

**Vojtechovská, Veronika. 2023. MOZAIKA TICHÁ [eng.: The Mosaic of Silence]. Bratislava: SNEPEDA**

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The Mosaic of Silence is a publication introducing encounters of DHoH people with the hearing world, via the personal experiences of its author and those close to her. Vojtechovská (2023) begins her book with a complex of inspiring thoughts written in the introduction. The quote “our lives in silence are often invisible” aptly describes the barriers faced by a deaf or hard-of-hearing person in (but not only) Slovak society. As she states, being hearing impaired is a disability that cannot be detected immediately in an individual. Thus, there are many situations in which the hearing majority does not realize how many challenges they pose to DHoH people and how far our society still needs to progress in creating an inclusive environment. This book presents a range of situations through the real experiences of the author, her relatives and friends which provide the reader understanding of the diverse experience of the DHoH in Slovakia – both positive and negative.

The publication is divided into five chapters. The first chapter introduces general situations in the daily life of a DHoH person. It describes experiences in which most people do not realize that not every citizen has the ability to hear and it portrays common prejudice regarding the (dis)abilities of DHoH people – be it in the public sphere, higher education, and various social interactions. The second chapter focuses on the developments brought to the lives of DHoH people after the COVID-19 pandemic. The author points out the major benefit arising from the pandemic period: the fact that the public started to realize the importance of sign language interpreters in order to provide information access to the D/deaf inhabitants of Slovakia. It also touches upon the challenges of the period. For sign language users, the necessity of wearing masks caused several critical issues, mainly related to the inability of holding a conversation in both spoken language and sign language, due to the fact that masks cover not only the mouth of a speaker but also their facial gestures (essential in communication in sign languages). The third chapter of the publication is devoted particularly to Slovak Sign Language – the mother tongue of the majority of deaf citizens. The author explains the differences between Slovak Sign Language and the Slovak language – its different rules, structure and grammar. The author describes the importance of creating appropriate conditions for communication with a D/deaf speaker, in terms of space, light, eye contact, as well as special arrangements for remote online communication or communication

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involving a sign language interpreter. This chapter also introduces important works of art from Deaf culture, the first Slovak fairytale in sign language with Deaf actors which is valued not only by children but adults as well. The fourth chapter is dedicated to specific selected linguistic and communication aspects and encounters between non-hearing and hearing persons. It also touches upon the new developments in sign language, e.g. in relation to the use of English words in Slovak Sign Language. The last chapter concludes with the values of understanding and cultural accessibility.

The Mosaic of Silence is a compelling publication that offers readers a deep dive into the experiences of DHoH individuals in the hearing world. Through the author's vivid depictions and intimate anecdotes, it not only sheds light on the challenges faced by DHoH people but also celebrates their resilience and unique perspectives. By offering valuable insights based on the real-life encounters of DHoH people in Slovakia, this publication plays an important role in broadening readers' awareness and contributes to fostering inclusivity within Slovak society.