

Communication Development

Yasushi ISHIHARA

Naoki OHNUMA

Research Center on Educational Media for the Hearing-Impaired

Communication skills are critical for success in college and in society. The Research Center on Educational Media at Tsukuba College of Technology (TCT) provides appropriate instruction and related services for the development of communication skills among the students and faculty at TCT.

I. Instruction and Services in Audiology

Average hearing threshold levels of 150 students range from 60dB to 130dB (HL). Almost all students are pre-lingually deaf and started to wear their hearing-aids when they were from one to three years of age. More than 90% of the students use their hearing-aids in everyday life. However, they seem to lack adequate understanding and concern for audiologic evaluation and management. Therefore, a ten-hour

Table 1 Actual Record in Audiological Services (1992)

Matters	Number of cases
Hearing Test	102
Aided Hearing Test	71
Hearing-aids Fitting	53
Earmold Making	61
Auditory Training and Concealing	14
Consultation of Welfare	18
Test and Checking of Hearing-aids	65
Lending of Hearing assisted Devices	58

course of audiological lectures is provided for first year students to learn more about the principles and practices of hearing compensation during adolescence.

The Research Center also provides services concerning evaluation and management of hearing, as well as counseling and orientation with regard to the use of hearing aids, assessment and training in aural-oral communication skills, and guidance in communication assisted devices.

2. Instruction in Sign Language

Sign language skills are important for all students not only as a means of communication in the educational setting (classroom) but also as a means to establish friendly relations with their peers. Furthermore, sign language skills are indispensable for maintaining ties with the deaf community after graduation.

Fig.2 indicates the means used by the first group of entrants (1990) to acquire information during the entrance ceremony. This graph indicates that almost all students received the contents of the

speeches through real time captions.

But at the graduation ceremony of the same class (three years later), the number of students who depended on sign interpretation was in sharp contrast to the number of students who depended on it at their entrance ceremony, three years earlier (Fig.3). This change tells us that many students who didn't know sign language or who weren't skilled in sign language had learned effective use of sign language in college life.

In the Research Center on Educational Media for the Hearing-Impaired, the first year students are provided with the opportunity to study sign language. However, it is necessary to increase the opportunities for the students to learn sign language. Furthermore, it is important for faculty members to develop their sign language skills.

3. Speech Therapy

Fig.4 indicates the communication methods used by the fourth group of entrants (1993) when they enrolled in TCT. About 80% of the students used the oral method in communicating with hearing people, and, this situation state indicates that many students choose to use speech when they communicate with their family and friends or a first acquaintance.

Fig.5 indicates instruction of communication skills which the students requested. Many students requested as much speech instruction as sign language instruction as sign language instruction

The Research Center provides weekly individualized instructions to those students who wish to improve their pronunciation and speaking skills. And a speech/pronunciation test has been prepared for first year students and the test evaluations are then distributed to each student.

We have the following tasks to face about support services in communication development:

- to determine, through a test upon entering TCT, the communication characteristics of the students.
- to make individualized instruction programs in the various communication methods accessible to each student.

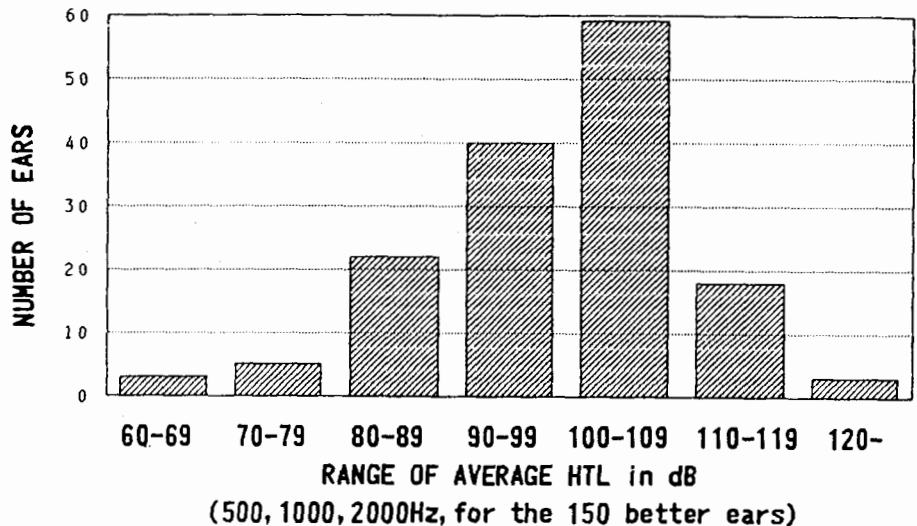


Fig.1 Distribution of average hearing threshold level of one hundred fifty students of TCT

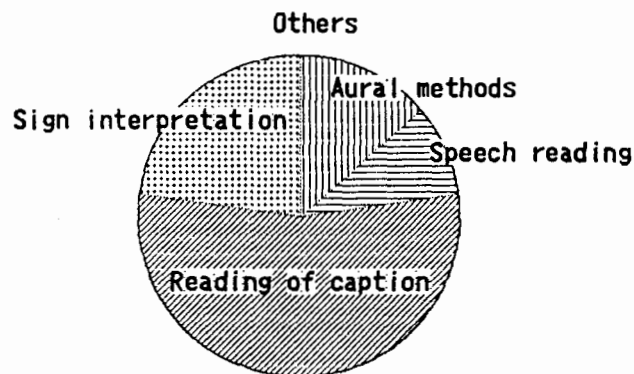


Fig.2 The means used by the first group of entrants to acquire information during the entrance ceremony (1990)

