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WRITTEN OUTPUT OF THE DEAF  
AND HARD OF HEARING PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS  
LEARNING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

INTRODUCTION

In a contemporary *society of knowledge* learning foreign languages, especially English, it is a base of good quality education. Foreign languages have also been learnt by students with special educational needs, among them by the deaf and hard of hearing children. Some of the students with mild level of hearing loss learn usually in mainstream schools and try to cope with foreign language requirements on a par with their peers. Other hearing impaired children are students at Special Schools for the Deaf. They also have foreign language classes and, according to the Polish educational law, they are obliged participate in the same program as their hearing peers<sup>1</sup>.

Students who are deaf and hard of hearing form educationally a very diversified group of pupils. As far as the level of their hearing loss is concerned, we can distinguish four groups of hearing impairment: mild (20-40 dB), moderate (41 – 70 dB), severe (71 – 90 dB) and profound (more than 90 dB). However, the outcomes of the biological level of hearing loss might be different and they depend on several factors. The first of them is the time of the disability onset and results of early diagnosis and early intervention practices. The earlier the impairment is discovered, the earlier

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<sup>1</sup> For future details comp. E. D o m a g a ł a - Z y ś k, *Czy istnieje już polska surdologiczność?*, „Języki Obce w Szkole” 2003, No. 4, p. 3-7.

the child is equipped with hearing aids or cochlear implant (CI), the better opportunities for the child's speech and language development. Other factors are connected with the child's family socio-economical status, the choice of the rehabilitation method and perseverance in respecting the methods' requirements. Since more than 95% of deaf or hard of hearing children are born in hearing families, their parents' main task is to establish an effective way of communication with the child. If the hearing impaired child grows up in a rich language environment in a supporting family, this conditions his/her positive cognitive and social development.

The hearing-impaired child's language development is significant not only for the development of his primary language, but also second and other languages that might be acquired by him/her. Taking into account the fact that the foreign languages learnt by the deaf are vocal languages, the question arises about the measurement of effects of foreign language learning of this group of students. It is an especially difficult task, due, above all, to a great diversity of this group of students<sup>2</sup>. Determination and assessment of language competence of the deaf and hard of hearing students is also difficult due to the communication barriers and difficulties of most deaf students in foreign speech production. So far there is no wider research or methodological studies that would examine the process of the deaf pupils' learning foreign languages and level of the competence achieved in foreign language reception and production. The research done in this field so far are contributory<sup>3</sup>.

Foreign language classes for this group of students play not only educational but also therapeutic role. It should be therefore noticed that in the context of assessing the effects of learning and teaching, it is important to take into account not only the student's achievements in improving foreign

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<sup>2</sup> K. K r a k o w i a k, *Szkice o wychowaniu dzieci z uszkodzeniami słuchu*, Stalowa Wola: Oficyna Wydawnicza Fundacji Uniwersyteckiej 2003.

<sup>3</sup> E. D o m a g a ł a - Z y ś k, *Kompetencje uczniów niesłyszących i słabo słyszających w zakresie posługiwania się językiem angielskim w szkołach podstawowych, gimnazjach i szkołach ponadgimnazjalnych*, „Neofilolog” [Czasopismo Polskiego Towarzystwa Neofilologicznego] 2011, No. 36 (*Niezwykły uczeń – indywidualne potrzeby edukacyjne w nauce języków obcych*, ed. K. Karpińska-Szaj), p. 91-110; E. D o m a g a ł a - Z y ś k, *Style uczenia preferowane przez niesłyszących uczestników lektoratu języka obcego*, in: *Specjalne potrzeby niepełnosprawnych*, ed. M. Białas, Kraków: Arson 2011, p. 243-260; E. D o m a g a ł a - Z y ś k, *Poziom motywacji niesłyszących studentów do uczenia się języków obcych*, in: *Student z niepełnosprawnością w środowisku akademickim* [in print].

language skills, but also the level of achievements of other objectives<sup>4</sup>. It is therefore important to address both the extent to which foreign language lectureship fulfilled its role as a teaching situation, but also as an activity compensating for cognitive, social and occupational deprivation experienced by the deaf students.

