

Grażyna Gunia<sup>1</sup>

### **Support to the development of communication skills of hearing impaired children in the context of evolution of surdologopaedic paradigms**

**Abstract:** Selected pragmatic and theoretical problems linked with support to communication skills among hearing impaired children and those with hearing difficulties will be outlined in the context of modern scientific foundations, questions, and controversies – all considered by modern surdopedagogics. These issues may be ascribed to one of the following groups: changes observed among the approach towards rehabilitation of hearing impaired people (in the context of: autonomy, identity, minority model, normalization and integration-inclusion), which are the subject of consideration of surdopedagogics, a subcategory of special education; pluralism of views on speech-language pathology and attempts to organize its paradigms (disorders of communication skills, support to development); innovation and verification of scientific achievements of those disciplines which are more or less linked to the problem of diagnosis, therapy of hearing impaired people and deafness prevention. The multiplicity of issues instigated particular emphasis on the perception of hearing impaired people and deafness, now, not only considered as a biological and medical problem, but also as a social-cultural issue which respects hearing impaired people (perceived as a minority with specific culture and with the right to sign language and bilingual education). I have also emphasized some ethical issues related to the triad of a speech-language pathologist, a child, and a parent.

**Key words:** surdologopaedics, support of development, cochlear implants, bilingualism.

\*

### **Wspomaganie rozwoju zdolności komunikacyjnych dzieci niesłyszących w świetle rozwoju współczesnych paradygmatów surdologopedii**

**Abstrakt:** Wybrane zagadnienia pragmatycznych i teoretycznych dylematów związanych ze wspomaganie/wspieraniem rozwoju zdolności komunikacyjnych dzieci niesłyszących i słabosłyszących omówię w świetle współczesnych założeń, pytań, kontrowersji rozważanych we współczesnej surdologopedii. Dotyczą one trzech grup zagadnień: zmian obserwowanych w podejściu do procesu rehabilitacji osób z uszkodzonym słuchem (w kontekście: autonomii, tożsamości, modelu grup mniejszościowych, normalizacji, integracji – inkluzji), które są przedmiotem rozważań surdopedagogiki – subdyscypliny pedagogiki specjalnej; pluralizmu poglądów w logopedii i próby nadania im uporządkowanych paradygmatów (zaburzona zdolność komunikacyjna, wspieranie/wspomaganie rozwoju); innowacji i weryfikacji dorobku naukowego tych dyscyplin naukowych, które w mniejszym lub większym stopniu zajmują się problemem diagnozy, terapii osób z uszkodzonym narządem słuchu oraz

---

<sup>1</sup> **Grażyna Gunia**, professor at the Institute of Special Pedagogy, Pedagogical University of Cracow, Poland.

prewencją głuchoty. Wielość dylematów powoduje, że w opracowaniu zwrócono szczególną uwagę na postrzeganie osoby z uszkodzonym słuchem i głuchoty nie tylko jako zjawisko biologiczne, medyczne, ale jako problem społeczno-kulturowy, który respektuje dążenia osób Głuchych jako mniejszości językowej, ze specyficzną kulturą, prawem do języka migowego i edukacji dwujęzycznej. Zwrócono również uwagę na zagadnienia etyczne, które dotyczą triady: logopeda – dziecko – rodzice.

**Słowa kluczowe:** surdologopedia, wspomaganie rozwoju, implanty ślimakowe, dwujęzyczność.

## 1. Introduction

The selected issues, related to pragmatic and theoretical dilemmas associated with the support to the development of communication abilities in hearing-impaired and hard-of-hearing children, will be discussed in the light of current dilemmas, questions and controversies deliberated upon by contemporary surdologopaedics, such as the issues related to the following areas:

1) changes in attitudes to the process of rehabilitation in persons with impaired hearing (in the dimension of autonomy, identity, standardization and integration-inclusion), which remain in the area of interest of surdopedagogics – a sub-discipline of special pedagogy;

2) pluralism of ideas in speech therapy and some attempts to bestow them with clearly-defined paradigms (impaired communication ability, support to the development);

3) innovation and verification of academic achievements in these disciplines, which to a smaller or larger degree deal with the problem of diagnosis and therapy of persons with an impaired hearing organ, as well as with the prevention of deafness.

