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English as a Foreign Language for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Persons

English as a Foreign Language for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Persons:

Challenges and Strategies

Edited by

Ewa Domagała-Zyśk
and Edit H. Kontra

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Challenges and Strategies

Edited by Ewa Domagała-Zyśk and Edit H. Kontra

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INTRODUCTION

When teachers or researchers of deaf and hard-of-hearing language learners come together, one of the issues often discussed involves their feelings of isolation and the need to come together more frequently to share ideas and experiences. This is what happened at the 12th Conference of the European Society for the Study of English (ESSE) in Kosice in 2014. The initiative of Ewa Domagała-Zyśk to have a separate section on hearing impaired learners of English within this huge international event received eager support from all contacted colleagues, whether they were in France, Norway or Serbia. The special seminar entitled *English as a Foreign Language for Students with Special Educational Needs – Exceptional English for Exceptional Learners?* and convened by Ewa Domagała-Zyśk and Edit H. Kontra was a great success, and the enthusiasm of the participants spawned the idea of publishing their presented topics as fully-fledged articles in an edited book and making it accessible to the wider community of teachers and researchers working in the field. When teachers tell their stories to others it soon becomes clear that the challenges faced are the same or very similar, and this in itself can give support. Sharing the responses to challenges and the worked-out solutions to the problems leads not only to adding a few new items to each teacher's individual resource pack, but the process of discussing issues with other professionals may also give rise to further ideas and new initiatives.

The feelings of isolation experienced by those involved in teaching foreign languages to hearing impaired language learners, and by those who embark on investigating this process come from the special circumstances of hearing impaired persons and their education. Deaf and severely hard-of-hearing persons are not only special needs learners; they have a special history, they are special linguistically, culturally and socially. They need to use foreign languages just like their hearing peers if they want to enjoy the same benefits of the technical advancements and globalization of our times, yet they cannot take part in the same foreign language (FL) education: the approaches, methods and materials developed are inadequate, and teachers trained to teach hearing learners are ill-equipped.

In the past few years, English has undoubtedly become the most frequently learnt and used foreign language in Europe, and not without

reason. According to data published in the 2012 Special Eurobarometer 386 (http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_386_en.pdf), English is the most widely spoken foreign language in most of the member states. What is more, 67% of the people asked in the countries of EU27 consider English the most useful language for their development and career, and 79% think that their children should learn it. Three quarters of all Europeans maintain that improvement in foreign language skills should be a policy priority. It is also important to note that an overwhelming majority (68%) voted the school as the best place to learn a foreign language, as opposed to taking classes at a language school (15%), learning from a private tutor (9%) or undertaking a self-study education (12%). These figures give strong support to the argument that teaching foreign languages, especially English, to hearing impaired students at various educational institutions should receive much more attention than before so that deaf and hard-of-hearing children, adolescents and adults can enjoy the same benefits of foreign language skills as their hearing peers.

According to the website of the World Federation of the Deaf (www.wfdeaf.org), there are currently around 70 million deaf people in the world, many of whom have fought long and hard for equal opportunities in every sphere of life, including education. Responses to their needs have come from two fundamentally different directions. One tendency has been to close the gap between deaf and hearing learners by reducing the effects of hearing loss with the application of highly developed technical devices and through intensive training in speech, thus fostering the integration of hearing impaired people into the majority society.

In the past few decades, however, there has been a body of research promoting the cultural view of deafness, according to which Deaf people with a capital *D* constitute a linguistic and cultural minority whose native or first language is their national sign language: a fully legitimate, natural, visual-gestural language which has its own extensive vocabulary and complex grammar. As a result, today more and more states officially recognize the right for Deaf and severely hard-of-hearing students to receive a bilingual-bicultural education, which many believe also provides a better base for foreign language learning.

This edited volume includes studies influenced by both traditions. Instead of reconciling the differences or establishing a neutral mean, each author presents their research and methodological suggestions based on the views about deafness that they identify with.

In Chapter One of this volume, Nuzha Moritz (France) presents the issue of oral communication and intelligibility of deaf speech. The paper is based on empirical research aimed at explaining the low intelligibility of deaf speech in terms of acoustic and articulatory deviations. The research took the form of a case study of two participants and resulted in a thorough description of typical (segmental and supra-segmental) errors in their speech production. The results confirm that on the segmental level consonant errors like substitution, omission and devoicing are more harmful to intelligibility than vowel errors. Supra-segmental analysis revealed that inappropriate intonation contours and speech rates are the main causes of unintelligibility. The research results have practical implications for FL teachers: understanding the characteristics of the speech of deaf and hard-of-hearing (D/HH) students might be a fruitful starting point for facilitating the process of learning a foreign language by this group of students.