The aim of the paper is to present the preliminary effects of the process of teaching and learning English as a foreign language to the deaf and hard of hearing students. The research presented was conducted in several primary Special Schools for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing around Poland. The study concentrates mainly on the deaf and hard of hearing students' writing skills in English.

#### I. WRITING PRODUCTION AS A MAIN TOOL OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE EXPRESSION OF THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING PUPILS

Mastering writing in a foreign language is for a deaf or hard of hearing student definitely the main and sometimes the only way of expression in the target language and that is why it is so important to create for the students the opportunities to be successful in this area. Factors determining success in writing in English as a foreign language were estimated in groups of hearing students by Lee and Krashen<sup>5</sup>. The authors identified four elements that correlate with success in writing in a foreign language: extensive reading, lack of writing fear, independence in correcting the written text and experience in writing. Lee and Krashen stress that the most important factor seems to be the time spent on reading in a target language: students doing that get better marks at the tests and exams and are generally better at writing. As for the ability to correct the text independently, the authors direct our attention to the fact that it is more effective to improve the vocabulary and precision of the text and correct spelling and punctuation mistakes at the

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<sup>4</sup> E. D o m a g a ł a - Z y ś k, *Edukacyjne i terapeutyczne wartości lektoratu języka angielskiego dla studentów niesłyszących*, in: *Przekraczanie barier w wychowaniu osób z uszkodzeniami słuchu*, ed. K. Krakowiak, A. Dziurda-Multan, Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL 2006, p. 423-432.

<sup>5</sup> S. L e e, S. K r a s h e n, *Predictors of success in writing in English as a foreign language: reading, revision behaviour, apprehension and writing*, „College Student Journal” 2002, No. 36(4), p. 532-544.

end of writing – it should not take too much time, as the most important thing is whether the text convey the meaning properly.

Students who are deaf and hard of hearing have specific difficulties in writing, but the research available is done mainly in their primary language. First studies on that topic concentrated on searching the specific features of the deaf persons' texts so as to distinguish them from the text written by the hearing people. Svartholm<sup>6</sup> notices that only for the last several years the studies have aimed not only at comparing the faulty "deaf" writing with the "typical" writing of the hearing persons, but they also aim at searching the reasons of the specificity and trying to understand the peculiarities. There are different reasons why the deaf persons write in this specific way, they are mainly connected with restricted possibilities to participate in everyday conversations (which results in "stiffness" of written language) and lack of opportunities to get information with the use of classical media, and that is connected mainly with lack of subtitling services. It is also stressed that sign language with its specific grammar influences the written production of its users.

## II. ASSESSING THE SKILLS OF WRITING IN ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE BY THE DEAF SUBJECTS

In the case of more profound deafness, the deaf and hard of hearing students might have serious problems with language acquisition and language production, both in their national and foreign languages. In that case a question even arises about the aims of foreign language learning and the extent to which we can expect the deaf children to conform to the principles and demands of foreign language curriculum.

Although students' diversity makes it unreal to construct a common framework of English as a foreign language classes, an effort was undertaken to summarize the primary school program's outline and expectations as for the deaf students' achievements<sup>7</sup>. The cornerstone of the project is the assumption that all four language abilities (reading, listening (=lip-reading), writing

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<sup>6</sup> K. S v a r t h o l m, *The written Swedish of Deaf Children: A Foundation for EFL*, in: *English in International Deaf Communication*, ed. C. J. Kellet Bidoli, E. Ochse, Bern: Peter Lang AG 2008.

