

**Deaf where is thy sting? An exploration into the
perceptions of *deaf*-related terms and phrases
of three Communities of Practice (Deaf, Hard of
Hearing and Hearing)**

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment for the requirements for the degree of
MA (by Research) at the University of Central Lancashire

February 2014

Acknowledgements

This MA by research acknowledges the input of The University of Central Lancashire of my supervisors, Professor Dawn Archer, for her expertise, advice and continued support and Robert Lee. Thank you, Robert, for your expert guidance when devising Phase 2 of the Research Process.

I would also like to thank the following people for their contribution in the research process of this thesis:

- Lynne Barnes – Divisional Co-ordinator BSL & Deaf Studies. University of Central Lancashire – for her time and input to this research.
- Nicola Nunn – Senior Lecturer in BSL & Deaf Studies. Thank you for your invaluable support, advice, especially with the BSL signed photographs.
- Gail Cauderelie – BSL/English Interpreter, University of Central Lancashire for her advice, input and fantastic interpreting skills employed in the semi-informal interviews.
- Nick Palfreyman as a friend and colleague – for his advice and continued support.
- Francois Nel - Director: Journalism Leaders Programme. Director: Media and Digital Enterprise (MADE) project, a winner of the International Press Institute's News Innovation Contest. Co-convenor: Digital Editors Network, UK. University of Central Lancashire for his advice and input to my research.
- Jane Cordell - a Trustee for Manchester Deaf Centre and for Disability Rights UK, Chair, DaDa Fest, Coach and public speaker and runs a company called 'Getting Equal' – for her important contribution to my research.
- The 31 interviewees from the Communities of Practice - Hearing, Hard of Hearing and Deaf Communities - who helped immensely with the research of this thesis for their participation, without who, my study would not be complete...

In addition, I would like to acknowledge the input of The University of Central Lancashire LIS services that helped with my technology requirements and advice in order to carry out my research:

- Mark Pentler – Multimedia Developer, LIS Digital Services, University of Central Lancashire for his essential contribution and support with DVD technology – for his invaluable support in respect of my DVD recordings and the transfer of recorded materials.
- North Hub equipment loan services (equipment needed for interviewing) – Harrington Building, University of Central Lancashire.
- LIS computer support for advice and their ability to improvement my computer skills.

Thank you to my friends and family for their continued support and encouragement, especially, my son Max.

ABSTRACT

The question, ‘Deaf where is thy sting?’ occurs in Lodge’s (2008:62) novel *Deaf Sentence* and provides us with a striking example of how the word *deaf* can be used readily in everyday literal and non-literal language. This MA thesis seeks to ascertain different Communities of Practice’s (henceforth CofPs) perceptions of the non-literal use of the word *deaf* and associated terms and phrases such as *to turn a deaf ear*, *it fell on deaf ears*, *are you deaf?* *deaf and dumb*, *stone deaf*, *deaf as a post*, *deaf-mute*, *hard of hearing* and *hearing impaired*. The CofPs investigated are the *Hearing*, *Hard of Hearing* and the *Deaf* communities. The project combines concepts and ideas drawn from corpus linguistics, sociolinguistics and sign linguistics. It also draws on concepts which transcend different linguistic approaches: those of semantic prosody, lexical priming, collocation and framing. As Lakoff (2004:4) states, ‘framing is about [using] language that fits your worldview. [Hence] it is not just language. The ideas are primary – and language carries those ideas, [and] evokes those ideas’. Implicit within this statement is the idea that membership of a given CofP is likely to shape our understanding of certain words, terms and phrases.

This research assesses the neutral, negative and positive prosodies of the above-mentioned terms from the representatives of the three CofPs. Questions addressed include:

- Are such language terms problematic for them all and, if so, why?
- Are they (ever) used or interpreted consciously they are used by the media and /or in literature texts? If so, why? If not, why not?

The main findings from this research project are that the terms *deaf and dumb* and *deaf-mute* tend to be perceived as descriptive labels for *deafness*. It is revealed that these terms are not used much nowadays because they can be somewhat derogatory in terms of their association between *deafness* and being *dumb* or *mute*. The term *Hard of Hearing* is a preferred term over the term *Hearing impaired* - a categorisation which is deemed derogatory by the *Deaf* CofP. The phrases *to turn a deaf ear* and *it fell on deaf ears* are perceived to convey a negative semantic prosody and representatives of the three CofPs separately recommended an alternate way of phrasing the concept of *ignoring someone or something*.

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Chapter One: ‘Deaf where is thy sting?’

1. Introduction

“Language is a guide to *social reality*” (Sapir 1949:162).

This thesis explores the meaning and usage of the following terms and phrases, *to turn a deaf ear, it fell on deaf ears, are you deaf? deaf and dumb, stone deaf, deaf as a post, deaf-mute, hard of hearing* and *hearing impaired*. By focussing on the meaning and usage of these terms and phrases I mean to highlight how they are not only used in their context-of-use but also how interlocutors’ understanding – or perception – of them is influenced and/or shaped by frames. Lakoff (2004: 4) explains that

[...] framing is about getting language that fits your worldview. It is not just language. The ideas are primary - the language carries those ideas, [and] evokes those ideas.

This means, in turn, that the words, terms and phrases we use in everyday life provide an insight into how individuals view the world - hence, Sapir’s (1949:162) claim above, that ‘language is a guide to *social reality*’. Searle (1995:2-29) describes a *social reality* as being intrinsically influenced by our experiences as we grow up, so we recognise and perceive signifiers, such as ‘a car and a bath tub’ for what they signify to us, given our experiences of them. We generally, as Searle (1995:x) suggests ‘take [such] *social realities* for granted’ because every day we all use different words, terms and phrases to communicate, explain and describe situations. We also generally tend to adopt the same terms/labels for things. However, how we perceive these terms and labels will be dependent, to some extent, on any influences from our culture, attitudes and beliefs - in sum, on experiences that are drawn from our own Communities of Practice (henceforth CofP).¹

To explain further, Lakoff (2004:3) cites the word *Elephant*, informing us that when this word is read it provides multi-layers of meaning which in turn activate our ‘frames of expectation’. He suggests that this word, for example,

¹ Eckert (2006:1) defines a CofP as ‘a community of practice is a collection of people who engage on an ongoing basis in some common endeavour. Communities of practice emerge in response to common interest or position, and play an important role in forming their members’ participation in, and orientation to, the world around them. It provides an accountable link, therefore, between the individual, the group, and place in the broader social order, and it provides a setting in which linguistic practice emerges as a function of this link’.
<http://www.stanford.edu/~eckert/PDF/eckert2006.pdf>

[...] evokes a frame, which can be an image or other kinds of knowledge: Elephants are large, have floppy ears and a trunk, are associated with circuses, and so on. The word is defined relative to that frame.

So, Lakoff's *elephant* captures the notion of our pre-existing ideas for what the word *elephant* actually means. These notions are stored in our subconscious to be accessed at appropriate times as a frame of meaning, thereby activating our frames of expectation. However, some terms and phrases carry more than one meaning and can be used in different ways to convey different messages. As Tannen (1993:14-15) suggests,

[T]he only way we can make sense of the world is to see the connections between things, between present things and things we have experienced before or heard about. These vital connections are learned as we grow up and live in a given culture. As soon as we measure a new perception against what we know of the world from prior experience, we are dealing with expectations.

Following on from the concept of frames of expectations in language, Hoey (2005:22) comments on how some words specifically and habitually go together; stating that 'the collocations of a word or word sequence often group in interesting ways and sometimes habitually so'. For example, the word *hard*, when it co-occurs with the word *hearing* to create the term *hard of hearing* implicitly signifies a person who finds it difficult to hear. As will become clear in this thesis, on occasion, collocations can attract negative semantic prosodies (see 3.2 for a more detailed discussion of collocations, and 3.1 for a discussion of semantic prosody).

With these sociolinguistic and corpus linguistic approaches in mind, the title of this MA thesis is '*Deaf where is thy sting?*' (see Appendix 1). This title is taken from David Lodge's (2008) book, *The Deaf Sentence*.² Lodge chooses *The Deaf Sentence* as a hook to make people think about how the main character of his book, Professor Desmond Bates, is feeling as he moves into a different 'centre' of his life. Lodge (2008:62) also uses the phrase '*deaf where is thy sting?*' in relation to the Professor's *social reality*, to depict his journey from being firmly placed in the *Hearing* community to having to move into the *Hard of Hearing* community and potentially beyond.³ The portrayal of the main character losing his hearing altogether is described, then, as though it is akin to a '*deaf sentence*', which relocates him away from his original CofP - to him,

² The definition of *deaf* is 'unable to hear' and the definition of *sentence* is *the punishment passed on a convicted person* (Collins English Dictionary: 2006). Some states in America, such as, Texas still carry the Death Sentence. This play on words within the book title and book itself reframes the word *deaf* reinforcing the already existing negative semantic prosody of the word *deaf*. It could imply that being *deaf* is a condition, which denotes punishment and exclusion from society.

³ I will discuss the CofPs relating to this study - the *Hearing*, *Hard of Hearing* and *Deaf* communities in Chapter 2 (2.5) and ensuing chapters.

an unpleasant and unwanted place. This message is both conveyed and heightened by the author's strong play-on-words between the words *deaf* and *death*, such that *death sentence* becomes *deaf sentence* - this potentially evokes a negative association and in doing so evokes this notion for his readers' to contemplate. Elsewhere in literature, we find phrases being used in similar ways, such as, *a kiss of deaf/death*⁴, *modern life is the deaf/death of us all*⁵, *stone deaf/dead, deaf as a doornail/dead as a doornail*.⁶

Lodge's (2008) novel, more generally, touches on the difference between a *Hearing* CofP, a *Hard of Hearing* CofP and *Deaf* CofPs in parallel with the world of the main character who experiences a shift in his identity - as his hearing loss increases. This provides us with a useful reminder that a CofP relates to which 'centre' we belong; it is what colours our beliefs, values, culture and language use. It provides a cornerstone to our understanding of how as individuals' our language is received and processed. Wenger (1998:6) illustrates some important features of a CofP, suggesting that,

[W]e all belong to communities of practice, at home, at work, at school, in our hobbies. We belong to several CofPs at any given time and the communities we do belong to change over the course of our lives... CofPs are everywhere... [they] are an integral part of our daily lives...if we care to consider our own life ...we can all construct a fairly good picture of the CofP we belong to now, those we belonged to in the past, and those we would like to belong to in the future. We also have a fairly good idea of who belongs to our CofP and why. Even though membership is rarely made explicit...we can probably distinguish a few CofPs in which we are core members from a larger number of communities, in which we have a more peripheral kind of membership.

The essence of a CofP encompasses language history and inherited 'lexical storage and priming', which in turn is used in our everyday conversations and other modes of communication. Hoey (2005:8,15) further explains that,

[A]s a word is acquired through encounters with its speech and writing, it becomes cumulatively loaded with the contexts and co-texts in which it is encountered, and our knowledge of it includes the fact that it co-occurs with certain other words in certain kinds of context. The same applies to word sequences built out of these words; these too become loaded with the contexts and co-texts in which they occur...Words are never primed *per se*; they are only primed for someone [the individuals perception].

⁴ <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/7772902.stm> - News headline title 'Chinese girl gets kiss of deaf'. This article is about how a kiss caused the girl's eardrum to burst and cause temporary deafness.

⁵ <http://www.thefreelibrary.com/Modern+Life+is+the+DEAF+of+us+all> This is a newspaper article about how technology is so noisy that it will affect everyone's hearing and potentially make people deaf.

⁶ Be as deaf as a post (*British, American & Australian informal*) also be as deaf as a doorknob/doornail (*Australian*) <http://idioms.thefreedictionary.com/be+as+deaf+as+a+doornail>

Padden and Humphries (2005:180) note that the multifaceted nature of CofPs is influenced very much by the ‘diversity of culture, language, and different ways of seeing the world’. The CofP to which we link ourselves is pivotal in how we perceive language, in how we use terms and phrases and generally how we understand the language we use. *Semantic prosody* is a concept that explores the notion that people can perceive language differently, depending on their individual life experiences, beliefs, values and attitudes, which in turn are influenced by the CofPs to which they belong; these create their ‘rich cultural realities’ (Cokely 2001:15). These elements link as a whole to colour how our language is processed, perceived and used on a daily basis.

Both Cokely (2001) and Sapir (1949) associate *semantic prosody* with the ‘rich cultural realities’ of how we use and manage our language. Sapir (1949:162) suggests that we as

[H]uman beings do not live in the objective world alone, nor alone in the world of social activity as ordinarily understood, but are very much at the mercy of the particular language which has become the medium of expression for their society... the fact of the matter is that the ‘real world’ is to a large extent unconsciously built upon the language habits of the group. No two languages are ever sufficiently similar to be considered as representing the same *social reality*. The worlds in which different societies live are distinct worlds, not merely the same world with different labels attached
(cited in Hunston 1998:100)

Louw (2000:60) defines *semantic prosody* as

[A] form of meaning which is established through the proximity of a consistent series of collocates, often characterisable as positive or negative, and whose primary function is the expression of the attitude of its speaker or writer towards some pragmatic situation.
(Louw in Stewart (2010:14)

As Hunston (2002:61) further explains, *semantic prosody* ‘usually refers to a word that is typically used in a particular environment, such that, the word takes on connotations from that environment’. This thesis explores how participants representative of the three different CofPs view various words, terms and phrases from their centre of language use. Lane (1996:67) concurs with Sapir’s (1949:162) claim that of ‘language is a guide to *social reality*’ suggesting that

[...] language has three roles in bonding a group of speakers to one another and to their culture. It is a symbol of social identity, a medium of social interaction, and a store of cultural knowledge.

This identifies succinctly just how influential and complex the use and understanding of language can be. Indeed, this thesis also considers in relation to a person's CofP Lodge's question of "*Deaf where is thy sting?*". In particular, Lane (ibid.67) stresses the importance of the relationship between language perception and how perception is dependent on a person's identity, social interaction, cultural upbringing and belonging. This, in essence, forms the cornerstone of a person's CofP.

1.1 The aims and objectives of the research

This thesis will explore the semantic prosodies of the following phrases and associated terms,

turns/turned a deaf ear
it fell/falls on deaf ears
are you deaf?
deaf and dumb
deaf as a post
deaf-mute
stone deaf
hearing impaired
hard of hearing

An initial corpus study of these terms and phrases identifies their frequency of use and provides an indication of how and when these terms are used and whether they are used frequently enough to make a social impact. This study aims to uncover the extent to which these terms are used metaphorically or in reference to literal *deafness* and or *d/Deaf* people, by identifying examples of use, through the British National Corpus (henceforth BNC), Nexis (Worldwide corpus database), literature and newspaper article searches (see 4.1.1, pages 51-53). I then go on to explore whether the above terms and phrases are used neutrally, negatively or positively, as a means of identifying the perceptions of the three CofPs; the *Hearing* Community, the *Hard of Hearing* Community, and the *Deaf* communities. My intention is to determine the extent to which perceptions overlap or remain distinctly separate (see Chapters Five-through-Eight).

Questions to be addressed include:

- Do such language terms colour the judgements of *deafness* - especially when used by the media or when used in literature?
- Should we be striving to avoid what potentially could be construed as derogatory terms, phrases and representations?

To address these questions I will specifically:

Research and identify people's perceptions of non-literal terms which include the word *deaf*, and the possible "influencing" role here of media and literature representations.

Explore the extent to which people's perceptions of such terms, are shaped by their CofP, in this instance, the *Hearing*, the *Hard of Hearing* and the *Deaf* communities.

Gather data information by qualitative and quantitative research approaches as a means of exploring in detail the extent of usage and the differing views from the three CofPs.

Explore peoples' attitudes to / understandings of these non-literal terms – with a specific focus on whether these terms are consciously being used (with *deafness* in mind).

Identify the impact of these terms on the medical, social and cultural-linguistic prototypes for *deafness* (Fearon 2010).

1.2 Approach taken

The research will be carried out using both quantitative and qualitative methods of analysis. Data will be gathered through a threefold approach consisting of:

A corpus linguistic quantitative investigation, to identify the frequency-of-use of the identified terms and phrases within the BNC and Nexis datasets. Data will also be sourced from media broadcasts, media publications and literature.

A corpus linguistic qualitative investigation, to identify the concordances of the identified terms and phrases and their context-of-use within the BNC and Nexis datasets. Data will also be sourced from media broadcasts, media publications and literature.

A qualitative investigation using semi-informal interview situations, involving the three CofPs, the *Hearing*, the *Hard of Hearing*, and the *Deaf* communities; to explore the neutral, negative and positive semantic prosodies of the identified terms and phrases, which involve other derogatory terms.

In designing the questions for the semi-informal interviews, I have been mindful of my own bias (as a member of the *Hard of Hearing* community). I will seek to control potential variables to some extent by interviewing ten people from each CofP, who are potentially prototypical members of each CofP. By this I mean:

Ten people representative of the *Deaf* CofP who were born *deaf* or have had reduced hearing very early in their lives. British Sign Language (henceforth BSL) is their preferred language, but they may also be bi-modal as well.

Ten people representative of the *Hard of Hearing* CofP who were born or have become *Hard of Hearing*. They may or may not wear hearing-aids to aid their communication through speech (For the purpose of this study people with age-related *deafness* have been excluded).

Ten people who are born *hearing* and have no particular difficulty in hearing and their preferred mode of communication is speech because there is no need ordinarily to communicate in other ways. (For the purpose of this study, the chosen representatives of this *Hearing* CofP have had no known contact with the other representatives CofPs and do not use sign language).

1.3 Structure of MA Thesis

Chapter Two introduces *d/Deaf* terminology and identity to enable the reader to gain an insight into how *d/Deaf* terms have been used and how they link to the identity of the *d/Deaf* person. It discusses how there is a diversity amongst *deaf* terminology, and introduces definitions of the term *deaf*. It explores the concepts of ‘othering’ and ‘difference’ and discusses the importance of the CofP theory in relation to this study. Finally, it links this study with cultural influences, such as the social, medical and culturo-linguistic models of *deafness*.

Chapter Three the ‘sociolinguistic means of capturing perception’ constitutes the thesis’s literature review. Within this chapter, I discuss the theoretical framework of this thesis identifying and illustrating how the concepts of semantic prosody, collocation, lexical priming, and framing shape people’s perception of language. The chapter introduces the work of Archer et al (2012), Burns et al (2001), Coffin et al (2004), Crystal (2011), Gavioli (2005), Grigely (2006), Hoey (2005), Hunston (2002, 1999a), Hunston and Thompson (1998), Lakoff (2004), Lakoff and Johnson (1999), Matthews (2007), Stewart (2010), Stubbs (1996), Sunderland (2006) and Tannen (2011).

Chapter Four outlines the methodological approaches adopted in this thesis. The research uses a threefold approach that combines quantitative and qualitative methods. Phase 1a and Phase 1b of the research explores corpus linguistic information from the BNC and Nexis data sources. Phase 2 employs a qualitative approach of semi-informal interviews. This chapter provides information on sampling, pilot interviews, participants of the study, the CofPs involved, and the design of the semi-informal interview.

Chapter Five covers - Phase 1a and 1b of the research process - the corpus linguistic (BNC and Nexis) quantitative data findings, analysis and discussion. It discusses, in turn, the BNC and

Nexis frequency and concordance corpus findings of the identified terms and phrases; *deaf mute/deaf-mute, deaf and dumb, stone deaf, deaf as a post, are you deaf? is deaf to..., to fall on deaf ears, to turn a deaf ear, hard of hearing, and hearing impaired.*

Chapter Six covers the qualitative data analysis of 30 semi-informal interviews, comprising of 10 interviews from each of the CofPs - the *Hearing* (1-10) *Hard of Hearing* (11-20) and *Deaf* (21-31) communities. Within the interview process I interviewed 11 people for the *Hard of Hearing* CofP but realised that the interviewee in question did not fit either the *Deaf* or *Hard of Hearing* CofP. This chapter analyses and discusses the language perception of the three CofPs in Sections 1-4 of the semi-informal interviews. It collates the perception of what these terms mean to the representatives of the three CofPs, providing an insight into their perceptions in Tables 27, 28 and 29 (see 6.6.2, 6.6.3, 6.6.4, 6.6.5).

Chapter Seven provides a summary and discussion of the research findings – expanding and developing linguistic theory. The research findings from Phase 2 of the research process definitions of the terms and phrases are illustrated by the representatives of the three CofPs. The results of the research contributed to the expansion of my Gradable Antonymy Model (see 2.2). Jane Cordell's input is explored further (see 2.3). The research outcomes helped further develop the social, medical and cultural-linguistic prototypes (Fearon 2010) and a media-led language prototype was created. The Baker and Cokely (1980) Model as introduced in 2.4 has been, in light of the research findings, expanded. This chapter is concluded by research summary flow charts 1 and 2.

Chapter Eight concludes this thesis providing a summary of the research undertaken. It informs the reader of what has been done and achieved; reflects on what has been learnt through the research; explores the limitations of the study, its strengths and weaknesses and identifies areas for further research.

Chapter Two: Deaf Terminology and Identity

2. Introduction

This chapter places the *Deaf* CofP in its historical, social and medical contexts. I have adopted ‘The Community of Practice’ approach so as to determine what a norm is for a given group of people as opposed to assuming a default societal norm and seeing the *Deaf* group as being different from the norm. In particular, I explore the diversity amongst the *deaf/Deaf* and *h/Hearing* terminology, in a way that acknowledges both its “gradability” and any “fit” with the Social and Medical Models of *deafness* (Fearon 2010). I explore the concept of ‘othering’ and ‘difference’ and identify the importance of the concept of a Community of Practice in respect to how my chosen three CofPs, the *Hearing*, *Hard of Hearing* and *Deaf* communities fit with the traditional view of a Community of Practice. Finally, I explore the social, medical and cultural influences that are associated with *deaf* terminology.

2.1 Definitions

Historically *deafness* has been controlled and categorised by the non-*deaf*, and labelled as a condition which required a cure or interventions to improve the hearing deficit. Carol Padden (2001) highlights the terms *deaf* and *deafness* as terms which conventionally refer to a disability. She stresses that

[D]eaf or deafness is conventionally referring to the absence of the ability to hear and is also used as a noun to refer to individuals who do not hear. The term [deaf] has filtered into popular language as a term for inattention or neglect – “to turn a deaf ear to the pleas of the needy”. In this way, deaf [and deafness] is used along with words like blind and blindness to refer to individuals who cannot access the world directly and instead require adaptive means. (Padden, 2001 in Duranti, 2001:52)

This portrays and perpetuates a negative semantic prosody (see 3.1, page 31). By this I mean that Padden’s quote indicates how the use of the terms in this way creates a need to make a distinction between people, thus creating a ‘difference’. In addition, the term *deaf* is used also in connection with metaphorical phrases, hence making connections with ‘inattention or neglect’. Cokely (2001:1) notes differences within people’s cultural realities and their world-view. In particular, he draws attention to ‘the frames of references that the English-speaking community has for understanding Deaf people’. The evoked ‘frames, as reflected by [the English-speaking community,] appear to represent ignorance, a pathology and deficiency’. Unless these frames of reference are addressed, this world-view in respect to *d/Deaf* people will continue to be perpetuated; an example of this is the use of the term *deaf and dumb*.

The descriptive term *deaf and dumb* has been used historically since biblical times when *deafness* was something to be cured (Mark 7v31-37: Isaiah 35:v5-6). As early as 1786, The Bartlett Trial⁷ refers to John Rasten who can ‘neither speak or hear’, and as ‘a dumb man’, and ‘deaf and dumb man’ who is referred to as an *idiot*, *a dumby*, *a learned pig* and an *automaton*. John Rasten was ‘indicted for feloniously stealing, on the 6th day of January 1786, one silver watch, value 20 s. a steel chain, value 6 d. and a steel seal, value 4 d. the property of John Williamson’. This example serves to highlight an inability on the part of both parties - the Court and the accused - to communicate effectively with any certainty that the other has understood fully. Garrow is at a loss to know how Rasten can communicate and fully understand what is being said. He states,

[M]y Lord I wish I could also address the Jury on this trial I should be glad to ask them whether they would chuse [sic] to convict a man of felony upon the testimony of a man with whom they could not hold a conversation who has not more rationality than an Automaton, who does not appear more competent (if I may be allowed to make such a Simily [sic]) than that learned Pig which is now exhibited to the publick [sic].

In addition, Archer (pc.20.03.2013) confirms that

[G]arrow was told off by the Judge – not for the terms he had used necessarily but for the implicature inherent in what he was suggesting, that is, that the *deaf and mute* man was, in fact, *stupid* and *unable to communicate*.

The message that the accused was deficient in his cognitive ability was further emphasised by Garrow: he stated that a ‘*deaf and dumb man*’ and ‘*that a man who is Sudus et Mutus... is in presumption [an] Ideot [sic]*’. Garrow was again chastised for his behaviour and instructed to ‘behave with decency’.

Fearon (2013, online)⁸ suggests a negative prosody regarding *d/Deaf* people existed even in Aristotle’s time, (384-322 B.C.) noting that

[T]here is an underlying assumption that *d/Deaf* people are incapable of acquiring literacy skills and therefore are classed as substandard human beings, who can be likened or compared to animals. Aristotle differentiates *d/Deaf* people from animals and from other human-beings, observing that ‘animals make noises, human beings speak, and though people who are born deaf have a voice, they cannot talk’ (*History of Animals* 49.536b). The ancient Greeks noted *deafness* to be a curse synonymous with *dumbness*, *an inability to speak*, with connotations of being *stupid* and *worthless*. Intertwined with the notion of speechlessness is an impairment of reasoning and basic intelligence, so that

⁷The Trial of Bartlett 1786 OBP ref: T1786111-30, T17860111-1.

⁸ See: <http://atp.uclan.ac.uk/buddypress/diffusion/?p=1529> for a copy of Fearon (2013) *Ameliorated or Pejorised; An exploration into the word deaf*. Volume 6, Issue 1.

the condition of being *deaf* disempowered *d/Deaf* people and ultimately separated them from being included in the political and intellectual arena. They were thus graded inferior beings, not worthy to be included within the literary elite.

History views *deaf and dumb* as a descriptive term but negative associations begin to pejorise this term; especially in the light of the Milan Conference 1880, which curtailed *d/Deaf* people's right to use sign language freely and sentenced them to an oralist dictated education system governed by *Hearing* people (see appendix 1). The British Deaf and Dumb Association was founded in 1890. Although its founders Francis Maginn and Charles Gorham disputed this title, it gained a majority vote at the time; this title therefore remained in force until 1971. Even though this title was changed to The British Deaf Association the term *deaf and dumb* still remains in use within the media, as we will see in Chapters Five and Six.

2.2 Diversity amongst Terminology

In Fearon (2013, online) I show that there are many identifiers which attempt to describe the varying degrees of deafness. Historically these terms have broadened as opposed to narrowing leading to a potential confusion in respect to which terms are the most acceptable to use. 'Each term can be graded by its sense relation to the word *deaf* and if the word *hearing* is added to the equation then there is a robust argument for gradable antonymy' (Fearon 2013). By this, I mean it provides a polarity in meaning and delineates different stages within its sense relations that exist between the two opposites – *hearing* and *deaf*. Firstly, I identify the gradable antonymy examples in Fearon (2013, online). Secondly, I define the terms used within the gradable antonymy lines.

(1) hearing > mild hearing loss > moderate hearing loss > severe hearing loss > profound hearing loss > deaf

Example (1) one notes gradable medical terminology for the word *deaf*. Between the antonyms of *hearing* and *deaf* are terms which are used in the medical world to describe a level of hearing loss. These may differ from how the public refer to the varying degrees of deafness. *Mild*, *moderate*, *severe* and *profound* are used in audiometric tests to assess the degree of a hearing loss.

(2) Hearing > hearing > hearing impaired > hard of hearing > mild hearing loss > moderate hearing loss > severe hearing loss > profound hearing loss > deafened > stone deaf > deaf > Deaf > 'Deaf' > DEAF

Example (2) introduces the concepts of lowercase and uppercase distinctions for ‘h/H’ *hearing* and ‘d/D’ *deaf* and their spoken and signed meanings. Example (2) is an expansion of Example (1), and includes descriptors to denote the differing levels of hearing loss. Senghas and Monaghan (2002:72; italics added) suggest that,

[C]onceptually, the *Deaf/deaf* distinction is significant. Separating audiological issues (that is, measurable hearing levels – *deaf* and *hearing*) from those of socialisation, acculturation, and identity (that is, *Deaf* as sociological or cultural reference) makes otherwise confusing issues far more understandable.

Napier (2002:145; [italics added]) proposes that uppercase ‘H’ *Hearing* and lowercase ‘h’ *hearing* should be used alongside *d/Deaf*.⁹ She asserts that

[H]*earing* people are those consumed by the *Hearing* culture; they are ignorant or naive about the *Deaf* community and its culture and typically regard deafness from a pathological point of view; *hearing* people [sign language users], however, are those who have internalized *Deaf* culture, ally themselves with *Deaf* people, and are regarded as members of the *Deaf* community.

The signed concept of *H/hearing* as outlined above introduces the term *hearing* as a reference to those people who identify with *Deaf* people, are aware of or use sign language and agree with the ethos of the social model of deafness. The social model of *deafness* places the concept of *deafness* in a cultural and linguistic framework, thus creating a positive non-medical *Deaf* identity, the impact of which aids the process of amelioration for the term *deaf* (see Graph 1, 2.3 and Fearon 2013, online).

The medical, social and cultural influences are discussed further in this Chapter (2.5). In support of this discussion, the BSL signs are illustrated with photographic representations. In order to understand the semantics of another language it is important to be aware of how language users use and perceive language (see 7.1 and 7.3). This consideration, in turn, affects how participants of a CofP interpret and use the identified lexical items, as it is possible that the use of these terms will differ from one CofP to the next.

⁹ The Hearing community do not use the *d/Deaf* distinction but the Deaf community do use this for descriptive purposes and for written explanation. The use of *H/hearing* is noted in written explanation.



Fig.1: The BSL sign for lowercase 'h' hearing

This BSL sign for lowercase '*h*' *hearing* is illustrated in Fig 1, which denotes a hearing person. The index finger begins by the ear and moves in a small arched semi-circle and then moves up to the chin. The index finger taps the chin two times.

The term *Hard of Hearing* provides reference to someone who has a degree of hearing loss. This term does not identify whether or not they describe themselves as audiolgically *deaf* or culturally *Deaf* – it remains an 'umbrella' term, which sits in the field of disability and portrays a deficiency. Brueggemann (2008, cited in Lindgren et al 2008:30) and Senghas & Monaghan (2002:73) note the concept of 'betweenity' in relation to being *Hard of Hearing* and '*deaf-betweenity*' in the realms of '*Deaf* culture, identity, language and its relationship with disability identity'. This is a term which refers to a perspective that exists between the terms *deaf* and *Deaf*, and even between *H/hearing* and *d/Deaf*. It effectively introduces an additional pragmatic dimension – it affords the participants of the *Hard-of-Hearing* community a perspective 'that [exists] in deaf-betweenity and disability' and the participants of the *Deaf* community a perspective that is not connected to a disability identity, but, rather, to their *Deaf* cultural identity.



Fig.2: The BSL sign for Hard of Hearing

The term *deaf* refers to someone who is audilogically deaf, and uses hearing-aids and/or assisted technology to enhance their hearing and speaks orally. Woodward (1972, cited in Padden and Humphries 1988:2) describe this term as ‘the audiological condition of not hearing’.

The term *Hearing* describes a person who understands deafness from audiological perspective and theoretically - potentially - identifies with the ethos of the medical model. The medical model situates the concept of deafness in the medical field of care - promotes the idea of a deficiency in people that needs a diagnosis, assistance and, where applicable, cure; ultimately promoting a pathological condition in need of help. Hunston (1999a, cited in Hunston 2002:122)¹⁰ suggests that the use of the term

deaf [denotes] an attributive and predicative adjective compared with the [term] *hearing*. Being able to hear is treated as the unmarked situation, rarely lexicalised, whereas being *deaf* is treated as the marked situation.

Padden and Humphries (1988:41) concur that a ‘key concept in defining HEARING [is that] HEARING means the opposite of what we are’. In BSL this distinction is made with a variation on the sign for hearing.

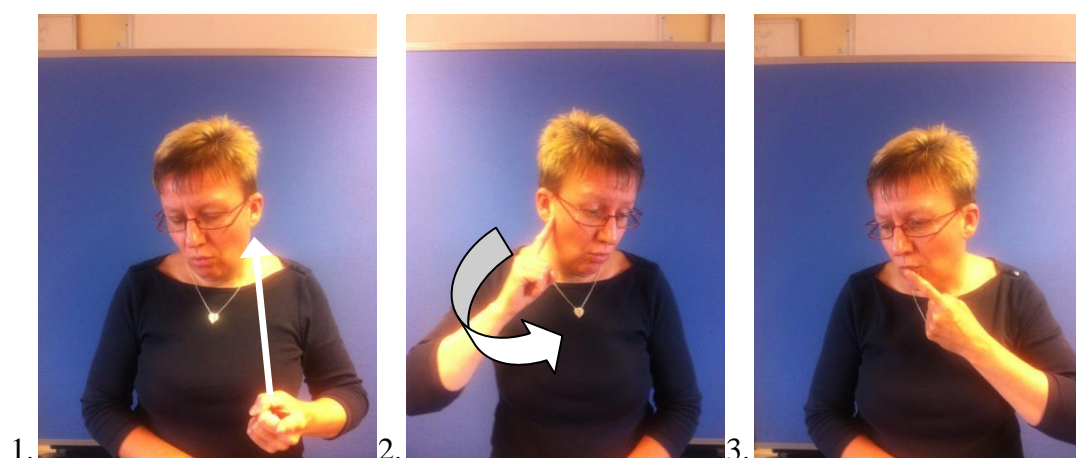


Fig.3: The BSL Sign for uppercase ‘H’ Hearing

This sign is uppercase ‘H’ *hearing* denotes a hearing person who is affiliated with the audiological hearing world. This sign uses the index finger placed on the side of the face. From this position the hand moves in a bigger arched semi-circle and the index finger moves up towards the chin, tapping the chin twice.

¹⁰ The reference to Hunston to 1999a, which is noted in Hunston 2002:12, was kindly supplied by personal communication with my supervisor -15/02/2013.

The term *Deaf* (uppercase 'D' Deaf) denotes someone who is *culturally deaf*. The preferred language of a *Deaf* person is a sign language¹¹ and their identity is embedded within the *Deaf* community. They consider themselves part of a recognised and valued linguistic minority.

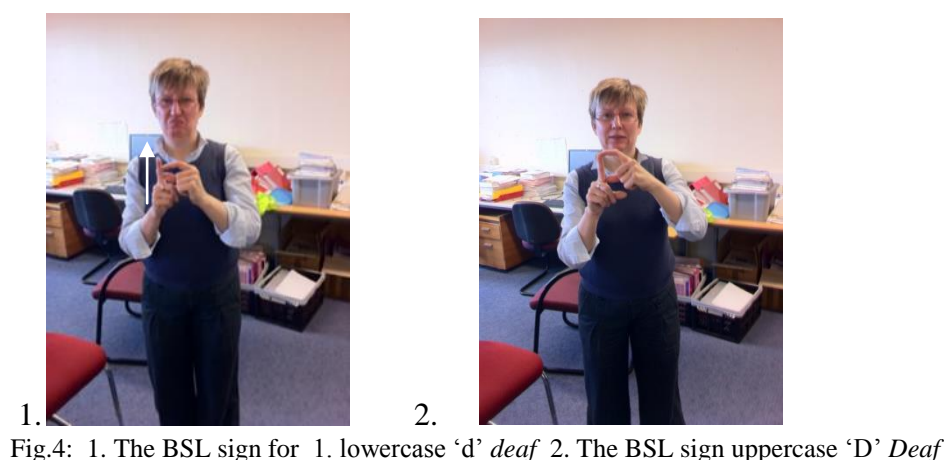


Fig 5 illustrates the signs for:

1: for lowercase 'd' deaf

2. for uppercase 'D' Deaf

These are not BSL signs for *Deaf* but demonstrate their use by people identifying this difference in an English essay, which differentiates between cultural and non-cultural *d/Deaf* people. The formal sign for *Deaf* would be the normal sign (7.1)



Fig 5 illustrates the concept of '*massive D – Deaf*', as opposed to the concept of 'uppercase 'D' – *Deaf*'. This takes the cultural *deafness* definition to a different level, identifying with deaf children who are born into a *Deaf* family, where their Mother and Father are *Deaf*; they may

¹¹ British Sign Language (BSL), American Sign Language (ASL), French Sign Language (FSL) etc...

have *deaf* siblings, have a *Deaf* spouse and possibly have *deaf* children. Padden and Humphries note that ‘DEAF is a means of identifying the group one’s connected with’ (1988: 39) further suggesting that

[...] to a child DEAF means “us,” but he meets others for whom “deaf” means “them, not like us”. He thinks DEAF means ‘friends who behave as expected’, but to others it means “a remarkable condition”.
(Padden and Humphries 1988: 17)

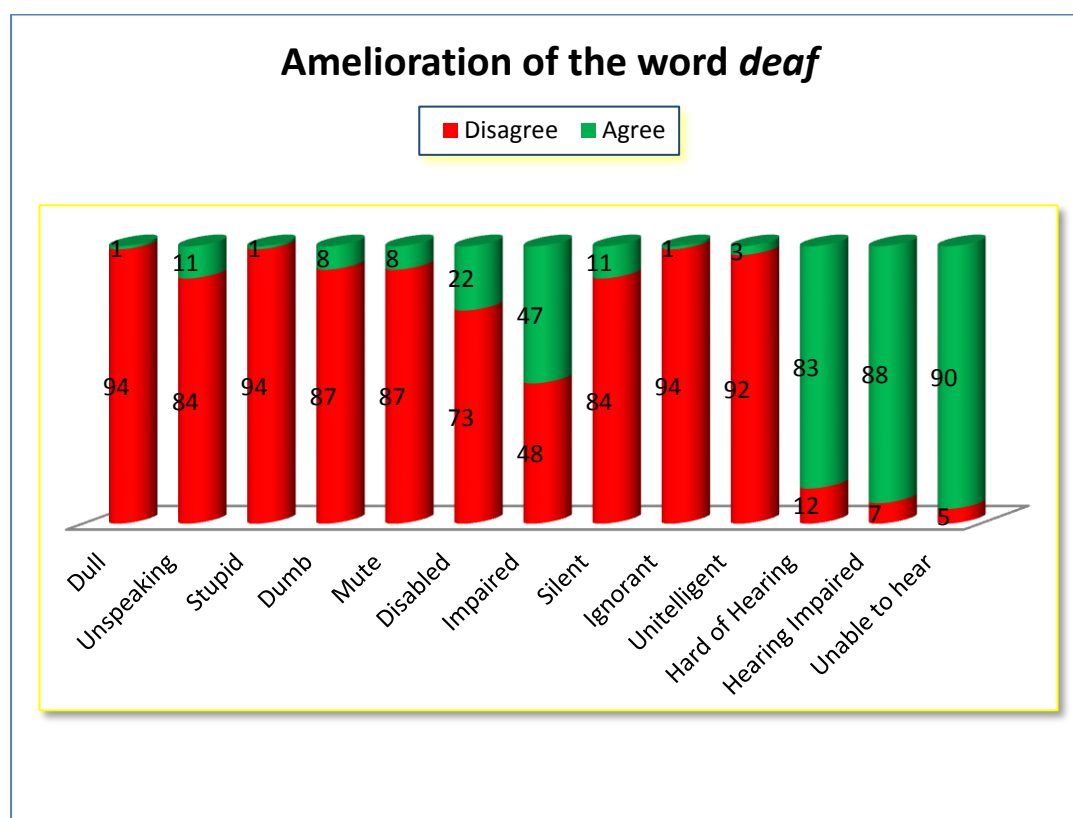
The above discussion illustrates the diversity and complexity of how *deaf* terminology can be perceived and used. It is interesting to note, that historically, the word *deaf* has kept company with other words, such as *dumb*, *stupid*, *daft*, *blind*; all of which have coloured its use with negative sense relations (as we saw with reference to the Bartlett Trial: see page 21). *Deafness* can be perceived as a condition that exists outside the ‘normal parameters’ that society sets. The term *hearing* is not generally coupled with another lexical item – it does not need another descriptor to emphasise its meaning or create additional priming. This research aims to indicate that there is an argument the words *deaf* and *Deaf* should also be able to positively stand alone, without additional descriptors to convey negative sense relations (see 7.3). *Deaf* people in general and members of the *Deaf* community - a recognised linguistic minority - should not be marginalised by their history and the terminology that serves to define them. This study explores the perception of the representatives of the three CofPs, the *Deaf*, *Hard of Hearing* and *Hearing* communities. The study notes, as suggested by Eckert (2006:1)¹² that

[...] a community of practice that is central to many of its participants’ identity construction is an important locus for the setting down of joint history, allowing for the complex construction of linguistic styles. Such history also sets the stage for change.

Fearon (2013, online) explored the sense relations of the word *deaf* suggesting an ameliorated change, a lexical shift in sense relations because the words/ terms, *dull*, *unspeaking*, *stupid*, *dumb*, *mute*, *disabled*, *ignorant* and *unintelligent* appear to convey, a disassociation with the word *deaf* and *d/Deaf* people. The outcome of this research revealed that the terms *impaired*, *hearing impaired*, *hard of hearing* and *unable to speak* maintained a strong association with *deafness*. The findings of this research study were based on the 95 viable responses to a disseminated 150 questionnaires (see Graph 1 below). The respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed that the word *deaf* and *d/Deaf* people were associated with the words and terms, *dull*, *unspeaking*, *stupid*, *dumb*, *mute*, *disabled*, *impaired*, *silent*, *ignorant*, *unintelligent*,

¹² <http://www.stanford.edu/~eckert/PDF/eckert2006.pdf>

hard of hearing and *unable to hear*. The association of these terms signifies the concept of *deafness* as a factual descriptor, category or label. The research also revealed a remaining connection with the medical and disability model of *deafness* indicated with the agreement of the terms, *hard of hearing*, *hearing impaired* and *unable to hear* and the split response to the word *impaired*.



Graph 1: An ameliorated response for the word deaf

Padden concurs that, indeed, over the years, the categorisation of *d/Deaf* people has changed due to a more extensive *Deaf* awareness in society and their cultural affiliations. ‘A joint statement made by Andrew Smith, the Secretary of recognition of British Sign Language in 2003 (see appendix: 2), has created pathways to the acknowledgement of a cultural, linguistic community – *The Deaf Community*. Padden (2001) suggests that an ameliorated process is occurring in respect to how the word *deaf* is perceived and used:

[N]ew definitions of deafness focus more on knowledge of cultural norms, cultural behaviours, and cultural practices. As a result, *deaf* has come to take on a distinctly cultural tone that seeks to make less privileged the pathological definition of the condition... *Deafness* is seen less as a debilitating condition and more as an expression of community with other deaf people. (cited in Duranti, 2001:52-55)

2.3 Othering and Difference

The following article depicts another example of how deafness can be seen in a negative manner; especially when it is used to denote the ‘dialogue of the deaf’ in conjunction with other words which carry a negative prosody, ‘sterile and petty’.

Article 1 – *The Independent* - 06/08/2011: ‘Denis MacShane: Slash and burn: less Brussels, better Europe’.



Denis MacShane: Slash and burn: less Brussels, better Europe
Saturday 06 August 2011

Has the word "leadership" been expunged from the dictionaries of Europe? It is not just David Cameron, Nicolas Sarkozy and Angela Merkel who are all on holiday. The crisis of the eurozone exposes a Europe whose institutions no longer work.

For Britain, George Osborne has had the boldest response to the crisis, when he welcomed the idea of joint economic governance and fiscal policies for the 17 eurozone nations – a startling change from previous British policy, which for centuries has been dedicated to preventing the formation of a hegemonic ideological, economic or religious continental puissance. The Osborne doctrine in favour of a single economic governance for 75 per cent of the EU is dramatic and new.

Can this open the way to changing the sterile, petty, point-scoring dialogue of the deaf between Europhiles and Europhobes, federalists against nationalists, that most voters treat with contempt?

Britain could take the lead in a new argument about changing the way the EU is run. The first priority is to stop the unending growth of the Commission. It now has 27 commissioners, with more in the Balkan waiting room. Most do overlapping jobs with an army of officials justifying their existence by producing ever-increasing minutiae of regulations that drive most European citizens mad with fury. Less Brussels will make better Europe...

The debate between Europhiles and Europhobes, which is discussed amidst a ‘slash and burn’ environment, conveys a message of impending disaster notes, in particular, the question ‘can this open the way to changing the sterile, petty, point-scoring dialogue of the deaf between Europhiles and Europhobes, federalists against nationalists, that most voters treat with contempt?’ (*The Independent*, 2011). This portrays a negative prosody which uses ‘the deaf’ to depict the message of non - or ineffective communications, which, in turn, serves to marginalise and ‘other’d/Deaf people.

This article provoked an interesting response posted as an online comment following the article’s publication. Cordell¹³ writes in response to Article 1 (see 7.4).

¹³ Jane Cordell is a Trustee for Manchester Deaf Centre and for Disability Rights UK, Chair, DaDa Fest, Coach and public speaker and runs a company called ‘Getting Equal’.

Deaf people really listen

Denis MacShane makes a common but lazy use of a metaphor in his article “Slash and burn: less Brussels, better Europe” (6 August). He describes the debate between Europhiles and Europhobes as a “dialogue of the deaf”, confusing hearing loss with choosing to ignore what is said.

If Mr MacShane were to observe a real “dialogue of the deaf” he might be impressed by the attentiveness of those present. Hearing and listening are different things. Deaf people do not have the luxury of being able to filter out messages, in which they are not interested, or with which they do not agree; we have to pay attention. Perhaps Eurocrats’ could learn something from us?

Jane Cordell
Manchester

Cordell (2011) suggests that is not appropriate to refer to the ‘dialogue of the deaf’ in conjunction with other people ‘choosing to ignore what is said’. She stresses that ‘deaf people do not have the luxury to filter out messages’

The concept of ‘othering’ refers to the knowledge of the ‘other’ in society, whether it be in a positive, neutral or negative manner. The perpetuated use of *Deaf* and *Dumb* potentially creates an ‘othering’ of a person or collective who are deemed to be unable to hear, speak, understand, and can even be seen as *stupid*, *silent* and *ignorant*; a marginalised group of people who cannot even function in the ‘real-world’.

The Independent article serves to, albeit implicitly, perpetuate the message that *d/Deaf* can equate to *not listening*, *inattentiveness*, and *ignoring what is being communicated*. The effect of this creates a negative prosody associated with difference, which potentially serves to oppress. This potential negative prosody is further perpetuated because the word *deaf* is noted to keep company with other words such as *dumb*, *stupid*, *daft*, *blind*, all of these colour its reputation with negative sense relations; this is discussed further in Chapters Five-through-Seven.

Deafness is seen as something that exists outside the ‘normal parameters’ that society sets. The term *hearing* is not coupled with another lexical item to describe its identity further - it stands ‘proudly’ on its own. There is some argument for suggesting that the words *d/Deaf* should be able to stand alone with positive sense relations. Fearon (2010) carried out research into the sense relations of the word *deaf*: the findings suggest that there has been an ameliorated response and that the words or terms *dull*, *unspeaking*, *stupid*, *dumb*, *mute*, *disabled*, *ignorant* and *unintelligent* appear to be less associated with *d/Deaf* people. The terms *impaired* and *hearing impaired*, *hard of hearing*, *unable to speak* remained a strong association with *deafness*. The

association of these terms, although they signify a description of *deafness* as a condition, indicate a remaining connection with the medical model and disability in reference to *deafness*.

Padden and Humphries (1988) highlight that, in order

[...] to understand how categorisations and labels work, one must begin from a different centre. *Deaf* people work around different assumptions about *deafness* and *hearing* from those of *hearing* people. The condition of not *hearing*, or of being *hard of hearing*, cannot describe apart from its placement in context of categories of cultural meaning. names applied to one another are labels that define relationships. *Deaf* people have [been] defined, [which] include their struggles with those who are more powerful than they, such as *hearing* others’.

(Padden and Humphries, 1988:54-55 [adapted])

Therefore, it is important to understand how people view the world from their different centres. It is crucial to consider how peoples’ cultural backgrounds/history, beliefs, customs, practices, and attitudes have an impact in respect to how they perceive and use language. Hunston and Oakey (2010) identify

[...]culture [to be] something that flows and shifts between us. It both binds us and separates us, but in different ways at different times and in different circumstances. There are many aspects of our behaviour which are culturally different... The foreign is not always distant, but often participant within our own societies; and the boundaries between us are blurred. Culture is therefore cosmopolitan, and as such resists ‘close description’.

(Hunston and Oakey 2010:138)

This thesis delves into a ‘*close description*’ of the identified terms and phrases *to turn a deaf ear*, *it fell on deaf ears*, *are you deaf?* *deaf and dumb*, *stone deaf*, *deaf as a post*, *deaf-mute*, *hard of hearing* and *hearing impaired* (see Chapter Four-through-Eight). It explores how the representatives of the three CofPs perceive disabilist language. The terms under analysis are entwined in the existence of a *Deaf* culture, in the sense that ‘*others*’ have defined *d/Deaf* people. Padden and Humphries (1988:54-55 [adapted]) concur that ‘names applied to one another are labels [which potentially] define relationships’. Cloran (2000: 153 [adapted]) further suggests that ‘language is itself a system that is crucially involved in creating, maintaining and [potentially] changing *social reality*... different social realities may be expressed in and maintained by different ways of meaning’. Cloran (2000) notes also that language

[...] is influenced by the ways in which language is structured for use [and in turn is] influenced ... by the immediate context of the situation. Language choices are also influenced by the context of culture. Cultures evolve recognizable ways by which members can achieve their social purposes in the range of situations they typically experience.

(Cloran, 2000:4)

The influences and identities within our own CofPs can make important impact upon how we perceive language in both its written, spoken and signed forms. When considering the involvement of CofP representatives, Kroskrity (2001:106) notes how important identity is in the ‘linguistic construction of membership in one or more social groups’ or what can be defined as ‘category’. He suggests that,

[L]anguage and communication often provide important and sometimes crucial criteria [by] which members both define their group and others. Identities may be linguistically constructed both through particular languages and linguistic forms... [which are] associated with specific national, ethnic, or other identities and through the use of communicative practices (greeting formulae, maintenance of mutual gaze, regulation of mutual participation) that are indexed, through members’ normative use to their group. [Indeed] language and communication are critical aspects of the production of a wide variety of identities expressed at many levels of social organisation. (cited in Duranti 2001:106 [adapted])

2.4 Social, Medical and Cultural Influences

Lane (2002) asks the following question, ‘why is *deaf* associated with loss rather than difference and gain (different language, different culture)?’ He answers this by stating,

[I] submit, that it is because the society that elaborated the concept of *deaf* is largely hearing and conceptualizes *deaf* as a loss of hearing. Indeed, the difference in hearing of a person born *deaf* and one born hearing is called ‘*hearing loss*’, although the *deaf* person didn’t lose anything. The idea that sensory difference is loss is reinforced by the limitations of *hearing* people who lose their hearing.

(Lane, 2002:283 [italics added])

Hence, we note that all the influences that are encompassed within our CofPs produce a ‘priming’ of the language we know and use. The audiological/medical, political, social and cultural-linguistic influences - amongst others - have a bearing on language use and in the case of the identified terms and phrases it outlines potential effects of disabilist language. Baker and Cokely in their 1980 model *Avenues to membership in the Deaf Communities* discuss the different influences that potentially influence the ‘avenues to membership in the *Deaf* community’ (see 7.6 and connected with this model 7.5.1-4).¹⁴

¹⁴ Chapter 7, section 6 explores Baker and Cokely’s 1980 model in the realms of its four spheres: audiological/medical, political, social and cultural-linguistic. The expanded model considers the impact of language in connection with the four identified spheres.

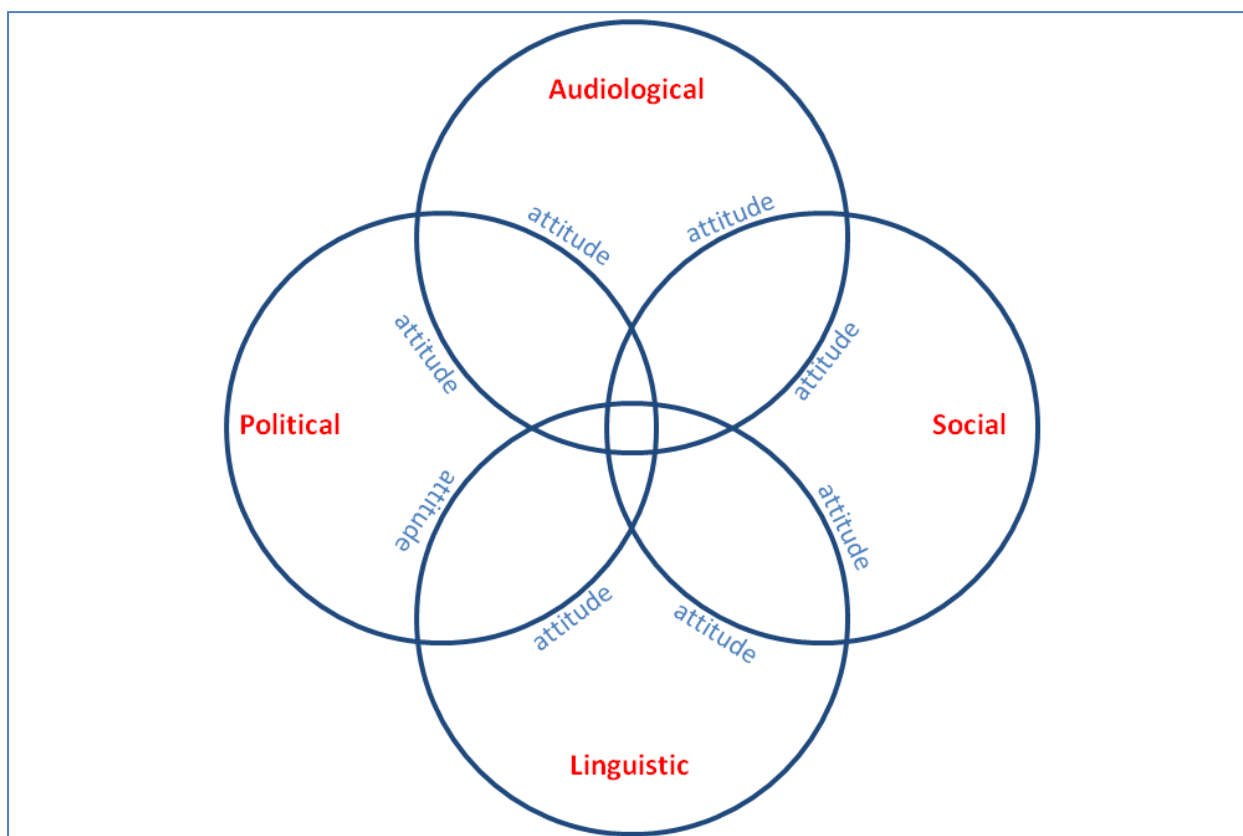


Figure 6: [adapted from] Baker and Cokely's (1980) model of – 'Avenues to membership in the Deaf Communities' (Baker and Cokely, 1980 cited by Brien 1991 in Gregory and Hartley 1991:49-50)

The term 'attitude' (which occurs repeatedly in Fig. 6) is used in conjunction with how outside influences in relation to audiological, political, social and linguistic affect avenues into becoming a member of the Deaf community. The term 'attitude' is utilised in my expanded model in relation to the use of disabilist language.

Baker and Cokely's model also highlights the diversities and influences that exist between the audiological, political, linguistic and social influences which, in turn, impact on the identities of the participants of the three CofPs; *Hearing*, *Hard of Hearing* and *Deaf* communities. An expanded model of Baker and Cokely's (1980) work delineates some of the research findings (see 7.6). Suffice it to say, Baker and Cokely (1980) identify four areas of influence which contribute to 'othering'. These are described below:

1. **Audiological:** this sphere refers to *hearing loss*, *being deaf*, therefore, is by definition an avenue of entry to *Deaf* communities - an entry which is unavailable to *hearing* people. Although, entry is extended to lowercase 'h' *hearing* people (see 2.2, Fig:1 and 7.3, and 7.6).
2. **Political:** this sphere refers to the ability to exert influence on matters which directly affect the *Deaf* community - for example the recognition of British Sign Language (henceforth BSL) and equal rights and linguistic recognition

3. **Linguistic:** this sphere refers to the ability to use and to understand BSL. The fluency of sign language skills does not appear to be related to the level of acceptance. It is an important factor but a positive *Deaf* aware response is important too. This sphere links to the recognition of BSL as a language.
4. **Social:** this sphere refers to the ability to participate satisfactorily in the social functions of the community. By this I mean, being invited to such functions, feeling at ease whilst present, and having friends who are themselves members of the *Deaf* community. This ability may presuppose other factors, such as competence in sign language (see number three above). This sphere links with the Deaf community becoming a linguistic minority.
(Brien 1991 in Gregory and Hartley 1991:49-50 [expanded])

Baker and Cokely (1980) describe the access requirements to *Deaf* membership as meeting at least two of the described avenues and, in this approach, ‘promotes a positive image of *Deaf* people and *Deaf* culture, but only if you are a sign language user’ (Taylor and Darby 2003:16). This separates the *d/Deaf* dichotomy and differentiates between them. Woodward (1997:2) suggests that

[I]dentity marks the ways in which we are the same as others who share that position, and in the ways in which we are different from those who do not. Often, identity is most clearly defined by a difference that is by what it is not. Identities may be marked by polarization, for example in the most extreme cases forms of national or ethnic conflict, and by the marking of inclusion – insiders and outsiders, ‘us’ and ‘them’, [in] this case between *the hearing* and *the deaf* – and even between *the deaf* and *the Deaf*.

