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Communication Theory Analysis of The Movie CODA

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The Covid pandemic brought different challenges for countless communities. Individuals that went through the pandemic were struggling with overall health, mental health, and social isolation. Due to health mandates, a considerable amount of the population was able to continue daily life with some changes. Furthermore, due to the restrictions introduced during the pandemic, many people in the United States continued daily life through technology, wearing a mask in public and calling loved ones over the phone. Despite the many challenges, society adapted the way they communicate and interact with others. Although this adaptation was great for most of society, some portions of the population struggled to adapt such as the d/Deaf community.

The d/Deaf community consists of individuals who are d/Deaf and use American Sign Language (ASL) for their mode of communication. Furthermore, the d/Deaf community consists of more members than those who are d/Deaf. The community consists of people who are: hard of hearing (HoH), children of d/Deaf adults (CODAS), people who learn the language, people who support the d/Deaf community, individuals who use a cochlear, individuals who were born d/Deaf but choose to hear (deaf) individuals who became d/Deaf and choose to embrace their deafness (Deaf) (Lane, 2002).

The difference between individuals who use deaf and Deaf is dependent on how the individual associates with the d/Deaf community. Usually, individuals who use little d do not associate with the population. Usually, these individuals use cochlear and strive to conform to the hearing community and disassociate with other people who are deaf. On the other hand, individuals who use Deaf are the opposite. These individuals usually do not use cochlear implants, embrace the language, the deaf community and strive to educate others about their community.

Not only did this community face a language barrier, but they also faced physical barriers due to face masks. The d/Deaf community has unique manner of communicating, not only through sign language but also through facial expressions (Garg, 2021). About 60-70% of the d/Deaf community's language is based on facial expression (Pies, 2006). For example, if someone describes how far away an object is from where they're standing, they'd point in that direction but there's a few options for facial expressions. If the object is far away, they'd point in that direction and move their lips to say "ah." If the object is closer, they'd point the same but move their lips to say "cs." Without these facial expressions, the d/Deaf community struggles to communicate with other d/Deaf community members.

Another struggle the d/Deaf community faced during the pandemic was online learning. A significant amount of d/Deaf students were expected to use ASL in an environment without linguistic support (Aljedaani, 2022). Although information was accessible online, students struggled to understand the materials due to the lack of knowledge of the English language (Aljedaani, 2022). According to Ajiedanni, online learning not only impacted the student's performance level in school, the inaccessibility of the information in their language had a negative emotional impact. As many students faced this emotional impact, others struggled to receive the medical care they needed to manage these emotions (Barbero, 2020).

With the ever-changing protocols to stop the spread of the virus, access to healthcare became particularly difficult for the d/Deaf community (Barbero, 2020). For example, this community struggled to receive health care due to a shortage of interpreters. With the increased protocols of how many people can be in the hospital at a time and restrictions on additional visitors in medical appointments, the D/deaf community struggled for language access (Barbero, 2020).

To change the support provided to the deaf community, we must understand how the d/Deaf community is viewed amongst others. Since most of our society is hearing in comparison to the deaf, learning how the hearing community views the d/Deaf community can shape a campaign to educate the larger community. More specifically, this honor thesis reflects how the d/Deaf community is portrayed to the larger hearing community.

This paper will cover an overview of the d/Deaf community and how they are viewed in society through literature and examples. An analysis of the motion picture CODA will be conducted to connect communication methods within the movie. The two communication theories used are: Communication Accommodation Theory (Giles, 1971) and Speech Code theory (Philipsen, 2008) with the ultimate goal of considering contemporary d/Deaf portrayal in the media.

Literature Review

Overview of the d/Deaf community

How does the d/Deaf community feel about the way they are treated in society? Many sources show this community feels a division between their community and other communities. There are a few reasons why the d/Deaf community feel a divide in society and struggle daily. Firstly, the d/Deaf community struggles to communicate and feel included with the hearing community (Hall et al. 2019). Another reason is, the hearing community does not know how welcoming the d/Deaf community is (Nomeland, 2012). Furthermore, the hearing community is unaware of the D/deaf community's passion to teach their language and culture (Scheetz & Martin, 2008). Due to this, the hearing community looks at the d/Deaf community with a medical point of view rather than a cultural point of view (Regan, 1995), and finally the hearing community does not know the true feeling the d/Deaf community has when it comes to inclusion

(Breivik, 2005). Due to misperceptions and the lack of knowledge about the d/Deaf community, an informative campaign may help lessen the divide between the hearing and the d/Deaf community.

As a result of communication barriers, the d/Deaf and hearing community struggle to communicate with each other. Over time there have been alternative forms of communication between a d/Deaf and hearing individual. Some of these ways include writing on a piece of paper, typing back and forth on a cell phone, gesturing, and using an interpreter. In 2015, ComRes, a market research group in London, England studied men and women's confidence in communicating with a d/Deaf child (Stacia, 2015). Of the 2,064 respondents, 41% answered “not very confident” when communicating with a child who is d/Deaf. Furthermore, 20% of the respondents answered, “not at all confident,” and 7% answered “I don’t know.” Taken together, nearly 70% of those surveyed indicated very little confidence in their ability to interact with a d/Deaf child. This survey is a clear example that shows the hearing population’s struggle to communicate with the d/Deaf community.