## 2. Surdologopaedics towards the dominant paradigms in the subdiscipline of special pedagogy – surdopedagogics

The contemporary approach towards people with disabilities is a reflection of humanistic theoretical assumptions of special pedagogy in the 1950s, and multiple arrangements in numerous fields of study at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> and the 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, as well as legal commitments of such global organizations as e.g. the UN, which were instituted by the Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities or European strategies on the part of the EU Committee. In the perspective of the present and future, we perceive people with disabilities not only in the context of medical sciences, or in the model of pathological character, but there is a tendency to expose the social-cultural dimension of the problem, which takes into account the following:

- Effectuating the equality of opportunities of people with disabilities and conditions of their existence, aimed at raising their quality of life;

- Right to social integration/inclusion accompanied by respect and understanding of its inter-cultural dimension, as well as building own cultural identity.

- Propagating the idea of “awareness of disability” in different scopes and areas of life;

- Right to self-standing and independent existence, including the freedom of making own choices, e.g. about the manner of communication;

Changes in social attitudes towards the perception of “otherness” have turned disabilities from “mere features into inabilities resulting from interactions between the restrictions and individual requirements”, i.e. they have become the result of environmental, economical and social barriers encountered in everyday life (Piotrowicz, 2009, p. 310).

The representatives of special pedagogy: W. Dykcik (2010), J. Głodkowska (2009), A. Giryński (2009), A. Krause (2010), C. Kosakowski (2000), T. Żółkowska (2005) and others, discuss the problem of rehabilitation of people with disabilities in the following categories: individuality, autonomy, identity, self-realization, standardization, responsibility, integration → inclusion and minority groups.

In its practical endeavors and theoretical assumptions, contemporary surdologopaedics must respect the theoretical concepts which apply to the guidelines of special pedagogy and its subdiscipline – surdopedagogy (Gunia, 2006). Therefore, surdologopaedics accommodates to:

- Including the phenomenon of deafness not only as an aberration, in its pathological/medical dimension, but also as a category of individual differences between people with different types and degrees of hearing organ impairment in the context of social-cultural setting;

- Perceiving people with disability in the entirety of their individual, family, school, social conditions and interrelations;

- Creation of optimal conditions for support to their resources, i.e. promoting abilities and highlighting not this what is peculiar, but what constitutes the feature of a particular human’s resource;

- Preventive action perceived as a priority, i.e. preventing factors hampering or disturbing harmonious psychomotor individual development and eliminating developmental abnormalities in the process of early intervention, education and rehabilitation.

The need of cooperation in the educational-therapeutic process between the child and his/her parents/family/psychotherapists/teachers and other members of a given social group (see: Bartnikowska, 2010; Gunia, 2010; Korzon, Plutecka, 2010; Szczepankowski, 2010).

Summing up, we must highlight the binding triad in the practice and theory of rehabilitation and education of deaf or hard-of-hearing people, which directs logopaedic intervention onto participation and maintenance of human resources (Gunia, 2010). Thus, we perceive a person that is hard of hearing or deaf not only as a medical phenomenon, but also as a social-cultural problem, an approach which respects the aims of deaf

people to make use of sign language (as a linguistic minority), bilingual education and identification with the culture of the deaf.

### **3. Pluralism of ideas in speech therapy and the attempt to grant them clearly-defined paradigms**

The interdisciplinary nature of speech therapy, as an academic discipline and a university course, diversifies the views of both theoreticians and practitioners, leading to pluralism in terminology, which requires ongoing clarifications and systematization. In the paper, I will confine myself to the specification of just two terms: impaired communication ability – referring to the guidelines of V. Lechta (2011) and support to the development (referring to pedagogic guidelines).

Theoreticians of the concept of speech therapy emphasize that it is an academic field bordering with pedagogic, linguistic and medical disciplines, whose objectives are rooted in multidimensional approach to communication, in its development and in the specificity of individually diversified disorders, directed not only at the disorder itself, but also at the person, together with his/her comprehensive bio-psychosocial context (see the concepts of: Kaczmarek, 1991; Styczek, 1979; Demel, 1994; Grabiasa, 2000; Lechta, 2009; Bleszyński, 2006).

