

The library and persons with hearing disabilities

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1. User identification

Definition

“Hearing disabled are those persons who have been deprived of hearing or have suffered a considerable hearing loss”

Characteristics

- Deaf community is very heterogeneous
- The hearing disabilities are conditioned by: *Internal factors*
 - The degree of hearing loss
 - Hypoacoustic persons
 - Deaf persons
 - The moment in which the loss took place
 - 0–6 years (cognitive barriers)
 - After 6 years

Characteristics

External factors

- The surroundings: family, educational, social and work
- Deafness is an invisible handicap
- One of the fundamental problems is that of communication barriers

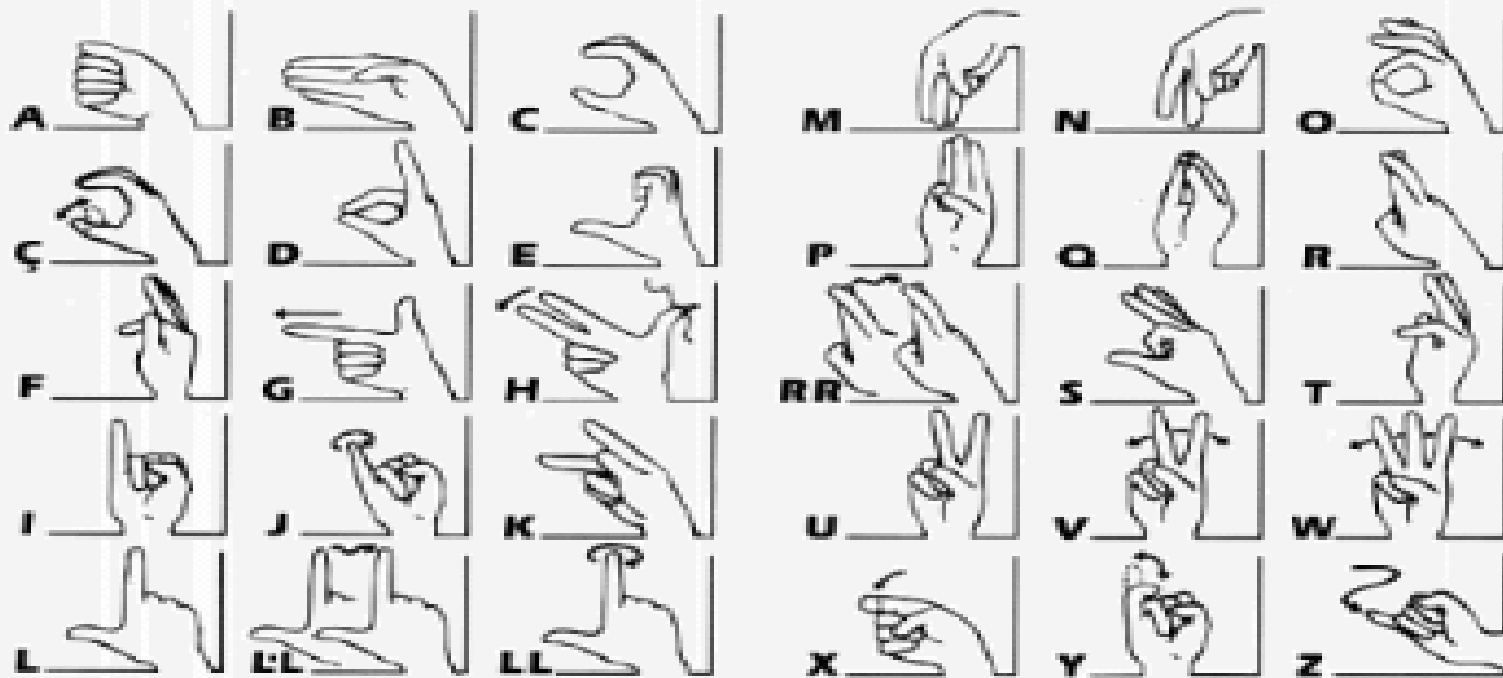
Deaf community

- There are now more than 132,000 persons in Catalonia with some auditory disability
- In Catalonia the deaf community is represented by Fesoca and thirty affiliated associations

Sign language

- Is not a universal code used in all countries
- Is not a pictorial or mimicked language
- Can express abstract concepts as well as specific concepts
- Needs a sign language interpreter
- Dactylologic alphabet

Dactylologic alphabet



Source: <http://www.lambdaweb.org/grups/sords/llengua.htm>

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Lip reading

- Is a visual method for recognising speech
- Success depends on the ability, interest and attitude of the speaker

2. Needs and limitations in using library services

Needs and limitations in using library services

- Communication and accessibility barriers present in library staff, activities and equipment
- Cognitive barriers
- Invisible handicap

3. Adapting library services

Applicable standards

- There is not a legal groundwork for adapting services
- Unesco and IFLA guarantee equal access to the library
- IFLA has specific directives for the deaf in: *IFLA Professional Reports*, no 62

Actions carried out by libraries

■ Prior experiences

- The Library of the Metropolitan Forum of Coruña has created an integral service for the deaf
- “Adventures of reading” programme

■ Preliminary study

- Social setting and the hearing disabled that could become users
- Establishes collaborative ties with entities representing this group

Actions carried out by libraries

| Needs | Adaptation | Services |
|--|--|----------------------------------|
| Eliminating communication barriers | Train staff Language Interpreter Alternative communication systems | Staff Equipment Activities |
| Increase awareness of this group | Creating an interest centre Train Staff | Collection Staff |
| Reinforcing reading and writing skills | Easy reading and graduated material Multimedia resources | Collection Activities |

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Actions carried out by libraries

- One of the keys to a service's success is effective dissemination
 - To give guided visits
 - To distribute some informative fliers to centres and associations

4. The case of a public and a university library

The case of a public and a university library

- Catalan Library System
- Audit of the Ignasi Iglesias – Can Fabra public library
- Audit of the library of the Universitat Pompeu Fabra

5. Conclusions

Conclusions

- Situation of Catalan libraries quite insufficient
- *Adventures of reading* programme (Consortium of Libraries of Barcelona)
- Certain actions not requiring a significant investment of resources

Conclusions

In the short term

1. Use alternatives to acoustic signals
2. Use the fax, e-mail or sms
3. Initiate collaborative ties with associations for the deaf
4. Distribute among the staff communication guidelines

Conclusions

Mid or long term

1. Prepare a flier for promoting services and activities and audio-visual resources
2. To break the true communication barrier: understand sign language

It is well known that libraries have few economic resources but this argument should not be used to defend discrimination against a sector of population.

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Thanks you for listening

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This presentation is based on a previous paper elaborated by Noemi Alcázar, Maria del Mar Chacón, Iraís Martí and Ignasi Sanz, for the Special Services course.

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