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## Abstract

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In 1983 the Greek Parliament approved a bill that enabled deaf graduates of high schools (amongst others) to be admitted to institutions of higher education without having to take entrance examinations.

Until very recently the education of deaf children in Greece has been based on the exclusive use of the oral approach (i.e. the use of spoken Greek as the language of instruction and excluding the use of Greek Sign Language). The educational attainments of Greek deaf children on completing their school education have been poor compared to those of hearing children and, it has been argued (Lampropoulou 1994), has resulted in the situation that many Deaf people are poorly prepared for participation in society. In light of this situation I investigated the experiences of Deaf students who have availed of the opportunity provided by the above law to enter higher education. The subjects of the study are deaf people whose first or preferred language is Greek Sign Language (GSL) who, hereafter, are referred to as Deaf (spelt with an upper case 'D') people. The samples of Deaf students were made up of students who had graduated, interrupted their studies, were studying or were about to commence their studies at a Greek institution of higher education. In addition I obtained the views of schoolteachers of deaf children, higher education lecturers and representatives of the Greek Federation of the Deaf. Brief overviews of the Greek education system and different models of d/Deafness are provided as way of background to the study. The data obtained from interviews with the above groups are presented and discussed, and include proposals as to how access for Deaf students to Greek higher education can be improved.

The author hopes that this study will be seen as a contribution to the education of Deaf people in Greece. It provides suggestions for consideration by Greek Deaf and hearing people interested in the education of Deaf people, as well as public and private organisations, as to how improvements in Deaf people's education in Greece can be achieved.

**UNIVERSITY OF DURHAM**

Department of Sociology and Social Policy

Deaf Studies Research Unit

**D** EAF STUDENTS' ACCESS TO  
HIGHER EDUCATION  
IN GREECE

**Fotini Sarinopoulou**

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SAS EFHARISTO

# Chapter 1

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## 1.1 Defining Deaf People

The term 'disabled people' is a term, which has been used to describe those groups of people who have in common a 'deficiency', which is physical and/or sensory. It has been argued that as a consequence of these physical, sensory or mental differences, such people face serious problems and experience social discrimination. (Oliver, 1990; Finkelstein, 1991).

However, within recent years, disabled people have used their personal experiences of disability and institutional life to demonstrate that it is not necessarily their physical condition or impairment that is the cause of their problems. The cause, it has been argued, is the way in which society fails to accept them as part of its whole, creating barriers to their full participation. This view or analysis has been called a 'social model of disability' (Oliver, 1990; Finkelstein, 1991). The 'medical model' provides an alternative perspective. According to this model, the causes of disability are attributed to the medical condition of disabled people. It advocates that disabled persons should be incorporated in society, but if they cannot be incorporated it is suggested that they should be accommodated in special institutions or supported in their own homes. According to the medical model the difficulty or problem is located in the person, not the organization or arrangement of the person's community or society.

The term 'disabled' has been attributed to that group of deaf persons who cannot communicate fully in a spoken language. To be deaf creates serious problems of communication given that the overwhelming majority of people are hearing. I wish to briefly examine in this first chapter how particular models of disability and deafness have been applied to deaf people in order to provide a context for my study.

- a. A medical model i.e. a clinical - pathological model of deafness
- b. A social model of disability applied to deaf people
- c. A cultural,socio-linguistic model of deafness



According to the medical model the hearing person's condition, behavior and values are defined as 'normal', and those of deaf persons are evaluated according to their deviation from those of hearing persons (Davis & Silverman, 1960; Myklebust, 1960; Schein, 1968; Vernon & Makowsky, 1969; Cokely and Baker, 1980; Kyle and Woll, 1985; Brien, 1991; Brien et al, 1992). This approach focuses on the idea of enabling deaf people to hear as much as possible so that they can become as 'normal' as possible. Baker and Cokely conclude that this is the approach traditionally associated with the majority of hearing people who interact on a professional basis with deaf people. (Cokely and Baker, 1980). This model has been described as pathological in that it defines people in relation to what they cannot do (e.g. hear in the case of Deaf people) rather than what they can do (e.g. use a sign language) (Cokely and Baker, 1980; Woodward, 1982).

The social model of disability focuses on the importance society places on 'normality' and how all forms of 'normal' behavior are defined. Being 'normal' became the dominant employment concern with the advent of the Industrial Revolution and it was important to suppress, it has been suggested, non-normal behavior such as signing (Finkelstein, 1991). It has also been argued that the predominant way in which wealth is created results in limited possibilities for disabled people to participate in this process. The Industrial Revolution was 'designed' not in relation to the individual but the 'average' person who might be hired off the street. People who deviated from this 'norm' were in increasing danger of being unemployed as more and more machines were introduced into the production process (Finkelstein, 1991). It is suggested that these social differences exclude disabled people. The way a society is organized, rather than the person's individual capacity, is seen as the cause of discrimination. Under this model it is suggested that Deaf people experience similar limitations to those experienced by other disabled groups. In their case, the main difficulty is seen as the unwillingness of society to accept deaf people's use of sign languages. The language oppression experienced by deaf people is seen as similar to the oppression experienced by people with motor impairment, etc., rather than that experienced by minority linguistic groups (Finkelstein, 1991).

In contrast, from the perspective of the cultural and socio-linguistic model, Deaf people experience linguistic oppression that is similar to that of other linguistic minorities. This focus on the common language and shared experiences that characterizes this particular group of people who 'happen to be deaf,' is increasingly being seen as the most adequate description of

their situation by deaf people who use a sign language. It is a view that conceives of the Deaf community as a separate cultural group with “its own values and language that should be accepted as such” (Brien, 1991) : see also Cokely and Baker, 1980; Woodward, 1982; Kyle and Woll, 1985; Brennan, 1987; Padden and Humphries, 1988 .

The socio-linguistic model developed as studies of ‘language communities’ were undertaken and the problems faced by linguistic - cultural minorities emerged. This was seen in the United States where the concept of the ‘melting pot’ was called into question. The melting pot aimed to ‘Americanize’ minorities: that is to provide a common experience and eliminate discrimination by eliminating differences. Such ‘Americanization’ was however also identified with loss of identity and cultural pride, rejection of minority cultural values and the disappearance of entire language groups in the United States. It was argued that if American Sign Language (ASL) is not a viable means of communication for a significant number of Deaf Americans it would also have become extinct. This process was seen as true not only for immigrants but also for black people and native Americans. (Charrow and Wilbur, 1989).

Linguists (in the USA and Europe) began to study the sign languages of Deaf people and they found that sign languages are true languages with complex grammatical structures, capable of expressing anything within human experience and imagination and are independent of spoken languages (Stokoe, 1960; Bonvillian, Charrow and Nelson, 1973; Wilbur, 1976; Klima and Bellugi, 1979; Brennan et al, 1984).

Studies have shown that Deaf people who have Deaf parents acquire a sign language as a first language in the same way that a spoken language is acquired by hearing children (Wilbur and Jones, 1974; Klima and Bellugi, 1979; Kourbetis, 1982; Kyle, 1986). Researchers in the UK have shown that Deaf people have the same bonds of language, social identity and the same attitudes towards community identity as other linguistic minority groups (Kyle, 1986). It has led to deaf people who use a sign language to define themselves in relation to what they do, i.e. use a sign language, rather than what they cannot do, i.e. hear. A convention was established following a suggestion by Woodward (1982) to use the term Deaf to refer to deaf people who define themselves in relation to their use of a sign language and membership of a Deaf community. The use of the term deaf with a lower case ‘d’ is used to refer to the inability to hear and associated meanings. From here on I shall follow this convention in this dissertation.

I believe that in comparing the three models (medical-clinical, social and cultural - socio-linguistic) each model defines Deaf people in a different way, which in turn may be used to explain their experiences in the wider society. As Brien (1991) notes: "The cultural model provides a way to call into question the deeply entrenched view that profound deafness has to be associated with disability and thereby, inability. In a society which would accommodate these differences and maximize the potential of these people rather than reify differences as unacceptable, the position of Deaf people would indeed be different."

The difference between the social model of disability (as it is presented by Finkelstein, 1991) and the cultural and sociolinguistic model leads us to the description that Groce (1991) provides of the circumstances of people on the island of Martha's Vineyard (off the east coast of the USA). A significant number of the population on this island were Deaf. As Groce describes, "the (Deaf) Vineyarders integrated into the daily life of the community so that they were not seen and did not see themselves as a group apart. Deaf people were included in all aspects of life". This is because on the Vineyard both hearing and Deaf Islanders grew up using the sign language. This unique socio-linguistic adaptation meant that the usual barriers to communication between the hearing and the Deaf, which so often isolates Deaf people today, did not exist there (Groce, 1991). In such a situation they did not, it seems, experience separateness.

I believe that Deaf persons' participation in the production process is conditioned not only by the fact that they form a minority group but is also dependent on the way in which they have been educated for their entrance to this process. But even the fact of their education is conditioned by whether they are seen as a linguistic or a disabled group.

## **1.2 Deaf People as a Linguistic Minority Group**

Deaf people who are born deaf or became so at a very early age can be regarded as potentially bilingual based on their learning of the local sign language and the local spoken language (oral-written) and it is in this way that they constitute a linguistic minority according to the main definition of bilingualism adopted by the Linguistic Minorities Project (Kyle, 1986). As a linguistic group they face many of the same linguistic and cultural pressures and discriminations as various other minority groups. They are considered inferior to the majority group and have usually been educated in special institutions (foundations, special schools,

etc) by hearing teachers, professors and lecturers i.e. people who belong to the majority group within the society.

The educational program used in their education is the same or based upon a restricted version of that used with hearing children. The school staff are usually hearing and usually have no competence in the relevant sign language or any acquaintance with the adult Deaf community and their situation. The children are forced to learn the language of the majority group while the use of the adult sign language is not formally permitted. Despite this, Deaf people maintained their linguistic and cultural identity inside their community. In addition to the above pressures, the communities of Deaf people face other problems that are found in other groups. These pressures, as described by Woodward (1982), are:

- i) "Deaf people have had a more difficult time overcoming inferiority stereotyping by the majority culture than other minority groups, since Deaf people are pathologised". The medical pathologocical view, decreasing the importance of linguistic diversity and emphasizing body differentiation, was dominant in education and social life and set unrealistic aims which were beyond the majority of Deaf people. This I think constitutes an explanation as to why they are seen as inferior. In contrast, the use of a sign language represents a different approach through which the abilities of Deaf people emerge, instead of their inabilities. If sign languages are used and allowed to develop it would remove the perception of Deaf people's dependency on hearing people.
- ii) "Only ten percent of Deaf people have Deaf parents. Thus the majority of Deaf people belong to a different cultural group from their parents and must be acculturated into the minority group through means other than their parents".

The problem, therefore, facing Deaf people in relation to a change of educational policy, is often strongly related to their family situation. Deaf people with Deaf parents report how their families provided a refuge against the pressures of school. Deaf people of hearing families appear to have experienced greater pressures. Parents and teachers underline the importance of developing the ability to communicate. Often deaf children do not have the opportunities to have other experiences and, most important, to learn and improve their use of a sign language. These children will often be enculturated in the language and culture of the Deaf community later in life. This may occur when they start attending a school or institute for deaf children or when they identify themselves and participate in the Deaf

community or mix with Deaf adults. In the schools, where few if any Deaf teachers are employed, they are not often actually able to use the sign language that is used in the Deaf community by Deaf people.

iii) The primary language of the Deaf community differs not only in structure but in channel of expression from the majority (spoken/written) language. This has resulted in the language oppression experienced by Deaf people often being doubly severe. As a consequence of the existing social prejudice against deafness as well as erroneous kinetic/linguistic conceptions of the status of sign languages, the value of these languages is underestimated, something that creates negative linguistic results for Deaf people.

The presumed linguistic 'inferiority' of sign languages has provided the basis for the majority view in social and educational circles that these languages are 'inadequate' compared to spoken languages, with usually disastrous results, in the view of Deaf people, for the development of Deaf people. It is obvious that here we witness a clear linguistic social problem. It is that of the imposition of established patterns and values of a majority (which carries superior status) to the disadvantage of a non-recognized minority. When this process occurs the myth of the linguistic superiority of certain languages over others usually leads to the social identity of the minority group being repressed. The linguistic damage that these minorities suffer as a consequence contributes to placing them on the fringe of society (Papasprou, 1990).

The existence of Deaf communities with their own languages is a reality recognized by Deaf people. It is no longer the case that the circumstances of Deaf people are defined only by hearing professionals. Deaf people determine their position, creating their 'world' and forming "different groups", separate from those of hearing people, "in which the members do not experience 'deficiencies' and the basic needs of the individual members are met as in any other culture of human beings"(Padden, 1980).

### **1.3 The Deaf Community**

Deaf communities are the places where Deaf people safeguard and develop their language and culture; form, preserve and develop their relations; share their experiences; and discuss and share problems and how to resolve them.

From research we learn that Deaf people form a 'thriving community', which is held together by such factors as self-identification as a Deaf community member, language, (Croneberg, 1965; Meadow, 1972; Markowicz and Woodward, 1975; Padden and Markowicz, 1976; Padden and Humphries, 1988), endogenous marital patterns and numerous national, regional and local organizations and social structures (Meadow, 1972; Padden and Humphries, 1988). Not all hearing-impaired individuals belong to a Deaf community. In fact, the actual degree of hearing loss is not necessarily a primary defining characteristic of membership of a Deaf community (Woodward, 1972; Padden and Markowicz, 1976; Cokely and Baker, 1980; Padden and Humphries, 1988; Brien, 1991).

Characteristics of individuals who participate in Deaf communities are first of all that they identify themselves as a member of the community and are accepted by other members (Padden and Humphries, 1988; Rutherford, 1989). The identification of a person as a member of the Deaf Community is closely related to the way in which a person views their deafness. It is therefore possible for hard of hearing children with Deaf parents to consider themselves Deaf or for individuals who are deaf to consider themselves hearing-impaired or hard of hearing.

The use of sign language is the major identifying characteristic of members of Deaf communities (Stokoe, 1970). "Individuals who are deaf but do not use sign language are not considered members of Deaf communities" (Rutherford, 1989). This explains why Deaf children with Deaf parents are identified as 'core' to Deaf communities, as they use the 'language of the community', while Deaf children with hearing parents tend to use less 'pure' signs because they generally begin to learn to sign after the age of six years when they start at schools for deaf children or live in institutions for deaf children, or later in life when they have contact with Deaf adults.

Another characteristic of the community is that there is an 85 to 95 percent endogamous marriage rate (Rainer et al, 1963). Deaf people tend to marry other Deaf people.

Still another characteristic is the existence of a complex societal structure within the community, which can be seen in the numerous Deaf organizations at local, regional, national, and international level.

Finally, one further important characteristic to note in regard to Deaf communities is that they are usually bilingual and/or diglossic communities (Rutherford, 1989). The culture developed inside Deaf communities reflects the ideas of Deaf people, the way they react in the social environment in which they live and the values that distinguish them from the majority society (as well as those that they share with the majority community). These include language, organizations and social relationships.

The characteristic however that is seen as primary by Deaf communities is the sign language of the community. Sign languages are languages in which information is taken in through the visual channel and produced through manual gestures, facial and bodily expressions and movement. They are seen to be equal to spoken languages in that they are capable of representation of thought, expression and interaction.

Research studies on the sign languages of various nations (Wundt, 1911; Stokoe, 1960; Klima and Bellugi, 1979; Prillwitz, 1982; Brennan et al, 1984; Lane, 1984; Poizner, Klima and Bellugi, 1987; Prillwitz & Wudtke, 1988; Boyes-Braem, 1990; Fischer and Siple, 1990; Papaspyrou, 1990; Ahrbeck, 1992; Engberg-Pedersen, 1993) have led to conclusions that may be summarized as follows:

- i) The relationship between the signifier and significatum as defined in linguistics is valid for sign languages. This undeniably confirms their linguistic status.
- ii) In sign languages there is classification of meanings and representation is achieved through symbols.
- iii) Sign languages are linguistic systems structured in a deterministic relation to their visual and kinetic character.
- iv) The wealth of vocabulary of sign languages varies from one to another but their grammatical structures have many similarities.
- v) The steps for the normal acquisition of sign languages are equivalent to the steps for the normal acquisition of spoken languages.
- vi) The use of sign languages is based upon the same neuro-psychological processes as spoken languages. A difference is claimed to exist in relation to the brain's functional adaptation to the demands of a sign language.
- vii) Every sign language is a vehicle for the culture of the linguistic community that uses the language. It also forms the basis for the development of the identity of Deaf people as well as the primary social means by which members are incorporated into the community.

It is clear that there is a functional equivalence between spoken and sign languages as well as both forming part of the total human linguistic entity (Papaspyrou, 1990).

Despite the fact that sign languages differ from country to country (like spoken languages) the linguistic structure of sign languages may be described according to certain common parameters. There are four parameters that comprise the phonological structure of sign languages that may combine with certain non-manual components such as facial expression, body posture, movement of the head, body and eyes. These are:

- i) handshape;
- ii) palm orientation;
- iii) movement;
- iv) place of articulation.

These parameters have been used as the basis to describe the grammatical structures of a number of sign languages (Stokoe, 1960; Klima and Bellugi, 1979; Brennan et al, 1984; Brennan, 1987; Rutherford, 1989; Papaspyrou, 1990; Brennan, 1993). Change in any of the above parameters can change the meaning of a sign.

Sign languages, although they differ from one country to another (like spoken languages) have similar linguistic structures. They constitute the most important component in the cultures of Deaf people.

In Greece, Greek Sign Language (hereafter GSL) has been formally recognized at the 'First Panhellenic Congress for Deaf People' as the national language of the Deaf community. During this congress it was emphasized that GSL is at the core of the Deaf people's movement and is the basis for their claim for formal recognition of their community as a linguistic community with distinctive values and forms of social behavior. The wide acceptance of Greek Sign Language by society would constitute a fundamental step forward, which must be achieved if Deaf people's social incorporation is to become a reality. It is also necessary if a climate of reciprocal co-operation with hearing persons is to be established.

At this congress GSL was declared the 'natural' language of deaf children and of the Greek Deaf community. This language constitutes the most important characteristic that identifies the members of this community (Proceedings of the First Panhellenic Congress for Deaf People).

Although only limited research on GSL has been published to date it is widely accepted that GSL has a similar linguistic structure to that of the sign languages of other nations. It is a visual and kinetic language in which facial expression, body posture, movement of the head, body and eyes, handshape, palm orientation, movement and place of articulation form its phonological system. A first description of the handshapes used in GSL has shown the existence of forty five handshapes (Papaspyrou, 1988).

The main forms of communication used by/with Deaf people in Greece are:

- a) Simple signs used within the family by hearing parents or in general by hearing persons seeking to communicate with Deaf people for the purpose of providing them with some visual, kinetic stimulus and a basis for communication. This type of communication is based on extemporizations made by hearing people and it is used in combination with spoken language. It is the most common form of communication between Deaf persons and their parents where the parents are hearing.
- b) GSL is the primary language of the Deaf community and usually the first language of Deaf persons who have Deaf parents. It is not the same all over Greece. The language has dialects, for example, of Macedonia, Crete etc. This occurs because Deaf people's communication with Deaf people from the different parts of Greece was, in the past, limited. Within the last thirty years significant changes have occurred which have led to greater interaction between Deaf people across Greece and it is now thought that a standard form of the language has been achieved but also continues to develop. (Proceedings of the First Panhellenic Congress for Deaf People). Deaf people organize and participate in various events (social, athletic, recreational, etc), which provide occasions for communication, the exchange of information and the creation of social relations between Deaf people.

As Padden notes, "It has frequently been observed that Deaf people often remain in groups talking late, long after the party has ended, or after the restaurant has emptied of people. One reason is certainly that Deaf people enjoy the company of other like-minded Deaf people. They feel they gain support and trusting companionship from other Deaf people who share the same cultural beliefs and attitudes" (Padden, 1980).

c) The use of elements of the sign language (in particular manual signs) with spoken Greek: this characterizes the visual communication of the majority of teachers, other professionals and in some families the signing of hearing parents, i.e. signing based on the syntax of spoken Greek.

d) Speech is used by the majority of Deaf people who are able to do so, particularly during events at which hearing people are present. It does not constitute usual behavior inside the Deaf community. "Exaggerated speaking behavior is thought of as 'undignified' and sometimes can be interpreted as making fun of other Deaf people" (Padden, 1980).

In this introductory chapter I have attempted to describe the social cultural model of Deafness that has been taken up by Deaf people in Greece. In their view this model most appropriately describes their own situation.

## Chapter 2

---

In this chapter I wish to provide a brief introduction to the Greek education system and the history of the education of deaf children in Greece.

### **2.1 The Framework of Greek Education**

The framework of our current Greek educational system is based on the reforms of 1964 and is enshrined in Law 1866/85. The system is divided into General, Technological and Vocational education and includes three stages: Primary or Elementary, Secondary and Tertiary education.

Primary education is compulsory according to the Constitution. It is offered at primary schools and lasts for 6 years. From the academic year 1976/77 compulsory education was increased to 9 years and includes, in addition to primary school (6 years), three years of secondary school (Gymnasio). Primary education alone was considered insufficient. Secondary education is divided into two stages: Gymnasio (3 years compulsory as stated above) and Lykio (3 further years).

Tertiary education is offered by universities and Technological Educational Institutes (hereafter TEIs) which are legal entities in Public Law (LEPL). Today there are 17 universities and 13 TEIs in Greece.

### **2.2 A Brief History of the Education of Deaf Children in Greece**

The recorded history of deaf people as an identifiable group is associated with Modern Greece, although deaf people were well known in Ancient Greece with their existence being recorded in the writings of the great Greek philosophers.

Aristotle, Plato and Socrates make references to how deaf people were treated in ancient Athenian society. In Sparta, according to Plutarch, "all infants were checked right after their birth and the ones with disabilities were thrown in a gully of Mount Tavgetus, known as Kaiadas or Apothetas" (Plutarch, Lykurgus). Some writers have doubted Plutarch's account,

but given the militaristic ideology of Lykurgus' Sparta, the position of people with disabilities would not have been as favourable as in other Greek cities of the same period (Lampropoulou, 1994). However, the conditions of Deaf people in ancient Greek society, with the exception perhaps of Spartan society, was not as bad as has been assumed by some writers (Moore, 1978).

From Athenian philosophers we have the first written evidence for the use of sign language as a means of communication. In Plato's Dialogues, Sokratis make the assertion that "mute and deaf from birth cannot express themselves through speech" ('Theatetus') and in 'Cratylus' (Plato, MDCCCXCI, p.235) reference is made to the use of mimiki (sign language) as a natural and spontaneous means of communication. (Lazanas, 1984). Aristotle relates speech to hearing and refers to the voice and hearing as having a 'common beginning' (Lazanas, 1984). He considered hearing the most important of all the senses because it contributes, he believed, to the mental development of human beings. He thought that hearing is the main organ of instruction. Aristotle also believed that deafness was organically connected to speechlessness. According to this idea, he assumed that damage to the hearing organs also caused damage to the speech organs (Aristotle, Problems: Lampropoulou, 1994). Although Aristotle's statements do not refer directly to the issue of education "some writers and educators have condemned Aristotle for his ideas and held him responsible for keeping deaf people in ignorance for more than 2,000 years" (Deland, 1931). The truth is that Aristotle never refers to the education of deaf children in his works. He does place a higher importance on the sense of hearing for instruction, which for the majority, is still the case today. He also states that a child deaf from birth will not learn to speak, which is also very often true today (Lampropoulou, 1994).

Greek philosophers appeared to accept that deaf people "who are born deaf do not express themselves through speech" (Plato, "Theatetus" 206D) but "try to express themselves through hands and head and all the rest of their body" ("Cratylus" Dialogues). Deaf people appeared to live separately from the rest of ancient social life because they were considered unfit for any profession, trade or education. However, in terms of welfare provision, some writers reported that allowances were made to people with disabilities. These were also issued to

slaves who were disabled (Lazanas, 1984). In the period that followed, the Byzantine epoch, as well as during the period of Turkish rule, deaf children were cared for in monasteries or asylums but did not benefit from any formal education (Lazanas, 1984; Lampropoulou, 1994).

After liberation, following four hundred years of Turkish rule, the first attempt to establish a school for deaf children in Modern Greece was made by a rich landowner named Charalambos Spiropoulos on May 14, 1907. He obtained permission from the government to establish a philanthropic asylum (Government Paper, 1907). This actually only came to pass in 1937. By this time Spiropoulos had died, but he had left a large sum of money and property for the establishment of a school for deaf children.

