

DEAF PORT PROJECT



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ANALYSIS OF NEEDS, CONSTRAINTS, PRACTICES AND CHALLENGES TO THE DEAF AND HEARING-IMPAIRED LEARNERS OF LANGUAGES

PRELIMINARY RESEARCH



Education and Culture DG

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PART I: PROJECT OVERVIEW

1. Summary

The main objective of the Deaf Port project is to develop a multilingual European Language Portfolio for the Deaf and Hearing-Impaired (16+) and Europass Language Passport with a view to:

- enhancing their motivation to develop, extend and diversify their language skills;
- helping them to reflect on their objectives, ways of and success in language learning;
- developing their capacity for independent learning;
- addressing learning needs in the most comprehensive way, providing suitable format and adaptation of descriptions;
- introducing commonly recognized standards and ensuring transparency and coherence in language learning

The Deaf Port model of the European Language Portfolio will address the language learning needs of the deaf and hearing-impaired, and will put language teaching and learning of the target group in the context of common European standards, in order to:

- provide transparent and reliable information on language skills and competences of the learners
- keep records of achievements in their language learning
- maintain their motivation for language learning
- plan their learning strategy
- enhance their plurilingual and intercultural experience

The project main beneficiary will be deaf and hearing-impaired learners of foreign languages who will be provided with tools based on common European standards. As the Deaf Port will help direct the process of acquisition of language competence and to introduce a basis for assessment of their language skills, it will also be a useful tool that will help language teachers

- to understand better the needs of deaf and hearing-impaired learners
- to monitor teaching process, and
- to assess the effectiveness of the pedagogical strategy
- will provide a basis for developers of curricula and assessment materials
- to use descriptors relevant for this specific group of learners in order to design courses and tests for definite levels of deaf and hearing-impaired learners
- will provide a tool to educational establishments and employers
- to assess language proficiency of the deaf and hearing-impaired, applying for a training course or job, or taking part in an international event
- will assist policy and decision makers in the field of education with special focus on learners with special needs

2. Outcomes:

- European Language Portfolio for the deaf and hearing-impaired in paper and electronic format including: Language Passport, Language Biography and Dossier in 7 languages: BG, CZ, DE, EL, EN, LV, RO.
- Deaf Port Teacher's Guide in paper and electronic format in 7 languages: BG, CZ, DE, EL, EN, LV, RO.
- Deaf Port User's Guide in paper and electronic format in 7 languages: BG, CZ, DE, EL, EN, LV, RO. (Learners + Employers Guides)
- Deaf Port Europass Language Passport in paper and electronic format in 7 languages: BG, CZ, DE, EL, EN, LV, RO.
- Language descriptors and self-assessment grids/checklists for deaf and hearing-impaired in 7 languages: BG, CZ, DE, EL, EN, LV, RO.
- Deaf Port Project website and workspace
- Analysis of needs, constraints, practices and challenges to the deaf and hearing-impaired learners of languages to help developers

- Dissemination and implementation/exploitation of results

3. Why? Rationale of and background to the project

The Deaf Port project addresses the needs for equal opportunities for the deaf and for people with impaired hearing as outlined in the Education and Training 2010 work programme, and in particular their language learning needs, to encourage the learning of modern foreign languages, including activities to make language learning more attractive to learners (Decision No 1720/2006/EC) and reflecting the Commission Communication on the Action Plan for promoting language learning and linguistic diversity, contributing to:

- encouragement of the introduction and use of the European Language Portfolio,
- the growing awareness in Member States of effectively linking curricula and examinations to the CEFR scales, and
- the use of Europass as a single framework for the transparency of qualifications and competences (Decision No 2241/2004/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council)

The project outcomes also address the Lisbon strategy re European key competences for life-long learning, which have been a key issue for the deaf and hearing-impaired, and particularly: communication in the mother tongue, communication in foreign languages, digital competence (the Deaf Port Portfolio and Europass Language Passport produced in electronic form will help deaf and hearing-impaired to use and develop their basic skills in ICT), learning to learn, social and civic competence, cultural awareness and expression.

4. Targeted Groups:

- > Two main groups of deaf and hearing-impaired learners according to their hearing impairment:
 - Deaf
 - Hard of hearing using listening amplification devices/hearing aids and with Cochlear implants (CI) incl. Oral Deaf
- > Five main groups of deaf and hearing-impaired learners according to their type of educational and training involvement:
 - deaf and hearing-impaired learners of languages in special schools for the deaf (bilingual education provided)
 - deaf and hearing-impaired learners of languages integrated in the mainstream education (secondary schools)
 - deaf and hearing-impaired learners of languages integrated in the mainstream education (higher education)
 - deaf and hearing-impaired learners of languages in the VET systems
 - deaf and hearing-impaired learners of languages in adult education
- > Language teachers/trainers and assistants to deaf and hearing-impaired learners:
 - language teachers to deaf and hearing-impaired (for community/country spoken language /CSL/ as a second language, when sign language is their first language or mother tongue)
 - language teachers' assistants/interpreters to deaf and hearing-impaired (for community/country spoken language /CSL/ as a second language)
 - language teachers to deaf and hearing-impaired (foreign spoken languages)
 - language teachers' assistants/interpreters to deaf and hearing-impaired (foreign spoken languages)
- > Policy and decision makers in the field of education with special focus on learners with SEN
- > Education and training institutions and establishments
- > Parents of deaf and hearing-impaired children and young adults
- > Deaf and hearing-impaired associations and organisations
- > Developers of curricula and assessment materials
- > Employers
- > The general public

PART II: ANALYSIS OF NEEDS, CONSTRAINTS, PRACTICES AND CHALLENGES TO THE DEAF AND HEARING-IMPAIRED LEARNERS OF LANGUAGES

1. Overview: Teaching languages to deaf and hearing-impaired

The research by the partners has found that teaching languages to deaf and hearing-impaired has been a challenge throughout Europe for many years, both for the learners and for the trainers. Different organisations and government bodies (United Nations, European Parliament, European Commission) have expressed their concerns about learners with special educational needs and the policies in most EU countries are directed to integrating deaf persons in the mainstream education, with more deaf entitled to receive a bilingual education, which includes both the signed and the spoken language of the country, and in the upper secondary education they also study foreign spoken languages (FSL). Nowadays a greater number of postsecondary programs involve foreign language instruction.

