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Inclusion of Hard of Hearing Students in the Foreign Language Classroom: Insider Stories

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Abstract

This study examines how specific experiences of disability (i.e. hearing loss) come into being and how they are articulated within educational practices. It particularly explores issues of social justice and equity regarding the discursive embracement of power relations and situated contextualization of hard-of-hearing students' learning experiences. Foucault's genealogical method was drawn on for revealing the fractured human realities which have formed the hard-of hearing students' learning experiences. The results show of the prevalent governing power reflective of a normative ideological position regarding hard-of-hearing students as deficit learners to be silenced and low achievers to be excluded. This study hopes to play as a starting point to initiate a wide-ranging and provocative dialogue around the issues, concerns, and even fears of the hard of hearing students and educators to provide a more open and holistic environment for the development of effective social justice policies and practices in educational environments.

The focus of this research study is to examine how specific "experiences" of disability (i.e. hearing loss) come into being and how they are articulated within specific culture, milieus (i.e. classrooms), and practices (i.e. education). Inclusive education requires forms of intercultural dialogue, for example with deaf culture (Tochon & Karaman, 2009). We are echoing Scott's (1992) problematizing of the notion of 'experience'. According to Scott, what is important about the rendering of experience is not simply to make visible experiences that were previously invisible, but rather to reveal the ways that experience is not a reliable or self-evident source of knowledge, and that certain discursive regimes allow certain experiences to emerge in history while others get hidden or denied. Scott emphasizes on "the constructed nature of experience" (Scott, 1992, p. 25).

Making experiences of disability visible

Looking at the current trend of disability studies and disability rights movement, we can't deny their continuous effort of disclosure and making visible experiences of disability that have previously hidden from history and not been addressed politically. However, while this tendency unquestionably brings to open up alternative modes of being and alternative spaces that most conventional history and politics fails to recognize, it does not necessarily reveal the ways that 'experience' itself is a category of representation that emerges and operates within a particular socio-cultural and historical milieu. As Scott (1992) asserts: "It is not individuals who have experience, but subjects who are constituted through experience. Experience in this definition then becomes not the origin of our explanation…but rather that which we seek to explain, that about which knowledge is produced". (p. 25-26)

Following Scott's conceptualization of experience and considering the nature and importance of this study, narrative

research is needed for a deep exploration of such multilayered and textured contours of human disability experiences in education. A strong argument for adopting the narrative inquiry in this study is that life stories provide access to the way individuals constitute self and construct identity (Richardson, 1997). Humans, including people with disabilities, are constantly engaged in the activity of construing meaning. Narrative is the primary means through which humans shape and organize their experience, express their emotions and thoughts, highlight the uniqueness of certain action and event, and ascribe meaning to human lives (Chase, 2005; Clandinin, 2007). Narrative, in short, is a means of coming to know oneself and one's world. Through the act of storying and narrating one's experiences, we are constructing ourselves, and achieving our identities. Therefore, using narrative methods to explore the life stories of the hard of hearing students in this study allows us to investigate the meanings that students ascribed to 'hearing loss' and 'learning' as they constructed their identities. In addition, another characteristic of narrative inquiry is its focus on the dialogical nature of knowledge and its emphasis on the social world as a site where power relations are played out. As such, this allows us to critically examine how the authoritative notions of ableism and hearing embedded around the participants with hearing losses, how the taken-for-granted discourses as learning prevail in education, and how the power relations travel to fabricate the identity construction among hard of hearing students in a site of negotiation and struggle.

Disability identity in the making

Let us have a closer scrutiny to disclose ways of understanding the embodiment of disabled bodies. Central to the studies of disability identity is the paradigmatic shift for understanding the mechanism of power in our society—poststructuralism, for example in Weedon (1997)'s clear introduction, particularly on

