



TECHNIUM
SOCIAL SCIENCES JOURNAL

Vol. 14, 2020

**A new decade
for social changes**

www.techniumscience.com

ISSN 2668-7798



9 772668 779000

The Role of Communication in Building Social relations with Deaf Persons

Admira Beha

University of Tuzla, Faculty of Education and rehabilitation, Department of
Audiology, Bosnia and Herzegovina
admirabeha@gmail.com

Abstract. The communication isolation to which deaf people are exposed often influences the building of social relations and determines their social position. The paper presents research on the position of deaf people caused by communication and social factors. The sample consisted of deaf (n=127) and hearing (n=99) respondents. In the evaluation of the results was used descriptive and factor analysis. The research isolated communication discriminatory factors and factors of discrimination in the evaluation of social functions, based on which it can be concluded that communication plays a key role in building social relations of deaf people, but also that their position is conditioned stereotypical and discriminatory attitudes of the hearing environment.

Keywords. communication, deaf and hearing people, social relations, social status, attitudes.

1. Introduction

Hearing impairment belongs to the group of sensory impairments, which are not visible and are most often noticed when establishing communication. The attitude of professionals, the environment, and even parents towards a deaf child very often depends on assessments made based on ignorance and poor information, which limits their capacities and developmental possibilities. Hearing impairment in young children is initially defined from a medical point of view, within which deafness is seen as a disease and disability, most often due to the need to make a diagnosis. Hearing parents and professionals who work with children advocate a psychological or functional view, according to which hearing impairment can have consequences on a child's learning, behaviour, and relationships with peers. Despite normal intelligence and developed abilities, deaf people experience social exclusion more often than the hearing population [1]. Regardless of the degree, hearing impairment has a great impact on communication, learning, and general social development [2]. Deaf and hard of hearing people use different forms of communication, between themselves and their environment. Which of the forms of communication will primarily develop, apart from the time and degree of hearing impairment, also depends on their intellectual development. To achieve communication between deaf and hard of hearing people and their social environment, mutual efforts are needed, ie the will to establish communication is needed, and then the use of all means, which will make this communication understandable [3]. Severe hearing impairments bring greater problems in communication and leave more severe consequences in the development of cognitive functions, as well as in the development of social and emotional functioning of deaf people [4]. In contrast, minor hearing impairments do not cause major difficulties in cognitive

functioning, and the consequences are most often manifested on the emotional level and social relations. Depending on how deeply one wants to go into communication with a person, superficial or quite present in rehabilitation, formal communication will be reduced by that much. Deeper communication leads to better understanding, and understanding is not an easy task if two communication systems collide, such as the standard verbal communication system and the non-standard, predominantly nonverbal or mixed system of communication of the rehabilitator [5]. In this regard, an approach to rehabilitation is introduced based on the development of communication skills in real and everyday situations, which is extremely important for them, given that it is a minority population, whose daily activities take place in the middle of the hearing [6].

Avoiding contact between a deaf and hearing person can be mutual because both populations have difficulties in understanding and transmitting communications content. Many factors complicate the social position of deaf people. Communication difficulties, inadequate education, and practical training, negative attitudes of employers are cited as factors that prevent employment and retain employment for deaf people [7]. Research by several authors [8, 9, 10] shows that deaf people face negative attitudes from the environment, that their communication opportunities are limited, and that they are very often unemployed, due to poor professional training and insufficient work experience. Every person, including the deaf, is in social interaction with family, friends, co-workers, and other people, where hearing impairment very often leaves consequences and affects their interaction [11]. Regardless of the age group, deaf people state that they are aware of the fact that the hearing environment feels uncomfortable when communicating with them, leading to increased feelings of isolation and loneliness [12], with even family members and friends can contribute to increased feelings of isolation [13]. Ignorance of the way deaf people communicate can cause their isolation because the hearing population does not have enough knowledge to exchange the necessary information and content with them. Avoiding contact and relationships with deaf people does not have to a priori express negative attitudes of the hearing environment, although they are very often perceived as discriminatory and segregating. In everyday life, deaf people often have to deal with negative and stereotypical attitudes on the part of hearing people [14]. Inadequate rehabilitation of hearing and speech can also be the cause of this because although people with hearing impairments are most often involved in this process, it often happens that they lack experience for everyday communication. Despite the increased acceptance of the hearing environment [15], deaf people still face more life challenges than hearing people. Some of these challenges are based on attitudes (eg inferiority, pity, ignorance, prejudice, and/or stereotypes) and others on communication/language barriers [16, 17].

