

Outcomes for children with cochlear implants: Identity and Culture

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Perspectives

Medical Model

deaf = disabled

Aim is to reduce disability

Focus on spoken language

Sociocultural Model

Deaf = cultural group

Culture is precious

Focus on sign language

Social, cultural and developmental factors

- There is a vibrant Deaf Culture
- NZ Sign Language is an official language
- We try to promote cultural equity

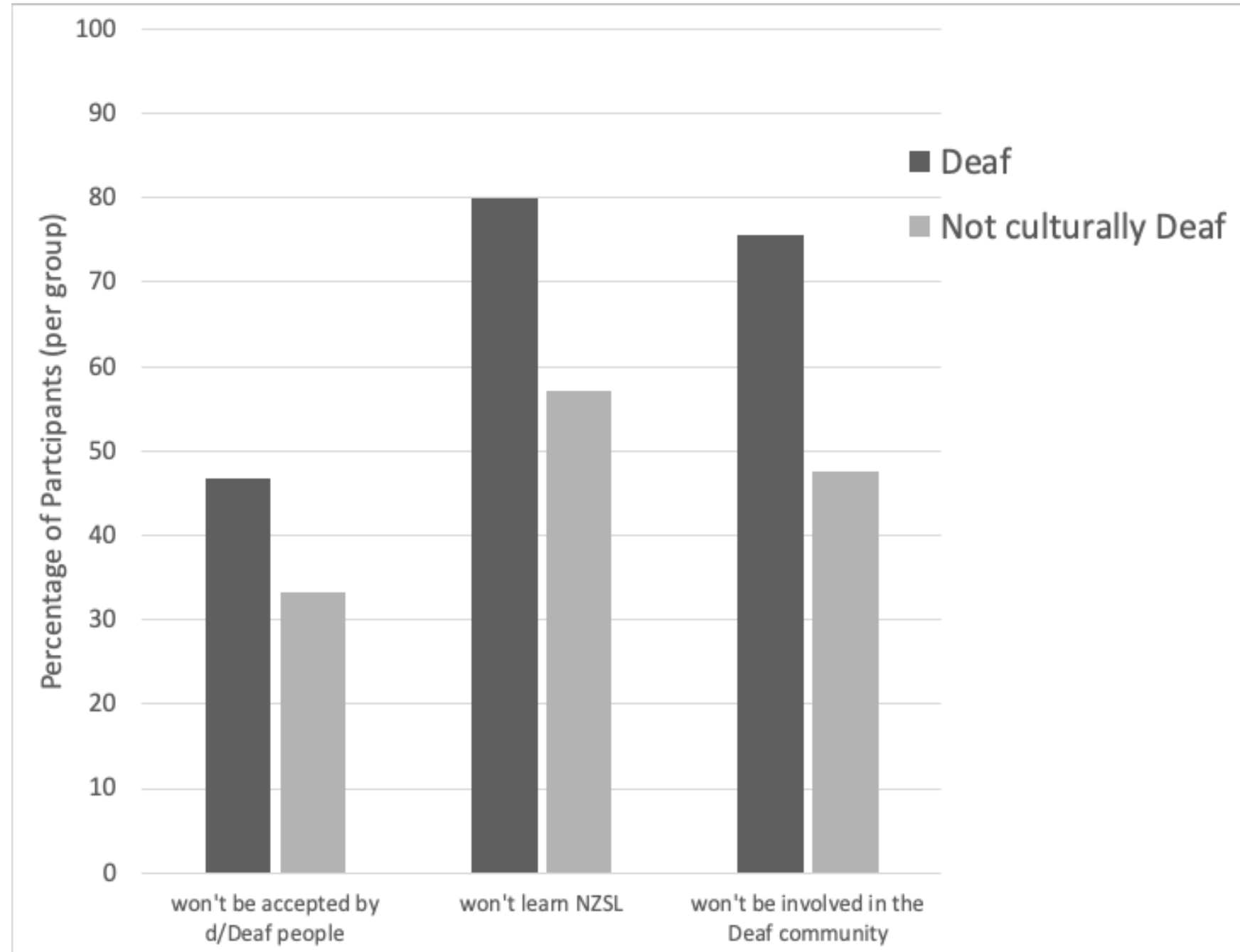
BUT

- 95% of deaf babies are born to hearing parents
- Cochlear Implants are highly effective at providing access to sound/speech
- To be most effective, implantation must occur very early in life

Online research with Deaf, deaf, and Hard-of-Hearing respondents

- Attitudes to cochlear implantation in children
- 66 Respondents:
 - 45 Culturally Deaf
 - 21 deaf or hard-of-hearing, but not Deaf
- Combination of quantitative and qualitative findings

Cultural consequences of cochlear implantation



Qualitative Themes

- Respondents were concerned about how children would see themselves
 - e.g. "they will be caught in the middle with no clear identity of who they are"
- And they wanted balanced advice for families
 - e.g. "give the parents the opportunity to know more about learning NZSL, NOT just CI as the only option"

Why does cultural identity matter?