<sup>7</sup> D o m a g a ł a - Z y ś k, *Kompetencje uczniów niesłyszących i słabo słyszących*.

and speaking (=participating in conversation) should be taught and learned during the classes with the deaf, as a large number of these students is in fact able to use their hearing to some extent, can effectively lip-read and benefit from listening to their ethnic language and use it in speech – it means they can use their residual hearing in perceiving and producing a foreign language to some extent. What is more, today the spoken communication of the deaf pupils might be enhanced by extensive use of communication and information technology (CIT) which makes it easier to understand and produce understandable speech communications (e.g. a question to the interlocutor might be typed on the cell phone keyboard, films might be subtitled<sup>8</sup> etc.). These conditions may widen the spectrum of language experiences of a deaf or hard of hearing student and improve the effectiveness of his/her learning.

Perception of written or spoken form of foreign languages is for the deaf and hard of hearing students much easier than language production. However, it is postulated<sup>9</sup> that as far as speech recognition is concerned, the deaf and hard of hearing primary school students (on the basis of the child's individual predispositions) should learn to understand single words and short spoken phrases (eg. welcome and farewell, simple personal information), used in everyday situations, and be able to understand them when they are used in conversation, if necessary, with the use of on-the-spot writing (e.g. on a mobile phone screen). While teaching reading it teachers need to know should be known for the teachers that deafness means not only difficulties in speech production but also some language challenges. For this reason it cannot be assumed that a student with hearing loss has an easy access to the written texts. His/her need of support includes explaining unfamiliar words and phrases and providing longer periods for training new words in many different contexts. As far as teaching and learning outcomes are concerned it is assumed that a primary school student can read and understand simple commands, subtitles, words and sentences written in a foreign language, e.g. short texts concerning personal information like biographies, texts describing hobbies, weather conditions, food, animal world etc.). It is also expected that a deaf and hard of hearing primary school student will be able to understand

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<sup>8</sup> E. D o m a g a ł a - Z y ś k, *Lekcje i zajęcia języka obcego dla uczniów niepełnosprawnych*. In: *Skuteczna nauka języka obcego. Struktura i przebieg zajęć językowych*, ed. H. Komorowska, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo CODN 2009, p. 232-246.

<sup>9</sup> D o m a g a ł a - Z y ś k, *Kompetencje uczniów niesłyszących i słabo słyszących*.

commands and texts necessary for using a computer and using internet. The level of reading skills of primary school deaf and hard of hearing students should be at least elementary.

Language production means that the students write or speak in a foreign language and these skills are also possible for the deaf and hard of hearing students. It is worth knowing that more than 95% of deaf and hard of hearing children have got hearing parents and very often they speak with their parents and peers in a national language. Thanks to technological developments (digital hearing aids, cochlear implants), and early treatment (early diagnosis and early psycho-pedagogical intervention) majority of students with hearing-impairment is not *deaf and mute* persons, but aware users of different languages: a national sign language, ethnic language, English as a foreign language, and others. Taking this into account it should be expected that deaf and hard of hearing primary school students (with recognition to their individual differences) should present some of the abilities of language (speech) production, similar to their language (speech) production in the ethnic language: they should know how to introduce themselves, present their family, likes and dislikes and participate (with the use of writing, e.g. using the cell phone screen, if necessary) in short conversations. It is also expected that a student will know how to react linguistically in a foreign language in public places: at the post office, at a shop etc.

Students who are deaf and hard of hearing usually learn English to be able to achieve the ability to effectively use it in writing and it is possible for them to manage this skill at a level similar to the achievement of the hearing students. A written statement by itself does not reveal if its author is a person with a disability or a non-disabled one, especially when we make contact with a person unknown to us, as it happens on the internet forum or in the case of writing a formal letter to an institution.