This paper aims to determine whether communication plays a key role in building social relations in deaf people or whether their position is conditioned by stereotypical and discriminatory attitudes of the hearing environment. The paper hypothesizes that there is communication discrimination of the social environment towards the deaf population, isolated as a "communication discrimination factor".

2. Methods of work

2.1. Sample of respondents

The sample consisted of hearing persons aged 18 to 65 years (n=99) and deaf persons (n=127).

Table 1. Structure of the sample of respondents concerning gender, age and education

Variables		Representation			
		Deaf respondents		Hearing respondents	
		f	%	f	%
Gender of respondents	Male	83	65,4	51	51,5
	Female	44	34,6	48	48,5
Age of respondents	1951-1970	58	45,7	21	21,2
	1971-1980	38	29,9	28	28,3
	1981-1990	25	19,7	46	46,5
	1991- 1995	6	4,7	4	4
Qualifications	Unskilled worker	3	2,4	1	1
	High school education	118	92,9	74	74,7
	Higher education	6	4,7	24	24,2

The gender structure of the subsample of deaf respondents consisted of 65,4% of male respondents and 34,6% of female respondents, while the hearing sample of hearing subjects consisted of 51,5% of male respondents and 48,5 female respondents. The largest percentage of deaf respondents (45,7%) were born in the period from 1951-1970, then from 1971 to 1980 (29,9%), and from 1981 to 1990 (19,7%). The largest percentage (46,5%) of hearing respondents was born in the period from 1981 to 1990, then from 1971 to 1980 (28,3%). The lowest percentage of both subsamples was born between 1991 and 1995 (4,7% deaf and 4% hearing). Both subsamples of respondents have the highest percentage of completed secondary education (92,9% deaf and 74,7% hearing), followed by higher education (4,7% deaf and 24,2% hearing), while the lowest percentage of respondents with completed primary school.

2.2. Measuring instruments and method of conducting research

The measuring instrument consists of two parts. The first, in which moderator variables were created, referred to general data related to gender, age, and education. The second part of the measuring instrument consisted of Likert-type assessment scales, where respondents were given three possible answers to the offered statements: I agree, I am indecisive and I do not agree. Data were obtained by direct examination, using the guided interview method.

The examination used statements that examined the attitudes of deaf and hearing citizens about the social position of deaf people, related to providing social assistance to able-bodied deaf people, their ability to drive motor vehicles, renting an apartment or house to deaf people, establishing friendships and marriages with deaf people, the intellectual status of the deaf, labor productivity and employment, the application of deaf people as a form of earnings and departure and the restaurant of the deaf person without the presence of hearing persons.

2.3. Descriptive characteristics of a research sample

Insight into the frequency of respondents' responses shows that both groups of respondents agreed with the statements related to the provision of social assistance to able-bodied deaf

people and the equal intelligence of deaf and hearing people. Both groups of respondents disagreed with the allegations regarding renting an apartment or house to deaf people, choosing a deaf friend for their child, begging for deaf people as a form of income, productivity and professional training of deaf people, and going to a restaurant unaccompanied by hearing people. Allegations of indecision in the respondents' answers, which refer to the establishment of marital ties between deaf people and the respondents' children and giving preference to deaf people in employment, are also isolated. The opposing views of the respondents were expressed on the claims related to the equally safe driving of deaf and hearing people and the merging of marital unions between deaf and hearing people.

