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HI CEFRL

Hearing Impaired Common  
European Framework of Reference  
for Language: learning, teaching,  
assessment



## Synopsis

**Chapter 1:** The HI CEFRL in its political and educational context

**Chapter 2:** Approach adopted

**Chapter 3:** Common Reference Levels

**Chapter 4:** Language use and the language learner

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**Chapter 6:** Language learning and teaching

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## PREFATORY NOTE

HI CEFRL is an adaptation of the original CEFRL for Hearing Impaired learners especially for A1 level. It is aimed to professionals and authorities from different fields dealing with the education of deaf and hearing impaired learners.

The HI CEFRL has to be related to the original CEFRL as it only consists of recommendations for foreign languages teachers having hearing impaired learners in their class. We tried to answer the questions raised by the original CEFRL considering our specialized experiences with HI learner.

## NOTES FOR THE USER

The aim of these notes is to help you to use the HI Common European Framework for language learning, teaching and assessment more effectively.

This special guidance is addressed to the particular category of users: teachers, examiners, textbook writers, teacher trainers, educational administrators, local authorities.

The target group is deaf and hearing impaired learners from specialized institutes or included in the mainstream system.

These notes are meant:

1. To encourage practitioners to think on questions as:
  - What are the HI learners' means of communication?
  - How do HI learners communicate with the hearing community?
  - How do HI learners communicate among their own community?
  - What is their mother tongue and how does this affect their abilities, motivations and needs to learn foreign languages?
  - Which way of communication do they prefer, need or benefit?
2. To make it easier for practitioners to help learners.

We are concerned to improve the quality of HI learners' communication with European people from different languages and cultures. Better communication leads to easier mobility, direct contact, better understanding and closer co-operation. This work contributes to the promotion of the European democratic citizenship.



## 1 The HI CEFRL in educational context

### 1.1 What is the HI CEFRL?

The HI CEFRL is a part of the TEDS MANUAL that is the final outcome of the European project and it is dedicated to all professionals that work with HI learners.

The HI CEFRL discusses specific of communication, social and cultural consequences of hearing impairment and its impact on learning abilities that creates a very specific educational situation. The adapted Framework should find the usage not only among teachers and specialized pedagogues dealing with HI learners arising from the different educational systems in Europe, but also among the educational administrators, course designers, teacher trainers, examining bodies, and another educational authority bodies. The adapted framework should ensure that the learners' needs are met.

The HI CEFRL could help as a common basis for the elaboration of HI language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations, final exams, textbooks, etc. across Europe. The Framework defines just A1 level of proficiency.

The specific situation of hearing impairment confronts us with psychological and pedagogical issues. In an intercultural approach of teaching/learning we have to be aware of the cultural differences between the nations but also the specific aspects of the deaf community.

### 1.2 The aims and objectives of language policy considering hearing impairment

Foreign languages education to deaf and hearing impaired learners should consider and respect their needs. We suggest perceiving their communication and learning abilities, means and needs. The complex profile of the HI learners includes his/her identity, his/her mother tongue (sign or oral language), his/her hearing loss with or without technical aids, and potential additional disabilities.

#### *General measures*

1. To ensure, as far as possible, that all profiles of HI populations have access to effective means of acquiring knowledge of the languages:
  - 1.1 to deal with hearing foreigners;
  - 1.2 to deal with HI foreigners;
  - 1.3 to achieve needed and expected outcomes of HI communication situations.
2. To promote, encourage and support the efforts of teachers and learners at all levels to apply in their own situation the principles of the construction of language-learning systems.
  - 2.1 by basing language teaching and learning on the needs, motivations, characteristics and resources of HI learners;
  - 2.2 cf. CEFRL.
  - 2.3 cf. CEFRL.
  - 2.4 cf. CEFRL.



3. To promote research and development programs enabling HI learners to acquire a communicative proficiency appropriate to their specific needs.

### 1.3 What is 'plurilingualism' for HI?

Plurilingualism for HI learners has to take into account both multilingualism and multiculturalism. HI multilingualism is oral language, or sign language or oral-sign language (bilingualism). Sign Language significantly differs from oral language.

HI multiculturalism is the confrontation of the Deaf culture and the Hearing culture (a hearing impaired person among a hearing group or among a hearing impaired group / a hearing person among a hearing impaired group).

### 1.4 Why is HI CEFRL needed?

Among the educational facilities across Europe there is no common approach and strategies on how teaching foreign languages to HI learners. HI CEFRL is needed to harmonize the general approach, strategies, evaluation and setup of the compulsory final exams.

The aim is to enhance the professional exchanges and the improvement of education of HI learners. It also provides information for those who deal with the HI -mainstream teachers, specialized pedagogues, textbook writers, authorities, educational facilities founders. The hearing impairment has profound impact on language abilities of learners: access to Oral foreign languages is much more difficult for HI learners –the hearing loss, the mother tongue not always mastered, the first language can be different from the mother tongue.

The aim of HI CEFRL is to provide a foreign language teaching that would suit to HI learners needs. There is not only one type of HI loss but a wide range of it. Teaching methods must be adapted. (cf. "Teaching Toolbox" and "Assessment Toolbox" from TEDS)

As crucial we see to take into account changes in the nature of the HI learners' needs and the context in which they live, study and work.

## 2 Approach adopted

### 2.1 An action-oriented approach

The action-based approach takes into account different range of communication abilities specific to HI individuals: different oral and written competences in both expression and comprehension (hearing loss, articulation and pronunciation sometimes non-existent or unintelligible, a lower range of vocabulary, an artificial syntax)

#### 2.1.1 *The general language competences of an HI individual*

As mentioned above hearing impairment has profound impact on language competencies. There is no or limited access to spoken language during the child development. It causes a profound lack of experience with the language itself.

The hearing channel of acquiring information is partly replaced by the visual channel. The hearing aids - including cochlear implants- do not provide comparable access to the natural auditory stimulus. This setup profoundly limits the readiness to pay attention to the sounds and to the oral messages.



### Consequences for HI learners:

- natural acquiring of language not possible
- only active learning
- general lower competence in spoken language (owing to experience)
- language competence among learners varies depending on hearing loss, family background, language project chosen
- linguistic development challenged (Chomsky, Language Acquisition Device Theory)
- in relation to Speaking and Listening:
  - ✓ can't follow group discussions
  - ✓ need visual contact while talking to someone
  - ✓ not enough feedback (can't correct themselves)
  - ✓ limited or no access to Listening comprehension
  - ✓ intelligibility (a difficult articulation and mastering phonemes)
- visual, kinaesthetic learners and less auditory learners
- limited lip-reading in time and quantity (tiring and not replacing the hearing ability)
- more support needed to overcome inhibitions
- limited (shorter) attention span – changing modalities is tiring
- Sign Languages uses different modalities (eyesight and movement) while English and any spoken language are built around listening and speaking
- lower hearing memory – need to analyse hearing input, which is difficult and tiring
- learners' and teachers' vocabulary often limited
- use of authentic materials can be difficult
- oral communication may not be that important to HI learners
- some learners value Sign Language

Such variations affect 'learning styles' or 'learner profiles'.

### 2.1.2 Specific communicative language competence

According to items above teaching/learning/assessing situations should start with the knowledge and the evaluation of the HI learners' communicative competence.

Some hearing impaired learners consider Sign Language as their mother tongue, so the visual-kinaesthetic and nonverbal way of communication is dominant for them.

Some HI learners consider the oral language as their mother tongue.

This establishes different educational situations for each group.

This basic setup influences these areas:

- communication means (Sign Language, spoken and written form of language, communication support methods – cued speech, dactyl, finger alphabet, lip reading)
- the knowledge of the spoken language (morphology and syntax)
- Learning abilities (capacity of auditory memory, attention span and so on).

**Sign Language** – the question was raised<sup>1</sup> whether to teach or not a foreign Sign Language. HI individuals may have an easy access to foreign Sign Languages. They are able to communicate using signs in international groups, reach fluency and specific knowledge -like new finger alphabets- in a very

<sup>1</sup> Patricia Pritchard: TEFL for deaf pupil in Norwegian bilingual schools: Can primary school pupils acquire a foreign sign language?, Masters thesis in Special Education, Trondheim, Norway, 2004.



short time. The competence of learning a foreign Sign Language can be suggested just as an additional learning activity (based on methods explained in the thesis of Patricia Pritchard<sup>1</sup>) and the decision also depends on the learner.

