

INCLUSION OF A CHILD WITH A HEARING IMPAIRMENT IN A MAINSTREAM SCHOOL, SINGLE CASE STUDY

Dita Nīmante

University of Latvia, Latvia

Liene Ekša

University of Latvia, Latvia

ABSTRACT

Inclusive education means that all pupils, regardless of their ability, gender and race, can study with their peers in the school closest to their place of residence. When enrolling students with special needs in a school, the quality of the student's academic and social inclusion is equally important. The study aims to analyze the single case of inclusion of a boy with a hearing impairment in a mainstream school X to answer the research questions: how do teachers deal with a pupil with hearing impairment and his needs in the classroom, what are the peculiarities of a hearing-impaired child's learning, what support (academic and social) is provided to the boy to promote his inclusion in school and the classroom? In the qualitative study, semi structured interviews were conducted with the boy with a hearing impairment and 5 teachers of school X and the boy's father, they were analyzed using content analysis. Three main categories emerged from the data: (1) support provided by teachers/school; (2) social participation in the classroom, school, friendships, (3) barriers for inclusion. There were two time periods in the first category suggested: (a) before the boy was identified as a child with special needs and (b) after the statement on special needs were received. There were several sub-categories that emerged from the transcripts: support measures provided to a child with a hearing impairment in the classroom, organizational response of the school to a child with a hearing impairment, the visible and invisible aspects in social participation of a child with hearing impairment in a mainstream school. The study highlighted that the academic and social inclusion experience of a child with a hearing impairment in a mainstream school may differ before and after receiving the statement from the Pedagogical Medical Commission on the child's special needs. The study discusses whether the statement of a pupil's special needs may become a new barrier to inclusive education that encourages schools to develop new exclusionary practices.

Keywords: *a child with a hearing impairment, inclusion, general education.*

Introduction

Today, more and more children with special needs are enrolled in regular schools in Latvia (Izglītības un [Public report]..., 2015, Izglītības un [Public report]..., 2019), which is in line with the international recommendation and policy pursued by Latvia (Izglītības attīstības [Education Development]..., 2013). Inclusive education is based on the premise that all children regardless of their ability have the right to be educated alongside their peers in their neighbourhood schools. Although inclusive education is often viewed as a way to enhance the possibilities for the inclusion into the mainstream education of those whom we categorize as “children with special needs”, broader understanding of inclusive education is concerned with identifying and overcoming the barriers for participation and qualitative learning in education for all (UNESCO, 2001, 2017). The Law of Education of Latvia states that every child in Latvia has the right to access education (Izglītības likums [Education Law], 1998). However, the accessibility to mainstream education is only the first step. The most important question is whether there are real participation and achievement opportunities for all learners that would rule out any form of exclusion from education. Inclusion is a multidimensional process, which involves organizational, academic, assessment and planning as well as social aspects (McMahon et al., 2016). Children can be included academically and socially. Academic inclusion has two components: academic performance and classroom participation (participation in classroom activities and discussions). Social inclusion means the ability to engage in various social activities, friendly relationships, make friends and be accepted by other children of the same age (Stinson & Antia, 1999).

This qualitative study explores inclusion experiences of a pupil with a hearing impairment in Latvian mainstream school X. In order to understand how academic and social inclusion affects the daily life at school for a boy with a hearing impairment, we have to compare the pupil's perspectives of inclusive practices in school with those of teachers and family. The empirical data is based on narratives with the pupil with a hearing impairment, his father and teachers.

The following questions were pursued in the research:

How do teachers deal with a pupil with hearing impairment and his needs in the classroom, what are the peculiarities of a hearing-impaired child's learning?

What support do teachers offer to a learner with a hearing impairment and how does it promote a child's academic and social inclusion in a mainstream school?