HEARING CULTURE

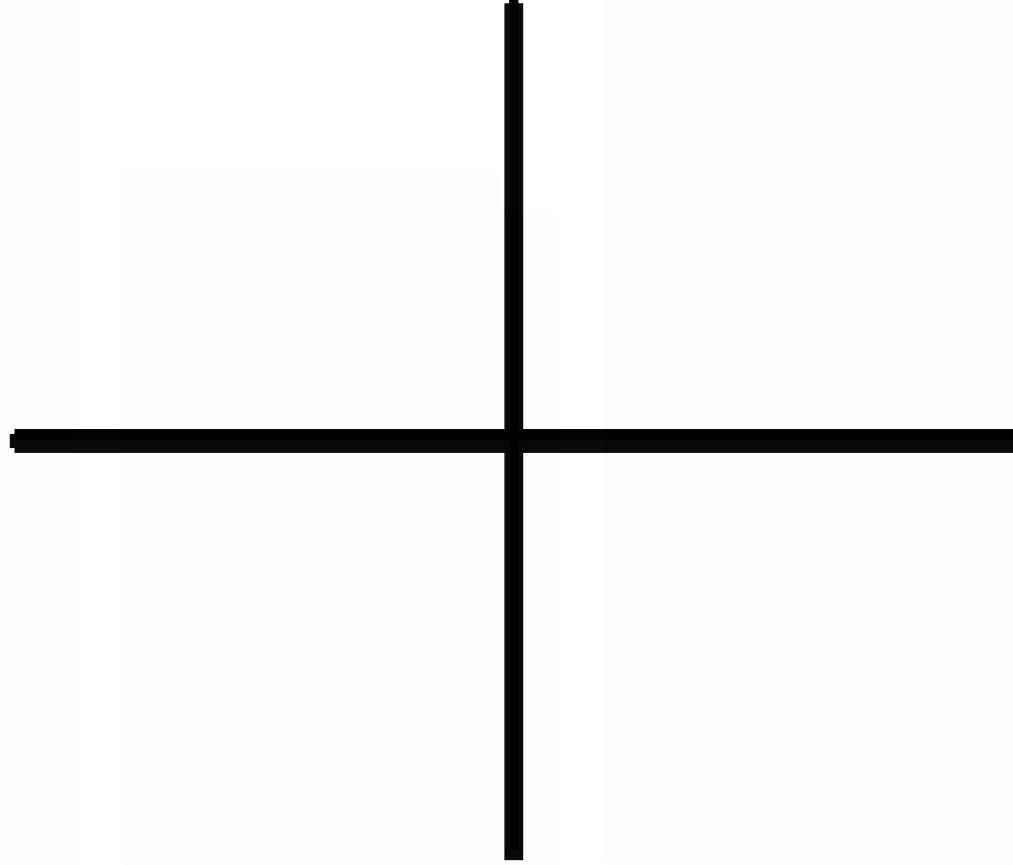
NO

YES

NO

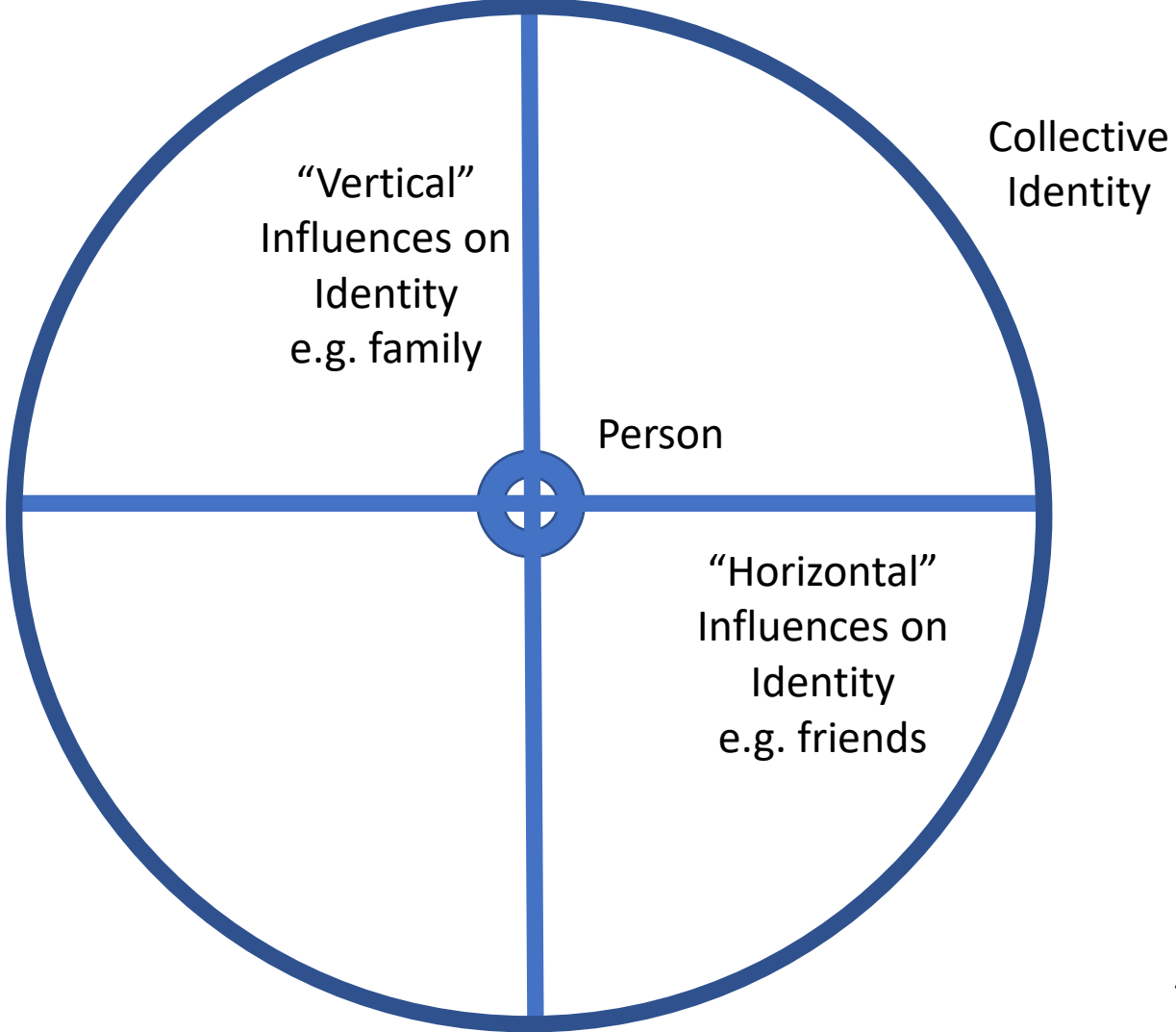
YES

DEAF CULTURE



How does cultural identity develop?

Social Identity Theory



Remember that 95% of deaf children are born to hearing parents

How does identity form in those born deaf?

How does it influence key outcomes?

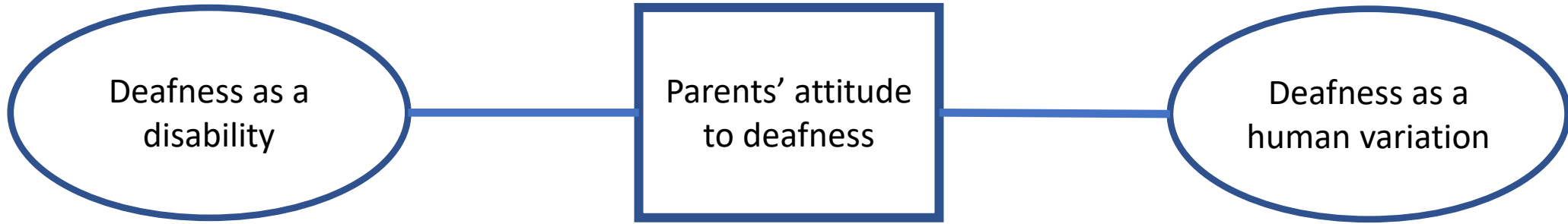
Research

(Katie's PhD)

