

Attitudes of Hearing Children
Compared to Attitudes of Hearing Adults
Towards the Deaf.

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Michael John Marini
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Saint Meinrad College
St. Meinrad, Indiana



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Chapter I

Throughout Western society (Emerton & Rothman, 1978), people have generally held negative attitudes towards deaf people. Although universal education has led to a wider acceptance of the deaf, studies show that various prejudices towards, and stereotypes of deaf people still persist. The deaf are often viewed as stupid, mentally retarded, or lazy (Bibrove, Cowen, Rockway & Stevenson, 1967). Barker (1953) maintains that familiar stories and jokes about the deaf attest to the fact that such stereotypes and prejudices are widespread. Bender (1970) illustrated that the ignorance of the general population towards deaf people is reflected in the persistent use of such terms as "deaf-mute" and "deaf and dumb," which are used in most countries and languages in a negative manner.

Studies show that there is a general indifference towards deaf people in the United States. Strong (1931) found that 59% of his subjects felt indifferent towards the deaf, while 25% disliked the deaf, and only 16% of his subjects liked deaf people. Barker found that the deaf are viewed in a more negative manner than other handicap groups, specifically the blind. This was found to be true in experiments done by Cowman (1957), Murphy, Dickstein & Dripps (1960), and Meyerson (1963).

The study by Cowen et. al. investigated how the deaf are viewed in relation to other minority groups. For this study, one hundred and sixty-seven male, white undergraduate students enrolled in a introductory psychology class were used as subjects. The relationships between anti-deafness (AD), authoritarianism (F), anti-minority (AM), and anti-Negro (AN) attitudes were measured. The correlation coefficients were computed between AD scores, and scores on each of the other scales. Correlations between AD and the other measures were all significant. This

study shows that the deaf are viewed as having "common attributes" with underprivileged minorities, and are negatively viewed by the adult population in general.

A study done by Emerton and Rothman (1978) investigated attitudes of hearing students towards deaf students at a hearing and deaf college. The Rochester Institute of Technology was the setting for the investigation, and 100 students were used as subjects. The students were randomly selected but were either freshman or transfer students. A self-administered questionnaire was mailed to the subjects during the summer. The questionnaire was a 25-item list of stereotypes about deaf people drawn from the "Attitudes Towards Deafness" scale developed by Cowen et. al. (1967). Results showed that subjects usually held positive attitudes towards the deaf if they were involved with a deaf person on a one-to-one basis. If this was so, then the deaf person was seen as friendly, helpful, warm, and outgoing. When subjects had little one-to-one contact with the deaf, they often viewed them as immature, lacking in leadership, and over-emotional. The negative attitudes tended to cluster around social expectations or norms which the subjects felt the deaf people violated. (i.e. door pounding, general noises, late hours, etc). Deaf and hearing students were likely to develop close and real friendships when they lived in close proximity and engaged in cooperative interaction with respect to common interest.

A study by Wilson (1969) compared the effects of deafness simulation and observation of the deaf with three other factors: a) the expressed attitudes towards the deaf, b) expressed anxiety towards interaction with the deaf, and c) the behavior manifested towards the deaf. The subjects for Wilson's experiment were from an educational psychology class, and

were randomly placed into one of three groups: two experimental groups (E-1 and E-2), and one control group. The E-1 group simulated being deaf for $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours. This involved engaging in activities with persons who had the full use of their hearing while pretending not to hear. Group E-2 was asked to observe a deaf undergraduate girl and a hearing female graduate student who was trying to communicate with her. The control group had no opportunity for any experience with deafness, either through simulation or observation. Afterwards, each group was given two questionnaires: The Attitudes Towards Deaf Person scale, ATDP (Cowen et. al., 1967) and Semantic Differential scale, SD (Osgood, Suci, & Tannenbaum, 1957). Each group was then asked to have a 5-minute interaction period with a deaf person, who played either a passive or active role.

No significant differences were found between groups in their responses to the ATDP, but significant differences were found on the SD ratings towards people who are deaf. Anxiety manifested before interaction with the deaf, and following interaction with the deaf were measured. There were no significant differences found in manifested anxiety, either prior to, or following interaction with the deaf, although the active or passive state of the deaf person did affect post anxiety scores. The post anxiety scores were lower when the deaf person was active during interaction. The general findings of this study tends to support the idea that hearing people who have little contact with the deaf tend to show more anxiety towards the deaf than people who have previous experiences with deafness.

Attitudes towards the deaf by hearing people is reflected in those who are deaf themselves. Schroedel and Schiff (1972) found that deaf people view deafness generally in a more negative manner than hearing

people. The authors suggest that the attitudes of deaf people may reflect actual experiences that they have been through. Greenmun (1958), and Stewart (1972) lent support to this idea by having deaf people give their accounts about their experiences living in a society where most people have the ability to hear. They found that the deaf have taken on the attitudes towards themselves exhibited by hearing people.

The literature reviewed thus far shows, among other things, how hearing adults view the deaf, but few studies have shown how hearing children view the deaf. Studies have shown in general that children do have and hold prejudices and stereotypes, the same as adults. These studies show that children develop prejudicial attitudes at an early age. Williams and Toberson (1967) measured the attitudes of 111 Caucasian children from ages 3 years 3 months, to 6 years 9 months. A picture test was used containing 12 pictures with accompanying stories. The subjects were shown the pictures and then asked to give adjectives describing the pictures, such as good or bad, rich or poor, pretty or ugly. Results showed that predominantly middle-class children obtained high scores on the radical-attitudes measure, and the higher the score, the more negative their attitude was towards dark-skinned persons. These scores did not necessarily reflect the child's negative attitude, but rather reflected the idea that dark-skinned people are usually associated with negative words, which the child often learns from his or her parents.

