Deaf, Deafness and Communication Options

Paper Code: DISLI T1

Marks: 50

Hours: 90

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DEAF, DEAFNESS AND COMMUNICATION OPTIONS

Course Code: DISLI T1

Marks: 50   **Total Hours: 90**

OBJECTIVES:

After completing the course, the learners will be able to:
- Discuss general perspective of deafness and the related terms
- Describe the context in which sign language needs to be understood
- Narrate role of communication and various communication options

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UNIT 1

MODELS OF DEAFNESS AND THE ASSOCIATED TERMINOLOGY

Total hours: 14

Introduction

As the first unit of the theory paper 1, this unit introduces the learner to the deaf and deafness. Learner will understand that getting to know the deaf is different than knowing the medical aspects of hearing loss or deafness. Like in other countries, in our country too, there has been stigma attached to being disabled including to a deaf child and it is only recent that deafness is being viewed from social and linguistic angle too. This unit will prepare the ground and context for the learner to study and understand the content of all the units of this paper with a better perspective.

This unit has four sub-units

1.1 Linguistic identity, diversity, equality
1.2 Concepts of hearing loss
1.3 Misconcepts about deafness
1.4 Deaf as linguistic minority community

Learning Outcomes

After studying this unit the leaner would be able to:
1. Appreciate diversity in human population and view disabilities from that perspective.
2. Understand the concept of identity, linguistic identity, linguistic diversity and importance of linguistic equality. And relate these concepts with regard to deaf persons and their language.
3. Know various aspects of hearing loss and understand its impact on the life of a deaf child.
4. Will understand and appreciate the unique case of deaf persons and their perception of themselves as a linguistic minority community rather than disabled.
5. Definitions and descriptions of key terms will help the learner to understand clearly the concepts and contexts in which various terms related to deafness, hearing loss, the deaf, communication, language, communication options or communication opportunities etc. are used.

1.2 Linguistic identity, diversity, equality

Introduction

This sub-unit will help bring better understanding to the learner of himself/herself as a person and his or her own identity in family and society. It would facilitate better understanding of deaf teacher's identity too. This is expected to lead to better understanding to the DISLI program as a whole. The topics of linguistic identity, linguistic diversity and linguistic equality will help the learner to introspect and help understand themselves as a whole better while opening up the world unto them. It will help the learner to be more compassionate, understanding, introspecting, more open minded and more open hearted too. The topics bring forth the fact that there is diversity in human population and every human being is unique. This uniqueness in terms of identity, abilities, culture, and above all language use   commands respect from fellow human beings and equal opportunities for growth.

Concept of Linguistic identity: Before talking about Linguistic identity and its importance, let us first talk about the concept of identity. Well, all of you had an identity card in schools or colleges and what information did it provide?

> **Activity 1:** Close your eyes and think about your own identity. Now, using this, introduce yourself to the student next to you.

Do you think your identity card had ALL of your identity details on it or you think there are many more points to your identity? Can there be more than one identity of a single person? Do you show same identity traits at home or at your community function and at school? Have you ever had an identity crisis... means have you ever wondered 'who you really are'?

> **Dictionary definition of Identity:**
> - Your identity is who you are.
> - The identity of a person or place is the characteristics they have that distinguish them from others.
> - Condition or character as to who a person or what a thing is; the qualities, beliefs, etc., that distinguish or identify a person or thing.
> - The characteristics and qualities of a person, considered collectively and regarded as essential to that person's self-awareness.
>
> Collins dictionary

What is Self - Identity?

Self-identification is how your see yourself or how you do you **identify** yourself with someone or something else. An example of **self-identification** is to see yourself as a great student/teacher. An example of **self-identification** is a girl with a Punajbi father and a French mother who **identifies** herself as a Punjabi girl. Similarly an Indian person after living in America for 40 years   may like to identify himself more as an American than as an Indian. Clothing is also an expression of self-identity. **Gender identity is also part of self-identity** and it is the personal sense of one's own **gender**.

It is **important** to maintain **self-identity** because it strengthens your character. That is, when we know who we are, have confidence in our **self** and are able to identify our strengths, we emerge as stronger individuals. Secondly, it keeps us **unique** and **distinguishes** us from everyone else.

Disability as a defining feature of self/group Identity:

Talking about identity, does a person's disability or special needs impact ones identity? Yes it does. Social stigma, language deprivation, mobility challenges and other issues does impact one's self identity. Try to put your feet in those shoes and imagine how it would have affected your identity. Now think of the things individuals, families, society, schools should do to develop and keep a positive self-image of people with disabilities.

Further when you study about the social model of disabilities, you will understand how at least deaf people do not view themselves as disabled but a linguistic minority community. More than the hearing culture of their families, as a group they adhere to Deaf Culture, ability to fluently use Indian Sign Language gives them a linguistic identity and as a person instead of deaf they prefer to be called Deaf with big 'D'. Instead of Hearing loss they talk about Deaf gain. Such empowered deaf do not have negative self-image, rather they have a strong Deaf identity. Now we will study more about Linguistic identity.

> **Activity 2:** In a mixed group of Deaf and Hearing people, the person next to you introduces himself as, "Hi!, My name is A-M-I-T. This is my sign name.   (shows the sign name). And I am deaf.
> How will you introduce yourself?

Linguistic identity:

> **Linguistic identity means that you consider yourself belonging to a certain group of people that speak your language.**

Dear learners, in your waking hours, you communicate with many different people and possibly with your pets too. This communication may be done in variety of ways. Your communication may be linguistic or non-linguistic, verbal or non-verbal. You may be able to speak one or more

than one language and you may have friends who can speak many other languages which you can't speak, read or write. Do you think the language especially your mother tongue has a role to play in establishing your identity? Have you heard comments like," The way you speak English, I knew you were Tamil/Punjabi"! Here you are being judged because of your accent and different terminology. When someone changes their way of speaking because they feel they are being looked upon by others, it means that they are changing their identity. **Within culture, often there is also a 'way of speaking' which may be within the dominant language but is somewhat distinctive.**

> **Activity 3**: Name the variety of ways you use to communicate with people and pets.

Do you think your preferred language has changed over time? Here is a story of a girl. Her home language was her linguistic identity before she entered an English medium school. Teachers discouraged her to speak in her home language. Over a period of time school language started becoming her language of choice to talk to peers, friends. However, initially even in school during playtime she preferred to speak her home language behind teachers' backs. She had the yearning to keep her native language identity intact as her group identity was through that language and she had known her culture through that language. Right?

Linguistic identity is basing one's own identity on the language one commonly uses, especially the native language.

Dear learner, now think of a situation: Your mother is in a transferable job and she has been transferred to a place where people speak a language not known to you. You are enrolled in grade six in the neighbourhood school and during lunch time whole class is chattering away happily, and you? You feel lost? Why? You want to talk but are hesitant, other boys and girls try to communicate too but soon say... "Oh.. you are a Punjabi?, You don't know Tamil". They get busy and you feel alone. Do you realize what did the students just do? They gave you an identity and they gave themselves also an identity. "You are Punjabi"...associating you to your home language (and culture) and themselves with their own language (and culture). So in this situation, you are required to now learn a new language, a new vocabulary and through that a new culture. However, your established linguistic identity is quite shaken. In the above example you realize that you have a particular linguistic and cultural identity because of your native language. At your native place everyone around you spoke the same language and you had no crisis of linguistic or cultural identity. However, in the new situation, you may try to find out in the school if there is any other student who speaks your language so that you feel more assured and start feeling a sense of belongingness again. With these students speaking your own language, you would be more confident to talk but with just small vocabulary of new language you are hesitant to speak to the native speakers of that language. In a similar situation, there could be

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other students who may like to befriend native speakers of the new language so that their skills in new language improve fast.

> **Language does** not **define identity**, but it can help us express our **identity** or our perceived **identity**. People often use words or features of a dialect to express or convey an image or **identity** with which they want to affiliate, or to affiliate with in groups, social networks, or even cultural competency. For example, you may describe yourself as a dabbu (a colloquial Hindi word for submissive) or a dhakad (a total go-getter).

How linguistic identity is relevant to cultural identity?

1. Language programs people to think in a certain way.
2. As people think in a certain way, they create a culture.
3. Hence the way you behave culturally is determined amongst others by the language you grew up with.

What do you understand by Culture?

One's culture most usually relates to one's home, locale', neighbours, and school experiences. It includes things such as preferred foods and modes of dress. Culture is elements of knowledge, ideas, beliefs etc. that are passed along from one generation to the next. **Language is central to a culture.** Language helps people with the proper knowledge to communicate with others. It helps to pass on information, knowledge, tell stories. Ones experiences are a big teacher and language helps to share those experiences with others. **Your cultural identity is integrally related to your linguistic identity.** Language is a vehicle to transmit culture.

> **Language** is intrinsic to the expression of culture. As a means of communicating values, beliefs and customs, it has an **important social function** and fosters feelings of group **identity** and solidarity. It is the means by which culture and its traditions and shared values may be conveyed and preserved.

The importance of language for keeping the cultures alive can be understood by understanding the status of lesser known languages or minority languages. Our country has rich treasure of languages. However, many minor languages of tribes and smaller communities are dying (probably because in the name of civilizing them and educating them, languages of the majority are being forced upon them). They are being displaced from their native places of abode. With the death of languages, the cultures of those communities are also dying. BHASHA is an organization that is exclusively working towards saving tribal languages. You will learn more about this topic when you study Linguistic diversity and Language equality.

> **Activity 4**: Tell the student next to you, the significant aspects of the culture you belong to? Ask about his or her culture. Notice how your native language is playing an important role in conveying what you are saying.

Linguistic identity and the deaf:

> **Activity 5**: Observe the way your deaf teacher is communicating with you. Do you think it is a language?

The case of deaf people is unique. Because of inability to hear, a born deaf child or a child who becomes deaf before the age of 3 years doesn't acquire spoken language naturally. This language deprivation leads to their isolation in their own homes. What has been narrated here is applicable to a **big number of deaf children** - if not all. The situation of these deaf children born to hearing parents makes their case a very **unique one**. There is language (spoken) all around them but it is **not accessible to them**. Their **mother's tongue does not become their native or primary language**; even hearing aids do not make this language fully accessible to them. For most deaf children, language of the home does not give any linguistic identity. This linguistic isolation causes less than full transmission of the cultural values of their families though they may be eating the same, dressing the same. So a deaf person's linguistic and cultural identity is not formed in the hearing families they belong to. The sense of belongingness does not develop with the hearing world of their families. **The validation and understanding of linguistic identity is beneficial to young children's emotional, social, and educational development. And it is this language deprivation in early years that causes negative effect on cognition, social, emotional development and later educational success of deaf children.**

In this situation when they reach school, especially a special school for the deaf, a very interesting phenomenon takes place. They have reached school without any meaningful language: spoken or signed. Inside the classroom, if hearing teachers do not sign, the situation is the same as home except now there is pressure too to speak the language the deaf child is not hearing properly. There is further pressure of studying the subjects too in the same language which they do not hear, do not speak, and have not learnt to read or write yet. Such education does not serve much purpose. However, outside the classroom, something magical happens. **Young deaf children watch older deaf children** using their hands, eyes, body to 'talk'. They get fascinated and start to copy. **It is easy, it is visual, it is accessible,** and they start to bloom. Before they know what is happening, they start having meaningful conversations with other deaf children in the classroom (behind teacher's back), near the water tap, near the toilet and on the playground. However, in most cases this acquisition of visual language is not appreciated, parents are advised not to use 'gestures' with their deaf children, forget about telling them to learn this sign language. Sign language passes from older deaf children to younger deaf children. **It is happening late but finally they start developing a linguistic identity and start imbibing deaf culture.** If parents don't learn sign language, the bond between deaf youth and hearing parents especially with boys becomes further weak as they start looking for deaf company outside their homes. **It is for the first time they feel an identity of their own.** Sign language

replaces language of the home to become their L1. However, situation in classrooms of most schools remain the same and education remains inaccessible, literacy does not develop and they pass high school semiliterate or virtually illiterate.

Situation with deaf children of **signing deaf parents**, however, is totally different as they reach school with a language identity (in India with ISL), cultural identity (Deaf culture), Self-identity/group identity (Deaf). However only a school which uses sign language to communicate and teach (Bilingual schools) would be able to appreciate and strengthen these identity traits. The percentage of such children is very less and we have very few such schools in India. Most deaf children do not reach school with a linguistic identity, deaf culture identity or deaf identity and the policies of the schools also do not support these concepts. So the linguistic and cultural identity of deaf youth, especially in India develops pretty late. **Deaf clubs and deaf organizations** contribute a lot towards that. However, in rural areas where deaf are scattered and do not come in contact with other deaf such identities remain unexplored. However in some special cases where there is a high percentage of deaf people, like a village with heredity deafness, use of sign language is a way of life by both deaf and hearing persons and deaf people usually do not have negative self-image. Mobile technology, internet and social media are helping too to break the barriers. As you study more about the models of deafness, history of deaf people, evolution of sign languages and concepts like **deafhood** and **deaf gain** your understanding of deaf people will increase. In 1.4 sub- unit, you will study more about why Deaf communities consider themselves as linguistic minority and not as disabled or handicapped.

Linguistic Diversity:

Our planet Earth is home to millions of species of animals, insects, birds, plants, trees. There is huge bio-diversity. During the cycle of evolution, humans emerged and we see huge diversity among humans too. Can you make a list of such diversifying factors? Some of these are shown here

Diversity
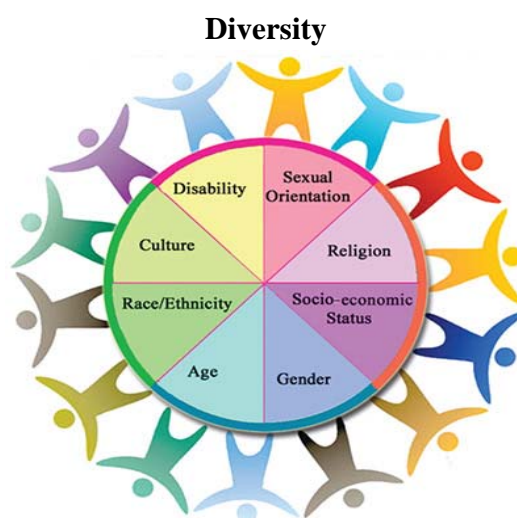
But how does this link with our current discussion? Let us see that.

Urge to communicate is a basic urge. Man must have started the journey with non-linguistic communication. In the evolution of human beings slowly languages developed. Probably sign languages developed before the spoken languages. We know that a language is a systematic way of communication. By systematic we mean that it is governed by a set of rules - rules of grammar. **Languages are man-made and it takes thousands of years for a new language to evolve.** However now, world has a treasure of thousands of spoken languages. One estimate says, there are around 7000 living spoken languages in the world. That is a huge number considering we have only 206 countries. Some of the small countries too have a large number of languages. Papua New Guinea is home to the largest number of languages in the world with as many as 820 languages. Indonesia-742, Nigeria-516 and India-427 (the number is much more in fact) come next. However not all languages of the world have written forms. In fact it is only some 2500 years back that writing systems developed and from Oral, languages migrated from brain to paper. In this computer age now knowledge is migrating from paper to digital.

> How many languages in the world are unwritten (do not have corresponding script)? The exact number of unwritten languages is hard to determine. Ethnologue (21st edition) has data to indicate that of the currently listed **7,097** living languages, 3,909 have a developed writing system.
>
> Ethnologue
>
> *https://www.ethnologue.com/enterprise-faq/how-many-languages-world-are-unwritten-0*

And also one script may be used to write many languages.

1. **Latin**

   Latin is the most widely used script. It is an alphabet type of script. Around **4.9 billion** people or 70% of the global population relies on this alphabet, which generally consists of an average of 26 letters, to write a range of languages.

2. **Chinese**

   The second most widely used script in the world is Chinese, also known as hanzi, kanji, or hanja. An estimated **1.34 billion** people around the world use Chinese logogram characters in written communication. This script consists of thousands of characters and is considered the oldest continuously utilized form of writing in the world

3. **Arabic**

   Arabic is the third most widely used script in the world. Around **660 million** individuals use Arabic script to communicate in a number of languages, including: Urdu, Pashto, Arabic, Punjabi, Persian, Malaysian, and Kurdish (to name a few). Unlike the other previously mentioned scripts, Arabic is written from right to left. This script dates back to around 400 AD, although its first large-scale use was to write the Qu'ran.

4. Devanagari
Devanagari script is considered an alphasyllabary system of writing. It is used to communicate in around **120 languages**, including the following: Nepali, Hindi, Sanskrit, and Marathi. Estimates suggest that around **608 million** people around the world utilize Devanagari on a regular basis, making it the fourth most widely used script in the world.

Chinese (1197 million speakers), Spanish (399 Million speakers), English (335 million speakers), Hindi (260 million speakers), Arabic (242 million speakers) are the top five most used spoken languages.

The numbers given above with the languages are that of the native speakers of that language.
It is also informed that English is a sort of melting pot language and has picked words from almost all other languages of the world.

Effect of Linguistic diversity: In the above section we learnt that language plays a role in the transmission of the culture. So a society with diverse languages means that it is exposed to a variety of cultures and traditions. Along with the language, older generations pass on the accumulated knowledge and culture of thousands of years to the younger generations. In a country with diverse languages, despite having several languages, a national language is considered a unifying factor and is spoken as either the first or second language. Hindi is the national language of India.

Linguistic diversity in India: After learning about the linguistic diversity around the world. Let's learn about the linguistic diversity of India in little more detail.

> **Activity 6:** How many languages you can speak, read and write?
> Find out the language diversity in your class.

The Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India recognizes **22 scheduled languages**, excluding English, the 1961 Census of India had recorded as many as 1652 languages being in use in India. However, it was decided to exclude languages spoken by less than 10,000 people in the 1971 Census, which brought down the figure to 108 languages. However **People's Linguistic Survey of India** (**PLSI**) in 2010 (and completed in 2013)followed the policy of including all languages in the survey, irrespective of the number of users. For example, it records a language called Chaimal in Tripura, which is spoken by only five people.

The **People's Linguistic Survey of India** (**PLSI**): PLSI is a linguistic survey launched in 2010 in order to update existing knowledge about the languages spoken in India. Conducted by 3500 volunteers, including 2000 language experts, social historians and the staff of the NGO Bhasha Research and Publication Centre, Vadodara, the survey has identified **780 languages in India**.

The 35,000 page survey is being published in 50 volumes. **It is for the first time that Indian Sign Language was included in the Linguistic survey of India too. Vol.38 of PLSI is dedicated to ISL.**

A few of the key findings of PLSI:

1. Survey identified 780 languages.
2. Of all the languages documented by PLSI, 480 are languages spoken by nomadic tribes, while about 80 are coastal languages.
3. Arunachal Pradesh is the state with the highest number of languages, with as many as 66 languages spoken there, while West Bengal has the highest number of scripts, nine, and around 38 languages. The scripts that exist in Bengal are Ol Chicki (Santhal), Kol Ho, Barangh Kshiti, Lepcha, Sadri and Limbu besides Bengali, Urdu and Nepali.
4. Languages with increasing numbers of speakers are Byari in Karnataka, Bhojpuri in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, Khasi in Meghalaya, Mizo in Mizoram, Kumouni in Uttarakhand, Kutchhi in Gujarat and Mewati in Rajasthan.
5. 400 million of the Indian population speak Hindi and it remains the most popular language of India, while the number of Indian people with English as their mother language has gone up from one hundred eighty-seven thousand in 1971 to 10 million in 2011. He, however, feels that English posed no real threat to major Indian languages.

The **thirty-eighth volume** of the People's Linguistic Survey of India is devoted to the **Indian Sign Language (ISL),** the language of the Deaf in India. The articles in the volume are divided into four parts. The first discusses both its formal linguistic and orthographic features; the second presents the sociolinguistic themes of the ISL such as bilingualism and language variety as well as language planning and policy issues. Part three presents various synchronic aspects of the ISL. The final part comprises articles on themes interfacing Sign Languages and other knowledge systems. This very first collection of articles on the ISL, is a critically important contribution to the discipline.

Diversity in Sign Languages*

Dear learner till now we have mostly talked about the diversity of spoken languages; however, you are training yourself to work with deaf communities and work as sign language interpreters. This means you must have knowledge about spoken as well as sign languages. First of all you must know that **sign languages are full-fledged, real and true languages** and need to be studied at equal level as spoken languages. Lets talk something about the diversity of sign languages. Like others you may have thought that perhaps there is only one sign language in the world. However it is not true. Every country has its own sign language and there are regional variations too. Some estimates state that the number of sign languages around the world is as high as the number of spoken languages, between 6000 and 7000 (Skutnabb-Kangas 2000),

although many of them remain undocumented. The Ethnologue, however, lists just **138 documented** and identified sign languages. Other estimates say there are perhaps three hundred sign languages in use around the world today. The number is not known with any confidence; indeed, new sign languages still emerge and are being 'discovered' and documented (Meir et.al. 2010). Examples are the sign languages that arise in a small community context, such as Chican Sign Language in rural Mexico (Le Guen 2012; Safar 2017), or in an institutional context, such as a school for the deaf, for example or Nicaraguan Sign Language (Polich 2005). Also new sign languages emerge frequently through creolization (the process of languages and cultures mixing to produce new languages and cultures) and de novo (Starting from the beginning, anew) and occasionally through language planning. Apart from regional variations of major sign language of a country there is possibility there may be more than one sign language in one country. In some countries, such as Sri Lanka and Tanzania, each school for the deaf may have a separate language, known only to its students and sometimes denied by the school; on the other hand, countries may share sign languages, although sometimes under different names (Croatian and Serbian, Indian and Pakistani). Deaf sign languages also arise outside educational institutions, especially in village communities with high levels of congenital deafness. **Apart from Indian Sign Language, in our own country we have Alipur Sign Language, a distinct village (A village in Karnatka state) sign language because of high density of deaf population there.** You will be surprised to know there are significant sign languages developed for the hearing as well, such as the speech-taboo languages used in aboriginal Australia. So it is not right to say sign languages as Deaf languages, they are Human Languages. Scholars are doing field surveys to identify the world's sign languages. Sign language communities' (SLCs') emergence has centred around places where deaf people have lived together or gathered frequently, such as deaf schools, within large multi-generational deaf families, in large cities, and in places with high rates of hereditary deafness. Apart from deaf signers, these communities consist of (but are not limited to) hearing people who identify with sign language and what it means to them (e.g. hearing signers with deaf parents, interpreters, researchers, parents of deaf children, teachers, learners, partners) and people who claim an association with the language by learning it, mostly through formal lessons (Meulder M.De et.al.,2019).

Sign Languages can be grouped into three sections:

- **Deaf sign languages**, which are the preferred languages of Deaf communities around the world; these include **village sign languages**, shared with the hearing community, and **Deaf-community sign languages**
- **Auxiliary sign languages**, which are not native languages but sign systems of varying complexity, used alongside spoken languages. Simple gestures are not included, as they do not constitute language.
- **Signed modes of spoken languages**, also known as manually coded languages, which are bridges between signed and spoken languages

Manual modes of spoken languages (Not independent languages but these are parallel systems)

- General – can be used parallel to all languages
    - [Cued Speech](#) – a hand/mouth system (HMS) to render spoken language phonemes visually intelligible.
    - [Fingerspelling](#) – alphabetic signs to represent the written form of a spoken language. There is one handed English manual alphabets (Used in USA with ASL and in many other sign languages), There is double handed English manual alphabets (Used with BSL in the UK and in India with ISL)
- English
    - [Manually Coded English](#)
    - [Signing Exact English](#) (SEE2)

In India too Signing systems (SS) of many Indian spoken languages including Hindi, Marathi, Telgu and Tamil have been developed alongwith Manual Alphabets in those languages.

Linguistic Equality:

We are now going to discuss an interesting but a disturbing phenomenon.

> **Activity 7:** Discuss with the student next to you what you understand by language and a dialect?

Imagine you live in a remote village of your state Madhaya Pradesh. You live in a large family and happily speak your language, finished your primary class in the nearby govt. Primary school. You insist you be sent to the city for further schooling. In the city school you find everyone speaking little differently...teacher tell you to speak proper Hindi and not speak your dialect. Till now you always thought you were speaking a language and suddenly your language becomes a dialect, little less valuable than the so called standard language.

> **Linguistic Equality:**
> - Thousands of languages (more than 7000) in the world currently
> - No discrimination based on language spoken
> - All languages are considered equal, no one is better than the other
> - **ALL languages are equally complex, functional and creative** in the context of the speech community which uses them.
> - Basic human right: to use the language one identifies with.

In an excellent article in Polysyllabic all aspects of Language Equality/inequality are discussed. Prof. Devy, chief editor of PLSI volumes in his introduction, "A nation proud of its linguistic diversity" has also discussed this issue extensively.

The main points with regard to language equality/inequality from these articles are as follows:

- In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the notion was widespread that some languages—generally presumed to be those of peoples with a primitive physical culture—either lacked a grammar completely, or had a very simple grammar. This notion still persist today claiming there are tribes in remote areas of Africa, Amazon or India or other places who have a language of only a hundred words and no grammar.

- The above notion is a myth and was exploded once linguists began to study these languages and discovered that they had grammatical systems every bit as regular and elaborate as any language of a culture with a civilization stretching back thousands of years. Although the grammatical structures of some languages are very different from those of English, **every language has a grammar**.

- **What is true of languages also holds true of dialects within a language**.

> **What is a Dialect?**
> Collection of sounds, words and grammatical patterns that are associated with an area or region. (Misfud,2012, cited in Caine ELL505 (2014))
> A nation's sign language too have regional dialects

Occasionally, you may get to hear that some dialect, (such as African American Vernacular English (AAVE) or Puerto Rican Spanish or tribal languages of India) is ungrammatical or deficient. **In truth, though, these dialects follow internally consistent rules.** That is, they have their own **consistent grammatical systems**, but ones that differ from the grammars of other speakers of English or Spanish or mainland languages.

- The claims that some thoughts cannot be expressed in a particular language or contrarily that an idea can only be uttered in one language are also not true. But such claims turn out to be hard to substantiate. People seem to mean that one language has a particular word for a concept that another language lacks. In such cases borrowing of words by languages from other languages keep happening. It is seen that English has borrowed words from invariably all other languages of the world.

- The arguments for the **intrinsic superiority of one language over another** also make little sense. Language is fundamentally an arbitrary convention. There is no principled reason why the animal that English speakers label *dog* must be identified with that particular string of sounds. Speakers of other languages get along just fine with entirely different strings of sound: *chien* in French, *perro* in Spanish, *gae* in Korean, *naayi* in Tamil or *Kutta* in Hindi and so on. It would be unreasonable to say that one of these words was a more logical fit for the animal.

- **Grammar rules of each language are different** and it is almost stupid to even propose that one set of rules are better than others. Can we question what is better to put adjectives

before nouns (as English does) or to put them after (as does Spanish). The order that each language follows is simply a convention that must be followed if we wish to be understood in that language. Evaluations of better or worse don't even arise.

Considering the above arguments, there is **no linguistic basis for declaring one language better than another**. For the same reasons, it's impossible to find objective reasons to declare a particular dialect of a language superior to another dialect.

- The equality of **dialects** is important to stress because traditional grammar typically values one dialect as proper and denigrates others as **inferior corruptions**. Labels like "substandard English," or "Inferior Hindi" reflect such attitudes. Dialects of Hindi: Bhojpuri, Rajsthani or dialects spoken in Madhya Pradesh can not be labelled inferior to Hindi.
  Linguists try not to privilege the language of one group over another just because that group has the prestige in society. That distinction is social, not linguistic. PLSI in its survey did not differentiate between a languages and a dialect and information about 780 languages of India include both with the firm belief that **ALL languages are equally complex, functional and creative** in the context of the speech community which uses them.

- Devy (2014) points that though not desirable, there are advocates of linguistic globalization who would prefer the spread of one or only a few languages all over the world so that communication across nations' boundaries becomes the easiest.

- Many studies have shown that linguistic diversity of a country is not detrimental, and could rather be a positive contribution to the country's economic or political performance. In other words, it is not linguistic homogeneity or rationalization, i.e., one language per state, that is a necessary condition for economic and political development, but rather linguistic equality i.e., languages being treated and used equally by and in the state that is a conducive to economic growth and political stability.

- Within a country sometimes independent of nation's policies, users of a language may treat users of another language unequally. However, it is necessary for nations to develop neutral language policies, recognise minority languages and provide meaningful opportunities to all individuals and minorities to exercise their linguistic rights. Particular measures would include funding of language maintenance, preferential treatment of certain languages, and widespread use of multiple languages in public institutions.

> *At the beginning of the 1980s,* **Tove Skutnabb-Kangas,** A Finnish linguist and educator coined the term **linguicism** to refer to **discrimination based on language.**

- **Languages and extinction:** Related to the issue of linguistic equality is the harsh reality of **languages dying at a rapid rate.** Devy (2014) urges **to** look at this situation more carefully because languages, unlike air or water, are man-made. "Language is man-made and comes out of great human labour. Thousands of years are spent before a language is born. If we lose our languages, we are doing grave injustice to our predecessors and ancestors", He cites economic reasons as the main reason of dying of languages. When people (for example coastal people) leave their native places to find livelihood in urban spaces, they leave behind their language and cultures too. It is warned that India will lose most of its nomadic and coastal languages. He warns, 400 Indian languages out of our total 780 languages may get extinct before the end of this century only. The other reason for the dying of languages is the education systems preferring dominant languages to teach neglecting the mother tongues/minority languages.

Sign languages and equality:

Sign languages have been in use since centuries and centuries and at one point (Before 1880) were used to teach the deaf and also there were many deaf teachers in schools. However, for most part of the history, there have been misconceptions about sign languages. Not considering them to be languages at all, collection of gestures or inferior languages (as compared to sign languages). The situation however changed when William Stokoe's (Stokoe.W. 1960) research on ASL showed that ASL too is a true language with complex grammar. Sign languages possess all those components which make any language a language. Sign languages too can serve all those functions which spoken languages serve with the difference that these are visuo-gestural languages which instead of ears are received through eyes and instead of mouth, are expressed on hands, eyes and torso. However, the fight of sign languages to be considered as true languages or minority language status is still on and not all countries of the world recognise their national sign languages or the verities of sign languages equal to spoken languages. The **fight of sign languages for equality differs from fight of minority spoken languages fighting for survival and equality**:

- Whereas Minority spoken languages are mostly territorial, limited to a particular geographical area of a state whereas sign languages are considered non-territorial languages because they are typically used throughout a country.
- Exceptions to this are so-called village or shared sign languages which have emerged in places with high rates of hereditary deafness (Kusters 2015; Nyst 2012). In our own country, in Karnataka there is a village named Alipur where there is a high incidence of deaf people and most of the village people deaf and hearing use sign language which is distinct than the mainstreamed Indian Sign Language (ISL) (Panda, S, 2014).
- Meulde M.De (2019) also argues that Sign languages di er from many other minority languages in that all of them are in a minority position (by number, power, and access to resources) in every country in the world. **They have traditionally mostly been excluded or ignored by minority language research and policies, a fact that is acutely related to their long road to being understood as full-fledged, real languages.** They also di er because of

their 'untraditional' transmission patterns: since over 95% of deaf children are born to hearing (non-signing) families (Mitchell and Karchmer 2004), sign languages are usually not transmitted within the family.

- **Other aspect of inequality is inequality within sign languages**. There is a **trend of dominance of certain sign languages,** which implies that some sign languages are considered superior than other sign languages. In our own country, many deaf and hearing professionals consider that American Sign Language (ASL) is a language or a better/more evolved language than Indian Sign Language. In this **misconception**, many Deaf prefer to use ASL than ISL. In many other developing countries where missionaries work with Deaf communities, they start teaching sign languages and also often the spoken languages of their country of origin. They almost always teach their own language along or over and above the native language. That is how, ASL has spread in many African countries where their own native sign languages have been neglected. This hegemony of certain sign languages if not curbed may cause the death of many native sign languages; the way many tribal, nomadic or small-group spoken languages are dying in the shadow of majority spoken languages. Extensive linguistic research of more popular sign languages have given them the limelight; similar linguistic research of oppressed or neglected sign languages is required to showcase that they are equally linguistically rich and grammatically complex. From the perspective of human linguistic rights also, the native sign languages of all countries need to be promoted and used for communication in early years and medium of instruction for the deaf children of those countries.

- The very mobile Deaf people of course get exposed to many sign languages and become conversant and comfortable in using them as well as unintentionally or intentionally mixing them. This **borrowing and hybridising** is fertile ground for communication, may be causing an impurity but truly a less than desired growth of native sign languages. It also is true that initial exposure to foreign sign languages like ASL and BSL brought visibility to sign languages and their use in their own countries, and started the movement of linguistic rights of Deaf people.

- This hegemony is inherently dangerous in the fact that the borrowing or transplantation or rather dominance in certain pockets of these international sign languages is that they are often copying a colonial paradigm. A search of sign languages being used in different countries shows that almost in all African countries ASL (and also written and spoken English) is more popularly used and promoted than their own native sign languages, especially inside schools. At least 13 foreign sign languages, mainly from Europe and America, have been introduced to at least 27 African nations; some of the 23 sign languages documented by Kamei (Nobutaka Kamei) have originated with or been influenced by them. Some local sign languages have even been mentioned as threatened by ASL. It is possible that early exposure to ASL to the deaf communities of these countries was by one or two native deaf people who went to the USA and studied in the Mecca of deaf education; Gallaudet university and later went back to their own countries to tell

amazing stories of use of ASL in communication and education. International projects from USA also helped in popularizing foreign sign languages over the native sign languages which had no recognition or rich vocabulary or widespread use leading to the mis-concept amongst the natives about the inferior status of their own sign languages. Later, growth of these sign languages show heavy borrowing of signs from these foreign sign languages. Indian sign language is also in this kind of danger and the Indian deaf community need to be aware of this danger. Many foreign educated (USA or UK) Indian deaf returning to India start using ASL and BSL signs mixed with ISL leading to sign language learners (deaf and hearing both) accepting those signs as part of ISL unknowingly and also indirectly stopping the growth of indigenous ISL vocabulary. Later, at international platforms Indian deaf have to get the blame that ISL has heavily borrowed vocabulary of ASL.

- Like the danger of extinction of thousands of spoken languages or dialects, extinction of certain sign languages is also a real danger. Mobility of the deaf from rural to urban areas, association of the deaf to a deaf club where only a certain variety of sign language is used, use of more standardized version of a sign language in education, influx of foreign educated deaf are all reasons which can affect the life of indigenous/rural sign languages making them neglected or causing them a slow or even a sudden death. Deaf communities must be aware of this danger and should come together to prevent this.

- **Diversity of languages, both spoken or signed is the unique feature of human diversity and connected with it is the experience of multiple cultures. Human experience must not become limited to one or few languages or just one or few cultures.**

Summary

This sub-unit is all about making the learner a language proud person. The topics of linguistic identity, linguistic diversity and linguistic equality are important topics for students getting training to become sign language interpreters. Linguistic identity is important for ones better self image and transmission of cultures and it is important to keep the diversity and equality of signed and spoken languages to keep this world a varied human experience. The clear understanding of these concepts will help them to understand and respect their clients. The deaf persons, their linguistic identity, and their language i.e. sign language better. This understanding will motivate them to improve their competencies both in spoken and sign language because clear and complete transmission of messages in both ways is important. While speaking or signing, the trainees will also become aware to keeping the purity of languages and the danger of mixing them or preferring one version over the other.

Note: It is to be stated that resources accessed from the internet have been mentioned and "no copyright infringement is intended" for pictures and texts and they have been used only for educational purposes.