Chapter Two, prepared by Anna Podlewska (Poland), continues the theme of foreign language speech production and examines the unique potential of cued speech (CS) in the teaching of English as a foreign language (EFL). It presents the results of a case study of two prelingually deaf university students. They participated in a course designed to improve their spoken foreign language performance with the support of cued speech. Twelve speech samples of the participants, including oral readings, spontaneous speech and language elicited by the researcher were recorded and later assessed by native and non-native listener judges. The results show that both students demonstrated a statistically significant improvement in their ratings at the end of the course (after four years of using CS) in terms of content comprehension, pronunciation accuracy and word transcription. The results confirm that D/HH students who communicate orally in their national languages are capable of developing all language skills, including pronunciation and speaking. Moreover, simultaneous use of auditory and visual modalities contributed significantly to the increased FL speech intelligibility scores. The study calls for the integration of pronunciation practice in FL courses for D/HH students, which is highly profitable when performed along with the systematic use of CS.

Chapter Three covers the issue of using sign language in EFL classes for deaf pupils. The author, Patricia Pritchard, describes Norwegian experiences in this field. Norway is one of those countries in which Deaf students' rights for an education in sign language are fully respected. Moreover, similarly to their hearing peers, they have their own national curriculum in English, which leads to a national examination. The aim of

FL education is thus to achieve age-appropriate literacy and the ability of independent communication in a FL. Depending on the personal characteristics or the choice of the student, this communication may take the form of oral or written interaction, or communication in British Sign Language (BSL), Signed English or American Sign Language (ASL). The chapter presents the theory and methodology of EFL classes for deaf learners. It underlines the need for teachers to assess the students' actual educational needs and address them specifically, rather than purely following FL methodology. The author strongly supports the use of BSL as a highly motivating tool to develop communication and highlights the usefulness of Phonics Instruction for teaching English literacy skills.

Chapter Four partly continues the topic of using sign language for communication in FL classes for deaf students. Written by Joanna Falkowska from Poland, it describes her experience during one year of *action research* in a group of 25 deaf students. The author discusses various communication strategies and advocates the individualization of the class environment through adjustment to the particular communication needs of the given students. Thus, the FL class environment might be monolingual, bilingual or trilingual, and only then can it lead to high performances and satisfactory progress for each individual.

Chapter Five, prepared by Katalin Piniel, Edit H. Kontra and Kata Csizér introduces the issue of D/HH language learning from the perspective of the teachers. The study was conducted in Hungary and is based on class observations and individual interviews with 10 FL teachers in special needs schools. It reveals both the teachers' devotion and creativity, and the lack of appropriate methodology and teaching materials. Despite the overall positive attitudes of teachers towards the idea of teaching foreign languages to D/deaf students, the authors observed serious communication problems as Hungarian schools advocate mainly the auditive-verbal approach, and teachers without sign language skills have no means for barrier-free communication with their students. The chapter ends with a strong recommendation: in order to teach effectively, language teachers should complete training in special needs education (SEN) and learn Hungarian Sign Language (HSL) for better communication with their students. The authors also advise FL teachers in mainstream schools to learn from special school teachers' experiences as this may help them to be better prepared for teaching D/HH students in integrative settings.

Chapter Six comes from Serbia, where Iva Urdarević started pioneering work by both teaching and analyzing EFL classes for D/HH learners. Her study introduces the Serbian regulations concerning this

issue, which shows the international character of surdo-glottodidactics and its main problems: they are similar in different countries, meaning that there is a need for international cooperation. In the second part of the chapter the author shares her experience of using different teaching methods and strategies to make the teaching of English more effective, pointing out especially the significance of D/HH students' participation in international exchange programs. Such project-based learning is perceived as highly motivating and successful for the students.

Chapter Seven addresses the topic of deaf learners' reading skills development in English as a FL. The author, Jitka Sedláčková from the Czech Republic, first observes that reading in the deaf students' first language has been recognized as a challenge, and the problems are even more complicated in the process of foreign language acquisition. However, this should not discourage the teachers from promoting effective FL reading strategies. The chapter describes an example of a reading strategy instruction framework developed for the purpose of implementing a series of interventions in deaf university students' learning of English. The main features of the interventions are explicitness, the teacher's modelling of the strategies presented and the learners' repetitive, hands-on practice. The research adopted a qualitative approach with the analysis of multiple case studies. The author advocates the conscious use of such a reading strategy instruction practice and shows its beneficial outcomes for deaf students.

Chapter Eight depicts the issue of vocabulary teaching strategies in EFL classes for D/HH students. It was prepared by Ewa Domagała-Zyśk from Poland and is based on her several years of experience in teaching English to D/HH university students. In the years 2000-2014 she was teaching EFL to 40 D/HH students, introducing innovative strategies, communicative tools and techniques. The chapter presents first of all the D/HH students' difficulties in learning FL vocabulary and points to their chances of mastering a satisfactory repertoire of FL vocabulary, enabling them independent communication in this language during educational and everyday situations. The second part of the chapter is devoted to the presentation of a few teaching strategies: Vocabulary Personalization, Vocabulary Emotionalization, Word Semantic Analysis and Word Morphological Analysis, which proved to be effective and motivating for the students. The author argues that the most beneficial way to address surdo-glottodidactics is to augment and make accessible the existing FL teaching strategies by adjusting them to D/HH students' special needs.