(cited in Taylor and Darby 2003:16)

Fearon (2010) notes that the medical model has a direct impact of refuting the premise that *deafness* can be viewed from a conceptual framework of *cultural Deafness*. This perspective is embraced by people who perceive *deafness* to be an *impairment* and a *disability*. Simply put, *d/Deafness* is conceptualized from a personal tragedy viewpoint and asks the question - what can be done to minimize the disabling effects of this infirmity?

[T]he medical model encompasses the idea that an individual affected by hearing impairment may be admired for their accommodation of the infirmity or their courage in struggling with it, but the infirmity itself is generally seen as undesirable... [describing it further] as a ‘personal tragedy’ and asks what can be done to minimize the disabling effects of the infirmity?’
(Princeton online)¹⁵

¹⁵ See Princeton. Online. ‘Models of Deafness’. Available at:
http://www.princeton.edu/~achaney/tmve/wiki100k/docs/Models_of_deafness.html

2.5 Communities of Practice

Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1998:490) traditionally define the term Community of Practice as,

[A]n aggregate of people who come together around mutual engagement in some common endeavour. Ways of doing things, ways of talking [signing] beliefs, values, power relations – in short, practices – emerge in the course of their joint activity around that endeavour. A community of practice is different as a social construct from the traditional notion of community primarily because it is defined simultaneously by its membership and by the practice in which that membership engages. (cited in Sunderland, 2006:8)

Wenger (1998:173-187) delineates the importance of the following elements that unify a CofP. His model is a threefold process which emphasises the ongoing negotiation of meaning - the formation of trajectories and the unfolding of histories of a community of practice. It identifies various influences that contribute to how we view the world. The first influence is the concept of *imagination* – *imagination* is an important component of our experience of the world and our sense of place in it - it can make an immense difference in our experience of identity.¹⁶ The second influence is *mutual engagement* – this ‘involves unconstrained assumptions of relatedness, it can create relations of identity anywhere, throughout history, and in unrestricted numbers.’ Thirdly, the concept of *alignment* is an influence which, as Wenger describes

[...] amplif[ies] our power and our sense of the possible ... it creates a kind of community. Allegiance, creed, a movement, the environment, a nation, a religion, it can also span vast distances, both socially and physically. It will tend to be more focused than imagination [element] since it entails an investment of personal energy, which cannot be split indefinitely. (Wenger 1998:173-187)

The three identified CofPs, the *Hearing*, *Hard of Hearing* and *Deaf* communities identified in this thesis may not all fit with what constitutes a traditional definition of a CofP but the elements

¹⁶ Wenger (1998:176) provides a useful explanation of the importance of *imagination* which draws on: ‘*The Story of Two Stonecutters* who are asked what they are doing – One responds: “I am cutting this stone in a perfectly square shape.” The other responds: “I am building a cathedral.” Both answers are correct and meaningful, but they reflect different relations to the world. The difference between the answers does not imply that one is a better stonecutter than the other, as far as holding the chisel is concerned. At the level of engagement, they may well be doing exactly the same thing. But it does suggest that their experiences of what they are doing and their sense of self in doing it are rather different. This difference is a function of imagination. As a result, they may be learning very different things from the same activity’. This denotes how through belonging to different CofP our use of language and our perceptions will differ, and may well differ greatly – hence the existence of the Medical and Social models of deafness and the existence of the Cultro-linguistic model.

of *imagination, mutual engagement* and *alignment*, as suggested by Wenger (1998), do, in fact, correlate. As Eckert (2006:1)¹⁷ suggests

[E]very community of practice offers a window on the world, the value of this approach relies on the analyst's ability to seek out communities of practice that are particularly salient to the sociolinguistic question being addressed. It is this selection that makes the difference between particularism and a close-up study with far-reaching significance. Explanation for broad patterns is to be found in speakers' experience, understanding, and linguistic development as they engage in life as members of important overarching categories.

This sociolinguistic approach explores the language perception of the identified terms and phrases through the interviewing of representatives of the three CofPs, the *Hearing, Hard of Hearing* and *Deaf* communities.

Bruggemann (2008:41) describes her centre as belonging to the *Hard of Hearing* CofP, this provides an insight into how she feels - and perhaps how others feel - from the same CofP. She writes,

[I] come always wanting to fit in. Yet I also always come wanting to ask questions and not fit in. I arrive doubly hyphenated (hard-of-hearing) – with a lot going on in those multiple hyphenated between spaces. I come, I suppose, thinking between, thinking in another kind of space, between think-deaf and think-hearing: [THINK-EYE]. For the deaf space is a visual space – an eye space – and also too, an I-space. We still have a lot to learn from each “I” and from each “eye”. Perspective (the eye) really matters; the personal (the I) experience really matters as well. This little between-space can be, in fact, rather expansive. It is a space of potent possibilities, contained and yet kaleidoscope in its perspectives. As the late nineteenth-century English novelist George Elliot (Mary Ann Evans) knew, since she was writing a novel named for a male protagonist and using a male pseudonym, perspective really matters.

(cited in Lindgren, 2008:41)

This thesis is undertaken in the belief that representatives of the three CofPs will provide some interesting insights into how they individually and jointly view the use of the above terms and phrases. The next stage of this thesis, Chapter Three will explore further the sociolinguistic means of capturing perception. By this I mean that, I will contextualise the sociolinguistic approaches of *semantic prosody, collocation, lexical priming* and *framing*; providing working examples to explain the importance of their role in capturing language use and perception.

¹⁷ <http://www.stanford.edu/~eckert/PDF/eckert2006.pdf>

To conclude this chapter it is important to consider as Crystal's (2006) stresses the importance of language being a 'social reality', he states that

[T]o study language without reference to change is to place it in a social vacuum. Language cannot exist without people... what other way is there of understanding an earlier period of social history except through the language in which people expressed themselves ... [it] reflects the realities of their time. (Crystal, 2006:90-1)

Austin (1962 in Stubbs 2005:6) corroborates Crystal when he states that 'language and situation are inseparable'. Chapter three will explore further the sociolinguistic means of capturing language perception through the linguistic concepts of *semantic prosody*, *framing*, *lexical collocations* and *priming*.

Chapter Three: Sociolinguistic Means of Capturing Perception

3. Introduction

Hunston and Thompson (1998:38) explain how,

[...] a given word or phrase may occur most frequently in the context of other words or phrases which are predominantly positive or negative in their evaluative orientation [...]. As a result, the given word takes on an association with the positive, or, more usually, the negative, and this association can be exploited by speakers to express evaluative meaning covertly. (cited in Stewart, 2010:13)

Chapter Two identified *d/Deaf* terminology and identity delineating the important role of language, how it has been and is used and perceived. Stubbs (1996:72) concurs with Hunston and Thompson (1998:38), below, as he illustrates the role of collocation to be

[...] words [that] occur in characteristic collocations, which show the association and connotations they have, and therefore the assumptions which they embody.

How we perceive and use language is important because it is influenced by our life experiences - by the CofP to which we belong. This, in turn, colours how we linguistically conduct ourselves. This chapter provides an illustration in respect to how the linguistic concepts of *semantic prosody*, *framing*, *lexical collocations* and *priming*¹⁸ are integral to influencing our linguistic behaviour.

3.1 Semantic Prosody

Stewart (2010:20) explains semantic prosody as being not solely ‘a meaning but ... a “way”... it denotes not only a type of meaning but the ways or processes that give rise to that meaning’. Coffin et al (2004:xxi) describe this concept as ‘the way in which apparently neutral terms come to carry positive or negative associations through regularly occurring in particular collocations’. Gavioli (2005:46) defines semantic prosody as ‘the way in which words and expressions create an aura of meaning capable of affecting words around them’. In addition, Louw (1993) identifies

¹⁸ The following authors introduce the theoretical framework for this research thesis. Coffin et al (2004), Gavioli (2005), Louw (1993), Stewart (2010), Stubbs (1996) and Hunston (2002) all explore the notion of *semantic prosody*, noting that “‘cultural keywords’ ... capture important social and political facts about a community’ (Hunston 2002, 119-20, 141-3). Hunston (2002), Lakoff and Johnson (1999), Matthews (2007) and Stubbs (2005) discuss the concept of *collocation*. The notion of *lexical priming* is introduced by Hoey (2005). Downes (1998), Lakoff (2004) and Tannen (1986) debate the concept of framing.

an element of *semantic prosody* to be '[...] used to hint at a 'hidden meaning' or a speaker's hidden attitude' (cited in Hunston 2002:141).

If a constant negative, oppressive historical reference is perpetuated within the use of words, this may serve to pejorise the given term or phrase - for example, the term *deaf and dumb*. This, in turn, potentially deteriorates any positive sense relation; thus conveying a certain frame within its meaning. This may colour peoples' views within society and within their individual CofP, thereby creating frames of meaning which then potentially influence peoples' language perceptions and use (be this a conscious or unconscious act). Stewart (2010:13) confirms that Channell's editorial (1999:38) by Hunston and Thompson emphasises the belief that 'words 'take on' meaning from their immediate surround[ing]s' and 'reiterate the evaluative quality of semantic prosody'. These qualities of semantic prosody are discussed further in Section 3.1 (as well as subsequent chapters).

Hunston's (2002:119 -121) research is based on a corpus linguistic approach, which explores concordances and collocations. She discusses the semantic prosody of the words *blind* and *deaf*; how they can convey two meanings that cover the literal and metaphorical senses. She asks the question 'where a word has more than one meaning – does the prosody of one meaning carry over to the other?'. Citing the metaphorical phrases of *to turn a blind eye to* and *to turn a deaf ear to*, she goes on to explain that,

[T]hese phrases mean 'do not pay attention to' and construe the blindness and deafness in question as a deliberate avoidance strategy. It could be argued that (e.g. Hunston 1999a) the meaning of *blind* and *deaf* in these phrases constitutes a prosody that influences attitudes to literal blindness and deafness.

Hunston finds in her research 'no evidence' that these metaphorical phrases have this type of influence. However, Hunston (2002:122) felt that the phrase '*fall on deaf ears* – is a metaphorical term which disadvantages a group and can be seen as oppressive.'

Shakespeare used the term *undeaf* in Richard II (II.i.16): '*My death's sad tale may yet undeaf his ear*'. Crystal (2011:113-4) notes that, although 'the word *undeaf* is not used today and was not even used in everyday language in Shakespeare's time, it serves as 'a vivid way of expressing the idea that Richard needs to listen'; an example of 'an avoidance strategy', as noted by Hunston (1999a) above. Shakespeare could have written "*My death's tale may open yet his ear*". *Undeaf* has more dramatic impact, however, as it is impossible to be *undeaf* - if you are deaf, you cannot suddenly become *undeaf*. In this scene, John of Gaunt knows that there is nothing he

can say that will change the king's behaviour. In this instance, the term *undeaf* translates into the modern use of the idiom – *it fell/falls on deaf ears*. The point, here, is that the use of these identified metaphorical terms have historically been used, not only to convey its metaphorical sense, but to also link back to the literal connection with *deafness*.

This thesis explores this notion, employing a qualitative method of semi-informal interviews to ascertain people's perception of the use of these terms and phrases. Hunston's (2002:123- 4, refers to 1999a) research identifies how the word *deaf* is categorised and used. Her research identifies four distinct "use" categories for the word *deaf*, two of which refer to disability positions in society. The following tables cite Hunston's concordance line examples of the four categories of "use" in their context-of-use.

1: *Deaf* people are a minority language group with rights.

Deaf people are a minority language group with rights:		
... one hysterical old teacher are	deaf.	Not since Children of a Lesser
...to staff to improve its service to	deaf	customer's. After consultations
...was valued. Diana spreads word to	deaf;	Princess of Wales PRINCESS
...that this was because they were	deaf	British sign Language users.
[L]yndsay and Alexandra. Sarah who is	deaf,	read a prayer in sign language as

2: *Deafness* is a handicap [disability] that can be overcome through technology.

Deafness is a handicap that can be overcome through technology:		
... sighted people. Even the blind and	deaf	can receive their daily paper usin[g]
[fr]equencies too high for the human ear,	deaf	people are able to understand
... of the police raids. PHONES FOR	DEAF.	A scheme to assist the deaf to

3: *Deafness* is linked to disability, and deaf people are to be pitied.

Deafness is linked to disability, and deaf people are to be pitied:		
[h]usband Abdullah was 60 and blind and	deaf,	but the Serbs had taken him anywa[y]
more so since I realised I was going	deaf,	because my visual perception
[o]wnership to a new commitment to help	deaf	and partially sighted people.
them is Andrew Redman, 19, who is	deaf	and dyslexic and works as a butche[r]
kidneys. Wife Yvonne, 46, who is	deaf,	had already suffered a failed
soldiers claiming they were	deaf	by firing rifles. Defence Minister
that involves phlegm sends me generall[y]	deaf	these days. My hearing is
our greatest fear? Going permanently	deaf.	With which historical figure do
whose daughter was born profoundly	deaf	as a result, according to her
[o]ne-to-one situations, being slightly	deaf.	But he loves company. Purr has
But I'm extremely impatient with the	deaf.	The deaf don't have the same

4: *Deafness* is a simple description.

Deafness is a simple description:				
pound; 30-a-week she earns escorting			deaf	children to school is all going on
are	deaf and dumb.	I get a lot of	deaf	people coming to my concerts. They

Hunston's research (2002:123- 4) identified that the most frequently used category in relation to the term *deaf* was the link to disability, stating that,

[F]rom the above [corpus text examples] it would appear that the 'disability' use is the most frequent, and it is possible to argue that the word *deaf* has this prosody in British society. Such an argument, while having some validity, masks the divergence of discourses that exist, and whose competing existence is arguably more important than the overall comparative frequencies.

Hunston further suggests that the collocates *deaf-mute* and *deaf and dumb* should be deemed as taboo and insulting (see 5.1a, 5.1b and 6.2aD, 6.2aE, 6.2bC, 6.2bD, 6.6.2, 6.6.3, 6.6.4, 7.1.4 and 7.1.6).

3.2 Collocation

Stubbs (1996:72) maintains, as discussed previously in Chapter 2 that

[...] words occur in characteristic collocations, which show the association, and connotations they have, and therefore the assumptions which they embody.

Collocation is a term which is used to describe a set of words that 'specifically or habitually go together – that there is a relationship between the syntactic unit and individual lexical elements' (Matthews 2007: 63). *Chalk and cheese* is a term that denotes polarity and opposites; something that is completely different from the other. To place this term in context it could be said that *Mrs Brown's twins are like chalk and cheese*, meaning that their personalities are not alike at all. *Fish and chips* denote a food association with its frame of reference for a very popular traditional British fare. *Fish and chips* and *chalk and cheese* ordinarily convey a neutral value. This said, intonation and context-of-use could potentially colour their overall meaning. Consider the term *deaf and dumb*, which can be used neutrally in context but can also be used to convey a negative semantic prosody, depending on the intentionality of the speaker. Depending on the individual's CofP, this term may also carry a positive value. Hunston (2002:119) suggests that 'strong collocations become fixed phrases that represent a package of information, such that the assertion behind the phrase is less open to question than it would be in a less fixed expression'

(see Chapters Five and Six). By way of illustration, consider the following example of the use of the term *deaf and dumb*, albeit for humorous effects.

Article 3: *Mail Online*, 16th of November 2007 – Kate Garraway – ‘sexy as a coconut’.

The Strictly Come Dancing judges say she’s ‘as sexy as a coconut’. But to one man Kate Garraway is seduction on legs.

Love may be blind, but love coupled with an inability to tell your waltz from your cha-cha is clearly blind, deaf and dumb.

Derek Draper – aka Mr Kate Garraway – is genuinely baffled. His missus, the clunkiest dancer since Pinocchio? What can they mean? “I honestly don’t see it”, he says of his wife’s lumbering round the Strictly Come Dancing dance floor.

The above article¹⁹ states that, ‘Love may be blind, but love coupled with an *inability* to tell your waltz from your cha-cha is *clearly blind, deaf and dumb*.’ This conveys the implicature that if you cannot tell your ‘cha-cha from your waltz’ you are deficient in your abilities – that you have an inability to see it, hear it or even understand it. The use of the adverb, *clearly*, prior to the terms *blind, deaf and dumb* emphasises the meaning that Kate Garraway’s husband, Derek Draper, does not see, hear or understand what the judges see. It is used as a light-hearted criticism, which nonetheless applies a negative semantic prosody. This could imply that Mr Draper is not intelligent enough to see what the judges see, being ‘genuinely baffled’ because of his love for Garraway.

Stubbs (2005:7) emphasizes that ‘sometimes individual words can trigger assumptions and frames of reference, and words’ can [thus] acquire implications if they are repeatedly co-selected with other words. In reading the above text there is a realisation that we are able to easily process the meaning of words, terms and phrases to which we are introduced. It is programmed into our subconscious, that, at a glance, we recognise and attach meaning to words depending on their context-of-use and, in particular, their immediate co-text. This is not just about our learnt language ability but also about our life experience, knowledge of the world, beliefs and value systems. If words, names, terms and phrases are used repeatedly in the same way, with attached negative or positive concepts, this will perpetuate world and societal perceptions. It can take a lifetime to introduce ameliorated beliefs and attitudes to improve the value and meaning of a word - to ultimately influence a shift in meaning - but the deterioration of word meanings can happen very quickly, especially when promoted by media outlets.

¹⁹ <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/tvshowbiz/article-494582/The-Strictly-Come-Dancing-judges-say-shes-sexy-coconut-But-man-Kate-Garraway-seduction-legs.html#ixzz1wk3LM800>

The richness of language provides language users' with an outlet for 'creativity' and 'expressiveness' but this can potentially have a restrictive effect in how we express ourselves, albeit unintentionally at times. The language choices we are able to make restrict us to the available labels, terms and phrases, which by their very nature potentially categorise. Moore and Carling (1988:13)²⁰ assert that

[...] what we value most in language – creativity, expressiveness [...] – allows us to succeed less well in having others understand us than the largely prefabricated phrases we use to say almost the same thing over and over again. Paradoxically, language is at its best when it matters least; at its worst when it matters most.

Lakoff and Johnson (1999:190) suggest that there is an action, direction and a purpose in a metaphor. The metaphor reaches its destination once the message has been received and clearly understood. The research of this study explores the language perception of representatives of three CofPs to identify whether there are any differences or similarities in how they use these two identified metaphors *to turn a deaf ear* and *it fell on deaf ears*. The purpose of these metaphors is to intentionally ignore someone or something – when this event is fulfilled it has reached its destination. In these metaphors there is also a perceived 'difficulty' which 'impedes' any further 'movement'. The 'blockage' in this case is noted as 'deaf ears' – in this way these metaphors portray a negative semantic prosody in ways that colour the role of 'deaf ears' as an actual 'difficulty', an inability to hear, and a denial in being responsive to a request.

Grigely (2006:227-241) wrote an anthological essay citing fifty-two metaphors that make reference to *blindness* and *deafness*. The examples range in date from 1956, but mainly cite examples from the 1980's, 1990's and into 2000's, the latest citation being 2006. All of the examples appear to perpetuate negative semantic prosodies. There are three examples which particularly stand out in their pejorative treatment of the condition of *deafness* and ultimately *d/Deaf* people themselves. The first example is taken from an article printed in *The Chicago Tribune* by Julia Keller: *The Life He Left Behind*'. It reads,

The Chicago Tribune (11th October, 2002)

[...] and those who wonder how Owens, who loved his daughters and talked about them constantly, could leave them so abruptly, a partial answer may be found in Andrew Solomon's prize-winning book, *The Noonday Demons: An Atlas of Depression* (2001), which supplies an unforgettable portrait of severe depression: 'Becoming depressed is like going blind, the

²⁰ Refer to Hunston and Oakey (2010:18) for Moore and Carling (1988) in Howarth (1996:13).

darkness at first gradual, then encompassing: it is like going deaf, hearing less and less until a terrible silence is all around you.

This example conveys an implicit connection between being *blind* and/or *d/Deaf* and *depression* which, it might be argued, makes being *blind* and *deaf* as negative as being *depressed*: note, for example, that their shared characteristics of ‘darkness’ and ‘silence’ can only be read negatively in this context.

The following headlines come from *The New York Times*,

The New York Times (27th of March 2004) Op-Ed Headline:
How Good Intelligence Falls on Deaf Ears: A Short History of Leaders Who Ignored
Bad News.

The New York Times (19th of June 2001)
Adelle Caravanos cites that [...] the environmental lessons will fall on deaf, uneducated ears.

The first example demonstrates how the concept of intelligence and *falls on deaf ears* are used in polarity, such that ‘falls on deaf ears’ is equated with the action of ignoring and the application of ignorance. The second example also implies a lack of intelligence (see 2.3)

3.3 Lexical Priming

Hoey (2005:8) introduces the concept of lexical priming by suggesting that

[...] words are ‘primed’ for use through our experience with them, so that everything we know about a word, is a product of our encounters with it. This knowledge explains how speakers of a language succeed in being fluent, creative and natural.

Although, language is ever changing and evolving, its semantic prosodies may change to provide multifaceted meanings, which are taken on by people to mean something to them and a different thing to others - especially if our CofP and cultural centre differs from other people.

Burns et al (2001) suggest that,

[W]e all form attitudes and opinions – sometimes positive, sometimes negative – about all levels of language use, whole languages, language varieties, pragmatics and discourse, the meaning and structure of word sentences, pronunciation and accent; these are all subject to opinions and we endow some language forms with prestige, while we stigmatise others.
(Burns et al 2001:181)

As various terms and phrases become established in their use such that frequently used collocates demonstrate a ‘strong’ and ‘habitual’ relationship: these ‘fixed phrases’ come to ‘represent a package of information, such that the assertion behind the phrase is less open to

question’ (Hunston, 2002:119). Thus strong collocation and lexical priming can bring about perpetuating frames of reference. It is important to note Hoey’s (2005: 9) observation at this point: that ‘primings need not be a permanent feature of the word or word sequence’, making a drift in the priming’ possible, for example. This said, some primings do become quite ‘fixed’ within/by their attached frames of reference over time.

Hoey also discusses the phenomenon of ‘collocation’. He maintains that ‘collocation is the property of language whereby two or more words seem to appear frequently in [each] other’s company’ (2005:22). Some words appear to habitually keep each other company: this ‘inevitability’ and ‘consequence’ of action offers a consistent and perpetuated message, although to some this may be a conscious action of language and obvious; but, to others, it may also serve as a subliminal message – meaning that a semantic prosody will still have been delivered. Hoey also claims that there is a possibility that words can be textually primed - ‘a lexical item ... words (or nested combinations)... [can have] not only a positive or negative priming but also a neutral priming’ (2005:116), although this does not happen with every word. For instance, the word *gay* has its origins of meaning rooted in the concept of being happy, as per the song example below. This potentially holds different meanings between CofP members, especially with older generations who still remember the term *gay* to mean *happy*, as illustrated below.

Article 4: Leslie Holmes (1934): *Who’s been polishing the sun?*

*The world’s becoming a gay one
I used to think it a grey one
But I discovered it’s A1, just now
It’s taken on a new meaning
It’s very nice to be seen in
There’s been a little spring-cleaning somehow*

Who’s been polishing the sun
Brightening the sky today?
They must have known just how I like it
Everything’s coming my way
Who’s been teaching all the birds
How to sing a roundelay?
They must have known just how I like it
Everything’s coming my way

Yesterday everything looked anyhow
Then I met someone and look at it now
Who’s been polishing the sun
Rubbing out the clouds of grey?
They must have known just how I like it
Everything’s coming my way

Now the world was getting all rusted
And I was getting disgusted
But everything has been dusted today
The sky's a little serener
The grass a little bit greener

The iconic word *gay* underwent a lexical shift in meaning, when the Gay community claimed it as a descriptive title for themselves – as a means of attaching a positive social image to their community. Cameron (2003) supports this positive reclamation of the term *gay* – a process that has served to promote respectability in their identity within society. Cameron states that

[T]he BBC, for example, uses [the term] 'gay' in news bulletins... 'gay' has come to be regarded as a conservative, middle-of-the-road choice... [it is now a] victory for the in-group term: it has been accepted by important linguistic gatekeepers like the BBC, and consequently it is now the unmarked term in most 'respectable' public discourse

For a more detailed account of this lexical shift, see references cited in the footnote²¹.

With a parallel trajectory in the realms of reclaiming a positive identity in society, the Deaf community have reclaimed terms relating to deafness for positive identity purposes, hence, the use of the uppcase, 'D' Deaf and the BSL signs which identify an individual's strong Deaf identity. Other terms, such as, Deafhood, Deaf pride and Deaf nation have been introduced to define the Deaf community as a linguistic minority and a minority group who have equal rights and equal-standing in society (see chapter 7 and 8).

Milroy and McClenaghan (1996:17) suggest that

Iconicity is a semiotic process that transforms the sign relationship between linguistic features and the social images to which they are linked. Linguistic differences appear to be *iconic* representations of the social contrasts they *index* – as if a linguistic feature somehow depicted or displayed a social group's inherent nature or essence.
(in Irvine 1996:17; italics in original)

Kramsch (1998:10-11) debates the influence of linguistic relativity – 'the theory that languages do affect the thought processes of their users', noting that culture and language are intertwined in that

²¹ Halperin, D.M. (1995) *Saint Foucault: Towards a Gay Hagiography*. Oxford University Press. Specifically page 77 where Halperin notes in relation to *gay identity* that it is a 'state of becoming... [that] choices one makes are present and have their effects on the ensemble of our life... To be *gay* signifies that these choices diffuse themselves across the entire life.' Other authors discuss this lexical shift in more detail see: Cameron, D and Kulick, D. (2003) *Language and Sexuality*. Cambridge University Press, pages 26 and 27.

[C]ulture is a product of socially and historically situated discourse communities that are to a large extent imagined communities, created and shaped by language. A community's language and its material achievements represent a social patrimony and a symbolic capital that serve to perpetuate relationships of power and domination; they distinguish insiders from outsiders.

This research shares this focus on how words habitually keep each other company - the use of collocation. Hence, acquiring a certain lexical priming or semantic prosody, a certain frame - be it positive, neutral or negative - is how people arrive at their perceptions of terms such as *deaf-mute*, *deaf and dumb*, *stone deaf*, *deaf as a post*, *hard of hearing* and *hearing impaired*.

Firth (1950) concurs that within the use of language

[T]here is the element of habit, custom, tradition, the element of the past, and the element of innovation, of the moment, in which the future is being born. When you speak you fuse these elements in verbal creation, the outcome of your language and your personality.
(cited in Downes 1998:233)

3.4 Framing – Our expectations and perceptions

In Chapter One (pages 12-13) I introduce the concept of framing as discussed by Lakoff (2004). This section discusses framing in relation to the identified terms and phrases. Some of the identified terms explored in this thesis are used as a descriptive title, a label; this is a way of creating identity and being categorised in society. Terms such as *deaf-mute*, *deaf and dumb*, *stone deaf*, *deaf as a post*, *hearing impaired* and *hard of hearing* frame a picture that conveys a certain meaning to people and society as a whole. Downes (1998:273) notes that when 'meaningfulness' is added to an 'utterance' there is an introduction of 'possible intentional action'. Variability of terminology can be integrated into the 'framework of norms' and can identify 'language as a social action'. By this I mean that 'people can convey specific messages about identity' and, more generally, they can 'project their social identities' in relation to their 'social face'.

Tannen (1986:91-2) introduces the concept of power within a frame noting that

[...]the power of frames is that they do their work off the record. By letting us know what we say without saying what we mean in so many words, [in this sense the speaker could] renege, perhaps sincerely, by saying, "I didn't mean it that way".

As part of this study, I want to determine whether the terms identified in this thesis - *deaf-mute*, *deaf and dumb*, *deaf as a post*, *stone deaf*, *hard of hearing* and *hearing impaired* - have a hidden

oppressive power due to varying degrees of pejoration in their frames, which in turn have historically produced ‘frames of expectation’.

Identifying the *deaf*-related terms and phrases is the first step; placing them in context constitutes the second phase of the research process (see Chapter Four). It is one thing to renege on what has been said by noting ‘that was not what you meant’, but if one of the above terms are used, including the term – ‘are you deaf?’, it produces a frame of expectation, meaning that the receiver may already have a preconceived idea, which will colour the overall response. Vine (2010:337, in Archer et al 2012:143) highlights that in these instances, ‘it gives the speaker the option of saying they we’re just joking’, when perhaps there were not joking at all.²²

Sunderland (2006) discusses Malinowski’s approach, who observes the importance of context in language use, stating that

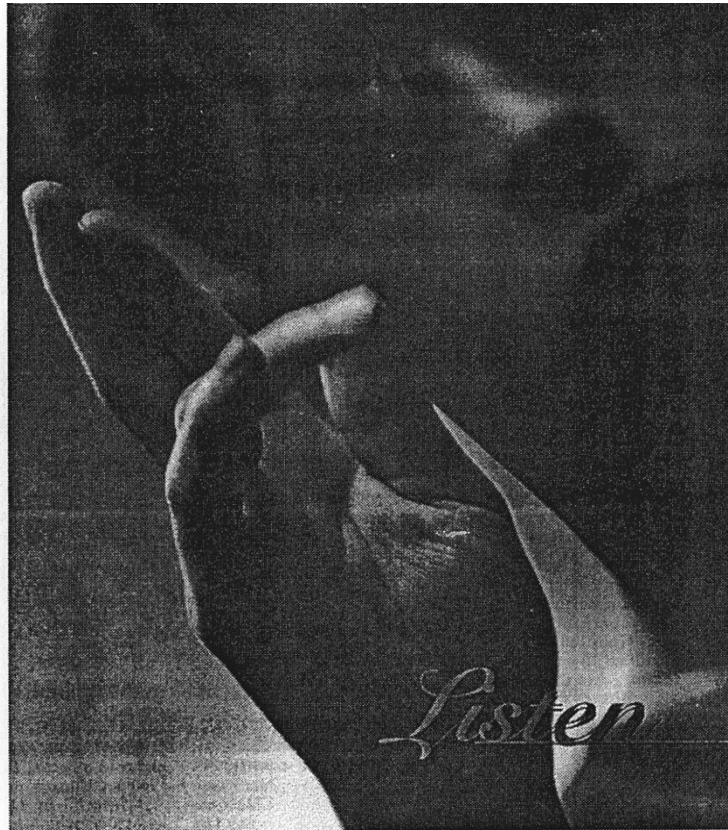
[U]tterance and situation are bound up inextricably with each other and the context of situation is indispensable for the understanding of the words. Exactly as in the reality of spoken [signed] or written languages, a word without linguistic context is a mere figment and stands for nothing by itself, so in the reality of a spoken [signed] living tongue, the utterance has no meaning except in the context of situation. (cited in Sunderland 2006:42 [adapted])

The next stage of this thesis, Chapter Four, introduces the research approaches adopted for this study. The quantitative method introduces the use of corpus linguistic research (see 4.1.1), this uses both BNC and Nexis corpus data to reveal frequency of use and concordance line information. The qualitative approach seeks to provide an insight into the language use and perceptions of the representatives of the three CofPs, the *Hearing*, *Hard of Hearing* and *Deaf* communities (see 4.2 onwards). Together these methods provide a more in-depth approach in ascertaining language perceptions of the identified terms and phrases. I also consider various issues which arose whilst designing and implementing my research approach (see 4.5.2, 4.5.3 and 4.6).

²² For a detailed discussion on impoliteness and politeness see Mey (2001:79-90, 176) and Archer et al (2012: 84-95)

Chapter Four: Approaches adopted in this thesis

4. Introduction



What's in a name?

You can talk without speech. Communicate without words. Listen yet not hear. It's a question of perception. To help us with our perceptions we give things names. Names that convey identity and meaning. So when a company like Friends Provident decides to change its name it's because we ourselves are changing and evolving...in the way we do business and in the business we do.

We've listened to our customers which is why we're offering you a bigger choice of financial products and services along with a commitment to provide exceptional customer service. Friends Provident becoming Friends First is only the first small sign of some big changes, and a commitment to putting you first.

Friends Provident
has become



Friends First

More than just a change of name.

As the metonymic advert of 'Friends First' above suggests, we can talk without speech, communicate without words and listen without hearing. It is a question of perception – a perception which is shaped in part by how we name things, thereby conveying on them an identity and meaning.

This chapter delineates the methodology used to explore the language perceptions of representatives of three different CofPs. Given my research questions, a ‘mixed method of research’²³ appeared to be the best overall approach, thus providing an enriched analysis which encompasses both social and cultural influences. In this respect, Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004:14-15) suggest that

[T]he goal of mixed methods research is not to replace either of these approaches but rather to draw from the strengths and minimize the weaknesses of both in single research studies and across studies. If you visualize a continuum with qualitative research anchored at one pole and quantitative research anchored at another, mixed methods research covers the large set of points in the middle...

4.1 Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches

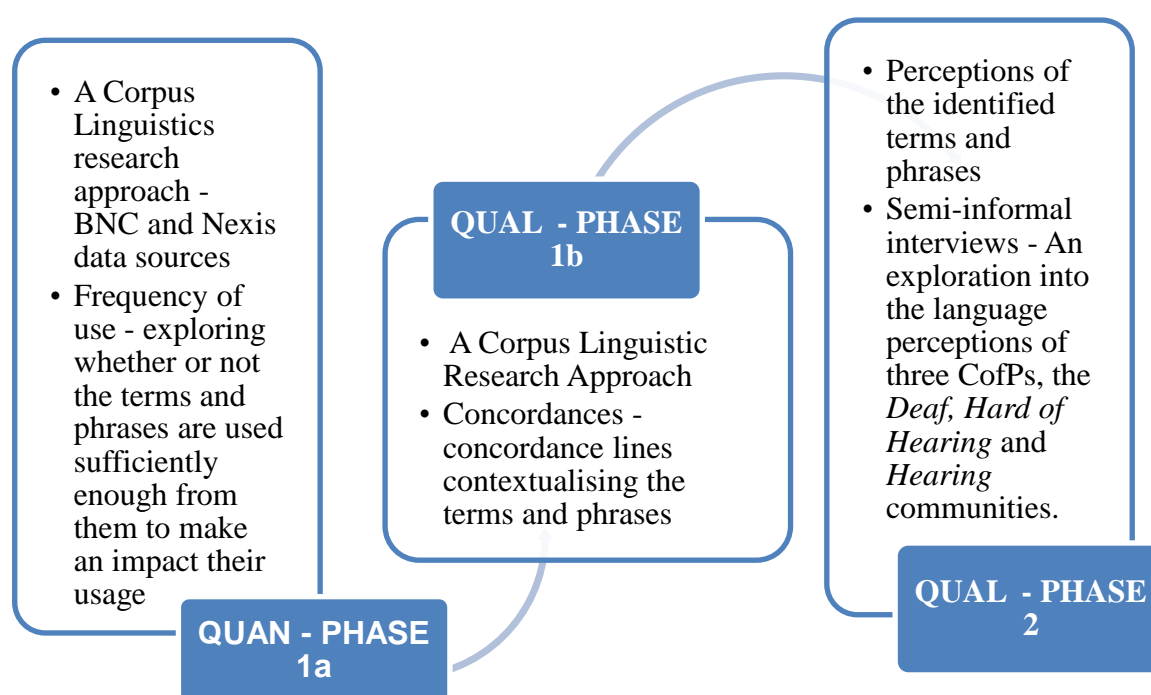


Table 1: Typology of Mixed Methodology Structure – QUAN/QUAL + QUAL

²³ Harden and Thomas (2005:27 in Dornyei 2007:166) suggest that ‘much research in the ‘real world’ does not fit into neat categorizations of ‘qualitative’ and ‘quantitative’ methods.’ Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004 cited in Dornyei 2007:167) concur that ‘today’s research scene is becoming increasingly interdisciplinary and complex, as a result of which many researchers feel the need to complement one method with another.’

The methodology of this thesis combines both qualitative and quantitative approaches as illustrated in Table 1 above (see Dornyei,2007).²⁴ The use of capital letters in the table denotes the rank of importance in this triangulated approach: the aim is to foster ‘a *convergence* of findings and *corroboration* of research results’ via which ‘to further elaborate [and expand] research findings’ (Bryman,2006²⁵in Litosseliti,2010:34-35). By this I mean that each phase of this research process is equally important in their contribution to the research outcomes. It is important to note that during this research study I will draw on data that is “authentic” and data that is elicited. By this I mean data which has been collected from its original source and data that the research process has identified.²⁶

4.1.1. Corpus Linguistic Research – A quantitative and qualitative approach: BNC and Nexis Research – Phase 1a and Phase 1b

Stubbs (2005:12,20) describes a corpus as

[A] large sample of how people have used language. Meanings are invisible and cannot be observed directly, but if we put ‘meaning in use’ and ‘corpus semantics’ together, then we have empirical observational methods which can be used in semantics, since words acquire meanings from their frequent co-occurrence with other words.

My corpus linguistic research approach provides an insight into the statistical frequency of the chosen deaf-related terms and phrases as used in the British National Corpus (henceforth BNC) and Nexis Corpus datasets.

My corpus search of the BNC²⁷ explores the frequency data information as well as identifying wordlists and concordance lines, which are analysed in their context-of-use. Charles (2009:1) suggests that a corpus linguistic approach can tend ‘to decontextualize individual texts’ by focusing on ‘recurrent patternings of small-scale items, such as, words and phrases’. This explains, in part, my employment of Phase 2 of the research process in addition to Phase 1a and 1b in the corpus linguistics approach – as a means of ensuring a holistic and contextualised research study.

²⁴Dornyei (2007:166-7) advocates the use of capital letters to represent ‘priority and increased weight’ and lowercase to indicate ‘a lower priority or weight’, and the plus sign (+) to indicate to a ‘concurrent set of data’.

²⁵For a more detailed discussion on mixed method research see Bryman (2006), ‘Integrating quantitative and qualitative research: how it is done?’, *Qualitative Research*, 6(1), 97-113.

²⁶ See example in Archer et al 2012: 12-15.

²⁷ The BNC is ‘a 100-million-word text corpus of samples of written and spoken English from a wide range of sources. This monolingual, synchronic corpus covers British English of the late 20th Century from a wide variety of genres with the intention that it be a representative sample of spoken and written British English of that time’. (Hoffman et al, 2008:9)

Wildcards such as **deaf*, *turn* a deaf ear*, *deaf**, and *it * on deaf ears* have been utilised in the corpus linguistic approach to gain the best insight into how these terms and phrases are used. In particular, I have investigated whether/the extent to which these terms and phrases are used in a literal or non-literal form, and whether/the extent to which they are descriptive or evaluative in their use. Wordlists were compiled for the words *deaf*, *hearing* and *hard of hearing*, to identify associated collocates. The aim of this aspect of my investigation was to determine whether these terms and phrases were used in everyday language or not. Using this data information as an anchoring-point has helped, in turn, to formulate design considerations as to which of the following terms and phrases were to be included in the semi-informal interviews:

to turn/turned a deaf ear
it fell/falls on deaf ears
are you deaf?
deaf and dumb
deaf as a post
deaf-mute
stone deaf
hearing impaired
hard of hearing

At first, the research into the ‘frequency-of-use’ of the word *deaf* in the identified terms and phrases was confined to just a BNC corpus search. However, because of the limitation of the reference sources used in the BNC Corpus database, a decision was made to widen the corpus sources used to include evidence from the Nexis database, hence focus to the research focus changed to include British popular media. To place the limitation of the BNC corpus usage in context, most of the references were taken predominantly from,

- Brian’s (1990) *The Deaf Advance: A History of the British Deaf Association 1880 -1990*.
- The other sources, albeit used to a lesser degree, are Jackson’s (1990) *Britain’s Deaf Heritage*.
- Sheard et al’s (1992) *Introductory Sociology*.
- Also noted were several fictional references, a conversation and a newspaper article. Although this list is probably not exhaustive, it conveys comprehensive representation of the BNC sources used.

The Nexis database draws from over 618 different sources worldwide - this provides extra information as to whether my identified terms or phrases are used widely or not. Nexis can also

provide an insight into the derivation of the sources under the headings of; publication type, subject discussed, political figure involved, geographical location of use and language used. In addition to the BNC corpus search, researching the frequency-of-use in the Nexis corpus dataset enables the research process to gain a wider perspective in respect to how the identified terms and phrases are used. In doing so, it affords sources that are not specifically related to deafness or deaf history – whereby gleaning a more holistic dataset in respect of the frequency-of-use and contextualisation of the identified terms and phrases. In researching frequency-of-use from this database, it is also worth noting its limitations,

- The same news story is reported often in several other newspapers - copied from its original source story, hence, the accuracy of the frequency-of-use is again moot.
- Data is gathered from other countries – in this case, my research will focus mostly on English examples in the concordance line contextualisation.

4.2 Methods of Sampling – Phase 2

In respect of finding representatives for the semi-informal interview process, I employed the ‘strong convenience’²⁸ sampling method and initially commenced with the recruitment for the *Hearing CofP* interviewees. Having my first selection of representatives, I began by observing their use of language: this in turn provided an interesting research opportunity due to their choice of terminology. In fact, experience of trial and error and the pilot of the first questionnaire led to a broadening of the terms and phrases used in the semi-informal interview – moving to include terms and phrases. This helped create a category of disabilist language, instead of the original pure-focus on the identified terms and phrases of this thesis.

The sampling process transformed into a ‘snowball sampling’ approach, as one person enlisted another person to be interviewed, whereby creating a cascade of volunteers. This approach was invaluable in gaining the needed number of representatives for the three CofPs; especially with the *Hard of Hearing* and *Deaf CofPs*. I was able to gain valuable participants from the *Hard of Hearing CofP* because I am diagnosed as *Hard of Hearing* and have contacts at the Hearing-aid Centre in Preston. I enlisted representatives from the *Deaf CofP* due of my contacts within the Deaf community – this came from my undergraduate degree in English Language, Linguistics and Deaf Studies. I interviewed 10 representatives from the *Hearing CofP*, 10 from the *Hard of*

²⁸ Deacon et al (2007:56) clarifies the term ‘a strong convenience sample’. This is a method I adopted in my research, by using this approach I mean, as Deacon et al state that ‘the ‘strong’ version of convenience sampling is where sampling focuses around natural clusters of social groups and individuals, who seem to present unexpected but potentially interesting opportunities for research’.

Hearing CofP and 11 from the *Deaf* CofP – in doing so I decided to not use interview 27, hence the numbering for the interviewees in Chapter 6 is noted 21 to 31.

Deacon (2010:55) notes that

[...]this method is widely used in research into either closed or informal social groupings, where the social knowledge and personal recommendations of the initial contacts are invaluable in opening up and mapping tight social networks.

This approach worked especially well with the *Deaf* Community because it avoided recruitment using online Face Book/ networking databases. I preferred to adopt a less formal approach at the risk of offending interested participants because I did not want to recruit people and then turn-them-away. The sample number was set at ten people from each CofP because any more than ten or twelve participants does not provide any more useful data unless the research study is applied to a large sample of people. The sample number was set at ten people from each CofP. Deacon (2010:45) concurs that

[Q]ualitative studies are less concerned with generating an *extensive* perspective than providing *intensive* insights into complex human and social phenomena in specific circumstances... this means that qualitative research tends to use small samples which are generated more informally and organically than those typically used in quantitative research.

4.3 Qualitative Sampling – Definitions

The cornerstone of this research is the interviewing of representatives of three different CofPs – that of the *Hearing*, *Hard of Hearing* and *Deaf* communities. The definitions of the three CofPs set the variable criteria for eligible participants. For the purpose of this research I chose to adopt a Community of Practice approach because it is a way of differentiating potentially diverse uses and perceptions of the identified terms and phrases; especially in employing the sociolinguistic approaches of *semantic prosody*, *framing*, *collocation*, *lexical priming*. The three CofPs are identified below:

A: Hearing CofP

The *Hearing* CofP is defined by two criteria for the purpose of the interview process, this is that:

1. Their communication mode is solely the use of speech – aural/oral skills.
2. The representatives concerned, to the best of my knowledge, also had no contact with the *Hard of Hearing* and *Deaf* CofPs.

B: Hard of Hearing CofP

The *Hard of Hearing* CofP is defined by their communication mode, but with a diagnosed hearing loss (with the option to use hearing-aids). They are bi-modal in the sense that they use their voice and lip-read. Their commonality is that they do not consider themselves fully part of the *Hearing* community nor *Deaf* community. They may or may not wear hearing-aids to enhance their hearing range and spoken communication ability, but all respondents lip-read to varying degrees, even if this is just in a noisy environment.

C: Deaf CofP

The *Deaf* CofP is defined by the participants' dominant use of British Sign Language as their first or preferred language, with the option to use hearing-aids and be bi-modal (see Glossary of Terms pages 201-2). This CofP is identified by its membership of the *Deaf* Community. Their beliefs and value systems are based on how they are affiliated to the *Deaf* Community. Their main commonality is that they consider themselves a signing member of the *Deaf* Community (see Chapter Two).

4.4 Use of Interpreters in Interviewing the Deaf CofP

Careful thought and attention was given to the process of interviewing the *Deaf* community and to the involvement of the BSL/English Interpreter. It was important to promote a consistent approach with respect to using the same interpreter as much as possible, given that some *Deaf* people prefer to work with their own interpreter. It is also important to be aware of cultural considerations whilst interpreting, taking into account who the person is or the audience are, their language and cultural requirements. Cauderelie (2013)²⁹ informs us that

[A]n interpreter you make you make a lot of decisions and that's why audience design is so important because you've got to suss-out [this element] straightaway [even] if you've got one deaf person or a hundred deaf people. If you're doing a voice-over [for] one hearing person or a hundred hearing people – you know what level of knowledge they [potentially] have already and what level of understanding they're bringing to the interpretation themselves and the level of interpretation they are going to require. If you go to a conference and do not know your audience then you could say that it is interpreting between two languages. (pc.Cauderelie,10/09/2012)

Cokely (2001:4) defines the skill of *interpretation* noting that it is

²⁹ Gail Cauderelie is a BSL/English Interpreter at the University of Central Lancashire. She is also the interpreter who acted as translator/interpreter for the majority of the semi-informal interviews for the *Deaf* CofP.

[...] the competent and coherent use of one naturally evolved language to express the meanings and intentions conveyed in another naturally evolved language for the purpose of negotiating an opportunity for a successful communicative interaction in real time within a triad involving two principal individuals.

Important considerations included the notion that:

- Promoting the same interpreter helps with the fluency and timings of the interview and a positive rapport and trust with the representatives of the *Deaf* community.
- The interview will be translated in the same style and manner, thereby promoting a consistent approach.
- The interpreter will explain the idiomatic terms -as required - because the interviewee may not have come across the terms and phrases in question before. This may be due to the potential difference in exposure to the English language depending on their upbringing and education.

Many of the terms and phrases used in the interview are not translated literally in Sign Language. Cokely (2001:3) informs us that

[E]xperienced, competent interpreters realize that idioms are a situation in which there is no disputing the fact that the surface form must be discarded in favour of the meaning of the idiom.

- The interpreter will also be culturally aware and sign appropriately if any of the terms and phrases to explain to the participants. As Cokely (2001:35) states

[I]nterpreters have learned a unique set of ‘culturally-rich-realities’ from the Deaf community, including how the Deaf community identifies itself and how it identifies other groups. This knowledge has allowed or led interpreters to attach unique semantic senses to existing English Lexical items, semantic senses that are reinforced through interactions with other interpreters. Thus, these English lexical items become polysemous for interpreters.

Cauderelir (pc.10/09/2012) concurs with Cokely noting that interpreting ‘is not just about the language it is about people and their culture’.

- All of the above considerations contribute to the length of the interview process; especially because more time is required to explain the terms and phrases.

The acquisition of English is a different process when British Sign Language is your first language. Sign Language is a visual language, a language of the eye. This helps to explain why George Veditz (1912, cited in Padden and Humphries 2005:2) describes ‘himself and his community as “first, last, and for all time, people of the eye”’. Non-literal language is not used

widely within sign language. This said, there are metaphorical terms which are translated through multi-channel signs (see 7.1) check.

Another consideration is whether the interviewee was born into a *Deaf* family or a *Hearing* family. If born into a *Deaf* family this means that your exposure to English terms and phrases may be greatly reduced because Sign language is then predominantly your first language. In interviewing the *Deaf* Community the respondents chosen are from *Deaf* family backgrounds and from *hearing* family backgrounds – there are a couple who are bi-modal and interviewed using their voices. The education system that a *d/Deaf* person went through is also a factor in the exposure to the terms and phrases investigated in this thesis.

4.5 Qualitative Approach – Phase 2 – The use of Semi-informal Interviews

As Table 1 (page 50) highlights, the second phase of my study employs a qualitative approach. In particular, Phase 2 is designed to reveal interlocutors' perceptions of the identified terms or phrases and includes; semi-informal interviews of the three CofPs, the *Hearing*, *Hard of Hearing* and *Deaf* communities.

4.5.1 Semi-informal Interview - Format One

Format One of the semi-informal interview formed a starting point in the design process of the interview. This format has undergone a design process which began as an interview, to be presented on paper, and then developed into a PowerPoint presentation. The PowerPoint approach provided a visual reinforcement to the interview structure. By this, I mean that the interview process met the communication requirements of the representatives from all the three CofPs: *Deaf*, *Hard of Hearing* and *Hearing* Communities.

The first draft of the semi-informal interview comprised of five sections. It asked five questions with reference to the following ten terms and phrases:

deaf and dumb
to turn a deaf ear
deaf as an adder
stone deaf
it fell on deaf ears
deaf as a post
he/she was deaf to
are you deaf?
deaf-mute
tone deaf

- Section One of the first draft interview asked the interlocutors, “where are you likely to see or hear the following terms or phrases?”
- Section Two asked participants, “would you expect the following terms to be used mostly to refer to actual deafness as a descriptive term or do you imagine it would be used more as a metaphorical term or both?”, in relation to the identified list of terms and phrases.

For the purpose of this research question the terms *descriptive* and *metaphorical* were defined as follows:

Descriptive denotes that the identified terms or phrases are being used as a label that defines actual deafness or a process or event that describes actual deafness. *For example:* “My friend’s dog is a chocolate Labrador” – the label in this case illustrated by the actual type of dog, a chocolate Labrador.

Metaphorical denotes that the identified terms or phrases are being used figuratively. These terms and phrases may take on an extended meaning that moves away from the literal surface meaning. *For example:* “It’s raining cats and dogs out there today!!” The meaning here is taken to denote heavy rain but we are not literally seeing cats and dogs falling from the skies above.

Section Three asked respondents to identify with the term *evaluative* and answer the following question with this term in mind, and in reference to the identified terms and phrases: “can any of the following terms or phrases be used evaluatively?”

Participants were informed that, for the purpose of this research question, the definition of *evaluative* is that the identified terms and phrases may provide an extra insight or indication of the writer’s or speaker’s world view, opinion, attitudes and belief system to a real or potential situation. *For example:*

- a. “How was your exam?” enquired Stewart to Elaine... “Oh, it was a piece of cake, thanks to my extra private lessons.” In this case, the term ‘piece of cake’ means that it was easy and is used in an evaluative way.
- b. ‘A Touch Of Dutch Courage: Heitinga is relishing the rough and tumble in England, he tells Paul Wilson’ (The Observer, Sunday 04 December 2011:8). This football star from Holland is hailed evaluatively as a brave player with a play on words connected with his place of birth.

Section Four asked the participants to consider the definitions of *positive*, *negative* and *neutral* in relation to how they perceived the identified terms and phrases. With these definitions in mind the respondents were asked, “would you expect the following terms to be used in a positive, negative or neutral way?”. For the purpose of the research study, these terms are defined as:

Positive: the identified terms and phrases reinforce and affirm favourable world views or opinions of actual deafness.

Negative: the identified terms and phrases cast an unfavourable or detrimental world view or opinions of actual deafness.

Neutral: the identified terms and phrases command an impartial, non-committal and unbiased worldview or opinion of actual deafness.

Section Five then asked respondents to read eight articles and comment on how they thought the word *deaf* is used within them. The chosen articles contextualise some of the identified terms and phrases.

4.5.2 Evaluation and Pilot of Semi-informal Interview – Format One

On reflection, Format One appeared to be too long and laborious for the interviewees: simply put, it was too optimistic to expect an interviewee to provide a consistent, useful and interested response. This format obviously did not meet the needs of the representatives of each CofP. This was especially true of the *Deaf* and *Hard of Hearing* participants, due to the amount of reading needed. British Sign Language has a different sentence structure to English - so when a *Deaf* person reads, they translate written English into their signing structure to sign it to themselves. As such, the definitions used were too complex. Having identified these issues, Format Two was designed so as to be less complicated in its terminology, and to employ a visual PowerPoint presentation designed to offer a more user-friendly method: thereby helping to ensure a quicker, more enjoyable and approachable interview.

4.5.3 Evaluation and Pilot of Semi-informal Interview - Format Two

Having piloted Format Two of the semi-informal interview an important issue was highlighted – that of conveying my research questions in such a way that covered the communication needs of the representatives from all three of the CofPs. By this I mean that, by setting this variable as a constant, it created the same interview environment in order to obtain consistency in interview technique and response. A visual recorded method affords the interviewer further opportunity to replay the interview footage and transcribe easily. This ‘multi-modal lens’ enabled me to see what otherwise goes unnoticed - often the interviewer can glean a further insight into the meaning of a response from viewing the interviewee’s response, rather than solely through transcript. This is an important factor because gesture, facial expression, and intonation are often missed in written form. Dornyei (2007:139) substantiates the mode of video recording data confirming that,

[I]f we want to use the content of a semi-structured or unstructured interview as research data, we need to record it – taking notes is simply not enough as we are unlikely to be able to catch all the details of the nuances of personal meaning, furthermore note-taking disrupts the interviewing process.

A consideration whilst using this recording method is that potential interviewees could feel that this is an intrusive approach and feel uncomfortable whilst being interviewed. I was careful to discuss this element in advance with all participants. Some potential interview candidates, especially from the *Hearing* and *Hard of Hearing* Communities, voiced a dislike about being filmed on camera. In particular, they felt self-conscious in having their opinions officially and permanently recorded. It made what I had described as a semi-informal interview process into a formal process for some. Unfortunately, this was a factor which made two potential candidates decline the invitation to be part of my research project.

In deciding to record the interviews the design of the semi-informal interview became a visual process too. The basis of the interview became a set of questions delivered via a PowerPoint presentation (see appendix:6). Considerations were made in the use of the 'randomised' word list and the use of three separate interview formats (see appendix:4) so that the interviews could be rotated. This provided a Likert-style approach and a test and retest method which helped to gain a non-acquiescent set of responses. All the terms and phrases were displayed on a white blank PowerPoint slide in '**bold capital letters**' – this was used for a uniformed approach; and the capital 'D' for *Deaf* in this case does not differentiate between audiologically *deaf* and *Deaf* cultural identity. A blank space was inserted between all the terms and phrases to provide time to think, reflect, and possibly add in extra thoughts and/or clear the mind before considering the next term or phrase. This design is considered important inclusion of the interview format because it supports the employed 'open-response format'. It also affords time for a productive discussion of each term or phrase, in turn, provides time for the representative to clear their mind of the previous word and discussion and promotes a consistent approach, which is employed throughout the interview process to encourage a productive response from the representative. Deacon (2008:387) suggests that

[T]his freedom can produce richer, more sensitive insights into the views and activities of respondents and remove the danger of undermining rapport by inappropriately restricting the nature of people's answers.

The sections were reduced to four sections and complicated terminology³⁰ was removed. This time, the questions were clearly understood but the overall comment was that the interview articles remained too long. The final chosen articles, consequently, are shorter – as a means of helping to ensure that they make more of an immediate impact. The last section of the interview process included video clips to watch as a means of eliciting opinions. The three different approaches within the semi-informal interview format afford the opportunity to gain insights into the participants' language perceptions by contextualizing specific terms and phrases in a written form, in published print and in DVD footage.

As previously discussed, careful considerations have been made in addressing the differing communication needs of representations of all the three CofPs, as discussed previously in using a digital recording methodology approach. I was particularly mindful in making sure that all suggested and considered alterations were made to the final draft of the semi-informal interview. These included:

- Using smiley face representations to reinforce positive, neutral and negative answers in section two.
- Using sign language to reinforce the terms *positive*, *neutral* and *negative*.
- Using hard copies of the news articles so that people could read them independently of the power-point screen (this also covers people who also have issues with their vision, and dyslexia).
- The writing-down of questions and discourse reinforced the interview process for the respondents from the *Hard of Hearing* CofP, this approach was employed due to the one-to-one discussion being difficult, at times.
- The video footage having the facility for playing subtitles with and without sound. In some instances, the sound interfered with the use of hearing-aids. There is often a delay in television subtitling - in the NHS (National Health Service) video, the subtitles were not properly aligned (out-of-sync).
- The term *are you deaf?* being removed from the word list due to this phrase not appearing in written form in the Phase 1a of the corpus linguistic research.

³⁰ The terms which were deemed as complicated were *descriptive*, *evaluative*, and *metaphorical* –as described in 4.5.1 of this chapter.

4.5.4 Format Three of the Semi-informal Interview (Final Draft)

The second pilot exercise of the semi-informal interview - Format Two - concluded the alterations to what constitutes the final draft of the implemented semi-informal interview Format Three (see appendix 6)

Section One asks the question - “where would you come across the following terms or phrases?