the issues of language, identity, subjectivity and power. Following Foucault, Weedon (1997) connects subjectivity to discourse, arguing that "subjectivity is produced in a whole range of discursive practices—economic, social, political—the meanings of which are a constant site of struggle over power" (p. 21). Using subjectivity to refer to "the conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions of the individual, her sense of herself and her ways of understanding her relation to the world," Weedon proposes "a subjectivity which is precarious, contradictory and in process, constantly being reconstituted in discourse each time we think or speak" (p. 32). Clearly, by Weedon's definition, subjectivity has a more inwardly directed or reflexive essence (her sense of herself) and constantly being reconstructed and reconstituted in discourses. However, it is nonetheless going beyond my purpose here to argue the differences between identity and subjectivity since they are very difficult terms to separate and are often used interchangeably. But to facilitate my discussion on disability identity below, I consider identity as a "cover term" (Ochs, 1993, p. 288) and subjectivity as one aspect of identity. After all, given the fact that identity emerges from the interactions of discourses, ideologies and institutional practices (Danaher, Schirato & Webb, 2000; Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982; Tremain, 2006, Weedon, 1997), the discursive interplay of the different relations of power that normalize and regulate the body is responsible for shaping a disability identity.

Five decades ago, identity or the notions of the self in disabled people have aroused a great deal of interests in medical sociology. Goffman (1963) drew a stark picture of strained relations between disabled and non-disabled people. According to his observations, a major aspect of the disability experience is the ongoing struggles to eschew the potential interpersonal devaluation which has caused the disable individual being classification as less than normal or less than human. If stigma, an attribute that triggers social disgrace, can be minimized or

submerged during social interaction through strategies such as using humor, providing competence, or hiding difference, the individual may "pass" as socially acceptable. On the contrary, if stigma cannot be successfully managed, the individual will be expelled to the margins of humanity and oftentimes he or she will internalize the stigmatized, spoiled identity as somehow deserved. In addition, in the analysis of disability as a social role, Scott (1969) theorized that blind people's needs for assistance hold them captive to the dominant philosophies and practices of the blind services system. In the process of qualifying for and receiving services, he maintained, blind people are rewarded for adopting the attitudes and behaviors expected of them by the service professionals, and they are punished for viewing themselves in ways that contradict with the professionals' own views of blind people. Ultimately, they are conditioned to be dependent and compliant, a social role that is systematically acquired under the hegemony of the sighted, as Scott bluntly declared in his concluding chapter, "blind men are not born, they are made" (p. 121). Apparently, by focusing handicapping responses of the social environment to human differences, the above two studies have shed light on the issues of impairment and identity into the sociological perspectives.

Although the 1970s was a period of increasingly visible disability rights activism (Davis, 2006; Linton, 1998), many prominent disability scholars began to shift their attention from sociological dimensions to the psychological analysis in terms of impairment-centered and individual-coping framework. Increasingly, researchers (Eisenberg, Griggins, & Duval, 1981; Fine & Asch, 1988) began to attend to the impacts of impairment on the individual's emotional status, the adaptation to impairment-related loss, and the performance of roles, such as worker, student, or family member, rather than on the contribution of society to the creation of disability problems. Noteworthily, empowered by the disability rights and independent living

movements, disabled people also have began to accelerate their production and publication of experiential accounts in autobiographies, anthologies, and participatory research reports (Browne, Connors & Stern, 1985; Carillo, Corbett & Lewis, 1982; Duffy, 1981; Zola, 1982).

Until recently, disability studies nonetheless directed the focus more on the subjectivity of disable people, namely the internalization of disability identity. On the basis of his own disability experience and his observations of other, Murphy (1990) concluded that acquiring a disability typically precipitates the loss of familiar social roles and the assignment of a negative identity, such as social burden, object of charity, perpetual dependent, or quasi-human. Moreover, Phillips's (1990) analysis of personal experience narratives from thirty three individuals with physical and sensory impairments led her to conclude that much of her informants' experiences of disability were predicated on the cultural view of disabled persons as "damaged good," a socially assigned identity that they believed was perpetuated by the media and medical and rehabilitation systems. But there are still other studies showing that disabled people are no longer captive receptors of stigmatized identity. In an intensive anthropological study of people with congenital limb deficiencies, Frank (1988) documented their capacity to critique and oppose the negative attributions that bombarded them during the course of development. Instead of longing for normality or covering their stigma to gain acceptance from others who were repelled by their differences, her informants openly presented themselves in public activities and forged empowered identities that integrated disability into their sense of autonomy and wholeness. Later vital studies (Finlay & Lyons, 1998) on the relationship between social categorization and self-concept of people with developmental disabilities also suggest that they, like Frank's informants, can be aware of stigma without inevitably internalizing or even reacting to it. Finlay and Lyons's interviews with developmentally disabled

people indicate that although they demonstrate awareness of their labels when asked about them, they generally are not likely to describe themselves spontaneously in terms of disability. Lastly, drawing from a large qualitative-interview based study of the quality of life perceptions of people with intellectual disabilities in Australia, Rapley, Kiernan and Antaki (1998) suggest that the social identities of being intellectual disabled is considered more fluid, dynamic, and heavily dependent upon the social demands of particular interactions. In other words, a person with an intellectual disability can, like any other, avow and disavow such an identity according to the demands of the managing contexts in which they find themselves.