Phase 1: Interviews with Parents and Teachers

Phase 2: Questionnaire

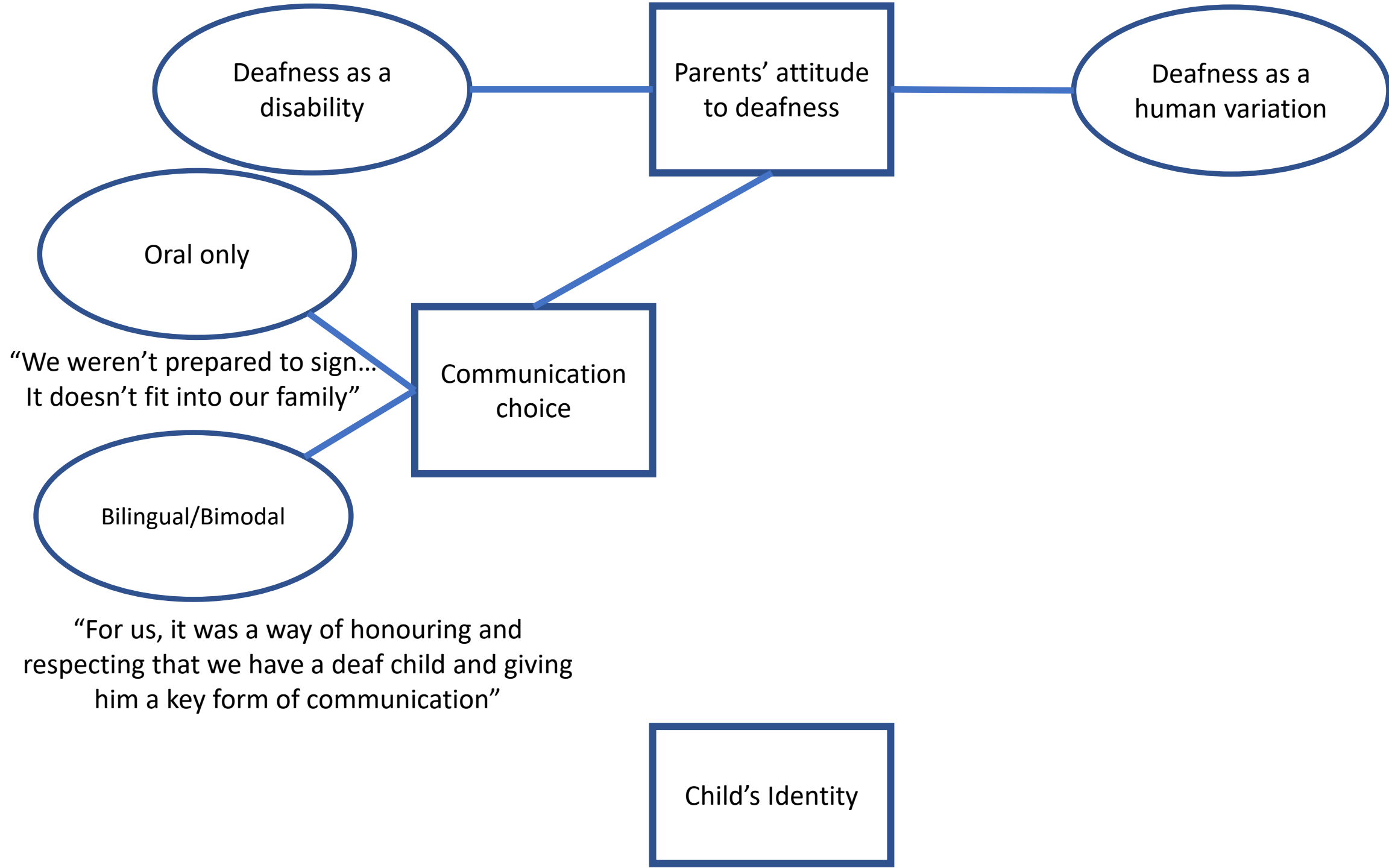
Child's Identity



“Oh God, I hope she’s not deaf because I don’t want her to be like that”

“We’ve always said that everybody’s got something [that makes them different]”

