What's the Difference Between
Cued Speech, Cuem, Cued English, and Cued Language?

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Dr. Metzger and Mr. Fleetwood are nationally certified as cued language transliterators and as ASL-English interpreters. They have authored a variety of texts, videotapes, and audiotapes on the topics of ASL and cued English, including <u>Cued Language Structure: An Analysis of Cued American English Based on Linguistic Principles</u> and have conducted empirically based research on the nature of cueing, including the study *Does Cued Speech Entail Speech?: A Comparison of Cued and Spoken Information in Terms of Distinctive Features*.

During the course of the past several years, the terms *cuem, cued English,* and *cued language* have been used with increasing frequency. In 1998, our book <u>Cued Language Structure: An Analysis of Cued American English Based on Linguistic Principles</u> became the first publication to formally define and use these terms in referring to particular phenomena. Because that publication serves to formalize the use of these terms, we as the authors would like to provide clarification with the hope of minimizing their misuse. Such is a goal of this writing.

Productive philosophical, academic, and practical discussions are dependent on a common understanding of the terminology that they employ. However, because research findings drive a continually evolving body of knowledge, it can be difficult to realize such a shared understanding. While new knowledge often requires the reformulating of definitions[1], the adoption of new definitions happens neither spontaneously nor simultaneously among the populous. Nevertheless, an evolving understanding of reality creates the need for meanings ascribed terminology to evolve as well. The point here is that reality is not a means of justifying definitions ascribed terminology. Definitions are a means by which reality is discussed. Underscoring the nature and value of evolving definitions is another goal of this writing.

— CUED SPEECH —

Because we are not the inventors of *Cued Speech,* we do not presume the right to define it. Nevertheless, in terms of its function, *Cued Speech* is a visual articulatory system. Designed in 1966 by R. Orin Cornett, Ph.D., the system is characterized by a set of visibly discrete symbols. Each symbol is the result of pairing a mouthshape with either a handshape or a hand placement, the former to distinguish among consonant phonemes and the latter to distinguish among vowel phonemes. All pairs are unique. Thus, the phonemic inventory of a consonant-vowel language is completely visible through this articulatory system without the need to create acoustic symbols via a different articulatory system — speech.

— CUEM —

Recognizing that traditional definitions of Cued Speech include reference to sound, speech, and/or speechreading, and wanting to refer strictly to a phenomena accessible entirely in the visible medium, the authors coined a term that refers solely to the visible products of cueing: handshape, hand placement, mouthshape. The term *cuem* is used to refer to these visible products and is not equivalent to, a replacement for, nor interchangeable with, the term *Cued Speech.*

— CUED LANGUAGE —

The term *cued language* refers to a class of languages just as the term *spoken language* refers to a class of languages. The need to distinguish between cued and spoken languages was incidently created as a result of (1) R. Orin Cornett developing Cued Speech and (2) people using Cued Speech to communicate linguistically. Cued languages employ the visibly discrete attributes of Cued Speech (i.e. handshape, hand placement/movement, and mouthshape). However, cued languages also employ visibly discrete non-manual features, including, but not limited to, brow-movement and head-thrust. These visibly discrete symbols and non-manual features are combined and modulated following a hierarchy of rules and processes which constitute the phonology, morphology, and syntax of a given consonant-vowel language. In other words, a *cued language* is any consonant-vowel language in which cuem, the visibly discrete

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[1]For example, the term *phoneme* is commonly defined in terms of the sound-units of a language. Such a definition is at odds with the reality that signed languages and cued languages make use of phonemes as structural components. In order to accurately address the reality that signed languages and cued languages are NOT based in sound, definitions of the term *phoneme* have had to evolve so that they include reference to visible-units.

symbols of Cued Speech, serves as the foundation for conveying wholly in the visible medium all of the features that constitute a language. Those visibly accessible behaviors associated with the linguistic application of *Cued Speech* are characteristic of *cued language*. Thus, the terms *Cued Speech* and *cued language* are not interchangeable; the former refers to an articulatory system that produces visibly discrete symbols (*cuem*); the latter refers to the linguistic employment of that system.