This question is used to ascertain whether the terms and phrases are used - or known of - by the representatives of the three CofPs. In this section, there are twenty-one terms and phrases to consider:

emotional cripple
blind as a bat
deaf and dumb
legless
visually impaired
to turn a deaf ear
lame duck
to turn a blind eye
hearing impaired
blind faith
stone deaf
physically impaired
blind drunk
spastic
it fell on deaf ears
blind obedience
lame excuse
mentally impaired
deaf as a post
blind-side
deaf-mute

These terms include the identified terms and phrases, as introduced in Chapter One. The additional terms and phrases include phrases which couple with the words *blind*, *impairment*, and words, such as, *lame* and *spastic*, which refer to a physical difficulty. These were introduced to explore a general view of how the representatives of the three CofPs perceive potential disabilist language. This approach is important because it created an overall discussion about disabilist language as opposed to the specific terms and phrases under investigation in this thesis.

The above list was randomly reproduced three times - advocating the random selection format to avoid any discussion about the terms and phrases with interviewees between

interviews – if such an overlap did occur. The random selection format of the identified terms and phrases affords consideration for the possibility of familiarity with the data between Section One and Section Two. It also considers how to maintain the validity of the interview and avoid any ‘acquiescent’ responses from the interviewees because the questions had a different focus and the words had been randomised to create a new question even though the same terms and phrases are being addressed (Ping 2005:1 in Rasinger 2008:63).

Section Two of the semi-informal interview asks the participants to consider first the following definitions:

- *Positive* - The identified terms or phrases reinforce and affirm *favourable* worldviews or opinions of actual conditions, such as being blind, deaf or having a physical difficulty.
- *Neutral* - The identified terms or phrases command an *impartial, non-committal* and *unbiased* worldview or opinion of actual conditions, such as having a physical difficulty, being deaf or blind.
- *Negative* - The identified terms or phrases cast an *unfavourable* or *detrimental* worldview or opinion of actual conditions such as deafness, blindness or having a physical difficulty.

These definitions alternate the mention of the ‘actual conditions’ to encourage interviewees to consider and interpret each of the above definitions separately, and to avoid assumptions. These definitions have been expanded from Format One of the semi-informal interview (see 4.4.1, 6.6.2/3/4 and 7.2).

Section Two poses the question – “In your view, would the following terms and phrases be used *positively, neutrally* or *negatively*?”. This was asked to ascertain the value of the sense relations attached to the identified terms and phrases, and to be able to compare responses between Section One and Two and of the representatives of the three CofPs.

In asking a different question about the same set of terms and phrases it promotes a balanced answer system. With this in mind, I elicited a situation to gain valid and viable results. I hoped that the interviewee would feel relaxed enough to answer as honestly as they wished - without too much thought into how they ‘think’ I, as the interviewer, would want them to answer. This approach employs a test and retest method which promotes a correlation in the respondents’ answers, thus promoting a reliability in the interview results. Rasinger (2008:172) asserts that this is a good tool to explore reliability in responses and ‘that a reliable measure should give us similar results if applied at two different points in time’. In this case, the timescale of ‘different points in time’ is between questions. Analysis of the other terms and phrases used in the semi-

informal interviews would create a future research paper in relation to language change and perception within the frame of disabilist language.

Section Three of the semi-informal interview moves away from the *word list* to explore six different pieces of literature which include some of the terms or phrases, cited in the aforementioned word list. In this section, I asked the representatives to read the following articles and, in turn, discuss their first reaction or impression of them. I worked to elicit such views as a means of assessing any potential differences of opinion when certain terms and phrases were presented in print.

The articles selected for the semi-informal interview format were chosen because they represent different reading genres:

1. Daily Mirror Newspaper
2. Children's Liturgy Educational Sheet
3. Online Political News Article
- 4a. Headline from a local newspaper - *Washington Times* (North East England).
- 4b. Full article of the Headline noted above in 4a.
5. A Newspaper article about elderly deafness.

Section Four of the semi-informal interview included footage from three television genres, the news, a soap opera and a sitcom. This section asks the participants, "with the terms and phrases in mind do the following clips make an impact on you?".

1. News footage from the BBC News which reports on NHS Care of Elderly People
2. The terms (2a) *turn a blind eye* and (2b) *are you deaf as well as daft* – as used in the soap opera *Coronation Street*.³¹
3. Two Clips taken from an American Situational Comedy (henceforth sitcom) programme called *My Name is Earl*.

Section Four explores the participants' first impression of each of the above video clips. The aim of this question is to place the use of some of the identified terms and phrases in the context of mainstream media broadcasting, that is, of television, news and DVD; all readily accessible by the public. Here, I am particularly seeking to explore whether or not the participants' reactions increased in intensity as the use of the identified terms were contextualised. To elicit a definite

³¹ Permission was granted to use the clips from *Coronation Street* – see Appendix 5.1

response the additional closed-question of whether the footage from ‘My Name is Earl’ is the right side or wrong side of comedy was posed before the participants viewed the DVD clips.³²

4.5.5 Final question of the Interview

The final question asks:

“One more thing ... has any of the words or phrases in this PowerPoint made a lasting negative or positive impact on you? If your answer is “yes”, tell me

- (i) Which were negative or positive for you
- (ii) [and]Why this is the case...”

This style of concluding an interview encourages the participants to reflect on their own contributions throughout the interview, thus providing an opportunity for them to say whether the interview had impacted them in any way. Dornyei (2007:138) confirms that it is good practice to include a ‘final closing question [because] this permits the interviewee to have the final say.’ The interview was thus concluded following this opportunity for discussion.

4.6 Considerations for the Semi-informal Interviews

Litosseliti (2010:170)³³ informs us that

[W]ithin projects in linguistics and in disciplines where language plays an important role, interviews and focus groups have been used ... in relation to a range of different topics: these include people’s attitudes towards language in general; people’s attitudes towards particular language aspects, [such as,] specific language use, people’s perceptions of a linguistic experience, ... audiences’ perception of media messages ... and people’s discursive construction of self and identity.

During the interviews I employed an open-response format - Deacon (2007:83) concurs with this approach, not least because this encourages the ‘respondents to articulate their answers in their own terms; there is [then] no danger of undermining rapport by imposing restricted response frameworks’. This said, Section Two asks more of a closed question option as it specifically asks the respondents to identify the value of the identified terms and phrases, be it *positive*, *neutral* or *negative*. In this case, it remains an unrestricted question because the interlocutors’ can discuss why they may opt to choose more than one value. Although the ‘ranking format’ of *positive*, *neutral* and *negative* is necessary to determine attitudes and beliefs, this approach may colour the interview as a whole because the terms and phrases can evoke some strong emotions - but

³² The question of whether the footage from ‘My Name is Earl’ is the right or wrong side of comedy was asked because it may be perceived by some people to be humorous but there may be some who could be offended.

³³ Litosseliti (2003:18) refers to her framework that lists the merits of interviews.

these, in turn, often lead to questions and discussion. Indeed, in my case, this brought about some interesting, insightful stories pertaining to how each CofP perceive some of the identified terms, and phrases (see Chapter 6).

On occasions, during Phase 2 of my research the interviews became lengthy due to the subject of discussion. This occurred within *Deaf* CofP interviews, especially due to the sensitivity of some of the terms and phrases and the involvement of an Interpreter, who diligently and meticulously interpreted the interview for the participant.

Having identified the approaches adopted for the research in this chapter, the next section, Chapter Five introduces Phase 1a and Phase 1b of my research process. More specifically, it explores, situates and contextualises the data collated from the corpus linguistic data search of the identified terms and phrases *to turn a deaf ear, it fell on deaf ears, are you deaf? deaf and dumb, stone deaf, deaf as a post, deaf-mute, hard of hearing* and *hearing impaired* within the British National Corpus (henceforth BNC) and the Nexis databases.

Chapter Five: Corpus Linguistic (BNC and Nexis) Data and Analysis

5 Introduction: BNC and Nexis Research

This chapter addresses Phase 1a and Phase 1b of the research study - by identifying the ‘string[s] of words’ required to begin the corpus study. As discussed previously in Chapter Four (Table 1 page 50), Phase 1 of the research process investigates the following terms and phrases:

Deaf-mute /deaf mute
Deaf and dumb
Stone deaf
Deaf as a post
Are you deaf?
Is deaf to....
Fall/fell/fallen on deaf ears
To turn/turn a deaf ear
Hard of Hearing
Hearing Impaired

The frequency of use and examples of variation in sense relations of these terms and phrases are sourced from the BNC and Nexis databases. The reason for using both corpus databases is because the BNC database was not as representative a corpus (in reference to the above terms and phrases) as first commonly believed. This will become clear as each of the terms and phrases are discussed below.

As Archer (2009:7) notes Davies (2009:66), who both advocate that word frequency

‘[...] needs interpretation through contextualisation’ and that it should ‘be analyzed not just as the overall frequency of a given word or lemma in a certain corpus, but rather, as the frequency of words in a wide range of related contexts’.

The above identified ‘string of words’ are explored first as wordlists, after which chosen concordance lines are drawn upon as a means of placing the identified terms and phrases, taken from the wordlist, in their context-of-use. My subsequent use of semi-informal interviews and email correspondence will provide, in turn, a situational means of gleaning both the contextual evidence regarding the potential diversity of language perception, and the potential diversity of the perception of others. This is important because, as Archer et al (2012:7) note,

[T]he linguistic context is limited to what is grammatically expressed in the utterance and cannot explain linguistic phenomena [that] can only be understood with reference to the speaker or hearer. We therefore need a broader definition of context which goes beyond the linguistic context (or co-text) and includes the speaker, the hearer and other situational variables which are relevant for the interpretation of the utterances.

In essence, viewing context solely on ‘what is grammatically expressed in the utterance’ does not account for people’s perception of what is read. A ‘broader definition of context’ includes the reader’s perception and assumptions which are drawn upon from their CofPs. By this I mean, their life experiences, beliefs, attitudes, and folklore/Deaflore³⁴ all of which colour peoples’ language perceptions and use. With this in mind, Hunston (2002) highlights the importance of corpus linguistic techniques when ‘identif[ing] repetition’ and ‘identif[ing] implicit meaning’ in texts. She asserts, further, that language perception is dependent upon,

[....] assumptions about the influence upon people and on society of repetitions of ways of saying things [and] about the power of language whose meaning is covert. It seems apparent, then, that corpora are a very useful tool for the critical linguist, because they identify repetitions, and can be used to identify implicit meaning. Because data in corpora are de-contextualised, the researcher is encouraged to spell out the steps that lie between what is observed and the interpretations placed on those observations. (Hunston 2002:123)

Corpus linguistic techniques such as wordlists, wildcards, concordances, collocation and colligation can be effective corpus linguistic techniques in the process of identifying wordlists, their frequency of use and repetition. Concordances, in particular, are used to explore the frequency of use of node words or phrases, and assist in contextualising the identified terms. A corpus linguistic approach, then, is an important identification process in which ‘context-of-use’ is a pivotal element in this study.

With the above in mind, the following corpus research of the BNC and Nexis databases discuss the frequency of use of all the identified terms and phrases and places these in context within the chosen concordance line examples.

5.1 BNC and Nexis findings

5.1a Deaf-mute / deaf mute (n., adj)

Fearon (2010) notes that the term *deaf mute* originates c.1374 from the word *mewet*, meaning *silent*: from Old French, *muet*, Latin, *mutus*, *silent*, *dumb*. *Mute* is described as an inability to verbally communicate with another person. Someone described as *deaf-mute*, then, is ‘*silent, speechless, dumb, unspeaking, wordless, voiceless*’ (Oxford Thesaurus of English 2006:579). Over time the word *deaf* became coupled with the word *mute* to simply describe two conditions;

³⁴ For a more detailed discussion about Folklore/Deaflore see Smith and Sutton-Spence (2007:18-43) *What is the Deaflore of the British Deaf Community*. Deaf Worlds, 2007, vol 23 (1).

deafness and *an inability to speak*. These two descriptive words were linked together, thereby coining the collocate *deaf-mute/deaf mute*. Historically, these terms allude to *deaf* people as being managed by a hearing society who thought that *deaf* people's futures were best supervised in the realms of medical cure and oral education (see Chapter Two).

5.1a.1 BNC findings - deaf-mute/ deaf mute

The corpus research on the frequency of use of the term *deaf-mute/deaf mute* notes very few incidences of usage in either of its forms. In fact, this is a term which seems to be used infrequently, as the BNC notes the total incidences of *deaf-mute/deaf mute* to be 18 occurrences. To place this usage in context, most of the references were taken predominantly from Brian's (1990) *The Deaf Advance: A History of the British Deaf Association 1880 -1990*. The other sources, albeit used to a lesser degree, are Jackson's (1990) *Britain's Deaf Heritage*, and Sheard et al's (1992) *Introductory Sociology*. Also noted were two fictional references; a conversation and a newspaper article. These examples are captured by the miscellaneous and academic categories, as illustrated in Table 2 below.

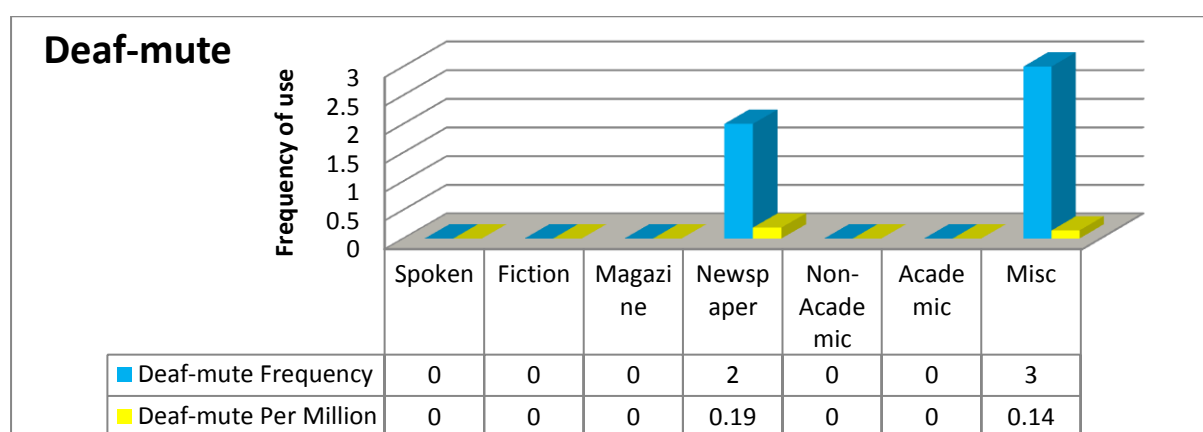


Table 2: BNC frequency results - Deaf-mute

I include both constructs *deaf-mute* and *deaf mute* above and below as a means of providing a more comprehensive insight into the frequency of use of this term.

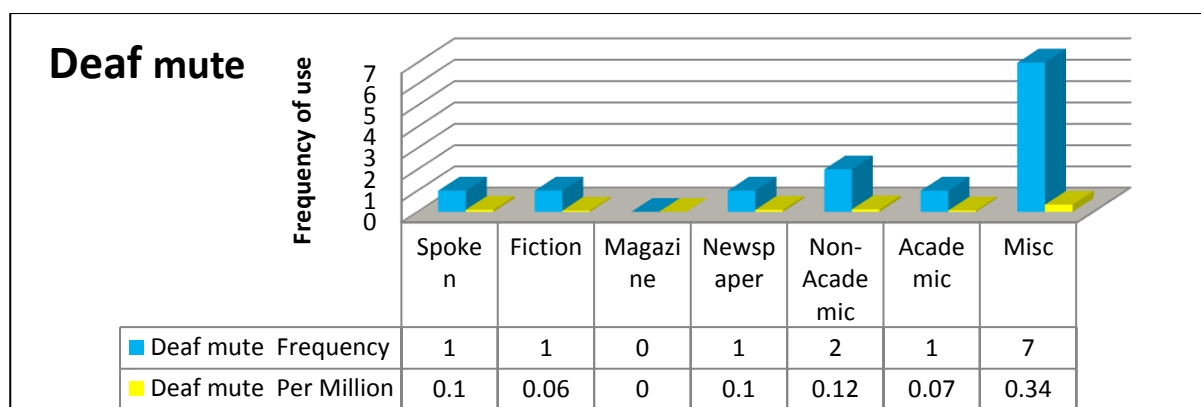


Table 3: BNC frequency results - Deaf mute

The following concordance lines for these examples reveal the term *deaf-mute* being used as a descriptive label for *deafness*.

1	...on his father's advice sought admission to the National	Deaf Mute	College in America for a degree course.
2	...Brown, who had spurned his advances. The tallest	deaf mute	in 1880 was a Hugh McIntyre, a Scotsman living in Buenos.
3	... referred to the deaf and dumb including himself as	"deaf mute"	or simply "deaf". His own proposal name...
4	... introduce Aaron, a convert from another faith, a	deaf mute	, who can only communicate in sign language.

Table 4: BNC Concordance line examples – Deaf mute

These findings note a use of this term as a title - for instance, '*the National Deaf Mute College*' (see example 1). It is also used as a label to describe *deafness* and identity (see examples 2 through 4). The BNC example 3 above talks about Francis Maginn, a Pioneer of Rights and Education of Deaf People (1861-1918), who referred to *the deaf and dumb* (including himself) as "*deaf mute*" or simply "*deaf*". He disliked the expression *deaf and dumb*, noting that this was 'obsolete and objectionable already one hundred years ago'. His proposal for an alternative name for *The British Deaf and Dumb Association* removed the word *dumb* so that it became *The National Society for the Deaf*. This reveals that the term *deaf-mute/deaf mute* was recommended to be replaced by the word *Deaf* even in 1890. Instead, the terms *deaf mute* and *Deaf* were superseded by the term *deaf and dumb*.

Richardson (2007:91-92)³⁵ discusses 'news agendas and new values' informing us that

[N]ews values are the criteria employed by journalists to measure and therefore judge the 'newsworthiness' of events. Whether produced by the *Sun* or the *Financial Times*, the news needs to be interesting or appealing to the target audience. News values are meant to be the distillation of what an identified audience is interested in reading or watching, or the 'ground rules' for deciding what is merely an 'event' and what is news.

³⁵For a more detailed discussion on news values, 'newsworthiness' see Richardson, J.E. (2007: 91-95) *Analysing Newspapers: An Approach from Critical Discourse Analysis*. On pages 91-92 he notes Galtung and Ruge's framework of 12 news values, number twelve being, 'negativity ('if it bleeds it leads!').

Hence, the concordance line example below illustrates a ‘newsworthy’ story that has the ‘news values’ - a ‘news hook’³⁶ to capture people’s interest sufficiently for the news article to be read. This news story uses the word *Deaf* in the title and the term *deaf mute* as a ‘news hook’.

Deaf drink driver gets message!

A DEAF mute [who] was stopped by police for erratic driving told a court yesterday that he’d been chatting to his passenger in sign language. But he was banned for a year.

Obviously, the drink-driving offense is a serious crime for anyone, but would the title of the article and article itself read quite the same if the word *Deaf* was substituted for the word *Hearing* - ‘Hearing drink driver gets message!’ - and A *DEAF mute* was replaced with ‘A *HEARING* man was stopped by police...’? This is a clear example of ‘othering’ – something I will pick-up-on in 7.5.1-4 and 7.6 (see also 2.3).

5.1a.2 Nexis findings – Deaf-mute/Deaf mute

The Nexis research for the term *deaf-mute/deaf mute* was taken from a sample of 999 incidences - from a dataset of over 3,000 results. These findings reveal a world-wide use of this term: within my chosen sample a consistent use of this term was evident from 1970 to present day. Examples are prevalent from newspaper and media news articles, with an incidence of 982 out of the sample set of 999. Other sources noted include 10 incidences in magazines and journals, and 7 blogs. This research again revealed the term *deaf-mute* to be used as a label/descriptor. Its use was reported in 643 varying subject areas, which indicate that people use this term ‘simply’ to describe *d/Deaf* people. The most frequent use is seen in India, China, USA, Australia and France, with other countries using it to a lesser degree. In the sample explored, it is reported 992 times in English, with seven reports in Spanish and one in German.

5.1b Deaf and dumb (adj, n.)

Fearon (2010) notes that the term *deaf and dumb* was first used around 1837. This term is associated with the terms *deaf-muteness* or *deaf-mutism* as a condition of a person being *deaf* and *dumb* or *deaf and not speaking*. As Corker (1998:60) asserts, the ‘common association of *dumb* and *mute* establishe[d] and reinforced phonocentric links between audition and linguistic competence.’ The notion of a lack of ‘linguistic competence’ led, in turn, to the concept of

³⁶ <http://www.npaction.org/article/articleview/756>

dumb, especially coupled with the word *deaf*, to broaden its sense relations to signify *unintelligence*, *stupidity* and *ignorance*.

Its Gothic, Old Norse and Old English origins highlight a person who was ‘silent, unable to speak, mute and speechless’ (*Online Etymology Dictionary*, 2005) and notes that *dumb* has links with the German language, in which *dumb* can also mean *stupid*. In England from c.1323, this term was used to mean *foolish* and *ignorant*. These links serve historically to give the word *deaf* a negative semantic prosody when repeatedly coupled with *dumb*. In more recent times, the *Collins English Dictionary* (2006:201) documents ‘*deaf and dumb* (adj) as being an *offensive* term – ‘unable to hear or speak.’ For some *Deaf* people, the term *deaf and dumb* holds an internal sentiment of acceptability: by this I mean that it is a way of signalling an emphasis of someone’s *Deaf* identity. To them it is not an *offensive* term: rather, it signifies a *Deaf Pride* and recognition of their cultural and linguistic identity. I address this further in 5.1a, 5.1b and 6.2aD, 6.2aE, 6.2bC, 6.2bD, 6.6.2, 6.6.3, 6.6.4, 7.1.4 and 7.1.6 – also see 3.1.

5.1b.1 BNC findings - Deaf and Dumb

The frequency results for *deaf and dumb* reveal that this term is used mainly in non-academic and miscellaneous sources. This said, the main source in the BNC database is drawn from an academic reference book on the history of deaf people in Britain.³⁷

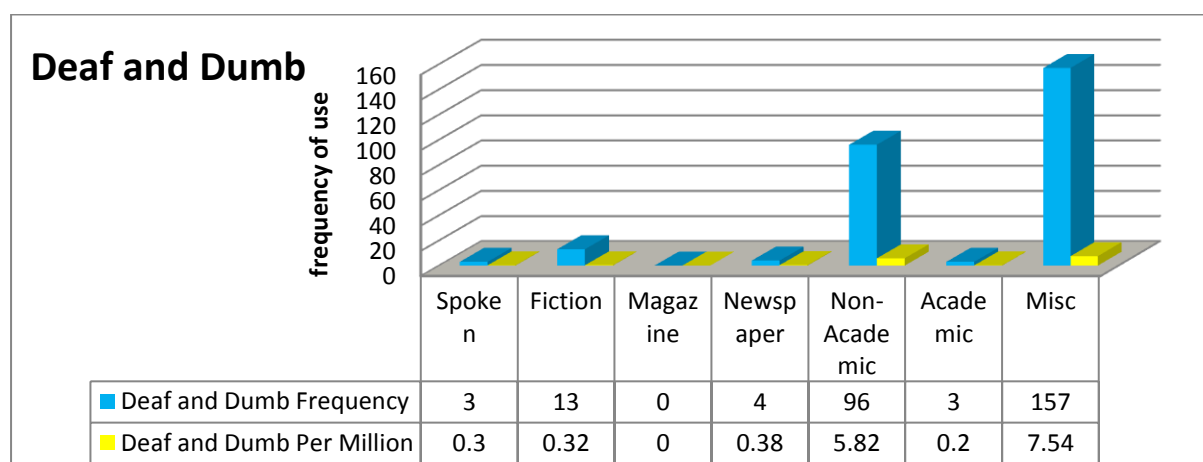


Table 5: BNC frequency results - Deaf and Dumb

The following BNC concordance line examples illustrate that the term *deaf and dumb* is used as a descriptor, as seen in Table 6 - example 2; which once again confirms that *deafness* can be seen as a ‘simple description’ (Hunston 2002:123). Descriptors are not necessarily used in a

³⁷ Grant, B. (1990) *The Deaf Advance: A History of The British Deaf Association*. Edinburgh: The Pentland Press Limited.

negative way, as noted in Table 6 - example 4, which informs us that ‘it was as a “voice” on behalf of the *deaf and dumb* that the BDDA excelled from its inception.’ The reference to ‘the “voice” on behalf of *the deaf and dumb*’, at that time constituted not only the organisation but also the Hearing CofP speaking on behalf of *the deaf and dumb* (now referred to as the Deaf community, see 7.6), thereby signalling a covert message of an inability to communicate for themselves and as being a people in need of help. This message is also conveyed in Table 6 - example 1, which denotes an unfortunate, fated lifestyle for *deaf and dumb* adults and children, of the eighteenth century.

1	... a hearing world. This was the fate of	deaf and dumb	adults and children until towards the end of the eighteenth century.
2	James Paul saw the National	Deaf and Dumb	Society as the principal backers of establishing a network of missions for the deaf...
3	Today, clue to Danielle Alison James, A	DEAF and dumb	teenager whose drawings of witchcraft have stunned France ...
4	It was as a “voice” on behalf of the	deaf and dumb	that the BDDA excelled from its inception.
5	Without hearing, it was thought, neither language or intellect could be acquired, which explains why the	deaf and dumb	were ignored by educators and shunned by hearing ...

Table 6: BNC Concordance line examples – Deaf and dumb

Example 5 illustrates a recognition of a derogatory connection that if a person was unable to hear there was a comparison drawn between unintelligence and an ability to communicate effectively with someone who is *deaf* (Brian 1990). This attitude promotes the disability/medical model of deafness: I address this perception further in Chapters-Six-through-Eight (see 7.5.1-4 and 7.6 , also see Graph 1, page 28).

5.1b.2 Nexis findings - Deaf and Dumb

The Nexis research revealed over 3,000 results for the phrase *deaf and dumb*. From a sample dataset of 996 the frequency of use ranges from 1981 to 2012. Its geographical use appears to be world-wide, but it is predominantly reported as a term used in Asia, India, the Middle East, Africa and, to a degree, the United Kingdom. There is a very low incidence of use in the USA and North America. This term is predominantly used as a descriptor, even though this is an outmoded way of determining *deafness* (7.5.4, page 183).

5.1c Stone deaf (adj, n)

The *Collins English Dictionary* (1992:151) documented the term *stone deaf* as a separate entry to the word *deaf*, noting it to mean ‘to be completely deaf’. In more, recent years, this term has been noted under the word *deaf* - to mean *hard of hearing, unhearing, stone deaf, with impaired*

hearing, deafened, profoundly deaf. Stone deaf is still used in both literal and metaphorical senses. In a recent television episode of *QI*³⁸ - the presenter Stephen Fry addresses the topic of inequality with his guests. Visiting contestant, Sandi Toksvig, used *stone deaf* in a literal sense noting that ‘the person in the boxing ring would not have been able to hear the bell because they were *stone deaf*’. BNC and Nexis research findings further delineate how this term is used.

5.1c.1 BNC findings - Stone deaf

The BNC revealed that the term *stone deaf* is seldom used, occurring 8 times within different genres; those of spoken, fiction, newspapers and miscellaneous sources.

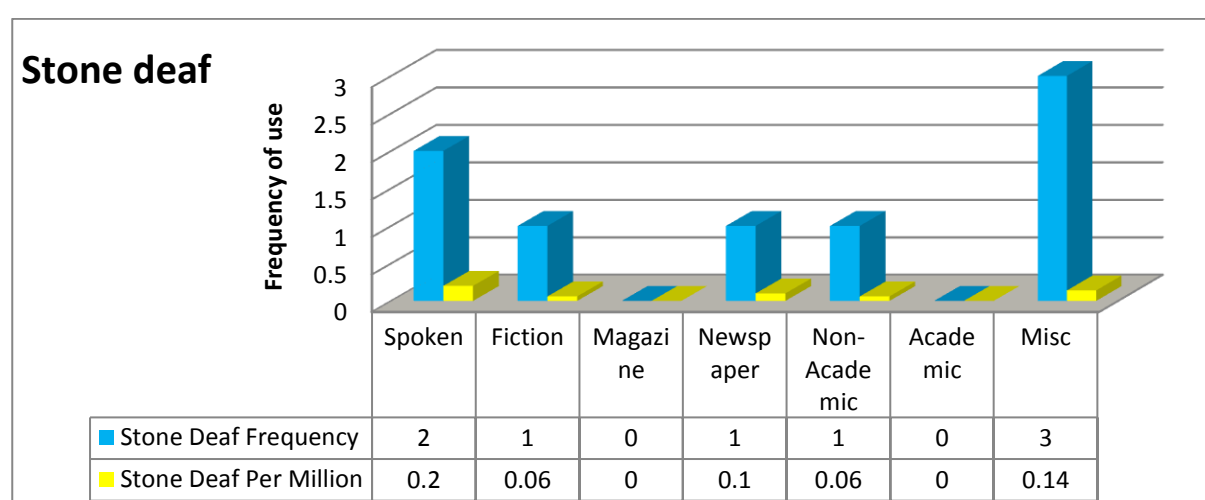


Table 7: BNC frequency results - Stone deaf

Its usage appears to be predominantly noted as a descriptive label denoting the condition of being *deaf*, or a level of *deafness*, as illustrated in the following examples.

1	Princess of Wales (later Queen Alexandra) who was	stone deaf	and who used finger-spelling as well as lip-reading to communicate...
2	Farrer, a white haired man in his fifties was	stone deaf	but fortunately could lip read, whilst his wife was a really...
3	...to stop the spread of cancer. She had been	stone deaf	, as well, "can't anything be done for her hearing.
4	...talks loud? Why was that? My father was	stone deaf	. I think all my family talks loud. Well you're...
5	...was convinced his career was over when he suddenly went	stone deaf	... hours before playing the biggest gig of his career. Thunder...

Table 8: BNC concordance line examples - Stone deaf

³⁸ This example was taken from an episode of *QI* - XL, (8/16) - 6th of April 2013 - 'Inequality'.

Table 8, examples 1 and 2 highlight that, the communication modes of finger-spelling and lip-reading are connected with being *d/Deaf*. Table 8 - example 4 reveals a suggestion that if you are *deaf* you may talk louder and others may need to raise their voices for them to be heard by you. Table 8 - example 3 notes a medical viewpoint of being *deaf*, asking whether something could ‘be done to help her hearing’. Table 8 - example 5 illustrates that *deafness* could end a person’s career because it is perceived as an essential sense for effective functioning in life. This coverage conveys messages that the reader digests and depending on which centre you view life from this could potentially colour your perception of *deafness* (2.5). This said, it may also perpetuate frames of reference of how *d/Deaf* people communicate, of its reference of disability and the need to be cured, and that of a potential life-altering consequence that could occur if you lose your hearing (cf. Hunston’s (2002:122), research which, identifies a category that points to ‘*deafness* [being] linked to disability and [that] *deaf* people are to be pitied’).

The following example is taken from a BNC concordance line, sourced from Catherine Cookson’s (1993:181-320) *The House of Women*, and constitutes an example of a metaphorical use of the term, *stone deaf*.

‘How many hours a day has he been practising since he left school?’, “At least six”. “Enough to drive anybody mad. But then, May thinks the sun shines out of him. She must be **stone deaf**. For me self, I could never see what’s in guitar playing.’

This portrays a view that even though the mother in this instance is not literally *deaf* she is metaphorically *deaf*, for how else would she be able to put up with all the noise that has been going on for the last six years. The use of this phrase may also convey a covert message to some people that actually being *deaf* would have been a positive thing due to May gaining some sort of peace during the guitar-practicing years.

5.1c.2 Nexis findings - Stone deaf

The Nexis research reveals 1,399 occurrences of *stone deaf* dating from 1978 to 2012. It is predominantly reported in newspapers with 1,135 hits - the remaining examples are noted in media publications. The Nexis data of *stone deaf* definitely reveals its role as a descriptor, denoting a level of *deafness*. However, this term is also used in a metaphorical sense to mean *not listening*, or *ignoring someone or something*. This has the same sense relation as *to turn a deaf ear*, and *is deaf to*, as seen in the Nexis concordance line examples below. The adjective, *stone*, is used to emphasise a level of hearing loss with a more profound and definite action.

These results indicate that this phrase is still used, currently.

1	... must have been	stone deaf	not to hear...
2	... 13, turned a	Stone deaf	ear on Monday to...
3	... criticism were launched at the	stone deaf	government ...
4	...	Stone deaf	to the volley of guffaws and ...

Table 9: Nexis Concordance line examples – Stone deaf

This example is taken from a media publication - *CNN Wire* (US), May 18th, 2012 ³⁹.

House Republicans don't allow vote forcing administration to stick to Afghanistan timetable

A frustrated Jones said he would try again to attach the language to the defence- spending bill when it comes up. "This is supposed to be the people's House -- that means *we listen to the people*. How about listening to the 72% of those who say get out of Afghanistan? We're **stone deaf** for whatever reason I don't understand."

The significance of this example is that it is insightful in its metaphorical use of *deafness* as a descriptor to describe the action of *not listening to* and *not engaging in discussions* regarding the defence-spending bill for Afghanistan. It emphasises that the 72% are not *listening* and *choosing to ignore the situation*... 'for whatever reason [Jones does not] understand', hence, the use of the term *stone deaf*.

Often the full meaning of the language used is only understandable when placed in its full context with the accompaniment of body language and gesture. Archer et al (2012:107) discuss the fact, for example, that

[T]he gestures that speakers use are wide-ranging in their nature. Some are unconscious movements that accompany speech, others are more iconic, such as using the fingers to indicate quotation marks in the air ("...") or holding the thumb and little finger to the ear to signal the telephone. Some are more conventionalized gestures such as the thumbs-up sign to indicate 'positive' or 'good' or 'success'. Other gestures are intended to offend. These vary considerably across cultures and are thus the source of potential misunderstandings.

This goes someway to explain why the effective interpretation of gestures performed alongside speech can be difficult.

³⁹ Even though this is an American news example taken from my Nexis research, I included this news article because it was available on the 'world-wide-web'. News publications are accessed world-wide on the internet and therefore, the language used within them could potentially colour people's perceptions.

5.1d Deaf as a post (idiom, adj)

Deaf as a post is described as a term which means that someone is ‘quite deaf, or so inattentive as not to hear what is said. One might as well speak to a doorpost or a log of wood’ (*Brewer’s Dictionary of Phrase and Fable*, 2001:61). This term can be uttered in a humorous way or in an insulting manner, similar to the use of ‘are you deaf?’ (see Section 5.1e).

5.1d.1 BNC findings - Deaf as a post

The BNC findings illustrate that *deaf as a post* is used very infrequently (i.e. twice) and only in the speech datasets.

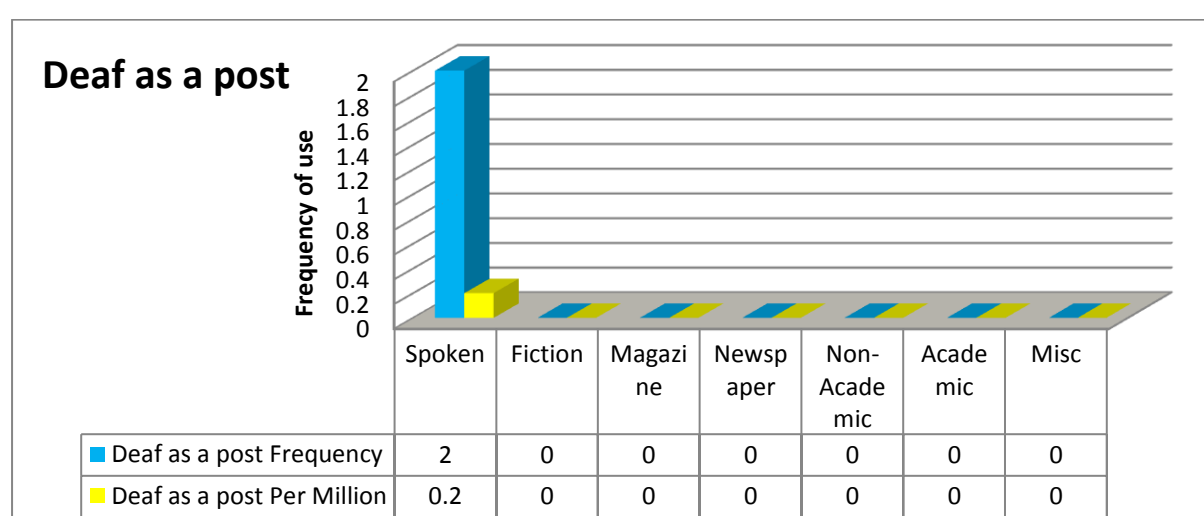


Table 10: BNC frequency results - Deaf as a post

The following concordance line examples demonstrate the use of *deaf as a post* as a descriptor in conversation. These examples refer literally to someone who is perhaps elderly, late deafened and who has become noticeably *deaf* to people who know them.

1	Mhm. Well, she used to sort of keep shop for him, she was	deaf as a post!	Really? Yeah, she was deaf as a post
2	...Yeah. You can't hear a thing, deaf as the,	deaf as a post,	And doesn't wear anything, I feel it's

Table 11: BNC concordance examples - deaf as a post

5.1.2 Nexis findings - Deaf as a post

On researching *deaf as a post* in the Nexis database, it revealed 373 hits. This term is used in relation to a hearing loss of some type, in texts dating from 1987 to 2012. It is reported mostly in Newspapers – 311 – although other occurrences appear in media publications and in one scientific material. It is used more frequently in North America, USA, United Kingdom, and Australia and New Zealand. Notably it is not used in India and China.

The example below is from *The Morning Star Newspaper* (September 22nd, 2003), and illustrates a metaphorical use of the phrase *deaf as a post*. This provides the reader with two messages conveying that, to some people, Margaret Thatcher, in her political office, did not listen in the political arena; being *deaf as a post* and *unresponsive*. It also indirectly alludes to the unresponsiveness of the Government. The covert message here, then, is that a profound *deafness* could be linked with the concept of *unresponsiveness*.

It certainly hasn't escaped our notice in the office that this is at least as unresponsive a government to public pressure as Margaret Thatcher's, and she was as politically ***deaf as a post***.

More recently in *The Daily Telegraph* (London, June 11th, 2009), this phrase was used metaphorically (again in the political arena); this time to describe the ineffectual effect of Gordon Brown as 'the unwanted' Prime Minister. The media outlet was using this term strategically to insult how he conducts himself and to stress that he literally chooses not to listen.

The unwanted Prime Minister paid no attention to Mr Cameron. Mr Brown is ***deaf as a post*** when it suits him, which nowadays is more or less all the time.

In the above instance, *The Daily Telegraph* flouts Grice's maxim of 'Quality' because Brown is not literally *deaf*: rather this is a subjective comment.

The Observer (England, January 24th, 2010), in an article regarding the game of Cricket,⁴⁰ illustrates a literal and metaphorical use of the terms *deaf as a post* and *blind as a bat*.

The chairman of the England and Wales Cricket Board, Giles Clarke, was particularly critical. "We're better off with the old system," he said. "If the umpire is as ***deaf as a post*** and as ***blind as a bat***, at least it's the same for both sides. We have to realise that we have created, in rather a hurry, a system which attacks one of the basic principles of the game - and it is a damned dangerous thing".

This example uses the phrases *deaf as a post* and *blind as a bat* in perhaps a potentially insulting manner because its implicature is that the cricket umpire is totally *deaf* and *blind*. It suggests that the umpire has no idea, in respect to how to manage the new system, rendering him unresponsive because he is left completely 'in the dark'. *Deaf as a post* and *blind as a bat* also constitute a potential play on words, in relation to the actual game of cricket. More specifically, the covert message could be that *deaf as a post*, in this instance, refers to a *cricket post* and *blind as a bat* refers to the *cricket bat* – both inanimate objects that give no response, thereby being impervious to the 'dangerous situation'. By this I mean that these terms are potentially not just employed to describe total *deafness* and total *blindness*; the implicature

⁴⁰ The Observer (England) 2010, January 24th. *Cricket: The loneliness of the long-distance umpire: England's series in South Africa showed that the ICC's elite officials have never been less appreciated or more abused. Jamie Jackson reports on a crisis of cricketing confidence.*

being that - to not hear and not see what is a ‘dangerous situation’ brings into play a potential lack of intelligence and understanding. This example flouts Grice’s maxims of *relation* and *manner*.

5.1e Are you deaf? (adjectival phrase)

This is a turn of phrase which can be used as an utterance in several ways, namely, as an enquiry of literal *deafness*, as a light-hearted jocular exchange, or an accusation of not listening or ignoring someone or something. The latter is used, in particular, as a way of signalling annoyance or frustration with someone who is deemed not to be listening. This can be construed as an act of impoliteness/rudeness (see 5.1e.1 below). Paying attention to the intonation used as well as the context-of-use is paramount if one is to fully comprehend how this phrase is being conveyed and/or might be perceived.

5.1e.1 BNC findings - Are you deaf?

The frequency of use of *are you deaf?* in written text appeared as a very low incidence – with only 9 occurrences, as illustrated in Table 12, below:

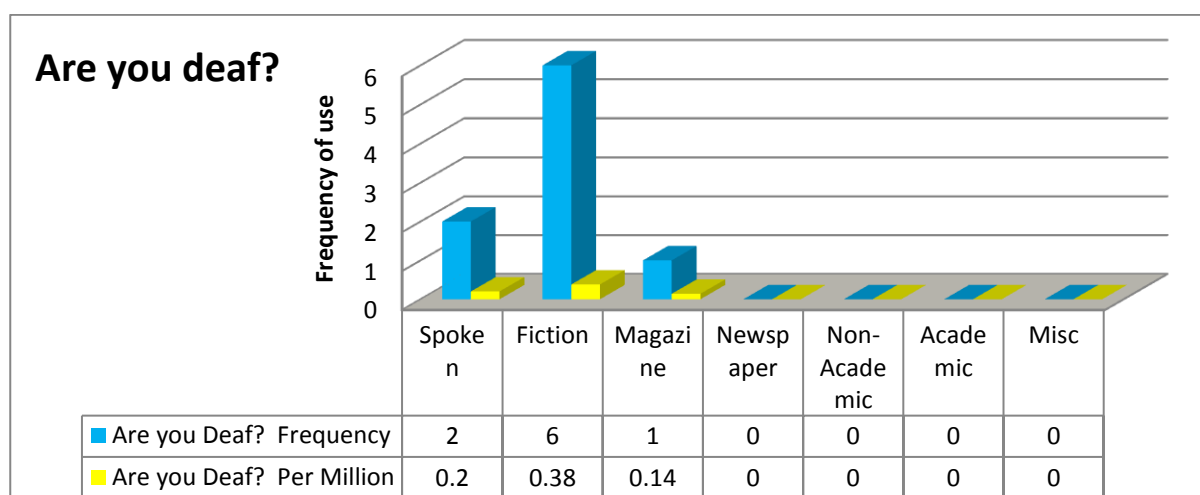


Table 12: BNC frequency results - Are you deaf?

The BNC research reveals that this phrase presents itself through mostly spoken language, fiction and drama. Indeed, this phrase appeared so infrequently in general written form that I took the decision not to include the phrase, *are you deaf?*, in the semi-informal interviews.

1	GUIL: Are you stupid? ROS: Pardon? GUIL:	Are you deaf?	ROS: Did you speak? GUIL: (Admonishing)
2	... : When? ROS: What? GUIL:	Are you deaf?	ROS: Am I dead? GUIL: Yes or No...
3	Cyrus, rising slowly to his feet.	Are you deaf,	blind, witless? Do you expect me to send food...

Table 13: BNC concordance line examples - Are you deaf?

The language in Example 1, above, is used in a fictional drama, Stoppard's (1986: 9-93) *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead*. It reveals a sense relation between being *stupid* and *deaf*. The character, Ros, almost dismisses the direction of the jibes, 'are you stupid?' and 'are you deaf?', by responding with 'pardon' and 'did you speak?'. In this instance, there are two issues to address in this conversational exchange. Guil in saying are you deaf? flouts Grice's maxim of 'Manner' because he is not orderly and is using non-literal language to gain a response from Ros. Her response is one of dismissal - 'pardon?' and – defensiveness - 'are you stupid?'. This links to FTA's, in that 'are you stupid?' constitutes an attack on Ros's positive face: that is, her desire or want to be approved of.

Example 2 is taken from the same fictional drama and uses *deafness* as a play on words, questioning what has been heard. Example 3 also creates a connection – this time between the words, *deaf*, *blind*, and *witless*. These three words connected together depict an unseeing, unhearing, unintelligent, clueless stupidity. These examples create pathos as to how the word *deaf* is used within literature which, in turn, perpetuates a frame of reference that evokes a picture of low cognitive ability and disability (see Graph1 page 28, Chapters 7 and 8).

The phrase, *are you deaf?* is used frequently in fictional literature stressing the action of not listening, for example, Marian Keyes (2009:374), in her book *The Brightest Star in the Sky*⁴¹, makes use of the phrase "*have you gone deaf?*". The character, Lydia, who uses this phrase, is portrayed as a colourful, wilful, strong-minded and vocal, female taxi driver. The conversation takes place between her and her new boyfriend, Conall, who is just dropping her off at her flat after one of their first dates. This particular date had not gone well and Conall is trying to cajole her into seeing him again.

“Conall: ‘So what’ll we do for our next date?’

Lydia: ‘Bye.’

Conall: ‘Describe your perfect night.’

Lydia: ‘**Have you gone deaf?**’

Conall: ‘Go on. Your perfect night.’”

⁴¹ Keyes, M (2009) *The Brightest Star in the Sky*. Penguin Books. ‘One address. Four Flats. A houseful of hearts. And the extraordinary visitor about to change their lives for ever... 66 Star Street.’

⁴¹ Grice (1975:47, cited in Archer et al, 2012:51) explains how ‘Our talk exchanges do not normally consist of a succession of disconnected remarks, and would not be rational if they did. They are characteristically, to some degree at least, cooperative efforts; and in each participant recognizes in them, to some extent, a common purpose or set of purposes, or at least a mutually accepted direction... We might then formulate a rough general principle which participants will be expected (*ceteris paribus*) to observe, viz.’ Make your contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged. One might label this the Cooperative Principle.’

Here, Lydia is intimating that Conall is not listening to her, that he *only hears what he wants to hear*, and hence is deliberately ignoring her implicit ‘no’. This portrays impatience with someone who will not listen to an original message; someone who, in this instance, is not taking ‘no’ for an answer. As such, it is an example of ‘an expression of emotional and attitudinal meaning... [qualified by] the primary function of tone of voice, or ‘prosody’, [and] also conveys other less elusive kinds of meaning, including focus on information, utterance type (question, statement), topic structure and the organisation of turns in conversation.’ (Archer et al, 2012:96).

The following example is an expanded concordance line from the BNC; and includes the use of taboo language in the conversation – specifically, the use of *deaf* in conjunction with the word *fucking* – “are you *fucking deaf*?”⁴². In the second instance, ‘*fucking deaf*’ is used in an aggressive manner in order to ‘explicitly associate the other with a negative aspect’ – a face damaging act which conveys the sense of the previously experienced offence. We discover later in the conversation that the speaker’s son is *deaf* and, therefore, from her CofP centre, she views the use of this term as unnecessary and insulting: in fact, she goes on further to say somewhat resignedly, ‘I just ignore his sentiments, that’s what I do.’

Aye, and he sa [...] and he said to me one day, **are you fucking deaf?** And I heard it alright! I haven’t got any, and he came down here and I said to him. I’ll give you **fucking deaf** alright!’

Archer et al (2012:90-91) discuss Culpeper’s (1996)⁴³ stance on impoliteness, wherein he suggests that

[...] the purpose of [the] *bald on record impoliteness* strategy is to explicitly create the maximum possible face damage (cf. Brown and Levinson’s bald-on-record politeness, where face threat is believed to be minimized or non-existent). Such ‘Face Threatening Acts’ (henceforth FTA’s) are performed in as direct, clear, unambiguous and concise way as possible (see, e.g., *You fucking shit*).

The above example demonstrates an attack on a person’s positive face⁴⁴ as it ‘captures behaviour which is designed to explicitly damage the addressee’s positive face-wants... seeking disagreement; using taboo words; and calling the other names’ (see 1996:356-7).

⁴² Culpeper’s (1996: 356-7) Positive politeness strategy captures behaviour which is designed to explicitly damage the addressee’s positive face wants. It subsumes behaviour such as: ignoring the other; being disinterested, unconcerned, unsympathetic; not using identity marker’s (e.g. address forms) where they are expected (or using inappropriate identity markers for the context); using obscure or secretive language; seeking disagreement; using taboo words; and calling the other names.

⁴³ See Culpeper’s (1996) *Anatomy of impoliteness* for a detailed discussion of the five strategies - *bald on record impoliteness*, *positive impoliteness*, *negative politeness*, *sarcasm or mock impoliteness*, *withholding politeness*.

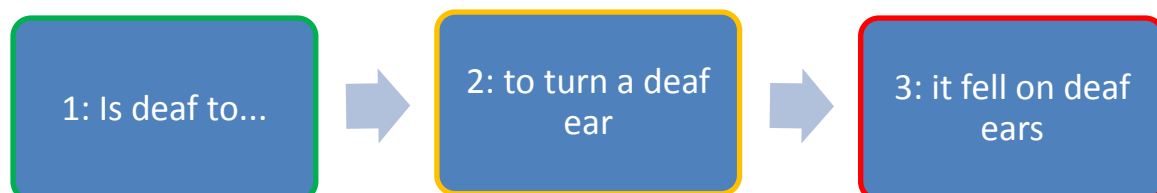
⁴⁴ ‘The term *face* may be defined as ‘the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he is taking during a particular contact’. (Goffman 1967:5) Brown and Levinson ([1978] 1987)

5.1e.2 Nexis findings - Are you deaf?

The Nexis search engine did not recognise the phrase *are you deaf*, even though it occurs. A manual search was therefore undertaken, and it revealed that *are you deaf?* occurs frequently in fiction and spoken language, as described in previous examples.

5.1f Is deaf to... (idiom)

Is deaf to... is a phrase that means to not take-on-board what is being said to you or to ignore a situation. As such, it has a similar meaning to *to turn a deaf ear* or *it fell on deaf ears*. This may point, in turn, to a continuum in meaning, whereby the intensity of meaning of these phrases increases from phrase 1 to 3 – as illustrated below:



Research results reveal that the most frequently used metaphor drawn upon by the media is *it fell on deaf ears*. This phrase commands more intensity and emphasis in meaning because it is used to amplify the action of deliberately ignoring and blocking out others' requests in a news story providing an impact for the reader. Consider the scale below in relation to my intensity continuum, whereby intensity of the action of 'ignoring a situation' raises a level from 1 to 3 and, in doing so, amplifies the message being conveyed (see Diagram 1, 7.4, 7.5.4, 8 p197).

differentiate between *two aspects of face*, which they term *Positive Face* and *Negative Face*. '*Positive Face* is the want of every individual to be approved of in their actions. *Negative Face* is the want of every individual to be unimpeded in their actions'.

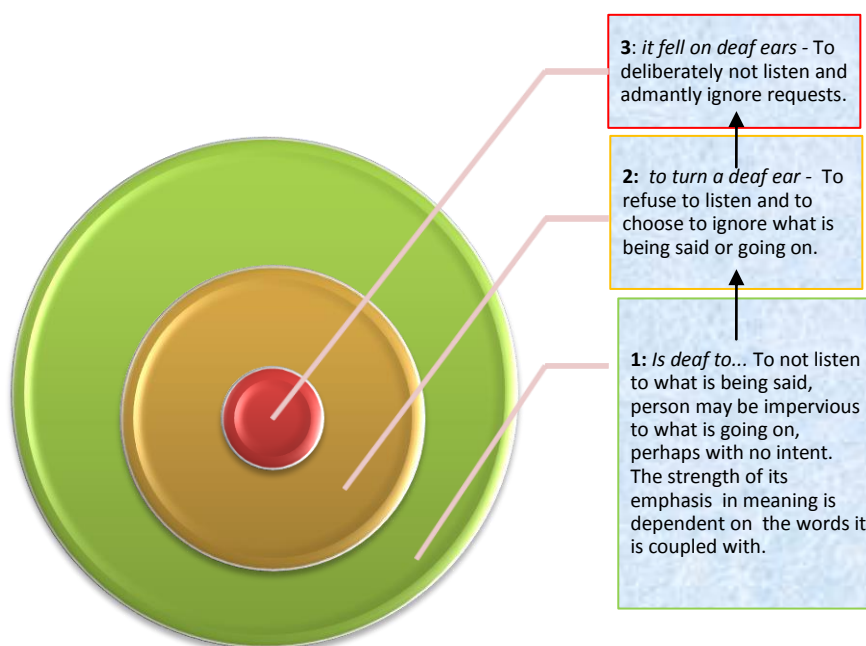


Diagram 1: Intensity Continuum for the phrases: *is deaf to...* *to turn a deaf ear*, *it fell on deaf ears*.

5.1f.1 BNC findings - Is deaf to...

The phrase *is deaf to* is used in mixed media publications but not in fiction or spoken language, at least in respect to the BNC dataset only (which notes 3 occurrences).

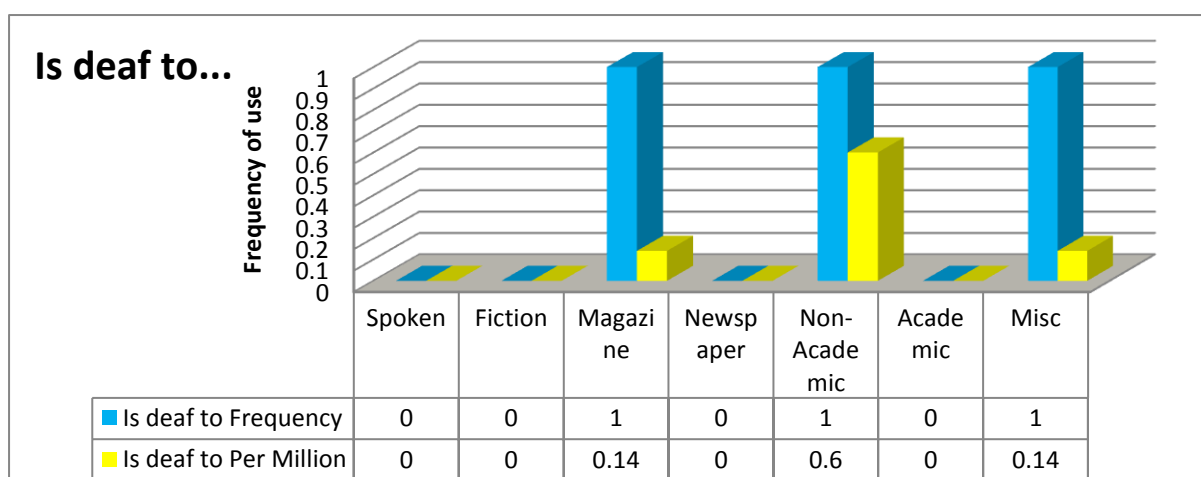


Table 14: BNC frequency results - is deaf to...

The three BNC concordance lines examples, below, for the phrase *is deaf to...* reveal this phrase to employ three different sense relations. Example 1 uses *is deaf to...* to mean *not listening, ignoring other people's views or advice* – a non-negotiable situation. The word *reason*, in this case, emphasises the intensity of meaning. This is similar to *to turn a deaf ear* and *it fell on deaf ears* (see 5.1f – Diagram 1 above). Example 2 describes the European Commission in a role

which *takes no notice/ignores* the Art Trade. Example 3 denotes a literal reference to *deafness* because the Puerto Rican coqui female frogs operate on a different sound frequency to the male coqui frogs.

1	The Daemonette a free round of attacks. The Daemonette	is deaf to	reason , and longs only to kill. Some characters
2	Addison Gardens, London W14 8AJ. The European Commission	is deaf to	the art trade . Although The Art Newspaper has written
3	The other, she ignores the local males because she	is deaf to	their calls . The Puerto Rican coqui frogs use a slightly

Table 15: BNC concordance line examples – is deaf to...

5.1f.2 Nexis findings - Is deaf to...

Given the Nexis database system can only allow, in this instance, the search to focus on the word *deaf*, I searched within the 3,000 plus hits retrieved by Nexis in respect to the word *deaf*. No examples of this particular phrase were found: however, this phrase is known to be coupled with the word *plea* - for example, he/she *is deaf to their pleas* in a similar way to the next phrase *fell on deaf ears*. In researching *is deaf to* manually, I found two examples used in news articles. The first example uses *...deaf to...* in its title, and conveys an negative meaning of *not listening* and *ignoring other opinions*.⁴⁵

Leaders are deaf to world's plea

By Peter Fray and Caroline Overington

February 17 2003

The United States and Britain have vowed to press on with a second United Nations resolution, preparing the way for war on Iraq in spite of unprecedented worldwide peace protests.

The next example illustrates a negation of the use of *is deaf to...* (see 5.1h.2 – Table 21)

Superheroes weren't deaf to boy's plea

Express, Sun September 9th, 2012

LITTLE Anthony Smith refused to wear his hearing aid because none of his cartoon superheroes had one. In desperation, the four year olds mother Christina e-mailed American publishing giants Marvel appealing for help.

In particular, the play on words in respect to the metaphorical phrase of “*Superheroes weren't deaf to boy's plea*” creates a positive sense of being listened to. For the story itself, although it relates to Anthony Smith's actual *deafness*, is focussed on a mother's desire to secure the help of Marvel publishers (in getting her son to wear his hearing aid).⁴⁶

⁴⁵ See smh.com.au – online news - <http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2003/02/16/1045330472713.html> for the full article.