From the above accounts of critical literature on disability identity, the relations between the disabled and non-disabled worlds seem not a small rift of communications, but a deep divide. It encompasses both intellectual and affective components, in that it is based on myth and misconceptions about the experience of disability and conflicting power relations between the disabled and non-disabled people. The gulfs in understanding should in no time be bridged. Recognizing the tension between the disabled and the non-disabled, the present study forges a bridge among the disabled world, the abled world, and the researcher. Shakespeare's (1996) suggests a poststructural perspective for the exploration of disability identity to foreground the objectives and significance of this research study.

> *Disability identity is about stories, having the space to tell them, and an audience which will listen. It is also about recognizing differences, and isolating the significant attributes and experiences which constitute disability. Some we might choose to change, other to recuperate or celebrate. We may need to develop a nuanced attitude which incorporates ambivalence: towards our bodies, for example. Theory has a part to play in this process. But (metaphorically, if not psychologically), it all starts*

with having a voice. As Foucault suggests, our task is to speak the truth about ourselves. (Shakespeare, 1996, p. 111)

Students with Disabilities in the Foreign Language Classrooms: The significance of coming into world

How do students with disabilities identify themselves in our current inclusive educational settings? Under the impacts of globalization, what are these disabled students' true stories behind the scene? With the trend of foreign/world language education, how do the notions of "language" and "learning" travel to fabricate the construction of the disabled learners' identities? Undoubtedly, time, courage, honesty and ingenuity are of the core necessities to these questions and answers. As Stiker (1999) notes,

> *The one who cracks the code of systems that "make sense" who is least poorly placed to undertake this risky adventure. This is where the gamble occurs, at least in part…. The problem of disability is a bit like the share of pottery discovered during an archaeological dig that justifies important observations on the culture of which it is the vestige…. The moment has then come to try to reconstruct a bit of our culture, on the basis of these fragments. (pp. 171-172)*

Recognizing this dangerous game, therefore, it might be appropriate to start with the very organic questions like "what it means to be human?" "What is the definition of leading a human life?" and "what are the ways in which human beings come into the world?" before I start my research journey on investigating hard of hearing students' foreign language learning experiences. In his insightful book titled Beyond Learning: Democratic Education for A Human Future, Biesta (2006) provocatively urges us as educators to treat the question of what it means to be human as "a radically open question, a question that can only be answered by engaging in education rather than as a question that needs to be answered before [I] can engage in education" (p. 4-5).

Moreover, the concept of educational learning, according to Biesta, is not just about the "economic transaction" (p. 19) of knowledge, skills and values, but is more concerned with the individuality, subjectivity, or personhood of the students, that is of their "coming into the world" (p. 27) as unique, singular beings. Following this vein, I came to realize that every individual's coming into the world is neither something that one can do on his/her own nor something being understood as an act or decision from a given situation, given the reason that "in order to come into the world one needs a world, and this world is a world inhabited by others who are not like us" (Biesta, 2006, p. 27). As such, everyone is markedly dependent upon him/herself, upon the others, and the contextualized situations in the world. More intriguingly, the very structure of the individual's identity and subjectivity as a singular being can only take place in a "troubling space" (Biesta, 2006, p. 53) of social situations. To echo Biesta's assertions, I can argue no more that foreign language classrooms are such a complex "troubling space" that is populated by unique individuals who are so much unlike to one another, in terms of ethnic origins, socioeconomic status, home languages, learning styles and even educational needs. Within this intricate contextualization of foreign language learning, it is all the learners' identities and subjectivities that make everyone into singular and unique beings on the one hand. On the other hand, it is all the human plurality and diversity that are to be appreciated and celebrated to the utmost degree. Accordingly, our role as foreign language educators should not merely be that of a technician or midwife to produce competent or fluent foreign language users, but it is rather our mission as a connoisseur and dreamer to value the difference, uniqueness and particularities of every student's "coming into world" as well as the exposition of human possibilities and justices.

