



## **UNIT 1. UNDERSTANDING ACCESSIBILITY**

**Element 2. Learning Outcome 1**

**TRANSCRIPT: DARJA PAJK**



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## Table of contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Slide 1</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Slide 2</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Slide 3</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Slide 4</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Slide 5</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Slide 6</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Slide 7</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>Slide 8</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>Slide 9</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>Slide 10</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>Slide 11</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>12</b>	<b>Slide 12</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>13</b>	<b>Slide 13</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>14</b>	<b>Slide 14</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>15</b>	<b>Slide 15</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>16</b>	<b>Voiceover</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>17</b>	<b>Disclaimer, acknowledgement and copyright information</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>18</b>	<b>Additional metadata</b>	<b>10</b>

## **1 Slide 1**

LiveTextAccess. Training for real-time intralingual subtitles.

## **2 Slide 2**

This is Unit 1. Understanding accessibility. Element 2. Target users and their needs.

## **3 Slide 3**

In this video lecture, we show a short interview by Darja Pajk, a member of the Late-Deafened community from Slovenia.

My name is Piero Cavallo from the Internationale Hochschule SDI München, in Germany. I have prepared this video lecture in collaboration with Rocío Bernabé Caro, also from SDI München, and the European Federation of Hard of Hearing, in short, EFHOH.

## **4 Slide 4**

On completion of the training sequence, you will be able to explain the needs and preferences of the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing, Late-Deafened, and Deaf-Blind community.

## **5 Slide 5**

The agenda is very short. First, I am going to introduce you Darja Pajk. Then, I will illustrate the topics of the interview. And finally, we will end this video lecture with a summary.

## **6 Slide 6**

First of all, let me introduce you Darja Pajk.

## **7 Slide 7**

Darja Pajk is from Slovenia. She refers to herself as a late-deafened person. She has long, red hair. She wears a pair of glasses. She works as occupational therapist.

## **8 Slide 8**

Let me give you some information before watching the video.

## **9 Slide 9**

In the video, Darja recorded herself with a webcam, while she answers some questions that we sent to her before.

Darja speaks in English and the video has English subtitles.

## **10 Slide 10**

In this short interview, Darja answers some questions about late-deafness.

First, she explains what late-deafness is and the impact that late-deafness can have.

Then, Darja describes how communication works for persons with late-deafness.

Finally, Darja talks about speech-to-text interpretation, or real-time intralingual subtitles, as an access service for the Late-Deafened community.

## **11 Slide 11**

Ok, let's watch the video now!

[TRANSCRIPT OF THE INTERVIEW]

[Interviewer] Can you introduce yourself?

[Darja] Hello, I am Darja Pajk from Slovenia, occupational therapist by profession employed now for many years in an institution, which takes care for adults with mental disabilities.

[Interviewer] When did you lose your hearing?

[Darja] I started losing my hearing progressively at the age of 23, and at the age of 46 I become completely deaf. This is when no Hearing Aids was able to help me anymore. I lost my hearing as an adult, and that was extremely hard experience for me and also my family.

[Interviewer] Can you explain what late-deafness is?

[Darja] There is a simple definition of late-deafness, in fact. The late-deafened were born hearing, developed spoken language skills, and lost their hearing progressively or suddenly later in life as adults. Late-Deafened people differ from those that are born deaf or people who are hard of hearing.

I also distinguish between people who became deaf in adulthood but can understand speech well with the use of various implants, and those who cannot understand it despite implants.

And that's my big fear, as I have a hard time imagining how much you should change your way of communicating and how much energy needs to be invested in being able to keep up with what's going on around you. In many cases, there is no possibility of written support.

[Interviewer] What is the impact of being a Late-Deafened person?

[Darja] It is extremely difficult to accept complete hearing loss and live with it. Mostly because society oftentimes does not understand that this can happen and that a Late-Deafened person still wants to be actively involved in the same life as before, even though he or she might not be able to, due to the hearing loss. In addition, of course, it affects your work and employment opportunities, your career prospects, the time you invest in the environment.

It is also difficult for a family that must accept the situation. There was no exception for me either. First, I isolated myself from the environment, my world had become extremely diminished, and I was in constant fear that I could not function normally in the environment. Of course, this affects you.

And adults who lose their hearing live in a world that knows no hearing loss and is foreign to them. The thing with the hearing loss is, that you do not look like you have a disability, people do not notice it, yet you do have it.

[Interviewer] As a Late-Deafened person, how do you communicate with other people? And how other people communicate with you?