Child’s Identity



Deafness as a disability

Parents' attitude to deafness

Deafness as a human variation

Oral only

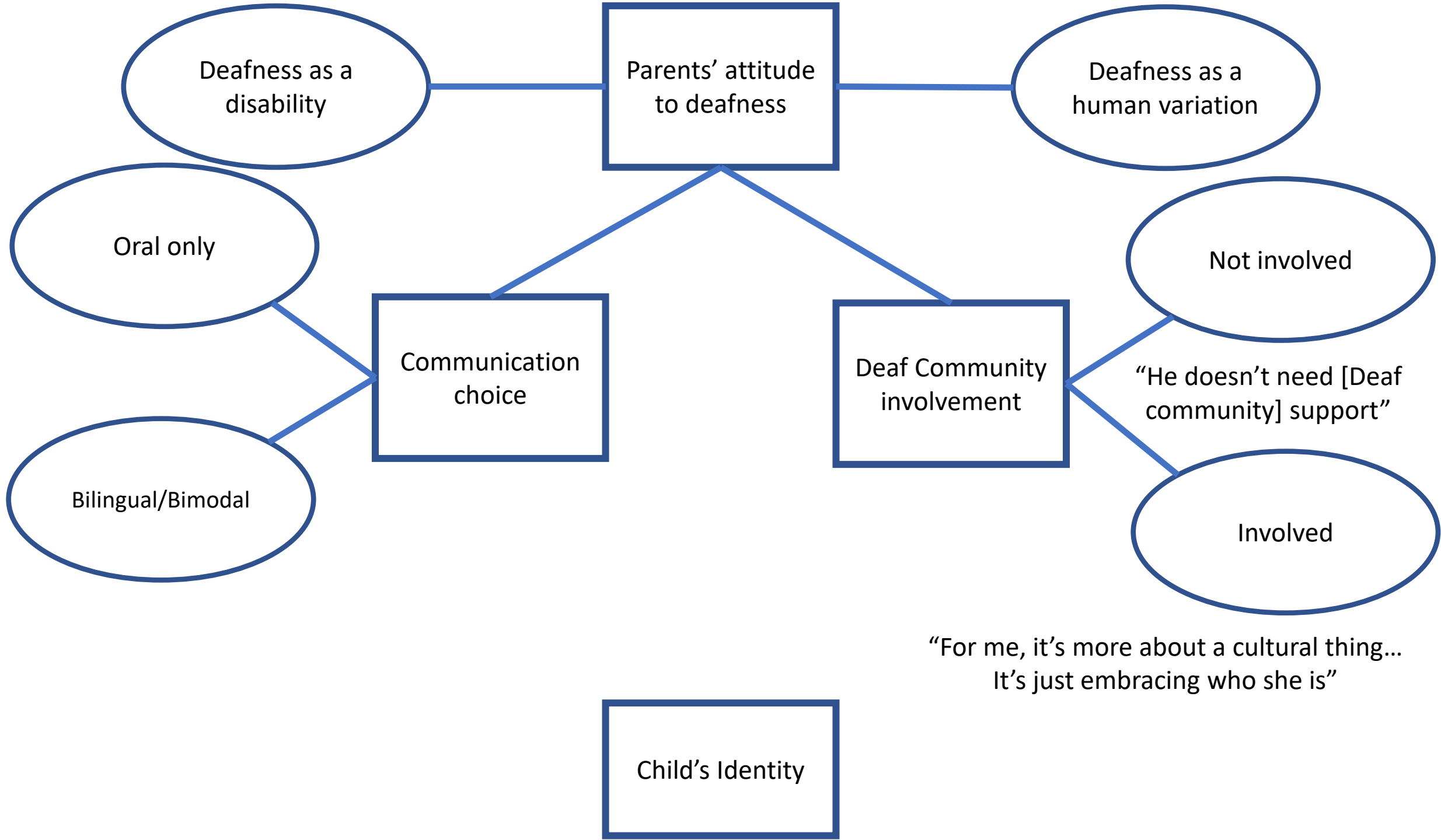
Communication choice

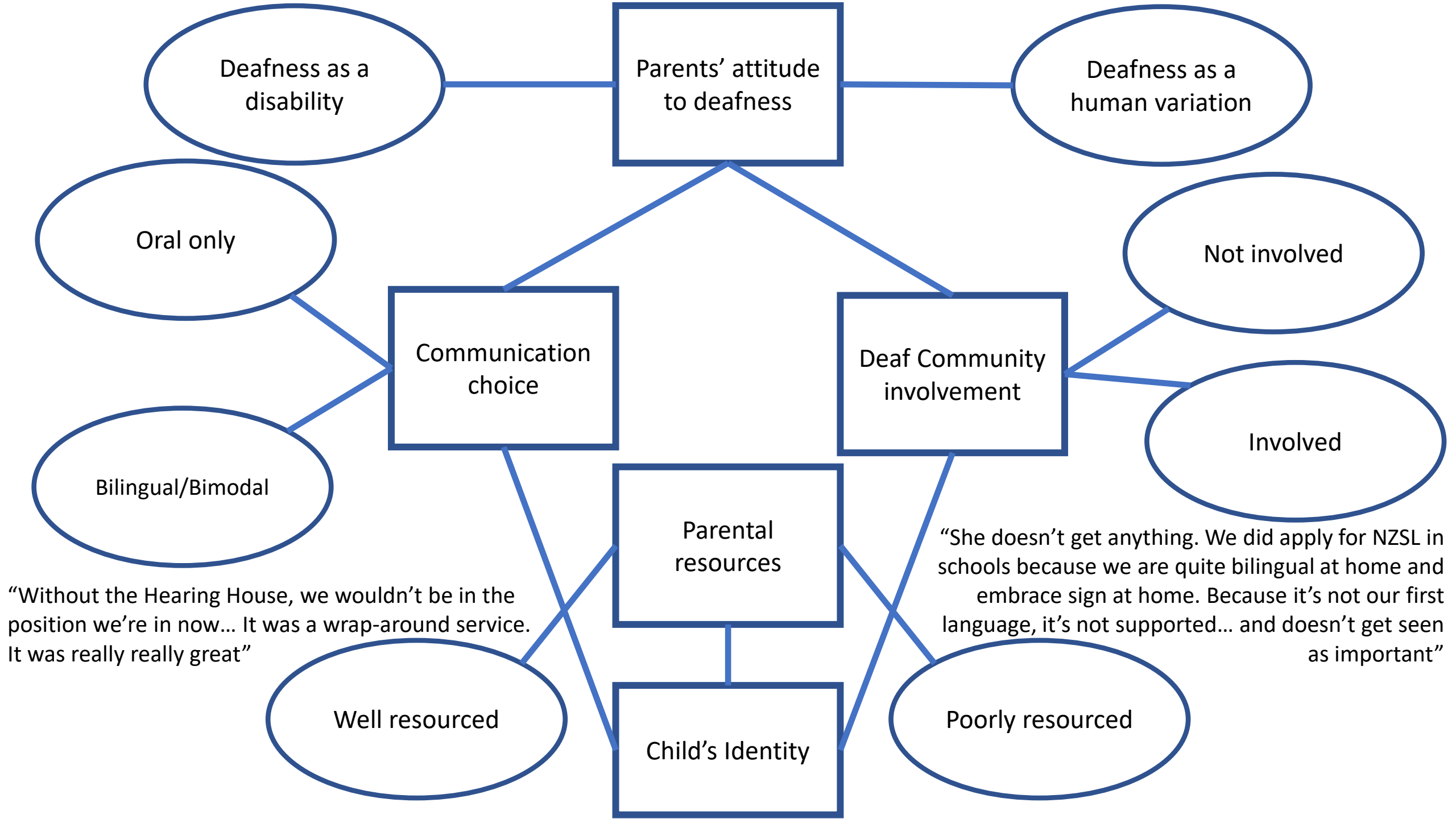
Bilingual/Bimodal

Child's Identity

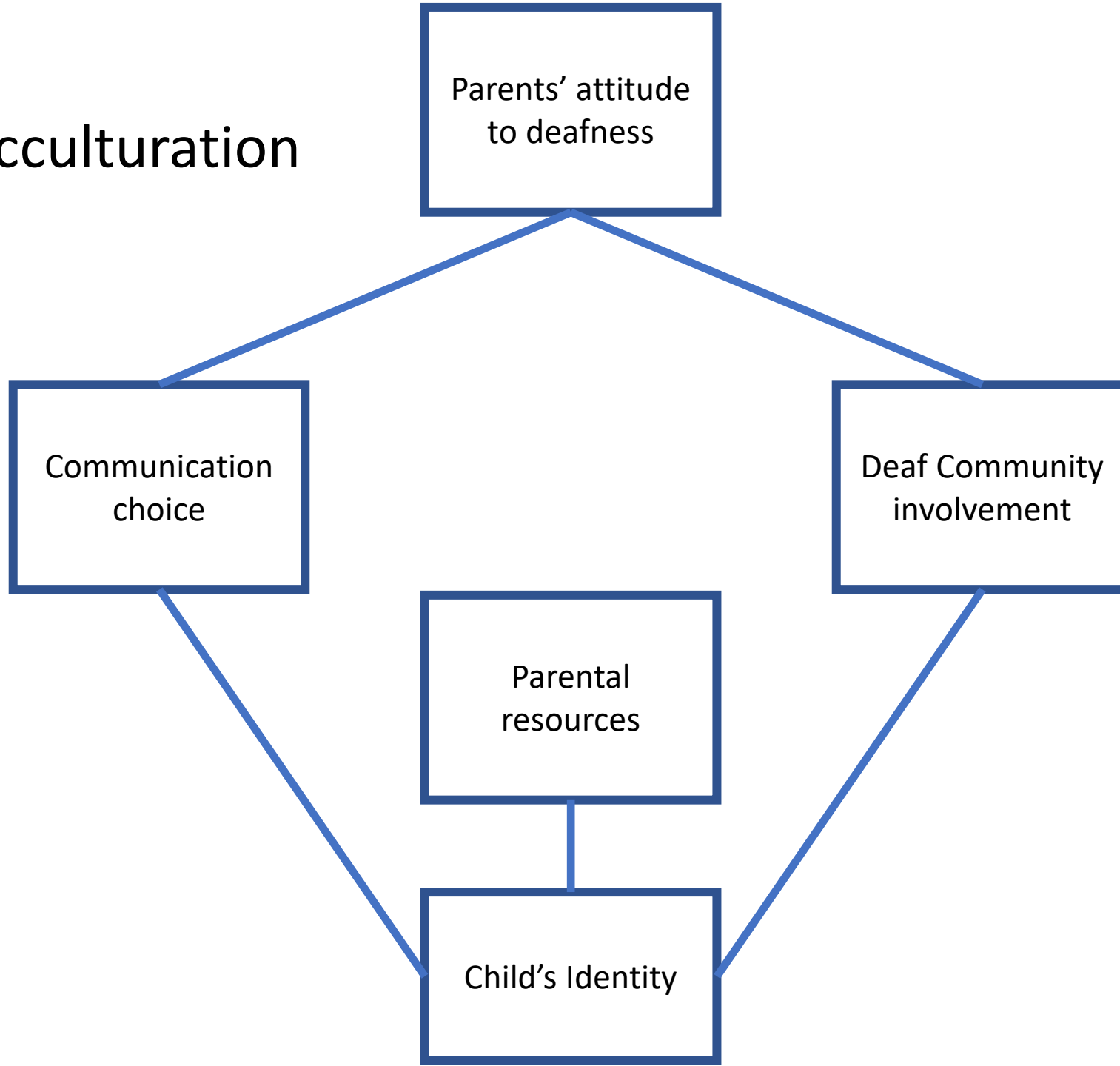
"We weren't prepared to sign...
It doesn't fit into our family"

"For us, it was a way of honouring and
respecting that we have a deaf child and giving
him a key form of communication"