⁴⁶ See Express, Sun, September 9th, 2012 - <http://www.express.co.uk/posts/view/344859/Superheroes-weren-t-deaf-to-boy-s-plea> for full story.

5.1g Fall/fell/fallen on deaf ears (action verb/ idiom)

The phrase *to fall on deaf ears* means that a situation or someone goes unheeded and with this action is deliberately ignored. This is a phrase which is used predominantly in the media, especially in political news reporting (see 7.5.4).

5.1g.1 BNC findings - Fall on deaf ears

The frequency results for *fall on deaf ears* reveal 7 hits, as illustrated in the table below.

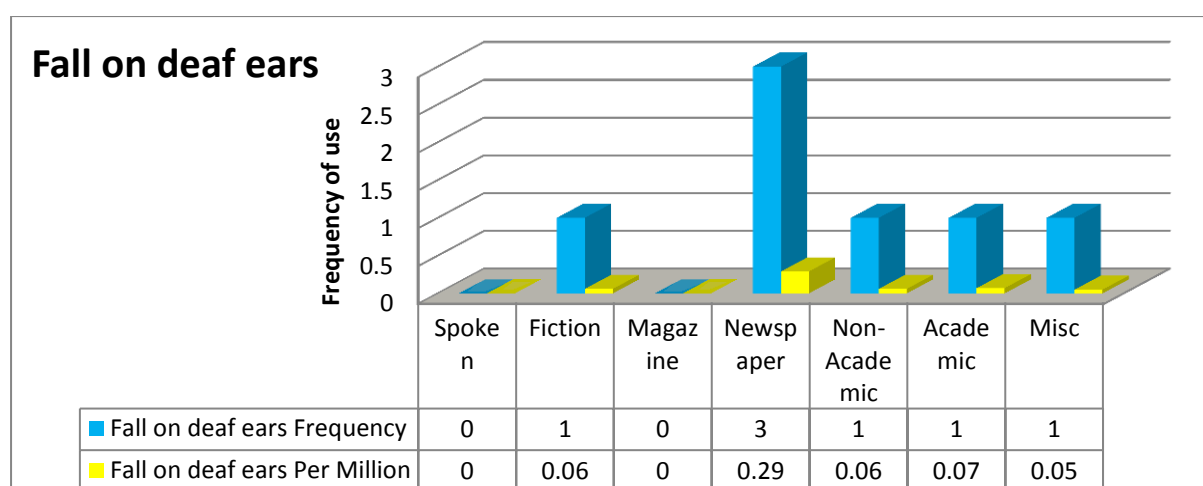


Table 16: BNC frequency results - Fall on deaf ears

Table 17 demonstrates that the frequency results reveal a similar genre coverage much the same for the phrase *fell on deaf ears*, but with an increase in incidences to 17 hits.

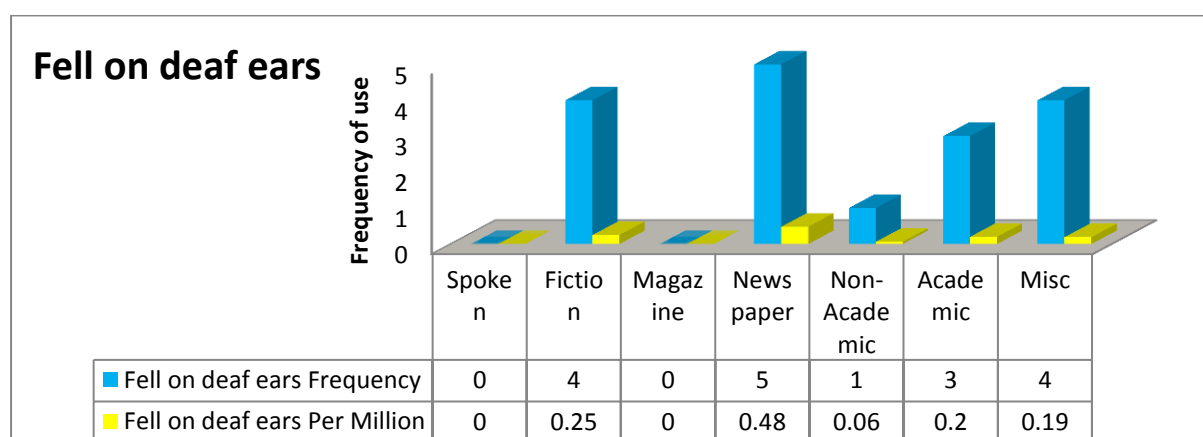


Table 17: BNC frequency results - Fell on deaf ears

When I researched this term with ‘wildcards *’, *F*ll *on deaf ears*, it produced results that revealed results that, indicated, this term is used across most genres, especially in the media. Its

incidence occurrence of 48 hits means that it is more frequently used than *is deaf to...* and *to turn a deaf ear*. It appears to be a written phrase rarely used in spoken language.

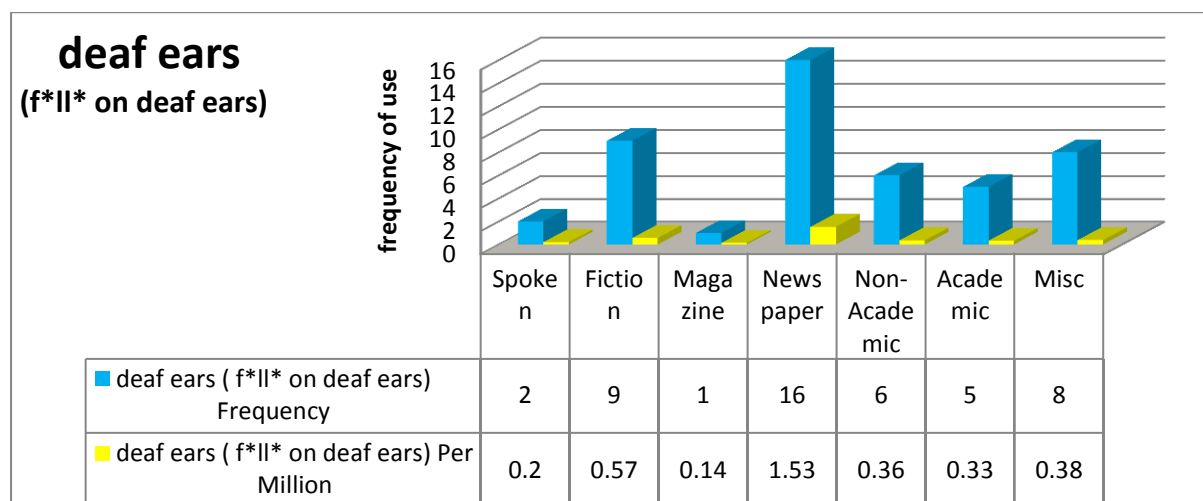


Table 18: BNC frequency results - deaf ears (f*ll* on deaf ears)

The following BNC concordance line examples in Table 19 demonstrate that this phrase is used frequently in a number of genres. Example 7 depicts *falling on deaf ears* as used in fiction. This phrase also appears to keep company with the word *plea*, which is also noted in examples 1, 2 and 3. These examples serve to illustrate the intensity of use of this metaphor. They create an impression that the action of *pleading* is necessary when trying to persuade someone to listen when the addressee is deliberately ignoring someone or something; hence the original request becomes a battle which moves into the realms of the personal. This potentially serves to personify the ‘personal tragedy’ view of *deafness* – depending on which CofP you belong to (see, 6.6.2, 6.6.3, 6.6.4, 7.5 and 7.7). Examples 1, 2, 3, and 6 note a political or business agenda that is reported as being ignored - as these issues *fall on deaf ears* - conveying a negative semantic prosody.

1	Pleas for housing made at council meetings, he said, had	fallen on deaf ears.	Many Protestants, like himself, were...
2	Homeowners and businesses pleaded for further interest rate cut and a boost in public spending. But their pleas	fell on deaf ears,	As Mr Major dug himself deep into his bunker and pretended the sterling crisis never happened.
3	...could not share the new road bridge over the Domoch Firth. All pleas	fell on deaf ears.	BR meanwhile accelerated its elimination of older locomotive types...
4	Prince Wales for corporate help to rebuild the inner cities has not	fallen on deaf ears.	Grand Metropolitan is to...
5	Injunctions to love the slugs in your garden may	fall on deaf ears.	
6	Their advice, even today when its more flexible and politically sensitive, consequently often	falls on deaf ears,	not because the economic logic is at fault...
7	"I'd be safer flirting with a rattlesnake." This seemed to be	falling on deaf ears.	"I don't chase men."

Table 19: BNC concordance line examples - f*ll* on deaf ears.

Example 4 is a news article from *The Independent* newspaper. It reports this phrase with a positive semantic prosody by using negation to dispel any thoughts that the Prince of Wales was ignoring the addressed issue. Indeed, the message to ‘*help to rebuild the inner cities **has not** fallen on deaf ears*’ conveys only an affirmative response from the Prince of Wales. This example appears to be an exception to its default usage, as the phrase usually constructs a negative meaning whichever tense chosen.

5.1g.2 Nexis findings - it fell on deaf ears

The Nexis research on the phrase *it fell on deaf ears* notes 1,845 results dating from 1978 to 2012. There appears to be a consistently higher use of this term within the media from the year 2000. The examples appear predominantly in newspapers, and all examples are media-led. This phrase seems to be particularly used in political arenas. For example, it is a reported phrase used in reference to political leaders such as Barack Obama (22 occurrences), George W Bush (10 occurrences), Bill Clinton (8 occurrences) and Hillary R Clinton (7 occurrences). The meaning is that of ignoring a situation, a message, a person or people. Occasionally this term is also used in conjunction with other words in a given article to create a play on words. However, this does not necessarily mean that there is a reference to actual *deafness*.

5.1h To turn a deaf ear (action verb use /idiom)

To turn a deaf ear means to refuse to listen; to refuse to accede to a request. It means that someone is ‘closing-off’ their ears to all communications being received; they do not afford the person or situation any time to understand the communication that has come their way. This phrase is used frequently in writing to illustrate the action of taking no notice, of not taking onboard any other view or opinion. This particular term is also used with reference to the sense of sight; for example, in *to turn a blind eye*; and a physical action, for example, *to turn one’s back on*. All of these terms convey the action of ignoring someone or something. *To turn a deaf ear* is also similar to the phrase ... *falls on deaf ears* as it conveys an act of *no response*; in this case, the use of the verb *to fall* emphasises a more deliberate action of ignoring someone or something (see 5.1f).

5.1h.1 BNC findings - to turn a deaf ear

The frequency results from the BNC corpus database reveal only 6 hits for the metaphor *to turn a deaf ear*. Like the phrases *is deaf to...* and *it fell/falls on deaf ears*, this phrase is also reported in written datasets, more specifically, it is used in fiction and media genres (see 7.4, 7.5.4, 7.7).

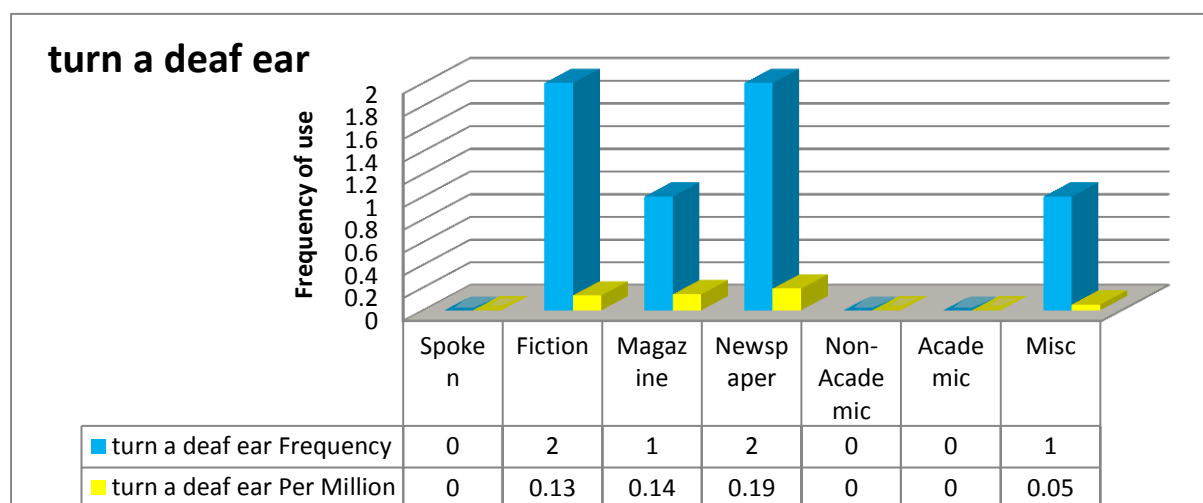


Table 20: BNC frequency results of - turn a deaf ear

The examples in Table 21 give a clear indication of how *to turn a deaf ear* is used.

1	Sedgefield Council either have not got the message or more likely have decided	to turn a deaf ear.	This is proven by the fact that ...
2	When the mob was destroying the Catholic chapel in Moorfields, he apparently	turned a deaf ear	to requests for orders from the soldiers and fire officers in attendance...
3	The solid bulk of the nation was as dedicated as ever to the war, phlegmatic and unquestioning , turning a closed mind and	a deaf ear	to the tales men bought back from Verdun...
4	... how could people ignore what happened to the Jews? How could people turn a blind eye or	a deaf ear	to the horrors that they suffered?

Table 21: BNC concordance line examples – to turn a deaf ear

Example 1 indicates that *to turn a deaf* is more than not listening; it is a definite decision to ignore a message. Example 2 illustrates a case for a deliberate act of not listening to orders. Example 3 includes the act of ‘closing your mind off’ as well as your ‘ears’ to the tales of war. Finally, example 4 includes the phrase *to turn a blind eye*. This phrase is used ironically in respect to what happened to the Jews in the war. It is used in a manner that indicates the need ‘to turn off’ completely from these memories because it is ‘truly appalling and transcends everyone’s imagination’ (Hansard extracts 1991-1992, BNC source).

5.1h.2 Nexis findings – to turn a deaf ear

The Nexis findings for the frequency of *to turn a deaf ear* is 3,000 plus. The information reported here relates to a sample dataset of 994, published between 1979 and 2012. *To turn a deaf ear* appears frequently in political news reporting - 771 occurrences - with the other 224 examples occurring within the media arena. This phrase is used especially frequently in the titles of the news articles. This term is predominantly used in America and Europe but it is a term which is also used worldwide. The press seem to use this phrase habitually to enhance the impact of meaning in their news reports.

To turn a deaf ear is used mainly in political news reports. The following Nexis examples are from the period when George Bush was the President of the United States of America. The examples below reveal a positive and supportive role of this phrase. The first article highlights Bush's need to handle Putin/the Russians carefully; to avoid disagreement with the USA Bush manages to discuss the important issues with Putin. Both the phrases used to convey this message, *to turn a deaf ear to criticism* and *would ignore calls to boycott* signal a negative action but in this context are used positively to gain attention / not be ignored.

Associated Press online, March 30th 2006

Bush made clear he has differences with President Vladimir Putin on his increasingly authoritarian stand on issues such as political, religious and press freedoms and the emergence of democracies on Russia's borders. *But he said he feared that scolding Putin might cause the Russians to **turn a deaf ear** to criticism.*

"I need to be in a position where I can sit down with him and be very frank about our concerns," Bush said, *saying **he would ignore calls** to boycott the Group of Eight Summit of Industrial Nations*, being held for the first time in Russia in Putin's home city, in July.

The following article demonstrates a positive use of the term *to turn a deaf ear*. In particular, President Bush emphasises, via deontic modality and negation, the need to keep engaged with those who had "taken to the streets".

October 19, 2007 Friday 2:48 PM EST

Bush increases pressure on Myanmar's junta

SECTION: POLITICS

DATELINE: WASHINGTON

President Bush on Friday set new sanctions against members of Myanmar's military junta and their associates in response to the junta's violent crackdown on democracy protesters.

"We must not **turn a deaf ear** to their cries," Bush said of those who have taken to the streets for democracy in the Southeast Asian nation.⁴⁷

5.1i Hard of Hearing (n, adj, phrase, label)

The term *Hard of Hearing* commands a definition of a 'betweenity' (see 2.5).⁴⁸ Brueggemann (2008:33), who coined the term 'betweenity', describes it as follows:

[T]he twinning of *d/Deaf* is perhaps safer that way since often, when pressed, it will be hard to determine at any one moment in a text whether the Big D cultural arena is where we are or if we are just in the small d audiological /medical space. And what if we are in both places at the same time?

⁴⁷ Even though this is an example from Washington DC I included this to demonstrate the political use of this term. See reference to media-led language use – 7.4, 7.5.4.

⁴⁸ See Brueggemann, B.J.(2008) *Think-Between: A Deaf Studies Commonplace Book*. In Lindgren,K,A. DeLuca,D. Napoli,D,J. 2008: 30 -42.

Brueggemann, is seeking to describe the ‘betweenity’ space in the realms of a created category - deeming a person to be neither *hearing* or *Deaf* but *Hard of Hearing*. It is an ‘umbrella term’, a hearing construct, like the term *hearing impaired*, which serves to explain the varying degrees of hearing loss. The use of the word ‘hard’ implies that it is ‘hard to hear’ but not totally impossible. *The Oxford Thesaurus of English* (2006:199) notes the term *Hard of Hearing* under *deaf* alongside ‘unhearing, stone deaf, with impaired hearing, deafened, profoundly deaf; informal deaf as a post.’ The term *Hard of Hearing* is borne out of a medical need to explain and label *deafness*. Nevertheless, it potentially implies that the *Hard of Hearing* have to put a lot of energy into hearing, as such, its sense relations delineate a struggle to hear (see 7.5.1-4, 7.6).

Padden and Humphries (1988:3) identify the term *Hard of Hearing* to be a label which is afforded to

[...] a newly arrived deaf person [who] is often given one of several borderline labels, such as ‘hard of hearing’, recognising his or her past affiliation with those who speak.

5.1i.1 BNC findings – Hard of Hearing

The frequency results for the term *Hard of Hearing* reveals an occurrence of 51. It is used across all genres, as well as in the spoken language dataset, which would be expected for a term that is used as a descriptive label.

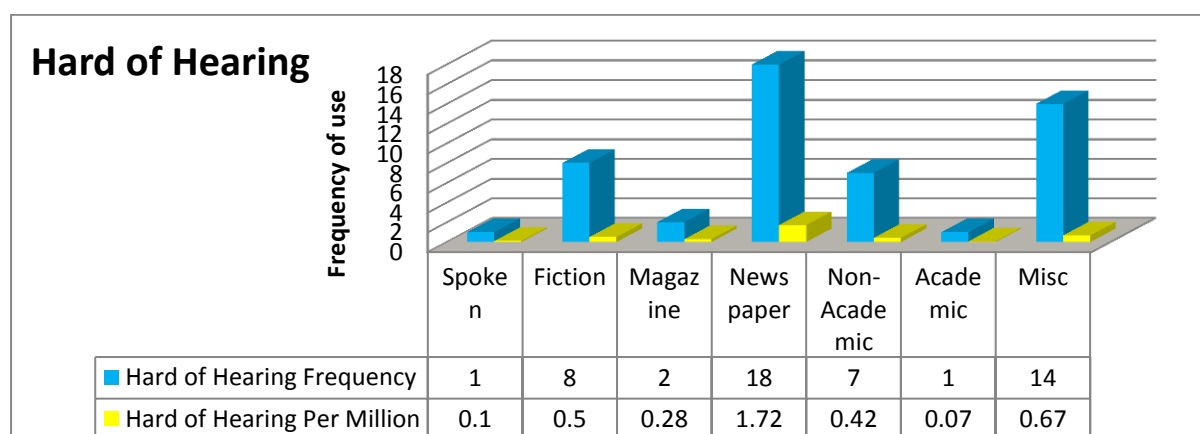


Table 22: BNC frequency results - Hard of Hearing

The following BNC concordance line examples in Table 22 for the term *hard of hearing* reveal several uses:

1	basic guidelines that make communication easier for the	hard of hearing	were suggested. These included speaking more slowly , facing.....
2	To Guisborough Road. Leader Steve Sherlock, Stockton,	Hard of Hearing	Club, Alma Street, Stockton, 6.30pm. New members...
3	#HEARING IMPAIRMENT# For the convenience of the	hard of hearing.	An induction loop is installed in this theatre. Patrons wishing...
4	Said its aim was to give the deaf and	hard of hearing	better access to banks, shops, offices and local councils.

Table 23: BNC concordance line examples - Hard of Hearing

- Example 1 demonstrates an understanding that *the hard of hearing* need to be communicated with in a different manner. This implies that basic guidelines are required for people to communicate with someone who is hard of hearing - that they are incapable of communicating effectively. Explicitly this example ‘others’, by marginalising people who are *hard of hearing* (see 2.3).
- Example 2 illustrates *Hard of Hearing* as a descriptive label used in the name of a club - a *Hard of Hearing Club*.
- Example 3 informs the reader that *the deaf* and *hard of hearing* can access a loop system to help them hear. Implicit in this meaning is that *the deaf* and *hard of hearing* all wear hearing-aids and all need technology to aid their communication.
- Example 4 assumes that the *deaf* and *hard of hearing* are in need of gaining better access to ‘banks, offices and local councils’. Implicit in this message is that, without better access, they will not be able to use services and local amenities effectively.

5.1i.2 Nexis findings - Hard of Hearing

The Nexis findings for the frequency of use of *Hard of Hearing* revealed over 3,000 results. The information reported here relates to a sample dataset of 994 published between 1997 and 2013. The reporting of this term is predominantly used in newswire and press releases, with 567 hits; newspaper reports accounted for 329 hits and the remaining are noted in other media publications. My results also suggest that the term *Hard of Hearing* is predominantly coupled with the word *deaf* as denoted by the Nexis concordance line examples, 1 and 2 in Table 24. It appears frequently to describe a level of deafness or as a label to describe people, children, adults, clubs and organisations or collectively *the Hard of Hearing*.

1	... some people in the deaf and	hard of hearing	community were unsure if Gallaudet University was ready for a deaf president.
2	...to deliver HD video communications to the deaf and	hard of hearing	in a way that’s fun and easy to use...

Table 24: Nexis concordance line examples – Hard of Hearing

The above Nexis concordance line examples in Table 24 note more recent usage of the term, *Hard of Hearing*. Example 1 uses the terms *deaf* and *hard of hearing* as community and cultural identity markers. The terms *deaf* and *hard of hearing* co-occur (as noted above) differentiating levels of *deafness*. Example 1 illustrates that, historically, Gallaudet University - a *Deaf* University - was lead by a hearing president. They have come a long way since the Milan Conference 1880; Gallaudet celebrated its 25th Anniversary in March 2013. Example 2 implies that in order to introduce a 'HD video communication technology' to the *deaf* and *hard of hearing* it must be 'fun and easy to use'. This example could carry a covert message that, unless the 'HD video communication technology' is easy and fun to use, then the *deaf* and *hard of hearing* may not be able to understand how to use this communication device; potentially conveying a lack of intelligence.

The example below illustrates the co-occurrence of *deaf* and *hard of hearing*. It also reveals the American use of hyphens within this term: *hard-of-hearing*, creating an inseparable collocated relationship between the words *hard* and *hearing* (see 2.5 – see reference to Brueggemann page 24).

Business Wire - February 2, 2004 Monday
WASHINGTON & SALT LAKE CITY, Feb. 2, 2004

Exclusive Unveiling at Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C.

Sorenson Media Introduces the Nation's First Videophone Booths for **Deaf** and **Hard-of-Hearing** Individuals to Place Video Relay Calls - Sorenson Media - unveiled today the nation's first videophone booths for **deaf** and **hard-of-hearing** individuals to conduct free video relay calls through an American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter at Gallaudet University, the nation's premiere university for **deaf** and **hard-of-hearing** students.

5.1j Hearing Impaired (n., adj.)

Fearon (2010) notes that the term *Hearing Impaired* is firmly identified in the medical, audiological realms of *deafness*. This term was introduced in the 1970's, and was coined by the *Hearing* community. It attempts to categorise the many varying degrees of hearing loss. The online *Macmillan Dictionary Thesaurus* (2010, online) defines a *hearing impaired* individual as someone who is 'unable to hear as well as most people. Many people now prefer this word to *deaf*.' Bartleby (2005:39) suggests that the use of *impaired* in such an expression as *hearing-impaired* is linked to the 'vocabulary of disability'. From Old French and Latin influences the derivation of *impairment* is *impair*, meaning to 'to make worse'. These influences colour the term *Hearing Impaired* with a negative semantic prosody.

Corker (1994:27-24) concurs that the term

[...] *hearing-impaired* [stems] from the need of professionals to have an ‘accurate’ blanket term for *deaf* and *hard-of-hearing* people, it defines them in relation to the hearing centre with the outcome that they are substandard hearing people...a disability identity [which provides] a focus for negative labelling.

5.1j.1 BNC findings - Hearing Impaired

The frequency results for the term *Hearing Impaired* differ from that of the term *Hard of Hearing*. *Hard of Hearing* is used across all genres, whilst *Hearing Impaired* is restricted to non-academic publications, newspaper and spoken genres, with an occurrence of 9. The term *Hearing impaired*, functions as a descriptor for *hearing loss* and *differing degrees of deafness*.

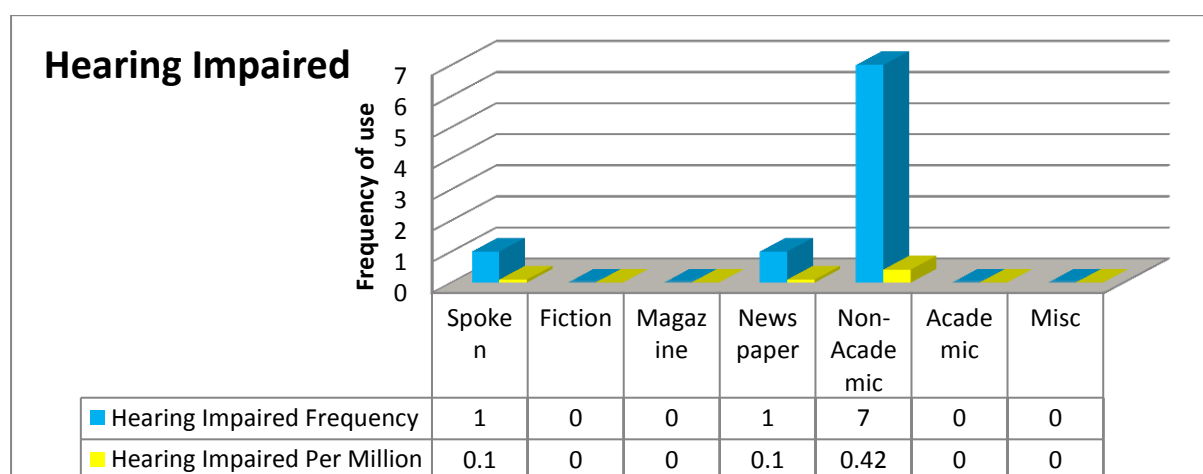


Table 25: BNC frequency results - Hearing Impaired

The term *Hearing impaired*, functions as a descriptor for *hearing loss* and *differing degrees of deafness*.

1	Have information on a wide range of equipment to assist	hearing impaired	People. Ask for British Telecom's guide to equipment
2	Have taken action to ease the difficulties of the	hearing impaired.	Woolwich CAB in South East London providing a regular...
3	Community languages: A Minicom is available for the	Hearing impaired.	:# The Terrence Higgins Trust is a registered charity which
4	... but as many as half a million people may be	Hearing impaired.	One third of those over 65 and one half of those

Table 26: BNC concordance line examples – Hearing impaired

The BNC concordance results, in Table 26, demonstrate that this phrase is predominantly used with a determiner – ‘the’ – ‘denoting somebody or something that has already been mentioned or identified, something that is understood by the speaker or hearer as distinct from ‘a’ or ‘an’”(Encarta 2012, online). As per the above examples, *hearing impaired* appears as *the Hearing Impaired*, predominantly used as a descriptor in the medical field linking *deafness* and *disability*. In particular, examples 1 and 2 note the phrases *to assist*, *ease the difficulties*. Example 4 conveys a different message and frames deafness in people’s expectation that deafness is something that can happen you when you grow elderly – because published statistics influence how we react to new introduced, in this case, the risk of elderly deafness.

5.1j.2 Nexis findings - Hearing Impaired

The Nexis search on the term *hearing impaired* secured over 3,000 results dating from 1980 to 2012. It is reported mainly in newspaper and media sources. In my search sample of 995 it constitutes a descriptive term which is used world-wide, but most frequently in North America and The United States, with only one example in the UK news. As demonstrated in the following example - from *The Evening Star* April 7th, 2009 - the Nexis search reveals the use of this term as purely a descriptor for *deafness* or *hearing loss*.

FORMER staff and pupils of a *hearing impaired* unit are today left with just their memories of the place as it finally closed after 20 years.

5.2 Summary of findings

Sinclair (1991:112 in Hoey 2005:22) notes that there are ‘many uses of words and phrases [which] show a tendency to occur in certain semantic environments’. This BNC and Nexis corpus research chapter reveals that these terms and phrases being investigated in this thesis do ‘occur in different semantic environments’. The research findings of this chapter for each of the terms or phrases are noted in the sections below. The documented references at the end of each term or phrase summary pertain to the salient research elements of this chapter, the research summary tables from Chapter 6 and a research finding reference from Chapter 7).

5.2.1 Deaf-mute

Deaf-mute is an historical term which is not used widely in current times (according to BNC results). However, Nexis results reveal a more widespread use; especially in India. This term is used only as a descriptive label to identify *deafness* (see 6.6.2b, 6.6.3b, 6.6.4b).

5.2.2 Deaf and dumb

Deaf and dumb is a term that reveals a surprisingly high incidence of use. Even though *deaf and dumb* as a term has been replaced with *deaf/Deaf*, it is still being used and documented as a descriptive label for *deafness*. Occasionally, it is used in a metaphorical sense (see 6.6.2a, 6.6.3a, 6.6.4a).

5.2.3 Stone deaf

Stone deaf is a term which is predominantly used as a descriptive label. The BNC results suggest an infrequent use but the Nexis search revealed more frequency. A metaphorical use of *Stone deaf* was noted, which conveys a similar sense to the idiom - *to turn a deaf ear* (see 6.6.2c, 6.6.3c, 6.6.4c).

5.2.4 Deaf as a post

The BNC results reveal *deaf as a post* to be virtually obsolete. Its meaning conveys a profound level of *deafness*. The Nexis research findings noted a high incidence of use in different sense relations; that is, as a descriptive label with the sense of *not listening* and as an im/polite verbal enquiry similar to the phrase *are you deaf?* (see 5.1e/1/2, 6.6.2d, 6.6.3d, 6.6.4d).

5.2.5 Are you deaf?

Are you deaf? is used mainly in speech and fiction genres. My research revealed data only from the BNC corpus search. These results depicted that it is used as an enquiry of actual *deafness*, and in a metaphorical sense which is somewhat insulting. As this phrase seems to be used most in spoken datasets, I chose not to include this phrase in Phase 2 of the research process

5.2.6a Is deaf to...

Due the corpus research findings for the term *is deaf to...* it was not included in the semi-informal interviews. The results reveal this term to be used less frequently than the phrases *to turn a deaf ear* and *it fell on deaf ears*. *Is deaf to* → *to turn a deaf ear* → *it fell on deaf ears* form a continuum which can be graded in intensity of meaning from a *lazy, I'm not listening* sense to a deliberate purposeful and damaging act of *ignoring* (see 5.1f – Diagram 1). Although, the intensity of meaning for *is deaf to...* could alter depending on its context-of-use, for example, if it is used in conjunction with the word *reason* – *is deaf to reason* (m) and *is deaf to his calls*

(l), hence, noting a polarity between the metaphorical(m) and literal(l) sense relations (see 5.1f.2, 8 p197).

5.2.6b To turn a deaf ear

To turn a deaf ear, although infrequent in the BNC corpus search, a frequency of use is noted in the Nexis research. It is predominantly used in media political news reports/articles similar to the employment of *it fell on deaf ears*: the difference in reporting noted the context and emphasis required for a particular piece of news (see 5.1f.2, Diagram 1, 6.6.2f, 6.6.3f, 6.6.4f).

5.2.6c To fall on deaf ears

Both the BNC and Nexis findings reveal that the phrase *to fall/fell/fallen on deaf ears* is a term which is used frequently in different tenses, across all genres, but noted to be employed more in the political arena. A potential reason for its frequency of use is its intensity of meaning (see 5.1g.1, 6.6.2g, 6.6.3g, 6.6.4g).

5.2.7 Hard of Hearing

The term *hard of hearing* occurs with moderate frequency in the BNC, where it seems to be used as a descriptive label of *deafness*, similar to the term *hearing impaired*. In addition, the Nexis research data reveals a high frequency of use as a descriptive label. The use of this term in the realms of negative, positive or neutral values depends on its context-of-use. Due to *hard of hearing* appearing to be used less than the term *hearing impaired*, I chose not to include this in Phase 2 of the research process.

5.2.8. Hearing Impaired

Hearing impaired is seen as term that is hardly used by the BNC but is prevalent in the Nexis database as a descriptive label for *hearing loss/deafness*. As a medical term it links with the medical role of disability, deficiency, neediness and inequality (see 2.4, 6.6.2e, 6.6.3e, 6.6.4e and 7.5 and 7.6)

Having analysed and discussed Phase 1a and 1b of the research process - the BNC and Nexis research findings - Phase 2 of the research process contextualizes the identified terms and phrases. The next Chapter, Six, explores the outcomes of how the three CofPs - the *Hearing*, *Hard of Hearing* and *Deaf* communities use and perceive the terms and phrases *to turn a deaf*

ear, it fell on deaf ears, deaf and dumb, stone deaf, deaf as a post, deaf-mute and hearing impaired.

Chapter Six: Analysis and Discussion of Semi-informal Interviews

6 Introduction

The previous chapter commenced Phase 1a and 1b of the research process with a corpus linguistic study that identified and discussed the frequency and use of the terms and phrases *to turn a deaf ear, it fell on deaf ears, deaf and dumb, stone deaf, deaf as a post, deaf-mute, hard of hearing and hearing impaired*. The purpose of this chapter is to tease out some of the nuances that were identified as part of Phase 1a and 1b. In particular, Phase 2 of my research explores the perceptions of representatives of the three CofPs', that is, how they use and perceive the terms and phrases and whether these perceptions are similar to or different from each other.

Sunderland (2006:156 [adapted]) contextualises the concept of CofP linking it to the real world. He asserts that,




...[a] Community of Practice is where the rubber meets the road [where language makes contact with people and society] – it is where observable action and interaction do the work of producing [and] reproducing [language] in societal discourses of gender, age and race...The symbolic value of a linguistic form is taken as given, and the speaker [signer] simply learns it and uses it, either mechanically or strategically. But in actual practice, social meaning, social identity, community membership forms of participation, the full range of community practices [creates an influence in how we use and perceive language].

Lakoff (2004: vx [adapted]) explains that language use is

[...] a 'cognitive unconsciousness' [or subconscious] process... all words are defined relative to conceptual frames, when you hear a word - its frame (or collection of frames) is activated in your brain.

Hall, in addition, notes that 'people of different cultures not only speak different languages, what is possibly more important, [is that they] inhabit different sensory worlds' (1982 cited in Dirksen & Bauman 2008: 83 [adapted]). This alludes to the idea that the framing process differs with an individual's knowledge of and access in the world. Cloran (2000:152) introduces the idea that, in turn, 'certain meanings 'get meant' [gain meaning] by just about everyone at certain ages and stages of their lives'. This can be noted through a societal trend and generational influence in respect to which "in" terms and phrases are used. For example, in the realms of disability terminology, the term *handicap* was commonplace in describing people who have a disability but this terminology changed to become more politically correct to *learning disabilities*, and this, in turn, changed to be *learning difficulties*.

Cloran (2000:152) also posed the question as to whether ‘despite differences in wordings used, does each text represent different ways of saying the same thing? Or do the different wordings construe different meanings?’ This chapter attempts to address this concept. For instance, if your grandparents used the phrase *deaf-mute* to describe someone who was *deaf*, then this may have been the term you would have used; thus, making the term *deaf-mute* an acquired phrase to your existing vocabulary. The meaning of that term will be coloured by how your grandparents used it, whether it was conveyed with a negative, neutral or positive value, or used descriptively, or figuratively. This bank of words, terms and phrases build up within us as we grow, depending on our exposure to language until, potentially, the culture of political correctness, the influence of the media, and influence of others around us introduce the notion of whether we use new terminology or not use them at all. In the case of *deaf-mute*, for example, we may consciously replace *deaf-mute* with *deaf and dumb* and then even replace *deaf and dumb* with *deaf/Deaf*. The following analysis of the semi-informal interviews explores these different views. The legend colours for the graphs in this section mean:

-  = Yes - I have come across these terms and phrases.
-  = No - I have not come across these terms and phrases.
-  = Not a lot – I have heard of these terms and phrases but it is rare to come across them.

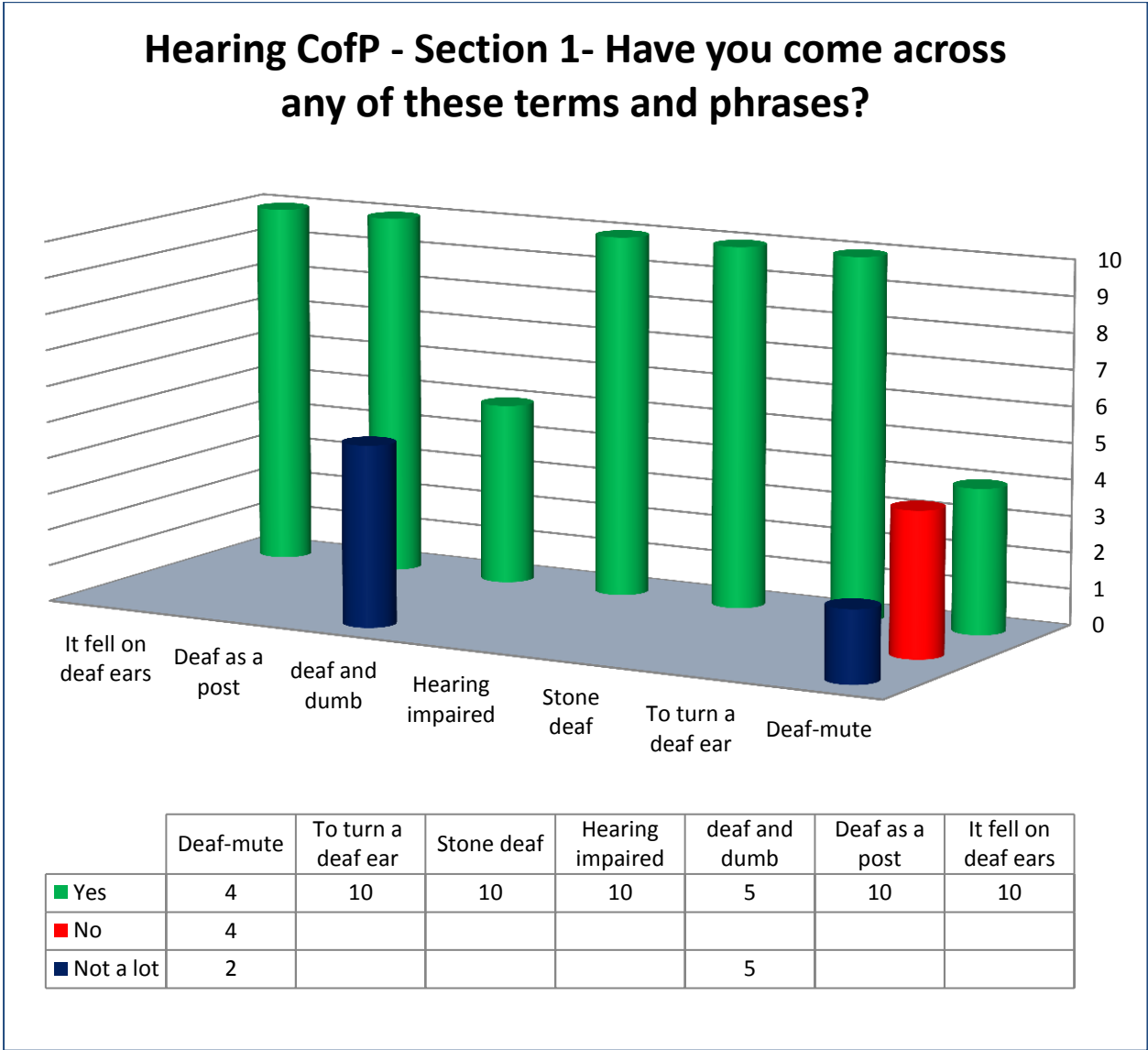
6.1 Analysis and Discussion of Section One of the Semi-informal Interview

The following section will analyse and discuss the interview findings from representatives of the *Hearing*, *Hard of Hearing* and the *Deaf* communities, beginning with the *Hearing* community. This section is further divided into questions, each of which is addressed in turn. A table for the representatives of each CofP reveals, in turn, the overall results from sections one and two of the interviews (see appendix 13- discs 1 to 4f or a record of the interviews themselves).

6.1a Hearing Community of Practice

Graph 2 illustrates the following responses from the representatives of the *Hard of Hearing CofP* – these comprise of their interviews 1 to 10. Section One of the interview provided participants with my list of terms and then asked them: “Do you come across these terms and phrases?”. As Graph 2 reveals, the representatives from the *Hearing CofP* are fully aware of the terms and phrases, *to turn a deaf ear*, *stone deaf*, *hearing impaired*, *deaf as a post* and *it fell on deaf ears*. The participants noted that they came across the term *deaf and dumb*, but half of them said that

they did not feel that they came across this term very much anymore. Discussion relating to the term *deaf-mute* revealed that this was the term least used and least acknowledged.



Graph 2: Section One of the Interview Results - Hearing CofP

The terms and phrases, *hearing impaired*, *stone deaf*, *deaf as a post*, *deaf-mute*, *deaf and dumb*, *to turn a deaf ear* and *it fell on deaf ears* were all commented on by representatives of the *Hearing CofP*. The following section discusses these findings.

A. Hearing impaired

According to my Phase 1 results, the term *hearing impaired* seems to be accepted, in general, as a descriptive term which informs people that someone has a *hearing loss*. The following quotes

highlight how representatives of the *Hearing CofP* perceived this term. Interviewee 8 acknowledged that this term is in general use, stating that

[*H*]earing-impaired is a very common sort of terminology, it is widely known... [so that] anybody would know that somebody had a hearing impairment or there is something to do with *hearing impaired*, a common phrase (disc 1).

Interviewee 10 concurred that *Hearing impaired* is a descriptive label which identifies a level of *hearing loss*. They also note that there is more than one cause of *deafness*, suggesting that it describes different conditions or different severities of the same condition.

[...] somebody who's not got her hearing, it's like..., not up to scratch, something not right with their hearing you know, impaired by their birth or whatever. Maybe some injury, noise or whatever, you know that can affect your ears, can't it noise. You know if you work in a noisy environment (disc 2.)

This description stresses the impairment part of *hearing impairment*, in particular, which suggests a link with medical model of deafness (see 2.5 and 7.5.1, 7.6).

Interviewee 9 also makes a link to the medical model of disability. There is a focus on the need to use hearing-aids as well as the loop system, which, in turn, suggests that all *d/Deaf* people wear hearing-aids and access the loop system as a means of enhancing their hearing.

[*H*]earing impaired – I have probably seen this in text more often than not because they are always talking about hearing-aids and things. It's in the papers advertising hearing-aids or if your hearing is impaired obviously that's how they are going to attract you in text. There all sorts of hearing-aids on the market now, it's a big business, so as I say probably seen more in text. I work in schools a lot, they have all these loop systems so there are quite a few signs around to inform people that if you are *Hearing Impaired* you can use the loop so... (disc 1).

Interviewee 1 states that,

[I]t's a medical term – I would expect to see signage in public places, in museums, for special equipment for the hearing impaired. It's not something I'd use. It's not on an everyday level of use – it's more a medical term. It tries hard to be politically correct (disc 1)

The suggestion, here, is that people only use this term for a specific reason, that is, with reference to (medical) *deafness* in mind and then this label is placed in context. Interviewee 7 concurs that

[I]'ve only ever heard this in context, so parents with children with hearing difficulties, teachers of students, so specific to what it relates to (disc 2)

Hearing impaired, then, seems to be viewed as a functional term that appears to be a necessary term and often a medically related term. As such, it does not provide a conceptual space whereby *deafness* can be (celebrated as) an acceptable part of someone's life (see 2.4).

B. Stone deaf

Stone deaf is noted to be a term that describes someone who is *profoundly deaf* or to be a phrase that is used in a jocular manner to infer 'did you hear me or not,' similar to '*are you deaf?*' (see 5.1e). The *Hearing CofP* interviews revealed that it is generally recorded as a term which describes someone who is *d/Deaf*. The following quotes highlight the different perceptions of this term. Interviewee 8 uses this term metaphorically and not literally to refer to actual *deafness*,

[O]h yes, well, we all say this at times '*your stone deaf!*' [in a jocular manner]. It is...a little bit of terminology that is used, but not something I've used in talking to somebody with or who had some sort of hearing impediment. I wouldn't use this terminology. I don't think it is appropriate to say that someone is *stone deaf* (disc 1).

Interviewee 1 concurs with Interviewee 8, noting a potential impoliteness in the use of *stone deaf* - in the sense of *turning a deaf ear* or someone saying '*are you deaf?*'.

[I]t's not an everyday turn of phrase and if it was, I imagine it would be somebody using it to exaggerate somebody who is either ignoring somebody or who hadn't heard" (disc 1).

Interviewee 9 likens the term *stone deaf* to *deaf and dumb*, asserting that it is also an unpleasant term to use. This term is also used strategically in the realms of *selective deafness*.

[S]tone deaf – I can be when needs be. *Deaf and dumb* is *stone deaf*. If you are *stone deaf* you are *deaf*. I don't see that in print and I don't think you can label people as *stone deaf* any more. [It's] another not nice way of saying that someone can't hear (disc 1).

C. Deaf as a post

Deaf as a post seems to be perceived as a less offensive term which is associated with an element of informality. It does not seem to be used as a descriptive term for *deafness* for the representations of the *Hearing CofP*. It appears to be used amongst people who know each other, who are 'on a first name basis'. In the right context, it can be used as a term of endearment; for instance, 'oh, don't worry, she's deaf as a post, she won't have heard you' (see Chapter 5.1d/5.1e).

Interviewee 6 suggests that

[T]his term [*deaf as a post*] is used more jokingly, yeah ,even if somebody knows they are talking about somebody who is perhaps *Hard of Hearing* they will refer to them as *deaf as a post* (disc 1)

D. Deaf-mute

Deaf-mute is found to be a term which is not particularly used anymore. The term is also recognised to be similar to *deaf and dumb*, with the word *dumb* meaning *mute* and the word *dumb* to meaning *not speaking*. Interviewees 10 and 6 inform us that

[I] would think that this is somebody whose *deaf and dumb*... (disc 2).

[I]t's never used in my opinion to mean anything other than somebody who can't hear and can't speak (disc 1).

E. Deaf and dumb

The term *deaf and dumb* is revealed to have a generational influence in the sense that it is a remembered term that has been used and should not be used now because it is perceived to be politically incorrect.

Interviewee 8 remembers

[...] when I was growing up it was [a term used for] a bit of fun '*deaf and dumb*', it was a bit of a joke. It's not used nowadays because the *hard of hearing* and *hearing impaired* have all the systems in place, loop systems and everything. I haven't heard the term *deaf and dumb* since the 1980's. I think it is not important [the term] *deaf and dumb* now – it is not about being *deaf and dumb* in this society. I think it is about what you can do and you can't be labelled *deaf and dumb* anymore –it's not on (disc 1).

In the above quote the use of *deaf and dumb* is used in a metaphorically jocular manner, similar to the same use of *are you deaf?* (see 5.1b). The interviewee conveys a view of 'inappropriateness', which advocates the removal of the term *deaf and dumb*. To them, the use of the terms *Hard of Hearing* and *Hearing impaired* promote a real sense of equality and inclusiveness because, medically, people with a *hearing loss* have access via hearing-aids and loop systems. Interviewee 8's CofP is coloured by their association with Social Services, and they are aware of equality issues and the importance of acceptance and inclusion of minority

groups in society. Interviewee 9 concurs with Interviewee 8, noting an implicature of a ‘non-politically-correct’ term.

[I] don’t think you hear it as much as it was used – not in print in everyday language – when I was younger maybe – but not as much now. Maybe a taboo subject now (disc 1).

Interviewee 7 suggested that this term makes more of an impact when placed in context, which is what the interview process went on to do. They also highlighted that

[G]enerally...a bit like *deaf mute*. It would be something I’d think that I would tend to hear more in context, although I have heard it used, rarely, but I have heard it used as a real kind of an expletive, you know in frustration – ‘*are you deaf and dumb!!?*’ So somebody is understanding this in something other than its real context. I feel that the word *dumb* is a loaded word, but I’m not sure in contrast or derivation how this compares with the word *mute* (disc 2).

The participant, quoted above, had a medical background, which clearly frames their perception of how the terms and phrases are used.

Interviewee 1’s perception is coloured by their profession as a nurse practitioner, by this I mean it is possible that their use of terminology will differ from other non-medical people because of their exposure to medical terminology. Interviewee 1 perceived this term - *Deaf and dumb* - to be

[...] medically written more than anything else. It’s not something I hear but I wouldn’t be surprised to read it in some sort of medical journal (disc 1).

F. To turn a deaf ear

The phrase *to turn a deaf ear* is revealed to be a well-established English metaphor. All participants to varying degrees noted its use in text, by the media, and in discourse. One participant, Interviewee 7, noted that it is

[...] more subtle in terms of terms. I would hear it occasionally in conversation but possibly in a judgemental way as they turned a deaf ear so they weren’t listening, or if somebody I was asking chose to ignore me that would be *to turn a deaf ear*. Yes, I could hear my mother saying this you know – if I had felt as if somebody or something was upsetting me, then it might be something she’d say, ‘*oh, turn a deaf ear*’ – so don’t listen. Yes, so given as an instruction sometimes *not to listen* (disc 2).

It is interesting how this phrase is described as a ‘more subtle’ term: this perception links to the ‘Intensity continuum’ which describes the increase in emphasis from *is to deaf to...* through *to turn a deaf ear* and then on to *it fell on deaf ears* (5.1f).

G. It fell on deaf ears

The phrase *it fell on deaf ears* is noted a lot in written text, seen in newspapers and used by the media; especially in the political and sports arenas. This type of use does not exhaust its use because it is used in discourse as the following participant, Interviewee 1, recalls,

[I] say that all the time you know. If I give advice to somebody at work, particularly at work, this is how you need to work with this person and they ignored me, I would say, that *fell on deaf ears*. But it’s not positive, it’s negative (disc 1).

Interviewee 3 notes *it fell on deaf ears* as an ‘evocative metaphor’. As such, this links once again to the ‘intensity continuum’ (see above). Interviewee 3 suggested that

[I]t’s very hard sometimes to communicate the point to people, so, yeah, that’s quite an evocative metaphor for me. It makes me think about that difficulty of trying to get your point across to people when they just cannot understand what you’re saying or see your point of view (disc 1).

Interviewee 5 highlighted the use of this phrase within the political arena (see 5.1g/5.1g.2). He notes

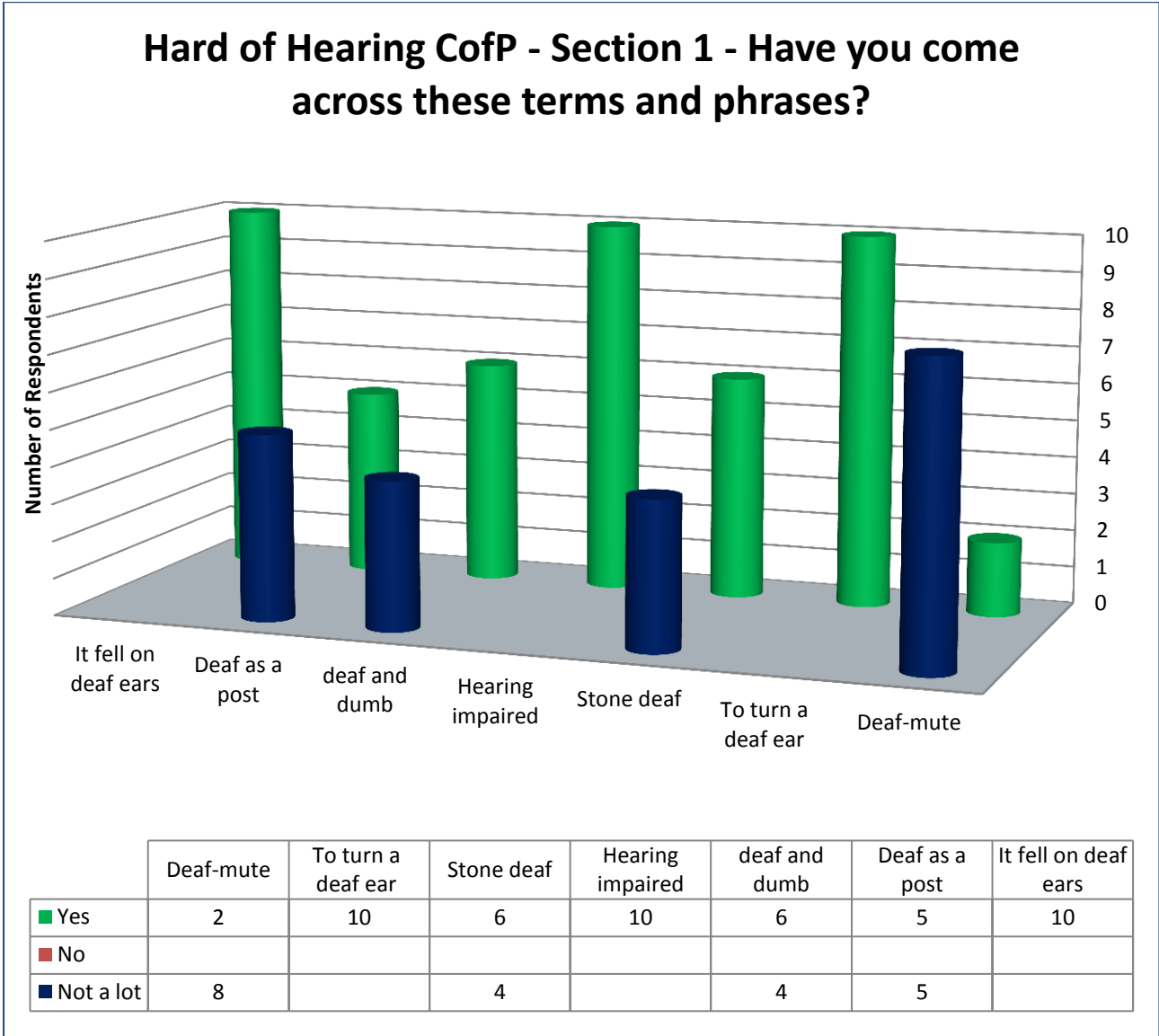
[I]’ve heard this a lot and it’s something you hear politically a lot too. I’d say of all the ones you’ve shown me up to now, that’s the one that I have seen most in print (disc 1).

With reference to this phrase, the interview process revealed that representatives of the *Hearing CofP* do not use this term in any way that connects with actual/real *deafness* or to refer to *d/Deaf* people.

61.b Hard of Hearing CofP

Graph 3 illustrates the following responses from the representatives of the *Hard of Hearing CofP* – these comprise of their interviews 11 to 20. The participants from the *Hard of Hearing CofP* stated that they have all come across the terms or phrases *to turn a deaf ear*, *hearing impaired* and *it fell on deaf ears*. The term *deaf-mute* had been heard of, but the majority believed this to be a term which is not used much anymore. The terms *stone deaf*, *deaf and dumb*

and *deaf as a post* had been heard of but half of the participants thought that they only came across these terms and phrases sporadically.



Graph 3: Section One of the Interview Results - Hard of Hearing CofP

The terms and phrases *hearing impaired*, *stone deaf*, *deaf as a post*, *deaf-mute*, *deaf and dumb*, *to turn a deaf ear* and *it fell on deaf ears* were all commented on by the representatives of the *Hard of Hearing CofP*. The following section discusses these findings.

A. Hearing impaired

For the representatives of the *Hard of Hearing CofP* the term *hearing impaired* was perceived as a term that describes their hearing loss. Interviewee 17 notes that *Hearing impaired* means to them

[...] a *hearing loss* or whatever extent or degree of *hearing loss* you have. I have a *hearing loss*, a *hearing impairment*. I actually prefer this terminology rather than somebody saying, ‘*oh you’re deaf or stone deaf or whatever*’. I think it’s a softer approach (disc 2).

Interviewee 18 concurs that *Hearing impaired*

[...] is an alternative to being called *deaf* because people like me are not *deaf*, we do have hearing, we are not *deaf*, but we have damaged hearing to use the word *impaired*, there’s a tendency to use that instead of the word *deaf*. [The word] *deaf* implies no hearing at all or born *deaf* (disc 1).

Interviewee 18 links this term with the medical model of deafness, and describes how this term is used within services providing help and support.

“The word *impaired* is used in other instances, like in Social Services, [there is] an impairment team who deal with people who some sort of impairment, whether it be, *deaf or blind*.” (disc 1)

The representatives of the *Hearing CofP* have a similar view of this term (see Interviewee 9 – p.110). It is worth noting, however, that Interviewee 19 disagrees with the above points of view, and explicitly voiced a dislike of this term, finding it distasteful.

[H]earing impaired.... [sighs] it’s one of those things that are upsetting – you see it a lot now (disc 1).

