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International experience of teaching deaf and hard of hearing students at university level – a short review

Międzynarodowe doświadczenie w nauczaniu
studentów niesłyszących i niedosłyszących
na poziomie szkoły wyższej – krótka charakterystyka

Abstract: In this text the author presents just a short review, connected with the international experience in teaching deaf and hard of hearing students abroad and in Poland. The USA and the UK are shown as leading countries with their well known Universities: Gallaudet and Deaf Studies in Bristol. The author also presents the Norwegian experience, with its Bilingual and Cultural approach and Hungarian a more oralistic one. Then she shows the background in Polish schools and Universities with a focus on Teaching English to deaf and hard of hearing students. First attempts at Catholic University in Lublin and in Siedlce University of Natural Sciences and Humanities conducted by the author of this paper are described. More information one can find in Master's Thesis by Beata Gulati which became the basis for this article.

Keywords: deaf, hard of hearing, teaching, university level

Streszczenie: Autorka prezentuje krótki opis międzynarodowego doświadczenia w nauczaniu studentów niedosłyszących i niesłyszących na poziomie szkoły wyższej za granicą i w Polsce. USA i Zjednoczone Królestwo pokazane są jako wiodące kraje ze słynnymi ośrodkami Uniwersytetem Gallaudet oraz Studiami dla Niesłyszących w Uniwersytecie w Bristolu. Autorka również pokazuje doświadczenie bilingwalne i kulturalne w Norwegii oraz bardziej oralistyczne na Węgrzech. Następnie pokazane są polskie szkoły z położeniem nacisku na nauczanie osób z osobami niesłyszącymi i niedosłyszącymi w zakresie języków obcych pierwsze na KUL-u oraz w UPH w Siedlcach, gdzie pracuje autorka tego tekstu. Więcej informacji można przeczytać w pracy magisterskiej Beaty Gulati, z której ten fragment pochodzi.

Słowa kluczowe: niesłyszący, niedosłyszący, nauczanie, poziom szkoły wyższej

Some of the leading countries in the field of teaching deaf and hard of hearing students at university level are the UK, the USA. In this article Norway and Hungary are also mentioned because these are the countries with which we have been cooperating for the past few years. The leading institutions in the field of deaf education are the University of Gallaudet in the USA and the Deaf Studies at Bristol University, in the UK. ASL and BSL happen to be the most popular sign languages, *the lingua francas* (*lingua franche*) for the deaf just like English in the world of hearing people.

Great Britain is one of the countries where inclusion of deaf and hard of hearing students is advanced and effective. Every year there are approximately 800 students [Domagała-Zyśk, 2013] and around 200 of them require additional support: interpreters, notetakers, tutorials. In 1993 the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) and The Further and Higher Education Act (1992) imposed duty to include students with disabilities. The Disability Discrimination Acts from 1990 and 2005 and Disability Equality Duty Universities should have inclusive character, be active in disabled students' support; the forms of support should be consulted with the disabled themselves. It should be inclusive, proactive, consultative and anticipatory [Barnes et al., 2007].

One of the interesting programs was the project concerning deaf students at Queen's University, University of Ulster and Belfast University. Teachability was a set of materials specially prepared for academics who were supposed to read, understand, and apply recommendations for students with disabilities if they teach ones. At present there are 4 universities which conduct Deaf Studies-Bristol University, Durham University, Wolverhampton University, University of Lancashire. A very popular form of studies is also the so called *Open University*, where students can obtain Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science, having their classes on-line, via radio and TV auditions, websites, and e-mailing with teachers and tutors. Such students take up doctoral studies as well [Domagała-Zyśk, 2014].

The best known technical university in the USA is Rochester Institute of Technology where there are around 1300 students annually on general studies, and additional 600 on postgraduate studies. They can choose different courses specially designed for the deaf students at National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID) or study on other courses together with hearing students. At present around 25,000 deaf and hard of hearing students study in postsecondary education. Gallaudet University federally chartered in 1864, is a bilingual, diverse, multicultural institution of higher education that ensures the intellectual and professional advancement of deaf and hard of hearing individuals through American Sign Language and English. Gallaudet maintains a proud tradition of research and scholarly activity and prepares its graduates for career opportunities in a highly competitive, technological, and rapidly changing world.