In 1922, after the defeat of the Greek army by Turkey and the destruction of Greek civilization on the east coast of Turkey and in Constantinople (Istanbul), a ship carrying Greek refugee orphans from Turkey approached the port of Athens. Among these orphans were ten deaf children. The American philanthropic organization for Near East Relief, which was helping Greek refugees from the east coast of Turkey, established an orphanage for the refugee children in Athens and later established another on the island of Syros. This organization also undertook the responsibility of educating the ten deaf orphans. A teacher named Helen Palatidou was sent to the Clarke School for the Deaf in the United States, from 1922 to 1923, to receive training (Epetiris, 1950). On her return to Greece she began teaching the deaf orphans through the oral method, first teaching the speech sounds followed by reading and writing. She also trained new teachers in this method (Lampropoulou, 1994).

The above school came under the auspices and support of the Ministry of Welfare in 1932 (Government Paper, 1932). In 1937 the property of Spiropoulos was transferred to the school creating the first institute for deaf children. It was called the National Institute for the Protection of Deaf-Mutes<sup>1</sup> (Government Paper, 1937). In the period between 1956 and 1970, the National Institute established residential schools in five more cities (Lampropoulou, 1994).

Today, the National Institute for the Deaf (NID) provides free primary education, residential accommodation, vocational training, rehabilitation, diagnostic and related services for deaf

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<sup>1</sup> The term 'deaf-mute' is usually found in legislation of this period. Today the term 'deaf' or 'hard of hearing' is used.

children from birth to fourteen years of age. There is now a Greek Sign Language school for any child who is interested in learning through GSL. In the NID buildings accommodation is provided for the Greek Union of Interpreters through which interpreting services are provided. It is supervised by the Ministry of Health and Welfare. The above mentioned school comes under the auspices of the Ministry of Education. It has residential schools in four other cities e.g. Thessaloniki, Patra, Crete and Seres (Information Guide to the Vocational Training and Rehabilitation of the Deaf in Greece, 1996 ).

Since 1984 the National Institute for the Deaf has adopted the Total Communication approach to the education of deaf children. (Lampropoulou, 1994). In addition to the National Institute, two private schools for deaf children were established between 1964 and 1974 when Andreas Kokkevis was Minister of Health and Welfare. The first private school was established in 1956, by Hro Kokkevi, in Glifada (Government Paper, 1956). It was an elementary school for deaf children that was later (in 1966) extended to include a Gymnasium. At this school a teacher of the National Institute for the Deaf-Mute, Amalia Martinou (the director and owner until 1986) was influenced by the methods used in oral schools in Britain. She and her teachers used the pure oral method.(Lampropoulou, 1994). In 1966, with the help of parents, it was expanded to included a Gymnasium (Lampropoulou, 1994). In 1985 it was transferred to the Ministry of Education and gradually Lykio classes were introduced through the efforts of the director, Elefterio Gika (Government Paper, 1985). The oral method continued to be used until 1994.

In 1973 a second school was established by an organization called the Institution for the Welfare and Education of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children. The president of this organization was Sofia Starogianni, the mother of two deaf sons. Iro Kokkevi was the honorary chairperson of this organization (Government Paper, 1973) and Victoria Daousi, a Greek language teacher, was the director. She (Ms Daousi) was considered to be a very skilful teacher and dedicated to deaf children. The Institution for the Welfare and Education of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children was an oral residential school and included a pre-school, elementary school, Gymnasium and Lykio (Lampropoulou, 1994). In 1982 this school came under the auspices of the Ministry of Education (Government Paper, 1982). The boarding school was under the auspices of the Ministry of Health and Welfare, as was the Institution for the Welfare and Education of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children. Today the elementary

school is located in the Municipality of Filothei. The Gymnasium, Lykio and Technical School that were established in 1992 comprise the Special Schools for Deaf and Hard of Hearing of Ag. Paraskevi. The communication policy until 1994 was oral, although some teachers used a Total Communication approach and others used GSL.

### **2.3 Legal Framework**

A legal framework was established and in March 1981 the first law (1143/81) concerning Special and Vocational Education had been passed (Government Paper, 1981). In 1985 this law was further elaborated and incorporated in law 1566/85, which concerned general education (primary and secondary levels).

According to law 1566/85 (the framework and organisation of first-degree and second-degree education.) people with special educational needs were defined as “people with special needs are considered those people with a complete or part psychosomatic condition which affects their functioning to the extent that they attend special professional education. Their entry into the production process of society and acceptance by the rest of society are seriously hampered.” Included under the category of people with special needs /disabled people were:

The blind, the deaf and hard of hearing, people with disabilities of movement, people with mental retardation, people that display partial difficulties in learning (dyslexia, speech disorders and other) or that have adaptation problems in general, people who suffer from psychological illness, epileptics, people who suffer from Hansen disease, people that suffer from diseases that require long-time therapy and residence in hospital, and any person that displays disturbances in their personality for whatever reason.

The education of such people comes under the Department of Special Education, which has developed over the past 20 years, and has as its aim “the complete and effective development and utilization of the possibilities and abilities of these people, their entry into the production process of society and their acceptance by the rest of society” (Law 1566/83). Such a categorisation appears to locate deaf people within a medical model as described in chapter one.

Through a series of laws (1351/83, 1566/85, 1771/88) certain categories of candidates seeking entrance to third level education were excluded from the requirement to take the Panhellenics or General Entrance Examinations. Persons excluded from this requirement included disabled and deaf people. Those granted places under this dispensation were counted as additional to the total number of students granted entry to tertiary education.

These special categories are:

- a) Greeks living abroad or children with at least one Greek parent who have lived abroad for five years during the last ten years;
- b) Children of Greek civil servants who have served abroad during the last two academic years;
- c) Cypriot Greeks;
- d) Non-Greeks (who have a scholarship from the Greek State) neither of whose parents are Greek foreigners;
- e) Greek students from abroad with a scholarship who have lived abroad for at least five years before their year of admission to the university;
- f) Blind/deaf people and people suffering from Mediterranean anaemia. A health committee (Law 1351/83) certifies the disability/disease of those who are accepted under this category;
- g) Athletes who have established world or European records.

## **2.4 Recent Developments**

In the last twenty years the Ministry of Education has accepted responsibility for the education of children with special educational needs. A two-year course in Special Education was established at one of the teachers' academies (Government Paper, 1975). However "even as it exists today, it only provides general information to teachers about children with special needs. It does not offer any kind of specialization". (Lampropoulou, 1994). In 1976 a Directorate of Special Education was established in the Ministry of Education.

During the decade of the 1980s, a new policy was implemented in the field of Special Education that located provision in mainstream schools. As a result of this development, gradually, special schools for deaf children were transferred to the Ministry of Education and

teachers with a general education background started to teach in special schools. Classrooms for deaf children were established in mainstream schools. Thirty-five primary, secondary (Gymnasium-Lykio) and Technical Special Schools were established across the country. Four out of the thirty five (in Athens, Thessaloniki and Patra) are special Gymnasium and Lykio or classes of Lykio for deaf and hard of hearing children. Two of them are in Athens, one in Thessaloniki and there are classes of Lykio for deaf and hard of hearing children in Patra.

Special schools offer public special education according to the curriculum of the Ministry of Education. The education offered (as stated above) aims to enable “the complete and effective development and utilization of the possibilities and abilities of these people, their entry into the production process of society and their acceptance by the rest of society ” (Law 1566/85).

However, officially, no particular educational or linguistic policy has been adopted in relation to the education of deaf children. In terms of the above aim the same programmes adopted by hearing schools apply to the education of deaf and hard of hearing children.

In Greece there is a long tradition of oral teaching of deaf children. Since 1922 when the first school for deaf children was established, through to 1994, when the first research study was undertaken, all schools have been using only the oral method (Kourbetis,1982; Lampropoulou,1994). The study published in 1994 indicated that most of the schools under the Ministry of Education had been using the oral method. Except for some teachers in the school of Ag. Paraskevi who use a Total Communication approach in their classrooms, all the teachers were using an oral method (Lampropoulou, 1994).

The outcome of this policy according to another survey is that deaf people are poorly prepared for vocational placement and development. Most of them “are illiterate or have a very limited education.” (Lampropoulou,1994). According to Lampropoulou’s study, it is clear that Deaf students receive an inadequate education. Her findings lead to another basic question which is the subject of this study viz. since Deaf students are not adequately prepared for vocational based employment, how is it possible for them to be educated to the standard required for entry to higher education?

Since 1985, when the first studies were carried out, a number of changes have been made in special schools for deaf and hard of hearing children. Changes have also occurred in the relationship between the special schools and the Greek Federation of the Deaf (GFD). Since 1989, other professionals such as social workers, psychologists, psychotherapists etc have been working in schools. Teachers have had the chance to be informed in more detail about other aspects of the deaf student's life: family, their relationships, opportunities in their social environment, etc. Moreover, teachers have the support of these professionals in seeking to achieve their educational goals for the children.

A number of seminars on Greek Sign Language have been organized by Deaf teachers in Ag. Paraskevi. There are two Deaf teachers (a chemist and an art teacher) at this school who, in collaboration with the Directors of the Special Schools (Gymnasium-Lykio-TSEA), have organized classes in GSL for their colleagues twice a week. The National Institute for the Deaf has established a department where Deaf teachers teach GSL.

The co-operation between the Greek Federation of the Deaf (GFD) and special schools for deaf and hard of hearing children has improved. The GFD took the initiative in organizing a presentation in Argiroupoli on bilingual education that was attended by all teachers of the secondary schools in Athens. Within the last two years, in order to improve the knowledge of GSL of hearing teachers, the GFD has sent Deaf teachers to every school interested in learning and using it.

In the next section consideration is given to how the above steps have influenced the development of a bilingual communication policy in the education of deaf students.

## **2.5 Bilingual Education**

Bilingual provision in Greece exists in relation to two categories of children:

- a) The education of children of Greek repatriates. According to the Department for Repatriates there are two schools for the education of children of Greek repatriates. One of them is in Athens, where both Greek and English are taught. The other is in Salonica, where Greek and German are taught. The choice of languages in the two areas is explained by the fact that in the south of Greece there are many repatriates

from English speaking countries (USA, Canada etc.) while in the north of Greece there are many from Germany.

- b) The education of children belonging to the Moslem minority of Thrace comes under the Department of Foreign and Minority Schools. Today, there are 236 private Moslem schools offering first level education; two private and five State Gymnasium; two private Lyceum; and two seminary schools of five classes. At these schools both Greek and Turkish are taught (Kolitsis, 1993).

Consequently, the term 'bilingual education' is very common in relation to the education of hearing children belonging to various linguistic or national minorities, or groups of emigrants. Recently, it has become a pioneering educational approach in the field of deaf children's education involving the use of Greek and Greek Sign Language.

Bilingual education may also be viewed as a political strategy. It is through such an approach that it becomes possible for the value of a linguistic or cultural group to become widely recognized. It is also through this approach to education that the principle of equality of the social position of the various languages of minority groups is promoted. Therefore, it is not just a series of languages that are being promoted, but real opportunities for children whose first language is different to that of the majority in the society in which they live.

The promotion of bilingual education is seen as playing an important role in the development of the human potential of the whole of society, as it removes, it is argued, all the internal factors that may contribute to the social marginalisation of minority groups and enables the social incorporation of the members of such groups through bilateral cooperation between these groups and the majority population. In the case of the Deaf community it not only promotes the use of two different linguistic systems but forms a double linguistic and historical identity through the interaction of two different cultures (Papasprou, 1990).

Bilingual students are defined as all students who communicate in two languages irrespective of their level of competence in each (Fitouri, 1983). Bilingualism does not require one to be fluent in both languages, indeed the balance of fluency will vary not only from individual to individual but also over time.

## **Bilingual Deaf Education**

It has been argued that Deaf students may be considered bilingual. In 1969, Stokoe proposed the use of sign language in the education of deaf children. Bilingualism when related to deaf students refers to the use of the sign language of a country and the written/spoken language of the majority population (and may include sign systems or codes developed to present the spoken language visually).

Sign languages satisfy the definition of a language (Stokoe, 1960; Klima and Bellugi, 1979) and on this premise Deaf organizations have campaigned for sign languages to be granted equal rights with spoken languages. They are able to meet fully the communicative and social needs of the communities that use them.

A sign language is, it has been argued, the 'first language' of a deaf child: a language that the child can naturally acquire (as opposed to 'learn') forming the base for her/his cognitive development (Brennan, 1987). The use of the term 'first language' may have a particular meaning for Deaf people. 'First' may come to mean dominant, preferred or most frequently used even when that language has been acquired relatively late (Llewellyn-Jones, 1988). In 1979 Conrad wrote that a sign language can provide an "easily learned 'mother tongue', which may serve not only the communicative function but much more importantly, it may preserve and develop the crucial organization for language upon which any second language learning must be based" (Conrad, 1979). Given the fact that the human brain can process the learning of two or more languages, people's ability to acquire another language is "unlimited": it can only be restricted by practical circumstances (List, 1981).

In viewing the Deaf person as bilingual, attention is drawn to the particular characteristics of bilingualism in the Deaf context (Papaspyrou, 1990). It is argued that a Deaf person's bilingualism should be expected to develop in two stages. Initially, a sign language is acquired and developed as the first language and afterwards comes the systematic teaching of the written and spoken language (after the sign language has been established). Secondly, the acquisition of the majority language is considered possible, mainly through its written form, because this form is visibly understandable and reproducible. Any difficulties in the learning of this language in its oral form (that is through reading the lips of the speaker and residual hearing) and in oral reproduction are 'technical' problems and should not be considered as the criteria for certifying whether this language can be successfully acquired.

'Bilingualism' for a Deaf person is related to 'biculturalism': that is the ability to describe and participate in our reality in two potentially, fundamentally different ways (Papasprou, 1990).

The above arguments have been used to promote the view that a deaf child should be educated in a bilingual pedagogical environment. In this situation the child's visual channel, which provides the child's primary contact with her/his social and physical environment and the main and unimpaired tool for the acquisition of a first language, can be developed. In addition, in this way access to the spoken language can be offered in a more productive and less painful way as is suggested from the early results attained where bilingual education has been introduced. An example of the success of bilingual education is the long term experimental program (10 years) undertaken at the 'Kastelsvej' School for the Deaf in Copenhagen. The Deaf graduates of this program had results in the official examinations (in Danish and other subjects) that were equal or superior to those of children in mainstream schools. (Lewis, 1995)

It is argued that through bilingual education equal opportunities are offered to deaf children as well as the possibility of access to a full curriculum. It is suggested that through this approach, based on bilingual acceptance of deaf children by hearing society, the aim of their social incorporation can be achieved. (Brennan and Brien, 1995)

In this chapter I have sought to provide a brief history and introduction to the educational system through which the subjects of this study, the deaf children of today, will have passed. I have also described the basis of a bilingual education approach to the education of deaf children to which many of the subjects of this study make reference in later chapters.

## Chapter 3

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### 3.1 Theoretical Propositions

The design of this research arose from my professional interest in the socio-linguistic approach to deafness which views Deaf people as a cultural - linguistic minority. Examining Deaf people's experiences through this perspective within a pluralistic society provides the possibility, I believe, of developing a bilingual model for the integration and social inclusion of Deaf people in Greek society. This perspective is favored by the Greek Federation of the Deaf.

In Greece, the education and social policies that have addressed deaf peoples' education have always considered Deaf people's special condition as a 'disability'. As a result of this, the general approach to the social and educational circumstances of Deaf people has insisted on focusing on what Deaf people do not have or cannot do, evaluating their abilities by the standards of a 'normal' hearing person. But a Deaf person cannot biologically attain the situation of the 'normal' hearing person. What is suggested is that 'Deafness' constitutes a special alternative status in relation to the use of speech by hearing persons but should not be understood as an example of 'disorder'. This misconception tends to be generalized in relation to the educational and social situation of Deaf people (Papaspyrou, 1990).

In considering the social and educational needs of Deaf people no account appears to have been taken of the following:

- a) Deaf people have their own 'mother' language, Greek Sign Language, which may be acquired naturally in the home in the case of Deaf children of Deaf parents. Deaf children of hearing parents may be educated through this language given the opportunity to acquire it naturally. This is the sign language of the country. Therefore, Deaf people may be viewed as a linguistic minority.
- b) Deaf people do not simply constitute linguistic minorities in societies, as demonstrated by research (Stokoe 1960, 1972; Klima and Bellugi, 1979; Prillwitz, 1982; Brennan et al, 1984; Lane, 1984; Poizner, Klima and Bellugi, 1987; Prillwitz and Wudtke, 1988; Boyes-

Braem,1990; Papaspyrou, 1990; Fricher and Siple, 1990; Ahrbeck, 1992; Engberg-Pedersen, 1993) on the sign languages of various nations. They found that Deaf signers (the majority born deaf or who became so at a very early age) constitute not merely a linguistic minority, but also a language community". (Schein, 1968; Padden and Markowicz,1975; Cokely and Baker, 1980; Padden and Humphries, 1988). Inside these communities people share the same language, their experience of deafness and experiences from the various institutions or schools for deaf children that they attended (Charrow and Wilbur, 1989). In these communities they use and develop their own language, which is the vehicle of their cultural creations and the background to their community's identity (Lane, 1984; Papaspyrou, 1990; Ahrberck, 1992;). This historically evolved language of the community is considered to constitute its foundation (Mead,1934; Papaspyrou, 1990).

The above may be taken as the starting point that defines the sense of identity held by the subjects of my study. These are deaf people who were either born deaf or lost their hearing early in their lives and have as their first or natural language GSL i.e. they define themselves as Deaf (Woodward, 1982). This research examines their access to higher education at university, Technological Educational Institute or polytechnic.

I wanted to examine the actual experiences of Deaf students who took advantage of the laws that have enabled deaf people to have free admission to tertiary institutes of education. The present research aimed to collect information about Deaf people's education at the university, Technological Educational Institute or polytechnic attended. I wished to explore their experiences through the data collected not only in relation to the quality of their access to higher education but also in terms of the adequacy of their education prior to commencing higher education in relation to preparing them for participation within higher education. These are two separate issues, which need to be separately addressed.

### **3.2 Objectives of the Study**

In my research I sought to obtain information on:

1. How many Deaf persons i.e. deaf persons whose first or preferred language is Greek Sign Language, if any, were attending universities and Technological Education Institutions in Athens at the time of the study.
2. How many, if any, attended these universities or TEIs over the last five years.
3. Whether the Ministry of Education (Statistics Department or Department for Special Education) keeps any records relating to the attendance of Deaf people in Greek universities and TEIs.
4. Whether the Ministry of Education has a policy on access to higher education for Deaf people e.g. whether special financial support is available to tertiary institutions in order to enable such access and if so, if it comes from central or regional government or from the European Community.
5. Whether the tertiary institutions make any special provision for Deaf people to enable them to attend any department of their institution and whether any special provision exists for any other students, for example:
  - a) Students whose first language is not Greek.
  - b) Disabled students.

I wanted to ascertain whether Deaf students had access to any university course or if they were restricted to courses such as GSL or Deaf Studies courses.

### **3.3 Hypothesis**

I put forward the hypothesis that Deaf students i.e. the students that have a hearing loss and whose first or preferred language is Greek Sign Language, cannot have access to the lectures as lecturers appear to use only spoken Greek. As G.S.L is not recognized as the language of the Deaf community and is not formally used in their education, I anticipated that services such as interpreting services were not provided. Drawing on knowledge of recent research undertaken in Greece (Lampropoulou, 1994) that found that the education provided to deaf students does not prepare them adequately for a professional career, I put forward the hypothesis that Deaf students must face serious problems in understanding and in expressing themselves only through Greek in higher education settings.

### **3.4 Organization of the Study**

The research was confined to tertiary institutions in Athens because, based on the findings of my pilot study, I found that most Deaf students were attending or had attended university, TEIs or polytechnic in Athens.

I started by collecting data from the Ministry of Education. I sought information by letter, personal visits and contact with the Ministry's Department of Special Education, Statistics Service and their Directorate of Minorities.

None of the above departments held information about deaf students. At the Statistics Service they held information on disabled people that had graduated during the academic year 1992-1993 from the University, but there was no record of how many deaf students, if any, were among them.

As I had been unable to obtain information from the Ministry of Education, I applied to the Secretariats of the University Faculties, to the Secretariat of the Polytechnic, and to the General Secretariat of TEI of Athens. From the 20 Secretariats that I applied to, only seven replied (by letter or by oral communication) and of those only four were able to give me numerical information.

The data obtained showed that during the five year period 1989 to 1993, forty five deaf students enrolled at the four institutions referred to above, of whom 30 were still enrolled at these institutions in the year 1992-93. These students included students with some degree of hearing loss whose first or preferred language is Greek Sign Language as well as students with some degree of hearing loss who do not know Greek Sign Language and who use (spoken) Greek as their preferred means of communication.

I discovered that the Greek Federation of the Deaf (OMKE) had created a committee of Deaf students, in an effort to help solve the problems experienced by Deaf students. The committee sought to bring the Deaf students together in order, with the support of OMKE, to address these problems. This initiative led to the formation of a group of 37 Deaf students. This group sent a letter to the Senate of Athens University describing the problems of Deaf students and requesting solutions of these problems (the letter of the Deaf students is reproduced in an appendix to this study).

I sought information from the members of this group in seeking to identify Deaf persons who had studied, had interrupted their studies or were studying at tertiary level. Of the 37 students contacted, I managed to obtain interviews with 21 of them.

In addition to the Deaf students who were attending or had attended a tertiary institution, I interviewed 17 (out of a total of 18) deaf school pupils who were attending their third (final) class of Lykios at two special schools for deaf and hard of hearing children in Athens. These pupils were interviewed at their schools. This enabled me to have direct access to the group but did, I think, restrict the level of 'spontaneous' responses that had characterized the responses of Deaf people interviewed in the other three groups.

I also interviewed teachers who taught the children interviewed at the two special schools. The total number of teachers who were teaching the third class of Lykio at these two schools in Athens was 16 when I did my research. I interviewed eight of these teachers. I did not interview those who had no experience or very limited experience of teaching the children (either because they had come there only for a transfer for a year from a hearing school, or because they had not been at the school very long and they did not feel ready to express their opinions).

I had planned to interview seven lecturers from the University of Athens who taught students in the Education Department (training to work in infant schools, primary schools, etc), Department of Physical Education, the Fine Arts Academy, the School for Social and Political Sciences, or in the faculties of the TEIs engaged in teaching deaf students. But of the seven lecturers that I approached, only three agreed to be interviewed and provide information. I experienced difficulties due to the disinclination of lecturers to become involved in the study. I had ascertained from the pilot study that there were two or more Deaf students enrolled in each of the faculties listed above. I believe that the lecturers' unwillingness was due to the fact that Deaf students form a minority and are always in the background in comparison with the number of hearing students that they teach. In addition, this minority is dispersed among the various faculties and departments with very few Deaf students at each of the different levels of study. As a result their presence normally escapes notice. Some lecturers, and in some cases even the administrative staff, are unaware of their presence. Even when lecturers are aware of Deaf students (either because they show a personal interest in them or because these students introduced themselves to the lecturers) they are usually inadequately briefed on the real needs of this particular category of student. This happens, I discovered, because

within the framework of the university educational program there is no briefing for the teaching staff on the needs and circumstances of the Deaf students. There are no established services for such students. In so far as it is possible I wanted to describe the exact situations experienced by Deaf students.

### **3.5 Languages Used in Interviewing Deaf Students**

The language that was used to carry out the interviews with Deaf students was usually Greek Sign Language (GSL) through the use of Greek/Greek Sign Language interpreters, although there were cases of Deaf people completing the questionnaires in written Greek.

In my first meeting with the students I gave information about my proposed research. I described the subject of my research and what was its goal (as described in the abstract) and how it was to be carried out. If they agreed to be interviewed, I then interviewed them right away or at a second meeting. The questionnaire was completed in the presence of an interpreter, who was there mainly for professional reasons in that I did not consider it professional to be both a researcher and interpreter at the same time.

I discovered that most Deaf pupils of the third class of Lykios had difficulty in completing the questionnaire in writing. In most cases I therefore wrote down the answers that were given through the interpreter. In the small number of cases where the questionnaires was completed in writing by the Deaf students themselves, I found many grammatical mistakes which made many of their answers incomprehensible. In these cases we arranged a third meeting to clarify the answers I could not understand.

I believe that the existence of a written questionnaire was one reason why some Deaf students did not want to participate in the research. This in itself provided evidence of the students difficulty in accessing written Greek. If I were to do such a research project again, I would use short, structured interviews, semi-guided so that the same topics would be addressed by each interviewee. In this way I think that the Deaf students would be able to express their experiences more easily and in their preferred language.

Deaf students who were interviewed stated either that GSL was their first language and one or both of their parents was Deaf, or that GSL was their preferred language. They stated that

GSL was their main, primary means of communication. This was true for students irrespective of their degree of hearing loss or their ability to use spoken and/or written Greek.