This suggests that perceptions may depend upon or be influenced by how individuals are primed as Hoey (2005:30,178) argues:

[...] the notion of priming [is] that every language user’s experience of the language(s) they use is unique to them... Words come at us both as children and adults from a plethora of sources. Parents, caretakers, friends, teachers, enemies, strangers (friendly or scary), broadcasters, newspapers, books, cards, letters, fellow pupils or colleagues – all at different times and to different degrees contribute to our primings.

B. Stone Deaf

Interviewee 18 humorously noted that *Stone deaf* was

[...] well... you can’t decide that a *stone is deaf* because it’s just a *stone*.... it’s not a living thing (disc 1).

They continue, adding that this term

[...] is an old-fashioned expression used to describe people who had *no hearing* or were *hard of hearing*. It’s similar to *deaf as a post*. People always used to say *stone deaf* – if

you were *hard of hearing* you were *stone deaf*, you had taken no notice [of] what they were saying. You didn't answer the question: "*Oh, he's stone deaf!*" (disc 1).

The above quote highlights both the literal and metaphorical use of *stone deaf*. In this instance, *stone deaf* could potentially be used in an insulting manner due to its 'condescending', 'ridiculing' stance. On the other hand, the utterance could convey a jocularity, or even describe a *profound deafness*.

Interviewee 19 confirms that this term is a straightforward term which is

[...] a quick, accurate description of someone who is 100% deaf (disc 1).

Interviewee 16 concurs but notes that they would not use this term nowadays.

[S]tone deaf - I have used this phrase but only to denote that people are profoundly deaf, that they have no hearing whatsoever. It's not something I would use these days; I have not heard it used for years (disc 2).

C. Deaf as a post

Deaf as a post is a term which representatives of the *Hard of Hearing* CofP seem to have puzzled over, especially in respect to the word *post* being associated with *deafness*. This is also noted in the interviews with the representatives of the *Hearing* CofP and discussed in 5.1d.2.

Interviewee 19 noted that *deaf as a post*

[...] tends to be used in [reference to] older people, who maybe have totally lost their hearing and in not wearing hearing-aids – [and] are *deaf as a post* (disc 1)

D. Deaf-mute

The term *deaf-mute* was suggested to be a phrase that you do not tend to come across anymore. Interviewee 19 remembers an experience that involved a conversation which saw her labelled as *deaf-mute* – her identity reframed without consultation. She perceived this as an attack on her positive face-wants – her need to be approved of had been ignored (Culpeper 1996: 352). She reflects,

[I]'ve had that said to me once... I had to correct that person because I may be *deaf* but certainly not *mute*. As I say, it is an outdated word, I think. I guess in less developed countries somebody may be *deaf* and unfortunately haven't been able to develop their language skills. I think that's where you'll find *deaf-mute* people ... who are obviously *deaf* and obviously *mute* (disc 1).

Interviewee 16 discussed the term *deaf-mute* as a descriptive label, but confirmed that the word *mute* is descriptive enough – there is no need to couple these two words together, noting that,

[D]*ea*f-mute ... is quite a descriptive phrase to me because I grew up with a girl whose parents were mute. I don't think you need deaf-mute. I think mute is enough because if they're mute they're usually deaf (disc 2).

Interviewee 15 suggested that there was no difference in meaning between the term *deaf-mute* and *deaf and dumb*,

[D]*ea*f-mute is *deaf and dumb* isn't it. You don't tend to hear a lot that today (disc 1)

E. Deaf and dumb

The term *deaf and dumb* was deemed to be a descriptive term for *d/Deaf* people, a term that was deemed not really used anymore by the representatives of this particular CofP. The exception to this was within the older generation, who habitually used this term because it was what their parents and even grandparents had used. Cloran (2000) suggests that words gain meaning at any stage of our lives, some terms gain meaning more than others and stay with us longer (see 6.6.3 and Cloran 2000:152 referenced on p.104 of this thesis).

Interviewee 18 notes that

[D]*ea*f and *dumb* – this is an insult, it's no longer used... it comes from many years ago when a person couldn't speak was described as *deaf and dumb*. But now-a-days *deaf and dumb* implies a lack of intelligence and believe me – people who are *deaf* and can't speak are not without intelligence. You can even find people in important walks of life who can be described as that. There are people in politics who could be described as *deaf and dumb*, but they are certainly not *dumb* in that context because *dumbness* as I say implies a lack of intelligence (disc 1).

Interviewee 19 remembers that

[D]*ea*f and *dumb* – this is something that I have been called. I have had to correct the person because I am not *dumb*. This happened a lot when I was younger and I had to live through that – it made me cringe... I don't think anyone is really *dumb*, even if you are *deaf* and can't speak you are still not necessarily *dumb*. I think it is quite a derogatory phrase and I don't really like it (disc 1).

Interviewee 12 explored the literal and metaphorical uses of the term *deaf and dumb* noting that

[...] there's the literal sense of someone who is *deaf* and therefore *dumb* – they can't hear and they can't speak. But *deaf and dumb* is someone you might refer to who is extremely

quiet and doesn't say much, or doesn't join in or interact with others. So figuratively and literally you get two contacts there (disc 2).

Interviewee 16 suggested a metaphorical use of *deaf and dumb* similar to the term *is deaf to...* (see 5.1f). The use of *deaf and dumb* is explicit in affirming that not only are you *not listening* you are also *not talking/responding verbally* or, more insultingly, *not intelligent*.

[D]*ea*f and *du*mb – [this can be] used by people to say about people who are unfeeling or uncaring, [that] they're *deaf and dumb* to the situation (disc 2).

F. To turn a deaf ear

This idiom was noted as being a phrase which signals varying reasons in respect to why someone is not listening.

Interviewee 1 uses a Lancashire colloquial saying which is an equivalent phrase *to turn a deaf ear*. She notes that

[T]o turn a deaf ear ... is to ignore someone – *to cock a deaf 'un* – *to cock a deaf one!* (disc 2).

Interviewee 13 describes *to turn a deaf ear* in a strategic manner in relation to selective *deafness*.

[T]o turn a deaf ear - [means] deliberately pretending to be *deaf* that's what I would say it would [mean]. A bit like certain married men, or maybe that's sexist to say that, maybe women as well, when you just pretend not to hear, even though they can hear (disc 2).

Interviewee 17 reflects that the phrase *to turn a deaf ear* has been personally directed, noting that it

[...] has very often been said to me because I am *hard of hearing*... as if I'm using it as an excuse not to listen, when actually it's not true because I haven't heard (disc 2).

This demonstrates again Culpeper's (1996) third strategy within his 'anatomy of impoliteness' – 'negative impoliteness – belittling the other and invading the other's space – (literally or metaphorically) (Archer et al 2012:90-91).

Interviewee 18 brings an interesting perspective to this metaphor reflecting that it is 'not possible to create a deaf ear'.

[T]o turn a deaf ear – in my experience you cannot create a *deaf ear*. You cannot at all adjust your ears so that one becomes deaf, it's impossible. So *to turn a deaf ear* means to ignore what's being spoken to you. You take no notice. Somebody's telling you something or trying to teach you something and you can ignore it. That's my version of

turning a deaf ear. You can't actually create a deaf ear if you haven't already got one (disc 1).

Hence, the insights provided by Interviewee 17 and 18 illustrate how one's CofP can colour how participants perceive the use and meanings of language terms.

G. It fell on deaf ears

The majority view of this phrase was that it is used metaphorically to mean to ignore or not listen to requests. Interviewee 12 notes that,

[...] that's when someone says something to another person, either they're trying to negotiate with that person or [to] persuade them or give a request the person... wasn't prepared to either give or meet with the request ... or wasn't persuaded – so you know it just fell on deaf ears – it's as though they hadn't heard (disc 2).

Interviewee 17 discusses the use of this phrase on a personal level, stating that

[...] refer[ring] to my own experience I feel sometimes [that] when I'm talking to someone they're not really listening but they're not actually deaf – it's like they've switched off their hearing and they are not really listening to you. To be honest sometimes they don't really care what you say, they're just being polite just by standing there but they look round and they don't. And again, I feel self-conscious sometimes because I don't know, I can't tell what level my voice is at (disc 2).

A common ground for the representatives of the *Hard of Hearing* CofP is that they can miss aspects of conversation. This means that they tend to rely on other linguistic cues to perceive the whole communication process, such as, lip reading, body language, and gestures. This element may potentially affect their language acquisition and, in turn, their knowledge of words, terms and phrases. By this I mean, it could create a 'degree of difference' in comparison to the representatives of the *Hearing* CofP in their priming of language terms. For example, Interviewee 11 reflects on this phrase and wonders how this idiom links with *deaf* people noting,

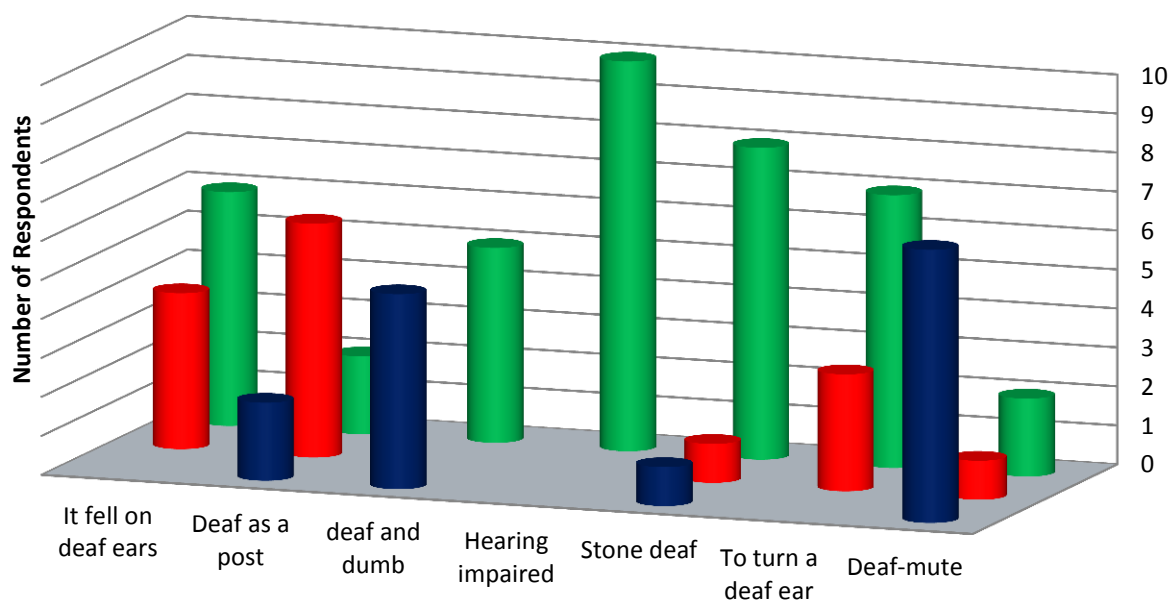
[I]'ve never taken any notice of that *fell on deaf ears* before, but now I've realised what it actually means, so that's what I'm thinking about really [this] in relation to *deaf* people (disc 2).

6.1c Deaf Community of Practice

Graph 3 illustrates the following responses from the representatives of the *Deaf* CofP – this comprises of interviews 21 to 31. The interviews are number as such because I decided not to use Interview 27. As will become clear, the responses from the representatives of the *Deaf* CofP differ quite a lot from the *Hearing* and *Hard of Hearing* CofPs. Both the representatives from the *Hearing* and *Hard of Hearing* CofPs had come across all of the terms and phrases, albeit to differing degrees, and could comment on whether they are currently used or not. Graph 4 illustrates the responses from the representatives of the *Deaf* CofP reveal that 6 out of 10 of the participants said that they had not come across the phrase *deaf as a post*. Two of the participants had come across the phrase but ‘not a lot’; the remaining two participants had heard of *deaf as a post* but it was not a term they would use. The term *deaf-mute* gained a majority response of ‘not a lot’ (7 out of 10) - to not coming across this term. One participant had not come across this term at all. As for the phrases, *to turn a deaf ear* and *it fell on deaf ears*, 3 out of 10 and 4 out of 10 respectively stated that they had not come across these phrases at all.

It is interesting to note that the term *stone deaf* carries a positive semantic prosody for the *Deaf* CofP – the majority of the participants linked this term to *Deaf* identity (see Interview 29 and 31 pages 114-116). The term *hearing impaired* received a unanimous response that this term conveys a negative connotation (see 7.1). *Deaf and dumb*, gained a split response in the sense that half of the participants noted that they did not come across this term a lot anymore and the other half noted this term to be an identity marker for them (see Interview 31 6.1c.B, p.123). However, there was a unanimous decision with regard to *deaf and dumb* conveying a negative semantic prosody when its use is to implicitly convey a meaning of intelligence, stupidity and ignorance. If this term is used by members of the *Deaf* CofP, then, it is deemed as a positive identity marker.

Deaf CofP - Section 1 - Have you come across these terms and phrases?



	Deaf-mute	To turn a deaf ear	Stone deaf	Hearing impaired	deaf and dumb	Deaf as a post	It fell on deaf ears
■ YES	2	7	8	10	5	2	6
■ No	1	3	1			6	4
■ Not a lot	7		1		5	2	

Graph 4: Section One of the Interview Results - Deaf CofP

The terms and phrases *hearing impaired*, *stone deaf*, *deaf as a post*, *deaf-mute*, *deaf and dumb*, *to turn a deaf ear* and *it fell on deaf ears* were all commented on by the representatives of the *Deaf CofP*. The following section discusses these findings.

A. Hearing impaired

The term *Hearing impaired* received a very different response from representatives of the *Deaf CofP* in comparison to the representatives of the *Hard of Hearing* and *Hearing CofPs*. This term is fervently disliked and does not exist in their vocabulary. They find *Hearing impaired* a term which describes them only within the realms of disability and the medical model of deafness. Therefore, to the representatives of the *Deaf CofP*, it is an insulting term because they are not as they say – ‘an impaired version of a hearing person’.

In discussing this term, Interviewee 31 gave the following response,

[H]earing impaired - Oh God, you mean *deaf*. It's a falsity, it's a government thing you know, Schools for Hearing Impaired Children, it's a load of rubbish, it's you know my view it's a falsity because what we're talking about is children who are *deaf* and why should we be ashamed to say that. You can't say *hearing impaired* because a lot of children in the *deaf* schools aren't hearing, they're *deaf*. *Hearing impaired* suggests that you have some residual hearing left and so I prefer the old fashioned term *deaf*, because it's all encompassing in the way that *hearing impaired* isn't (disc 4).

B. Stone Deaf

Interviewee 29 reflected on the term *stone deaf*, declaring,

[N]ow - this is an interesting one because I always say I'm *stone deaf*. I use this loads to describe myself because I don't hear anything at all and I like the fact that there is a term to describe myself... There is a sign you know, the sign for *deaf*, it can be modulated to all extremity to mean *stone deaf* or you either could add the sign for *stone* in there - you know a *stone* doesn't hear anything and I don't either and so there's an analogy being made. So for me, from my particular perspective I'm okay with it - a stone can't hear and I can't hear... English does have this way of adding adjectives to nouns, so it's just a pre-modifier of a noun to me to give it some emphasis [an] adjectival description. So I think *stone* does the job, so it's okay, [it's] neutral. It's funny really because I'm very proud to be *deaf* and proud to be *stone deaf* - you know, I'm fine with being *deaf*. I'm not one of these people who has any problems with being *deaf*, I'm very accepting of my own situation - I suppose it depends on your life experience (disc 4)

The above response denotes a neutral perception of the term *stone deaf* from a participant who was born *deaf*, even though they describe themselves as *stone deaf*. This neutral response may not be shared by other members of the *Deaf* community because overall this term is perceived as a positive identity marker (see 7.1, 7.5.2, 7.5.3). Interviewee 31 concurs that the term *stone deaf* can be viewed as an identity marker, asserting

[...] that's me stone deaf... it's an identity. I am absolutely *stone deaf*. I just don't hear anything at all, I mean nothing because not a lot of people are but I will sleep through an alarm. People are surprised that I just don't hear anything at all. A hearing member of my family when the alarm goes off - they just don't hear it! They just have this ability to sleep through anything. I think, I would say *stone deaf* in that context (disc 4).

The use of the term *stone deaf* in relation to 'not hearing the alarm clock' is an innocuous metaphor, hence describing a hearing person to be *stone deaf* because they did not hear the alarm clocks wake-up call. Interviewee 21 states that *stone deaf* is an identity term they would use as a member of the *Deaf* community. She is also aware that this term is potentially used by other people from different CofPs, to convey other meanings that she personally would not use. She confirms that

[Y]es I come across that, obviously a phrase used to describe somebody who you know [to be] profoundly deaf - can't hear anything. I don't think it intentionally holds any negative connotations but I think it it's used by various people who probably wouldn't know the terminology that we use [for] profoundly deaf (disc 3).

C. Deaf as a post

Interviewee 31's comment below is representative of most of the *Deaf* CofP participants when it comes to *deaf as a post* they are

[...] not sure what it means. Post as in post a letter or post that's in a fence post. No, I've never seen that and I'm finding that really difficult to imagine what that might mean. *Deaf as a post* - that's terrible, can't believe it's a term that's used and people say that (disc 4).

Deaf as a post is a hearing construct and therefore may not be a phrase that a *Deaf* person would come across; especially as this is not a term that would be used in sign language.

D. Deaf-mute

Interviewee 29 notes that

[T]his is a term that relates to me as an individual – for me it is positive - it is quite odd really because there is so much debate over it [being a] negative term. Now when I was growing up people were related to as *Deaf and dumb* and *deaf-mute* and historically we've always been quite proud to be known as that without really speaking to much about any negative connotations. To me it's not negative to say – it's just the same, *deaf and mute* have the same weight to me. *Deaf* means don't hear, *mute* means don't speak and so people don't deliberate over the term *deaf*. I don't deliberate over the term *mute*, so to me there's richness in the language when it's describes something at that level... I know it is used in humour and if it's used in any kind of derogatory way then it becomes negative... The BSL sign for it – I mean there is a sign for *Deaf* which incorporates ... *deaf and mute*. I don't choose to sign just *Deaf* – I choose to sign *Deaf-mute* because to me it's positive that I don't speak. It's good that I don't speak because I am a sign language user and what I was saying was if you take a term like gay there are variants of it like queer and queen... Some people will say that you shouldn't use that because it's offensive but gay people say well we don't find it offensive so why do you find it offensive? And it's the same for deaf people with hearing people running around saying *deaf-mute*, *deaf and dumb* are offensive but deaf people don't find them offensive and we use these terms ourselves and the equivalent signs. But then again it comes to whether you are being politically correct or not ... so it gets incredible individual in how words are used (disc 4)

I have included the above perspective to provide a balanced view of how individuals will perceive terms and phrases in a different manner depending on their backgrounds, life

experiences, beliefs and values. Perception is also dependent upon how an individual feels about specific terms, and how they have come across them. If these terms are used offensively towards you then it is possible that you would feel more negatively towards them (see 6.2c: D for a negative view of the term *deaf-mute*). This is an area I pick up on in more detail in Chapter Seven and also see 6.1b:D.

E. Deaf and dumb

Interviewee 31 states their belief that *deaf and dumb* is still used. She makes an analogy between *deaf and dumb* and *dumb blonde*⁴⁹ in the sense that people generally use *dumb* to mean *stupid* or *not clever*. *Dumb blonde* can also be associated with *dizzy*, *clumsy*, *silly*, *clueless* behaviour. However, *dumb blonde* is never taken to mean a *blonde person who can't speak*.

Interviewee 31 elaborates that they are very aware of the term *deaf and dumb*, asserting

[Y]es. Many, many, times in my life have I seen that. Now for me, I think you know it means *deaf* and *stupid* really, *deaf and dumb*. So you use terms like *dumb blonde*, which means *stupid blonde woman*, so to me you know *deaf and dumb* means *stupid deaf person*. I mean maybe it was meant to mean *deaf with no speech*, but I don't think it's used in that way. I mean that's just my personal view of the way it's used - to mean, *thick*, yeah, *definitely not very clever*. But like *dumb blondes* that expression, I think it's very similar really because people think, you don't seem to have *blonde* meaning a *blonde person who can't speak* do you. It's never taken to mean that. Anyway, that's just my view. But I'm *profoundly deaf* and proud of being *deaf* and am I *dumb* no. No way! It's an old fashioned term but people still use it don't they, they say she's *deaf and dumb* and I say I'm not *dumb*, because I always respond to that, you know. I lip read somebody and I catch them saying she's *deaf and dumb* and I always respond to say I'm not *dumb*, always. So yeah it is still used isn't it, it's still used today! (disc 4).

Interviewee 25 concurs with Interviewee 31, and also, remarks on the historical use of the term *deaf and dumb*,

[...] I think it's an interesting one - when it was used in the nineteenth century, twentieth century - when sign language was banned and you know that decision was made and they had *The Deaf and Dumb Association*, that was set up, and later they realised that *dumb* was the wrong word and it got dropped... I think it's an old fashioned phrase that means *deaf people can't talk*, but some people thought you know *deaf and dumb* as in *deaf and stupid*... A lot of deaf people said no no, *dumb* not *stupid* and there's hearing people [saying], no we don't mean *dumb* not *stupid* we mean *speech*, so as I said that's been

⁴⁹ It is politically correct not to use the term *dumb blonde* but to refer to blonde people as *blonde haired-people/person/woman/man*.

dropped, now it's just *Deaf* ... I have heard some people refer to them as *deaf without speech*. (disc 3).

F. To turn a deaf ear

Interviewee 23 notes that *to turn a deaf ear*

[...] is a phrase that a hearing person would use... I've read that before, so I've seen it written and I don't use it. I just think I might use that but I would sign it, *to turn a deaf ear*. So I would sign the equivalent meaning of it, there is a BSL sign (disc 3).

This term is discussed further in 7.1 in relation to the BSL use of metaphor. In sign language this metaphor is translated into a visual semantic form to be signed *in one eye and out the other* – a visual version of *in one ear and out the other* – meaning something similar to, *to turn a deaf ear*.

G. It fell on deaf ears

Interviewee 31 acknowledges the phrase *it fell on deaf ears*, stating that

[...] yes I've seen this. To be honest I don't really know what it means - *fell on deaf ears*. I just don't know. I've read that, I don't know if it was in a book or something, where have I [saw] that... It's difficult to imagine what that means because *fell*, you know involves falling in some way, what's that got to do with *deaf ears*. I can't put the two together. Maybe people who wear iPod's too loud and become *deaf* or something (disc 4).

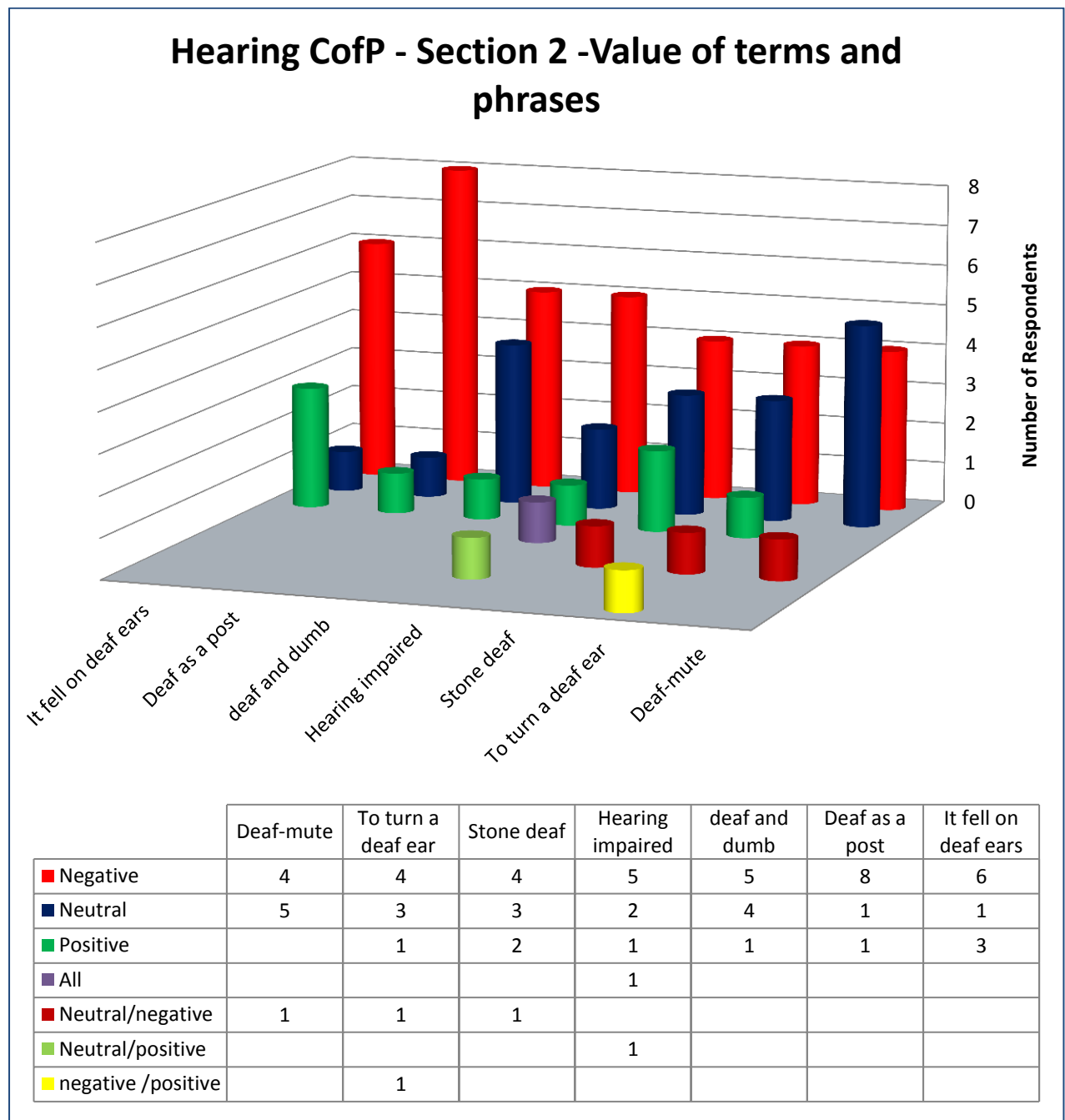
This is a term that is generally not acknowledged as a phrase by representatives of the *Deaf* CofP. It is recognised as a hearing construct to some, whilst others claimed they had not come across it at all.

6.2 Analysis and Discussion of Section Two of the Semi-informal Interviews

Section Two of the semi-informal interviews asked the question: "What value would you give these terms and phrases – positive, neutral, negative?" Representatives of the three CofPs suggested that answers to this section would depend on the context-of-use. Section Two responses are summarised and discussed further, below, with specific examples provided under each CofP response sections, the *Hearing*, *Hard of Hearing* and *Deaf* CofPs. The value results are summarised in Section 6.6.

6.2a Hearing Community of Practice

This section discusses the value responses of the representatives of the *Hearing CofP*, this is illustrated in the table below and in the summary results table (see 6.6.2). Within the *Hearing CofP*, the term *deaf as a post* was deemed to carry the most negative value. *Stone deaf* revealed a positive value when it was used in a jocular manner but not if it implicated anyone who was literally *d/Deaf*.



Graph 5: Section Two of the Interview Results - Hearing CofP

Representatives of the Hearing CofP discussed the terms and phrases *hearing impaired*, *stone deaf*, *deaf as a post*, *deaf-mute*, and *deaf and dumb* in more detail. *To turn a deaf ear* and *it fell on deaf ears* were noted to have mixed responses but were seen to have more of a negative value. These were not discussed in any detail until they were placed in context in Section Three of the interview process.

A. Hearing impaired

The following quote is taken from Interviewee 7, who stresses the positive and negative benefits of the term, *Hearing impaired*. For them, even though it can convey a negative semantic prosody (3.1). *Hearing impaired* was perceived to be a term which,

[...] is simply for giving information that might be helpful. So if somebody is explaining to me that the person I'm going to connect with is *hearing impaired* it gives me information that hopefully is going to help with that interaction. [On the other hand] it's not so much the *hearing* [part of the phrase] but the *impaired* [part]. I don't know how I would feel if somebody described me as *impaired* in some way. It is not a common word to use. So an impairment you know means that you have a difficulty in dealing with something, so therefore, it has a general negative connotation to that word, conjoined - it adds negativity. This is perhaps why you feel it's negative because it doesn't have anything happy to say (disc 2).

B. Stone Deaf

Interviewee 3 stated of *stone deaf* that

[I]t's quite an evocative and brutal phrase that isn't it, *stone deaf*. It's like the phrase *stone dead*. I guess it really conveys what it means that you know there is utterly no hearing there at all for a person who is *stone deaf*, or no life for someone who is *stone dead* (disc 1).

This perspective conveys a negative value in the sense that *stone deaf* is compared with being *stone dead* (see Chapter One). *Stone deaf* is a term which was generally not liked by the representatives of *Hearing CofP*.

C. Deaf as a post

Deaf as a post is a term that revealed a majority view of negativity. Interviewee 2 asserts

[...] I think that's negative. I think negative because it implies that nothing can be done, *deaf as a post* (disc 1).

This term conveys a *profound hearing loss* to the point that even with medical intervention the hearing ability will not be restored. *Nothing can be done* implies that there is no cure and that the

situation is hopeless - beyond help. This is a direct comparison to how representatives of the *Deaf* CofP view *deafness*. Being *Deaf* to them is their way of life – they seek no cure or medical intervention (see 2.4). The cornerstone of this research is that we all view life from our own CofP and this, in turn, contributes to how we use and perceive the language we use and come across. In essence our responses depend on our life experiences – something that I discuss further in the findings discussion in Chapter 7 - 7.8 (see 6 and 6.1b D and G).

D. Deaf-mute

Interviewee 9 notes that

[D]eaf-mute is a derogatory term (disc 1).

Yet representatives of the *Hearing* CofP tended to be “split” in respect to whether this term was negative or neutral. All did agree that the term does not tend to be used anymore.

E. Deaf and dumb

Deaf and dumb is a term that can be used to label and also to (potentially) ‘other’ *d/Deaf* people. Interviewee 1 thought that

It [was] negative because it’s a classification (disc 1).

Interviewee 10 suggested that

[D]eaf and dumb, you can be *deaf* but you’re not *dumb*, I can assure you of that. You are *deaf* but you’re not *dumb* (disc 2).

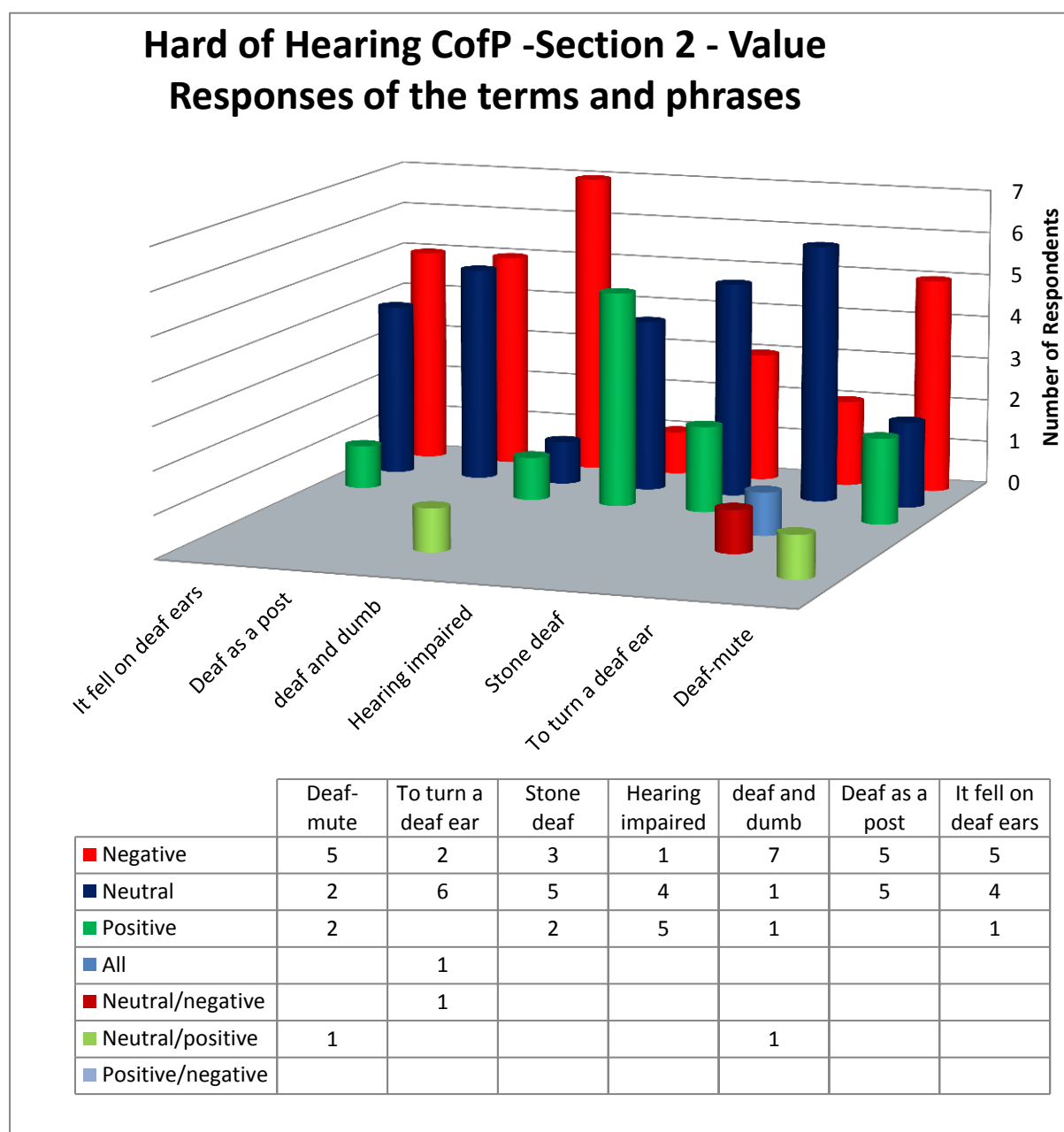
Taken in this context, Interviewee 10 notes that the term *dumb* clearly has a negative connotation because of its associated meaning of *stupid*, *unintelligent*, or *unable to communicate*. In sum, Interviewee 8 asserts

[I] hate *deaf and dumb* ... people in this day and age shouldn’t be called *deaf and dumb*, definitely not (disc 1).

6.2b Hard of Hearing Community of Practice

This section discusses the value responses of the representatives of the *Hard of Hearing* CofP, this is illustrated in the table below and in the summary results table (see 6.6.3). Representatives of the *Hard of Hearing* CofP tended to view the term *deaf and dumb* negatively. *Deaf as a post* gained a split result between positive and negative in value. *Deaf-mute* was noted to be negative

from half the participants but the rest revealed a split between neutral and positive. *Stone deaf* was mostly perceived to be neutral, with the rest of the results split between negative and positive values.



Graph 6: Section 2 Interview Results - Hard of Hearing CofP

It fell on deaf ears revealed a different response from *it turns a deaf ear* – the former term revealed a split response mostly between negative and neutral values and the latter noted more of a neutral response (see 5.1f). In comparison to the representatives of the *Hearing CofP*, who noted split responses between negative (5), neutral (2) and positive (2), the representatives of the *Hard of Hearing CofP* revealed a split response between positive (5), neutral (4) and negative

(1). Representatives of the *Hard of Hearing* CofP discussed the terms and phrases *hearing impaired*, *deaf as a post*, *deaf-mute*, *deaf and dumb*, *to turn a deaf ear* and *it fell on deaf ears* in more detail. Their comments are outlined below.

A. Hearing impaired

Interviewee 12 stated that

[H]earing impaired ... is a neutral to me - it's a descriptive term, not really conveying any sense of [being] derogatory or being a value judgement, it's simply this person has a difficulty with an impairment with their hearing, a medical physical condition (disc 2).

B. Deaf as a post

Interviewee 18 draws an analogy between *Deaf as a post* and the post being a '*dead piece of wood*'. This helped to give it a negative semantic prosody.

[...] yes, I've come across that frequently, but I could never figure out why it was a post. A post to me is probably a piece of wood, but a piece of wood would of course be dead (disc 1).

C. Deaf-mute

Interviewee 19 declares that

[D]eaf-mute – this is negative – I don't think this is a nice word – it is degrading, wiping somebody off really, no – I don't like it at all (disc 1).

Interviewee 12 asserts that *deaf-mute* is purely a descriptive term noting that it

[...] suggests a physical state of affairs that a person is *deaf and mute* – they can't speak and that's it. I don't see that as a positive or negative just neutral (disc 2).

D. Deaf and dumb

This collocative term is viewed mostly to have a negative value by the representatives of the *Hard of Hearing* CofP. Interviewee 17 reveals a firm dislike of this term because it suggests unintelligence,

[D]eaf and dumb – I don't like those two words, they are so negative. It's like somebody doesn't understand a person's *hearing loss* or [have an] understanding of why they don't speak very well or have language difficulties (disc 2).

E. To turn a deaf ear

Interviewee 12 views *to turn a deaf ear* from a couple of perspectives because this phrase was introduced as a standalone concept and not placed in context.

[T]o turn a deaf ear – if I'd known the context [of this phrase that] it might be [as] if the person was deliberately ignoring [you], which is rude, then it might be negative. But it could be positive in certain circumstances if you are pretending not to hear something out of being discreet or you know - not wanting to know [because] you're just pretending not to have heard. So it's a difficult one that. It depends on context (disc 2).

Context is intrinsic to how we perceive language – without this function, it is hard to assign the intended meaning to a term or phrase. As Archer et al (2012:7) inform us,

[T]he interpersonal function is associated with language as an expression of attitudes and an influence on the attitudes of the hearer. The textual function is defined as the function of language in constructing a text. Pragmatics has opened our eyes to the fact that we need a rich description of context in order to understand what is said.

F. It fell on deaf ears

The phrase *it fell on deaf ears* was discussed in the sense of ignoring. Interviewee 13 notes a negative perspective of this term because the described behaviour is anti-social and unpleasant. It has no link to real deafness but it could potentially offend if it was used with this in mind. A literal use of this term is noted in 6.2c.G and discussed further in 7.1.

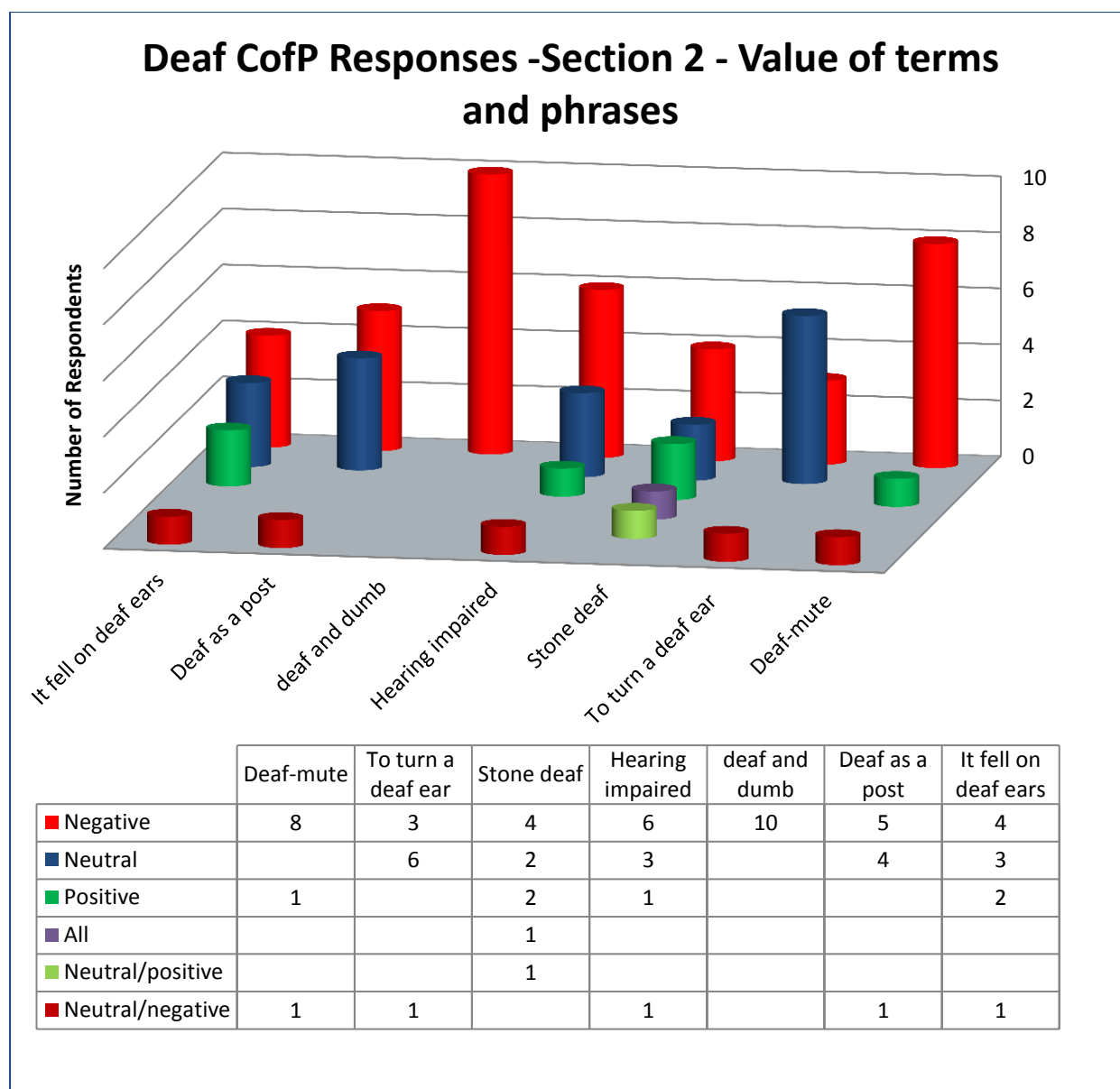
[I]t fell on deaf ears - I'm going to say negative because if you're talking to someone and someone pretends they're not hearing or ignores you that's not very good behaviour (disc 2).

Interviewee 12 concurs with Interview 13. In addition, they use the word *pleading* which is found to be used with this phrase frequently as revealed in the corpus research in 5.1g.1. Hence, Interviewee 13 confirms that

[I]t fell on deaf ears – [this to me means that] if you went *pleading* to someone or request something and all of *it fell on deaf ears* as though they wouldn't listen or wouldn't be persuaded, I would tend to see this as negative (disc 2).

6.2c Deaf Community of Practice

As illustrated in Graph 7 below and the summary results table (see 6.6.4) - this section discusses the value responses of the representatives from the *Deaf* CofP. The representatives of the *Deaf* CofP revealed a shared negative value for the phrase *deaf and dumb*. *Deaf-mute* follows a close second, having been assigned a negative value (9), neutral (1) and positive (1). *Hearing impaired* was also assigned largely a negative value (7), with only a few neutral (3) and one positive (1) score. The phrase *deaf as a post* revealed a spilt view between negative and neutral values. Interestingly, *stone deaf* noted a mixed response: this is discussed later in the summary results 6.6.4, 7.1 and 7.2. The chart below notes 11 results as opposed to 10 for the term *Hearing impaired* - this is because one of the participants could not decide their outcome due the varying ways of using this term – depending on its context-of-use for them. Their response is documented under neutral/negative and positive categories to make the distinction that language perception is personal to the individual.



Graph 7: Section Two of the Interview Results - Deaf CofP

To turn a deaf ear was assigned a neutral response by the majority of the representatives (7), with some negative acknowledgements (4). *It fell on deaf ears* in comparison revealed a split response between negative and neutral values, with two positive value responses. These are discussed in more detail below.

A. Hearing impaired

Interviewee 29 asserts a strong negative response to this term, noting that the word *impaired* should not be any way involved in describing *Deaf* people. The term *hearing impaired* is described from a *Deaf* CofP perspective:

[N]ow this is interesting - this is a word that appears to be politically correct but a lot of *Deaf* people don't like this term because the word *impaired* alone has very strong connotation it means something's wrong, imperfect, not right. So if you've got a blind person and deaf person alongside each other – you know – they're referred to as *visually impaired* and I'm referred to as *hearing impaired* – but no other group is referred to as being impaired. I will tell you that people aren't referred to as walk-impaired, walking impaired are they a person with glasses isn't called reading impaired. So I'm not sure why this term impaired is used only to describe deaf or blind people – and people see that it is more politically correct to use it – this is not an acceptable – it's not politically correct to say the deaf people are impaired in any way – for deaf people this is a negative term. (disc 4)

Interviewee 25 concurs with interviewee 29 asserting that

[I] think *hearing impaired* is a negative because you know you can't say which level of deafness it is. To me if it's *hearing impaired* ... you know they might look and think ... oh, you know, hearing problems [and] talk to me but at the end of the day I'm profoundly deaf ... It gives the wrong impression because it's not a clear term (disc 3).

B. Stone Deaf

Stone deaf was assigned a positive value for being a positive *Deaf* Identity marker, and also seen as a neutral term because, as a hearing construct, merely describes a level of *deafness*.

Interviewee 25 conveys this in saying,

[Y]ou know I wouldn't say it was a negative, I think it's linked to the level of hearing isn't it, you know I would call it neutral because you know [if] you are *stone deaf* a hearing person wants to be clear and know that they can't hear at all you know that other person wants to be clear. [If you are] *deaf* ... you know are you *stone deaf*. I'd just say it was neutral. It's not negative it's not positive (disc 3).

C. Deaf as a post

As well as gaining a negative response to this hearing construct and its relation to an inanimate gatepost, Interviewee 26 notes a neutral response, stating that they would not be affected by this phrase.

[I] can see how there's humour in it, but for me it wouldn't be offensive because it's just sort of what hearing people say so I wouldn't take it on board at all. (disc 3).

Interviewee 25 had not used this phrase before and stated that it was a hearing idiom. He described his understanding of *deaf as a post* as,

[F]or me looking at it... a *deaf* person signing it... [they] would probably just see you know a *deaf* person stood there he wanted to call them [gain their attention] but you couldn't [because they're *deaf*] you have to go over and tap them... that's my perception of what that means. You've got to walk over, you can't shout, you can't do anything, you've got to run over [to get that person's attention] so that's my perception of *deaf as a post* - a term that I never use. I've seen it, very rarely ... you know I know it's out there... It's not an effective term, it's just a phrase (disc 3).

D. Deaf-mute

Interviewee 23 confirms that this term conveys a negative semantic prosody. It is not an acceptable term to use anymore and prefers to view *deaf-mute* as an historical term, stating that it is not used

[...] much now, hardly ever really, but in newspapers mostly, you know, you'll get the *deaf mute* was blah, blah, blah or [a] *deaf and dumb* person. I mean that, that's a throwback from the past and now it's more correct now just to use the term *Deaf*, although there are some media ... newspapers that will still use that term *deaf mute*, yeah, so you still see it around now and then (disc 3).

The media use of this term was previously highlighted in 5.1a.1 and is addressed further in 6.3 and 6.4 of this chapter. I discuss further the potential influence of media use of the identified terms and phrases in 7.1 and 7.2.

E. Deaf and dumb

Interviewee 23 assigns the term *deaf and dumb* with a positive identity, acknowledging that

[...] there are some *Deaf* people who sign [the term] *Deaf* with the fingers going from the ear round to the mouth as if to say like he is, don't hear and the mouth doesn't speak, but that's not what the sign means. The sign means *Deaf*, it doesn't mean can't hear, can't speak... it's a sign that reflects identity rather than [a] medical condition ... It reflects a positive identity (disc 3).

The concept of *Deaf* identity was addressed in Chapter Two and is further discussed in Chapters 7 and 8.

F. To turn a deaf ear

Interviewee 26 notes a neutral response to *to turn a deaf ear* because they had not come across this phrase before.

[D]oes it mean like turning your ear or something, it's somebody that's got like a twisted ear? (disc 3).

Interviewee 21 recognises the phrases *to turn a deaf ear* and provides a view that this term could be viewed in relation to *d/Deaf* people, in a way that conveys a negative semantic prosody. They confirm that

[Y]es I've heard of that obviously it means to ignore someone. I get the concept [of] what it's sort of trying to relay, but... it does sort of give you this impression that a *deaf* person has a tendency to ignore someone which you know it's not [that] they're ignoring you it's simply that they haven't heard. So it is a phrase that does hold again negative connotations ... although, most people who use it don't need to use it in that way, just simply to ignore, that it's not being heard, it's not being taken on board (disc 3).

Interviewee 24 provides a view that any term which casts a negative light on *deafness*, such as *to turn a deaf ear*, is cause to not like this type of phraseology. He asserts

[I] see the term *deaf* [and] hom[e] in on it wanting to object to it because usually it's something that's negative and so... you know to me *deafness* isn't a negative concept and so I object to negative phraseology like this that puts *Deaf* people in a negative light (disc 4).

Interviewee 22 discusses the use of both phrases – *to turn a deaf ear* and *it fell on deaf ears*. As discussed in 5.1e.2 and 5.1g.1, table 19 Interviewee 22 connects the use of the words *plea* and *mercy* to both phrases, noting their negativity, depending on how they are used. He states that

[T]o turn a deaf ear – [means] ... they didn't care basically – a decision to ignore some information that is given, it is attached with *plea* or *begging for mercy* – desperately wanting or needing something ... something that falls flat and doesn't make an impact. It is interesting in a way that this [term] might imply that there are *deaf ears* and *hearing ears*. If you find the right audience your *pleas* might be heard. [It implies] *useless ears* – all information going into them and not being heard – but *turning a deaf ear* is *ignoring*. [An association with the word] *pleas* that comes to mind – it is difficult to think of other examples to do with this, where it might be used – would one say that instructions or an opinion *fell on deaf ears*? [There is a] strong association with *plea*, *mercy*, with power [being] very much part of that situation – for people who choose to ignore are very powerful in this case – those are the ones who make a judgement as to whether to submit, agree, accept, or acquiesce or not. So, quite interesting that this suggests that people can almost choose to be *deaf* or *hearing* in this situation – it is not a choice that *d/Deaf* people cannot choose or make. This phrase implies a choice that doesn't actual exist. Maybe this phrase has evolved and moved away from the root meaning – depends how you use this phrase – use of ears maybe passive - those people are stubborn would never understand it –but others may understand but choose not to (disc 3).

G. It fell on deaf ears

Interviewee 24 provides an insightful account regarding the literal use of the phrase *it fell on deaf ears* - because it was a real situation this had remained as strong memory, he reflected on the power that this action had exerted amongst the rally-goers. His story begins

[...]when he attended a Deaf Rally in London, I think it was 1995, anyway, at the time there was a policeman called Mark Cranwell who was fluent in BSL and when it came time to disperse the Rally - he attempted to gain people's attention – at first everyone looked and watched him sign but when we realised it was a request to go home - the policeman's message - a call to disperse - literally *fell on deaf ears* - we were having a great time and deliberately chose to ignore him (disc 4).

6.3 Section Three: Analysis and Discussion of the articles in the Semi-informal Interview

Section Three of the semi-informal interviews asked the question: “In the light of the terms and phrases we have just discussed - do the following articles make an impact on you? If yes, why?”. The chosen terms and phrases are contextualised in the following genres: a magazine, educational literature and news articles. This section explores the reactions given in respect to the following six articles:⁵⁰

1: Article One: “Jamie’s offer of work falls flat”

2: Article Two: “Blind to his own Bigotry”

3: Article Three: “Deaf and Dumb Man cured”

4: Article Four: “U.S. incensed by Europe’s last dictator ...[he]turns a deaf ear to his governments criticisms”

5: Article Five: Title – “Royal Wedding Bells Fall on Deaf ears”

6: Article Six: full article of the above headline – “Royal Wedding Bells Fall on Deaf ears”

7: Article Seven: “Don’t turn a blind eye or deaf ear to us”

More particularly, this section identifies the perception of the three CofPs in relation to the articles. I worked to elicit a response that reflects the newsworthiness of each article in the light of the identified terms and phrases introduced to the participants in Section One and Two of the

⁵⁰ Full copies of the seven articles used in Section Three of the semi-informal interview are located in Appendix: 7-12.

semi-informal interview process. This section questions whether the language used in these articles has made an impact or not; by impact I mean whether they noted the identified terms or phrases, and if so, whether they found them particularly salient and why.

The stories have been chosen because their wording provides a ‘hook’⁵¹ for the reader’s interest to be captivated, and thereby effected by what is being presented to them.

[N]ews hooks include controversy and debate, calendar events like anniversaries and special events, interesting people, such as, celebrities, unusual alliances and emerging leaders and information on trends, new research results or a local angle on a national story.

6.3.1 Article One: “Jamie’s offer of work falls flat”

This article describes Jamie Oliver’s project in his London cafe, Fifteen.

Chef Jamie Oliver has been scouring the country looking for workers to fill his ever-expanding restaurant empire. With unemployment figures at a record high, you’d think he’d be inundated with applicants. But Jamie’s offer of work *fell on deaf ears*.⁵²

6.3.1a Hearing Community of Practice

The use of the phrase *fell on deaf ears* in this article implies that *no-one is responsive or listening* to Jamie’s offer of work. The overall focus of the representatives from the *Hearing CofP* to this article was that it referred to the unemployed group in a negative manner.

Interviewee 10 supports this perception, stating that

[I] just happened to look up at Jamie Oliver and saw ‘Jamie’s offer had fallen on deaf ears’. I thought that just confirmed what I’ve read earlier because when I was reading it I was thinking [that] people can’t be bothered to get out of bed. It’s really emotive, really judgemental and negative and not really representing the unemployed group at all (disc 2).

6.3.1b Hard of Hearing Community of Practice

The focus of the representatives from the *Hard of Hearing CofP* varied from being sceptical about what the tabloid press write about and the real message that probably is not given, to the phrase *it fell on deaf ears* being associated with *deafness*.

⁵¹ <http://www.npaction.org/article/articleview/756> [accessed 04/09/2012]

⁵² The phrase *fell on deaf ears* is foregrounded in a separate box next to a photograph of Jamie Oliver located in the right-hand corner of the article.

Interviewee 12 acknowledges a metaphorical use of this phrase – looking to know the deeper social reasons why Jamie’s offer of work *fell on deaf ears*.

[Y]ou’d have to find out why there was such poor response, to me you have to go behind the headlines here, as I say I am very sceptical and suspicious particularly of tabloid journalism, they just want to sell papers...you have to go behind the *it fell on deaf ears* – I mean then why did it, that’s my reaction, if they used that expression... why was there such a poor response? (disc 2).

Interviewee 13 notes a literal representation to actual *deafness*, asserting that

[T]hey’re associating it with people being *deaf* aren’t they really – I don’t know why they would do that. It’s a poor choice of words really. That’s how they use the word isn’t it. So you’d think that a report like this would be more politically correct (disc 2).

6.3.1c Deaf Community of Practice

The representatives of the *Deaf* CofP assert that they do not really like the word being used in a phrase which is associated with negative connotations. Some of the participants noted that this phrase was an English metaphor and hence it made no difference to them. Other perceptions are detailed below.

Interviewee 25 responded to the ‘Jamie Oliver’ article by stating that the use of

[...] *fell on deaf ear* is [a] good impact ... I think, you know, it is straight to the point (disc 3).

Interviewee 21 stated that

[...] it’s not really a new kind of topic, something that you know [is] often debated in these days and economic climate... interesting - I’ve just seen this bit, *Jamie’s offer of work fell on deaf ears in London*. So yes it’s sort of taking that sort of topic, you know he’s trying to do a drive and he’s trying to get people back into work and for whatever reason *his campaign has fallen on deaf ears*. So it’s, it’s been ignored, it’s not been taken up... I wouldn’t read too much into the use of *fell on deaf ears*, because I know what it’s being used for. But, I think perhaps for members of the *Deaf* community who maybe don’t understand what that phrase is being used for, they might sort of feel well why are we sort of being used in what is quite an article which ... is reflecting negatively on the British public and saying that you know, they’re not getting up out of bed, they’re not sort of being bothered to look for work. But, yeah, I just see that phrase as saying whatever he’s been doing, whatever campaign he’s pushed forward it’s just been ignored, it’s not worked (disc 3).

Interviewee 30 questions the use of *it fell on deaf ears* to gain a newsworthy impact,

[I]t's very difficult to say *it fell on deaf ears* I don't think people would really understand what that means *Deaf* people wouldn't understand it. You'd have to change that word and it doesn't make the impact really, it's supposed to make an impact ... it's supposed to make someone look, *oh what fell on deaf ears* but I'm *Deaf* and to think that hearing people often use terms like this. I mean, I don't know if they do ... but it worried me,... it's sad really that you know it's a negative thing people ignoring Jamie Oliver's offer of work, so why should they use the term deaf ...the term *deaf* in it to get attention to that fact so -why use *it fell on deaf ears*? (disc 3).

6.3.2 Article Two: Blind to his own Bigotry

Blind to his own Bigotry is a *Daily Mirror* story which conveys the message that David Sieff, the boss of the National Lottery [at the time] was insensitive to the feelings of the *d/Deaf* and *Hard of Hearing* and people with Alzhiemers but he is noted to like blind people.

[I]n one fell swoop, David Sieff has insulted millions of Britons. The boss of the National lottery Charities Board has declared that he's "extremely impatient" with deaf people...

This article metaphorically cites him as 'Blind to his own bigotry'.

6.3.2a **Hearing Communtiy of Practice**

The representatives from the *Hearing* CofP thought it was an awful peice of news reporting and extremely bigotted. Interviewee 1 declares that

[I] can't think of a more rediculous reason to lose your patience with somebody... I feel that the Daily Mail has got some other motives and it's not exactly written in the way that it's suggesting that people who are *hard of hearing*, who have Alzhiemer's should be pitied. Yeah, Nobody's right – there's nothing right about that (disc 1).