In her research *Signed Languages in Education in Europe – a preliminary exploration*, Language Policy Division, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, 2006, Lorraine Leeson points out that in many countries, Deaf schools are exempted from teaching certain languages, and in the mainstream, deaf and hard of hearing children may apply for exemption from learning languages (Leeson 2005). Leeson (ibid.) notes that often such exemptions are based on the false assumption that deafness is a 'language disability', which impedes language learning. The experience of countries where foreign languages – spoken and signed – are introduced to deaf children (e.g. Sweden) demonstrates that this approach is grounded in false beliefs about the nature of deafness.

Other language projects include a European Community funded Lingua programme, called "Signs of the Future", which was developed to enable Deaf people to learn a foreign language either partially or fully via a visual medium, and to provide a curriculum that includes both signed and spoken foreign languages to encourage both Deaf and hearing people to learn another foreign language, be that signed or spoken and to develop communicative competence in that target language. The Signs of the Future Project was developed by The Scottish Office Education Department and Moray House School of Education (Herriot Watt University), CÉPLUS (University of Liege) and CaPSAS INJS (Gradignan, France). It offers resources in four languages: British Sign Language (BSL), La Langue des Signes Française (LSF), English and French (The Scottish Office 1998). Other developments include moves towards developing Council of Europe European Language Portfolios for signed languages (A portfolio for LSF exists, while the Centre for Deaf Studies in Dublin is working on a portfolio for Irish Sign Language).

It is also important to remember that many Deaf people experience the dominant spoken language of their country as a second or foreign language to which they have very limited access: literacy skills are typically low due to educational experience making the reading of newspapers and subtitles on TV difficult for many and access to incidental conversation and radio is not possible. Thus, "For many deaf persons, the spoken language of their country or region will always remain a foreign or second language" (Stevens 2005: 4).

There have been various constraints in teaching languages to the deaf as the naturally evolved sign languages have a grammar and vocabulary, which are distinct from the spoken language used in the same country or region (Sallop, 1980, p. 217 and Stokoe, 1980, pp. 18, 20, 30, 46). This includes the word order in a sentence, which is generally completely different from the word order in a sentence in the spoken or written language. It is important to stress that deaf persons cannot master spoken languages as easily and comprehensively as sign languages and the spoken language of their country or region will always remain a foreign or second language for them (Heiling 1999, p. 363; British Deaf News, Feb 2002). On the other hand sign languages have run through similar stages of development as spoken languages, and their acquisition is very much comparable to that of spoken languages (Klima & Bellugi, 1987, pp. 189-191, 211/212 and more recently, e.g. MacSweeney et al., 2002, pp. 1583-1593, Hickok & Love-Geffen & Klima, 2002, pp. 167-178 and Levänen et al., 2001, pp. 506-512).

Another challenge is many teachers typically rely heavily on oral/aural methods and students who cannot hear may be waived from foreign language requirements. Thus students are evaluated in part by how they listen and respond orally in the foreign language during class. Evaluation of the deaf or hard-of-hearing student may seem impossible and the practice has

proved teachers must first come to terms with and find some acceptance of expectations for deaf and hard-of-hearing students that are different from those for hearing students. The goal is for all students to demonstrate knowledge about the culture and a level of expressive and receptive proficiency in the language. All students should be able to do this. For deaf and hard-of-hearing students, though, evaluation of receptive and expressive skills generally focus on reading and writing, not listening and speaking (Cheryl D. Davis, Ph.D, coordinator, Northwest Outreach Center, 2005).

The Deaf Port project aims at finding a solution to the above by developing specific descriptors and tools as European Language Portfolio and Europass Language Passport reflecting the needs of deaf and hearing-impaired learners. Such tools for this target group are innovative and have not been developed so far.

One fact remains true: for Deaf people, linguistic access is the key to participation and access (Towards an Inclusive Multi-linguistic Europe for All, European Union of the Deaf, 2005). For the deaf and hearing-impaired the mother tongue or the first language is the sign language, and learning the community/country spoken language (CSL) as a second language and foreign spoken languages (FSL) has proved to help their ability to better communicate and express themselves in the mother tongue. Learning the community/country spoken language (CSL) as a second language and foreign spoken languages (FSL) has proved to share the main skill dimensions of communication in the first language or the mother tongue of deaf and hearing-impaired, but in a different language. Communication in foreign languages also helps developing mediation and intercultural understanding skills. The need for the deaf to communicate in the community/country spoken language (CSL) as a second language and foreign spoken languages (FSL) has increased with the globalization and mobility and has become a must in today's world.