Williams and Toberson's experiment shows that children hold prejudices and stereotypes towards minority groups. It is now easier to examine how children might hold prejudices towards the deaf.

In an article by Charleston (1978) the problems of an eight year old deaf child are seen in her relationships with her peers. Julie was

a deaf child whose classmates were acting in an insensitive and cruel manner. She was mainstreamed into a regular classroom situation. The hearing children could not understand the problems Julie had as a deaf child until her mother started a special program for Julie's class, teaching the children what it was like to be deaf. Her mother played records simulating a hearing loss so the children could understand speech the way a deaf child does. Julie's mother taught the children pantomime, and she did charades with them. She also taught the children sign language. The children began to understand the problems Julie was having as a deaf child. They soon wanted to help her. This article tends to show that once the children can understand the problems of deafness, their attitudes become more favorable towards a deaf person. This article also suggests that, like adults, children do have prejudiced attitudes towards the deaf.

In a study dealing with mainstreaming deaf children into the regular grade school classrooms (Stevenson, 1977) the author found that attitudes towards deaf students changed after significant interaction had taken place between deaf and hearing students. For example, hearing students initially felt that the Maryland School for the Deaf was like a prison and that deaf people were non-communicative, retarded and spastic. After interaction had taken place, hearing students expressed more favorable attitudes towards the deaf (Stevenson, 1977).

The literature thus reviewed examines the attitudes of adults and children towards the deaf, and shows that both adults and children do possess to some degree stereotypes and prejudices towards the deaf. The purpose of the following experiment will be to examine both sets of attitudes and compare them to find similarities and differences. To do this, adults and children will be observed in an experimental setting.

Chapter II

Method

Subjects

Two sets of subjects were used from two different populations. One group of 12 randomly selected subjects were fourth grade school children from St. Phillip's Catholic school in Evansville, Indiana. These subjects were all male. The second set of subjects were 12 randomly selected male college students from St. Meinrad Catholic college in St. Meinrad, Indiana. Subjects in both groups, after selection, were screened to make sure prior contact with deaf people had never been made.

Procedure

Subjects were observed individually in an unobtrusive setting. This setting consisted of a room with three chairs about three feet apart from each other in a semi-circular fashion. Subjects were observed by the experimenter and an observer, who were both in an adjoining room.

Subjects were told they were going to take a visual test. They were informed upon arrival that the equipment was not set up yet and that there would be a short delay. A cohort was sitting in the third of three chairs. The experimenter introduced the cohort as a friend from another college, visiting the experimenter.

Five feet from the seating arrangement stood a table with magazines, immediately out of the reach of the subjects. The subjects attention was not purposively directed to the table. One Time and two St. Louis magazines were used for the adults, while three Hi-Time magazines were used for the children.

In Condition 1, the cohort feigned deafness for six of the adults and six of the children. The cohort spoke, slurring his speech, and concentrating his focus on the subjects lips.

In Condition 2, the cohort presented himself as a hearing person for the other 12 subjects.

In Condition 1 when the cohort feigned deafness, after the experimenter spoke his name, the cohort made a sign signifying "stop." The experimenter explained that his "friend" was deaf but was able to read lips and understand speech and language. The experimenter then went to set up the "experiment."

This set-up lasted for six minutes. This time was divided into three-two minute intervals. During the first interval, the cohort made no attempt at communicating with subjects. During the second interval the cohort made attempts at communication, using the same questions for every subject i.e. how did they like school, what were their hobbies. . . Within the third interval, the cohort again did not initiate conversation.

The cohort in both Conditions was a business major and on a quarter break. In both Conditions the cohort had known the experimenter for six months, was living in St. Louis, was an extremely bright student, and was very friendly. In both Conditions he would tell subjects we had met at a class at Washington University in St. Louis, in a deaf education course, where we had become good friends. In Condition 1, the cohort would speak slowly and use a bit of sign language. In Condition 2, he would speak normally. In Condition 1, the cohort was from Galaduate University (the only university for the deaf), while in Condition 2 he would be from the University of Evansville.

A frequency count was taken for two sets of specific behaviors: contact and non-contact, exhibited by the subjects during the three intervals. The two sets of behaviors consisted of the following:
For Contact Behavior:

- 1) The subjects attempt at communication with the cohort in the first and third interval; the subjects response to communication attempts made by the cohort during the second interval.
- 2) Smiling.
- 3) Eye contact made by the subject with the cohort.

For non-contact behavior:

- 1) Rubbing hands together.
- 2) Tapping of hands, toes, feet, and fingers.
- 3) Looking around.
- 4) Playing with objects.
- 5) Walking.
- 6) Looking at magazines.
- 7) Biting of fingernails.
- 8) Other types of non-contact behavior not mentioned above.

A frequency count of the number of seconds for contact and non-contact behaviors was taken for each of the three intervals by the experimenter, and also by the observer in an adjoining room.

Chapter III

Results

The experimenter and observer recorded the number of times each type of behavior was emitted by the subjects in each time interval. An analysis of variance was used to analyze contact and non-contact behaviors. A 2x2x3 ANOVA design with repeated measures on the third factor was employed (Kintz, 1977).

Non-contact data

Results of the ANOVA computed for non-contact behavior are summarized in Table 1. Note that letter substitutes are provided in Table 1 for the different sources of variance analyzed. Further discussions of these factors will refer to these letters. As is indicated in the table, only factors A, AC, and AB were significant.

