The problems posed by communication tools in the lives of deaf people in Soviet Russia: A historical study on a series of social policies and their impact on deaf people

Naoya Hakumura

1. Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to describe the problems encountered by deaf people in Soviet Russia when using different communication tools. It is generally agreed that "deafness" refers to severe hearing loss or the inability to hear. Thus, the ability to hear distinguishes deaf people from non-deaf people. The problems that can arise with the communication tools used by deaf people can affect their social lives. It is generally assumed that deaf people communicate by conducting conversations using Sign Language (SL). In contrast, Oral Speech (OS) is less widely known as a communication tool and is often used to illustrate the limitations of SL.

Recently, there has been a marked increase in the number of studies examining deaf people from a socio-historical viewpoint. In such studies, the introduction of SL is considered a core aspect of the history of deafness, the independence of the deaf community, and the identity of deaf people; in contrast, OS is thought to reflect the identity and culture of non-deaf people. The promotion of OS in school education is often seen as an imposition of the culture and values of non-deaf people on deaf people. In this sense, SL is regarded as an important element of deaf people's identity and culture, whereas OS is often seen as an obstructive element.

Furthermore, recent campaigning by deaf people to promote the societal recognition of deaf culture and SL, as well as the results that have emerged
from the research conducted on such activism, tend to substantiate this historical viewpoint. In other words, the deaf activist movement has promoted a historical viewpoint that describes any educational efforts to promote OS as a failure. The problem with such a viewpoint is that it ignores some deaf people's attempts to support OS and leads to certain unstructured and confused arguments that do not take into account the varied historical contexts of different countries and regions. Therefore, an objective comparison between OS and SL that considers the inherent historical viewpoints and contexts of individual countries and regions is necessary.

A survey of some of the previous historical studies that dealt with these issues revealed several noteworthy studies. Among them, Susan Burch's study was of particular interest. Burch called attention to the fact that in "Russia," the position of the deaf community was distinct due to the unique social-political-economic environment to be found in Russia, an environment which fostered a cultural minority that differed in important ways from European and American deaf communities. She considered education, economic and employment status, social characteristics, and the relationship between the community and the state as important aspects of this unique social-political-economic environment. According to Burch, this environment in Russia fostered an "original cultural minority." She seems to use the word "original" to mean the existence of pluralism within the culture of deaf people, in reference to the complicated position of Russian SL and OS within the deaf community in Russia. Burch writes, "Under both the Tsarist and Soviet regimes, the Russian people suffered considerably...This stark reality also contributed to the deaf community's response to oralism. As deaf Russians lacked many basic individual rights and privileges and lived within a restricted environment—both economically and socially—they looked to oralism as a way of dealing with their disability. While they continued to communicate using signed communication among themselves, they understood the importance of being able to communicate with the larger community in order to survive. This pluralistic approach...demonstrates a more complex understanding of cultural deafness."

Thus, it seems clear that although most deaf people preferred to communicate using SL, they also felt the need to acquire OS skills in order to live within the wider community. Burch's research compels us to examine more closely the psychological reality of deaf people in both Imperial Russia and the Soviet
THE PROBLEMS POSED BY COMMUNICATION TOOLS IN THE LIVES OF DEAF PEOPLE IN SOVIET RUSSIA

Union as they attempted to interact with the wider community by using OS. It also prompts us to pay further attention to the experiences of deaf people in other countries and to compare these experiences across countries. However, Burch’s approach has been criticized for having one weakness: Any discussion of this subject must acknowledge “the two different dimensions” in order to understand deaf people’s perception of these communication tools. One dimension is historical, and it recognizes the fact that the ideological impact of socialism was only slight; thus, it stresses the continuity between Imperial Russia and the Soviet Union. The other dimension is the deep impact of the unique social situation that existed in the early days of the Soviet Union. Because “the two different dimensions” are closely connected, a conscious effort is required to prevent any confusion between these “originalities” in both periods.

In fact, it is extremely difficult to assess each deaf individual’s stance on the issue of SL and OS, a problem that other studies have encountered as well. However, these studies have noted the contribution of “The All-Russian Association of the Deaf” (or VOG), an organization of deaf people that was founded officially in 1926, which had previously (between 1917 and 1925) been called The All-Russian Union of the Deaf (or VOS). This organization tried to represent deaf individuals’ views on topics such as SL and OS. E. Silianova described the meetings of VOG as “deaf towns” where deaf people conversed with each other in SL and where everyone in the “town” had the same status. Spatial limitations prevent us from including more detailed descriptions here, so, for our purposes, may it suffice to note that the organization had its roots in Imperial Russia. With this in mind, we must consider the organization’s position in “the two different dimensions” and attempt to track how the “originalities” changed, both before and after the revolution. By acknowledging these issues, we will attempt herein to locate the organization within a wider social context and consider the organization as an important social filter for understanding deaf individuals.

The main resource used in this paper is the bulletin published by VOG, entitled “The Life of the Deaf Zhizn’ Glukhonyemykh.” We will consider how SL and OS were generally regarded in the bulletin, and we will examine the resolutions of the First Conference of VOG. In addition, we will concentrate on the period from the early twentieth century to 1928 because the First Conference of VOG was held in 1926. This event attracted significant attention because it was the
first time since the revolution that the deaf community had an opportunity to officially voice its own demands. This shift in deaf people’s privileges was due mainly to the ideology of the period when the New Economic Policy (NEP) was announced; in this period, the people—to a certain extent—enjoyed what was known as the people’s priority. If we wish to investigate the debates that were being conducted on this subject in the 1930s in greater depth, we must consider the deaf community’s hope that communication tools would be made a priority against this background. In addition, if we suppose that every nation has disabled people, then this study can offer a preliminary opportunity to reconsider national policy with regard to the disabled. In the course of this paper, we place certain terms within quotation marks to distinguish between “literate deaf people” (gramotnyi glukhoi) and “late-deafened people” (pozdnoglokhshii). Although we cannot clearly categorize literate deaf people and late-deafened people as such, we use this categorization for convenience in the absence of a firmer basis for classification.