EXERCISES

Q.1 State True (T) or False (F)

i. Linguistic identity is based on ones native language.

ii. A single person can have more than one identities.

iii. Language has no connection with culture.

iv. " I see myself as a great teacher" . This statement is an expression of social identity

v. Language has no role to play in culture transmission.

vi. Maintaining one's self- identity strengthens character.

vii. Deaf community has its own cultural values.

viii. It will be best in all respects to have only few languages in the world.

ix. ISL gives many Indian deaf a linguistic identity.

x. Only few languages in the world have grammar.

xi. All languages in the world must have a written form.

xii. Latin is the most widely used script.

xiii. India has around 300 spoken languages.

xiv. Sign languages have been developed by hearing people.

xv. In comparison to a language, its dialects are inferior.

xvi. Bhojpuri is a fast growing language.

xvii. There is always only one sign language in a country.

xviii. Sign languages evolve where there are many deaf people.

xix. Most sign languages of the world are not yet documented.

xx. Some languages can be superior to others.

Q.2. Fill in the blanks

i. Full form of PLSI is_____

ii. PLSI survey recorded _____spoken languages in India.

iii. Language acts as a vehicle to transmit _____ values.

iv. Preferred language of deaf community is _____.

v. Apart from ISL, India has a village sign language named _____.

Q.3 Tick the correct answer to fill in the blank

i. **Blind/deaf** community considers itself as a linguistic community..

ii. Disability can have a **negative/positive** impact on self image.

iii. There are around **7000/5000** spoken languages in the world.

iv. Gender identity is also a part of **self/social** identity.

v. Sign languages are **equal/unequal** to spoken languages.

Q.4. Define in one or two sentences

i. Linguistic diversity

ii. Linguistic equality

iii. Linguistic identity

Q.5 **Assignments:**

i. Listen to news (Hindi/English or the language you want to improve) every day to improve your listening skills and also to learn the correct pronunciation.

ii. Read aloud news from newspapers everyday to improve your speaking skills.

iii. Every weekend attend deaf club's activities and make a diary of what you observe.

iv. Apart from classroom learning, spend at least half an hour with a deaf person.

v. Find out the number of languages and dialects students in your class speak

vi. Learn new words of a language you do not know.

vii. Observe and discuss the cultural traits of students from different states/languages other than you.

viii. Observe and document the cultural traits of your deaf teacher and other deaf persons around you. What differences you find between a hearing person's culture and a deaf person's cultural traits.

Note: Make a portfolio of at least three of the above given tasks.

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Q.1 State True (T) or False (F)

i.True, ii. True iii.False iv. False v. True vi.True vii. True viii. False ix. True x. False xi. False xii. True xiii. False xiv. False xv. False xvi. True xvii. False xviii. True xix.True xx. False

Q.2. Fill in the blanks
i.Peoples Linguistic Survey of India
ii. 780
iii. cultural
iv Indian sign language
v. Alipur sign language

Q.3 Tick the correct answer
i.deaf ii.negative   iii. 7000   iv. self v.equal

1.2 Concepts of hearing loss

Introduction

Knowledge about the hearing loss is necessary for dealing with the children with deafness.This knowledge will help to understand not only about the hearing level of the children but also their lives and the world of deafness.The implications of deafness vary from person to person and from one society to another. Yet, we need to get a generalized picture of what deafness mean across the globe.

Objectives

At the end of this sub -unit students will be able:

- To understand what hearing loss is.
- To describe the different types of hearing loss.
- To discuss the causes of sensorineural hearing loss

There are, as you already know, two ways of looking at deafness: sociologists call them the "Medical Model" and the "Social Model". At this point, without going in much details we are going to understand the biological reality of deafness in rather brief theoretical manner. As the name suggests, hearing loss is loss of hearing in a person in comparison with "normal' hearing experienced by the majority of the population.

Let us understand the continuum of hearing and when a condition is called hearing loss with the help of an analogy. A very wild analogy (without claiming hearing loss to be like fever) would be – how do we measure 'fever'? The unit of measurement is Fahrenheit (short form - °F). Body temperature of 98.6°F is expected to be 'normal and as it increases beyond that, we state the person to have fever. Similarly, the unit of measurement for hearing is decibels. You must have seen the short form on a few documents – dBHL. There are degrees of hearing levels which too are indicated using the unit dB (deci Bells).

According to RPWD act 2016, Hearing impairment— (a) "deaf" means persons having 70 dB hearing loss in speech frequencies in both ears;

 (b) "Hard of hearing" means person having 60 dB to 70 dB hearing loss in speech frequencies in both ears.

Hearing loss is not a binary condition – either present or absent. But it is a continuum and there are various types.

Five way classification of Hearing loss
1. Age of on set
2. Site of lesion
3. Nature of hearing loss
4. Degree of hearing loss
5. On the basis of cause

1. Age of onset– Hearing loss on the basis of when it occurred may be classified as follows:

a. Congenital hearing loss - It refers to any hearing loss occurring prior to birth or at the time of birth. It may be heredity or may develop during prenatal or natal period.

b. Acquired hearing loss - It refers to any hearing loss occurring after the birth. It can be classify in two ways:

- **Pre-lingual Hearing Loss**: Pre-lingual hearing loss refers to that hearing loss which occurs before the child has achieved basic competency in his or her primary language. It comes by birth or occurring before age 3 years.

- **Post-lingual Hearing Loss**: Post-lingual hearing loss refers to that hearing loss which occurs after the acquisition of language, in later childhood or adulthood.

2. Site of lesion (Physical origin of impairment)

- **a.** Conductive hearing loss
- **b.** Sensori-neural hearing loss
- **c.** Mixed hearing loss

3. Nature of hearing loss

- **a.** gradual hearing loss
- **b.** Sudden hearing loss

4. Degree of hearing loss

- Normal Hearing Sensitivity [-10 to 25dBHL]
- Mild Hearing Loss [26 to 40dBHL]
- Moderate Hearing Loss [41 to 55dBHL]
- Moderately-Severe Hearing loss [56 to 70dBHL]
- Severe Hearing Loss [71 to 90dBHL]
- Profound Hearing Loss [91dBHL and Above]

See the audiogram given here to understand the degrees of hearing loss.

5. Causes of hearing loss

a. Causes of conductive hearing loss: Conductive hearing loss occurs due to dysfunction in the outer or middle ear or in the both. Conductive hearing loss could be because of:

- condition of external ear
- Atresia , wax,
- condition of middle ear
- infections

b. Causes of sensorineural hearing loss: It occurs due to defect in the inner ear and causes of hearing loss are classified into three categories namely:

- Exogenous Causes
- Endogenous Causes
- Idiopathic Causes

Things to remember about hearing loss:

1. There are degrees of hearing losses which are likely to impact the general functioning of the individual.
2. Early identification is essential for lessening the impact of hearing loss on the development of hearing loss.
3. Not all persons with hearing loss benefit and / or use hearing aids.
4. Hearing loss itself does not have anything to do with inability to speak.
5. Hearing loss has nothing to do with intelligence. Like normal hearing people, there are deaf people with high, low and average intelligence.
6. Hearing loss refers to varying degrees but deafness refers to profound loss.

Factors influencing the overall functioning of a person with deafness.

- General factors- age of identification, age of intervention, availability of resources,
- Family related factors –
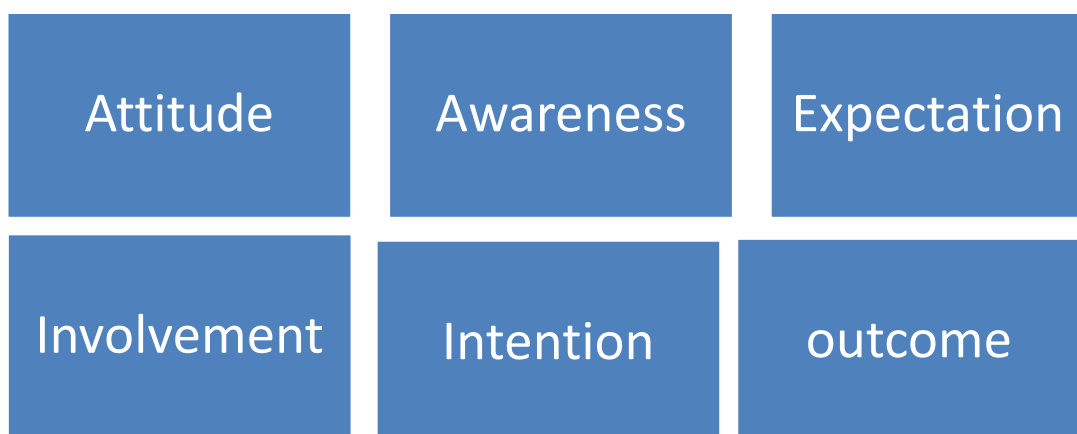
Summary

- Hearing loss is classified on the basis of age of onset, site of lesion, nature, degree and causes.
- On the basis of site of lesion, hearing loss are classified into three types conductive, sensori-neural and mixed hearing loss.

How far have you learnt:

Q.1 State True (T) or False (F)

i. Hearing loss is a binary condition.
ii. Deafness occurring before birth is called congenital hearing loss.
iii. Deafness occurring before a child acquires language is called pre-lingual deafness.
iv. Conductive hearing loss is an irreversible loss.
v. A defect in the inner ear leads to conductive loss.
vi. Hearing loss can be progressive in nature.
vii. Early identification does not impact the language development of a deaf child.
viii. Parents attitude and involvement are important factors in the overall progress of a deaf child.
ix. RPWD refers to deaf people who have 70dB or more Hearing loss.
x. dB is the unit of degree of hearing loss.

Q.2. Fill in the blanks

i. Persons with 60 dB to 70dB dB hearing loss are referred to as _____ persons
ii. There can be pre-natal and ___natal causes of hearing loss.
iii. Sensori-neural hearing loss is an _____hearing loss.
iv. Deafness can be viewed from medical and _____ model of deafness.
v. Hearing loss itself does not have anything to do with inability to _____.

Q.3 Assignments:

Meet five Deaf or Hard of Hearing persons and profile them on the following parameters:
- Age of onset,
- Degree of hearing loss,
- Cause of hearing loss,
- Site of hearing loss,
- Age of identification,
- Early family communication experiences

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1.3 Misconcepts about deafness

Introduction

If anyone wishes to learn French, they better know basic things about Frenchmen. People, culture and language are inseparable. You intend to learn and use ISL professionally and hence we better discuss Deafness – what it is and, more importantly - what it is not.

There are a variety of myths that people have regarding the D/deaf and the D/deafness. It is important that we as professionals start debunking these myths in our mind as well as during our communication with others. This is all about learning to treat the deaf with respect that they deserve…. that any human with diverse conditions deserve. There are two ways of looking at deafness: sociologists call them the "Medical Model" and the "Social Model". You have learnt these in other units. Here is a quick summary for your ready reference.

Medical Model

This model considers Deafness to be an 'illness and handicap'. According to medical model, deafness can be treated by medication or surgery, or managed by training from the medical professionals. Deaf people are cases for treatment.

Social Model

This model considers that Deafness is not an illness or impairment but a different situation. Deaf people are only disabled by barriers created by other people or the society at large. Deaf people have their own language and are a linguistic and cultural minority. Deaf people can live normal lives with access through visual information, technology and interpreters.

Objectives

At learning this Sub unit students will be able to:

- Understand the mis-concepts about deafness.
- Understand the deaf people without any biases

Here are a few mis-concepts related to deafness. Let us understand the issues clearly.

1. Hearing aids instantly make you hear or **Hearing aids restore hearing loss (NOT TRUE):**

A person does not obtain "normal" hearing by wearing a hearing aid or by getting cochlear implant done. Hearing devices are unable to restore biological process of hearing to 'normal'. Even now, when hearing technology is at its most advanced, there's no device that can repair the damage to the hair cells of the inner ear. Digital hearing aids work by amplifying sounds coming into the ear – but unlike inner ear hair cells, they are unable to process complex sounds effectively. This is why people with hearing loss who wear aids tend to find it difficult to

concentrate and hear clearly in busy environments, where background noise makes it tricky to focus on particular sounds.

People with hearing loss cannot and do not start hearing (and hence , lisening) instantly as they tune the aid on. Depending on the level of someone's hearing loss, hearing aids vary in terms of power. Hearing aids / CI need some fine tuning to create the best listening features in each users's technology. Even after that the need for long term training to be able to listen is mandatory. While hearing aids can make a big difference in one's hearing ability, it's not the same as someone with "normal" hearing. There are several 'if's and 'buts' involved when it comes to effective use of hearing devices by the young children with deafness. It is not like spectacles where one needs to put in minimum adjustments and the aid (spectacle) can be used effectively for months without hassles till one feels the need for the up gradation. The case of a hearing device is a total contrast to this. Appropriateness and suitability of the aid for each person is of prime importance. Use of hearing devices need to be supported with long term consistent professional training and parent involvement without which the hearing devices have been proved to be waste of time and money.

2. If you talk louder, deaf people can hear (NOT TRUE):

No matter how loud one talks, if the listener has severe hearing loss he/she will not understand. Talking loudly just sounds like you are shouting at the listener! Shouting at a deaf person does not help them understand a speaker. If a speaker increases the volume when he/she talks, his/her face becomes distorted, making it yet more difficult for the deaf listener to understand the meaning. Increasing the volume is only part of the solution which may work with a person with mild hearing loss; clarity is more important. And there is a point where increasing the volume begins to distort the quality of sound. To obtain sufficient clarity, people with residual hearing may require sound to be transmitted from a microphone directly to their ear via an assistive listening system. But that too cannot take place of the natural hearing and listening. In short, yelling and over-articulating do not help in communication because these distort the natural rhythm of speech and make understanding more difficult. A person who can hear normally cannot determine whether the sound is adequate for a person with hearing loss.

3. Deaf people can communicate adequately and exclusively through speech reading / lip reading (NOT TRUE):

It is not true that Deaf people can communicate by reading lips. It is true that people with hearing loss focus more on reading people's face predominantly the lips. It is called speech reading (or lip reading) It is a vital skill for them to have to aid communication with hearing world. However, it is just a weak support for communication in the absence of more effective alternatives. Speech reading is difficult to learn and it's impossible to catch everything someone says by simply watching the face or lips. While this is complicated in itself, it's worth remembering that speech reading requires reasonably good eyesight and it's impossible to speech read in the darker areas – or when someone is mumbling or covering their mouth. Most

importantly, speech sounds of same category look identical and hence it is impossible to make out the difference among them, like k, kh, g, gh or t, th, d, dh n. In short, speech reading is no substitute for either speech or sign language – it may prove to be one of the supporting strategies but can never be an independent communication option. This is why Deaf people appreciate gestures, visual clues or pointing to indicate the subject.

4. Hearing loss only affects the older generation (NOT TRUE):

Some people are born with a hearing loss; others lose it later in life. Hearing loss can affect people of all ages. While deafness is a common age-related health problem, the true reality is hearing loss can begin at any age – for all kinds of reasons.

5. Deaf are dumb (NOT TRUE):

You must have heard the term 'deaf and dumb' or 'deaf mute'. Dumb or mute mean inability to speak or communicate. It is a very common mis-concept that deaf are dumb. There are deaf who can speak age appropriately and almost all deaf communicate adequately. Dumb also indicate low performance or intelligence. From that point of view, the term deaf and dumb must be banned since it is not only technically incorrect but also insulting to a deaf person.
It is unfortunate that we still find people using the terms and also organizations using the term as their names. More than anything it is a habit that we all must avoid and gently yet firmly correct others if it is used in our presence.

6. Deaf people are not 'normal': (NOT TRUE)

Have you paid attention to the word 'normal'? What do you think it really mean? The word 'normal' is generally used to mean majority – like others. Technically, normalcy has three types: abnormal (mentally imbalanced), sub normal (lower intelligence or IQ) and normal. Which category would you like to place the deaf community? Abnormal, subnormal or normal? Obviously, the deaf are normal – their hearing can be at the most called different from normal – not like others. But discarding the whole being as not normal on account of hearing loss is incorrect. Let us start using the term hearing person or hearng community rather than 'normal' person or normal community.

7. Deaf people cannot drive (NOT TRUE):

Deaf people can drive! They just need to be more cautious visually of their surroundings. In many counties the deaf too get driving license. If any individual who passes through the test that the rules prescribe for the citizens and gets the driving license can and should be able to drive – immaterial of hearing status. Driving is a learnt skill and there is no reason why hearing loss come in the way of learning it. Obviously, there needs to be adaptations in systems which assume that each driver can hear. For example, it is better if other drivers know the hearing status of the driver of one of the cars. There are symbols for indicating that.

8. Deaf people always need to be defined as "hearing impaired:

Many deaf people don't like to be defined as "hearing impaired" and prefer the word "deaf." Some want to be identified as members of the deaf community and capitalize the word "Deaf." Some deaf people also object to the word "impaired," which they feel implies that a person is flawed, deficient or imperfect. "Hearing loss is a characteristic, like the color of one's eyes. It does not define a person. The "person" should be listed first, for example, "a person who is hard of hearing," "a person who is deaf," or "a person with hearing loss." (See "People First Language").

9. Deaf people are too dependent and can't effectively contribute to society. (NOT TRUE)

Many deaf people can drive, read, write, go to school, marry, raise children, work, etc. In fact, their unique challenge of needing to constantly communicate with others who have a difficult time understanding them may make them better communicators (and listeners) than hearing people!

Exercise

State whether true or False
   a. Speech reading is a very effective and adequate communication way.
   b. Talking loudly always help in communicating with the deaf.
   c. Deaf are not dumb.

Short answer questions

   a. Why do people use the term deaf and dumb? What can we do to stop society using this term? Lip-reading is difficult, and not always accurate. Explain with example. Describe the concept of normalcy.

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Model answers
   a. False
   b. False
   c. True

1.4 The Deaf as linguistic minority community

Please read and understand this before we begin:

'Among the seismic shifts in culture brought about in the 1960's was a much quieter but nonetheless profound revolution in our understanding of human language and culture: the validation of the fully linguistic nature of sign languages and the subsequent rewriting of the deaf identity from deaf to Deaf, that is from a pathological state of hearing loss to the cultural identity of a linguistic minority' (Bauman, Open Your Eyes) (2007 H-Dirksen L. Bauman)

Introduction

We have discussed the concept of linguistic identity and misconceptions about deafness and hearing loss in the earlier units. We learnt that 'Language is central to a culture' and that 'your cultural identity is integrally related to your linguistic identity'. This sub-unit will provide the learner a base to understand the Deaf community's perspective of seeing themselves as a linguistic minority community.

What constitutes a linguistic minority?

'A linguistic minority is a community that uses a language different from the one spoken by the national majority'

The Census 2011 (India) reports 2.68 crore persons with disability within which 19% are persons with hearing disabilities. (http://censusindia.gov.in/Census_And_You/disabled_population.aspx) This means that the Deaf community in India constitutes a definitely visible community of people who have been struggling for self-determination, equal rights and opportunities. Though seeing from the perspective of the whole population of the country, it can be considered as a minority group.

At the very core of this struggle for equal rights is the emancipation and acknowledgement of the linguistic identity of Deaf individuals. The preferred language of a person is his / her chosen and rightful mode of expression. Ones preferred language has a symbiotic relationship with his / her thought and individuality. Due to certain developments in the history of Deaf community and their far-reaching impact, the linguistic identity of the Deaf community was repressed worldwide.

SIGN LANGUAGES AS LINGUSITIC MINORITY: CONCEPT AND RELEVANCE

Understand the word minority. It assumes a larger group having different characteristics. Using the characteristics the group is naturally divided into types wherein one type is distinctly more in number. The other group distinctly smaller in number. Observe your current class or neighborhood carefully. You could easily draw conclusions like:

- Majority of our class fellows are Hindi speaking. OR
- Majority of my neighborhood families are government officers. OR
- Graduates are a minority in our group; most of us are HSC passed. OR
- Veg people are a minority among my friends; most of them are non-veg.

What does these statements indicate? These purely refer to numbers. But the issue of majority and minority is more complex and deep routed than the number itself. It has been the tendency of the humans in majority to overpower the minority. Generally they either **look down upon** by the minority or have **negative mis-concepts** about them or also discriminated against. They may want to 'convert' minority population into the majority types. Minority groups too have their own psychology wherein they either feel inferior or wanting to become like the majority ones or get too 'purist' and discriminate against the majority group. There could be a lot complex emotional, social and identity related dynamics between the two groups: the majority and the minority.

What do you think could be such characteristics operating within societies which set two groups apart as a minority and a majority?

Religion

Income

Culture

Education

Yes, there could be many more factors. One of the strongest factors closely linked with culture and identity is LANGUAGE. Benedikter (2013) for example states - India not only is concerned with inevitable multilingualism, but also with the rights of many millions of speakers of lesser used minority languages. As the political and cultural context privileges some major languages, linguistic minorities often feel discriminated against. He adds – The UNSCO - World Atlas of languages in danger for India lists 172 languages in danger. These have real threats of disappearing.

This indicates that the issue is not only about inferiority and superiority but also about existence and sustainability of natural languages.

The constitution of India rightly and strongly protects all natural languages of the country. Article 30 (1) of the constitution also provides fundamental rights to protect the languages. But the social dynamics could be different from the legal document of the country.

How does this link with ISL? Is ISL one of the 172 languages is danger in India today? Unfortunately it is not even recognized and rarely documented as an independent LANGUAGE currently. If and when the ISL gets the recognition of a (minority) language, it too would come under the legal protection of the nation.

And how does this non-recognition of a minority language impact the functioning of the native community?

Any language that is considered minority (and hence incorrectly inferior) raises issues related to social hierarchy and educational equity. The issues related to perceiving deaf to be inferior (handicapped, not normal) and the educational challenges faced by them in an oral social and school systems are just the tip of the iceberg.

Ministry of Minority Affairs, Govt of India notifies a few communities as minority communities like Sikhs, Muslims, Jains, or Buddhists. Being minority community is being part of diversity and not disability. Deaf community and sign languages are like such minorities and hence need legal notification stating the same. Such step is expected to facilitate social and legal equity which would in turn empower the generations of the Deaf community.

In 2010 Bhasha a Vadodara based Research and Publication Centre, under the chairmanship of Prof. G.N. Devy initiated the mammoth task of Linguistic Survey of India. This People's Linguistic Survey of India (PLSI) did not discriminate between a language and a dialect and included even those languages which are being spoken by even less than 100 speakers. It documented as many as 780 languages. And first time in India's history Indian Sign Language also got place in this survey. Volume 38 of PLSI is on The Sign Language(s) of India. It was emphasized that a language is not about numbers or even the modality, many languages included do not have scripts but the fact that languages are social systems and they get impacted by all other contextual social developments. Therefore, a given language can not be disassociated from the community that uses it. Preservation of a language entails the preservation of the community that puts that language in circulation. (Front cover page of Vol.38,PLSI). Sub-unit 1.1 of this unit has included more findings of PLSI.

The History of the Language and Culture of the Deaf

From the ancient times, both in India and abroad, deafness as a disability and deaf people as a group have been prejudiced against. Modern societies today may not know these details or may not agree to this thought processes. But generation by generations these mis-concepts have travelled in our deep thinking. We need to fight it on rational level carefully. To be able to do that, we need to see the origins of such incorrect perception of disability / deafness. We also need to review history in brief here to be able to understand the journey of the perception from being disabled to being different. Only then can we understand the concept of minority and its applicability to the Deaf community.

In the Manusmriti, the "deaf and mutes" were to receive no share of inheritance, they were thought of as having sinned in their past lives and deafness was their punishment (https://www.sacred-texts.com/hin/manu/manu11.htm)

In the *Mahabharata* too there is mention that the "deaf and dumb" are individuals who have wronged, sinned and had evil demeanor.

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The *Ancient Greeks* denied education to the deaf:

Plato stated that as deaf people could not speak, they lacked intelligence.
Aristotle said without hearing, people cannot learn.

Saint Augustine stated that having a deaf child was probably a punishment for parents who had sinned. As the deaf could not hear the words of God (Read or Hear Sermons and Gospel) so they could not be saved.

Benedictine Monks who took vows of silence created a form of '*Sign Language*' to communicate with each other in 530 C.E.

Pedro Ponce de Leon, a Benedictine Monk from Spain opened the *first school for the Deaf in Europe in 1550*, he used his religious group's sign language to teach Deaf Students.

Juan Pablo Bonet, a priest from Spain, published the first Sign Language book (probably inspired by Ponce de Leon) in 1620.

Father Charles-Michel d'l' Epee' started the first public school for the deaf, National School for the Deaf in Paris, France in 1760. He is considered the father of Deaf education.
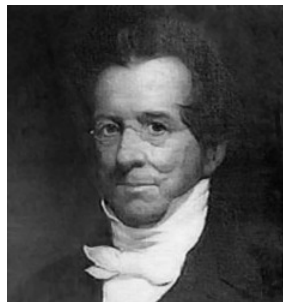
(Alice Cogswell)   (Laurent Clerc)   (Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet)

Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet, a hearing man, was hired to teach a deaf girl named Alice Cogswell. His inquisitiveness and determination to learn how to teach the deaf took him to Europe to study Deaf education. In 1817 Gallaudet met Laurent Clerc at the National School for the Deaf in Paris. He convinced Clerc to travel with him to start a school for the deaf in America. Clerc taught French Sign Language to Gallaudet.

American School for the Deaf in Hartford, Connecticut

blished America's first school for the Deaf in 1817.

Abraham Lincoln in 1864 passed the law which saw the establishment of the National Deaf Mute College in Washington D.C. now known as the Gallaudet University.

Milan Conference and its effect on the Education of the Deaf and H/h worldwide

The Second International Congress on Education of the Deaf was an international meeting of deaf educators from at least seven countries. The Conference was held in the RegioInstitutioTenico di Santa Martha, Milan from 6 September to 11 September 1880. The aim

of the conference was to ban sign language from deaf education. During the conference, 12 speakers gave their opinions on issues connected with deaf education. Nine of the twelve speakers gave an oralist view and three (Thomas H. Gallaudet, Edward M. Gallaudet and Richard Elliot, a teacher from England) supported the use of sign language.

The Congress was planned and organized by the Pereire Society, a group that was a strong supporter of oralism and was against sign language. More than half of the people invited were known oralists; therefore, the Congress was biased and most of the resolutions that were voted on, gave results in favor of the oral method. They organized the Milan conference with the intention to ban the use of sign language. They carefully selected and invited the delegates, encouraged negative reactions to speeches supporting sign language and cheering those supporting Oralism.

Delegates from the United States and Britain were the only ones who opposed the use of oralism as a sole method of instruction, but were unsuccessful in their efforts at the Congress. Edward Miner Gallaudet and Reverend Thomas Gallaudet were among the protesters who fought against the oralist method. The National Association of the Deaf was also formed in the United States in response to the Milan Conference.

In July 2010 in Vancouver, Canada, the board of the 21st International Congress on the Education of the Deaf (ICED) formally voted to reject all of the 1880 Milan resolutions.

The Modern Age of Deaf People

The modern age for Deaf people did not begin until the 1970s (Tom Humphries). Deaf communities exist in every nation preserving and cherishing their rich heritage, unique culture and beautiful language. A deaf man from India can go to China and learn Chinese Sign Language or perhaps communicate in International Sign. American Sign Language uses one-hand for fingerspelling whereas Indian Sign Language, British Sign Language as well as Auslan (Australian sign language) use both hands to fingerspell. Canadian Deaf may use both ASL and Quebecois Sign Language.

But there was a time when developments in the field of science, medicine and technology treated deafness as a condition to be fixed and rendered sign languages as crude gesture based incomplete systems of communication. Repression and dehumanization of Sign Language along with restrictions in self-determination were the primary acts of discrimination against the deaf people around the world. Irrespective of this deaf people are visible as a group struggling against social and cultural prejudice; thriving through generations and building their own community.

George Veditz (cited in Carol Padden 2005) referred to deaf people "as first and foremost and for all time, people of the eye". Carol Padden (2005) distinguishes between the deaf community and Deaf culture. **The Deaf community may include non-deaf members like sign language interpreters, parents of deaf children etc and who actively support and work with the**

community for their education, rights and so on. Deaf culture focuses on the core essence of being deaf and nativity.

There have been numerous discourses on what constitutes Deaf Culture. Most 'voices' were from outsiders or culture-researchers. Soon enough there were publications and discussions on what Deaf people cherished, typical to it was their preference of using sign language, value of light and profound visual acuity, bilingualism, introduction and so forth.

William C. Stokoe's (1965) research finding proved beyond doubt that Sign Languages fulfill all the parameters of a language like any other spoken language having their own complex grammar. Natural signed language like American Sign Language (ASL) or Indian Sign Language (ISL) demonstrate the same linguistic properties as spoken languages including phonetic, phonemic, syllabic, morphological, syntactic, discourse and pragmatic levels of organization (Devy, 2014).

William C Stokoe was an American linguist and a professor at Gallaudet University. In 1960 he published 'Sign Language Structure' which was instrumental in establishing the fact that Sign Languages are independent and thriving systems of communication. Since then, more than 30 countries have recognized their respective sign languages in their legal systems. Ponder upon following questions….

1. How many languages does the Indian Constitution recognize as official languages?
2. Do you know that a Public Interest Litigation has been filed to Delhi High Court for granting official recognition to Indian Sign Language?
3. Did you know that American Sign Language is the third most widely used language in the United States of America?

'We know that there is no one universal sign language and each country has its own sign language with several regional variations. For the Indian deaf population it is the Indian Sign Language with various regional variations mainly in the lexical domain (Vasishta, 1978)'

Indian Sign Language (ISL)

Indo-Pakistani Sign Language and its variants are the accepted language of the Indian deaf community similar to American Sign Language (ASL) of the American Deaf people.

Whereas the western countries like France and America had stalwarts like Abbe de l'Epee, Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet, Laurent Clerc, Wiiliam C. Stokoe etc. to establish the first college and university for the Deaf and appropriate teaching methods. In India, eminent individuals like Dr. Madan Vasishta, Sibaji Panda, Arun C. Rao, Ulrike Zeshan, have presented mammoth research and efforts in shaping the first Dictionary of Indian Sign Language, three levels of ISL Training and Interpretation, Beginners Guide to Sign Language etc.

In1978, a team of three researchers began to investigate the linguistic status of Indian Sign Language in India through linguistic survey conducted among Indian deaf signers from Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta and Bangalore. The team consisted of MadanVasishta, an Indian man who became deaf at the age of 11 and went on to study at Gallaudet University, and two hearing

American linguists namely James Woodward and Kirk Wilson. These researchers determined that Indian Sign Language (ISL) possessed definite grammatical rules and high degree of lexical uniformity, despite some regional variation. Furthermore, they estimated that ISL was used by 1½ Million Deaf people.

In 2000 Ulrike Zeshan published a grammatical description of Indo-Pakistan Sign Language.
In 2006, first Ph D level study was completed by Dr Surinder PK Randhawa shedding light over the damaging confusion among the stake holders of deaf education about the concept of sign language and its applicability. In recent years few doctoral thesis have been submitted on grammar of Indian Sign Language too.

Facts and Myths of Sign Language

Facts: (Besides many more that you are learning in other units)
1. Sign Language has complex rules of grammar and expansive vocabularies
2. Sign Languages are capable vehicles of everyday conversation, intellectual discourses, rhetoric, wit and poetry
3. Sign Languages in each country are found to have dialects, just as spoken languages do.

Myths that work as barriers in accepting ISL as minority language.
1. Sign language is just pantomime and gesture, represents spoken language
2. Sign Language is universal, the same in every country
3. Abstract concepts cannot be expressed in Sign Language
4. Education in Sign Language jeopardizes the learning of the written language

World Federation of the Deaf (2012), notes on its website:

'Deaf children learn best in sign language. A bilingual approach is becoming more popular in many countries. It means that the teaching language is sign language in all subjects for Deaf children. At the same time, it has a strong emphasis on teaching reading and writing skills of the language used in the country or society.

This approach has facilitated in good learning results because it supports the natural learning and communication environment of a Deaf child.'

Audism
- Definition of Audism (Dr. Tom Humphries (1975) introduced the term "audism" in his dissertation called "communicating across cultures Deaf-hearing and Language Learning.")
- Defined audism as the notion that one is superior based on one's ability to hear or behave in the manner of one who hears.
- Audism includes the belief that spoken language is superior to sign language

(Deaf artist – Nancy Rourke)

- Examples of Audism of how it can impact:

  ➢ Self – comparison of hearing levels
  ➢ Family - Family members eating on a dinner table and chatting by leaving the deaf child out of conversation – Dinner Table Syndrome
  ➢ Training – The trainer gives long and detailed information to the trainees while for the deaf trainees- the trainer would compress the information short by using gestures. Not getting full access to equal information that been shared to the non-deaf trainees.
  ➢ Job– The Employer who interviews the Deaf candidate would not provide a sign language interpreter as a source of equal access. Another example, regardless of the same credentials by a deaf person and a hearing person, the employer would usually pick a hearing person. This example can go for the same for a deaf person who uses sign language to communicate vs. a deaf person who uses speech to communicate – where the employer would usually pick the deaf person who can speak.
  ➢ Society – Showing the sympathy toward the deaf individuals – by not treating them as human beings.
  ➢ Policy- Lack of accessibility for the Deaf in cinemas.
  ➢ Education – Most of the eachers are not using sign language to teach the deaf children. More than 2 million deaf children are facing language deprivation in India.

- How to reduce Audism among the Deaf in a mainstream environment?

  ➢ The biggest problem is that the people don't have awareness on this issue. They need exposure by spreading the awareness of existing examples and role models. You as interpreters are expected to become accountable since you are entering the Deaf world by learning the language and socializing with the Deaf individuals.
  ➢ It is critically important for each one of you to be aware of ways and means of reducing audism when a deaf person(s) is around you. Educate the non-deaf of what

does it mean to "respect" the environment when a deaf person or a group of deaf people are around them.

➢ Example of Respecting the environment is by signing at all times if deaf people are presence – regardless if you are not talking to them directly.

Winding up message

For hundreds of years, the deaf community has been oppressed by not being able to communicate freely with their hands. In India, there has not been much research on how Indian Sign Language (ISL) is an effective tool to use within the Deaf community. It would improve the language acquisition skills among all deaf children as well for parents to actually be able to communicate with their children. In the next 5-10 years, there will be many positive changes with the fact that the awareness of sign language is being spread out. With your involvement, it would critically make an impact by respecting the linguistic of the minority community.

Summary

- There are two perception of looking at d/Deafness: disability (medical model) and Linguistic Minority.
- Although, the word minority and majority appear to be about the number, the issues have more to do with social status and equity.
- ISL, currently, is not a notified (recognized) language in India. Efforts are being made to obtain the status of notified language for the ISL.
- Reviewing the global history help us understand how and why sign languages were discriminated against and were not given status of independent language.
- Ability to hear or behave in the manner of the one who hears (audism) was and is – to a great extent predominant in the society. More awareness needs to be created about ISL being a language which will ensure educational equity for the new generations of the Deaf community.

Exercise

- Can you come up with at least 3 examples of how **audism** can be reduced?
- Can you list things which Deaf individuals cannot do but hearing people can?
- From this reading, what did you find most important that you would remember it?

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   http://www.idcoop.eu/en/KeyConcepts/Pages/LinguisticMinorities.aspx)

Unit- 2
UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT

Total Hours: 14

Objectives

After reading this Unit the learners would be able to:

- Describe the larger picture of communication concerns and deafness;

- Explain the relevance of pragmatic factors impacting functioning of a deaf individual in terms of how society looks at deafness and the deaf;

- Get a basic understanding of the legal and policy structure of India and its relevance to Deafness and Indian Sign Language (ISL, henceforth);

2.1 Medical model: Meaning, global and Indian scenario
2.2 Socio-cultural model: Meaning, global and Indian scenario
2.3 Legislations, policies and practice in India
2.4 Deafness, ISL and the school systems in India

Unit Introduction

"Decisions made for young deaf children can be fateful for their life chances so I make a strong plea to anyone who has a part to play in the decisions (so crucially affecting the lives of these young persons) to be **objective, systematic and consistent**" (Lynas , 1994).