Insert Table 1 about here

For the A effect, subjects exhibited a greater amount of non-contact behavior during Condition 1 (the "deaf" cohort) than in Condition 2 (the "hearing" cohort). This difference is represented in Figure 1.

Insert Figure 1 about here

The AC effect is graphically represented in Figure 2. This graph shows

Insert Figure 2 about here

that in Condition 1, subjects exhibited greater amounts of non-contact behavior in the second and third trials than in the first trial. For Condition 2, subjects exhibited greater amounts of non-contact behavior in the first trial, while the amount of non-contact behavior decreased in trials 2 and 3.

The AB effect is graphically represented in Figure 3. The child sub-

Insert Figure 3 about here

jects exhibited greater amounts of non-contact behavior during Condition 1 than Condition 2. However, as this figure indicates, for the adult subjects, the amount of non-contact behavior exhibited during Conditions 1 and 2 did not decrease greatly.

Contact data

The results for contact behavior are summarized in Table 2. As indicated, factors A, C, AC, BC, and ABC were significant for contact behavior.

Insert Table 2 about here

The A effect for contact behavior is represented graphically in Figure 4. Subjects exhibited lesser amounts of contact behavior in

Insert Figure 4 about here

Condition 1 than in Condition 2.

The C effect shows that the amount of contact behavior displayed changed over trials. This effect is graphically represented in Figure 5.

Insert Figure 5 about here

This figure shows that subjects displayed more contact behavior on trials 2 and 3 than on trial 1. The amount of contact behavior was especially high on trial 2 when the cohort attempted to communicate.

The AC effect is shown graphically in Figure 6. This figure shows that behavior did not differ for Conditions 1 and 2 during the first trial.

Insert Figure 6 about here

Subjects did however, exhibit greater amounts of contact behavior towards the hearing cohort for both the second and third periods. The amount

of discrepancy between contact behavior towards the hearing and deaf cohorts increased between the second and third periods.

The BC effect is graphically represented in Figure 7. For trials 1

Insert Figure 7 about here

and 2, adult and child subjects did not differ greatly from each other. Contact behavior did increase in trial 2 for both adult and child subjects. However, in the third trial child subjects exhibited lesser amounts of contact behavior than the adult subjects, whose level of contact behavior stayed consistent with amounts shown in period two.

The ABC effect for contact behavior is graphically represented in Figure 8. For trial 1, there was no difference for either adult or child subjects

Insert Figure 8 about here

for Conditions 1 and 2. Within the second trial, contact behavior was greater for child subjects than adult subjects for Condition 1, while contact behavior for subjects in Condition 2 was about the same. For trial 3, contact behavior for both sets of subjects decreased to zero for Condition 1. Contact behavior increased markedly, especially for the adult subjects during Condition 2.

Chapter IV

Discussion

This experiment compared attitudes of hearing adults with attitudes of hearing children towards the deaf. The hypothesis was that adults would tend to exhibit more negative behavior than children towards the deaf in a specific experimental situation.

As Cowen et. al. (1967) and Charleston (1978) suggest, prejudicial attitudes towards the deaf are maintained by both hearing adults and children. These authors suggest that negative attitudes can be expressed in many ways. This experiment showed that subjects exhibited greater amounts of nervous behaviors for Condition 1 than Condition 2. Although a small amount of this nervous behavior may be attributed to the fact that the cohort was a stranger, subjects appeared to have nothing to do with the cohort in Condition 1, and looked relieved when they were able to leave the cohort's presence. Also, the cohort was unknown to the subjects in both conditions, and the cohort got much more non-contact behavior in Condition 1 than in Condition 2.

Although children and adults exhibit negative behaviors towards the deaf, as also found by Emerton & Rothman (1978), Wilson (1969), and Stevenson (1977), this experiment showed that children exhibited greater amounts of negative behavior during Condition 1 than during Condition 2. Although the adult cohort may have inhibited children's responses, the child subjects during Condition 1 appeared extremely nervous

to the point of physically wanting to remove themselves from the situation. Four of the six child subjects began to cry in Condition 1. This emotional display did not occur when the children were in the presence of the stranger that could hear.

For Contact behavior, subjects gave little response to the cohort in Condition 1 and 2 during the first interval. For the second interval, subjects gave a greater response to the cohort in Condition 2 than in Condition 1. Although the amount of contact behavior decreased for Condition 2 a little, it dropped to zero in Condition 1 during the final interval of time. The subjects gave more response to the cohort in Condition 2. Subjects only answered questions with brief yes or no answers in Condition 1. There was more eye contact and much more smiling towards the hearing than the deaf cohort.

Although children made small attempts at talking with the cohort in Condition 2, no attempts were made in Condition 1, while adult subjects talked freely with the cohort in Condition 2 and not at all in Condition 1.

The adult subjects ignored the deaf cohort, especially during the final interval of time, while children gave negative reactions to the cohort in Condition 1 (i.e. frowning, legs and body facing away from the cohort in Condition 1 and not Condition 2, and voice crackings).

The hypothesis of this thesis implied, as Wilson, (1969) suggests, that seating preference would be determined by Conditions 1 and 2. Subjects would tend to sit in the chair furthest from the cohort for Condition 1, and nearest to the cohort for Condition 2. The two conditions made no difference upon the subjects in relation to where they sat. Four of the adult subjects during Condition 2 sat in the chair furthest from the cohort, while one of these subjects for the first trial paged through a magazine. Two of the subjects sat in the chair closest to the cohort. For Condition 1, two subjects sat in the chair closest to the cohort, and four subjects sat in the chair furthest from the cohort.

Three of the six child subjects sat in the chair furthest from the cohort, while the other three subjects sat in the chair next to him. This was true for both Conditions 1 and 2.