2. Interaction and communication with deaf people:

2.1. Interaction

Deaf People generally have problems in understanding for various reasons. Therefore there are certain issues when interacting with deaf people that have to be taken into account, and namely:

- Deaf people need to see the person speaking (lip reading)
- They usually touch the person to get his/her attention
- Many hearing teachers tend to speak directly into the deaf person's ears, which distorts the message and hides all visual clues (facial expression, gestures, etc.)
- Deaf people prefer the one who speaks not to stand too close to them, the preferred distance being 1-2 metres
- Deaf people prefer the one who speaks to speak a little louder than normal, but not to shout
- Deaf people prefer the one who speaks to speak at his/her normal rate
- Deaf people prefer the one who speaks not to eat, chew, or cover his/her mouth when speaking
- Deaf people prefer the one who speaks not to exaggerate sounds as this may distort the message and make it hard to read the visual clues (facial expression, gestures, etc.)
- Deaf people prefer the one who speaks to rephrase his/her statement into shorter and simpler sentences when they have problems in understanding, instead of the speaker repeating the same statement several times
- In rewording deaf people prefer the one who speaks to use words beginning with sounds visible on the lips such as B, P, M, F, V, TH (English), SH, R, W.
- Deaf people prefer the one who speaks to use helpful gestures but without exaggerating them too much or using too many as this could become confusing
- In a group setting Deaf people generally prefer others in the group to repeat the question asked
- In a group setting Deaf people prefer simple and shorter sentences to be used
- In a group setting Deaf people prefer to be arranged in a semi-circle so they can see each other

- In a group setting Deaf people prefer to see the speaker's face and body
- In a group setting Deaf people prefer good lightning so they can clearly see the face of the speaker
- In a group setting Deaf people prefer the use of visual aids
- In a group setting Deaf people prefer the background noise to be reduces as much as possible

2.2. Communication with a deaf person in language learning:

Practice has shown the proper ways of communication with deaf people are crucial for their success in learning languages. Teachers and tutors have noticed and pointed out some vital rules re the communication with a deaf learner as follows:

- One has to beware of false impressions: e.g. nodding does not necessarily mean 'I understand'; it may mean the deaf person does not want either a) to embarrass the speaker, or, b) to be embarrassed
- Deaf people prefer the one who speaks to be flexible in his/her communication. If you do not understand each other then the speaker should use a different method of conveying the message.
- One has to be aware that a deaf person would like to see his/her desire to communicate and make sure this message is conveyed
- One has to closely follow/watch the deaf person's facial expression which conveys a lot of information
- One has to be open to communicating in the most comfortable manner for the deaf person using sign language, signed language (e.g. Signed English), speech/lip reading, writing, mime, etc.)
- One has to be ready to repeat when necessary
- One has to be ready to allow time when necessary
- One has to be ready to look directly at the deaf person
- One has to be patient
- One has to be friendly and casual
- One has to approach the deaf person as equal (in intelligence, abilities, etc.)
- One has to have pen/pencil and paper available should this be necessary
- One must not pretend to understand the deaf person if s/he can not
- One must not exaggerate his/her lip movement
- One must not eat, chew, smoke, etc., when communication with a deaf person
- One must not eat, chew, smoke, etc., cover his/her mouth when communication with a deaf person
- One must not repeat the same words or sentences if s/he is not understood but find another way of conveying the message or expressing the idea
- One must not communicate with a deaf person with his/her back to light, window or mirror

(Based on Lesia Richman's, Do's and Don'ts, The Communication Connection Inc.)

2.3 Classroom Practice Recommendations

Opportunities to read and enjoy books alone, with friends, and with teachers are important learning experiences for all students. (Language and Literacy Development in Children Who Are Deaf or Hearing Impaired, Briggie, Sandra J, 2005). Exploring the written word through drawing and writing also benefits all students. Make sure that students have time to discuss their literacy experiences amongst themselves and with others. If you are just learning to sign, use written notes combined with signing to communicate. If your student is unable to come up with a sign for an object, assist him or her in finding the written word or an actual example, and then look up the sign together. Provide written, as well as sign labels for classroom objects. This will help connect sign to spoken language.

- Organize your classroom to maximize visual input. The following suggestions help ensure that students receive information in a clear, efficient manner:
- Write key words, phrases, and assignments on the board.
- Use visual aids whenever possible to provide additional access to information presented in class.
- Use an overhead projector rather than a chalkboard. This allows you to face the students rather than have your back to them.
- Arrange seating so that students with hearing impairments can see and hear the majority of what is occurring during class. Make sure that the light source (window or open door) is behind the student; visual cues are difficult to see when looking into the light.
- Use closed-captioned videos.
- Present new vocabulary to students prior to the lesson. This allows students to recognize the words and signs during the lesson and thus maximize comprehension.
- Teach students to raise hands and be identified before speaking or responding in class. This allows students who are deaf to know who is speaking.

By making some small changes in your daily teaching, you can create a more visual classroom environment. These visual strategies not only will benefit students with hearing impairments, but also will provide additional input for hearing students. Visual input always must be considered when planning lessons and activities. Alter your story time so that you can sign as you read, or have an interpreter sign the story as you read it aloud. If using an interpreter, make sure that he or she is signing near the book. This shows the connection between the written words, the oral story, the pictures, and the signs. Exploring students' names to show the interrelatedness of sign and English (or other spoken language) is another high-interest, successful activity.

Overall, having a student who is deaf in your classroom should not dramatically change the way you teach. Providing a developmentally appropriate, print-rich environment is integral to literacy success. Exposure to competent language models, whether interpreters, teachers, or peers, encourages language development. Opportunities to respond and ask questions in class also help. Teaching hearing peers to sign increases the amount of social interaction and directly affects learning. Having a student who is deaf should be a learning experience for everyone. Being prepared and understanding more about students with hearing impairments only can improve the quality of education teachers provide.