In this unit we are going to look into the larger perspective of the issue: Deafness and ISL. As a part of this program, you have been getting insights into both; deafness and ISL. As you progress as a learner, you will also get to know more about the way deafness and ISL are related.For that let us try to look at the concepts of deafness and ISL within their **context**. We need to see the larger picture for that. It is like you cannot claim to know Bengali when you only know the vocabulary and the grammar of the language. You need to know the society, culture, food, festival, attitude, temperament, dressing, literature and many more things about West Bengal and the Bengalis to claim complete understanding of the language, Bengali. Most importantly, we also need to know how the world looks at Bengalis and the Bengali language. Only after getting insight into all these can one claim to 'know Bengali well'. Similarly, to get more insight into ISL, we need to see the larger picture – a macro level perspective of ISL. This unit intends to add that missing piece to your understanding. Learning this will be like taking one step forward in understanding ISL. It would help you to understand the context of the issues that you are studying. So are we ready to fly high, to take a bird's eye view of the concepts of deafness and ISL?

The **first sub-unit** would help you understand the old and traditional model of deafness which has been largely rejected by current thinkers, professionals and researchers. However this

medical model seems to be deep rooted in the mindset of society – society of which you and I are a part of, as well. As a professional, you have to be aware of categories of perspectives (models) that exist. You have to pay attention to your own thinking; you need to guide your thinking towards more professional ways rather than the typical **medical (limiting)** model of deafness. For this you need to take a closer look at this perspective of the medical model. Only after that can you train your mind and thinking to see the pitfalls in this model. **Sub-unit 1** will give you that opportunity.

The second sub-unit is about the **socio-cultural model** which is a more positive way of looking at deafness. We will learn that this model is in contrast with the earlier mentioned clinical model. You will better understand these models if you try to apply the information gained to real life situations that you face in your professional life. You will also be able to understand the background of peoples' responses to deafness once you get insight into the perspectives - what guides them to think / speak / act while responding to deafness.

The third sub-unit will help you complete the picture with yet another relevant area of information without which deafness cannot be understood well. It presents a summarized version of **legislations and policies** related to deafness. This would help us understand about the stand our nation takes over the issue of disability in general and deafness and ISL in particular.

In most of the cases, due to several reasons, deaf children get experience and exposure to ISL in schools or in deaf communities rather than in a family set-up. Hence, while studying ISL and putting it in the context of users of ISL, we need to review the current school systems. Obviously, we are going to peep into the school systems only to know its stand on ISL – to the extent the stand that schools take on communication opportunities. It will be interesting and insightful to see whether ISL is considered at par with other verbal languages of the country by the Indian school system.

Thefourth sub-unit intends to share a few glimpses of the Indian school system from the ISL point of view.

As interpreters 'in the making', these issues may not be directly linked with your professional activities. Nevertheless, you need to be equipped to face a society whose responses to deafness may not always be desirable. If you understand the larger picture and have the **insight into the sources of these responses, you will be able to deliver better professional results**. If this unit puts your professional skills in a realistically positive and proactive zone, the purpose of learning this unit will have been served.

2.1 Medical models: Meaning, global and Indian scenario
Introduction

Have you heard the story of the elephant and the six blind men? Each of the men perceived the elephant differently because none could get a holistic view of the elephant. Each thought that the information he had was the ultimate truth. However, in reality what each of the men knew was only a small piece of the truth and not a complete understanding.

What does this story have to do with the current topic? Consider Deafness to be like that elephant in the story and understand that different people perceive it differently. This happens because they look at it from only one side and hence they get only **a restricted view**. They are not aware how this concept looks from the other angles.

Predominantly, there are two contrasting perspectives about deafness. A few people look at **it as a diversifying factor while others look at it as a disabling factor.** Much depends on how an individual looks at a thing at a micro level and how a community looks at it at a macro level. Let us see how this happens with reference to disabilities in general and deafness in particular.

Before discussing perspectives on disability, let us agree that disability is a common and natural part of the human condition. The **awareness** about this concept called disability is rather poor in most societies –including India. Still worse, people have rigid misconceptions about what disability is and what persons with disability can and cannot do. Studies on evolving demographic features have established that disability is a commonly found feature experienced by all sectors of society. In spite of this truth, society is unable to respond to disability in a manner which is just and desirable.

There are some experts who believe that disability reflects a physical fact affecting the quality of life and then there are others who believe that disability is defined by social prejudice. Within the broad framework of these two contrasting points of view there are several perspectives which fall in-between. According to Koch, "the result is similar to a figure – ground paradox in which one can see only part of a picture at any moment".

Some believe that disability is a demographic variation, just like sex or race. Disability is about classifying people on the basis of observable characteristics. However the issue gets complex when we realize that this classification, when it comes to disability, does not remain biological. Social perspectives play a major role. The responses of society also make the matter more complex. What do you think are the general responses of people towards disability?

Points to Ponder: How do you think a teacher responds to the news that she would have a child with disability in his/ her class? OR what do you think is the typical response of parents when an expert conveys for the first time that their child has disability?

The responses of people to difficult parts of life are generally known to pass through a range of emotions, for example Kubler-Ross described the Grief Cycle commonly known as DABDA – Denial, Anger, Bargaining, Depression and Acceptance. Responses of parents go through a similar process when they come to know about the disability of their child.

Another more recent cycle of responses states the following stages:
- Shock
- Denial
- Depression / Mourning
- Questioning
- Integration and Acceptance

Experts also categorize the response of society towards disability into:
1) Behavioural: How one chooses to act when confronted with disability.

2) Cognitive: How one chooses to understand or view disability.
3) Affective: How one feels when confronted with disability.

All such discussions are relevant for understanding the models of disability. In the current unit we are going to see one of the perspectives of looking at disability: Medical Model and how responses of people are dominantly governed by the model that operates in their mind. You have already studied about disability,in general ,in other units. In this unit you are going to analyse how the concept of disability has evolved to its present state as a result of shifts in perspectives towards persons with disabilities. These perspectives of looking at persons with disabilities, categorized into 2-3 broader types - are known as '**Models of Disability'**. Although your syllabus mentions medical and social models only, we will take a quick look at the third model , the rights-based model, to get the whole picture.

A Quick Exercise!

Write a line in your own words on - What is hearing impairment? What comes to your mind when you hear the term hearing impairment?

Your response: _____

What was your response?

Anything from SET A? Or something similar to it?

SET A
- Inability to hear
- Reduced hearing level
- Issues in hearing sensitivity
- problems in communication
- Inability to communicate in verbal language
- Special school
- Not normal

OR

Anything from SET B? Or something very similar to it?

SET B
- Ability to hear with amplification
- A condition that needs alternate communication options
- A group of people who communicate in sign language.
- Integrated schools

OR

Anything from SET C? Or something very similar to it?

SET C
- A condition which will not restrict a person's access to any public place.
- A condition which though difficult, will not interfere with a person getting a position of power.

- A hearing impaired person is one for whom society needs sign language interpreters while communicating.
- Inclusive schools, where the diversity of communication means is respected.

Let us see how your response reflected the model in your mind. What did you look at while defining hearing loss?

- The person's disability? or
- Societal barriers? or
- Interaction between a person with disability and his/her environment?
-

Please have a look at Table 1 at the end of sub-unit 2.2. If your responses fit into set A, then you are following the Medical Model in your thinking. If your responses fit into set B, then your thinking is ruled by the Social Model. If you are thinking in terms of Set C, then you are defining hearing loss as per the rights-based model. Obviously, these are not your conscious decisions but your experiences and habitual use of language which has impacted your thinking. These are instrumental in your responses. Our perceptions (the **templates we use while thinking)** are important **determiners of our choices of responses, our language and our actions**. Such templates are **habitually formed** and we can undo these only when we put in conscious efforts. Changing perspectives is possible only if a person is convinced and is willing to be flexible enough to take a new path. Mind training and tongue training are a part of such efforts.

Did this exercise help you to identify your perspective towards 'disability'? The majority of your responses will fit into Set A (medical model) or Set B (social model). Very few responses will fit into Set C (rights-based model) because it is of recent origin and **people from whom we derive our templates of thinking may not use the 'rights-based model'**. We are not adequately exposed to the rights-based or even the social model to naturally opt for that line of thinking. So, don't blame yourself for opting for the medical model. Basically, the medical model too is a reality so one need not deny the biological truth. More importantly, once you know that there are alternate models, you can train yourself to use those while thinking. Meta-Cognitive theory says that we have an **anchoring bias** while thinking which means that our previous thoughts hold our current thinking, not allowing it to go far off from it – just as an anchor does not allow the boat to get disconnected and go far away from the shore. Hence do not blame yourself for restricting yourself to the old fashioned medical model. You were one of the blind men, responding on the basis of pieces of truth within your reach. Think what you can do now to break the anchoring bias and think **holistically from different perspectives**.

How about understanding these models and making our thinking template more appropriate professionally. Sounds like a good idea? As educators and professionals who work with persons with Deafness, we have to be **academically correct** in the language we use since it impacts the thinking of the children / adults, their parents and society at large. Let us remember that our selection of terms reflects our thinking. For example, you will not use the term 'deaf and dumb' since you know it is a regressive term but what will be your response if someone uses it while talking to you? Ideally, humbly yet firmly, you must draw the attention of the person to the

incorrect use of the term. This is like giving him / her an opportunity to understand a larger perspective. After studying this module, you will be able to explain models of disability and state the main features of the medical model.

Models of Disability: Understanding the concept

As per the dictionary meaning, a model is a thing that is used as an example to follow or imitate. Models of disability refer to different perspectives of looking at persons with disabilities. Some models focus on a person's disability, while others focus on the environment and the rights of all individuals. They are essentially devised by people about other people. They provide an insight into the attitudes, conceptions and prejudices of the former and how they impact on the latter. Models are influenced by two fundamental philosophies. The first sees persons with disabilities as dependent upon society often resulting in **paternalism, segregation anddiscrimination. The second perceives people with disabilities as consumers of what society has to offer leading to choice, empowerment, equality of human rights.** Models demonstrate the degree to which these two philosophies are applied (Ram, 2010).

Medical model of disability

While answering the question, 'what is hearing impairment?', people focus attention on the person's hearing status and not on him / her as a whole individual. Hence what a person is not able to do ,as a result of hearing impairment, gets highlighted. The Medical Model holds that disability results from an individual's physical or mental limitations. It does not emphasize the social environment. Hence, it is sometimes referred to as the Biological-Inferiority or Functional-Limitation Model. This model assumes normalcy of capacities and whoever does not attain the same capacities is considered to be inferior – needing repair or correction or support. Each individual and his/her functioning are compared to the functioning of the other 'majority' population by default and any difference is looked upon as inferior.

Let us look at the main features of the medical model:

1. Focus: Person's disability: The Medical Model places the source of the problem within the impaired person, and concludes that solutions are found by focusing on the said individual.

2. Solution: This model tries to solve the problem of 'disability' by equating persons with disabilities with 'patients'. As patients receive medical treatment in order to get cured, similarly, persons with disability should also receive treatment to get cured. The aim is to make persons with disability 'normal'.

POINT TO PONDER: Did you notice the choice of terms that this Unit uses? Why use 'people with disability' in place of 'disabled people'. Note the difference.
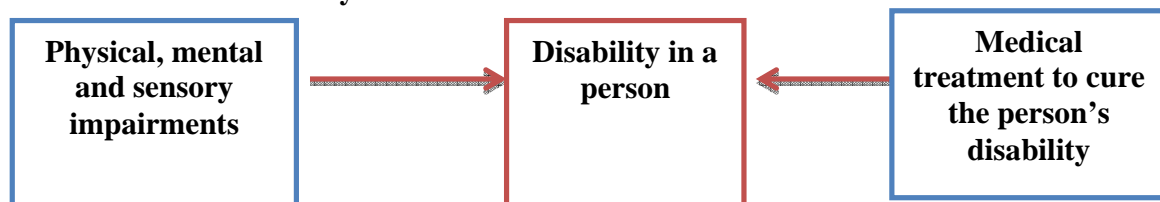
Similarly, think of the term 'normal'. Do you think it is appropriate to call persons without disability a 'normal' person, denoting individuals with disability to be either sub normal or abnormal? It is not at all appropriate. Individuals with disability too are NORMAL. The functioning of one of their faculties is deviated but this in no way makes the person 'not-normal'.

In what way do you think this discussion on terminology is relevant while discussing models? Does our selection of terms reveal our mindset and the model which governs it? Yes, it does.

3. Action points: This model prepares a list of a person's inabilities. The focus is on providing the person, aids and/or appliances. Training is imparted to enable the person overcome the inabilities. In order to impart training and undertake intervention, persons with disabilities are classified into different categories such as, persons with hearing loss, autism, visual impairment, etc. They are removed from the mainstream social set-up and grouped into homogenous groups, for example, special schools for children with hearing loss. Once the children learn to communicate verbally, as the majority hearing individuals do in society, they are enrolled in mainstream schools. Thus, it appears that the medical model of disability, involves segregating persons with disabilities and hence, in a way, it supports special schools.

Fig 1: Medical model of disability:
Medical model of disability

Physical, mental and sensory impairments	→	Disability in a person	←	Medical treatment to cure the person's disability

In short, the 'medical model', defines disability as a negative variation from the physical norm. This model necessarily disadvantages the physically distinct subject's life and the quality of that life.

The traditional, physical definition of disability used in the clinical model typically refers to a necessarily **limited, restricted state** in which the subject cannot independently undertake specific tasks or actions. In the next sub-unit we will see the contrasting concept of the social model which represents the perspective of those who define disability in terms of social discrimination that limits the opportunities of persons of difference.

There are a few other constructs proposed by experts like the **moral model.** This refers to considering disability as a result of bad deeds (the typical Indian concept of PAAP –a sin resulting in miseries of which disability is one form)**.** This is historically one of the oldest beliefs and is less prevalent today even in countries like India. At the same time one has to admit that this has not been completely eradicated from India. Till services and facilities do not lead to inclusion and full participation of persons with disabilities, they would be considered as a burden on the family. This feeling of being a burden further connects disability with divine punishment. Though no religious doctrine associates disability with sin or shame, many cultures see it as such. Because of this, a person with disability and / or the parents develop a feeling of guilt, of having done some PAAP (sin) in the present or in his/her previous JANMAS (births). This is totally baseless and is not supported by any religious doctrine.

Various countries have now realized that disability has to be seen holistically. The negative impact of the prevalent medical model in earlier decades has been highlighted in recent literature. Countries like USA, Germany, Hong Kong and a few more European countries have become more aware about human rights and have started looking at disability beyond its physical restrictions. Several Asian countries including India are moving towards the desired state of recognizing disability as a social construct – although the speed of change in people's attitude is rather slow. The terms and language of the policy documents and legislations indicate progressive thinking. Nevertheless, this positive thinking has not **trickled down to affirmative action** at the grass-root level. The mindset of the general population is found to be rigid and it does not accept change in its own thinking. This is unfortunate since classroom teachers, employers, friends and colleagues of individuals with disabilities are derived from this very same population.

Point to ponder: Find out the difference in the terms sympathy and empathy. How do these terms link with models of disability?

 Summary

- Let us understand the concept of perspective. People can and do differ in the way they look at something.
- Disability is a concept which can be seen from different points of view. This manner of looking at one thing from different viewpoints is called models. The medical model and the social model differ in terms of focus points, solutions and action points.
- The medical model sees persons with disabilities as physically limiting making them dependent upon society. This often results in segregation and discrimination.
- Responses to disability can be categorized into behavioural, cognitive and affective types.

HOW FAR HAVE YOU LEARNT?

A. **Tick mark one correct alternative**

1. Models of disability are:
   a. Types of disability
   b. Perspectives of viewing disability
   c. Degrees of disability

2. The full form of UNCRPD is:
   a. United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
   b. Union of National Council Representing Persons with Disabilities
   c. United Nations Camp for Re-union of Persons with Disabilities.

3. The focus of the Medical model of disability is on:
   a. Person's abilities
   b. Person's disabilities
   c. Environmental barriers

4.The Medical model reflects
    a. The inferiority of those functioning differently
    b. Discrimination and segregation
    c. All of the above

5.The fifth stage in the grief cycle is:
    a. Acceptance
    b. Denial
    c. Bargaining

B. Observe the responses of people towards disabilities. Write a note which reflects your thoughts on models of disabilities.
C. Make a list of terms used by professionals, parents, and society and link that with the concept of varying views of people looking at disability.
D. Describe a couple of activities wherein school going children are made aware of the negative impact of a one-sided view of disability.
Key to answers: 1. b, 2. a, 3. b, 4. c, 5.a.

2.2 Socio-cultural model: Meaning, global and Indian scenario
Introduction
Let us begin with a case (example) cited at the URL disabilitypublichealth.org
Example*:* Mark is 32 and is employed as a computer programmer at a manufacturing company. He was involved in a car accident at 21 years of age that resulted in a lower limb amputation. He uses a motorized scooter to get around locally, and drives an adapted van. He has a secondary health condition of Type 2 Diabetes. When visiting medical doctors, the care Mark receives is impacted by the way in which his disability is perceived. His Endocrinologist sees Mark's physical disability as an illness or deficit that prevents him from living a healthy life (Medical Model of Disability) and does not recommend the same interventions that he would for a person without disabilities like a diet and exercise program. His dietician recommends a programme of diet and exercise as an intervention for his diabetes, but his local gym is not accessible for people with mobility issues. This creates a barrier for him to exercise regularly (Social Model of Disability).
Let us look into the thought processes of the people who chose responses from set B given in the earlier unit. The focus here has shifted away from the person's disability to the **context in which this disability exists.** The scope of thinking expands here to include attitudinal & environmental barriers that give rise to disabling conditions.
- **Focus: Society:** It views disability as a consequence of environmental, social and attitudinal barriers that prevents people with impairments from maximum participation in society. It is also referred to as the Minority-Group Model of Disability. This argues from a socio-political viewpoint that disability stems from the **failure of society to adjust to**

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meet the needs and aspirations of the disabled minority. For example, when a wheelchair user comes till the bank gate and is unable to visit the bank since it has a steep staircase or no ramp, who do you think must be blamed here? Who do you think needs to be called disabled here? The person on the wheelchair who could make his way only till the bank gate, or the bank which did not provide a ramp. Obviously the latter, the bank which failed to think of a situation where a ramp should have been provided. Actually both the factors played the role to begin with, but the latter is to be blamed more since providing a ramp is in the control of the state / society. Probably, the solution was not within the control of any one person but was well within the control of the bank authorities. The onus of accessibility is on the bank and hence the bank not having a ramp is disabling rather than the person not having limbs. You can think of several such examples.

Point to ponder: Think of an example of a similar kind replacing physical disability with Deafness and 'not having a ramp' with 'not having an ISL interpreter' at the bank. Are there similarities?

When a college student with **low vision** is unable to access the information on the notice board , what is disabling, his vision or the small font of the notice board?

When a person with **hearing impairment** visits a hospital and the doctors are unable to treat him /her since they do not know how to communicate with the patient, who is to be blamed? Is it the hearing status of the patient or the inadequacy of the hospital to provide an interpreter?

When a student who is a slow learner is struggling hard to complete school-end examinations, what may be modified, his / her cognitive processes or curricular exemptions and adaptations? Not having curricular adaptations is the barrier and not the differently functioning cognition or a differently wired neuro-developmental system of the child per se.

Add two examples from your experience here:

1.
2.

- **Solution:** This model tries to solve the problem of 'disability' by building bridges between persons with disability and mainstream society. It does not focus only on the 'inabilities' of persons, but on what they are able to do. It identifies their needs and makes efforts to satisfy these needs within regular mainstream society. For example, if children with hearing loss are not able to comprehend the **verbal instructions of the teacher**, then they should be taught using sign language in the same regular class alongside their hearing peers or with effective amplification systems being made available in the class.

- **Action points:** This model believes that the onus lies on society and not on the persons with disabilities. You must have read about deaf individuals who belong to the Deaf community. They are represented by upper case (capital) **'D' to symbolize that they are separate from the hearing community.** However, this is not a biological difference but,

a cultural difference. As per the social model, the deaf are a separate minority community like any other **minority** community, for example, the Christian or the Parsi community; that co-exists with the majority Hindu community. The Deaf have their own language - ISL. Thus, the social model tries to remove social barriers between deaf and hearing communities by propagating the use of sign language. If Deaf individuals find it difficult to communicate verbally, hearing individuals can learn sign language and overcome the communication barrier. Let us take another example of a student using a wheelchair seeking admission in a mainstream school. He will find it difficult to climb the stairs. Hence, the school must adapt the school conditions for such students by making the school infrastructure barrier-free by building ramps, slopes, and making a provision for an elevator.

This Model implies that the removal of **attitudinal, physical, curricular, instructional and institutional barriers will improve the quality of life** of persons with disabilities, giving them the same opportunities as others on an equal basis. Taken to its logical conclusion, there would be no disability in a fully developed society.

Fig 2: Social model of disability:
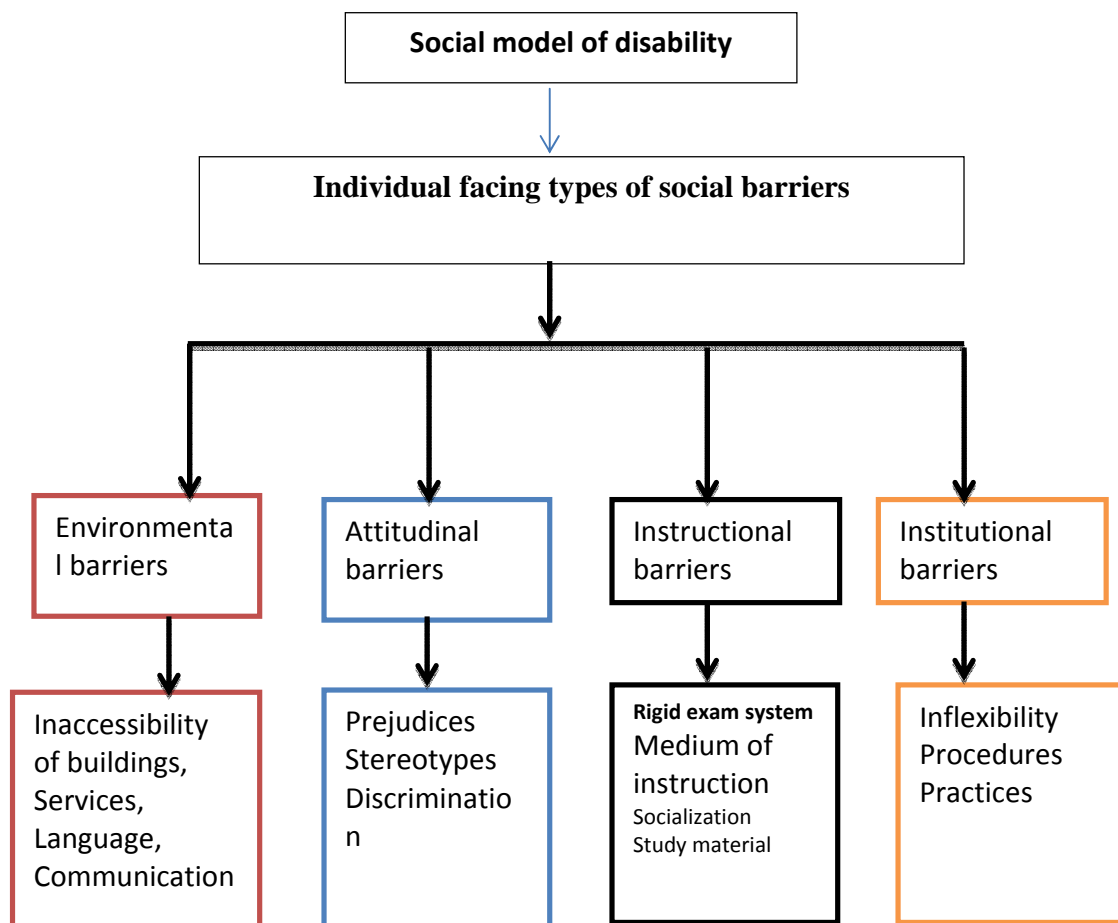
Human rights model of disability (Although not directly a part of your syllabus, it is better to take a glimpse of the human rights model for facilitating a more comprehensive understanding.)

If a person has responded by a statement given in set C of the previous unit then his / her thoughts are closer to concepts of rights, dignity and equal participation of persons with disabilities. That, in a nutshell is the human rights model.

Human dignity is closely linked with human rights. Each individual is deemed to be of inestimable value and nobody is insignificant. People are to be valued not just because they are economically strong or otherwise useful, but because of their inherent self-worth. The human rights model focuses on the inherent dignity of human beings. It places the individual centre stage in all decisions affecting him/her and, most importantly, locates the main 'problem' outside the person and in society. The human rights model has its origins in UNCRPD (2006). This is a modern human rights treaty that marks a shift from the medical model to the human rights model of disability. The following are the defining features of this model:

Focus on human rights: Human rights are fundamental rights. They cannot be gained or taken away from an individual or a group. They are acquired by birth and are universal. They can be called'un-conditional rights'. Persons with disabilities are human beings first. Hence, it is important to safeguard their human rights like other non-disabled people. Let us look at a few important features of human rights model:

1. It presents human rights as being more than anti-discrimination.
2. It recognizes impairment as a human variation.
3. It acknowledges the fact of multiple discriminations and layers of identity.
4. It acknowledges that poverty and disability are inter-related, but there is a road map for change.

Let us see how the major documents define disability.

PWD Act 1995, states that disability refers to 'a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'.

UNCRPD 2006 ,the preamble recognizes that 'disability is an evolving concept and that disability results from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinders their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others'.

RPWD 2016 defines it as - 'a person with long term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairment which, in interaction with barriers, hinders his full and effective participation in society equally with others'.

Point to ponder: What are the thought processes behind the selection of the terms used in the definitions? Which model of disability is reflected in the phrasing of the definitions?
Connections between Models of disability and Inclusion

By now you must have got a clear idea about each model of disability. We are now going to look at the connections between these models and the evolution of inclusion.

The latest philosophy of 'Inclusion' has evolved from many moral and political issues of how best to include and support people with disabilities. During the ancient period, persons with disabilities were perceived as incapable of performing any meaningful work. They were kept away from social participation and social institutions like family, marriage, etc. As time passed it was realized that persons with disabilities are capable of learning new skills. Hence, the philosophy that dominated at that time was 'screen and segregate'. Once, children with disabilities were identified they were sent to segregated educational set-ups. This was because the focus was on a person's disability. Exclusion of persons with disability from society is regarded as an individual problem and the reasons for exclusion are seen in the impairment. Disability according to the medical model remains in the exclusive realm of 'helping' and within the medical disciplines: doctors, nurses, special education teachers, and rehabilitation experts (Degener , 2016).It aims to treat and cure a person's disability. It attempts to make them 'NORMAL', so that they can participate in mainstream society.

What do you understand by the term 'NORMAL'? Write your response here:

'**NORMAL**' means: something that is

- Possessed by the most? Yes.
- Not problematic? Yes.
- Commonly found? Yes.
- Widely available? Yes
- Stereo typical? Yes.

'NORMAL' overlaps with the concept,'**majority**'. When the majority of people display a particular behaviour, it is called as 'normal'. The majority of individuals in society communicate using verbal language. Hence it is considered to be 'normal'. What about Deaf individuals who communicate using sign language? Will you categorize them as 'abnormal' or 'sub-normal'? Let us read the following story. After going through this story, you are to identify the factor that is an important parameter in deciding what is 'normal' and what is 'not normal'.

Point to Ponder: Read the story given below. How does Ruchi look at 'normalcy'? How have her previous experiences and environment affected her way of thinking?

Ruchi was a girl with deafness studying in std. 2. Her family was also deaf. They communicated using Indian sign language. As Ruchi's family shifted to a new locality ,she had a group of new neighbours now. She asked her mother if she could visit her new neighbourhood friend's home to play. Her mother happily allowed her to go for some time. When Ruchi returned home her mother asked, "Did you enjoy playing with your new friend?" Ruchi replied, "Yes, pretty much, however, there is something abnormal about their family". Mother was surprised and asked "What is abnormal?" Ruchi replied that all the family members talk to each other and that nobody used sign language.

Recently many national and international legislations like UNCRPD (2006), RPWD Act (2016), have been passed that reflect more positive ways of looking at disability. These legislations highlight the notion of 'rights'. We will see these in detail in the next sub-unit.

Summary

The socio-cultural model focuses on the barriers facing people with disabilities. It does not focus on the impairments and deficits of the person with disability. Rather, in this model an individual's activities are considered to be limited not due to the impairment itself but due to environmental barriers. These barriers are considered to be the consequence of a lack in the social organization.

Let us quickly glance through important points from our discussion. Models of disability are perspectives of looking at persons with disabilities. Traditionally there have been three models of disability. The summary of their details is presented in the table given below.

Table 1: Models of disability

Sr. No.	Parameters	Medical model	Social model	Right based model
1.	Concept	Disability exists in a person	All things that impose restrictions on person with disability lead to disability	Disability results from interaction between person with impairment and attitudinal & environmental barriers in society.
2.	Equation	Impairment=handicap	Inaccessible society=handicap	Impairment + Inaccessible society = handicap
3.	Focus	Inabilities of a person	Inabilities of society	Mismatch between abilities and environment
4.	Solution	Treatment of person's disability	Making environment barrier -free	Increasing access, equity, person's participation and inclusion
5.	Action points	Inabilities listed	Needs & challenges identified	Positions of power to be given to PWDs to address the issues
6.	Scope	Labeling & classifying persons into different disabilities	Identifying individualistic needs	Fulfillment of needs and Safeguarding rights of all
7.	Efforts	Family level	Collective efforts by individual, family, professionals, organizations	Family +Professional organizations+ Community Participation

So far, we studied three models of disability: medical, social and the human rights model. Medical model views disability as a problem originating within the person, while the social model views disability as originating outside the person: barriers in society. The human rights model is of recent origin. It has come into practice with UNCRPD (2006), which is an

international human rights mandate to which India is a signatory. It focuses on equal participation of persons with disabilities and safeguarding their rights.

HOW FAR HAVE YOU LEARNT?

Select the appropriate option

1. Social model of disability focuses on :
   a. Person's disability
   b. Person's environment
   c. Person's personality

2. The chief concept in human rights model is:
   a. Person's disability
   b. Dignity of human beings
   c. Person's environmental barriers

3. Use of which of the following terms indicates the medical model in the mind of the user?
   a. Using the word 'normal' in place of 'non-disabled'
   b. Using the term disabled child in place of child with disability
   c. Both

4. Which of the following statement indicates the social model?
   a. We must help disabled children by allowing them to enrol in regular schools
   b. We must support regular schools by tuning them to include children with disabilities in their classrooms.
   c. We must help children with disabilities by setting up special schools for them.

5. Which of the following statement indicates human rights model?
   a. All children need appropriate schools providing a natural environment in which to learn. The State must provide for it. The term ALL includes children with disabilities.
   b. It is the right of the regular schools to select appropriate students without disabilities so that the learning can be effective.
   c. It is the duty of the family to provide necessary need-based services to their child with disability.

6. Make a list of real responses of teachers / doctors / police / bus conductors to persons with disabilities. Identify the model that governs their thinking.

Answer Key: 1. b, 2. b, 3. c, 4. b, 5. a.

## 2.3 Legislations, policies and practice in India

Introduction

When we buy a gadget like a smart phone or a toaster or a DVD player, we get an instructional manual or a user's guide along with it. What is the purpose of that manual? It gives us basic information about the gadget and how it works. It talks about the basic principles governing the system and the best ways to use it. It informs us about consequences and effects of misuse. It talks about dos and don'ts of its use and a few problem-solving tips.

We do not read this manual word by word every time. If we are aware of the basic use, we don't even open it before starting to use our new device. However if there is something wrong, we refer to it. We use it as a guiding document.

Are you wondering where this discussion is heading? It is setting the stage for our discussion on the legislative framework of any country. The Constitution and the legislative mandates of the nation are like 'user' manuals for the citizens. We may not read these regularly but we know the general rule system within which we are expected to function in society. We are aware of a general framework of rules. A society functions in an integrated fashion due to this often invisible system. Children learn about it very briefly in schools and they see adults around them mostly following these norms. When they become adult citizens then they follow the pattern. However, there is something in legislations which is not there in user manuals of a gadget – declaration of the rights of citizens.

In this sub-unit we will see what is the legal framework of our country in terms of disability management and ensuring of their rights? The Constitution of India applies uniformly to every legal citizen irrespective of their background, their status and their abilities and disabilities. Most of the countries in the modern world aim at having an inclusive society which is based on rights and justice. Let us see how India plans to fulfil this dream? Most importantly we need to understand, of course, where persons with disabilities stand in the whole scenario.

The Constitution of India reflects protection of the rights of all legal citizens of the country and PWDs are no exception. The Preamble clearly highlights the concepts of equality of status as well as of opportunities. For example, Article 38 mandates the state to ensure the welfare of the people by securing a social order in which social, economic and political justice prevails. It promotes the State to eliminate inequalities. Basically the Constitution and the various Acts of the land offer a blue print of the system. This blueprint is similar to the diagram given below. Often people do not make a distinction between the following terms and use them interchangeably. Nevertheless the four terms, used in the first layer of the diagram, are four different terms meaning four different things. Pay attention to the terms: Reservation, Concession, Exemption and Facilities. Together these four, if properly provided – would lead to at least three things viz. Protection of rights, equal opportunity and a barrier-free environment. Persons with disability are able to participate as contributing citizens if these three things are attained. What would be the outcome of a situation if there is full participation of PWDs? We would achieve the goal of an inclusive society, a society which not only acknowledges and accepts diversity but also considers it to be an added advantage.
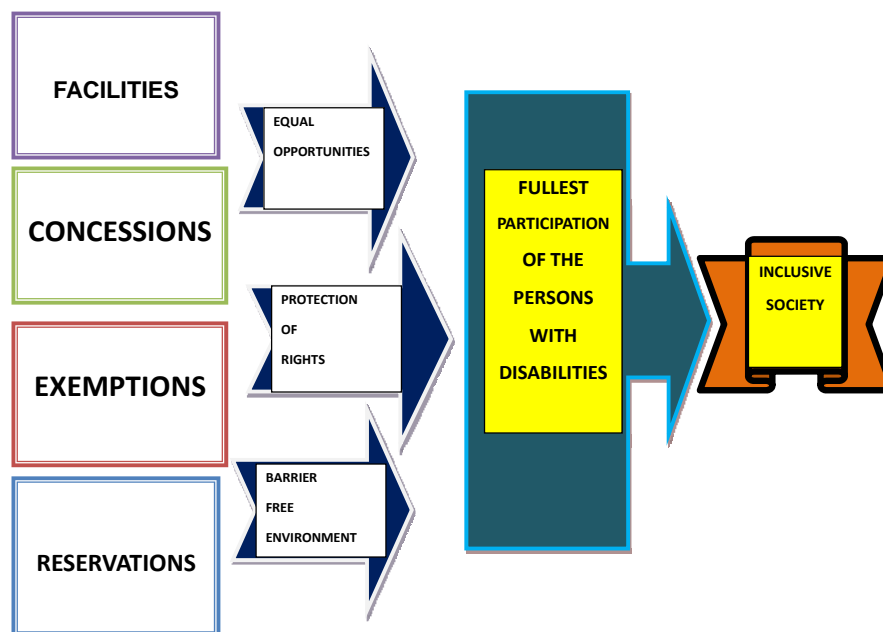
Point to Ponder: Think and write down at least one example of each of the 9 terms used in the above diagram.