Where subjects sat in relation to the cohort seemed to be a matter of personal preference rather than to the fact of the cohort being hearing or deaf.

This experiment shows that the child subjects exhibit more negative behaviors towards a deaf person than adults do under the same conditions. These behaviors can be attributed to the attitude of the subject with relation to the cohort. The child subjects had no experience with any type of handicap situation, and as Charleston (1978) and Stevenson (1977) suggest, children with no knowledge of the handicap of deafness will exhibit more negative behaviors and at-

titudes when faced with this situation. This was found to be true by this experimenter. Children exhibit more negative behaviors towards the deaf than adults.

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Table 1

NON-CONTACT BEHAVIOR

<u>SOURCE OF VARIANCE</u>	<u>DF</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u>
A (Cohort)	1	5178.8	11.9*
B (Age of subject)	1	2.6	.00005
AB (Cohort X age of subject)	1	3204.9	7.4**
S(AB) (Subjects within cohort X age)	20	433.8	----
C (Trails)	2	59.2	.26
AC (Cohort X trials)	2	1744.6	7.67*
BC (Age X trials)	2	213.4	.94
ABC (Cohort X age X trials)	2	329.8	1.45
C(S/AB)	40	227.4	----

**(p ≤ .05)

*(p ≤ .01)

Table 2
CONTACT BEHAVIOR

<u>SOURCE OF VARIANCE</u>	<u>DF</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u>
A (Cohort)	1	18053.1	121.6*
B (Age of subject)	1	108.2	.73
AB (Cohort X age of subject)	1	119.1	.8
S(AB) (Subjects within cohort X age)	20	148.5	----
C (Trials)	2	5769	112*
AC (Cohort X trials)	2	3875.7	75.2*
BC (Age X trials)	2	830.9	16.1*
ABC (Cohort X age X trials)	2	866.1	16.8*
C(S/AB)	40	51.5	----

*($p \leq .01$)

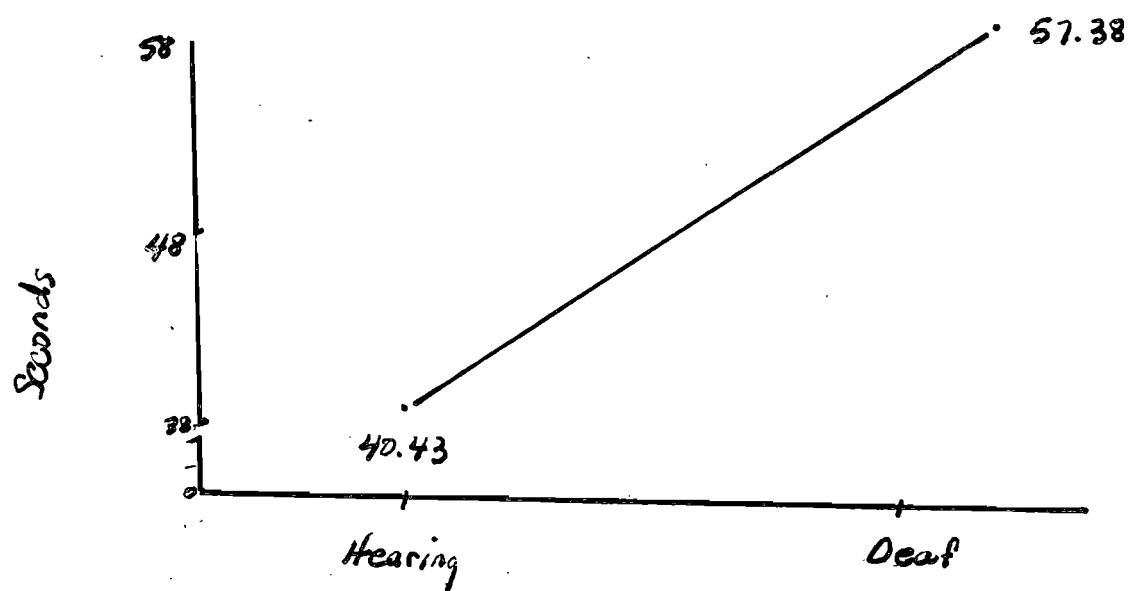


Figure 1. Non-contact behavior displayed toward hearing and deaf cohort by all subjects.