2. The era of Imperial Russia

In several studies focusing on the history of deaf people in Imperial Russia, this period has been regarded as a low point because deaf people were denied the right of citizenship. For example, H. N. Zamsky took a negative view of the government’s stance toward disabled people, because “although some legislation to help disabled people was promulgated…even these attempts to reduce the burden upon deaf people were merely symbolic, because they didn’t guarantee anything at the policy level.” However, we cannot entirely view this period in a negative light, especially when we consider the relation between Imperial Russia and the Soviet Union. For example, in the field of deaf education, it is well known that the teaching methods developed by educators such as V. I. Fleri\textsuperscript{11} and F. A. Rau\textsuperscript{12} were far more advanced than the methods that were being used in other countries, and to this day, Fleri and Rau’s methods attract worldwide attention from specialists in deaf education. The method developed by F. A. Rau involved combining his original inventive idea with a French method that focused on SL and a German method that focused on OS. This method became less influential after the International Congress of Teachers of Deaf-Mutes was held in Milan in 1880; later, however, America borrowed the concept from
THE PROBLEMS POSED BY COMMUNICATION TOOLS IN THE LIVES OF DEAF PEOPLE IN SOVIET RUSSIA

the Soviet Union, adapting an improved version in the 1970s known as "Total Communication," a teaching method that is now widely practiced by specialists in deaf education.

With regard to deaf education, H. Williams investigated the progress made during this period, pointing to the official establishment of deaf education by the Empress Dowager Maria in Pavlovsk in the nineteenth century (1806). However, as K. W. Hodgeson suggests, this may well have been merely a reflection of the humanitarianism that was fashionable at the time, and H. Williams may be falsely focusing only on the positives. In addition to this official progress, we must also note the existence of a private deaf school, which was built in Moscow in 1860 by P. M. Tretyakov, who privately funded it. Named The Arnold-Tretyakov School for Deaf People, its director was F. A. Rau.

Although a detailed comparison is beyond the scope of this paper, it seems clear that there was no real unification of the teaching methods used in Imperial Russia. The school founded by the Empress Dowager Maria focused on a method making use of OS whereas the Arnold-Tretyakov School embraced the use of SL in its teaching process. However, after the International Congress of Teachers of Deaf-Mutes was held in Milan, in 1880, the methodologies of these two schools began to be combined. After the Congress, schools were encouraged to teach deaf people OS, and it became the only recognized method for teaching deaf children in Imperial Russia.

This emphasis on teaching methods that made use of SL in some cases and OS in others was a matter of concern not only for the specialists but also for the deaf people themselves. Before the revolution, socially concerned organizations had been formed by deaf people (in St. Petersburg in 1904 and in Moscow in 1912, when their regulations were officially approved), whose main objectives were to improve the social situation of the deaf and to foster a deeper understanding between the deaf community and society as a whole. Both organizations were founded with encouragement and support from graduates of the deaf schools. The graduates of the Arnold-Trechakov School, for example, founded the Moscow Association of the Deaf in 1912, which consisted of 100 deaf people. Under the Provisional Government, the organizations in Moscow and St. Petersburg joined together in July 1917 to create VOS and hold the first All-Russian Congress of the Deaf in order to bring together and unify deaf people from all over Russia.
During this conference, there were many lively debates. For example, a deaf man from Kostroma, by the name of Sokolov, felt it was necessary to preserve SL as the predominant form of language for deaf people, whereas another deaf man named Alekseev considered SL unacceptable. A third deaf man named Toropov, in his report "In Defense of SL," pointed out the tendency for teachers to remove SL from people's speech learning, in keeping with their belief that it was erroneous. He suggested that "ignoring SL in learning resulted in an undesirable phenomenon. ... No one will deny the benefits of learning OS, but when such learning is detrimental to pupils' understanding of the meaning of such words, this delays intellectual development." A deaf man named Zhuromsky disagreed, saying: "SL cannot meet all the requirements of speech and can delay and complicate learning literacy, fast development. ... I say, SL is harmful not to those deaf people who never were at school, but to those who have graduated from it." Why might this be? Because "it is essential for their continued intellectual development... SL not only stands in the way of appropriate intellectual development but also causes frustration and alienation." Ultimately, the conference concluded that "we must recognize that SL must be used like the other methods for contact between deaf people: OS and Finger Spelling must be used only when deaf people are communicating publicly, as it is the only language with which deaf people can appropriately communicate with those who are not deaf. In schools, SL should not be admitted and the instruction of deaf children must be performed only by means of OS and Finger Spelling."

There were serious disagreements regarding the issue of deaf people's development and what paths it might take. In addition, this topic was generally discussed within the contentious context of school education, primarily because most of the members of VOS were graduates of the deaf schools. Although we do not have detailed evidence, there is still a need to consider how deaf schools influenced the deaf people's views of their own development. Conversely, some previous studies have shown that opportunities to enter schools were not offered to proletarian children. If we consider the actual number of deaf children who attended these schools, then we must reconsider the significance and positioning of VOS and of this conference in the context of the lives of the deaf people who were not part of the school education system and were not members of VOS in Imperial Russia.

In 1907, there were 61 facilities for the deaf: 50 schools, 7 shelters, and 4
THE PROBLEMS POSED BY COMMUNICATION TOOLS IN THE LIVES OF DEAF PEOPLE IN SOVIET RUSSIA

mixed-use (smeshannyi tip) charity and learning establishments. These facilities were utilized by 2,230 students.26 The majority of these institutions were run by charitable organizations (e.g., The Marie Foundation27). There were 158,759 deaf people in Imperial Russia in 1897, of which more than 40,000 were children of school age.28 Fewer than 3,00029 (7.5%30) of these children made use of the abovementioned educational facilities.

A school network was not developed until 1917, at which time, there were various opportunities for specialists and concerned deaf people to discuss the communication tools available to the deaf. However, this subject was usually considered only within the framework of “school education.” If we acknowledge the existence of some kind of ideology (without going into further detail) in Imperial Russia and consider “education” as the method that was used to transmit it, it is not clear how this discussion helped those deaf people who were not part of the school system. If, in this context, we attempt to identify those deaf individuals who did not form part of the school education system and the VOS organization by using only VOS as a social filter, then we cannot help but question the extent to which VOS paid serious attention to the problems faced by such deaf individuals. Moreover, it is telling that VOG, which was founded after the revolution and on the back of the organizations that had already been established in St. Petersburg and Moscow, was compelled, according to a regulation in 1925, to pay particular attention to the development of deaf people who were not part of the school education system.

3. The Russian Revolution and deaf people

P. A. Saveliev,31 a deaf man, watched the revolution intently. He wrote down his memories of his first sight of V. I. Lenin at the Plenum in 1922:

“Lenin appeared—the pleasant leader of all world workers. Wearing a coat and with a hat in hand, he went to the proscenium quickly. The entire audience stood and applauded the leader for a long time. Lenin started his speech. How pitiful I felt my physical disability then.”32

The revolution had a serious impact on deaf people. The VOG bulletin wrote, “It was only Abroller which managed to put an end to deaf people’s disenfran-
chised position in society. The Soviet government gave rights to those people who had previously been repressed."33 However, this view was not universally held by deaf people. P. A. Saveliev wrote, "I came to Moscow [in 1920] and participated in many social activities for deaf people. First, what surprised me was that deaf people were not closely involved in the power of the Soviet Union and had not been involved in the political struggle...deaf people—who gained all the rights of citizenship as a result of the revolution—should be helping to protect the power of the Soviet state."34

In Moscow, he noticed that the deaf community was not active in protecting the power of the Soviet state. Indeed, the Soviet policy of awarding citizenship to deaf people had benefited the deaf in Russia, and P. A. Saveliev regarded this in a positive light. However, at the time, most of the deaf people did not understand what citizenship was and how it would affect them, a situation that Saveliev thought was senseless.