Children with a hearing impairment in a mainstream school

One of the groups with barriers to learning and social participation in mainstream school is pupils with hearing impairments. Although there is no exact statistics on how many children there are with hearing impairments in Latvia, Umbraško estimates that about 0.5% of children in the age of 3 to 14 might have hearing impairments (Umbraško, 2016). There were 18 pupils with hearing impairments registered in special programs in mainstream school in 2019 (Beizītere et al., 2020). However, there is no statistics on how many of children with hearing impairments attend mainstream schools without learning in special programs. Children with hearing impairments represent one of the eight, so called, categories of special needs distinguished in education in Latvia (Prasības vispārējās [Requirements for]..., 2019). For a child to receive such status in education, there has to be a statement drawn either by clinical or school psychologist, speech therapist at the school level or Municipal or State Pedagogical Medical Commission. It is their role to determine who meets criteria of special needs and who have to have a special program, special services, extra resources, additional help and support measures in learning process. Upon the receipt of such notification, the child may receive support measures in the classroom as well as study in a licensed special education program. If a child is enrolled in a special education program, he or she can have an extra support and extra recourses provided while learning in the mainstream classroom, or in a special classroom in the mainstream school or in a special school. Support measures can include physical adjustments in the school (such as a light bell), physical adjustments in the classroom (such as placing tables in a semicircle, etc.), assistive learning technologies (such as Frequency Modulation systems, etc.), adjusted learning materials (such as teaching aids with more pronounced visual stimuli, etc.) and individual materials that can be used by the student (such as disposable workbooks) (Raščevska, et al. 2017). Adjustments may be offered both during the instruction time (for example, by repeating instructions several times, etc.) or during the execution of the task by the child (for example, by extending the time to do the task), extra human recourses (for example, an assistant) may be provided and the volume of a task may be reduced or partly removed (for example, the listening part) (VISC [NEC], n.d.).

So far no research has been conducted in Latvia on the social and academic inclusion of children with hearing impairments in mainstream schools. The evidence from the research conducted globally shows that students with hearing impairments have been increasingly more included in mainstream education over the last 20 years (Takala & Sume, 2018), however they may face numerous challenges in the process (Mekonnen

et al., 2015). There are different dimensions of inclusion – organizational, social and academic (Nilsen, 2020). Those challenges may be related both to the academic social and organizational inclusion. Children with hearing impairments may have some participation barriers, as they have appeared not to be well-integrated into the classroom activities either academically or socially with their hearing peers (Ridsdale & Thompson, 2002). The pupils with hearing impairment may have a lower status within friendship groups (Ridsdale & Thompson, 2002) and may as well experience communication and language problems at school (Dakwa & Musengi, 2015), which are closely linked to children’s academic and social inclusion (Hadjikakou et al., 2008). In some cases, social and academic inclusion could be difficult for students with hearing impairments, due to the delays in the development of their social skills (Adibsereshki et al., 2015). Research reveals that children with hearing impairments have socio-emotional difficulties interfering with their friendships, classroom learning, and ability to get along with the people around them (Mekonnen, et al., 2015). Children with special needs generally can feel less popular at school, have fewer friends (Vetoniemi, & Kärnä, 2019). Those challenges may be more severe if a child with a hearing impairment has additional disabilities. Then the level of academic and social inclusion can be even lower (Olsson, et al., 2018).

Inclusion means that regular classrooms and schools adapt to the child (Stinson & Antia, 1999) even if some children who are referred to as “children with special needs” have to receive something different from what is required by most children. The inability of a school to meet those needs of children can create barriers to learning and participation. The major challenge lies in a school’s inability to adapt the curriculum and provide the necessary social and academic accommodations to meet the needs of the pupils with hearing impairments while the child remains in the classroom along with other children. Inclusion takes place inside classrooms, therefore teachers are the persons to promote socially rich and inclusive environment in their classrooms (Vetoniemi, & Kärnä, 2019). One of the reasons for that might be the fact that the mainstream teachers have little relevant knowledge of the personal concepts and social experiences of hearing-impaired pupils (Ridsdale & Thompson, 2002). It can indicate that there is a need for in-service training for teachers and better cooperation between teachers and support specialists at school. On the other hand, if the school as an organization and teachers has the necessary knowledge, experience and attitude, inclusion can be provided for children with hearing impairment and reasonable academic standard can be achieved (Hadjikakou et al., 2008). If special education pupils’ strengths are enhanced by interactions and social participation with peers through their strengths (can be related to hobbies), the pupils can get the sense of belonging (Vetoniemi, & Kärnä, 2019). There is

a positive effect on pupils with hearing impairment self-esteem after participation in life skills training programs (Vernosfaderani, 2014). In the research by Hadjidakou and colleagues (2008) it was shown that the academic inclusion of hearing-impaired children can be facilitated by a number of tools, the most important being pre-tutoring sessions, in-service training provided for designated teachers and the modification of traditional classroom delivery. During the mainstream class, provision of more details or extra explanation and visual clarification during teaching can be used as an additional support for children with a hearing impairment (Bamu et al., 2017). Zanin and Rance (2016) have proved that assistive technologies (for example, remote microphones and remote loudspeakers) in a classroom can be very helpful for improving listening and communication skills with children with hearing impairments (Zanin & Rance, 2016), which increases the chances of their academic and social inclusion. Also, the awareness of a child's hearing impairment among the hearing children and teachers can promote the social inclusion of children with hearing impairments (Hadjidakou et al., 2008).