Secondly, another problem that is important to address is, the hearing community being uninformed of the d/Deaf community’s view on teaching their language. In the United States all states offer ASL as a foreign language, as a credit, or accept ASL classes as credit (NAD, 2019). In Kalamazoo there are many opportunities to learn about the d/Deaf culture and American Sign Language. Classes are offered at Western Michigan University and Kalamazoo Valley Community College. Furthermore, there is often a “Deaf Night Out” (DNO) event hosted by the d/Deaf community. Many of these events include going out to see a movie, going out to eat or to participate in local events. DNO is marketed monthly to the d/Deaf community, students learning the language and anyone who wants to join. These events hosted to engage the community, build

relationships amongst the two communities, practice the skills students learn in class and allow students to experience a d/Deaf social event. In my personal experience, I have struggled with communicating with a d/Deaf individual. I struggled not because I feared the person, but because I feared using the language incorrectly or not being “good enough”. After going to these events, I have met many welcoming individuals who were happy to help correct my sign language and encouraged me to continue learning. I hope this undergraduate honors thesis will encourage others to not be afraid and engage with this community.

The third misconception is the hearing community views the d/Deaf community in a medical lens rather than a cultural lens (Regan, 1995 & Breivik, 2005). From the beginning of time deafness has been compared to the hearing community in a negative manner (Nomeland, 2012). In the 1800s, deafness was seen as a disease and physical condition (Nomeland, 2012). The d/Deaf community undertook many experiments to cure their deafness such as “the blowing of a trumpet in the ears or pouring liquids ‘oil, honey, vinegar, bile of rabbits or pigs, garlic juice, goat’s urine, eel fat mixed with blood’ into the ears” (Nomeland, 2012. Pg.11). Our country in the past fifty years has been fighting to change people's view of deafness (NAD). The traditional view of deafness is seen as a medical condition rather than a cultural choice (Reagan, 1995). Some have the option for a surgery for an implant yet, they are still considered deaf. Some efforts to fight this habitual thought is by passing the Americans with Disabilities Act (1990), the “Deaf President Now” movement and the establishment of the National Deaf Association. These events show the progress the d/Deaf community has made to receive recognition amongst society.

The last problem that is important to consider is the segregation this community faces. The lack of communication between individuals who are d/Deaf and individuals who are

hearing, has created a health concern for the d/Deaf community. Repeatedly studies have proven individuals who are d/Deaf are more likely to be depressed (Leigh, 1989). A study done by Gallaudet University, analyzed the rate of depression between d/Deaf and hearing students (Bond, 1989; Leigh, 1989; Robins, 1989; Welkowitz, 1989). Through a series of tests, students were asked to rate statements and feelings about their at home life, behaviors, attitudes and values. This study found the d/Deaf students had a significantly higher rate of depression than the hearing students. More recently, another study researched depression rates between d/Deaf and hearing individuals. This study found d/Deaf individuals not only have higher depression rates, but also do not have consistent healthcare providers (Holcomb,2019; Kushalnagar, 2019; Reesman, 2019; Ryan, 2019).

To combat these problems, the d/Deaf community has spoken out and advocated for themselves. These efforts of their advocacy include: “Deaf President Now 1988”, (*The week of DPN*) passing the American with Disabilities Act 1990, (*Americans with Disabilities*) and the establishment of the National Deaf Association. Most recently, the d/Deaf community has been raising awareness and attention through advocating for interpreters during the COVID-19 pandemic, establishing British Sign Language as an official Language in Great Britain, Washington state creating a law to require interpreters in the classroom, the entertainment industry awarding d/Deaf actors and other campaigns. These events show a testament to what this community can do when they work together and are acknowledged by the hearing community.

The d/Deaf community has a voice in how they want to be treated, this can be seen in the “Deaf President Now” movement. In 1988, Gallaudet University elected a hearing president to lead the student body. After this announcement, the University’s campus came together to

boycott and demand new leadership under d/Deaf president, I. King Jordan. The community won causing the university to induct the I. King Jordan.

More recently, during the Covid pandemic national broadcastings of briefings did not provide interpreters for the d/Deaf community. These briefings provided citizens with crucial developments and alerts about the ongoing health crisis. Since there were no interpreters, the information was not accessible to the d/Deaf community. Consequentially, the NAD filed a lawsuit for failure of adequate interpreters during the briefings. Months after the lawsuit was filed, the file was dismissed and resulted in the White House hiring the first d/Deaf interpreter, Elsie Stecker (O'Keefe, 2022).

Another iconic step that brought awareness to the d/Deaf community is the Americans with Disability Act in 1990 (ADA). This Act protects this community in terms of employment, services and law enforcement. This act was passed to make sure citizens were treated equally despite their "conditions" (*Americans With Disabilities*). Many changes can still be seen today from this act. Public places must satisfy the standards ADA ratify, to include individuals protected under this act. This act allowed many people to have access to information in society from: subtexts required to be made for television and regulations for alarm systems.