The Soviet government recognized this indifference early on and suggested several policies to combat it. They were determined to broaden the cultural activities available to the deaf population, to disseminate scientific and technical knowledge, and to bring deaf people together so that they could join the ranks of other citizens who were helping in the spread of atheism through anti-religious activities. However, it was difficult to put these activities into practice in the aftermath of the revolution. It is widely known that the revolution created many orphans, widows, and disabled people,35 and the great famine of 1921–1923 increased social instability as people’s livelihoods collapsed, serious unemployment grew, and food was scarce. With regard to serious unemployment, disabled people made up the largest proportion.36 The number of jobless people, including the disabled, from 1897–1926 in Moscow (in '000s)37 is shown below:
The problems posed by communication tools in the lives of deaf people in Soviet Russia

The Soviet government did try to guarantee jobs for disabled people. In fact, there is evidence of regulations and notifications that were passed in this regard. For example, a government notification (soobshchenie) entitled “Concerning social insurance (strakhovanie) for disabled people,” was published on November 1, 1917. However, this was intended almost entirely for those who had been disabled by war. In 1920, an individual annuity was introduced for those who had suffered during the war against imperialism and in the counter-revolution or during the activities that were carried out to build a socialist state. The annuity was the first paid remuneration for those who rendered distinguished service in defense of the country.38

On December 8, 1921, a regulation (dekret) “regarding social security (obespechenie) for disabled people” was established by the Council of People’s Commissars (Sovnarkom). This, too, stressed the subject of social security, but only for people disabled by war and Red Army soldiers who were no longer able to work because of disease or for other reasons. Although, in the mid-1920s, the concept of “disability” was applied to people not only disabled by war but also while working, it was only in the mid-1970s that the concept was adapted for disabled peasants.39 It cannot be said that the system of social security as we know it today began in the 1920s, because it did not apply to peasants who were disabled by war.40

The above data was recorded in 1926 and shows the number of people who had been disabled by war or labor. However, because we are unable to determine what type of disability they had, these figures for “war” and “labor” may also

Figure 1. Number of disabled people, by disability type and cause, per 10,000 people in 192641

| Location            | Blind | Deaf | Psychological | War | Labor |
|---------------------|-------|------|---------------|-----|-------|
| Leningrad district  | 13.2  | 7.6  | 17.1          | 5.7 | 1.8   |
| Moscow              | 12.8  | 8.6  | 20.1          | 6.0 | 2.4   |
| Ivanovsk            | 18.3  | 9.0  | 15.7          | 5.7 | 2.1   |
| Nizhegorod          | 28.2  | 10.3 | 16.0          | 7.3 | 2.4   |
| Ural                | 18.4  | 9.0  | 13.4          | 6.0 | 2.2   |
| Eastern Siberia     | 17.6  | 8.5  | 21.9          | 6.8 | 1.9   |
| Far East            | 9.3   | 5.9  | 14.0          | 4.9 | 2.7   |
| Average             | 16.1  | 8.2  | 15.7          | 6.8 | 1.8   |

27
include deaf people. It is difficult to determine what jobs disabled people held because of a lack of reliable data in this regard; therefore, we can only use the data related to certain areas that were described in the VOG bulletin. We have taken the data gathered in Kursk in 1926 as an example.

Although the number of people rendered deaf by events during the war was not recorded, the total number of people rendered deaf for other reasons is assumed to correspond to a percentage of 100% (Figure 3). From this, it is ap-
The problems posed by communication tools in the lives of deaf people in Soviet Russia

parent that the percentage of people who were rendered deaf by natural causes was the highest, at slightly over 60%. With regard to those who were rendered deaf in an "accident," the rate for men was much higher than it was for women. However, it remains unclear what the term "accident" means.

The occupational data in Figure 4 shows that nearly 90% of deaf men and women had no occupational training. If this was the case, how did they earn a living? The answer lies in the data on livelihood (Figure 5). Many deaf people were supported by relatives, second only to those engaged in agriculture, and accounting for slightly less than 30% of the total. However, the figures do not show how those deaf people who were supported by their relatives spent their time every day.

It is generally said that the "deaf minority" differs from other minorities in that the parents of deaf children usually hear and there is some kind of breakdown in the transmission of language and culture from parent to child. It is also said that those deaf people who were lonely or isolated were often very willing to participate in VOG activities. In fact, it seems possible that an organization like VOG functioned as a compensatory mechanism for many deaf people, helping them to overcome the feelings of uncertainty and uneasiness associated with loneliness. However, it was not only in the Soviet Union that deaf people were lonely and isolated. It seemed to be a worldwide phenomenon, a fact that became clear as VOG's population grew beyond the Soviet Union's borders (a subject we will return to later).

Although social organizations had established activities for deaf people in Imperial Russia, and the organizations in Moscow and St. Petersburg had merged with VOS during the first conference in 1917, these organizations was not officially acknowledged by the Soviet government. Furthermore, the conditions that prevailed during the period of reconstruction did not allow these organizations to solve the problems that deaf people faced in terms of unemployment and material insecurity. After the Civil war, the Bolsheviks did not endorse the autonomy of VOS and instead demanded that deaf people join the cells (iacheika) of the Communist Party. Indeed, in 1920, they pressed for the dissolution of VOS, considering it completely outdated because it had been founded during the period of Kerensky. In October 1920, the second All-Russian Congress of the Deaf was held, and the decision was made to dissolve VOS, although this action was not actually taken until 1925. In 1925, Sovnarkom established
Naoya Hakumura

a regulation “Regarding the All Russian Union of the Deaf.” This transformation of policy must be understood within the context of the period of NEP, which granted independence (albeit limited) to social organizations; this was considered a historic occasion for deaf people.49 The VOG bulletin included an article that proposed that “this could be possible due to the close connection that existed between representatives in VOS and state organs.”50

The regulation “Regarding the All-Russian Union of the Deaf,” published on June 23, 1925, stated that, “Sovnarkom decided to improve the lives of deaf people... manual labor opportunities will be made available to deaf people and they can learn various forms of labor which will be useful to the society as a whole.”51 The importance of the union is clear from this introduction. This association had two objectives, both of which were aimed at opening up opportunities for deaf people: to improve labor opportunities and to develop cultural activities. The basic labor opportunity policy was outlined in rule “1-1”: “VOS is a social organization that should solve [its] own problems and pursue its basic purpose through the increased labor opportunities that have been established for deaf people in the industrial fields... and it should also form a foundation on which the voluntary activities, mutual support, and individual initiatives of deaf people can be pursued.”