6.3.2b **Hard of Hearing Community of Practice**

Overall the representatives from the *Hard of Hearing* CofP thought that this article was distasteful.

Interviewee 19 asserts that it is not a positive thing to categorise other people.

[I] think it's wrong to put all deaf people in that category – you should take each person as an individual – a bit like any category, anyone who is gay, deaf, whatever, you are always going to get extremes, someone who overacts (disc 1).

Interviewee 16 concurs that this constitutes an example of marginalisation.

[T]hat's terrible, so bigoted. I mean what is he God Almighty and there's nothing wrong with him at all, or any of his family. That's immediately marginalising people who aren't perfect!(disc 2).

6.3.2c Deaf Community of Practice

The overall impression of this tabloid newspaper article of the representatives of the *Deaf* CofP is that is very a patronising story which affords *d/Deaf* people no respect. It is unimpressive and portrays an ignorant personality.

Interviewee 23 confirms that

[Y]eah. I would say, I would expect it to be about somebody who is ignorant and that's confirmed in what I've read. That actually, yeah, its, it reflects ... a really ignorant person (disc 3).

6.3.3 Article Three: Deaf and Dumb Man cured

This piece of literature is from a Sunday School session teaching children about the parable of Simon. It is titled “ *The Story of Simon, The Deaf and Dumb Man*”(Mark 7v31-37). This article highlights a number of issues for people, such as the need to be cured if you are *deaf*, the use of the term *deaf and dumb*, that Simon was very sad before he was cured by Jesus, that he can now hear the birds and music, and that being cured is a reason to have a big party. This story is adapted from the biblical story and, as such, captures how the author viewed this parable from their CofP.

6.3.3a Hearing CofP

Overall the representatives from the *Hearing* CofP thought that this viewpoint was not appropriate to hand out to children.

Interviewee 7 declares

[R]ight well how *loaded*, yeah, as if a *deaf and dumb* man has nothing going for him, that's what it is saying to me. So, if I was a school child reading this I would be learning that if you are *deaf and dumb* it's very sad. It feels like it is an all or nothing situation. So until these two issues are dealt with there's no chance of happiness. So, although I can hold with celebrating, hearing and speaking this feels like an absolute half picture, that

the whole of the rest of this person is ignored. ‘Made him better’ – what loaded words (disc 2).

Interviewee 5 states

[I] think that’s quite bad actually because it makes out that he’s deficient and less than other people until he’s been cured. It’s like... it’s implying that because he’s *deaf and dumb* and he can’t be happy and that’s not true (disc 5).

6.3.3b Hard of Hearing CofP

The *Hard of Hearing* representatives reflect that this literature illustrates a ‘them’ and ‘us’ situation by creating a divide between *deaf* and *hearing* people, this said, this Parable story was also seen positively (see Interview 12 below).

Interviewee 19 reflects

[I] have to laugh at these – going to church is also used – the bible is also used, especially hymns refer to being *deaf* – mmmm – I’m really pleased that he can now sing, speak, hear and what have you. I just think he has a heck of a lot catching up to do. He will be very behind with things now that he can hear... it will take him a lot of time to adapt and may affect him mentally.... it will take a long time (disc 1).

Interviewee 19 notes in addition that

[T]his separates you out from *hearing* people. It makes you ... different from them, it enhances that. My case at school – when I was a kid I was always different from the other kids and was never one of them. I was deaf ‘Interviewee 19’ – the deaf girl – so there was a them and us [situation]. I was always well aware that there was always that difference (disc 1).

Interviewee 13 remembers this term as an old fashioned term which associates deaf people with unintelligence – marginalising and othering

[I]t’s this *deaf and dumb* thing from the past you know associating people with deafness and not being intelligent, which is wrong really isn’t it (disc 2).

Interviewee 12 notes a positive value to this article because, from their CofP perspective, they are comfortable to receive medical help and support with regard to their hearing. This perception links to the medical model of *deafness* where the general view is one of cure and use of audiological interventions to enable them to hear (see Chapter 2 and 7.6).

[I] suppose this is positive really... to do with religion and Jesus’s miracles, in that context, I mean the fact he was *deaf and dumb* and was cured. (disc 2).

6.3.3c Deaf Community of Practice

Overall the representatives of the *Deaf* CofP thought that the use of *deaf and dumb* was no longer appropriate, the main issue being that a negative view of *deafness*, in their opinion, was being perpetuated.

Interviewee 30 states

[Y]ou know it's not appropriate to do this at all ... I don't want to be made hearing I'm not ill. I'm just a deaf version of ... a hearing person with no nerve endings in the cochlear, that's all I am, not an ill person (disc 3).

Interviewee 23 declares that

[W]ell it's 2012, I mean come on, it's still using the term *deaf and dumb*. It's not good. Phurr. Well I mean to me that's sending a message to children that being *deaf* is a bad thing, that, it's invalidating *Deaf* people to me and saying that we need to be cured, so for me, it has very a negative value that strip. Yeah, and I don't think it should be handed out in that situation at all (disc 3).

Interviewee 29 reveals the following perception of this biblical literature,

Okay, so this is what I say the problem is if you read the Gospels - do you know Jesus did go round professing to cure people and *deaf* people were included in that, but ... you know *deaf* people were just a small section of the number, you know of the different types of people that were subject to being healed in the Gospel writings. I think you've got to see that in the context of Jesus' times... it was difficult being *deaf*. *Deaf* people weren't educated there was no support you know *deaf* people kind of had a raw deal. It's different being *deaf* now to what it was 2,000 years ago so you know the Bible, although saying that does have a lot of positive reference to *deaf* people, it actually mentions interpreters, somebody interpreting what was said to a *deaf* person so we assume that life was difficult for *deaf* people but you know if you really take a look at the Bible and this specific incidence where cure comes into it the problem is you know it's negative because it's saying like *deaf* people are lacking, are missing something, but I think you know the person who wrote it, I think you now it's their interpretation of it really. So for me it's just an individual person's interpretation of what happened in the Bible. You know, is it more important to hear the birds or hear somebody talking - you know it's interesting that he's chosen you know to put the birds issue in here and not, you know to me as a human being functioning in society is it relevant to hear the birds compared to, is it relevant to be able to hear your child say hello, you know that type of thing - so it's interesting. But again it's, it's how people individually value their hearing and people who take hearing for granted and the value a level of not being able to hear the birds. Now the only article...you know *deaf* people have never heard music and all that similar, that if I miss a lot which for deaf people the things that hearing people say, oh it must be awful being deaf you can't hear the birds, you can't hear music, are actually the things that deaf people don't need in their lives and don't miss. So if you've grown up hearing and you're used to listening to music and are used to listening to the birds in the morning

then it's different. I mean if you have music really loud you know all hearing people say oohh the music's driving me mad so every experience could be negative or positive but there you go. But I do think that this bit here, yeah again you've got the reference to *deaf and dumb* isn't it awful and that's not acceptable, but I don't think it means unintelligent in this sense, it means can't speak - the man who couldn't hear and couldn't speak - so it's interesting that it's been used to mean something different as I say, [it is an] ambiguous term now (disc 4).

6.3.4 Article Four: “U.S. incensed by Europe’s last dictator... [he] turns a deaf ear to his governments criticisms”.

This article uses the metaphor *to turn a deaf* to describe the action of the Belarusian President, Alexander Lukashenko who blatantly ignores calls to be ‘held accountable for the crimes committed against his own people. This articles reports that “ Alexander Lukashenko continues *to turn a deaf ear* to all criticim of his government”. Hence, this article conveys the meaning that Alexander Lukashenko is deliberately and persistently ignoring criticism of his leadership as a President and calls for him to be accountable for crimes against his own people. In essence, the media outlet is using the metaphor *to turn a deaf ear* to emphasise a permanency of action (given *deafness* is rarely reversible).

Archer et al (2012:292) discuss Lakoff and Johnson’s view of the media’s use of metaphor and how, by using certain phrases repeatedly, it can alter people’s perception subliminally.

[A]ccording to Lakoff and Johnson (2006), much of our thought, language and action may be conceptualized – and hence governed – by metaphors. If this is true, then it is possible that politicians and media outlets can (knowingly and/or unknowingly) use metaphors to influence us –to the extent that they shape the way we think about things... Infact, the repetition of words/phrases is said to have the power to change our brains in addition to helping us to develop particular interpretative frames.

6.3.4a Hearing Community of Practice

Overall the representatives of the *Hearing* CofP swayed between a neutral and negative value of the phrase *to turn a deaf ear* because it never really conveys anything positive (cf. evidence from the Nexis research which demonstrates this term being used to emphasise positive action; see 5.1h.2.).

Interviewee 8 suggests that *to turn a deaf ear* is a phrase which could potentially discriminate, noting

[I] don't know, but, I think they are using this *turn a deaf ear* to try and use it to their advantage, but it's not working. I just think to use *to turn a deaf ear* and terms like that in this day and age is just not acceptable and I really think that people shouldn't be using those terminologies, although older people know what it's all about – it's not brought up to the 21st Century, it's just really bad and I feel quite offended and it discriminates (disc 1)

Interviewee 7 states the implicature of *to turn a deaf ear* in this instance is that Alexander Lukashenko obviously does not care about - will not be held accountable for - his actions, hence the concept of not listening is also that of not caring. Interviewee 7 also connects this meaning with *d/Deaf* people which, in turn, potentially conveys a negative semantic prosody towards *d/Deaf* people.

[T]here is not a lot in it that's positive, in any which you look at it, to be honest. Their lack of connection with [his] people and also a lack of connection with *deaf* people, and implying that something to do with not listening is not caring and hearing is not caring. The two are kind of using this term in terms of the not caring... [this] I mean on the one hand [is] incorrect and on the other hand judgemental. Not good (disc 2).

Interviewee 6 contradicts Interview 7 declaring that

[I]t's just a phrase being used... it's nothing to do with people being *deaf* (disc 1).

6.3.4b Hard of Hearing Community of Practice

The *Hard of Hearing* representatives find *to turn a deaf ear* to be a non-offensive term, thereby awarding it a neutral value. However, they also note that this phrase could be replaced with other words to remove the metaphoric use of *deaf ears*.

Interviewee 19 informs us that *to turn a deaf ear*

[...] is basically saying that he is ignorant and critical of his government and taking no notice really – I mean they could've used ignorant. I think it would've been a better way – but I'm not really bothered by the phrase. Yes, ignorant is a better way but whoever wrote this wouldn't have given this second thought really. I don't feel insulted by this. It is not directing this to me, so I am not bothered by it personally (disc 1).

Interviewee 16 states that the phrase

[T]o turn a deaf ear – is a fairly common phrase but they could've phrased it *continues to ignore*, that would've been sufficient. Again it's putting in *deafness*, it's bringing up people's impairments and it doesn't need it, you know there are other words that can be used instead (disc 2).

6.3.4c Deaf Community of Practice

The representatives from the *Deaf* CofP overall have a mixed response to this article. It can be perceived as non-offensive because they know what it means and how it is used metaphorically to convey the action of not listening. They do view *to turn a deaf ear* as negative means of describing the concept of not listening and ignoring something or someone and also negatively in the sense that the use of the word *deaf* can be associated with *d/Deaf* people.

Interviewee 30 asserts that

[I]t's the same isn't it really, the same as the Jamie Oliver one really isn't' it where he's using *deaf* people to criticise *hearing* people for not listening. I'd say the same you know it means people not listening. It's terrible, absolutely terrible, you know yes we need to improve crime, we need to improve government control but you know they're not doing anything about it so, but the thing is to say that they take not notice why use the term *deaf*, why say *deaf* and that, the *deaf ear* thing again. Why don't they just say couldn't say not notice ... just criticise in more explicit terms and taking no action. Why do they have to put the *deaf ear* thing, oh that's slap across the face who ever did that. It's not appropriate at all. Really, really inappropriate use of the word *deaf*. I'm *deaf*, I don't go round totally ignoring people just like being totally ignorant and needing help, but you know I was born *deaf* and I find it very offensive and this is a *hearing* person, I don't agree with it all, I don't agree with the use of the term at all (disc 3).

Interviewee 29 discusses the choices journalists face in respect to their use of metaphoric language, stating that

[I] think it's the same thing again it's English using this descriptive language but I think when you think for example if a journalist wants to express a common something - that's a common experience, [such as], somebody is ignoring something deliberately. Does the journalist actually think oh *deaf* people are like that, so I'll use ... the word *deaf* in it to create an analogy, I don't think so and that's what you've got to ask yourself the question. What choice of phrases does the person have, what choice of words or phrases could have been used in place of this. So... you know ... what interests me is when a journalists goes to write something down they've got to make a choice, the diction becomes a matter of choice and it's what influences that choice and often there's no other way in the language to describe that situation figuratively and so [they] use that (disc 4).

Interviewee 23 stresses that this term is not offensive to them personally but

[...] because in relation to how it means in terms of what he's doing then it's being used with negative connotation. So I don't think the term itself is offensive but it's being used in a negative way and so they're using the term that adds negative meaning (disc 3).

5/6 Article Five: Title only – “Royal Wedding Bells Fall on Deaf ears” and Article Six: Full Article of – “Royal Wedding Bells Fall on Deaf ears”

The headline of this article was introduced, first, to ascertain the perception of the title of this newspaper story. The newspaper article discusses the fact that Britain was not interested in The Royal Wedding – they were not listening and not planning any street parties, hence the use of the metaphor *falls on deaf ears* in the headline of the article - “*Royal Wedding Bells Fall on Deaf Ears*”. The overall perceptions draw on the analogies between the use of the word *deaf* and the concepts of *not listening* and *ignorance, indifference, laziness* and *not hearing something*, in the context the *Royal Wedding*. I discuss the perceptions of both the title and the story in respect to representatives of each CofP below:

6.3.5a Hearing Community of Practice – The Story Headline

Interviewee 8 reflects

[I] find this really offensive – it is nothing inviting – I can't actually say that there is anything that will make me as a *deaf* person – [I mean] putting myself in their perspective – make me want to watch the Royal Wedding (disc 1).

Interviewee 10 notes that the title really says...

[N]obody were listening to them – the Wedding Bells (disc 2).

Interviewee 9 asserts that

[I] don't think Royal Wedding Bells would fall on many *deaf* ears because they wouldn't be able to hear anyway – so I don't know who they are aiming. I don't think that's a very good headline at all, they are just picking on people who have *partial hearing* or are *deaf* – strange (disc 1).

Interviewee 6 states that

[...] if they are taking the sound of the Wedding Bells *falling on deaf ears*, then one would assume that there would be quite a few *deaf* people there... but it's taken out of context so I'm not sure (disc 1).

6.3.6a Hearing Community of Practice – The Full Story

Interviewee 1 confirms that when this headline is

[...] placed in contextI'd say the headline is poorly chosen (disc 1).

Interviewee 8 is confused by this article and puzzles

[M]mm, I don't know who this is aimed at – is it aimed at people who don't want to know [about the Royal Wedding] or aimed at *deaf* people – I really don't know how to take this (disc 1).

Interviewee 2 asserts that the article headline is deliberately used to make an impact and states

[N]ow- it wasn't put like that - I think the heading grabs your line of sight and then probably drags you to read the rest. Just seeing the heading like that is not very nice, because it appears that are picking on someone who is *deaf*!! (disc 1)

Overall the representatives from the *Hearing* CofP have mixed opinions. Other participants understood the article to convey a non-interest in the Royal Wedding, which is what the article was about.

6.3.5b Hard of Hearing Community of Practice – The Story Headline

The *Hard of Hearing* CofP representatives, like the *Hearing* CofP representatives, puzzled over the meaning of the title, “*Royal Wedding Bells Fall on Deaf Ears*”. They note that it does not convey a clear message, wondering whether it is actually linked to real bells or *deaf* people.

Hence, Interviewee 12 asks the question

[D]oes it mean that the bellringers are *deaf*? I'm just puzzled by that headline because I'm not quite sure what it means, does it mean that they're not allowed or some people are unhappy by the volume of the bells sound? (disc 2).

Interviewee 16 confirms that this headline is misleading, confusing and derogatory, stating

[W]ell, have the Royal Wedding Bells been played for a community of *deaf* people?... Well, that's terrible that, that's very derogatory and very misleading (disc 2).

6.3.6b Hard of Hearing Community of Practice – The Full Story

The *Hard of Hearing* representatives overall remained confused when the full article was introduced and were puzzled as to why the headline, “*Royal Wedding Bells Fall on Deaf Ears*” was used, especially because the article alludes to “Britons are not listening or caring” about the Royal Wedding. Interviewee 12 remained preplexed when introduced to the full story and suggested

[P]eople actually heard the Wedding Bells but they ignore it. They probably said – ‘why on earth are they having Wedding Bells?’ (disc 2).

5c/6c Deaf Community of Practice – The Story Headline and The Full Story

For the representatives of the *Deaf* CofP the quote below covers the overall perception of the Royal Wedding article, *Royal Wedding Bells Fall on Deaf Ears*. They draw an analogy between the use of the word *deaf* and the action of laziness. Interviewee 30 declares

[A]gain this word why? *deaf ears* again?.... You know when you read [the article] I can understand it but it doesn't go with the title at all. I didn't get anything from the title anyway, but ...whatever that has gone on ... there's a much better way to word that title... It should not have that title and it should certainly not have the word *deaf* in it ... Because what's interesting is [that] you don't see the British who are too lazy to take action may be it's because people could sue, but ... when they say *deaf*, when they use *deaf* we don't sue. They're saying that the *deaf* people are lazy and they're making a comparison between the *d/Deaf* people and all these lazy British people, but we would never be able to say but - it's slanderous to *d/Deaf* people. And this is why I think they're trying to be careful don't want to be too explicit so they're using this kind of metaphorical stuff because then they don't have to be as direct and explicit. They're kind of go[ing] round a bit with all these clichés and [it's] not appropriate at all (disc 3)

6.3.7 Article Seven: “Don't turn a blind eye or deaf ear to us”

In her article, “*Don't turn a blind eye or deaf ear to us*” Clare Raynor discussed her *deafness* in a jocular manner. Turning *deafness* into a “rueful joke” she uses the euphanism “I'm a bit mutton me”. Drawing the euphanism ‘mutton’ from the American Comic Strip “Mutt nad Jeff”, she attempts to reduce the shame/embarrassment about her hearing loss. She is apologetic in questioning “why should we deaf be ashamed?”. Clare Raynor claims that the “youth

worshipping” culture creates a feeling that age-related *deafness* is an indication of not being perfect anymore.

6.3.7a Hearing Community of Practice

The representatives of the *Hearing CofP* overall think that society is image driven and that the *youth worship* culture definitely promotes the view that we should be perfect, and anything less can potentially be seen as failure.

Interviewee 8 asserts that even though they respect Clare Raynor they disagree with the wording of the article, noting

[I] think Claire Raynor is fun. I think *don't turn a blind eye and a deaf ear to us* is a good slogan because I really think it makes people more aware of what is actually going on in the world. There needs to be something else and there isn't anything to bring these things up to date with any young kids. We laugh about things, all those things that we have seen, we do laugh – but it isn't funny for people who are *deaf*, *blind* or who have a *disability* – and I really don't know what it is, but we need something that will fit into this society that will make everybody be aware that it is not all about trainers, the clothes, where you go in life or having the right bag. We shouldn't be ashamed of how we are and we are not all the same (disc 1).

Interviewee 1 states that they do not understand why she would turn her *deafness* into a joke to cover up her embarrassment, declaring

[I] think it's sad that she had to use cockney rhyming slang and turn it into a joke. You know it's probably really easy for me to say, but that's what I thought, that's kind of sad for her. I can't understand why because you know if I was, it would wind me up more feeling like people felt sorry for me and obviously that's her experience (disc 1).

6.3.7b Hard of Hearing Community of Practice

The representatives of the *Hard of Hearing CofP* convey an overall opinion that *deafness* is not something to joke about, disagreeing with Clare Raynor's approach. Interviewee 19 emphasises the importance of not being embarrassed about being *deaf*, asserting

[I] have my own business and I can't use the telephone at work. My husband does that part and I text and email. I explain my situation but I am not embarrassed by it and don't make a joke – I am diplomatic – I maybe *deaf* but I am not *dumb* – I don't like that saying but I do have to compensate for it... I don't think she should be embarrassed by it. Explaining the fact that you are *deaf* to somebody can be quite tricky because they tend to be scathing and that you are a weaker person when it has probably made you a stronger person. It is difficult when you are communicating – it does make you are more tired and frustrated (disc 1).

Interviewee 12 perceives the humour of this article but states that there should be no need to apologise about being *deaf* but society can make you feel like that. They note a frustration in their communication abilities, stating

[I]thought it was quite a light-hearted article. You know sometimes [the] *hearing impaired* are almost made to feel that you must apologise for being that they can't hear. As I say when you are asking people to repeat things, that's not an easy thing really and you sometimes say 'oh, sorry I didn't hear that'... I mean it's frustrating for them and it's frustrating for the *deaf, hearing impaired* person but it's also for the person who has to listen as well as engaging them (disc 2).

Interviewee 16 declares

[I] think she's trying to be positive about *deafness* but it's a sick joke isn't it. 'Well, I'm a bit mutton me', I mean admitting I'm *deaf* is a 'rueful joke' well, it's not, it's not a joke, it's a matter of fact if you are *hard of hearing*, or *hearing impaired*, you don't make a joke out of it... I don't like that (disc 2).

6.3.7c Deaf Community of Practice

The representatives of the *Deaf* CofP overall did not understand the meaning of this article. I had to explain the article to them, after which the majority stressed a feeling that *deafness* is not something to be made fun of. Being *Deaf* is their identity and, as such, should afford respect.

Interviewee 30 confirms the above perception, asserting that

[I] just think the problem [is] with the wording on this. It should have been ... worded differently, the *deaf* and the *blind* thing ... something to do with seeking respect or something rather than using ... the terms that [have] been used. Or she could have said you know whatever we are, whatever you are ... *blind* or *deaf* but it's the way she's worded it. You know we are all different and it's important that we respect each other and we respect each other's physical differences - but no, no to the[se] terms - because *deaf* people are not stupid, they just have a different upbringing (disc 3).

6.4 Section Four - Analysis and Discussion of the five DVD clips in the Semi-informal Interview

In this section, I explore the perceptions given in respect to the five DVD clips and ask the question – “with the identified terms and phrases in mind what impact do the following DVD clips make on you?” (see appendix 13 disc 5).

1. BBC News story re: 'NHS care' “you're either deaf and dumb or lying on the table”

2. Coronation Street - Clip One: “I tried to turn a blind eye”

3. Coronation Street - Clip Two: “ Are you deaf as well as daft?”

4/5. My Name is Earl - Clip One/ Clip Two: In this section I asked the participants if these clips were on the right side or wrong side of comedy.

The above DVD clips cover a range of the identified terms and phrases.

6.4.1 BBC News Clip – ‘NHS Elderly Care and the use of patronising language’

The DVD footage from the BBC News discusses NHS care of the elderly and questions the use of patronising language such as, *dear* and *bedblockers*, which were used by the hospital staff to address patients. The news report include a patients perspective on how she was referred to, stating that “you’re either *deaf and dumb* or lying on the table...”.

6.4.1a Hearing Community of Practice

The representatives of the *Hearing* CofP had a mixed response to this news story. They either had a complete focus on the NHS Elderly Care theme and did not notice the use of the term *deaf and dumb* or they felt that it was completely inappropriate and even ironic in its inclusion when the news report was discussing the NHS’s use of patronising language to patients.

Interviewee 10 acknowledges this term to mean that the patient thinks that the NHS staff are not listening to her.

[D]*ea*f and *dumb* on the bed. Whaat’s that supposed to mean, you just lie there and do nothing. What’s that? ... obviously she can communicate, so what you know, either nobody is listening to her you know, or they’ve got *deaf ears* on her (disc 2).

Interviewee 7 indicates this news story to be ironic because

[T]he patient who uses that term rather than the staff, interestingly enough. Rather ironic (disc 2).

Interviewee 1 asserts that patient must have

[...] felt like she was *deaf and dumb* and the inference I pick up from that was that as a patient you’re you were on a bed, you might as well be *deaf and dumb*, as she compared a *deaf and dumb* person to someone who was deserving of less care, a lesser humanbeing and less important (disc 1).

Interviewee 6 stated

[I] felt that this term, *deaf and dumb* was used in a slightly derogatory way (disc 1).

6.4.1b Hard of Hearing Community of Practice

The representatives of the *Hard of Hearing* CofP note an overall acknowledgement of the term *deaf and dumb*. The use of this term is generally perceived as negative and they are quizzical as to why the interviewed patient was used to illustrate an issue that was addressing patronising language.

Interviewee 19 concurs with Interviewee 6, above, in perceiving the term *deaf and dumb* to be negative. Additionally, Interviewee 19 identifies a positive element to the news story, noting that the NHS are reportedly addressing the use of patronising language.

[T]he NHS clip – very positive in the fact that they are doing something about it – but very negative. There is a lot of ignorance. This is the biggest impact for me. *Deaf and dumb* is very negative (disc 1).

Interviewee 11 asserts that

[...] erm... she's not *deaf* and she obviously speaks very well – so she's either referring to her culture or she's referring to being elderly (disc 2).

This highlights an ambiguity in the speaker's meaning. Indeed, the words in this clip can be perceived in several ways depending on your CofP. They could refer to the fact that the patient potentially feels that the staff are ignoring her because of her culture, or because she is elderly or it could be that she is indirectly insulting people who are *deaf and dumb* - either way, her use of *deaf and dumb*.

6.4.1c Deaf Community of Practice

Overall the representatives of the *Deaf* CofP did acknowledge the use of the term *deaf and dumb* and thought that this was an inappropriate use of the term. Interviewee 24 also suggested that the patient was viewing her situation from her own cultural background, stating that

[...] what's interesting is [that] the Asian woman was saying they're [the care of the NHS staff], you know [is] *falling on deaf ears*. She's using the term related to *deafness* but she was transferring it to race. She's referring to that in terms of her own identity and ... her own ethnicity and how she feels not [being] treated like a human in the way other people are (disc 3).

6.4.2 Coronation Street – Clip One – “I tried to turn a blind eye”

6.4.3 Coronation Street – Clip Two – “Are you deaf as well as daft?”

All the three CofPs, *the Hearing*, *the Hard of Hearing* and the *Deaf* communities held the perception that the phrase, *to turn a blind eye* was just one of those phrases that does not offend. In the second clip Audrey Roberts uses the phrase ‘*are you deaf as well as daft*’ and further on in the dialogue retorts that she was not a hundred per cent sure that Kylie had ‘*a brain*’ in her ‘*head*’. This demonstrates not only a link between the word *deaf* and *daft* but also connects these concepts with not having a brain, thereby implying a lack of cognitive or intellectual ability. In sum, we have a negative metamessage which negatively primes and frames the word *deaf*.⁵³

6.4.2 Coronation Street – Clip One – “I tried to turn a blind eye”

6.4.2a Hearing Community of Practice

Interviewee 6 suggests that

[I]t’s just a phrase being used... they’re just phrases that are so commonly used that you just seem to accept them you know (disc 1).

Interviewee 3 notes the use of this phrase as

[...] quite an unusual reference *to turn a blind eye* wasn’t it, because it was almost used in a positive sense, in the sense of being tolerant (disc1).

6.4.2b Hard of Hearing Community of Practice

Interviewee 14 states that

[I] wouldn’t notice that one, no, yeah it’s obviously what people would say you know that ... Whatever the problem is I’m turning a blind eye to that, yeah that’s how I would read it (disc 2).

⁵³ The use of cinematography can potentially orchestrate how an audience perceives an atmosphere. Deacon et al (2007:199) make reference to negative and positive framing stating that ‘[...]evocations of trust and intimacy are taken a stage further in *close-up shots* that focus solely on the face... close-ups can also activate strong connotations’. The Coronation street clips illustrate the use of ‘close-up shots’ of Audrey, a face shot is used when she is addressing Kylie and talking about Mark.

6.4.2c Deaf Community of Practice

Interviewee 23 suggests that the phrase *to turn a blind eye* is used to evoke sympathy for the situation Audrey has found herself in, noting

[I] would feel a sense of sympathy to her because she's used the expression and she's conjured up this image, that you know she has tried her best, so..., it evokes a sense of sympathy in you by the use of the words but the expression itself again it's just an expression (disc 3).

Interviewee 30 discusses the use of both the terms identified in the Coronation Street Clips 1 and 2, declaring that the use of this type of language, *to turn a blind eye* and *are you deaf as well as daft* is quite negative; especially if children think these are acceptable ways of expressing themselves. It promotes a negative semantic prosody. Interviewee 30 declares that this

[...] is very dangerous, because this is children. They listen to this and they see this and this is where they grow up thinking, oh, you know *blind* people don't take any notice of anything, or and they grow up and they replicate that, they tease *deaf* and *blind* people, because we are saying to them it's okay to do that, we are allowed to do it, [but the TV company] they should be fined for it. They should be sacked for coming up with that in the script using [that] language... They're not allowed to swear before 9 o'clock, but now you see swear words on television. Years ago you would never have seen swearing on television and now we've gone back and ... we've been treated to this very negative use of language from forty years ago you know where swearing was never used and you wouldn't have used offensive language like this. So I think we just need to have more respect for each other that's what it's about and use the proper terminology because swearing and derogatory expressions like this influence people like replicate them and that's not appropriate (disc 3).

6.4.3 Coronation Street – Clip Two – “Are you deaf as well as daft?”

6.4.3a Hearing Community of Practice

The overall perceptions of the representatives of the *Hearing* CoP in respect to “Are you deaf as well as daft” being used in a main-stream soap opera were mixed. The reactions ranged from disbelief, to thinking it did not make an impact for them. The word *daft* was perceived as *stupid* and deemed worse than the word *deaf*. Interviewee 8 states

[W]ell, she did say ‘are you deaf’, and she used the word *deaf* which is not very nice in the context, but also I would like to say, she actually, you know, she used the word ‘are you stupid’, I'm sure she said stupid, right deaf and stupid don't go. They are two different things so we all associate deafness as a common word and its commonly used but the stupid thing, I would find more offensive than the [word] *deaf* (disc 1).

Interviewee 9 notes that

[I]f you were *deaf* you could be *daft* as well, that means it goes hand in hand with *deaf*. I don't suppose that's acceptable to some people, whereas in a programme like *Coronation Street*, it shouldn't be used. I did watch it at the time and that just washed over me (disc 1).

Interviewee 1 links the phrases *are you deaf as well as daft* and *I'm not sure you have a brain in that head of yours* to the concept of 'low intelligence', stating

[W]ell, she is clearly linking being deaf to being low intelligence. I watch *Coronation Street* and the character, *Kylie*, was a dispicable character when she first came in to the Street, not particularly likeable. I mean she [Audrey] didn't only say 'are you deaf as well as daft' she went onto to say 'I'm not sure you've got a brain', so that's a double whammy, so she's leaving no stone unturned. So, yeah, it's a dreadful use of language with a very clear purpose. It's not been put in there by accident, has it? We're not talking about somebody whose got hearing problems, we're talking about using the word *deaf* and it's about somebody who they think are of lower intelligence (disc 1).

The terms and phrases used in this script perhaps gives people permission to use it themselves. Often, it does not make an impact because it is language that is used constantly/ frequently in society. This creates a subconscious acceptability which potentially perpetuates a particular message, in this case linking the concept of *deafness* with low intelligence.

6.4.3b Hard of Hearing Community of Practice

The overall perception of the representatives of the *Hard of Hearing CofP* of the *Coronation Street* - clip 2 was that it conveys unnecessary negative associations with *deafness*. They note that it 'classifies' and it could have been easily reworded.

Interviewee 19 suggests that the phrase

[*Deaf*] as well as *daft* – I think my family would say – 'did you hear me?' – I wouldn't have used that – again they use it to classify us. I'm use to it now and don't take it personally. It is obviously because I am *deaf* that I notice it (disc 1).

Interviewee 16 asserts

[Well], it's just very negative. The referral to *are you deaf as well as daft* is very derogatory (disc 2).

Interviewee 17 states that Audrey has

[...] done it in a confrontational way and really that needn't have happened. She could've re-phrased it or put it differently. So I don't think it was absolutely necessary, I think it could've been avoided (disc 2).

6.4.3c Deaf Community of Practice

In repeat to the representatives from the *Deaf* CofP some participants viewed this turn of phrase to a ‘communication exchange’ between two people and others perceived this as an inappropriate use of language.

Interviewee 25 acknowledges that Audrey

[...] says *are you deaf as well as daft*. You know she’s saying now I’ve told you before, you want to know, you’ve ignored me, you will now go away. I think again it’s just a phrase they talk you know, she’s trying to get that message across that she wants Kylie to go away, you know *are you deaf as well as daft* go away. Again I don’t think it’s aimed at *deaf* people I think it’s aimed at the person she’s talking to ... you know, but Kylie was adamant that she wanted talk. I don’t think it’s an offensive phrase I think it’s just communication, words exchanged between two people (disc 3).

Interviewee 31 confirms a dislike for the use of the collocation of *deaf* as well as *daft*, stating

[...] that’s interesting because she says do you think [you are] *deaf as well as daft* ... So the collocation of those two words does conjure up almost some crossing from *daftness* to *deafness*. So again, I don’t think it’s good that they’ve used those two words together in that way because when people read that they will transfer that negative meaning of *daft* across to *deaf* and so that’s not good. I think that does happen already anyway in society, the thing is people think *deaf* people are *daft*, people think that when you’re *deaf* you’re not as intelligent and then, and so it’s not a good phrase to use because it reinforces that false understanding, that falseness really that people think that *deaf* people are *daft*. It’s not good to use it in that way.⁵⁴ (disc 4).

6.4.4 My Name is Earl – Clip One and Clip Two

My Name is Earl is an American Sitcom which stars, Jason Lee as Earl Hickey and Jamie Pressly as Joy Turner who plays Earl’s ex-wife, Joy Turner. The main storyline is about Earl healing his ‘karma’ by apologising to all the people in his life that he feels he has wronged. In this particular episode, Joy is arrested for stealing a furniture van and faces a prison sentence because it is her third ‘strike’ felony. Marlee Martin, who is an accomplished *Deaf* actress plays the *Deaf* Lawyer, Ruby Whitlow - Joy is astounded to discover that she will be represented by deaf lawyer. Clips one and two illustrate the use of many references to *d/Deaf* people. Joy’s descriptions include; ‘*those whose ears are only good for holding up glasses*’, ‘*I*

⁵⁴ Refer to 2.1 and 2.4 of this thesis

don't feel comfortable putting life my in your deaf hands' and *hearing impaired* as well as references to being *deaf* and *stupid*.⁵⁵ The question I asked the participants was whether the humour in this sitcom was on the right or wrong side of comedy?⁵⁶

6.4.4a Hearing Community of Practice

The representatives of the *Hearing* CofP overall thought it was amusing, even though it was politically incorrect and could potentially insult.⁵⁷ The overall response was mixed as to whether this the right side or wrong side of comedy. Interviewee 10 confirmed that for them it was “American trash – taking the mick” (disc 2).

Interviewee 9 states

[I] think they can probably get away with things like that because it is in a comedy –but then again if you were of that disposition and you were deaf it could be really offensive. I think if you are physically perfect then stuff like that when it is in a show, which is supposed to be in a comedy –these things wash over and don't offend you. But there are those percentage of people that are inferred then it would be very offensive but it doesn't bother me – but then I am aware of how other people feel (disc 1).

Interviewee 7 asserts

[I] think this probably does more for a cause because it is so dreadful. It actually makes people stop and think. How on earth could you say that, and the fact that although she keeps tying herself in knots, what she does do is keep trying to explain and to her be real about it. May be what there is, is a sense of portraying how shocking it can be. Reversing roles so you've got the person with the impairment in the professional role and she's coming in for the help- but she is stopping and thinking herself. I find a vitality in that, even though it is so, you know, up front dreadful, rather than something that slips in unseen. It is more thought provoking because it is in context (disc 2).

6.4.4b Hard of Hearing Community of Practice

The representatives from the *Hard of Hearing* CofP noted, *My Name is Earl* clips to be the wrong side of comedy. Interviewee 16 confirms for this CofP that, for this particular CofP,

⁵⁵ This episode of *My Name is Earl* is knowingly acted-out in humour by Marlee Matlin – but what she finds offensive is the misuse of sign language. Refer to Today's News report, November 5th, 2012 – '*Marlee Matlin Calls Saturday Night Live - Deaf Signing Skit: "Childish and Insulting"*'. See www.tvguide.com/news/Marlee-Matlin-SNL-Deaf-Signing-1055572.aspx

⁵⁶ My line of questioning for *My Name is Earl* meant that the representatives of the three CofPs, in this instance, had to choose a response. I used this particular question because I wished to elicit a deliberate evocative response because the script of these clips had been written with humour in mind.

⁵⁷ A representative view from the *Hearing* CofP is that the clips from *My Name is Earl* is acted out in humour so that it, potentially, could make the point that this is not what you should say to someone who is *Deaf*.

[I]t's an absolute disgrace, I don't think this should be allowed. It's so prejudiced and she's so thick I can't believe it. It gives out the fact that they think that people who are *deaf* are *stupid* (disc 2).

C. Deaf Community of Practice

Overall, the representatives from the *Deaf* CofP can see the potential negativity in the *My Name is Earl* clips but perceive these as acceptable humour because the programme has employed Marlee Matlin, a *Deaf* actress to play the lawyer. They also note the humour in the interpreters behaviour because you would not stand next to someone to interpret or cover your mouth with a notebook and whisper when addressing a *Deaf* person Interviewee 28 states

[...] so what they've done is take something negative and made something positive in the end. So it's humour because I think it's acceptable because there is a *Deaf* actress in it. Because what they've said is –you know actually –it's the twist at the end where they say –actually this is the lawyer that court has appointed you so....they are trying to show just how patronising *hearing* people can be – it's positive because they are using humour to highlight the issue (disc 3).

Interviewee 23 concurs with Interviewee 28, noting that the use of a *Deaf* actress in this episode of *My Name is Earl* provides an interesting perspective from the *Deaf* CofP, suggesting

[...] no they shouldn't use offensive phrases like that for humorous use. On the other side of it she's *deaf* herself, she's a *deaf* actress [the lawyer] ... So when you're watching it and you know there's a *deaf* person involved it's okay. If she was *hearing* and you were watching *hearing* people having that conversation it would have a completely different effect and it could be taken very offensively but the fact that she's *deaf* and its being used in a humorous way by a *deaf* person that's okay. I think a *deaf* person watching that will get the humour from it and not be offended but I think what's going on [in] a very subconscious level is that people out there are watching it who aren't in it so to speak and they will be taking this unconscious message on board that oh yeah *deaf* people are *daft*. So, it shouldn't be used because it sends messages to people that aren't appropriate, and it just reinforces really what *hearing* people already think about *deaf* people, even worse, it could, it could not only just reinforce it but it could exacerbate what *hearing* people think. So, for me it's the fact, that she's *deaf*, a *deaf* actress that made it okay, but it still carries a lot of offence with it and so it's inappropriate (disc 3).

6.5 Concluding perceptions of the Semi-informal Interviews

By way of summarising this chapter, the following quotations leave pertinent and salient perceptions of how through the interactive process of the semi-informal interview the representatives of the *Hearing*, *Hard of Hearing* and *Deaf* CofPs, perceive the identified terms and phrases - individually or contextualised. Mey (2008:302) confirms that

[W]ording is the process, through which humans become aware of their world, and realize this awareness in the form of language. However, words are not just labels we stick on things: the process of wording is based on interaction with our environment. “We bespeak the world, and it speaks back at us” (Mey 1985:166).

A. Hearing Community of Practice

Interviewee 6 concluded

[I]t must be very different if you are impaired in any way, you know, blind, deaf etc... and you hear [read] a lot of these phrases being used in various different ways, because obviously you’ll see it in a different way to somebody who is just using it as part of their everyday language without thinking about blindness or deafness etc... It must be very different from somebody’s point of view, you know, who is impaired (disc 1).

Interviewee 5 reflected that

[I]t [the interview] made me think, while I said some of these terms are neutral and that people don’t mean offence by them. But, yeah, maybe there is a better way of putting them that’s less offensive because you do have a tendency, I suppose, to start equating a handicap or inadequacy when there are two different things [or potential meanings] (disc 1).

Interviewee 8 asserts a perception that appears to be acknowledged by representatives of the three CofPs.

[I] hate *deaf and dumb* ... people in this day and age shouldn’t be called *deaf and dumb*, definitely not (disc 1).

B. Hard of Hearing Community of Practice

The *Hard of Hearing* CofP conveyed several different views on their use of descriptive terminology. This identifies that, even though you may have a commonality of being deemed *hard of hearing* it does not mean, that all of our terminology preferences will be the same. Clearly, the influence a person’s life experience’s and upbringing have in respect to our language use is pivotal to how we use and perceive language. Interviewee 12 confirms this important point, noting

[I] suppose in understanding what *deaf* means, you know, I’d say I’m *hearing impaired*, I’m *hard of hearing*, so to me a *deaf* person is someone who is *totally deaf*. I don’t see myself as *deaf*, so you know you might get different reaction from someone who was *deaf* from birth (disc 2).

Interviewee 14 states that the terms *deaf and dumb*, *deaf-mute* and *hearing impaired* make a lasting impact and asserts, from a *Hard of Hearing* CoP perspective, that, for them, the term *hearing impaired* does not explain *deafness* ‘enough’, stating

[I]’d say the *deaf and dumb* and *deaf-mute*... I think that’s why it’s been changed over the years because obviously it wasn’t acceptable, but I still feel like *hearing impaired* is not clear enough for *hearing* people, it doesn’t come across like the word *deaf*. *Hearing impaired*, I don’t think it’s a powerful word... *Hearing impaired* to me is like they’ve had a damaged ear throughout their life, rather than being born *deaf*. *Hearing impaired*, that’s how I see that word. I suppose because obviously I’ve been brought up with the word *deaf* and now it’s *hearing impaired* I’m not comfortable with that word, it doesn’t come across as a powerful word, it doesn’t explain enough, like *deaf* (disc 2).

C. Deaf Community of Practice

Interviewee 30 reflected that

[I]t’s this word stupid... it’s [a] very loaded word for me anyway, for me I would never use that word to describe a person in a college, [or] whatever. I don’t use stupid and I don’t use wrong. I think we’ve got a responsibility to use positive language towards each other. We don’t say to somebody you’re wrong you say to somebody you can improve ... the way we address it. The way [that we use] language ... is really important and that should be exactly the same on TV and in the newspapers because there is a different way, there’s always a different way, there’s always a different way to say something. You know, people don’t have any pride when they use derogatory terminology, but in comedy you can, why, yeah, [because] it’s funny but it’s still sending a massive influence to people, it’s still sending the same negative influence out to people. The second point that made an impact was the Asian woman whose you know she’s being treated as if she was *deaf and dumb* ... To me ...that’s just some person, you know, she thinks that *deaf and dumb* are not words in their self. What she’s saying is ‘I don’t deserve to be treated like that I’m not deaf’, you know, ‘treat them like that, don’t treat me like that’. I think that’s really worrying, it’s really worrying that somebody can think like that. That’s the second one that really has left a lasting impact on me (disc 3).

Interviewee 25 objects to the use of the word *impaired*, for the *Deaf* CoP there was a unanimous negative perception to words that include this word, especially the term *hearing impaired*. They assert that

[...]the word ... *impaired*, you know, it’s just a negative you know I don’t want to accept that word... those words [that] have got impaired in [them]. I just see it as negative (disc 3).

Interviewee 28 declares that terms that made most negative impact were the visual demonstrations of *are you deaf aswell as daft* and *deaf and dumb*, acknowledging that

[T]he worst of all is the film – the Coronation Street – clip 2 and [the] word[s] in the other clips – probably not meant to offend but do cause offense in society, especially words which you know shouldn't really be used anymore. The worst of all were the film clips because that's when you see the language being used in context. The very very worse one was the news clip – the woman that used the term *deaf and dumb* (disc 3).

6.6 Overall Summary of Findings for Chapter Six

6.6.1 Introduction

The following three summary tables for the representatives of the *Hearing*, *Hard of Hearing* and *Deaf* CofPs provide an overall perspective of the interview process. This visual summary also reflects the responses from Section Three and Four when the participants were introduced to the terms and phrases in their context-of-use. The perception findings gleaned are reflective of the questions asked below,

- Section One asked: “Do you come across these terms and phrases?”
- Section Two asked: “What value would you give these terms and phrases?”
- Section Three asked: “In the light of the terms and phrases we have just discussed - do the following articles make an impact on you?”
- Section Four asked: “In the light of the terms and phrases we have just discussed - do the following video clips make an impact on you?”

6.6.2/6.6.3/6.6.4 – Summary Findings Tables of the Semi-informal Interview Research

Each table focuses on the overall perception responses from the representatives of the *Hearing*, *Hard of Hearing* and *Deaf* CofPs. Firstly, it illustrates neutral, positive, or negative values of the terms and phrases *deaf and dumb*, *deaf-mute*, *stone deaf*, *deaf as a post*, *hearing impaired*, *to turn a deaf ear* and *it fell on deaf ears*. The following key illustrates the ‘value’ response results presented in the three separate tables 6.6.2, 6.6.3 and 6.6.4. The positive, neutral, negative definitions are coloured-coded to denote the ‘value response’ - green for positive, blue for neutral and red for negative. The definitions for these are employed for Section 2 of the semi-informal interview to ensure a uniformed response from the representatives of the three CofP’s.

For information purposes these definitions are:

- *Positive* - The identified terms or phrases reinforce and affirm *favourable* worldviews or opinions of actual conditions, such as being blind, deaf or having a physical difficulty.
- *Neutral* - The identified terms or phrases command an *impartial, non-committal* and *unbiased* worldview or opinion of actual conditions, such as having a physical difficulty, being deaf or blind.
- *Negative* - The identified terms or phrases cast an *unfavourable* or *detrimental* worldview or opinion of actual conditions such as deafness, blindness or having a physical difficulty.

Negative = 

Neutral = 

Positive = 

I have provided this visual illustration of the findings outcomes in order to synthesise all results, thus far, prior to beginning my discussion proper. These summary findings are linked to 5.2 and 7.1, thereby providing a comprehensive perspective of the use and perception of the investigated terms and phrases below, in respect to the representatives of the *Hearing, Hard of Hearing* and *Deaf* communities. These overall summaries of the ‘value responses’ demonstrate more than one perspective for the terms and phrases, due to the variation in the context-of-use.

Although the following Tables (6.6.2, 6.6.3, 6.6.4) provide an overall perception taken from all four sections of the semi-informal interview process I will provide a section after the Tables (6.6.2-4) to draw a comparison between responses to non-contextual and contextualised samples phrases used in my research.












6.6.2. Hearing CofP	<i>Deaf and Dumb</i> (a)	<i>Deaf-mute</i> (b)	<i>Stone deaf</i> (c)	<i>Deaf as a post</i> (d)	<i>Hearing impaired</i> (e)	<i>To turn a deaf ear</i> (f)	<i>It fell on deaf ears</i> (g)
Overall neutral value							
Overall positive value							
Overall negative value							
Overall use	A term that is deemed as an old - fashioned description for someone who is <i>deaf</i>	Seen as a term that is not used in today's language	This is a descriptive term to describe a profound level of <i>deafness</i>	A phrase used to describe someone who is very deaf. It is often used to refer to elderly deafness	This a term which is used as a descriptive label to categorise <i>deafness</i>	This phrase is used metaphorically to mean <i>to take no notice, to ignore someone or something</i>	This phrase is used as a metaphor – meaning <i>to deliberately take no notice, to take no notice of advice, warnings or criticism</i>
Overall comments: The representatives of the Hearing CofP thought...	This is not really used nowadays. The use of <i>dumb</i> coupled with the word deaf - 'if you are <i>deaf</i> you are not <i>dumb</i> ' – this is not a negative, unacceptable term.	This is a derogatory term – 'if you are <i>deaf</i> you are unintelligent. It is neutral if used as a descriptive label to say <i>deaf</i> and not <i>speaking</i> .	This is a neutral term which is used to describe a level of profound <i>deafness</i> – It is negatively viewed as a term which is not commonly used or liked. It can be used in a derogatory, figurative sense.	This phrase is used more in a jocular manner with an informal register. It can often be used in a derogatory, face-damaging manner.	As a descriptive term, it provides information to people so that they know that the person they are addressing has a <i>hearing loss</i> . It is a term which is used, in respect to filling in forms and accessing services.	This is a neutral phrase which is not used to relate to actual <i>deafness/d/Deaf</i> people. It is can be negative because of how it describes the act of ignoring someone or something. On occasions, it may negatively colour people's perceptions of deafness, depending on the context-of-use.	This is not related to actual <i>deafness</i> . It is a phrase which is used in the sport and political arena. It is also a face-damaging/ rude way of saying - <i>I am definitely not listening or taking any notice.</i>

Table 27: A Summary of the Research Findings – The *Hearing CofP*












6.6.3. Hard of Hearing CofP	<i>Deaf and Dumb</i> (a)	<i>Deaf-mute</i> (b)	<i>Stone deaf</i> (c)	<i>Deaf as a post</i> (d)	<i>Hearing impaired</i> (e)	<i>To turn a deaf ear</i> (f)	<i>It fell on deaf ears</i> (g)
Overall neutral value							
Overall positive value							
Overall negative value							
Overall use	An old fashioned term not used now-a-days. Not politically correct. It can also be used in a sense that ' <i>someone was deaf and dumb to...</i> ' not listening.	A very old-fashioned term. This term is not used now-a-days.	A descriptive label to describe a profound level of deafness	An older generational descriptor of <i>deafness</i> – to denote a late onset of deafness	A descriptive label which attempts to cover all levels of deafness	A metaphor which means - <i>to take no notice, to ignore a request</i>	A metaphor which means - <i>to deliberately take no notice</i>
Overall comments: The representatives of the Hard of Hearing CofP thought...	This is a very negative, and face-damaging term. The link between <i>deaf</i> and <i>dumb</i> is negative in the sense of conveying unintelligence.	They are not sure why the word mute would be relevant.	They are not sure that this is a politically correct reference to <i>d/Deaf</i> people. It can be used as a face-damaging metaphor.	They are not sure why this is used when deafness has no link with a 'post'.	This as an identity term for some i.e. - ' <i>this is me</i> '. Some people prefer Hard of Hearing as a 'softer' (i.e. a less face-damaging) term.	This phrase is an easy term to describe someone who is taking no notice of a situation or a person. It does not refer to <i>d/Deaf</i> people.	This phrase is not used in reference to <i>d/Deaf</i> people. It is a phrase which is used a lot in political news reporting or articles. This is a negative phrase which could colour how the word <i>deaf</i> is seen.

Table 28: A Summary of the Research Findings – The *Hard of Hearing* CofP












6.6.4. Deaf CofP	<i>Deaf and Dumb</i> (a)	<i>Deaf-mute</i> (b)	<i>Stone deaf</i> (c)	<i>Deaf as a post</i> (d)	<i>Hearing impaired</i> (e)	<i>To turn a deaf ear</i> (f)	<i>It fell on deaf ears</i> (g)
Overall neutral value							
Overall positive value							
Overall negative value							
Overall use	An old-fashioned term descriptive term	An old-fashioned term	A descriptive term to describe profound level of <i>deafness</i>	A hearing phrase – not used within the <i>Deaf</i> community	This is a hearing construct which is deemed as a disempowering descriptive label	This is an English metaphor - meaning <i>to ignore someone or something</i>	This is an English metaphor – used to emphasise - <i>a deliberate act of taking no notice</i>
Overall comments: The representatives of the Deaf Community of Practice thought...	Generally, this is a face-damaging term if used to convey intelligence, stupidity and ignorance. It can also convey a positive, historical identity marker for being culturally Deaf.	A term that is not used today.	Deaf people of an older generation self-refer with this term as a positive identity marker for culturally Deaf. It is not a term generally used in/by the Deaf community and only is noted in this research as a reclaimed term by an older generation of Deaf people who have grown up with this terminology. A younger generation of Deaf people will not use this term.	The uses of this phrase in both its literal and metaphorical senses are acknowledged as negative. There is a question as to why; being <i>deaf</i> has anything to do with a 'post'. The neutral response comes from participants who had not heard of this phrase before and felt unaffected by it.	This term tries to describe every level of <i>deafness</i> . There is more to being <i>deaf</i> than just a categorisation of terms. To the <i>Deaf</i> CofP it is a face-damaging, disrespectful term.	A term not generally used. Unless this is used to have a positive gain then this is quite a negative term. It can be taken to associate ignorance or ignoring someone or something with being <i>d/Deaf</i> which conveys a negativity in its use. This phrase is neutral if it does not affect <i>d/Deaf</i> people personally.	This phrase is a negative term. It is used to describe negative situations and so, even though it does not directly refer to actual deafness or <i>Deaf</i> people, it could cast a negative light on the word <i>deaf</i> . This phrase is neutral if this term does not affect <i>d/Deaf</i> people personally.

Table 29: A Summary of the Research Findings – The *Deaf* CofP

6.5 Comparison between responses to non-contextual and contextualised sample phrases

In comparison the participants' responses between Section 1 and 2 and Section 3 and 4 of the semi-informal interview process revealed a raised awareness of how contextually the sample terms and phrases did actually appear in literature, newspapers, television and DVD mediums. One interviewee from the Hearing CofP retorted,

“Now you've got me there – I didn't think I'd see those in print or on television”. This participant was referring to the idiom ‘*to turn a deaf ear*’ and the term ‘*deaf and dumb*’ or as quote in Coronation Street – “*Are you deaf as well as daft?*”.

All three of the CofPs noted a dislike for the bigoted man in the newspaper article, the Coronation clip where Audrey says “Are you deaf as well as daft?”. The one, which came as a shock - to some -, was the news article on the television when in a news-story on the NHS use of politically correct language when addressing patients and a lady being interviewed used the term *deaf and dumb*.

A comparison between the non-contextual and contextualised sections of the semi-informal interview for the *Hearing* CofP highlighted the thought that the use of the term *it fell on deaf ears* became intensified when seen in print. They noted that “there is nothing nice about this term” – it conveys a negative message that emphasises a lack of communication, lack of connection with the ‘others’ who are being ignored, a judgemental stance, and an uncaring attitude.

Secondly, they focused on the liturgy article - a story-board telling the story of Jesus curing a deaf man. In some cases, they noted the term *deaf and dumb* to be inappropriate but the overall view was that it was about a deaf man being cured and that it was a good thing – a ‘very’ medical view of *deafness*

A comparison between the non-contextual and contextualised for the *Hard of Hearing* CofP was the idiomatic term *it fell on deaf ears* because creates an association with deaf people – the question in this instance is – “why would they do that –include the word deaf – in something that means to ignore someone or something? Another focus for the Hard of Hearing CofP was the Coronation Street footage when Audrey addresses Kylie defensively retorting “Are you deaf as well as daft?”. Although, they could see the funny side it does ‘other’ – Interviewee 19 stated that it separates you out from Hearing people.

A comparison between the non-contextual and contextualised for the *Deaf* CofP found the television news story on the NHS on politically correct use of language to patients a focus of disbelief as the term *deaf and dumb* was used (see 6.5C, page 153 Interviewee 30). A second prominent focus was on the term *it fell on deaf ears*? This phrase was a source of worry for some because the action of ignoring is a negative thing to do – they query – ‘why the use of *deaf ears*? – surely it is not needed’.

Having explored the importance of contextualising the terms and phrases and impact these made within the three CofPs – the next two chapters 7 and 8 identify the focused areas that the research findings identify.

Chapter Seven: Research findings and discussion

7 Introduction

Frederick Waismann⁵⁸ cited in Ebersole (2002:88) suggests that

[L]anguage supplies us with means of comprehending and categorizing, and different languages categorize differently.

With this in mind, I will discuss my research findings, in particular, noting the responses of the three CofPs in how they comprehend and categorize the identified terms and phrases, highlighting pertinent differences and similarities (see previous 6.3, 6.4 and 6.5 summaries of the research findings) During the analysis phase of my research, I considered the corpus linguistic results and the individual perceptions of the representatives of the *Hearing*, *Hard of Hearing* and *Deaf* CofPs. My research findings, indeed, reveal some similar and separate insights of the terms and phrases, *to turn a deaf ear*, *it fell on deaf ears*, *are you deaf?*, *deaf and dumb*, *stone deaf*, *deaf as a post*, *deaf-mute*, *hard of hearing* and *hearing impaired*. Consequentially, my research identifies new findings and expands previous research models. The research of this thesis contributes to the following, (see 5.2 and 6.6)

1. The representatives of the three CofPs - the *Hearing*, *Hard of Hearing* and *Deaf* communities - conveyed their working definitions of the identified terms and phrases. (see 6.6.2, 6.6.3, 6.6.4).
2. In light of the research findings I have expanded my 'Gradable Antonymy lines' as introduced in 2.2 (Fearon 2013, online).
3. The Social, Medical and Cultural Linguistic prototypes noted in Fearon (2010) are expanded upon to include the influence of prototypical media language usage.
4. The Baker and Cokely's (1980) model of the *Avenues to membership in the deaf communities* has been expanded upon with the given perceptions of how the above terms and phrased are used. I have expanded this model to include a linguistic framework. This illustrates the potential power that these terms and phrases convey, in turn, priming and framing our responses implicitly, and ultimately influencing how we use and perceive language.

⁵⁸ In *Essays on Logic and Language*, ed. Antony Flew (New York: Philosophical Library, 1951), 140-41.

