

# 世界中 不一樣的聲音

## UNHEARD VOICES IN OUR WORLD

By / **Ting En Yen** ·  
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### 傾聽不一樣的聲音

你是否曾在餐廳或派對上因背景音樂太吵，讓你聽不清楚朋友的對話，只能靠猜測接話？或在電話裡，對方的聲音忽遠忽近，讓你不得不反覆確認？這種「聽見了，卻無法完全理解」的情境，對聽損者而言，可能是他們的日常。他們或許能聽見某些聲音，卻難以拼湊完整的語句；有人依靠助聽設備，有人使用手語來溝通。

當我們認為「聽見」是理所當然時，或許忽略了聽損者所經歷的世界。外國語文學系萬宗綸助理教授專注於台灣聽損者的口語使用與身份認同研究，他的發現帶領大家更認識此群體，理解他們的日常，以及如何創造一個更友善的社會。

### The story behind the research

Have you ever struggled to hear a friend in a noisy restaurant or at a party, relying on guesswork to keep up with the conversation? Or been on a phone call where the other person's voice fades in and out, making you ask them to repeat themselves? For people with hearing loss, these challenges are part of everyday life. Some can hear certain sounds but still find conversations difficult to follow. Many rely on hearing aids, while others use sign language to communicate.

Hearing is often taken for granted, making it easy to overlook the experiences of people with hearing loss. Assistant Professor Tsung-Lun Alan Wan from the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures studies their spoken language and identity in Taiwan. His research offers insights into this community, helping us better understand their daily lives and explore ways to create a more inclusive society.

談起這個研究方向的契機，萬老師說，起初，他發現所學的社會語言學對種族、性別、階級議題的討論較多，卻鮮少關心障礙者的語言經驗，也想起國中時，班上有一位聽損同學經歷了霸凌。萬老師與其他同學幫助他，但有些人卻模仿他的發音，把他的發音當成笑話。

萬老師從這段經歷體會到，語言不只是溝通工具，也影響身份認同與社會適應。開始學術研究生涯後，他決定回頭探討這個被忽略的議題，因此投入這個領域，一路持續至今。

### 當「正常聽見」成為標準

社會對聽損者的誤解，往往來自對聽覺障礙的認識不足。由於聽損不像輪椅或白手杖明顯，許多人不會意識到身邊可能有聽損者，當對方沒有即時回應提問或說話的口音與一般人不一樣時，第一反應通常不是理解，而是疑惑：「他怎麼不理我？」或「他是外國人嗎？」更糟的情況，把對方貼上「問題人物」標籤。

社會習慣把「正常聽見」當成標準，公共場所、學校教育無一例外，人們很少停下來想過有人聽不到一般場合用聲音傳遞的訊息。這就像收看一部沒字幕的電影，觀眾也聽不懂該電影的語言，只能自己猜劇情。當大眾預設每個人都能正常聽見時，聽損者的需求自然會被忽略。

Reflecting on what led him to this field, Professor Wan noted that sociolinguistics often examines race, gender, and social class but rarely addresses the linguistic experiences of individuals with disabilities. He also recalled a middle school classmate who was bullied because of his hearing loss. While he and some classmates tried to support him, others mocked his speech, imitating the way he spoke to tease him.

For Professor Wan, this experience left a lasting impression, reinforcing that language is more than just a tool for communication as it shapes identity and social belonging. When he later entered academia, he returned to this overlooked issue, dedicating his research to understanding the challenges faced by people with hearing loss and has been working in this field ever since.

### When hearing is the expected norm

Misunderstandings about people with hearing loss often arise from a lack of awareness. Unlike a wheelchair or a white cane, hearing loss is not immediately visible, making it easy to overlook. When someone does not respond right away or speaks with an unfamiliar accent, the reaction is rarely one of understanding. Instead, some may wonder, "Why are they ignoring me?" or assume, "They must be a foreigner." These assumptions can sometimes lead to unfair judgments.

Public spaces and schools are generally designed with the assumption that everyone can hear. Few people take a moment to consider that

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*"I live my life like everyone else;  
everyone has their own obstacles.  
Mine is deafness."*

—— 我的人生和其他人無異，  
每個人都會面對困難，  
而我面對的只是聽不見而已。

Each person has unique life experiences.  
每個人都有不同的生命經驗



醫療與教育體系則進一步強化「修復」的概念。助聽器、人工耳蝸被塑造成「讓聽損者回歸正常」的解方，彷彿只要戴上設備，問題就能迎刃而解。實際上，每位聽損者的狀況不同，有人樂於使用輔助科技，也有人覺得適應困難或不需。但社會的期待卻是：「聽不見聲音？那趕快去取得助聽器吧！」這忽略了聽損者自身的選擇權，以及他們對自己身份的認同。

### 什麼是生命經驗？

社會期待，可深刻影響聽損者的生命經驗。生命經驗是一個人從小到大，與自身狀況相關的所有經歷，會對個人產生影響。這些經驗不只是個人的內在感受，也包含外界對他的看法與社會互動。對聽損者而言，生命經驗涵蓋了他如何接受自己的聽力狀況、社會對他的態度，以及這些因素如何影響他對輔助科技的選擇與適應。

some individuals struggle to process the sounds around them. It is like watching a foreign-language film without subtitles; you might catch a few words but have to guess the rest. Since most people don't question their ability to hear, the needs of those with hearing loss often go unnoticed.