The National Association of the Deaf (NAD) founded in 1880, provided space to "preserve, protect and promote the civil, human and linguistic rights of the Deaf, DeafBlind, DeafDisabled and Hard of Hearing, and Late-Deafened people in the United States of America" (*About Us. National*). This group of people empower this community to be acknowledged and respected (*About Us. National*). The NAD works together with the public to ensure any needs of the community are satisfied. Most recently during the COVID-19 pandemic the NAD sued the US government for lack of access to COVID-19 information in sign language. After this lawsuit

any information broadcasted from the US government must have an interpreter. This is a win for the d/Deaf community. Since this lawsuit the White House has hired a full-time d/Deaf interpreter for this position (CBS News).

Recently, entertainment media has expanded to new perspectives because of the d/Deaf community. In 2021, Apple Tv released a new movie “CODA.” This movie showcased the perspective of a hearing child in a d/Deaf family. The movie shows the life of Ruby, a CODA, exploring her love for singing, despite her family being deaf. The movie broke through new barriers for the d/Deaf Community through a winning nomination to the first D/Deaf actor, Troy Kuster and winning an Oscar for best picture for a movie about the community. Since CODA received these Oscars, it started many conversations online and amongst people.

In addition to improved ASL representation in Hollywood, another sector of our society is enriching ASL in schools. Although CODA has created new conversations online about the language, it has been established for over a century, the community continues to gain language access in schools. Last year (2022) a bill, in Washington state, for increased language access in their classrooms was passed (1153-S2 Bill). The bill’s main goal is to ensure parents, teachers and students are receiving adequate information. To achieve this the bill adopts four principles to achieve an “effective language access program for culturally responsive, systemic and family engagement,.” (Smith, 2022). The four principles include: accessibility and quality; accountability and transparency; responsive culture; and focus on relationships. Through these principles the program aims to engage the community, surrounding the schools, to nurture students in their first language.

Now moving to our focus to the east of the United States, the d/Deaf community in Great Britain received exciting news this year as well! On April 28, 2022, the ‘House of Lords’

formally acknowledged the British Sign Language as an official language in Great Britain (McManamon, 2022). This monumental day for the d/Deaf community is equivalent to the U.S. President signing a bill passed by congress to make it federal law. The bill was brought to public attention after a popular activist group, The British Deaf Association, campaigned for the passing of the bill. The bill was inspired by the Equality Act 2010. The Equality Act 2010 was passed to outline equality for numerous areas of Britain's society. The main overarching key message of this act is to protect everyone and anyone from discrimination, victimization and harassment.

This acknowledgement has been a long time coming. Over the past 20 years, individuals in the community have started campaigns to bring awareness to the potential of this bill. Some of the campaigns that contributed to the British Sign Language Act being passed include: Stop Changes to Access to Work Campaign led by d/Deaf professionals in Britain and “Spit the Dummy” by Jason Sharpe (Williams D. 2013). Though these campaigns had different focuses such as increasing the number of interpreters in the workplace and gaining legal protection for BSL, these efforts proved why this bill needed to be implemented.

In the United States, awareness of the d/Deaf community is a different story. Unlike the UK, the US does not recognize ASL as an official language. To improve awareness for this community some campaigns include National Association of the Deaf: The gift of language campaign, Lead K by deaf Focus, Therapy the d/Deaf way by the Deaf Counseling Center and the Depression Awareness Ad Campaign by URMC Rochester. All these campaigns focus on improving mental health and everyday challenges this community faces. Through these campaigns, the d/Deaf community uses videos, television advertisements and social media to improve awareness amongst the hearing community.

Communication Accommodation Theory

To understand how the hearing community views the d/Deaf community, it is important to consider how the two interact. One theory to analyze this would be with Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT; Giles, 1971).

CAT (Giles, 1971) centers around the idea that people strategically adjust their communication when interacting with others, including intergroup interactions. The parties that engage in this interaction accommodate their communication to gain communication effectiveness and social acceptance. CAT covers three adjustments that can happen during interactions: Maintenance, Convergence and Divergence. For example, in an interpersonal interaction between a hearing and d/Deaf individual three scenarios can happen. First, both parties can communicate via their natural way of communication. For example, a hearing individual would talk to the d/Deaf individual and the d/Deaf individual would sign to the hearing individual. In terms of a hearing and d/Deaf individual engaging in maintenance adjustment, neither party would understand the conversation. The second accommodation of the theory is convergence. Convergence accommodation occurs when one party adopts a behavior to become more like others. The most common example would be a hearing individual expecting a d/Deaf individual to use hearing aids to communicate with the hearing community. Lastly, the third accommodation is divergence. Divergence is the behavior that everyone engages in to highlight their differences. An example of this would simply be the various methods the hearing community and d/Deaf community communicate. In these examples, the individuals who are d/Deaf usually are the ones who change the way they communicate. In most of the examples above the d/Deaf community is the party that must conform to the hearing community's way of communicating. Another example that can be seen in this type of conforming would be the

d/Deaf community receiving hearing implants. These hearing implants allow the d/Deaf community to hear and communicate in a similar way to the hearing community.

Speech Codes Theory

Along with CAT, Speech Codes Theory (Philipsen, 2008) provides insight as to how the community communicates amongst themselves and with other communities as well.