There were also some students amongst those who did not want to participate in the study who declared that they knew GSL but that they it was not their preferred language because “they had little loss of hearing” or because “they were hard of hearing” and they could speak. Some students stated that they were learning GSL at the time, but their parents did not allow them to attend Deaf Clubs and they did not have contact with the Deaf community.

In carrying out my research I experienced both positive and negative reactions. Some students agreed to discuss my proposed research, and issues relating to deaf education, but some others refused my request due to their lack of trust of hearing people. Some asked the interpreters that I engaged “Is she hearing? Do you trust her?” The fact that I understood and used their language gained their respect, but it did not always remove their reservations.

Some interviewees, children of Deaf parents and active member of the Deaf community, did not want to answer questions that related to the Deaf community (the clubs and the Federation). This was particularly the case with questions on whether they had received support or guidance from the Deaf community; if they did, what did it consist of, and if they did not, why did they think support was not forthcoming. I think that they did not want to answer these questions because they felt that by not answering a hearing person they avoided exposing their community to the wider society that they do not trust. Society in the way it is organised, in their view, does not offer them the ‘safety that they experience in their community, even if the latter is only able to give them limited support as students.

I discovered it is not usual for Deaf people in Greece to meet hearing people undertaking research on their community (the Deaf Clubs) and that they would often prefer to keep their life in their community to themselves. Many Deaf people are not used to engaging with hearing people and sharing their own views and experiences with them (except those hearing people who have bonds through family relationships with Deaf members of the community or are hearing interpreters). However, I think there has been a significant improvement in the relationship between the Deaf community and hearing people, and a greater acceptance of hearing people by members of the Deaf community.

When I met former students of mine in their own social setting I noted their confidence and the ease with which they interacted together. The two-way communication that occurred in these settings revealed them to be strong and happy. I did not get the same impression when I observed them at school.

### **3.6 Construction of the Samples**

I started my search for Deaf students at the GFD. The members of the Committee on Education drew up a list of 37 Deaf students. Of these 37 students, some were abroad as part of their studies, and some I could not get in touch with because they worked or they had no time. As some of the 21 who agreed to be interviewed were members of Deaf Clubs, I continued looking for people I could interview in the Deaf Clubs. I was introduced to some them by a process of one student introducing me to the next one and so on.

Even though I had a list of Deaf students at the start of my research, through the use of the snowball method I adopted, I was able to create a sample group. I used qualitative methods to analyse the data I obtained (Gilbert, 1993; Bell, 1993).

In the Deaf clubs I met another 24 persons. However, it was possible only to interview those to whom I had obtained an introduction. In total I ended up with a list of 61 persons (38 current students, 12 graduates, 11 who had interrupted their studies). Of these, 21 agreed to be interviewed viz. 12 current students, 4 graduates and 5 who had interrupted their studies.

In the same period (1992 –1993) the University of Athens developed a program (Horizon 1992-93 / No 91003E1) in which it is stated that during the year 1992-93, 37 deaf students studied at Athens University.

This study includes members of both sexes (see table 2) even though it was not possible to have the same proportion of men and women in all groups. The age range is between 19 and 30 (with the exception of one student who was 41). I cannot claim that the sample is representative of the whole population since I could not get data on the whole population. However, I believe I was able to create sample groups that, I believe, will enable us to identify the main issues confronting Deaf students in higher education.

The sample of deaf pupils who studied in the third class of Lykio was drawn from a list of two special Lykios in Athens. There were 18 in this group in total and the sample participating is representative since 17 out of 18 were interviewed. The group is divided into two sub-groups:

- a) Deaf students who stated that they would go to university or TEI.
- b) Deaf students who stated they had decided that they would not go.

After I had established the sample groups of tertiary level Deaf students and pupils who studied in the third classes of special Lykio for deaf and hard of hearing children, I sought to complement their perspectives by interviewing and obtaining the views of:

1. Schoolteachers: particularly those who had a permanent post and taught in the third class of Lykio. They would be able to describe the educational standard of Deaf pupils in the third class of Lykio and the difficulties that confronted Deaf pupils who wished to attend a higher education institution. Moreover, these interviews would be valuable in order to learn of the teachers' experiences and points of view on how they would wish to see the education of deaf children improved. The interviews would also seek to obtain their suggestions on how to address the problems identified.
2. Lecturers from tertiary institutions, especially those who were teaching or had taught Deaf students. Specifically, I wanted to record their personal experiences, the problems they had to deal with or had experienced in teaching Deaf students, as well as their proposals on how the situation could be improved.
3. Greek Federation of the Deaf. I wished to obtain the views of representatives of Deaf people on how access to higher education could be improved for deaf users of Greek Sign Language.

Based upon the information obtained from these different perspectives I attempt to provide a framework through which to view Deaf people's education.

### **3.7 Sources**

Sources that I used or applied to for information included:

The Central Services of the Ministry of Education; the Department of Special Education; the Ministry's Statistics Service; the Directorate of Foreign Language Schools. However, there were no separate, aggregated records kept in relation to deaf students.

Twenty Secretariats of Tertiary Institutions of Higher Education.

Two Special Schools for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children in Athens.

The Greek Federation of the Deaf.

Eight foreign universities were requested to provide information: information was received from the following:

University of Durham: University Service for Hearing – Impaired Students.

University of Durham: Deaf Studies Research Unit.

University of Bristol: Centre for Deaf Studies.

University of Wolverhampton: Visual Language Centre

University of California: Office of Information, National Technical Institute for the Deaf.

### **3.8 Socio-geographical Characteristics of the Groups**

Many of the Deaf students' families live in Athens even though half of them originate from other parts of the country. Deaf students whose families do not live in Athens live in boarding houses with hearing students. Although some of the interviewees came from places where there are schools for deaf children, universities and/or TEIs, they preferred to study in Athens.

An overview of the sample showed that a majority of the fathers of those interviewed were in employment: the remainder were retired or unemployed. However, the sample of the mothers showed that over half their number were unemployed.

The educational level of the parents of those interviewed was very low: two out of three of the parents had not completed their elementary education or were illiterate. The great majority of the parents were hearing and the Deaf interviewee was usually the only Deaf member of their family.

### **3.9 Questionnaires and Interviews with Deaf Students, Deaf Pupils, Teachers, Lecturers and Representatives of the Greek Federation of the Deaf**

In administering the questionnaires and conducting the interviews I used:

- a) Specific questions to collect information about each individual's social and educational circumstances.
- b) Open questions enabling the individuals to provide empirical information and their own viewpoints. Many of these open questions contained a 'why' element allowing the person to explain her/his opinions.
- c) Prepared answers from which the person selected, enabling them to place in rank order their views and/or suggestions.

Questionnaires were structured according to the circumstances of each group and the type of information I wanted to obtain.

#### **Deaf Students and Pupils**

Questions addressed to members of each of these groups covered:

- family
- education
- services provided
- problems during education
- co-operation with other Deaf students
- proposals to overcome communication problems
- opportunities provided
- participation in non-course activities at tertiary institutions
- participation in the Deaf community
- knowledge about the situation of Deaf people in other countries and EC policies in relation to Deaf people
- proposals.

#### *Family*

The questions in this section included:

Age: information on the ages at which Deaf people undertook their studies; i.e. start, completion or date at which studies were interrupted.

Sex: in the total population I sought equal representation of the two sexes.

The questions about where interviewees came from and where they lived provided information on the extent to which Deaf people tend to move to Athens if they are not from Athens.

The questions relating to communication were structured in such a way as to find out how family members communicate and if there are differences in how communication was achieved with different members of the subject's family.

The question on whether parents are Deaf or hearing provided information on, or an indication of, how many students had Greek Sign Language as a first language.

The employment status and 'type of work' questions provided information on the social stratification of the families of Deaf students.

I sought to identify the influences on the Deaf students in relation to their choice of a higher education institution and their subject of study.

All the above questions were 'closed'. They give information about the social, educational and linguistic status of the Deaf students' families and the relationships within their families.

### *Education*

The questions in this section covered:

- a) The previous education of the Deaf students: whether they had been educated in schools for deaf children or in schools for hearing children and what level of achievement they had obtained.
- b) Their choice of a specific tertiary institution; their subject of study; how these choices were made; where did they get information and what issues determined their final decisions.
- c) The residential and the financial situation of the students: how did they (especially those from regions outside of Athens) face the problems and cost of living in Athens.

### *Services Provided*

Questions were asked as to whether any financial support or special services were available to the students.

### *Problems Experienced During Their Education*

Whether Deaf students face problems during their studies was investigated. Specific questions were asked in relation to their attendance at lectures, seminars, access to information, use of preferred languages and other communication issues.

### *Co-operation with other Deaf Students*

Deaf Students were asked whether they co-operated as a group in addressing problems, i.e. co-operated with other Deaf students who are studying or who have studied in the same department or in other departments of the same tertiary institution.

### *Proposals to Overcome Communication Problems*

The students proposed solutions to the difficulties they had experienced and ranked these in order of priority. The Deaf students reported on the services provided and compared these with those available to hearing students. In this way the students described how they experience university life.

### *Participation of the Deaf Students in the University Community*

This group of questions addressed the Deaf students' participation in the community of the university or TEI and sought to find out whether they participated in the life of the institution outside their courses of study.

### *Participation in the Deaf Community*

I enquired if the Deaf students were members of the Deaf community; their views on the community's contribution to addressing the problems of Deaf students and contribution to their solution; their expectations of the Deaf community.

### *Knowledge about Other Countries and European Community Policies*

These questions sought to ascertain what the students knew about Deaf people's access to tertiary education in other countries; if they knew about EC policies in relation to Deaf people and their views on these policies if known.

### *Proposals*

In this section Deaf students considered the situation of Deaf students and Deaf people in general in Greece and suggested what they thought should be done to improve their circumstances.

### **Teachers**

Interviews were conducted with schoolteachers of deaf children. There were four sections to the questionnaire for teachers who teach in the special Lykio in Athens.

The first section covered general information about their specialist subject(s) and their professional experience in education (in both schools for hearing children and in special schools).

The second section focused on the aims of education and if, in their view, they achieve their aims in relation to deaf children.

In the third section teachers discussed their pupils and their achievements. They describe their pupils and provide information on their achievements in relation to the use of languages (spoken/written Greek and GSL). They describe the education that, in their view, is appropriate for pupils who use GSL as their first or preferred language.

In the fourth group of questions teachers give their views on the opportunities that Deaf students have to gain access to higher education and discuss how they think the education of Deaf children can be improved. They are asked what they think would encourage Deaf pupils to go on to higher education and how they believe access to higher education for their pupils can be improved.

## **Lecturers in Institutions of Higher Education**

The first section of the questionnaire sought general information about the subject(s) they taught, their professional experience in education and how long they have been involved in teaching Deaf students.

In the second section the lecturers discuss what 'access' means to them and how access is provided by their institution to students whose first language is not Greek, such as Deaf students and what kind of special services or financial support, if any, are provided by their institution.

In the third section, they discuss their subject, the way they teach and what issues, if any, arise as a consequence of having Deaf students in their classes.

In the fourth section the questions address whether there is information available about the situation of Deaf students and what action can the tertiary institutions take to address the problems experienced by Deaf students.

In the last section the lecturers present what they think can be done with regard to the special situation of Deaf students in tertiary institutions.

## **Greek Federation of the Deaf**

The Greek Federation of the Deaf is the representative organization of Deaf people in Greece. I interviewed representatives of the Federation and sought their views on the education of deaf children, Deaf students' access to higher education and how they believe access can be improved.

The GFD questionnaire was in four parts: in the first section the questions address the GFD's views on the education of deaf children; in the second their views on issues relating to access to higher education, and in the third and fourth consideration of identified problems and suggested proposals and solutions.

# Chapter 4

## 4.1 Findings from the Interviews with Deaf Students and Deaf Pupils

### 4.1.1 Characteristics of the Samples

I report on the views of 21 Deaf students (Q1, 2,3) and 17 out of 18 Deaf pupils who were in the third class of two Lykio in Athens (Q4). At the time of my research 12 of the Deaf students were attending institutions of higher education (Q3), five had interrupted their studies (Q2) and four had graduated (Q1). Sixteen of them studied or had studied at university, one at a polytechnic and four at Technological Educational Institutes in Athens.

The age of the group of Deaf students ranged between 20-30 years except for one student who was 41. Sixteen of the Deaf students were between the ages of 20 and 25 and four were between the ages of 26 and 30. The Deaf pupils of the third class of Lykios were aged between 19 and 23 years.

Table 0.1

Age	Q1	%	Q2	%	Q3	%	Q1,2,3	%	Q4	%	Q1,2,3,4	%
15-19	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1c	6	1c	2.5
20-25	-	-	3c	60	9c	75	12c	57	16c	94	28c	74
26-30	4c	100	2c	40	2c	16.7	8c	38	-	-	8c	21
30-45	-	-	-	-	1c	8.3	1c	5	-	-	1c	2.5
Total	4c	100	5c	100	12c	100	21c	100	17c	100	38c	100

The total sample comprised 19 males and 19 females. There is a difference in the proportion of men and women in the group of students who had interrupted their studies. This reflected the fact that more men than women were found to have interrupted their studies. This might be an indication that more men than women interrupt their studies, but the sample numbers were insufficient to permit such a

conclusion. Most of them interrupted their studies in order to work. This might indicate that one reason for Deaf students interrupting their studies is a lack of finances.

*Table 0.2*

Sex	Q1	%	Q2	%	Q3	%	Q1,2,3	%	Q4	%	Q1,2,3,4	%
Female	2c	50	1c	20	6c	50	10c	48	10c	59	19c	50
Male	2c	50	4c	80	6c	50	11c	52	7c	41	19c	50
Total	4c	100	5c	100	12c	100	21c	100	17c	100	38c	100

#### *4.1.2 Family Background of the Students and Pupils*

More than half of the families came from the provinces but the majority lived in Athens.

*Table 0.4*

Place of Origin	Q1,2,3	%	Q4	%	Q 1,2,3,4	%
Athens	9c	43	4c	24	13c	34
Other	12c	57	13c	76	25c	66
Total	21c	100	17c	100	38c	100

*Table 0.5.*

Place of Residence	Q1,2,3	%	Q4	%	Q1,2,3,4	%
Athens	15c	71	8c	47	23c	61
Other	6c	29	9c	53	15c	39
Total	21c	100	17c	100	38c	100

About half (10) of the fathers of Deaf students were in paid employment, mainly in manual occupations. Of the others, five were retired, four were unemployed and two had died. Fifteen of the 17 fathers of deaf pupils were in paid employment and most were manual workers. The other two were retired.

Table 0.6

Fathers in Paid Employment	Q 1,2,3	%	Q4	%	Q 1,2,3,4	%
W	10c	48	15c	88	25c	66
N	4c	19	-	-	4c	11
R	5c	24	2c	12	7c	18
D	2c	9	-	-	2c	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>21c</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>17c</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>38c</b>	<b>100</b>

The level of education achieved by fathers of Deaf students was sixth class of primary school in 13 cases. Only one had completed high school and two had finished Lykio. Three had finished Gymnasio. One had finished technical school and one was illiterate.

Eleven of the 17 fathers of deaf pupils had completed only their primary school education. Only two had finished high school and two had a Higher Institute Diploma. From the total sample more than half had only been educated to primary school level.

Table 0.7

Fathers' Level of Education	Q1,2,3.	%	Q4	%	Q1,2,3,4.	%
Illiterate	1c	5	-	-	1c	2.5
Primary	13c	62	11c	64	24c	63
Gymnasio	3c	14	-	-	3c	8
Lykio	2c	9	2c	12	4c	11
HEI - TEI	1c	5	2c	12	3c	8
Did not finish primary school	1c	5	1c	6	2c	5
Technical school	-	-	1c	6	1c	2.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>21c</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>17c</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>38c</b>	<b>100</b>

Two thirds of the mothers of Deaf students did not work in paid employment. Most of the seven who were in paid employment were manual workers. Half of the mothers of Deaf pupils were in paid employment and all were manual workers.

Table 0.9

<b>Mothers in Paid Employment</b>	<b>Q1,2,3.</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Q4</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Q1,2,3,4.</b>	<b>%</b>
W	6c	28	10c	59	16c	42
N	14c	67	7c	41	21c	55
D	1c	5	-	-	1c	3
Total	21c	100	17c	100	38c	100

Two thirds of the mothers of Deaf students had attended school until the sixth class of primary school. Only one had a university level diploma while three had finished Lykio.

The level of education of mothers of Deaf pupils was to primary level in nine of the 17 cases. Two had not finished their primary school education. Three had finished Gymnasio and two had finished high school. One had obtained a Higher Institute Diploma.

Table 0.10

<b>Level of Education</b>	<b>Q1,2,3.</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Q4</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Q1,2,3,4.</b>	<b>%</b>
Illiterate	2c	10	1c	6	3c	8
Primary	14c	66	9c	53	23c	61
Gymnasio	-	-	3c	17	3c	8
Lykio	3c	14	2c	12	5c	13
HEI-TEI	1c	5	1c	6	2c	5
Did not finish primary school	1c	5	1c	6	2c	5
Total	21c	100	17c	100	38c	100

The majority of the parents of Deaf students, 18 fathers and 16 mothers, were hearing while all parents of Deaf pupils were hearing.

Table 0.8

<b>Fathers</b>	<b>Q1,2,3.</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Q4</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Q1,2,3,4.</b>	<b>%</b>
Hearing	18c	86	17c	100	35c	92
Deaf	3c	14	-	-	3c	8
Total	21c	100	17c	100	38c	100

Table 0.11

<b>Mothers</b>	<b>Q1,2,3.</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Q4</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Q1,2,3,4.</b>	<b>%</b>
Hearing	16c	76	17c	100	33c	87
Deaf	5c	24	-	-	5c	13
Total	21c	100	17c	100	38c	100

Most of the families (83%) had between one to five family members while the remainder consisted of between five to ten members.

Table 0.3.

<b>Family Members</b>	<b>Q1,2,3</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Q4</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Q1,2,3,4</b>	<b>%</b>
1-5	19c	90	13c	76	32c	84
6-10	2c	10	4c	24	6c	16
Total	21c	100	17c	100	38c	100

In 11 of the 21 families of Deaf students, spoken language was used exclusively to communicate with Deaf members, while four used signs and speech or family signs. GSL was reported to be used by six families as a basic means of communication. In four of these families both parents were Deaf, while in two of them one parent or one sister was Deaf.

All members of the families of deaf pupils communicated through speech with 24% reporting the use of some combined form of languages.

Table 0.12

<b>Communication</b>	<b>Q1,2,3</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Q4</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Q1,2,3,4.</b>	<b>%</b>
Trough speech	11c	52	13c	76	24c	63
Trough G.S.L	6c	29	-	-	6c	16
Trough sign and speech combined	3c	14	3c	18	6c	16
Though family signs	1c	5	1c	6	2c	5
Total	21c	100	17c	100	38c	100

#### 4.1.3 Education of Deaf Students

All the students had completed their primary school education at schools for deaf children while three had attended Gymnasio and Lykio for hearing children.

The majority of graduates had obtained their degrees over a period of between six to seven years.

The majority of those who interrupted their studies did so within the first year of their studies. The remainder did so either between their first and third year or in their fifth year.

It became clear that the choice of a specific university, TEI or polytechnic was influenced by the subject of study rather than by special services since no established special services for Deaf students were provided.

The subject of study chosen by the students was guided by their wish to help other Deaf people in seven cases out of 21, while five were influenced by the fact that other Deaf people had studied that subject. Parents influenced the subject chosen in five cases. The obtaining of a professional qualification was the least important reason given for choice of subject.

They received information about universities, TEIs or polytechnics from other Deaf people in 10 cases out of 21, from their parents in six cases and from the tertiary institutions themselves in three cases.

During their studies 16 Deaf students lived with their families, while the remainder lived in the residential accommodation that is available to students, with relatives or on their own.

The costs of their studies were covered by a combination of family support and government financial support for the deaf in the case of nine students. In eight cases it was covered by their family and in two cases by a combination of the students' personal earnings (from work) and government financial support.

#### *4.1.4 Provision of Special Services in Tertiary Education*

The availability of special services was reported by only one of the students who attended university. Services were described as uncoordinated and fragmentary as they did not officially exist within the institutions as services for Deaf students. There was no financial support available to Deaf students to cover their special needs.

The majority of the Deaf students reported that they would wish to have access to GSL/Greek interpreting services (17 of the 21) as well as financial support to cover the additional expenses incurred in studying such subjects as Architectural Studies or in studying abroad. In addition they would wish their books to be available on time, have a note taking service for lectures and either an advice centre or a special department to be established to provide information and support.

#### *4.1.5 Problems Experienced During Tertiary Education*

All Deaf people who had attended or were attending a tertiary institution reported facing problems. The main problems were as follows:

- Communication problems (which they described as considerable and stressful) when they were among groups of hearing people. Except for those for whom lectures were compulsory (six students) the students did not attend lectures. As a consequence they reported that they had insufficient information on courses and examinations.
- Problems due to difficulties in understanding spoken and especially written Greek.
- Problems arising from the low standard of their school education compared to that of their hearing peers.
- Problems with regard to the attitude of the lecturers and secretarial staff towards Deaf students.

Deaf students who attended lectures faced the following problems:

- As there were no GSL/Greek interpreters available, and lecturers were reported as speaking very fast, Deaf students could not follow everything said during their lectures. They found they were never able to take part in the discussions that were held, so they felt they did not get proper access to the different perspectives discussed.
- Because there was no note-keeping facility provided, they found it difficult to understand certain terms and linguistic expressions.

- They studied only certain essential chapters of books suggested by lecturers.

In attempting to solve their problems Deaf students as individuals turned to:

Lecturers: often (4), sometimes (9), rarely (3)

Secretary's office: often (8), sometimes (3), rarely (3)

Deaf students: often (4), sometimes (5)

#### *4.1.6 Co-operation With Other Deaf Students in Tertiary Institutions*

Those Deaf students who had other Deaf students in their department, in 13 cases reported that they co-operated with each other in dealing with problems. They informed each other of difficulties and sought assistance from or informed the Greek Federation for the Deaf or the president of the hearing students' federation .

These Deaf students made an attempt at inter-university co-operation, with the support of the GFD, through the Federation's Committee for Education. This co-operation resulted in the sending of a letter to the Senate of a university (see appendix) outlining the needs of Deaf students.

The others did not engage in such co-operative action. The reasons given were that they were the only student in their faculty or that they did not share a common sense of identity or circumstance with the other students.

#### *4.1.7 Suggestions as to How to Overcome Communication Problems in Tertiary Institutions*

In order to overcome communication problems the Deaf students suggested priority should be given to the creation of special departments (16 respondents out of 21) and the provision of interpreters (15 respondents out of 21).

#### *4.1.8 Equal Opportunities*

All Deaf students, both those who had graduated and those who had interrupted their studies, stated that they did not believe they had equal opportunities in learning and

studying compared with hearing students. They felt the fact that their preferred language was not officially recognized was the main cause for this situation continuing. They had neither the opportunity to be taught in their preferred language or use interpreters for their communication and attendance at lectures. As a result, they believed they received low-level information and knowledge.

They believed they did not have the same access as hearing students to scholarships and occupations (even in the case of professions associated with Deaf people, such as teachers in schools for deaf children). They believed they were viewed as lower class individuals.

#### *4.1.9 Participation in Non-Academic Activities at University, TEI and Polytechnic*

A majority of Deaf students who had attended or were attending tertiary institutions (17 respondents) did not participate in the activities of the university as there was no encouragement to do so and they did not feel comfortable in mixed situations in which they experienced communication problems. Three students reported that they traveled and participated in university games, parties and other events.

#### *4.1.10 Participation in the Deaf Community*

All Deaf students reported participating in the Deaf community and being members of one of the five clubs.

The majority of the Deaf students did not discuss the problems they faced in higher education when they went to the clubs. The reason was related to the role of organizations within the Deaf community. They knew that the clubs did not address the hearing community directly about the problems experienced by Deaf students. This role was the responsibility of the GFD which they contacted when they had difficulties. They wanted the GFD to show more interest in the problems of Deaf students in higher education, in particular to put pressure on the Government to provide interpreters and to support them financially. They also wanted for the GFD to seek subject recognition for Greek Sign Language.

#### *4.1.11 Knowledge of Other Countries*

Among those who had been to other countries (16) 11 stated that Deaf people in other countries faced similar problems, six believed that they did not, and four did not know.

#### *4.1.12 Knowledge of European Community Policies*

Over half of the students (12) were not aware of EC policies in relation to Deaf people. Those who were aware (5) considered the recognition of sign languages by the European Community to be important. In their opinion, the members of the European Community should all follow the same policy. They supported the idea that grants for programs relating to Deaf people should be given to the GFD directly.