It is assumed that this industrial initiative was aimed at a number of economic activities that were being undertaken by VOS. In addition, in clause 12 of rule 1, “VOS’s problem and purpose” were stressed as being “the consideration of deaf people.” Thus, VOS’s primary aim was to work toward “the pursuit and realization of a method to integrate deaf people into a labor market that has been opened to deaf people.”52

According to the census of 1926, there were 79,300 deaf people in the Republic of Russia (11,000 in the cities and 68,000 in the provinces). Indeed, 4,039 deaf people had joined the newly created VOG through their 32 branch offices. In 1927, 68 cooperatives catering to 905 deaf workers were in existence, along with 15 clubs for deaf people. In 1928, there were 73 cooperatives and production repair shops where 1,228 deaf people trained and worked.

With regard to cultural activities, literacy education received particular attention. There were 18 clubs and 40 liquidation points (likpunkty), which 3,925 deaf people had visited as members of VOG (equivalent to 50.7% of the total number of deaf people who were members of VOG at that time). By the end of 1928,
VOG had 56 branch offices and more than 7,600 members, and it was growing larger every year. However, the issue of how to accommodate its increased size began to have serious implications for its continued progress.

4. Some discussions about SL and OS

The activities of VOS had been developed and implemented under the influence and the control of the Party, through the People’s Commissar of Enlightenment (Narkompros) and Social Security (Narkomsobes). Influenced by the deaf education policy that had been introduced by Narkompros in the 1920s, the promotion of OS was readily apparent in the “GUS” program.53 After its establishment in 1924, this program was carried out as a revision program in 1926 and 1927, and efforts were made to adapt it to deaf education. The implemented policy proposed that teachers at educational facilities for deaf people should recognize that their most important role was to ensure that students acquired OS. Through various activities, teachers attempted to improve students’ pronunciation and Lip Reading (i.e., OS) skills, in addition to teaching the grammar of the Russian natural language.54 With regard to the positioning of OS in educational policy, we can see a certain degree of continuity between policies in Soviet Russia and those in Imperial Russia. Throughout the city and the prefecture of Moscow, 30% of all deaf children entered schools, while less than 4%–5% of deaf children were in the school system in Narkompros.55

VOS paid little attention to this aspect, however. Although there were a few articles mentioning the problem from various perspectives, these topics were not discussed in a structured manner. Rather, several other topics were addressed, some of which we shall outline in the following paragraphs.

In 1920, when the continuation of VOS was in doubt, a deaf man named A. Y. Udal wrote that deaf people possess a unique language and culture. He expressed his confidence that “[n]ow, we will succeed in introducing into the common treasure of human culture something new and valuable, that has been inaccessible to our hearing comrades who are physically different from us.” He wrote that deaf people “are not hopelessly despised in the sense of language... are far from despised, despite the fact that our language is not similar to the language of the rest of humanity.”56 However, there is no evidence regarding the nature of the responses — if any were made — to this written statement. This may
Naoya Hakumura

be because the social activities of VOS had declined after 1920 and, by 1925, VOS had become outdated. It was in 1925 that the foundations of VOG were officially established and this problem with communication tools was not apparently regarded as a problem of the highest priority. Against this background, we will now turn to some articles that were published after 1925.

Regarding Pioneer activities with non-deaf children, for example, it is assumed that in terms of school education and schools for literacy, some interactions with deaf children were conducted almost solely by teachers who were familiar with the children, a policy that had been implemented purposely by the schools and that facilitated smooth interaction. However, the Pioneer activities that were conducted with non-deaf children differed because exchanges between deaf and non-deaf children could not occur easily. Therefore, the promotion of OS was gradually called into question. According to an article published in the VOG bulletin, "the lamentable situation of the Pioneer activities is clear; the reason for it being that the non-deaf Pioneer leader [the person who takes on the lead role in the activity] does not know SL." School education tended to promote OS and "the work of educationalists seems to exclude SL as a tool of the Pioneers as an extension of the educational policy. It may be a good judgment [to exclude SL as a tool used by the Pioneers]. However, [because the Pioneer leader and deaf children cannot communicate with each other,] Pioneer activities may amount to nothing by this judgment." The exclusion of SL affected Pioneer activities differently from school education. The Pioneer activities had failed because the non-deaf Pioneer leader and the deaf children were unable to communicate with each other. This article created a sensation and cast further doubt on the promotion of OS in school education: "SL is the native language of deaf people, whereas OS is, for many deaf people, a foreign language...it seems outdated to exclude SL from school life and from Pioneer activities. We cannot accept this situation [because] it is only through SL that deaf children can express their mental and intellectual activity..."

It is clear that the situation with regard to SL and OS was complicated. The bulletin included both positive and negative articles regarding how OS affected school education, and there was little consensus in this regard. However, VOS could not leave the argument unresolved. The organization faced the serious problem of how to undertake cultural activities and how to position SL and OS.
THE PROBLEMS POSED BY COMMUNICATION TOOLS IN THE LIVES OF DEAF PEOPLE IN SOVIET RUSSIA

in the process. Besides establishing school education for deaf children, a social movement was also undertaken to reduce illiteracy.

Although illiteracy was a serious problem, at the same time, the difficulties inherent in improving literacy among deaf people were given particular attention. For example, in Saratov, there exists a school for the illiterate, which has been attached to the club for deaf people since November 1924. Twenty-two deaf people were initially enrolled in this school, and although the numbers fluctuated, the number of students enrolled in the school had risen to 37 by 1926. Although by this stage the school had been in existence for more than one year, it had failed to produce a single graduate. The reason for this was that it was difficult to improve the literacy rates among deaf people because the teacher had to teach them not only how to read and write, but also how to use words that they were totally unfamiliar with. In addition, the abovementioned article in the VOG bulletin stated that "we would seemingly not achieve success by expelling SL from deaf schools now, because the number of children at home and in preschool facilities is not sufficiently high and illiterates still exist among the deaf adult population."

During the conference in 1926, VOS was renamed VOG and the new organization tried to outline a resolution to this problem. However, this resolution prompted a new discussion, and a considerable amount of criticism emerged in 1928. With this in mind, we will attempt to consider the background of complications between SL and OS, and attempt to make sense of this complicated discussion.