3. Deaf, hard-of hearing and hearing-impaired learners and the Language Learning

3.1. Deaf People and the Language Skills

Deafness often leads to linguistic problems. Difficulties manifest themselves most obviously in *written work*, where mistakes may be found with sentence structure, verb tenses, word omissions etc. When one considers a lifetime of not hearing articles, determiners, word endings and prepositions, the mistakes become more understandable. To exacerbate the problem, carrier language, all those words which tie language together (it, them, and, with etc.), is often hidden in fluent speech and therefore impossible to lip-read. The lack of audition and auditory memory severs the means by which to rehearse what is put down on the page (Language, Literacy and Deaf Students, University of Central Lancashire, 2004).

Furthermore, sign languages have a grammar and syntax that is quite different to that of spoken languages, which can also confuse the student. Pre-lingual deaf students cannot be immersed in the language around them for they cannot hear it. As most sign languages are entirely visual, deaf students do not have a *written or spoken language* on which to pin their second language learning.

3.1.1 Listening

Listening for the deaf is speech reading/lip reading - a process of understanding spoken language through visual analysis of mouth and face movement. Usually effective only with significant residual hearing, it is extremely difficult and tiring, especially for those spoken languages that have similar mouth shapes (like English). Deaf students may use speech reading to supplement the visual sign language input, but rarely depend upon speech reading alone in communication.

Good lightening is vital.

Sign language Interpreters presence.

Sign language interference:

- there is no passive voice in sign language;
- homonyms. For example HAVE – I have to go, I have a book, I have just finished it, I have had the flu. In sign language these uses of HAVE is signed differently.
- Sign language are highly conceptual – there are different signs for “run off”, “run out”, “run around”, “run into”, “run against”...
- sign languages tend to change the form of signs themselves to show grammatical relationships rather than to rely on sign order to show these relationships.

3.1.2 Speaking

If we are unable to hear our own voice, we are unaware of our errors and articulation problems are certain to occur.

Pronunciation

1. Transposition of letters or syllables (gril for girl);
2. Omission of letters or syllables (reption for repetition)
3. Substitution of consonants because they have similar manner of articulation (den for ten)
4. Substitution of consonants because they look alike (m, p, b, man for pen)
5. Sound omission when cluster of consonants in word (wap or was for wasps)
6. Additional sound (tenata for tent)

Voice

If frequencies or groups of frequencies cannot be heard properly, this has an influence on the voice. Typical voice disorders include hoarseness, breathiness, or sudden breaks in loudness or pitch.

3.1.3. Reading

Reading remains a very laborious task for deaf students, as their vocabulary is usually *considerably restricted* in comparison with their hearing peers. A deaf student will not have heard many of the words that fill the classrooms and lecture rooms around them. Unfamiliar words, or words which have not been specifically introduced to the student, *cannot be lip-read*. Consequently, deaf students often have to research not only the technical jargon relating to the subject, but also carrier language that is commonplace for hearing peers. (Language, Literacy and Deaf Students, University of Central Lancashire, 2004)

3.1.4 Vocabulary

Compared to hearing children:

1. deaf children are more likely to understand and use concrete nouns and familiar action verbs over more abstract and general words;
2. deaf children have smaller expressive vocabulary;
3. deaf children have smaller receptive vocabulary (because they have fewer opportunities to expand them);

So, Deaf children’s vocabulary skills are better when words have only a single meaning or when they are presented in context rather than in isolation.

4. reduced comprehension and reduced reading speed;
5. tendency to remember disconnected portions of the text rather than the whole picture, especially when the material is unfamiliar.
6. deaf children are more likely to use visual and whole-word strategies during reading

3.1.5 Grammar

Compared to hearing children:

1. deaf children tend to have particular difficulty with constructions that depended on keeping track of meaning across multiple events and grammatical structures in texts. For example: Pronouns (he, her, their, that, it, etc.) can cause difficulty because the reader

has to remember the activities or characteristics of noun in order to later understand who or what is being referred to.

2. word order

3.1.6 Writing

Perhaps the most significant difference between the use of literacy skills in children who are hearing and children who are deaf is the reliance by children who are deaf on literacy skills, such as writing, as a mode of social communication (Maxwell 1985; Rottenberg and Searfoss 1992). Evidence from Rottenberg and Searfoss (1992) indicated that children who are deaf use literacy as a way to learn about and gain access to a world where the majority of people use a verbal mode of communication. When attempts at signed communication fail, children rely on drawing or writing to express themselves (Maxwell 1985; Rottenberg Searfoss 1992). For children who are not yet able to write or draw a clear message, environmental print-such as name tags, charts, signs, and labels-is shown to a communication partner to convey a message (Rottenberg and Searfoss 1992). This is a cultural phenomenon that continues throughout the life of adults who are deaf.

Despite the frequent use of written communication by children who are deaf, the reliance on letter-sound relationships in written language provides a significant challenge for emerging writers with hearing impairments (Williams 1994). Without the ability to hear initial consonants in words, using the strategy of sounding out a word is not a useful approach. Seemingly, however, children who are deaf do make generalizations about beginning sounds based on the visual cues provided by the hand shape of the sign for the word (Ruiz 1995; Williams 1994). While this works for some words, such as names, the strategy has been observed to be overgeneralised by children to include other words without sign-initial consonant correspondence (Ruiz 1995).

A similar, more developed strategy is observed as children use finger spelling to record words in print (Padden and Ramsey 1993; Ruiz 1995; Williams 1994). As children make the connection between the finger spellings used in daily communication and the written English language, select, high frequency, personally important words begin to appear in their writing (Padden and Ramsey 1993; Ruiz 1995). Finger spelling, therefore, should be encouraged as a viable strategy when presenting new words in the classroom. Hearing peers also find this technique helpful for remembering difficult spellings and words. (Language and Literacy Development in Children Who Are Deaf or Hearing Impaired, Briggie, Sandra J, 2005).