2.3.1 MILESTONE LEGISLATIONS / PROGRAMS DIRECTLY RELATED TO PERSONS WITH DISABILITY

As discussed above, the legislations have set the stage for affirmative action to ensure the rights of various categories of the population – category of the persons with disability (PWD, henceforth) is no exception. Hence a few landmark and directly relevant legislations are summarized here.

THE REHABILITATION COUNCIL OF INDIA ACT 1992

The quality of any service greatly depends on the nature of the manpower involved in delivering the said services. Disability management,special education and rehabilitation of persons with disability is no exception. Considering the importance of the issue of manpower development in the field of rehabilitation, The RCI Act was enacted in September 1992. As an outcome the earlier formed rehabilitation council of India became a statutory body of the Govt. of India. It is a regulatory body for in-service and pre-service human resource development and connected issues. It functions in a manner similar to other professional regulatory bodies like NCTE for general education, AICTE for the engineering field or the MCI for medical science. The Act was made broader-based through an amendment in 2000.

The selected objectives of the RCI act are:

1. To regulate the training policies and programs
2. To prescribe minimum standards of education for rehabilitation professionals

3. To maintain a Central Rehabilitation Register (CRR) of rehabilitation personnel
4. To encourage continuing education for rehabilitation professionals

The Council functions through

- A General Council
- An Executive Committee
- A Zonal Committee
- A Chairperson
- A Member Secretary

As per the above mentioned objective number 3, all the professionals dealing with/working with/teaching/training person with disabilities need to **register themselves in the CRR**. Only those who register their names are entitled to practice rehabilitation in the country. This registration is like a driving license system. Non-license holders are prohibited from driving. Similarly, non-registered professionals are not allowed to work with children with disabilities. This step ensures that working with children with disabilities is looked upon as a profession and not as charity.

The CRR registration can be done for 16 categories including special educators, audiologists, psychologists etc. When you complete your program successfully, you too need to register yourself as an ISL interpreter before you start professional practice. Currently there is no separate category for either ISL interpreters or ISL teachers. However, as mentioned in your syllabus, you need to register your name in the CRR by following the given guidelines. You will be given a **unique number and the registration as rehabilitation professional**.

Registration in CRR is valid for 5 years and it needs to be renewed. For the renewal one needs to collect 100 credit points within five years. The ways to collect the points is given on the RCI website for your ready reference.

THE PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES (EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES, PROTECTION OF RIGHTS, AND FULL PARTICIPATION) ACT 1995

This Act is a path-breaking one in the country since it is for the first time that a separate Act was passed for assuring equal rights to seven types of disabilities. It can be considered as the first step towards a rights based model rather than the earlier charity mindset.

Benchmark disabilities: (7)

Blindness, Low vision, Leprosy Cured, Hearing Impairment, Locomotor Disability, Mental Retardation, Mental Illness.

Main Provisions:

- Prevention and early detection
- Education
- Employment
- Affirmative Action
- Non Discrimination

- Research and Manpower Development
- Social Security
- Grievance Redressal

The aim of this Act was to spell out the role of the state in taking the responsibility towards **prevention, diagnosis, certification, education, employment, protection of rights** etc. The focus has been on creating a barrier- free environment so that the benefits of development are shared equally by PWDs. It also aimed at **counteracting the situation** of injustice, discrimination, abuse or exploitation faced by PWDs. The overall aim was to make a provision for the integration of PWDs in mainstream society.

The Act facilitated several positive changes including distribution of aids and appliances under Govt. schemes. It served the purpose, to a limited extent, for 2 decades, wherein awareness, facilities and disability management in the country evolved significantly. However, the PWD Act was also criticized on the grounds of weak implementation and for having a charity mindset in terms of the terminology used and the solutions prescribed.

The PWD Act is available in Indian Sign Language on the following URL: https://wecapable.com/rpwd-act-2016-sign-language-video/

With the passing of the RPWD act in 2016, the PWD, 1995 Act,is not functioning.

NATIONAL TRUST FOR THE WELFARE OF PERSONS WITH AUTISM, CEREBRAL PALSY, MENTAL RETARDATION AND MULTIPLE DISABILITIES ACT 1999

Although the PWD Act was in place since 1995, the need for a separate set of provisions was felt for persons with disabilities related to autonomy and self-reliance. Ensuring the rights of and services to the neuro-developmentally challenged population was a gap which was needed to be filled. The National Trust Act aimed at addressing the issues and concerns of persons with specific disability who are dependent on others.

Benchmarked Disabilities: Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disabilities.

The National Trust Act has 9 chapters. The regulations of the National Trust Act in 2000 and 2002 provide various forms and appendices for the effective use of the Act.

Main Provisions:

- Constitution of a National Trust
- Objectives of the Board of trustees constituted under section 3
- Powers and responsibilities of the Board
- Procedures for registration
- Guardianship issues
- Constitution of local level committee
- Accountability and monitoring

The act proposed to bring about positive changes through National Trust, District level local committees and registered parent associations. Non-Govt. organizations too had vital role to play.

SARVA SHIKSHA ABHIYAN 2000 (SSA)

Education for all is a global dream. Such universalization of elementary education is India's dream as well. The 86th Amendment of the Constitution and RTE 2009 are the consolidated efforts towards this purpose. The most significant one however is the flagship program called SarvaSikshaAbhiyan to implement the universalization of education.

Features of SSA:

1) Aim is education for all and the objectives include universalization of elementary education.

2) Provision for free and compulsory education.

3) A time- bound program.

4)The Program was launched in 2001, after the 86th amendment of the Constitution announcing free & compulsory education to be a fundamental right for children between 6 to 14 years.

5) It is a partnership program between the Central and state govts.

6) It covers all districts in the country to ensure access, retention and quality improvement in elementary education.

7) It expects that every child with special needs and disabilities irrespective of the, type, category and degree of disability is provided meaningful and quality education. SSA has adopted a zero-rejection policy.

UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES (UNCRPD) 2006

Although the constitutions and legal frameworks of most of the modern nations ensures protection of rights of PWDs, at the grass root level one gets to see several cases of violation of human rights related to PWDs. There are gaps between what is desirable and the reality. An international treaty is a global mandate which intends to close such gaps in protecting human rights by setting out a code of implementation. Here are a few examples of how various Articles of the CRPD intend to ensure the agenda of universal protection of human rights.

Article 4

Article 8

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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│               Signatory Countries to combat                  │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
        │                                    │
        ▼                                    ▼
┌──────────────────────┐          ┌──────────────────────┐
│  Disability Stereotypes │        │      Prejudices       │
└──────────────────────┘          └──────────────────────┘
        │                                    │
        ▼                                    ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│                  Awareness of Potentials                     │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
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Article 16

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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│                    Ensuring Freedom From                     │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
     │              │                        │
     ▼              ▼                        ▼
┌──────────┐  ┌──────────┐   ┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│Exploitation│ │ Violence │   │         Abuse through           │
└──────────┘  └──────────┘   └─────────────────────────────────┘
                              │        │         │          │
                              ▼        ▼         ▼          ▼
                     ┌──────────┬────────────┬─────────────┬──────────────┐
                     │ Recovery │Rehabilitation│Reintegration│ Investigation│
                     └──────────┴────────────┴─────────────┴──────────────┘
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Article 21

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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│                          Use of                              │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
        │                    │                    │
        ▼                    ▼                    ▼
┌──────────────┐      ┌──────────────┐    ┌──────────────┐
│ Sign Language │      │    Braille    │    │  Technology   │
└──────────────┘      └──────────────┘    └──────────────┘
        │                    │                    │
        ▼                    ▼                    ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│                    Communicative Access                      │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```
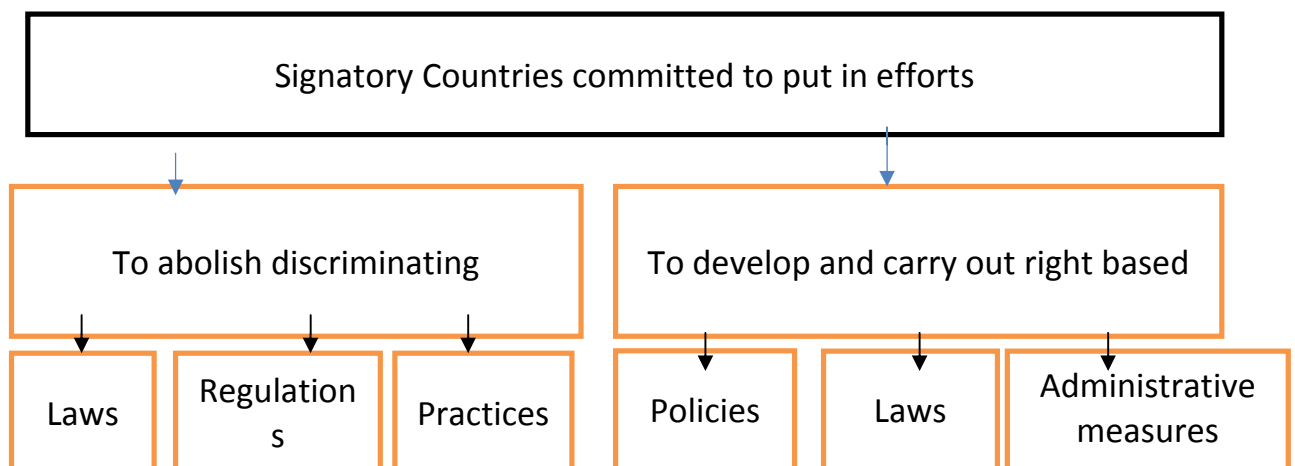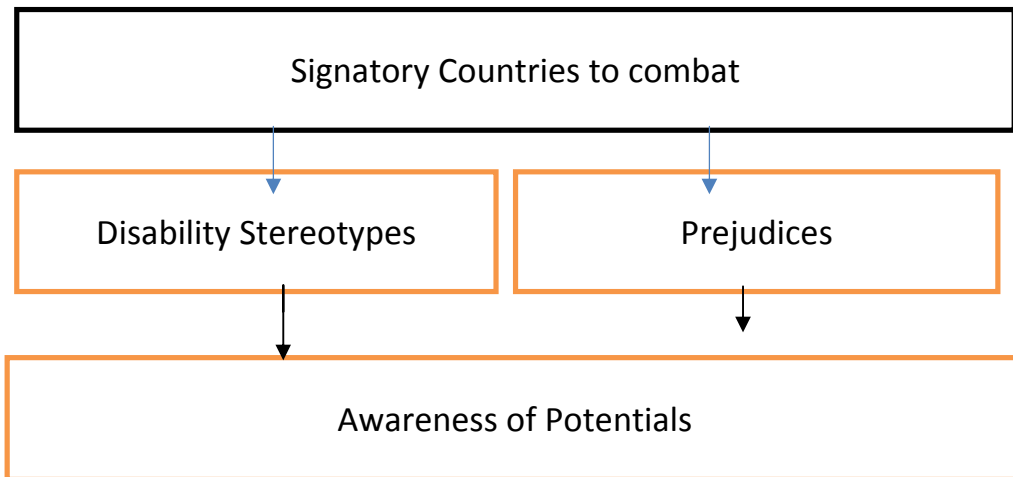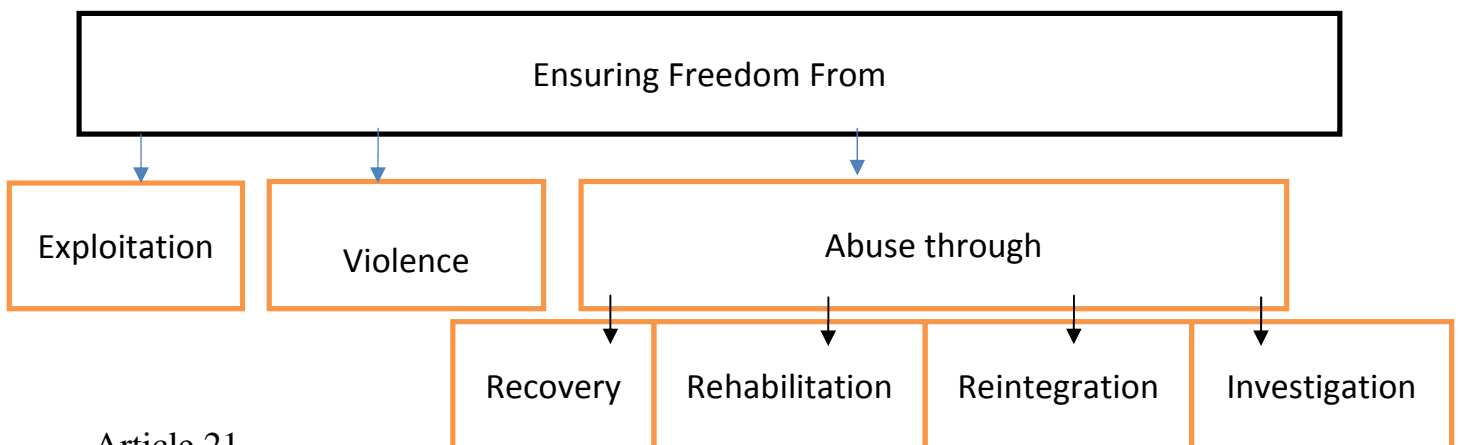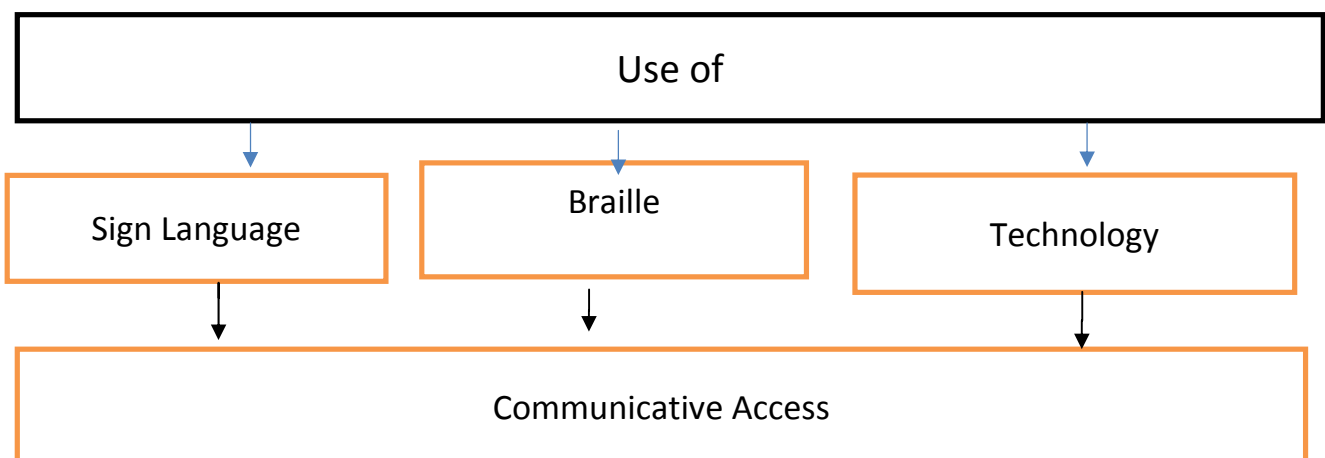
The preamble to the UNCRPD states that disability is an evolving concept and ,"it results from the interactions between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others."

Defining disability as an interactive concept clearly states that it is not linked only to the individual possessing it. Working on Social barriers will ensure participation of persons with disability.

The mechanism of ensuring rights under CRPD includes:

a) A Monitoring Committee on the rights of persons with disabilities.

b) A Conference of the state parties.

The United Nations General Assembly adopted the Convention in December 2016 and it was opened for signatures in 2007. Thus it is the first legally binding instrument with comprehensive provisions. Considering the impact of the Convention it is important to see how many countries are actively involved in the process.

Country Profile	
Convention	Optional Protocol
Signed =187	
Ratified = 117	Signed =119	Ratified = 91
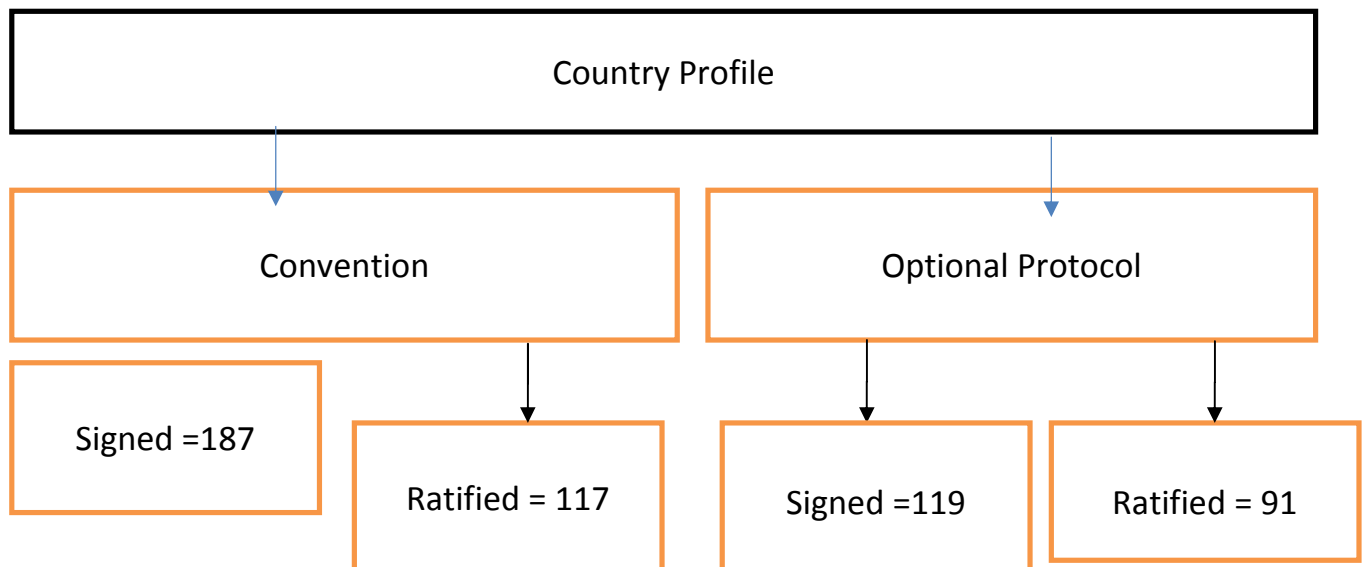
Articles of UNCRPD which are relevant to Deaf / ISL / culture:

Article 2 includes sign languages in the definition of languages

Article 9 includes sign language interpretation as an example of live assistance to achieve full access

Article 21 advocates the use of sign language for freedom of expression.

Article 24 advocates learning of sign language and ensuring linguistic identity. It also prescribes that education be delivered in the most appropriate languages / modes / means. Same article mandates the state to appoint teachers who are qualified to use sign language.

Article 30 in the context of recreation and leisure, prescribes recognizing cultural and linguistic identity.

Considering the scope of the Articles and provisions and the number of signatory countries one can understand the magnitude of the CRPD and the role it plays in facilitating the world to be a rights based and inclusive place. India was one of the first countries to sign and ratify UNCRPD.

NATIONAL POLICY FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES 2006

This was released in 2006 as an effort to give implementation details in a consolidated manner.
Features:

- It deals with physical, economics and economic rehabilitation
- Special attention to women with disabilities
- Sets norms for certification
- Emphasis on barrier-free environment and social security

The implementation was proposed through the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MSJE) as a nodal agency, a central coordination committee, other related ministries and the Chief Commissioner of Disabilities.

RIGHT TO EDUCATION ACT 2009

"The Constitution (Eighty-sixth Amendment) Act, 2002 inserted Article 21-A in the Constitution of India to provide free and compulsory education of all children in the age group of six to fourteen years as a Fundamental Right in such a manner as the State may, by law, determine. The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009, which represents the consequential legislation envisaged under Article 21-A, means that every child has a right to full time elementary education of satisfactory and equitable quality in a formal school which satisfies certain essential norms and standards."

https://mhrd.gov.in/rte accessed on 3/4/19

RTE prescribed education to be minimum 6 things:

SamagraShiksha document summarizes the salient features of RTE Act 2009. A few are mentioned here. (http://samagra.mhrd.gov.in/docs/Framework_IISE%20_F.pdf)

- Right of children to free and compulsory education till completion of elementary education in a neighbourhood school.

- 'Compulsory Education' means obligation of the appropriate government to provide free elementary education and ensure compulsory admission, attendance and completion of elementary education to every child in the six to fourteen age group. 'Free' means that no child shall be liable to pay any kind of fee or charges or expenses which may prevent him or her from pursuing and completing elementary education.

- Section 6 makes a provision for establishment of school for all children within the defined area or limits of neighbourhood as defined by the States/UTs. One of the important sections in RTE is section # 6. It mandates the state to establish neighbourhood schools. For std.1 to 5, neighbourhood school means a school of walkabledistance ,within a radius of 1 km. For std. 6 to 8, it is 3 kms. (Relaxation is given to areas with difficult terrain.)

- It makes the provision for a non-admitted or drop-out child to be admitted to an age- appropriate class with provisions for Special Training in order to be at par with other children.

- It specifies the duties and responsibilities of appropriate Governments, the local authority and parents in providing free and compulsory education and sharing of financial and other responsibilities between the Central and state Governments.

- It lays down the norms and standards relating inter alia to Pupil -Teacher Ratios (PTRs), buildings and infrastructure, school-working days, teacher-working hours etc.

- It provides for the appointment of appropriately trained teachers, i.e. teachers with the requisite entry and academic qualifications.

- It prohibits (a) physical punishment and mental harassment; (b) screening procedures for admission of children; (c) capitation fee; (d) private tuition by teachers and (e) running of schools without recognition,

- It provides for protection and monitoring of the child's right to free and compulsory education and redressal of grievances by constitutionally created independent bodies of the National and State Commissions for Protection of Child Rights.

- According to Section 12 (c) all unaided and 'specified schools' shall provide free and compulsory education to at least 25% children belonging to weaker sections / disadvantaged groups in the neighbourhood.

INDIAN SIGN LANGUAGE RESEARCH AND TRAINING CENTER (ISLRTC) 2015

ISL is a language like any other Indian language. However, a rigid mindset acted like a barrier and ISL was not treated at par with any other verbal language for decades. At the turn of the century there was a need felt to set up an organization exclusively working on promotion of and training in ISL. Hence after a long struggle and a prolonged wait the Ministry of SJ & E approved the Centre in 2015.

Objectives (Selected content)

1. To develop manpower for using ISL.
2. To promote use of ISL in educational settings.
3. To carry out research in relevant areas
4. To orient and train various sections of society about ISL

Currently, the Centre situated in Delhi, functions through an Executive Council and a General Council.

RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES ACT 2016 (RPWD)

Although the Constitution of India ensures protection of human rights, the need for a more detailed framework for the implementation, **affirmative** action and grievance redressal was felt. This was fulfilled by appropriate legislations. The RPWD is the most recent and the more **exhaustive** legal document which intends to take India a few steps ahead in the direction of sustainable inclusion and towards a rights based society.

India had Persons with Disability Act in place since 1995. However, as India signed and ratified the UNCRPD in 2007, it became mandatory to have laws, policies and procedures in tune with the articles of the UNCRPD. By 2010 the process of drafting and consultations began and the RPWD was passed by both the houses of Parliament in 2016.

The Act, in the very beginning, mentions 8 principles put forward in UNCRPD (short titles).

a) Respect for inherent dignity, individual autonomy and independence of persons.
b) Non discrimination
c) Full and effective participation & inclusion
d) Accepting PWDs as part of human diversity
e) Equality of opportunities.
f) Accessibility
g) Equality between men & women
h) Respect for the evolving capacities and rights to pressure their identifies

Chapter I, which is the preliminary chapter, while defining the terms in the Act ,also defines the term communications. Point # 2 (f) in the first chapter gives a list of several ways/ aids / alternative modes as part of communication. Sign language is also mentioned in the list.

Article 17 of Chapter III (Education) mandates the states and local authorities to "promote use of appropriate augmentative and alternative modes". This point mentions the use of sign language.

Point (c) of the same article mandates authorities to train and employ teachers who are qualified in sign language and Braille.

Considering the mention of sign language in the 2 chapters, it appears that the Act treats sign language to be a mere, 'yet another' communication aid or an alternative mode rather than a separate language linked with a separate culture.

The following table summarizes the types of disabilities mentioned in the RPWD. (As given in the Schedule on page 33 of the Act)

Table:2 :Benchmark Disabilities listed in RPWD 2016

	Broad Category		**Category**		**Sub types**	
1	Physical Disability	A	Locomotor Disability	a	Leprosy cured	
				b	Cerebral Palsy	
				c	Dwarfism	
				d	Muscular Dystrophy	
				e	Acid attack victim	
		B	Visual Impairment	a	Blindness	
				b	Low vision	
		C	Hearing Impairment	a	Deaf	
				b	Hard of Hearing	
		D	Speech & Language Disability			
2	Intellectual Disability					
				a	Specific Learning Disability	
				b	Autism Spectrum Disorder	
3	Mental Behavior					
4	Disability Caused by			a	Chronic Neorological condition	i.Multiple sclerosis

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					ii.Parkinson
		b	Blood disorder		i. haemophilia
					ii. thalassemia
					iii. sickle cell disease
5	Multiple Disability				
6	Any other category as specified by Central Government				

What are benchmark disabilities with reference to RPWD? (Marked in grey in the above given table.) Disability and disorder are umbrella terms which include several human conditions. Different countries have different lists of disabilities as the benchmark list. This means only these listed disability conditions are legally taken to be disability while availing concessions, facilities, reservations and exemptions. The disabilities which are not listed in the act are not considered eligible for a disability certificate. Such a certificate isessential for eligibility of availing provisions prescribed by the Act. RPWD Act **lists 21 benchmark disabilities**. Persons having **40 or more percent** of any one of the disabilities can avail the provisions. Moreover, in terms of degree of disability,RPWD Act also mentions high support disabilities. Chapter I, point # (L) defines **high support** degree to mean those persons who need intensive support for daily activities for informed decisions and for participating in education, employment, family and community. **The Act has 102 provisions categorized into 17 chapters**. Chapters include relevant areas like rights, offences and penalties. At the end a Schedule is given listing the disabilities into 5 major categories as indicated in the table above. It also adds a 6[th] category of any other category as may be notified by the Central Govt.

SAMAGRASHIKSHA ABHIYAN (INTEGRATED SCHEME FOR SCHOOL EDUCATION) 2018

Three major aspects of childhood education are primary level, secondary level education and teacher education. Preschool education too is an important aspect which initially did not fit well in the state-aided service delivery in the area of education. Looking at these things in a holistic way (rather than in bits and pieces) the Govt. of India launched Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan which was reflected in the Union Budget of 2018-19. This included education from preschool to std.12 as well as teacher education. This is expected to be an 'overarching program' aiming at **equal opportunities for schooling and equitable learning outcomes.** The earlier 3 schemes: SSA, RMSA (Rashtriya Madhyamik Siksha Abhiyan) and RTE are incorporated in this scheme.

This merger is expected to fine tune the gaps among the three schemes in terms of service delivery mechanism and costs.

Samagra Shiksha includes: (Selected features)

- ✓ Treating education as a continuum from pre-primary to 12thstd.
- ✓ Supporting states to initiate pre-primary education.
- ✓ Unified administrative structure for better implementation.
- ✓ Flexibility to states to prioritize their activities under the scheme.
- ✓ Enhanced budget.
- ✓ Learning outcomes and steps taken for quality improvement will be the basis for allocation of grants.
- ✓ Enhanced capacity building of teachers.
- ✓ Focus on strengthening teacher education institutes like SCERT or DIET.
- ✓ Special grants for libraries
- ✓ Quality education through the two, teachers and technology
- ✓ Focus on girl child.
- ✓ Focus on inclusion.
- ✓ Allocation of grants increased from 3000 per CWSN to 3500 per child.
- ✓ Stipend of Rs 200 per month for girls with SN from std.1 to 12.
- ✓ Sabki Shiksha – Achhi Shiksha (special attention to non-admitted and drop-outs)
- ✓ Focus on skill development.
- ✓ Focus on sports and physical education.
- ✓ Focus on regional balances.

The framework of the scheme mentions 7 principles: Holistic education, Equity, Access, Gender concerns, Centrality of teachers, Moral compulsion, and integrated educational management. Samagra Shiksha framework for implementation describes the mechanism in detail in 10 chapters which includes a chapter on inclusion and children with special needs (CWSN).

Summary

Table: 3

SHORT TITLE	NATURE	YEAR	IMPORTANCE	REMARK
RCI ACT	Indian Act	1992	Regulatory statutory body for quality and registration of manpower in rehabilitation	Amended in 2000
PwD Act	Indian Act	1995	First separate Act taking steps towards equal opportunities, protection of rights and full participation	Replaced with a new RPWD Act as per the UNCRPD
NT Act	Indian Act	1999	Act for neuro-developmental disabilities who need support in autonomy and self	

			support	
SSA	Implementation program	2000	Time bound program for compulsory, free and elementary education with special attention to children with special needs	Currently merged into Samagra Shiksha
UNCRPD	International Mandate	2006	Placing disability in diversity category from the human rights perspective mandating signatory nations modify legal framework.	India has signed this
RTE	Indian Act	2009	Free compulsory elementary education to ALL between 6 to 14yrs. in a neighborhood school	
ISLRTC	Center of Ministry of SJ &E	2015	Center of Govt. of India accountable for promoting and training in ISL	
RPWD	Indian Act	2016	Updated Act in tune with the mandates of the UNCRPD	
Samagra Siksha	Implementation Program	2018	Looks at school education holistically	Merges objectives, mechanism and costs of various programs

HOW FAR HAVE YOU REACHED?
A Tick mark one correct alternative
1. What is UNCRPD?
   a. International obligation which mandates a signatory nation to ensure implementation of the provisions of the document.
   b. New Act passed for persons with disabilities is India.
   c. An Act passed by all the countries of the world.
   d. Summary of all the legislations in India drafted to avoid gaps and overlaps.
2. Following is an Indian Act
a. UNCRPD
b. SSA
c. ISLRTC
d. RTE

3. Which is the most recent overarching program merging various programs for school education?
a. Samagra Shiksha

b. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan
c. National Policy on Persons with Disabilities
d. UNCRPD

4. Which disability is not included in the RPWD 2016 as a benchmark disability?
a. Learning Disability
b. Hard of Hearing
c. Emotional disorder
d. Speech and language disorder

5. After completing your program before starting your professional practice you will have to Register:
a. In CRR as per RCI Act
b. In National Trust as per UNCRPD
c. In SSA as per RTE
d. All of the above

6. What does UNCRPD prescribe?
a.Sign language interpreter as live assistance
b.Use of sign language as freedom of expression
c.Ensuring linguistic identity
d.All of the above

B. Make a list of benchmark disabilities mentioned in various Acts.

C. Review the legal framework of any other country.
Answer key: 1.a, 2.d, 3.a, 4.c, 5.a, 6.d.

2.4 Deafness, ISL and the school systems in India
School is an extremely important agency in the life of a child. It **formalizes the learning process** which exists from the time of birth. It is a door that opens a wide world in front of the child. It has a significant role to play in the overall development of the child which obviously includes language development. We cannot bypass a discussion on language when we discuss either deafness or the school system. We are now actually discussing both together. Let us review a case to draw some conclusions about how school education, deafness and language are interlinked.

Here is the case of a typically growing child with normal hearing and no disability – Kitu. Kitu's family is Tamil and hence Kitu is exposed to the Tamil language since birth (or even before her birth). Kitu's life is full of opportunities to listen to Tamil in various contexts. Like any other

human child, Kitu is genetically fitted with the capacity to acquire language. In other words Kitu is neuro-developmentally ready to use language – to whichever language she is exposed . If she had been exposed to Marathi she would have got command over Marathi, if shehad been exposed to French she would have got command over French.**If she had been exposed to ISL she would have got command over ISL**. Regardless of any specific language, her story would have been the same. She was **ready <u>FOR</u> language since birth** – whichever that could have been. She was exposed to Tamil so she started getting **age-appropriate command** over Tamil. By the time she was three years old she could satisfy her needs using Tamil. She told her parents what she wanted to eat, enjoyed listening to poems and stories, expressed her feelings, fought with her elder brother, played with neighbourhood kids, so on and so forth. At the age of 3 and a half she was **ready <u>WITH</u> language**to b**e** enrolled in a school. She was enrolled in a preschool. Within a couple of years she started identifying a few common written words, copying alphabets, naming most of the colours and objects, singing many poems, asking many questions, understanding the world around her, so on and so forth.

Kitu's Tamil got more and more efficient as time passed. Using this knowledge, she started learning from her school textbooks. Her reading and writing helped her understand school subjects like Maths or Science. Her age-appropriate developed language and knowledge facilitated each other towards more complex parts of language and knowledge. She had a good back-up of reading and writing skills for the journey ahead by the time she reached std. 5.

This is Kitu's story. This is the story of millions of children. What your conclusions about the relationship between: (Try writing the same in one line)

Language exposure and language development? _____

Language development and literacy? _____

Literacy and schooling? _____

Language development, literacy and knowledge development? _____

Did you write something close to the following statements?Then you are on the right track , otherwise reread the story more carefully.

1. Although each child is ready to get command over language, he/she needs exposure of at least one language to be able to use it effectively.

2. If the child gets a natural, fluent exposure and an opportunity, the language of the child develops age appropriately.

3. A child enters the school with adequate language back-up and hence can learn to read and write.

4. Adequate language and literacy facilitates knowledge of school subjects.

5. Through the primary years; language, literacy and subject knowledge facilitate each other.

The story continues:

Kitu's parents were blessed with a baby boy -Montee. They constantly spoke to Montee in Tamil just like they did with Kitu. Montee has deafness but the parents were unaware of it initially since no one from amongst the close family had deafness. Due to his inability to hear what his parents and siblings were saying (Tamil), Montee's language was not developing age appropriately and easily. He was 3 and half years old by the time his deafness was suspected; he was diagnosed as having hearing loss and was fitted with an aid. He too is now enrolled in a school but he does not have a ready tool – language (command over Tamil) to make better sense of the school activities. His inadequate language acted like a barrier in his literacy development in preschool and his early primary years. As he could not hear the teachers well and nor could he read text books effectively, his school subjects remained weak by the time he reached std.5. In his later journey he had to LEARN language, literacy and school subjects **simultaneously.** This was an uphill task. For Kitu, on the other hand, these were each learnt one at a time.

First language is obtained,

Then literacy with the help of language

And thirdly, subject knowledge with the help of language and literacy.

Does the story endorse the same conclusions which we drew above? Yes.

To put things in the right perspective, one can say that any child needs to have a fluent and age-appropriate command over language at the time of entering school. This foundation of language facilitates fundamental developments like literacy, subject knowledge, cognition and socialization – just to name a few vital ones. Whether it is a special school or it is a mainstream school and whether it is a child with or without special needs, this parameter is the determiner of a child's progress and development. It is argued that most of the children with deafness in India entering school do not fulfil this prerequisite due to which their educational achievement remains quite below the expected level. One of the ways to ensure that the child enrols in school with age-appropriate language is to ensure fluent exposure to ISL from a very early age – a minimum of 2 years before enrolment.