#### *4.1.13 Proposals for Improvements Put Forward by Students*

The official recognition of GSL was the main suggestion which the Deaf students believed would lead, not only to the improvement of their situation in institutions of higher education but also to the improvement of the general situation of Deaf people in Greece.

In addition they would wish to receive support from the State in three ways:

##### *a) Education*

As a consequence of their experiences of an educational system that they felt did not correspond to their needs, they suggested that the most important priority was to change or revise the educational policy in relation to Deaf children and students. They suggested that a bilingual educational approach to the education of Deaf children and students should be established, and interpreters used in all faculties and departments of institutions of higher education.

It was suggested by some that such a bilingual approach would require a bilingual curriculum to be available from the time a child's deafness was diagnosed. Some recommended that a special centre should be established through which Deaf adults

and Deaf and hearing specialists could provide advice and counseling support to the hearing parents of deaf children, and training programmes provided in relation to the bilingual education of deaf children. Some suggested that doctors should be obliged to send deaf children to these centres (and not just to speech therapists). In addition there should be seminars for parents through which information and advice could be provided on the first steps to take in connection with their deaf children.

It was recommended that hearing teachers who taught in schools for deaf and hard of hearing children should have specialized training and competence in GSL. Deaf people should be encouraged to become teachers.

Lecturers and administrative staff at institutions of higher education at which Deaf students have been accepted should be briefed as to the particular needs and circumstances of Deaf students. They considered it very important for information to be made available to all hearing people, especially those who were directly involved with Deaf people, about the world of Deaf people. This should include information on how to interact and communicate with Deaf people.

They identified the need to establish a school for the training of GSL/Greek interpreters, along with a department that would undertake research into GSL.

The Deaf students drew attention to the need for professional career guidance for Deaf students.

#### *b)Funding*

The students considered it important to establish special State grants for Deaf students, equivalent to those available to hearing students.

The view was expressed that increased funding is required to be allocated to the education of deaf children so that they can receive the same level of education as hearing children during all stages of education.

### *c) Ensuring Professional Opportunities*

Students felt it was important for Deaf people to have opportunities to obtain professional employment, not only in State organizations, but also in private companies.

#### *4.1.14 Education of Deaf Pupils*

All Deaf pupils who studied in the third class of Lykio had attended three years of classes in a Special Lykio for deaf and hard of hearing children. Sixteen of the 17 pupils had also attended a special primary school and Gymnasio.

The sample of deaf pupils who studied in the third class of Lykio for deaf and hard of hearing children was divided into two subgroups: those Deaf pupils (10) who stated that they wanted to continue their studies at an institute of tertiary education, and those (7) who had decided they did not wish to do so.

Seven of the ten Deaf pupils who stated that they wanted to continue their studies had chosen university, two had chosen Technological Educational Institutions and one a polytechnic.

Most of them had chosen subjects related to education (i.e. four teaching, two psychology and another two, computer science). Half of the pupils (5), in choosing their subjects of study, had been influenced by a wish to help other Deaf people, whilst the others had been influenced by either their family (3) or by the wish to obtain professional qualifications (2).

They obtained information on courses mainly from their family (5 cases), from other Deaf people (2 cases), the mass media and hearing friends.

The cost of their studies for half of the group was to be paid by a combination of family contributions and government financial support<sup>2</sup>; four were to be financed in full by their families and only one by a combination of family and income from the student's paid employment.

#### *4.1.15 Knowledge of Provision of Special Services in Tertiary Education*

Most of the young Deaf people (8 out of 10) who had decided to attend a higher education institution did not know whether special services or financial support were available to them or not. Two knew that there was no special provision for Deaf students.

The provision of interpreter services was seen as the most important service that they would wish to have provided (6). They also asked for a centre for Deaf people, for special books, for persons to take notes and for more financial support.

In particular, they noted that: "For them most things were negative". "Most teachers were not specialists and they came to schools for deaf children without having appropriate training e.g. they did not know sign language". "Deaf pupils when they read have difficulties in understanding the meanings of words because they lack knowledge of Greek vocabulary". "They did not have information; nobody told them the truth and they experienced stress and a feeling of insecurity". "They wished very much that TV would give information every day and that all people would understand that there were people with special needs: that there are not only handicapped and blind people but also Deaf people who communicate through sign language".

One pupil stated that "All people must know that Deaf people are normal like hearing people; the only difference is that they live in their own way". The wish was expressed that the State should "help Deaf people by giving money to the Deaf people of Greece" and hearing people "help deaf children by understanding that Deaf people are different from them".

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This financial support is the state grant available to deaf people in relation to their deafness. This amount was 26.000 Drs per month at the time of the study.

#### *4.1.16 Proposals for Improvements Put Forward by Pupils*

Deaf pupils believed that their situation would be further improved if they could have the opportunity to study in their own language and if they were not considered to be 'lower-class' individuals.

They wish for the presence of interpreters in institutes of tertiary education and the opportunity for hearing people to learn GSL.

They suggested that special schools and colleges for Deaf students should be created, as in the USA, where they exist from primary school to university.

They identified the need for increased funding to be made available for the training and education of Deaf pupils.

#### *4.1.17 The Group Who Did Not Wish To Attend An Institution of Tertiary Education*

The seven pupils, who did not wish to continue their education at an institution of tertiary education, stated that their decision not to continue related to their previous level of education, to their abilities to read and to their level of knowledge (which they considered inadequate in relation to higher education).

Only two stated that they did not wish to study in any circumstances because they were not interested. Four wanted to work, one wanted to go to technical school, one had not yet decided and one wanted to learn to use computers.

#### *4.1.18 Knowledge of Other Countries*

Most of both subgroups did not know about the situation of Deaf people in other countries that they had not visited. Among those who had been abroad only five reported not being aware of problems.

#### *4.1.19 Knowledge of European Community Policy*

These pupils did not know about EC policies. They did not understand the meaning of 'EC policies'.

#### *4.1.20 Equal Opportunities*

All 17 deaf pupils stated that in their view they had not had and would not have the same opportunities as hearing pupils because:

- Hearing people spoke the language of the society in which they lived while Deaf people used a different language;
- Hearing people in a hearing society have direct access to information while Deaf people have problems because they do not understand or do not fully understand information presented in a spoken language. They have to deal with communication problems which hearing people do not have to confront.

#### *4.1.21 Participation in the Deaf Community*

Ten of the 17 pupils were members of Deaf clubs. The reasons given by those pupils who were not members as to why they did not go to Deaf clubs included, no time to attend and a belief that the Deaf clubs had no power and were not able to represent the demands of Deaf people.

The pupils would like the Greek Federation of the Deaf to have more power and to be able to ensure that interpreters, and lecturers with experience of teaching Deaf people, were employed at universities.

### **Summary**

The above data shows that all students and pupils interviewed had attended special primary schools for deaf and hard of hearing children and most had also attended special Gymnasio and Lykio for deaf and hard of hearing children.

Most deaf pupils who had finished the third class of Lykio at a special school for deaf and hard of hearing children, completed their secondary education on average 1 to 5 years later than their hearing peers. Up to 1994 Deaf students who graduated usually needed five to seven years to complete their studies.

Overall Deaf students needed between six and twelve years to complete their studies. This seems to be the result not only of the difficulties they faced in their education at tertiary institutions but also because of being behind in their previous education.

The choice of subject for most of the students was guided by their wish to help other Deaf people, by their parents or was influenced by the fact that other Deaf people had studied the subject. It was not, unfortunately, the result of Deaf pupils having obtained information concerning special services since none had been established. Most of them received information about higher education from their parents and/or from other Deaf people.

The costs of Deaf students attendance at higher education institutions were paid mainly by their families.

Deaf students made clear that they faced three main problems during their studies at tertiary institutions:

- They had a low educational standard in relation to their fellow hearing students;
- They had difficulties in understanding the Greek language not only in its spoken form but also in its written form;

These difficulties were related to their earlier education.

- They did not have access to Greek Sign Language/Greek interpreters or other services such as note taking.

Due to their communication problems and the lack of any established special services (particularly interpreters) or any financial support, they had no access to lectures. As a result the majority of Deaf students (15) did not attend lectures except for those they were obliged to attend (6). Even these six Deaf students did not attend theoretical lectures and they also experienced difficulties in laboratories.

They knew that Deaf students in other countries have to deal with the same problems to a greater or lesser extent but were not well informed about European Community policies.

### **Commentary**

The fact that all the pupils and students had attended special primary schools, and most had attended Gymnasia and Lykios for deaf and hard of hearing children, would seem to demonstrate the necessity for the existence of:

1. special schools for deaf and hard of hearing children;
2. special Lykio for deaf and hard of hearing pupils, as under the existing education provision, deaf pupils can not follow lessons in Lykios for hearing pupils.

While all pupils who finished Lykio had the possibility to enter university, TEI or polytechnic without taking the entrance examinations, only ten of the 17 Deaf pupils decided to continue their studies at an institution of higher education. The influences and reasons why Deaf pupils decided to attend or not to attend institutions of higher education included:

- half of the pupils who intended to continue their studies at tertiary institutions had received information about university, TEI or polytechnic only through their families who, a number of pupils reported, had influenced their choice. The other half had received information from other sources. None stated that they had obtained information through their school;
- the decision of Deaf pupils to continue or not to continue to higher education was not usually a result of simply seeking to maximize their potential;
- their choice of subject of study was not the result of having obtained information concerning professional employment opportunities after graduation;
- the decision to study at university, TEI or polytechnic seemed to be seen by some pupils as an alternative to seeking entry to the professions given the limited choices available for entry to the professions. There were only three university departments that provided specialist courses in relation to deaf people;

- only two of the 17 pupils stated that they had no wish to go to university, TEI or polytechnic. The rest of the pupils who had decided not to continue to tertiary education did not believe they had received an appropriate school education to equip them for entry to higher education. After 12 years of education they stated that their situation was that “they could not read”, “they did not have proper knowledge”, “they did not have the proper educational level”, “they did not have the ability to go to university, TEI or polytechnic ”.

When the pupils completed the questionnaires, only three of the ten pupils who were going on to higher education managed to do so in writing, with many grammatical mistakes: this was after the questionnaire had been translated into Greek Sign Language.

None of the Deaf pupils who had decided not to attend tertiary education were able to complete the questionnaire in writing. These Deaf pupils realized that they were not in a position to undertake higher education because of the way in which they had been previously educated and their low level of educational attainments.

It is clear from the above that entrance to higher education without having to take entrance examinations does not provide Deaf students with real opportunities.

## **4.2 Findings from the Interviews with Secondary School Teachers.**

### *4.2.1 Background of the Teachers*

The study involved two special schools for deaf and hard of hearing children: they are referred to as school A and school B.

The total number of teachers who were teaching the third class of Lykio in these two schools was 16 when the fieldwork for the project was undertaken. Eight teachers from the special Lykios were interviewed for the study. Three of the teachers were from school A and had ten pupils in the final class of their school; five were from school B and had eight pupils.

All of the teachers were hearing. The first language of one teacher at school A was Greek Sign Language. The first language of the other teachers was Greek.

All teachers were engaged in teaching the curriculum that is laid down by the Ministry of Education. This is the same curriculum that is used with hearing pupils. They had created their own methods of teaching to deliver the curriculum.

A teacher in Greece is not required to use a particular form of communication with his/her own deaf pupils. The form of communication that they use in their classes is determined by their experience of teaching deaf children, and related to the subjects that they teach. Three-quarters of the teachers who teach deaf pupils have no specialized qualification and few know GSL. There is no information or training provided to these teachers in relation to teaching deaf children.

The teachers were qualified as follows: one as a physicist, one as a chemist, one as a theologian, three as philosophers and two as mathematicians. Some of them taught not only lessons in their subject area but also lessons “in related subjects”, for example the chemist taught biology and a philosopher taught Ancient Greek, Modern Greek and History.

The teachers had professional experience in secondary schools for hearing children from three months to three years and they had taught deaf pupils in the special schools for between six to twenty years. Only one of the teachers (in school A) had specialized exclusively in teaching deaf children and only had experience of teaching in special schools for deaf and hard of hearing children.

The number of deaf pupils in each of their classes varied from five to eight.

#### *4.2.2 Goals of the Special Schools for Deaf Pupils*

The aims of the teachers engaged in the education of deaf pupils at the special Lykio for deaf and hard of hearing pupils were described as follows (individual teachers are identified by school (A or B) and a number).

The stated aims included the best possible statutory education (school A1; school B1,2), socialization (school A 2,3; school B 1,4, 5) and inclusion (school A 2,3) of the children in society.

The aims of teachers of deaf pupils in the special Lykio were to enable the pupils to become competent in the Greek language, and provide Deaf pupils with the knowledge deemed appropriate for hearing children. Education must create the ability to think in a critical way, cultivate the mind and enable pupils to socialize (school B 3,4, 5).

Only one teacher (school B3) considered the aim of education of deaf pupils to include preparation for higher education.

One teacher (school A1) stated that the education of deaf children was not equal to that of hearing children: that it was “a bad copy of the schools of the hearing” and he believed that it was “incomplete, insufficient teaching of sterile knowledge, also that the attempt to transmit knowledge to socialize the pupils was incomplete because there was no direction, no program or targets for each child; there was no work done individually in relation to each child”. The Deaf pupils and the teacher quoted above both draw attention to how the stated aims do not correspond to practice.

Most of the teachers described one of the goals of the special Lykio for deaf and hard of hearing children as the development of the social character of the special school. Although social acceptance of deaf children by society at large was defined as one of the goals of special education at both primary and secondary level according to law 1566/30.9.95/FEK 167/30.9.95, the first objective was the complete and effective development and utilization of the potential and the abilities of the pupils.

The social character of special schools was certainly not ignored. However, the question arises whether the “best possible statutory education”, the “special education” to which the law refers, was offered, or whether the education provided resulted in being “a bad copy of the schools of the hearing”, as one of the teachers characterised it.

The issues of what “special education is offered”, “by which means is it offered”, and “are the abilities and the potential of deaf pupils maximized through it” were not considered to be adequately reflected in the goals.

It seemed that the aim of preparing Deaf pupils for higher education came low on the list of priorities, since only one teacher referred to a goal of the education of deaf pupils at Lykio as being that of preparing them for higher education in the same way as hearing pupils.

Certainly, by providing the necessary knowledge, developing critical thinking and cultivating the minds of deaf pupils (to the same level as hearing children), the basic requirements for access to higher education are addressed. However, how can this be achieved if one of the goals is the teaching of the Greek language?

Since Lykio involves high level study, Deaf pupils should finish Gymnasio with the necessary language to further their knowledge, critical thought and abstract thinking. Lykio should prepare Deaf pupils to the academic standard required for access to higher education.

The Deaf pupils also made this latter point in relation to the aims of their education. They noted that “Educational policy must change and reach the same goals as for hearing pupils, so that they would have the same level of education”. They focused on how the above goals did not correspond to the practice and noted that educational policy had to change so that Deaf education reaches the same standards as delivered to hearing students.

#### *4.2.3 Achieving the Goals of the Schools*

According to the views of two of the teachers, one from each school (A1-B2), the goals of the schools were not achieved. The reasons goals were not achieved were, in their view because:

- a) the knowledge and the way that knowledge was transmitted was not evaluated or of the appropriate standard (school A1);

b) the current curricula were developed for hearing children and were not appropriate for deaf pupils (school B 2);

c) there is no planning for the development and use of written/spoken Greek for each Deaf pupil by their teacher, so that the goals of Greek language teaching are not achieved. (school A1).

Six of the eight teachers (school A 2,3; school B 1,3,4,5) felt that the goals of the school were, to some extent, being achieved i.e., “in a very small percentage” or “to a minimum degree”. Successful achievements were identified in particular in relation to socialization. Failure in education was associated with failing to achieve effective results (school A 2).

Education was not only characterized as inappropriate in terms of Lykio but as being so from the very beginning (school B 1) and this was because:

a) the method, the language and the curricula that are used in the special Lykio for deaf and hard of hearing pupils (but also in the special Gymnasio and primary school for deaf and hard of hearing children) are the same as those for hearing pupils. The pupils however use as their first or preferred language a different language from that used in the school, and who, in the majority of cases, see themselves as belonging to the Deaf community (school B 2,4);

b) lack of communication exists between Deaf pupils and teachers (school B1). Communication depends not only on the ability of the teaching staff but the provision of special training (school B 5);

c) the pupils’ knowledge of Greek, which is essential to entering higher education, is considered insufficient (school B 3).

One of the eight teachers (school B 5) raised issues related to educational achievement. These were the importance of the family environment and the way families are instructed in how to deal with deaf children. Attention was drawn to the importance of the age at which pupils entered primary school.

It seemed that all the teachers who were interviewed agreed that the main educational goals for deaf children such as the acquisition and use of written and spoken Greek, as

well as subject knowledge and appropriate preparation for entry to higher education, were not achievable in the present educational system. Consequently, it would appear that the goals as defined by the law as the “complete and effective development and utilization of the potential and abilities of these people” cannot be accomplished under the present system.

The basic reasons for the failure to achieve the aims, according to the teachers, were:

- the lack of specific curricula suitable to the education of deaf pupils;
- the inappropriateness of the method (described as the ‘oral’ method) used by the majority of the teachers in the two schools;
- the use of Greek that, if used and examined orally/aurally, was considered to be insufficient for ensuring a coherent medium of education, and for full comprehension and mental development of deaf pupils who have GSL as their first and preferred language.
- the problem of communication between teachers and Deaf pupils. The teachers were not familiar with GSL and the majority of them had not received any special training before or after their appointment by the Ministry of Education.

It seems clear that in relation to the education of deaf students, the educational goals are not achieved because the methods used, combined with the use of spoken Greek, have not proved to be realistic and do not meet the requirements of the pupils’ situation, which differs considerably from that of hearing children.

Important questions arise from the information and views expressed by the teachers. What kind of special education is offered to deaf pupils when:

- there are no special curricula for deaf children;
- teachers are unable to communicate effectively with their deaf children or only to a limited extent;

- most of the teachers do not have any special training in relation to either special educational needs in general, or to communication with deaf pupils in particular.

The Deaf students (who are studying or had studied at an institution of higher education) referred to their relative lack of achievement in their primary and secondary education, compared to their fellow hearing students. They characterized their education as completely inadequate from kindergarten to Lykio. This was because they believed their education was based mainly on the oral method, and the policy of the schools was seen as seeking to satisfy parents who wished their deaf children, above all, to learn to speak.

The Deaf students strongly advocated that the method used should be changed and a bilingual approach adopted by schools for deaf and hard of hearing children. They argued in particular that deaf children should start their education (before commencing school) with GSL, in order to acquire a language. In this way the child would be clear about the difference between the two languages: i.e. GSL and spoken/written Greek. In the students' view the establishment of a first language would enable the deaf child to learn Greek more effectively.

#### *4.2.4 How Teachers View Their Deaf Pupils*

Four of the eight teachers (school A 2,3 and school B 2,3) gave a brief description of how they view their pupils. The two teachers from school A, described their students as 'good' and their performance as 'satisfactory' to 'excellent' (school A 2,3). This contrasted with the views of one of their colleagues, (school A1), who gave a detailed and global description of his school's pupils that emphasized problems of participation and weaknesses.

Two other teachers (school B 2,3) emphasized only weaknesses, whereas the rest of the teachers (school B 1,4,5) gave a more detailed description, classifying the pupils into groups according to their different needs and comparing them to hearing pupils.

Two teachers (school A 1; school B 1) characterized deaf pupils as clever pupils who tried quite hard and were able to survive in society even though a few of them faced family difficulties. Reference was made to their previous education i.e. primary and pre-school education, with the suggestion that because it had not been completed to the required standard, deaf pupils did not have the knowledge for entry to Gymnasio.

They made important observations with regard to the foundation that needs to be established if deaf pupils are to make appropriate progress. In particular, they stated:

Deaf pupils tried to learn about the subjects that they were taught without relating to previously taught necessary knowledge because either they were never taught those subjects or they had faded in their memory - and this happened very easily. (school B1)

Deaf pupils had a mechanical way of learning and thinking without being able to assimilate abstract thinking and the ability to make assumptions. There also occurred large gaps in their knowledge of social subjects. They were poor readers and their knowledge of literature was limited. Consequently, when they entered higher education, they were not at that level yet (school A1).

In relation to language, two of the teachers (school A1; school B2) described their pupils as having poor and limited knowledge of language and their level of linguistic comprehension and production as below average.

One teacher (school B5) related the deaf children's language level and ability to communicate to their intellectual level and character. The teacher considered the intellectual level of these children was not at the appropriate standard and neither was their ability to communicate in general, either in Greek (oral and written) or GSL. In addition this teacher felt that their emotional understanding and character were not fully developed.

Although some teachers characterized the deaf pupils of the third class of Lykio as clever with many skills, capable of surviving in society, they identified important

weaknesses in their education, which I believe reflect the inadequacies of our educational system to educate these pupils, rather than deficiencies in the pupils themselves.

The ‘deficiencies’ of deaf pupils, as identified by the teachers, are similar to those identified by the Deaf students attending, or who have attended, institutions of higher education.

The views of the teachers raise certain questions that need to be addressed:

1. Has the IQ of the deaf pupils ever been measured and, if so, what tests were used and in what language were the tests conducted?
2. Has the deaf pupils ability to use GSL been evaluated? As few teachers know GSL, and little detailed research has been undertaken on the language, I think this is unlikely. This would be necessary to if teachers are to be enabled to describe the Deaf children’s ‘language levels’ (which should include both GSL and Greek).

It should be noted that most of the teachers had little or no competence in Greek Sign Language. The observations made about the pupils’ use of Greek Sign Language need to be considered in this context.

Many of the above observations are shared by the Deaf pupils who feel, compared to hearing pupils, that they lack the skills required for entry to university or TEL.

The most worrying comments presented by the majority of teachers on their Deaf pupils attainments related to their limitations of “language” as “a cognitive deficit arising from the inability to think, conceptualise and reason”. This is the situation after 12 to 17 years of formal education (deaf pupils finish Lykio from one to five years later than hearing pupils).

#### 4.2.5 The Teachers' Evaluations of Their Deaf Pupils' Use of Greek.

The teachers estimated the standards achieved by their pupils in their use of Greek after a minimum of 12 years study and what they believed they had achieved through its use?

One of the teachers (school A) gave a detailed description of approximately half the pupils, i.e. one, third year class of Lykio. The deaf pupils were categorized under three headings viz: 'very good', 'fairly good'(from quite good to poor), 'does not use'.

<i>Level of Spoken Greek</i>	<i>Number of Students</i>	<i>%</i>
Very good	1	10%
Fairly good (from quite good to poor)	3	30%.
Does not use	1	10%.

The other two teachers presented a somewhat contradictory evaluation of their students use of spoken Greek (school A 2,3).

Two teachers (school B 1,2) stated that there were a few (one or two) deaf pupils who used spoken Greek and that these pupils were definitely much better equipped than those who could not. Their general evaluation was similar to the detailed description of the other teacher interviewed at the same school who described only one pupil using spoken Greek to, in their terms, a 'very good' standard (see above).

Two other teachers from the same school (school B 3,4) classified their pupils into three categories according to their level of spoken Greek. In particular, teacher B4 categorised pupils into three groups comparing their standard of Greek with that of hearing pupils, i.e. those who had the linguistic and cognitive level of hearing pupils, those who had only average knowledge and those whose use of Greek was very poor. In the last category were those who did not speak Greek and did not sign Greek Sign

Language and whose level of knowledge of a language was deemed to be non-existent.

Finally, one teacher (B5) divided the deaf pupils into two categories, namely 'very good' and 'fairly good' without mentioning cases of 'does not use'.

We can therefore summarise their views as follows:

<i>Level of Spoken Greek</i>	<i>Number of Students</i>	<i>%</i>
Very good	1	12%
Fairly good (from quite good to poor)	3-4	38-50%
Does not use	3	38%

As we can see there is only one deaf pupil who, in the teacher's view, had a good command of spoken Greek. Three were able to speak Greek to a 'fairly good' standard and three were not able to understand or speak Greek.

What this means, and the practical consequences of it, is something that can be seen in the level of educational achievements of deaf pupils, as described by the pupils and students.

Deaf pupils in the third class of Lykio pointed out how their inability to use spoken Greek underlined the difficulties they faced in their effort to understand certain meanings. These difficulties were exacerbated by an inadequate vocabulary.

Deaf students (who studied or had studied at an institute of higher education) agreed with the above stated opinions since very often they made reference to their difficulties in understanding, not only spoken Greek but also written Greek.