Methodology

The qualitative single case study was used in the research as we tried to seek an in-depth understanding of participants' experiences and gain an insight into the phenomenon of inclusion of children with hearing impairments in a mainstream school. Case study was chosen as it can help to better understand contemporary phenomenon within its real life context (Yim, 2003).

Questions were designed to answer the two research questions. The data was collected through semi-structured interviews, which were complemented with field notes. A topic guide was used to provide for the structure of the interview, however the boy, teachers and boy's father were encouraged to talk freely about anything they considered to be important. One of the authors of the paper was involved in the interview process. This means that in this case all participants knew who the researcher was and what the researcher's goals were (Geske & Grinfelds, 2001). The boy and his father were interviewed twice, and all interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim in Latvian. For this article, selected quotes were translated into English. Data collection with interviews and field notes was conducted between October and November 2019.

Participants. The description of the participating persons is as follows:

P1 – Boy, 15 years old, growing up in a family of four children. From the 1st to the 7th grade has been learning in a mainstream school, mainstream class. He was often ill during the 7th grade, mostly otitis. In the 7th grade he was diagnosed with hearing loss (mild), which should not cause difficulties

on a daily basis. His hearing deteriorated over time, it became harder to hear, loss of concentration was observed along with the inability to hear. At the end of the first semester of the 8th grade, an accurate diagnosis was made, treatment was started, but unsuccessfully. The need for a hearing aid was identified. At the end of the 8th grade, a complicated medical operation was performed to compensate for the hearing impairment. It was partly successful. On a daily basis, the hearing aid helps to compensate for the boy's hearing loss. In the 9th grade the student started home education (for one month), then an individual learning plan was set up and he returned to school after the home schooling. In the 9th grade, learning took place individually with a teacher, according to an individual lesson schedule and an individual learning plan outside the classroom. The boy is partly integrated in the breaks between lessons among hearing peers. Another surgery is planned, after which there is a possibility that his hearing will improve at least slightly. Following the initiative of the educational institution, an exemption from the ninth grade State centralized examinations has been made. Outside school, the boy plays badminton, he is a member of the national junior team.

P2 – Father of the boy, lives together with the boy and family.

There were 5 teachers (see Table 1) chosen on a voluntary basis.

Table 1. Demographics of participants (teachers)

Code	Teacher	Work experience	Experience working with children with special needs	Experience working with children with hearing impairment
P3	Classroom teacher, social pedagogue	45	Learning disabilities	No
P4	Latvian language teacher	36	Learning and language disabilities,	No
P5	German language teacher	7	Learning disabilities	No
P6	Mathematics teacher	14	Learning disabilities	No
P7	History teacher	6	Learning disabilities	No

Ethics

Consent to access within this research was requested from the father of the boy and the child himself. The study was described briefly to the father and boy, highlighting the fact that participation was entirely voluntary.

All participants gave their written approval to be included in this study. The interview situations were made as safe and comfortable as possible. Confidentiality and anonymity concerning all provided information was ensured during all phases of the research.

Data analysis

The research applied inductive content analysis (Graneheim, Lindgrena, 2017). Categories arose from the respondents' narratives depending on their frequency of appearance, or the relevance of the subject matter. The basic unit of the analysis was a single word, a sentence or an expressive unit. Analysis of the data started after the interview notes had been taken. The interview transcripts were read by both researchers, individually, then the results were compared and discussed. The narrative material was processed analytically by breaking the text into relatively small units of content. The key themes were identified and preliminary categorisation was made in each case. The results of all respondents were compared.

Results

Three main categories emerged from the data: (1) support provided by teachers/school; (2) social participation in the classroom, school, friendships, (3) barriers for inclusion. There were several sub-categories that emerged from the transcripts (see Figure 1): support measures provided to a child with a hearing impairment in the classroom, organizational response of the school to a child with a hearing impairment, the visible and invisible aspects in social participation of a child with a hearing impairment in a mainstream school.