(The same can be achieved with a cochlear implant and the early training of a verbal language. However, with that option the language obtained by the child would have channel dependent limitations.)

This is how deafness, language development and school issues are interlinked and until language issues are resolved, school issues cannot be resolved.

School systems in India

There is hardly any published database on the issues discussed here (with a few welcome exceptions) and hence you may look at this section to be a one-sided and a critical perception about the current functioning of special schools for the deaf in India. At the same time you will also find many educators who will readily accept the reality described here, even in the **absence of published data**. It is a fact that comments in such academic writing should have the support

of well documented published data. At the same time it will also not be appropriate to **bypass the real issues** (which educators,otherwise ,discuss openly) only on the grounds of 'absence of published data'.

Some of the characteristic features of most of the (not ALL) special schools in India are discussed here. The points discussed here are derived from the discussion on the same issue published in the RCI manual titled –Communication options and students with deafness, Published in 2011.

1. No clearly stated communication policy

Currently, India has above 500 schools for the deaf (AYJNIHH, 2000). Out of these, 289 (68.8%) special schools, report their communication policy to be 'Total Communication' and 123 (29.3%) schools claim it to be 'Oral'. The responses received from many schools are not clear. There are hardly any schools claiming to follow Educational Bilingualism. However, these figures have to be accepted with caution. The biggest concern with these figures is the fact that most of the respondents were unaware and confused about – what communication options exist for the schools to choose from. More importantly, most of these schools do not have a clearly spelt out and adopted communication policy. One study (Randhawa, 2006) also showed that there was a high degree of discrepancy in the principals' and teachers' responses about the communication policy of the school. It was found that the teachers of as many as 35% of the schools gave totally different answers from the answers of the Principal. This indicates the confused state of affairs at school policy level.

To put it very simply, the situation can be best explained with the following analogy. The principals, teachers, students and parents are riding a bus unaware where it is going and confused about where they intend to go. Most unfortunately, the expected destinations of all the groups are in different directions. Who is paying the price for this chaos? School authorities, teachers, parents and students are all a part of a school system and yet their objective: where they see the students at the end of the education at school does not match.

Special school teams are unaware and confused about many issues – the following being the critical ones:

a) The various communication options available for children with deafness and hence for the schools?

b) How using a collection of gestures with 'some amount' of speech is not an option.

c) What are the various pre-conditions for selecting an option?

d) Why is it necessary to select one option clearly and implement it consistently?

e) How speech reading, generally known as lip-reading, is not a communication option.

f) How to equip families to be participative in using the chosen communication option.

g) How 'poor' language is not a consequence of deafness butbecomes one because of the lack of the consistent use of any ONE option.

h) How using 'all' ways is NOT an option.

One can imagine the level of confusion the system undergoes if these basic issues are unresolved in the minds of decision makers. Most of the special schools therefore do not have a clearly

stated communication policy which is displayed in the public domain for parents and others to know.

2.Non-fulfilment of pre-conditions of any of the communication options

Globally, professionals divided themselves into 'Oralists' (those who believe in using verbal language with support from residual hearing and hearing devices) and 'Manualist**s'** (those who believe in using sign language as the first language of the child with deafness).

In the past, spanning many decades, most of the professionals fought over the best option and tried their best to convince the other group about the benefits of their point of view. Recently, however most of the rational professionals (predominantly in developing countries) believe in 'appropriateness' of the option rather than advocating one over the other. Generally such macro-level selection is a result of the personal choices of the professionals and is done without taking the needs of the child into consideration.

It is generally agreed that it is not any of the options in themselves that matters much. What matters is:

1. Need-based selection of an APPROPRIATE option.
2. Careful implementation of the chosen option.
3. Consistent monitoring.
4. Upgrading the skills of family members and professionals.
5. Support the child gets in linking communication skills with school skills.

Appropriate selection and careful implementation refer to fulfilling the preconditions required for the implementation of the chosen philosophy (Oralism, SIMCOM, and Educational Bilingualism). Special schools should select the communication option on the basis of the availability of resources essential for implementation of the chosen option. For example, if a school claims to use Oralism then each student MUST have the most appropriate amplification device which is used during most of his / her waking hours in school and at home. However if a school, claiming to be oral ,does not fulfil this precondition, the under achievement of the students is bound to happen. In this case it is not the failure of Oralism, but the failure of the school system. Similarly, if a special school claims to use Educational bilingualism (sign language) but if the hearing teachers are not fluent signers, children will be under- achievers , again. This will not be due to the failure of EB but due to the failure of the system to fulfil the prerequisites.

Point to ponder: What could be the common pre-conditions needed for any or all the options?

Can you make a list?

3. Inadequate school readiness services

Have you heard about the concept of 'critical age'? **Critical period hypothesis** believes that there is a period in child development where the child is **most ready neuro-developmentally** to acquire a skill. This could be any skill for which the child gets the required exposure. Language is also a skill and the early 2-3 years of a baby is considered to be the critical period for language

development. This means children are most ready to acquire language during this period if he/ she get the **E3 of any one language**. E3 stands for Environment, Exposure and Experience. E3 of language facilitates all-round development. (Reread the lines to ensure that it is LANGUAGE that we are talking about and not speech or verbal language. Take a pause and process this part carefully. Things will not make sense till you train yourself to understand the difference between language and speech.)

In case of children with typical hearing, in general, E3 of the mother tongue can be taken for granted. However, the same is not the case for a child with deafness. Hence, these children require readiness programmes which would set the stage for formal learning in school. If India had a good network of preschools, parent-infant programmes or early childhood training programmes, it would have been simpler to deal with the communication issue. These centres would have introduced children with deafness to any of the options. They would have, thus been prepared for formal schooling from std. 1.Schooling would then not be a struggle for the learners. Currently, professional early childhood centres are scarce and urban-centred. Mainstream systems of preschool or Balwadis/Anganwadis are not equipped to deal with children with deafness or to deal with any special needs for that matter.

Hence, when a typical non-urban child with deafness is brought to school for enrolment, he/she is not ready for formal schooling in terms of language and communication. This further complicates the case of a deaf learner.

4.Lack of evidence-supported classroom practices

One of the keys to academics success is the ever-evolving teaching learning practices in schools. The same holds good for special schools. However, in India the link between theory and practice is quite weak. The amount of research carried out which addresses the challenges faced by the classroom teachers is extremely little. Most of the research that takes place in special education in India is in the form of Master level dissertations. Generally, these mini researches taken up by master level students, are of a profiling nature and rarely address classroom concerns. Obviously, the purpose of this research activity at master level colleges is to train the professionals for research and not for problem solving. Hence, one can say that special teachers in India do not get ready made solutions through research studies.

However there is a wealth of information in international journals which is available for practicing teachers in India. In reality the practicing teachers do not refer to journals, or research reports to solve their problems. Teachers are, in general, unaware of global trends in communication options and teaching practices. Obsolete and non-experimental teaching practices and an unresolved communicative policy leads to low achievements for the products of Special Schools.

5.Inadequate in-service capacity building avenues for teachers

One of the basic prerequisites of success of any communication option is the fluency of the teachers to use the option consistently and creatively. If it is Oralism, teachers need to be groomed on a regular basis for aural/oral training of the children; updating their skills to develop, monitor, evaluate and facilitate listening and speaking. They need to follow evolving evidence-

based practices of teaching speech. In a similar manner, when a special school claims to use the EB method, hearing teachers need to undergo regular up gradation of their ISL skills. It is often claimed by teachers that there are no avenues for developing the fluency skills of ISL except in cities like Mumbai, Delhi, Bangalore, Indore etc. An inadequate number of skill development centres for facilitating fluent ISL use by hearing adults, including teachers ,is a grave reality. Yet, these schools do not look at **local Deaf adults** as a resource to carry out capacity building of in-service teachers. Deaf individuals are available everywhere, their services can be used to work on the on-going fluency of the teachers.

Teachers in mainstream schools also need capacity building and in-service training sessions about special needs. Disability, diversity and accommodative classroom strategies are the areas wherein mainstream teachers need capacity building. Several efforts are being made in this direction, though in a sporadic manner. To put it in a nutshell, a school's curriculum, text books and polices assume that when a child enrols in a formal school (std. 1), he/she has age-appropriate command over at least one verbal language – the mother tongue. The child's entire school education rests upon this assumption. When a child with deafness enrols in a school, whether special or mainstream, the said assumption does not apply. Hence the system fails to deliver the expected outcome to deaf students.

This unique situation where a child enters a school system without the adequate backup of age-appropriate language is most likely to negatively impact the development of literacy, school subjects and social skills. The visual manual communicative system for which the child is ready is generally rejected by schools and this leads to grave academic concerns.

Acceptance and the use of ISL could be one of the ways to deal with this deadlock between verbal language and school readiness.

Inclusive schools / mainstream schools and children with Deafness

We have been discussing special schools and their functioning. However, a very small number of the population attends special schools, roughly about 5%. There were a large number of school dropouts among deaf children earlier which has gone down in recent years. All said and done, students studying in mainstream schools struggle a lot since they are caught in a situation where their inadequate language base creates barriers in learning and the **class / school environment is mostly, neither pro-oral nor pro-signing.** The activities, curriculum, exam system, teacher readiness, student teacher ratio, class infrastructure, teaching learning material of typical classrooms in most of India do not fulfil the preconditions of both the philosophies. Most of the deaf students SURVIVE (and we are not even talking about not achieving their full potential) in a school system purely on the basis of additional academic support provided by parents or professionals. There are schools which offer accommodations which can lessen the struggle. However, that too is not a very common feature. Also, there is a common misconception that using a sign language will negatively impact the progress of the child in inclusive education (Huddar, 2015). Acknowledging and respecting diversity is the essence of inclusion. Why not expect that an inclusive set-up is more welcoming to diversity of language and employs the use of sign language. In short, the option of sign language has tremendous potential for a child with

deafness (and betterment of a school system). However, the same remains unexplored to a great extent.

Summary

Language development is a prerequisite of academic development. One can work towards fulfilling this prerequisite even in the case of a child with deafness. If language development does take place, though this happens rarely, the academic journey of a child with deafness takes place in a manner similar to that of a child without deafness. In most of the cases the inadequate language base of a child with deafness creates unnecessary barriers in academic development.

The two major types of schooling options, special and mainstream, in general, do not provide the appropriate environment for either the oral or the manual philosophy. Most of the special schools are indecisive and confused about which option to use in school. Schools, as a practice do not place the communication policy in the public domain. There are inconsistencies among the school team members about the communication options. Due to these and a few more factors like inadequate early education facilities, the level of functioning of students with deafness is found to be much below that of their potential.

HOW FAR HAVE YOU LEARNT?

State true or false and correct the false statements:
1. Every child is born with the capacity to develop language except children with deafness.
2. Children learn their mother tongue in schools.
3. Literacy can be learnt only after a basic level of command over language is obtained.
4. Sign language is the only successful communication option.
5. Success of a school depends more on careful selection and implementation of one of the communication options.
6. Inadequate avenues to learn sign language for teachers and parents is the unresolvable problem

Answer key: 1. F, 2.F, 3.T, 4.F, 5.T, 6.F.

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Unit- 3
COMMUNICATION: MEANING, SCOPE, TYPES AND OPTIONS

Total hours: 14

Learning Outcomes

After reading this Unit the student will be able to:

- Explain the meaning of the term Communication.
- Describe the process of communication and the barriers to communication.
- Discuss the different types of Communication-Linguistic and Non-Linguistic.
- Explain the structure and characteristics of language that distinguish linguistic communication from non-linguistic communication.
- Narrate the various modes of communication.
- Discuss the challenges in communication for people with deafness.

Introduction

Studies of communication in early humans indicate that it was the need to cooperate and live in a community that created the need for communication. Fear of wild animals and the need to cooperate for food were the driving forces that brought human beings together in a group. It was the understanding that living in this manner was beneficial and this brought people to share space and resources. This type of **existence required communication**. Early communication is evident in prehistoric cave paintings found in many parts of the world. Some theories put forward the interesting view that **sign language preceded spoken language**.

In this Unit we will study the meaning of the word, communication and how it has been defined. We will investigate how communication takes place, viz., the Process of Communication and,most importantly, the barriers to effective communication. We will explore the different types of communication, Linguistic and Non-Linguistic and the different modes of communication that exist. Lastly the focus will move to communication challenges faced by people with deafness and the use of sign language.

3.1 Meaning, definition and scope of communication
3.2 Types of communication: Linguistic and non- linguistic communication
3.3 Modes of linguistic communication (Aural/oral, Visual/manual, Visual/ graphical):
Meaning and nature
3.4 Communication challenges and sign language use

3.1 Meaning, definition and scope of communication

How does one define communication? In its most basic form, communication involves the **transmitting** of information from one person to another. Communication is a **two-way process**. This transmitting of information could be over time or space. If we look at dictionary meanings, the **Merriam Webster Dictionary** describes it as**:** a process by which information is exchanged between individuals through a common system of symbols, signs, or behaviour.

The **Cambridge Dictionary** describes communication as the act of **sharing** information with others by speaking, writing, moving your body, or using other signals.

It is communication that forms the bedrock of our work as interpreters of sign language. It is clear then that we need to pay attention to the words, 'common' and 'sharing' in both the descriptions. Communication can only be said to have taken place when a '**common understanding**' exists, i.e. both the sender and receiver 'share' a common code. To illustrate this point further we know that a speech in Chinese will not be understood by an audience in India. In a broader sense, it is through communication that we create relationships that frame how we perceive and relate to the world and each other, Rodriguez,2010.
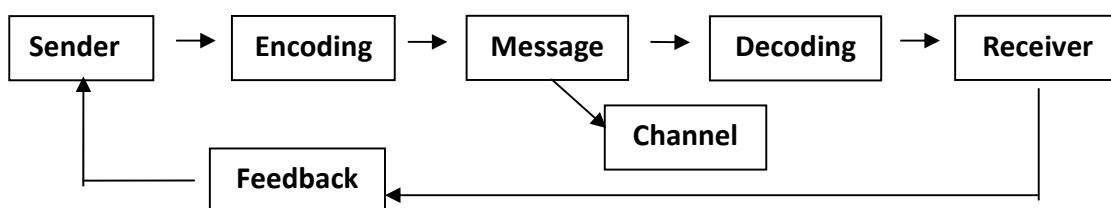
Process of Communication

It is most important that we understand the Process of Communication. The Communication Process is the steps which are needed for successful communication to take place.

The **5 steps** are
1. The Sender or the Encoder
2. The Message
3. The Channel
4. The Decoder or Receiver
5. The Feedback from the Receiver to the Sender.

Listening/Speaking

Process of Communication

The steps function in the following manner: The Sender begins the communication and encodes the idea, using words or visual aids. This encoded idea is now the Message. The Message is then sent through a Channel, which could be through a telephone or just by using a face-to-face mode. The Receiver decodes the message. The last stage is the feedback which the Receiver sends back

to the Sender. This feedback provides information to the Sender whether the communication has been successfully received.

It would be useful to use an **example** to make the complex Process of Communication clearer. A lecturer is teaching   the principles of democracy to students. The lecturer is the Sender and she encodes the idea in words. These words become the Message. The sender uses the Channel of sound waves to transmit the Message. The students are the receivers and decode the words to gain meaning. A question or a reply by the students to the lecturer becomes the Feedback. This will indicate to the lecturer whether her message has been received successfully.

Point to Ponder:*What is missing when a speech is given in Hindi in Tamil Nadu?*

It is clear that a problem at any of the steps of the process will cause disruption in the communication. Firstly, the sender must encode the Messagecompetently. Then it must be decoded correctly by the receiver. For this to take place a common code is required. It is only through a common code that the Message can be decoded and becomes meaningful. Finally, Feedback is required as this completes the loop It is through Feedback that the sender understands whether the communication has been successful.

Barriers to Communication

Though many of us take communication for granted it is not as simple as it seems. There exist many barriers to successful communication. As interpreters for sign language one needs to be aware of the barriers because this knowledge will help one to overcome them.

For our purpose we can classify the barriers to communication under **5 headings**:-Process Barriers, Physical Barriers, Semantic Barriers , Psychological Barriers and Cultural Barriers.

Process Barriers

These can occur at any of the steps in the Process of Communication i.e.at the level of the sender/ encoder, the medium, the decoder/ receiver and at the stage of feedback.

It has been pointed out, 'Because communication is a complex, give-and-take process, breakdowns anywhere in the cycle can block the transfer of understanding'.Lunenberg, 2010.

Physical Barriers

These comprise of all the aspects in the environment which pose physical barriers. Some of these are:-

a. Lighting-It is important that communication takes place in appropriate light. This is with special reference to people with deafness but can apply to various different categories of people, such as those with low vision or older people with weak eye-sight.

b. Environment-The space where communication is taking place should not be overcrowded. Noise pollution is another factor which comes in the way of communication.
c. Mode-Whichever mode has been chosen for communicating such as speaking, writing or signing, it should be clear, accurate and appropriate.
d. Movement-It is difficult to understand a person who is moving about while trying to communicate.
e. Time- The attempt should be to use the least amount of time i.e. an email instead of post; a video-conference instead of an email to a larger group etc.
f. Interruptions-These are all the factors that interrupt a communication i.e. attending a phone-call,lookingata message etc.

Semantic Barriers

This refers to both parties using a shared language i.e. a common code. This means that the words or language or signs chosen by the sender are understood by the receiver *in the manner intended*.

Both parties need to be using a language medium they both understand. A person who is not fluent in English is not going to make sense of a lecture given completely in English.

Care needs to also be taken that both parties understand the same thing by the words used even within a shared language.
This is particularly true when jargon or slang is used as the receiver may not be familiar with some vocabulary due to being older and familiar with different vocabulary. This is also relevant when technical terms,such as in Information Technology(IT) are used. Acronyms such as SSA (SarvaShikshaAbhiyan) may also pose a barrier.

Psychological Barriers

An important aspect of communication between two parties is the attitude of the sender towards the receiver. This is conveyed through body language, choice of vocabulary and tone.
The following qualities will have a beneficial result on the interaction.

a. Empathy-This refers to being able to see from the other person's point of view.
b. Sensitivity-By displaying sensitivity to the other person's situation one is able to get the message across competently.

A willingness to communicate-This refers to both expressing and receiving information. It is not only that one wants to communicate but also that one is able to listen to the other.
Not getting too emotional-An emotion- laden communication comes in the way of comprehension.

A positive attitude which is aware of the above will have a healthy result on the success of the communication.

Cultural Barriers

One needs to take into account people's values, socio-cultural background and prejudices to have a successful exchange. Whether one is young or old, female or male, belong to a certain ethnic, religious group or not, will all have a bearing on communication. If one is not aware of the impact of these factors one cannot have an effective communication.

Sometimes in a new situation it is helpful to know the way things were done earlier or the tradition in place. This is necessary as the people receiving the message may have been conditioned.They are used to a certain manner or routine and that needs to be understood before successful communication can take place.

> *Point to Ponder: These barriers to communication are primarily related to people who can hear. List the barriers which would apply to communicating with people who are deaf.*

Scope of Communication

The scope of communication embraces all spheres of our lives. As social animals living within a community every aspect of our daily lives requires us to communicate. For successful communication we could look at

a. To whom are we communicating or the audience.
b. What are we communicating or the subject.

It is clear that for effective communication we need to know the target audience. This will help us to tailor our communication to their requirements. If the audience is a group of villagers, we will be presenting our content in a certain manner. If it is a group of students our manner of presentation will change even when the content remains the same. An audience or receiver will not pay attention if the sender is not competent in communicating.

The sender must be fully conversant with the subject of communication. This will help in the receiver paying attention and getting complete information.

The scope of communication covers various aspects of our lives. These aspects could be categorised as –

a. The Personal
b. Business
c. Educational
d. Cultural
e. Organizational

3.2 Types of Communication: Linguistic and Non-Linguistic Communication

The origin of the word, 'linguistic' is from the Latin word 'lingua' which means 'tongue' and is connected to the word, 'language'. To understand the term, non-linguistic communication we

need to explore the relationship between Communication and Language. The cry of a baby is communication but it is not language.

Let us look at the following examples:
1. Writing a text message on your mobile phone.
2. Stopping a rickshaw with a wave of your hand.
3. Smiling at a friend.
4. Sending an email.
5. A monkey baring its teeth.
6. Reading a whatsapp message.
7. Greeting a visitor with hands folded.
8. A group of deaf adults talking to each other.
9. A baby pulling her mother's sari pallu.
10. Having a skype conversation in sign language.

The situations described above are familiar and part of our routine lives. In sentences **1,4,6,8 and 10 there is language** which is being used to communicate. In sentences **2,3, 5,7 and 9** there is communication but **no language**. As you can see from these examples, it is evident that communication can still take place without language.

Waving your hand to stop a rickshaw is communicating that you need transport. However you have done it without using language and so this is an example of non-linguistic communication. On the other hand, in sentences 1,4,6,8 and 10 reference has been made to some use of language to communicate whether it is in its primary form of speaking/listening or in its secondary form of reading /writing. Sentences 8 and 10 are also examples of linguistic communication viz. Indian Sign Language. We can therefore state that the first set of sentences would come under linguistic communication and the second set would be termed non-linguistic communication.

To clarify further, all communication that fulfils its goal by **using language** is linguistic communication. Communication which **does not use language** to send or receive messages is classified as non-linguistic communication.

> *Point to Ponder: When do infants start using language to communicate?*

The next question would then be what are the characteristics of language that distinguish the two sets of communicative acts? To answer this question we need to clearly understand the nature of language. At a basic level we can define language as a **rule-based symbol system which is unique to human beings.**

Characteristics of Language

Let us understand this symbol-based system in more detail. Language has what linguists term the design features or its characteristics. It is the fact that a communication system has the following features that gives it the status of a language. It is these features that distinguish it from a communication system.

Some of the characteristics of language are known by the following terms,Arbitrariness, Cultural Transmission, Duality, Creativity, Displacement and Reflexity .

Arbitrariness

Most words have no relationship with the object or idea that they **represent.** There is nothing in the word 'book' which indicates that it is a rectangular object with a cover and printed sheets of paper which is used to convey some information. No logic binds the word 'book' to the object 'book'. No logic binds the Hindi word 'ghar' to a place in which people live.

However there are a few words that are closely related to that which they represent. These are words like the 'quack' of a duck or the 'moo' of a cow. These are called onomatopoeic words but these are exceptions to the arbitrary nature of language.

Cultural Transmission

Language is transmitted culturally. This refers to the acquiring of language by children in the cultural context. The social or cultural situation is the factor which decides which language the child will acquire. A Chinese child will acquire English if adopted and brought up by an American couple. (But that child will have the skin tone or hair type of its Chinese parents. That is the biological transmission as against cultural transmission of language).
Cultural transmission of language does not hold true for animals.

Duality

This is also termed as 'Duality of Patterning' or 'Double Articulation'.
It refers to the feature of language which shows us that there are 2 or dual purposes within language.

At one level language is made of speech sounds such as phonemes. By themselves these sounds or phonemes have no meaning. They acquire meaning when they are combined with other phonemes. An example of this would be the phonemes r/t/a. When combined differently we get rat, tar, art.

Hence we see that by combining limited or finite elements we are able to make unlimited or infinite words and morphemes. This feature of language is called Duality and is not seen in animal communication.

Creativity

This feature of language is also called 'Productivity' and 'Open-endedness'. Chomsky observed that human beings have the ability of making / understanding new and novel sentences with the limited utterances or finite sounds they possess. Even children can express themselves in sentences they may never have used before. They can also make sense of sentences they may have never heard earlier. As Chomsky states, it is like solving a math sum, you may not have learnt or practiced a particular sum but you are able to 'generate' the answer since you know values of numbers (vocabulary) and the rules (grammar) to deal with them.

Displacement

This refers to a characteristic of language which gives the user of language the ability to refer to objects or situations which are not present in the immediate environment or at that present time. Through language not only can we talk about an event which may have taken place long ago but we can also talk about creatures which are imaginary and may have never existed. Language gives human beings this facility which is not available to animals.

Reflexity

This feature of language makes it possible to use language to think about language, to describe language, to write about language. In short, we can use language to reflect on language.

Structure of Language

Let us also examine the structure of language. This consists of 3 aspects-Form, Content and Use. Form comprises of Phonology, Morphology and Syntax; Content comprises of Semantics; Use involves Pragmatics. It is the relationship within these aspects which creates language.

Form

Phonology is the sound system of a language. The sound system is made up of **phonemes** which are the smallest units of sound. By themselves phonemes have no meaning but by combining them, words are formed e.g. m/a/p/, when combined gives us 'map'. By changing one phoneme we can change the meaning e.g.'tap'. Phonemes are governed by rules of the particular language i.e.in English phonemes, combine differently from a Slavic language such as Russian.

Morphology

Morphology deals with the rules for **word formation**. Morphemes are a collection of letters and are the smallest unit of a word that is **meaningful**. For example the word sandpit consists of 2 morphemes, sand and pit. The girl/s walk/ed rapid/ly consists of 7 morphemes;The student/s sang beautiful/lyconsists of 6 morphemes.

Let us understand Free Morphemes and Bound Morphemes. Free morphemes are the smallest units of words that are meaningful i.e. talk, play, look. They have meaning by themselves and can stand alone in a sentence. One can change their meaning by adding Bound Morphemes talk*ed, talks,* talk*ing-ed, s, ing.* Bound morphemes convey meaning when combined with free morphemes.

Syntax

This refers to the rules that govern **word order** in a sentence. It is concerned with the **construction of sentences**. Each language has its own rules for word order and how words can be combined. Some languages, like English, follow subject-verb-object(SVO) order e.g. The girls are playing cricket. Other languages such as Hindi follow subject-object-verb (SOV) e.g. ladkiya cricket khelrhihain.

Semantics

This comes under the *Content* of Language. It refers to the meaning expressed in language. According to the Thesaurus, 'Meaning' is *the general word denoting that which is intended to be or actually is expressed or indicated.* It is through meaning that we understand the message of the communication.
Chomsky has famously indicated that we can create syntactically correct sentences with no meaning or semantics e.g. Colourless green ideassleep furiously. This is a grammatically correct sentence but it has no meaning.

Pragmatics

This refers to the *Use* of language. It refers to how we use language in a specific social situation. The use of language changes according to the social context. The same message will be expressed differently depending on where we are and/or with whom we are communicating. We may also be implying something in our message which may not be directly stated.

Point to Ponder:Why do you think it is important to understand the structure of language?

3.3 Modes of Linguistic Communication (Aural/Oral, Visual/Manual,Visual/Graphical) Meaning and Nature.

By now we know what is meant by the term, linguistic communication. We also know what is meant by the term, non-linguistic communication. The difference between these areas of communication is important for our work as interpreters of sign language.

Let us examine the new terms Aural/Oral, Visual/Manual and Visual/Graphical. We know that when we use language to communicate a message it is termed as a linguistic communication. We

also know that one can either use language in its **primary form**, i.e. listening and speaking or in its **secondary form**, reading or writing. If, for example, one had some information for students, 'Come earlier to class tomorrow', one could either say it or write it. The first, by using listening and speaking would be an example of an Aural/Oral mode. The second by using reading and writing would be an example of a Visual/Graphical mode. There is a **third** mode of linguistic communication and one could use sign language to communicate, 'Come earlier to class tomorrow'. This would be an example of a Visual/Manual mode of linguistic communication. The dictionary meaning of mode is the way or manner in which something is expressed or done. Note: There exists a population for whom sign language is the primary or first language and not the spoken language. The above explanation uses the sequence of: spoken language, reading/ writing and sign language purely because spoken language is used as the first language by the majority population – not because it is more important or more efficient.

To what are we referring when we use the term Aural/Oral? The word 'Aural' refers to the ear or to 'listening' and 'Oral' refers to the mouth or 'speaking'. The term 'Aural' is used first because reception comes before expression. The Aural/Oral mode or listening and speaking is the preferred mode of communication by all the people who are hearing and speaking. Listening and Speaking is the primary form of a verbal or spoken language.

Let us now examine the Visual/Manual mode of linguistic communication. The word visual refers to the eyes and the word manual refers to the hands. This is the reception of sign language through the eyes(visual) and the expression of sign language through the hands (manual). Sign language is not a spoken language i.e.it has no phonology or sound system.Till date no sign language has a script. However, it now has the status of a 'natural' language. A natural language is one that has evolved over time through usage like any language such as English or Hindi. It can be contrasted with 'artificial' languages such as computer planning languages. It is stated to be the primary language of people with deafness. The work of William Stokoe on American Sign Language ensured that from 1965 onwards, sign language came to be recognized as a language in its own right.

We move to the Visual/Graphical mode of linguistic communication. This refers to reading (visual) and writing (graphical).The word graphical comes from the Greek word 'grapho' which is connected to 'writing'. Reading and writing are the secondary forms of a language. They are based on the primary form listening/speaking. "Reading or written language is a derivative of spoken language. The written forms are symbols for spoken symbols" (Hart, 1963).

Linguistic Communication		
	Mode	
Primary Form	Aural/Oral	Listening/Speaking
Secondary Form	Visual/Graphical	Reading /Writing
Primary Form	Visual/Manual	Signing

Point to Ponder: The secondary form of a verbal language is reading and writing. Does the lack of a secondary form directly linked withsign language need us to investigate further?

3.4 Communication Challenges and Sign Language Use

You must have come across the terms,'Deaf' and 'deaf' in your reading and wondered what isthe difference between them was. Let us get an understanding of these terms.

The use of the **uppercase 'D'** in the word 'Deaf' has a significance which many hearing people may miss and to which they may not pay attention. It refers to people with deafness who consider sign language to be central to their lives and who identify with Deaf Culture.

The use of **lowercase'd'** in the word 'deaf' often refers to those who consider their hearing loss a medical condition . People who prefer to use the lowercase'd' are those who may be using an oral mode of communication and who do not identify with the Deaf Community. They would not be using sign language.

These people could be those who are born to hearing parents and have grown up identifying with the hearing community.They could also be those who have lost their hearing due to illness or due to old age.Some may be those who are progressively losing their hearing .None of them would be identifying themselves with Deaf Culture.

As Padden and Humpheries(1988) note,the lowercase 'deaf' is used for the **audiological condition** of not hearing. The uppercase 'Deaf' refers to a community of people who share a language -American Sign Language (ASL) and a **culture**. The 'deaf' are those who are either not born deaf,or have become deaf due to old age or an illness and thus do not have access to the knowledge, beliefs, and practices that make up the culture of Deaf people.

As we said earlier the use of the uppercase 'D' for the word 'Deaf' distinguishes those people for whom sign language is the sole means of communication. Those who use the lowercase 'd' in the word 'deaf' would generally be using an oral means of communication. We will briefly look at the strengths and weaknesses of both these modes of communication.This aspect will be covered in more depth in the next Unit on **Communication Options and Opportunities.**

Deaf Culture is intrinsically linked to the use of sign language. Since the research on American Sign Language (ASL) by William Stokoe in the 1960s , Sign languages have been considered natural languages. What are the advantages of using this mode of communicationby people with deafness?

Point to Ponder: Do you think there is only one communication option which is the correct one for people with deafness? Or is there room for choice and appropriateness?

Advantages of using sign language

The most significant advantage of sign language usage is that people with deafness can have an effective and complete communication with others who use sign language.

In babies usage of sign language establishes communication early. This is said to enhance the **cognitive and socio personal** skills of babies. It also establishes early language skills.

There can be complete transmission of knowledge and information for students in school through the use of sign language. This enhances the learning process.

The **psychological benefits** of sign language are many.

- In babies it enriches the relationship between parent and child.
- It leads to less frustration when communicating with others who know sign language.
- It builds up confidence and self-esteem in a person with deafness and removes feelings of inadequacy.
- Communication is more satisfying.

Concerns and Challenges

A person with deafness lives in a hearing world and this means that if the person is only using sign language there are some challenges.

The person will have difficulty in communicating with those who do not know sign language. This prevents their integration in the larger community.

There are no provisions in regular schools to meet the needs of students who only use sign language. This works to their disadvantage in an inclusive setting.

In India an added disadvantage is that there are very few qualified sign language interpreters. There is no awareness of having interpreters as a necessary part of any gathering or meeting. It is also not mandated by law.

Let us now turn to those people with deafness who do not use sign language, who use oral communication and who do not identify with the Deaf Community. They use the lowercase 'd' in 'deaf' to identify themselves. What are the strengths and weaknesses of their choice?

Advantages of the Aural - Oral mode

The first advantage is that they can communicate with hearing people through the oral mode. They can speak to express themselves and understand the speech of others, through lip-reading and hearing aids/cochlea implants to receive information.

The ability to communicate through oral means gives them the ability to integrate more easily in society.

At a later stage they also have the choice of learning sign language. This gives them the advantage of having access to both the world of the hearing and that of the Deaf community.

Concerns and Challenges

Communication is not established **early** as 90 % of children with deafness are born to hearing parents. This is likely to have a negative impact on the development of cognitive skills and language development.

The use of the oral mode, in many cases, can prevent a student with deafness from gaining complete information in the classroom. This becomes a serious disadvantage.

Sometimes even if the person is proficient, there will be limitations to his/her oral communication.

Most likely psychological impact of incomplete communication can lead to frustration.

- Because of the difficulty in communication (missing out on the ease of communication).
- Not being able to gain complete information.
- Communication foundation being inadequate to facilitate development of other areas.

The person with deafness may also find it difficult to learn sign language at an older stage of life. This can hinder their becoming a part of the Deaf Community if they wish to do so as they grow older.

Summary

As interpreters of sign language it is essential that we get a complete understanding of the term, communication.

Communication is a two-way process in which information is transmitted from one person to another person or a group of persons. This transmission can be over time and space.

Communication is basic to our lives as we live in a community. Hence the scope of communication is wide and it covers many aspects of our life.

The Process of Communication comprises of 5 elements. These are the sender or encoder; The Message; The Channel; The receiver or decoder; the Feedback. A problem in any of these elements causes a disruption in the process of communication. These disruptions are called barriers to communication.

For our purpose the different types of communication are linguistic communication and non-linguistic communication. It is important to appreciate that communication can take place without language. We also need to be able to distinguish between the two.

To be able to distinguish between communication and language it is helpful to know more about the structure and the design features of language. The structure of language comprises of 3

aspects-Form, Content and Use. Form consists of Phonology, Morphology and Syntax; Content consists of Semantics; Use involves Pragmatics. Language is created by the relationship between these aspects.

If a communication system has the following features Arbitrariness, Cultural Transmission, Duality, Creativity, Displacement and Reflexity, it will qualify as a language.

A mode of communication refers to the manner by which we choose to express ourselves. This could be by using the aural/oral mode i.e. listening and speaking or by using the visual/graphical mode i.e. reading and writing. We are all familiar with these modes as we use them in our routine lives. There is another mode of communication and that is the visual/manual mode i.e. use of sign language .This is received visually and expressed   manually, by the use of hands. What is to be recognized is that all these are linguistic means of communication.

There are challenges in communication for people with deafness. There are those in the deaf community who have chosen to use sign language and have chosen to belong to the Deaf Community. They see themselves as being a part of Deaf Culture.What are the advantages for the people who use sign language and identify with the Deaf Community?

Advantages:

- Effective and complete communication with others using sign language.
- Babies get the benefit of early and age appropriate communication through early sign language use. This has a favourable impact on cognitive and language development.
- In school the learning process is enhanced as there is complete transfer of information.
- Psychological benefits are
    1. Richer relationship between parent and child.
    2. Less frustration when communicating with other sign-language users.
    3. Builds up confidence and self-esteem.
    4. More satisfying communication.

Concerns and Challenges:

- Difficulty in communicating with those who do not know sign language.
- Difficulty in integrating in the larger community.
- Difficulty for a student in an inclusive school setting.
- Lack of adequate sign-language interpreters in India. No practice of having interpreters at meetings or gatherings.