#### *4.2.6 Educational Achievements in Relation to the Deaf Pupils' Abilities to Use Spoken Greek*

Most of the teachers, seven in total (school A 2,3; school B 1,2,3,4,5), believed that the pupils' educational achievements depended on their ability to use spoken Greek.

However, seven of the eight deaf pupils were said to be "average at ", "bad at" or "having no access to " spoken Greek. Therefore, we can conclude that these deaf pupils will have below average conventional educational achievements, since their achievements are seen to be dependent on their ability to use spoken Greek.

Only one teacher (school A 1), did not believe that educational achievements were strictly dependent on the deaf pupils' ability to use spoken Greek but that they were dependent on language skills in general and on the way that spoken Greek is taught.

This teacher noted that:

'The educational system should offer the possibility of deaf pupils acquiring language skills in order that they may achieve academic success'.

#### *4.2.7 The Educational Achievements of Deaf Pupils in Other Subjects Compared to Hearing Pupils*

All the teachers (school A 1,2,3; school B 1,2,3,4,5) estimated that the educational achievements of deaf pupils in other subjects were generally lower than those of hearing pupils; by four to five years in the view of teachers at one school (school A).

One teacher (school B 1), who initially had provided a positive assessment of deaf children's educational progress, particularly in situations involving judgement and critical evaluation of social problems, added however that pupils at Gymnasio and Lykio did not grasp elementary arithmetic functions.

Teachers considered the deaf pupils to have, as a result of a lack of access to information, a low cognitive level and extremely limited background knowledge.

They noted that they lacked a facility in spoken Greek and estimated that in most of their subjects they knew little compared to hearing pupils.

Obviously, limited or no ability in Greek has, in these educational settings, a major, detrimental effect on the deaf pupils' ability to acquire knowledge.

#### *4.2.8 The Use of Greek Sign Language in the Schools*

Two teachers (school A 1,2) said that GSL was not used in their school, while one teacher at the same school supported its use in combination with spoken Greek (school A3). This latter form of communication is usually described as Sign Supported Greek and needs to be distinguished from Greek Sign Language.

One of these teachers (school A 1), who had Greek Sign Language as her first language, said that in their school neither the pupils nor the teachers had any knowledge of GSL; they could not sign in Greek and used the written form of the language rather than the spoken form. Most teachers in this school usually provided a written a summary of lessons and gave it to the pupils to copy.

Teachers from school B (1,2,3,4) said that GSL was used in their school while one teacher (B1) made it clear that it was only partly used by teachers and pupils.

Two teachers (school B 4,5) clarified that it was used by the pupils in communication between themselves and by the Deaf teachers. (In this school, as noted above, there were two Deaf teachers). It was agreed that most of the teachers did not know GSL. GSL was not used by the hearing teachers at the two special Lykios for deaf and hard of hearing children. Only the Deaf teachers used it. However, certain teachers in some situations were using signs at the same time as spoken Greek (i.e. Sign Supported Greek).

The views of the Deaf pupils and students on this issue were as follows:

In relation to the use of GSL in their education, pupils from the third class of the two special Lykio in Athens stated that they lived in the same society as hearing people

but used a different language. The society of hearing people excluded them. They did not feel that they had the same opportunities as hearing people. If, in their education, GSL was used, they felt they could become equal to hearing people. For these reasons they asked teachers to learn the language of Deaf people (i.e. GSL). They felt teachers were appointed to schools for deaf children without having had proper training.

Deaf students stated that their teachers, who they believed should be obliged to learn GSL, did not do so. They strongly criticized a director of the Ministry of Education who was not in favor of the use of GSL.

What was widely recognized by the majority of teachers, all the Deaf students and the pupils of the third class of Lykio was the necessity for the use of GSL in the education of Deaf children. Half the teachers asserted that it should be used as the primary language in deaf education and that through its use the deaf pupils and students could be introduced to a knowledge and use of spoken Greek.

#### *4.2.9 Deaf Pupils whose Primary or Preferred Language is GSL*

Six teachers (school A1, 3; school B 1,3,4,5) said that there were deaf pupils in their schools whose primary or preferred language was GSL. Two others (school A2; school B 2) suggested that there were no such students. However, of the 17 pupils who were studying in the third class of Lykio, 16 stated that GSL was their preferred language.

Teachers who stated that there were such Deaf pupils (school A 1,3; school B 1,3,4,5) made the following observations:

Deaf pupils whose primary or preferred language was GSL, avoided signing in front of teachers in the classroom, where they used a mixed system of communication i.e. speech with signs (school B 3) or speech only (school A1). But they used GSL fluently when they were together during the breaks (school A 1; school B 3).

Most deaf pupils (school A3; school B4) preferred using GSL but did not have the chance to do so because it was not recognised by the education system or the State and therefore not by teachers.

It was stated that there were Deaf pupils who used only GSL, did not understand Greek when spoken and did not have clear speech (school B5).

Therefore, I concluded that GSL is used only by the pupils in communication between themselves and with the Deaf teachers. Some of the hearing teachers used signs in combination with speech (i.e. Sign Supported Greek).

#### *4.2.10 The Possibility of Educating Deaf Pupils Through Greek Sign Language*

Four teachers (school A1, 3; school B3, 4) were in favour of the use of GSL in the education of Deaf pupils. They considered it to be essential. They also thought that Deaf pupils should be taught both languages (GSL and Greek).

They gave the following reasons:

One teacher (school A 1) suggested GSL should be used not only with deaf pupils who had signing skills but with all pupils with a hearing loss. He reported that some pupils had not acquired the grammar of either GSL or Greek. Taking into account the situation of the pupils, as well as the inadequacies of the educational system, he believed that the use of GSL by staff would help them to understand their deaf pupils from the beginning of their education.

Two teachers from school A believed that by using GSL their pupils level of understanding would improve. One also believed that through the use of GSL and a special curriculum for Deaf pupils they could improve their students use and understanding of Greek. One of these teachers (school A1) raised a question about the way in which spoken Greek was taught, claiming that the system did not show the pupils how to use it or introduce them appropriately to its structure.

One of the teachers in school B (B3), thought that by using GSL, Deaf pupils would be able to reach the same level of knowledge as those pupils who used spoken Greek.

One teacher (B 1) suggested using written Greek with the signs of GSL (Sign Supported Greek) because Deaf pupils did not have access to the spoken language and, as a consequence of their deafness, did not have a choice in the matter. The ability to use the written form of the language would grant them access to books.

One of the eight teachers thought it would be preferable to teach using a Total Communication approach rather than GSL (school B 5).

This teacher raised the same question as teacher A1 about the way in which Greek was taught. She described how hearing people (teachers and other professionals) when communicating with deaf pupils used very short sentences or phrases in spoken Greek that lacked detailed information or elaboration, thereby not using the language to the full (i.e. they might give an instruction using a verb only without further explanation).

Two of the eight teachers stated that there were no deaf pupils whose preferred language was GSL (school A2; school B2). One, in particular, rejected the proposal of educating Deaf pupils through GSL because, she believed, that GSL was still developing.

In summary, the majority of teachers suggested that GSL should be used with Deaf pupils since Greek is seen as their second language. They did not however necessarily agree on how it should be used.

We can categorize the teachers into two groups:

Category One: two of the eight teachers believed that deaf pupils should be educated using a Total Communication approach (in practice a combined method approach) or Sign Supported Greek.

Category Two: four of the eight teachers believed that GSL should constitute the main language of instruction through which the language potential of deaf pupils could be developed.

The second group also believed that through its use the following would be improved or achieved:

- a) Deaf pupils comprehension and understanding of grammar;
- b) Deaf pupils level of knowledge (to the level of people who use spoken Greek;
- c) Deaf pupils understanding of Greek, particularly in its written form, which is potentially more accessible to them than the oral form, and which would grant them access to books.

Deaf students who are studying or have studied at the tertiary level, argued that deaf children should start to learn GSL before they go to school in order to acquire a first language. This would, in their view, also enable the child to distinguish between the two languages at the outset of their education: i.e. between GSL and Greek. The deaf child would be able to distinguish between the languages and would, as a consequence, be in a position potentially to learn the spoken language more easily. The Deaf students believed they should be offered a bilingual education.

#### *4.2.11 The Opinions of Teachers on the Possibility of Deaf Pupils being Educated to the Level of Deaf Pupils who Use Spoken Greek or to the Level of Hearing Pupils*

Six of the eight teachers who stated that they had Deaf pupils in their school believed that in the current situation pupils could not reach the same educational level as those deaf pupils who use spoken Greek. They are even less likely to reach the level of hearing pupils.

The reasons given by the teachers in support of these views were:

- a) The pupils could use neither spoken Greek nor GSL (school A1);
- b) The current educational system was not flexible enough to educate Deaf pupils to their potential, especially in subjects such as physics, chemistry and biology (school B3).

- c) Reaching the same level as other pupils depended on the use of GSL and on teachers and pupils learning the language to the required standard. Unfortunately, at present there is no way that pupils can be educated through GSL (school B 1, 3).

Four of the eight teachers agreed that if the education system changed and GSL was established as the primary language of instruction, Deaf pupils could reach the same level as deaf students using spoken Greek and that of hearing students, but such a

change would need to be properly resourced and organized. The evidence from other countries suggests that such improvements can only be achieved if there is an appropriate investment in a bilingual approach.

Two out of the eight teachers believed Deaf pupils could reach such levels of attainment and might even reach a higher level of achievement in appropriate circumstances, either through the use of Total Communication or through the use of Sign Supported Greek. These teachers believed that the majority of hearing pupils achieved a higher standard of education than Deaf people because they received a better quality of general education and because there is no equivalent debate within hearing education as to the language of instruction to be used in delivering the curriculum.

Deaf pupils, in order to achieve the same educational standard as hearing students, asked for:

- Education delivered in their own language i.e. GSL.
- Deaf teachers to be appointed to schools for deaf children.
- Hearing teachers to learn GSL and to be specially trained.
- Recognition of GSL.

The Deaf students who were studying or had studied at institutions of higher education asked for a bilingual education system in order to acquire the same level of education as their hearing peers.

They suggested that:

- Bilingual education should commence from the time that deafness is diagnosed.
- Special centres should be established where Deaf adults and specialists could provide counseling support for parents as part of a bilingual educational programme for deaf children.

#### *4.2.12 Proposals for the Improvement of the Education of Deaf Pupils*

All teachers (school A 1,2,3; school B 1,2,3,4,5) believed improvements in the personal experience of Deaf pupils and their cognitive development would require the creation of a special curriculum and individually orientated programmes.

Six of the eight teachers (school A 1,2; school B 1,3,4,5) thought that varied visual and technological aids should be provided for deaf pupils. Courses should reflect their circumstances and be accessible to them. Visual and technological aids would, it was thought, improve the education of Deaf pupils and develop and sustain their interest.

Five of the eight teachers (school A1, 2; school B 1,4,5) considered training and post-graduate courses for teachers to be essential, especially in relation to educational methods and pedagogical principles which address the particular needs of deaf pupils. Such courses should include the latest research on Deafness and enable teachers to acquire proficiency in GSL.

Two of the eight teachers (school A 2; school B 3) said that special books were required which would be suitable to a bilingual approach and the particular needs of Deaf pupils.

Three language teachers believed that the school curriculum should focus on language (school A1; school B 4,5). They stressed the need to increase the teaching hours dedicated to Greek as soon as possible, with the focus on modern rather than ancient Greek (school B 4). A Total Communication approach was favoured by one teacher in this context (school B 5)

Two of the eight teachers (school A 1; school B 2) referred to the need to involve the whole family of the deaf pupil in her/his education. At the time this research was undertaken they were excluded from the education of their children. They believed deaf pupils should receive informed support and help from their family.

Some teachers (school B 3,4,5) referred to non-educational issues e.g. the need for an appropriate disciplinary procedure and the construction of proper buildings (school B 1,2). Other issues raised included the streaming of deaf pupils, the need for assistant teachers in the classroom to facilitate individual teaching and the need for televisions, computers, open spaces, etc. (B 3,4,5).

Attention was drawn to the need for more freedom and flexibility (school B 3,4,5) in the timetable. For example, time to take children to the library or to adapt teaching timetables to the particular needs of a class.

They pointed out the necessity to establish targets for every class in relation to each course and to build upon them in subsequent years (school B 3,4,5).

One of the teachers from school A (A2) made a proposal in relation to all levels of deaf education. He suggested that two modules of study should exist. In the first module there should be lessons on theoretical and professional issues. Having ascertained the ability of the pupils during the first and the second year, the children should then be prepared for possible further education at Lykio. General education in the first module would be followed by modules of one year duration in specialist subjects.

#### *4.2.13 The Opinions of Teachers on the Provision of Access to Higher Education for Deaf Students Compared to Hearing Students.*

One of the eight teachers (school A 3) said that Deaf pupils had the opportunity to gain access to higher education (presumably based on the law that gives access to Deaf pupils without having to take the entrance examinations) but they did not have

the ability to use this opportunity due, in the view of this teacher, to a lack of competence in spoken Greek.

Seven of the eight teachers (school A1, 2; school B 1,2,3,4,5) believed that Deaf pupils did not have the same opportunities in practice to avail of their access to higher education compared to their hearing peers because:

- a) None of the staff know GSL (school B 3,5).
- b) There is no proper structure and no relevant background information provided, which would facilitate access to higher education for deaf pupils who use GSL (school A 2; school B 1). Deaf students are not offered anything more than hearing students in relation to access to their lectures; there are no interpreters or note-takers provided (school A 2; school B 4,5).
- c) Deaf students did not have the advanced level of education required to avail of the opportunities offered by higher education (school B 2).

Three other teachers (school A 1; school B 3,5) considered a comparison between the Deaf pupils' level of education and that of their hearing peers to be inappropriate, given the lack of opportunities available to Deaf pupils compared to those available to hearing children. The same method of teaching was followed in Lykio for deaf pupils as in Lykio for hearing pupils and the same curriculum was used (school B 3).

It was claimed no short-term or long-term goals existed in relation to the education of deaf pupils. It was felt that there was no encouragement since the pupils were not evaluated according to their abilities. Moreover, there was no appropriate structure in place which could be adapted to the needs of the pupils; at present the pupils have to adapt to the methods used to teach hearing students and respond within this system (school A 1).

On the basis of the views expressed by the teachers we can conclude that, in their view, deaf pupils did not have the same opportunities to acquire knowledge as hearing pupils. All 17 deaf pupils who studied in the third class of Lykio agreed with their teachers on this matter. They felt they did not have the same opportunities as hearing pupils. In their view this was because they used, or wished to use, a minority language

(GSL). They do not have the chance to be educated though this language and they do not have direct access to information in this language.

As far as the Deaf students were concerned, they did not have the same opportunities because their language was not recognized. All the above young people stated that they felt they were considered 'lower class' individuals.

#### *4.2.14 How Did Teachers Think More Deaf Pupils Could Be Encouraged to Enter Higher Education*

According to the teachers in the third class of Lykio of the schools for deaf and hard of hearing pupils, deaf pupils whose first or preferred language was GSL could not avail of higher education in practice despite the law that granted entry as a right (school A 2)

Only one teacher stated that "in practice he encouraged Deaf pupils to apply to universities". He felt his school "could train teachers, social workers etc, in this way by becoming an experimental school". This is why, in Greece, much confusion surrounded the subject of the education of deaf children (school B 4) and why what existed today was of a very poor standard (school A 1). In particular, given the way that secondary education operates, it was difficult to provide real support for students wishing to enter higher education. It was suggested that only deaf people who use speech are educated to the required standard (school B 4).

One student expressed the view that "We can not all be scientists, but we should all have university as a target. However if we all went there what would happen to the other professions; they would become extinct, a heavy loss for the economy and for society".

#### *4.2.15 How Access to Higher Education Could Be Improved for Deaf Pupils*

According to the teachers access to higher education for Deaf pupils could be improved by the following measures:

1. Provision of funding for GSL/Greek interpreters for Deaf students in tertiary institutes (school A1, 2).
2. Acceptance of GSL by the State and provision of opportunities for hearing people to learn GSL (school B 3, 4).
3. Creation of a complete education system for deaf children involving early intervention programs, pre-school education, and primary school provision tailored to the needs of each deaf child (school A1).
4. Establishment of a university faculty/center dedicated to the education of Deaf students.

The suggestions put forward by the teachers were similar to those of the Deaf students who were studying or had studied at tertiary institutions. They believed that Deaf students access to higher education would be improved by:

- Recognition of Greek Sign Language
- The provision of interpreters
- Hearing students and all staff (lecturers, administrative staff) being taught Deaf Awareness and provision of appropriate language programmes to facilitate communication with deaf students
- Provision of GSL classes for lecturers, administrative staff and hearing students

The proposals made by teachers concerning the admission of Deaf students to higher education were in accordance with those of their pupils. It was clear that these two sets of proposals complemented each other and formed a basic framework for promoting Deaf people's admission to higher education, as well as ensuring the upgrading of their general level of education so that they could avail of the opportunities provided by higher education.

#### **4.3 Interviews with Lecturers at Institutions of Higher Education**

Although I made considerable efforts to obtain interviews with staff at institutions of higher education with experience of teaching Deaf students, I was, in the end, only

able to interview three lecturers. These interviews were with one female and two male members of the academic staff.

#### *4.3.1 Background of the Lecturers*

Two of the three lecturers were from the University of Athens; the third was from a Technological Educational Institute in Athens. Two of the lecturers were engaged in teaching seven Deaf students and the third had taught five students who had already graduated. They had been working in higher education for between 15 to 20 years. They had also experience of teaching abroad and in secondary education. Only one had specialist knowledge of special education. Although none had any specialist knowledge of Deaf people, they were concerned about being able to teach them well. They were teaching or had taught Deaf students for between three to five years.

The subjects taught by the lecturers included:

- Minorities
- Introduction to Special Education
- Applied Special Education
- Psychology
- Political Psychology
- Computer Science

Their teaching was conducted predominantly through spoken Greek.

As in the case of the schoolteachers, I have translated and presented the views expressed by the lecturers. I believe the lecturers identify some very important issues that need wider debate.

#### *4.3.2 What the Lecturers Understand by 'Access'*

For each lecturer the term 'access' had a different meaning.

For the first it was determined by the Deaf students' knowledge of the Greek language.

For the second it had to do with the level of support offered to these students by the University.

For the third it related to how these students could attend university courses given the way they are currently organized.

#### *4.3.3 The Lecturers' Opinions on Access to Universities, TEIs and Polytechnics By Students Whose Second Language Is Greek.*

The lecturers believed that students whose second language is Greek could not have real access to university if they did not know Greek. For this reason these students entered Greek tertiary education either by passing special entrance examinations (2) or through Greek bilateral agreements (3) or by participation in an ERASMUS program (1).

One lecturer (2) said that there were always difficulties with students whose first language was not Greek. These difficulties were dealt with on an individual basis. Consequently, for bilingual students there is a procedure to access their knowledge of Greek in order to ascertain if they have the ability in Greek to attend an institute of higher education.

#### *4.3.4 Access to Tertiary Institutions for Deaf Students*

From the statements of the three lecturers it can be seen that two of the three lecturers made reference to Deaf people's access to the higher education system in relation to their free admission, without ascertaining whether they could really participate on their chosen course.

The third lecturer (1) recognized that there was no real access for these students. This was supported by the fact that the majority of Deaf students, 15 out of 21, did not attend lectures. Even the six for whom attendance was compulsory drew attention to the fact that they were unable to participate adequately, as they could not follow what was being said during the lecture or participate in any discussion which arose within the class. They were unable to appreciate the various topics covered during such lectures.

It was clear from the lecturers' comments on the access of the two bilingual groups under consideration, i.e. hearing students whose first language was other than Greek and Deaf students, that admission procedures for each of these two groups was different. Students in the first group had to take special entrance examinations in

order to ascertain their competence in Greek, whereas the Deaf students were granted admission without this requirement. It was notable that none of the three lecturers made any connection between these two groups of students who had in common the fact that their second language was Greek. They also did not make any reference to the need for any sort of introduction to higher education for Deaf students following their acceptance by university, TEIs or polytechnics, not even under the category of people with special needs.

In order to provide a context to the discussion of the type of services requested by Deaf students and referred to by certain lecturers, I sought information on the services provided by universities in other countries at which Deaf students are enrolled. I was able to obtain information from three universities in England and one in the United States of America. The English universities were Durham, Bristol and Wolverhampton. The university in the USA was the California State University at Northridge.

In relation to the process of admission to these universities, I obtained the following information.

At the University of Durham all applications for admission to courses leading to a first degree must be made through the national Universities and Colleges Admissions Services (UCAS), approximately one year before entry. Durham welcomes enquiries from potential hearing-impaired applicants at any time, particularly prior to a UCAS application being made. All applicants who register as hearing-impaired are monitored by the University's Service for Students with Hearing or Other Disabilities and if necessary will be offered help in undertaking the admission process, e.g. assistance at interview. At Durham University each deaf applicant is considered separately and 'sympathetically'. Academic potential is the only criteria used to

determine whether a place will be offered to an applicant. Once a student has been accepted on a course of study, the University accepts responsibility to make available appropriate provision for that student (Information obtained from an information booklet published by the University of Durham. A separate admission procedure operates in relation to students applying to take a course with the University's Deaf Studies Research Unit).

At the University of Wolverhampton a Deaf person responsible for dealing with all applicants who state they have a hearing loss. Such applicants are invited to meet her for an informal interview. She is a member of the University's Visual Language Centre. Applicants are assessed according to their individual needs. It is an opportunity for the applicant to inform the University of the type of communication support s/he would require and for the applicant to learn about the services provided by the Visual Language Centre. (Information obtained from a University of Wolverhampton information booklet).

At Bristol University applicants are required to attend for interview. Certain courses require students to demonstrate a high level of language skills in British Sign Language (e.g. to have obtained an appropriate qualification such as the Durham University Certificate in the Teaching of British Sign Language or a Certificate in Social Sciences in Deaf Studies). For entry to mainstream courses applicants should hold a degree from a UK university or its equivalent. The same requirement applies for entry to the Diploma in Social Sciences in Deaf Studies (University of Bristol information booklet).

At California State University, Northridge (CSUN) the admission requirements for deaf and hard of hearing students are no different from those for hearing students but they are encouraged to apply through the National Centre on Deafness which is located at California State University, Northridge. The Centre has a committee to help students in every way possible. On acceptance, it will provide new students with an orientation course and create individualized programs to meet the needs of each student.

At each university all applications are examined by special centres, which undertake the responsibility to inform Deaf candidates on behalf of each university of the special services available to them. In addition, candidates are interviewed before their admission. In this way it can be ascertained if they satisfy the prerequisites for attending the university course of their choice.

#### *4.3.5 The Lecturers' Opinions on the Special Services Provided for Deaf Students in Greek Institutions of Higher Education*

The lecturers indicated that there were no regular, specialized services provided for Deaf students at the University of Athens except in one Faculty in which deaf students had access to 'oral interpretation' services. In the interviews with Deaf students who had studied or were still studying at university or at a Technological Education Institute, only 5% reported that they had been offered 'oral interpretation' services. Although two of the three Faculties that employed the lecturers interviewed had advisory centers that aimed to support students with special needs (social and psychological), no services were provided for Deaf students, nor was there any prospect at this time (in the view of the lecturers) of such services being provided. In a letter from the University Senate to Deaf students who had requested the provision of access services, the University stated it was unable to provide such services due to lack of funding.

In examining the services provided by universities abroad, I discovered that not only were specialist services provided, but in some universities Deaf and hearing students could take courses in Deaf Studies, the teaching of sign language and sign language/spoken language interpreting at undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

The four universities referred to above offered the following services:

##### University of Durham

1. Technical support e.g. adapted college rooms, radio microphones, vibrating alarm clocks, TDD devices, computer systems and other technology.
2. Communication support, e.g. provision of a lip-speaker, interpreter, note-taker or assistance with language difficulties.

3. Academic support in the departments concerned.
4. Counseling services.

In order to fully benefit from the services offered, a deaf or hearing-impaired student is encouraged to discuss their needs so that the most appropriate help can be suggested which may be modified, if necessary, over time. In this way the range of services is continually developing. There are opportunities for deaf and hearing-impaired students to improve their spoken language skills through speech development training programmes and lip reading classes, as well as the opportunity to learn British Sign Language.

There are special grants available to British students in higher education to cover the extra costs incurred in studying as a result of their deafness or disability. (This grant is available to all eligible students attending a British university).

#### University of Bristol

1. Radio aids and induction loops.
2. British Sign Language/English interpreting services and equivalent services in relation to Sign Supported English.
3. Computer based note-taking and text display.
4. Lip-speakers.
5. Counseling.
6. Environmental aids and technical advice (a number of halls are to be equipped with facilities for Deaf students e.g. flashing alarms and door bells, text telephones and text television sets).
7. Augmented tutorial time.

