

International Research Group
English as a foreign language
for deaf and hard of hearing persons

People:

Ewa Domagała-Zyśk

Poland

IRG EFL DHH coordinator



Ewa Domagała-Zyśk PhD - university professor at the Department of Education, John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin (KUL). After her studies she worked as a pedagogue and an English teacher in a J.Ch. Andersen Therapeutic School for children with special educational needs. Since 1998 she has been working as a researcher and lecturer at KUL and its Centre for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Education. She was a pioneer of teaching English as a foreign language to deaf and hard of hearing university students in Poland, starting her work with a specialist and innovative *English for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing* course in 1999. She is the author of more than 50 empirical papers on that issue, more than 50 presentations on international conferences, editor of *English as a foreign language for the deaf and hard of hearing persons in Europe* (2013, Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL), (together with E. Kontra) *English as a foreign language for deaf and hard-of-hearing persons. Challenges and strategies* (2016, Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing) and (with N. Moritz and A. Podlewska) *English as a Foreign Language for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Learners Teaching Strategies and Interventions* (2021, Routledge).

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Kamila Ciepiela
Poland



Kamila Ciepiela is an Associate Professor at the Institute of English Studies, University of Lodz, Poland, where she teaches General Linguistics, Sociolinguistics, and Discourse Analysis. She holds an MA in English Studies and a PhD in English Linguistics. Her research interests encompass the study of self and identity, particularly how they are shaped and expressed through various discourse practices. She is especially focused on the linguistic expression of self, applying the ‘small story’ framework to analyze situated identity construction and performance. Her current research centers on linguistic approaches to identity, multimodal communication, and discourse analysis in the EFL classroom. Kamila’s work has been published in various academic journals, and her book *EFL Teacher Identity: From Mental Representation to Situated Performance* was published by Lodz University Press in 2013. She regularly presents at both national and international conferences and leads the biennial conference series “Personal Identity through a Language Lens” held at the University of Lodz.

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Naomi Ganin Epstein Israel



Naomi Ganin Epstein - a teacher and national counselor of English as a foreign language to deaf and hard of hearing students in Israel for the past 31 years. Her teaching career began before graduating with a B.A in Education of the Deaf, She then went on to complete a B.E.D in EFL and an M.A in Curriculum Development. The publication of two course books for Deaf and hard of hearing students soon followed; "Apples and Zebras" (a beginners workbook) and "The Book of Keys" (for struggling high-school students). Naomi teaches full time at Yehud Comprehensive High-School (though she began her career as an elementary school teacher) which has the largest program for Deaf and hard of hearing students in a regular high-school in the country. In addition she is a Ministry of Education National Counselor for teaching English to Deaf and hard of hearing students, in charge of updating curriculum and exam sections to reflect changing national dictates.

Naomi blogs at "[Visualising Ideas](#)" and "[The Key in the Apple](#)".

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Zahra Ghasemi Iran



Zahra Ghasemi is a PhD student at Alzahra University in Iran. She graduated as a top student from Ilam University and earned her MA from university of Teheran in 2010. She designed and conducted specialized English courses/workshops with the support of Iranian sign language for Iranian Deaf and Hard of Hearing students. She's been doing this for over twelve years. Zahra is a lecturer at Islamic Azad University - in Fareshtegan international Branch. This university is the first university specializing in supporting Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing community in Asia. Zahra is also a designer and a teacher for workshop on phonetic alphabets and pronunciation adapted for Iranian deaf and hard-of-hearing community, workshops on methods and strategies for English learning of DHH students at Islamic Azad University, courses for CI users, courses for Iran Society of Deaf People Family. She is deeply engaged in studies on needs assessment of DHH persons, designing learning resources for DHH students, technology based language learning, individual differences of DHH learners and professional ethics of EFL teachers of the DHH.

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**Katarzyna Gapys
Poland**



Katarzyna Gapys, Ph.D., is a senior lecturer at the Foreign Language Teaching Center of the Medical University of Łódź, Poland, where she teaches medical English to future healthcare professionals. She also collaborates with the University of Humanities and Economics in Łódź, where she teaches linguistics and descriptive grammar at the English Philology. She has extensive experience working with D/deaf and hard-of-hearing students; for many years, she taught English to secondary school deaf and hard of hearing students at two specialized educational centers in Łódź, Poland. Her research interests include surdoglottodidactics, linguistics, sign linguistics, English for specific purposes, and translation.