There are some people in the deaf community who have chosen to use an aural/oral means of communication and have chosen to identify with the hearing community.

For those who use an oral means of communication and see themselves as being 'deaf'.

Advantages:

- Able to integrate more easily into the hearing world-the family, the neighborhood, the inclusive school etc.
- Potential of acquiring good literacy skills.
- Higher education is easier to achieve.
- Good jobs are more likely.
- Can learn sign language at a later stage of life.

Concerns and Challenges:

- A young infant may suffer delay in communication. This has a detrimental effect on cognitive and language development.
- May not get complete information in classroom.
- May have limitations to being able to express themselves.
- Frustration because of difficulty in communication and not getting complete information.
- May not be able to learn sign language at a later stage.

Check your progress

Exercises:

True/False:
1. Communication is a two-way process.
2. There is no need for a common code when we communicate.
3. Sign language is not a natural language.
4. Reading and writing are the primary forms of a verbal language.
5. Understanding the structure of language enhances our understanding of Indian Sign Language.

Fill in the Blanks:
1. The sender of a message is also termed as the _____and the receiver is termed the _____in the Process of Communication.
2. Poor lighting could work as a _____to communication.
3. In the Scope of Communication we need to pay attention to both the _____and the _____.
4. The Aural/Oral mode refers to _____ and _____.
5. A person waving her hand to say 'Good-bye' would be considered _____ communication.

Multiple Choices:
1. Morphology
   a) is the sound system of a language.
   b) deals with the structure of words.

     c) is concerned with the structure of sentences.
2. The Visual/Manual mode of communication refers to
     a) reading and writing
     b) listening and speaking
     c) use of sign language
3. The communication option of Oralism means
     a) use of the visual/manual mode
     b) use of the aural/oral mode
     c) use of the visual/graphical mode
4. People who use the lower case 'd' in deafness are known to have
     a) identified with the hearing community
     b) identified with the those who use sign language
     c) neither of the two
5. Children with deafness using sign language will have communication difficulties in
     a) an inclusive educational setting without an interpreter.
     b) a special school using Educational bi-lingualism.
     c) the Deaf Community

Short Answer:

1. What do you understand by the scope of communication?
2. Make 3sentences to indicate linguistic communication and 2 to indicate non-linguistic communication.
3. Which are the design features or characteristics of language? Describe any one.
4. What are the advantages for a person using an aural/oral mode of communication?
5. Describe the Visual/Manual mode of communication.

Suggested Readings:

- Huddar ,A.,(Ed.).,(2011)Communication Options and Students with Deafness, New Delhi ,Rehabilitation Council of India.
- Pinker, S.,(1995), *The Language Instinct,* https://monoskop.org/images/2/20/Pinker_Steven_The_language_instinct_1995.Pdf Downloaded 5/19/2017

Model Answers
1. True & False:
    1. T
    2. F
    3. F
    4. F
    5. T

2. Fill in the Blanks:

1. Encoder. Decoder.
2. Barrier
3. Audience. Subject
4. Listening. Speaking
5. Non-linguistic

3. Multiple Choice:
   1. b
   2. c
   3. b
   4. a
   5. a

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UNIT- 4
COMMUNICATION OPTIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Total hours: 14

Learning Outcomes

After reading this Unit the student will be able to:

- Describe the 3 Communication Options, Oralism, Total Communication and Educational Bi-lingualism.
- Understand the principles of each Option and the pre-requisites for their success.
- Narrate the history and development of Oralism, Total Communication and Educational Bi-lingualism.
- Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of Oralism, Total Communication and Educational Bi-lingualism.

4.1 Oralism, Total Communication, and Educational Bilingualism
4.2 Communication philosophies: Contrasting objectives and means
4.3 Justifications and challenges for Oralism, Total Communication and Educational Bilingualism

4.1. Oralism, Total Communication, and Educational Bilingualism

Introduction

As we studied in Unit 3, Aural/Oral, Visual/Manual and Visual/Graphical are all linguistic methods of communication. We now turn to some new terms, Oralism, Total Communication(or SIMCOM), and Educational Bilingualism. These are the names of communication options which are used in the education of children with deafness. All 3 communication options have their own philosophies and have developed over time to counter the challenges that deafness poses to language acquisition and communication.

Oralism

This is a philosophy which uses the Aural/Oral mode of communication. In simple terms Oralism uses oral language for communication: comprehending other's speech and learning to speak. The underlying philosophy of Oralism is that a person with deafness can best belong to society by being able to understand speech and by using speech. This is one of the oldest approaches to teaching language to the child with deafness. It became more established and spread rapidly after the Congress of Milan in 1880. The end of the Second World War (1939-45), saw advances in electronics specially in hearing loss assessment and for amplifying speech. As a result it was recognized that many deaf children had residual hearing.Portable batteries also

helped as children could now move around with their individual hearing aids. This was another factor which added to the appeal of oral methods. We must not forget that more than 90% of deaf children are born to hearing parents. These parents do not need to learn a new skill to support their child if Oralism is the communication option.

Oralism is based on the following principles

1. The child should be trained to make the best use of residual hearing. This is to be done through amplification devices like the hearing aid and through auditory training.
2. The child must be taught to speak.
3. The child should be taught lip /speech reading.
4. According to some 'oralists' finger spelling can be used for technical terms and proper nouns. While others discourage any exposure to minimum manual support.
5. Reading and writing are taught as the child progresses in acquiring or learning language.

There are some approaches which share the philosophy of Oralism such as Cued Speech and Auditory–Verbal Therapy. The latterhas been introduced more recently.

Oralism has been described as not just the use of listening speaking and speech reading in the classroom but as a way of life. It involves thinking in English(sic),expressing oneself in Englishboth orally and in writing,and understanding the English used by others,through reading,lipreading and such hearing that remains (Watson,1976).Of course by English he means any verbal language.The goal of Oralism is that the young deaf child acquire language, develop speech and become a part of the hearing community.

As Oralism uses the same mechanisms for listening as do hearing people it is said to have a salutary effect on literacy. Reading and writing skills will give the child a means to achieve academic success.Their communication skills will give them access to good employment opportunities. Oralists believe that the child will benefit most by linking to the mainstream.

Oralism has been successful with many deaf children across the world.However we need to be aware of the challenges as well.If we look at the situation in India we find that many times children are not identified early. They enrolllate to any training programme. Parents are often not in a position to support the demands of well-maintained hearing aids. There is inadequate support in terms of effective and ongoing auditory training to the child.

How do we ensure the success of Oralism?

Early Identification and Intervention

If Oralism is to be successful, it is essential that the child is identified as early as possible. Universal Newborn Screening is most useful on this account as it gives a **head-start**. And how 'early'does the identification need to be done for better results with Oralism? It is said that the child needs to be identified and fitted with the hearing device around his / her first birthday. It is also important that the child has **no additional disabilities** if Oralism is chosen as the

communication option. Once the child is identified, intervention must follow as soon as it is possible.Research is indicating that the younger the baby when intervention begins the better is the result for language development and oral skills.

Staff of Educational Programme

The staff of the Early Intervention Centre must be highly trained. They must have the skills and knowledge to intervene competently and work with the child.They must also be able to guide and counsel the parents.

The teachers and all the other staff of the special school must be **committed to the principles of Oralism.** They need to be convinced about the communication option and be able to support it competently. They must also be trained to use electronic equipment effectively. Speech therapists and audiological staff must be available for close monitoring.

There is also an understanding that classrooms should be as homogeneous as possible.

Technology

Technology plays a crucial part in Oralism. Amplification devices,such as the hearing aid must be appropriate to suit the hearing loss of the child. Cochlear Implants must bein good working condition for the child to gain the optimum from them. These must be used during the entire waking hours of the child. Good maintenance of these devices is also essential and the parents must be aware and alert.

Parents

As in all the communication options parents are crucial to the success of Oralism. After being guided and counseled they are in a position to support the work of the centre or school.Their help is invaluable in the development of oral skills and in supporting the audiological requirements of the child.**Day schools** are therefore more beneficial than residential schools for Oralism.

If all the above are in place only then can we hope to achieve the goals of Oralism: ability to make the most effective use of residual hearing to adequately speech/lip read and to speak.

Point to Ponder: In Oralism do parents have to learn a new skill? How do they need to be guided?

Total Communication (SIMCOM)

In USA in the 1960s , it became clear that the achievements of children with deafness using Oralism asa communication option were not satisfactory. Parents of children with deafness desired a review of this approach. By the 1970s a new communication option was recognised.

This was Total Communication,also known as the Combined or Simultaneous Communication Method (widely known as SIMCOM).

Total Communication (TC) is based on the following principles:
1. The child must make the fullest use of her residual hearing.
2. The child must develop speech.
3. The child must learn to speech read/lip read.
4. Signs and the signing system must be used simultaneously with the channels which are listed above.
5. Finger spelling is a part of this option.

It is apparent that the principles are similar to those of Oralism. So we need to investigate what the difference is between the two options.The difference, as you can see,is in point # 4 - Signs and the signing system must be used simultaneously with the   channels which are listed above.
The term Total Communication (TC) refers to the overall philosophy of using a sign system along with speech. At an implementation level however, the term SIMCOM is used. Hence, we will use SIMCOM now onwards since we are discussing the execution of the philosophy.

In SIMCOM, a verbal or spoken language, such as English,Hindi, Bengali etc.is used. This is supported by the signing system.

We need to be clear about the salient features of SIMCOM.
1. TC uses a verbal/spoken language supported by sign systems. This is also referred to as a Signed Language. Thus one has sign*ed* Hindi or sign*ed* Gujarati. In a sign systems the grammar including the word order of a sentence will be that of the spoken language of the society such as Hindi, Gujarati etc.
2. The sign system employed in TC is a specially created system to support a spoken language.
3. The signs used to represent words areusually that of an established sign language such as ISL (Indian Sign Language) in India or ASL (American Sign Language)in USA.
4. Sign system is a manual representation of a spoken language.The *supporting signing system* refers to signs for words and the word –parts e.g. 'ing', 'ed' in English. These are also represented manually.
5. In TC one speaks and signs simultaneously. Hence one needs a signing system to parallelthe speech.
6. A sign system supports a spoken language.While sign language is an independently functioning language with its own grammar. Hence a sign system is very different from a sign language.

When TC was introduced in the USA in the 1970s the supporting signing systems or Auxiliary Signing Systems were specially designed as manual codes for spoken English. The best known were SEE I (Seeing Essential English) and SEE II(Signing Exact English). In India at the AYJNIHH, with UNICEF funding, signing systems were developed to parallel Indian languages.

TC has been described in the following manner by Craig (1976), Signs are intended to be used with speech at all times, and they have been devised in such a way that they do not obscure the face. Indeed it is one of the strengths of the system that the sign should be used to supplement speech, and can be signed rhythmically to encourage good speech patterns. The use of speech ,together with hearing amplification is essential to ensure that maximum benefit may be derived from the system by deaf children.

TC believes that the child should get the benefit of **complete input of language** at all times. This input is presented simultaneously through speech and signs. The signs are of words, word parts and function words. In short the entire sentence of a spoken language is represented manually along with speech. The belief is that this input will enable the child to acquire grammatically correct language.

How do we ensure the success of TC?

We see that there are three factors which are required for the communication option of TC to be successful.

Time of Intervention

We need to ensure that the decision to start using TC is taken early. As with all the options an early use is also an advantage. So the first pre-requisite for success is Early Intervention which should begin during the 'Critical Period' (Early years of life when the baby is most ready neuro-developmentally to 'take in' the language she is exposed to).

Stakeholders

There are many people who are involved in the success of this option of SIMCOM. These are teachers, professionals, students with deafness and their families.

a. Teachers

It is necessary that teachers are skilled in the use of SIMCOM and are able to communicate efficiently using this option. **Incomplete or haphazard usage of the sign system** should not be allowed. Nor should **pidgin** language be used with the students. Speech must be used **along with** the manual component i.e. the teachers must speak and sign simultaneously.

Teachers need to be able to develop lip reading skills and speech in their students. They must be trained in the use of amplification devices and ensure that the devices are in good working condition.

b. Professionals

There are many professionals connected to educational programmes for children with deafness viz. speech and language pathologists, audiologists, occupational therapists etc. All the

professionals need to understand the features of TC and learn its use. For a successful implementation of the option it needs to be used consistently by all who come into contact with the child.

c. The Student

The students will need to be trained in all the components of SIMCOM. This will include speech reading, being trained to develop speech, being able to make the best use of their residual hearing through amplification and auditory training. They will also need to learn signing system and its simultaneous use with speech.

d. The Family

The role of the family in any of the 3 communication options is most vital. Parents and the other family members need to understand the benefits of TC. They also need to develop skills in the use of TC.

Instructional Material

It is clear that if TC has to succeed then the instructional material is required. In the U.K. the Paget- Gorman System was invented along with Signed English. In the USA, SEE I and SEE II were specially designed. In India material for the Indian Sign System was created at the AYJNIHH,1988-96.

In a school setting, it is important that the instructional material is available to the staff especially new staff members. It should also be made available to the parents and siblings. Videos are an option and are most effective.

Point to Ponder: Which communication option would be easier for the parents to use-Oralism or Total Communication?

Educational Bilingualism (EB)

This is the third Communication Option in the education of children with deafness. It rests on the belief that language is more essential than speech and children with deafness have a right to sign language as their primary means of communication. This right cannot be denied as it gives them a complete channel for communication and language. EB is based on the Bilingual-Bicultural understanding of the deaf community which recognizes the deaf community as a distinct socio-cultural group.

EB is based on the following principles:

1. The child has a right to sign language as a primary means of communication and language development. Hence the **first language (L1**) of the child will be a sign language such as ISL,ASL, BSL etc.
2. The first language (L1),sign language, will be the base to develop reading and writing.In an educational programme it is necessary to develop literacy.
3. For literacy to develop, a verbal/spoken language,such as Marathi, Hindi etc. will be introduced. This is the second language(L2). The introduction of a verbal language is necessary as sign languages do not have a script. We see now that 2 languages are involved: a sign language (L1) and a verbal language(L2).Hence the name Bi-lingualism,2 languages.

Sign Language

You will be learning about sign languages in other Units of the Course.Examples of sign languages are Indian Sign Language(ISL),American Sign Language(ASL), British Sign Language(BSL) etc. Rough estimates tell us that there could be **300 sign languages** in the world.Sign languages have **evolved naturally** over time just as have verbal languages.However it was only towards the end of the 1960s that the research of William Stokoe made evident that ASL was a language in its own right just as any verballanguage such as French or English. ASL had all the linguistic features which are innate to a spoken language and came to be recognized as a rich and viable language. Research of the past 20 years has shown that ISL now has the status of a fully complex, natural human language. It is unique in the sense that it is also the only pan-Indian indigenous language in the country(Zeshan,2014).

Sign language uses the shape of the hand (Designator), the location of the hand in relation to the body(Tabula), the movement of the hand (Signation), the movement of the hand in relationship to the body(Orientation) and facial expressions. It uses the visual-manual mode of communication. The syntactic structure of any sign language is different from that of a spoken/verbal language. There are regional differences in sign languages.

Let us understand a little more about this communication option. A school following EB would be using sign language as the first language,L1, of the child in the classroom. Teaching and communication would be in sign language. A spoken/verbal language would need to be learned by the child. This second language, or L2, is required for the written mode. Literacy is required in an educational programme.

Several nations in the West have been implementing bilingual education programmes for educating children with deafness (Vasisth,2014).It has been stated that in the U.K deaf children educated through this approach are able to match the educational achievements of hearing children in national examinations (Randhawa,2014).

How do we ensure the success of Educational Bi-lingualism?

Commitment of Stakeholders: Parents, the Student, Professionals and Teachers
a. Parents
As you know, 90% of deaf children are born to hearing parents. The parents need to be informed about
  i. Communication Options and the viability of EB.
  ii. The status of sign language as opposed to the myths that surround it.
  iii. Their role in the chosen communication options.

Once they have made an informed choice they also need to learn sign language. This will be ISL in India.
b. The Student
The student, as a young child, needs to learn sign language through interaction with competent users of sign language. These will be the parents. Exposure to Deaf adult role models or deaf teachers who use ISL would be useful.

c. Professionals

As discussed in TC, all the professionals who are to interact with the student need to be able to use sign language competently and effectively. This means that avenues for them to learn it should be readily available.

d. Teachers
  i. As with other communication options, teachers need to be convinced about this option and committed to its implementation.
  ii. They need to be able to learn sign language.
  iii. They need to be able to teach by communicating in sign language.
  iv. They need to be able to teach the second language (L2),a verbal language, (Hindi, English etc.) on the base of the first language(L1),a sign language(ISL,ASL).

Skill Development

  a. As, at the moment, there are more hearing teachers than deaf teachers ,there must be adequate training avenues to learn Sign language.
  b. There must also be mentorship for teaching a verbal language through sign language.
  c. Pre-service and in-service training must also be available.
  d. There must also be opportunities for parents to learn sign language.

Early Intervention

As with any of the communication options it is necessary to begin as early as possible. This will give the child an opportunity to acquire sign language as hearing children acquire a verbal/spoken language, through interaction with competent adult users. Critical period as

mentioned earlier, needs to be exploited fully since the children are most ready during those early years.

Deaf Role Models

Deaf role models adults and deaf teachers are essential to efficient implementation of EB . Their role would be to introduce, monitor and problem solving related to sign language. As native signers they are in a position to mentor the programme.

It is evident that to ensure the success of EB both the parents and the hearing teachers need to have an understanding of the Deaf Community. This should be from a cultural-sociological point of view.

Point to Ponder: How and from where would parents of a young deaf child get information on EB?

Conclusion

Oralism makes use of the same auditory mechanisms for the acquisition of language as hearing children. Total Communication is often seen as a term open to many interpretations. However as we have understood, it could be described most clearly as manually-aided oral communication (Conrad, 1976). The child is expected to get the complete input of language. EB provides another stage in the consistent search for ensuring academic success to students with deafness. By giving the child the right to sign language as the primary language the groundwork for another route to academic success has been attempted. All the three options have proved appropriate to many children. It is the matter of selection of an appropriate option as per the needs of the child. One size DOES NOT fit all.

4.2 Communication philosophies: Contrasting objectives and means

Introduction

There is a historical perspective and rationale for the 3 communication options you have studied in the earlier sub-unit. Without exception, the aim of all these options has been the development of language and literacy for the deaf child. Through the ages different ways and methods have been tried. Some options have been successful with some deaf children. History has made clear that there is no single option that suits the needs of all deaf children.It is this constant search for means which will ensure that all deaf children attain literacy and communication skills which drives the process.

Let us turn to the 3 options and explore the difference in their objectives and the means they employ to achieve them.

Oralism

The goal of Oralism is the acquisition of a spoken language by a deaf child. This philosophy of communication believes that the interests of the child will be best served by this acquisition. The child, through spoken language, would be able to understand others and also be understood by others. Once acquired, spoken language will give the child the opportunity to be assimilated into the hearing world and being a part of this world gives a deaf child a chance to function independently. Graduates of auditory-oral schools are typically capable of being mainstreamed academically, socially and professionally to a large degree and being able to talk gives them "mainstream life" as an option if they so choose.(Moog,2000). It is towards this objective that Oralism has been striving for many years.

As you have studied in the earlier sub-unit, Oralism uses the auditory–vocal mechanisms of the child as the basic communication system (McAnally et al,1987).The auditory mechanisms refers to residual hearing which remains with the child. Through amplification and auditory training the child is to get the benefit of her residual hearing. The vocal mechanism refers to the use of the speech apparatus of the child. As you know a person with deafness has no physiological problem with their speech mechanism. The child is to monitor her speech through the auditory feedback which has been made available through the use of residual hearing. In short Oralism is attempting to use the same channels of communication to acquire spoken language as those used by hearing people. The only significant difference is that speech reading is added to the use of auditory-vocal mechanisms.

Language is acquired by the hearing child through interaction with competent adult users of language. No mother attempts to teach language to her infant. Language develops as the mother and child bond through conversation and play. Oralism believes that deaf children can also acquire language through meaningful interaction in an informal situation. This is preferred to direct teaching of language. With appropriate amplification , through hearing aids, and auditory training or cochlear implants the child will get better input of language. This ability to listen will also help the child's speech.

An important point to note here is that technology is improving constantly. This has made it possible for many deaf children to receive the auditory information which makes learning to speak a realistic objective (Moog,2000).

It is evident that loss of hearing is a debilitating situation. In spite of the best of efforts the input channel will be able to give the child only partial information. The feedback mechanism in the same manner will be able to give limited support. The result is that in many cases the communication system is labored and only semi–intelligible rather than fluent and fully intelligible (McAnally et al.,1987).It has been observed that there are many deaf children for whom speech becomes an insurmountable barrier. This can be the case even with structured auditory training and the benefit of amplification.

At the same time it has been indicated that oral methods have proved successful with some deaf children. There has been documentation of the success of a substantial number of children from oral schools in language, education and occupation (Ogden,1979;Quigley,Jenne,and Phillips,1969 as cited in McAnally et al,1987). Oral methods also appeal to parents as they find comfort that they are educating their deaf children on the same lines as hearing children.

The die-hard oralists have insisted for long that as a communication option Oralism has much to commend it. If there is evidence of poor results there are many reasons which have little to do with the philosophy per se. One of the complaints of oralists is that Oralism has not been given a chance to succeed. Various reasons have been listed. These range from the lack of trained and qualified teachers with experience, late intervention and so on. The argument was that it was not the method which was to blame but circumstances. We will not go into those reasons here but it will be sufficient to say that Oralism can work for some children. As the Lewis Report of the U.K.1967, stated , no single individual ,involved with the Report, thought the Oral method appropriate to all children with deafness.

Total Communication (SIMCOM)

TC has been defined as, 'incorporating the appropriate aural, manual, and oral modes of communication in order to ensure effective communication with and among hearing impaired persons'(Garretson,1976 cited by Lou,1988). The philosophy of TC proclaims the right of a deaf child to learn to use all forms of communication available to develop language competence (Denton,1970, cited by Strong,1988).It has been said that TC takes the best of both oral and manual approaches and tailors them to the communication needs of individual children(Lou,1988).

You have already studied the principles of TC and we now turn to its aims and objectives. The underlying objective of TC is the same as that of Oralism. The goal is to make it possible for a child with deafness to acquire a spoken/verbal language. Verbal language, literacy and communication skills open the door to academic opportunities and the ability to being able to make one's way in the world without support. This has a direct relationship with avenues for employment. For the person with deafness assimilation into the larger community, which is hearing, becomes a reality. As discussed earlier there are many advantages be a part of the hearing world.

Let us look at the means employed by TC. It was the poor results of deaf children in oral programmes in the 1960s and the dissatisfaction of the parents that created a shift away from Oralism. Deaf students were leaving school without becoming literate. At the same time ASL was creating interest due to the publication of Stokoe's book on Sign Language Structure. There was also some evidence that ,the less than 10% of deaf children of deaf parents, using ASL as a native language were doing better academically than the deaf children of hearing parents. A new approach was required.

TC became the new philosophy. It turned to a communication system which combined auditory-vocal mechanisms (Oral method) with visual-manual mechanisms. This was the production of simultaneous speech and a manually coded spoken language (McAnally et al,1987).You have read about these manual codes in the earlier sub-unit. A visual-manual component had been added to the auditory-vocal. The visual mode of the deaf child was to be used to the optimum. In the instructional model of TC, which is SIMCOM, a spoken language is supported by a signing system.

TC believes that a visual representation of an oral /verbal language helps the child in receiving more complete language .What is not clear through only speech reading and residual hearing gets the support of a manual component, a signing system. This makes it easier for the child to receive input. When speech is used simultaneously with the supportive signing system the child is more confident that her message has been understood by the hearing person. As described by Clive Davis, himself post-lingually deafened, TC is a wise use of manual communication used simultaneously with speech (which) removes the obscurity of oral communication(Clive Davis,1976).

Till the late 1980s TC was prevalent across most school programmes in the USA. However SIMCOM(simultaneous use of speech and signing) has not found favour with either the proponents of ASL or those endorsing Oralism. One of the criticisms of SIMCOM is that signed/manual codes cannot wholly represent a verbal language.It is also being recognized that from the visual inputs they receive deaf children cannot extract the structure of a verbal language. Nor can they internalize the structure. Pure Oralistsfear that the child will not develop the motivation needed for the difficult tasks of lip reading ,listening and speaking and will thus be prevented from pursuing oral English or any verbal Language skills(Lou,1988).A final issue is that presentation is in two modes, visual and auditory.To which will the child be able to pay attention?

In support of TC ,Meadow (1976) agrees that some visual systematically signed supplement to spoken English is beneficial to young deaf children. It has also been recognized that TC enhances the development of verbal competence and has no adverse effects upon the acquisition of speech(Denmark,1976).

Point to Ponder: Would one need to vary one's speed of speech to match signing simultaneously?

Educational Bi-lingualism

As we have studied earlier, EB believes in the right of the deaf children to sign language as their primary language. It uses the visual-manual mechanism to develop a sign language such as ASL or ISL. On the foundation of this primary language a verbal language such as English or Hindi is taught mainly through reading and writing. The primary form of this oral language is not used,

i.e. the spoken form. The teaching of the second language is required for school and education as sign languages do not have a script.

What are the goals of EB? As with Oralism and TC, the ultimate aim of EB is that the child attains language competency. It is the attainment of language and literacy which will provide the independence for functioning in the world.

Alongside the development of language and literacy EB also believes that the child should have a positive sense of her own identity. This is in contrast to the earlier options in which the child has to sometimes struggle to make sense of the information they are receiving. This difficulty in understanding the message completely and easily often leads to lack of self-esteem and a sense of failure.

Another goal of EB is that the child gets the most complete input through the chosen mode of communication. This is possible through sign language as it offers the greatest access to knowledge and information to a person who cannot hear.

How does EB function?

The Bi-lingual Bi-cultural understanding of the Deaf as a linguistic community promotes the approach that children with deafness use sign language as the first or the primary language. This has many advantages and can be compared to young hearing children starting education in their mother-tongue. In many ways the deaf child can be likened to hearing speakers of other languages for whom bi-lingualism is one available option to mainstream into society. (Strong,1988).

The use of sign language as the first language ensures that the child is able to have a fluent access to communication. This ease and fluency means that the deaf child understands completely what is being conveyed to her. This has implications for the transfer of knowledge and information in a school setting. Knowledge is more easily received and hence understoodbetter.Thus sign language gives the deaf child complete access to the school subjects in the curriculum.

It is on the plinth of basic language competency provided by the first language, ISL or ASL,(L1) that a second verbal language (L2)is developed. Hence the term bi-lingual has been used to describe this communication option.

Formal signing is encouraged and group codes and 'home-signs' are discouraged in EB (Huddar, 2011). It is also necessary in this option that hearing parents of deaf children learn ISL (in India), so as to support the development of sign language. As Strong(1988) reports the quality of interaction children experience with adults is more important for academic success than whether that language is English or something else. It is also required as only parents can ensure that the child has the language skills before formal education begins. This means that hearing parents have to learn sign language before their deaf child enters school.

The fluency and intelligibility of communication in both reception ad expression that are necessary for normal development of language are probably present in greater degree in this approach than in the other two. We must also recognize that the eye is a relatively inefficient processor of spoken languages (speech reading).However, it is more efficient at processing features of sign language (McAnally et al,1987).

Studies, such as those of Vernon and Koh, 1970 and Meadow,1968,(cited inVernon,1976) show deaf children of deaf parents using manual methods achieving better results in comparison to deaf children with hearing parents using oral methods.

At the same time there is a need to recognize that EB has issues just as do the other options. One of these is the sign language competence of the student at the higher levels of education. The question here is whether their sign language competence is sufficient to grasp concepts at this level. There is also the issue of there being only a little research on the normal process of sign language development. In contrast is a great amount of research is available on spoken language development. The third is that even in this option, it is questionable whether deaf students are able to achieve age-appropriate language development when they enter school to be able to access the curriculum (Gregory,1996).

> *Point to Ponder: Would a young deaf child acquire sign language naturally?*

4.3 Justifications and challenges for Oralism, Total Communication and Educational Bi-lingualism

Introduction

We now explore the 3 communication options and understand the strengths and challenges of each option .We know that in the narrative of deaf education there have been swings ,from 'pure oralism' to 'pure manualism'. There have also been periods when the consensus has been between the two, at a mid-way mark. The reasons for these changes have been many factors, some connected to the socio-political situation and some to new findings and research. The main factor appears to be the need to provide viable means by which a child with deafness can find her place in society.

Justification for Oralism

The oral approach, from the beginning, has been an attempt to give a child with deafness the ability to be a part of the 'hearing' world. Let us examine the advantages of a successful 'oral' programme.

Oral Communication

As stated earlier Oralism means that the child can use speech to communicate with hearing people and is also able to understand the speech of others. What is the effect of this situation?

How can we justify the selection of this option over the other two?

a. It fulfills the parent's expectation of having a child who can speak like them. As we know nearly 90-95% deaf children are born to hearing parents.
b. This ability keeps the child integrated within the family and the immediate community. There is no new skill that the family members need to learn.
c. The 'oral child' if successful, is able to be a part of the inclusive school setting. The teacher does not need to learn a new skill or take any special measures.
d. Due to the fact that they can communicate to a wider group of persons, they may have more access to information and knowledge.
e. It is true that,though not necessarily right, more and better job opportunity are available to those with better communication skills.

Technology

Though Oralism may have been one of the first recorded means of teaching the deaf, it has been the later advances in technology which have supported this option. In India we can see the following:-

a. Hearing Aids: Newer and more advanced design features have resulted in steady improvement of hearing aids. Electric hearing aids became commercially available in the early 20th century. Since then rapid strides have been made and today BTE (Behind-the-Ear) and Programmable hearing aids are readily available.
b. Cochlear Implants: These are more accessible today and the new scheme of the government has helped.
c. Speech Software: There is more speech software readily available.
d. Audiology: There are newer and more advanced procedures as well as equipment for measurement of hearing loss.

Literacy

There is some research that indicates that mastery of oral skills has a positive effect on literacy skills. This is linked to the fact that the oral method uses the same channels as those used by hearing children to establish language skills.

Challenges for Oralism

To obtain an understanding of a communication option we need to examine the option in its entirety. What are the challenges faced by Oralism? What are its limitations?

Oralism and language

a. Identification related challenges : For a child to be able to acquire language and speech skills through the oral method, it is essential that the child is identified early. However, without universal screening or even the High-Risk Register in India, early identification seldom takes place.

b. Intervention related challenges: This needs to happen within the 'Critical Period'. This is the age between 0-3 years and is a crucial time for language development. A delay in intervention and amplification will have a negative impact particularly if the oral method is the chosen option.

Oralism has limited results if listening and speaking training is started as late as 3 or 4 years.

c. Language Delay : Since Oralism would insist on use of residual hearing and use of speech, some of the following may occur

    i.   child may have had no amplification during the critical period,

    ii.   may have uninformed parents and hence no language or speech,

    iii.   May not respond well to the intervention

This will result in language delay which most likely to have a negative impact on literacy development.

Technology related challenges

a. *Amplification*: Appropriate binaural hearing aids are essential for the oral method to succeed. However, this is often not the case in India. Many times the most appropriate hearing aids are out of reach financially and even when acquired will need replacement in a few years.

b. Maintenance: Amplification devices need to be well-maintained both by the parent and the educational institute. In smaller towns this can take a long time as the device is sent to a bigger city for repair. In the rural areas   of India there are no personnel or service centers.

Teachers

Knowledge and Skills related challenges: Oralism can only succeed if the teacher has a good grounding in the principles of oral methods. Skill development in implementing these principles is also required. One's ability to speak as a teacher is no guarantee that one can impart these skills to a deaf child. Extensive training is required.

A teacher must be able to guide parents in gaining knowledge and skills to support the oral programme at home. This is particularly important during early intervention. Illiteracy and poverty among the parents also plays a role and can be areas of concern.

Schools

a. Residential Schools: Though claiming to be Oral Schools,it is often observed that residential schools clearly state that they are not able to ensure oral methods. Though

they may be using this approach in the classroom, during the non-school hours, the children usually use signs .The staff of the hostel need to be as well- trained as the teaching staff to support Oralism.

b. Inconsistency: Some schools only use the principles of the oral methods in their Early Intervention and Pre-school classes. The teachers are allowed to use any mode in the higher classes. This approach does not support Oralism and can be a challenge to deal with.

c. Additional Disabilities: If the school gives admission to students with additional disabilities, yet efforts have to be made to ensure homogeneity in the classroom.

Parents

a. Informed Parents: The best situation is when the parents are informed about the various communication options and have the freedom and availability to choose. If they choose Oralism they must be prepared to support the option with support from the home. Failure to do so becomes a challenge.

b. Support: In the Oral option the parents need to have both information and the guidance on how to support the approach. They need to know the techniques to stimulate language and speech at home, to be able to have access and the ability to maintain amplification devices etc. If they cannot do the above it becomes difficult to follow the principles of Oralism.

Point to Ponder: Do parents have added responsibility in Oralism?

Justification for Total Communication

There were many reasons that TC was introduced. Let us examine these reasons so as to **justify SIMCOM over the other two options**.

Early Internalization of Signs

The use of signs at an early age by deaf children of deaf parents has been recorded to have a beneficial effect on later language development. Signs are as much a symbol system as speech and the use of a symbol system helps cognitive functioning (Brill,1976).Total Communication, unlike Oralism ,gives the deaf child a chance to use signs at a young age. Meadow notes that it is urgent and crucial that deaf children acquire language during the same developmental period as do hearing children, "with the same speed and the same pleasure"(Meadow,1976).

Information Input

In SIMCOM, speech is supported with an auxiliary signing system. A wise use of manual communication used simultaneously with speech removes the obscurities of oral communication. Conversation becomes easier and the child receives better information.

Psychological Justification

a. TC helps easy parent-child communication. There is less frustration on both the side of the child and of the parent because of more fluent communication.
b. The child is better adjusted psychologically as her means of communication is understood by the parents and not rejected by them. Rejection can be felt by the child if her constant efforts at communication are either not understood or are not in the mode acceptable to the parent, i.e. the oral mode.
c. Good self- image is an important factor in psychological well-being. Compare a child who can communicate fluently and easily with parents, peers and teachers to another who is seen as failing at the task of communication. The first child will have a better self-image.
d. It has been noted that when compared to Oralism, TC has been advised by psychiatrists in helping to avoid mental health problems among the deaf (Brill,1976).
e. It has been noticed that children use either mode, speech or signs depending with whom they are communicating. With TC they have the advantage of both modes.

Challenges for Total Communication

Two channels for reception and expression of information

In TC the child is presented by information through a supporting signing system along with speech. This means the child is expected to use the visual mode and the auditory mode. However as the child will find signs easier to receive, the fear is that the child will pay less attention to the speech of the speaker and only focus on the signs. The attention to only the signing system would mean that in the reception of communication, speech reading and the auditory input will be ignored. In the same manner while expressing themselves the child will find it easier to sign and pay less attention to speaking.

The challenge then is how the child will be able to communicate with people who do not use the signing system and know no signs.

It has been observed that in SIMCOM, the child in a classroom has to pay attention to many sources of input. They are speech reading(visual input),listening(auditory input),watching the signs of the speaker(visual input) and taking in information from teaching aids and the blackboard(visual input).This is a description of a multi-modal situation which is taking place simultaneously. To any student this is a confusing scenario. What does the child do? Child can decide to concentrate only on one of the channels as described earlier.