#### University of Wolverhampton

1. All members of staff at the Visual Language Centre have at least a basic qualification in British Sign Language.
2. There are two members of staff (a full-time lecturer and a business liaison officer/lecturer) based in the Visual Language Centre, and one full-time and three part-time trainee interpreters.

3. British Sign Language/English interpreting (or equivalent in relation to Sign Supported English), note taking or lip-speaking services can be arranged.
4. Assistance to students applying for the Disabled Student Allowance.
5. Information about environmental aids (e.g. radio aids, vibrating pagers, etc).
6. Counseling services.
7. Text telephones.

#### California State University

The National Centre on Deafness at California State University, Northridge offers the following services:

1. National leadership training program.
2. Specialized workshops, library, oral/aural services.
3. Tutoring.
4. Note-taking.
5. Interpreting services.
6. New student orientation course.
7. Counseling.
8. Summer courses.

In contrast, in Greece, since 1926-1930, when the first deaf student graduated from the Department of Archaeology at the University of Athens (according to information provided by the GFD) there have been no regular, specialist services provided for deaf students. Even though the University of Athens' Departments of Philosophy, Pedagogy and Psychology have an Advisory Centre for Disabled Students, founded in 1990 (enactment number 13637/26110190), there are no prospects of substantial aid for Deaf students (of the type outlined above) through the centre.

The aims of the centre are:

1. Provision of social and psychological support.
2. Careful examination and evaluation of the social and psychological problems of the students through special epidemiological research.
3. Development of models of socio-psychological intervention appropriate to the students' situation.

4. Training for students of the Department of Psychology in counseling and psychometric processes.

#### *4.3.6 Problems Experienced by Lecturers in Relation to Deaf Students*

It seemed that all the lecturers faced a common and important problem. It was that they could not persuade the Deaf students to attend their lectures, even when attendance at lectures was compulsory (2,3) or an interpreter was available (1). The students were usually absent. It was suggested that this was due to the lack of an adequate infrastructure and services (e.g. GSL/Greek interpreting) for Deaf students at the University (1,2).

All the Deaf students confirmed the problems identified by the lecturers. Most of them i.e. 17 of the 21, did not participate in activities outside study hours at universities, TEIs or polytechnics. Only four participated in social activities. Some students had not received information about the existence of such activities.

On the other hand all Deaf students participated in the Deaf community.

I would suggest, based on my interviews, that Deaf students experience isolation at institutions of higher education because:

- There is very limited or no communication between Deaf and hearing people, so Deaf students feel uncomfortable in mixed situations.
- They do not have access to proper information.

However, one of the above lecturers, a member of a Faculty of the University of Athens where student attendance at lectures is not compulsory, said that the above stated reasons were not the only reasons why Deaf students were not present at lectures. Other reasons, in the view of this lecturer, included:

- Deaf students appeared to avoid interacting with hearing students.

- Most Deaf students grew up in a 'ghetto' of special education: it was suggested that an 'educational mentality' was developed at school which was carried over into higher education.

Seven of the twenty one Deaf students who had studied in this Faculty between 1989-93 said that they had not attended lectures (some of them after repeated unsuccessful attempts) because of the lack of interpreters and because no special services for Deaf students were provided.

The students also drew attention to the particular difficulties they faced during their examinations, as they could not understand explanations given orally by examiners. The Deaf students would have preferred to have had these provided in written form. These obstacles may explain why, of the 21 Deaf persons who entered and studied in this Department between 1989-93, only four graduated (according to data obtained from the secretariat).

I believe those Deaf students, and Deaf people in general, often find themselves in situations of isolation. These situations are usually addressed by seeking a change in particular conditions rather than the creation of social circumstances appropriate to the situation of Deaf people.

In contrast to the views of the above lecturer, a lecturer from another department (2), in which 'oral interpreting' was offered for one year, noted that the Deaf students' interest was enormous and that they were motivated by the fact that "they felt themselves capable of such studies". According to him they needed to obtain an adequate amount of theoretical knowledge as well as practical knowledge. In order for this to happen the student needed a good knowledge of GSL.

These last observations were confirmed by one of the three Deaf people who had graduated from this department. It was particularly noted that during group meetings Deaf students could not understand the instructions given by lecturers, since they could not see their lips to lipread and no GSL/Greek interpreter was provided. The

students made clear that they would have preferred a GSL/Greek interpreter rather than an 'oral interpreter'.

The lack of facilities and provision of organized services (e.g. of interpreting) constituted the first and most important of the problems identified by lecturers in their effort to provide access for Deaf students to their lectures. This lack of provision formed the most consistent need identified by all groups of Deaf students interviewed, but not the only one. Deaf students also pointed out the lack of note-takers, financial support and provision of books on time.

The Advisory Centre of the University of Athens, through an Horizon programme (1992- 93/number 91003 E1) discovered that:

"Deaf students (31 in the academic year 1991-1992 and 37 in 1992-1993) did not come to the lectures and seminars since there were no interpreters. Therefore, they did not participate in the exchanges that took place between the students and the lecturer, which are so important to the process of acquiring knowledge. As a result, their unanswered questions led them to be weak in these subjects. If, in addition, one takes into account their poor standard in Greek due to the inadequacies of their school education, their struggle for academic inclusion with hearing students is seen as being very difficult if not almost impossible.

#### *4.3.7 Further Extracts from Interviews with Lecturers on the Educational Difficulties Experienced by Deaf Students*

Apart from the lack of infrastructure in the provision of services for Deaf students, the lecturers identified the following problems:

- 1 Lack of communication (1,2,3).
- 2 A low level of language comprehension and competence in Greek (1,2,3).
- 3 Lack of interpreters (1,2,3).
- 4 Deaf students did not have access to the briefing and information dissemination channels of the academic community, which in practice excluded them from general academic life (2,3).

- 5 The lecturers, as well as the rest of the University staff, were not aware of the particular needs of Deaf students (2,3).
- 6 Due to the general indifference of the hearing members of the University community, Deaf students existed on the fringe of the community (3).
- 7 Deaf students on occasions appeared indifferent towards their environment and sometimes exploited their 'disability' in order to overcome certain difficulties (1).

The above problems have been addressed by the lecturers in the following ways:

- All three lecturers had contacted the Ministries of Education and Health and Welfare. Two of them had requested interpreters and specialized staff, and the third had raised the question of the general treatment of these students within university education.
- They had sought to foster relationships and communication between themselves and the Deaf students by dedicating special time for addressing their problems.
- They had offered the Deaf students what was described as an 'oral interpretation' service whenever possible, through either 'volunteer interpreters' (1,3) or a university based 'interpreter' (a provision that was unfortunately only available for one year).
- Special treatment for these students (compared with hearing students) resulted in Deaf students being examined either in subjects that they could cope with or in the most basic subjects covered each semester (2,3).
- They worked with the special schools for deaf children (3), with a Deaf academic (1) and with the parents of these students (2), to improve their language and communication abilities.

### *Discussion*

The Deaf students themselves referred to these problems. All four graduate students from this Faculty remarked that no special services were provided for them. They also made reference to the difficulties that they faced in the use of Greek because of their limited competence in this language compared to that of the hearing students taking the same courses.

The fact that the Deaf students made no mention of the ad hoc information and support services offered to them was essentially related to the type of information and services provided to them by the University. They explained that they had actually had "no briefing by the University". Special services were not provided officially or through an established programme of services.

The Deaf students did not feel that their problems were treated in the same way as those of hearing students and with the degree of seriousness that they deserved. They believed that hearing students treated them as inferiors and hearing people did not recognize their right of access to the university's education and information services. The Deaf students would feel that they were being treated as equals and feel satisfied if they were able to obtain information and gain access through an interpreter.

The Deaf students who had graduated from one of the Faculties in question made reference to the provision of the 'oral interpreting' service. They would have preferred a GSL/Greek interpreting service. They drew attention to the particular difficulties they had in specialist subjects with regard to the use of complex terminology.

In one department a TEI lecturer described how he dealt with his Deaf students on a personal basis. The secretary (of this institution) in response to my letter asking for information about these students replied that there were no Deaf students at this institution and that there was no specialist provision made available. (See appendix).

The four students interviewed stated that at the TEI there were no interpreting services and because of the standard of their school education they faced serious difficulties. What they particularly noticed was that there was a climate of indifference both from the teaching staff and from the secretarial staff. A typical example of this was provided by a Deaf student who reported that 'The lecturers did not help her and said that the her problem was her (responsibility) and she received the same response from the secretary'.

In summary, it seems that the picture that emerges from the interviews with lecturers is as follows:

- The situation of Deaf people is not recognised or acknowledged within the framework of the University's linguistic policy in relation to ethnic or linguistic minorities recognized by the Greek State.
- The general education policy categorises Deaf students as a group of disabled people. The few lecturers who have shown an interest in Deaf students start from the perspective of disability when working with them, but do not have any specialist knowledge in relation to Deaf people. They do not have the means to deal with their special situation e.g. in relation to financial support, technical aids, interpreting services, etc.).

Through their experience of teaching and interacting with Deaf students the lecturers described the Deaf students' situation as characteristic of a linguistic minority group.

- They recognized Deaf people have a different language. That is why the lecturers need interpreters to communicate with Deaf students and to provide them with knowledge in the students' preferred language. Deaf students not only have a different language but also use a different channel through which their language is expressed; as a consequence lecturers viewed their situation as being one which was more difficult than that of other linguistic groups.
- They asserted that Deaf students constituted a separate social group who generally did not socialize with those who were not Deaf. However this did not seem to be because, as claimed by one lecturer, they had grown up in a "ghetto" of special education, since most of them, despite being educated in special schools, had grown up in hearing families and in a hearing society. But, as Deaf students noted, having a different language created a 'different world', and Deaf people did, in their view, adhere to particular values and behaviour that distinguishes them from hearing people. It is natural to socialize with those with whom you can communicate and with whom you share common experiences, values and behaviour. A similar situation has been noted in relation to other social and

linguistic minority groups. If we compare such groups to Deaf people they are seen to have the same or similar characteristics.

- Reference was made to the group of Deaf students having communication problems in their particular social environment, not only because of their different language but also because of the lack of time given to engaging seriously with Deaf people. The academic environment was seen as rejecting these students and marginalizing them. This was also related to the view that they existed in a 'ghetto'.

It was obvious however that the lecturers made their observations without any reference to other linguistic groups and without making a connection between the situation of such minorities and Deaf people. They sought to provide Deaf students with services under a disability perspective, whilst at the same time recognizing that there are linguistic issues for this group of Deaf students. This is illustrated by a statement made by the first lecturer "I strive for them to be treated as equals with special needs".

The provision of interpreting services occurred only in an irregular and unofficial way. Psychological support cannot be provided without a common language through which communication can be achieved. As a consequence of the lack of communication, access to even basic knowledge was dependent on their limited access to the lecturer. This is not what Deaf students need.

It is difficult to get psychological and social support from hearing people when Deaf students do not have the right to be educated in their first or preferred language and as a result do not have the necessary knowledge and level of language to participate on an equal basis. They want the right to have Deaf teachers and lecturers who use GSL, and/or to have professional interpreters provided officially by the universities and TEIs. Provision of these services would mean that the universities and TEIs recognize and care about the diversity of their students and recognize their right to equality of access.

From the lecturers' accounts of their experience of Deaf students these questions emerge:

- How can Deaf students gain access to knowledge and institutions of higher education if they are unable to use spoken Greek?
- What changes in education policy are required in order to develop the abilities of Deaf people?

The needs of Deaf people did not fully register with lecturers as being a bilingual issue but rather one of deficit. The lecturers' appreciation of Deaf students' abilities presupposed that they must have Greek (the major language of our society) as a first language. Deaf students' difficulties were interpreted as the inability of Deaf people to gain complete access. Their difficulty was not seen as equivalent to the difficulty of non-native/foreign students who had as their first or preferred language, a language other than Greek.

#### *4.3.8 Treatment of Deaf Students by the Tertiary Institutions*

Does the treatment of Deaf students differ between Faculties?

The first lecturer said "There was a discussion going on about the circumstances of Deaf students and what lecturers (and the University) should do about why Deaf students did not go on with their studies, especially in some Faculties or Departments where language was central. This issue had been brought to the attention of the Director of Special Education at the Ministry of Education."

The second lecturer said "An effort to deal with the problems was made by the Special Department of the Faculty. They were trying to solve the problems that arose in the department with the support of the Deaf students' parents".

The third said "The president of the institution knew that these problems were due to the communication problems that existed. The issue had been brought up for consideration in the Department and the lecturers who taught the Deaf students had been asked to show a particular interest in them and help them in whatever way possible. He did not know if this was carried out by all the lecturers and did not know if all the professors had the chance to deal directly with the Deaf students,

due to their pressing schedules and the number of students they had to deal with, but at least they cared about the Deaf students' needs. They had had contact with the special Gymnasio and Lykio for deaf and hard of hearing children and the School for Interpreters in Argiroupoli. Interpreters had been sent to the Faculty for their practical placements to interpret on the theoretical courses, but this only occurred for a short period of time. They had also taken this matter to the Ministry of Health and asked for a permanent appointment to be made to a TEI. They had received no response”.

## **Discussion**

The problems experienced by the Deaf students mentioned above occupied members of the teaching staff (lecturers), as well as the Senate of the University. They were handled in different ways: the problems of Deaf students who studied in the Faculty were forwarded to the Ministry of Education since in this department students were required to have a very good competence in spoken Greek (1). In contrast, in another Faculty, their situation was addressed by an Advisory Centre in collaboration with the students' parents' (2). In the third, the lecturers were invited by the General Director of the Institute to take a special interest in the situation of the Deaf students and to respond positively to these students' requests for help in relation to their particular needs (1).

It appears from the interviews with the lecturers that the universities and TEIs had no facilities whatsoever for receiving students with hearing problems. The lecturers found themselves in a situation where they had to deal with the needs of deaf students without having any information concerning their specific situation and the specific needs that result from it. In addition the lecturers had to deal with a lack of financial resources.

There was clearly no uniform policy on how to deal with the specific needs of Deaf students. How their difficulties were addressed depended on the response and consideration of individual lecturers. Although the Senate and the Ministry of Education were notified about the problems of specific students, it appears that no immediate solution was forthcoming as to how these problems were to be addressed.

#### *4.3.9 The Assistance Requested by Deaf Students of Lecturers in Relation to Their Problems.*

Lecturers reported different responses from Deaf students with regard to how they wished them to address difficulties experienced in relation to their studies.

The first lecturer reported that problems were not reported directly to them by the students. The problems were presented to the Faculty of the University.

The second lecturer reported that students did come in person and explain if they could not understand a particular subject or had particular difficulties. The lecturers offered students the opportunity to come to see them at any time and in relation to any kind of problem they faced. Yet, the real problem was that, in practice, the Deaf students could not follow the lectures.

The third lecturer understood that the students were deaf as a consequence of an accidental event and he encouraged them to address him whenever they wished and on any issue. He developed his ability to communicate in order to be able to respond to their problems.

### **Discussion**

From the lecturers' accounts it was the lecturers who raised questions about the Deaf students' problems in two of the three Faculties. In the third Faculty, the Deaf students had the support of an advisory centre in addressing their problems.

In a letter addressed to the University of Athens, the Deaf students not only informed the Senate of their particular needs, but also made specific requests, to which they received no reply. (See appendix). However as a result of this letter the University authorities appointed an academic member of staff to act as a 'link' between the Deaf students and their lecturers. His main task was to make recommendations in matters relating to these students. How adequate was this response, given that the Deaf students had asked for:

- a) GSL/Greek interpreters.
- b) Briefings for teaching staff on the situation of Deaf students.
- c) Delivery of books on time.
- d) Study groups made up of Deaf students and a lecturer to discuss questions arising from lectures (to be established in each department).

The answer of the Senate to the above requests was negative due to a lack of financial resources to fund services.

In the academic year 1992-1993 the above Faculty of the University of Athens, through the framework of an Advisory Centre, created a programme for the incorporation of Deaf students that commenced with a training programme for “Study Assistants and Counselors for Deaf students”. However, the Deaf students did not respond to this initiative (1).

It appears that no Deaf students interviewed approached lecturers in order to address their difficulties. This might be taken to show how Deaf students felt: not only how they felt as result of being different but also as a result of hearing peoples’ attitude towards their difference. At issue is whether they are accepted as they are, and made to feel ‘at home’ in Universities and TEIs by the provision of services to meet the demands of the academic environment, or whether they are required to adapt to the hearing way of life without any acknowledgement of their difference and the problems they experience as a consequence of their difference. This is an issue the lecturers need to consider in attempting to understand why the Deaf students did not cooperate with the above initiative.

#### *4.3.10 Deaf Students’ Access to the Senate*

All lecturers asserted that Deaf students had the same access to the Senate as hearing students. In the case of one Faculty it was made clear that there was no need for the Deaf students to address their problems to the Senate as, in the view of the lecturer in charge, their problems were addressed by an Advisory Centre.

#### *4.3.11 Suggestions Made by Lecturers to Deal with the Problems Experienced by Deaf Students*

Lecturers made a number of suggestions as to how the problems experienced by Deaf students could be addressed. They included the following:

The first lecturer suggested that the issue of the education of deaf students must be addressed by the Ministry of Education. He proposed that “We must go into the issue more deeply here, because with the current system of education we practically produce illiterate people. This phenomenon is present in the Greek population to a level of 20% - 23%. We see it also in the case of Deaf students who finish Lykio. This fact should worry us. You cannot have schools for deaf children without teaching them the basic concepts. In addition, there should be a test system in education. The Deaf students should be passing some test to show that they are in a position to attend the university they are interested in.”

“It should also be checked if they understand the concepts. I have the impression by going through their writings, especially when they haven’t understood the concepts, that they need to pass a test to let us know the degree of comprehension, not only in oral examinations but also in written examinations. I mean that when they take a book to study they should be able to understand it, to communicate its concepts in the written language. That is, understand what they write. In order to learn how to write you must know the language you use well. I have the impression that they know neither spoken or written Greek, nor Greek Sign Language”.

“We see that what is going on is an exclusion of the deaf and not inclusion in schools. I do not want us to say that a deaf person must turn into a hearing person. The deaf person should keep his/her individuality but achieve this in relation to hearing children. That is, to coexist from pre-school age not necessarily in the same school, but attending school normally, as all children do, and a specialist teacher should teach him/her Greek Sign Language so that

s/he will understand ideas; and will be able to answer the questions of his/hers early childhood e.g. who s/he is etc., so that s/he will not have to face these questions suddenly in adolescence. When I say exclusion, I mean the education given in mainstream schools for both the deaf and the hearing, not only in the university, because to get to university is a long way; we should start from pre-school age”.

“Both the parents and the children should learn sign language. That is where the money should be allocated, because what we call interpretation at university is not easy. Interpretation does not mean that we sign and that is all. Can any interpreter translate my lecture, for example? Does s/he know the terminology? I, for instance, use the terms ‘differentiation’, ‘incorporation’ and ‘arrangement’; what if s/he considers all these to be identical? Consequently, interpreters, too, need training. Finally, the Deaf students should interact with both Deaf and hearing persons from their early childhood”.

“The problems of the Deaf students will be solved”, the second lecturer suggested, “if the State helps teaching staff in their communication with Deaf students. That is, the Ministry should give them a man or a woman who will communicate with the students. If it was effective that would undoubtedly be very important.”

“First of all”, the third lecturer suggested, “the State needs a person responsible for services to Deaf students/students with special needs so that a teacher knows that when the State sends them people with special needs s/he can make a call and address him / herself to a specialist who can give him/her advice, on the phone at least, even if s/he can not get support. For example, in my case I wanted to get a person who knew Greek Sign Language so as to be able to communicate my with my students, in order to be able to give them advice about what to do and how to do it.”

“Entering this sort of environment, (which in my opinion is not correct) I think that students with that type of special need can in any case not follow the curriculum of an “ordinary” student. More time and much more help that does not exist now, is needed for a Deaf person to complete the same learning material that a hearing person finishes in 15 weeks. It is my opinion that the State should deal with these issues, maybe in the form of certain special departments in Universities and TEIs, which will have special curricula that offer equal degrees so that these (Deaf) people can be absorbed by the community at large”.

“Finally, as a lecturer, based on my limited experience, and the knowledge I have obtained abroad, my proposal would be the following:

There is SELETE where teachers for technological education are trained. In this school a section comprising persons with special needs could be created. The State could also establish a committee, which would be made up of specialist academic teachers that would consider carefully all the facts and information about the problems experienced by Deaf students in Greece, and propose solutions. The State could thus take advantage of the existing potential of specialist people to create a section in tertiary education with an appropriate curriculum and methods of evaluation suitable to the education of these students.”

“This sort of department might also be of interest as a research centre that could make a significant contribution, and as a secondary purpose it could, as is usual in universities and TEIs, help Deaf people find their place in society in appropriate ways. For example, we have a placement system whereby we bring students in contact with employers. These validate them, and from these placements many students end up getting employment. I believe that something similar could happen for Deaf students. They could complete their courses with the help of appropriate legislation. This would allow a Deaf person to do his/her job, which s/he might do even better than another person because of the special sensitivity that Deaf people have in certain areas e.g. the fact that their attention is not distracted by certain sounds. Deaf people could certainly be employed and work in the community”.

In summary, the lecturers made the following proposals to improve the educational achievement of Deaf students at universities or TEIs:

1. The subject of Deaf peoples' education has to be examined by the Ministry of Education thoroughly and seriously. The present system 'produces illiterate people' (1) even though special schools for deaf and hard of hearing children exist and are understood to provide special education.
2. Appropriate assessments need to be introduced to determine if Deaf people are:
  - a) capable of attending institutions of higher education;
  - b) interested in the particular Faculty they apply to;
  - c) able to be examined in their chosen subject(s) in written Greek;
  - d) able to comprehend and reproduce a text in written form.
3. There is a real need for trained GSL/Greek interpreters who will provide interpreting service wherever there are Deaf students (1, 2,3).
4. The State should create a committee of specialists (made up of members of the academic community) who will examine deaf people's particular problems in education and propose methods as to how these difficulties can be addressed and deaf students enabled to maximize their potential. The formation of a special department for Deaf students in higher education is proposed.
5. The establishment of an information and advice department or centre for the staff of institutions of higher education in relation to the needs of Deaf students.

The lecturers' suggestions are similar to those proposed by the students interviewed for this study. Deaf students suggested deaf children need a bilingual education in both primary and secondary education, in which GSL is seen as their first language and is the language of instruction. Through such an education system they believe deaf children would develop their ability to use Greek Sign Language and Greek, and acquire knowledge.

Deaf students also suggested that the universities and TEIs should create a special department for Deaf students that would be able to organize and provide interpreting services for all Deaf people at universities and TEIs.

It will be clear that a number of the suggestions made by the lecturers and the Deaf students are similar e.g. the provision of interpreting services.

However, there is a need to clarify how such services and education should be offered. I think that if Deaf people continue to be categorized as disabled, it will result in their situation not receiving the attention it requires. The view that sees Deaf people as disabled would restrict our knowledge about Deaf people and their culture; knowledge through which we can become a richer society both linguistically and culturally. It would follow that success should be measured according to the extent Deaf people are accommodated rather than assimilated in our society. In other words, as outlined in chapter one, a socio-linguistic approach rather than that of a medical model should be followed.

#### **4.4 Interview with Representatives of the Greek Federation of the Deaf (GFD)**

##### ***4.4.1 Description of the GFD***

The GFD is the major organization of Deaf people in Greece and represents all Deaf people in Greece. It is directed by an elected board of seven members and within the framework of the organization there are special committees that address subjects such as the education of Deaf people, Greek Sign Language, Deaf women, the media, etc.

The different associations of Deaf people are members of the GFD, which elect through their representatives (one representative for every ten members) the members of the Board of the Federation.

The GFD is a member of the 'National Federation for People with Special Needs', of the 'World Federation of the Deaf'(WFD) and the 'European Union of the Deaf' (EUD).

#### *4.4.2 The Financial Resources of the GFD*

The financial resources of the GFD are obtained from:

- a) Membership subscriptions;
- b) State subsidies;
- c) Donations;
- d) Legacies;
- e) Bequests;
- f) Interest on capital;
- g) Financial assistance from various other sources.

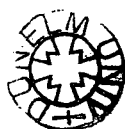
#### *4.4.3 Aims of the GFD*

The main aims of the GFD are the co-ordination and support of the member associations, as well as providing opportunities for the cultural and social development of members. In addition the Federation provides advice on Deaf education and vocational rehabilitation, and it also participates in, and contributes to, the work of research centres. The Federation aims to advance and develop the use of GSL.