3.1.7 Other observations:

1. deaf children produce shorter sentences
2. they use simple subject-verb-object sentences
3. frequent omission of words
4. deaf children use fewer adverbs, conjunctions, and auxiliary verbs.
5. unfamiliar with basic punctuation principles (when to use capitals, quotation marks, periods)

3.2 Hard-of-Hearing People and the Language Skills

3.2.1 Listening

It is possible to lose the ability to hear within specific frequency ranges. As a result, no matter how loudly a sound is generated, it cannot be heard. All other sounds that fall outside of the damaged range can be heard well. Therefore students who are hard of hearing tend to depend upon amplification (hearing aids or assistive listening devices) and speech reading. Students with residual hearing have difficulty tracking where sound is coming from.

Auditory comprehension is composed of the following four components:

1. Auditory memory – deaf children experience lack of auditory memory
2. Following one-step commands with one critical element – difficult
3. Auditory sequencing – impaired
4. Auditory integration – almost impossible

3.2.2. Speaking

Typical pronunciation errors are:

1. Transposition of letters or syllables (gril for girl);
2. Omission of letters or syllables (reption for repetition)
3. Substitution of consonants because they have similar manner of articulation (den for ten)
4. Substitution of consonants because they look alike (m, p, b, man for pen)
5. Sound omission when cluster of consonants in word (wap or was for wasps)
6. Additional sound (tenata for tent)

Voice (very similar to deaf, see 3.1.3 above)

3.2.3 Reading

3.2.4 Vocabulary

Compared to hearing children:

1. deaf children are more likely to understand and use concrete nouns and familiar action verbs over more abstract and general words;
2. deaf children have smaller expressive vocabulary;
3. deaf children have smaller receptive vocabulary (because they have fewer opportunities to expand them);

So, Deaf children's vocabulary skills are better when words have only a single meaning or when they are presented in context rather than in isolation

4. reduced comprehension and reduced reading speed;
5. tendency to remember disconnected portions of the text rather than the whole picture, especially when the material is unfamiliar.
6. deaf children are more likely to use visual and whole-word strategies during reading

3.2.5 Grammar

Compared to hearing children:

1. deaf children tend to have particular difficulty with constructions that depended on keeping track of meaning across multiple events and grammatical structures in texts. For example: Pronouns (he, her, their, that, it, etc.) can cause difficulty because the reader has to remember the activities or characteristics of noun in order to later understand who or what is being referred to.
2. word order

3.2.6 Writing

1. deaf children produce shorter sentences
2. they use simple subject-verb-object sentences
3. frequent omission of words
4. they use fewer adverbs, conjunctions, and auxiliary verbs.
5. unfamiliar with basic punctuation principles (when to use capitals, quotation marks, periods)

3.3. Cochlear-Implanted Children and the Language Skills

For some students with cochlear implant, hearing is vastly improved, for others, access to environmental sounds is increased, but speech sound is not improved. Cochlear implants don't return hearing to normal. Communication needs are similar to those of hard-of-hearing children.

PART III: CONCLUSION

Teaching languages to deaf in the traditional oral/aural approach looks like mission impossible to many teachers.

Deaf are not exposed to both community spoken languages and foreign spoken languages through TV, radio, music, films, overhearing conversations, etc. Therefore deaf and hearing-impaired learners must be visually attending.

They learn spoken languages for a number of reasons:

1. Need to communicate in their immediate environment: family, community, school, workplace
2. To fulfill an educational requirement
3. To satisfy a job requirement
4. Career development prospects
5. Personal interest (incl. curiosity)

The community spoken language can be either their first or second language depending on whether they are pre-lingual deaf or not. In any case the CSL cannot be considered a foreign language to them though it is important to pinpoint the fact that spoken languages have different grammar and syntax from the sign languages most deaf people use.

Constraints and needs:

The constraints and needs in learning spoken languages by deaf and hard of hearing can be divided into three categories:

D. General

E. Constraints and needs referring to the **Teaching Strategies and Approaches**

F. Constraints and needs referring to the **Learning Environment**

They will be as follows:

A. General

1. Spoken languages have different grammar (morphology and syntax) from the sign languages
2. Deaf are not exposed to both community spoken languages and foreign spoken languages through TV, radio, music, films, overhearing conversations, etc. Therefore deaf and hearing-impaired learners must be visually attending.
3. Oral deaf and a considerable part of late deafened do not use sign language and are more dependent on print communication
4. Cochlear implanted and hard of hearing learners have similar communication needs relying on speech/lip reading to supplement what they pick up auditorily
5. For deaf and hard-of-hearing students evaluation of receptive and expressive skills must focus on reading and writing, not listening and speaking. It may help to compare this process with the teaching of Latin, which students must learn to read but not speak. (Donalda Ammons, Ph.D., a Professor of Spanish at Gallaudet University who is deaf herself)
6. Need to change the focus from listening and speaking to reading and writing esp. in testing

B. Constraints and needs referring to the Teaching Strategies and Approaches

1. Deaf and hearing-impaired learners must be visually attending. Generally they rely on:
 - Speech/lip reading
 - Amplification using hearing aids, assistive listening devices (ALDs), Cochlear implants (CIs)
 - Print (e.g. captioning)
 - Sign language assistance in explaining the meaning
 - Fingerspelling (The fingerspelling component used in sign languages can be important in learning a foreign spoken language, esp. when the alphabets are the same (e.g. Latin). This is based on a research by the Gallaudet University that most foreign sign languages include a fingerspelling component, which represent the written language used in that area, incorporating characters and diacritical marks specific to that spoken and written language.)
 - CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning) programs