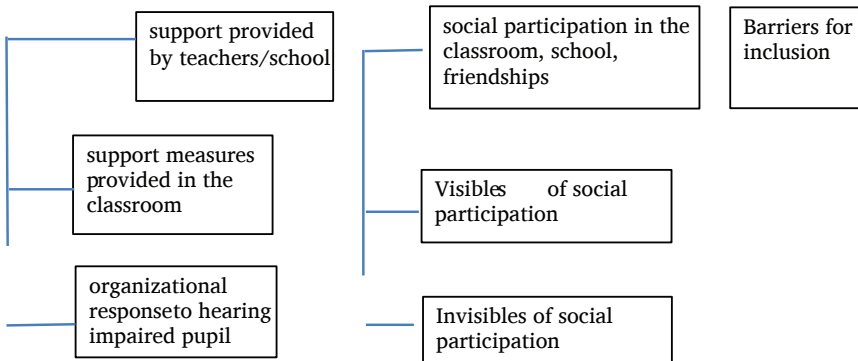


Figure 1. Hierarchy of themes arising from transcripts

Support provided by teachers/school

In the first category, there were two time periods estimated in the narratives: (a) before the boy was identified as a child with special needs and (b) after the statement on special needs was received.

Support measures provided in the classroom

The data from interviews revealed that the teachers, boy's father and boy had been explicit that before the statement on special needs issued by the Pedagogical Medical Commission the boy was learning alongside his hearing classmates in the classroom. The teachers remembered that, first, they noticed that the boy had some kind of learning difficulties. He was absent due to illness quite regularly. So the teachers, in cooperation with the parents, asked the school support team (psychologist, speech therapist, nurse, social pedagogue) for advice and required to start the specialized assessment process. As a result, a mild hearing impairment was diagnosed and the support team immediately recommended providing a classroom support measures. The classroom teacher says, "I noticed that the child was having learning difficulties – difficulty keeping attention, he had problems concentrating in my lessons, he seemed to "slip away". I talked about it with the child's parents. We required the school speech therapist and psychologist to assess the child, but, as it turned out, the child did not have any learning disabilities, but rather had hearing problems, so there was no special support or reminders needed. We provided support measures such as seating him at the front of the classroom" (P4).

The boy admits that the support measures had been very helpful at that time, as being closer to the teacher helped the boy better hear the verbal information the teacher was providing to the class and helped him "read from the teacher's lips": "When my hearing problem was detected, I was moved to the front of the classroom. I sat in the front row near the windows." (P1) The boy added that not speaking too fast and providing clear instructions and repeating them had also been very helpful.

The teachers agreed that the boy was very diligent and willing to cooperate, so they were very willing to provide extra help, if it was required by the boy. As it was said by the boy, he was able to keep up with learning quite well. There were consultations provided by teachers, sometimes he could use peer help, as peer learning was supported by teachers in the classroom.

To support their son, the parents worked very hard, cooperated with the school and were ready to spend a part of the family budget to buy all the necessary equipment and assistive technologies their son needed: "We bought everything he needed. We bought a device that helps him perceive the teacher better, such as a microphone, the teacher has to

put it on his clothes and then he perceives the sound better. We bought bone conduction headphones from acquaintances from abroad, it helps to eliminate background noise.” (P2) The father points out that all the devices were purchased by their family, there was little involvement from the Government in supporting those needs. The amount of money to be paid for the hearing device was small, however there were many problems with that, for example, there was a very negative experience with the Latvian Hearing Centre during the adjustment of the hearing device to their son.

Organizational response to a hearing-impaired pupil

The data from the interview suggests that after receiving the statement on the boy's special needs issued by the Pedagogical Medical Commission, the way he was learning changed. In the first month, they provided the so-called schooling for protractedly ill children at home (teachers visited the boy at home twice a week and taught him the basic subjects – mathematics, languages, natural sciences). After a month, the school had designed an individual learning plan (in Latvia – *Individual educational program acquisition plan*). It included an individual schedule for the boy to come to school at certain times for certain lessons to work individually with teachers one to one. The classroom teacher (every classroom in Latvia has its own classroom teacher who is responsible for children's moral and career education, coordinates the cooperation between the schools and parents and follows up with children's academic success) explains, “He attends school only according to an individually designed schedule and lesson plan created especially for him, he studies with teachers individually. In between, during the breaks, he may, if he wants, spend time with others.” (P3) The boy explains how it works: “Well...teachers teach me one to one. Now the teachers teach me more individually. I understand better. I study according to a plan, I come to school on certain days”. (P1) However, the boy points out that in some cases it helps him learn better, in other cases it does not because there are teachers who do not invest extra effort in explaining the subject to him.