Chapter Nine was prepared by Beata Gulati and deals with the topic of visualizing as an effective way to teach EFL. She observes that for most

D/HH students, whilst their sense of hearing is compromised, their sense of sight is enhanced. This fact calls for the extensive use of visual aids, and a wider utilization of the students' visual perceptions. In the chapter the author shares with the readers her experience of an EFL course for 15 D/HH students, and explores the ways of visualizing the teaching of reading, writing and speaking by using sign languages, pictures, video clips, films, posters, mind maps etc., so as to cater for D/HH students' special needs. Concluding the chapter, the author encourages teachers to get acquainted with the unique opportunities and challenges that are brought into the classroom by D/HH students, to keep a record of that knowledge, and to share it with others.

Chapter Ten is devoted to the concept of immersion in the language in EFL classes for D/HH students. It was written by Anna Nabiałek from Poland, who shares in it her personal experiences and reflections. The author perceives immersion in the language to be one of the most effective ways of teaching, also for D/HH students. The paper presents the unique experiences of a group of five Polish D/HH students who were invited to improve their English in one of the British universities. Describing the steps of this experience, the author points to the necessity of social support for the students at this stage of FL learning, when they start to communicate in the target language with native speakers. She also claims that this experience can be very rewarding, motivating and worth repeating.

Chapter Eleven is concerned with lesson content modifications and the adaptation of regular EFL material to the special needs of D/HH students. Monika Malec from Poland initially describes her innovative modifications of lesson content so as to adjust those lessons to the target groups at elementary, pre-intermediate and intermediate levels. Her methods include using technology to visualize content, modifying the pronunciation exercises, using different communication means and individualizing the content according to the learners' needs. The author concludes that taking into consideration the huge diversity of the D/HH population, a *one size fits all* solution does not exist. This demands first of all a careful assessment of the students' needs, and also creativity from the teachers themselves when modifying the learning materials so as to make them more user-friendly, motivating and effective.

It is our pleasure to invite you to read this unique book. We are sure that you can learn a lot from it about the methodology of teaching foreign languages to deaf and hard-of-hearing students, or at least update your knowledge in this field. You will find here the present-day strategies for developing both D/HH learners' receptive and productive skills as we

share our experiences of teaching, reading and perceiving a foreign language via the amplified sense of hearing or vision (by listening and/or seeing the language), and also good practices of evoking language production – whether in writing, speech or cued speech. The strategies are described in the context of learning English as a foreign language but we are sure they can be effectively included in classes of any other languages. We wish you great success in your future teaching experiences with deaf and hard-of-hearing students.

CHAPTER EIGHT

VOCABULARY TEACHING STRATEGIES IN ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSES FOR DEAF AND HARD-OF-HEARING STUDENTS

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1 Introduction

In the methodology of teaching foreign languages to deaf and hard-of-hearing (D/HH) students (surdo-glottodidactics) usually general teaching and learning strategies are used and regarded as effective. These strategies are varied and depend upon the students involved and a given teacher's characteristics and preferences, as well as the dominant teaching approach within the institution in question or contemporary methodological trends. This tendency is an adequate one, and there are actually no special methods or strategies of teaching and learning that should be used exclusively with a group of D/HH learners. On the other hand, we cannot presume that foreign language teaching should not be in any way modified in classes for D/HH students as this would mean denying this group proper educational support. The general methodological approach and teaching strategies should be carefully and extensively *modified and adapted* into teaching techniques, activities and classroom materials so as to meet the specific needs of this group. In the field of surdo-glottodidactics, there still exists a shortage of such methodologically modified ideas, techniques and materials that might be used and shared by the teachers of D/HH students. Therefore there is an urgent need for publications presenting particular methodological solutions and methodological empirical studies.

The aim of this chapter is to present D/HH students' achievements and difficulties in learning foreign language vocabulary and a set of valuable

teaching and learning strategies that might be used during foreign language classes with such a group. The source for the description of the difficulties and the strategies enlisted is the author's 14-year participatory research involving a group of 40 D/HH university students who had been learning English as their foreign language in the years 2000-2014. The program *English for the deaf and hard-of-hearing* was conducted by the author at John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin. All of its participants had a hearing loss of 70 or more decibels, came both from hearing or deaf families and were educated either in mainstream schools or in special institutions for the deaf. None of these demographical characteristics differentiated the groups. Their advances in foreign language learning depended mostly on their personal characteristics: the level of motivation, educational expectations and the ability to structure their learning so as to achieve success. All of them successfully passed their university foreign language exams and reported achieving their personal goals as far as learning a foreign language is concerned.

2 Challenges in learning foreign vocabulary by D/HH learners

When we work with D/HH students it is necessary to remember that their main problems relate not only to the impossibility or restricted possibility of access to the audio component of a language, but first of all to understanding the meaning of the words and expressions used. Because of this, learning and teaching a foreign vocabulary is of the utmost significance as it breaks the most annoying barrier that is met in education by the D/HH students.