Sketching out the complexity of disability matters

To sum up, in this study we draw on trails of Foucault's genealogical method for tracing the discursive practices which have formed the hard-of-hearing students' present in learning experiences. Foucault has interrogated the boundaries of certain disciplines, and especially the social sciences or, in his terminology, the disciplines of the (hu)man, and he has problematized their methodologies, leaving them open to change. As an alternative to a closed methodology, the genealogical approach can explore the disabled subject in education by locating some of the lost or hidden events and experiences.

The use of genealogy for analysis shows a path out of the theoretical impasses that inevitably appear as a result of a wholesale adoption of general theories and critiques. Genealogy can be used as a critical methodology in the study of disability experiences, particularly deriving from Foucault's groundbreaking historical analyses of punishment, madness and sexuality (1990, 1995, 2003). With the conceptualization of human reality as practices which are to be analyzed from within, many scholars in disability studies have done important work that is genealogical in nature (Baynton, 2006; Campbell, 2001; Davis, 2006). In *Disability /Postmodernity: Embodying Disability Theory*, Corker and Shakespeare (2002) acknowledge that Foucault's work and his genealogical method provide resources for understanding disability:

> *a proliferation of discourses on impairment give rise to the category 'disability'. Though these discourses were originally scientific and medical classificatory devices, they subsequently gained currency in judicial and psychiatric fields of knowledge. 'Disabled people' did not exist before this classification although impairment and impairment-related practices certainly did. Thus social identities are effects of the ways in which knowledge is organized, but his work is also significant for its explication of the links between knowledge and power. (pp. 7-8)*

In short, a genealogical approach deals with a vastly different conceptualization trajectory characteristic of revealing the

contingent and fractured heritage of human reality and experiences. This approach can also inform teacher education as student teachers are generally unaware of the experiences of these students.

Methodology

By approaching disability and education through the framework of genealogy in this study, we can demonstrate an interdisciplinary methodology that helps understand how disability is enacted within such a complex network of social relations, not just in the past but in the present as well.

Participants

Four hard of hearing students, three females and one male, participated in this study. They were college students at the time of the study. Though entering different institutions, they all were educated in mainstream settings throughout their schooling history. Regarding their daily communication, all participants used voice and residual hearing as their primary mode of communication in despite of the severity of their hearing loss varied from mild, moderate through to severe. None of the participants had other disabling conditions. The diversity of this group of students is shown in the etiology and age of onset of their hearing loss; the age at diagnosis and hearing aid fitting; and the degree of hearing loss. Table 1 summarizes each participant's hearing background.

Table 1: Descriptions of focal participants

P	G	Age 1	Onset of hearing loss	Cause of Hearing loss	Age 2	Age 3	Degree of Hearing Loss
Fay	F	19	Congenital	Heredity	3	4	Moderate
Eve	F	22	Postlingual	Medical misconduct	10	10	Moderate to severe
Wendy	F	20	Congenital	Maternal rubella	1	4	Moderate to severe
Simon	M	19	Postlingual	Meningitis	6	7	Mild to moderate

Note: P = Participants, G = Gender, Age1 = Age at the time of study, Age2 = Age at diagnosis, Age3 = Age at first hearing aid fitting

Data collection and analysis

Individual, open-ended, semi-structured interviews provided the main form through which data were collected for this study. Prior to the first interview, there was an informal meeting with the participants not only to facilitate the follow-up interviews but also to address ethical issues. The further interviews were also conducted to follow the flow of the participants' narrative comments. All interviews were transcribed and summarized. As discussed above, genealogy conceives human reality as an effect of the interweaving of certain historical and cultural practices, which it sets out to trace and explore with skepticism about the universalistic dogmas of truth, objectivity and positivist reason. Foucault (2003) described genealogy as "the coupling of scholarly erudition and local memories which allows us to constitute a historical knowledge of struggles and to make use of that knowledge in contemporary tactics" (p. 8). Genealogy is a way to consider how knowledge or systems of reason change over time

as cultural practices (Popkewitz, Pereyra & Franklin, 2001). Central to such analysis, therefore, is to understand how problems of social and individual life become constituted as they do, and change so as to affect the conditions where we live. Put differently, a genealogical approach seeks to trace experiences, processes, and techniques through which truth, knowledge, and belief are produced. It conceives human reality as an effect of the interweaving of certain historical and cultural practices, which it sets out to trace and explore.