The boy's father is not convinced that this is the most effective way for his son to learn. According to the father, the boy is capable of learning together with other children in the classroom, so there is no need to separate him: “Theoretically, it might be good for my boy in some way that he has the individual plan. However, I would like and I also believe that he could and he wants to study alongside with others in the same classroom. Yes, but, somehow, the school is not sure about that.” (P2) Both parents, mother and father, would like that their son return to the classroom and be able to learn together with others. The boy's father even agreed that there

could be some lessons when the boy could stay away from the classroom and learn separately. Nevertheless, he wants that the boy spends most of the school day together with his peers. “We in the family do not really understand why the school does not try to include him in the class, even partly, for example, by teaching only certain subjects individually.” (P2)

One of the teachers explained the possible reason behind it. She remembered the boy having some concentration problems when he was learning together with other pupils in the same class. If a boy works individually with teachers, there are no such problems at all: “Now that he is studying individually, the result is quite different.” (P6)

Besides the individual plan and individual learning, the school offered the parents to ask doctors to grant their son an exemption from the national final examinations. This was recommended with the rationale that the boy might experience additional stress during the examination, which can affect his health. The father was not convinced about this suggestion either, as he thinks that the boy would be able to pass the examinations successfully. The boy’s father thinks that the school is not interested in providing the boy with all the necessary participation support, “Honestly, I believe he has the knowledge and, with more instruction, he would pass the exams. But the teachers probably see this all better. The psychologist argues that pre-exam stress can negatively affect my son. Maybe the school is afraid of something.” (P2)

Social participation in the classroom, school, friendships

In the interview transcripts there were identified both visible, and invisible aspects of the boy’s social participation at the school, classroom.

Visible aspects of social participation

Teachers are quite unanimous in their view that the attitude towards the boy from other pupils is positive. Other pupils demonstrate understanding and awareness of the situation. One teacher describes it as follows: “Pupils are friendly and responsive towards the X”. (P7) The boy also agrees to that, he says that other pupils respect him and treat him well, “I am respected and understood in my class. I have never been bullied and I have good relationships. I don’t want to change the class; they all have a good attitude toward me.” (P 1). The boy’s father agrees with his son, saying that there are nice children in his son’s class, they are very polite and all of them are willing to help his son.

Invisible aspects of social participation

At the same time, the boy explains that he is very seldom together with his class. He does not take part in field trips or any other classroom events.

He admits that he feels ashamed of his hearing device, therefore, he tries to avoid people: "I really don't like the hearing aid being visible, so I am growing my hair.... (turns away), I don't want anyone to see it, I'm even a little scared of my visual appearance, I don't like to be in public when others see me." (P1). The boy's father revealed in the interview that his son does not have any friends at school. One of the teachers described that the boy does not like to be in contact with others during the school time. He chooses to stay in the classroom during the break. Even if he is outside the classroom in the hallway, he avoids others: "On days when he is at school, he likes to stay in the classroom during the breaks, but then he has to eat lunch, so he has to walk out into the hallway. At those moments, when I am on duty, I even think that the child is not comfortable in the hallway or canteen, it seems that he is looking for another room." (P4) Another teacher pointed out that the child himself avoids the class: "He himself is quite closed up to the classmates" (P6). Teachers interpret it as the boy's unwillingness to cooperate with others. Teachers say that they have invited the boy to take part in field trips and other events for several times, but he always refuses.