Medical and educational institutions often reinforce the idea that hearing loss is something to be "fixed." Hearing aids and cochlear implants are commonly presented as solutions that return a person to a so-called normal state, as if wearing a device eliminates all challenges. In reality, experiences vary; some find these tools helpful, while others struggle to adjust or choose not to use them. Despite these differences, social pressure remains: "Can't hear? Get a hearing aid." This perspective fails to consider personal choice and how people with hearing loss define their own identity.

### Understanding life experiences

Societal expectations profoundly shape the experiences of individuals with hearing loss. A person's life experiences include every interaction and challenge they have faced in relation to their condition, influencing both their self-perception and how others see them. For those with hearing loss, these experiences involve accepting their condition, managing societal expectations,

對於成長環境友善、未曾遭遇重大困難的人來說，助聽器或人工耳蝸只是日常工具，同時可帶來便利。但若童年曾遭歧視或霸凌，輔助科技可能成為痛苦的象徵。有人因助聽器被同學戲弄、偷走、破壞，讓父母不得不花費大量金錢重新購買，而對這些設備產生抗拒，甚至選擇隱藏聽損身分。

語言與口音的偏見也會帶來影響。萬老師的研究發現，許多聽損者因發音與多數人不同，常在公共場合被誤認為外國人，女性受訪者提及此事的比例較高，可能與社會對女性語言表現的期待較嚴格有關。被誤認的對象也會影響他們的自我認同，若被誤認為是日本人或韓國人，可能受到較友善的對待，但若被誤認為是東南亞移工，則可能遭遇歧視，進而焦慮，緊接著積極矯正發音，以避免不必要的標籤。

這些例子顯示，聽損者的社會適應並非單純的生理問題，而是受到語言、性別、族群等因素影響。每

and making decisions about assistive technology.

Growing up in a supportive environment without major obstacles can lead to viewing hearing aids or cochlear implants as practical tools that improve daily life. In contrast, individuals who have experienced bullying or discrimination may associate assistive devices with negative memories. Some recall being mocked, having their hearing aids stolen or deliberately damaged, or watching their families struggle to afford replacements. Such experiences can create resistance to assistive technology or even a desire to conceal their hearing loss.

Bias related to speech and accents plays a significant role in shaping these experiences. Professor Wan's research indicates that many individuals with hearing loss are often mistaken for foreigners due to differences in pronunciation. Female participants raised this issue more frequently, possibly because of societal expectations for women to speak clearly and precisely. Being misidentified also affects how they see themselves. Those mistaken for someone who is Japanese or Korean tend to experience friendlier interactions, while those assumed to be migrant workers are more likely to face discrimination. This can lead to anxiety and encourage individuals to modify their speech in an effort to avoid unwanted assumptions.



Did you know? The Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures in Humanities and Social Sciences Building 3 is home to fascinating research on human language. Visit the “Lingsights” website (<https://lingsights.tw/>) to learn more!

你知道嗎？人社三館的外國語文學系有許多有趣的語言研究，快到「言來如此」網站 (<https://lingsights.tw/>) 一探究竟！

個人的生命經驗不同，也影響他們如何看待自身的聽力狀況與科技接受度。

科技帶來的改變，對每個聽損者而言意義不盡相同。萬老師分享一個例子，一位老年聽損者拒絕配戴助聽器，理由是「現在人生變得更美好」。這位患者的弟弟患有躁鬱症，長年在家中大吼大叫，而他在聽力退化後，反而享受到難得的寧靜，不再被環境噪音困擾。因此，他完全不想恢復聽力，因為對他來說，這反而是一種生活品質的提升。

「這是我一直想強調的，生命經驗決定需求。」萬老師說。「有些人渴望聽見鳥鳴聲，覺得這是世界美好的聲音，而對另一部分人來說，這只是噪音干擾。」科技的目的，不能單純以恢復聽力來衡量，而應該回到每位使用者的生命經驗，理解他們真正的需求，並提供合適的選擇。

### 聽覺輔助科技，使用者的經驗在哪裡？

萬老師同時也研究聽覺輔助科技，關注這些設備如何影響聽損者的生活。然而，這些裝置不只是「讓人聽見」，實際使用比想像中複雜。

「科技開發常忽略使用者的真實需求。」萬老師指出，人工耳蝸由少數歐美與澳洲廠商主導，設計者

These examples illustrate that life with hearing loss is shaped by more than just physical factors. Language, gender, and cultural background all influence how individuals experience it. Their perception of hearing loss and willingness to use assistive technology are shaped by personal experiences.