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Beata Gulati Poland



Beata Gulati - lecturer at the Siedlce University of Natural Sciences and Humanities, former Director of the Centre for Education and Rehabilitation of Disabled Students, President of the Association for the Promotion of Education for Disabled People “Hefajstos”. Author of many publications about education for the disabled at university level, a specialist in TEFL for Deaf students. She has presented a model of inclusive education in Poland and abroad at many conferences (Edinburgh, Oxford, Kenilworth at annual NADP conference). The author of a handbook for university teachers *How to work with students with disabilities*, and *Teaching foreign languages to disabled students*.

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Marianthi (Marianna) Karatsiori

Greece



Marianthi (Marianna) Karatsiori PhD - is a lecturer and a researcher at Educational and social policy department, University of Macedonia. Her main interests are teacher education, foreign language learning, digital pedagogies and Gen AI in education, educational policy guidance and reform. Marianthi coordinates European projects on improving inclusion for students with challenges and on enhancing educators' professional development. Her background also includes roles at the Ministry of Education and the Institute of Educational policy in Greece and UNESCO's International Bureau of Education. She has written books and published articles in international journals and conference proceedings about education reforms, teacher training, innovative methods of teaching and learning, quality in education etc

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Katarzyna Karpińska-Szaj
Poland



Katarzyna Karpińska-Szaj PhD - professor, Head of the Department of Language Acquisition at the Institute of Romanesque Philology at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań. Chairwoman of the Polish Society of Neophilology. Manager of and expert in research and educational projects on learning difficulties. Author and co-author of many scientific papers on linguistics and language teaching concerning, among others, language complexity, teacher education, language education of students with special educational needs, including especially students with hearing loss.

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Edit Kontra Hungary



Edit H. Kontra PhD habil. - associate professor at the Department of English Applied Linguistics of Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest. Her current research interest lies in individual differences, language learning in dyslexia, and the Deaf language learner. She has been involved in researching the foreign language learning situation of Deaf and hard-of-hearing Hungarians since 2006. She is co-editor of *Language learners with special needs: a European perspective* published by Multilingual Matters.

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Paulina Lewandowska
Poland



Paulina Lewandowska is a PhD student at the Doctoral School of the Catholic University of Lublin in the discipline of pedagogy. She received a master's degree in Journalism and Social Communication and a second one - in Special Pedagogy. She studied also at the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan) in Preston, England. She serves as secretary in the International Federation of Hard of Hearing Young People (IFHOHYP), vice president in the Association of Hard of Hearing People and Cochlear Implant Users "SUITA", and president in the Scientific Circle of Special Pedagogy at KUL. Her pedagogical research interests include topics related to the hearing impaired (especially the hard of hearing), social and educational accessibility (inclusion), and informal education.

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Monika Malec
Poland



Monika Malec - Ph.D. candidate at the Department of Pedagogy and graduate of English Philology at the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin. The research interest of her PhD thesis is to study the linguistic basis of language acquisition and methods of language education in the context of hearing loss. From 2011 she cooperates with the Centre for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Education at KUL. Moreover, she taught English to deaf and hard of hearing adult participants of the project *Breaking the waves*. Her experience as an English teacher, which she gained in Poland, Spain and Italy, involves teaching range of individual and group courses: Cambridge Examination preparation courses, General English courses and personalized courses for individuals, but also in-company English language courses (e.g. Business English, 'English in the Fashion Industry', 'English for Human Resources', 'English for the food service industry') English for blind learner course.

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Nuzha Moritz
France



Nuzha Moritz PhD - associate professor of English language and phonetics at the Department of Applied Modern Languages at the University of Strasbourg (Ph.D. in Linguistics/specialised in Phonetics, MA in English language and pedagogy), has been teaching English as a foreign language since 1995 in different Universities and institutes while preparing her Ph. D., and since 2001 as an associate professor at the University of Strasbourg. Her current research interest lies in English varieties and speech intelligibility by deaf and hard of hearing learners. She participated in several international conferences presenting her current work on deaf and hard of hearing speech unintelligibility. She is also involved in pedagogical work at her University seeking to develop aural activities for the deaf and hard of hearing students.

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Anna Nabiałek
Poland



Anna Nabiałek - a senior lecturer of English at the Foreign Languages Centre of the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań. She has been working with deaf and hard of hearing students since 2008. She was the co-founder and has been the Head of the Multimedia Foreign Languages Teaching Centre for AMU hearing impaired students since 2010.