As in the case of speaking, the efficiency of written expression in a foreign language is conditioned by the efficiency of using the national language: deficits in writing (e.g. in building complex sentences, using rich and varied vocabulary) in an ethnic language would mean that it will be difficult for the student to write texts in English as a foreign language. On the other hand, the fact that English is a language almost completely devoid of inflectional complexity makes many deaf and hard of hearing students claim that it is a language much easier for them than e.g. Polish and this is evidenced

by their written works<sup>10</sup>. Taking this into consideration it should be expected that a deaf and hard of hearing primary school student should be able at least to complete English sentences with relevant words, write simple sentences and questions, especially those concerning his personal information and know how to fill out a simple form by providing properly the personal data (e.g. age, address, telephone number etc.).

### III. RESEARCH

In order to search the primary school deaf students abilities in writing in English a research was undertaken<sup>11</sup>. Its subject was assessing the quality of written production of deaf students of Special Schools for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing in Poland. This research was a pioneering one as so far only language output in national languages (e.g. in Polish) was assessed for the deaf children<sup>12</sup>.

The aim of the research was to present and assess the deaf and hard of hearing primary school students' abilities in writing in English. The main research problem was formulated in a question: What are the deaf primary school students abilities in communication in writing in English? Among the detailed problems of the study there were the following: 1. To what extent do the students communicate effectively in a written form of English? 2. What English structures are the most difficult for them? 3. To what extent are their texts understandable for adult English native speakers?

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<sup>10</sup> D o m a g a ł a - Z y ś k, *Style uczenia preferowane przez niesłyszących*.

<sup>11</sup> I would like to express my sincere thank you for teachers of English from these schools: it is due to their immense and friendly help that the material was gathered.

<sup>12</sup> A. R a k o w s k a, *Rozwój systemu gramatycznego u dzieci głuchych*, Kraków: Wydawnictwo Naukowe WSP 1992; Cz. D z i e m i d o w i c z, *Dziecko głuche i język ojczysty*, Polski Komitet Audiofonologii, Bydgoszcz: Wydawnictwo Tahan 1996; K. K r a k o w i a k, M. P a n a s i u k, *Umiejętności komunikacyjne dziecka z uszkodzonym słuchem*, in: *Komunikacja językowa i jej zaburzenia*, t. III, Lublin: UMCS 1992; J. S t a c h y r a, *Zdolności poznawcze i możliwości umysłowe uczniów z uszkodzonym słuchem*, Lublin: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej 2001.

## 1. METHOD AND PROCEDURE

A classical method of analysis of documents<sup>13</sup> was used as a research method. The documents were intentionally prepared by the pupils and analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively by both the author of the research and “competent judges” adult English native speakers. In order to answer the research questions a set of research tools was designed. It consisted of three questionnaires: two of them were provided for the students and one for the English native speakers. The student participants were asked to fill in a questionnaire *I Use English* and a *Personal Information Chart*. *I Use English* it was a set of exercises for children checking their abilities to use written form of English. The participants were asked to write as many sentences as they can for the following topics: 1. *Me* 2. *My family* 3. *Animal*, 4. *Food* 5. *Weather*. In order to analyze the pupils’ work, all the sentences provided by children were written down in the same form, counted and content-analyzed. *Personal Information Chart* consisted of 13 questions concerning the pupils’ sex, age, grade, type of hearing loss, time of the diagnosis, way of communication with others (sign language, oral, Cued Speech) and type of technological support used (hearing aids, cochlear implants etc.). The third questionnaire, *I Use English – Native Speakers’ Evaluation Chart* consisted of all the sentences provided by the pupils. Participants of the study, English native speaker, were to answer the following two questions about each of the sentences: *Is it correct? Does it convey information?*

After checking the questionnaires in a short pilot study (5 participants), they were sent to all 37 Special Schools for the Deaf all over Poland. Unfortunately, not every finally participated, but quite a big number of 78 responses from 11 schools was sent back. Special schools from the following towns participated in the research: Sławno, Łódź (3 schools), Bielsko-Biała, Kutno, Lublin, Racibórz, Poznań, Warszawa, Szczecin.