Speech codes theory by (Philipsen, 2008). This theory highlights the different ways speech (in this case a language) highlights a culture. In this theory there are four main ideas or propositions when characterizing speech codes of a community (Philipsen, 2008). The four main ideas are: distinctive cultures have distinctive speech codes, speech communities involve multiple speech codes, a speech code reflects different social culture structures, and you must be effective to utilize the speech codes. Since the d/Deaf community has their own language, this is considered as one of their speech codes. American Sign Language is a distinctive code that expresses the community. Across the world there are many different types of sign language, a few examples include: BSL (Black Sign Language), BSL (British Sign Language), PSE (Pidgin Signed English) and SEE (Signed Exact English). The second proposition addresses that the speech community involves multiple speech codes. A speech code is a common phrase or understanding the community has. In the hearing community we have many speech codes such as “it’s raining cats and dogs” and “we can’t talk now we’re in a corn field” these are examples of language that only the hearing community would understand because it’s a part of our culture. The d/Deaf community has their own set of speech codes such as: “258” or “touch finish.” In ASL some of the commonly used phrases in everyday writing have faster ways to sign. In ASL instead of signing “very interesting” many individuals sign the numbers “258” as a faster way to say very interesting. Similar to “258,” “touch finish” is a faster way to say “been there done that”

or “I’ve been there before.” Since the d/Deaf community has idioms that they use daily this qualifies as a proposition under Philipsen’s theory. The third proposition talks about how a speech code reflects different social culture structures. Some idioms the d/Deaf community uses that shapes their culture are “tru-biz” or “fsh.” These idioms such as “tru-biz” mean “that really happened” people usually use the phrase when an unbelievable story is being told. Furthermore, the idiom “fsh” is a fast way to say “stop” or “cut that out.” This term is often used when telling a child to stop doing something they’re not supposed to be doing. These idioms showcase the feelings and emotions of the culture. These idioms show the culture structure since these idioms can be signed in different aspects. Furthermore, these idioms are unique to the d/Deaf community since members of the hearing community would not interpret the same meaning. Lastly, the final part of this theory is: individuals must be able to use, understand, and interpret different meanings within the culture. In terms of a hearing community, this proposition focuses on the volume or how someone talks to express their thoughts. Though American Sign Language doesn’t use sound or volume in their language, there are different parameters in the language. The parameters are handshape, palm orientation, movement, location and expression/non-manual signs. These are the ways the d/Deaf community shows expression and their own speech codes. For example, a student who learned American Sign Language cannot be fully immersed due to the unknown rules within the culture. Some rules within the community are do not talk while d/Deaf individuals are present, do not cover your mouth when people are interacting with you, do not read conversations in the room and do not interpret for someone if they did not ask for the help (Nomeland, 2012a; Nomeland ,2012b).

Why is this study important? This study will be a way to analyze how the d/Deaf community communicates with each other and the hearing community using CAT and Speech Code Theory as exemplified in the movie CODA.

Methods

Text

CODA, directed by Sian Heder, illustrates the life of high school senior Ruby Rossi, and her life as a CODA (Child of Deaf Adults). As a CODA, Ruby is committed to supporting her family. She spends her mornings before school fishing with her father and brother, Frank and Leo. Although Ruby grew up as her family's interpreter, she enjoys music. At school she's seen as an outcast and has one close friend named Gerdy. As an effort to try to make a new friend, Miles, Ruby signs up for Mr. Bernardo Villalobos' choir seminar. As Ruby peruses her passion in music, she is quickly put to the test to balance her life with music and her family (CODA, 2021).

Analysis

Collecting data for this study took approximately 6 hours in a span of two weeks. A codebook was developed by using Microsoft word. In the codebook, both theories (CAT and Speech Code theory) were explained and documented with examples. Once the codebook was developed, an Excel sheet was developed to track each of the occurrences of the main ideas in the movie. In the Excel sheet, each theory had its own sheet. Within the sheet, each main idea had row. Preceding the row, open cells were reserved for documenting occurrences of that main idea in the movie. Once these documents were prepared, collecting data could commence.

Before coding data, the movie was watched once in its entirety. Once the movie was finished, a day passed to allow for information retention and reflection. Next, while watching the movie, any occurrence of either communication theory resulted in pausing the movie and documenting the instance. After the data was collected it was analyzed. During the analysis each interaction depending on the main idea was created into groups. For example, if the interaction among maintenance was between a deaf individual and another deaf individual, it was labeled “deaf vs deaf”. For convergence it was noted which individual changed their communication method for the other individual. Once the data was labeled and grouped conclusions formulated.

Findings

As the movie CODA captures the daily life of Ruby, the main ideas of CAT theory and Speech Code theory begin to unfold. Throughout the history mentioned above, the way d/Deaf individuals have been treated can be seen throughout the movie CODA. As the movie focuses on the life of Ruby, a CODA (Child of Deaf Adults) it begins to show the true struggles and growth of d/Deaf individuals in a hearing community. Throughout time, the d/Deaf community has grown to show their culture, their language and relationship with society which is expressed in the movie CODA. The following sections of this paper will breakdown how Communication Accommodation Theory (Giles, 1971) and Speech Code theory (Philipsen, 2008) are used in the movie to portray the lives of Ruby, Leo her brother, Frank her father, Jackie her mother and Gerdy her friend.