Model of Acculturation

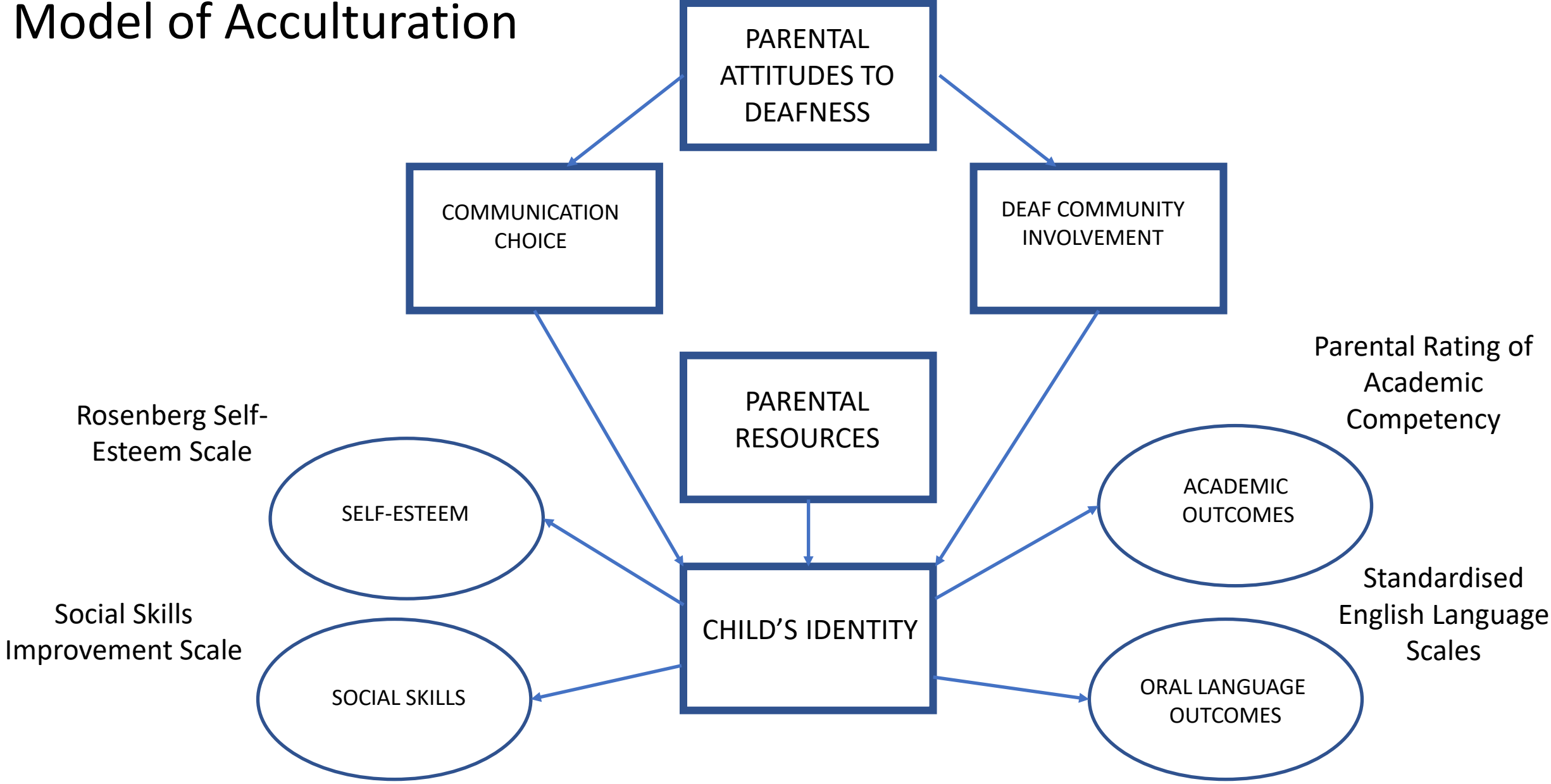


Research

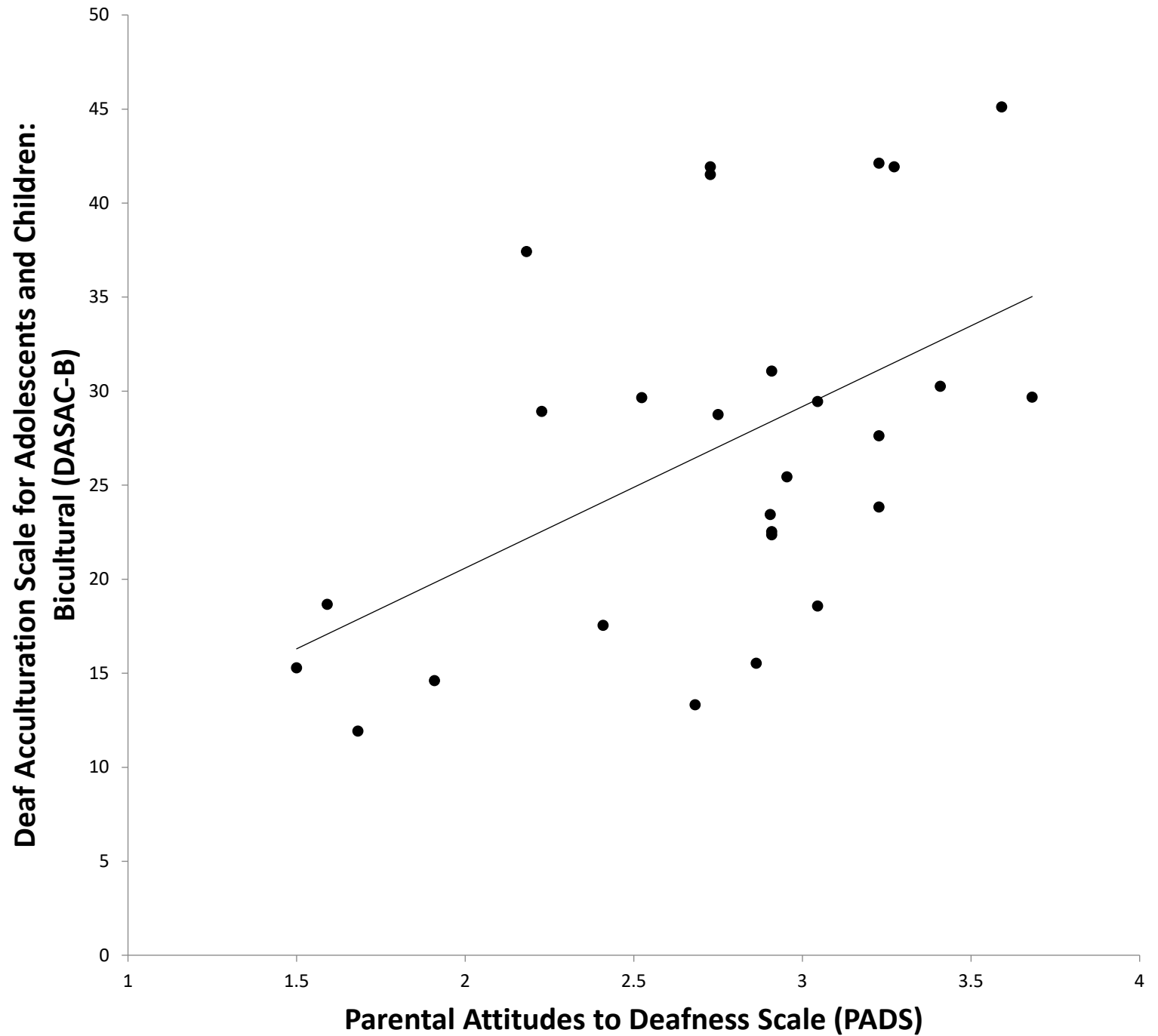
