

The Second International Conference on “deaf education”

The Second International Conference on « deaf education » was held on February 07 and 08, 2018 at the Faculty of Educational Sciences in Rabat, Morocco.

Opening session:

During the opening session, the representatives of Mohammed V University Rabat addressed the aims of the Conference in its second edition on the Teaching methods of Deaf Children. The aims of this conference is to heighten participants' awareness of deafness issues and create a space for discussions about international experiences in the field of education as well as to study ways to improve the social status of deaf people. They heightened the importance of the involvement of stakeholders from all relevant sectors (the government, the civil society organizations, the universities) in the process of promoting the education of persons with disabilities in particular, in accordance with a participatory approach. They also pointed out that the field of disability is one of the main concerns of the University by including this field in higher education programs, encouraging scientific research on disability, and mobilizing facilitative mechanisms to improve conditions of disabled students. In addition, they work on the development of inclusive education methods for disabled children, within the framework of agreement signed on August 04, 2016 between the Mohammed V University and the Ministry of Family, Solidarity, Equality and Social Development in Rabat.

For his part, Mr. Rachid Guennouni, Director of the Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities at the Ministry of Family, Solidarity, Equality and Social Development, said that Mohammed V University is one of the pioneers in promoting scientific research related to disability, especially the field of inclusive education for disabled children. It also mentioned the functions of the ministry that include coordination with the higher education and scientific research sector through developing a general framework of cooperation and partnership according to the same agreement mentioned above, in response to the general directives of the Integrated Public Policy of promoting the rights of persons with disabilities . He also pointed out the full involvement of the Ministry to promote the status of Deaf people by working on the

project “Normalization and development of Moroccan sign language” and on the development of sign language trainings in order to facilitate the access of deaf people to public services.

Following the opening session, speakers were invited to make their presentations on their model experiences in improving the conditions of Deaf people and facilitating their access to services and especially experiences on inclusive education. These presentations may be summarized as follows:

→ **Dr Claudine Storbeck - The Center for Studies in Deafness at the Wits University - Johannesburg South Africa :**

In his introductory address, Dr Claudine Storbeck gave a brief overview of the current work of the center for deaf studies. The center aims to develop the training programs for teachers of deaf children, to promote scientific research related to deaf education, and to equip parents of deaf children with the necessary knowledge and skills to foster equal opportunities for the Deaf Community (HI HOPES program).

She emphasized the importance of parents' involvement in the development of the social and communicative abilities of Deaf child and the role that the university could play through promoting the scientific research in the field of deaf education and by engaging Deaf people themselves in this process Fully because of their familiarity and understanding of deaf culture. She pointed out that South African community has encountered many challenges in the same field, which are faced now through concerted efforts of institutions and universities, as well as deaf associations. She called for more attention to the situation of Deaf people in Morocco through the development of a national program and the establishment of mechanisms and practical measures with the full respect of the local linguistic and cultural specificities of the Moroccan deaf community.

→ **Mr. Abdel Aziz Arssi - the Faculty of Educational Sciences Rabat, Morocco :**

In his address, Mr Arssi gave a brief overview of his scientific research project at the Faculty of Educational Sciences, which is based on the study of the current situation of deaf education in Morocco by collecting quantitative and qualitative statistics about the Moroccan context and identifying the strengths and weaknesses related to the educational system for deaf children. He mentioned that the results of this research will be announced until another meeting.

→ **Mrs. Ghazlan Siddiqui : The program "ISHARAH" led by The Islamic Center in London :**

The program " ISHARAH" was developed by in 2007 and aims to make the religion of Islam accessible to any muslim deaf and support the teaching of Islam in an informed and validated approach, so as to avoid any confusion or misleading information about Islam through the deaf Muslim community in Britain.

its principal activities include actions to create Islamic schools for deaf children and to provide religious lessons and various services in sign language. In addition, the ISHARAH team are engaged to make available Islamic resources as the Holy Coran in British sign language. (The website of the program www.alisharah.com).