Table 2. Respondents' responses to the offered statements

Statements	Hearing respondents %			Deaf respondents %		
	A	CD	DA	A	CD	DA
	Although able-bodied, deaf people should be given social assistance	48,5	25,3	26,2	65,9	11,9
Deaf people drive just as safely as hearing people	28,3	33,3	38,4	94,4	2,4	3,2
If I had an apartment or a house I would be reluctant to rent it to deaf people	11,1	11,1	77,8	24,6	11,9	63,5
I wouldn't mind my child getting married to a deaf person	36,4	46,4	17,2	86,6	6,3	7,1
Deaf people are just as intelligent as hearing people	93,9	6,1	0	91,2	5,6	3,2
I would mind if my child chose a deaf person as their best friend	2	9,1	88,9	4,8	4	91,2
The marital unions of the hearing and the deaf are not logical to me	5,1	23,2	71,7	46,8	19,8	33,3
I think deaf people beg because, like other beggars, they don't want to work	2	11,1	86,9	13,5	8,7	77,8
Deaf people cannot be productive and do not need professional training	1	9,1	89,9	3,2	4,8	92
When employing deaf and hearing people of the same abilities, priority should be given to deaf people	26,3	41,4	32,3	77,7	16,7	5,6
I would support a deaf person in the election for a government representative	50,5	29,3	20,2	86,5	7,9	5,6
A deaf person cannot go to a restaurant without a hearing person because they would not be able to order food without their help	4	10,1	85,9	2,4	2,4	95,2

Legend: A-I agree, CD-I can't decide, DA-I don't agree

3. Research results and discussions

To determine the latent space of the respondents' assessment on the applied system of offered claims, factor analysis was used, where the determinant of the correlation matrix was determined, which is 0,318, KMO coefficient 0,639, with Bartlett's Test of Sphericity and Chi-Square of 251,187, with established statistical significance, at the level of $p = 0,00$.

Table 3. Eigenvalues of isolated variability of applied claims

Factors	Lambda	Variance %	Cumulative %
1	2,170	18,085	18,085
2	1,616	13,470	31,555
3	1,251	10,425	41,980
4	1,077	8,972	50,951

Table 3 shows the percentages of common variability, where four eigenvalues can be found to significant, exhausting 50,951% of the total variability of the system of the twelve claims offered. The first eigenvalue of 2,170 exhausts 18,085% of the total system variance, and the last extracted eigenvalue by this criterion is 8,972%.

Based on the analysis of the coefficients of parallel and orthogonal projections of the variability of the applied claims to the first factor, shown in Table 4, it can be seen that the content of this measurement space suggests that hearing respondents are indecisive when it comes to prioritizing employment for deaf people, establishing a marital relationship between their children and deaf people and providing support to deaf people in elections for government representatives.

Table 4. First eigenvalue - first measurement overview

Statements	PAP	ORP
Deaf people drive just as safely as hearing people	0,804	0,804
When employing deaf and hearing people of the same abilities, priority should be given to deaf people	0,723	0,710
I wouldn't mind my child getting married to a deaf person	0,657	0,657
I would support a deaf person in the election for a government representative	0,518	0,527

Although no studies have been published so far stating that deaf drivers pose a danger to other road users or that they are involved in traffic accidents in a higher percentage than the hearing population, there are negative attitudes when it comes to driving safety for deaf people. The obtained data are in line with research [14] which states that deaf respondents express significantly more positive beliefs about the abilities of deaf people as drivers, compared to hearing respondents who express doubts about it. Studies [18] show that hearing loss is associated with a higher risk of accidents, while studies [19, 20] have not observed such a relationship. According to research [21], 48,8% of hearing respondents express disagreement with the statement about safe driving of deaf people, and 51,2% express positive attitudes. These results indicate that there are negative attitudes of the hearing environment towards the ability to drive motor vehicles of deaf people. In this way, deaf people can be discriminated against concerning the hearing population, because the number of occupations in which they can participate is limited, their mobility is limited and dependence on the hearing population is increased.

When it comes to giving preference in employment to deaf people, there is no willingness of hearing respondents for such activities. The reason for this can be found in the low employment rate of the general population, and the view that cash benefits provided to deaf people under social protection should meet their needs.