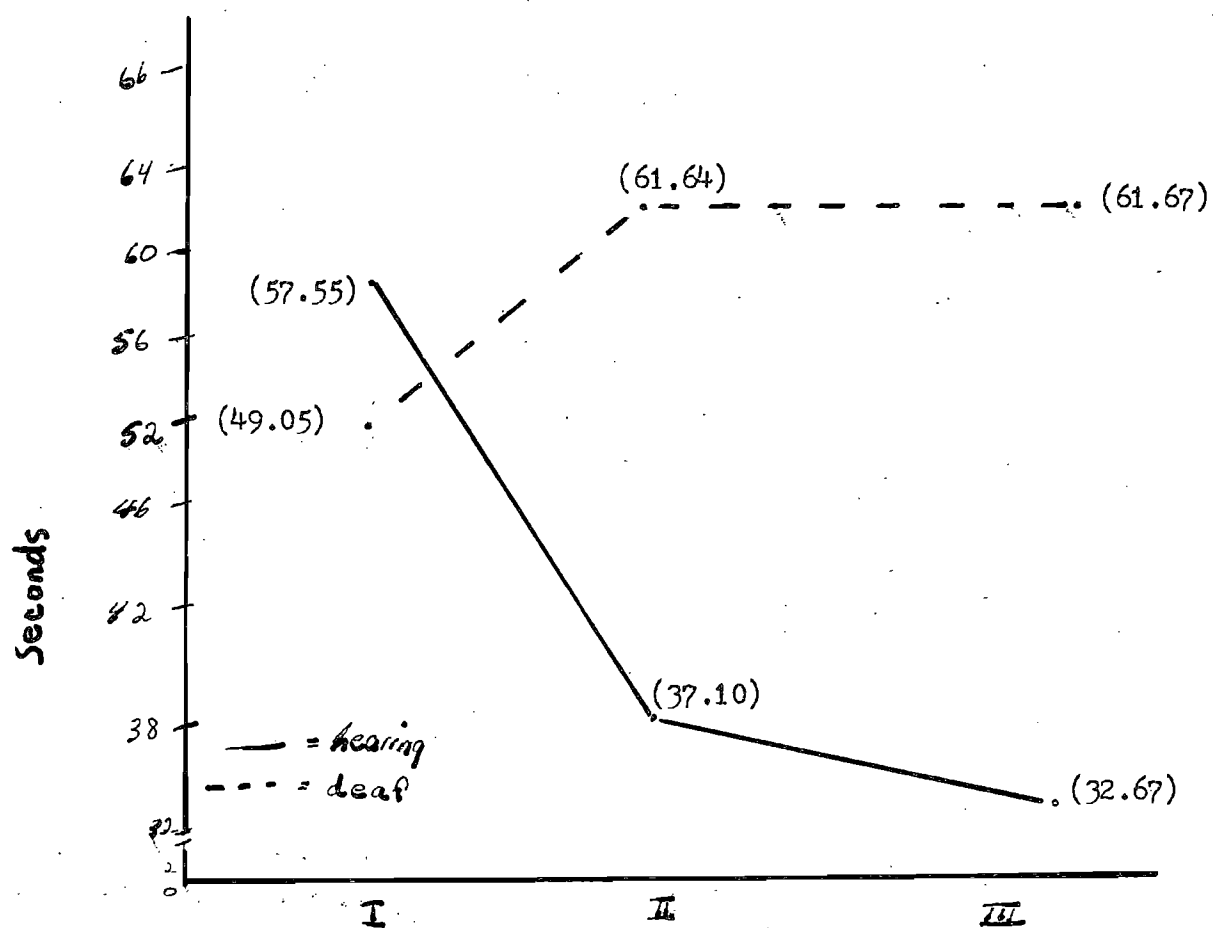


Figure 2. Non-contact behavior displayed towards hearing and deaf cohort as a function of time intervals (AC effect).

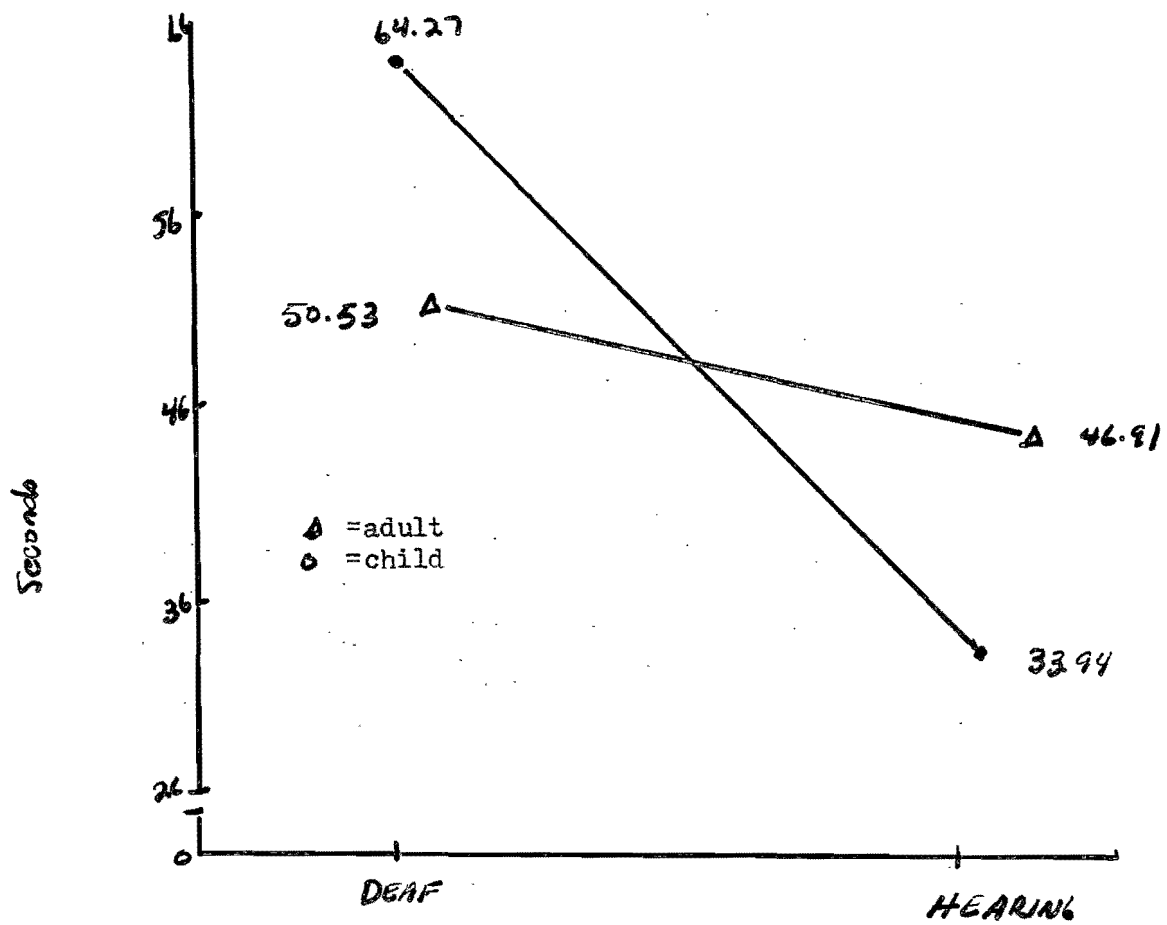


Figure 3. Non-contact behavior exhibited by adult and child subjects in Conditions 1 and 2.