## 2. PARTICIPANTS

There were two groups of participants of the study: 1. Deaf and hard of hearing students and 2. English native speakers – university students.

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<sup>13</sup> S. P a l k a, *Metodologia. Badania. Praktyka pedagogiczna*, Gdańsk: GWP 2006, p. 55; D. S i l v e r m a n, *Interpretacja danych jakościowych. Metody analizy rozmowy, tekstu i interakcji*, Warszawa: PWN 2007.



### *Students*

The research group consisted of 78 students of IV, V and VI grade – last three years of education in Polish primary schools, half of the group consisted of pupils of the oldest VI form. They have been learning English as an obligatory subject for 2-4 years. They have got rather good marks in English – the mean grade for the group was 3.8, so it would mean 4<sup>14</sup>. The subjects were 12-16 years old<sup>15</sup> and majority of the group consisted of males – there were 38 boys (73%) and only 14 girls (27%) in the whole group. It should be stressed that each pupil was invited to take part in the study so this predominance of boys mirrors the general structure of sex division in the participating schools for the deaf. Participants of the study attended Polish Special Schools for the Deaf and all of them have some degree of hearing impairment. As for the children it is generally difficult to quote their exact level of hearing loss, the students were asked to assign themselves to one of the two groups: 1. Deaf or 2. Hard of hearing. The results are meaningful: only 43% of the participating pupils named themselves as deaf, the remaining 67% called themselves hard of hearing, although their teachers confirm that their hearing loss is usually much above 70 dB. It was not the aim of this study to define the self-identity of the students with hearing loss in Polish Special Schools for the deaf, but these results should be regarded as meaningful (Table 1 and 2).

Table 1. Participants of the study – according to the declared hearing status

Deaf (N=34)				Hard of hearing (N=44)			
boys		girls		boys		girl	
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
17	33	6	10	20	40	9	17

<sup>14</sup> In Polish educational system there are the following grades: 1 – fail, 2 – sufficient, 3 – satisfactory, 4 – good, 5 – very good, 6 – exceptionally good.

<sup>15</sup> In Poland children attending primary schools are usually 7-12 years old, but in the case of disability the education process may last longer.

Table 2. Participants of the study according to their sex and grade

Class IV (N=23)				Class V (N=15)				Class VI (N=39)				Total (N=78)			
Boys		Girls		boys		girls		boys		girls		boys		girls	
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
17	22,5	7	9	12	15	3	4	28	36	10	13,5	57	73	21	27

### Competent judges

The group of native English speakers consisted of 11 university students, American citizens, who were studying at the time of the research in Lublin. They were 24-36 years old, 8 males and 3 females, none of them have ever had any contact with hearing impaired persons. They participated in the study on voluntary basis.

## IV. RESULTS

In the main body of research on writing skills the participants were asked to provide a written assignment. The children were to prepare as many sentences in English as they could for the following topics: 1. *Me*; 2. *My family*; 3. *Food*; 4. *Animals*; 5. *Weather*. Although the research group consisted of 78 persons, only 39 written works of *I use English* questionnaire were analysed, as the rest of the participants filled out only the *Personal Information Chart* and less than 20% of the *I Use English* questionnaire. The participants were students of both the 4th, the 5th and the 6th form (Table 1).

Table 3. Participants of the study response to scales

	Class IV		Class V		Class VI		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
<i>I Use English</i>	14	35,90	9	23,07	16	41,03	39	100

The pupils prepared altogether 265 sentences and that result means that it is almost 8 sentences *per capita*. The shortest answer consisted of 3 sentences and the longest one contained 16 sentences. The sentences were very simple in their form and provided information about the students and their family members' names, age, likes and dislikes and place of living. Information

about favorite animals and food consisted usually of a series of nouns presenting the students' choices (e.g. *dog, ham*) and information about the weather consisted of adjectives describing the weather conditions.