49,5% of hearing respondents expressed indecision and disagreement in support of deaf people in the elections for the representative of the government, as opposed to deaf respondents who would support a deaf person in elections in 86,5% of cases. The current system of political participation is poorly designed for sign language users. Deaf people often feel the severance of the link between mainstream and their politics because access to participation is not the same. Public hearings are not always understandable if translators and subtitles or both are not provided [22]. Significant efforts have been made among some countries, such as the United Kingdom, which has recognized the problem of equal participation of persons with disabilities in elections for government officials, and provided funds to raise grants to train for election or political career development¹. Such activities are not carried out in most countries, and given the low educational status of deaf people and the lack of positive examples and support from relevant institutions, which advocate for the promotion and inclusion of deaf people in some form of political engagement, it is not surprising that elections of deaf representatives for any form of government rarely occur.

Table 5. Second eigenvalue - second measurement overview

Statements	PAP	ORP
Deaf people are just as intelligent as hearing people	-0,624	-0,628
The marital unions of the hearing and the deaf are not logical to me	0,597	0,592
I think deaf people beg because, like other beggars, they don't want to work	0,515	0,485
I would mind if my child chose a deaf person as their best friend	0,515	0,540

The second factor is defined by four statements. The largest negative projections are expressed in the first statement, which refers to the intelligence of deaf people, compared to the second, third and fourth, which show positive projections, and whose content provides information about the attitude of respondents to marriages of deaf and hard of hearing, friendship and requests of the deaf. Negative projections on the statement referring to the equal intellectual status of the deaf and hearing indicate the mutually expressed difficulties and distrust of the deaf respondents towards the hearing and the hearing towards the deaf respondents. The current attitude of the hearing community, inertia and lack of interest in the problems they face, even in everyday activities such as going to the bank, pharmacy, with the inadequacy of the entire service system, lack of sign language interpreters, leads to closed deaf population, which is expressed through attitudes related to entering into marital relationships and choosing a deaf friend. Negative projections of claims of equal intellectual status between deaf and hearing people are logical, given the fact that despite equal intellectual status there are difficulties in their integration into the hearing community. The begging of deaf people, resulting from the low employment rate, is a direct indicator of the inefficiency of the rehabilitation system of this population and their poor social position. Research [23] has shown that people with hearing impairments are more likely to experience economic hardship and that they are more likely to be unemployed than hearing people. Difficulties most often arise due to communication challenges [24], but also that there are low expectations, as well as lack of access to information for making informed choices [25].

The answers of both groups of respondents, through the stated claims about married life, point to the conclusion that there is no readiness to establish marital unions between these two populations, which does not indicate discrimination, but the presence of objective communication difficulties. Linguistic and cultural compatibility are important preconditions

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/access-to-elected-office>

for the quality of married life, and greater satisfaction with married life is expressed in marital communities in which both partners have hearing impairment [26], where hearing impairment does not lead to divorce but can lead to marital problems, due to a lack of communication skills [27].

Table 6. Third eigenvalue - third measurement overview

Statments	PAP	ORP
Although able-bodied, deaf people should be given social assistance	0,652	0,643
If I had an apartment or a house I would be reluctant to rent it to deaf people	0,648	0,651

The largest parallel and orthogonal projections on the third factor are expressed in the statement "Although they can work, deaf people should be given social assistance". Although it is a working-age and intellectually healthy population, the data obtained indicate that deaf people should be included in social benefits, as well as other people who are not able to work independently and earn a living. In this way, the attitude of citizens is recognized that social and financial assistance should meet the needs of the deaf population, without taking into account the equal rights to work, employment, and social inclusion of these persons. Renting a property can also be related to the income of the deaf population, but also communication difficulties between deaf and hearing people. Hearing respondents express distrust when it comes to the payment of financial obligations by deaf people, but it is also recognized that there is no will for closer contact with them. The reluctance of deaf respondents to rent the property can be found in a poor financial situation, in which a large number of deaf people find themselves, with deaf people as landlords being stigmatized in the deaf community if they refuse to rent to tenants with hearing impairments.