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Elana Ochse Italy



Elana Ochse PhD - Associate Professor of English Language and Translation, University of Turin since 2007. Besides teaching regular EFL courses at BA and MA levels, since 2000 she has been organizing and teaching experimental EFL courses for deaf students at the University of Turin. She has been involved in various local and national research projects. She was responsible, together with J.C. Kellett Bidoli, of the scientific organisation of the International Seminar “Deaf Identity and Culture in European Integration: the Role of Interpretation, Translation and Teaching” which was held at the University of Trieste, 30 - 31 October 2006. She collaborated in the organization of ESSE X, held in Turin in August 2010 where she convened a seminar entitled “Rethinking the challenge: English as a Foreign Language for Deaf Adult Learners”. She is the Turin Leader of the SignMedia EU Lifelong Learning Project. Since 2000 she has been focussing on the language education of the Deaf from an acquisitional and sociolinguistic perspective. She has presented numerous papers at international conventions on sign languages and Deaf cultures, has been visiting well-known Deaf programs abroad for study and research purposes and has developed cooperation links with foreign universities. Together with Ewa Domagała-Zysk she convened a seminar entitled “Deaf people’s mastery of English as a second or foreign language” for the XI Conference of the European Society for the Study of English held at the University of Boğaziçi, Istanbul in September 2012.

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Anna Podlewska
Poland



Anna Podlewska, Ph.D., is a senior lecturer at the Department of Foreign Languages at Medical University of Lublin. She is also affiliated with the Institute of Pedagogy and the Centre for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Education at John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin. An experienced teacher, material writer and teacher trainer she has taught different age groups at all proficiency levels. Her experience involves teaching medical and business English. Her research interests focus on the use of Cued Speech to support language skills development in English language instruction for students with hearing impairments.

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Patricia Pritchard Norway



Patricia Pritchard - qualified as a teacher in England in 1972. After moving to Norway she has worked in the classroom for over 20 years with the deaf and hard-of hearing. She has worked on the development of teaching methods for the teaching of English to deaf pupils, and the national curriculum for hearing-impaired pupils. Today she is an educational advisor for teachers of the hearing impaired and a text book author. Her thesis for her Master's degree was about the level of understanding of British Sign Language of Norwegian fourth grade deaf pupils. She has adapted assessment materials on communicative competence and developed materials for assessing the language environment for mainstreamed hearing-impaired children, as well as materials for assessing pupils' knowledge of English speech sounds and writing patterns. Patricia regularly lectures to teachers and parents on different areas of Deaf Education and sign bilingualism.

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Yasamin Pourhemat Khanshir

Iran



Yasamin Pourhemat Khanshir earned an MA in TEFEL from Islamic Azad University in 2023 and her thesis was on exploring the Iranian deaf and hard-of-hearing learners' experiences in learning English as a foreign language. Through this endeavor, she developed a strong dedication to understanding the unique experiences and needs of this community. She is a member of both the Iranian National Center of Deaf and Iranian Autism Association. She participated in numerous webinars focused on special education focusing on deaf and autism community. She published her MA thesis as a paper " Deaf and hard-of-Hearing EFL learners' perception of learning English: A narrative inquiry " in the British journal of Special Education.

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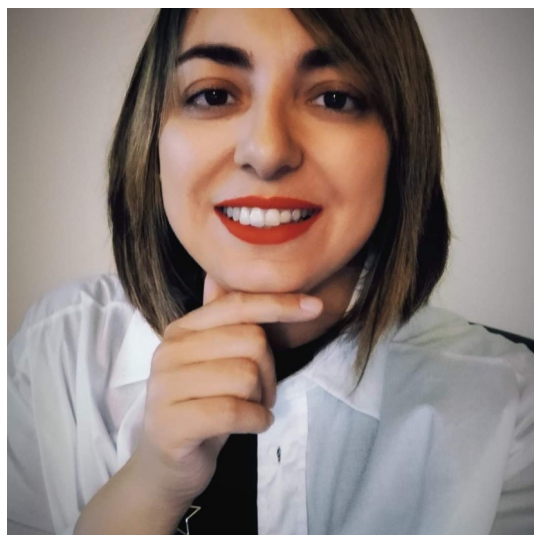
Jitka Sedláčková
Czechia



Jitka Sedláčková PhD - studied English Language and Literature at the Faculty of Arts, Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic. In the course of her studies she became interested in English Language Teaching from both the practical and theoretical points of view. In 2008 she started teaching English to hearing impaired students at the Masaryk University. She finished a PhD research focused on reading of Deaf learners in EFL.

