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

*Challenges and Strategies*

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CHAPTER EIGHT

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

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1 Introduction

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

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

2 Challenges in learning foreign vocabulary by D/HH learners

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

In his book on EFL methodology Harmer (1991) suggests that when teachers think of learning a new language they usually mean learning the vocabulary and grammar of that language. However, it is a commonly known fact that grammar gives language a structure, whereas vocabulary "provides the vital organs and the flesh" (p. 153). In the past, grammar was regarded as a dominant part of language learning (e.g. in the Grammar Translation Method). Later, the significance of vocabulary was more commonly stressed in various teaching approaches, alongside communication abilities and active language use in different social contexts (e.g. the communicative approach or the direct learning method). Today learning vocabulary no longer means learning a set of words by heart (as it used to mean), but learning it by negotiating the meanings of words in group work, guessing the meanings from context, and learning new words not only systematically, but also incidentally.
In such a context a basic question may arise: What does it mean to know a word? Wallace (1982) suggests that this process is complicated and means that the student: 1. Recognizes the spoken and written form of a word; 2. Associates it with a certain object or word content; 3. Uses it in a proper grammatical form; 4. Pronounces it in an intelligible way; 5. Writes it correctly; 6. Uses it in a suitable context; 7. Is aware of its connotations and collocations; 8. Uses it in correctly constructed collocations with other words. This kind of language learning perception was described thoroughly in the lexical approach promoted by Lewis (1997). According to the principles of this trend vocabulary is valued above grammar and it is presumed that an important part of learning a language consists in being able to understand and produce lexical phrases. Lewis postulated that students should learn such lexical chunks as they make up a large part of everyday discourse. Later, the researchers added that in order to achieve vocabulary competence it is not enough to understand the meaning of a word just from the context, but one must also get to know the word on the phonological, morphological, semantic and syntactic levels (cf. Almela & Sanchez, 2007; Harmon, Hedrick, & Wood, 2005).

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

2.1 Learning the written or the oral form of words?

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

It is clear that students whose preferred means of communication is sign language do not learn the spoken form of a foreign language (Domagała-Zyśk, 2013c). The common goal of D/HH students with no or limited residual hearing is thus to learn to read and write in a foreign language. Researchers and language teachers e.g. in Norway (cf. Pritchard, 2013) argue for the benefits of introducing BSL first, as this enables learners to fulfil their foreign language requirements at school and also
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provides the real and empowering possibility for communication with D/HH people from abroad. Still, for the majority of D/HH students the written form of a word is the basic form of the lexical item that has to be learnt. Writing is usually the D/HH students’ strength and the teaching process should be based on this. D/HH students present good visual memory skills (cf. Domagała-Zyśk, 2013a; Emmorey, Kosslyn, & Bellugi, 1993; Todman & Cowdy, 1993) and this gives them a good chance of being successful when memorizing the written form of new lexical items. The process of visual memorization can be supported by using different visual forms like pictures, photos, tables, charts, diagrams and other such aids. Using technological devices such as social networks, online forums or chat programs as an element of a FL lesson’s structure can also be an effective tool (Domagała-Zyśk, 2013d).

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

2.2 Learning the grammar of the vocabulary

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

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

2.3 Word pronunciation

By pronouncing a word aloud correctly, students have one more channel through which to learn and revise vocabulary. D/HH persons who prefer to use sign language in communication usually do not learn pronunciation of either their national or consequently their foreign languages. However, the majority of students with hearing loss nowadays use speech to some extent, and they also want to learn how to pronounce new words (Domagała-Zyśk, 2001, 2003, 2013a).
It is natural that D/HH students’ pronunciation might not be ideal, but we do not have any right to forbid them to try to master it to the extent that they are able to master it. Students’ unclear pronunciation should not discourage the teachers from practicing the vocabulary aloud with them. If a person is stuttering or experiencing a speech disorder, nobody even thinks of discouraging them to use their national language. Surely, it would be inhuman to ask somebody not to speak because it made someone feel “uncomfortable”, and yet such situations have been reported by our students. The same rule should be applied to the D/HH students as is the norm for those with speech impediments of other kinds.

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

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

### 2.4 Contexts, connotations, collocations

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

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

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

### 2.5 Hearing vocabulary in classes for D/HH students

There is a certain type of vocabulary that is especially difficult for D/HH students. It was noticed as early as in the 1970s (Heinen, Cobb, & Pollard, 1976/1993) and observed during my classes with D/HH students (Domagała-Zyśk, 2009). These are the words connected with auditory sensations. It is well known that if we know a certain aspect of reality, we can quickly understand the vocabulary used to describe it and use it fluently. When somebody likes music and listens to it regularly, words like transpose, triplet or andante are well known to them. D/HH students
learning any phonic language have to acquire and use words that are completely unrealistic to them, and it is really hard work to get the right meaning across. These kinds of words were grouped by Domagala-Zyśk (2009) into six categories and include: 1. Words and expressions describing a person's voice: scream, cry, hum, whisper, to say sweetly, to say softly, to shout cheerfully, ask anxiously, say calmly; 2. Words describing animals' voices: miaow, squeak, bark, roar, chirp; 3. Natural sounds: rumble of thunder, echo, blowing wind, falling rain; 4. Social events or situations where the auditory element is the dominant one: auditions, gold record, number one hit; 5. Music-related words: play the flute, sing, hum, buzz, croon, twitter, zoom; 6. Background noises: car brakes screeching, a siren wailing, to click, a tap dripping, a clock ticking, knocking, a doorbell ringing.

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

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

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

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

3.1 Vocabulary Personalization

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### 3.2 Vocabulary Emotionalization

The second strategy might be called Vocabulary Emotionalization. Linguists agree that we remember better those words that were presented to us not only clearly, but also with an emotional component (Kaczmarek, 2001, p.20), the more moving the learning situation is the better the vocabulary is memorized. An example of using this technique is shown
below. The teacher knows that Paul has strong emotional bonds with his sister and he likes speaking about this relationship. An everyday shopping situation is used to introduce the new words: old-fashioned, V-neck sweater and turtle-neck sweater:

T: Paul, what did you do yesterday?
S: Nothing special. I did shopping.
T: What did you buy?
S: A sweater.
T: Did your sister like your sweater?
S: (smiling) No, she said it is ugly because people do not wear such sweaters.
T: What do you mean—such sweaters?
S: (tries to explain in sign language and using gestures that it is a cardigan).
T: So your sister thinks cardigans are old-fashioned? Does she like V-neck sweaters or turtle-neck sweaters more (teacher shows photos of different types of sweaters found quickly on the internet)?
S: She doesn’t like V-neck sweaters and turtle-neck sweaters. She want I wear a shirt and a suit every day.

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

T: How many brothers and sisters have you got?
S: I have one brother.
T: What is your brother’s name? Where does he work?
S: And you? Have you a brother?
T: No, I haven’t. But I have got three sisters.
S: Three sisters?! I haven’t got three sisters.

3.3 Word Semantic Analysis

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

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

3.4 Word Morphological Analysis

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

4 Conclusion

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

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