**Spoken language** – The understanding of spoken language of HI learners -loud articulation, right pronunciation, listening comprehension- are affected. So the training of this skill can demotivate HI learners. Some HI learners will prefer other means of communication when trying to get through a message.

**Dactyl and finger alphabet** – they can mediate the written word with 100% accuracy but they do not provide the understanding automatically. A benefit from this mean of communication totally depends on the quality of the mastered vocabulary.

**Lip reading** – This ability has severe limitations. The HI individual can lip read the words they already know, if the context is given, if the articulation and pronunciation are clear, if there are no similar lip shapes, if the messages are not too long and complex. Lip reading itself is not a way of communication, it is a limited tool which and it requires extra effort and concentration. The lip reading should be used only as a support communication mean.

**Cued speech** – is a specialized visual tool completing lip reading. It helps to clear up similar lip shapes (path, bath, Math). All the phonemes of the language are visualized. Cued Speech is a very helpful tool for HI learners who are in an oral project.

**Written language** – some HI learners technically can read but the lack of experience with the language limits the knowledge of vocabulary and the access of the syntax. Written forms in teaching/learning/assessing situations can be a limited support.

### 2.1.3 Language activities

HI learners' experience of -oral, sign or bilingual- language affects the performance in the various *language activities*: **reception, production, interaction or mediation.**

HI learners have no or a very limited access to reception of spoken language (hearing loss, hearing technical aids not 100% efficient, quality of the auditory environment)

HI learners' spoken production can be understandable enough and require a lot of efforts for the HI learners (feedback, articulation, pronunciation)

HI learners have a limited access to interaction or mediation (hearing loss, noisy groups of learners, big groups of learners, quality of the auditory environment)

HI learners may also have a limited access to writing activities -reading/writing- (the link between the oral and the writing language is insufficient, lacking)

### 2.1.4 Domains

Written language is the mean of communication to promote in the various domains for HI learners (written language only or oral supported by written language).

The two domains to encourage with HI learners are the occupational and the personal ones.





### 2.1.5 Tasks, strategies and texts

The overall approach for HI learners should respect their weakened general language competence. Tasks, strategies and texts depend on the HI learners' specific profile of communication.

The teaching/learning should focus on competences HI learners can benefit from and be efficient in. The use of the writing foreign languages should be favoured. A focus on basic and developed vocabulary, on the syntax (deep analysis of the language), on personal and pragmatic aspects of languages use (following instructions, recipes, real life labels/tables/signs) should be done.

The use of visual aids should be regular (picture dictionaries, internet images research, notes on boards, books, files, mimes, gestures)

All means of justifying comprehension and language simple structures should be accepted.

### 2.2 Common reference levels of language proficiency

The competences that HI learners should reach for an expected level should respect their impairment and its consequences on learning foreign languages. Two approaches of assessing HI learners can be suggested: avoid or adjust/adapt oral language assessments and emphasize the HI learners writing competences and value their oral efforts.

HI learners' achievements should not be compared with hearing learners ones.

### 2.3 Language learning, teaching and assessment

*This issues will be closely discussed in Chapters 5 and 9.*





### 3 Common Reference Levels

#### 3.1 Focus on common reference points for A1 level adapted for HI learners.

Table 1. Common Reference Level for HI learner: global scale

<b>Basic users</b>	<b>A1</b>	<i>In written form can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. In written form can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person writes clearly and is prepared to help.</i>
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#### 3.2 Descriptors

The three tables used to introduce the Common Reference Level A1 for HI learner (Tables 1, 2 and 3) are taken from the original CEFRL and adapted on condition of hearing impairment.

Table 2. : Common reference level A1 for HI learner: self-assessment grid

		<b>A1</b>
<b>UNDERSTANDING</b>	<b>Listening</b>	<i>I can recognize familiar words and very basic phrases concerning myself, my family and immediate concrete surroundings when people speak slowly and clearly, in a face-to-face relation (support of lip-reading), with or without the speaker's use of the Cued Speech</i>
	<b>Reading</b>	<i>I can understand familiar names, words and very simple sentences, for example on notices and posters or in catalogues.</i>



Table 3 (Common reference levels: qualitative aspects of spoken language) was omitted because it defines spoken language. HI learner's range, accuracy, fluency, interaction and coherence is influenced by their hearing impairment. HI learners can vocalize separate words, basic phrases and simple sentences. But, in many cases oral language intelligibility and the drastic efforts required for the HI learners to use oral language makes impossible or very hard to decode the form and the content of their message.

SPEAKING	Spoken Interaction	<i>I can interact in a simple way provided the other person is prepared to repeat or rephrase things at a slower rate of speech and help me to formulate what I'm trying to say. I can ask and answer simple questions in areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics.</i>
	Spoken Production	<i>I can use simple phrases and sentences to describe where I live and people I know provided the fact that my defaults of articulation, pronunciation and voice are tolerated.</i>
WRITING	Writing	<i>I can write a short, simple postcard, for example sending holiday greetings. I can fill in forms with personal details, for example entering my name, nationality and address on a hotel registration form.</i>
Specific Communication means	Sign Language	<i>I can understand basic phrases, basic sign vocabulary and I'm able to understand/express simple basic facts, information and needs.</i>
	Finger alphabet	<i>I can "spell" known vocabulary fluently and write down "spelled" words.</i>
	Lip-reading	<i>I can lip read limited on basic vocabulary related to personnel information.</i>
	Cued speech	<i>I can lip read and hear basic vocabulary and simple basic facts, information, needs with the support of the Cued Speech.</i>



## 4 Language use and the language learner

*Plurilingualism* and *interculturality* in the case of HI learners require a completely new approach. When HI learners have a spoken language as their mother tongue, there is less difference from common learners to learn a foreign language. While HI learners whose mother tongue is a Sign Language, learning a foreign language can become a wider issue.

HI learners (using Sign Language) first explore the language and the culture of their native country as a foreign language. Then, in the school system they explore foreign countries and their languages through their native spoken language. At the same time they also have to challenge and understand two different communities: “Hearing foreigners” and “Deaf foreigners”. This situation raises new educational contexts, strategies and different issues in teaching interculturality.

### 4.1 The context of language use

Hearing Impairment strongly affects the context of the language use and it can modify the whole social life.

#### 4.1.1 Domains

HI learner's social life is organized of the *domains* (spheres of action or areas of concern) similarly to a hearing learner. It may be useful to distinguish the general purposes of language learning and teaching from the original CEFRL document:

- The *personal* domain for HI learners can be travelling, using internet, social networks...;
- The *public* domain and the *occupational* domain are areas that can be considerably limited for HI learners due to their communication disability.

#### 4.1.2 Situations cf. CEFRL

#### 4.1.3 Conditions and constraints

Specific consequences of deafness/hearing impairment on language skills

##### LISTENING:

- Limited passive learning
- Visual support needed
- Shorter auditory attention span
- Lower auditory memory leads to lower understanding
- General lower spoken language competence

##### READING:

- Not autonomic readers
- Need for structure
- Visual support needed
- Limited extrapolation of the meaning from the context
- Lower general knowledge leading to lower understanding



### SPEAKING:

#### a) A: SPOKEN INTERACTION:

- Various factors need to be considered: number of people, background noises, eye contact
- Mutual intelligibility needed

#### b)

#### c) B: SPEECH PRODUCTION:

- Limited self-correction (lack of feedback)
- Limited articulation (though limited intelligibility)

#### d)

### WRITING:

- Spelling difficulties
- Lack of interest in a written language
- Limited experience in writing
- Problems with the concept of punctuation (there is none in Sign Language)

Most of communication situations between a HI and a hearing person may be, on both sides, experienced as stressful. The risk of misunderstanding may be high.

#### 4.1.4 *The learner's mental context*

##### Limitations of HI learners:

- Perceptual apparatus – *handicapped auditory system, usually compensated with better visual skills;*
- Attention mechanisms – *auditory attention span and visual language analyse span are limited. Attention mechanisms are not affected to non-language visual stimulus: such as the perception of nonverbal language, social interactions or the analysis of objects/ environment or connections available through visual channel;*
- Long-term experience, affecting memory, associations and connotations – *those depending on language knowledge are affected, whereas those not depending on this knowledge are intact;*
- Linguistic categorization, *as a highly abstract process, is profoundly handicapped; the practical classification of objects or events depending on linguistic categorization is handicapped.*

#### 4.1.5 *The mental context of the interlocutor(s)*

Spoken language skills limit the learner ability to compensate constraints of communication with a hearing partner.

Communication between two HI partners from two different countries is easier through sign languages than oral languages.