5. Background to and the resolution of the First Conference of VOG

We will now examine the resolution of the First Conference of VOG, which was held during September 21–25, 1926. Owing to space constraints, we will not discuss the role of this conference in deaf people's activities and the processes that emerged. Members from Arkhangel'sk, Gomel, Kursk, Leningrad, Moscow, Saratov, Samara, Stalingrad, and elsewhere, attended the Conference. Twenty-nine representatives with voting rights and nineteen representatives with discussion rights took part. Twelve representatives, making up a majority, were 21–30 years old, and six were 31–35 years old. The remaining eleven members were 36–66 years old.
Naoya Hakumura

Debates were conducted on issues such as occupational mediation and enlightenment (schools, clubs, and literacy) for deaf people. In a description of the conference in the VOG bulletin, the following was written: "we confirmed that although we recognize the continuing positive results of activities relating to deaf children’s upbringing and education by Narkompros, not enough attention has been paid to cultural enlightenment and the political activity of deaf adolescents and adults."

With regard to previous conflicts between SL and OS, one may presume, making use of information garnered from the VOG bulletin, that these issues were understood to varying degrees by the representatives at the conference. What did they think was necessary to the upbringing and education of deaf children in the future? "We will decide the resolutions necessary for the enlightenment of deaf people on the basis of the future activity of Narkompros, as follows:"

1-3 School education classes that adopt Oral Methods must be offered for more than 8 years.
1-9 The Conference judges it to be right that the Oral Method be adopted for pre-school and school education. The Conference considers that Writing Speech and SL are correct methods to teach deaf children with learning/developmental difficulties in order to reduce the level of their mental burden. The use of SL should not be a permanent feature of pre-school and school education.
1-17 It is necessary to offer short-term classes for local teachers for the effective learning of general education subjects through the Oral Method."

At that time, children attended school between the ages of 8 and 16 years. In this period of attendance at school, the period of 8 years suggested in 1-3 covered almost the entire period of school attendance. In 1-9, it was stated that the adoption of the Oral Method in pre-school education as well as school education was correct. Writing Speech and SL were seen as subjects that were appropriate to be taught to developmentally disabled deaf children to reduce their stress levels. This is to say that SL was still regarded negatively. The statement that "SL shouldn’t be a permanent feature” implied that it should be used as little as possible. The resolution stated strictly that deaf children in pre-school and school education must be taught using only OS. The need to establish short-term classes for local teachers to achieve this end was also suggested.
THE PROBLEMSPOSEDBYCOMMUNICATION TOOLSIN THE LIVES OF DEAFPEOPLE IN SOVIET RUSSIA

In the previous section, we considered the debate between those who championed SL and those who championed OS. We then examined articles from the VOG bulletin which highlighted the importance of SL in broadening the cultural activities that were available to deaf people, and attempted to place SL within the context of the regulatory framework. However, it is difficult to understand how the prevailing opinions on SL were reflected in the relevant regulations of the period. Furthermore, after the conference, it was even said that “it (Lip Reading or OS) brought hope to the lives of deaf people, and could help to dispel the sense of uselessness that many felt after becoming deaf, uselessness based on a perception that they were unsuitable for labor, and were of no use to their neighbors or themselves.” What about the case for SL? It was difficult to find similar articles touting the positive effects of SL. Thus, it seems clear that differing opinions with regard to SL and OS only reflected differences between local and non-structured opinions. However, this was not the case. With an examination of later historical materials, from 1928, we can understand what lies behind this contradiction.

Here let us focus on the categorization of the representatives of VOG, and the relationship between the “literate deaf people,” “late-deafened people,” and “others.” V.A. Pelennyi has suggested that those who often said that “SL is harmful” or “SL is an enemy of deaf people” probably belonged to the categories of “literate deaf people” and “late-deafened people.” Furthermore, he pointed out the important fact that more than half of the total number of deaf people were “illiterate” and the remainder were “half literate.”2 In addition, the representatives of VOG (and it is very difficult to determine the number of representatives because, to our knowledge, no such information exists in this regard) were always occupied by issues concerning the so-called “literate deaf people” or “late-deafened people.” Pelennyi also wrote that “instead of helping with their knowledge—sharing knowledge with unfortunate deaf comrades—they [the “literate deaf people” and “late-deafened people”] separated themselves from others with the slogan “SL—the enemy of deaf people.”23

The level of literacy and proficiency with OS are directly related to the severity of each individual’s deafness. The “literate deaf people” or “late-deafened people” could acquire the skill more easily than those who were deaf from birth. In addition, it was mostly people who were either “literate deaf” or “late-deafened” who became the representatives of VOG and initiated many of the
activities among deaf people.

"I noticed that many literate deaf people are ashamed of SL, as if it degrades them. This is misplaced. Literate Mimists [deaf people who can communicate with SL] among deaf people are valuable, however, they are only disabled when among the non-deaf people. Deaf people, even if they can speak, are still deaf people and they should not deceive themselves into believing that they are non-deaf. You are a literate deaf man among deaf people and, therefore, your high value must not be separated from your unfortunate deaf comrades, but you [that is, literate deaf people] must focus all your energy on working among them. ... [W]hat is particularly important is that you [literate deaf people] teach SL to other deaf people to involve them in cultural activities. ... SL never becomes an enemy. ... It will become a friend and supporter."74

Some "literate deaf people" or "late-deafened people" tended to try to ignore their own deafness. Many of those who were discriminated against because of their deafness would later try to conceal their disability as much as possible. In particular, deaf people who were literate and could use OS would, to a certain extent, behave in this manner. However, despite this, their deafness would have been clear when they were among non-deaf people.

VOG grew in terms of the number of its members (which almost doubled from 4,039 in 1926 to 7,600 in 1928) and the scale of its economic activities. With regard to the number of members, we wish to focus on the categories of the deaf people who were joining VOG or, in other words, the number of new members who were accustomed to Natural Language OS and literacy. Because the number of such new members was low, we would like to propose that critical opinions such as "SL is harmful" and "SL is an enemy of deaf people" might have been voiced by individuals who did not belong to the categories of "literate deaf people" or "late-deafened people." Of course, this is not to say that all "literate deaf people" or "late-deafened people" supported OS.

Susan Burch wrote that the originality of VOG lay in the impact of its economics and the status of its deaf workers. She considered each VOG office as a sanctuary for deaf people's culture where Russian SL was used, and deaf people in that time had developed an original culture in VOG that centered on the use of SL.75 In addition, she identified the pluralism within the deaf people's community. If such pluralism really existed, then we must consider the severity of people's "deafness" and the relationship between the "literate deaf people,"
THE PROBLEMSPOSED BY COMMUNICATION TOOLSIN THE LIVES OF DEAFPEOPLEIN SOVIET RUSSIA

"late-deafened people," and "others" as the background to an understanding of deaf people’s culture and the concept of pluralism in the deaf people’s community from a structural standpoint (although we cannot, of course, clearly categorize all deaf people as such). In addition, if “literate deaf people” or "late-deafened people” were the most likely to be involved in funding VOG, then we need to consider the critics from the “others” category when reflecting on the conference’s resolution.