In his book on EFL methodology Harmer (1991) suggests that when teachers think of learning a new language they usually mean learning the vocabulary and grammar of that language. However, it is a commonly known fact that grammar gives language a structure, whereas vocabulary "provides the vital organs and the flesh" (p. 153). In the past, grammar was regarded as a dominant part of language learning (e.g. in the Grammar Translation Method). Later, the significance of vocabulary was more commonly stressed in various teaching approaches, alongside communication abilities and active language use in different social contexts (e.g. the communicative approach or the direct learning method). Today learning vocabulary no longer means learning a set of words by heart (as it used to mean), but learning it by negotiating the meanings of words in group work, guessing the meanings from context, and learning new words not only systematically, but also incidentally.

In such a context a basic question may arise: What does it mean to *know* a word? Wallace (1982) suggests that this process is complicated and means that the student: 1. Recognizes the spoken and written form of a word; 2. Associates it with a certain object or word content; 3. Uses it in a proper grammatical form; 4. Pronounces it in an intelligible way; 5. Writes it correctly; 6. Uses it in a suitable context; 7. Is aware of its connotations and collocations; 8. Uses it in correctly constructed collocations with other words. This kind of language learning perception was described thoroughly in the lexical approach promoted by Lewis (1997). According to the principles of this trend vocabulary is valued above grammar and it is presumed that an important part of learning a language consists in being able to understand and produce lexical phrases. Lewis postulated that students should learn such lexical chunks as they make up a large part of everyday discourse. Later, the researchers added that in order to achieve vocabulary competence it is not enough to understand the meaning of a word just from the context, but one must also get to know the word on the phonological, morphological, semantic and syntactic levels (cf. Almela & Sanchez, 2007; Harmon, Hedrick, & Wood, 2005).

Deaf and hard-of-hearing students usually have some problems in learning foreign vocabulary (Domagała-Zyśk, 2009, 2013a) and this is mainly connected with their difficulties in mastering their national spoken language. Having a restricted repertoire of words in their national language they have to fight for every single word in their own and other languages. The majority of D/HH children (about 95%) are born in hearing families and are usually advised to learn the language of their parents. Not having full and unrestricted access to speech they do not acquire new words, but they *are taught* them. This results in a poorer vocabulary and mistakes in matching the words to their full meaning (making mistakes of narrowing or widening the meaning of the words, Krakowiak, 2012). Psycholinguistic studies show that D/HH children who possess the same level of intellectual potential as their hearing peers usually get lower results in vocabulary tests (cf. Lederberg, 2005; Lederberg, Prezbindowski, & Spencer, 2000), have a smaller repertoire of vocabulary (Ouellet, Le Normand, & Cohen, 2001), especially relating to words seldom used (McEvoy, Marschark, & Nelson, 1999), and have difficulties with the fluency of vocabulary-related memory operations (Marschark & Everhart, 1999). This applies to children of any age and manifests itself as reading and writing difficulties during their school years. At the same time, learning foreign vocabulary is regarded by the students as a relatively easy part of a foreign language course (cf.

Domagała-Zyśk, 2013a). This can be explained by an observation that in the process of learning a foreign language D/HH learners usually repeat the stages of learning vocabulary that they experienced in their national spoken language. This fact might have important motivational significance and serve as an incentive for D/HH students to master vocabulary in both national and foreign languages.

2.1 Learning the written or the oral form of words?

D/HH students usually rely rather more heavily on writing than on speaking or listening. They usually learn to read and write early (sometimes as early as age 3 or 4, see Cieszyńska, 2001) and use these skills as the main means of learning about the world and communicating with it (cf. Albertini & Schley, 2005). Speech, speech-reading and listening are means of communication in native languages only for some D/HH people. To be useful, these means of communication need special external conditions: good visibility, good quality of the interlocutor's speech and no background distractions. These conditions are not easily met, especially in mainstream classrooms, and are even more difficult to achieve in everyday spontaneous communication situations. As a consequence, D/HH students studying foreign languages learn first of all to recognize the written form of a word. They rarely have the chance to match it with the spoken form. It often happens that if a D/HH student knows a written word and then comes across the spoken form of that same word, he or she is not aware that these are two different forms of the same word and therefore treats them as two separate lexical items. Such a situation creates numerous problems. First of all, as many linguists argue (cf. Blamey, 2003; Krakowiak, 2012; LaSasso, Crain, & Leybaert, 2011; Leybaert, 2000) the spoken form is naturally the first one that has to be met and acquired by a student to learn and know how to use a word. If a student meets only the written form, it usually means he sees it in a formal written context. Not having the possibility to use this new word in real dialogues, exchanges and conversations, the students tend to *learn about the language* but *not the language*.

It is clear that students whose preferred means of communication is sign language do not learn the spoken form of a foreign language (Domagała-Zyśk, 2013c). The common goal of D/HH students with no or limited residual hearing is thus to learn to read and write in a foreign language. Researchers and language teachers e.g. in Norway (cf. Pritchard, 2013) argue for the benefits of introducing BSL first, as this enables learners to fulfil their foreign language requirements at school and also

provides the real and empowering possibility for communication with D/HH people from abroad. Still, for the majority of D/HH students the written form of a word is the basic form of the lexical item that has to be learnt. Writing is usually the D/HH students' strength and the teaching process should be based on this. D/HH students present good visual memory skills (cf. Domagała-Zyśk, 2013a; Emmorey, Kosslyn, & Bellugi, 1993; Todman & Cowdy, 1993) and this gives them a good chance of being successful when memorizing the written form of new lexical items. The process of visual memorization can be supported by using different visual forms like pictures, photos, tables, charts, diagrams and other such aids. Using technological devices such as social networks, online forums or chat programs as an element of a FL lesson's structure can also be an effective tool (Domagała-Zyśk, 2013d).