#### *4.4.4 Education of Deaf Children*

At a Congress organized by the Federation on the education of the deaf child, the GFD raised questions on the education policies of oral education, the inclusion of deaf children in mainstream education and the practice of 'Total Communication' as used in the education of deaf children.

The GFD generally considers the concept of 'inclusion' in the education of deaf children to have been unsuccessful so far, and considers that deaf children have been seriously disadvantaged by this practice. A deaf child needs an environment that will safeguard her/his identity and her/his social development as a deaf child. Special schools for deaf children constitute centres of Deaf people's culture, and in the view of the GFD, should not be closed. Deaf people demand the equal and active participation of deaf children in the education system, and that the same rights and expectations that exist in relation to the education of hearing children should be



extended to deaf children. Deaf people demand the right to contribute to the wider society and to be able to maintain their special identity.

Although a positive attitude towards the 'Total Communication' approach was expressed by the GFD at the congress, it was alleged that 'Total Communication' is not yet being used in practice, not even in schools considered to be implementing such an approach, due to the low standard of sign language used in the classrooms.

At the end of the congress, however, the GFD representatives expressed themselves as being in favour of a policy of bilingual education for deaf children who are born deaf or who become so at a very early age. They underlined the importance of educating such children in GSL through the assistance of Deaf adults who should start working with these children as soon as possible after diagnosis. The GFD promotes the idea of GSL as the 'first language' of Deaf people at all levels of education.

#### *4.4.5 Current Provision of Vocational Education for Deaf Students*

The GFD considers that vocational education is needed and therefore vocational schools must be set up not only in Athens but also in the rest of the country (e.g. Thessaloniki, Patra, Crete, etc). Even though the Organization of the Employment of Manpower (OEM) operate schools that cover a range of subjects, Deaf people do not go to these schools for two basic reasons:

1. At such schools they are placed with disabled people.
2. There are no interpreters at these schools.

It is the view of the GFD that the education and professional programmes organized by the municipalities of Greece, which are subsidized by the European Union and include interpreters, are more successful than internal programmes that operate without interpreters. Deaf people are able to access these programmes in their preferred language, Greek Sign Language, through interpreters.

The subject of books was raised by the Federation. Special books need to be produced, after relevant research, for the education of deaf children.

Decisions need to be made on where deaf children can most appropriately be educated and how they can be granted access to the professions. The GFD argues that the State must guarantee equality between the value of qualifications obtained by Deaf and hearing people as well as ensuring equal opportunities to work.

The number of interpreters available to those engaged in the delivery of professional services needs to be sufficient so that communication between Deaf and hearing people can be successfully accomplished in order that Deaf people are finally able to participate fully in decisions about their future.

#### *4.4.6 Bilingual Education*

In order to provide bilingual education the GFD believes that GSL must be officially recognized by the government as Deaf children's first language in educational settings.

#### *4.4.7 Deaf People's Entry to Higher Education*

Entry by Deaf people to universities, polytechnics and technological institutes should, in the view of the Federation, be based on special examinations at which an interpreter is present.

#### *Problems Raised by the GFD in Relation to Deaf People's Access to Higher Education*

The basic problems experienced by Deaf students (as reported to the Federation) included not receiving information in relation to practical matters (e.g. lack of information about changes to timetables, change of location of classrooms, etc.,) and problems relating to access (e.g. lack of interpreters at lectures, etc.,). As a result, Deaf students do not gain access, in an accessible form, to knowledge of their subject.

The GFD is of the view that the negative atmosphere or indifference existing in the majority of universities and TELs in relation Deaf people, together with the related

lack of dedicated services for Deaf people in these institutions, create serious difficulties for Deaf students.

#### *4.4.9 Proposals of the Greek Federation of the Deaf in Relation to Deaf Students*

The GFD invites Deaf students to make proposals in relation to how access can be improved. It seeks to work with the staff of universities, polytechnics and TEIs, and encourages its members to take an interest in the field of higher education.

## **Chapter 5**

### **5.1 Access of Deaf Students to Tertiary Education**

Since 1980 (Law 1035/80) Deaf people can enter higher education without having to take entrance examinations (as members of one of the groups excused from this requirement).

Each year, over and above the usual intake of entrants, a number of people from different groups including persons whose first language is not Greek (Cypriots, Greeks resident abroad, non-Greeks, etc. as described in chapter.2) can enroll in a faculty or department of a Greek university, polytechnic or technological institute. Deaf people are another group who may enroll under this legislation. The number of students who enroll in this way must not exceed 25% of the total number of entrants.

These students may come from different cultural backgrounds with different customs and traditions, be at different cognitive levels and have different technological requirements. Both formally and in reality, the access of these groups depends on their ability to use the Greek language. They therefore do an examination in Greek before they can enter a tertiary institution. By demonstrating competence in Greek through a special examination, bilingual hearing students demonstrate their potential to avail of higher education in Greece. The difficulties that they may have, and need to be addressed, are identified through the examination, and in the view of the lecturers, usually relate to how they were taught Greek.

Deaf students accepted by a tertiary institution are only dealt with on an individual basis when lecturers become aware of their presence. However no procedure exists that ensures they have the required standard in Greek (particularly in the written form) as they are excused from taking the entrance examinations.

Another issue that was raised is that no proper preparation or guidance is provided to Deaf students in relation to choosing their subject of study at tertiary level. Their

choice of subject did not usually relate to primary and secondary school attainments or interests. All the Deaf students that participated in this research project (pupils in the third class of Lykio at the two special schools for deaf and hard of hearing children, and students in universities, TEIs and polytechnics) stated that they had received information from their families and from other Deaf people. Their choice of subject of study was mainly influenced by a desire to help other Deaf people, or by the fact that other Deaf people had studied in the same department, or by the views of their families. For a number of students their choice of a specific subject (e.g. teaching, physical education, psychology, sociology and computer science) was related to a desire to enter the field of education.

From the above data it appears that in deciding whether or not to study at the tertiary level, Deaf people are influenced above all by two factors:

- The Deaf community
- Their family

These two social groups, which appear to be the main influences on the choices that Deaf students make in relation to higher education, play a limited or non-existent role in the education of deaf children and adolescents. It would therefore be interesting to analyze, based on the information obtained during this study, the relationship between the education community and the Deaf community, as well as the role of the family in the education of Deaf young people in Greece.

Apart from the Deaf community and their families, Deaf people are also influenced in their decision whether or not to enter higher education by the fact that they often feel they have not acquired the proper standard of education during their primary and secondary (Gymnasio/Lykio) education. It appears from this research that many feel their education achievements not only do not correspond with that of hearing peers but is also much lower than the standard expected of a Lykio class. Most Deaf pupils in the third class of Lykio could not write a simple sentence with correct grammar and spelling in completing the questionnaire for this research.

In these circumstances, despite the fact that they can legally enter higher education without taking the entrance examinations, a great number of Deaf young people make the decision not to study at a university, TEI or polytechnic. They believe that they are not at the same educational level as hearing pupils in the third class of Lykio. No research exists in Greece with regard to the difference in educational attainments between Deaf and hearing pupils. Research undertaken in other countries suggests that Deaf pupils educated through the oral (spoken) method display poor academic achievements in all areas (Conrad 1979, Meadow 1984, Quigly & Paul 1984).

Furthermore, many of those who decide to study do not complete their studies. It is suggested that the acquisition of an education level corresponding to that of hearing students is the main indicator as to whether Deaf students will complete their studies.

The acquisition of an education level that corresponds with that of hearing peers is the biggest issue for Deaf people and the Deaf Federation. If this is achieved this will ensure not only their access to higher education, but also to technical education, work and society in general. This is why the above issue is identified as crucial not only by Deaf People who were interviewed for this research, but also by the other groups that were interviewed viz the teachers of the third class of Lykio, teachers at the special Lykio for deaf and hard of hearing children in Athens, and lecturers with experience of teaching Deaf students at institutions of higher education.

The Deaf people who were studying or completed their studies during the five year-period 1987 – 1993 in universities, TEIs or polytechnics all had problems with communication and with access to information. No service (interpreters, regular note-taking, access to technical equipment) was provided for Deaf students at these institutions in relation to these problems.

The lack of provision of interpreting services was the result not only of inadequate organization and preparation on the part of the tertiary institutions to provide proper services and resources, but the consequence of a failure to train a sufficient number of interpreters. The existence and training of interpreters presupposes an acceptance and implementation of a bilingual educational policy. This is not the case and therefore no

associated provision, such as interpreting services, has been made. The fact that Deaf people have their own language has not been taken into consideration.

As a result of the existing policy and the lack of properly trained interpreters, Deaf students, whether they attended lectures or not, could not participate in seminars which resulted in significant knowledge gaps. These gaps, in combination with the gaps created by an inadequate school education, resulted in a very difficult situation for Deaf students. As a consequence of the lack of access services, Deaf students were limited to studying books as their only access to knowledge (if the books were made available in time).

The following issues, in my view, emerge from the above data and define Deaf people's access not only to higher education but also to our society in general. Further research and analysis of data on these issues would be valuable.

The issues are as follows:

1. The current standard of education provided to Deaf pupils and their preparation for higher education.
2. The role of the family in the education of Deaf children.
3. The role and contribution of the Greek Federation of the Deaf to the education of deaf children.
4. Training of GSL/Greek interpreters and the provision of interpreters in educational settings.
5. The relationship between Deaf and hearing people in education settings.
6. The organization and provision of services for Deaf people in higher education.
7. Financial support.

## **5.2 The Current Standard of Education and the Preparation of Deaf Pupils for Higher Education.**

Since 1982, when the Ministry of Education took over responsibility for schools for deaf and hard of hearing children and established new special schools and special

classes, deaf children in Greece have been educated in special schools for deaf and hard of hearing children, or in special classes in schools for hearing children controlled by the Ministry of Education. They may also be educated in the National Institutes for the Deaf which come under the Ministry of Health and Welfare and which are supervised by the Ministry of Education.

Deaf people prefer to be educated in special schools for deaf children. During the 5-year-period 1987-1993, as is demonstrated by this research project, the great majority of Deaf pupils were educated at all stages of their school careers at special schools for deaf children (of the 38 pupils/students only one had attended a hearing primary school and three a hearing Gymnasio or Lykio). This fact is confirmed by recent research in which it was stated that 91.2% of deaf pupils/students had received their elementary and secondary education at special schools for deaf children (Lampropoulou, 1994). Special education is offered at deaf schools under law 1566/30.9.95. It aims to enable the full-scale, effective development and utilization of the potential and skills of deaf children, their incorporation in the production process and their acceptance by and of society.

Education for Deaf people, if it wants to reach its goals, must create the proper conditions, based on appropriate prerequisites, if special education adapted to the special needs of deaf people, is to be achieved. However, the education of deaf people as it has existed up to the present day fails to correspond to the goals of special education, since it exists under the following conditions:

Most hearing teachers that currently teach in deaf primary and secondary education did not receive any information about the education of deaf children before they were appointed to their post of teaching deaf children.

Since 1975, primary school teachers have started to receive further education on special education issues at Maraslio School. Since 1988 courses have been taught on the education of deaf children at the Pedagogy of Primary School Education course at the University of Patra. There is no equivalent course available for secondary school teachers.

Secondary school teachers are appointed to a special school by means of “yearly lists” (the number of available teachers is usually in excess of the available teaching positions at schools). Up to now they do not receive any information about deafness either during their studies or before they start to teach at a special school for deaf children. The teachers do not attend training courses or receive information on research or the development and achievements in the education of deaf children to date (i.e. upto the year 1994 when I did this research) or during their employment at the school (this was the situation at the time, 1994, when I did the fieldwork for this research). Only a few teachers have had any further education on the education of deaf children (based on this research and the Greek research referred to above).

Half the teachers that worked in the Special Lykios of Athens had taught deaf children for a number of years (from six to twenty years), prior to which they had taught in schools for hearing children (from three months to thirteen years).

Because the teaching methods to be used and the language in which lessons are to be taught in the schools for deaf and hard of hearing children are not officially laid down by the Ministry of Education, each teacher, following a detailed curriculum (the same as that used in hearing schools), uses his/her own teaching method and develops his/her own way of communication with the pupils, based on her/his experience. Therefore the education of deaf children in secondary education is mainly based on the practical experience of teachers, even though in most other countries the education of deaf children has long been founded on non-empirically based information (Hoffmeister, 1985).

Greek Deaf pupils, during their education, are mainly taught by hearing primary and secondary school teachers, most of whom do not know Greek Sign Language. This is confirmed by other research (Kourbetis, 1987; Lampropoulou, 1994). There are some secondary school teachers who use signs with spoken Greek (Sign Supported Greek). Deaf teachers, and Deaf pupils in communication amongst themselves, use Greek Sign Language.

The education of deaf pupils at Gymnasio/Lykio is based on the same detailed curriculum and books used with hearing pupils.

The educational progress of Deaf pupils is therefore dependent on their access to written and spoken Greek, even though it was stated by teachers who contributed to this study that:

- After 12 to 17 years of education in Greek only two or three out of 28 pupils had competence in the language.
- Their knowledge is four to five years behind that of hearing pupils in most subjects.

The following observations were made by teachers:

- When Deaf pupils commence Gymnasio, they do not have the knowledge required to do so. From the first grade of primary school, it is uncertain if they can acquire the educational standard required for study at Gymnasio or Lykio. Therefore the chance that they can acquire the necessary educational standard to enter university, TEI or polytechnic is therefore considerably less.
- Deaf pupils have considerable difficulty with language: they have particular difficulties with spoken Greek and the majority (deaf children of hearing parents) have poor and limited GSL.
- They were poor readers and their knowledge of literature was limited so that discussion of literary topics in the third class of Lykio was poor.
- Even those pupils who obtained the best results found that their way of learning was ‘mechanical’ which made it difficult for them to develop “abstract thinking” and the ability to “make assumptions”. As a result they appeared to have large gaps in their knowledge of social subjects. One can only imagine the lack of development of thought of those pupils categorized as average or poor.
- Having entered higher education their educational level did not match the required level.
- They were insufficiently informed of what they could do in their lives and very few felt that they had the right to choose in relation to their future. It seemed that they were badly informed about how to obtain a job.

- The intellectual level of these children was not the same as that of their hearing peers and neither was their ability to communicate – either in Greek (spoken and written) or (in comparison to hearing children's level and range of communication in Greek) in GSL. Teachers considered their emotional development and character were not properly developed.

The above observations of the teachers, however, are dependent on their communication with their Deaf students. We must accept that this communication is, for most of them, limited as the majority of teachers do not know GSL, the preferred language of their Deaf pupils.

No assessments or tests in Greece have been adapted to the particular circumstance of Deaf students. However, the above observations are indications of the way educators view current educational provision, and it would be worthwhile in another study to investigate their views in more detail.

The teaching methods and form of communication used by a secondary school teacher not only depends on the number of years that s/he has taught, the lessons that s/he teaches and the experience that s/he has acquired, but also on the way they view deafness. The bilingual approach allows those involved with Deaf pupils to acknowledge the use of a language other than Greek, i.e. Greek Sign Language, and to accept and use this language in communication with Deaf pupils. In this study it was noted that some secondary school teachers did not acknowledge that a language other than Greek is used by their pupils. These teachers stated that there were no pupils who preferred to use Greek Sign Language as their first language (a view contradicted by their pupils). However, the majority of secondary school teachers, even if they did not know Greek Sign Language, acknowledged that this was the first language of children of Deaf parents, or the preferred language of the majority of Deaf pupils.

Some teachers believed that signs should be used together with spoken Greek (within a Total Communication approach or as Sign Supported Greek). Most of them recognized the need to use GSL in the education of Deaf pupils as a first language with spoken Greek as a second language i.e. to use a bilingual approach.

This latter development is, I believe, a significant step forward, not only in relation to a possible change in approach to the education of deaf children in Greece, but also as an important advance in relation to obtaining formal government recognition for Greek Sign Language as the language of Deaf people in Greece.

Both groups of teachers were agreed that either through a Total Communication approach involving the use of Sign Supported Greek, or through a bilingual approach, Deaf pupils will not only reach the same level as deaf pupils who use spoken Greek, but the level of hearing pupils.

But recent research shows that:

The use of a spoken language with the simultaneous use of signs is, in the view of Pickersgill, "... likely to be less efficient than the use of sign language, as a means of transmitting information that can be readily understood"; "furthermore the use of (a spoken language) with the simultaneous use of signs can only offer a partial version of a spoken language."

The Total Communication approach (which is, according to Denton (1968), a philosophy, and not a method) demands fluency in Greek Sign Language and all other forms of communication, if this approach is to be properly applied to the particular circumstances of each child. Research has shown that in comparison with the oral method the use of a Total Communication approach has achieved better results with Deaf pupils in all sectors of their school careers (Nix, 1975; Montgomery, 1981; Zafiratu-Koliouba, 1994).

Bilingual education is a pioneer pedagogic method in the education of Deaf children through which the deaf child's natural facility to communicate visually is utilized by means of a sign language. Its use in deaf schools is an alternative approach to the 'oral' method proposed not only by linguists but by Deaf people. It has been the long-standing demand of members of the Deaf community that GSL be used in the education of deaf children. Research on Deaf children of Deaf parents has shown that they do better on average than deaf children of hearing parents not only in relation to

knowledge but in their understanding of the language of society at large and the knowledge and use of Greek Sign Language.

It appears, not only from the findings of this research but also from the findings of recent research (Kourbetis, 1987; Lambropoulou, 1994) that the goals that the law sets down are not achieved in practice. It is not therefore a matter of surprise that all the Deaf pupils and students, teachers and lecturers that participated in this research believed that under the present conditions Deaf people, whose first or preferred language is Greek Sign Language, do not have the same opportunities as hearing people.

Deaf pupils and students believed that they are viewed and treated as inferior people or as second class citizens.

The lack of a special curriculum, books, equipment, and especially the lack of a language policy and teaching methods appropriate to Deaf children in Greece (1994) not only does not secure a special education but, when we take into account the above situation, makes the current education of deaf children "completely unsuitable from kindergarten age to Lykio"(Lambropoulou, 1994).

Although the education of deaf people presents many serious problems, it is, I believe, a very important step forward that the education of deaf children is now the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and that a special department exists within the Department that includes the education of deaf children within its responsibility.

A public discussion of the above issues has started with scientists, educators and officials of the Ministry of Education having been in attendance at the conference on the 'Education of Deaf Children'(1987).

Since 1988 primary school teachers can attend courses on the education of deaf children at the Department of Pedagogy of Primary Education of Patras University.

Posts have been established to enable early intervention and provide counseling for parents of deaf children (1986).

The first books containing analytical programmes on the teaching of written language to deaf children in primary education have been published by the Organization for the Publication of Educational Books.

Courses in Greek Sign Language and the training of interpreters have been established in the Municipality of Argiroupoli (1989).

Research for a dictionary of Greek Sign Language, describing its rules and structure, has started under the direction of scholars at the University of Patras. The completion of this project will have a particular value for hearing people who work in the field of education of deaf children.

The issues under discussion and the suggestions proposed will, I believe, have a positive influence on the provision of education for deaf children in Greece. The achievements of Deaf pupils will improve, but the educational system has a considerable way to go in order to create the proper conditions to provide equal opportunities for Deaf pupils.

To date (up to the time this research was conducted) Deaf pupils have had few opportunities for access even though they have been granted access to tertiary education without having to take entrance examinations. No programmes have been established to provide Deaf students with an introduction to the tertiary institution of their choice, either as people with special needs or as bilingual persons. Academic and administrative staff are not provided with information on the situation of Deaf students by their institutions and therefore do not know how to approach the education of Deaf students and how to address their special needs.

No service has been established to date that creates the conditions for Deaf people to study 'normally', to utilize their capacities and potential, and be accepted in the academic community.

### **5.3 The Role of the Family in the Education of Deaf Children.**

The findings of the current research show that the great majority of parents (of Deaf children) work mostly in manual employment. They are labourers or skilled workmen and their formal educational achievement is low. More than half the parents had not completed their basic education (primary Gymnasio). This information on the families of deaf children would suggest that we can conclude that the living standard of the families is low.

Two out of three of the families come from the provinces; half have moved to Athens. This movement away from the village to the city is a general characteristic of the Greek population since the beginning of the nineteenth century; it continues to occur and is characterized as 'social progress'. The current system provides a better living standard and education for the children. In the case of families with a deaf child this is related to access to medical specialists and other services in Athens (e.g. logotherapy, audiology, etc).

The low educational attainments of the parents would suggest that the deaf children could not expect their parents to be in a position to assist them, and that the systematic help of specialists, especially from the time when deafness is first diagnosed, is essential. The fact that families have chosen to move to Athens would suggest that the necessary services and educational provision for their deaf children are not available outside of Athens.

Parents played an important role in the decision of Deaf children to continue or not to continue to study at the tertiary level. About one third of the Deaf pupils/students who decided to go on to higher education were guided by their families in their choice to do so, as they were in choosing their subject of study. This may show that Deaf children did not have access to other sources of information, did not have the maturity needed to make such decisions, or the independence to decide by themselves.

The great majority of parents are hearing (35 of 37 fathers and 33 of 37 mothers). More mothers than fathers were Deaf in the sample of deaf pupils/students who contributed to this project. Their main method of communication is spoken Greek.

Only Deaf parents use Greek Sign Language. The great majority of hearing parents expressed negative views about their children using Greek Sign Language, especially at school. This factor influences educational policy, as the State takes the opinions of parents into account when developing such policies.

The parents need better information about all aspects of the education of their children. There should be appropriate intervention and support at the time their child is diagnosed so that they can work through any anxiety and grief, and can plan appropriately for the future of their children. The provision of specialist information and guidance for parents by the State at the time of diagnosis can, I believe, make a most significant contribution to the lives of parents and their deaf children. The importance of this has been stressed by many specialists in Greece during the last two decades.

#### **5.4 The Deaf Community in Greece: Role in and Contribution to the Education of Deaf People**

As stated in chapter 1 Deaf people form a linguistic minority with its own culture. Deaf people develop their language and culture in local communities that are represented at the national level by the GFD. Deaf people develop their potential and abilities through their participation in these communities.

In Greece the community of Deaf people has created clubs and organizations where Deaf people meet, communicate, discuss problems, develop relationships and organize various activities. Through these clubs Deaf people develop their social life and relationships, provide opportunities for recreation and sports, and receive and provide information.

All the Deaf students interviewed for this study were members of these clubs and organizations, participated in the activities of the community and contributed to accomplishing the goals of the community. One of the goals of the community is social and cultural development. This development is seen as being accomplished mainly through the education of deaf children. Deaf young people take an interest in

this issue. For instance, over half of the Deaf pupils and students were influenced in their decision to continue their studies at the tertiary level by their desire to help other Deaf people or because other Deaf people had studied in the department that they chose, which ensured that they would be able to communicate with others who shared their interest and from whom they could obtain information.

The Deaf clubs are represented by the Greek Federation of the Deaf (GFD). The GFD was founded in 1932 (under the name of the National Federation of the Non-hearing) and is the community's main organization.

One of the goals of the Greek Federation of the Deaf is the creation of an education policy that will provide a proper education for Deaf people. In order to advance this goal the GFD organized a conference on the topic "Education of the Deaf Child" (Athens, 1987), in cooperation with a national British deaf organization and the European Regional Secretariat of the Deaf. The conference was organized by Deaf people. Deaf representatives of organizations, major scientists, and Deaf and hearing people who work with or for Deaf people, addressed and analyzed current issues in the education of Deaf people, and proposals were made for improving the education of Deaf people.

The declaration of the rights of the Deaf child was accepted by the conference. It included the following:

Every Deaf child has the right to be educated in two languages i.e. in the native sign language of his/her country and in the language that is used by the hearing population in the child's environment. This will help the Deaf child to develop a linguistic base on which s/he can build the capacity to read and write, and her/his aptitude in relation to a spoken language.

Every Deaf child and young person has the right to stand up for his/her opinions concerning legislation to provide further education for Deaf people. These rights are often misunderstood because the special facilities that Deaf students need are not given to them, e.g. special and specific lessons; interpreters and tutors; access to information on subjects from around the world; the right to choose lessons or

professional education in any area; and the right to financial assistance to continue to study the subjects of their choice. (Minutes of the Conference, 1994. Greek Federation of the Deaf, Athens.)

The goal of the GFD is to obtain formal government recognition of Greek Sign Language as the language of Deaf people and the implementation of a bilingual education programme in the education of deaf children.

In order to address the problems of Deaf students the GFD proposes, among other things, to encourage cooperation between the university/academic community and the Deaf community. In this way the GFD hopes to create within the academic community a greater interest in issues relating to Deaf students and people.