Communication Accommodation Theory

Maintenance

Throughout the movie maintenance can happen one of three ways: d/Deaf talking to d/Deaf individuals, hearing talking to hearing individuals and d/Deaf talking to hearing individuals. Among all three of these categories, d/Deaf and hearing individuals are more likely to maintain their preferred way of communication when talking to each other (Giles, 1971).

d/Deaf vs. Hearing

Throughout the movie there were eight instances throughout the movie of maintenance between d/Deaf individuals and hearing. Of these eight instances two were negative experiences for the d/Deaf individuals. The two instances occurred about 25 minutes into the movie. The first was when Ruby helped her brother receive the correct price for their fish (CODA, 2021, 00:26:21). Since her brother, Leo, is deaf, he was not able to hear other offers in the shop. Since the buyer knew this, Leo's hearing was exploited to buy the fish at a lower price. This scenario is an example of maintenance since both Leo and the person he was selling to were using their preferred way of communication.

Unfortunately, the other instance happened to Leo at the bar (CODA, 2021, 00:36:40). While Leo was at the bar, another individual accidentally spilled a drink on him. Leo, being upset, walked up to him, and asked in sign language if he was going to apologize. Since the gentleman did not understand sign language, he mocked Leo and tries to talk to him in English. This scenario can be seen as maintenance since both gentlemen expect each other to understand their forms of communication despite knowing otherwise.

As for the other positive instances, there were six of them. Early in the movie the first instance of maintenance between d/Deaf individuals and hearing individuals was at the doctor's office (CODA, 2021, 00:07:24). During the doctor's office visit, Ruby became the interpreter for

her parents. This is evaluated as maintenance since; the doctor and the family maintain their preferred way of communication.

Furthermore, another time that the movie showed maintenance was when the bar owner asked Leo if he wanted ice for his eye after getting into a fight (CODA, 2021, 00:37:14). Since the bar owner is hearing, he asked Leo by using English. Using lip reading, Leo accepted.

Later in the movie, the Frank and Leo are faced with a new challenge, having a monitor required on their boat. This woman is required to check that everything is working properly on the boat (CODA, 2021, 01:05:09). During this scene, the woman creates small talk, expecting for the men to respond. As the woman tries to create small talk the men on the boat do not respond and maintain their method of communication.

The last way the Rossi family maintain their preferred way of communication among hearing individuals is seen in the last few scenes at Ruby's choir concert (CODA, 2021, 01:22:15). At the end of the concert the scene shows the crowd clapping for Ruby and the performers. While the crowd claps the Rossi family applause by waving their hands, differently than everyone else. Although the family could have clapped like everyone else, they chose to clap how they clap in their language.

Maintenance among d/Deaf v. d/Deaf and Hearing v Hearing

Throughout the movie there are many times when hearing individuals and d/Deaf individuals maintain their way of communication with each other. Although we can see this throughout the entire movie with scenes focused on the Rossi family, the maintenance between d/Deaf individuals is positive. The first time we can see maintenance between d/Deaf individuals is about 5 minutes into the movie. During this time, Leo and Frank talk about how their own

business will not work in the fishing industry (CODA, 2021, 00:03:50). On the other hand, the first time we see maintenance between two hearing individuals is between Ruby and her friend Gertie at their hearing school.

The second part of CAT is convergence. Convergence is when one individual change the way they communicate so the other individual can understand. Throughout the movie this can be seen as one of two ways, a hearing individual converging their communication to accommodate to the d/Deaf individuals or the d/Deaf individual. The recorded times someone had to converge their way of communication was about 17 times. Among those 17 times, 9 of them were the hearing individuals converging to communicate with the d/Deaf while the other 8 times were the d/Deaf individuals converging to talk to the hearing.

The most common way for a hearing individual to converge to communicate with the d/Deaf individuals is when Ruby communicates with her family. This can be seen when: Ruby tells her family the quota for the fish that day is not good (CODA, 2021, 00:03:59), Ruby being the interpreter for her family at the doctor (CODA, 2021, 00:07:24), Ruby signing and talking with her mom while a friend is around and Ruby signing her audition for her family to understand (CODA, 2021, 01:38:00). Although this is the most common way a hearing individual converges to communicate with the d/Deaf individuals, other characters throughout the movie try to communicate using sign. The two characters that take on this role of communicating with Ruby's family is Gordy trying to sign with Leo and Bernardo, the choir teacher talking to Ruby's family.

On the other hand, there are instances in the movie where d/Deaf individuals converge to talk to the hearing. Some examples of these would be Jackie, Ruby's mom, literally saying "hey" to get her attention (CODA, 2021, 00:34:56), Gerdy uses Leo's phone to talk to him over text

(CODA, 2021, 00:37:53) and Frank banging on the chair at the marina meeting to get everyone's attention (CODA, 2021, 00:50:07).

Lastly the last piece of this theory of CAT theory is divergence. Divergence is when an individual acts deliberately outside of the norm. Some examples in the movie would be: Ruby explaining how she feels when she sings in sign language (even though no one knows how to sign when she explains herself) (CODA, 2021, 00:32:46), Gerdy saying Ruby's brother is hot knowing that he won't hear (CODA, 2021, 00:19:52). and when Jackie and Frank have a conversation in ASL knowing that no one can understand them at the choir concert (CODA, 2021, 01:22:30).

Speech Code Theory

The second theory I'd like to point out that is used in the movie CODA is Speech Code theory. Speech Code theory has 4 distinct categories: Distinctive cultures have distinctive speech codes, speech communities involve multiple speech codes, a speech code reflects different social culture structures and lastly you must be effective to utilize speech codes (Philipsen, 2008).