None of the teachers associates it with the student's new state of health and new challenges the boy is facing due to the hearing aid, which he must live with. On the contrary, teachers think that the boy does not have any problems with that. One of the teachers describes the situation on the first days, after the boy returned at school with the hearing aid: "It seems to me that on the first days there was a lot of interest, the boy with a hearing aid was in the spotlight, after a while the interest diminished and nobody any longer paid attention to him. But at no point, at least in my practice, did anyone say anything to the child and make him feel uncomfortable, he was feeling all right too." (P4)

The boy's father explained that the situation, when his son is ashamed of himself for wearing the hearing aid, is only observed at school. His son is ashamed that at school everyone sees it. At the same time, the situation is different outside the school. The boy plays badminton; he is a member of a youth badminton team. In the badminton team the boy has many friends, as well as in their neighbourhood. Thus the boy's father has observed that the son is not ashamed of himself with his friends and neighbours outside the school. The boy's father did not explain the reasons for that. He insisted that his son should be learning along with others in some classes, he argued there is no real reason why the boy is separated from others in the learning process. Separation does more harm than good: "I would very much like the boy to have the opportunity to learn with the class and that the attitude would not change, so that he would still receive attention and help from teachers. I would like every child to be able to learn freely

with others so that they are not immediately separated because of their problems. But it's a big and long way to go, and the school has a lot to do there" (P2).

The father assumes that the school is not addressing his son's problem properly by looking for ways to offer the child inclusion in the classroom, but, on the contrary, unknowingly, is looking for the ways to "get rid" of him: "We often talk about it at home, it is not right. We have a feeling that it would be better if there were no such child at all in the school, but if there is, there could be a way to "get rid" of him. It is much easier than to work with such a child for a long time. You may say what you want, but teachers are not ready to include such a child in the classroom". (P2)

Barriers for inclusion

In spite of the good practice before the boy received statement on his special needs, teachers were unanimous that there are many unresolved issues for the student with hearing impairments to be included in the classroom with others. The main factor – the number of students in the class. As it was stated by several teachers, a teacher is not able to work in a classroom with more than 25 students where there is need to provide support to a special needs pupil, and at the same time providing support to others, there is a risk that others will "not receive anything" at that time (P5). It was stated that in a classroom with more than 25 children it is difficult to provide support to a child with special needs, especially if there are children with other disabilities in the classroom as well. Other factors of importance are the severity of the student's disorders as well as the teacher's attitude. The teacher must be "ready to accept such a child in his / her class" (P7). However, the attitude alone is not enough, the school must offer professional methodological support to the teacher, so that the teacher has the necessary knowledge about the child's disorder and the ways teacher can support the child.

Discussions and Conclusions

As the case study data suggested, the teachers at first confused hearing impairments with learning disability. Hearing impairments are so-called invisible disability, therefore it can pass unnoticed for the teacher in some cases (Takala, Sume, 2018) or gets confused with some other possible problems. After the evaluation was carried out, the child's hearing impairment was identified.

The case suggested that the school has the necessary means and it can ensure academic and social inclusion of a child with hearing impairments both at classroom and school (organizational) level. However, in

the current case, the quality of academic and social inclusion of the pupil with a hearing impairment differed before and after the statement on special needs by the Pedagogical Medical Commission was received. Before receiving the statement, the boy was fully included in the classroom and several support measures were provided to adjust to the child's special needs: physical adjustments (seating plan), assistive learning technologies (microphone) (Raščevska, et al. 2017). Adjustments during the instruction time (talking slower and repeating the instructions) (VISIC [NCE], n.d.), peer support was provided. At the school level there were consultations ensured. There was strong cooperation between parents and school.

After receiving the statement on special needs, the child was segregated from the classroom. At the school (organizational) level, an individual learning plan was designed, which stipulated individual schedule of individual lessons for the boy to learn one to one with teachers. Although he was allowed to socialise during the breaks with other children from the class, in reality, it did not happen.

The interview data from the boy and his father suggest that the boy was not particularly well-included socially and academically (social participation during the learning) in the school as the boy was segregated during the learning process from the classroom. Consequently, he was avoiding his classmates during the breaks, ignored invitations to participate in the field trips and other school events, he did not have any friends at school and was quite ashamed of his "new looks". The reasons behind providing such segregated learning opportunities were explained by the school as a better opportunity for individualized learning to help the child concentrate, have higher academic results and reduce stress.