Although it is not known for sure when and how such critical opinion arose, an article in the 1927 bulletin had this to say about the possibility of establishing cadres to unify the deaf people’s community: “Considering the unique requirements associated with the task of organizing the deaf people’s community, the following two types of people would be necessary: (1) those who know how deaf people use SL, their lifestyle, their habits, and how to approach them and (2) those who have grown up with almost normal hearing (obshchaya razvitoct) [i.e., without any disabilities] and can freely communicate using the speech of contemporary (non-deaf) people.”76 Condition (1) was intended for activities among deaf people who use only SL, while condition (2) was intended for “late-deafened people.” If VOG felt the need to bring up as many cadres as possible, it would then follow that the representatives supported OS during the first VOG conference. Although, of course, even if the “representatives” intended to systematically organize the deaf people’s community, we must consider how such intentions were perceived by members of the “others” category. With regard to such critical opinions (mentioned above for the year 1928) as “SL is harmful” and “SL is an enemy of deaf people,” these opinions appear to be based on a failure to understand the “others.” Further investigation is required to understand where such critical opinions came from and how they were subsequently resolved. This is certainly a matter worthy of further study.

6. Conclusion

We have considered the selection of communication tools in the lives of the deaf people living in Soviet Russia through the lens of achievements in Imperial Russia. With this in mind, we proposed two dimensions that, to varying degrees, influenced the ideology of the 1917 revolution.

In this study, we tried to understand the deaf individual’s stance with regard to
SL and OS through the filter of evidence that emerged from socially concerned organizations (while acknowledging, of course, that trying to understand the typical deaf individual only through VOS and VOG has its own inherent limitations). The foundation of VOG dates back to the period of Imperial Russia (when it was first established as VOS). According to the available materials, graduates of the very few deaf schools that existed in those days promoted the foundation of VOS. When looking at the number of deaf schools in Imperial Russia at that time, we need to consider how seriously the government attended to deaf education as compared with other countries. Certainly in this regard, it can never be said that the percentage of school attendance in Imperial Russia was high. In addition, if we use “education” as an indicator of the types of people required by the government, then factors such as poor school attendance, the foundation of social organizations by graduates, and the discussions among them were, seemingly, never so influential as to affect deaf people who did not form part of the school education system and were not members of VOS. With this point in mind, we must acknowledge that this approach—trying to understand the deaf community in Imperial Russia through evidence from socially concerned organizations—is limited in scope. In the same era, the extent to which these organizations focused on deaf people who were not part of the school education system and were not members of VOS remains unclear. Therefore, we cannot draw any firm conclusions about the opinions that socially concerned organizations had regarding SL and OS.

After the revolution, the foundation of VOS was officially approved in 1925 under the jurisdiction of Narkompros. Considering the limited rights that deaf people had in Imperial Russia, the establishment of VOG in 1926 was significant in that it attempted to bring the concerns of the deaf people’s community to the attention of society as a whole. Although VOG bulletins from this period contain articles that cast doubts on the applicability of OS to cultural activities, the resolution of the conference encouraged the promotion of OS. With regard to this point, VOG seemed to comply with the educational policy set by Narkompros. However, such a conclusion would be overly simplistic.

The VOG membership increased significantly as did the scale of its economic activities. What types of deaf people joined VOG? In other words, how many of the new members were accustomed to using Natural Language OS and were literate? Because few of the new members appear to have been, we would like...
THE PROBLEMSPOSEDBYCOMMUNICATIONTOOLSINTHELIVESOFDEAFPEOPLEINSOVIETRUSSIA

to suggest that such critical opinions as “SL is harmful” and “SL is an enemy
of deaf people” may have been raised by individuals not belonging to either the
category of “literate deaf people” or of “late-deafened people.”

In this paper, we showed that the more the “literate deaf people” and the
“late-deafened people” interacted with non-deaf people, the more they began to
move away from the use of SL (it should be noted that we cannot find evidence
of this type of categorization, i.e., that of “literate deaf people,” “late-deafened
people,” and “non-deaf people,” within the materials available from the impe-
rial period). It is also clear that those deaf people who were literate and skilled
in using OS came to occupy the posts of representatives in VOG. Hence, the
resolutions that emerged from the first conference of VOG should be understood
in this light, acknowledging that the representatives making these decisions were
mostly “late-deafened people” or “literate deaf people,” and this must also have
influenced the policies they outlined regarding school education. In addition
to these factors, we also propose that these policies emerged in keeping with
and reflected a genuine need for the deaf people’s community to organize itself
and garner some level of coherence. The acquisition of OS was considered an
important aspect of this aim, since it would allow the organization to respond
to the needs of various members of the deaf people’s community (depending
on the severity of their deafness).

Many previous studies have tried to view SL as a method of communication
that confirmed the positive aspects of deaf people’s identity. It seems clear that
many deaf people in the Soviet Union regarded SL as a core aspect of their
“deafness”; indeed, one school of thought held that “SL is a native language of
deaf people.”78 However, it is important to consider who this opinion was held
by. In addition, as has been seen in previous studies, as the economic might of
VOG increased, an internalized deaf people’s culture that used SL as its medium
might actually have developed. However, even if such an internalized culture
were to have developed, we must ask whether those deaf individuals who were
“literate deaf people” or “late-deafened people”—who made up a majority in
the administration of VOG—regarded SL as beneficial or not. Without consid-
ing this aspect, we cannot conclude that SL was a positive tool for those living
with “deafness.” Any attempt to understand the resolution in 1926 without
first acknowledging this aspect will be insufficient. The acquisition of OS was
promoted heavily by VOG, and for this reason it is important that we consider
whether the acquisition of OS skills itself contributed to the development of the association and increased the social participation of deaf people.

In this paper, the division of deaf people into categories has been somewhat crude; however, this cannot be helped given the dearth of historical materials. Of course, we cannot conclude that the basis for the division (severity of deafness) corresponded perfectly to an individual’s consideration of SL and OS, because “literate deaf people” and “late-deafened people” would have different cultural experiences that would probably overlap with those of “illiterate deaf people.” Making use of available examples, we need to verify this point in a future study.