Results and discussion

Unmaking individuals with hearing losses as the other

To begin this genealogical research study, it is important to recognize the historical dimensions of human reality in hearing losses, to interrogate the supposed interconnections between reason, knowledge, progress and ethical actions, and to acknowledge the discontinuities and struggling interfaces between various identities within selves, including that of particular hearing/hard of hearing identities, each of which are colored by life experiences and emerge when stimulated by specific contextual situations. The labels of "hearing" or "hard of hearing" do not exist in vacuum as sole entities. From the four participants' narratives of their life experiences with hearing losses, there is one common theme regarding epistemological grounds of "hearing impairments." For them, the term "hearing impairment" has been drawn on modernist cultural territory and social maps of positivist experts or professionals. When being asked to describe their hard of hearing condition in the interviews, all of the participants shared similar stories or situations of multiple oppressions, particularly due to expert professionals' constitutive regimes of ultimate knowledge and power at play.

As early as I was one year old, the doctors brought in the verdict of my abnormalcy... I was just not as normal as others.… I often joked with my mom that these dominating words or advices from the medical professionals were so much like the imperial edict that no one seemed ever to doubt or argue back with them. People just listen and follow them. (Eve)

I was the only one out of the whole family who was hard of hearing, the ONLY ONE, kind of separate and deviant from anybody else… I was the only black sheep with stigmatization because I was hard of hearing. And my memory of childhood is not really a happy one—with lots of doctor visits, hearing tests, and even religious rituals and remedies…. I really don't blame them. But honestly, I feel sorry for them and myself as being such a trouble maker and deviance to this world. (Wendy)

Just because of my abnormalcy, the different hearing conditions, I have to accept all the prosthetics curings which meant to change me into a normal kid, remedy my poor hearing, and bring back to the normal life… Truly, my hearing impairments have made me inferior and blocked me from the normal life. My hard of hearing condition seems to line out a border between the other hearing people and myself. Though this is an invisible borderline, it does prohibit me from crossing and inclusion. (Fay)

All what they said and did was dishearten me and make me question I could act and listen like other normal people, not even to mention going for post-secondary studies. But I have no choice at all in this hearing world because I am just the deviant from the norms in hearing. (Simon)

Obviously, not only the participants but their family members are interpellated by the hearing-dominated views that reproduce deficit perceptions that make them think of hearing losses as something inferior and needed to be remedied and cured. Metaphorically, all four participants, have described themselves, explicitly or implicitly, as having 'impairments,' inhabiting a

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landscape that is pathologized and marginalized, surrounded by impermeable label borders (Smith, 1999). This end result is the reproduction of reigning ideologies that control the body and mind. As such, the cult of professional expertise has compelled people, with or without impairments, to believe its authoritative voices unquestioningly as a total coherent system of necessary knowledge within a precise territory. The prevalence of discursive politics of power has relentlessly disciplined the so-called impaired bodies, as biological determinations and characteristics to be traced as the objectification and devalued as the other (Foucault, 1995). Consequently, people with 'impairments' are objectified, classified and devalued as "other" in terms of a grand narrative of deviance, lack and tragedy in a dominating hearing world.

New eugenics of ableism and hearing

In what follows, we explore how being a hard of hearing individual is inscribed in time and space. This is literally a space travel, dangerous as all space travels are supposed to be, full of unknown surprises and destinations. The multifarious practices and discourses of the new eugenics of ableism and hearing will be particularly discussed to get an understanding of the intricate identity constructions among people with hearing losses in a way that can inform social justice, equity, and teacher education,

In this able-bodied and hearing dominated world, the eugenics of ableism and hearing has been, consciously or unconsciously, directly or indirectly, prevalent within the very soul of our bodies, lives and society. Ableism is a network of beliefs, practices and process that produce a particular kind of self and body that is projected as flawless, perfect and therefore essential and fully human (Hehir, 2002). To show that hard of hearing peoples' place in society is governed or controlled by the eugenic process of ableism, the participants' narratives of experience are discussed

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in terms of three discourses—discourses of normalcy, discourses of difference, and the discourses of passing. The focus is on how these discourses are taken up, resisted, rejected, and/or incorporated as the participants construct their identities based on their hearing condition.