So, one can conclude that children with a hearing impairment can experience several barriers to inclusion socially and academically. At the same time, the barriers might be eliminated by adapting the mainstream school curriculum by providing physical adjustments, assistive technologies, adjustments during the instruction, extra consultations and peer learning. The mainstream teacher's and hearing peer's awareness of a child's hearing impairment and appropriate education of mainstream teachers are of high importance here. They can promote successful inclusion of children with hearing impairments in a mainstream school. However, the case reveals a new possible barrier for inclusion – the statement of special needs can change the way a school regards the pupils and their problems and determines the way how support is provided at mainstream school for pupils with hearing impairments. Although the school had the opportunity to insure full academic and social inclusion of the boy in the classroom, it chose to segregate the child by developing new exclusionary practices by providing individual learning with teachers. The organizational response was

some kind of overreaction to child's special needs. The case suggests that if something is offered differently, there must be some serious justification not to make the situation worse for the child by developing new exclusionary practices. The support must be both proportionate to the pupil's abilities and disability. It must be provided to compensate for the disability instead of becoming a new way of discrimination. Separating the student from other students, not offering the opportunity to participate in the learning process, restricting opportunities for socialization may result in the student losing the sense of belonging to the school and avoiding and ignoring provided social inclusion opportunities, even starting to feel ashamed.

The case results support the previous research on the importance of the relevant knowledge necessary to the teachers about the personal concepts and social experiences of hearing-impaired pupils (Ridsdale & Thomson, 2002). The case study explains the visible and invisible aspects of how the social participation of a child with hearing impairment is perceived and reminds us, that physical inclusion of a child in the school does not automatically mean that he is included at school and classroom both academically and socially.

References

- Adibsereshki, N., Vernosfaderani, A. M. & Movallali, G. (2015). The Effectiveness of life skills training on enhancing the social skills of children with hearing impairments in inclusive schools. *Childhood Education Volume*, 91(6), 469–476.
- Bamu, B. N., De Schauwer, E., Verstraete, S. & Van Hove, G. (2017). Inclusive education for students with hearing impairment in the regular secondary schools in the North-West region of Cameroon: initiatives and challenges. *Journal International Journal of Disability, Development and Education*, 64(6), 612–623.
- Beizitere, I., Grumulte-Lerhe, I., Ziemane, I. & Valtenbergs, V. (2020). Iekļaujošā izglītība bērniem ar speciālām vajadzībām Latvijā [Inclusive education for children with special needs in Latvia]. Latvijas Republikas Saeima. Retrieved from: https://www.saeima.lv/petijumi/Ieklaujosa_izglitiba_berniem_spec_vajadzibam_Latvija.pdf.
- Dakwa, F. E. & Musengi, M. (2015). A look at language problems experienced by children with hearing impairments—the learner's experience. *South African Journal of African Languages*, 35(2), 177–180.
- Geske, A. & Grīnfelds, A. (2006). *Izglītības pētniecība [Educational research]*. Rīga: Latvijas Universitāte.
- Graneheima, U. H., Lindgrena, B. & Lundmana, B. (2017). Methodological challenges in qualitative content analysis: A discussion paper. *Nurse Education today*, 56 (Sep), 29–34. doi: 10.1016/j.nedt.2017.06.002.
- Hadjikakou, K., Petridou, L. & Stylianou, C. (2008). The academic and social inclusion of oral deaf and hard-of-hearing children in Cyprus secondary general education: investigating the perspectives of the stakeholders. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 23(1), 1–12.
- Izglītības likums [Education Law] (1998). Saeima: Rīga. Downloaded from <https://likumi.lv/ta/en/en/id/50759>.

Izglītības un zinātnes ministrijas 2014. gada publiskais pārskats [Public Report 2014 of the Ministry of Education and Science] (2015). Izglītības un zinātnes ministrija [Ministry of Education and Science] Rīga. https://www.izm.gov.lv/images/parskati/IZM_2014_Publ_parskats.pdf (30.04.2020) *Education*, 23(1), 17–29.

Izglītības un zinātnes ministrijas 2018. gada publiskais pārskats [Public Report 2018 of the Ministry of Education and Science]. (2019) Izglītības un zinātnes ministrija [Ministry of Education and Science]. Rīga.: Retrieved from https://www.izm.gov.lv/images/parskati/2018_PARSKATS_SEPTEMBRIS.pdf.

Izglītības attīstības pamatnostādnes 2014.–2020 [Education Development Guidelines] (2013). Izglītības un zinātnes ministrija [Ministry of Education and Science]. Retrieved from <http://www.lsa.lv/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Izglitibasattistibaspamatnostadnes.pdf>.