## 4.2 Communication themes

1. personal identification
2. house and home, environment
3. daily life



4. free time, entertainment
5. travel
6. relations with other people
7. health and body care
8. education
9. shopping
10. food and drink
11. services
12. places
13. language
14. weather

### **Subcategories added for hearing impaired learners**

- e) 1.1 being deaf
- 2.1 technical and human aids
- 3.1 specific deaf events
- 4.1 foreign sign languages
- 5.1 communication with hearing impaired people
- 6.1 deafness (medical aspects)
- 7.1 deaf inclusion in society
- 8.1 sign languages and Cued Speech

## **4.3 Communicative tasks and purposes**

### Hearing impaired learners' needs

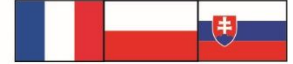
- Deaf oral language learners can interact with one interlocutor.
- Deaf sign language learners use written messages.

#### **4.3.1 Ludic uses of language**

The use of language for playful purposes often plays an important part in language learning and development, but is not confined to the educational domain. Examples of ludic activities include:  
Social language games:

### Conditions for hearing impaired learners

- Deaf oral language learners must be in small groups (4 maximum) or with a Cued Speech Transliterator or written transcriptions.



- Deaf sign language learners need written transcriptions.

Verbal joking (punning, etc.) e.g. in:

Condition for hearing impaired learners

Meaning of verbal jokes must be given.

### 4.3.2 Aesthetic uses of language

Remark for hearing impaired learners - Speaking ability depends on their will and capacities.

## 4.4 Communicative language activities and strategies

Conditions for hearing impaired learners

- Deaf oral language learners: interactivity is only possible in small groups (maximum 4) or with a Cued Speech transliterator.
- Deaf sign language learners need written communication.

For both: Enhance their self-confidence.

### 4.4.1 Productive activities and strategies

*4.4.1.1 In oral production (speaking) activities the language learner produces an oral text which is received by an audience of one or more listeners.*

SUSTAINED MONOLOGUE: Describing experience	
A1	<i>Can describe him/herself, what he/she does and where he/she lives.</i>

ADDRESSING AUDIENCES	
A1	<i>Can read a very short, rehearsed statement – e.g. to introduce a speaker, propose a toast.</i>

- f) According to their abilities (e.g.: adapt the length of oral production, adapt articulating expectations...)

*4.4.1.2 In written production (writing) activities the language learner as writer produces a written text which is received by a readership of one or more readers.*

- taking down messages from dictation:
  - Deaf oral learners: Cued Speech is needed.
  - Deaf sign learners: avoid dictation

*4.4.1.3 Production strategies involve mobilising resources, balancing between different competences – exploiting strengths and underplaying weaknesses – in order to match the available potential to the nature of the task.*



### 4.4.2 Receptive activities and strategies

These include listening and reading activities. For deaf learners, a comfortable hearing background is needed: isolated room or very few and low chatting in the class; respect of speech turn taking; in large group point out the speaker.

*4.4.2.1 In aural reception (listening) activities the language learner as listener receives and processes a spoken input produced by one or more speakers. For listening activities:*

Listening activities include:

Listening activities include:

OVERALL LISTENING COMPREHENSION	
A1	Can follow speech which is very slow and carefully articulated, with long pauses for him/her to assimilate meaning.

LISTENING TO ANNOUNCEMENTS AND INSTRUCTIONS	
A1	Can understand instructions addressed carefully and slowly to him/her and follow short, simple directions.

g) For these activities:

- Deaf oral learners need Cued Speech or a written transcription.
- For deaf sign learners it depends on their will and capacities, they need a written transcription.

*4.4.2.2 In visual reception (reading) activities the learner as reader receives and processes as input written texts produced by one or more writers.*

Deaf learners can perform reading activities.

*4.4.2.3 In audio-visual reception the learner simultaneously receives an auditory and a visual input.*

Deaf learners use the visual input. They can use the auditory input according to their capacities.

### 4.4.3 Interactive activities and strategies

#### 4.4.3.1 Spoken interaction

Spoken interaction must be face to face interaction.





In interactive activities the language learner acts alternately as speaker and listener with one or more interlocutors so as to construct conjointly, through the negotiation of meaning following the co-operative principle, conversational discourse.

For deaf oral learners, it should be done in small groups (less than 4) and/or a Cued Speech transliterator. Deaf sign learners can't do this except if the interlocutors master BSL or ASL.

### 4.4.3.2 *cf. CEFRL*

### 4.4.3.3 *cf. CEFRL*

### 4.4.3.4 *cf. CEFRL*

## 4.4.4 *Mediating activities and strategies*

### 4.4.4.1 *Oral mediation:*

Oral mediation is not possible except for signs, menus and notices. Written mediation is possible for deaf learners.

### 4.4.4.2 *cf. CEFRL*

## 4.4.5 *Non-verbal communication*

### 4.4.5.1 *cf. CEFRL*

### 4.4.5.2 *Paralinguistics*

For prosodic qualities, adapt your expectations to the hearing impaired abilities.

### 4.4.5.3 *cf. CEFRL*

## 4.5 **Communicative language processes**

To speak, the learner must be able to:

- *Plan* and *organise* a message (cognitive skills);
- *Formulate* a linguistic utterance (linguistic skills);
- *Articulate* the utterance (phonetic skills). Articulations skills are limited for deaf sign learners.

To listen, the learner must be able to:



- *Perceive* the utterance (auditory phonetic skills); the deaf oral learners need Cued Speech, in small groups and in face-to-face interaction.
- *Identify* the linguistic message (linguistic skills);
- *Understand* the message (semantic skills);
- *Interpret* the message (cognitive skills).

No problem for reading and writing.

### 4.5.1 cf. CEFRL

### 4.5.2 Execution

#### 4.5.2.1. Production

Limit and adapt production.

#### 4.5.2.2 Reception

Deaf learners need Cued speech (oral users) and / or subtitles (sign users).

#### 4.5.2.3 Interaction

Deaf oral users can take in face-to-face interaction, in small groups, with a cued speech transliterator.

### 4.5.3 Monitoring

It should be noted that an important factor in the control of the productive processes is the *feedback* the speaker/writer receives at each stage: formulation, articulation and acoustic.

The auditory feedback is difficult to master for oral users.

## 4.6 Texts

### 4.6.1 Texts and media

Every text is carried by a particular medium, normally by sound waves or written artefacts. When it comes to communication between deaf people their texts can be also signed.

In such case the texts are carried by the system of signs.

### 4.6.2 Media include:

cf. CEFRL + The deaf and the hard-of-hearing won't be able to use telephone, radio, audio discs and public address system because the messages if not supported by visual aids (cued speech, lip reading). Cinema films and TV should have subtitles or the aid of sign language interpreter.

### 4.6.3 Text-types include:

*Spoken*, e.g.: cf. CEFRL

These documents are accessible only to the hard of hearing, who can make use of lip reading and Cued Speech.



*Written, e.g.: cf. CEFRL*

All written texts can be understood by the hard of hearing and the Deaf. Sometimes foreign language teachers will have to not only translate a word into mother tongue but also explain concept behind that word.

The deaf and the hard of hearing learners at A1 level will be able to copy out single words and short texts presented in standard printed format just as their hearing peers.

### 4.6.4 Texts and activities

It is worth mentioning that the signs the HI use when communicating are also ephemeral and irrecoverable.

The text is central to any act of linguistic communication, the external, objective link between producer and receiver, whether they are communicating face to face or at a distance. The diagrams below show in a schematic form the relation between the learner, on whom the Framework is focused, the interlocutor(s), activities and texts.

#### h) Production.

The learner produces a spoken or written text, received, often at a distance, by one or more listeners or readers, who are not called upon to reply.

##### *I.I. Speaking*

**LEARNER** → **sound waves** → **Listener**  
(listener)

The deaf and the hard of hearing need much more practice to be able to speak than their hearing peers. Sometimes they will only be able to say simple phrases or sentences or nothing at all.

##### *I.II. Writing (reader)*

**LEARNER** → **written text** → **Reader**  
(reader)

#### i) Reception.

The learner receives a text from one or more speakers or writers, again often at a distance, and is not called upon to reply.

##### *II.I. Listening (speaker)*

**Speaker** → **sound waves** → **LEARNER**  
(speaker)

The deaf and the hard of hearing need to lip-read or have the aid of Cued Speech. They cannot use audio discs without lip-reading or Cued Speech

##### *II.II. Reading*

(writer)

**Writer** → **written text** → **LEARNER**  
(writer)

#### *I. Interaction.*



The learner enters into a face-to-face dialogue with an interlocutor. The text of the dialogue consists of utterances respectively produced and received by each party in alternation. Such situation is very difficult for the deaf and the hard of hearing (using oral language) the interlocutor has to speak quite slowly and clearly. Sign users may not be able to do such a task.