The principle at the heart of VOG was voiced loudly: “the ultimate aim of everything [we do] is to enable the deaf to hear and the mute to speak.” This resulted in the development of a partnership between some deaf individuals and VOG. Here, the relationship between VOG as a social organization and the deaf individuals it sought to represent is brought into question, although we have not fully addressed this matter herein. With regard to this point, see Shiokawa, N., “Shudantekiyokuatsu to kojin” (written in Japanese) (Collective suppression and an individual), in Ehara, Y., ed., Feminizumu to riberarizumu (Feminism and Liberalism) (Tokyo: Keiso Shobo, 2001), p. 46.

Notes

1. This is a language that uses manual communication, body language, and lip movements instead of sound. The most important elements other than the use of “hands” and “fingers” are “facial expressions” (mimicry), “the raising and lowering of eyebrows,” “the direction of the eyes,” and “the movement of the head.” These elements function as an original grammar system. In particular, mimicry is a special method that helps users to express themselves using Sign Language. Regarding this point, see footnote 9.

2. The “Oral Method” emphasizes language perception and speaking skills as modes of communication instead of manual signing communication. Lip Reading and utterance are generally included within this category. The acquisition of Lip Reading skills significantly improves Oral Speech.

3. Parks, E. S., “Treatment of Signed Language in Deaf History Texts,” Sign Language Studies 8 (2007): 72–93.

4. See Komarova, A., “Nekotorye Fakty Iz Istoriyu Russkogo Zhestvogo Iazyka,” (written in Russian) (Some facts from the history of Russian sign language) available from http://www.surdus-ral.ru/index.php; Internet; accessed October 29, 2008. We can also see the same tendency in Zaitseva, G., Pursglove, M., Gregory, S., “Vygotsky, Sign Language, and the Education of
THE PROBLEMS POSED BY COMMUNICATION TOOLS IN THE LIVES OF DEAF PEOPLE IN SOVIET RUSSIA

Deaf Pupils," *Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education* 4 (Spring 1999): 9–15.

5. Susan Burch, "Transcending Revolutions: The Tsars, the Soviets and Deaf Culture," *Journal of Social History* 34: 2 (Winter 2000): 393–401.

6. It generally means the theory or practice to teach the deaf to communicate primarily or exclusively through lip-reading and speaking rather than Sign Language.

7. Burch, "Transcending Revolutions," 393–401.

8. Silianova, E., "Russian Deaf Towns," in Goodstein, Harvey, ed., *The Deaf Way II Reader: Perspectives from the Second International Conference on Deaf Culture* (Washington, DC: Gallaudet University Press, 2006), pp. 189–192.

9. Here, a criticism may arise with regard to the dichotomy between Sign Language and Oral Speech. In fact, L. S. Vygotsky (1896–1934), a Russian psychologist, emphasized that "there were three languages for the deaf in those days: (1) the language of natural Mimicry, i.e., Sign Language; (2) the systematic language of signs; and (3) Oral Speech. However, Sign Language (using hand-based alphabets) ... was a language that most non-deaf people could not understand and it created a wall between deaf people and the world as a whole since someone who could understand Sign Language and translate it into common language was required." (Vygotskii, L. S., "K Psikhologi i Pedagogike Detskoj Defektivnosti" (written in Russian) (To the psychology and education of defects in children) (originally written in 1924); Vygotsky, L. S., Collected Works, Vol. 5 (Moscow: Pedagogika, 1983), 78–79.)

In fact, (2) was presumably used only among the deaf and the few who are familiar with this communication mode. Furthermore, how serious were the deaf about (2)? Indeed, it appears that most deaf people did not consider this a serious aspect of communication. We can see that VOG tried to distinguish the deaf from the non-deaf as their organization developed economically and culturally; indeed, the different categories of the deaf united in order to maintain their own rights and interests. This is reflected in the adoption of Sign Language on the deaf side and Oral Speech on the non-deaf side.

10. Zamskii, K. S., "Istoriia Oligofrenopedagogiki" (written in Russian) (The history of education for mentally retarded children) (Moscow: Proseveshenie, 1977), 333.

11. Victor Ivanovich Fleri (1800–1856) was a teacher at the school opened by the Empress Dowager Maria and published a book about deaf psychology in 1835, the first such book to be published in Imperial Russia.

12. Fedor Andreevich Rau (1868–1957) is one of the most famous teachers in the history of deaf education in Imperial Russia and the Soviet Union. He was the director of the Arnold-Trechakov School in Moscow and brought the Oral Method to Russia from Germany.

13. The Congress was attended by representatives from Italy, France, British, America, Germany, etc. Its aim was to promote the use of the Oral Method and discourage the use of Sign Language in the education of the deaf.

14. She was the widow of Czar Aleksandr III, who was assassinated in 1894. Apparently, the first school for the deaf was founded in Russia in 1806 by Empress Marie Fedorovna, who was the second wife of Tsar Paul I. One difference between the two schools was that the former was private and the latter was national. The education of the deaf in Russia was nationalized
Naoya Hakumura

after the Socialist Revolution.

15. Hodgeson K. W., *The deaf and their problems, a study in special education* (London: Watts, 1953): 176.

16. Pavel Mikhailovich Tretyakov (1832–1898) was a famous collector, patron of the arts, and philanthropist who lent his name to the Tretyakov Gallery.

17. For further details, see Basova, A. G., Egorov, S. F., "Istoriya surdopedagogiki" (written in Russian) (The history of education for deaf children) (Moscow, Prosveshchenie, 1984).

18. Williams, H. G., "Czarist Contributions to the Care, Education and Welfare of the Deaf in Imperial Russia," *International Studies on Sign Language and Communication of the Deaf* 33 (Hamburg: Signum, 1996): 280.

19. A short reference to this congress can be found in Bazoev, V. Z., Pelennyi, V. A., "Chelovek Iz Mira Tishiny" (written in Russian) (The person from the silent world) (Akademkniga: 2001): 671.

20. GARF (The State Archive of the Russian Federation). F. 511. op. 1. d. 1. l. 89–89 ob.

21. GARF (The State Archive of the Russian Federation). F. 511. op. 1. d. 1. l. 125–125 ob.

22. GARF (The State Archive of the Russian Federation). F. 511. op. 1. d. 1. l. 125–125 ob.

23. GARF (The State Archive of the Russian Federation). F. 511. op. 1. d. 1. l. 130–134 ob.

24. GARF (The State Archive of the Russian Federation). F. 511. op. 1. d. 1. l. 55–55 ob.

25. *Sotsial'noe Obespechenie*, No. 4, 1937, 33–34.

26. We cited this figure from the report, "Za Vseobuch Glukhomykh Detei," (written in Russian) (For the compulsory education for deaf children) written by Pelennyi, V. A., the current chief editor for VOG, who recommended this report to us as useful material on September 18, 2008 (the page number is not mentioned).