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Angela Sileo Italy



Dr. Angela Sileo obtained a PhD in Humanities at the University of Rome Tor Vergata in 2016, where she also completed a Master's Degree course in Literary and Audiovisual Translation (2011) and where she taught English language and translation at both BA and MA levels. In 2019, she co-founded a research group named TrAdE (Translation and Adaptation from/into English). She has been a translator since 2006 and has written extensively on (Audiovisual) Translation, mainly lip sync and linear sync. She is currently a post-doc research fellow at the University of Milan (Statale), under the supervision of Prof. Paola Catenaccio. Her project is on teaching English and accessibility. She teaches English to hearing and DHH students at the BA in Translation and Interpreting in LIS (Italian Sign Language) and LIST (Tactile Italian Sign Language) at the University of Milan - Bicocca, where she had the chance to implement an innovative and deaf-inclusive approach to EFL by using Didactic Subtitling

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Lenka Tothova Czechia



Lenka Tóthová, Ph. D. is a lecturer at Teiresias - the Support Centre for Students with Special Needs, at Masaryk University, specialising in teaching English as a Foreign Language to D/deaf and hard of hearing learners. She is a course designer, creating new foreign language courses and learning opportunities for Masaryk University's students and the deaf public. Being also an inclusive mobility coordinator, she supports accessible mobility at her university, working with incoming and outgoing students with disabilities who engage in exchange stays.

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**Katharina Urbann
Germany**



Katharina Urbann PhD - works currently as a research associate (since 1/2019 post-doctoral) at the University of Cologne, Education and Rehabilitation of the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing. She Since 2017 she has been serving also as a Board member of the German society for sign language and culture of the Deaf (GGKG).

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FORMER MEMBERS OF EFL DHH

Worked with us:

Iva Urdarevic - BS in special education and rehabilitation of D/HOH persons, MS in teaching English to the D/HOH persons, PhD candidate at the Faculty for Special Education and Rehabilitation, University of Belgrade. In 2005 she started teaching English to Deaf and Hard of Hearing elementary and high school students at Stefan Decanski Special School, Belgrade, Serbia. She created national curriculum for English language for Deaf and Hard of hearing high school students in 2009. She involved her students in numerous international project where they used English as a language of communication. Nowadays she teaches English to students with all types of developmental disabilities and multiple disabilities. She participated in and presented papers on teaching English to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students on national and international conferences.



Francine Widerker - English counselor for the hard of hearing and the deaf in northern Israel since 2011. Pedagogical adviser for English for Gordon Teacher's College in Haifa. General high school and literature counselor for northern Israel from 2012-2017. Online English teacher for the deaf and hard of hearing since 2010. M.Ed. in teaching English as a foreign language with distinction (thesis track), Oranim Teachers College, 2015. B.A. math track economics, Barnard College, Columbia University, N.Y.C. Presents regularly at conferences for English teachers throughout Israel on "How to Help the Hard of Hearing".

Daniela Janakova - created the Resource Centre for Learning English at the Charles

University in Prague, Czech Republic. She was a pioneer of teaching English to deaf and hard of hearing students in Czechia. Generously invited us to visit her Center and get inspired. She also visited Poland with her magnificent lectures.



Marie Doležalová - was appointed Deputy-Head of the Multimedia Language Resource Centre in 2007. She specialises in developing teaching and learning techniques concerning ELT to Deaf and Hard of Hearing university students and students with special needs. She also works as a Faculty of Arts advisor for students with special needs within the Information and Advisory Centre, Charles University in Prague



Zuzana Fonioková - has been teaching English as a foreign language since 2005, including courses at university level. She has taught students with hearing as well as visual impairments. Since 2011, she has been working for the Centre for Students with Special Needs at the Masaryk University as a teacher, methodologist and coordinator of English for the deaf and hard of hearing. She has co-authored a study on “Early Language Development of the Deaf and Its Relation to Foreign Language Learning,” presented in the ULD special track of the ICCHP conference in Linz in 2012 and published in the proceedings of ULD@ICCHP 2012.