There is also literature that suggests that it is not possible to process two visual signals simultaneously .One or the other visual signals would be disregarded. As we have discussed already the child will either pay attention to speech reading or to the signs but not to both. We are still left with the question of the text book, the blackboard and, perhaps, teaching aids.

Skill Development

For TC to be implemented and be successful it is necessary that training centers exist which can teach both the teachers and the parents. A teacher needs to use TC fluently if there is to be proper communication and imparting of information. A parent and the family also need to be able to use TC with ease.

There are very few centers in India where training in the signing system can be learned. This is a major challenge.

Point to Ponder: How necessary do you think it is for the parents to use the signing system?

Justification for Educational Bi-lingualism

As we have studied earlier the education of children with deafness has been a continuous search for the communication option which would best serve their interests. Let us study the pros and cons of using EB as an option.

Educational Aspects

Communication between teacher and student, in atypical classroom using EB is unambiguous and fluent. Students are receiving information and communicating in what has been termed the primary language of the deaf i.e. sign language. Hence language used in the classroom is completely accessible to the child with deafness. This would lead to:

a. Complete understanding of concepts.
b. Clear imparting of knowledge.
c. There is no need for rote-learning as there is clear comprehension of content.
d. Classes are more lively as no student is left out. Students can be left out if Oralism is the communication option.
e. Pupils are not struggling to understand the teacher but can spend more time in acquiring knowledge.
f. The learning of the second language, which is a spoken/verbal language, can become easier when the primary language(sign language)is well established.
g. Students have the benefit of the same language within the classroom and outside. This means that there is scope to gain more information from the environment just as hearing children.
h. Early exposure to sign language prevents delay in acquiring language. This is often the case with a child who is using a communication option which makes it difficult to acquire language during the Critical Period.

Psychological Aspects

    a. The child gains self-esteem as the communication mode is accessible to her and there is no scope of being left out and unsure.

    b. There are teachers who are deaf who work in EB. They provide positive role-models for the child.

Challenges for Educational Bi-lingualism

There are limitations to the communication option of EB which need to be recognized. For convenience let us look at them from the point of view of parents, teachers and the children.

Parents

    a. It is an established fact that more than90% of all children with deafness are born to hearing parents. If decide to follow EB, the parents need to learn a new language i.e.sign language.In India they need to learn Indian Sign Language so that they can communicate with their child and also support the language of the school. The limitation is that ISL is a new language to be learnt and parents must be prepared to learn it just as if they were to learn a verbal language such as French or Russian.

    b. Research is indicating that sign language also needs to be acquired during the Critical Period for language development. This means that parents have to learn it even before they send their child to a formal school. That appears difficult to achieve.

    c. The attitude of the hearing parents to deafness and sign languagelearning also plays a critical role in the success of EB.

Teachers

    a. Teachers need to learn sign language and there must be avenues to be able to do so.They have to not only learn sign language but also be competent in it.

    b. Teachers must be convinced that EB is the option for development of language and for the imparting of knowledge.

    c. A teacher needs to be able to instruct and teach in sign language. At the same time the same teacher needs to be able to teach a verbal/spoken language through the medium of sign language.

An example of this would be that the teacher teaches Indian Sign Language as a primary mode. This needs competence as pointed out earlier. The teacher also needs to teach Gujarati, as a second language, through the base of ISL. A verbal language is required for reading and writing. As you know sign languages do not have a script.

Hence there are two areas in which the teacher needs to be competent.

Children

In a hearing world the person with deafness using sign language will have to face certain challenges.

a. There will be limitations in being able to communicate with most people as they will not know sign language.
b. In an inclusive setting a child using sign language,without an interpreter, could prove to be a disadvantage.
c. In India an added problem is the shortage of interpreters.

Point to Ponder: Is making sign language interpreting mandatory essential to the success of EB?

Conclusion

It is the concern of educationists for the achievements of their students that has largely driven the changes in the history of deaf education. The debate between the Oralists and the Manualists has been a steady feature. The theoretical frame-work for what suits the deaf best needs to be constantly re-examined.It could also be that some children benefit from one approach and the others from another communication option. As those involved in the field we need to be constantly searching and introspecting.

Summary

It is necessary to have knowledge and an understanding of the 3 Communication Options which are Oralism, Total Communication and Educational Bi-lingualism.

Oralismisis based on principles of using the aural/oral mode of communication. The deaf child is trained in learning to speak bymaking the optimum use of residual hearing. Thisis to be done through the use of amplification devices and auditory training.

The goal of Oralismis that the child acquires a spoken language, literacy and communication skills. By learning the language of the community the child will have access to higher education, good employment and a life of dignity.

The pre-requisites for the success of Oralism emphasises
   1) Early Identification and Intervention
   2) Commitment of staff
   3) Use of appropriate technology.
   4) Supportive and informed parents.

TC (SIMCOM) was introduced in the 1970s as there was dissatisfaction with the results of Oralism. The principles of TC include all the principles of Oralism with the addition of signs and the supporting signing system. In TC a verbal/spoken language is used with the support of the signing system.

The goal of SIMCOM is the same as that of Oralism, an acquisition of verbal language, literacy and communication skills. It is the addition of the component of signs that differentiates the 2 communication options.

The pre-requisites for success include

1) Early intervention.
2) Skill development of all the people involved in the implementation –the teachers,the professionals, the students themselves and the family.
3) The availability of training avenues and instructional material.

EB was considered an option once ASL got the status of a language through the research of William Stokoe in the late 1960s.It takes a completely different path from the other 2 options.The principles of EB are based on the recognition of the Deaf community as a minority linguistic community with rights.This translates into the right of a deaf child to have sign language (ISL in India) as the primary or first language.All instruction in the school system will be in sign language (L1).Based on the primary language a second (verbal/spoken) language will be taught as a second language(L2).This becomes necessaryas a sign language till date has no script.

The pre-requisites for the success of EB include

1) Commitment of parents and teacherswhomustbewilling to learn sign language.
2) Teachers must be efficient in instruction through sign language. They must also be competent in being able to teach a second language for academic purposes based on sign language.
3) Avenues for skill development for both parents and teachers.
4) Time of intervention is also relevant so that the child can acquire sign language through interaction with competent adult users.
5) Adult Deaf role models are needed to act as mentors in EB.

As you can see the 3 communication options have been built on different principles in different times of history. There are many factors that have been instrumental in creating them. Oralism and EB are at two ends of the spectrum with TC attempting a middle path. Though markedly separate what binds the 3 options is their endeavor to ensure that language and literacy is attained by the child with deafness. As pointed out earlier, no one option suits all deaf children. It is wise to be informed and choose carefully. However, whichever option is chosen, it is essential that it is implemented in a consistent and systematic manner.

Check your Progress

Exercises

True /False:

1. The goal of all the communication options is language and literacy.
2. Amplification devices play no role in SIMCOM.
3. EB requires a verbal/spoken language to be taught.
4. Parents need to learn new skills in Oralism.

5. There are psychological benefits for the child in EB.

Fill in the Blanks:
1. In _____ and _____ it is not necessary for hearing parents to learn a new language.
2. TC uses a _____ language and supports it with a _____.
3. Sign language is considered the primary language in _____.
4. Manual codes have been specially designed for_____.
5. There is one _____ language and one _____ language in EB.

Multiple Choice:

1. Oralism is based on
   a. Speech,speech/lip reading, use of residual hearing and a signing system.
   b. Speech, speech/lip reading and use of residual hearing.
   c. Speech and sign language.
2. The success of TC is linked to
   a. Instructional material
   b. Use of sign language
   c. Auditory-verbal Therapy
3. A special school following EB primarily needs
   a. Electronic equipment
   b. Staff who are competent in teaching in sign language.
   c. Audiologists and speech pathologists.
4. A signing system is used in
   a. Oralism
   b. Total Communication
   c. Educational Bi-lingualism
5. Indian Sign language is
   a. A manual representation of a spoken language.
   b. A language based on a verbal language.
   c. An independent language.

Short Answer:
1. Explain residual hearing with reference to deafness.
2. What is a signing system?
3. What were the reasons for TC to be promoted?
4. What are the pre-requisites for Oralism?
5. What are the justifications for EB?

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- Henderson,P., (Ed.),(1976),*Methods of Communication Currently Used in the Education of Deaf Children*, London: Royal National Institute for the Deaf.

Model Answers:

True/False:
1. True
2. False
3. True
4. False
5. True

Fill in the Blanks
1. Oralism .Total Communication.
2. Spoken.Signing System.
3. Educational Bi-lingualism.
4. Total Communication.
5. Verbal.Sign.

Multiple Choice:
1. B
2. A
3. B
4. B
5. C

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UNIT- 5

OVERVIEW OF LANGUAGE

Total Hours: 14

Objectives

After reading this unit the learners would be able to:

- Discuss sign language in the context of the relation among communication, language and speech
- Describe what a language is and how it can be distinguished from the range of non linguistic communication systems.
- Understand the basic concepts of current linguistic theory and how does sign language fit into it
- Respond better to society's misunderstanding about sign language and facilitate the process of realistic awareness about sign languages are.

5.1 Communication, Language and Speech Introduction
5.2 Definition, Design Features and Sign Language
5.3 Linguistic Theory and Sign Language

Unit Introduction

I have been chasing the concept of language for more than a decade. Sometimes this chase led me to some fulfilling intellectual insights and at times it tricked me into confusing paths. I am not an exception. Several scholars, from several faculties of human advancement have been doing it for centuries. Man has been constantly trying to push back the boundaries of ignorance about language and communication. There are lacs of books and thousands of researchers dedicated to this topic. And after so much of efforts we can see some light at the end of the tunnel. Yes, we understand LANGUAGE rather better than the yester years today.

As interpreters, language is like your professional tool that you need to know it well. This unit would help you take a fresh look at the term Language. You may also think what is there to know about LANGUAGE! We have been using language as naturally and as commonly as we breathe. Yes, you have been using language effortlessly so far but now that you intend to become an ISL interpreter, you better know it little better – Particularly because you are not an interpreter of two verbal languages (or two manual languages), you would be interpreting between a verbal and a manual language.

We would review three areas in this Unit # 5. In the first sub **unit 5.1**, we will take a closer look at three frequently used terms – communication, language and speech. These terms are used

rather **loosely or interchangeably**. People feel the boundaries among these three terms to be rather blur or overlapping. Let us find out how this is not true. **Communication, language and speech are as distinct** as the terms 'vehicle, four wheelers and car' are. It would be a lot of fun discovering how communication is similar to 'vehicle', language is like a 'four wheeler' and speech like 'car'. Lets do it.

Sub-unit 5.1 would set the stage for the sub-**unit 5.2** wherein we leave communication and speech behind and concentrate on 'Language'. We would also look into the **characteristics of language what make language a Language**. And yes, unfortunately (or fortunately) once again (or once and for all) we would face the question: is sign language a language?

If sub-unit 5.2 highlights that sign languages too are languages. If so then we need to briefly review the linguistic theory since we are going to **fit sign languages in the larger structure of current linguistic theory**. **Sub-unit 5.3** is planned to help you do the same. Linguistic theory is generally studied and discovered through the spoken languages. How well does it qualify to describe sign languages? In this unit we would try to see whether describing sign languages using framework of current linguistic theory adds more insights into our knowledge of this linguistic theory.

Overall, in this unit we are going to walk on a few untried paths. We would try to be more rational cognitively and more accepting affectively so that the biggest barrier will not keep us away from the truth – the barrier called anchoring bias. Anchoring bias is the term used to describe a cognitive process wherein a person is unable to take a fresh look at knowledge because the previous knowledge anchors (chains) the thinking to go into new direction.

As interpreters, it may be difficult and at times irrelevant for you to understand the more complex parts of neuro-linguistic concepts and its application to sign languages. However there could be a few facts about which you need to be clear and firm. You would bump into people – including professionals, parent's and the deaf themselves, who go by their own limiting assumptions rather than verifying the current pool of knowledge. Even if you could identify the biases / misunderstandings people may possess, the purpose of this unit will have been served. And if you could identify your own earlier biases and misunderstandings about which you could simply laugh now, consider half the batter won or half the journey covered in the making of a professional interpreter.

5.1 Communication, Language and Speech Introduction

Technical terms are the leaders of any professional discipline, they lead knowledge and they lead the professional communication in a specific field . A student or a practitioner needs to know the exact meaning of the key terms to be able to think or talk professionally. These terms look like any common English words at the surface level but there is a precise meaning attached to it when the same word becomes a technical term in a field of study. Ask a media professional what is a 'hook' or a teacher what is 'instruction' or an engineer what is 'scaffolding' or a film maker what

is 'continuity'? All these words are English words and anybody knowing English knows the meaning of these words. Yet, these professionals mentioned above use these words as technical terms with a very specific meaning. The knowledge of the technical terms is shared among fellow professionals and the fine nuances of it would not be understood by a person not belonging to that professional.

In your field of sign language interpretation too there are several terms which mean more specifically to you – and for others these are just English words.

This unit gives you opportunity to understand and be precise in using three of the most important terms – communication, language and speech. These mean different things.

> *Read and tell whether everyone has the same problem?*
>
> a. *Anil is a 4 years old. It is difficult to understand him when he talks. His voice is not clear.*
> b. *Anita is in 10th standard. She has trouble in reading text due to her language disorder.*
> c. *Akash stammers and it is difficult to understand what he speaks.*
> d. *Ajay was not exposed to ISL since childhood and hence his signing skills are below average.*
> e. *Ali was raised in an institute and hence he finds it challenging to interact socially or initiate talking to strangers.*

Do Anil, Anita, Akash, Ajay and Ali have same problems? Who has speech related problems? Who has language related problems? Who has communication related problems?

Before we get into the details of the terms, let us draw an analogy here which would make things simpler for us.

What takes someone from one place to another?
Write your answer here: _____
What was your response?

A few of the common responses would include: Car, train, vehicle, raft, four wheeler, two wheelers, bus, ship etc. To see the relationship among all these responses, let us arrange them in a diagrammatical way.

Try your response here.

One of the ways to do it would be

VEHICLES

Zero Wheel	Two Wheeler	4 Wheeler	More than 4 Wheeler
Ship	Cycle	Car	Train
Boat	Scooter	Bus	Truck
	Bike	Van	

Now study each of the item in relation to each other. For example how are ship and boat related? How are train and vehicle related? How are car and scooter related?

I have used these terms here since these are concrete and familiar objects. We are aware of the relations these have with each others. Now see these terms: **Sign language, written language, gestures, animal communication, language, communication, speech, non linguistic communication, human non linguistic communication, pictures**. How would you place these terms in a tree diagram like the one shown previously? Here is a clue. Try filling in the blanks. It is very important that you try this exercise before going ahead. This will help you understand your thought processes. Later you will be able to correct it if need be.
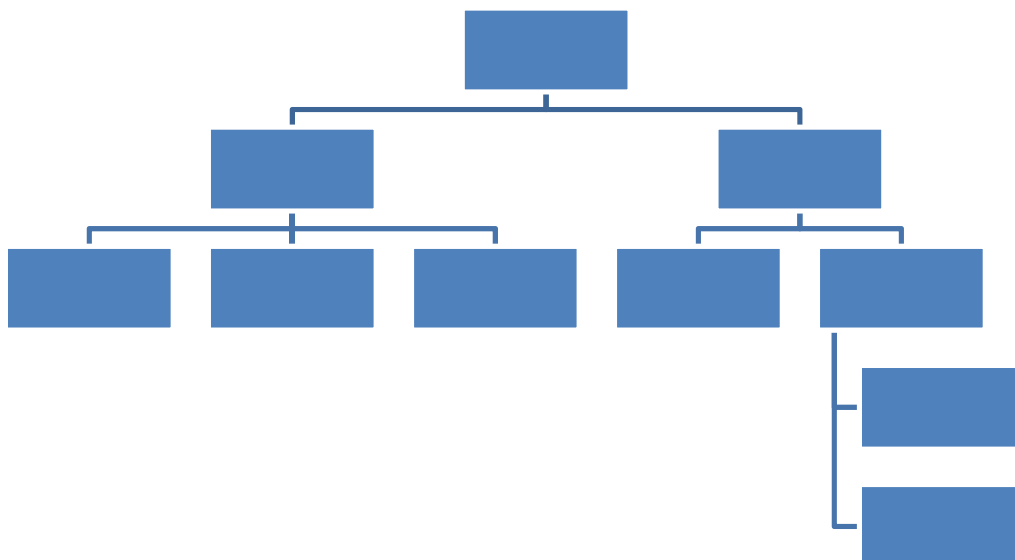
Now study this. Was your response similar?

```
                          ┌─────────────────────┐
                          │    COMMUNICATION    │
                          └─────────────────────┘
                ┌────────────────────┴────────────────────┐
        ┌───────────────┐                         ┌───────────────────┐
        │   Language    │                         │   Non linguistic  │
        └───────────────┘                         │   Communication   │
                                                  └───────────────────┘
    ┌────────┬───────────┬──────────┐        ┌──────────────┬──────────────────┐
┌────────┐ ┌──────────┐ ┌────────┐      ┌──────────────┐  ┌──────────────────┐
│ Speech │ │ Written  │ │  Sign  │      │   Animal     │  │   Human Non      │
└────────┘ │ Language │ │Language│      │Communication │  │   Linguistic     │
           └──────────┘ └────────┘      └──────────────┘  │  Communication   │
                                                          └──────────────────┘
                                                              ┌──────────────┐
                                                              │   Gestures   │
                                                              └──────────────┘
                                                              ┌──────────────┐
                                                              │   Pictures   │
                                                              └──────────────┘
```
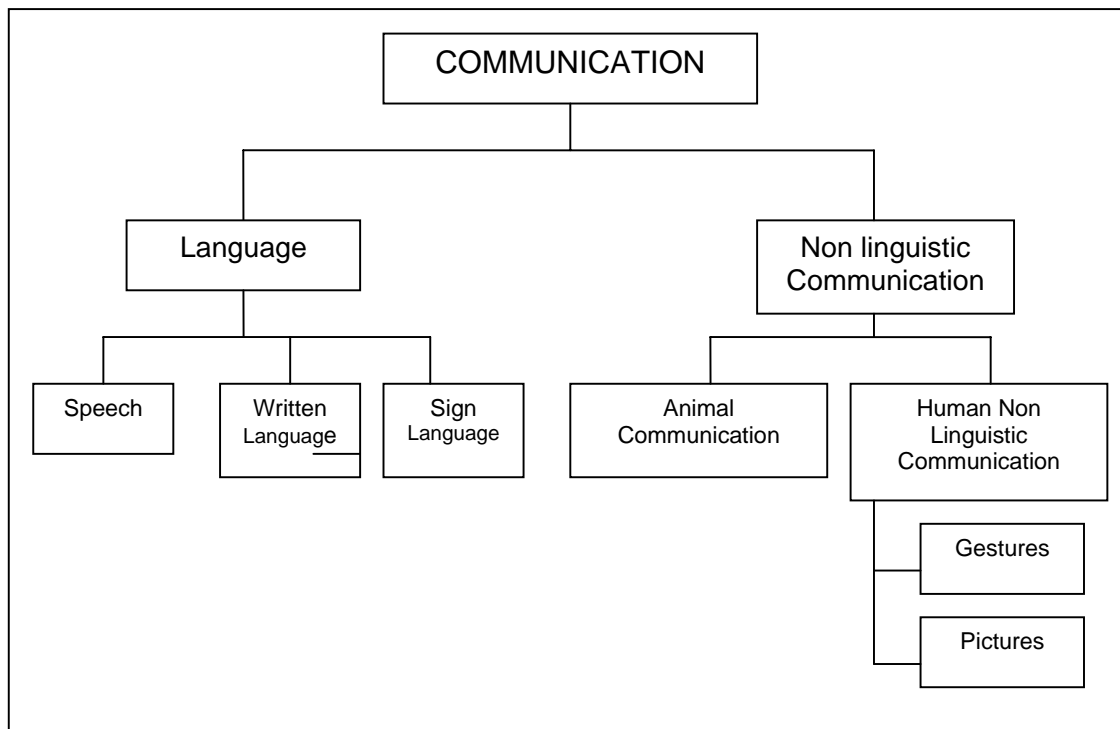
Point to ponder: There are many more communication forms than this. Make a list. Refer this when we discuss linguistic and non linguistic communication later.

However, we will take the mentioned communication systems here for keeping things simpler. That will help us concentrate on the three terms that we need to understand. These are: Communication, Language and Speech. How would you describe the relationship among the three? **Communication is an umbrella term** with the broadest spectrum including a big range of communication systems. These communication systems can be divided into **two broad categories languages (linguistic communication) and non linguistic communication** (communication that takes place without using language). Language is an inner abstract process in human mind. It is a mental reality. It exists in human brains. It has **three concrete physical ways** in which it can either expressed or received:

- Spoken language (**verbal** form of language or speech)
- Written language (**graphical** form of language or writing)
- Sign language (**manual** form of language)

These are the ONLY three ways of language expression. Anything beyond these is non linguistic communication like animal communication (dancing honey bees, talking parrots, dolphins trained to follow instructions or pet dog wagging tail), gestures, pictures, roadside traffic signal system etc.

Read following statements which would further aid your understanding.

1. One can communicate in many ways – language is one of them. It is known to be the most **effective** one.
2. One can use language in 3 ways. **Speech is one of the ways**. It is known to be the most **commonly** used way. **Majority** of the people acquire it naturally and hence look at it as a **primary way** of using language.
3. Speech though most commonly seen around is NOT THE ONLY way of linguistic expression.

Also read these question – answers carefully.

1. Is speech a communication system? Yes
2. Is speech one of the ways language is expressed? Yes
3. Is speech the **only** way of communication? No
4. Is speech the only way language is expressed? No
5. Is language a communication system? Yes
6. Is language the only communication system? No

After understanding the analogy, the tree diagram and the summarizing statements given above, the relation among the 3 terms should be quite clear to all of you.

The discussion however would not be complete till we understand these three terms in isolation as well.

1. Communication: Communication is a two way complex and intentional process of transmitting thoughts from on end to the other through a channel.
Pay attention to the words:

- **Two way:** This means that the receiver and the sender can exchange their roles. They may not do so actually every time communication takes place but they have the positional do so.
- **Intentional:** Unintentional (informative) signals / symbols may transfer message from one end to the other but if it is not intentional then we would not call it communication for our study purpose.
- **Thoughts:** The term thoughts is used here as a broad umbrella term to include every form of the content in human mind like feelings, opinions, questions, comments, response, ideas information etc.
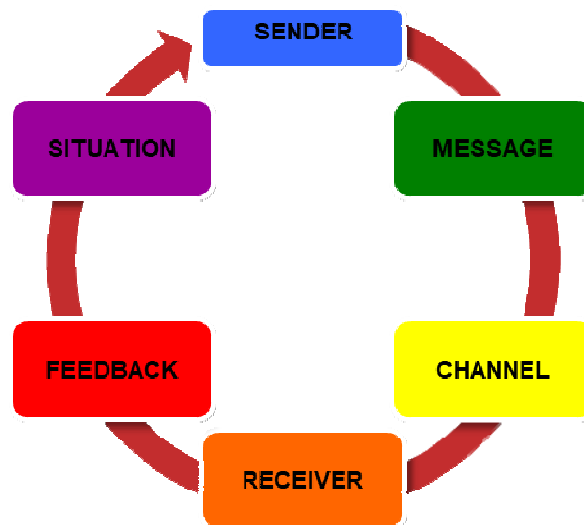
Communication Process: The goal of communication as you all know is to convey information. This communication process is divided into basic components like (please *refer to flow chart above*);

a. A sender transmits (conveys) a message through a channel to the receiver. For this to happen, the sender first develops an idea, which is composed into a message and then transmitted to the other group. This group interprets the message and receives the meaning.

b. Developing a message is known as encoding. Interpreting the message is referred to as decoding.

The other important feature is the feedback cycle. Communication is rarely a one   way. When a person receives a message, s/he responds to it by giving a reply. Otherwise, the sender will

2. Language: A rule governed symbol system used for communication within a community. Let us see a few key terms in isolation.

- **Rule governed:** Phonemes are combined to make words, words combined to make sentences and sentences are combined to make a discourse. All these combinations of isolated items are extremely structured and are made on the basis of explicit rules.

For example, in any language one can combine two words in a particular way but not in any other way. For example in Hindi you can have 'haree' followed by 'topi' but not 'topi' followed by 'haree'. Have you ever wondered why we must say:

(1)   That is a green cap.

Why cannot one say:

(2) "a cap green is that"

Or have you ever wondered why must we spell table as t a b le and not t e b l e?

We, those who claim to know English, use sentence 1 and not the sentence 2. This happens for some reason. We follow the rules of the language in which the communication needs to take place. If rules are not followed then communication is **at risk of breaking down**. For example when you read.

(3)   and Rinku Montee gracefully ran caught.

3 is collection of words but look at the way the words are arranged. Are you able to understand the specific meaning of it?   Who ran? Who caught whom? What could have been done gracefully? running or catching? Many details remained unclear there.

(4)   Rinku ran gracefully and caught Montee.

Now do we get the complete and detailed meaning? Yes, we do. What was the difference between sentence 3 and 4? Sentence 4 follows the rules and hence achieves communication while sentence 3 does not. Hence, let us remember that we follow the rules of the language or else communication is at risk of breaking down.

Rule governed thus simply means that words are not more collection of alphabets but it is a rule based collection of words.

Sentence are not a more set of words but it is a set of words which are arranged on the basis of rules.

Point to ponder: We follow rules whenever we use language to either receive the communication or to express anything. How many rules are there in that set of rules? What do we generally call this set of rules?

Symbol system: See following images

(a)   (b) deckel   (c)   ball

Did you understand the meaning of image a? Yes
Do you think most of the people in the world would understand it? Yes
This is so because the image has (almost) direct relation with the meaning. We would call this relation <u>iconic</u>.

Did you understand the image b? No
Do you think most of the people who do not understand German would understand it? No
Only those who understand German would understand the meaning of the image b. This is so because the image does not have any direct / natural / biological relation with meaning. You will

understand it only if you have learnt the association. For example, the image 3 given above. **We would call this LEARNT relation <u>symbolic</u>**.

If looking at the word we do not get the access to meaning we say 'I do not know that language' because the relation between the word and the meaning is symbolic – it is a learnt association. If we know the language we know the meaning. On the other hand we understand the meaning of the image (a) because the **association between the image and meaning is natural or <u>iconic.</u>**

From this point of view language is more of a symbolic system as against an iconic system. (More about this later when we discuss sign languages and their natures.)

Point to ponder: Sign languages are completely iconic. True or false?

Within a community: A language is language only in a particular community. Language is a **shared code** which means the grammar or the vocabulary or the rules of its use are meaningful only within that language community. We are going to discuss language in greater detail in the next sub-unit, hence let us move on to our third term – Speech.

<u>3. Speech:</u> Speech is one of the ways language is expressed. Speech is using articulated sounds which are called speech sounds. Speech includes three components.
Voice + Articulation + Suprasegmental features = Speech

Voice: How we make use of vocal cords and breathe to create sounds which are either loud or soft.

Articulation: How we produce speech sounds like /p/, /ph/, /b/, /bh/, /m/. We can produce such speech sounds in isolation but more importantly we communicate combining those speech sounds. Isolated /t/, /o/ and /p/ do not mean anything or are not communicative. But /top/ is communicative. Hence articulation is an important part of speech.

Suprasegmentals: Read the sentences loudly

<div align="center">(5)   Rinku is going for a movie</div>

Now imagine a question before this sentence and then say the sentence loudly again

       Is Rinku going for movie?   (6) Rinku IS going for a movie

        Where is Rinku going?   (7) Rinku is going FOR A MOVIE

        Who is going for a movie?   (8) RINKU is going for a movie.

Did you find the way you say 6, 7 and 8 different from each other? What was different then? The difference you could feel was due to intonation, pause, emphasis, rhythm etc. These are equally important components of speech. These are called the suprasegmental features of the speech which are known to be overlaid on the voice and articulation.

Point to ponder: When we say 'there is a problem in her speech', do we mean problem in her voice or articulation or suprasegmentals?

We will also have to understand these terms in the light of our focus – sign language!
Sign language being a language basically communicates.

Sign language being a language has all the features that a language should have. within the area of linguistic communication actually, speech and signs are the only two options of **primary linguistics communication**. Written expression (reading / writing) is the third way of linguistic communication which cannot be the **primary mode** of communication – it is the secondary mode of communication which is learnt on the basis of the primary mode. A child has to have adequate age appropriate command over either speech or signs to be able to use language effectively. Sign language does exactly the same what speech does to its native community – in a DIFFERENT way neither being inferior.

Speech and sign are counter parts and do exactly the same in a given language – communicate and create base for reading and writing. Of course **speech to literacy** is a smoother pathway – tried and tested by the majority. Comparatively **sign and literacy** is a journey full of straggle. It is difficult and not impossible.

Adequate command over language (and not speech) is a pre requisite of literacy development. Literacy can be achieved bypassing adequate command over speech but literacy cannot be achieved bypassing language.

Summary

Communication, language and speech are neighboring concepts but they are very distinct from each other. We better use these differently.

Communication: Communication is a two way complex and intentional process of transmitting thoughts from on end to the other through a channel.

Language: A rule governed symbol system used for communication within a community.
Speech: Speech is one of the ways language is expressed. It refers to using a unique language based combination of voice, articulation and suprasegmental features for communication.

Communication is a border concept including hundreds of communication systems. We can categorize these systems into linguistic and non linguistic communication. Linguistic communication means communication using language and non linguistic communication is communication without the use of language.

Language in an inner and abstract process in our mind. It is a rule governed symbol system. Language can be expressed in 3 and only 3 ways:
1. listening and speaking (verbal language)
2. reading and writing (graphical language)
3. understanding and using sign language (manual language)

The first way given above is speech

- Speech is NOT the only way to use language.
- Speech has three components voice, articulation and suprasegmentals.

Speech and sign are counter parts and do exactly the same in a given language – communicate and create base for reading and writing. Of course **speech to literacy** is a smoother pathway – tried and tested by the majority. Comparatively **sign and literacy** is a journey full of straggle. It is difficult and not impossible.

Adequate command over language (and not speech) is a pre requisite of literacy development. Literacy can be achieved bypassing adequate command over speech but literacy cannot be achieved bypassing language.

HOW FAR HAVE YOU LEARNT?

Read the following statements and identify **which 6 are true and which 6 are false**. Try correcting the 'false' ones.

(1)   Communication language and speech have similar meaning but these are used in different context.
(2)   Communication can only be of three types: oral, written and signed
(3)   Communication can not take place using either gestures or pictures.
(4)   Communication may break down if rules of the language are not followed while communicating.
(5)   Speech is an inner abstract process with no physical attributes.
(6)   Speech is made of voice, articulation and suprasegmentals.
(7)   Speech and sign language are counter parts playing similar role in communication but differently.
(8)   Symbols use in language like words do not have natural association with its meaning.
(9)   Speech is an essential prerequisite of development of literacy.
(10)   Mere collection of words is not language.
(11)   Speech is the only manifestation of language.
(12)   Language is being comprised of three key areas; form, content and use.

(1): F   (2): F (3): F (4): T (5): F (6): T (7): T (8): T (9): F (10) : T

5.2 Definition, Design Features and Sign Language

Introduction

In sub-unit 5.1 we understood that **speech and signs are counterparts** of each-others carrying out identical role in the process of linguistic communication. We also discussed how speaking, writing and signing (using sign language) are the three ways of linguistic expression. We know

that rest of the communicative systems are non linguistic. But what are the basis on which we categorize a communicative system to be nonlinguistic. For example, gestures, body language, animal communication or traffic signal system. Obviously on the other hand on what basis do we call a language a language? For example, ISL, Marathi, Swahili or BSL. In this unit we will see definitions of language and the characteristics of language. That would help us classify a communicative system either in the category of linguistic or nonlinguistic communication. And yes, we will look into the case of sign language to conclude whether sign languages can be categorized as languages or as some believe, it is a collection of signs facilitating 'lower order' nonlinguistic communication.

Story Time

A man from India met a man from Africa. They started talking about birds and that brought them to a topic of crow and how intelligent they are. While discussing the Indian insisted that cows are always black and the blackness of the complete body makes them crows. The African was surprised and insisted that whatever full black or half black a crow is a crow. He added that there are biological and genetic features which decide that a bird is a crow. Hence the color does not matter. They argued for long and then the African showed a crow to the Indian which had all the genetic features of a crow and had a white-grey neck area. The Indian was surprised but he accepted that most of the crows are black but that does not mean that a bird can be a crow only when it is completely black. Being fully black is a majority issue and not the design features of being a crow.

What are your take home points from this story? Why do you think the Indian and the African said what they said or believed what they believed?

The Indian had never seen a non-black crow and hence for him being fully black was a by-default characteristic of being a crow. The African has seen the crows with white-grey areas on a crow's body and hence was surprised to see the association between the blackness and a crow. Both of them were arguing on the basis of what they had experienced earlier. They understood the reality when they combined their knowledge.

How can we relate this story to the issue that we are discussing currently? A language is a language whether it is spoken or not. Like the Indian in the story, the hearing community has only experienced one way of language expression –spoken language. Due to this the hearing community associates the concept of language with being verbal / spoken expression. If a hearing person has never seen the other mode of languages (sign language), then he is bound to reject sign language as a language. He is going by his experience and he is also going by the majority. When he is explained that being spoken is not one of the design features of language. That is just a majority issue. Keeping the majority / minority issue aside we must be able to sate that **something can be non verbal and yet be a language.** It then becomes as simple to accept sign language to be a language as accepting a non-black crow to be a crow. Then what remains to be done is to verify the sign languages to have the real design features of a language. We need

to see whether sign language fit into the definition of language. Once that is done then being non verbal would not come in the way to prove that a sign language is a language too.

Defining Language

Defining language is a complex task. Scholars throughout the centuries have struggled to come out with a single definition which would do justice to as a multifaceted concept as Language. Here are a few samples. We need not buy any one of these definitions as a complete and the only definition. We can **understand all these definition**s carefully to understand the complex concept called Language. Only then we can look at sign languages on a relevant ground.

The uppercase use of L in language high lights that we are not taking about any particular language like Marathi or ASL or German. But the use of upper case L suggests that the word Language is used to mean the **system underlying** any or all languages. Let us **leave language a side now and focus on Language**. Here are a few commonly quoted definition of Language – 'the language' rather than 'a language':

(1)   Bloch and Trager: A language is a system of arbitrary vocal symbols by means of which a social group cooperates.

(2)   Crystal and Robins: Language is a system of conventional spoken, manual or written symbols by means of which human beings, as members of a social group and participants in its culture, express themselves.

(3)   Chomsky: Language is a set (finite or infinite) of sentences, each finite in length and constructed out of a finite set of elements.

(4)   Lahey: Language is a code whereby the idea about the world are represented through conventional system of arbitrary signals for communication.

(5)   Sapir (1921): "Language is a purely human and non- instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions and desires by means of voluntarily. Produced symbols".

Point to Ponder: The definitions look so different from each other that one wonders whether it is the same thing that they are talking about. Why does that happen?

Read the definitions and you will realize that there are a few words which are part of all the definitions. For example, the word '**system**'. Language is a system - we discussed this in the earlier unit. The word system indicates that there are rules which govern the use of language. Since it is **rule bound**, the system is called a 'system'.

We have been using the term rule governed. What does the set of rules called? It is grammar. It is very common to hear a statement that sign language is a collection of gestures and has no grammar. You have learnt that in the unit of myths about sign language. Sign languages being languages, obviously have distinct grammars. Just as the grammar of Malyalam is different from that of Punjabi, the grammar of ISL is different from that of ASL or SSL.