**LEARNER ↔ discourse ↔ Interlocutor**

<i>USER</i> → <i>Text 1.</i>	→	<i>interlocutor</i>
<i>USER</i> ← <i>Text 2.</i>	←	<i>interlocutor</i>
<i>USER</i> → <i>Text 3.</i>	→	<i>interlocutor</i>
<i>USER</i> ← <i>Text 4.</i>	←	<i>interlocutor</i>
<i>etc.</i>		

II. **Mediation covers two activities.**

IV.I Translation. cf. CEFR

*Interpretation.* cf. CEFR. Interpretation is not possible for the deaf and the hard of hearing if the oral language of their native country is not mastered.

Activities such as repetition, reading aloud, phonetic transcription, though very mechanical should be recommended when teaching the deaf and the hard of hearing learners. They will help them to communicate in a foreign language.

## 5. The learner's competences

cf. CEFR + When teaching the deaf and the hard of hearing one must bear in mind a separate group of language competences associated with sign languages. Some deaf learners and a substantial group of the hard of hearing ones, Sign Language is their native language. Its characteristics (in terms of linguistics) are distinctively different from those of oral languages. Many would argue that e.g. British Sign Language resembles Polish Sign Language (or any given sign language) much more than it resembles English.

### 5.1 General competences

#### 5.1.1 Declarative knowledge: cf. CEFR

##### 5.1.1.1 Knowledge of the world

If it comes to the deaf and the hard of hearing learners their general knowledge has been limited first by their hearing loss and then by the consequences of their disability. Their emotional, social and intellectual development has been affected to some extent by the loss of hearing. Their access to information has been limited. They have been taught (or denied the chance of learning) sign language and oral language. These factors should be taken into consideration while discussing deaf and hearing impaired language learners.



### 5.1.1.2 Sociocultural knowledge

Strictly speaking, knowledge of the society and culture of the community or communities in which a language is spoken is one aspect of knowledge of the world. It is, however, of sufficient importance to the language learner to merit special attention, especially since unlike many other aspects of knowledge it is likely to lie outside the learner's previous experience and may well be distorted by stereotypes.

The features distinctively characteristic of a particular European society and its culture may relate, for example, to:

I-IV.: cf. CEFRL

- j) Body language (see section 4.4.5). Knowledge of the conventions governing such behaviour form part of the learner's sociocultural competence.

Body language has a significant role for all Hearing Impaired. Native signers are used to expressing themselves through their body (movement, facial expressions) and often excel in body language-related issues.

- k) Social conventions: cf. CEFRL + within a given nation, social conventions might significantly differ between native speakers and native signers. The issue is addressed in literature as the Deaf culture. It should be taken into consideration when teaching the deaf and hard of hearing.

Ritual behaviour: **cf. CEFRL**

### 5.1.1.3 Intercultural awareness

cf. CEFRL + Most of the deaf and hearing impaired learners are already aware of the intercultural differences and issues. It is widely acknowledged that for the deaf, who have been raised by deaf parents and acquired sign language early in their childhood, L1 would be the sign language. Later they would be taught the spoken language of their native country, which in time becomes their L2.

Moreover, many countries recognize sign languages as used by language minorities. It seems that the Deaf recognize themselves as members of a language and culture minority.

It is quite different for the hard of hearing as their stance depends on various factors including the depth of their hearing loss, oral language experience, preferred mode of communication etc.

## 5.1.2 Skills and know-how

### 5.1.2.1 Practical skills and know-how include: cf. CEFRL

### 5.1.2.2 Intercultural skills and know-how : cf. CEFRL

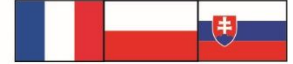
### 5.1.3 'Existential' competence (savoir-être):

cf. CEFRL+ (lack of) self-confidence, which is often negatively affected by disability;

### 5.1.4 Ability to learn:

cf. CEFRL+ Due to the loss of hearing the learners' ability to participate in social life and events is hugely limited.

Language and communication awareness:



cf. CEFRL + for many deaf learners the established linguistic system would be based on their sign language as opposite to oral which makes learning and teaching more difficult. For many of the hard of hearing the linguistic system might not be fully developed (due to the lack of language input) or even close to non-existing.

### 5.1.4.1 General phonetic awareness and skills:

cf. CEFRL + The phonetic skills of the deaf and the hard of hearing depend on numerous factors including their hearing loss, previous oral language experience and speech-therapy treatment. Learners used to speech-therapy might find it easier to produce unfamiliar sounds and be comfortable with it.

### 5.1.4.2 Study skills: cf. CEFRL

### 5.1.4.3 Heuristic skills: cf. CEFRL

## 5.2 Communicative language competences

cf. CEFRL

### 5.2.1 Linguistic competences: cf. CEFRL

#### 5.2.1.1 Lexical competence,

knowledge of, and ability to use, the vocabulary of a language, consists of lexical elements and grammatical elements.

*Lexical elements* include:

- a) *Fixed expressions*, consisting of several words, which are used and learnt as wholes. Fixed expressions include:
  - l) sentential formulae, including: cf. CEFRL
  - m) Phrasal idioms, often: cf. CEFRL+ Phrasal idioms are very difficult to understand for deaf and hearing impaired learners as they are indirect messages. If they are going to be taught to A1 level learners at all, they need a lot of explanation.
  - n) Fixed frames, cf. CEFRL + Phrasal verbs, problematic for hearing learners, are even more difficult to understand and remember by deaf and hearing impaired learners. The particles with which phrasal verbs end do not bear any concrete meaning and therefore are hardly recognized by sign language learners as useful, meaningful grammatical structures. We recommend to teach A1 level learner only very basic phrasal.
  - o) Fixed collocations, consisting of words regularly used together, e.g. to make a speech/mistake.  
(Fixed collocations are usually not a problem for deaf and hearing impaired learners.)
- b) *Single word forms*: cf. CEFRL + while some of the groups above seem to be quite easy to be perceived by deaf and hearing impaired learners – e.g. personal pronouns, the others are a trouble. Articles, quantifiers, demonstratives, prepositions, auxiliary verbs and particles are very difficult for them for the same reason as ending particles of phrasal – they do not exist in most sign languages



and do not carry any specific meaning. These are the words which sign language learners usually omit when they communicate.

### 5.2.1.2 Grammatical competence:

cf. CEFRL + Case and abstract words, conjugations and declensions, subordinate/coordinate clauses and complex/compound sentences can cause problems among deaf and hearing impaired learners, (in)transitive, active/passive voice, past/future tense progressive and transformations are entirely unavailable for vast majority of them. These categories are not to be taught to A1 level learners and therefore are not going to be discussed further.

*Morphology:* cf. CEFRL + In general, affixes are difficult for deaf and hearing impaired learners. Such learners usually do not pay enough attention to these structures even in their native language. However, through persistent attraction of their attention, it is possible to improve – to some extent – learners' comprehension of the role of affixes.

*Word-formation:* cf. CEFRL

*Morphology:* cf. CEFRL

*Morph phonology:* cf. CEFRL + Such 'minor' differences in phonology are almost completely unavailable for most deaf and hearing impaired learners. If they are going to be taught, they need to be supported with phonetic transcription, Cued Speech, finger alphabet, and lip reading.

*Syntax:* cf. CEFRL

### 5.2.1.3 Semantic competence: cf. CEFRL

#### 5.2.1.4 Phonological competence involves a knowledge of, and skill in the perception and production of:

cf. CEFRL + Phonological competence is, of course, low or very low among most of deaf and hearing impaired learners, except those who use Cued Speech. Their perception and production of the sounds, stress, intonation etc. can be far from the one to which they are exposed. While many deaf learners will not be able to use e.g. sentence phonetics or word tones at all (even in their first language), some of the hearing impaired ones will be able – to some extent – to practice their phonological skills. It is always worth improving phonological competence of the hearing impaired. For some of them a well-pronounced word, phrase or sentence can boost their self-confidence and be a stimulatory achievement. In some cases however, phonological practice will not bring any effect at all.

Although it is worth trying to improve the learners' phonological competence, English teachers of the deaf and the hearing impaired should not put much pressure on phonology. Moreover, assessment should always be adjusted to learners' abilities.