Codes are Cultural

The movie CODA shows two instances of having examples for this first main idea of speech code. The two examples are: Jackie not wanting to be friends with the other marina wives (CODA, 2021, 00:52:25). and Bernardo's accent. These two examples show that groups of individuals have different ways of talking to each other. In Jackie's case, the woman does not want Jackie to join the friend group because she's deaf. Since Jackie is deaf, many of the women do not know how to communicate with Jackie. Due to this, the woman in the friend group has a distinctive speech code amongst each other. On the other hand, Bernardo pronounces his words

set him apart and creates his own speech code. Bernardo has his own speech code throughout the movie since no one shares his accent.

Speech Community involves multiple speech codes and different Social Culture

Structures

The second main and third main ideas of speech code theory are: speech communities involve multiple speech codes and speech communities involve different social culture ideas (Philipsen, 2008). A few examples that can be seen in this movie are when the Rossi family signs differently and true ASL (CODA, 2021, 00:34:13). Some examples that can be seen throughout the movie are how the family signs hate and why. The movie did not have many speech codes that reflected different social culture structures. The one that was seen in the movie was when Leo gets in a fight at the bar (CODA, 2021, 00:36:40).

Being effective to utilize speech codes

The last main idea of speech codes is being effective to utilizing speech codes (Philipsen, 2008). Throughout the movie this is being used when Ruby gets upset with her family and signs differently when she's upset with someone (CODA, 2021, 01:20:30). Since Ruby knows the language well, she can effectively communicate her feelings through sign language and her body language. Furthermore, During the concert there is a song that engages the audience in clapping. This song is a two way conversation between the audience and the performers since the audience is participating in the music. The Rossi family knows the audience is clapping but doesn't know why. During this the Rossi family claps at the wrong beat. For the Rossi's to truly understand why they are clapping they must know the beat of the song to participate. During the concert there is a song that engages the audience in clapping. (CODA, 2021, 01:24:44). Lastly, the final

way we can see this idea used in the movie is when Jackie pulls Frank down to sit after the ovation at the concert. We can assume she does this to make sure he doesn't stay standing to embarrass himself when everyone else is sitting. In this example, it's clear that Jackie is helping Frank to abide by the social cues in the room. (CODA, 2021, 01:24:55).

Discussion

As stated before, the goal of this honors thesis is to reflect and change how the deaf community is portrayed among the hearing community. Throughout history, the deaf community must consistently contend with general misconceptions and regulations. Some of these changes that the d/Deaf community done have impacted their daily lives. The efforts of hiring interpreters in the White House, implementing interpreters into schools, integrating ADA, appointing a deaf president for Gallaudet University and establishing NAD to preserve ASL has brought awareness to the culture of the d/Deaf community; furthermore, these implications have revitalized the medical perspective among the hearing community to a cultural perspective.

The history and changes amongst the community have created a new era, one connecting the d/Deaf community and Hollywood. Through this, the movie CODA has begun to shape not only how the hearing community views the d/Deaf community, but also the daily lives of the d/Deaf community.

Through the application of CAT (Giles, 1971) and Speech Codes (Philipsen, 2008), we can unify the communication between the hearing community and the d/Deaf community. The Oscar awards awarded to CODA for Troy Custer's best supporting actor and best picture have brought great honor and representations to the deaf community. Through this, the deaf

community continues to spread their word, change the way the hearing community views their culture and bring awareness to the individuals who are d/Deaf.

Through the analysis of these two theories to the deaf community it is important to note speech codes do not only apply to “speech” but also to language in general. During the research for this paper, speech codes application was noted to ensure that ASL fits under this category due to the parameters of the language. Similarly, to speech codes, communication accommodation does not only happen amongst individuals who speak different verbal languages but can occur between verbal and nonverbal languages (Jones et al. 2018).

Through evidence found in CODA and history, there are three concepts to cogitate after reading this thesis: acknowledge the daily struggles the d/Deaf community face with communication, maintenance in a conversation can cause exploitation, and finally due to different speech codes we should all treat each other with kindness. Through the execution of these three suggestions, the frustration between these two parties could diminish. Utilizing communication as a tool to share ideas among others does not need to be a struggle between speech communities, but can be a process to grow, overcome and develop new communication practices.

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Appendix A

Code Book

Communication Accommodation Theory – Giles 1971

Three types of adjustments

Maintenance- Both parties communicate via their natural way of communication.

Ex: A hearing individual speaks to a deaf individual expecting them to understand and vice versa.

Convergence- When one party adopt a behavior during communication to become more like others.

Ex: A deaf individual uses their phone to type what they want to say and show it or play what they wrote for the hearing individual.

EX in CODA when the piano teacher tries to use sign language he learned off of YouTube to say nice to meet you but ends up saying something else.

Divergence- Everyone engages and highlights their differences during the interaction.

Ex: A hearing individual speaking louder than their usual tone to try and communicate with an individual.