Since **communication i**s the core function of language that word too is frequently used in the definitions. We have discussed communication earlier. There are a few functions of language

like cognitive function or identity related function. However, the first and the foremost function of language is communication.

The symbols used in a language are **arbitrary.** Hence, this term too is found to be in definitions of Language. As discussed earlier, there is no natural connection between the word / sign and the meaning of the symbol of Language and hence the symbols are known to be arbitrary.

Do you think animals use language? No, animals are involved in communication but that communication is not linguistic. Therefore, language is considered to be **purely human**.

What is your first language or your family language? It could be Hindi, Marathi, ISL, BSL or Bengali. Whichever is your language, try answering following questions.

   (a)   How many alphabets are there in your language?
   (b)   How many words or signs are there in your language?
   (c)   How many grammar rules are there in your language?
   (d)   How many sentences are there in your language?

Read Chomsky's definition again. Did you find Chomsky's definition rather different? He has kind of focused on the product of language. Finite means limited or countable and infinite means unlimited or uncountable. What are countable parts in language and what are uncountable parts of language? What were your answers for the above given questions? The countable parts are phonemes, alphabets, words and rules of grammar. Using this finite set we can GENERATE infinite set of sentences. Sentences obviously are uncountable (literally and not literary). Chomsky calls this ability of Language to produce infinite sentences to be **creativity of language** or 'productivity of language'. Hence, he makes the definition of Language that highlights this feature.

Now read the 4 questions given above. It is very simple to count the alphabets. It is very different to count words or grammar rules of a language but it is not impossible. The number will be very big, yet it is a doable task. What about sentences? Those are next to impossible to count. Sentences are finite in length but are infinite in number.

We have been trying to describe 'Language' in terms of its definitions presented by various scholars. One of the other ways of understanding 'what languages are' is to study its design features.   Before moving ahead with the design features, lets very briefly see what sing languages are.

Concept of Sign Language

Please visit you tube   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NRhVS38VNO0 video and try to understand what the message is about.

The above video was in sign language. You must have noticed a visual language convening national anthem of India. This visual language that uses hand shapes, facial expression, gestures and body language is termed as sign language. These languages use the visual-manual modality

to convey meaning. Sign languages are full-fledged natural languages with their own grammar and lexicon (*lexicon is all the words used in a particular language or subject, or a dictionary*). Kindly note here that no one form of sign language is universal.

Different sign languages are used in different countries, example, British Sign Language (BSL) is a different language from ASL, and Americans who know ASL may not understand BSL even if English verbal language is common. Same is with ISL (Indian Sign Language).

Design features of language. (Also known as properties of language)

We learnt to make distinction between living things and non living things in standard third. What did we learn then? The text book told us to categorize cup, dog, man, cap, iron, glass, crow, fish, snake, honeybee, ant, elephant, water etc into two categories. When we categorized these into two types, we were explained that one group is called living things and the other is called non living things. Then little more complex examples like plants or algae or coral were given to further expand the concept. Most importantly characteristics were listed before us. On basis of these characteristics we were taught to call a thing either living or non-living. For example,

(1) Living things grow
(2) Living things breathe
(3) Living things change
(4) Living things reproduce

So we take each item and check its properties against the 4 characteristics. If these are found in a thing we call it a living thing, otherwise it is a non-living thing.

Same is the case with categorization between linguistic and non linguistic communication. There are a few characteristics / properties / design features of language. If these features are found in the communicative system we call it a language, otherwise it is an example of non-linguistic communication. Let us see these features one by one.

(i)   Creativity: Read the sentence below
          (9) The rich man from Timbaktoo gave a lot of money to the police last year.
Did you understand the meaning of the sentence? Yes, You would like to know more about the context of the sentence but without that too basic comprehension takes place.

Had you read or heard or seen somebody signed (or spoken or written or signed) this particular sentence? Most probably not and even if you had done so, now you do not remember it. How could a novel sentence (unused earlier) make sense for you? Let's see one more example. Chomsky **compares language with math** while discussing the characteristic of creativity. Read the sum below
          7582

$$x\ 392$$
_____

Had you read, heard, seen or solved this particular sum? Most probably not and even if you had some time ago, now you do not remember it. And yet, will you be able to solve this sum? Yes. This happens because while using language we know the vocabulary and grammar. We generate novel sentences or meaning of unheard sentences on the basis of that knowledge. Memory has minimum role to play in the process. Same is the case of math. If we know the numbers (their values) and the rules to process them, then we can GENERATE answers of a sum with a minimum role of memory.

This capacity to generate meaning and novel sentences is called creativity. The amount of things man can generate through language is infinite.

Language is truly a creative or productive system. No other communicative systems including animal communication has the feature of creativity. Needless to mention, manual languages have this feature just like the verbal languages. Manual languages too have vocabulary and grammar and hence combining signs in a rule governed way manual languages too are capable of producing infinite number of sentences. The design feature called creativity thus is found in sign languages and hence sign languages are languages.

(ii)   Duality: Duality means having two levels. Language has two levels.
Level one: isolated alphabets or isolated words or isolated signs.
Level two: distinct meaning generated due to various combinations of the isolated items.
Imagine if meaning was created only with isolated items and not with its combination then we would be able to express very few things.

For example, the road side signal system. It has three isolated items and three meanings associated with these three items.

> Set A
> Green = Go
> Red = Stop
> Amber – Get ready

Had there been the second level of rules (to combine) then the communication like the given below would have been possible.

> Set B
> Green Green Green   = Go
> Green Amber Amber   = Go but slowly
> Green Amber Red   = Go from left side only
> Green Red Amber   = Only four wheelers to go

etc. etc.

Do you see the difference between the two sets? Set A is single level and Set B has 2 levels. When there are two levels the productivity of the system is more.

No other communicative systems including animal communication has the feature of duality. Needless to mention, manual languages have this feature just like the verbal languages. Manual languages too have two levels operating to give meaning and hence combining signs in a rule governed way manual languages too are capable of complex meaning. The **design feature called duality thus is found in sign languages** and hence sign languages are languages.

(iii)   Arbitrariness: As discussed earlier there is no direct connection between the words of a language and the meaning attached to it. The meanings of the linguistic words have to be acquired or learnt on the basis of the environment, exposure and experience. This feature is called arbitrariness of language.

No other communicative systems including animal communication has the feature of arbitrariness. Needless to mention, manual languages have this feature just like the verbal languages. The design feature called arbitrariness thus is found in sign languages and hence sign languages are languages.

Arbitrariness and iconicity need little more discussion here. These two are antonyms (opposite words). Sign languages being visual manual in nature are more iconic than the verbal languages. For example, read the sentence given below.

(10) Two over ripped apples were kept on the table.

If you read this sentence in German and you don't know German then you will not know anything in that sentence, nothing at all. Now imagine that someone is signing this sentence in ISL. And also assume that you don't know ISL at all. Looking at someone signing sentence 10, do you think you will understand the meaning completely, partially or nothing at all? You will understand partially. Yes, non-signers may at least get the hang of it. That is iconicity. Understanding meaning of an image (spoken / written / signed) even if you do not know the language would indicate iconicity. This is found MORE in sign languages than verbal or written languages.

However, one must understand that no language even a sign language can be completely iconic. One may take signs like 'apple', 'table' or even 'two' to be iconic words but what about signs like 'over ripped', 'were', 'kept', 'on', 'the'? Can these words / signs be ever be iconic? Only some portion of a manual language (which is much less than what we think) can be iconic. Had sign language been completely iconic then there could have been only one sign language in the world. But we all know that there are many sign language in the world. Signs for words like apple or table may look similar across the various sing languages but there is no reason for 'the' or 'over-ripped' to be similar across the sign languages. Hence, we can conclude that the sign language being visual manual in nature are more iconic compared to the verbal languages. This does not mean that the symbols of sign language are not arbitrary.

(iv)   Cultural Transmission: Transmission here refers to things that passed down from one generation to the other. What are the features that are transmitted from one generation to the other? If we say Montee got brown eyes from his father and diabetes from his mother. He got lot of gold from his parents and we can also add that he got his mother tongue – Tamil from his parents. Do you want to categorize four things that Montee got from his previous generation? Brown eyes, diabetes, gold and Tamil. You would put brownness of eyes and diabetes in one category genetically transmitted things and gold to be in the category of culturally transmitted things. So we have things that are culturally transmitted as against things that are genetically transmitted. Where will you place Tamil or any language in this classification? Montee's father has brown eyes. Even if Montee grew up far away from his father, he would still have brown eyes.

Is the case same with Tamil? Had Montee grew up in a Gujrati speaking family, he would have acquired Gujrati and not Tamil. Thus a language is culturally transmitted from one generation to the other. Then can we say that there is nothing genetic / biological about language? The capacity (neuro–muscular system) to acquire language is genetic. Chomsky called this Language acquisition device (LAD). Every human child is born with this innate system which is a kind of biological readiness for acquiring Language. Although the child is ready with the system, exposure and experience of a particular language is essential to acquire that language. Hence, we say that languages are not genetically transmitted from one generation to the other but they are culturally transmitted. Of course, which language ultimately the child will 'uptake' would depend on the culture – the exposure of a particular language.

No other communicative systems including animal communication has the feature of cultural transmission. Needless to mention, manual languages have this feature just like the verbal languages. Manual languages too are culturally transmitted from one generation to the next. The design feature called cultural transmission thus is found in sign languages and hence sign languages are languages.

(v)   Displacement: Language sets human beings apart form the animals. It has played major role in the evolution of mankind. It does much more than what we think it does. When we take language seriously and study it carefully we come to know many hidden aspects of it. Displacement is one such feature of the language. Displacement means using language one can talk about another place and time. The communication is **not restricted to 'here and now'** whenever we use language. We discuss about past present and future, we can talk about places we have never seen and we can talk about concepts we have never experienced. This is the quality called displacement.

No other communicative systems including animal communication has the feature of displacement. Needless to mention, manual languages have this feature just like the verbal languages. Manual languages too allow the users to go beyond the time and place zone including abstract, unknown concepts. The design feature called displacement thus is found in sign languages and hence sign languages are languages.

Did you notice that being able to use speech or verbal symbols is not considered as a design feature of a language. This simply means that a language to be able to be qualified as a language, it need not be a spoken language. Any communication system that has the given characteristics is LANGUAGE – mode of expression does not matter for the purpose of classifying communicative systems as languages or non-languages.

There are a few more characteristics generally discussed in terms of what a language can do. However, the above given five features are enough for the purpose of basic understanding of the distinction between language and non-linguistic communicative systems. And also to understand where the sign languages fall.

Summary

Many scholars have tried to define language from different perspectives. Common points covered by many and agreeable to all are:
- it is a symbol system
- used for communication
- it is purely human
- it is shared buy a community

The word verbal / spoken is used in a few definitions which belong to old era wherein our understanding about language was restricted to verbal languages only. More recent definitions however, does not restrict the language systems to mean mere spoken forms. Following are the design features and a table stating whether these are present in verbal and sign language

#	Characteristic	Verbal Language	Sign Language
01	Creativity	Yes	Yes
02	Duality	Yes	Yes
03	Arbitrariness	Yes	More iconic than verbal language
04	Cultural Transmission	Yes	Yes
05	Displacement	Yes	Yes

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HOW FAR HAVE YOU LEARNT

Fill in the blanks:

Language is a …………………1 used for …………………..2 Language can be looked at as a finite set of …………………..3 , …………………..4 or …………………5 but can generate …………………6 number of sentences. One can make words combining phonemes and sentences by combining words. Making such combination is not random, it is …………………..7 This applies to both the types of language ………………8 language or …………………9 languages.

Languages is ……………… 10 transmitted form one generation to the other unlike the ………………11 or ………………12 which are transmitted genetically. Symbols used in Language are ………………13 in nature which means that these symbols do not have direct or natural association with the meaning. The symbols which do have direct association with meaning are called …………………14 This feature is found more in ……………… 15 languages since these languages are visual manual in nature.

ANSWER KEY (Please note there are multiple correct answers that would fit in places 11 and 12.)

1. System 2. Communication 3. Alphabets 4. Words 5. rules 6. Infinite 7. Rule governed 8. Verbal 9. manual 10. Culturally 11. Skin tone 12. Voice quality 13. arbitrary 14. iconic 15. sign

5.3 Linguistic Theory and Sign Language

Introduction

Man has been using language for centuries. Man has been studying language for centuries. Scholars from various backgrounds have been reviewing the concept called language from their own perspectives. Lacs of books and journals are devoted to the study of language. This includes range of areas like language development, language analysis, language learning, language pathology etc. But all these scholars at least initially assumed the language to be verbal language. You will notice the earlier definitions of Language too had the word 'vocal symbols' in it. Till awareness about sign language being languages came up, the languages by default meant verbal languages. Research into ASL, BSL and very little yet definite research into ISL helped people accept that sign languages are full-fledged languages at par with verbal languages. Today also people who are not aware of sign language think languages can only be spoken or written - the third option of signing never occur to them as independent language. Our story about the crow told us that this was due to the previous knowledge – the cognitive bias called anchoring bias restricted the perception of many.

In this unit we are going to take a very brief look at where linguistic theory stands today and how do sign languages fit the picture. Linguistic theory intends to provide valid analysis of the structure of language. Linguistic theory attempts to establish a coherent set of principles that would explain how a language functions. Without going much into details we could simply make a list of the common notions well accepted in the field of linguistics today. We will understand these concepts and simply check whether these are applicable to the sign language or not.

1. Structure of language: We have seen that language is a system. System by default means that it has a structure – set of rule government norms. We have learnt some part of it in a very conventional or traditional way in school grammar. But now we will look at it from the

perspective of modern linguistic theory. Traditional grammar which we learnt in school, taught us concepts like

- Types of sentences;
- Parts of speech;
- Tense and aspects;
- Concord norms etc.

All these features are applicable to sign languages too. Modern linguistic theory presents the structure of language to be like this:

Structure of Language:
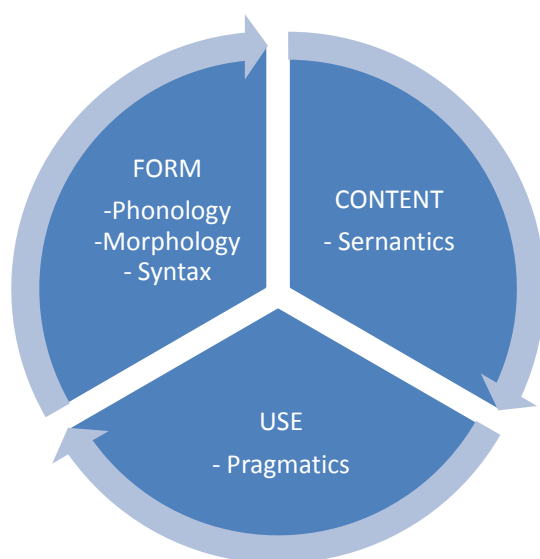
Form, Content and Use are the three components of this structure. Their 5 levels which function as sub systems of the larger structure are:

i) Phonology: This level deals with the smallest unit of linguistic analysis which is called a phoneme (speech sound). Phonology is the description of the systems and patterns of speech sounds. This is based on what a native speaker knows about his / her own language. Any speaker consciously or unconsciously knows about the sounds, sound patterns and sound related norms of a particular language. This is the fundamental level of the language that describes the comparative and contrastive relationships among the speech sounds.

Phoneme is the smallest unit of sound in a particular language that is able to distinguish one word from the other. For example, /p/, /t/, /h/, /m/ as in pop, top, hop, mop. /p/ here does not have independent meaning but has capacity to distinguish meaning of /pop/ from / top/.

ii) Morphology: Morphology is description of morphemes. A morpheme is the smallest MEANINGFUL unit of a language. Morpheme is similar to word but not same as word. For example 'talked' is one word but it has two morphemes: 'talk' and 'ed'. Here 'ed' is a separate

morpheme since it conveys distinct meaning. Other examples could be going, beautifully, opener, which are words with more than one morphemes.

In short morphology is the level of the structure of language dealing with words which include:
- How words are formed.
- How words have relationships with other words.
- What are various types of morphemes.
- Structure and parts of words like stems, roots, affixes.

iii) Syntax: The **third level of the component of form** is called syntax. We have seen that phonemes connect to make morphemes. Similarly, morphemes are connected to make a meaningful string called sentence. **Syntax is the study of sentences and how they are formed.** Syntax is a set of rules or principles that describe the structure of the sentence. This is with reference to a particular language. Major part of syntax is **word order and word agreement**. It describes the formats in which words and phrases are arranged. For example

English has SVO structure

     (11) <u>The cat</u> <u>jumped</u> <u>happily</u>.
        S   V   O

Hindi has SOV structure:

      <u>Billi</u> <u>khushi se</u> <u>kudee</u>.
       S   O   V

ISL has

      <u>CAT</u> <u>HAPPY</u> <u>JUMP</u> PAST TENSE
       S   O   V

Syntax, a level of language structure describes how a particular language functions in terms of word combinations and word order.

iv) Semantics: We produce and combine phonemes morphemes, words, phrases and sentences. All these efforts are towards one purpose – making meaning or communicating something. Such 'meaning making' is also a level of linguistic structure. It is called semantics. Semantics is closely linked to the subjects of representation, reference and denotation. Do not look at semantics as a level linked with only syntax. As we understand that meaning operates not only on syntactic level but also other levels like phonology and morphology.

v) Pragmatics: If someone comes to your place and you want to offer water to begin with what choices do you have in terms of linguistic communication?

       12) Would you like some water please?
       13) How about some water?
       14) There is water kept their.
       15) Water?

Which one among the given options would you select? The choice would greatly depend on the context: Who is saying it to whom and what is the relationship between the two communicators.

All the four sentences mean the same thing and are grammatically correct. Yet, you would select one over the others as per the context.

Point to Ponder: Think of more such examples of sentences? Are there parallels of such sentences in 2-3 languages that you know?

The level of pragmatics deals with use of language, the context of the language used and the appropriate selection of one option from the several existing options, like indicated in sentence 12, 13, 14 and 15.

Although this is one of the important aspects of pragmatics, there is more to pragmatics than this. Pragmatics includes:

- Making sense of deixis - words and phrases that do not make sense in isolation for example 'her' 'that time' 'here' etc. One needs more information on context of the word to understand it. The meaning of such words is relative; it changes person to person if not specified.
- Turn taking in conversation: Description of norms followed during orderly conversation about who speaks when and who stops when. It is study of how individuals take turn while talking.
- Text organization: This refers to the text structure, how the ideas are presented for example, first writing a generalized statement and then detail points or vice versa.
- Presupposition: This refers to assumptions on the basis of earlier context or background for example: Montee does not like pets now. This statement assumes that Montee liked pets earlier.
- Implicature: This refers to hidden yet obvious or unsaid meaning. For example, read the question: 'How is the dish?". If the response is 'The look and the fragrance are good'. It means "the taste is not so good or I don't want to talk about the taste".

All of us use these and many more features of language. Analysis of these features is called pragmatics.

While understanding the structure of language, we need to understand one thing clearly. Although there are 3 components (from content and use) and 5 levels in analysis or description of a language (phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics and pragmatics) these components and levels are not linked with each other in a linear way. They are all related to all the others in a complex way.

How does this relate to sign languages?

Now let us understand the components of sign language. As we know that language comprises of five components namely phonology, morphology, semantics, syntax and pragmatics (as discussed above). Sign language is also a language hence have all these components.

A] Sign language and Phonology
There are three phonetic parameters in verbal language like:

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a. Place of articulation: (where in the oral cavity the speech sound is produced)
b. Manner of articulation: (how a particular speech sound is produced)
c. Voicing (whether a particular sound is voiced or voiceless)

In Sign language there are five features parameters, namely:
a. Handshape
b. Location
c. Movement
d. Orientation
e. Non manual features

Many linguistic also refers the above parameters as acronym **HOLME**
Examples; sign these words or see a native user sign these words and note

Word	Parameter
Responsibility	Location
Newspaper	Movement
Yesterday	Hand-shape
Balance, average	Palm Orientation
Happy	Non-Manual Signals

Co-articulation in sign language: Many incorrectly think that finger spelling each alphabet is sign language. For example M Y N A M E I S M O N T E E. That's not sign language. But finger spelling is part of sign languages. Native and fluent signers fingerspell naturally. Actually, they do not produce nor read letter by letter. They look at the whole configuration of a finger-spelled word, just the same way a hearing person listens to the whole word, not a phoneme by phoneme (or sound unit).

Does the sound unit "o" sounds the same in "pot" and "owl"? or say /s/ in the words - cats and dogs. Pay attention to the last speech sound which is 's'. But it sounds different in cats (/s/) and dogs (/z/). Speech sound /t/ in cat is voiceless and hence /s/ remains voiceless there. In dogs, however, /g/ is voices which influences the /s/ making it voiced - /z/.This happens in sign language too. Each unit of a word is affected by the other units before and after that unit. The unit is stretched, pulled, rotated, twisted, as an influence of the previous and the next unit. whether signed or spoken. It's known as co-articulation in linguistics. Now, you think of more examples.

B] Sign Language and Morphology: Morpheme is the smallest meaningful unit of language. There are basically two types of morphemes; free and bound.

Free Morpheme: Morpheme that can stand alone as a word is referred as free morpheme. Example; morphemes in English are - dog, stop, smile, again, love, see etc. same is for ISL also.

Bound Morpheme: Bound morpheme is the smallest meaningful unit that cannot stand alone like free morpheme. Example; -s, -er, -ed, -un, -able, -non, -ly etc. These morphemes are the affixes attached to words. In ISL word unhappy will be signed as, sign will be done for – happy- not. Another example is a numeral hand-shape which is affixed to ISL word. 6000 (six thousand); the sign *6000* consists of two morphemes (one sign for 6 and other sign for thousand.

Have a conversation with Individual with Deafness and segregate words having free and bound morphemes;

Word	Free Morpheme	Bound Morpheme

C] Sign Language and Syntax

Verbs in Sign Language: As we know that a verb is a word that expresses an action or an event, or a state of being about the subject. SL linguists describes three major types of verbs: plain verbs, indicating verbs and depicting verbs.

1. **Plain Verbs**: Plain verbs require the signer to specify the subject and the object. For example, the SL verb know is a plain verb that the signer cannot inflect it in a sentence. The signer has to specify the subject and the object in a sentence, so the sign is done contextually. Some examples of the plain verbs that cannot be inflected are as follows:*eat, enjoy, love, remember, understand, have, cherish etc.*
2. **Indicating verbs**: These indicate the subject and the object in a sentence.Examples; inform, give, distribute etc.
3. **Depicting verbs (to represent something)**:These verbs are also called as classifier predicates. These verbs contain information about the action or state of being. Examples; vehicle driven by, person walk awkwardly, pencil roll down stairs etc.

Let us understand the example in SL, Fruits spoils when it is kept too long.

The sign language user (signer) will sign the sentence in a sequence:
>   FRUIT KEEP IT TOO LONG SPOILS.

When signer signs fruit (topic) establishes this referent in its spatial location. Spatial location means the place in the air which will be used to refer to fruit later in the conversation. Signer will then sign keep-it-too –long (left – it –for long-time). Then the signer signs for spoils in the same space as the previous (verb). The use of the specific space or location is similar to "it" as in English.

There are several examples of syntactic variations in ISL which may be applicable to other sign languages. For examples,
Question words are placed at the end of the statement like
>   YOU COME HOME TIME?
There are signs for tenses which are attached at the end of the statement like

I GO PUNE FUTURE TENSE
Numbers are placed at the end of the statement like
SHE HAS CARS 3.

Point to ponder: Did you notice that upper case is used to indicate signing in above sentences. Or did you note the use of // while talking about speech sounds. What is the significance of this? Why is such a pattern needed?

In short, sign languages too have their own independent structures which are equally complex and equally capable to satisfy communicative needs of the native users. However, sign languages are studied less frequently as compared to verbal languages.

2) Universal Grammar: Earlier we discussed about what is cultural and what is genetic about a language. A child acquiring or learning a language is a cultural process. But the **capacity or the neurological readiness that enables a child to acquire a language is a genetic endowment**. Only human child possesses such genetic structure. If a human child is born with this genetic device then it would obviously be common across all the languages. These inbuilt structures that a human child is born with can roughly be called universal grammar. It is a linguistic theory proposed by Chomsky. He basically proposed that the ability to learn language is
    - Innate (having genetic component),
    - Distinctly human,
    - Distinct from other cognitive processes.

This theory assumes that language has two sets of structural rules:
    i) Rules which are independent of experience and exposure to language and
    ii) Rules which are dependent on language exposure.
    The first one is referred to as universal grammar and the second set may be called as language specific grammar. How does this relate to sign languages?

3) Competence and performance: We claim to know our mother tongue, our first language very well. What do we really know about the language we know?
        Can you try making a list?
        1) Meaning of the words of the language
        2) How to make a sentence
        3)
        4)
        5)

Can your list be all inclusive and complete? No. you will not be able to write everything that governs your language. Yet there will be no sentence in your language that you would not understand. More importantly if someone uses incorrect sentence in your language you will be able to identify that to be the incorrect one. **You will be able to separate correct sentences from the incorrect sentences.** How are you able to do that though you could not make a list of

all the rules of your language? This means the language rules are stored in your mind for you to be able to use them. But you have no access to it directly. Isn't that funny! It is like saying - **you do not know what you know** about your language. That is strange but true when it comes to language.

Connected to this, Chomsky put forward yet another commonly accepted concept called competence and performances of language.

Linguistic competence refers to inner knowledge of language which is implicit. This means language users (native speakers) do not have conscious access to the rules and norms that are applied while using the language, yet importantly, they can:

      i)   Use language effectively

      ii) Can identify ungrammatical sentence.

      iii) Know how to repair an ungrammatical sentence.

Linguistic competence is distinguished from the linguistic performance. **Linguistic performance is the way the language is used.**

Accordingly to Chomsky, Wikipedia explains, competence is the ideal language system that enables speakers to produce and understand an infinite number of sentences in their language. Competence can be studied independently of language use. There is a difference between underlying knowledge of language from the way language is actually used in practice. Performance of language can be seen as an impure form of the linguistic system which is affected by things like attention, stamina, social intention, memory distraction, interest, errors etc. **Competence is a mental property. Performance is its manifestation in an actual event**: set of utterances produced by a native speakers.

How does this apply to sign languages?

This understanding of linguistic competence and linguistic performance being two separate aspects supports the philosophy of educational bilingualism. Educational bilingualism as we know now advocates natural acquisition of sign language as the first language for a deaf baby. This would facilitate building language competence.

Drasgow (1998) claims that application of the concept of competence and performance to sign language (ASL in his article) is that it supports use of ASL on Philosophical and empirical grounds. According to him, ASL is a natural language and deaf children acquire ASL in a normal and predictable manner when exposure is ensured at an early language.

At surface level when we look at ISL (or any sign language for that matter) and if we have been raised using any of the verbal languages, then sing languages and verbal languages look poles apart. This is because modality of the language is the most visible part of the language. Spoken languages are spoken and sign languages are 'signed'. But if you, remove the word 'spoken' and 'signed' from the above sentence then you will realize that whether verbal or manual, a language is a language. Accordingly to Lillo Martin, "when the surface effects of modality are stripped away, ASL will be seen to follow many of the patterns proposed as universal for human

language. If these theoretical constructs are meant to be hold for language in general, then they should hold for natural human language in any modality, and if ASL is such a natural human language, then it too must be accounted for by any adequate theory of Universal Grammar"

Technically, what Lillo-Martin claims for ASL, holds good for ISL.

4) Neural plasticity and critical period hypothesis

At the age or 3 to 4 years, most of the typically developing children acquire enough command over their language so that can satisfy their needs and control the environment. If an adult has to have similar level of command over a new language, how many years do you think are needed? 3-4 years, less than that or more than that? Since an adult is more mature, experienced and has evolved intelligence compared to a 4 year old child, he/she should be able to learn the new language in half the time. But that does not happen. Adults need to put in more efforts and duration to get enough command over a language which any child acquires effortlessly and swiftly during early years. What is the reason behind this amazing age related difference in obtaining skills? A lot of research has been done and is being done in the area of:

What we learn
How we learn
When we learn

Experts describe this to be the critical period hypothesis. It refers to neurological changes that occur in the developing brain. The brain structure gets adjusted to the functions. These are developmental time windows for cognitive functioning – one of such cognitive processes is language learning. Critical period is the span wherein the right stimuli can provide maximum 'returns' on developing cognitive skills. A human child, it is believed that, is born with great potentials and the environment and experiences decide what the child can do with these potentials.

Here is an analogy for you to understand better. If you make an earthen pot and you want to imprint some images on it with a pin, when is the right time to do so? As soon as the pot is done and when it is still wet or later? Obviously, you would try to imprint the image as the pot is still wet. As the pot gets dried up it gets increasingly difficult to imprint anything on it. Neuro-plasticity works roughly like this. Obtaining skills is rather easier earlier years when the plasticity of the system supports it.

How does this relate to sign languages?

Language is an inner process. Speaking, writing and signing are its physical manifestations. Only after adequate exposure to these physical manifestations can a child develop the inner process. In majority of the human children the primary mode of language exposure is listening (and speaking). But that does not mean that listening is the ONLY option for language input and uptake. 'Taking in' sign language through visual manual mode too is an option. This option is used by those who are unable to hear due to deafness and off-springs of deaf people. Visual manual mode clubbed with exposure to fluent sign language does same for a deaf child what

auditory mode clubbed with exposure to verbal language does to a hearing child. Due to the neural plasticity of the brain, it adjusts itself to suit' the modality of the exposure. As stated at Wikipedia.org, the brain's left side is the dominant side utilized for producing and understanding sign language, just as it is for speech". It is further stated that in 1980 "the left perisylvian region was discovered to be functionally critical for language, spoken and signed. Its location near several key auditory processing regions led to the belief that language processing required auditory input and was used to discredit signed languages as "real languages." This research opened the doorway for linguistic analysis and further research on signed languages…… Despite some differences between spoken and signed languages, the associated brain areas share a lot in common."

Several researches into the area support this line of thought that auditory is not the only channel for language uptake. Brain structure organizes itself to suit the modality. For example, according to a study (Meyer et al, 2007) designed to find out the neural correlates of processing of German Sign Language, it was concluded that the **cerebral anatomy of deaf individuals has undergone structural changes as a function of monomodal visual sign language** uptake provided to them since childhood.

UNIT WIND UP

In words of Myrte Bijster (2011), there are about 80 signed languages in existence in deaf communities all over the world. Many of these are still under-researched, but some are investigated intensively, and it is becoming increasingly clear that the investigation of sign language can make important contributions to linguistics. Looking at similarities between spoken and signed languages enables linguists to gain a better view of the basis for language"
As he further mentions if there are two aspects of language which are universal and modality dependent then studying sign languages would facilitate more knowledge for human kind in separating the two aspects.

As we wind up this unit we may revisit our two friends from India and Africa who debated about what makes a crow a crow. The Indian earlier though that being completely black is one of the essential characteristics of a crow. When he saw a crow with white-grey parts on his body he realized that a crow need not be completely black. What are the take home points?

1) All crows need not be black. Non black crows are still crows.
2) The two friends paid attention to the 'real' features of a crow later since they got the opportunity to go rather deeper in biological traits of a crow than the body color.
3) Completely black and partially black crows are different from each others superficially but not in terms of more fundamental genetic characteristics.
4) Neither is superior or inferior. Both are simply DIFFERENT crows.

Do you see the analogy here?
Did you draw similar conclusion?
1. All languages need not be verbal. Non verbal languages are languages too.

2. Let us pay more attention to the universal features of language. That is possible only when we accept and understand that there could be at least 3 types of parameter, pattern or process in language:
   - Universal features. (Features commonly found in ALL languages. Can you think of some examples of such features? Having negative and affirmative sentences, having adjectives, adverbs etc, having question forms etc. There can be no language without these features.)
   - Modality dependent features (Features commonly found in set of sign languages versus features commonly found in verbal languages. Can you think of some examples of such features? Linguistic economy, balance between iconicity and arbitrariness etc. All verbal languages would share these features and all sign languages would share these features.)
   - Language specific features. (Features particularly found in any language. Can you think of some examples of such features? English has articles (a, an, the) which many other languages do not have, Hindi has honorific pronouns (like aap as against tum or tu) which other languages like English do not have. There can be no language without such unique features. Languages are also classified into types on the basis of such features.

3. Verbal languages and sign languages are different from each other's superficially but not in terms of more fundamental genetic characteristics.

4. Neither is superior or inferior. Both are simply DIFFERENT languages.

Globally, we have come a long way from 'rejecting the language status to sign language' to accepting sign languages to be languages. Carol Padden (whose research into analysis of verbs in sign languages facilitated similar studies on sign languages from various parts of the world) says – Since the Chomsky Revolution, as it became known, linguists have labored to dissect the nuances of thousands of languages, stripping them down to their grammatical gears, their syntactic systems, yet for many years one type of language remained untouched. Sign languages! She was referring to ASL and claimed later that 'now people understand that it is a language'. Same holds good for sign languages which are not researched into adequately.

 Summary
1. Communication, language and speech are the most frequently used words by us in everyday situation. But these words have different meaning with deeper understanding. Communication is exchange or transfer of thoughts. Language is a complex code for receiving and conveying information. Language is a systematic means of communication by the use of sounds or conventional symbols Speech is the oral manifestation of language.
2. There are mainly five components of any language namely phonology, morphology, semantics, syntax and pragmatics. These components of language work with each other in order to give a meaningful communication among individuals.

3. Language has various characteristics but the most important ones are; arbitrariness, duality, displacement, cultural transmission and creativity. These characteristics of language set human language apart from that of animal communication.

4. Chomsky's theory states that children have the innate biological ability to learn language. Chomsky developed the concept of Language Acquisition Devise (LAD) in the 1950s. Then, he moved on to a greater theory called universal grammar (UG) to account for the rapid language development in humans.

5. Indian Sign Language (ISL) is a complete language that employs signs made by moving the hands combined with facial expressions. As an sign language interpreter or a deaf teacher understand that, the signs have their own vocabularies, morphologies, and syntax, which is not parallel with that of spoken or printed verbal language.

6. Like ISL is practiced in India. Other countries of the world have their own independent sign languages e.g. United States of America has American Sign Language (ASL), and the United Kingdom has British Sign Language (BSL), etc. Sign languages is considered as an independent language

HOW FAR HAVE YOU LEARNT FROM THE UNIT

Fill in the Blanks

1. …………………refers to the study of speech sounds of a given language and their function within the sound system of that language.

2. …………………….is the study of meaning of words, and the development of the meaning of words in language.

3. Grammatical level can be divided into two broad levels namely …………. and ………...

4. Communicative competence requires that speakers be aware of ………… and …………….aspects of their language.

5. The suffix /ed/ is an example of a …………………..

6. Full form of LAD is …………………….

Answers: 1. Phonology 2. Semantics 3. Syntax and Morphology 4. Linguistic and Pragmatic 5. Morphology 6. Language Acquisition Device

True and False

1. Sign language is an artificial communication system.

2. Sign language is universal.

3. Sign language is connected with local spoken language.

4. Arbitrariness as a feature of language refers to the ability of human language to communicate throughout time and across space.

5. Cultural transmission feature describes the human ability to produce language in multiple forms.

Answers 1- F, 2- F (there are more than 140 sign languages from all over the world) , 3- F, 4- F (Displacement) , 5- F (Duality)

Answer in detail

1. Explain the concept of Communication in detail?
2. Is there a difference between speech, language (verbal and sign language), and communication?
3. Discuss the various components of communication?
4. What is communication process?
5. What is the relationship between language competence and language performance?

C] Short Notes

1. Features of Language
2. Communication cycle
3. LAD
4. Concept of sign language
5. Importance of language acquisition during critical period

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