While pondering the answer for the question posed as the title to section 2.1 it should be stressed that the teacher's role is to provide for the students *the opportunity* to get accustomed to both the written and oral forms of a word – only if this is manageable for and desired by a student. It might be possible first of all when the teacher uses clear lip-speaking. Today the majority of people with hearing loss use speech and speech reading techniques for communication with the hearing society. Consequently, we have no right to limit their education by using only the written form of a foreign language. If it is not possible for the student to recognize the words through lip-speaking, we can use different technological tools to present the oral forms of a language. Some teaching programs provide a set of free texts in the form of clear speech (e.g. SignOne! and SignOnOne, cf. Dotter, 2008). These short films can be watched by the students, thus helping them to learn the shapes of words and to recognize them more easily in everyday communication. Regular technological materials prepared for teaching in mainstream groups are also a great help, especially in the forms of tape transcripts added to regular audio or video dialogues. The important thing is that the transcripts are not printed on the last page of the course book, but are presented on the screen in real time so the students can listen to a conversation and *simultaneously see the texts* with the spoken phrases highlighted the moment they are spoken. Thanks to this, a watching student not only gets to know the vocabulary, but also to know when, in which circumstances and in conversation with whom certain lexical items can be used. Such teaching is multi-sensory in its nature and this helps students to learn effectively. The student not only reads the material (as they used to with the traditional printed transcripts) but also watches people using certain structures, gets some access to them speaking, observes the people's

behavior, learns the words and expressions and associates them logically with certain objects or word contexts.

2.2 Learning the grammar of the vocabulary

In order to know a lexical item it is indispensable to know what the correct grammar forms of a certain word are. Grammar is difficult for the majority of D/HH students in their national language. Those who are educated in their national language or within a framework of bilingualism are sometimes really exhausted as they have already been learning different rules and exceptions. It is highly difficult for them to sort such complex matters out. Such students are therefore put-off learning a foreign language's nuances, and try to learn only the basics so as to communicate quickly and in simple language, even if it is not correct. They do not express the need to master the language and it inhibits their achievement levels greatly.

In order to support the students one must take care in presenting the vocabulary not only in its basic form, but also in the true diversity of the language. In other words, not only the breadth of vocabulary knowledge, i.e. the quantity of words learners know, but also its depth, i.e. the quality of their vocabulary knowledge (cf. Paribakht & Wesche, 1996). In mastering the quality of their vocabulary knowledge D/HH students need time and individualized support. The more real-life contexts and practical exercises in using the foreign language as a means of real communication, the better the students' results are. This statement can be supported by the achievements of my D/HH students participating in EFL classes between 2000 and 2012. The oral and written English production of EFL class participants demonstrates diversity in the English structures used (a good quality of vocabulary knowledge) and richness in their vocabulary (cf. Domagała-Zyśk, 2013b, pp. 176-177).

2.3 Word pronunciation

By pronouncing a word aloud correctly, students have one more channel through which to learn and revise vocabulary. D/HH persons who prefer to use sign language in communication usually do not learn pronunciation of either their national or consequently their foreign languages. However, the majority of students with hearing loss nowadays use speech to some extent, and they also want to learn how to pronounce new words (Domagała-Zyśk, 2001, 2003, 2013a).

It is natural that D/HH students' pronunciation might not be ideal, but we do not have any right to forbid them to try to master it to the extent that they are able to master it. Students' unclear pronunciation should not discourage the teachers from practicing the vocabulary aloud with them. If a person is stuttering or experiencing a speech disorder, nobody even thinks of discouraging them to use their national language. Surely, it would be inhuman to ask somebody not to speak because it made someone feel "uncomfortable", and yet such situations have been reported by our students. The same rule should be applied to the D/HH students as is the norm for those with speech impediments of other kinds.

D/HH persons do not hear their own voice or hear it imperfectly, and they are also not able to control their own voice to the extent that a hearing person can. As a result it is not possible for them to assess whether they are pronouncing a word correctly or not, which means the D/HH students have fewer possibilities to revise and exercise their vocabulary. However, if they wish to speak a foreign language, they have every right to do so and to get their teacher's support for learning the correct pronunciation of words. Also, this desire is frequently expressed by the D/HH students themselves: they want to speak a foreign language and they wish to be taught one. In Domagała-Zysk's (2013a) research, out of a group of 35 university students with severe or profound hearing loss, 28 persons (80%) wished to use speech for communication in English as a foreign language. D/HH students represent many different levels of speech intelligibility. What is important is to try to cooperate with their speech therapists and to discuss which sounds could be improved by exercise and which could not, perhaps as a result of a certain medical condition.