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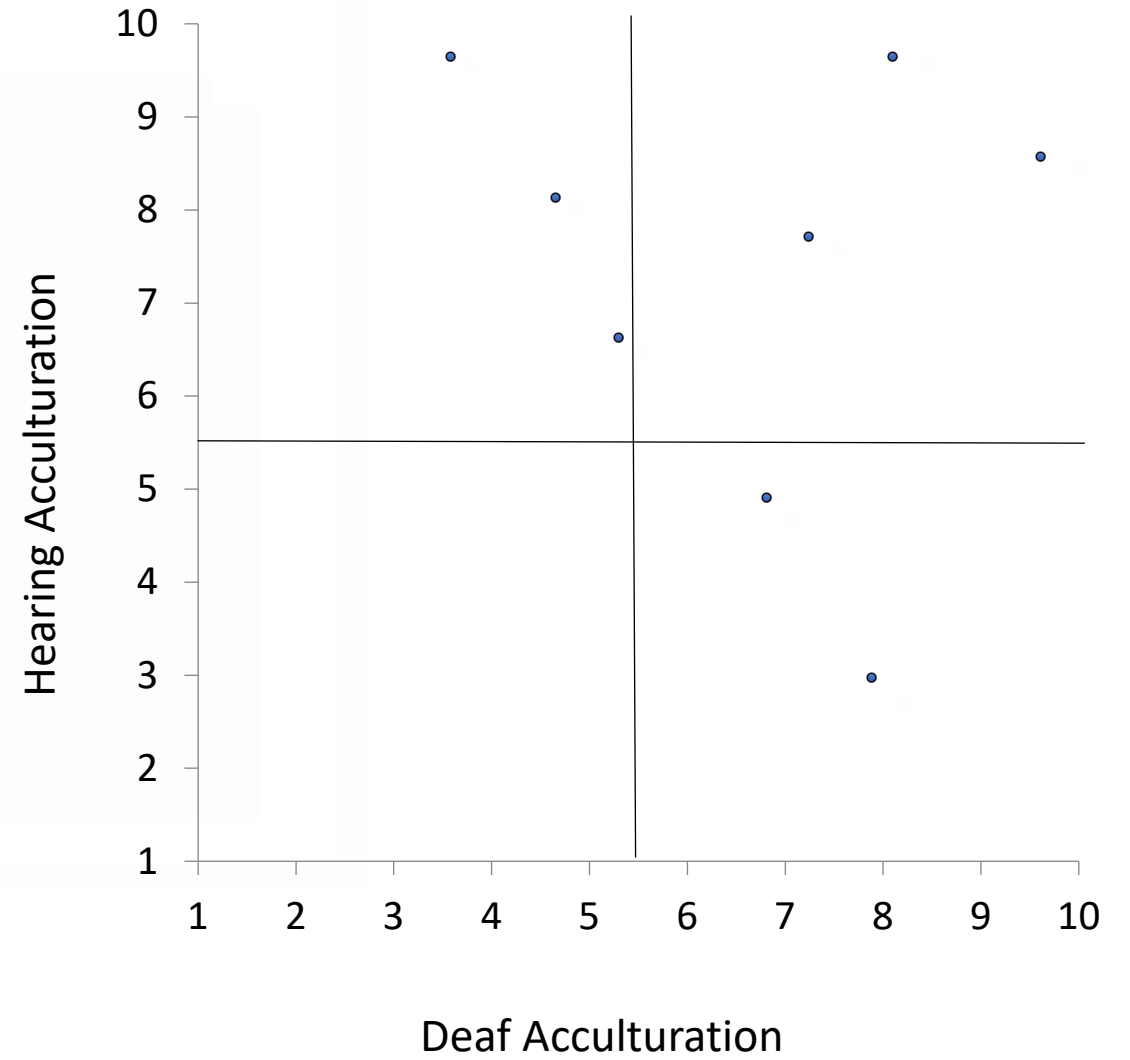
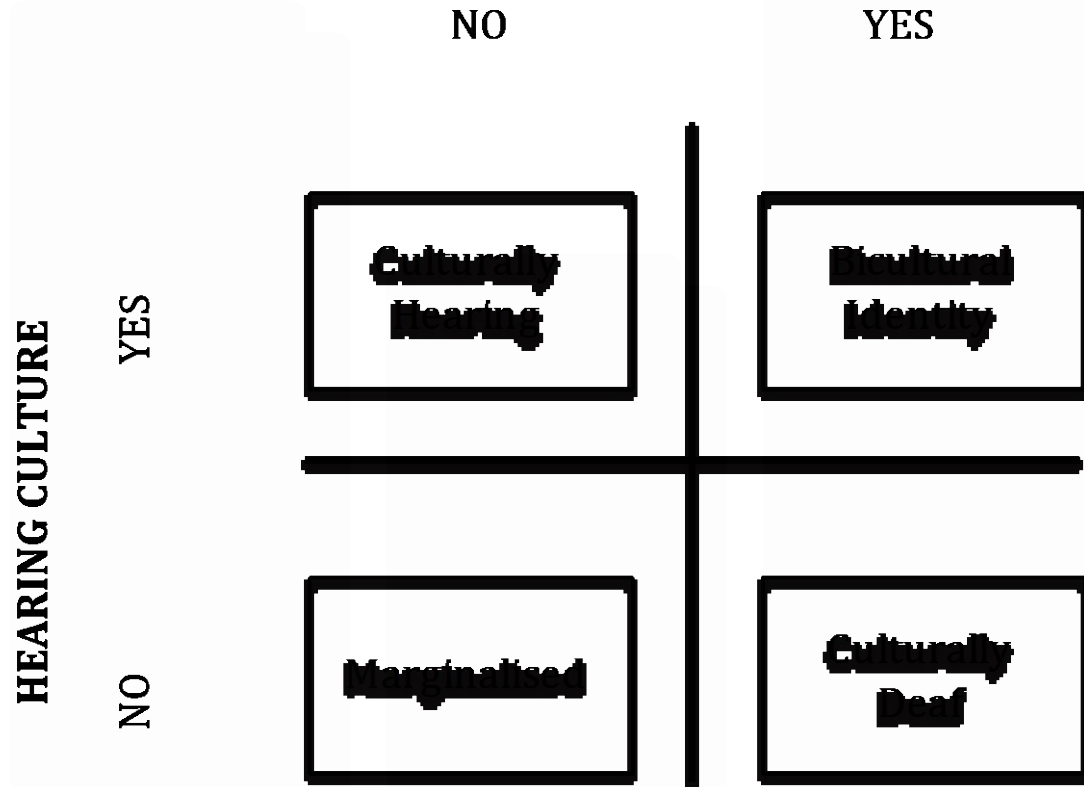
Model of Acculturation