Discourses of normalcy

When reviewing the interview narratives, the prominence of discourses of normalcy, both explicitly and implicitly, is unmistakable. In our society, discourses of a prevailing body ideal and perfection exist—the able-bodied, strong, beautiful, healthy, pain-free and productive body (Wendell, 1996). These discourses, including the meanings, representations, images, stories, and statements which construct a particular consensus and understanding of the normal body, permeate the educational structures and practices. Thus, although human bodies exist in remarkably diverse ways, certain bodies are scrutinized and labeled as abnormal or deviant. Negative valuations are ascribed to people with hearing loss by the majority of individuals who take for granted that their own way of being in the world is 'normal'. A consequence of attributing 'normalcy' to hearingness is the construction of those who do not have this ability as abnormal, defective, and impaired:

> *I used to dream about being in a world where being disabled was no big deal, where no one considered it a tragedy. No one thought you were inspiring or felt sorry for you. No one stared at you. I imagined what a relief it would be to be seen every day as perfectly ordinary. (Wendy)*

> *Ever since I lost my hearing, my families and friends, and even any person sitting by me in the bus or subway, walking pass me on the street, have given me the impression that I am not a healthy person… I am abnormal from most people because I don't have a normal hearing. And just because of this hearing deficiency, I will never ever be a normal person and far away from a perfect being. (Fay)*

When I was aware of being the only hearing impaired child in my neighborhood, I felt the sense of embarrassment, shame and inferiority about my hearing loss... And I know no matter how I covered my hearing aids or pretended eased and normally, I am still, and always will not be a normal kid to them. (Simon)

More implicit example of discourses of normalcy at work in the research participants' narratives could be seen in the numerous stories they shared of performing oral and audio identity, in other words, performing normalcy. For example, Fay explicitly stated, "I was what they called an oral success even though I had lost more than 50 percent of hearing in my both ears." Likewise, Simon repeated spoke of his abilities to speak like a hearing person and his exceptional lip-reading skills. He said, "My speech was perfect. I guess people won't believe I am hard of hearing unless I tell them. The way I talk and the voice I sound are just like hearing people, and I am really good at lip-reading too." And Eve highlighted her ability to excel academically in a fully integrated hearing class "on par with the other hearing students."

Discourses of difference

Black bodies, white bodies; male bodies, female bodies; young bodies, old bodies; beautiful bodies, broken bodies; right bodies and wrong bodies; normal bodies and abnormal bodies. Historically, our bodies write our stories in which they have explained our past and framed our futures (Baker, 2002). But it is not our bodies which write the story; rather it is the way in which how we, as a society, construct and perceive our bodies that shapes our history and our future. Put it differently, it is the bodily difference that has determined the social structures and mindsets for centuries by defining certain bodies as the norm, and defining those which fall outside the norm as "the other"; with the degree of "otherness" being defined by the degree of variation from the norm (Wendell, 1996). In doing this, we have created an artificial paradigm of humanness into which some of

us fit neatly, and others fit very badly. The discourses of normalcy existed explicitly in many examples from the participants' narrative stories. However, they also existed in other implicit and unnamed ways. Owing to the fact that the very existence of discourses of normalcy presumes the notion of "the other" or "otherness," that is, the opposite of norm, the difference, it was found that a binary relationship intertwined between discourses of normalcy and discourses of difference. The following quotes illustrate the effect of the normalcy/difference binary at work as participants positioned themselves as outsiders, different from the "normal" hearing children.