7.1 The Hearing, Hard of Hearing and Deaf CofPs Analysis of the Terms and Phrases

Cokely (2001:15) substantiates the importance of ‘social realities’, as mentioned previously by Sapir (1949:162) in the realms that

[C]ulturally neutral realities are those that are shared by or viewed similarly by two or more linguistic communities in contact. Culturally rich realities, however, not only represent the defining characteristics of a unique community and its culture but also represent occasions for values, norms, beliefs, and traditions to come into conflict with those of other communities.

With this in mind, the results of my research are presented in the following narrative which discusses the definitions of the terms and phrases ‘in-use’ - the ‘social reality’ - of how the representatives of the *Hearing*, *Hard of Hearing* and *Deaf* communities use and perceive *to turn a deaf ear*, *it fell on deaf ears*, *are you deaf?* *deaf and dumb*, *stone deaf*, *deaf as a post*, *deaf-mute*, *hard of hearing* and *hearing impaired*. The phrase *are you deaf?*, and the term *hard of hearing* are not documented in the summary tables of Chapter Six because, as previously discussed, they were not included in the semi-informal interview process, although they were discussed informally in conjunction with the other terms and phrases (see 5.1i, 5.1e). Each CofP identifies the following definitions in turn, for each term or phrase.

7.1.1 To turn/ turns/ turned a deaf ear

7A. Hearing CofP

The representatives of the *Hearing* CofP define *to turn a deaf ear* to mean that someone refuses to listen, ignores someone, something, a request or a criticism. This phrase is perceived to be more subtle than *it fell on deaf ears*. It is given as an instruction to ignore someone or something - not *to listen to them*. The value response and overall perception regarding this phrase is illustrated in 6.6.2f.

7B. Hard of Hearing CofP

The representatives of the *Hard of Hearing* CofP define *to turn a deaf ear* as ‘an excuse not to listen’. It is the same as the Lancashire saying of *to cock a deaf ‘un* – *to cock a deaf one* meaning to refuse listen. The value response and overall perception regarding this phrase is illustrated in 6.6.3f.

7C. Deaf CofP

The representatives of the *Deaf CofP* define *to turn a deaf ear* in their language - BSL. They do not sign *to turn a deaf ear* literally but sign the meaning of this phrase. The BSL sign used, while not a literal translation of the phrase *to turn a deaf ear*, does have a similar meaning. The multichannel sign means *to ignore* or *take no notice*. It can be signed with an intensity of the movement of the sign and facial expression, such that the meaning and action of the phrase gains more force/strength of feeling; this is illustrated in Figure:1 and Figure:1a. Figure:1b is another way of signing 'I'm taking no notice and not listening to you'.



Fig 7: To ignore/ to take no notice



Fig7a: To ignore/ to take no notice – this sign shows more intensity in the facial expression and movement in the sign space to note a stronger use of the term and action.



Fig 7b: This sign means – 'I'm not listening/ I am ignoring you/ I am not acknowledging that'

An example of a BSL methaphor which conveys a similar meaning *to turn a deaf ear* is – *in one eye and out the other eye*. This is equivalent to the English metaphor – *in one ear and out the other*. This is illustrated in Figure 2 below.



Fig8: 'In one eye and out the other'

Sutton-Spence and Woll (1998:187-8) confirm that some

[...] idioms are similar to English ones but are not exactly the same. Examples Include IN-ONE-EYE-AND-OUT-THE-OTHER (as opposed to *in one ear and out the other*) and MY-HANDS-ARE-SEALED (as opposed to *my lips are sealed*).

Interviewee 24 defined the term *to turn a deaf ear* as a phrase that means, 'to ignore, it means kind of going in one ear and out of the other ... similar to that'. See 6.6.4f for the value response and overall perception regarding this term. 'In one eye and out the other' is a BSL sign for 'in one ear and out the other.'

7.1.2 It fell/ falls on deaf ears

7.1.2A. Hearing CofP

The representatives from the *Hearing CofP* suggest that this term means *to deliberately ignore someone, a situation, or something*. In addition this term is also perceived to convey an *uncaring* and a *close-minded* attitude – for example, Interviewee 3 defines *it fell on deaf ears* as

unconsidering [inconsiderate] with not listening to the opinions of others and close-minded (disc1).

Table 6.6.2g(page 156) demonstrates the value response and overall perception of this phrase.

7.1.2B. Hard of Hearing CofP

The representatives of the *Hard of Hearing* CofP define the phrase *it fell on deaf ears* to mean a person who is either trying to negotiate with another person or attempting to persuade them to do something, or have a request acknowledged. If that person was not prepared to either concede or meet with the request and when the negotiation or request was not successful, it is deemed that the message or instruction will have *fallen on deaf ears*. (see 6.6.3g, page 157) for the value response and overall perception in regard to this phrase.

7.1.2C. Deaf CofP

The representatives of the *Deaf* CofP note their value response and overall comments regarding *it fell on deaf ears* in 6.6.4g. The *Deaf* community do not sign *it fell on deaf ears* but uses a multichannel sign meaning *to deliberately ignore*. The forcefulness and emphasis in meaning of *it fell on deaf ears* is conveyed in the intensity, facial expression and action of the sign, as illustrated in Fig 9.



Fig 9: to deliberately ignore
Fist moves up and down twice



Fig 10: I'm not listening –I'm taking no notice – demonstrates an indifference

Fig 5 illustrates a breaking of eye gaze and deliberately looking in a high position so that there is no way the person can be talked to – this is to convey a deliberate act of not listening whilst taking a stand – by this I mean the body language also conveys a remoteness in its cooperation/willingness to listen.

7.1.3 Are you deaf?

7.1.3A. Hearing CofP

For representatives of the *Hearing CofP*, this term can be linked to how you can use the terms *deaf as a post* and *stone deaf*. They note that this term can be used as a derogatory enquiry used to offend or to disempower the person who had not heard or had taken no notice of the speaker; in this kind of address the intonation will be in a “curt” manner which is necessary to convey that type of meaning.

7.1.3B. Hard of Hearing CofP

For the representatives of the *Hard of Hearing CofP*, *are you deaf?* could be meant as a literal question or enquiry into whether or not someone is actually *deaf* or *hard of hearing/hearing impaired* – it questions a person's ability to hear. However, it could also be used in a derogatory manner and hence convey rudeness on the speaker's part. In all accounts, it is linked to the inability to hear.

7.1.3C. Deaf CofP

The *Deaf* community literally sign *are you deaf?* to enquire if someone is *Deaf*. In this case, it is an enquiry of *Deaf* identity.



Fig 11: 'are you deaf?'

Figure 7's sign 'are you just acting deaf?' conveys a different message to Figure 6's '*are you deaf?*'. This sign is signed using more intensity and facial expression to emphasise a change in meaning to *are you ignoring me, taking no notice*.



Fig 12: 'are you just acting deaf?'

7.1.4 Deaf and dumb

7.1.4A. Hearing CofP

The representatives from the *Hearing CofP* define the meaning of the term *deaf and dumb* to convey more than just a classification for *deafness* but that it additionally conveys *stupidity*, *unintelligence* and an inability *to communicate* effectively. It is also noted to be a taboo phrase. The value response and overall perceptions are illustrated in 6.6.2a.

7.1.4B. Hard of Hearing CofP

The representatives of the *Hard of Hearing CofP* define the term *deaf and dumb* as a physical state of affairs, that a person is *deaf and mute*. They assert that it is a descriptive label for *deafness*; but, also believe it to be a derogatory term. The value response and overall perception is illustrated in 6.6.3a.

7.1.4C. Deaf CofP

The representatives of the *Deaf* CofP define the term *deaf and dumb* as a term that has been historically used as a descriptive title or label to depict someone who is *d/Deaf*. This term has now been replaced with the term *Deaf*. This term is defined within the *Deaf* community to describe themselves within the context of their *Deaf* Identity.

Figure 13 and 14 defines a *Deaf* identity in BSL and not the term *Deaf and Dumb*. Figure 13 conveys the meaning – ‘I’m *Deaf*’ and Figure 13 conveys the meaning ‘I’m *Deaf* and I have a strong *Deaf* identity’.



Fig 13: Sign for Deaf meaning ‘I am Deaf’. The index and middle fingers move from in front of the ear to the chin, just below the bottom-lip.

The *Deaf* community do not sign the term *deaf and dumb* - this is not an acceptable term to literally sign. Fig 8 and Fig 9 are signs for *culturally Deaf*. Nunn (pc. 27/06/2013) confirms that this is a reclaimed sign used by old[er] people and now accepted by younger generation - it doesn’t mean deaf and dumb (see Diagram 2 below, Fig: 10a and 10b - see also 2.1).



Fig14: Sign for a stronger Deaf identity - conveys an intensity of meaning in the facial expression.

7.1.5 Deaf as a post

7.1.5A. Hearing CofP

The representatives of the *Hearing CofP* define the term *deaf as a post* to mean that there is nothing that can be done for the hearing loss which is deemed as a profound *deafness*. *Deaf as a post* is also used in the sense that someone may not have heard the conversation, for instance, “Oh, he won't have heard you - he's *deaf as a post* you know!” It can be said in a jocular manner, which is always subject to the context and intonation of the term used. The value response and overall perception of *deaf as a post* is illustrated in 6.6.2d. This term is also noted to be term used to be an indication of being late-deafened due to old-age.

7.1.5B. Hard of Hearing CofP

The representatives of the *Hard of Hearing CofP* define the phrase *deaf as a post* to mean to be quite deaf, profoundly or severely deaf. It can also mean to be so inattentive as to not hear what is said; again, this is context and intonation dependent. For example, “Goodness, he is so *deaf as a post*, he always ignores me!”. The *Hard of Hearing CofP* assert that to be likened to an inanimate object, a doorpost/gatepost/log of wood, is insulting because items such as these cannot communicate. The value response and overall perception of this term is illustrated in 6.6.3d.

7.1.5C. Deaf CofP

The representatives of the *Deaf CofP* define this term as a hearing construct. If this was signed it would be the same as signing *are you deaf?* (see Fig7 above). The value response and overall perception of *deaf as a post* is illustrated in 6.6.4d.

7.1.6 Deaf-mute

7.1.6A. Hearing CofP

The representatives of the *Hearing CofP* define the term *deaf-mute* to mean that you are *deaf* and *cannot speak*. The term *deaf-mute* /*deaf-mutes* (pl) can be used in a derogatory sense when used with the determiner 'the'. 'The' indicates one person as distinct from another or a particular group of people. The value response and overall perception of this term is illustrated in 6.6.2b.

7.1.6B. Hard of Hearing CofP

The representatives of the *Hard of Hearing* CofP define *deaf-mute* as an old fashioned term which suggests a physical state of affairs of a person who is *deaf and mute* – someone who cannot hear or speak. They note that this term is still used by an older generation as a descriptive term to describe people who are *d/Deaf*. It has been mentioned throughout this research process that this term should be obsolete. The value response and overall perception of *deaf-mute* is illustrated in 6.6.3b.

7.1.6C. Deaf CofP

The BSL sign for this term means *deaf* without speech. The term *deaf-mute* is now obsolete. The BSL sign for *deaf and dumb* is the same sign for *deaf-mute* (see Fig8).

Nunn (pc.10.09.2012)⁵⁹ suggests that the term *deaf-mute* has a negative value, noting that it is

[...] an old-fashioned term. You don't see that as much. I don't know if *hard of hearing* people would use this. [As a] signing community [it] means somebody who is profoundly deaf, we would say that that person is completely Deaf.

The use of this sign holds the same approach, as highlighted by Nunn (2012) to the term *stone deaf*.

7.1.7 Stone deaf

A Hearing CofP

The representatives of the *Hearing* CofP describe the term *stone deaf* as a term that describes a non-existent level of hearing – *totally deaf*. It is used as a label or description; the equivalent medical term would be *profoundly deaf*. The value response and overall perception of the term *stone deaf* is illustrated in 6.6.2c.

B Hard of Hearing

For the representatives of the *Hard of Hearing* CofP, consider *stone deaf* to be a descriptive label for a profound level of deafness. They also note that this can be used in an insulting metaphorical sense (similar to the meaning of *are you deaf?*: see 5.1e). The value response and overall perception of this term is illustrated in 6.6.3c.

⁵⁹ Nicola Nunn is a Senior lecturer in BSL & Studies at the University of Central Lancashire.

C Deaf CofP

For the representatives of the *Deaf* CofP, in some instances *stone deaf* has been discussed as a reclaimed term to signify a strong *Deaf* identity - this perception is only noted by an older generation of the *Deaf* representatives who have been brought up with this hearing construct/term. Nunn (pc. 27/06/2013) confirms that

[T]here is no translation of stone deaf except to denote someone's complete hearing loss. The photo means someone who is culturally Deaf and implies a positive connotation of being Deaf.

Figures 15a and b below, demonstrates a strong descriptors of *Deaf* identity.



Fig15a,b: Sign *Deaf* in relation to a strong *Deaf* identity.



Diagram 2: The relationship between Fig.10a and, 10b to denote a strong Deaf identity
A continuum in the strength in meaning that conveys Deaf identity

Diagram 2 demonstrates that BSL has signs to convey the literal deafness, such as, (Fig 13). In contrast, *Stone deaf* would not be signed to denote with the literal meaning as conveyed in spoken English. Intensity and facial expression are employed when signing the above BSL signs to emphasise a *Deaf* identity. The value response and overall perception of the term *stone deaf* is illustrated in 6.6.4c.

7.1.8 Hearing impaired

A Hearing CofP

According to the representatives of the *Hearing CofP*, *hearing impaired* is simply for giving information to others about a person who has a hearing loss, in order to aid communication and their accessing of services. Interviewee 6 concurs that

[I]t is a term that provides information to another person who then can use the information about hearing loss and use this to communicate appropriately with someone who is hearing impaired. (Interview 6)

It is also described as a descriptive label which serves a purpose. The value response and overall perception of the term *hearing impaired* is illustrated in 6.6.2e.

B Hard of Hearing CofP

The representatives of the *Hard of Hearing CofP* define *Hearing impaired* as a term that denotes a hearing loss - a reduction or problem with their hearing. This term is classed as an 'umbrella term' for hearing loss. The value response and overall perception of the term *Hearing impaired* is illustrated in 6.6.3e.

C Deaf CofP

The representatives of the *Deaf CofP* assert that the term *Hearing impaired* implies that there is something wrong with a person's hearing and state that if you are born deaf, your hearing is not impaired so you are *Deaf*. The word 'impaired' within this term places it within the medical model of *deafness*, whilst the use of 'hearing' places it within the realms of the hearing world and can be associated with the *Hearing CofP*. The *Deaf* community firmly define this term as a hearing construct.

The BSL sign for *Hearing impaired* is signed in two steps.



Fig16: The BSL sign for Hearing Impaired

The concept of *Deaf-impaired* was introduced during the research process of this thesis and suggests that it is a lack of *Deaf awareness* for *Deaf* people which results in their being classed as *hearing impaired*. Nunn (pc.10.09.2012) further informs us that *Hearing impaired* is a negative term and asserts that it is a term which is

[...] very well known as a terminology that stems from the medical community. It has been used in academic writings for many years now by hearing people - it has been a very popular word for *deaf*. Deaf scholars I don't think would find that term used or rarely used or if it was it would be used as an explanation. It's applying to someone whose is hard of hearing or [that] their hearing has been damaged. I don't like this term at all, it is a very negative term. This term *hearing impaired* can be seen as a play on words – it creates issues around acceptance, social perceptions together with psychological influences. It provided 'reference to defect terminology, a learning or physical difficulty – all these terms come from a problem platform. (see 7.5.1-4, 7.6)

7.1.9 The term Hard of Hearing – overall perspective

This is a term that was not included in the semi-informal interview process but the *Hearing* and the *Hard of Hearing* CofP discussed that *hard of hearing* was a “softer” and more acceptable term. The *Deaf* CofP illustrate their use of this term in Fig.17 below. In general terms this term could potentially convey a negative semantic prosody - because collocates that include the word 'hard' are 'hard times', 'hard luck' and 'hard up'. This is a term which could describe someone who struggles to hear and is deficient in this sense. The term *Hard of Hearing* is used to categorise/label hearing loss - it is an 'umbrella term' which belongs to the *medical model of deafness* (see 7.5.1 and 7.6).

The *Deaf* CofP illustrates their use of this term in the sign below. It is signed to denote a person's hearing status as opposed to a *Deaf* identity.



Fig17: The BSL sign for Hard of Hearing

Barnes (pc.30.05.2012)⁶⁰ asserts that

[I]n comparing the term *hearing impaired* with *hard of hearing* - *hard of hearing* tends to be a term that is given to people who become deaf, so you refer to it like a sub-set of *deaf* people as being *Hard of Hearing*. Quite a lot of the time they will be people who have lost their hearing in old age, whereas we have *hearing impaired* children. *Hearing impaired* is a term that, sometimes, even babies are labelled as. I think *hearing impaired* is far more negative than *Hard of Hearing* because you have the word *impaired*, which to me is a loaded term. Also *Deaf* people themselves don't like the term *hearing impaired* if they are big 'D' *Deaf*, because they are not particularly fond of being called *hearing*, and being called *impaired* when they are neither.

7.2 Summary of findings for the value responses

The following Table 30 provides a summary of the value response data collated from my research outcomes delineated in Tables 6.6.2, 6.6.3, 6.6.4(pages 156-7). This summary follows the same value key format to illustrate the overall shared and individual perceptions in relation to, the positive, neutral and negative value responses from the representatives of the three CofPs, the *Hearing*, *Hard of Hearing* and *Deaf* communities.

Key: ● = A negative value response

● = A neutral value response

● = A positive value response

⁶⁰ Lynne Barnes is the Divisional Co-ordinator for BSL and Deaf Studies at the University of Central Lancashire.


































Summary of value responses 7.2.1	(a) Deaf and dumb	(b) Deaf-mute	(c) Stone Deaf	(d) Deaf as a post	(e)Hearing Impaired	(f) To turn a deaf ear	(g) It fell on deaf ears
Hearing CofP		 	 		 	 	
Hard of Hearing CofP			 	 	 		 
Deaf CofP	 			 		 	 

Table 30: A summary of the value responses from the representatives of the *Hearing*, *Hard of Hearing* and *Deaf* CofPs.

7.2.2a Deaf and Dumb

Representatives of the *Hearing*, *Hard of Hearing* and *Deaf* communities all deem the term *deaf and dumb* to be negative. The additional finding to highlight is that the representatives from the *Deaf* CofP also perceive the term in a positive manner. This particular perception response is because the *Deaf* community view this term as an identity marker (see 5.1b, 6.6.4a, 7.1.4C and 7.1.7C).

7.2.2b Deaf-mute

The term *deaf-mute* is noted to share an overall negative value response from the representatives of the *Hearing*, *Hard of Hearing* and *Deaf* communities. The additional finding to highlight is that the *Hearing* CofP perceived *deaf-mute* to convey a neutral value in the sense that it is a descriptive label. However, if *deaf-mute* was used in a derogatory sense and the word *mute* was employed to mean *stupid* or *unintelligent*, then this term would overwhelmingly be deemed as negative.

7.2.2c Stone deaf

The term *stone deaf* was perceived to be both negative and neutral in its value by the *Hearing* and *Hard of Hearing* CofP. This highlights that this term is used in different contexts. The context-of-use was noted to be an important element which made this term tolerable or intolerable in its use (see 5.1c, 6.6.2c and 6.6.3c). The representatives of the *Deaf* CofP note that this is a term which does not translate into BSL. It can signify a ‘full/profound’ deafness but this term is never used to demonstrate this meaning. My research revealed a positive perception from an older generation of the representatives of the *Deaf* CofP, who discussed that they reclaim the term, *stone deaf* - for them it does not mean *stone deaf* but conveys a strong *Deaf* identity (6.6.4c).

7.2.2d Deaf as a post

Overall, the representatives of the *Hearing* CofP identify *deaf as a post* as having a negative value. This is due to the fact that it can be used in a derogatory manner; and, in referring to an inanimate object, it has nothing endearing to convey about *deafness* (see 6.2aC and 6.6.2d). On the other hand, the representatives from both the *Hard of Hearing* and *Hearing* CofPs reveal a negative and neutral perception of *deaf as a post*. The negativity of this phrase is borne from wondering why *deafness* should be likened to a ‘post’. The neutral value response is noted because it is a hearing construct that they take no notice of and felt unaffected by (see 6.2b.B 6.6.3d, 6.2cC and 6.6.4d).

7.2.2e Hearing Impaired

The representatives from the *Hearing* and the *Hard of Hearing* CofPs share the perception that the term *Hearing impaired* conveys a positive and neutral value. It is deemed a neutral term because, for them, it is purely a descriptive label which describes a hearing loss. Its positive value is due to the fact that this categorisation helps people access and gain services (see 6.6.2e, 6.6.3e). In contrast, representatives of the *Deaf* CofP noted *Hearing impaired* to be an extremely offensive term conveying a negative value. Representatives also stressed that they do not consider themselves to be an impaired version of a hearing person (see 6.6.4e).

7.2.2f To turn a deaf ear

In respect of the phrase, *to turn a deaf ear*, the representatives of the *Hard of Hearing* and *Deaf* CofP noted both a neutral and negative value response. The neutrality response denotes the use

of this term to mean to *ignore someone or something*, thereby conveying no explicit connection to being deaf. However, depending on the context-of-use, it could convey any of the value responses. With reference to the word *deaf* it potentially constitutes a negative value (see 6.2bE and 6.6.3f, 6.2cF and 6.6.4f). The representatives of the *Hearing* CofP tended to regard this phrase as neutral because it is a well-known English metaphor used in the media and its actual meaning depends very much on its context-of-use (see 6.6.2f).

7.2.2g It fell on deaf ears

Overall, the representatives of the *Hearing* CofP reveal a negative value response to the phrase *it fell on deaf ears*. This is because it is a derogatory way of saying ‘I am absolutely not going to take any notice’ (see 6.6.2g). Both the representatives of the *Hard of Hearing* and *Deaf* CofPs convey a neutral and negative value response to this phrase noting that there is nothing positive about this English metaphor. Its neutrality comes from the fact that for both CofPs they perceive this term as nothing really to do with them. The negativity is conveyed in its context-of-use and a potential perpetuated negative semantic prosody with the phrase utilising the words *deaf ears* (see 6.6.3g and 6.6.4g).

7.2.3 Conclusion

As discussed above, these research outcomes link to my expanded prototype models where I discuss the use of prototypical language usage and in relation to its medical, social, cultural and media-led influences (see 7.5). This in turn, links to my expanded Baker and Cokely (1980) model, which connects the outside influences of; audiological and medical needs, political issues regarding difference, othering and equality rights, social issues linking to the social model of deafness and the cultural linguistic influences. These highlight that language is, indeed, ‘a guide to social reality’ - subject to context-of-use and individuals’ use of and perception of language - as discussed in-light of the three CofPs use and perception of the identified terms and phrases in Chapter 7 section1 above.

The following section explores further my ‘Gradable Antonymy Model’ (Fearon 2013) also in connection with these research outcomes and contributes to reduction of terms from line 3 to line 5.

7.3 Expansion of the Gradable Antonymy Model (see 8.1.2)

The expansion of my gradable antonymy model links identity labels and categories in order to identify a recommendation as to which (if any) should or should not be used, based on the research findings of this thesis. In Fearon (2013, online) I introduce lines 1 and 2 of the Gradable Antonymy Model (this is explained in more detail in 2.2 pages 22-23). I include the gradable antonymy lines 1 and 2 to place the expansion of my model in context.

(1) hearing > mild hearing loss > moderate hearing loss > severe hearing loss > profound hearing loss > deaf

(2) Hearing > hearing > hearing impaired > hard of hearing > mild hearing loss > moderate hearing loss > severe hearing loss > profound hearing loss > deafened > stone deaf > deaf > Deaf > ‘Deaf’ > DEAF

In addition to lines 1 and 2, line 3, below, signifies the gradable process that includes the descriptive terminology noted in this thesis - with the exception of the term *deaf-mute*. My research findings recommend that the term *deaf-mute* should be seen as an obsolete descriptor of *d/Deaf* people - a taboo term (see 7.1.6). Hence, line 3:

(3) Hearing > hearing > hearing impaired > hard of hearing > mild hearing loss > moderate hearing loss > severe hearing loss > profound hearing loss > deafened > deaf as a post > stone deaf > deaf and dumb > deaf > Deaf > ‘Deaf’ > DEAF

Line 4 identifies the removal of the terms *hearing impaired*, *severe hearing loss*, *deaf as a post*, *stone deaf* and *deaf and dumb*. This suggests that these terms are no longer desirable descriptors for *deafness* or *d/Deaf* people, hence, line 4:

(4) Hearing > hearing > hard of hearing > mild hearing loss > moderate hearing loss > profound hearing loss > deafened > deaf > Deaf > ‘Deaf’ > DEAF

Finally, line 5 illustrates the removal of all indeterminate descriptors, the responsibility being on the individual, parent or guardian to explain the level of *deafness* as and when required or deemed necessary, hence line 5:

(5) Hearing > hearing > deaf > Deaf > ‘Deaf’ > DEAF

This research has indicated that there is an argument the words *deaf* and *Deaf* able to positively stand-alone, without additional descriptors to convey negative sense relations. With this in mind, a future research project into introducing the cultural definition of *deafness* to the dictionary

would be a way forward in raising *Deaf* awareness and providing a solid reference to the term *Deaf* (see Fearon 2013, online).

7.4 A further perception of Media-led use of Language

Cordell⁶¹(pc.11.11.2012) is a member of the Deaf community and acknowledges the fact that she may feel strongly about the word *deaf* being used inappropriately because she is *Deaf* and has regular contact with *Deaf* people and *Deaf* culture; thereby, colouring and framing her use and perception of language from her centre and experience of life. Further to her comment regarding the use of the term *dialogue of the deaf*, (see 2.3, Article 1 and 2) she expands on her thoughts/perceptions, stating that

[T]he (inaccurate) use of the word to mean 'not listening' is so entrenched that it is now accepted as having this meaning, when used in the popular press. This usage does, however, help to reinforce negative stereotypes and unconscious ignorance (not knowing what they don't know) about deafness. This sometimes makes me feel frustrated (which is what inspired my response to the Denis Macshane article) but the disempowerment of *D/deaf* people (which is increasing at the moment due to negative stereotyping about *deaf* and *disabled* people generally e.g. being scroungers) means it is unlikely that our views would be listened to (ironically) or even if they are listened to, not take[n] seriously.

Cordell stresses the unnecessary promotion of a stereotypical negative semantic prosody for the word *d/Deaf*, arguing further that it perpetuates the message that they are linked to the frame of disability, hence a disempowerment, disrespect of their culture and general wellbeing. The involvement of the media with the use of the identified terms and phrases warrants further research.

7.5 Social, Medical and Cultural Prototypes

The research carried out in Fearon (2010) developed social, medical and cultural linguistic prototypes, these can be drawn-upon in order to situate the identified terms and phrases in relation to societal influences, which potentially categorise and label *d/Deaf* people (see also Graph 1 page 28). Language provides us with other phrases and terms which attempt to describe and categorise the concept of *deafness* – all these terms convey different meanings/messages to the representatives of the three chosen CofPs, the *Hearing*, *Hard of Hearing* and *Deaf* communities (as discussed in Chapters Five, Six and 7.1 above). Society seems to need to label,

⁶¹ Jane Cordell (Trustee for Manchester Deaf Centre and for Disability Rights UK, Chair, DaDa Fest, Coach and public speaker) runs a company called 'Getting Equal'.

define and categorise people, whereby identifying the groups to which they belong. Padden (1989: 1-16) discusses the importance of how a label is interpreted and what a person actually calls themselves. She states that the uppercase “Deaf” is not a label of deafness as much as a label of identity with other *Deaf* people’.

The research of this thesis serves to raise questions about the use of the identified terms and phrases as addressed and discussed so far in, Chapters One-through-six. The following prototypes illustrate areas of focus within the realms of the medical model, the social model, cultural language influences and prototypical media-led language usage. By so doing, it also raises future research recommendations which will potentially delve further into a ‘closer description’ of how the media employ these terms and phrases (see Chapter 8.3, 8.4).

7.5.1 Prototypical Language use – Medical model influences (expanded model from Fearon 2010)

I was inspired to devise this Medical prototype whilst researching the influence that language has in framing the concept of disability (see also my expanded Baker and Cokely model – 7.6). The terms, which appeared to be used predominantly in association with a disability perspective, were *Hearing Impaired*, *Hard of Hearing*, *deaf* and *deafened*. The centre of the medical prototype identifies the main influence for the audiological condition of *deafness* – this can be located within the framework of disability. It demonstrates a potential disempowerment and inequality in its frames of reference. In reference to the research of this thesis - for someone who identifies with the terms *hearing impaired*, *hard of hearing*, *deaf* and *deafened* - these are terms which are recognised within their CofP.

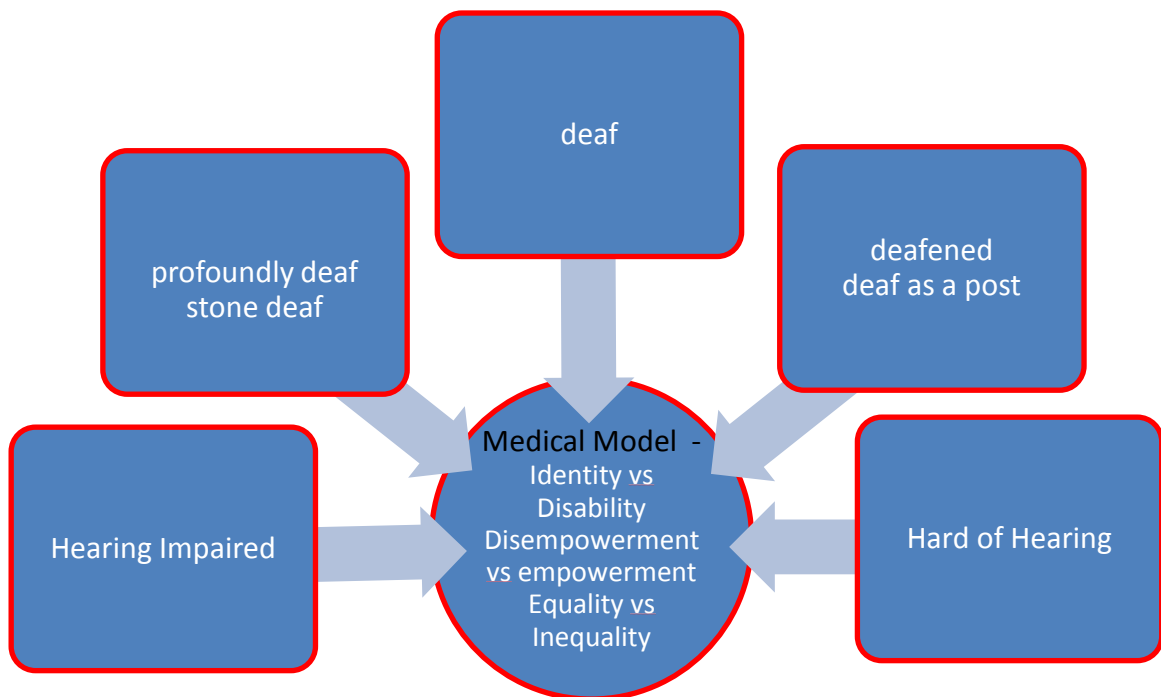


Diagram 3: Prototypical Language usage – Medical Model

In addition to the original Medical prototype in Fearon (2010), the above expanded model makes a direct comparison to the ethos of the social model. The Medical Model identifies through the research of this thesis that the identified terms demonstrate a person's identity and place in society. The *Hearing* CofP viewed the terms, *stone deaf* and *deaf as a post* as a negative descriptor, but used the term *Hearing Impaired* as way of describing someone with a hearing loss or an indicator for them to communicate in a different way (see table 27, 6.6.2). The *Hard of Hearing* CofP held the same point-of-view but in considering the term *Hearing Impaired* this became for some an identity marker, although overall the term *Hard of Hearing* is a more acceptable descriptor (see Table 28, 6.6.3). The *Deaf* CofP noted that *stone deaf* for some members of the *Deaf* community – amongst an older generation of *Deaf* people – reclaimed the term *stone deaf* as an identity marker to illustrate a strong *Deaf* identity; otherwise this term is another way of saying that someone is profoundly deaf. Within this model the descriptor *Hearing Impaired* is deemed as extremely negative, disempowering, placing *deafness deaf/Deaf* firmly in the clutches of medical care and a need to be cured (see Table 29, 6.6.4). Refer to Chapter 6, Sections two and three for a more in-depth perceptions of how each of the three CofPs perceived these terms and phrases.

In addition to the original Medical prototype in Fearon (2010), the expanded model below focuses on the ethos of the social model having an ameliorated effect on the *Deaf* Community because it rejects the negative effect of the medical model – an approach which has historically defined and maintained a disability status for *deafness*, as illustrated in the Medical Prototype above. The centre of the Social Prototype identifies an ameliorated shift of empowerment and equality. It recognises the existence of the uppcase ‘D’ *Deaf* and encompasses *Deaf Identity*. The terms *Deaf*, *Deaf Gain*, *Deafhood* and *Deaf Identity* are intergral in the Social Prototype. *Deaf* is about *deaf* people who have an identity and sense of belonging. Harrington (2009) states that

[D]eaf is about giving *deafness* a title and not just linguistically being a word. It is making a noun in that sense not simply *deaf* - cannot hear, but *Deaf* belonging to a cultural group of people who share a common language.

(cited in Fearon 2013, online)

7.5.2 The Social Prototype

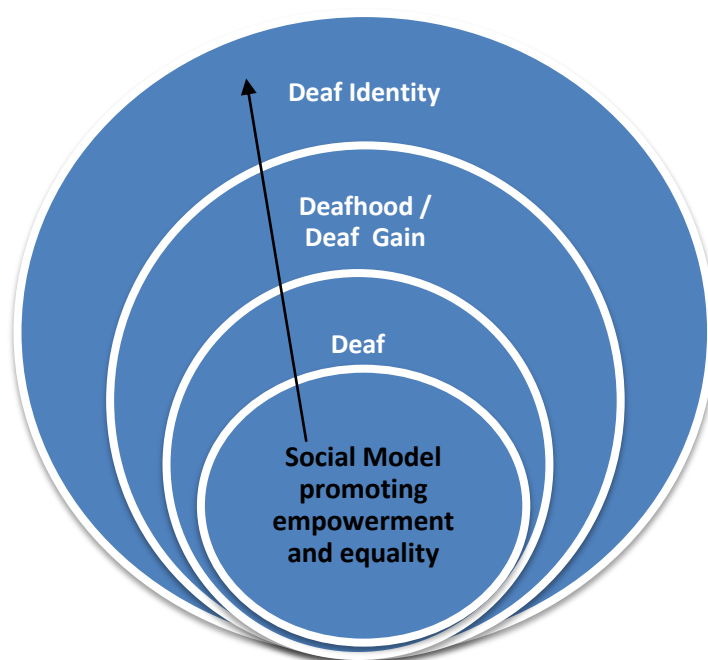


Diagram 4: The Social Prototype

The arrow in diagram 5 above accentuates how each term is embedded within each other highlighting the relationship between the terms used in this prototype. The subject title ‘Social model promoting empowerment and equality’ serves to highlight that in being culturally Deaf –

Deafhood is a way of life ultimately promoting a *Deaf* identity in which *Deaf* people are empowered and have equality in society.

Padden (1996a quoted in Senghas and Monaghan 2002:69) states that ‘to use a cultural definition is not only to assert a new frame of reference, but to consciously reject an older one.’ In essence, the research findings of this thesis support the social model of deafness by rejecting terms and phrases, such as *deaf and dumb*, *deaf-mute*, *deaf as a post*, *stone deaf* and *hearing impaired* which can potentially perpetuate a negative semantic prosody. The Social Model prototype promotes a positive semantic prosody in the identified terminology, thereby, promoting the use of preferred terms and phrases. The cultural linguistic prototype illustrates the inclusion of the terms *Deaf Identity*, *Deafhood*, *Deaf Pride*, *Deaf Power*, *Deaf community* and *Deaf Nation*. It rejects the categorisation of the medical model and promotes the social model as a recognised linguistic minority. Ladd (2003:16) explains that in their terms the ‘[...] ‘culturo-linguistic model’ has produced a contemporary Deaf discourse which refuses...categorisation’.

7.5.3 The Cultural Linguistic Prototype

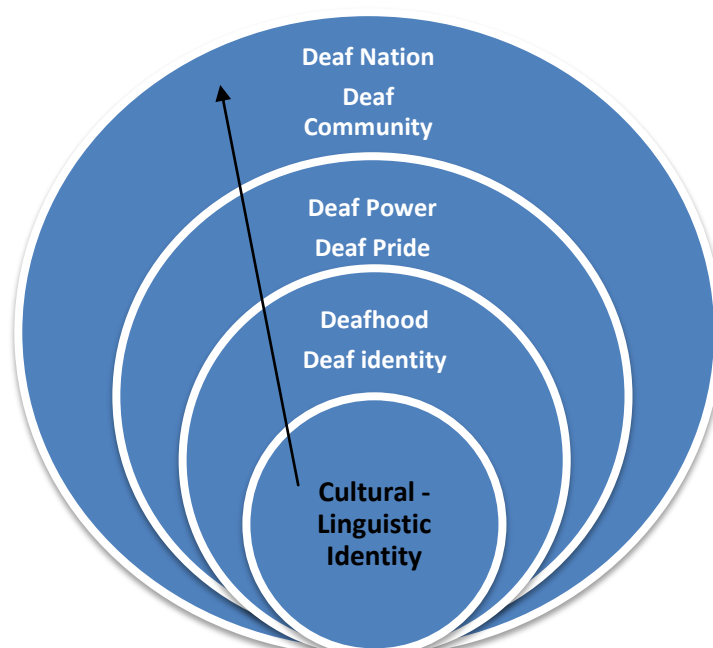


Diagram 5: The Cultural Linguistic Prototype

The cultural linguistic prototype illustrates a model that promotes a reality of inclusion of the terms; *Deaf identity*, *Deafhood*, *Deaf Pride*, *Deaf Power*, *Deaf Community*, *Deaf Nation*, these in turn are embedded within each other. *Deafhood* as a way of life affords and promotes a *Deaf Identity*, within these terms there follows an innate *Deaf Pride* and *Deaf Power* which promotes a positive proactive *Deaf community* and, ultimately a *Deaf Nation*. It rejects the categorisation

of the medical model (as depicted in diagram 3) and promotes the social model as a recognised linguistic minority (as depicted in diagram 4). Ladd (2003:16) explains that in their terms the ‘[...] ‘culturo-linguistic model’ has produced a contemporary Deaf discourse which refuses...categorisation’⁶².

The medical, social and cultural linguistic prototypes, above, provide a link to the media-led language prototype, below, and the expanded Baker and Cokely model discussed in 7.6 (following). The Media-led Prototype demonstrates the terms and phrases which have a continued use – these vary in frequency and context-of-use – the important factor here is how they are used.

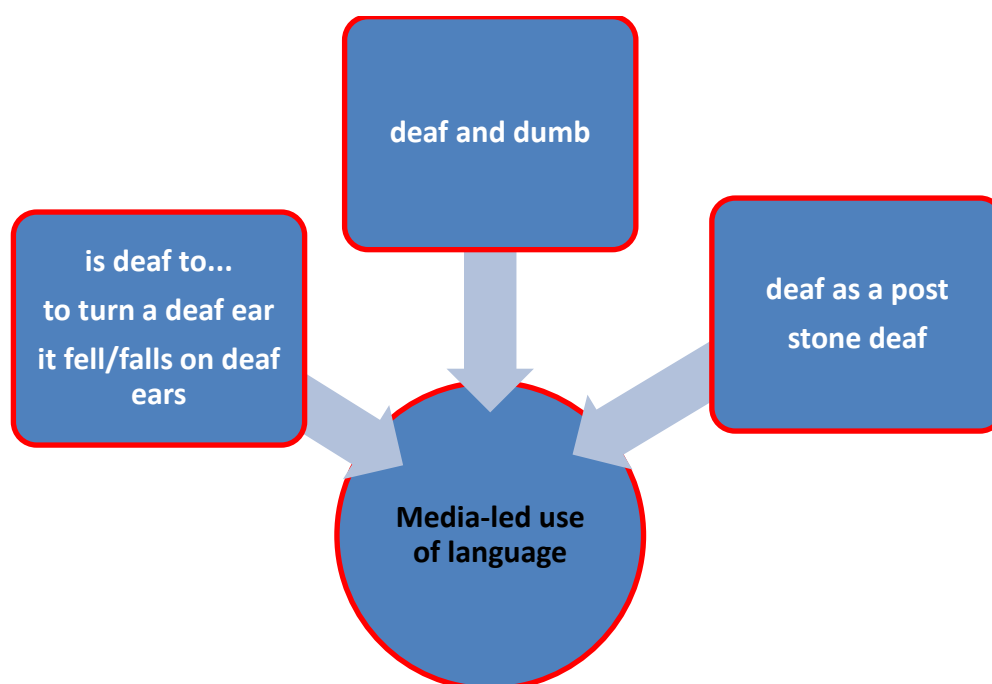


Diagram 6: Prototypical language use by the Media

⁶²In Ladd (2003:16) *Understanding Deaf Culture: In Search of Deafhood* describes the cultro-linguistic model. Ladd states that the ‘essence of this model is rooted in ideas about individualism and collectivism in Western societies. Deaf cultures are not cultures of individualism, but of *collectivism*, a trait which they share with 70% of the global population (Mindness, 2000)’.

7.5.4 Prototypical Language Usage (Media-led)

The Media-led language prototype is an expansion from my existing model which includes the medical, social and cultural linguistic prototypes. The additional prototype provides a focus for the terms and phrases, *deaf and dumb*, *it fell on deaf ears*, *to turn a deaf ear*, *is deaf to...*, *stone deaf* and *deaf as a post*. The investigated perception and use of these terms and phrases has revealed that they do provide an impact in print or by media broadcasts, this in turn draws in the attention of the reader (see 5.1f). These are the terms that my research highlights as being in continued use - in varying degrees of frequency. At times, these terms and phrases potentially perpetuate a negative semantic prosody and negative framing of *deafness*, *d/Deaf* and *hard of hearing* people, as discussed earlier (Chapters Five-through-Eight). The use of literal and metaphorical language terms and phrases within the media are prevalent. Nel (pc.14.05.2012)⁶³ discusses that

[...] Metaphor within society exists, 'no man is an island'. Sometimes metaphor is an essential part of a vibrant language but I think, particularly, the use of dumb has not kept pace with modern usage...[it's] negative to use the term dumbness and very emotive... the use of dumb is not a metaphor for me... It's for stupidity and that's different, whereas the word deaf is a metaphor for not listening.

My Media-led language prototype reveals outcomes, which could form a platform for a future research study, allowing us to explore in more detail what influence the media have on the use of these terms and phrases. A more detailed exploration of the media-led terminology could be investigated by using corpora such as *Cobuild*. A comparison of perception and use could involve a more detailed study which could focus on the professional use of this language. This approach could compare the way the medical profession, social services and disability services use these terms and phrases. Here, I have in mind an investigation of the role of the media and, in particular, the reason(s) why a journalist might have chosen/used the investigated terms and phrases. This research would provide a potential focus, in turn, for exploring further whether sanctions should be applied to the use of terms as *deaf and dumb* and *hearing impaired* within certain media text-types (see 8.3).

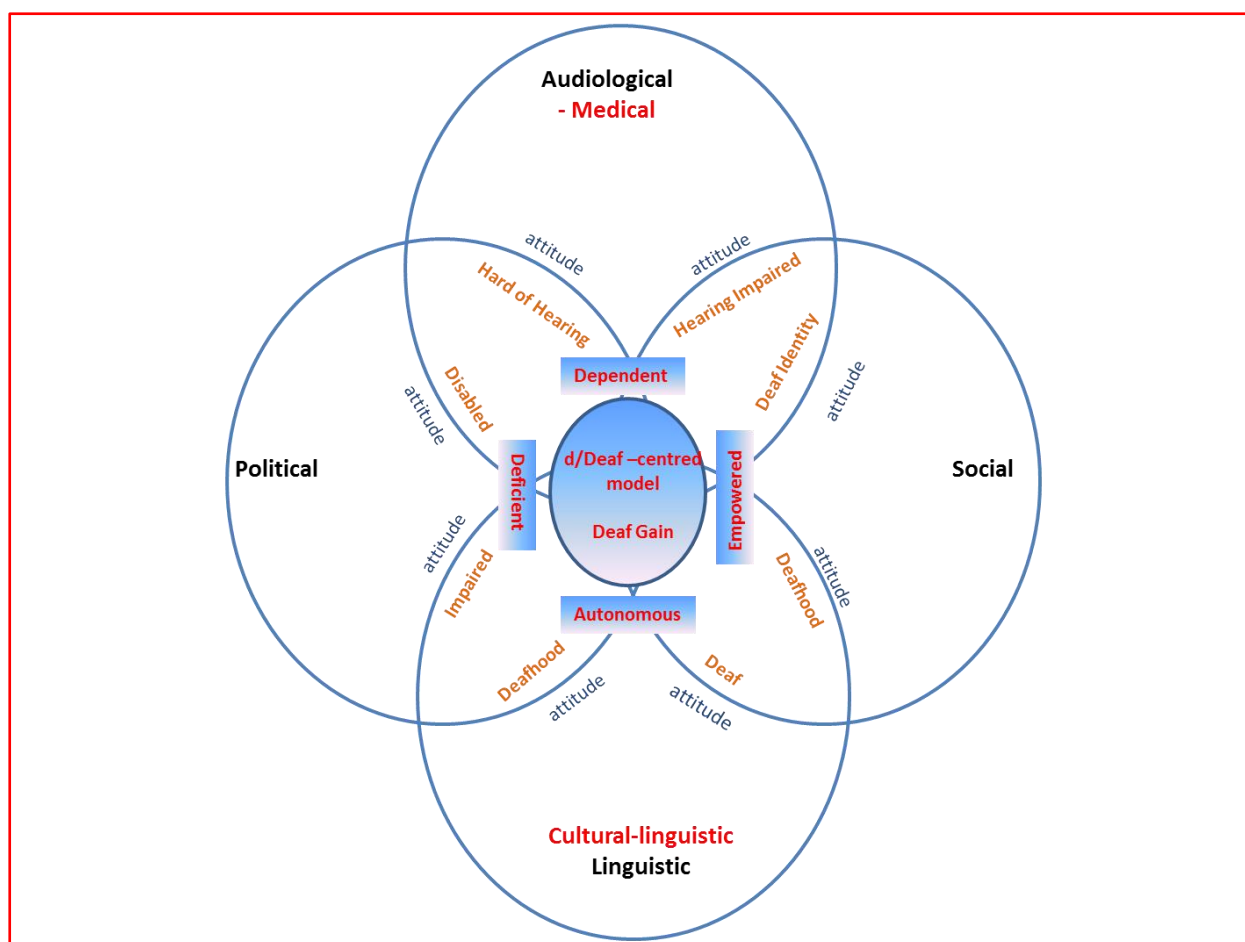
⁶³ Francois Nel is the Director of the Journalism Leaders Programme. Director: Media and Digital Enterprise (MADE) project, a winner of the International Press Institute's News Innovation Contest. Co-convenor: Digital Editors Network, UK School of Journalism and Digital Communication at the University of Central Lancashire, Preston PR1 2HE, UK.

7.6 Expanded Baker and Cokely Model

As discussed earlier Dirksen et al (2008:3) notes that the ‘frame theory can be applied to the concept of “deaf”’. Cokely (2001:1) identifies how the concept of *deafness* is framed to potentially convey ‘ignorance, pathology and deficiency’. Dirksen et al (2008:3) concur that

[D]eafness has long been viewed as a hearing loss – an absence, a void, a lack. It is virtually impossible to think of deafness without thinking loss. And yet Deaf people do not often consider their lives to be defined by loss. Rather, there is something present in the lives of Deaf people, something full and complete. They view their lives through a frame that is diametrically opposed to the frame of hearing loss. We call this opposing frame Deaf Gain.

The results of my thesis results have enabled me to modify Baker and Cokley’s (1980) model as discussed in 2.4. My expanded model version demonstrates the influence of language use in the realms of the audiological/medical model of *deafness*, political, social and cultural-linguistic centres. My expanded model highlights the influence these different centres have on the use of language and in turn, how they can frame the perception and, consequently the use of the given terms and phrases by providing specific roles and categories of use.



Deaf Gain is a concept that links in with a central concept noted in the centre of the above model as - d/Deaf – deaf-centred.

Diagram 7: A Joint Model - Baker and Cokely (1980) Avenues to membership in the deaf communities (original model in black and blue type)

Rachel Fearon (2013) Impact of d/Deaf labels and terms: the need for empowerment rather than disablement. (expanded model in orange and red type – the main spheres are in emboldened black)

Baker and Cokely's (1980) model is illustrated in the blue type – this information outlines the influence of audiological (medical), political, social, linguistic and cultural linguistic attitudes. I have expanded the attitudinal elements of Baker and Cokely's original model in diagram 7 to include the influence of language usage and perception – this is illustrated by the inclusion of the terms *hard of hearing*, *hearing impaired*, *disabled*, *impaired*, *Deafhood*, *Deaf*, *Deaf Nation* and *Deaf identity* (see orange type). These attitudinal elements denote an existence of how d/Deaf people have been historically oppressed, stereotyped in the disability framework, and negatively depicted by the use of words and terms identified in this thesis, which can be deemed as derogatory and on occasions, used inappropriately, as discussed in specifically in Chapter two and discussed in Chapters five-through-eight.

In the centre of this model the words *dependent*, *deficient*, *autonomous* and *empowered* are prominent because these terms are linked to the model spheres. These additional terms, *dependent*, *deficient*, *autonomous* and *empowered* illustrate a perception of *deafness* and *d/Deaf* people. This model is influenced by the research in Chapter 6 and Chapter 7 – both sections contribute to how the words are placed in the individual spheres.

- **Dependent** is linked to the audiological/medical sphere, which describes a dependency on the audiological and medical interventions. In my research, this is highlighted in how the terms, *hard of hearing* and *hearing impaired* are perceived and used.
- **Deficient** is linked to the political sphere – it describes a negative perception of *disability* and *impairment*. This highlights a connection that for some people who are deaf/Deaf people are categorised as disabled, impaired, deficient and unable to function fully in society. Historically there has been an oppression of d/Deaf people (see Chapter 2) but in recent times politically there has been a recognition of being a linguistic minority. There is a need to be respectful with the terminology used in relation to *deafness* - the use of terms, such as *disabled* and *impaired* can potentially be perceived in a certain way that can lead to unnecessary societal barriers, whereby creating inequality and reduced opportunities.
- **Autonomous** is linked to how linguistically the *Deaf community* lives their lives independently - ‘to-the-full’ – autonomously without need to be dependent on the medical system of care.
- **Empowered** is linked to how the influence of a sense of community, a sense of belonging, a sense of Deafhood and collectivism affords the Deaf community and Deaf people the right to live a deaf-centred life moving away from the historical view of negativity and incorrect, derogatory terms of reference to describe their deafness and ultimately their identity.

The expanded model: ‘The impact of d/Deaf labels and terms - the need for empowerment rather than disablement’ is discussed further, below. In the following section, I delineate the impact made in each of the identified spheres:

1. Audiological (medical) – this sphere refers to the *Hearing CofP* as carrying a medical influence; primarily the people they see have a hearing loss - this is linked to the medical model *deafness*. A *deaf* person who seeks medical intervention requesting the support of hearing-aids

or cochlear implants (henceforth CI) belongs outside of the *Deaf* Community. They may choose to belong solely to the *Hearing* Community or may choose to use hearing-aids and/or sign; although there is a generation who have chosen to have CI and later in life choose to sign and switch between both the *Hearing* CofP and *Deaf* CofP or even to be identified as *Hard of Hearing*. My expanded model illustrates that the decision on how we allow ourselves to be influenced by external factors, how we perceive and use language - is not only personal choice because we can be implicitly orchestrated to manoeuvre in certain directions under the influence of covertly deployed frames and our own acquired frames of expectation.

In the audiological sphere there are two terms, *hard of hearing* and *hearing impaired*, which potentially make a negative impact and create a medical dependency, thereby perpetuating the notion of disability.

2. Social – here I have expanded this sphere to delineate that there is a potential social influence upon the *Hard of Hearing* and *Deaf* CofPs - this is linked to the social model *deafness*. A *Deaf* person chooses to become a member of the *Deaf* community using sign language as their preferred language, whereby they are part of a recognised linguistic minority. In this social sphere there are two terms for consideration, *Deaf Nation* and *Deaf Identity* both of which advocate empowerment for *d/Deaf* people. This, in turn, alludes to the importance of positive *d/Deaf* terms and how, as a linguistic minority current terminology should reflect a movement of ameliorisation rather than a continuum of pejorative terms. More recently, Dirksen, Bauman & Murray (2009:3) introduced the term Deaf Gain – this is defined ‘as a reframing of “deaf” as a form of sensory and cognitive diversity that has potential to contribute to the greater good of humanity’. There are three [concepts] which define the concept of Deaf Gain;

- 1: DEAF INCREASE – this expresses the opposite notion of hearing “loss”. It emphasises that Deaf people have something of importance.
- 2: DEAF BENEFIT – this emphasises that deafness is not just a loss but a benefit as well.
- 3: DEAF CONTRIBUTE – this [concept] emphasises the importance of considering all the ways that Deaf people contribute to humankind.

(Dirksen et al 2009:3 [adapted])

3. Political – here I have expanded this sphere to identify some political influences which cause constraints in respect to how the *Deaf* community and *d/Deaf* people (which considers both the *Hard of Hearing* and *Deaf* Communities) are accepted or included in mainstream society. It also includes the potential impact of attitudes from not only hearing people, but also from within the *Deaf* communities themselves and government legislation, such as, the Human Rights Act 1998,

The Disability Discrimination Act, 1995, and the Equality Act of 2010, these political influences can make an important impact on people's lives.⁶⁴

In my expanded model the political sphere identifies two terms, *disabled* and *impaired*. This follows on from the *dependency* of the medical model of *deafness* - these political influences can maintain the *disability* framework of life. It promotes a deficiency in *d/Deaf* people (see 7.4, 7.5.4).

4. Linguistic – Cultural Linguistic influences – here I have expanded this sphere to identify language influences. In 2003 British Sign Language was recognised as a language in its own right. Although, BSL was unofficially acknowledge as a language for a long time, Baker and Cokely's model devised in 1980 did recognise sign language as an integral part of the *Deaf* communities' identity. My 'cultural-linguistic' sphere identifies the terms *Deafhood* and *Deaf* - this links to the concept of *Deaf Gain*. The 'social reality' of the identified terms promote a collectivism⁶⁵ as a linguistic minority and within that individuals' who strive to be autonomous in the celebration of their *Deafhood*. Ladd (2009:xviii) defines *Deafhood* as a concept that

[...] is not seen as a finite state but as a process by which *Deaf* individuals' come to actualise their *Deaf* identity

The identified *avenues of attitude* overlap, within these four sections, the *audiological*, *social*, *political* and *cultural linguistic*. I have included the terms and words *hard of hearing*, *hearing impaired*, *disabled*, *impaired*, *dependent*, *deficient*, *Deaf*, *Deafhood*, *autonomous*, *empowered*, *Deaf identity*, *Deaf nation* to promote a *d/Deaf-centred* model which demonstrates factors that make an impact on *d/Deaf* lives and communities in a potentially negative way. The *avenues of attitude* reveal a connection between the *audiological* sphere and the *medical model* of *deafness*, thereby creating a dependency of medical services to cure *deafness*. *Politically* it demonstrates that *deafness* is still seen as disability, that if you have a hearing loss you are impaired and deficient. Thompson (2011:79-80 [adapted]) states that

[...] some terms have a depersonalizing or dehumanizing effect. Terms such as, 'the

⁶⁴ Reference to the Equality Act 2010, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Human Rights Act 1998 <http://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/80A40B84-F50A-488D-B8C2-90365466E3AD/0/antidiscriminationandequalitylegislation.pdf>

⁶⁵ With Collectivism in mind, Ladd (2003:430) notes that 'research should ... bear in mind the importance of perceiving Deaf community and culture as a collective entity. Strategies devised must therefore seek to draw on those collective sources in an active manner, attempting to encourage and create a national cultural climate based on the spirit of enquiry.'

elderly' and 'the disabled' [or even 'the deaf and dumb man' or 'the Hearing impaired'] have been criticized for their depersonalizing and derogatory connotations.