According to V. Lechta (2011), practical activities of a speech therapist incorporate three mutually complementing directions in the implementation of preventive, diagnostic and therapeutic incentives towards a person with impaired communications ability, i.e. an entity functioning in different social spheres: linguistic, cultural, situational, educational. The specific incentives of a therapist are labelled by V. Lechta (2011) by a term “logopaedic intervention”. It is an interdisciplinary process implemented on three, mutually complementing levels:

- 1) preventive;
- 2) identifying the communication problem, i.e. providing the diagnosis;
- 3) removing and correcting the impaired communication ability by means of various therapeutic methods (Lechta et al., 2002).

The need of communication is as important as food and love. The ability to communicate with the surrounding reality may only develop through interaction with other people. The quality of these interactions, their frequency and the degree of involvement, co-decide about the pace and level of a given child's development. If parents confine themselves only to instructing, the child will remain passive, and its development will be delayed. D. Bouvet (1996), psychotherapist of deaf children's speech, maintains that the emotional bond between the mother and her child will constitute the main factor in the acquisition of the language system, rather than e.g. the degree of hearing deficit, a disability or an illness.

With reference to the resources stored within every human being, I will relate to the issue of abilities, which are conditioned by individual differ-

ences, occurring between people in terms of their achievements. W. Szewczuk (1993, p. 991) defines abilities as “an arrangement of internal conditions in a given individual, deciding on the level and quality of his/her achievements in his/her activity”. Thus, every man is generally gifted, and his/her efficiency and responsiveness, understood as potential opportunity in the acquisition of skills, is multilaterally conditioned. W. Okoń (1981, p. 363) defines ability as “a possibility of obtaining the expected results when executing particular activities in determined external circumstances (...) their presence is necessary when performing different activities”. Taking into consideration the achievements of individual persons in a given field of expertise, we typically consider the ability to learn, as well as general and special abilities associated with literary, technical or musical activity. We may also consider communication skills, which V. Lechta (2011, p. 20) defines as “an ability of conscious command of language as a system of signs and symbols in its entire complexity and all its communication forms, according to appropriate orthophonic norms, in order to execute a predestined communicative intention”.

Taking into consideration all forms of communication, i.e. various systems of verbal, non-verbal, graphical or ideographic communication, is a sign of respect towards alternative manners of communication between people, i.e. by means of different communication channels with rightful consideration towards the law concerning sign language and other means of intercommunication (act of 19 August 2011, cf.: <http://www.pzg.org.pl>, access: 29.04.2012). This act is a legal, universally acknowledged document, which came into effect on 1. April 2012 and denotes a lawful right to free use of a selected form of communication in the form of sign language (SJM, PJM). Consideration towards the right of deaf persons to free use of sign language obliges speech therapists and parents to become acquainted with it, as well as to apply alternative forms of intercommunication and provide assistance to the affected people in communication by hiring professional sign language interpreters.

When discussing the right of a deaf person to use sign language, we must elaborate on the phenomenon of bilingualism, which has been an issue since the beginnings of the surdopedagogical practice. According to D. Bouvet (1996, p. 23), bilingualism is not only associated with the idea of equal mastering of two languages, but also “with alternating between two or more languages”. Therefore, a non-hearing person, who freely uses audio tongue and understands its written form, is practically bilingual, which allows a child with prelingual deafness to harmoniously develop its speech.

Living with two preverbal and verbal languages is taken advantage of in bilingual education. B. Szczepankowski (2010, p. 236) emphasizes that in bilingual education “sign language is treated as the first tongue, and the phonic tongue (written) is taught as the second”.

According to M. Czajkowska-Kisil (2006, p. 273), full bilingualism of deaf children is apparent “when the child fluently uses sign language and

written mother tongue and is able to interpret Polish text into sign language and inversely". However, bilingualism of deaf children denotes that "sign language must be treated as the first, mother tongue", but in fact "the primal character of sign language, i.e. the tongue which the deaf child is able to acquire, is conditioned by one essential element, i.e. its use by people who surround the child", according to M. Czajkowska-Kisil (2006, p. 272). As such, it denotes the requirement to learn sign language by all implicated parents, teachers and speech therapists.