I didn't really know I had a disability until my first day in the kindergarten. I still remembered vividly that after entering the classroom, I realized that I was the only kid with hearing aid sets. It was the first time I felt ashamed of my hearing impairment because I wasn't like everyone else. I became more depressed and upset when they came over around me fingering "the thing in my ear" and curiously asking about it. (Fay)

Noticing of being different from my other classmates owing to my hearing loss, I felt so excluded and ashamed. All bad ideas and images have been revolving in my mind about myself. At times I felt I was just like the ugly duckling in Andersen's classic children tales in which I was the different one supposed to be persecuted and despised. At time I felt like a black sheep in the class because I could hardly catch up others' sayings and doings. And for most of the times, I felt the hearing difference between me and my friends has built up an invisible wall separating me as an outsider. (Eve)

I was really aware that I was different from the other kids in the schools… No one else in the school had hearing aids. Why did I talk funny? Why did I talk differently than the other kids?… I felt different. I felt like why I was the one to be blamed for my hearing loss? Why did God punish me? Why am I different from everyone else? Why am I

alone? The only one? Sadly, this seems to be an unanswered question. (Wendy)

I have hands, legs, eyes, mouth, and ears as others do, a normal person. But when it is my turn to purchase a ticket… I am forced to expose my hidden stigma to the public... All of a sudden, my self-perception as being a normal person is shattered away... I can HEAR their sighing and murmuring. Their expressions of mercy and pity have even made me more sorry for my difference to them. (Simon)

Discourses of passing

The third discourses examined in the participants' narratives were discourses of passing, a theoretical concept used earlier by Goffman (1963). Passing, according to Goffman, refers to the efforts and attempts of the individuals with "discredited stigma" (p. 42) or deviant from the norm to act as if the known differences were irrelevant and even nonexistent. Educational settings emerge as a prominent context in the participants' life stories where discourses of passing are at work, influencing how they go about the task of identity construction.

Most of the time, I didn't tell people that I was hearing impaired. I never warned anyone. I just carried on with my life and tried to make it through…At young age, maybe I was kind of over-reacted, but I thought if I told them that I had hearing impairments, they might see me as a morbid and abnormal boy and think of my hearing as a contiguous disease that I would pass it on to them. Or maybe they'd feel awkward and not know how to relate to me. And I really didn't want their pity because I am not hearing well like others. So I never, if possible, told friends that I was hearing impaired. But too bad, they could still find it out though. (Simon)

Sometimes I do felt pathetic and guilty about myself disguising and pretending to others. I know that's not the right thing, but I just couldn't help. Perhaps that's one way of self protection and defense, just like a chameleon, to survive in this hearing world. (Eve)

I was not honest at all about the difficulties I was having. But that was just me. The internal me, the real me, was not like what I told people "I'm fine, I'm okay." I was wearing a mask. Keeping up an appearance and making an illusion that everything was fine. I put on a good front. (Fay)

Lastly, from their narrative stories, all four participants emphasized the added schoolwork that was necessary to do in order to keep up with their hearing peers in class.

I guess one thing about me, as a hearing impaired student in a hearing class, was that I had to work twice as hard. I'd study constantly because I couldn't get all the information as the others did. So it was double the work having to read things all over again and having to make sure that I got it. Or write it again. It was just much more work than you could expect. (Fay)

To let myself more included in the class, I am always working extra hard. It might take one hour for the classmates to finish an assigned homework; however, it could take me one or two days to make it complete. Everything really takes time for me to do. But I do appreciate the understanding from some teachers and selfless help from the classmates. (Eve)

Much more extra work and time on my studies are the only strategy for me to survive in the class. Just because I know I am different from other, I have to work extra hard to make up the gap. (Wendy)

Compared to other students in the class, I have always spent more time and energy on my schoolwork. For example, it seems to be easy for them to memorize a short English poem. But for me, it is really a difficult task to accomplish with hours of looking-up words in the dictionary and brainstorming of memorizing techniques. It does take a lot of extra time and effort, and you won't fully understand the struggles unless you're in the same shoes. (Simon)

Conclusion

For the participants in this study, the variety of hearing levels, the perceived stigma of the hard of hearing labels, their pronounced desire to pass and meld into the hearing world, and the reigning discourses of normalcy and hearing to unmake them as the other, all mitigate the chance of clustering 'hard of hearing' into an easily defined and acceptable neutral identity constellation. Along time, their educational experiences incorporate multilayered levels of interplay between the micro self and the macro cultural, social and historical contexts. With oscillations and disturbances, we see tensions and complexities in the identity construction and commitment among people with hearing losses in their lives and learning experiences.