Speech Codes Theory

1. Distinctive cultures have distinctive speech codes – Individuals are all different from the way they speak and the language they use. Cultures all over the world use the same language but may have different accents when using the language, creating different speech codes.
Ex: Different types of sign language.
2. Speech communities involve multiple speech codes – As mentioned above many cultures use the same language but some may have different accents. Rather than cultures having 1 or 2 variances of accents, there can be an unlimited amount of variances for the way people communicate.
Ex: the deaf community using “258” to say very interesting rather than saying very interesting
3. A speech code reflects different social culture structures – Idioms that are used in the deaf community is unique to their community just like idioms used in English are unique to their community.

Ex: if you say its raining cats and dogs to a deaf individual they wouldn't understand or if a deaf individual signs 258 to a hearing individual, they wouldn't understand the meaning of that sign

Ex: A sign being used in multiple ways meaning different ideas

Ex: Idioms in the community would be interpreted differently from the hearing community

4. You must be effective to utilize the speech codes – To converge in conversations with individuals, people must know more about the language and the culture than “surface level”

Ex: A student or an individual who learns sign language off of YouTube does not learn rules to interact with the community, or how to properly sign. Due to this they are not effective to sign. In the movie coda the piano teacher tries to learn to sign “nice to meet you” but ends up learning how to say a different sentence.

Another Ex: in Dominican Republic not everyone adheres to stop signs. In America a stop sign means a hard stop, in Dominican Republic people do a rolling stop. You would not know this unless you lived in the DR or spent a decent amount of time there.

Appendix B

CAT	Movie Time	Scene Description	Notes
Maintenance			
Deaf vs deaf	0:03:50	When Leo and Frank were talking about when their own fish business wouldn't work	
Hearing vs hearing	0:04:49	We learn that ruby goes to a hearing school	
Hearing vs hearing	0:05:28	Ruby talks to her friend Gertie	
Deaf v hearing	0:07:24	Ruby and her parents are at the doctors and ruby is the interpreter	The maintenance in this scene would be the parents Signing and the doctor talking... which is both of their natural ways of signing
Deaf v hearing	0:16:25	The group talking at the docks	Maintenance: people talking while the family keeps signing
Deaf vs hearing	0:26:21	Ruby going to the docks to make sure that the fish is being sold for the right price, she heard someone get theirs for 3 while the man is about to sell to her brother for 2.75... take advantage of his hearing	In this scene Ruby is trying to help her family by making sure that they are getting their fish for the right price by over hearing other people talk
Deaf v hearing	0:36:40	Leo gets up to tell the man that spilled a drink on him that he spilled a drink on him in ASL.. Expecting him to understand. Furthermore, the gentleman does it back to make fun of Leo	Can this also be divergence????
Deaf v hearing	0:37:14	The bar owner asks Leo if he wants ice for his eye. He points to his eye but also talk to Leo	can be convergence because he's using a gesture? This is the whole convo that the two of them have

Deaf and deaf but with hearing	0:43:42	We need to discuss this: between Ruby, Jackie, Frank and Miles	This is also convergence because ruby talking so miles can understand
Deaf vs deaf	0:58:00	Ruby interpreting for the news interview on the fishery	
deaf vs hearing	1:05:09	The at sea monitor talking to Leo and Frank thinking that they are hearing	This is still maintenance even though she doesn't know (or we can assume she doesn't know) that Leo and Frank are deaf?
Deaf vs hearing	1:08:09	The person on the boat with them asks Frank if Leo is also deaf by talking after she found out that they are deaf.	
Deaf vs hearing	1:22:15	The Rossi family clapping their hands like the rest of the crowd	

Appendix C

Convergence			
Hearing converges to sign with deaf	0:03:50	Ruby talks to the boys on the boat about how the quota for the fish is not good	Although Ruby is hearing, to talk to her family she signs with them
Hearing converges to sign with deaf	0:04:51	Ruby is asleep at school. Her teacher bangs on her desk to wake her up. As Ruby wakes up, she signs the word what	This one I had to think about for a bit. But since banging, turning on and off lights are part of the deaf community and how you get peoples attention, Ruby assumes its her family trying to get her to wake up which causes her to sign.
Hearing converges to sign with deaf	0:07:24	Ruby and her parents are at the doctor and Ruby is the interpreter	Ruby being the interpreter would be the convergence
Hearing converges to sign with deaf	0:16:25	s B	
Hearing converges to sign with deaf	0:19:37	Ruby changes from talking to her friend to signing with her mom after school	
Hearing converges to sign with deaf	0:21:06	Gerdy trys to learn different signs from Ruby to talk to her brother	

Deaf converges to talk with hearing	0:34:56	Jackie says "hey" to get Ruby's attention to take her plates to the sink after lunch	
Hearing converges to sign with deaf	0:35:46	A gentleman at the docks yells out "I'm going to Pratty's for a brew. Who wants to go?" Since Frank and Leo cant hear, the gentleman signs drink to them to ask if they'd like to go	
<i>Deaf converges to talk with hearing</i>	0:37:53	Gerdy uses Leo's phone to text to him and have a conversation with him	
<i>Hearing converges to sign with deaf</i>	0:43:42	Ruby signing and speaking when talking to her family so Miles can Understand as well	
<i>Hearing converges to sign with deaf</i>	0:49:20	Ruby being Frank and Leo's interpreter	