There are around 60,000 deaf and 300,000 hard of hearing in Hungary. According to Bajko and Kontra (2008) oralist approach prevails in deaf education. After congress in Milan the use of sign language was banned. Only 4.6% hard of hearing and 0.6% deaf students study at universities. They receive interpreters and notetakers support. Spoken Hungarian is believed to be the mother tongue of deaf students. Sign language is only elective language at grade 7. Students usually pick up Hungarian Sign Language (HSL) from their peers in a kindergarten or at school. When they go to primary school they are taught lip reading and speech production in spoken Hungarian. Foreign Languages were introduced in the curriculum in 1990s, however it is left for school to decide if they should introduce them for their students or not. Five out of seven schools in Hungary offer foreign language classes (English and German). Hungary was the first country to sign and ratify the UN Convention on the Rights of people with Disabilities (United Nations, 2007). In 2009 Hungarian Parliament acknowledged HSL as the language of the deaf and declared that Hungarian Deaf constitute a linguistic and cultural minority. But still only 2.1% of deaf adults have higher education degree. But the year

2017 is set as a deadline for full implementation of the necessary changes across all levels of schooling [Kontra, 2013, p. 96].

The Deaf population in Norway is small-about 4000 people. At the beginning such children received an oral education, but in 1997 a school reform introduced *New National Curriculum (L97)* which included the following specific subjects for the deaf: Norwegian Sign Language (NSL), Norwegian for deaf pupils, English for deaf Pupils, and Drama and Rhythms, which replaced the subject of music. L97 was created on the basis of *the cultural minority approach* and *Sign Bilingualism*. By the year of 2005 there were 300 deaf people with university degree. In the year 2006 a new national curriculum (L06) was introduced. It highlighted the need for assessment tools suitable for evaluating Deaf pupils' development and needs. At present about 90% of deaf children use Cochlear Implants (CI). Sign Bilingualism is aimed at assuring full access to the curriculum, education, culture and social life. *Oral* English for the Deaf is a combination of sign languages BSL or ASL, spoken and written English, chatting using ICT. Since 1997 British Sign Language has become a compulsory part of the syllabus for the deaf pupils of Primary School. It was the L97 reform which made the first step in the field of foreign language learning. BSL or oral English were especially introduced in L06 curriculum for CI users. Knowledge of English literature and culture and Deaf Cultures of English speaking countries are requirements of both L97 and L06 syllabuses [Pritchard, 2013, pp. 115-116].

Father Jakub Falkowski established the first school for the deaf in Warsaw, Poland in 1817 [Domagala-Zyśk, 2013, pp. 164-165]. In 1923 in Warsaw the Institute of Special Education was introduced by Maria Grzegorzewska what was connected with dynamic development of schools and rehabilitation centers. From the beginning the oral way of communication was the most popular and Polish Sign Language (PJM) and the Polish Language Sign-System (Signed Polish) were only partial means of communication in education. Signing was not allowed. In 1995 Polish Cued Speech (known as Fonogesty) was introduced by Kazimiera Krakowiak. The system of education for deaf and

hard of hearing students was mainly segregative, with a range of special boarding schools all over Poland. They were located in all bigger towns and served hearing impaired students around the country. After a transformation in 1989 it became possible to create integrative systems and mainstream settings. Since 2002 *an obligatory newborn listening screening test* was introduced. In 2001 it was established by the Ministry of Education that deaf and hard of hearing students should have foreign language classes. According to this rule they can only be exempted from second foreign language classes. Nowadays, all Polish students learn a foreign language starting in the first grade. After 12 years of learning they are expected to pass *Matura* exam. *Deaf and hard of hearing students* have two³⁴ options of passing the *Matura* Exam: the first option is to take a regular Extended English Exam *without its speaking and listening parts* and the second option is to take Basic English Exam which has *a form designed for deaf and hard of hearing* students. Ewa Domagała-Zyśk has been teaching deaf and hard of hearing students at John Paul's Catholic University of Lublin since 1999. She has been teaching *students with the severe and profound hearing impairment*. They started their studies at Pedagogy. Since then more than 30 students have taken their obligatory foreign language courses in the Centre for Education of the Deaf and hard of hearing that was established in 2004. It is ensured by the University regulations that each student with severe disability has the right to participate in *specialised foreign language classes*. The next was Siedlce University of Natural Sciences and Humanities which has offered English to deaf and hard of hearing students since 2004 (Harań 2005, Gulati 2013). But at present there are English courses specialised for hearing impaired students also at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, at Jagiellonian and Warsaw Universities.

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