During the interviews, "silence" is the repetitive episode in their educational learning experiences. The juxtaposition of learning experiences as being silenced by teachers and peers in the classrooms, the silence of an absence of any positive appraisal of their learning outcomes and results, as well as the silent disconnection of curriculum design and support to every individual learning needs. The concept of who one is about is produced in a variety of contextual sites, all of which are structured by relations of power in which the person takes up different subject positions such as student, child, immigrant or disabled person. The normalizing discourses of learning in forms of oral-listening dominated theories or principles have operated to regulate and constrain the identity construction and behaviors of all learners, not to mention the students with hearing losses, and devastatingly perpetuate the regime of ableism. In this study, the prevalent governing power reflective of a normative ideological position regards hard of hearing students as deficit learners to be silenced and low achievers to be excluded. However, it is fairly important to initiate and maintain such a wide-ranging and provocative dialogue around the issues,

concerns, and even fears of the hard of hearing students and educators in order to provide a more open and holistic environment for the development of effective social justice policies and practices in learning environments.

In this article, a snapshot was provided, some truths were told, but an urge for reconceptualization of foreign language learning among students with hearing losses is therefore cast. Bringing together a unique collection of personal narratives of hard-of-hearing students' foreign language learning experiences, this study makes visible the presence of disabled beings in the foreign language classrooms and legitimizes their voices, lives, and knowledge to trace and reveal the contingent and fractured human realities which have formed the hard-of-hearing students' disability identity in foreign language learning practices. To answer the pressing research questions, the results of this study indicate the truth of prevalent governing power relations reflective of a hearing epistemological and ableist ideological position regarding hard-of-hearing students as the others to be objectified, deficit learners to be silenced, and lower achiever to be marginalized in the foreign language classrooms. More specifically, the findings of this study have painted a complex picture of hearing disability discourses within the terrain of foreign language practices on the path of globalization by problematizes the existing meanings of disability, debunking the taken-for-granted, and recovering the social, cultural, linguistic, and discursive processes that serve to subordinate hard-of-hearing people by locking them in essentialized subject positions and negatively valued identities while privileging and creating mobile, fluid, valued, multiple identities and subject positions for the other abled and hearing people.

Without questions, nothing would induce more positive change than to grant a voice to the people who know best—the hard-of-hearing students. In this study, the narratives shared by the young

participants during the interviews are without fit, dramatic, messy, contested, but affirming. It is only through the prism of their voices and revelation of their life stories could foreign language educators, policy makers, and other players start to interrogate those warps and woofs of difference and sameness constituting the notion(s) of dis/ability in foreign language learning and to further examine the fundamental human and educational developmental issues regarding social justices and human equity. Admittedly, till now, not any prescribed "solutions" to hard of hearing students' foreign language learning have been provided as there is no such an elixir nor miracle to "cure" these issues. However, this study can be seen as a starting point for an empowering practice of making the unknown visible and palpable as well as an ongoing reconceptualization of the great dividing gaps between the presumed truths and lived realities regarding hard-of-hearing students' foreign language learning experiences. The participants herein have been moving us forward to open up entire realms of their lived realities and experiences otherwise left unexpressed or unexplored, to talk openly about it and think critically of a foreign language learning environment being exposed. This study achieved this to a limited degree, and the need for a more extensive and comprehensive investigation and understanding is evident. Indeed, without the timely challenge of the hegemony of foreign language educational establishments, the net effects of disparity between the perceived and lived realities will be the continuation of the hard-of-hearing students' failure to attain the fundamental ideals of social justices, human equality and pursuit of happiness bringing upon the resultant subjugation and underachievement of their potential as foreign language learners and human beings. There is so much work to do in the next journey to listen each voice with the ear of the heart, to ponder the burning issues circulating the discursive constructed notions of "ability & disability," "normal & abnormal," "sameness & otherness," and to further unmask the politics of

truth of disability experiences in foreign language education. As such, any so-called "disability," including hearing loss, is no longer a matter of private struggle or public shame but a matter of diversity in learning and living in foreign language learning. This would be so critical and foundational to more effective, sensitive and appropriate foreign language educational policies and practices. Otherwise, the gross marginalization and underachievement of hard-of-hearing students caused by faculty policy and practice is bound to continue.

Acknowledgements

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