[Darja] In the beginning, when I completely lost my hearing, I was in an immense crisis and did not know how to talk to people at all, because I was not able to understand speech in many situations. I was not a member of any association of Hard of Hearing or Deaf people, nor did I know them. Later, I joined the Slovenian organization of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and met others there. For the most part, however, the focus was on sign language. I also started learning it myself, but it was quite foreign to me and no one in my environment spoke or knew it. It is also slow and not rich enough in words for my needs. Thus, I always approached people at a short distance, I sought a peaceful environment and I helped myself with lip-reading. Of course, I used in this time enormously powerful hearing aids and in some situation FM and induction loops. Several times, friends helped me by writing short summaries for me, so I knew what the conversation was about. I didn't even know the other methods. I additionally checked all the information online and tried to use as many written methods of communication as possible. And when I saw the possibilities of speech-to-text at the EFHOH and IFHOH conferences, I was immensely fascinated. For the first time in many years, I felt normal, and I was able to follow the lecture.

I now use cochlear implant which serves me very well and I communicate in most cases without any problems. However, I experience some problems in crowded spaces and when I am feeling overwhelmed. At that time, the possibility of reading written information or communicating in writing, extremely helps me.

It is also possible to use additional sound amplifiers in addition to the implant, but despite the simplicity, this is often still difficult to do, as you always need an additional device or an Internet connection.

Communication is best done at a normal volume of speech in a quiet space with only one person speaking who articulates well or at least normally. It is helpful when the speaker faces the listener. And also, it is very welcome if Late-Deafened person explains about problems which he or she has.

But perfect option is, if there is possibility for speech-to-text support especially in noisy environment.

[Interviewer] How do you plan and organize for communication?

[Darja] In my normal life, since I have the implant, I only make sure that the processors are always fully charged. So, this means that if I stay overnight, I always have chargers with me. Of course, sometimes I forget about it and then I must return home or try to find a place where I can buy a spare one.

I am also lucky to hear well on the phone and I do not often need to use other devices. But sometimes I still do have to use an additional sound amplifier that transmits the sounds directly to the processor, specially AudioLink and Artone 3 Max. Thus, I need to make sure they are always fully charged and that I have them with me.

Figuring out what exactly you need all the time and carry with you, takes a really long time and you are always in stress if you have everything with you, how to connect everything so that you can hear well. But before meetings, I always explain that I am deaf, a cochlear implant user and that I might not be able to understand everything properly. I also always check where is the best position to sit to see and hear optimally. But now, there is quite a big problem because of mask people wear, as they cover their mouths.

[Interviewer] Are real-time intralingual subtitles a good support for Late-Deafened people?

[Darja] Yes, it is perfect. As I mentioned before, with speech-to-text reporter near you, you feel normal as you can follow and know what is going on. And I really enjoyed in some meetings of EFHOH where I met a speech-to-text supporter who followed only one person and thus also participated in social events by typing all the time. This really made it possible to understand and socialize. In my opinion speech-to-text reporters are a wonderful support for Late-Deafened people.

[Interviewer] When and where do you personally use real-time intralingual subtitles?

[Darja] Unfortunately, the speech-to-text did not exist in Slovenia until recently. Even in our organization of Deaf and Hard of Hearing people, a speech-to-text reporter was not available, and we had to rely on the induction loop at the meetings. In 2020, however, at least in our organization, a team was formed that performs speech-to-text at our Zoom meetings, which is extremely welcome.

In this way, people have begun to learn what speech-to-text means and how they can participate in events, trainings, meetings, and so on.

I do not use speech-to-text at home because it is not available, as I said before, nor in the study, nor in the work environment. For me it would be useful during educational trainings, meetings.

[Interviewer] Do you have any suggestions for current and future real-time intralingual subtitles?

[Darja] It is extremely important for Late-Deafened people to be able to follow the content of the conversation. It is important to focus on the content and there is no need to write down all the sounds. There is also no need to correct the text, even if someone makes a mistake and writes something wrong, but it is necessary that the content is correct.

And I really wish that the speech-to-text profession would spread everywhere, and Late-Deafened people would have possibility to cooperate equal.

## **12 Slide 12**

The summary.

## **13 Slide 13**

To briefly sum up, we can say that late-deafness is an impactful impairment for the person who is experiencing the hearing loss and his or her family too.

Then, we have seen that persons with late-deafness can use devices, like cochlear implants, and also benefit from sound devices, such as amplifiers.

Finally, we have seen that real-time subtitles can really help to follow the content of a conversation and socialize on an equal basis in different contexts. As Darja explains, subtitles also support the audiological treatment for this target group.

## **14 Slide 14**

Exercises.

## **15 Slide 15**

The exercises for this video lecture are in the Trainer's Guide and the PowerPoint file.

## **16 Voiceover**

LTA - LiveTextAccess. Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. SDI - Internationale Hochschule. Scuola Superiore per Mediatori Linguistici. 2DFDigital. The European Federation of Hard of Hearing People - EFHOH. VELOTYPE. SUB-TI ACCESS. European Certification and Qualification Association - ECQA. Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union.

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