PHONOLOGICAL CONTROL	
A1	<i>Pronunciation of a very limited repertoire of learnt words and phrases can be understood with some effort by native speakers used to dealing with speakers of his/her language group. Not applicable for deaf learners. With hearing impaired - not always possible.</i>

### 5.2.1.5 Orthographic competence:

cf. CEFRL + The proper spelling of words and punctuation is often difficult for deaf and hearing impaired learners. This fact can be caused by at least two common factors: the hearing loss of the learners and/or their additional disabilities, like dysphasia, dyslexia etc.

### 5.2.1.6 Orthoepic competence

Deaf and hearing impaired learners cannot be expected to present high or even average orthoepic competence. Deaf learners cannot be required to read aloud a prepared text. It is only possible if the HI is used to an oral language. Neither can we expect from learners to use in speech words first encountered in their written form or to be able to produce a correct pronunciation from the written form. This is entirely impossible with deaf learners and very difficult to achieve with the hearing impaired ones without Cued Speech.

Orthoepic competence may involve:

- p) cf. CEFRL+ A1 level learner is usually not expected to know phonetic signs and the rules of phonetic transcription. Moreover, introducing this knowledge to the deaf and hearing impaired learners would cause their learning far more difficult. Let us remember that for a lot of deaf and a number of hearing impaired learners, sign language is their native means of communication. The language used by the society in which they live is their second language. Written English is often the third language that they encounter. Spoken English would be then their fourth language and the phonetic transcription – the fifth. All of these would make the process of learning a language far too much complicated.
- q) Knowledge of the implications of written forms, particularly punctuation marks, for phrasing and intonation: Impossible with deaf and hearing impaired learners.
- r) Ability to resolve ambiguity (homonyms, syntactic ambiguities, etc.) in the light of the context: Very difficult for deaf and hearing impaired learners as many of them do not look at sentences as whole, logical, meaningful structures. They often see just individual words and do not have enough language experience.

ORTHOGRAPHIC CONTROL	
A1	<i>Can copy familiar words and short phrases <u>from a given category</u> e.g. simple signs or instructions, names of everyday objects, names of shops and set phrases used regularly. (Giving them a category narrows the spectrum of words and phrases from which they can chose.)</i>



*Can spell his/her address, nationality and other personal details - with the use of finger alphabet.*

### 5.2.2 Sociolinguistic competence

Sociolinguistic competence is the ability to choose the proper linguistic behaviour to the situation. Developing sociolinguistic competence one should have already mastered the basic rules of linguistic competence. Deaf people, conscious and competent sign language users, can behave properly in various sociolinguistic situations. Linguistic markers of social relations, politeness conventions, register differences of speech, language dialects – all this is present in the sign language.

Therefore it is extremely important to the person working as an English teacher with deaf learners to not only be aware that there are differences between the two languages sign and oral, but also to know exactly what those differences are. The situation would be even better if the teacher had at least a passive knowledge of sign language at the same level he expects from his learners.

Linguistic markers of social relations, politeness conventions, register differences – these are of course widely divergent in different cultures and languages. Obviously not everything can be translated from one language to another, but such factors as closeness of relation, many register differences of discourse, greetings forms, address forms, positive or negative politeness, etc. – can be clearly expressed in sign language. The distinction can be expressed by controlling the appropriate spatial distance and/or by controlling nonverbal behaviours such as facial expressions, body posture and gestures selection.

Regarding expressions of "folk wisdom" they require more explanation, but they should not be omitted because it is also process of foreign language learning and culture acquisition.

Sociolinguistic competence also includes the ability to recognize the linguistic markers of, for example regional provenance or national origin. But dealing with deaf people it is rather obvious that they will not be able to hear the accent differences.

Unfortunately the greatest barrier which does not allow the deaf to use the foreign language in a fluent, appropriate sociolinguistic way is due to their hearing loss. So when teaching English to deaf learners we should not skip over sociolinguistic issues, just because the deaf "will not hear the difference". We should present different social contexts through careful comparison to social sign language situations or by giving more and more explanation.

### 5.2.3 Pragmatic competences

Deaf and hard of hearing children show delays and difficulties in communication due to insufficient exposure to daily language practice. They lack ability to control and structure the sentences in terms of thematic organization or logical ordering of language expression.

As it comes to deaf learners they should be given writing exercises in place of speaking ones. One should take into account the needs and abilities of each HI learners. And exercises' commands should be expressed in a short, simple sentences as the learners could follow the instructions and accomplish a given task.



A deaf learner should always be given examples of different types of texts e.g. description, narration, demonstration, instruction, so he/she could learn by repetition and analysing the suitable sequence of sentences and finally learn to distinguish different types of structures.

Fluent use of verbal language will remain unlearned by the deaf learners and the level of pragmatic communication can be unsatisfactory. That is due to the hearing loss which affects the way of speaking verbal communication. But teacher should encourage his deaf learner and may expect that he/she communicates what he/she wants to say in a simple, short phrases on familiar topics.

## 6 Language learning and teaching

cf. CEFR

### 6.1 What is it that learners have to learn or acquire?

#### 6.1.1 cf. CEFR

##### 6.1.2

cf. CEFR + The appropriate objectives for a particular stage of learning for a particular learner or class of learner at a particular age, cannot necessarily be derived by a straightforward across-the-board reading of the scales proposed for each parameter. Decisions have to be made in each case.

This is a very important remark with hearing impaired learners. The teacher must decide which language skills, competences or strategies should be developed more depending on the learner's hearing loss and their language-oral or sign.

#### 6.1.3 *Plurilingual competence and pluricultural competence cf. CEFR*

##### 6.1.3.1

cf. CEFR + The profile of competences in one language is different from that in others (for example, excellent speaking competence in two languages, but good writing competence in only one of them); Some HI learners do not master the written language the same way as the hearing learners. For HI sign learners the access to written language can be disadvantaged due to the specific structure of the Sign Language.

##### 6.1.3.2

cf. CEFR + the HI learners can be taught in the mainstream system by a non-specialised teacher who doesn't know neither Sign Language nor Cued Speech tool. Teachers have to pay attention that in such a situation the learner and the teacher do not share the same linguistic experience – the teacher speaks and teaches linear language, learner uses another mode of communication. And it cannot be compared.

##### 6.1.3.3 *Development of awareness and the process of use and learning*

Plurilingual and pluricultural competence also promotes the development of linguistic and communication awareness, and even metacognitive strategies which enable the social agent to become



more aware of and control his or her own 'spontaneous' ways of handling tasks and in particular their linguistic dimension. In addition, this experience of plurilingualism and pluriculturalism:

- s) Exploits pre-existing *sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences* which in turn develops them further;
- t) Leads to a better perception of what is general and what is specific concerning the linguistic organisation of different languages (form of metalinguistic, interlinguistic or so to speak 'hyperlinguistic' awareness);
- u) By its nature refines knowledge of how to learn and the capacity to enter into relations with others and new situations.

It may, therefore, to some degree accelerate subsequent learning in the linguistic and cultural areas. This is the case even if plurilingual and pluricultural competence is 'uneven' and if proficiency in a particular language remains 'partial'.

This kind of linguistic experience is always limited for D/HI learner. The reason is simple: a deaf person is physically deprived of the ability to hear sounds. So lack of this kind of experience can sometimes slow down the process of learning a language.

It can be claimed, moreover, that while the knowledge of one foreign language and culture does not always lead to going beyond what may be ethnocentric in relation to the 'native' language and culture, and may even have the opposite effect (it is not uncommon for the learning of **one** language and contact with **one** foreign culture to reinforce stereotypes and preconceived ideas rather than reduce them), a knowledge of several languages is more likely to achieve this, while at the same time enriching the potential for learning.

In this context the promotion of respect for the diversity of languages and of learning more than one foreign language in school is significant. It is not simply a linguistic policy choice at an important point in the history of Europe, for example, nor even – however important this may be – a matter of increasing future opportunities for young people competent in more than two languages. It is also a matter of helping learners:

- v) To construct their linguistic and cultural identity through integrating into it a diversified experience of otherness;
- w) To develop their ability to learn through this same diversified experience of relating to several languages and cultures.

In this context we should also promote among hearing learners the awareness of different mode of communication, as e.g. sign languages.