In mastering the pronunciation of words, the cued speech method can serve as a very useful tool (cf. Podlowska, this volume). The cues have been adjusted to several languages (e.g. French: Le langage parlé complet (LPC) or Spanish: La Palabra Complementada (LPC)) and thus may serve as a tool when learning foreign languages. The main idea of cued speech is to show with a handshape and a hand position those language elements which are not easily visible on the lips. For example, words like *baba*, *papa* and *mama* look the same on the lips, but if we speak them with different handshapes for *m*, *p* or *b* then it is possible to read on the lips which word is being spoken. Podlowska (2013) suggests that while getting to know a new word, especially if it is an important one and used regularly, it is advisable to prepare *sound grids*. This is a visual way of presenting a written form of a word, the number of its syllables, consonants and vowels and also the way it is pronounced with the use of

cues. Such analysis helps the student to get to know better the structure of a given word and the rules for its pronunciation.

2.4 Contexts, connotations, collocations

Learning a new word should also mean that a student is able to use the word in an appropriate context. This may create a problem for D/HH students, as their language experience is usually narrower than that of their hearing peers. They are physically not able to effectively use hearing aids or CI and participate in conversations for as many hours as hearing students can. If they use a sign language, their communication activities are restricted to a smaller than desired circle of relatives or colleagues. All this means that even when they know a word they may have problems using it in a proper social and cultural context. The same difficulties are usually met while trying to use words with the correct connotations and construct collocations with other words.

Foreign language classes have a special meaning: when we learn a foreign language we have to learn about some social, cultural or natural phenomena (e.g. *famine, women's rights, suffragettes, the Berlin Wall, shift work, hippopotamus adoption*). To speak about them using a foreign language one has to know them and to be able to name them in their native language. It is not always a simple task, and D/HH students during their foreign language classes not only learn the foreign names of these phenomena, but get to know about them for the first time in their lives.

D/HH students have a narrower vocabulary in their national language and very often do not understand some of the vocabulary contexts used during foreign language classes (Domagała-Zysk, 2006). This slows down the teaching process, but for the students it creates a chance to get to know words and expressions that they had no chance to learn in their national language.

2.5 Hearing vocabulary in classes for D/HH students

There is a certain type of vocabulary that is especially difficult for D/HH students. It was noticed as early as in the 1970s (Heinen, Cobb, & Pollard, 1976/1993) and observed during my classes with D/HH students (Domagała-Zyśk, 2009). These are the words connected with auditory sensations. It is well known that if we know a certain aspect of reality, we can quickly understand the vocabulary used to describe it and use it fluently. When somebody likes music and listens to it regularly, words like *transpose, triplet* or *andante* are well known to them. D/HH students

learning any phonic language have to acquire and use words that are completely *unrealistic* to them, and it is really hard work to get the right meaning across. These kinds of words were grouped by Domagała-Zyśk (2009) into six categories and include: 1. Words and expressions describing a person's voice: *scream, cry, hum, whisper, to say sweetly, to say softly, to shout cheerfully, ask anxiously, say calmly*; 2. Words describing animals' voices: *miaow, squeak, bark, roar, chirp*; 3. Natural sounds: *rumble of thunder, echo, blowing wind, falling rain*; 4. Social events or situations where the auditory element is the dominant one: *auditions, gold record, number one hit*; 5. Music-related words: *play the flute, sing, hum, buzz, croon, twitter, zoom*; 6. Background noises: *car brakes screeching, a siren wailing, to click, a tap dripping, a clock ticking, knocking, a doorbell ringing*.

Topics about music, music programs on TV and favorite singers all have a well-established position in language courses. Listening to music is definitely a natural activity of a vast number of young learners and they like sharing their opinions on this topic. For our D/HH learners these topics create a certain problem: for the majority of them music is an unapproachable and alien world, though some of them try to download music and get the flavour of it. A lot of new cochlear implant users write on their blogs that not being able to listen to music or share this passion with their peers is for them a serious source of depression and alienation and they perceive the possibility of enjoying music after implantation as one of the most important assets of CI.

While discussing music and listening topics with D/HH learners the teacher should be very sensitive to their individual needs. Some of the students overtly refuse to learn about listening and music and do not wish to touch on these topics, they would prefer omitting this vocabulary entirely. Others enjoy being treated like the majority of FL students and sharing their views on these topics. They want to work out the meaning of the words and try to learn to distinguish them. For some of them FL classes afford an opportunity to incorporate these words into their internal vocabulary, as they did not have a chance to learn them earlier in their national language. In each case the teacher should take into account the fact that in FL classes for D/HH students, music and listening words form a group of "sensitive" vocabulary that must be approached with a deep understanding of the life situations of the students.