#### 1. GRAMMAR AND VOCABULARY CORRECTNESS

The sentences were analyzed and their grammatical correctness was checked. All the sentences without any exceptions were single sentences of the simple pattern *subject – verb – object* (SVO) and this type of structures is typical for students with hearing impairment<sup>16</sup>. Unfortunately, only 140 (53%) of the whole 265 sentences were grammatically correct (comp. Table 4). The most common mistakes included incorrect sentence structure (16,6%) that usually resembled a group of freely gathered words not a sentence structure. Next common mistakes include incorrect use of verb forms (16,4%), omission of definite and indefinite article (15,6%) and lack of plural form markers (13,6). Other common problems appeared in adjective sentences (8,8%). Deaf and hard of hearing children quite often, when they do not know a word in English, use a Polish word that may mean the same (8,8). The results are presented in table 4.

Table 4. Type and number of errors

Type of errors	Examples	Number of mistakes (N)	Percent of mistakes (%)
Incorrect sentence structure	*Mother works nurse; *Teacher English nice; *I have brother three	26	16,6
Incorrect verb forms	*I am has two brother	24	16,4
Definite and indefinite article omission	*I am boy *My mother is teacher	23	15.6
Lack of plural forms	*I like dog	20	13.6
Wrong forms in adjective sentences	*The weather is cloud	13	8.8

<sup>16</sup> G.P. B e r e n t, *The acquisition of English syntax by deaf learners*, in: *Handbook of second language acquisition*, eds. W. Ritchie & T. Bhatia, San Diego, CA: Academic Press 1996, p. 469-506.

Using Polish equivalents	*I like zupa ogórek; *My favourite animal is świnka morska	13	8.8
Subject omission	*Don't like eggs; *Like English	8	5.4
Prepositions	*I live for Lodz	5	3.4
Possessive	*My mother name is Krystyna	3	2
Spelling	*fudbool, *podatose	2	1.4

## 2. UNITS OF SENSE

Although some of the sentences were not grammatically correct it does not mean that they did not convey information. The ultimate aim of foreign language learning is to be able to communicate, to exchange meaningful information and minor mistakes do not disturb this process to a very large extent<sup>17</sup>.

In order to check whether these sentences provided by deaf and hard of hearing children carry any kind of understandable meaning, an experiment was organized. The sentences produced by the children were presented to 11 *competent judges*, English native speakers. The group consisted of university students, American citizens for whom English is a primary language. All of them were students of one of state university in Lublin and volunteered to take part in the research. They were asked to assess the sentences produced by the deaf and hard of hearing pupils and answer two questions: whether these sentences are correct and if they convey any information. Special space was provided for any comments or remarks.

The results were outstanding – they show that despite their language problems, deaf primary school students were successful in conveying the sense of their thoughts in written English to adult native speakers of English: despite their errors, 90,6% of the sentences provided by the children were recognized by native speakers as meaningful. This result mean that the deaf students achieved the ultimate aim of foreign language learning, their written

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<sup>17</sup> R.C. Gardner, *Integrative motivation and second language acquisition*, in: *Motivation and second language acquisition*, ed. Z. Dörnyei, R. Schmidt, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press 2002, p. 1-19.

English was accepted by native users of the target language. The results are presented in detail in table 5.

Table 5. Correct and meaningful sentences as assessed by native *competent judges*

	<b>Total number of sentences (N)</b>	<b>Number of correct sentences (N)</b>	<b>Percent of correct sentences (%)</b>	<b>Number of meaningful sentences (N)</b>	<b>Percent of meaningful sentences (%)</b>
<i>Me</i>	<b>87</b>	55	63	<b>77</b>	<b>89</b>
<i>My family</i>	<b>76</b>	34	45	<b>63</b>	<b>83</b>
<i>Food</i>	<b>68</b>	39	81	<b>61</b>	<b>90</b>
<i>Animals</i>	<b>34</b>	5	15	<b>31</b>	<b>91</b>
<i>Weather</i>	<b>20</b>	7	35	<b>20</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Total</b>					<b>90.6</b>

## V. DISCUSSION

The presented results are ambiguous. Out of 78 participants only 39 (50%) were able to prepare simple answers for the test provided. There are no comparative research of this phenomena, but on the basis of teachers' observations it should be stated that the results in a group of hearing primary school students would be better. On the other hand the deaf and hard of hearing primary school students, although they present elementary level of writing skills in English as a foreign language, achieved the aim of foreign language learning – they were able to communicate their thoughts and their language production was understood by native language users to a high extent of 90.6%.