### 6.1.3.4 cf. CEFRL

### 6.1.4 Variation in objectives in relation to the Framework

cf. CEFRL

#### 6.1.4.1 Types of objectives in relation to the Framework Teaching/learning objectives may in fact be conceived:

- a) cf. CEFRL



- b) cf. CEFRL + In terms of the communicative language competence the main aim of teaching a foreign language to the D/HI learners should be mastery pragmatic effectiveness. The objective for the deaf learner is to develop a capacity to act in the foreign language with the limited linguistic resources available.
- c) cf. CEFRL
- d) cf. CEFRL

### 6.1.4.2 *The complementarity of partial objectives*

cf. CEFRL

## 6.2 The processes of language learning

### 6.2.1 *Acquisition or learning?*

cf. CEFRL + As language acquisition opportunities for the Deaf and the Hearing Impaired learners are limited by their hearing loss it is crucial to expose them to the real language usage by immersing them in the written language real materials, communication, and oral materials if possible. The development of ICT (Information and Communication Technology) allows the teachers to broaden the learners' experience.

### 6.2.2 *How do learners learn?*

#### 6.2.2.1

cf. CEFRL + As Deaf/HI learners are more visual and kinaesthetic learners, it's advisable to dwell on their abilities.

#### 6.2.2.2

cf. CEFRL + Engaging Deaf/HI learners in a real-life communication is not an easy task. Still, it might be done through the usage of ICT or thanks to the development of CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning) or by using Cued Speech.

#### 6.2.2.3

cf. CEFRL + Whilst working with the Deaf/HI the teachers should take into consideration the depth of the learners' hearing loss and individual differences in hearing loss among their learners.

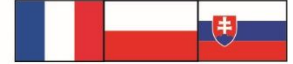
It is also advisable to check their native language proficiency as it will influence their target language performance.

## 6.3 What can each kind of Framework learner do to facilitate language learning?

cf. CEFRL

### 6.3.1 *Examinations and qualifications:*

For those teaching the Deaf/HI the clarity of the instructions and the provision of examples should be a key concern.



### 6.3.2 *Authorities,*

when drawing up curricular guidelines or formulating syllabuses, may concentrate on the specification of learning objectives.

To what extent the HI learners are expected to express themselves in spoken language and what level of accuracy and fluency in speaking should be expected of them remains to be seen.

### 6.3.3

cf. CEFRL + Whilst teaching the Deaf/HI one might find certain parts of the textbooks inaccessible or irrelevant for the learners (e.g. listening and speaking activities). Still, there is the need to cover the material which can be done by adapting the above mentioned tasks.

### 6.3.4 *cf. CEFRL*

### 6.3.5

cf. CEFRL + The opportunity to learn how to be an independent language learner cannot be overestimated as it might be of a great influence both on the learners' class performance and on their general self-confidence in life.

## 6.4 Some methodological options for modern language learning and teaching

cf. CEFRL

### 6.4.1 *General approaches*

cf. CEFRL + With Deaf/HI learners the choice of methods and ways of approaching language learning is both limited by the hearing loss and different as their first language might well not be a spoken one but a sign one. Bearing this in mind the best practical advice might be to vary your procedures and adapt the methods to the best of your knowledge and the needs of your learners.

### 6.4.2 *Consideration should be given to the relative roles of teachers, learners and media.*

#### 6.4.2.1 *cf. CEFRL*

#### 6.4.2.2

Teachers should realise that their actions, reflecting their attitudes and abilities are the most important part of the environment for language learning/acquisition. They present role-models which learners may follow in their future use of the language and their practice as future teachers. What importance is attached to their:

a-i) cf. CEFRL

j) Ability to use sign language proficiently -the teacher who uses Sign Language makes deaf learners' foreign language learning easier-for the HI learners whose mother tongue is a Sign Language.





### 6.4.2.3

How far should *learners* be expected or required to:

cf. CEFRL

### 6.4.2.4

What use can and should be made of *instructional media* (audio and video cassettes, computers etc.)?

cf. CEFRL

### 6.4.3

What part should be played by *texts* in language learning and teaching?

#### 6.4.3.1

How may learners be expected or required to learn from spoken and written texts (see section 4.6)?

cf. CEFRL

#### 6.4.3.2

How far should the written or spoken texts presented to learners be:

cf. CEFRL + It's useful to teach important public notices (Waiting area, Wrong way, Entrance etc.). Nowadays the deaf travel a lot. Some HI may not be able to ask for directions but knowing these expressions they will help them to find their way through.

#### 6.4.3.3

How far should learners have not only to *process*, but also to *produce* texts?

- a) cf. CEFRL + It may be very difficult for deaf and hard-of-hearing learners to pronounce even simple words and phrases. Memorizing how words are pronounced will be much more difficult for deaf and hard-of-hearing learners than for hearing learners. Phonological accuracy of deaf and hard-of-hearing learners' utterances may never be reached. Cued Speech can help HI learners -whose mother tongue is a spoken language- to memorize how to pronounce a word. Indeed, Cued Speech visually represents all the sounds of the oral speech.
- b) cf. CEFRL + Bear in mind that some errors occurring in your deaf learners' pieces of writing may be a result of the consequences of their hearing loss.

#### 6.4.3.4

cf. CEFRL

### 6.4.4

How far should learners be expected or required to learn from *tasks* and *activities* (see sections 4.3 and 4.4):





cf. CEFRL

### 6.4.5

Should the development of the learner's ability to use *communicative strategies* (see section 4.4) be:

cf. CEFRL

### 6.4.6 General competences

(see section 5.1) may be developed in various ways.

#### 6.4.6.1

With regard to knowledge of the world, learning a new language does not mean starting afresh. Much if not most of the knowledge that is needed can be taken for granted.

Sometimes deafness leads to incomplete and rudimentary general knowledge. It's good to check if learners understand certain concepts and if not explain them.

#### 6.4.6.2

cf. CEFRL

#### 6.4.6.3

How then should the general, non-language-specific competences be treated in language courses?

cf. CEFRL

#### 6.4.6.4

With regard to *existential competence*, the learner's personality features, motivations, attitudes, beliefs, etc. (see section 5.1.3) may be:

cf. CEFRL

#### 6.4.6.5

With regard to ability to learn, learners may (be expected/required to) develop their *study skills* and *heuristic skills* and their acceptance of *responsibility for their own learning* (see section 5.1.4):

cf. CEFRL

### 6.4.7

cf. CEFRL

#### 6.4.7.1

In which of the following ways should learners be expected or required to develop their *vocabulary*?

cf. CEFRL

#### 6.4.7.2

cf. CEFRL



### 6.4.7.3

Lexical selection cf. CEFR

### 6.4.7.4

**Grammatical competence**, the ability to organise sentences to convey meaning, is clearly central to communicative competence and most (though not all) of those concerned with language planning, teaching and testing pay close attention to the management of the process of learning to do so. This usually involves a selection, ordering and step-by-step presentation and drilling of new material, starting with short sentences consisting of a single clause with its constituent phrases represented by single words (e.g. Jane is happy) and finishing with complex sentences. However, we have to bear in mind the fact that some deaf and hearing impaired learners are able to produce and receive only short utterances. This does not preclude the early introduction of analytically complex material as a fixed formula (i.e. a vocabulary item) or as a fixed frame for lexical insertion (please may I have a . . .).

### 6.4.7.

cf. CEFR

### 6.4.7.6

cf. CEFR

### 6.4.7.7

**Learners may (be expected/required to) develop their *grammatical competence*:**

- a) inductively, by exposure to new grammatical material in authentic texts as encountered;
- b) inductively, by incorporating new grammatical elements, categories, classes, structures, rules, etc. in texts specially composed to demonstrate their form, function and meaning;
- c) as b), but followed by explanations and formal exercises;
- d) by the presentation of formal paradigms, tables of forms, etc. followed by explanations using an appropriate metalanguage in L2 or L1 and formal exercises;
- e) by elicitation and, where necessary, reformulation of learners' hypotheses, etc.

Points a-b seem to be more difficult for deaf and hearing impaired learners, whereas points c-d are better for understanding and practice. Therefore they should be used more common. Usually deaf and hearing impaired learners need much more formal exercises to master a language than hearing people.

### 6.4.7.8

cf. CEFR

### 6.4.7.9

#### **Pronunciation**

Should deaf and hearing impaired learners be expected/required to develop their ability to **pronounce** a language? Yes, but only to some extent. As proper pronunciation is not always possible even in national languages of the deaf and the hearing impaired, we cannot always expect them to master pronunciation in a foreign language. It is far more difficult for them to learn pronunciation –speech therapy and the use of Cued Speech may help them to reach this aim. If we put too much pressure on proper pronunciation, we can discourage deaf and hearing impaired learners from learning a language



in general. On the other hand, pronunciation practice can be motivating for some of the learners so it is worth trying with the learners who are willing to speak.