3 Strategies of learning and teaching foreign vocabulary

In achieving success in foreign language learning, it is important to use effective strategies. Oxford (1992/1993) explains that they are “specific actions, behaviors, steps or techniques that students use to improve their skills in the language they are learning” (p. 18). Thanks to these strategies, the process of learning a foreign language becomes easier, quicker, more independent, joyful and effective. Learning strategies are inseparably connected with teaching strategies (Laurillard, 2002): that is why it is reasonable to inspect and describe them together, as *learning and teaching strategies*. These strategies should be studied as dynamic phenomena: teachers are often changing their strategies and adjusting them to the students’ abilities and their own preferences. Strategies are not innate, but they are acquired by the students, so they have to be presented by the teacher and the students must be encouraged to try them. This means that students during their education are faced with a series of strategies and they will usually explore and incorporate some of them for further use.

All these strategies might be applied and serve well in the process of teaching foreign languages to D/HH persons. Nevertheless, for this group of students, it is worth using some specialist strategies that may make this process even more effective and enjoyable.

3.1 Vocabulary Personalization

The first of them is Vocabulary Personalization. D/HH students should be made aware that while learning a foreign language they should personalize their foreign vocabulary and learn those words and expressions which they are sure will be useful to them. Of course, each foreign language course has its own rules and teaching cannot always be personalized to its maximum (there are tests, exams and different formal objectives to be met). At the same time when students are personally motivated to learn a certain set of vocabulary that they see as their own personal goal, they are able to do it much more effectively. A technique that might be supportive in this process is a *Personal Vocabulary Journal*, or PVJ (Wood, 2001). Students are asked to prepare their own dictionaries consisting of those words which they want to know and which are not taught in the course. The words can be connected with a sport practiced by the student, their temporary job requirements, recent holiday experience, local Deaf Culture events etc.

As mentioned before, in teaching a foreign language, we must understand well the fact that oral languages are usually not *acquired* by

D/HH individuals; they *are taught* every single word. It is not possible for them to pick up words spontaneously while listening to music, to the radio, overhearing conversations, dialogues or quarrels. They pick up words during school classes, in speech therapy classes and through meaningful conversations with their carers. In such circumstances the vocabulary repertoire might be incomplete, therefore the first task of a foreign language teacher is to check whether the student understands in his native language the vocabulary that the teacher plans to teach. While learning a foreign language it often appears that even adolescents do not know all of the vocabulary involved, and some explanations are required (from our classes for university students some examples were: *aerosol, fiord, couscous, greenhouse effect, lagoon, irritation, conclusion, shift, nephew, bossy, breeze, night owl, full lips*, Domagała-Zysk, 2013a, p. 199). Students for whom sign language is their preferred means of communication usually also need some explanation here, as the meanings of words in oral languages do not always match their meanings in sign language, sometimes a particular sign might have several oral synonyms, sometimes the oral and sign meanings differ as to the word's precise connotation. In this sense a foreign language class has an added value: it creates a chance to revise and extend a student's vocabulary in their first spoken language.

Vocabulary personalization also means that the teacher has to choose a set of vocabulary that is appropriate for a student. It should be as much as possible connected with the student's everyday experiences, their hobbies and interests. The vocabulary to be taught should be divided into a set of significant, indispensable words and those that are used much more rarely and thus are not so necessary in regular communication. Those words that are classified as significant must be regularly revised and used in different contexts (cf. McEvoy, Marschark, & Nelson, 1999). D/HH students do not only have problems with acquiring new words, but also in remembering them, as (once again) their chances to rehearse them spontaneously are scarce. D/HH students usually learn foreign languages only during their FL classes, so they need more formal occasions to practice foreign vocabulary than their hearing peers who can use that vocabulary spontaneously in different contexts. In the FL learning process it is very important to appreciate the students' efforts to use a foreign language for everyday regular communication. When they need and want to speak about their personal experiences it is much more motivating for them to ask their teacher for some new vocabulary with which to describe their experience and thus learn new words and expressions. Some examples of such personalized statements are enlisted below. They were all produced

by D/HH students during English for the deaf and hard-of-hearing classes at KUL. The statements have not been corrected so as to give a real insight into the students' foreign language usage:

*I used to be shy and calm but now I am a little crazy.
My sister is lazy. I am not lazy. My mother is not lazy. My father is sad,
hungry, tired.
My nephew name Bartek. My niece Ola is 12.*

It seems that students usually want to use FL in communication with their teacher, since from the very first class they wanted to greet the teacher in a foreign language and to use that language to inform them about different organizational issues. The teacher's task would be to appreciate and encourage such behavior, as this helps students to master the language. An example of one such student's message can be read below:

*Dear Teacher. I cannot come on Monday. I am headache and sore throat. I
apologize.
I wish you happy Christmas and many health. You and your husband.*

When using the Vocabulary Personalization strategy it is advisable to base it on Vygotsky's idea of the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978). It is defined as "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance, or in collaboration with more capable peers" (p. 86). For the FL teachers of the D/HH who play the role of enablers (Tatar, 1998) it means they should concentrate not only on a student's abilities, but also on their potential, in a way they must perceive the student not as he/she is today, but as they may function tomorrow. The teacher should be one step ahead, organizing tasks that are not doable by the students themselves, but which can be performed with the teacher's support. Only then will the teacher's expectations not seem too high, but will be challenging and fruitful.