### **5.5 Greek Sign Language/Greek Interpreting: The Training and Provision of Interpreters in Greece**

Deaf people have always used interpreters to facilitate communication with hearing people. Hearing children of Deaf parents and hearing relatives of Deaf people who have acquired a knowledge of GSL have traditionally been used as interpreters. Interpreters are the bridge of communication between Deaf and hearing people and vice versa. The use of interpreters enables equal participation of Deaf people in hearing society and communication with hearing people.

In the early 1960s research into sign languages began. The first professional interpreters commenced work not long after that. Interpreters' organisations were established in various countries. In 1964 the first association of sign language/spoken language interpreters was founded and programmes for the training of interpreters were established e.g. in Sweden the training of interpreters started in 1968.

In Greece the first efforts to train Greek Sign Language/Greek interpreters started with a programme organized by the Municipality of Argiroupolis and the Greek Federation of the Deaf. The European Community funded training programmes for

interpreters in 1989, and in 1991 the Greek Union of Interpreters of Greek Sign Language was founded, with 21 members from all over Greece.

The Union of Interpreters of Greek Sign Language cooperates with, and is supported by, the Greek Federation of the Deaf (GFD) and by Greek Deaf clubs and is a member of the European Forum of Sign Languages Interpreters (EFSLI).

Since then Greek Sign Language/Greek interpreters have started to be used officially and regularly to facilitate communication e.g. in the education of Deaf people. But the number of interpreters is too small to meet the constantly increasing demand. The training of interpreters needs to be extended and developed in order to meet the specialized needs not only of education but also of other areas.

## **5.6 Relationships between Deaf and Hearing People**

The relationships between Deaf and hearing people can be difficult. Deaf people who experience problems relate the causes mainly to the views many hearing people hold about Deaf people and the interpretations they place on the presumed difference of Deaf people.

The students interviewed made reference in particular to how Deaf people are often seen as inferior and treated with indifference. A number of examples were given. These included experiences in which they had asked lecturers for explanations or they needed to discuss a particular subject and the lecturers left them waiting and finally forget about them. Examples were given of administrative staff who speak so fast the Deaf students cannot follow what they are saying, and lecturers who do not give out notes and books on time. I believe the above examples may be explained by indifference but may also arise because of a lack of awareness and information on the part of university staff with regard to the students' difference and requirements.

Deaf people referred to their 'own world'. A knowledge and understanding of that 'different world' by hearing people would be an important step forward, I believe, towards hearing people accepting Deaf people as equal but different members and

participants in our society. In this way realistic solutions to problems might be achieved, in particular the problem of Deaf people obtaining real access to education and knowledge.

### **5.7 Organization and Provision of Services for Deaf People in Tertiary Education.**

The Organization and provision of services presupposes on the one hand the securing and allocation of the necessary funds, and on the other hand knowledge of the needs of Deaf students.

It is, in the view of many who were interviewed, the responsibility of the State and the educational institutions to secure the financial resources to provide appropriate access for Deaf people and to create equal opportunities for them in education. Securing financial resources to support such programmes would, I believe, constitute a real acknowledgement of the right of Deaf students to be different and their right to an education of equal standard to that of hearing students.

Since Deaf people are not innately less able than their hearing peers, but need particular conditions and a different approach to how they are educated, I consider the policy of allowing Deaf people to enter tertiary education without taking entrance examinations not to be a real solution to the problem of how Deaf people can be granted access to higher education.

The real problem of Deaf people's access to higher education is to be located in the current low standard of deaf primary and secondary education. The common view of teachers, lecturers, Deaf pupils and students is that the standard of education required to enter tertiary education is not being provided to those for whom GSL is their first or preferred language.

It is therefore suggested that the Ministry of Education should, based on the research that has been done, determine a bilingual educational policy for children who are deaf from early childhood. It is further suggested that in cooperation with university

departments and deaf schools, detailed language programmes and curricula for deaf children in primary and secondary education should be created to ensure that all deaf children receive an adequate basic education.

As we have seen it is not only at the school level that lack of access is a major issue. Tertiary education does not have the flexibility in the way it is organized or the necessary means to meet the needs of special groups such as Deaf people. As a result those Deaf people who decide to undertake study at institutions of higher education, in addition to the problems outlined above, need more time under present circumstances, to finish their studies compared to their hearing fellow students. Indeed, in many cases they do not complete their studies, either because they cannot meet the requirements under the present circumstances or for financial reasons.

This research has demonstrated that many of the academic staff do not take an interest in the particular needs of Deaf students. Deaf students stated that they had appealed to staff (lecturers and administrative staff) on many occasions for assistance in relation to the problems they experienced in undertaking their studies. It is a fact that the number of Deaf students is small and that they are spread over various departments and faculties. But this is no reason not to address the needs of this particular group of students. It may be that the issue of the distribution of Deaf students across so many faculties can only be addressed through greater cooperation between the institutions of higher education.

In order to create the conditions that will provide equality of access it is necessary:

- That an interest is taken in the circumstances of Deaf students by academic staff, and that information about their circumstances and needs is made available to staff. All of the staff need to be given information and made aware of problems promptly (i.e. lecturers, social workers, psychologists and the administrative staff of every faculty), in each of the departments where there are Deaf students. This is a matter of priority in relation to both Deaf students and pupils.
- Administrative and secretarial staff, from whom Deaf students often seek assistance in relation to problems, need to be trained in how to communicate and

interact with Deaf students. For example, they should not talk quickly or have their face turned away when they speak to a Deaf student. It is necessary that some secretarial staff should know Greek Sign Language.

- A policy in relation to the tertiary education of Deaf people needs to be agreed and implemented. The current 'deficit model' needs to be replaced with a bilingual model that acknowledges Deaf people's use of a minority language. Lectures made reference to Deaf students use of Greek Sign Language and the need for interpreters to facilitate communication during lectures and seminars.
- Technology needs to be utilized so that education can be delivered more effectively and at less cost.

The lecturers who did take an interest and spent time in addressing the problems experienced by Deaf students acknowledged that not only did they not have the necessary information but also were unable to effectively communicate with the Deaf students as they did not know GSL).

The communication needs of Deaf students may be divided into the technological (text telephones, fax machines, e-mail) and human (interpreters). The lecturers made representations to the Ministries of Education and Health and Welfare to provide such, but so far these needs have not been met and it is urgent that they are.

- The provision of written notes of lectures should be organized as a matter of urgency, as well as the distribution of books on time, as all Deaf students stated that they studied mainly from books and notes.

The most important problem that confronted the lecturers was that the Deaf students did not attend lectures. Most Deaf students reported they did not participate in the activities of the academic community. Apart from the issue of communication, (which was also identified by the Deaf students), the lecturers believed Deaf students did not attend lectures because they wished to avoid hearing students. This needs to be clarified but I believe should not deflect the institutions from addressing the issue of access for Deaf students and investigating, if true, how it may relate to the current problems of access.

A fundamental issue in relation to the communication and participation of Deaf students was the lack of recognition and respect for their differences. These issues not only depend on the Deaf students ability and desire to participate, but are also determined by the hearing students' capacity and disposition to accept, understand and to engage with Deaf students. Acceptance and understanding can only develop if appropriate information is available and there is the disposition to accept Deaf people as equals in our society. The willingness to engage with Deaf students is directly related to the ability to communicate with them.

- Tutorial classes need to be organized for Deaf students. Deaf students have difficulties with Greek and in particular with terminology. They need opportunities to clarify issues in relation to their subjects of study directly with lecturers through interpreters. This issue needs to be addressed urgently and the provision of tutorials for Deaf students arranged.
- Interpreters need to be present during examinations, and prior to the examinations when explanations are given with regard to the examinations.
- The provision of Greek/Greek Sign Language interpreters needs to be organized and a regular interpreting service established. This is considered essential by both Deaf students and lecturers.

At the time this project was carried out Greek Sign Language had not been recognized officially by the Greek State even though Greek members voted for the recognition of the sign languages of the member states of the European Community in the European Parliament. The lack of formal recognition by the Greek State is seen as hindering the provision of interpreting services. The small number of competent interpreters are in considerable demand.

- Greek Sign Language should be recognized. I believe a number of the above problems could be addressed either directly or indirectly by formal recognition of Greek Sign Language with legal and statutory confirmation of the right of Deaf people to use interpreters.
- It is proposed that a central service should be created that would:

1. be responsible for providing academic and administrative staff with information in relation to Deaf students;
2. organize the provision of interpreters for lectures, seminars, tutorials, etc., attended by Deaf students;
3. organize the provision of note takers for Deaf students as required.

The counseling centres that already exist should be provided with similar services. This is another way in which the needs of Deaf students can be addressed.

### **5.8 Financial Support**

A most important need and demand is for financial support and the allocation of increased funding by the Greek Government for the education of deaf children. The education of deaf people at all level requires more financial support in order to create the special framework that would meet the needs of deaf people. In particular, money is needed for the training of teachers in GSL, the training of interpreters to work in institutions of higher education, and the creation of a framework within which services for Deaf people would be provided.

It is suggested, that where such courses do not exist in Greece, Deaf people need to be supported financially by grants to enable them to attend special courses for Deaf people abroad. The government should offer grants to Deaf people through the institution for State grants since Deaf people are Greek citizens and should have the same rights as hearing people.

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1143/81. 'For the Special and Vocational Education and Rehabilitation and Other Provisions.'

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1566/85. 'Framework and Functioning of First-Degree and Second Degree Education.'

1771/88. 'Amendments and Completion for Entrance System to Universities and Other Provisions.'

1946/91 'Entrance of Students to Higher Education'

## Appendix A : Questionnaires

### ***Deaf Students and Pupils : Questionnaire***

This is the questionnaire that was used with each of the four sub-groups of students: graduates, students who had interrupted their studies, current students and high school pupils. Certain questions were adapted to reflect the particular situation of each sub-group.

#### ***Family Background***

1. Male ☐ Female ☐ Age \_\_\_\_\_ How many people in your family? \_\_\_\_\_

2. Which part of Greece are you from? Athens ☐ Other part of the country ☐

3. Where do your parents live? Athens ☐ Other parts of the country ☐

4a. Is your father in paid employment? Yes ☐ No ☐

Please state your father's occupation \_\_\_\_\_

What is your father's level of education?

Primary ☐ Gymnasium ☐ Lykio ☐ HE ☐ Other ☐

Is your father Deaf ☐ Hearing ☐

4b. Is your mother in paid employment? Yes ☐ No ☐

Please state your mother's occupation \_\_\_\_\_

What is your mother's level of education?

Primary ☐ Gymnasium ☐ Lykio ☐ HE ☐ Other ☐

Is your mother Deaf ☐ Hearing ☐

5. How do you communicate with other members of your family?

Through speech ☐ Through sign language ☐ By other means ☐

#### ***Education History***

6. Date of entry into higher education \_\_\_\_\_ Date of graduation \_\_\_\_\_  
Date you interrupted your study \_\_\_\_\_  
(if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

7. Where were you educated?	Special school for the deaf	School for the hearing	Other
Primary	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Gymnasium	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lykio	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

8. Which route through higher education have you taken?

Technical Education Institution    ☐    University    ☐    Polytechnic    ☐

9. What subject did/do you study? \_\_\_\_\_

10. Was your choice of subject influenced by any of the following?

Family	<input type="radio"/>
Deaf people who have studied in this field	<input type="radio"/>
Your wish to obtain professional qualification in order to find a job more easily	<input type="radio"/>
Your wish to help other Deaf people	<input type="radio"/>
Other reasons	<input type="radio"/>

11. Where did you get information about your institution of higher education?

Family	<input type="radio"/>
School	<input type="radio"/>
The higher education institution itself	<input type="radio"/>
Other Deaf people	<input type="radio"/>
Media	<input type="radio"/>
Other source(s)	<input type="radio"/>

12. During your studies where do you reside:

With family	<input type="radio"/>
With relatives	<input type="radio"/>
In residential accommodation	<input type="radio"/>
With friends	<input type="radio"/>
Alone	<input type="radio"/>
Other	<input type="radio"/>

13. How is the cost of your studies financed?

	In part	In Full	Not at all
Family	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Government financial support for deaf people	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Scholarship	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Personal means (including work)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other means	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### ***Services Provided***

14. Does the particular educational establishment you attend offer any special service or financial support?

Yes    ☐    No    ☐

If yes, what kind of special support is/was offered \_\_\_\_\_

If no, what kind of special facility would you like to have been offered \_\_\_\_\_

### ***Problems During Education***

15. Did/Do you encounter any problems in your studies at your educational establishment

Yes    ☐    No    ☐

If yes, what is the nature of these problems \_\_\_\_\_

16. Do you attend lectures given at your educational establishment    Yes    ☐    No    ☐

If yes, please move onto question 17. If your answer is no, please move onto question 18.

17. What difficulties, if any, do you face when attending lectures?

\_\_\_\_\_

18. What are your reasons for not attending lectures?

\_\_\_\_\_

### ***Co-operation with Other Students***

19. Do other Deaf students attend your institution?    Yes    ☐    No    ☐

20. Do you have any contact with other Deaf students    Yes    ☐    No    ☐

If your answer is no, please give your reasons \_\_\_\_\_

21. Do you co-operate with other Deaf students in attempting to solve the problems you face?

Yes    ☐    No    ☐    State Reasons: \_\_\_\_\_

### ***Suggestions to Overcome Communication Problems***

22. In attempting to solve problems do you turn to:	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Other Deaf students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other hearing students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lecturer or supervisor	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The administrative office of your institution	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other person(s)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
No-one	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

23. In what ways do you think that the communication problems Deaf students experience can be overcome (please grade from 1-6 according to priority)

The creation of a special department for Deaf students    ☐

The use of interpreters in educational establishments    ☐

Special programmes for Deaf students    ☐

Employing lecturers with knowledge of Deaf students    ☐

Informing those lecturers teaching Deaf students about their needs    ☐

Other ways (please indicate) \_\_\_\_\_

### ***Professional and Learning Opportunities***

24. Do you work in the field in which you graduated?    Yes    ☐    No    ☐

Where do you work \_\_\_\_\_

If unemployed, what are your plans \_\_\_\_\_

25. Have other Deaf students graduated from the same institution?    Yes    ☐    No    ☐

Do you know if they work in a sector related to their studies?    Yes    ☐    No    ☐

Where do they work? \_\_\_\_\_

26. Are you aware of any laws that assist Deaf people to obtain employment in the public or private sector?

Yes    ☐    No    ☐

27. If you interrupted your studies, what did you do next?

Work    ☐

Course in another higher education establishment    ☐

Registered at and attended another technical school or other establishment    ☐

Stayed at home    ☐

28. Do you believe you have the same opportunities as hearing students?    Yes    ☐    No    ☐

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

### ***Participation in University Activities***

29. Do you participate in any activities organised by or for students?

Yes    ☐    No    ☐    Not informed    ☐

What type of activities do you participate in? \_\_\_\_\_

If your answer is no, explain why? \_\_\_\_\_

If you do not know of any activities, give your reasons as to why this is? \_\_\_\_\_

### ***Participation in the Deaf Community***

30. Are you a member of any Deaf clubs?    Yes    ☐    No    ☐

If no, explain why not \_\_\_\_\_

31. Do the Deaf clubs or the GFD know about the situation at your educational establishment?

Yes    ☐    No    ☐

Are they able to offer any support or guidance? \_\_\_\_\_

If no, what do you think are the reasons? \_\_\_\_\_

32. What kind of support would you like to be offered by the Deaf clubs? \_\_\_\_\_

33. What kind of support would you like to be offered by the GFD?

---

### ***Knowledge of Other Countries***

34. Have you visited any other countries      Yes   ☐    No   ☐

35. Do you know whether Deaf students face similar problems in other countries?

Yes   ☐    No   ☐    Do not know   ☐

If yes, what kind of problems do they face?

---

If no, why do you think they do not face similar problems?

---

### ***Knowledge about EC Policy***

36. Do you know about EC policy regarding Deaf people    Yes   ☐    No   ☐

If yes, what is your opinion of it? 

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### ***Proposals***

37. What would you suggest could be done to improve the situation of Deaf people, in general and Deaf students in particular in Greece? Give some examples and ideas.

---

## ***Lecturers in Higher Education : Questionnaire***

1. Name of institution
2. Department
3. Specialisation
4. Position
5. Studies : Special field
6. Did your studies include any subject relating to Deaf people      Yes     $\theta$       No     $\theta$
7. How many years have you been teaching?
8. Do you have any other professional experience in educational institutions      Yes     $\theta$       No     $\theta$   
Where? \_\_\_\_\_
9. How long have you been teaching Deaf students?
10. What does the word 'access' mean to you \_\_\_\_\_
11. Does your institution give access to any group of students whose first language is not Greek:  
Yes     $\theta$     No     $\theta$     In what way? \_\_\_\_\_
12. How does your institution give access to Deaf students  
\_\_\_\_\_
13. Does your institution offer any special services or any kind of financial support      Yes     $\theta$       No     $\theta$   
Of what kind \_\_\_\_\_
14. Which subject do you teach?
15. Are your lectures given in      Spoken Greek       $\theta$   
   Through GSL/Greek Interpreters       $\theta$   
   Other special programmes       $\theta$   
   Please specify \_\_\_\_\_
16. Do your Deaf students attend your lectures?      Yes     $\theta$       No     $\theta$   
If yes, in what way do they participate? \_\_\_\_\_  
If no, what are the reasons for non-attendance? \_\_\_\_\_

17. What kind of difficulties have you encountered during your work with Deaf students?

How did you cope with these difficulties?

18. Have these problems been considered by the Senate or other colleagues? Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, what action was taken by your institution to solve the problems?

If no, why do you think there was no action?

19. Have Deaf students themselves brought to your attention the problems they face with their studies? Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, in which way and to whom?

If no, has the institution tried to respond to these students?

20. Was there any action on your part? Yes ☐ No ☐

Of what type?

21. Do Deaf students have the same access to the Registrar and the Senate as hearing students

Yes ☐ No ☐ In what way?

22. In which way do you think that the special situation of Deaf students can be improved?

### ***Secondary School Teachers : Questionnaire***

1. School:  Speciality:
2. How many years have you taught deaf children?
3. How many years have you taught in this school?
4. Do you have any other professional experience in educational institutions?
5. What are the aims of the school?
6. In your view, do you feel the school achieves these aims?
7. How would you describe your pupils?
8. How do you rate your deaf children's use of written Greek? (rate each child in your class without identifying their names)
9. Do you feel that their educational achievements are dependent on their ability to use written Greek?
10. How do the educational achievements of your pupils compare to those of the hearing pupils?
11. Is Greek Sign Language used in your school?
12. Do you have deaf pupils in your school who only use or prefer to use Greek Sign Language rather than Greek?
13. For these pupils, do you believe it would be appropriate to educate them through the use of Greek Sign Language? Yes/No : reasons why?
14. Do you think it is possible for deaf children who use Greek Sign Language to be educated to the same level as
  - a) deaf children who use (spoken) Greek
  - b) hearing children
15. How could the education of deaf children in your school be improved?
16. Do you believe that the deaf young people who use Greek Sign Language have the same opportunities as other children to gain access to higher education? Yes/No Reasons why.
17. Are there any ways your school could encourage more deaf children to enter higher education?
18. How do you believe that access to higher education could be improved for young deaf people? (i.e. for deaf young people who use Greek Sign Language)

### ***Greek Federation of the Deaf : Questionnaire***

1. What is the Greek Federation of the Deaf?
2. How is it organised?
3. Who are the members of the Greek Federation of the Deaf?
4. How is the Federation funded?
5. What are the aims of the Greek Federation of the Deaf?
6. What is the view of the Greek Federation of the Deaf on the education of deaf children?
7. What is the Federation's view on current education provision for deaf children?
8. How does the Federation believe this situation can be improved?
9. Does the Federation believe that Greek Sign Language should be used in the education of deaf children?
10. It has been suggested that deaf children should be educated bilingually (through Greek Sign Language and Greek.). Does the Greek Federation of the Deaf support this policy?
11. What is the Federation's view on access to higher education for Deaf students?
12. What kind of problems do deaf students who use Greek Sign Language experience in higher education institutions?
13. Is the Federation able to assist such students in any way?
14. How does the Federation believe that access to higher education could be improved for deaf students who use Greek Sign Language?

## Appendix B

### **(i) Letter of Deaf Students**

We are a group of deaf students gathered to discuss the problems existing at the University. When we entered the University we were expecting that the requirements for an attendance at lectures in accordance with our needs would be fulfilled. In practice, we had to face various difficulties, so we took the initiative in describing to you some of our problems.

As deaf persons we use the sign language, that is we communicate with each other through our hands. In lectures, we try to understand the lecturer by "reading his lips". Naturally, this is an unsuccessful attempt as we cannot force him in speaking slowly or standing still in order to see him. It is obvious that some spirited efforts are made from a group of lecturers but still, the problem remains the same. Therefore that we really need is an interpreter whose task will be to translate into the Greek sign language all that is said by the lecturer.

The best thing would be the co-operation of two or three of these interpreters working in shifts. In the case that no interpreter could be present the lecture should be read in tape.

In addition, the lecturers, being aware of our failure in attending the lessons, usually advise us to limit ourselves in studying from books. Well books quite always are delivered with delay and we are compelled to use the hearing student's notes. These ones are insufficient and we become an encumbrance to the hearing students. An alternative solution could be the creation of a group in which deaf students would discuss their questions with the teacher once a week.

In order to help you understand the importance that has for us the interpretation process into the sign language, we have to tell you that without it we have no practical interest in attending the teacher's lectures and we all result in failure in most of the exams. What makes things even harder for us is the presence of teachers who, being in complete ignorance of what "Deaf person" means regard us as people with mental deficiency (!) whereas our problem is purely technical.

We believe that the first important step that should be taken is the election from the teaching personnel of a person, whose task will be to intervene in any problem that may arise and brief us anything that is relative to the university. This person could be fully informed of our particular case by Mrs. Helen-Foremou-Meleti who is a specialist in these matters and disposed to help us be treated as real students. She has a degree in special pedagogics and interpretation of the sign language. She works at the public School for Deaf in Arghiroupoli (Athens) as special educator. She collaborates with the "National Union of Deaf" and she can procure you the interpreters required.

We believe in our right to ask this minimum of things. We also believe that you should listen to us, who conceive what our real needs are better than anyone else.

Therefore, for start the basic steps that should be taken are:

- (1) 2-3 interpreters of the Sign language  
(The National Union of Deaf could procure them.)
- (2) the formation of a connection between Deaf students and the teaching personnel.
- (3) briefing and care for a real participation of Deaf persons in all university issues.
- (4) timely delivery of books.

An additional reason for which we take this initiative in writing to you is that, being fully aware of the prevalent situation in deaf people's we dream of creating a new educational program adequate to the deaf student's needs. This will help change the distorted image that society has for us.

This remain our aim, to be regulated as normal students something that will enable us to start the creation of the conditions in which the deaf students will be developed properly.

We inform you that the names of the Deaf students in the various university faculties/departments (in Athens) are:

Department of Literature of the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Athens;

Department of Archaeology of the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Athens;

Department of Education of the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Athens;

School of Education;

Faculty of Mechanical Engineering of the National Technical University of Athens;

Faculty of Mechanical Engineering of the National Technical University of Athens;

Faculty of Architecture of the National Technical University of Athens;

School of Arts;

School of Physical Education.

## **(ii) Letter of a Deaf Student**

Dear Sirs,

I am a student in the first year at the Department of -. As a student I have a special problem. I am deaf, which means I am unable to conceive what is normally said inside the classroom during lectures.

One could easily advice me to study from the books delivered to the students (or even from the relevant bibliography to the subject taught).

I really find myself in a very difficult condition not just because all this written notes cannot adequately substitute for the oral work done in the classroom (especially when our subject has to do with matters of -, - and -) but for another reason as well. My deafness impels me not to attend lectures regularly. As a result, I feel out of my environment and my interests are seriously limited instead of being increased by the stimulus of the various theories that are taught.

You might ask me for proposing an alternative solution that will enable me to attend lectures regularly.

At this moment, there are interpreters of the Greek Sign Language that is my natural language.

It has been proved that these persons can offer me a real educational profit through their work during the lectures. In fact, they are going to give me the right of a regular attendance.

Please, take under consideration the following: I already know many things about - special in particular, I attend meetings and seminars related to this subject. You may ask me how do I do that? Through the aid of these special interpreters who are paid by relevant services.

In the first semester of this year the subject of -, taught by - and - is completed by a seminar by - and -. This is one of the few seminar that I miss as there is no possibility of interpreting. This seminar includes also subjects that interest me as (a) - (b) - (I have a certificate of -). I stated this example to help you realise how much I need the interpreters' aid.

My basic request is on: "Sign Language Interpreters". From the University budget a particular sum should be spent for the payment of the Sign Language Interpreters, something that would facilitate Deaf students in fulfilling their obligations during their studies. Deaf students are many but very few of them graduate.