2. Important information to be provided in written format. Questions preferably to be put in written format and the learner to provide a written response
3. Need for slower pace to make everything visual and applying the PERT approach: (Presentation, Explanation, Repetition, Transposition).
4. The Study-Latin approach is to be considered: It is not taught as a spoken language, but students are still expected to be competent in reading and writing Latin. Change the focus from listening and speaking to reading and writing
5. New vocabulary provided in advance or pre-taught
6. Learners are embarrassed when attention is drawn to them and feel uncomfortable being identified (as disabled)
8. Teachers should allow learners extra time to view the visuals before they continue speaking
9. Teachers should repeat the questions and comments from other students
10. Teachers should face the audience when speaking and avoid facing away from the learners
11. Teachers should maintain visual contact with deaf and hard of hearing learners
12. Teachers should talk to the learners and not to their interpreters, notetakers, captionists, etc.
13. Teachers should provide more/multiple examples, additional explanations, clarifications, and paraphrase questions if need be
14. Teachers should provide more language practice and drills
15. Teachers should use the community spoken language as mother tongue in learning a foreign spoken language
16. Teachers should provide cultural comparisons when needed
17. Teachers should use different colours, fonts, etc. to identify e.g. different parts of speech (verb conjugations, noun-article agreement, gender), comparisons between the community spoken language and the foreign spoken language being learnt (e.g. *A new book – Un libro nuevo*)
18. Word associations are important esp. in vocabulary exercises (alliteration; association with physical characteristics /colour, size, smell, feel,/; natural word associations such as opposites (cold/hot, brother/sister, big/small); or may present vocabulary in word groups such as colours, days of the week, numbers, and fruits and vegetables
19. Writing: deaf learners develop skills easier when teachers encourage them to plan before writing, to use familiar words, phrases and sentence patterns, when revision is made at lexical, phrasal, sentential and discoursal level, when watch for similarities and differences in punctuation. CALL programs can be useful
20. Reading: familiar topics at appropriate level and of interest to the learner, allowing increasing difficulty at learners' own pace. Texts with limited number of unfamiliar words, and which will help the student anticipate content, such as headings, subheadings, summaries, and study questions. Identify cognates in the reading that the student will be able to apply to other settings. In figuring out new vocabulary, help the student use techniques such as considering the probability of occurrence. (Gallaudet University).
21. Usage: Sign languages are signed (not written) languages and are generally three dimensional languages (3D), whereas spoken and written languages are linear. In sign languages a whole sentence can be expressed by a single gesture/sign. The main problems arising from the differences above in learning a community spoken language or foreign spoken language by deaf and hard of hearing students are:
 - Sign languages are more and highly contextual
 - Missing articles
 - Problems conjugating verbs

- Difficulties with comparatives and absent referents
- Misuse of words
- Grammar rules (different in sign languages)
- Word order (different in sign languages)
- Lack of passive voice in most sign languages
- Homonyms as sign languages are highly contextual and each conceptual use of a single word (e.g. 'run') is signed differently
- Idioms

C. Constraints and needs referring to the **Learning Environment**

1. Need for good lightning is crucial
2. Need to sit in front of the room, closer to the speaker
3. Need for deaf learners to use all available cues to understand what is being said
4. Defined need to see the face of the speaker clearly
5. Need to reduce background noises

APPENDICES

1. A Case Study

Learning English as foreign language by the deaf and severely hard-of-hearing as implemented by the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (Utdanningsdirektoratet):

The language learning focuses on knowledge about the language, language usage and insight into one's own language learning. Being able to assess one's own language usage, define one's own needs and select strategies and ways of working are the requirements for attaining this. This main subject area focuses on seeing what is involved in learning a new language and seeing relationships between English, one's native language and other languages.

Communication:

- Developing one's vocabulary and skills in using grammar and the sentence and text structuring systems of the spoken language learnt;
- Adapt the language to an increasing number of topics and communication situations
- Master appropriate language codes and communication strategies and to distinguish between formal and informal language
- Consider cultural norms when using the language in social settings and follow conventions and norms when it comes to politeness

Communication is achieved by choosing and using appropriate communication methods in the form of written English, spoken English and British or American Sign Language: understanding English by reading, listening, speech-reading and decoding signs, and expressing oneself in writing, speech or by the production of signs. This includes prepared and spontaneous interaction and choosing appropriate communication strategies. It also involves participation in different social arenas, among hearing persons and the hearing-impaired, where a central element is training in mastering an increasing number of language codes, genres and forms of expression. Using vocabularies of words and signs, idiomatic structures, spelling, grammar and sentence and text structures are all part of this main subject area.

New media and the development of a linguistic repertoire across subjects, topics and language codes are also an important part of Communication. Knowing how to be polite and taking social conventions into consideration in any number of linguistic situations are also important skills to master. This goes hand in hand with adapting language to the needs of the recipient and the situation, including distinguishing between formal and informal, written and oral registers.

Working with various types of texts and cultural modes of expression is important for developing linguistic skills and understanding how others live, their cultures and views on life. Reading literature may also help to instil an enjoyment of reading and provide the basis for personal growth, maturity and creativity.

Basic skills

Basic skills are integrated in the competence aims where they contribute to the development of competence and are part of the subject, while also being part of this competence. In the subject of English for the deaf and severely hard-of-hearing, the basic skills are understood as follows:

- Being able to express oneself orally in English for the deaf and severely hard-of-hearing means being able to participate actively in linguistic interaction. It includes more than hearing, perceiving sounds and speaking. Expressing oneself orally may also include decoding and producing British Sign Language (BSL) or American Sign Language (ASL) – alone or in combination with speech.
- Being able to write in English for the deaf and severely hard-of-hearing means being able to express oneself in written English in increasingly varied and demanding contexts across cultures and subject fields. Writing skills are essential to the development of competence in the English language.
- Being able to read in English for the deaf and severely hard-of-hearing is part of the practical language competence and means being able to read with understanding, to explore and reflect upon increasingly more demanding texts and thus gain insight across cultures and subject areas. Texts may be presented in various media and may also

appear as visualised texts using sign language from English-speaking countries. Developing reading skills in English also improves general reading skills.