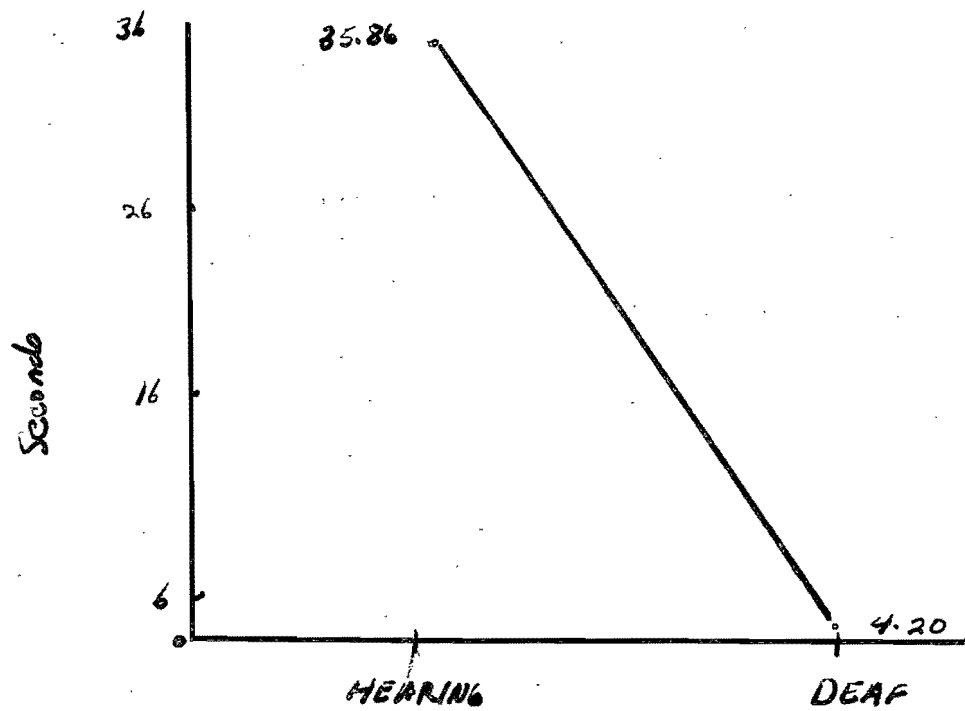


Figure 4. Contact behavior exhibited by all subjects in Conditions 1 and 2.

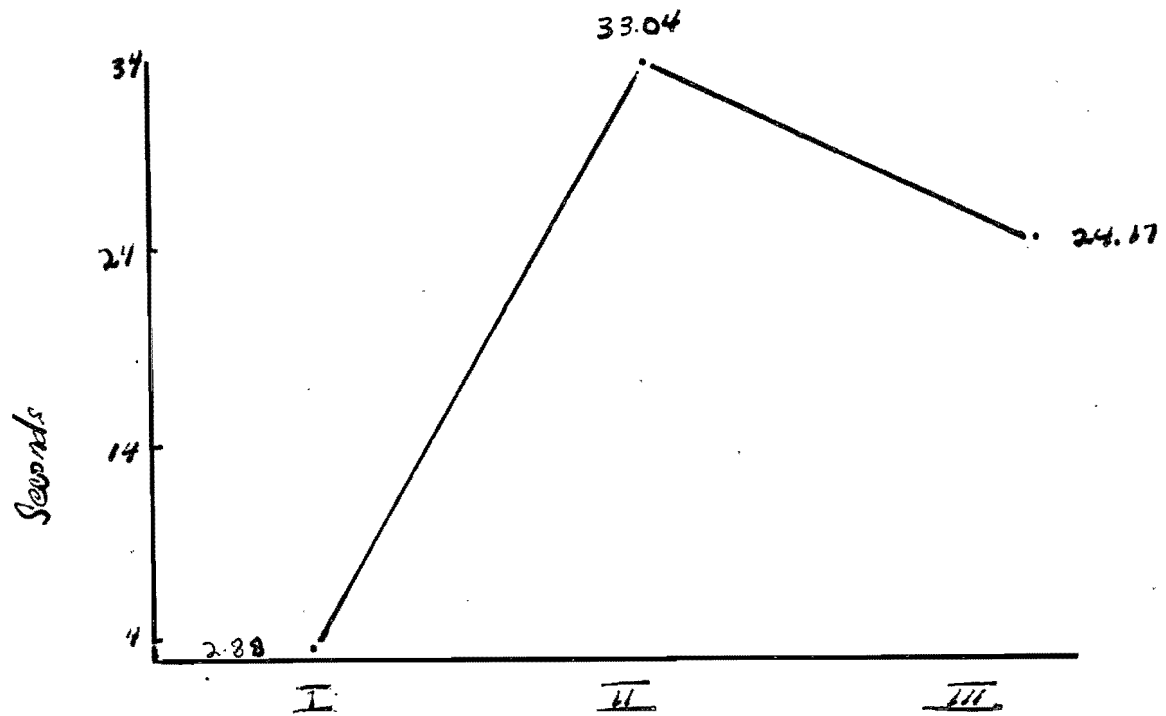


Figure 5. Contact behavior exhibited by all subjects during all three intervals.