A deaf person, as a person with impaired communication skills, is described as a communication phenomenon, characterised by multidimensional clinical constitution and complex social-cultural conditioning (Lechta, 2010). Therefore, interaction with such a child by means of multiple communication channels, constitutes a basis of supportive measures in terms of the development of its communicative ability while using multiple communication channels, so that the child may make itself understood and may understand others, which in turn constitutes a basis for its entire psychomotor development.

Also, when discussing the issue of support to the development of communication ability of deaf or hard-of-hearing children, we must introduce and explain the term "assistance/support". According to W. Dykcik (1997, p. 81), these two terms should be considered separately, because "assistance" denotes "actuating and strengthening of favourable factors or reinforcement of beneficial mechanisms and tendencies, rather than mental transformations, which lay in the scope of competence of psychotherapy". On the other hand, the term "support" is referred by the author (on the basis of I. Obuchowska) to "conditions and circumstances in which the development of determined behavioural properties takes place, including internal attitudes as well as external beliefs or lifestyles (...), thus, it refers to these factors which are not connected to dysfunctions or disorders, but to positively assessed psychological properties, personality mechanisms and external influences" (Dykcik, 1997, p. 81).

With reference to specifications presented by M. Kielar-Turska (2003, p. 20), it is possible to describe "support" as accompanying in "the process of intentional influences of one man onto another", with the purpose of:

- exposure of health resources through promoting and stimulating the child's strong suits;
- preventing factors threatening health or development;
- eliminating developmental irregularities in the process of correction, therapy or rehabilitation.

Whereas assistance should rather relate to instrumental aid, and in case of people with an impaired hearing organ, it typically entails the provision of a hearing aid or assistance by means of alternative communication channels.

According to B. Szczepankowski (2009), the most often applied forms of support in cases of deaf children are:

- 1) aural prosthesis by means of:
  - hearing aids,
  - implants.
- 2) aural education;
- 3) manual codes supporting linguistic communication, such as phonogestures or finger alphabet;
- 4) sign language.

#### **4. Aural and oral prevention and treatment**

Discussing the contemporary paradigms of surdologopaedics, we must relate them to the innovation of academic achievements within these disciplines, which to a smaller or larger degree deal with the problem of diagnosis, therapy and prevention.

In medical sciences, new solutions are being offered for screening treatments of hearing. H. Skarżyński states that the current screening conducted at the Institute of Physiology and Pathology of Hearing, now turned into the World Centre of Hearing in Kajetany, a “high scale of hearing disorders” was confirmed amongst school-age pupils, largely from rural areas. At the same time, “the awareness in educational circles and among parents about the possibilities of early detection, diagnosis and therapy of hearing disorders has grown” (Skarżyński, 2012, p. 9).

The last two decades have also seen gigantic progress in technological solutions applied in hearing aids enhancing the effect of hearing (Leonhardt, 2009). Digital hearing aids making use of modern technologies and their miniaturization guarantee the optimum reception of sound in everyday situations, and thus facilitate the maximum utilization of residual hearing. In other words, they facilitate perception through aural channels and support the development of communication abilities in the process of aural education (Kulczycka, 2004; Löwe, 2000; Korzon, Plutecka, 2010; Schmid-Giovannini, 1999).

The system of implants is an unusual device, combining the new knowledge of audiology, biomedical engineering, electronics and ergonomics. Abroad, the operations of grafting cochlear implants already have a 30-year-long tradition. In Poland, H. Skarżyński performed the first operation of the cochlear implant in 1992 (1995). Initially, only adults were operated. Nowadays, younger and younger children may apply for cochlear implantation. According to E. Leonhardt (2009), U. Horsch (2002), H. Skarżyński (1996), the implant improves the quality of life in persons with an injured hearing organ.

## 5. Conclusions

The comparison of J. Bruner (cf. Bałachowicz, 2004, p. 207): "education is not an island, but a part of culture", makes us aware of the interrelationship between speech therapy and civilization, historical and cultural contexts, which are subject to ongoing transformation, thus creating new demands to surdologopaedics, which must not only correspond to social and cultural, but also to economic and technical challenges of contemporary world. According to present-day paradigms in disciplines supporting speech therapy, preventive measures constitute a challenge for the practice and theory of surdologopaedic endeavors, and as such, are aimed at the levelling of educational chances in children with hearing and communication disorders.