- Having skills in mathematics in English for the deaf and severely hard-of-hearing means being able to supplement mathematics in one's native language with the necessary terms in English and/or an English sign language. Extracting information from graphs, tables and statistics is important for understanding English texts.
- Being able to use digital tools in English for the deaf and severely hard-of-hearing allows for authentic use of English speech, written material and sign language and opens for additional learning arenas for the subject of English. English language competence is in many cases a requirement for using digital tools, and using such tools may also aid in the development of English linguistic competence. Being critical of one's sources and aware of copyright issues and protection of personal privacy are important features in digital contexts that are also relevant in this subject.

Example of Competence aims in the subject

Competence aims after Year 2

Language learning

The aims for the education are that the pupil shall be able to

- provide examples of situations where it is useful to have some skills in the English language and an English sign language
- find words and phrases that are common to English and his or her native language
- provide examples of English terms and phrases associated with his or her personal interests

Communication

The aims for the education are that the pupil shall be able to

- understand and use some common English words and phrases that are connected to the near environment
- use the most basic English mouthings, phonology and language rhythms in practical-aesthetic forms of expression
- recognise and use the manual alphabet of British Sign Language (BSL) or American Sign Language (ASL)
- greet people, ask questions and answer simple questions orally
- understand simple instructions given in English
- recognise some words, expressions and simple sentences in oral, written and visualised texts
- use letters and experiment with writing English words and expressions
- use numbers in communication

Culture, society and literature

The aims for the education are that the pupil shall be able to

- participate in conversations about aspects of children's daily life in some English-speaking countries
- participate in English children's culture and literature

Competence aims after Year 4

Language learning

The aims for the education are that the pupil shall be able to

- identify areas where English is useful to him/her
- find similarities between words and expressions in English, his or her own native language and Norwegian Sign Language
- use dictionaries and other teaching aids in his or her own language learning

Communication

The aims for the education are that the pupil shall be able to

- understand and use common English words and phrases associated with daily life, recreation and interests, both orally and in writing
- use basic English mouthings
- use some common grammatical structures, simple words, simple sentence structures and spelling patterns
- understand the meaning of words, signs and phrases based on the context they are used in
- understand the main content of simple oral presentations of familiar topics
- use some polite expressions and take part in simple everyday dialogues
- use simple oral phrases to obtain help in understanding and being understood
- use some stock expressions that are common in familiar situations, both orally and in writing
- express him-/herself through drama, role play and improvisation
- read and understand the main points in texts about familiar topics
- write short messages and simple sentences that describe, narrate and ask
- indicate prices, amounts and sizes
- use digital tools to find information and create texts

Culture, society and literature

The aims for the education are that the pupil shall be able to

- give some examples of countries where English is spoken
- compare some aspects of the way of living, traditions and customs in Norway and English-speaking countries
- participate in nursery rhymes, songs and stories in English
- express thoughts and emotions after experiencing English-language literature and children's culture, nursery rhymes and song lyrics
- create oral or written texts inspired by English-language literature and children's culture, including texts created by deaf authors

Competence aims after Year 7

Language learning

The aims for the education are that the pupil shall be able to

- identify and use various situations to extend his or her own English-language skills
- give examples of various ways of learning English words and phrases
- identify some linguistic similarities and differences between English and Norwegian
- use basic terms about grammar and text structuring
- describe his or her own work in learning English
- use digital and other aids to learn English

Communication

The aims for the education are that the pupil shall be able to

- master a vocabulary that covers everyday situations
- use basic rules and patterns in oral communication, spelling, grammar and various sentence structures
- express himself or herself in writing and orally to obtain assistance to understand and to be understood
- understand various oral and written presentations about selected topics
- participate in conversations in connection with everyday situations

- use polite phrases and phrases that are appropriate to the situation in various contexts
- express his or her own opinions on various topics
- apply listening, oral, reading and writing strategies that are suitable for the purpose
- give short presentations of a topic
- read and understand texts of differing lengths and in various genres
- write texts that narrate, describe or present messages
- express herself or himself using statements about currency, measures and weights
- use digital tools to find information and to prepare texts

Culture, society and literature

The aims for the education are that the pupil shall be able to

- tell others about some people, places and events in English-language countries
- compare the way people live and use language to communicate in various cultures in countries where English is spoken and in Norway, including Deaf culture and Sami culture
- read and tell others about English literature for children and teenagers from various media and genres, including texts by and about deaf people
- compare people and content in a selection of books for English children's literature
- express his or her own reactions to films, pictures and English-language song lyrics or sign language poetry
- express himself or herself creatively, inspired by literature in English from various genres, cultures and media, including texts by and about deaf people

Competence aims after Year 10

The aims for the education are that the pupil shall be able to

- use different situations, ways of working and strategies to learn English
- identify essential linguistic similarities and differences between English and Norwegian and use this knowledge in his or her own language learning
- use various teaching aids critically and independently
- use basic terminology to describe grammar and text structures
- describe and assess his or her own work in learning English