Prasības vispārējās izglītības iestādēm, lai to īstenotajās izglītības programmās uzņemtu izglītojamos ar speciālām vajadzībām [Requirements for general education institutions to admit learners with special needs in the educational programs implemented by them] (2019). Ministru kabineta noteikumi Nr. 556. Ministru kabinets: Rīga. Retrieved from <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/310939-prasibas-visparejas-izglitibas-iestadem-lai-to-istenotajas-izglitibas-programmas-uznemtu-izglitojamos-ar-specialam>.

McMahon, S. D., Keys, C. B., Berardi, L., Crouch, R. & Coker, C. (2016). School inclusion: a multidimensional framework and links with outcomes among urban youth with disabilities. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 44(5), 656–673.

Mekonnen, M., Hannu, S., Elina, L. & Matti, K. (2015). Socio-emotional problems experienced by deaf and hard of hearing students in Ethiopia. *Deafness & Education International*, 17(3), 155–162.

Nilsen., S. (2020). Inside but still on the outside? Teachers' experiences with the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs in general education. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 24 (9), 980–996. doi: 10.1080/13603116.2018.1503348.

Olsson, S., Dag, M. & Kullberg, C (2018). Deaf and hard-of-hearing adolescents' experiences of inclusion and exclusion in mainstream and special schools in Sweden. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 33(4), 495–509.

Raščevska, M., Nīmante, D., Umbraško, S., Šūmane, I., Martinsone, B. & Žukovska, I. (2017). *Pētījums par bērniem ar speciālām vajadzībām sniedzamo atbalsta pakalpojumu izmaksu modeli iekļaujošas izglītības īstenošanas kontekstā* [Study on the financial model for support services for children with special needs in the context of the implementation of inclusive education in Latvia]. Retrieved from http://www.izm.gov.lv/images/izglitiba_visp/IZMiepirkumamLUPPMFgalaparskats08122017.pdf (30.04.2020).

Ridsdale, J. & Thompson, D. (2002). Perceptions of social adjustment of hearing-impaired pupils in an integrated secondary school unit. *Educational Psychology in Practice theory, research and practice in educational psychology*, 18(1), 21–34.

Stinson, M. S. & Antia, S. D. (1999). Considerations in educating deaf and hard of hearing students in inclusive settings. *Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education*, 4(3), 163–75. doi: 10.1093/deafed/4.3.163.

Strong, M., Charlson, E., S. & Gold, R. (1987). Integration and segregation in mainstreaming programs for children and adolescents with hearing impairments. *The Exceptional Child*, 34(3), 181–195.

Takala, M. & Sume, H. (2018). Hearing-impaired pupils in mainstream education in Finland: teachers' experiences of inclusion and support. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 33(1), 134–147. doi: 10.1080/08856257.2017.1306965.

UNESCO (2001). *Inclusion in education: The participation of disabled learners*. UNESCO: France. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000123486>.

UNESCO (2017). *A Guide for ensuring inclusion and equity in education*. France: UNESCO.

Umbrāško, S. (2016). *Intelekta saistība ar zīmju valodu un lasīšanas prasmi bērniem ar dzirdes traucējumiem* [Relationship of intelligence with sign language and reading skills in children with hearing impairments]. Doktora darbs [Doctoral Thesis]. LU: Rīga. Retrieved from https://dspace.lu.lv/dspace/bitstream/handle/7/34451/298-56209-Umbrasko_Solvita_sp11072.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.

Vernosfaderani, A. M. (2014). The effectiveness of life skills training on enhancing the self-esteem of hearing impaired students in inclusive schools. *Open Journal of Medical Psychology*, 3(1), 94–99. <https://doi.org/10.4236/ojmp.2014.31012>.

Vetoniemi, J. & Kärnä, E. (2019). Being included – experiences of social participation of pupils with special education needs in mainstream schools. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*. doi: 10.1080/13603116.2019.1603329.

VISC [National Centre for Education (NCE)] (n.d.). Par atbalsta pasākumu piemērošanu valsts pārbaudes darbos [On the application of support measures in national exams] 2019./2020. mācību gadā. VISC: Rīga. Retrieved from https://visc.gov.lv/vispizglitiba/eksameni/dokumenti/atb_pas_2020.pdf.

Zanin, J. & Rance, G. (2016). Functional hearing in the classroom: assistive listening devices for students with hearing impairment in a mainstream school setting. *International Journal of Audiology*, 55(12), 723–729.

Yim, R. (2003). *Case study research: design and methods*. 3rd ed. Washington, DC: Sage.