3.2 Vocabulary Emotionalization

The second strategy might be called Vocabulary Emotionalization. Linguists agree that we remember better those words that were presented to us not only clearly, but also with an emotional component (Kaczmarek, 2001, p.20), the more moving the learning situation is the better the vocabulary is memorized. An example of using this technique is shown

below. The teacher knows that Paul has strong emotional bonds with his sister and he likes speaking about this relationship. An everyday shopping situation is used to introduce the new words: *old-fashioned*, *V-neck sweater* and *turtle-neck sweater*:

T: Paul, what did you do yesterday?

S: Nothing special. I did shopping.

T: What did you buy?

S: A sweater.

T: Did your sister like your sweater?

S: (smiling) No, she said it is ugly because people do not wear such sweaters.

T: What do you mean—such sweaters?

S: (tries to explain in sign language and using gestures that it is a cardigan).

T: So your sister thinks cardigans are old-fashioned? Does she like V-neck sweaters or turtle-neck sweaters more (teacher shows photos of different types of sweaters found quickly on the internet)?

S: She doesn't like V-neck sweaters and turtle-neck sweaters. She want I wear a shirt and a suit every day.

It is very important to create a positive atmosphere as this also supports learning. When a student feels safe, they are more eager to show their full potential. D/HH students usually experience more emotional strain than their peers: they feel frustrated when they are not able to communicate freely, they usually have to fight for their rights and they feel excluded. These emotions also influence their learning capability. Foreign language classes are often taught in small groups and this makes possible the establishment of a more personal relationship between student and teacher. D/HH students like to get to know their teachers. If they learn in a mainstream group, they are usually excluded from the peer gossip, so the only way to get information is to ask the teacher directly. Questions like “How old is your daughter?”, or “Were you born in Lublin?” should therefore be treated not as a sign of nosiness, but as a sign of communicative language use: language is learned in order to communicate, after all. When students feel emotionally safe they are motivated to use language, and their progress is more dynamic. In the following, classic dialogue a student reverses the roles (with the simple expression *And you?*) as her curiosity was greater than her shyness:

T: How many brothers and sisters have you got?

S: I have one brother.

T: What is your brother's name? Where does he work?

S: And you? Have you a brother?

T: No, I haven't. But I have got three sisters.

S: Three sisters?! I haven't got three sisters.

3.3 Word Semantic Analysis

The next effective strategy is Word Semantic Analysis. Learning vocabulary in a foreign language might be difficult for a D/HH individual because it is not easy to grasp the exact, precise meaning of a new word or expression. They often make mistakes by widening or narrowing the meaning of a word (Krakowiak, 1995). While we learn a new language, we learn at the same time about historical, social, political and natural phenomena. Some of these phenomena might not be known to D/HH individuals. Second language teachers can observe significant gaps not only in FL vocabulary but also in the first language vocabulary of a student. It is a good chance to improve the students' general knowledge and vocabulary.

D/HH students should have more opportunities that are organized by the teacher to practice and revise vocabulary. An important tool here is communication and information technology (cf. Poel & Swanepoel, 2003). Thanks to the Internet and online databases it is now much easier, even compared with just a few years ago, to find a visual context for new words (it is easy to find a picture of e.g. a tree house or a vending machine) and to practice it with the use of numerous exercises, tests or online courses.

3.4 Word Morphological Analysis

Word Morphological Analysis is the last strategy which I would like to recommend in this chapter. Morphological analysis has a special significance in English, as it has been estimated that more than 40% of new English words are formed with the use of suffixes or prefixes (Algeo & Pyles, 1982). The art of word morphological analysis helps students to understand a language better and to be able to grasp the meanings of new words on the basis of knowing their morphological structure. D/HH students are often conscious language users. They have the experience of attending speech therapy classes where they learn the language structure. While learning to read and write they aim to gain a thorough knowledge of word formation, paraphrasing and the rules of pronunciation. An example of such analysis from my classes is the following word chains: *care-careful-careless-carelessly-carer*; *wise-wisdom-wisely*; *polite-impolite-politeness-impoliteness*; *politics-policy-political-politician*. This strategy might be especially fruitful with students using cued speech: while cueing

they learn to recognize the phonological and morphological structures of words.

4 Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was twofold: 1. To analyze D/HH students' chances and difficulties in learning foreign language vocabulary and 2. To propose a set of effective teaching strategies for foreign language classes for D/HH students. The main message concerning the issue of foreign vocabulary learning and teaching for the wider community of D/HH students is that despite many disadvantages (like lower levels of national language vocabulary, restricted access to the spoken form of words, difficulties in reaching the exact and precise meanings of words) D/HH students are able to master their foreign language vocabulary and use it effectively. Four teaching strategies were described and analyzed thoroughly: Vocabulary Personalization, Vocabulary Emotionalization, Word Semantic Analysis and Word Morphological Analysis. This is not a closed set, but rather a kind of methodological incentive. Using these strategies should help teachers to work out their own creative and effective methodological tools that may motivate their D/HH students and support them in consistent, systematic and successful foreign language learning.

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