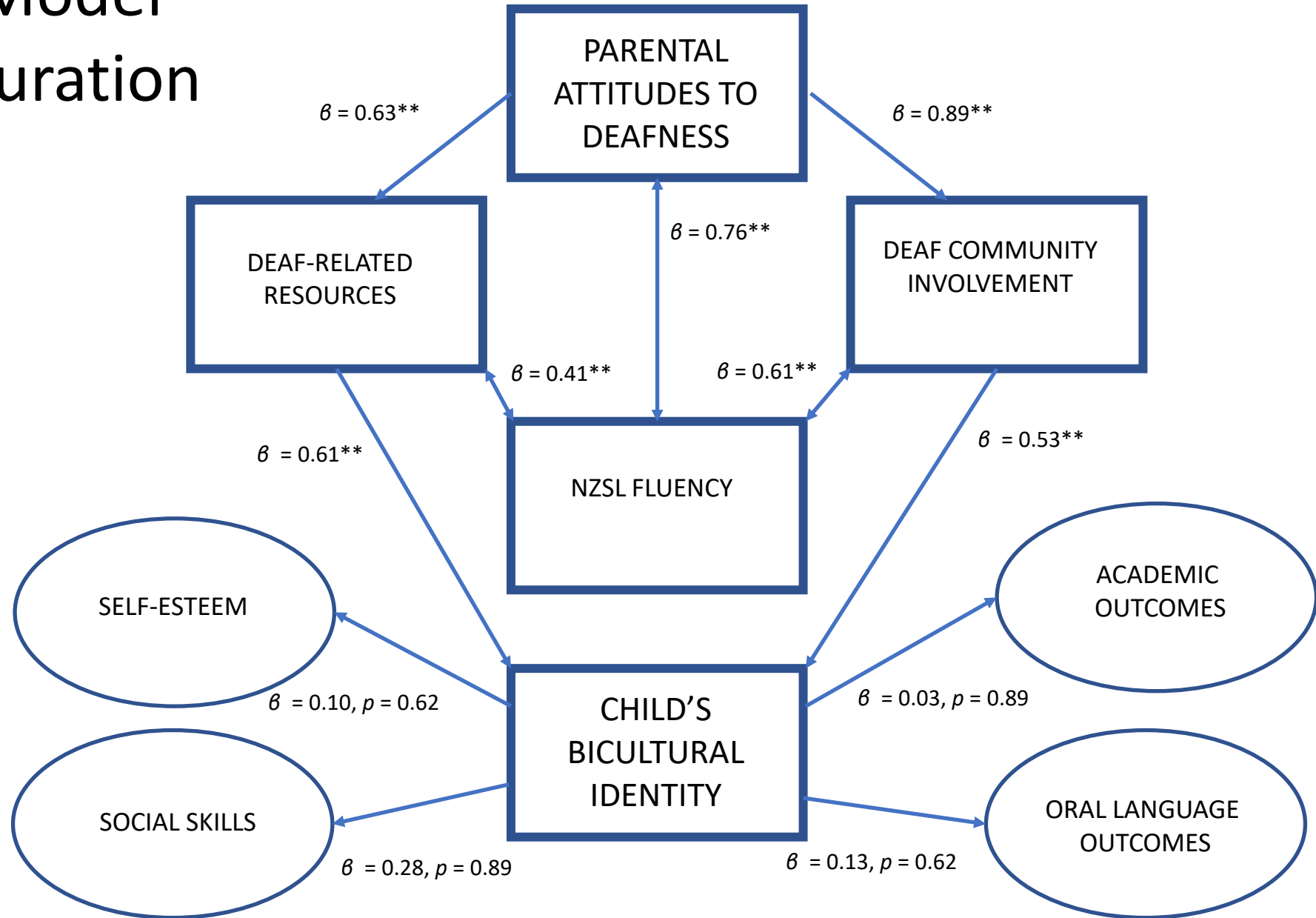
Parental attitudes
predicted Bicultural
Identity