Table 7. Fourth eigenvalue - fourth overview of measurements

Statments	PAP	ORP
Deaf people cannot be productive and do not need professional training	-0,762	-0,767
A deaf person cannot go to a restaurant without a hearing person because they would not be able to order food without their help	0,571	0,558

The last isolated factor defines two statements. The negative projection is expressed in the statement referring to the unproductivity of deaf people, concerning the second statement, which shows a positive projection, and whose content provides information about the impossibility of going to a restaurant for deaf people. Attitudes that discriminate against the deaf population were not observed in the isolated claims. However, it should be noted that although domestic and international legislation defines recommendations that should enable equality of the deaf population, their implementation is lacking, and the reason for this may be the lack of control mechanisms by the competent institutions.

4. Conclusion

Insight into the results of the research revealed and isolated the presence of communication discrimination factor, as a cause of communication discrimination of deaf people. These results indicate that the position of deaf people is conditioned by a certain system of communication, which can discriminate against them and cause their unequal position in society. In addition to the communication factor, the presence of discriminatory attitudes observed in the assessment of their general abilities, such as the ability to drive safely and participate in traffic, and the ability to perform and develop a parliamentary function and political career, was determined as

a determinant of the social position of deaf people. Furthermore, although it is a working and intellectually healthy population, the obtained data indicate that deaf people should be included in social benefits, as well as other people who are not able to work independently and earn a living. In this way, the attitude of citizens is recognized, that social and financial assistance should meet the needs of the deaf population, without taking into account and not carrying out sufficient activities to achieve equal rights to work, employment, and social inclusion of these persons. Although the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities prescribes the right to participate effectively and fully in political and public life, on an equal basis with others, such activities are rarely carried out. The lower educational status of deaf people, the lack of positive examples, and the support of competent institutions, which advocate for the promotion and inclusion of deaf people, certainly contribute to the current situation in which representatives of government or political structures from the deaf population are rare.

References

- [1] R. PUNCH, M. HYDE, D. P. POWER: Career and workplace experiences of Australian university graduates who are deaf or hard of hearing. *Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education*, 12(4) (2007).
- [2] L. R. GOLDBERG, C. M. RICHBURG: Minimal hearing impairment: Major myths with more than minimal implications. *Communication Disorders Quarterly*. 25(3) (2004).
- [3] H. HASANBEGOVIĆ: *Uvod u rehabilitaciju slušanja i govora*. Off-set. Tuzla, (2009).
- [4] V. RADOMAN: *Surdopsihologija*. Beograd: Fakultet za specijalnu edukaciju i rehabilitaciju, (2005).
- [5] H. HASANBEGOVIĆ, J. KOVAČEVIĆ: *Sistemi komunikacije u edukacijskoj rehabilitaciji*. Institut za humanu rehabilitaciju. Tuzla (2014).
- [6] K. SCHAMROTH, L. THREADGILL: Using a 'Live English' curriculum. *Bulletin of the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists* (Feb), 12–13, (2007).
- [7] R. E. PERKINS-DOCK, T. R. BATTLE, J. M. EDGERTON, J.N. MCNEILL: A Survey of Barriers to Employment for Individuals who are Deaf. *JADARA*, 49(2) (2015).
- [8] K. HOUSTON, B. LAMMERS, S. SVORNY: Perceptions of the effect of public policy on employment opportunities for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing. *Journal of Disability Policy Studies*, 21(9), 9-21, (2010).
- [9] S. CAWTHON, THE RES TEAM: *National Needs Assessment*, pepnet 2 (2012).
- [10] S. LINDSAY, C. MCDUGALL, D. MENNA-DACK, R. SANFORD, T. ADAMS: An ecological approach to understanding barriers to employment for youth with disabilities compared to their typically developing peers: views of youth, employers, and job counselors. *Disability and Rehabilitation*, 37(8):701-711 (2014).
- [11] S. S. KURAWA: The impact of disability on self and society: an agenda for research on rehabilitation of disabled in Nigeria. *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences* 5 (2010).
- [12] N. A. SCHEETZ: *Psychosocial aspects of deafness* / Nanci A. Scheetz. Boston, MA : Pearson/A & B (2004).
- [13] T. VAN GENT, A. W. GOEDHART, P. D. TREFFERS: Self-concept and psychopathology in deaf adolescents: preliminary support for moderating effects of deafness-related characteristics and peer problems. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry* 52.(6), 720-728 (2011).