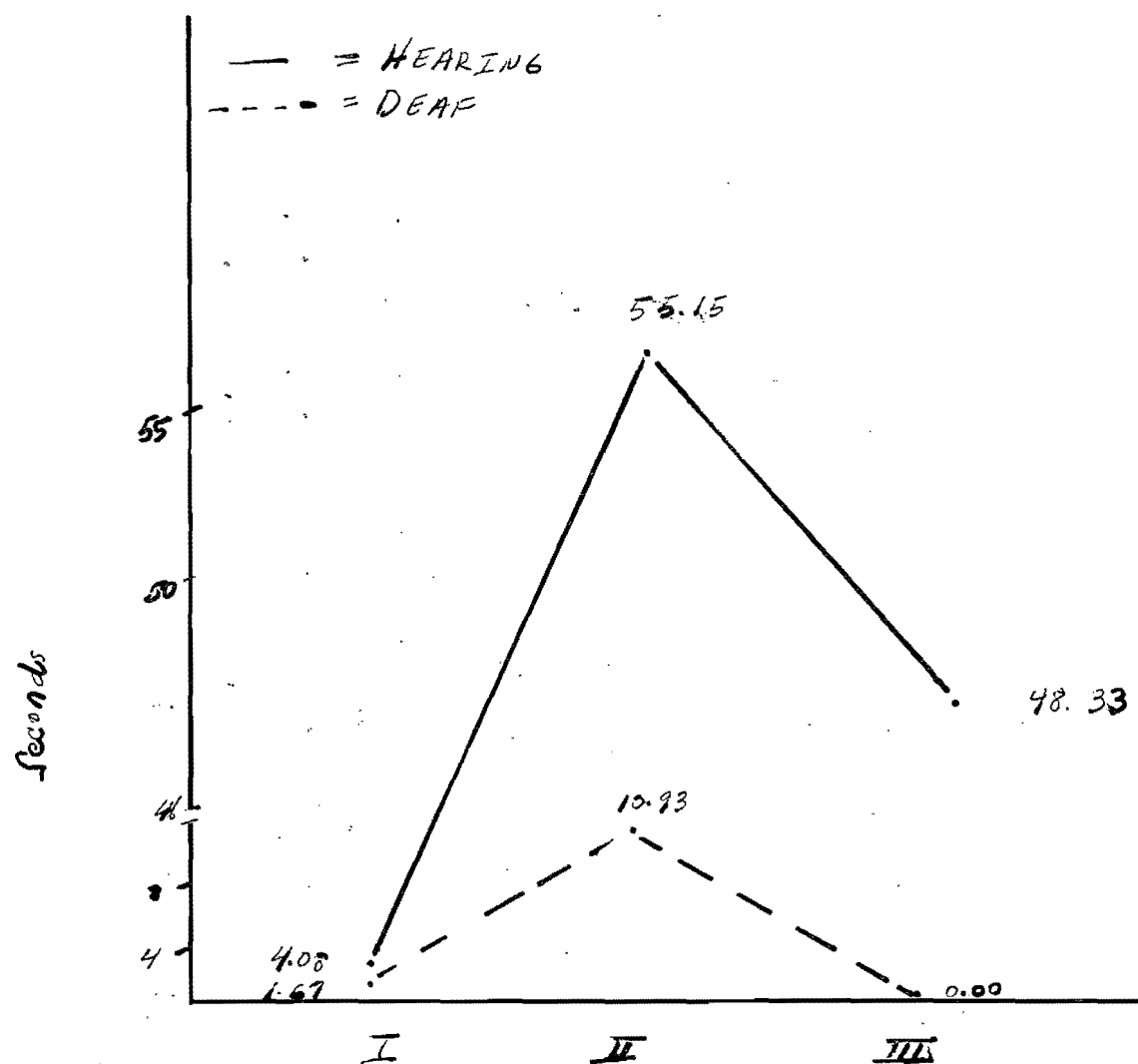


Figure 6. Contact behavior exhibited by all subjects in Conditions 1 and 2 during trials I, II and III.