It is important to emphasize that making mistakes it is a natural part of language learning process and can happen to anyone. It is important is to confirm the deaf and hard of hearing students that despite these difficulties, it is useful to prepare their own written texts and present information about real life – their experiences, likes and dislikes, dreams and fears. They have a tremendous value, because during the process of preparing them the language is used as a tool for real communication with other people. Positive

teachers' comments should reinforce the motivation to learn new vocabulary and grammar structures and protect the students against the temptation to use linguistically correct texts written by others. Language errors should not arouse negative connotations - it is part of the learning process of each person.

Of a great value it will be also to use effective teaching strategies reinforcing the students' effort in reading and writing in English. This issue has been discussed in other papers<sup>18</sup> and it demands from each English teacher of the deaf and hard of hearing to search for such strategies that will be most effectively matching the students learning style and his/her individual preferences. However, they are most often unable to participate in the listening activities and they require special strategies for listening and speaking tasks – their interlocutor should speak plainly and clearly, have his/her face directed towards the deaf person, be positive about repeating things or changing the words difficult to lip-read into the more convenient ones.

As it was mentioned beforehand, writing for many deaf students becomes a main way of foreign language production and expression that is why a teacher should pay special attention to provide diversified strategies of teaching this skill. The students' activities should not be restricted only to closed and passive types of activities, and they should be encouraged in many ways to use a foreign language creatively, with an aim to express their own thoughts and emotions. Writing exercises should be accompanied with extensive reading activities, as only through reading and analyzing plenty of essays, letters and other texts students will be able to create their own texts<sup>19</sup>. In explanation of the meaning of new words two techniques might be employed: 1. Using a target language in explaining the meaning (*language bath – language immersion* conception); 2. Using national language with or without Cued Speech support/national sign language. This second strategy uses students' metacognitive knowledge, sometimes widens it significantly<sup>20</sup> and helps negotiate the word meaning clearly<sup>21</sup>.

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<sup>18</sup> D o m a g a ł a - Z y ś k, *Kompetencje uczniów niesłyszących i słabo słyszących*; D o m a g a ł a - Z y ś k, *Style uczenie preferowane przez niesłyszących*; E. D o m a g a ł a - Z y ś k, *Podstawowe trudności osób niesłyszących w opanowaniu pisowni języka obcego i ich kompensowanie*, in: *Ku wspólnocie komunikacyjnej niesłyszących i słyszących*, ed. K. Krakowiak, A. Dziurda-Multan, Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL 2011, p. 149-162.

<sup>19</sup> L e e, K r a s h e n, *Predictors of success in writing in English as a foreign language*.

<sup>20</sup> S v a r t h o l m, *The written Swedish of Deaf Children*.

<sup>21</sup> D o m a g a ł a - Z y ś k, *Poziom motywacji niesłyszących studentów*.

## CONCLUSION

Language production is an indispensable element of language learning process. In the case of hearing disability it is thoroughly distorted not only in a foreign – but also in a native language. However, the situation can be amended, mainly by using two strategies: 1. Enhancing language written production and 2. skillful grammar mistakes correction.

To enhance language production there is a need to use various motivational techniques: positive reinforcing, choosing interesting input materials, providing awards and prizes for undertaking the tasks (not only for the effects). It is especially important that the students should feel safe to express their minds, write about their life, relationships, feelings and activities. They should notice that such texts are interesting for the teacher and useful in communication, so it would be advisable to use different occasions for “real communication”, e.g. by e-mails or chats with English-speaking peers.