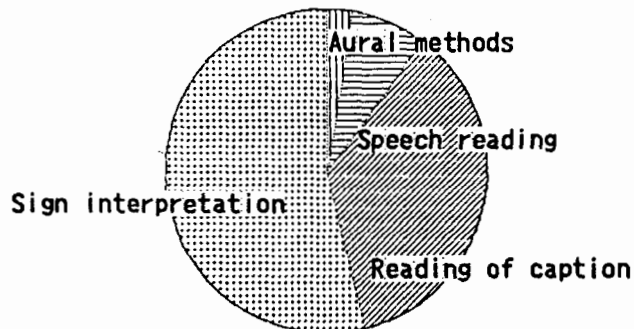


Fig.3 The means used by the first group of entrants to acquire information during the graduation ceremony (1993)

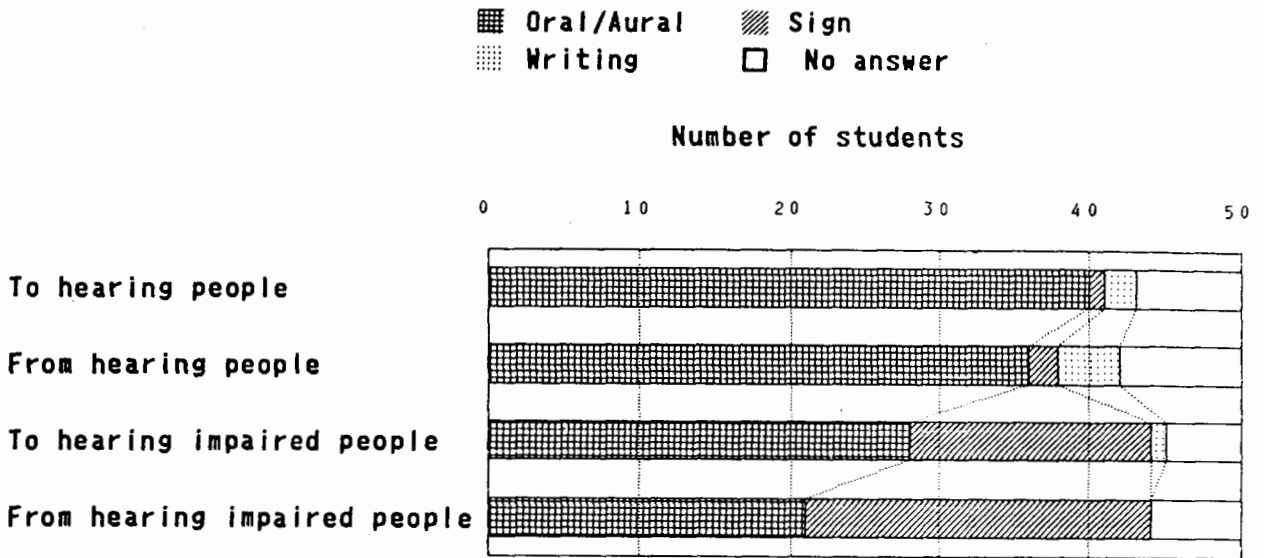


Fig. 4 Communication methods used by the fourth group of entrants ('93)

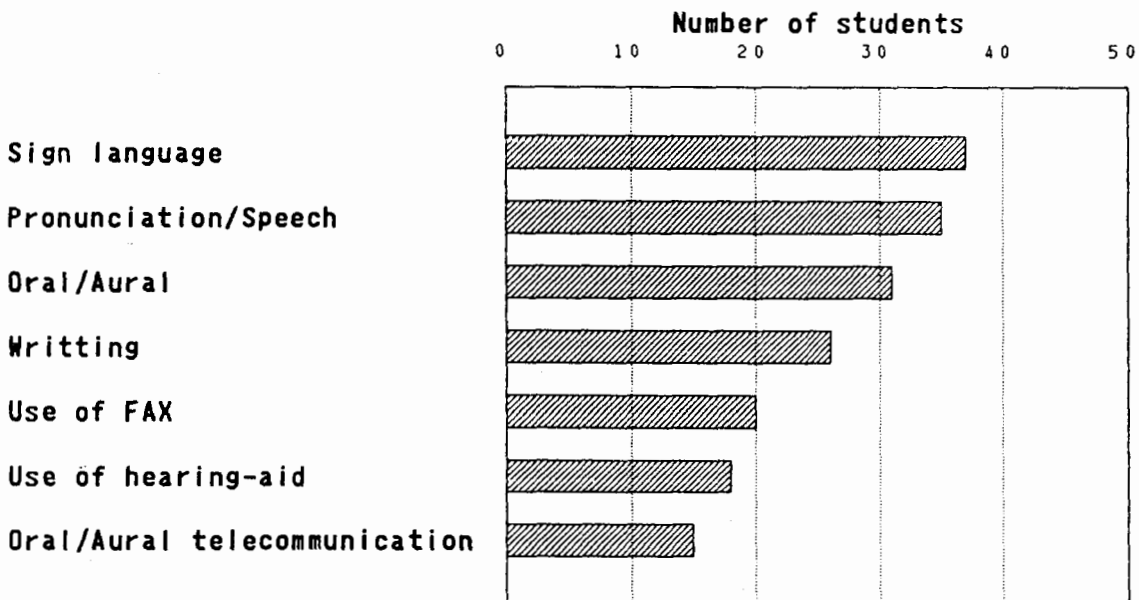


Fig. 5 Instruction of communication skills which the fourth group of entrants requested ('93)