- [14] M. NIKOLARAZI, M. MAKRI: Deaf and Hearing Individuals' Beliefs About the Capabilities of Deaf People. *American Annals of the Deaf*, 149 (5), (2004/2005).
- [15] C. LEE, S. A. POTT: University students' attitudes towards deaf people: educational implications for the future. *Deafness & Education International*, 20(2), 80-99 (2018).
- [16] P. LADD: Deafhood: A concept stressing possibilities, not deficits. *Scandinavian Journal of Public Health*, 66(5), 12-7 (2005).
- [17] P. LUFT: Communication barriers for deaf employees: Needs assessment and problemsolving strategies. *Work: A Journal of Prevention, Assessment and Rehabilitation*, 14(1), 51-59 (2000).
- [18] M. PICARD, S. A. GIRARD, M. COURTEAU, T. LEROUX, R. LAROCQUE, F. TURCOTTE, AT ALL. (2008). Could driving safety be compromised by noise exposure at work and noise-induced hearing loss? *Traffic Injury Prevention*, 9(5), 489-499 (2008).
- [19] K. A. GREEN, G. MCGWIN, C. OWSLEY: Associations Between Visual, Hearing, and Dual Sensory Impairments and History of Motor Vehicle Collision Involvement of Older Drivers. *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*, 61(2) (2013).
- [20] B. THORSLUND, B. PETERS, B. LIDESTAM, B. LYXELL: Cognitive workload and driving behavior in persons with hearing loss. *Transportation Research Part F. Psychology and Behaviour*, 21, 113-121 (2013).
- [21] A. H. TARMY: A relational-exploratory study: how attitudes towards deafness affect quality of behavioral health services provided to the deaf/deaf/hard of hearing client. Theses, Dissertations, and Projects. Paper 1283. (2007).
- [22] G. H. TURNER, J. NAPIER, R. SKINNER, M. WHEATLEY: Telecommunication relay services as a tool for deaf political participation and citizenship. *Information, Communication & Society*, 20(10), 1521-1538 (2017)
- [23] E. J. KIM, S. L. PARISH, B. BYRRNE: Deaf people and economic well-being: findings from the Life Opportunities Survey. *Disability & Society*, 33(3) (2018).
- [24] M. S. FORDYCE, R.O. RIDDELL, E. WEEDON: *Post-School Transitions of People Who Are Deaf and Hard of Hearing: Final Report*. Edinburgh: Centre for Research in Education, Inclusion and Diversity, (2013).
- [25] G. VALENTINE, T. SKELTON: Re-Defining 'Norms': D/Deaf Young People's Transitions to Independence. *The Sociological Review*, 55(1), 105-123, (2007).
- [26] A. ABEDI, M. ROSTAMI, S. ABEDI, N. SUDMAND, G. MOVALLALI: Marital satisfaction in deaf couples: a review study. *Aud Vestib Res*, 27(4), 179-184 (2018).
- [27] A. ABEDI, G. MOVALLALI, M. ROSTAMI, P. REZA SOLTANI, A. DADKHAH: The effect of a life skills training program component enrich marital satisfaction of Iranian deaf women. *Applied Psychological Research Quarterly*, 6(3), 115-31 (2015).
- [28] F. K. VOSNIAKOS, K. S. FARMAKIS: Radioactive Releases from Nuclear and Thermoelectric Power Plant Operation and Their Effect to the W of Northern Greece. *J. of Protection and Ecology*, ISSN 1234-1212, 1 (2), 255 (2000).
- [29] E. P. PAPANIKOLAU, P. KRITIDIS: Contamination of the Agricultural Land of Greece with Cs-137 and Its Effect on Crops. In: Intern. Conf. on Radioactivity in the Mediterranean Areas, *Barcelona*, May 1988, 457-466.



- [30] K. TASCHNER: Environmental Management and Audit Scheme. *EEB ISBN 0987-09982-23-1 (Eds C. Key, K. Tashner)*. Brussels, Belgium, 1998.