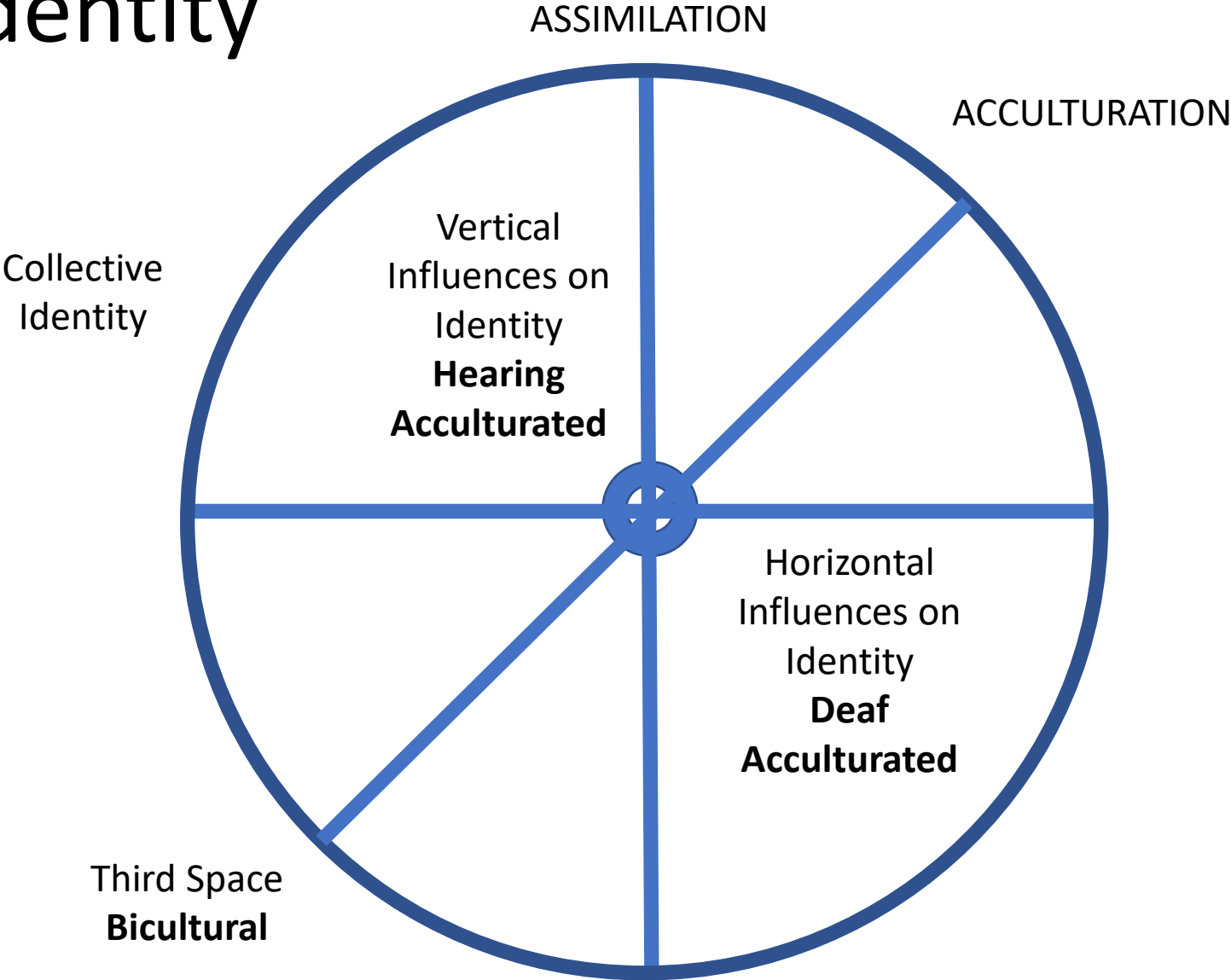
DEAF CULTURE



Revised Model of Acculturation



Social Identity



Summary

- Parental attitudes influence the identity of children with cochlear implants
- This is mediated by involvement with the Deaf Community and resource availability
- In our research, children were acculturated either to Hearing Culture or to both Deaf and Hearing Cultures
- Key outcomes (self-esteem, social skill, academic ability, and oral language skills) were not influenced by acculturation
- Influence of the UNHSEIP and initiatives such as 'First Signs' may alter this picture in future

Thank-you

Many thanks to our research participants who gave their time and information to help the research

And many thanks for your attention!

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