Technology impacts people in different ways. Professor Wan shared the story of an elderly man with hearing loss who refused to use a hearing aid, saying, “Life has never been better.” His younger brother had bipolar disorder and often shouted at home. As his hearing declined, he found peace in the quiet and felt less overwhelmed by noise. For him, regaining hearing was not a priority. Instead, the absence of sound improved his quality of life.

“This is what I always emphasize. Needs are shaped by life experiences,” Professor Wan explained. “Some people love hearing birdsong because they believe it makes the world more beautiful, while others just find it noisy.” Technology should not be judged solely by its ability to restore hearing. Rather, it should be evaluated based on how well it meets individual needs.

### *The role of user experience in assistive technology*

Professor Wan also examines how assistive technology impacts the daily lives of individuals with hearing loss. These devices do more than simply amplify sound; their real-world application is far more complex than it may seem.

“Product developers often fail to consider the actual needs of users,” he explained. Cochlear implants, for example, are primarily produced by a few major companies in Europe, the United States, and Australia. Since most engineers involved in their design have normal hearing and speak languages without tonal distinctions, they did not account for the tonal variations in Mandarin and

*“Silence is the last thing the world will ever hear from me.”*

—— 沉默，絕不會是我留給世界的最後聲音。  
Marlee Matlin, the first deaf American actress to win an Academy Award

多為聽力正常者，且母語不含聲調辨識，因此未納入華語與台語的聲調差異，導致使用者適應困難。助聽器技術門檻較低，許多聽損者創立品牌試圖開發更貼合需求的產品，卻難敵大廠競爭。

「科技應從開發初期就納入使用者回饋，而非等即將上市後才發現問題。」萬老師舉例，一款電動輪椅設計完成後才請人測試，結果發現輪椅在地毯上會打滑，這正是未考慮實際需求的典型案例。助聽器也有類似問題，例如背景噪音、多方對話聲干擾等，使用者最清楚在哪些環境需要降噪、哪些頻率要強化。「使用者才是專家。」萬老師提出，當社會理解這些需求，輔助科技才能真正服務使用者，讓每個人的聲音都被聽見。

### 改變的起點

對聽損者及其他需要關心的群體，社會的理解往往始於認知的缺乏。許多人甚至未曾意識到這些群體的存在，因此無法調整互動方式，導致誤解與衝突。當人們聽到與自己不同的口音，常會直覺認為對方是外國人，卻未曾考慮口音可能來自聽損或其他障礙。

建立認知是改善社會理解的第一步。當我們意識到這些群體就在身邊，互動方式自然會改變。當社會開始反思對不同群體的既定印象，例如不再隨意詢問「你是哪國人？」或預設所有人都能輕鬆應對社會互動，包容度便能逐步提升。這些小小的改變，都是讓社會更友善的一步！

Taiwanese, making adaptation more challenging for users. Hearing aids, on the other hand, have a lower technical barrier, allowing more companies to develop them. However, smaller startups, including some founded by people with hearing loss, struggle to compete with industry giants.

“User feedback should be integrated from the start rather than considered only when a product is nearly ready for launch,” Professor Wan pointed out. He shared an example of an electric wheelchair that was tested only after its design was finalized, revealing that it got stuck on carpets. This issue could have been avoided if real users had been involved earlier. Hearing aids face similar challenges, from difficulties reducing background noise in crowded settings to struggles distinguishing overlapping conversations. Users best understand where noise reduction is needed and which sound frequencies should be adjusted for better clarity.

“The true experts are the users themselves,” Professor Wan emphasized. When product developers and society recognize these needs, assistive technology can better serve its users, ensuring that everyone’s voice is heard.

### *Change begins with awareness*

Understanding people with hearing loss and other marginalized communities starts with awareness. Many people go about their daily lives without realizing these communities exist, making it harder to adjust interactions and increasing the chances of misunderstandings or conflict. When someone speaks with an unfamiliar accent, the immediate assumption is often that they might be a foreigner, without considering that differences in speech patterns might stem from hearing loss or other conditions.

Raising awareness is the first step toward fostering a more inclusive society. Once people recognize that these groups are part of everyday life, their approach to communication naturally shifts. Challenging long-standing assumptions, such as casually asking, “Where are you from?” or assuming that social interactions are effortless for everyone, can lead to greater acceptance. Minor changes in how we see things can help make the world a more welcoming place for everyone.