Communication

The aims for the education are that the pupil shall be able to

- master a vocabulary that covers a number of topics
- use the basic grammar and text structures of oral and written English
- understand oral and written texts on a variety of topics
- express himself or herself in writing and orally with some precision, fluency and cohesion
- adapt his or her oral and written English to the genre and situation
- present and discuss relevant and interdisciplinary topics
- read and understand texts of differing lengths and genres
- select oral and writing strategies adapted to the purpose and situation
- write texts that narrate, describe, argue or present messages, with the appropriate basic structure and appropriate paragraphing
- use content from various sources independently and critically
- demonstrate the ability to distinguish between phrases with positive and negative connotations referring to individuals and groups
- communicate via digital media
- describe and interpret graphic representations of figures and other data

Culture, society and literature

The aims for the education are that the pupil shall be able to

- discuss the way young hearing and deaf people in Great Britain, the USA, other English-speaking countries and in Norway live, how they use language to communicate, their values and views on life
- explain features of history and geography in Great Britain and the USA
- describe the situation for some indigenous peoples in English-speaking countries
- read and discuss a representative sample of literary texts from the genres poetry, short story, novel and drama from English-speaking countries, including texts by and about the deaf
- describe theme and composition in texts and visual expressions
- create and discuss his or her own oral or written texts inspired by literature and art

Competence aims after Vg1 – programme for general studies

Competence aims after Vg2 – vocational education programmes

Language learning

The aims for the education are that the pupil shall be able to

- exploit and assess various situations, ways of working and strategies to learn English
- discuss the similarities and differences between English and other foreign languages and use this in his or her own language learning
- use relevant and precise terminology to describe forms and structures of English
- describe and assess his or her own progress when learning English
- use a wide selection of digital and other teaching aids independently, including dictionaries in English

Communication

The aims for the education are that the pupil shall be able to

- master a wide vocabulary
- use the grammar and text structure of English in oral and written presentations
- understand extensive, written and oral presentations on different personal, literary, interdisciplinary and social topics
- extract essential information from written texts and discuss the author's point of view and attitudes
- express herself or himself in writing and orally in a balanced way with fluency, precision, cohesiveness and in accordance with the situation,
- select appropriate oral and writing strategies adapted to the purpose, situation and genre
- take initiatives to start, finish and keep a dialogue going
- read formal and informal texts in various genres and with different purposes
- write formal and informal texts with good structure and cohesion on personal, interdisciplinary and societal topics
- choose and use content from different sources independently, critically and responsibly
- use technical and mathematical information when communicating
- produce texts with composite content using digital media
- choose an interdisciplinary topic for in-depth studies within his or her own programme area and present this

Culture, society and literature

The aims for the education are that the pupil shall be able to

- discuss social conditions and values in various cultures, including Deaf cultures, in a number of English-speaking countries
- present and discuss international news and current events

- explain the main characteristics of the development of English from an Anglo-Saxon language to an international world language
- analyse and discuss a representative selection of literary texts in English from the genres poetry, subtitled film, short story, novel drama or sign language poetry
- discuss a selection of literary texts in English from various regions of the world and different epochs from the 1500s up to the present, including texts by and about the deaf
- discuss literature and events based on the situation of the deaf in English-speaking parts of the world
- create and assess his or her own texts inspired by literature and art, including art expressions by and about the deaf

2. Assessing Deaf Students' Academic Readiness and Language Skills

The US Gallaudet University states that although there is little empirical information about deaf and hard of hearing youngsters as thinkers and learners, Vess and Douglas (1995) make the point that:

". . . hearing loss apparently alters their [deaf and hard of hearing children's] learning style so that they often depend on experiential/visual learning modalities. Further, because these children have no undistorted access to the flow of language and information in the environment, they quite reasonably can demonstrate gaps in vocabulary, language, and conceptual knowledge, especially understanding and using abstract concepts" (Vess & Douglas, 1995, p. 1127).

Achievement tests in general are used to evaluate the student's knowledge and understanding in specified curricula areas, e.g., reading and math, and intended to assess the extent to which a student has profited from schooling and other life experiences. Testing school readiness, on the other hand, is not a unique kind of measurement. In Salvia and Ysseldyke's (1991) book, *Assessment*, tests of "readiness" are described as:

"First, readiness tests are typically administered before school entry as during kindergarten. Second, the tests are used to predict initial school success and to select those children who perform poorly -- and thus are thought not to be ready for regular school experiences -- for participation in remedial or compensatory education programs or delayed school entry" (p. 471).

For deaf and hard of hearing youngsters, identifying broad areas of academic strength and weaknesses with an eye toward matching the youngster's present state of knowledge and academic and conceptual skills with the appropriate curriculum placement, might be the goal of academic and readiness assessment. It is unlikely that any one test instrument described in the following test review will provide sufficient information to determine what a student can or cannot do correctly or what a student needs to learn to be successful in a specific curriculum. Examiners skilled in educational evaluation and knowledgeable about the potential impact of deafness on children's learning, typically use a variety of assessment instruments - including informal assessment and curriculum-based assessment - to make critical judgements about a deaf or hard of hearing child's state of knowledge and intervention/placement needs.

It is typical in assessing deaf and hard of hearing youngsters that examiners from a variety of professions work as a team in order to ensure that there is a transfer of information, knowledge, or skills across disciplinary boundaries. While psychologists often are responsible for evaluation in the areas of cognition, adaptive behavior and social-emotional development, developmental and/or self-help skills, and academic/readiness, the critical area of language assessment for deaf and hard of hearing children is best approached by speech-language professionals familiar with deaf and hard of hearing children. Speech and language assessment, encompassed within the broader meaning of communication, e.g., content, method, attitudes and emotions, quality, quantity, and effectiveness of communication, are often a critical element in the complete and comprehensive assessment of a deaf or hard of hearing individual.