— CUED ENGLISH —

With regard to the term *cued language*, 'cued' identifies the articulatory system employed; 'language' refers to the hierarchy of symbols, structures, and rules conveyed by that system. The terms *signed language* and *spoken language* are similarly descriptive. Thus, *cued English* simply refers to one member of the class of *cued languages*.

— DIFFERENT PHONETIC FEATURES —

Cueing produces a different set of symbols than does speaking; cueing produces a visible set and speaking produces an acoustic one. The symbols produced by cueing are bipartite (2-part) in nature: a visible symbol is uniquely identifiable as the product of combining (a) handshape and mouthshape or (b) hand placement and mouthshape. The symbols produced by speaking are tripartite (3-part) in nature: an acoustic symbol is uniquely identifiable as the product of combining (a) voice$\pm$ (i.e. voiced/voiceless attribute), (b) manner (e.g. plosive, nasalized), and (c) place (e.g. bilabial, interdental). Thus, a cued symbol is described by a set of phonetic features different from the set of phonetic features describing spoken symbols. Because cueing is a bipartite system and speaking is tripartite in nature, and because the relevant symbols (visible vs acoustic) and medium (light vs sound) differ, cued languages exhibit phonological processes distinct from those characteristic of spoken languages.

— CUEING IS NOT THE SAME AS SPEAKING —

Spoken English users who learn to cue English thereby learn to produce a set of visible symbols that represent the phonemes of English. Cued English users who learn to speak English learn to produce a set of acoustic symbols that represent the same phonemes. Each set of symbols — visible and acoustic — targets the same linguistic values (i.e. phonemes). However, because one set of symbols does not entail the other set, exposure to cueing does not teach one to speak just as exposure to speaking does not teach one to cue. Cueing is not a representation of speech sounds and speaking is not a representation of cued symbols. Thus, an individual can know cued English without knowing spoken English, and vice versa.

— KNOWING A CUED LANGUAGE IS NOT THE SAME AS KNOWING CUED SPEECH —

Cued Speech has been adapted to approximately 60 languages and dialects. This adaptation is motivated by the fact that the phonemic inventory of one language does not correspond exactly with that of another language. In light of this difference, the visibly discrete *Cued Speech* symbols (i.e. cuem) can differ across consonant-vowel languages. For example, cued French employs five (5) hand placements while cued English employs four (4). The additional hand placement (at the cheek) found in cued French is a visibly discrete way of representing vowel phonemes, such as that found in the French word "peu," while visibly distinguishing it from vowel phonemes of other languages, such as that represented at the mouth placement (e.g. /ur/) in cued English   Additionally, the values (phonemic) ascribed the symbols (phonetic), the combination and sequence of those symbols (phonotactic and phonologic processes), the meanings ascribed the symbol combinations and sequences (morphologic), and the grammatical (syntactic) rules are language-specific. Thus, by only establishing that two individuals know Cued Speech, it is impossible to determine whether or not they will be able to communicate linguistically. If one is an English monolingual and the other a French monolingual, the fact that both cue does not resolve the fact that they know different languages. Although the individuals share an articulatory system contained wholly in the visible medium, they do not share knowledge of the values ascribed the symbols nor the rules for applying them. Thus, the authors propose that, when describing an individual's avenue for communicating, it is more productive to specify mode (e.g. cued, spoken) and language (i.e. English, French) than to describe the individual as knowing *Cued Speech*.

— CONCLUSION —

The terms *Cued Speech, cuem, cued English*, and *cued language* have specific meanings. A better understanding of these terms can serve to facilitate a better understanding of language and the nature of communication. As lifelong students of linguistics, we hope that the preceding points of clarification help contribute to that outcome.