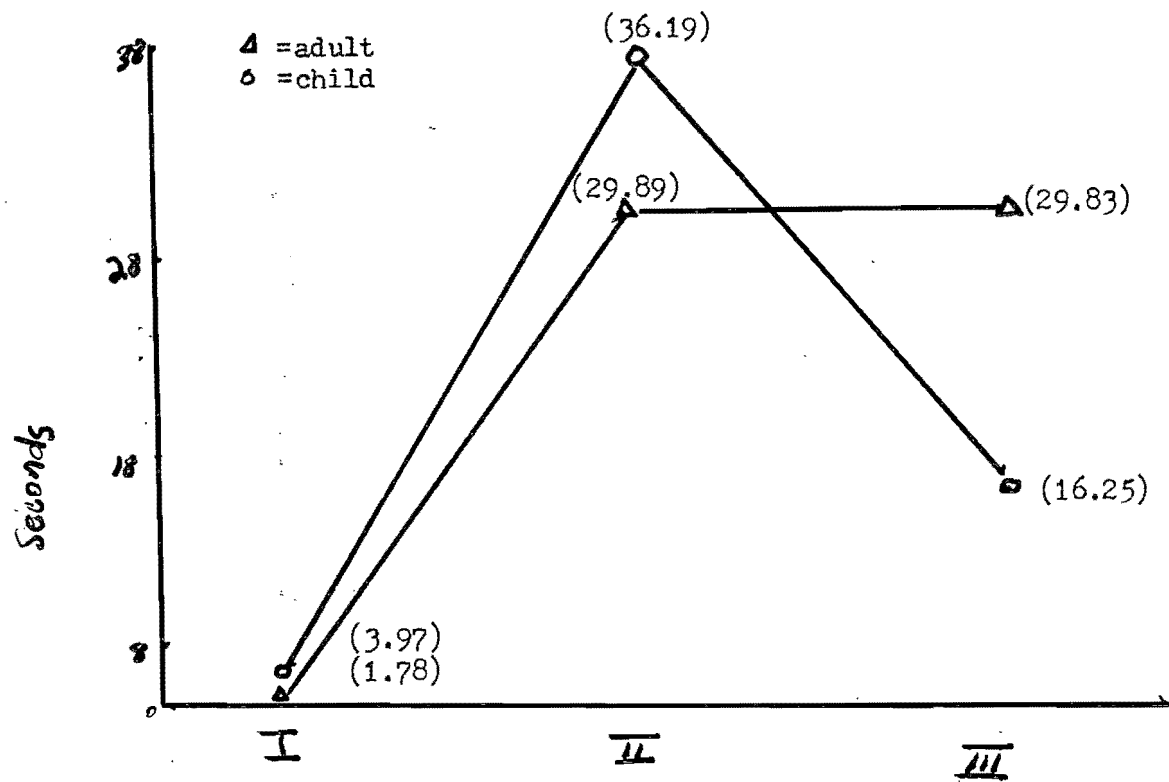


Figure 7. Contact behavior exhibited by adults and children during intervals I, II and III.

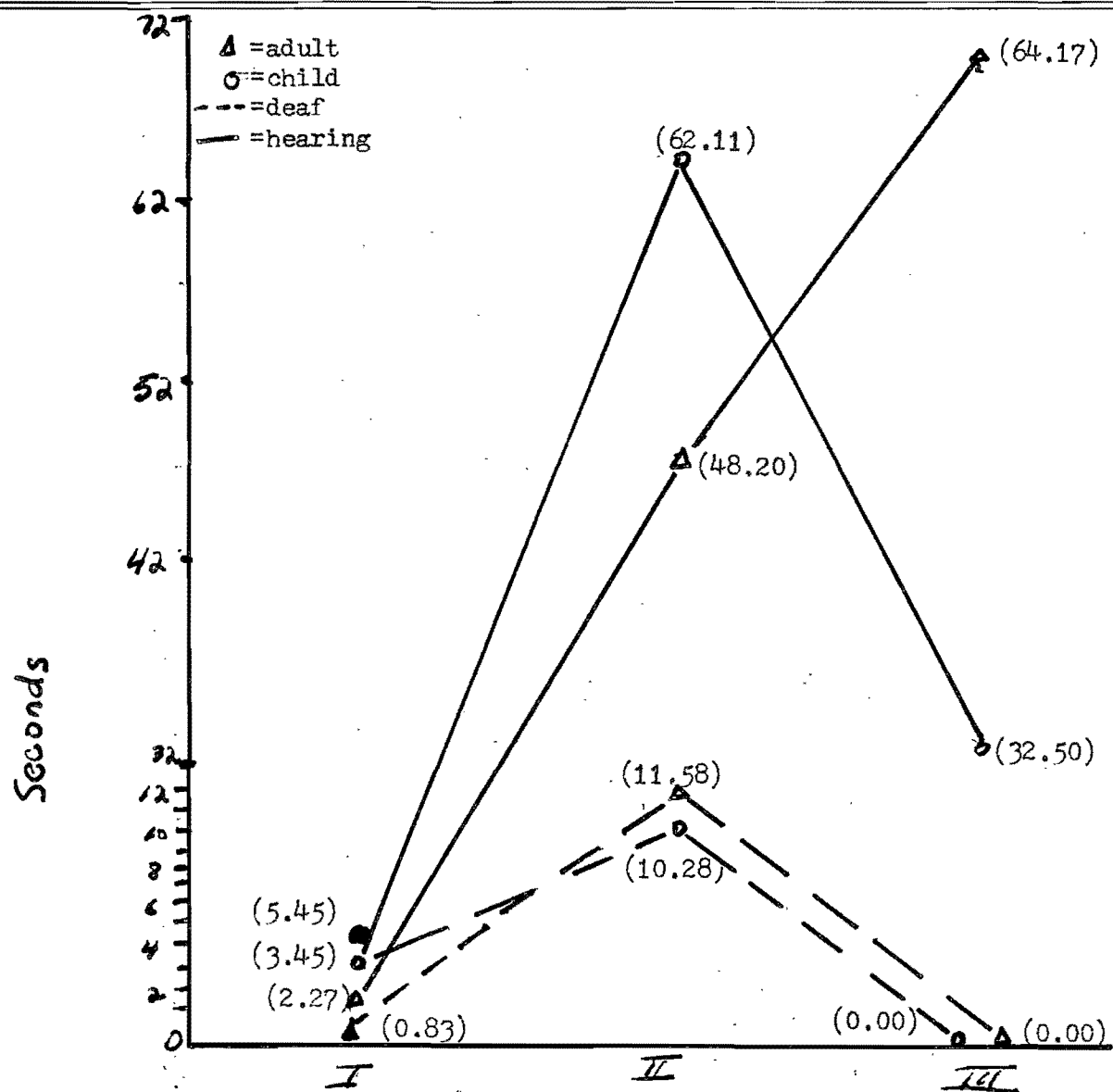


Figure 8. Contact behavior displayed in each of the three time intervals for child and adult subjects towards hearing and deaf cohort (ABC effect).