Then **how** should deaf and hearing impaired learners be expected to develop their ability to pronounce a language?

- a) Simply by exposure to authentic spoken utterances; they need to be simple, especially at the beginning of learning – e.g. Good morning / Open your books. The teachers can support pronunciation practice with finger alphabet, lip reading, Cued Speech, and additionally they can write the pronunciation on the board.
- b) by chorused imitation of
  - i) The teacher; (reception must be supported by lip reading; the teacher should speak slowly and clearly. It is helpful to write the pronunciation on the board using the learners' mother tongue alphabet – not proper pronunciation symbols as they could confuse the learner).

Do not use:

- ii) audio-recorded native speakers;
- iii) video-recorded native speakers;

Such exercises are very difficult for deaf and hearing impaired learners to understand and can lead to incorrect pronunciation patterns; they need a Cued Speech transliterator to access such materials if pronunciation is the task.

- c) by individualised language laboratory work; (foreign language teachers can take advantage of some techniques used by speech therapists)
- d) by reading aloud phonetically weighted textual material; (*just very short and simple utterances*)
- e) by ear-training and phonetic drilling;
- f) as d) and e) but with the use of phonetically transcribed texts;
- g) by explicit phonetic training (see section 5.2.1.4);
- h) by learning orthoepic conventions (i.e. how to pronounce written forms);
- i) by some combination of the above

Do not require 100% correct pronunciation from your learners as it can be impossible with deaf and hearing impaired learners. No matter how well or badly they do, it is always good to praise the learners for pronunciation in order to boost their self-confidence, encourage and motivate them to extra language practice.

### 6.4.7.10 Orthography

How should learners be expected/required to develop their ability to handle the writing system of a language?

a-f) cf. CEFRL

- g) By the practice of dictation – not possible with deaf and hearing impaired learners, except for those using the Cued Speech.

One should bear in mind the fact that some of the learners have additional learning disabilities like dyslexia or dysorthographia. Therefore development of proper orthography is not always possible.

### 6.4.8 Should the development

of the learner's *sociolinguistic competence* (see section 5.2.2) be assumed to be transferable from the learner's experience of social life or facilitated?

cf. CEFRL



### 6.4.9

Should the development of the learner's *pragmatic competences* (see section 5.2.3) be?

cf. CEFRL

## 6.5 Errors and mistakes

cf. CEFRL

# 7 Tasks and their role in language teaching

## 7.1 Task description

A specific attention on task choice should be done. HI learners can have a limited vigour and attention span for foreign languages learning due to the consequences of their hearing impairment. Motivation can be easily questioned. Tasks should be kept very personalized, related to their interests (names of movies, instructions in PC games, information related to favourite subjects, actors, football players), taken from real life (restaurant menu, train/airport schedules, signs, legends and labels), names of famous brand products or any English words used in their native country.

## 7.2 Task performance

### 7.2.1 Competences

It is much more important to pick the tasks that respect the HI learners general communication competencies. Recommendations: do not insist on right pronunciation, reading aloud or lip reading. Focus on written form of English, practice passive understanding, get familiar with the Deaf community in English-speaking countries and their communication means such as British Sign Language /American Sign Language. Audio and video documents not subtitled are not accessible for HI learners.

### 7.2.2 Conditions and constraints

HI learner may have difficulties with pure oral text, abstract subjects/topics, idioms, slang. Constraints on linguistic level are closely discussed in another part of this document.

The overall HI learners' educational conditions through teaching/learning/assessing are influenced by these factors:

- degree of hearing impairment (hearing loss)
- the time when hearing impairment has been acquired -pre or post language development period-
- the language the HI learner perceives to be his/her mother tongue (oral or sign language)
- cultural identity (belonging to hearing or Deaf community)
- cultural identity of family members (belonging to hearing or Deaf community)
- hearing aids and their benefits (audio prosthesis, cochlear implant)
- additional disabilities

### 7.2.3 Strategies

Strategies have to take into account the specific profile and competences of HI learners and offer suitable compensation in these fields:



- environment conditions (lighting and audio conditions, class group size)
- teacher's skills of communication with HI learners
- focus on development of competencies in foreign language that is real for the learner and respect his/her specific profile
- an assumption that HI learners will benefit from them in the future

HI learners may prefer information/texts that have some supportive visual components (photos, drawings; drawn jokes; subtitled videos, mind maps, diagrams); information related to concrete known people, events, places; words analysed by categories and topics (nouns, adjectives...school, sports...). Montessori pedagogical approach can be very helpful for HI learner as it strongly involves visual, tactile and movement component into educational process.

HI learners may prefer to solve the tasks supported by visual puzzle: to correct discrepancy/find mistakes between the text and the picture; describe a picture/ discrepancies between pictures; to compare similar visual situations and choose the correct one by description; draw a picture/plan/map/route according to oral instructions; match the picture and the word/phrase/sign and so on.

### 7.3 Task difficulty

The educational authorities (local schooling authorities, textbook writers, those with administrative power, teachers – especially in mainstream without knowledge of consequences of hearing impairment) should be aware that some language competencies are not accessible or very tough to perform.

The fragile motivation of HI learners to acquire skills in another oral language (except his/her native one) can be easily distracted by the difficulty of presented material.

In considering levels of task difficulty, it is necessary to take into account:

- learner's competences and characteristics, including the learner's own purposes and learning style;
- Task conditions and constraints may affect the language learner's performance and, may be adjusted to accommodate learner's competences and characteristics.

#### 7.3.1 HI Learner competences and learner characteristics

##### 7.3.1.1 Cognitive factors

HI learner's cognitive dispositions are same as hearing one in field of nonverbal performance. There are constrictions in verbal area (such as shorter audio memory span, worse verbal memory ect.), that are caused by lack of experience and basal exposure due to hearing impairment.

##### 7.3.1.2 Affective factors

HI learners, in general, do not prefer oral/spoken language. As there is no problem to communicate with foreign person in deaf community, their motivation to learn oral language is low. The reason is that HI learner contact hearing community only when necessary. Especially there is block to practise speaking and English pronunciation. The reason is that to practise spoken form in maternal oral language is mostly exhaustive and it is difficult to reach minimum intelligibility.

##### 7.3.1.3 Linguistic factors



Sign language is considered to be maternal language for most HI learners. The nature of sign language and communication of HI is motion not words. Therefore the characteristics of oral languages are completely different in a very basic structure of given message.

### *7.3.2 Task conditions and constraints*

The teacher should be aware of:

- chosen channels through the information is coming from;
- lighting and audio background / environment;
- visible position of all speakers;
- communication tools and supports such as Sign Language, Cued Speech

#### *7.3.2.1 Interaction and production*

HI learners have low competences, due to impairment, for speech and face to face communication. When using oral language they prefer written forms in interaction. Mostly they can rely on nonverbal communication.

## **8 Linguistic diversification and the curriculum**

### **8.1 Definition and initial approach**

The definition of plurilingual and pluricultural competence differs for a HI person due to the experience of language and to the mother tongue.

### **8.2 Options for curricular design**

#### *8.2.1 Diversification within an overall concept*

Discussion about curricula in relation to the Framework may be guided by three main principles plus one more principle for the HI learners.

The fourth principle is that adapted lessons, assessments and examinations should be done focusing on their capacities and not on their incapacities.

#### *8.2.2 From the partial to the transversal*

cf. CEFRL

### **8.3 Towards curriculum scenarios**

#### *8.3.1 Curriculum and variation of objectives*

With HI learners, the target group can be a mixed group (a hearing impaired person with hearing persons) or a group of hearing impaired persons. Some hearing impaired learners have no experience of learning foreign languages in primary schools.

Singing songs is not possible for deaf sign users who do not use oral language. Phonetics is more comfortable and more efficient for oral hearing impaired learners if taught with Cued Speech.

#### *8.3.2 Some examples of differentiated curriculum scenarios*





HI learners do not always start English in Primary school, do not often learn a FL2, and rarely learn a FL3. For Deaf Sign users, Sign Language is their mother tongue so the country language is their FL1 and a foreign language is their FL2. Even some HI oral users can have a limited access to the country language because their language experience is less natural than the hearing ones. Listening to audio documents is not always possible for deaf learners depending on their hearing loss, on radio or CDs they can be helped by the scripts, on TV they can be helped by subtitled programs.

### *Primary school:*

HI learners do not always start a foreign language in primary school because they have first to develop their mother tongue and / or the country language and they have speech therapy so they lack of time to learn another language.

HI learners should have the possibility to choose the country language as FL1 or not.