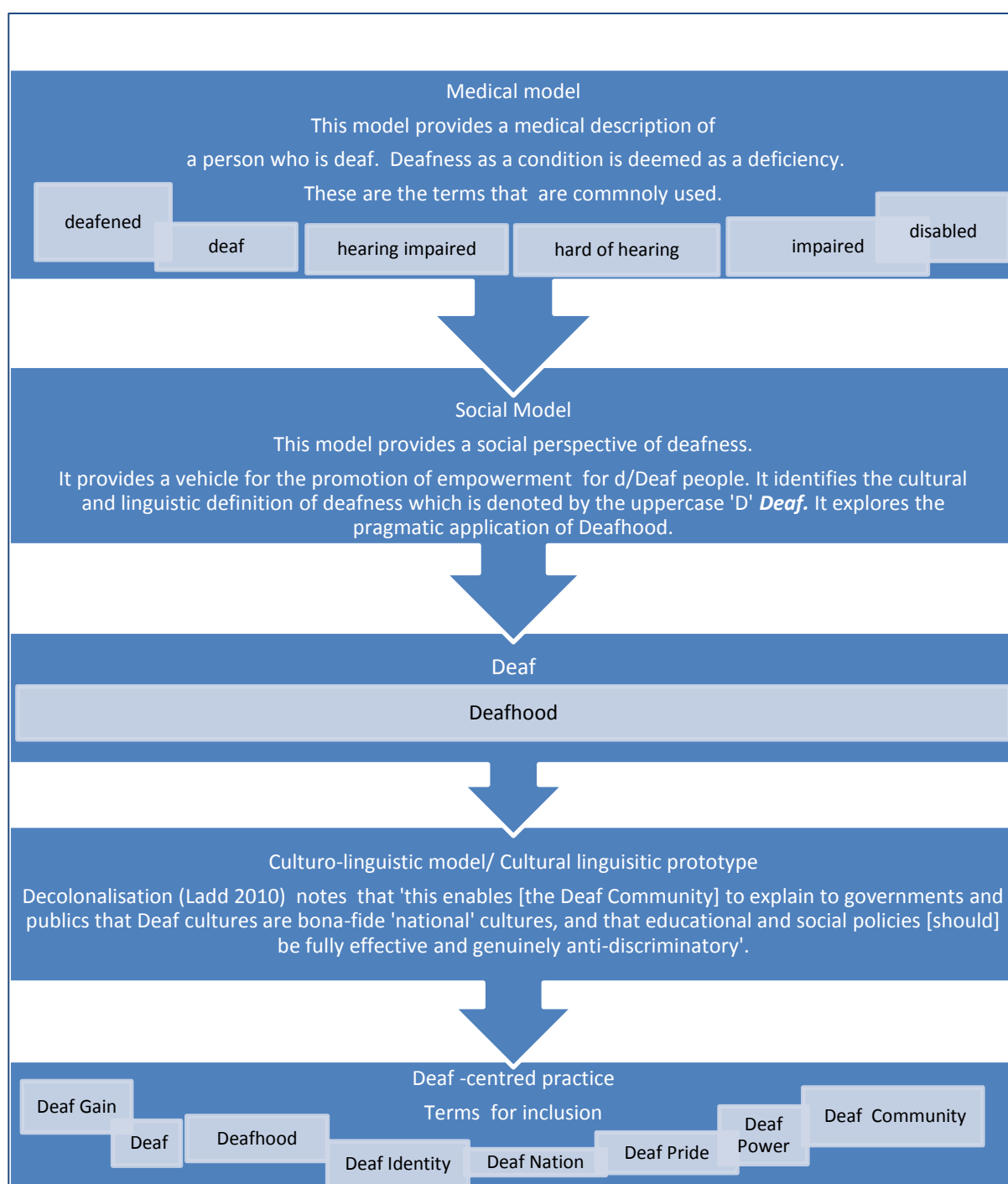
In the *social sphere* my expanded model constructs a *social model* of *deafness* where *Deaf* people can be empowered, cultivate and promote a positive *Deaf* identity. In sum, my expanded model, the: *Impact of d/Deaf labels and terms: the need for empowerment rather than disablement* seeks to identify a need for an empowering process towards the promotion of ameliorated terminology.

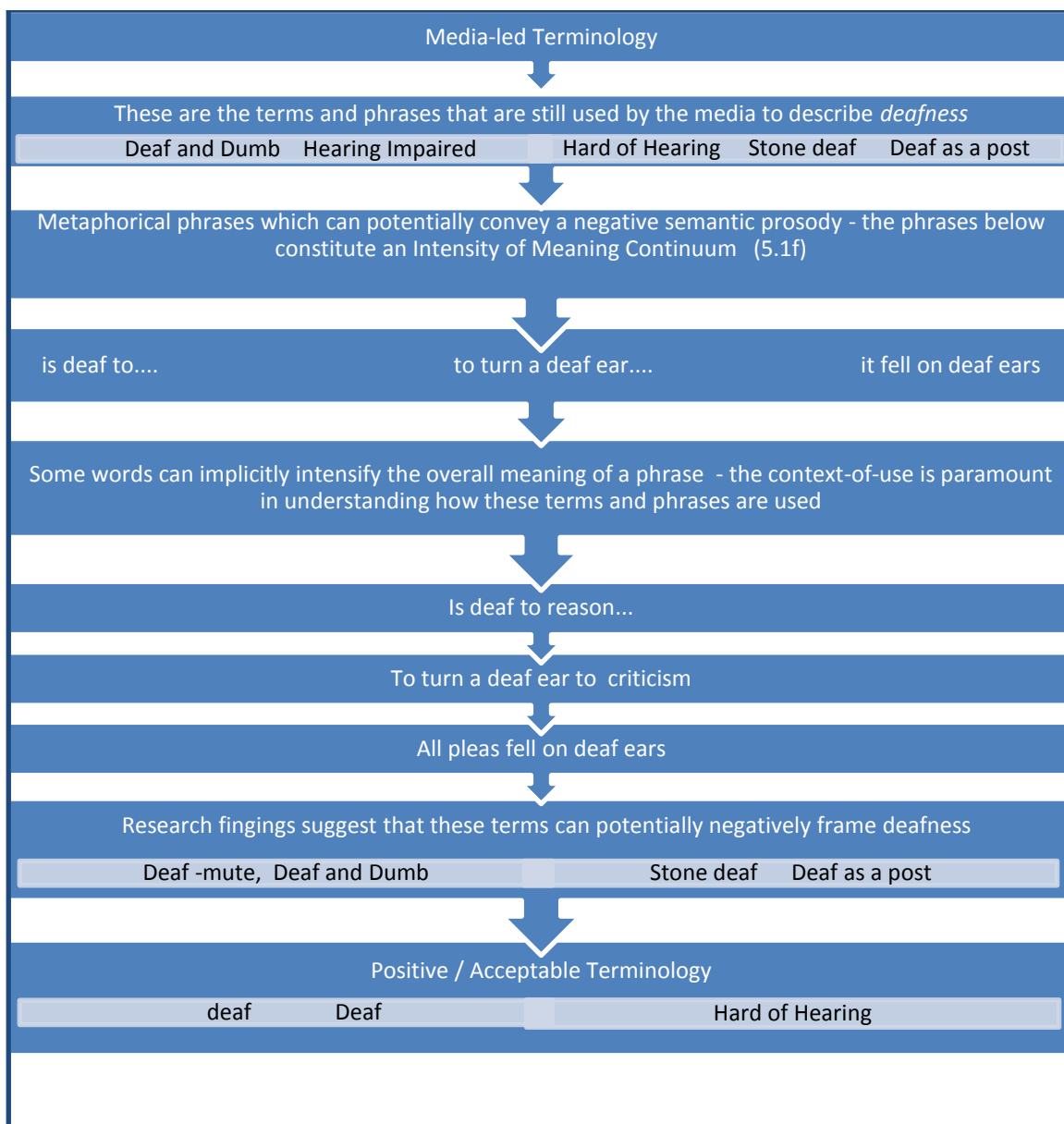
7.5.6 Summary Flow Charts

The following Flow Charts One and Two summarise my research findings.

1. Flow Chart One encapsulates the relationship between the Medical, Social and Cultural-linguistic model prototypes - I have developed these further in the light of the research findings and devised the Media-led language prototype which is summarised in my Flow Chart 2. My prototype models are expanded upon above in 7.5 and are connected with the expanded Baker and Cokely Model in 7.6.
2. Flow Chart Two illustrates my Media-led language prototype - a summary of my research findings in this thesis.

Flow Chart One: A summary of the Medical, Social and Cultural linguistic models of deafness





Flow Chart Two: Media-led Terminology – A summary review of the research terms and phrases

Chapter Eight: Conclusion Consolidating findings and recommendations

8 Introduction

Implicit in the title of this research study - '*Deaf where is thy sting?*' - is the notion that it is possible for a *d/Deaf* or *Hard of Hearing* person to be stung by negative external challenges and/or influences (medical, disability, political, inequality, social, cultural and linguistic). The answer to the question, as posed, is subject to individual perceptions and attitudes, as has been found to be the case in respect to the identified terms and phrases investigated in this thesis. In essence, where there is a *sting*, it will be subject to individuals' attitudes, perceptions and use of language. Even though as individuals we belong theoretically to a CofP, we ultimately hold a personal responsibility to how we use and perceive language. I have used the Communities of Practice framework to investigate the use and perception of;

to turn a deaf ear, it fell on deaf ears, are you deaf? deaf and dumb, stone deaf, deaf as a post, deaf-mute, hard of hearing and hearing impaired.

One of my main findings is that *deafness* is viewed differently by each CofP, the *Hearing*, *Hard of Hearing*, and *Deaf* communities (see 2.5; 6-6.4; 7-7.2). Eckert (2006:3) situates the use of the term Community of Practice in the realms of sociolinguistics and the value of its approach in research studies. She maintains that

[T]he enterprise of sociolinguistics (and linguistic anthropology) is to relate ways of speaking to ways of participating in the social world. This is not simply a question of discovering how linguistic form correlates with social structure or activity, but of how social meaning comes to be embedded in language. Meaning is made in the course of local social practice (McConnell-Ginet 1989), and conventionalized on the basis of shared experience and understanding (Lewis 1969). The importance of the community of practice lies in the recognition that identity is not fixed, that convention does not pre-exist use, and that language use is a continual process of learning. The community of practice is a prime locus of this process of identity and linguistic construction. Communities of practice emerge in response to common interest or position, and play an important role in forming their members' participation in, and orientation to, the world around them. It should be clear that the speech community and the community of practice approaches are both necessary and complementary, and that the value of each depends on having the right abstract categories and finding the communities of practice in which those categories are most salient.

The Community of Practice as a linguistic approach is a useful means of teasing out language perceptions. This said, I am aware that some may find the notion of a "hearing" CofP

problematic (because of its potential size and, hence, heterogeneity within). In this concluding Chapter, I will discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the study, my research outcomes and overall findings, the future research recommendations and my concluding reflections.

8.1 Limitations of the study - Strengths and Weaknesses

The strengths of this study include:

- The factor of bias - being *Hard of Hearing* myself I was aware of the need to remain impartial to promote and deliver holistic research outcomes, in order, that I could ‘better capture’ perceptions from the three CofPs.
- The use of a mixed method approach to glean enough data from the representative’s perceptions, in order, to form an opinion – employing a Likert-type effect in the interview process aided the gathering of ‘true’ perceptions.
- The length of the thesis is potentially strength of the study because it needed to be situated as a means of linking *Deaf* terminology to identity and its linguistic framework. Hence, the reader is provided with the necessary background (via Chapter 2). The length of the outcomes write-up was dictated by the ‘mixed method’ research approach and the depth of answers provided by the representatives’ of the three CofPs.

The weaknesses of this study include:

- During the research process, it became clear that the corpus BNC data source did not provide a wide data sample to draw-out accurate frequency-of-use information. In this instance, only three main data sources for the word *deaf*, these were discovered to be books on the subject of Deaf cultural and sign language – *The Deaf Advance*, *British Deaf Heritage* and *Sign Language*. There were a few other references to note but not many to use. Perhaps, in future research studies ‘Cobuild’ could be utilised instead. This weakness, in fact, became a strength of the research because the Nexis database was employed to gain another perspective of the frequency and context-of-use of the identified terms and phrases.
- The length of the thesis is due to my adoption of the triangulated approach. The length became such an issue that I have decided to omit, from the final version of the thesis, a

section which focussed on interviews from professionals in the field of Deaf Studies, Interpreting and Journalism (but see 8.3, below).

8.2 Research Findings

My research findings focus around the following six key areas.

- 8.1.1** The outcomes of the semi-informal interviews from the representatives of the three CofPs - in Chapter 6 (6.6.2, 6.6.3, 6.6.4) the research highlights individual and shared perceptions, the influence of stereotypes and the importance of community presence in the realms of identity (see 7.1).
- 8.1.2** The research findings highlight the need for agreed terminology that is non-offensive and sensitive to identity requirements, my research has led to the expansion of my Gradable Antonymy model (see 7.3) and a future recommendation for the inclusion of uppercase 'D' *Deaf* to the dictionary.
- 8.1.3** Prototype – prototypical language use – expansion on Fearon 2010 research - a link with ameliorated view of the word *deaf* – in the sense that *deaf-mute* is deemed an obsolete term. *Deaf and dumb* is viewed as an unacceptable term and *hearing impaired* is stressed as an insulting term.
- 8.1.4** Media influences – intensity continuum – as discussed below (page 193) – the use in the media to use idiomatic terms, such as, *is deaf to...*, *to turn a deaf ear*, *it fell on deaf ears* to heighten a negative news event. An overall opinion from all three CofPs was that perhaps there was another way for the media to word their stories without including idiomatic language that includes the word *deaf*.
- 8.1.5** Identity is highlighted in language use (see 7.1) - from this outcome, sanctions are suggested to discourage the use of the terms *deaf and dumb*, *stone deaf*, *deaf as a post* and *hearing-impaired*.

Shared and individual perceptions

All three CofPs concurred that the term *deaf-mute* was not used anymore. All three CofPs confirmed that the term *deaf and dumb* should not be used anymore. It is deemed as a derogatory term - strong reference is made to the word *dumb* being used in association with the word *deaf* (see 6.1cE page 116) The term *Hearing Impaired* was vehemently opposed by the *Deaf* community, was a term of identity for the *Hard of Hearing* CofP and a label to access services - although not particularly liked. For the *Hearing* CofP it was a way of knowing that someone was *d/Deaf* and was a terminology, which was used as a 'means-to-an-end' because it accessed services.

- 8.1.6** A key finding is the impact external influences have on language use. My expanded Baker and Cokely (1980) model explains further the impact that

external influences have the perception of the identified terms and phrases of this thesis.

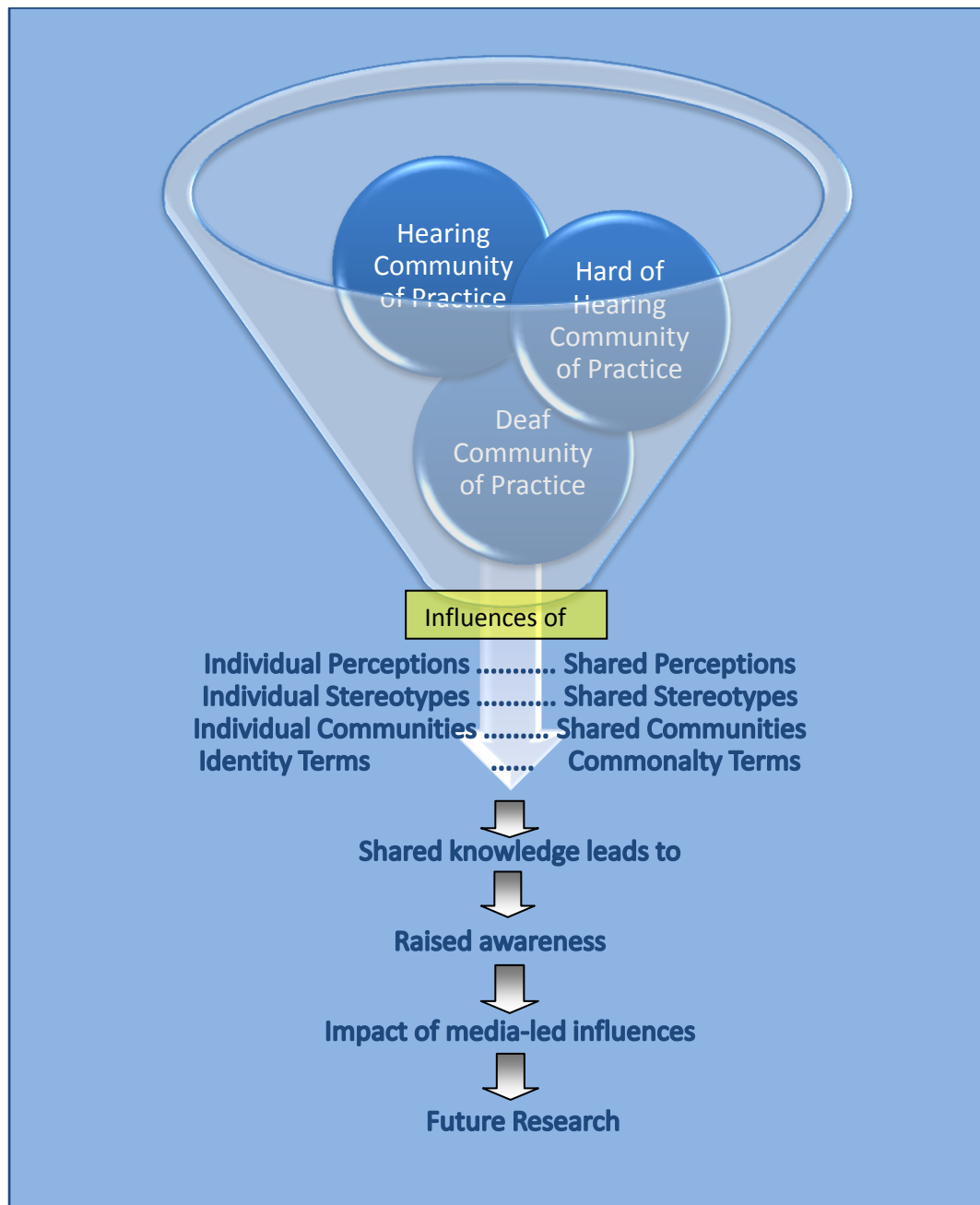


Diagram 9: CofP research approach - outcome model

I have devised the model, above, to illustrate the existence of those overlapping perceptions (when considering the use of the identified terms and phrases listed above). During the research process I identified individual perceptions and discovered that some of these perceptions were shared for the same reasons, but, at other times, these opinions were borne from the individual's own centre, that is, their CofP (see 6 – 6.4 and 7.1). I discussed stereotypes and discovered *shared* and *individual* positive, neutral and negative perceptions. In identifying the diversity in

meaning of these terms and phrases I discovered a commonality in perception and distinct differences. In sum, my research demonstrates that, individually and collectively, we are influenced, to some degree, in how language is conveyed and portrayed. In particular, we have seen how our perceptions are primed, framed and coloured and ultimately influenced by our “centre” or CofP, and this usage can be implicit and explicit.

My research findings have enabled me to provide comprehensive definitions of the terms and phrases from the representatives of the three CofPs. In teasing out different nuances, I have compared the value responses and discussed the similarities and differences (see 6.6.2/3/4 and 7.2). As a result of the definition and perception outcomes I have been able to identify an Intensity of Identity Continuum for the *Deaf* community (see 7.1.7C). The overall perception and use findings of the identified terms and phrases aided, in turn, my expansion of the Gradable Antonymy Model of *d/Deaf* terminology (Fearon, 2013; see 7.3 for detailed explanation). I also identified differences in the frequency of use and perception of the phrases *is deaf to...*, *to turn a deaf ear* and *it fell on deaf ears*, which prompted by creation of an Intensity of Use Continuum (see 5.1f). For reference purposes, I have inserted this model below:

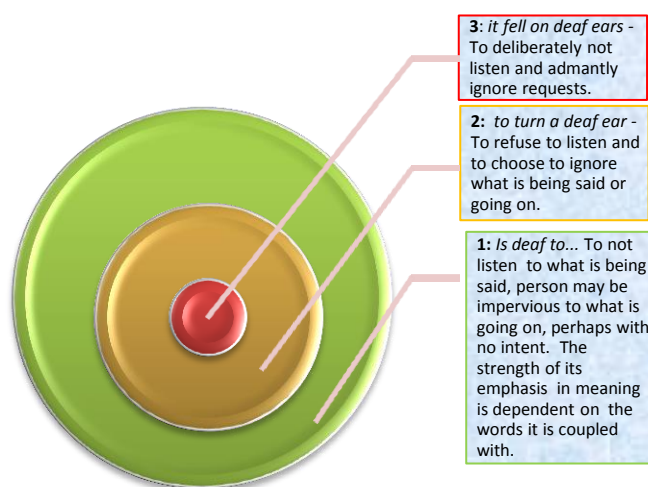


Diagram 1: Intensity Continuum for the phrases: *is deaf to...* *to turn a deaf ear*, *it fell on deaf ears*.

In addition, I have identified a negative polarity between *we must turn a deaf ear* and *we must not turn a deaf ear* in Phase 1a and 1b of the research (see 5.1h.2).

With these research outcomes in mind, I have developed further my Prototype Models for medical, social and cultural linguistic influences (Fearon 2010). The additional prototype I have constructed, as part of this thesis, relates to the media-led use of language in the realms of the researched terms and phrases. My models link, in turn, to the expanded Baker and Cokely (1980)

Model (see 2.2). My expanded version helps to identify the importance of the influences exerted from the Audiological, Political, Social and Cultural Linguistic spheres (see 7.6). The aforementioned models are summarised in Flow charts 1 and 2.

The findings of this research highlight a predominant influence of the media role in employing some of the identified terms and phrases, as discussed in Chapters Five-Eight. The media use of these terms and phrases creates frames of expectation; and, in some cases, perpetuates a negative (and, to a lesser extent, a positive) semantic prosody. Stubbs (1996:45) draws upon Halliday's (1991, 1992) analogy between linguistic systems and weather systems, noting that

[E]ach day's weather affects the climate, however, infinitesimally, either maintaining the status quo or helping to tip the balance towards climate change.

(cited in Hoey 2005:9)

I would contend that, by continuing to research in this area, there will be a positive contribution - no matter how 'infinitesimal' - which could potentially contribute to 'tipping the balance' in attitudes towards the use of the identified terms and phrases. This could potentially make a difference in influencing a positive lexical shift, thereby stemming a perpetuated historical viewpoint of the concept of *deafness* and negative semantic prosody of the words *d/Deaf* - contributing further to the amelioration of the words *d/Deaf*.

Hunston (1999a cited in Hunston 2002) suggests that the role of positive 'verbal hygiene' should promote the fact that,

The word *deaf* should be used to mean only 'born without hearing, uses sign language'. To use *deaf* meaning 'does not hear much' is evidence of marginalisation of deaf people. It indicates ignorance. To use *deaf* meaning 'chooses not to listen or understand' is evidence of discrimination against deaf people. It indicates a degree of malice.

My own research inspiration originally derived from Hunston's query of whether 'the prosody of one meaning carr [ies] over to the other?'. She poses the following,

For example, words such as *blind* and *deaf* have 'literal' meanings ('cannot see/hear' and 'without the full range of sight/hearing') and metaphoric ones. The metaphoric meanings occur in phrases such as *turn a blind eye* and *turn a deaf ear to*. These phrases mean 'do not pay attention to', and construe the blindness and deafness in question as a deliberate avoidance strategy. It could be argued ... that the meaning of *blind* and *deaf* in these phrases constitutes a prosody that influences attitudes to literal blindness and deafness; however, there is no evidence for this influence, and a counter-argument would be that the different meanings exist independently, having no influence upon each other.

My research has tested Hunston's hypotheses by observing the use of corpus data and applying these results in Phase 2 of the study to explore the interpretations of the representatives of the three CofPs, the *Hearing*, *Hard of Hearing* and *Deaf* communities. In particular, I have investigated whether prosody influences 'attitudes to literal deafness' or whether these perceptions exist independently. The results of my research indicate that there is evidence to suggest that attitudes do influence the perception and use of these terms (at least in respect to the identified terms and phrases of this study). My findings further suggest that these attitudes exist independently, the influence here being the context-of-use. This said, the use of the word *deaf* within phrases such as *is deaf to...*, *to turn a deaf ear*, *it fell on deaf ears*, *deaf as a post* tend to be perceived as being inappropriate and, as such, also tend to perpetuate a negative semantic prosody.

Hunston's (2002: 123) categories for the word *deaf* as previously discussed in 3.1 highlight that

- 1: *Deaf* people are a minority language group with rights.
- 2: *Deafness* is a handicap [disability] that can be overcome through technology.
- 3[a]: *Deafness* is linked to disability, 3[b] and deaf people are to be pitied.
- 4: *Deafness* is a simple description.

These 4/5 categories are revealed in the Phase 1b but not completely in Phase 2 of my research process. *Deafness* in its various terms and phrases is used as 'a simple description' causing no offence. Interviewee 24 noted an attendance to a *Deaf Rally* in London where as a minority language group they rallied for their rights (see 6.2cG p.138 Interviewee 24). The connection with *deafness* and disability remains, Interviewee 9 (see 6.1a p.110) highlights the use of technology - loop systems and hearing-aids. Throughout my research, I did not note the term or connection with the word or concept of *pity* but the term *mercy* was mentioned by Interviewee 22, see 6.2cF p.137/138. These and other perceptions are revealed in this study. In addition to Hunston's research this thesis discloses the outcomes delineated in 6.6.2, 6.6.3, 6.6.4 – Tables 27, 28 and 29.

8.3 Future Research Recommendations

With this in mind, future studies recommendations include:

1. An exploration of the impact Equality legislation has had upon language use and perceptions. A future study could include the overall data from the semi-informal interview which focussed on disabilist language. (see appendix 4)

2. An exploration of the literal and metaphorical prosody of the other terms and phrases addressed in Phase 2 of the research. This includes the perception of terms and phrases which include the word *blind*. (see appendix 4, 14).

3. A more detailed exploration of the media-led terminology using corpora such as *Cobuild*. Here, I have in mind an investigation of the role of the media and, in particular, the reason(s) why a journalist might have chosen/used the investigated terms and phrases. This research would provide a potential focus, in turn, for exploring further whether sanctions should be applied to the use of terms as *deaf and dumb* and *hearing impaired* within certain media text-types.

4. A related exploration might also make more detailed use of my Media-led prototype (see 7.5.4 and 7.6: Flow Chart Two), as a means of assessing what influence the media have on the use of these terms and phrase. (see 7.5.4).

5. An exploration which seeks to ascertain how best to introduce the cultural definition of *deafness* - *Deaf* - to the dictionary. To this end, Nel (pc.14.05.2012) notes that a positive and proactive approach is a must – as, in essence, ‘[...] the challenge of all of this is to find a vocabulary and to share that vocabulary in a way that gets it to be widely adopted’. Brueggemann (2008:37 in Lindgren et al 2008:37) asserts, in addition, that ‘dictionaries and attempts to capture or standardize any language ... operate under...perspective-oriented prevailing paradigms. Yet dictionaries are definitely needed – if for no other reason than to record the revolutionary and rhetorical shifts that language can make’.

8.4 Concluding reflections

In the realms of Deaf Studies, Ladd (2003:430) suggests that such future research

[...] should ... bear in mind the importance of perceiving *Deaf* community and culture as a collective entity. Strategies devised must therefore seek to draw on those collective resources in an active manner, attempting to encourage and create a national cultural climate based on the spirit of enquiry.

On reflection, I believe that my research study has been respectful in its ‘spirit of enquiry’ in order to glean language perception and use from the representatives of the three CofPs. My research questions queried whether the judgements of *deafness* are “coloured” by the use of certain terms and phrases - especially when used by the media or when used in literature - and whether we should be striving to avoid what potentially could be construed as derogatory terms, phrases and representations. My research findings have suggested that the use and perception of the following terms and phrases

is deaf to... to turn a deaf ear, it fell on deaf ears, are you deaf? deaf and dumb, stone deaf, deaf as a post, deaf-mute, hard of hearing and hearing impaired

do colour the judgements of *deafness*. That is to say, a perpetuated use of the noted terms and phrases - used by the media, in literature and everyday language - does potentially colour people's attitudes and beliefs about *deafness*. This conclusion is dependent on the context-of-use as well as individual use (as shaped by people's own CofPs and life experience). There is a suggestion that such CofPs and life experiences can be influenced, in turn, by how language is generally portrayed and conveyed by external influences, such as media-led representation and generational use of language – which seems to bring us full circle; and to highlight the importance of continued research along the lines suggested in 8.3. By way of concluding, Roberts et al (1992:67 in Thompson 2011:81) foster the belief that

[L]anguage not only reflects but transmits the values and relationships of a society: it actively creates and maintains them. So all the time we are getting things done with language; we are creating a piece of reality and sanity for ourselves. We are constructing a social reality (Berger and Luckmann, 1967), in the sense that we making relationships and establishing roles and identities in the choices of language we make and our orientation to the world consists, in part, in our language.

Glossary of terms

Throughout this thesis, reference will be made to the following terms:

Amelioration - is where a word develops a more favourable sense, hence a word's meaning is positively elevated in its usage.

Betweenity – this term is coined by Bruggemann (2008:30, cited in Lindgren et al) this is a term which identifies the space between – ‘it exists in Deaf culture, identity and language. [It is] about the way that deafness itself occupies an interesting “betweenity” in relationship to disability identity.’

Bi-modal - this is a term which refers to people who are proficient in more than one modality of language, for example the visual-gestural modality and the auditory-vocal modality. In practice, a person who is bimodal is likely to be proficient in at least one spoken/written language and at least one sign language. It is not the same as bilingual, which refers to proficiency in more than one language in the same modality.

Cultural linguistic Prototype - The Cultro-linguistic Model is an addition to the Social Model. It encompasses the essence of *Deafhood* with the recognition of the Deaf community being a Linguistic minority. It disseminates the associated terms of *Deafhood: Deaf Identity, Deaf Pride, Deaf Power, Deaf Community, Deaf Nation*.

d/Deaf - this term d/Deaf refers to both audiologically deaf and cultro-linguistically identified deaf people (see 2.1).

Descriptive - means for the purpose of this study that the identified terms or phrases are used as a label that defines actual deafness or a process or event that describes actual deafness.

Difference – this is used within the realms of disability versus the ‘other’ - instead of using terms regarding disability we should be accepting of others’ differences and in doing so we should ‘celebrate difference’ and not use it to separate society in a derogatory manner.

Evaluative - is a term which means that the identified terms and phrases may provide an extra insight or indication of the writers or speaker's world view, opinion, attitudes and belief system to a real or potential situation.

Medical model - this term places the concept of deafness in the medical field of care.

Metaphorical - this means that the identified terms or phrases are used figuratively. These terms and phrases may take on an extended meaning that moves away from the literal surface meaning.

Negative - refers to the identified terms or phrases which cast an *unfavourable* or *detrimental* world view or opinion of actual conditions such as deafness, blindness or having a physical difficulty.

Neutral - refers to the identified terms or phrases which command an *impartial, non-committal* and *unbiased* world view or opinion of actual conditions, such as having a physical difficulty, being deaf or blind.

Neutral/ Neutrality response – is a response that holds an opinion of acceptability – perhaps an inherited saying or term – used without any intent to offend.

Othering – this concept refers to the language that projects an image, conveys a message and meaning of attitude and belief that is then attached to a person or a group of people.

Pejoration - refers to how a word is deemed to have negative connotations and thus negative attitudes from society are perpetuated.

Political model – this term refers to the ability of external influences, such as, governmental legislation and policy, to exert influence on matters which directly affect d/Deaf people and the Deaf community.

Positive - refers to the identified terms or phrases which reinforce and affirm *favourable* world views or opinions of actual conditions, such as being blind, deaf or having a physical difficulty.

Social model - this term places the concept of deafness in a cultural and linguistic framework.

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Appendices

Appendix:1

Denouncing the Milan Conference of 1880

The Association/Latest document/ BATOD - Resolution about the Milan Congress - The 21st International Congress on the Education of the Deaf (ICED 2010).

Resolution in Vancouver about the 1880 Congress of Milan

Currently the International Congress on Education of the Deaf (ICED) is taking place in Vancouver. The Congress website can be visited @ <http://www.iced2010.com>.

This is the draft text:

"In 1880, an international congress was held in Milan to discuss the education of the deaf. At that time, the members passed several resolutions that affected the education, and the lives, of Deaf people around the world.

The resolutions:

1. removed the use of sign language from educational programmes for the deaf around the world
2. contributed detrimentally to the lives of deaf citizens around the world
3. prevented deaf citizens from participation in government planning, decision making and funding in areas of employment training, re-training and other aspects of career planning
4. hindered the abilities of deaf citizens to succeed in various careers and has prevented many of them from following their own aspirations
5. and prevented the opportunity for many deaf citizens to fully demonstrate their cultural and artistic contributions to the diversity of each nation.

Therefore, we reject all resolutions passed at the ICED Milan conference in 1880 that denied the inclusion of sign language in educational programmes for deaf students. Therefore, we acknowledge and sincerely regret the detrimental effects of the Milan conference. And therefore, we call upon all nations of the world to remember history, and ensure that education programmes accept and respect all languages and forms of communication."

This was accepted, and thus a formal apology made to the Deaf community worldwide.

<http://www.batod.org.uk> [accessed 06/09/10]

UK Council on Deafness, Registered Charity Number 1038448

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Appendix:2

The Recognition of British Sign Language

UK Council on Deafness



Government Statement - 18th March 2003

A joint statement made by Andrew Smith, the Secretary of State at the Department of Work and Pensions, and Maria Eagle, Minister for Disabled People.

"The Government recognises that British Sign Language (BSL) is a language in its own right regularly used by a significant number of people. For an estimated 70,000 deaf people it is their preferred language for participation in everyday life. BSL is a visual-gestural language with its own vocabulary, grammar and syntax.

The Government understands that people who use BSL want their language to be protected and promoted in the same way some minority languages are by the Council of Europe's Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. The Council is considering how that might be achieved for indigenous sign languages. The Government will give careful consideration to any proposals which the Council might make.

The Government has already taken action to improve access to BSL, for example by identifying situations where it might be reasonable for employers and service providers to engage the services of a BSL/English interpreter.

The Government will be funding a discrete programme of initiatives to support this statement."

Appendix: 3

Consent form for Semi-Informal Interview

Please read the introduction to my informal interview questions carefully and take time to ask me any questions before you sign this form and complete with me the interview questionnaire. You can also contact my tutor who will be happy to answer any further questions.

Prof Dawn Archer
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and Pragmatics
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Tel: 01772 89

Email: RLee@uclan.ac.uk

Please circle yes or no as appropriate below:

The purpose of this study has been explained to me and I have had an opportunity to ask questions.
Yes No

I agree that data may be collected from me for the purposes of this study. **Yes No**

I understand that data which is collected **will** be anonymised and **may or may not** be used in the completed version of this study. **Yes No**

I agree that data collected in this study can be used for academic purposes if the data is presented in an anonymised form. **Yes No**

Your name (please print) _____

Your signature _____

Date _____

Additional questions:

I agree that the University tutor can keep copies of the anonymised data collected for academic purposes (for example, but not limited to: showing students in class as examples).

Yes No

I would like a summary of the research when it is finished (student to provide)

Yes No

If YES please supply email address

Consent Form information

1. Gender: Female Male
2. Age group: 18-25 26-35 36-45 46-55 56-65 66-75 76-85 86+
3. Occupation: _____
4. Region of origin: _____
5. Region you live in now: _____
6. Nationality: _____
7. Ethnic origin: _____
8. 1st Language: _____
9. 2nd Language (if any) _____

10: Please circle the following network that you identify yourself with and/or belong to:

HEARING HARD OF HEARING DEAF

Do you know anyone who you would consider to belong or identify with the networks of Hard of Hearing or Deaf: if yes please comment below:

Appendix: 4

Semi- informal interview – random word lists

Word list - Number 1

Emotional Cripple
Blind as a bat
Deaf and Dumb
Legless
Visually impaired
To turn a deaf ear
Lame duck
Blind obedience
Mentally Impaired
Blind faith
Stone Deaf
Physically Impaired
Blind drunk
Spastic
It fell on deaf ears
To turn a blind eye
Lame excuse
Hearing impaired
Deaf as a post
Blind-side
Deaf –mute

Word list – Number 2

Deaf as a post
Blind-side
To turn a deaf ear
Emotional cripple
To turn a blind eye
Mentally Impaired
Legless
Blind drunk
Hearing Impaired
Blind obedience
It fell on deaf ears
Blind faith
Stone deaf
Physically Impaired
Lame excuse
Deaf-mute
Spastic
Blind as a bat
Lame duck
Visually Impaired

Deaf and Dumb

Word list – Number 3

Visually impaired
Spastic
Deaf-mute
Lame duck
Blind obedience
Legless
Blind faith
To turn a deaf ear
Stone deaf
Emotional Cripple
Blind-side
Hearing Impaired
Lame excuse
Blind drunk
Deaf and Dumb
Mentally Impaired
Blind as a bat
Deaf as a post
It fell on deaf ears
Physically impaired
To turn a blind eye

Semi-informal interview 1a = Word list 1 used in Section 1
Word list 3 used in Section 2

Semi-informal interview 2a = Word list 2 used in Section 1
Word list 1 used in Section 2

Semi-informal interview 3a = Word list 3 used in Section 1
Word list 2 used in Section 2

Appendix: 5

Business Affairs Dept
ITV Studios
Leeds

University of Central Lancashire
School of Journalism, Media and
Communication
Preston
Lancashire
PR1 2HE

23rd of February 2012

Dear Sir/Madame,

My name is Rachel Fearon. I am undertaking a Masters Degree in Linguistic Research at the University of Central Lancashire. My research explores how society perceives language use with a focus on words and terms such as, 'it fells on deaf ears', 'to turn a blind eye' and 'are you deaf'. I was very interested to discover that in an Episode of Coronation Street, dated the 29th of August 2011, Audrey says to Kylie, 'are you deaf as well as daft?' and uses the term 'turn a blind eye' in a conversation with Gail.

I spoke recently with the Duty Officer at Granada Studios, David Newton to request advice on how to access a particular clip from an Episode of Coronation Street. He advised that I direct my enquiry to you. I wondered if you would grant me permission to use this clip for research and educational purposes as it conveys how these terms can be used verbally and in context of an everyday situation - as played out in Coronation Street; it is an excellent example of how this term can be used. My research focuses on how language is socially perceived – I am exploring the semantic prosodies of these terms as to whether people view this particular use of language as being neutral, negative or positive. I would use this clip to support my research data in semi-informal interviews with different communities, the hearing community, the hard of hearing community and the deaf community, and compare their responses.

I would be very grateful for your consideration and I look forward to your reply – please find my home contact details at the end of this letter for your reply.

Yours sincerely,

Rachel Fearon

Student - MA in Linguistic Research

Email: rfearon@uclan.ac.uk

My supervisor contact details are as follows in case further clarification is needed:

Professor Dawn Archer
Professor in Corpus Linguistics and Pragmatics
University of Central Lancashire
School of Languages, Literature and International Studies (SoLLIS)
Preston
Lancashire
PR1 2HE

01772 893027

Email: DEArcher@uclan.ac.uk

Appendix: 5.1

Victoria Ott
Business Affairs Dept
ITV Studio
Leeds
LS3 1JS

University of Central Lancashire
School of journalism, Media and
Communication
Preston
Lancashire
PR1 2HE

12th of March 2012

Your ref: RJP/VO

Dear Victoria,

Thank you for your prompt reply to my letter dated the 23rd of February 2012. I would like to thank you for the granted permission to use the Coronation footage shown on the 29th of August 2011 – regarding Audrey’s conversation with Kylie – ‘are you deaf as well as daft?’ and the term ‘to turn a blind eye’ in a conversation between Audrey and Gail. My next query is how do I access these clips because on your official website the archived footage does not cover my requested date and it is too long ago to be shown on ITV I player? Your help/advice on this matter would be great – thank you. I look forward to your reply. Please find my contact details below.

Yours sincerely,
Rachel Fearon
University Email: rfearon@uclan.ac.uk

Appendix: 6

Semi-informal presentation interview format – this was presented as a PowerPoint presentation. Between each word slide I used a blank slide to create a pause in-between each term and phrase to foster reflection and clear the mind for the next word (see Chapter 4).

Before we start could you fill in the
Consent Form.

Thank you

Semi-Informal Interview
Questions

Interview format

- Please read the questions as they appear on the screen.
- There are no right or wrong answers.
- Please answer as honestly as you can - true to your feelings, whatever your first thoughts are. All your comments are valuable to this research project.
- There are four sections to this exercise – which will take an hour or so...

Section 1 (LIST 2)

Where are you likely to
come across the following
terms or phrases?

DEAF AS A POST

BLIND-SIDE

TO TURN A DEAF EAR

EMOTIONAL CRIPPLE

TO TURN A BLIND EYE

MENTALLY IMPAIRED

LEGLESS

BLIND DRUNK

HEARING IMPAIRED

BLIND OBEDIENCE

IT FELL ON DEAF EARS

BLIND FAITH

STONE DEAF

PHYSICALLY IMPAIRED

LAME EXCUSE

DEAF-MUTE

SPASTIC

BLIND AS A BAT

LAME DUCK

VISUALLY IMPAIRED

DEAF AND DUMB

SECTION 2

Please familiarize yourself with
the following definitions...

POSITIVE



The identified terms/phrases
reinforce and affirm *favourable*
world views or opinions of actual
conditions, such as being blind,
deaf or having a physical
difficulty.

POSITIVE



NEUTRAL



The identified terms/phrases
command an *impartial, non-committal*
and unbiased world view or opinion of
actual conditions, such as having a
physical difficulty, being deaf or blind.

NEUTRAL



NEGATIVE



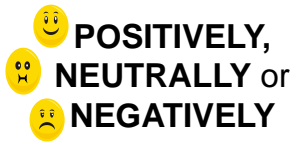
The identified terms/phrases cast an *unfavourable or detrimental* world view or opinions of actual conditions such as deafness, blindness or having a physical difficulty.

NEGATIVE



Section 2 (list 3)

In your view...would the following terms or phrases be used:



**POSITIVELY,
NEUTRALLY or
NEGATIVELY**

Section Two of the Semi-informal interview asked the above question and directed it to the same words as illustrated previously – these words were presented in a different order - see the Appendix: for the three randomised word lists.

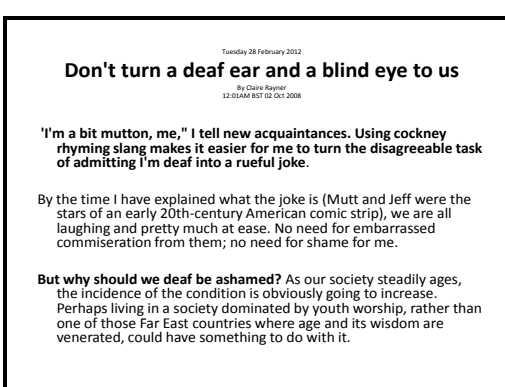
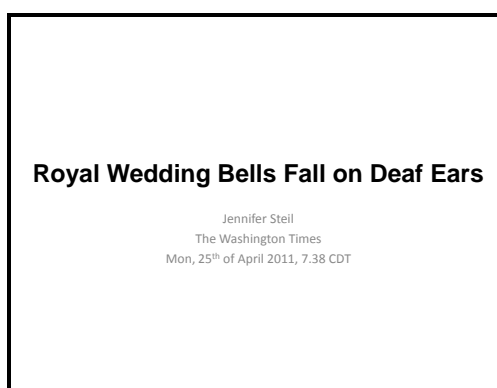
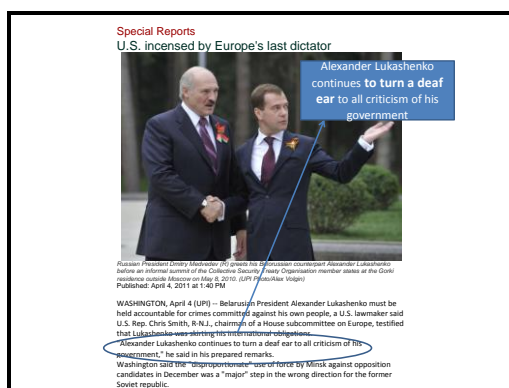
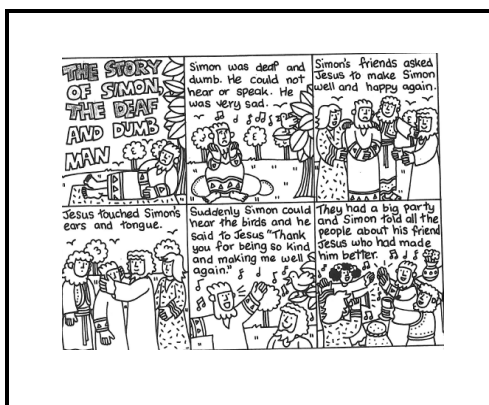
Section 3

Please look at the following articles and tell me what your first reaction/ impression of these are...

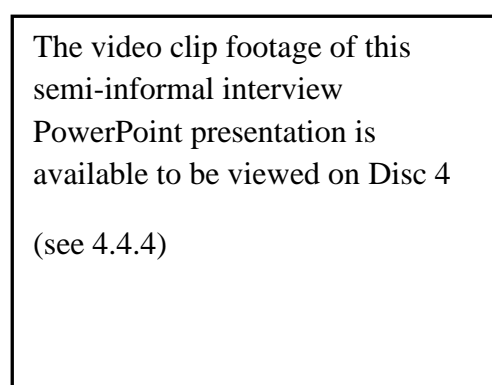
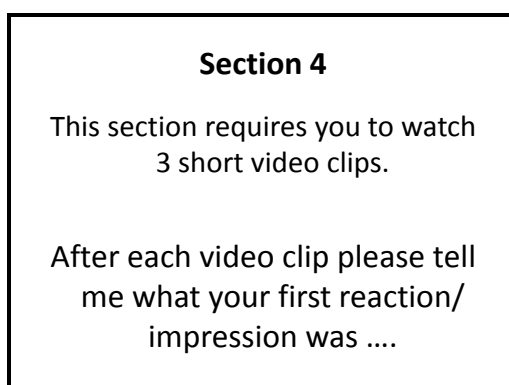
Article 1



Article 1: Jamie's 'Back to Work Britain' campaign falls flat was presented first to the interviewees without drawing attention to the phrase *fell on deaf ears*.



For reference purposes, a readable copy of the above articles will be included in this appendix.



One more thing...

...have any of the words or phrases in this PowerPoint made a lasting **negative** 😞 or **positive** 😊 impact on you? If your answer to the above is “yes”, tell me

(i) which were **negative/positive** for you, and (ii) why this is the case.



Thank you very much for your participation.

Before you leave ...
please fill in a short information sheet.

Thank you

Appendix 7: Article 1 of the semi-informal interview was introduced to the interviewee initially without any prompting.

Best report

Jamie's 'Back to Work Britain' campaign falls flat

Over two million people are unemployed in the UK – so why did only a handful turn up for Jamie Oliver's recruitment day?

Chef Jamie Oliver has been scouring the country looking for workers to fill his ever-expanding restaurant empire. With unemployment figures at a record high, you'd think he'd be inundated with applicants. But when **Best** writer Katie Burnett visited one of his recruitment drives, she was met with a stark example of work-shy Britain...

Arriving at the London Palladium for Jamie's job fair, I expected to see hundreds of eager job-seekers snaking round the block.

Instead, I was met by a frantic-looking member of Jamie Oliver's HR team, who practically bit my hand off for my CV. She said this was Jamie's second recruitment drive in two weeks, but they were still in need of workers to staff the chef's expanding empire.

With UK unemployment at a staggering 2.5 million,

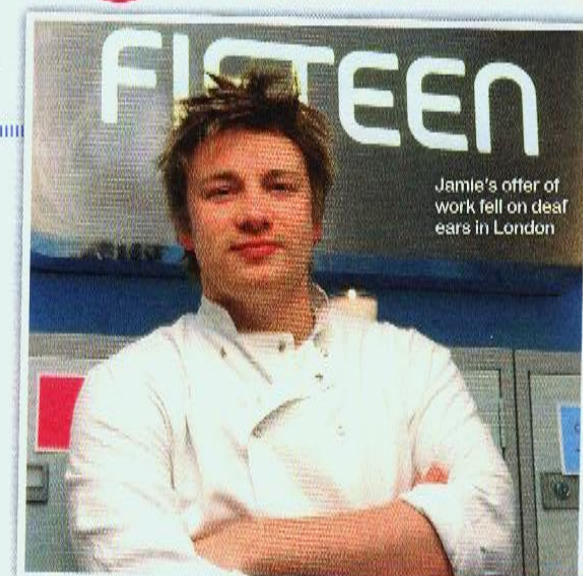
entrepreneurs like Jamie help to fill the gap left by the cuts in public sector jobs.

And the culinary dynamo is certainly doing his bit. He's about to open five new restaurants, generating 300 jobs. On top of that, his chain, Fifteen, runs an apprentice programme to help get 18-24 year olds into work.

Hungry for work?

But what happens when the opportunity arises to work in a respected company? It seems that no one can be bothered to get out of bed.

Iain Duncan Smith, the Work and Pensions Secretary, blames Labour for creating a welfare system that has made it pay not to work. This could just be political point-scoring, but our investigation seems to suggest a real apathy among Britain's unemployed. And when the *Daily Mail* recently advertised 10 fictitious job vacancies across Britain,



Jamie's offer of work fell on deaf ears in London

just 17 out of 225 applications were from UK workers.

You could blame it on Jamie only offering the minimum wage of £6.08 an hour, but with the economy less than healthy, they're jobs nonetheless. The handful of people who did turn up were almost all from overseas. Perhaps we need to reclaim our famous British work ethic if we're to overcome the current crisis.

We want a job!



GIUSEPPE, 26, who arrived in London a week ago, said he was amazed when he saw Jamie's advert on the internet.

"Working for Jamie Oliver would be such a good career step for me and I hope I get the job," he beamed. "Even though I'm Italian, and quite a good cook, I'd rather work in the bar and work my way up to being bar manager. I'm OK with the wage. My English isn't the best and as I get better, my pay will go up, I'm sure."



SOLSKA, 25, from Latvia, who moved to London a year ago, said: "I work nearby as a receptionist and I don't mind that

Jamie pays the minimum wage, because there are lots of incentives if you do well, such as holidays to Italy. It's work at the end of the day and that's what matters," she adds.

Jamie to the rescue...



Jamie with some of his first fifteen recruits

Jamie Oliver set up Fifteen in 2002, to help deprived young people develop a career in catering. His apprenticeship scheme has so far put 180 into work. Those who complete the 15-month course get jobs across four restaurants in London, Cornwall, Amsterdam and Melbourne. A portion of profits go to the Jamie Oliver Foundation to support training schemes. "Some young people have talents hidden by problems at home," Jamie says. "These can be freed by a passion for food and hard work."

WORDS KATE BURNETT PICTURES HEARST MAGAZINES UK

REAL LIFE » 21

Article 1

Best report

Jamie's 'Back to Work Britain' campaign falls flat

Over two million people are unemployed in the UK – so why did only a handful turn up for Jamie Oliver's recruitment day?

Chef Jamie Oliver has been scouring the country looking for workers to fill his ever-expanding restaurant empire. With unemployment figures at a record high, you'd think he'd be inundated with applicants. But when **Best** writer Katie Burnetts visited one of his recruitment drives, she was met with a stark example of work-shy Britain...

Arriving at the London Palladium for Jamie's job fair, I expected to see hundreds of eager job-seekers snaking round the block.

Instead, I was met by a frantic-looking member of Jamie Oliver's HR team, who practically bit my hand off for my CV. She said this was Jamie's second recruitment drive in two weeks and they still need chefs.

With a staff of 150 at a star-

entrepreneurs like Jamie help to fill the gap left by the cuts in public sector jobs.

And the culinary dynamo is certainly doing his bit. He's about to open five new restaurants, generating 300 jobs. On top of that, his chain, Fifteen, runs an apprentice programme to help get 18-24 year olds into work.

Hungry for work?

But what happens when the opportunity arises to work in a respected company? It seems that no one can be bothered to get out of bed.

Iain Duncan Smith, the Work and Pensions Secretary, blames Labour for creating a welfare system that has made it pay not to work. This could just be political point-scoring, but our investigation seems to



Jamie's offer of work fell on deaf ears in London

just 17 out of 225 applications were from UK workers.

You could blame it on Jamie only offering the minimum wage of £6.08 an hour, but with the economy less than healthy, they're jobs nonetheless. The problem is that most of the people who did turn up were not from overseas. We need to reclaim our British work ethic if we're to survive the current crisis.

Rescue...

When Jamie started Fifteen in 2002, to help young people develop their skills. His apprenticeship programme has put 180 into work. He plans to take the 15-month programme across four restaurants in London, Amsterdam and Manchester. Profits go to the Jamie Foundation to support training schemes. "Some young people have talents that are hidden by problems at home," Jamie says. "These can be freed by a passion for food and hard work."

We want a job!

GUISEPPE, 26, who arrived in London a week ago, said he was amazed when he saw Jamie's advert on the internet.

"Working for Jamie Oliver would be such a good career step for me and I hope I get the job," he beamed. "Even though I'm Italian, and quite a good cook, I'd rather work in the bar and work my way up to being bar manager. I'm OK with the wage. My English isn't the best and as I get better, my pay will go up, I'm sure."

SOLSKA, 25, from Latvia, who moved to London a year ago, said: "I work nearby as a receptionist and I don't mind that Jamie pays the minimum wage, because there are lots of incentives if you do well, such as holidays to Italy. It's work at the end of the day and that's what matters," she adds.

Jamie's offer of work fell on deaf ears in London

Jamie with some of his first fifteen recruits

WORDS: KATIE BURNETTS PICTURES: HEARST MAGAZINES UK: PA

REAL LIFE »21

DAILY Mirror

COMMENT

Blind to his own bigotry

IN ONE fell swoop, David Sieff has insulted millions of Britons.

The boss of the National Lottery Charities Board has declared that he's "extremely impatient" with deaf people.

It's incredible that someone working with charities can be so insensitive.

Just imagine going through life without hearing a note of music.

Imagine the jobs that are impossible for someone who cannot answer a telephone.

Well that's tough if you're one of Britain's 50,000 deaf or eight million hard of hearing. Mr Sieff has no patience with you.

The 500,000 sufferers from incurable Alzheimer's disease also don't come top of his list of sympathies.

Blind people, on the other hand, Mr Sieff likes.

It's a bizarre range of prejudices. Even if he does not allow them to colour his judgment, there will always be the suspicion that Lottery charity grants will be awarded by whim, not reason.

Appendix 9: Article 3 of the semi-informal interview



Special Reports

U.S. incensed by Europe's last dictator



Alexander Lukashenko continues to turn a deaf ear to all criticism of his government

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev (R) greets his Belorussian counterpart Alexander Lukashenko before an informal summit of the Collective Security Treaty Organisation member states at the Gorki residence outside Moscow on May 8, 2010. (UPI Photo/Alex Volgin)

Published: April 4, 2011 at 1:40 PM

WASHINGTON, April 4 (UPI) -- Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko must be held accountable for crimes committed against his own people, a U.S. lawmaker said. U.S. Rep. Chris Smith, R-N.J., chairman of a House subcommittee on Europe, testified that Lukashenko was skirting his international obligations.

"Alexander Lukashenko continues to turn a deaf ear to all criticism of his government," he said in his prepared remarks.

Washington said the "disproportionate" use of force by Minsk against opposition candidates in December was a "major" step in the wrong direction for the former Soviet republic.

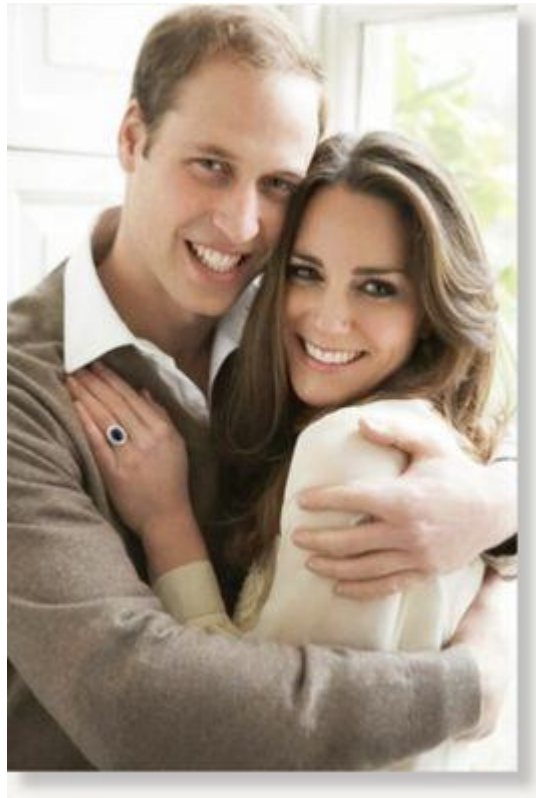
Appendix 11: Article 5/6 of the semi-informal interview

Royal Wedding Bells Fall on Deaf Ears

Jennifer Steil

The Washington Times

Mon, 25 Apr 2011 07:38 CDT



© Mario Testino/Clarence House Press Office via Getty Images

Prince William and Catherine Middleton will marry Friday, but many Britons don't care. *Many parties not for nuptials.* When Prince William marries Catherine Middleton, all Britons should be celebrating, or so says Prime Minister David Cameron, who has been working hard to whip up public enthusiasm for the extravaganza. Setting an example, the Cameron's are planning to throw their own party on Downing Street - after they have attended the wedding and reception, of course. "My message to everyone who wants to have a street party is: I'm having one, and I want you to go ahead and have one, too," he said.

But the majority of Britons are not listening.

The title of this article –Royal Wedding Bells Fall on Deaf Ears was shown to the participants of the interview before revealing the full article.

The Telegraph

Tuesday 28 February 2012

Don't turn a deaf ear and a blind eye to us

By Claire Rayner

12:01AM BST 02 Oct 2008

'I'm a bit mutton, me,' I tell new acquaintances. Using cockney rhyming slang makes it easier for me to turn the disagreeable task of admitting I'm deaf into a rueful joke.

By the time I have explained what the joke is (Mutt and Jeff were the stars of an early 20th-century American comic strip), we are all laughing and pretty much at ease. No need for embarrassed commiseration from them; no need for shame for me.

But why should we deaf be ashamed? As our society steadily ages, the incidence of the condition is obviously going to increase. Perhaps living in a society dominated by youth worship, rather than one of those Far East countries where age and its wisdom are venerated, could have something to do with it.