## References:

- Bałachowicz, J. (2004). *Pedagogika wczesnoszkolna – współczesne problemy i zadania*. In: Lewowicki T., Szymański M. J. (Eds), *Nauki pedagogiczne w Polsce. Dokonania, problemy, współczesne zadania, perspektywy*. Kraków: WN AP.
- Bartnikowska, U. (2010). *Sytuacja społeczna i rodzinna słyszących dzieci niesłyszących rodziców*. Toruń: Wydawnictwo Edukacyjne Akapit.
- Błęszyński, J. (2006). *Pedagogiki specjalna*. In: Śliwerski B. (Ed.), *Pedagogika*, vol. 3. *Subdyscypliny wiedzy pedagogicznej*. Gdańsk: Gdańskie Wydawnictwo Pedagogiczne.
- Bouvet, D. (1996). *Mowa dziecka. Wychowanie dwujęzyczne dziecka niesłyszącego*. Warszawa: WSiP.
- Czajkowska-Kisil, M. (2006). *Dwujęzyczne nauczanie dzieci głuchych*. „Szkoła Specjalna”, 4.
- Demel, G. (1994). *Minimum logopedyczne nauczyciela przedszkola*. Warszawa: WSiP.
- Dykcik, W. (1997). *Pedagogika specjalna*. Wydawnictwo UAM, Poznań
- Dykcik, W. (2010). *Odpowiedzialność człowieka w kontekście indywidualnym i społecznym*. Poznań: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Polskiego Towarzystwa Pedagogicznego.
- Giryński, A. (2009). *Motywy psychospołeczne preferowane przez osoby niepełnosprawne intelektualnie w stopniu lekkim przy wyborze partnera życiowego*. In: *Pedagogika specjalna. Różne poszukiwania – wspólna misja. Pamięci Profesora Jana Pańczyka*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Akademii Pedagogiki Specjalnej im. M. Grzegorzewskiej,
- Głodkowska, J. (2009). *W trosce o przestrzeń rehabilitacyjną wobec osób z upośledzeniem umysłowym – czy „zuchwałe rzemiosło” pedagogiki specjalnej?* In: *Pedagogika specjalna. Różne poszukiwania – wspólna misja. Pamięci Profesora Jana Pańczyka*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Akademii Pedagogiki Specjalnej im. M. Grzegorzewskiej.
- Grabias, S. (2000). Mowa i jej zaburzenia. „Logopedia”, 28,7-36.
- Gunia, G. (2006). *Terapia logopedyczna dzieci z zaburzeniami słuchu i mowy. Wybrane problemy teorii i praktyki surdologopedycznej*. Kraków: Oficyna Wyd. „Impuls”.
- Gunia, G. (2010). *Subiektywny obraz zdrowia oraz zachowań zdrowotnych uczniów z wadą słuchu*. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Naukowe UP im. Komisji Edukacji Narodowej.



