This paper focuses on linguistic features frequently encountered in the writings of profound prelingual deaf individuals. Our aim, in this long-term project, is to investigate (1) the existence of a linguistic system specific to deaf people, often identified in the literature as ”Deaf French” or ”français sourd” (Nadeau 1993); (2) any common characteristics between this ”Deaf French” and learners’ varieties (Klein and Perdue 1997); and (3) the assumption of a typical cognitive functioning of the deaf, which would explain the presence of specific linguistic forms and choices of information to convey, both for signing and oral deaf people.

During writing workshops, we collected a corpus of narratives produced by profound prelingual deaf adults having different linguistic and educational profiles. We also gathered writings from two control groups of hearing adults (French as L1, L2) who performed the same task.

Our first analyses (Perini 2013) show that (1) the ”Deaf French” is to be defined rather as a pattern of features, with intermediate deaf writers having the highest density; (2) even if deaf and L2 learners share numerous common strategies, we identified some particular ”deaf forms” which could be explained by the visual saliency in the organization and transmission of information. The results will be discussed in light of a new corpus (DynaScript Project, in preparation) containing a largest frame of text types (descriptions, explanations, argumentations).

References :


Keywords: deaf French, learners’ varieties, deaf learners.