Correction of mistakes can be realized in a direct (*explicite*) form<sup>22</sup>. Using it, a teacher consciously points to the mistakes and explains how to formulate the statements properly. It can be done with the use of the technique of “negotiating the form”, when a teacher does not give the answer, but helps a student to discover it by giving him/her some clues, e.g.: *it is the comparative form that has to be used here*. Such a technique teach to use language actively, to operate it and do not treat as a set of closed slogans.

Writing production is very often the only possible way of language expression for the deaf and hard of hearing students, therefore it needs special attention. More research (also comparative research) is necessary in this field, so as to get to know better the boundaries and challenges of this process.

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<sup>22</sup> M. P a w l a k, *The effect of corrective feedback on the acquisition of the English third persons ending*, in: *Morphosyntactic Issues in Second Language Acquisition*, ed. D. Gabryś-Barke, Clevedon: Multilingual Matters 2008, p. 187-202.

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WRITTEN OUTPUT OF THE DEAF  
AND HARD OF HEARING  
PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS LEARNING ENGLISH  
AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

S u m m a r y

Contemporarily learning foreign languages it is a must for anybody who wants to acquire high quality education and be competitive on the job market. It is also true for the students who are deaf and hard of hearing. Their language disability makes it much more difficult to become a proficient foreign language user.

The aim of the paper is to present the preliminary effects of the process of teaching and learning English as a foreign language to the deaf and hard of hearing students. The research presented was conducted in several primary Special Schools for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing around Poland. The study concentrates mainly on the deaf and hard of hearing students' writing skills in English. Students' written works were linguistically analyzed by the author of this research and also presented to "competent judges" – adult native English speakers. The results show that deaf and hard of hearing student are able to construct meaningful texts in English. However, they are very simple in their form and content. This problem needs further analysis, also the comparative ones.

**Key words:** deaf, hard of hearing, foreign language, education, primary school.

KOMPETENCJE W ZAKRESIE PISANIA  
NIESŁYSZĄCYCH I SŁABO SŁYSZĄCYCH UCZNIÓW SZKÓŁ PODSTAWOWYCH  
UCZĄCYCH SIĘ JĘZYKA ANGIELSKIEGO JAKO OBCEGO

S t r e s z c z e n i e

Uczenie się języków obcych jest współcześnie koniecznością dla każdego, kto chciałby zdobyć wysokiej jakości wykształcenie i być konkurencyjny na rynku pracy. Ta prawda jest także oczywista dla osób niesłyszących i słabo słyszających, jednak ich niepełnosprawność językowa w istotnym stopniu utrudnia im biegłe opanowanie języka obcego.

Celem artykułu jest zaprezentowanie wstępnych wyników badań efektów procesu uczenia się i nauczania języka angielskiego jako obcego uczniów niesłyszących i słabo słyszających. Prezentowane badania zostały przeprowadzone w kilku szkołach i ośrodkach dla uczniów niesłyszących i słabo słyszających na terenie całej Polski. Badania koncentrowały się głównie na umiejętności pisania w języku angielskim. Pisemne wypowiedzi uczniów zostały przeanalizowane pod względem językowym przez autorkę pracy oraz przedstawione do analizy sędziom kompetentnym – dorosłym rodzimym użytkownikom języka angielskiego. Wyniki wskazują, że uczniowie niesłyszący i słabo słyszący są w stanie tworzyć zrozumiałe dla rodzimych użytkowników języka teksty w języku obcym, jednak są to teksty bardzo proste w swojej formie i treści. Zagadnienie to wymaga dalszych badań i analiz, także o charakterze porównawczym.

**Słowa kluczowe:** niesłyszący, słabo słyszący, język obcy, edukacja, szkoła podstawowa.