- Gunia, G., Lechta, V. (2011). *Wprowadzenie do logopedii*. Kraków: Oficyna Wyd. „Impuls”.
- Horsch, U. (2002). „*Kan man Blumen wachsen horen?*” – Frage eines 10-jährigen Mädchens nach Cochlear-Implantation Cochlear Implant, U. Horsch. Olsztyn: UWM.
- Kaczmarek, L. (1977). *Nasze dziecko uczy się mowy*. Lublin: Wydawnictwo Lubelskie,
- Kielar-Turska, M. (2003). *Analiza pola semantycznego terminów związanych ze wspomaganie rozwoju*. In: Kaja, B. (Ed.), *Wspomaganie rozwoju. Psychostymulacja, psychokorekcja*. Bydgoszcz: Wydawnictwo WSP.
- Korzon, A., Plutecka, K. (2010). *Kształcenie zintegrowane uczniów niesłyszących w teorii i praktyce edukacyjnej*. Kraków: Oficyna Wyd. „Impuls”.
- Kosakowski, C. (2000). *Przemiany w podejściu do ludzkiej niepełnosprawności – implikacje do teorii i praktyki*. In: *Sport w rehabilitacji osób niepełnosprawnych*. Olsztyn: Wydawnictwo UWM.
- Krause, A. (2010). *Współczesne paradygmaty pedagogiki specjalnej*. Kraków: Oficyna Wyd. „Impuls”.
- Lechta, V. (2009). *Metody, techniki i zasady terapii logopedycznej*. In: Oszustowicz, B., Lechta, V. (Eds), *Teoretyczne i praktyczne aspekty terapii pedagogicznej osób z niepełnosprawnością*. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Pedagogicznego.
- Lechta, V. (2010). *NKS jako pedagogický fenomén*. In: Lechta, V. (Ed.), *Základy inkluzivní pedagogiky*. Praha: Portal, s. r. o.
- Lechta, V. (2011). *Podstawy teoretyczne logopedii*. In: Gunia G., Lechta V., *Wprowadzenie do logopedii*. Kraków: Oficyna Wyd. „Impuls”.
- Lechta, V. et al. (2002). *Terapia narušenej komunikačnej schopnosti*. Martin: Vydavateľstvo Osveta.
- Leonhardt, A. (2009). *Cochlea-Implantate für gehörlose Kinder gehörlose Eltern?* In: Ernst, A., Battmer, R. D., Todt, I. (Eds), *Cochlear Implant heute*. Heidelberg: Springer Medizin Verlag.
- Löwe, A. (2000). *Drogi i sposoby wczesnej rehabilitacji niemowląt i małych dzieci z uszkodzonym słuchem*. In: Siedlecka, H., Kulczycka, E. (Eds), *Współczesne kierunki wczesnej diagnozy i wczesnej rewalidacji dziecka z wadą słuchu*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo APS im. M. Grzegorzewskiej.
- Okoń, W. (1981). *Słownik pedagogiczny*. Warszawa: PWN.
- Piotrowicz R. J. (2009). *Jakość życia osób niepełnosprawnych intelektualnie jako wyznacznik polityki społecznej na rzecz wyrównywania szans w społeczności lokalnej*. In: *Pedagogika specjalna. Różne poszukiwania – wspólna misja. Pamięci Profesora Jana Pańczyka*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Akademii Pedagogiki Specjalnej im. M. Grzegorzewskiej.
- Polski Związek Głuchych, Zarząd Główny*. Online: [www.pzg.org.pl](http://www.pzg.org.pl). 08.07.2012.
- Schmid-Giovannini, S. (1999). *Das Internationale Beratungszentrum für Eltern horgeschädigter Kinder*. In: *Auditory-Verbal Kongress in Berchtesgaden*.
- Skarżyński, H., Ed., (1995). *Implant nadziei. Nowe szanse dla osób niesłyszących. Pytania i odpowiedzi*. Warszawa: Stowarzyszenie Przyjaciół Osób Niesłyszących i Niedosłyszących „Człowiek – człowiekowi”.
- Skarżyński, H. (2012). *Nowe wyzwania dla medycyny szkolnej – badania przesiewowe słuchu*. „Nowa Audiofonologia”, 1(2), p. 9.
- Styczek, I. (1979). *Logopedia*. Warszawa: PWN.

Szczepankowski, B. (2009). *Wspomaganie rozwoju dziecka niesłyszącego. Audiofoniologia pedagogiczna*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego.

Szczepankowski, B. (2010). *Prawo dziecka głuchego do własnego języka – kontrowersje w surdopedagogice*. In: Przybylinski, S. (Ed.), *Pedagogika specjalna – tak wiele pozostaje dla nas tajemnicą*. Olsztyn: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Warmińsko-Mazurskiego.

Szewczuk, W. (1993). *Zdolności – uzdolnienia*. In: Pomykało, W. (Ed.), *Encyklopedia pedagogiczna*. Warszawa: Fundacja Innowacja.

Żółkowska, T. (2005). *Socjopedagogiczny kontekst niepełnosprawności*. In: Żółkowska T. (Ed.), *Pedagogika specjalna – aktualne osiągnięcia i wyzwania*. Szczecin: Oficyna IN PLUS.