<i>Deaf converges to talk with hearing</i>	0:50:07	Frank bangs on a chair to get everyone's attention and gives speech about starting their own business	
	1:24:55	Frank standing up for a ovation when everyone else stands up at the concert	
<i>Hearing converges to sign with deaf</i>	1:26:48	The producers of the movie turing off during the duet to show the audience watching the movie to experience what the deaf community experiances, not being able to hear	
<i>Hearing converges to sign with deaf</i>	1:28:09	When Bernardo signs a different sign than "nice to meet you"	
<i>Hearing converges to sign with deaf</i>	1:38:00	Ruby signing and speaking in her audition for her family to understand	
	001:41:00	Everyones lives changed and being accepted by the hearing community withing their own community	

Deaf converges to talk with hearing	1:45:00	Frank tells Ruby to "Go" after she stops the car from leaving to go to college to get one more hug from her family	
Hearing converges to sign with deaf	1:45:45	Ruby signing I really love you back to her family as the car pulls away	

Appendix D

Divergence			
	0:05:41	Gertie tells Ruby that its good that the "mean Girls" arent doing the deaf voice anymore	
	0:19:52	When Gerdy says the brother says hot and that he cant hear her	
	0:32:46	Ruby tries to explain to her teacher what it feels like to sing. Instead of speaking she does it with ASL	MAINTENCE??? AND IF SO IS HER NATURAL WAY ASL?
	0:35:34	Frank snapping in Leo's ear to get his point across that no one will hire them because they do not hear	
	0:47:53	Ruby explains to her teacher that she was made fun of when she came to school because she talked like a deaf person. In this scene shes acting how she talked like a deaf person	
	0:55:05	During the montoge it shows Jackie being the only wife that's not being included in the conversations with the other wives	

	1:22:30	During the concert Jakie and Frank sign and have a conversation with eachother. Although they arent directly talking to the people that are singing its diverging because they are using sign amongst themselves during the interaction between the choir and the crowd	
	1:28:39	Frank saying nice to -- you too back to the teacher even though he knows he means to say nice to meet you.	Wouldn't this be highlighting sign language since frank is teasing Bernardo???

Appendix E

Speech Code Theroy	Movie Time	Scene Discription	Notes
Distinctive cultures have distinctive speech codes			
	0:52:25	When Jackie says that none of the wives want nothing to do with her because shes deaf	
	LOOK AT WHEN WE FIRST MEET BERNARDO	He speaks english but has an accent	

Appendix F

Speech communitites involve multiple speech codes			
	All	The entire movie is in ESL not ASL (maybe not all but look to see who does sign in ESL)	
	0:34:13	The way Jackie signs why. Its different then what we've learned in class	
	0:44:55	Different sign for I hate you	
	1:02:50	When Ruby signs "singing I love" that's true ASL	
	1:24:50	The Rossi Family clapping in ASL rather than clapping like everyone else	

Appendix G

A speech code reflects different social culture structrues			
	0:36:40	When Leo gets into the fight with the guy at the bar	

Appendix H

you must be effective to utilize speech codes			
	1:02:43	Ruby's signing changing when shes upset at her family to get that feeling across	
	1:20:35	Leo and Ruby have a fight about Ruby staying to help the family catching fish rather than her going off to college	
	1:24:44	During the concert there is a song that engages the audience in clapping. This song is a two way conversation between the audience and the performers since the audience is participating in the music. The Rossi family knows the audience is clapping but doesn't know why. During this the Rossi family claps at the wrong beat. For the Rossi's to truly understand why they are clapping they must know the beat of the song to participate	
	1:24:55	Jackie pulling frank down to sit from a ovation because (we can assume) to make sure he's not standing up when everyone is sitting down	

Appendix I

Scenes that do not fit			
Movie Time	Scene Description	Notes	Guess
0:06:49	When Ruby's Parents come to pick her up after school with everyone looking because the music is so high		
0:09:17	Ruby is trying to do homework but everyone is noisy	Ruby: puts in earphones -her mom: take those out its rude - Ruby: what's rude is how noisy you guys are	
0:09:46	why does God make farts smell joke		
0:10:00	Tinder is something we can do as a family		convergence?
0:16:46	That's more than we make in a day... Don't tell me tell them. But hes deaf and everyone else is hearing... Then the dad walks a way		

0:26:48	Dad: its medical- Ruby: being deaf doesn't make smoking medical		
0:26:51	You made me look stupid Leo talking to Ruby		
0:34:13	Jackie rolling her eyes when Ruby said she joined the Choir because she likes to sing	Although Ruby is not actively divergin, because of the body language that her mother gave her it was a visual of unacceptance. Its putting down her differences	Divergence?
0:39:36	do they know what music is?		
1:21:00	When Bernardo says I don't know what they say behind my back	Is this - A speech code reflects different social culture structures. Although the Rossi family couldn't hear the joke would they have understood it? Is this an english idiom?	

1:26:48	During the part of the concert the sound goes out to show the perspective of the Rossi family. During this time the movie shows how Jackie and Frank look around the audience to see how they are reacting to the duet	Jackie -Look shes crying	
1:27:59	what would be an inside joke? Would that be 2 or 3?	When Bernardo calls Ruby Bob	
1:28:50	When bernardo says " Please tell them their daughter is very talented. And they're making a terrible mistake not sending her off to school"	Using their deafness to his advantage to say something mean without them knowing even though he wanted Ruby to tell them that he said that???? What would this be?	