→ The representative of the company ORPHEO GROUP for digital solutions :

The educational electronic application for deaf children is implemented by ORPHEO GROUP for digital solutions. The aim of this program is to enable parents to be involved in the development of the social and communication abilities of deaf child through educational exercises to evaluate and consolidate the skills learned the school. .

→ Mr. Yasin Miroslav Ivanovich, Professor of Psychology at Plekhanov Russian University of Economics :

Mr. Yasin presented the current status of the education and education of Deaf people in Russia and the degree of their integration into Russian universities, highlighting that Deaf students were able to benefit from the immediate Distributed among three Russian universities, headed by Moscow University. The total number of Deaf students studying at the universities of Russia was 370 in 2017. About 50% of the total students are enrolled in the Bauman Technical University in Moscow. He noted that despite the progress made to improve the situation of Deaf people in Russia, they continue to suffer from marginalization due to lack of professional prospects, difficulty in choosing the desired university specialization, and a misunderstanding of the specificities of the education of Deaf students. In order to overcome these difficulties, an educational program entitled "Inclusive Education in the University" was developed to form a university faculty on inclusive education and mechanisms to improve the quality of teaching Deaf people within the university.

→ Dr. Diane Clark, University of Lamar USA and the President of the Deafness Research Center :

Dr. Diane discussed the strategic role of scientific centers in promoting deaf children's education. She emphasized her experience in the implementation of three specialized scientific centers in the following fields: Sign language and methods of developing language skills , writing and reading skills of deaf children and the methodology of teaching, as well as the behavioral studies related to deaf people and the determinants (the main influences) of behavioral development. It was noted that language intervention from early age through programs of language skills development contributes to the academic development of knowledge in the first language, and affects positively the learning abilities to learn the second language (reading and writing skills).

→ Dr. Otmane Ahmiani, Professor researcher at the Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences / Mohamed V University Rabat :

The scientific research of Dr. Osman Ahmiani is based on "Lexicon in Sign Language : Morphological derivation". The presentation focused on a critical study of the Moroccan Sign Language Guide (developed in 2002), which include signs with the same meaning without any distinction between name and verb functions. He also discussed the methods of derivation in sign language and the distinction norms between name and verb based on some examples of Moroccan signs.

→ Dr Claudine Storbeck - The Center for Studies in Deafness at the Wits University - Johannesburg South Africa :

The second presentation was about code of ethics for sign language interpreters, which includes neutrality, integrity, respect of content, confidentiality and non-interference in personal matters and many others rules. She also noted that the infringement of these rules carries great risks in terms of civil liability. She called all concerned actors for the need to be involved in the development of an action plan to promote the profession of sign language interpretation and ensure its legal recognition.

→ **Dr. Ines Sleeboom, Kentalis Foundation :**

- Dr. Inas Sleeboom stressed the importance of social relations during the early childhood in promoting the child's mental and cognitive development in general. Some of the psychological conditions observed through scientific research are due to the social isolation of deaf people and the existence of a linguistic barrier between deaf and hearing people, as well as the parents' lack of awareness of the importance of their role in the social development of deaf children

→ **Dr. Nabil Chekouh, Ministry of education :**

Dr. Nabil Shakouh's presentation was about "The semantic Memory of deaf people. He gave first a brief presentation about types of memories and methods of organizing. He pointed out that Deaf people have great abilities at the level of receptive memory and the visual sense is their strongest, but they also experienced difficulties with lexical access to the semantic memory because of the simplicity of links within semantic networks in their memory. The weakness of semantic memory is not due to the intelligence of deaf child, but due to the lack of the education for deaf children to develop the necessary skills since early childhood.

Conclusion:

The conference concluded with a signing ceremony of the Memorandum of Understanding between Lamar University (Dr. M. Diane Clark) and Mohammed V University (Abdelhanine Belhaj, Interim President; Rabat, Morocco) in order to establish an overarching framework for collaboration in scientific research related to the field of deafness.