A visual learning approach, body language and gestures are important for deaf learners. On the contrary working on sound aspects, music and rhythm can be difficult, even impossible but the use of Cued Speech can help some of them.

FL1 should be the country language for hearing-impaired learners. Even if taught the same as for the hearing learners, it is not learned the same and should not be assessed the same

FL2 is not very often learned by deaf learners except if FL2 is Sign Language.

FL2: first foreign language for hearing impaired learners if country language is FL1

## **8.4 Assessment and school, out-of-school and post-school learning**

### *8.4.1 The place of the school curriculum*

A better awareness of, knowledge of and confidence in the HI learners' competences and the capacities and resources available to them, inside and outside the school, so that they may extend and refine these competences and use them effectively in particular domains.

### *8.4.2 Portfolio and profiling cf. CEFRL*

### *8.4.3 A multidimensional and modular approach cf. CEFRL*

## **9 Assessment**

### **9.1 Introduction**

This chapter deals with assessment of hearing impaired learners. We have to keep in mind the consequences of hearing impairment in assessment. We should be aware that we assess the level of English communication skills and not the level of the consequences of hearing impairment. Important questions are: *what is assessed*, and *how performance is interpreted*.

It is unfair that there is a huge gap between the two ways of assessment: public or official ones and teachers' ones. The public assessment should respect the physiological limits of HI learners and should





follow the criteria of teachers' assessment. An assessment procedure also needs to be practical, to be *feasible*. Feasibility is the most important issue with performance testing.

## 9.2 The Framework as a resource for assessment

### 9.2.1 The specification of the content of tests and examinations

To summarize we should focus on writing and reading skills for HI learners. Spoken skills should be optional for HI learners who are willing and able to use oral communication.

	Interaction	Production
Spoken:	<i>Physiologically limited</i>	<i>Physiologically limited</i>
Written:	<i>Can be proposed instead of spoken one</i>	<i>Report/Description of his/her academic field</i>

Considering the content we should choose topics that are not related to hearing such as music, favourite songs etc. We should respect domains, conditions and constraints, mental and cultural context of HI learners as described in previous chapters. Assessment has to respect specific profiles of communication abilities of HI learners. The use of same tests for hearing population discriminates HI learners. There is no offer of examples how to construct the items of tests specific to HI learners.

### 9.2.2 The criteria for the attainment of a learning objective

The criteria for acquiring certain level should take into account massive general consequence of hearing impairment on ability to master oral language. There is a huge variety among HI learners' communication ability. The ability mostly depends on the level of hearing loss. Profoundly HI learners -with average intelligence- has to generate twice more effort to acquire the same level as intact peers.

In some countries (France and Poland for example) the public assessment accepts different level final college exams in comparison to intact population and also takes into account the level of hearing loss (measured by audiogram).

#### 9.2.2.1 Descriptors of communicative activities

Descriptors of communicative activities (Chapter 4) can be used also for HI learners with respect to consequences of HI as described in previous chapters. The descriptors describe not only WHAT the learners can do, but also HOW WELL they do it.

#### 9.2.2.2 Descriptors of aspects of proficiency related to particular competences

Descriptors of aspects of proficiency can be used in two main ways in relation to the attainment of objectives.

1. Self- or teacher-assessment
2. Performance assessment

There are basically three ways in which descriptors can be presented for use as assessment criteria:



- Firstly, descriptors can be presented as a *scale* – often combining descriptors for different categories into one holistic paragraph per level. This is a very common approach, but not suitable for HI learners.
- Secondly, they can be presented as a *checklist*, usually with one checklist per relevant level, often with descriptors grouped under headings, i.e. under categories. Checklists are less usual for live assessment.
- Thirdly, they can be presented as a **grid of selected categories**, in effect as a set of parallel scales for separate categories. This approach makes it possible **to give a diagnostic profile**. This approach we see as the most relevant to fair assessing of attainment of English communication skills.

### 9.2.3 Describing the levels of proficiency in tests and examinations to aid comparison

The HI Framework starts a discussion on assessing the performance in modern language learning in a hearing impairment context. Chapters 4 to 7 elaborate a descriptive scheme, which tries to conceptualize language use through the lens of HI learners.

The scales of descriptors make up a conceptual grid which can be used to:

- relate hearing community public approach and HI teaching facilities approach, through the medium of the Common Framework;
- map the objectives of particular examinations and course modules using the categories and levels of the scales related to conditions of hearing impairment.

## 9.3 Types of assessment

We would like to highlight some types of assessment as more useful than the others when assessing HI learners.

Table 7. Original list of types of assessment from Common Framework

1	Achievement assessment	Proficiency assessment
2	Norm-referencing (NR)	Criterion-referencing (CR)
3	Mastery learning CR	Continuum CR
4	Continuous assessment	Fixed assessment points
5	Formative assessment	Summative assessment
6	Direct assessment	Indirect assessment
7	Performance assessment	Knowledge assessment
8	Subjective assessment	Objective assessment
9	Checklist rating	Performance rating
10	Impression	Guided judgement



11	Holistic assessment	Analytic assessment
12	Series assessment	Category assessment
13	Assessment by others	Self-assessment

*Achievement assessment* is the assessment of the achievement of specific objectives – assessment of what has been taught. It therefore relates to the week's/term's work, the course book, the syllabus. It represents an internal perspective which can take into account an individual profile and gives sort of diagnostic resume of attained communication skills. This type is important to learners and teachers. *Proficiency assessment* on the other hand is assessment of what someone can do/knows in relation to the application of the subject in the real world. It represents an external perspective. It is important to educational administrators. Our experiences say that there is high risk to assess what is necessary from hearing population perspective and not what is necessary and feasible for HI learner.

*Norm-referencing* is the placement of learners in rank order, their assessment and ranking in relation to their peers. This sort of assessment is in high risk to demotivate HI learners when comparing to intact peers and also not correct to compare HI learners with different communication profiles. *Criterion-referencing* is a reaction against norm-referencing in which the learner is assessed purely in terms of his/her ability in the subject, irrespective of the ability of his/her peers. We can highly recommend this sort of approach.

The *mastery criterion-referencing* approach is one in which a single 'minimum competence standard' or 'cut-off point' is set to divide learners into 'masters' and 'non-masters', with no degrees of quality in the achievement of the objective being recognised. This sort of assessment is a problem for public exams. Spoken skills cannot be assessed as YES/NO but replaced with CAN'T.

*Direct assessment* is assessing what the candidate is actually doing. For example, a small group are discussing something, the assessor observes, compares with a criteria grid, matches the performances to the most appropriate categories on the grid, and gives an assessment. HI learner does not have the access to this sort of assessment. *Indirect assessment* that uses a test, usually on paper, which often assesses enabling skills is more appropriate. Be aware that for some HI learner writing is quite difficult so they should have the option to answer in sign language (or BSL skills could be assessed).

*Performance assessment* requires the learner to provide a sample of language in speech or writing in a direct test. During teaching we recommend to focus on functional communication and pragmatic competence. Therefore the performance assessment is more appropriate way. *Knowledge assessment* requires the learner to answer questions which can be of a range of different item types in order to provide evidence of the extent of their linguistic knowledge and control. Could be used too, but to master grammar and linguistic knowledge is to HI learner quite limited.

*Rating on a scale*: judging that a person is at a particular level or band on a scale made up of a number of such levels or bands. *Rating on a checklist*: judging a person in relation to a list of points deemed to be relevant for a particular level or module. Both sorts are appropriate.

*Holistic assessment/Series assessment* is making a global synthetic judgement, is not appropriate for HI. *Analytic assessment/Category assessment* looking at different aspects, competences, skills assessed separately in categories (assessment grid) is more adequate.

*Users of the HI Framework should consider:*



- *the specific communication profile of the learner*
- *the overall result of exams should be more diagnostic profile assessing different skills separately*
- *physiological, linguistic and cultural specifics of HI background and restrictions should be taken into account when constructing test items*

### 9.4 Feasible assessment and a metasystem

There are possible categories to a feasible assessment:

*Turn taking strategies* – not in spoken interaction, spoken one replace with written one

*Co-operating strategies*

*Asking for clarification*

*Fluency*

*Flexibility*

*Coherence*

*Thematic development*

*Precision*

*Sociolinguistic competence* – for learners with a profound deafness and additional disabilities we could accept lower level of these skills

*General range*

*Vocabulary range*

*Grammatical accuracy*

*Vocabulary control*

*Phonological control* – no phonological assessment

Different systems with different learners in different contexts simplify, select and combine features in different ways for different kinds of assessment.