27. See Abramov, I., "History of the Deaf in Russia. Myths and Realities," *Looking Back: A Reader on the History of Deaf Communities and Their Sign Language* (Hamburg: Signum Press, 1993): 15.

28. Bazoev, V. Z., Pelennyi, V. A., "Chelovek," 471.

29. Pelennyi, "Za Vseobuch," 1.

30. It is difficult to make a true comparison with Japan, as the statistics refer to those who were included in the deaf-blind education system (the school attendance rate was about 10%); therefore, it is difficult to determine the attendance rate of only deaf children.

31. Seweliev was born in the Saratov prefecture in Imperial Russia in 1890. He actively participated in social activities for the enlightenment of the deaf in Saratov before the Socialist Revolution. When VOG was founded in 1926, he was appointed as its first president.

32. Ginzhurzskii, D. L., "Pervyi Predsedateli" (written in Russian) (The first president) (Leningrad, 1990), 26.

33. *V Edinom Stroiu*, No.8, 1974, 20–21.

34. Ginzhurzskii, "Pervyi," 25.

35. Nakamura, Y., "Sekai no shakaifukushi 2 Roshia/Poland" (written in Japanese) (World Social Welfare 2 Russia/Poland), (Tokyo: Shunchosha, 1998), 43.

36. Firsov, M. V., "Istoriia Sotsial'noi Raboty v Rossii," (written in Russian) (The history of social
work in Russia) (Moscow: Vrados, 2001), 163.
37. Firsov, Istoriia, 163.
38. Shek, O., "Mechanizmy Vospriyozdovstva Vtorichnogo Sotsial'nogo Statusa Invalida v SSSR," (written in Russian) (The mechanism to create second social status of invalid in SSSR) available at http://www.jsps.ru/index.php; Internet; accessed November 3, 2009.
39. Malev, Tat'iana, Vas'in, S., "Invalidy v Rossii," (written in Russian) (Invalid people in Russia) available at http://www.carnegie.ru/ru/; Internet; accessed November 3, 2009.
40. Malev and Vas'in, "Invalidy v Rossii."
41. Sotsial'noe Obespechenie, No. 2, 1932, 10–12.
42. Kursk is located in the southwestern part of Moscow.
43. Zhizn' Glukhonymykh. April 23, 1926. Without an objective comparison, any number can only be an estimate. We sought data related to Japanese deaf people at the time, but none was available. The Japanese Federation of the Deaf reported no data related to the lives of the deaf during this period (interview with The Japanese Federation of Deaf on June 19, 2008).
44. Although the ages 17 and 23 appear twice in the age groups, it is as per the source; we have reproduced the original chart exactly.
45. The percentage of children residing in children’s homes was very low. Although 30% of all deaf children were included in some kind of educational facility in the city and prefecture of Moscow, deaf children admitted to the educational facilities of the People’s Commissariat of Enlightenment in USSR were less than 4%–5% of all deaf children of that time.
46. Pelennyi, V.A., "Glukhie Rossiiane i Sovetskii Totalitarizm (1917–1941 gg.)," (written in Russian) (Deaf Russian and Soviet totalitalism) available at http://deafnet.ru/; Internet; accessed November 3, 2009.
47. V Edinom Stroiu., No. 10, 1974, 10.
48. Bazo'y, Palennyi, "Chelovek," 673–674.
49. Zhizn' Glukhonymykh. 19.7.1926, 1.
50. Zhizn' Glukhonymykh. 19.7.1926, 2.
51. Zhizn' Glukhonymykh. 19.7.1926, 3.
52. Zhizn' Glukhonymykh. 19.7.1926, 4.
53. This program was planned under the management of the scientific-pedagogical section of the State Academic Council of Narkompros (GUS).
54. Bazo'y, Palennyi, "Chelovek," 201.
55. Efremov, P.Y., "Vospitanie i obrazovanie slepykh glukhonymykh i umstvenno-ostalych detei," (written in Russian) (Upbringing and education for blind, deaf, and mentally retarded children) Voprosy vospitanija slepykh glukhonymykh i umstvenno-ostalych detei (Moscow: Glavotsvos) 55–56.
56. We cited this as secondary material from the report, "Nash iaizik-iaizik zhestov," (written in Russian) (Our language—Sign language) written by V.A. Pelennyi. His paper gave a description of the bulletin of the All-Russian Conference of the Deaf, No. 6–7, published on May 29, 1920.
57. Pioneer was a mass organization targeted at children aged from 10 to 15 years. Activities were
Naoya Hakumura

undertaken on various issues, and these mainly made up a campaign to get rid of vagrancy and illiteracy in children.

58. Zhizn' Gluhonemykh. 31.10.1925, 3.
59. Zhizn' Gluhonemykh. 31.10.1925, 3.
60. Zhizn' Gluhonemykh. 1.12.1925, 3.
61. Zhizn' Gluhonemykh. 5.3.1926, 2.
62. Zhizn' Gluhonemykh. 1.12.1925, 3.
63. With regard to this point, see Hakumura, N., "Shakaishugikakumei to rousha, matawa fujyosuru jiritsu shikou," (written in Japanese) (Socialist Revolution and deaf people, or their intention for independence), Slavic Culture Studies, Vol. 7, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, 2007, pp. 59-75.
64. Zhizn' Gluhonemykh. 26.7.1926, 1.
65. Zhizn' Gluhonemykh. 26.7.1926, 2.
66. Zhizn' Gluhonemykh. 26.7.1926, 1.
67. Zhizn' Gluhonemykh. 26.7.1926, 2.
68. Zhizn' Gluhonemykh. 26.7.1926, 2.
69. Zhizn' Gluhonemykh. 26.7.1926, 3.
70. Zhizn' Gluhonemykh. 26.3.1927, 2.
71. We cited this as secondary material from the report, "Nash iazik-iazik zhestov," written by V. A. Pelennyi. His paper gave a description of the bulletin of VOG №15 in 1928. The paper number was not given.
72. Pelennyi, "Nash iazik." Paper number not given.
73. Pelennyi, "Nash iazik." Paper number not given.
74. Pelennyi, "Nash iazik." Paper number not given.
75. Burch, S., Transcending, 393-401.
76. Zhizn' Gluhonemykh. 22.7.1927, 1.
77. The deaf who ran VOG before and after 1926 are thought to have belonged to the "literate" and "late-deafened" categories. When researching this article, we could not find information about the participation/withdrawal of members of the union before and after the revolution. This is a subject for future study.
78. Zhizn' Gluhonemykh. 1.12.1925, 3.
79. Zhizn' Gluhonemykh. 13.1.1927, 1.