

The Modern Surdopedagogy – The chances and the challenges

The dynamic changes, that include the various areas of social life, very often concern the educational reality in a more or less expecting way; they influence on it or change it radically. Nowadays we are the observers of this phenomenon in the area of the surdopedagogy- subdiscipline of the special pedagogy that deals with the rehabilitation theory and the practice and the education of the people with the different extent of the hearing damages.

The key tasks of the rehabilitation's action towards the deaf children is the early and the proper diagnose, matching the right hearing prosthesis, taking steps to the early and systematic revalidation (language education) by the application of the chosen method ¹ The access to the language code is necessary to enable the natural and proper development of the language, that create the limitation of the hearing. At this scheme of the acting the word "early" pays special attention. The too late detection of the hearing impairment that were caused by the medical and social factors was the impediment for the effective rehabilitation's actions in surdopedagogy for years. That state of affairs contributed to the fact that a lot of deaf people were functioning as the significantly linguistic impaired human beings, resisting the social exclusion. ²

Six years ago The Great Orchestra of Christmas Charity made the decision of formulating, implementing and financing The Universal Newborn Hearing Screening Program³. Every year all infants, who are born in Poland, undergo such tests in the second or third day of their life. Thanks to functioning of such a Program till the sixth month of the life, infants undergo the diagnosis on the first or the second reference value level and they are also equipped with the hearing aids or they are qualified for the cochlear implant. Achieving such a level lasted till the fourth or even the sixth year of their life ten years ago!

¹ K Krakowiak „, O potrzebie pomocy dla rodzin wychowujących dzieci z wadami słuchu” in: Kornas-Biela D. „Rodzina – źródło życia i szkoła miłości” Wyd. KUL 2000, pp.446-447

² Marynowicz-Hetka E. (2006) *Pedagogika społeczna* .PWN, pp.310-312

³ http://www.wosp.org.pl/medycyna_sluch/

The Universal Newborn Hearing Screening Program places us at the world's forefront of the diagnosis, that is undoubtedly the great opportunity for the deaf children, who are able to assimilate the mother tongue naturally, and thanks to it they are able to avoid the linguistic disability. This situation makes a lot of possibilities for supdologopedists and surdoeducators- the observations the specifics of the child's language development after using the hearing aids, controlling the effectiveness of the methods used, and finally searching for the new, adequate ways of rehabilitation and pedagogical actions.

The Universal Newborn Hearing Screening Program arose and it functions thanks to the decision efficiency, the precise cooperation with a lot of trained people and the permanent and huge financial support. As I mentioned before, the deaf child takes part in this program since the moment of the receiving and matching the hearing aid. From this moment the coordinated medical actions are finished but the systematic and the logopedists` and surdoeducators` work of many years should be started. The early and systematic undertaking the rehabilitation that includes the hearing training, the linguistic development and the counseling and the supporting the family are necessary in order to the success, which is the early diagnosis of the child with the hearing impairment, would not be ruined. Many children, in fact get to the health centre where they are in the right care and the parents get the professional information and the psychological support. Nevertheless, many children have nothing to do with such a support.

While talking about the dangers to the deaf children's development, I think mostly about the lack of coordinated, thought over and spread over Poland care and the rehabilitation program. Some attempts are made to fill this gap, for example the 2 years existing; the home rehabilitation program for deaf infants "Sounds of Dreams"⁴ but it is still not enough. The characteristic feature of the existing programs is that they are formulated, implemented and they are conducted by the non governmental initiatives, thanks to the particular sensitivity of the people who identified the problem and the fact that solving it may prevent the real disability of the great number of children. It is distinctive and characteristic that the solutions appeared beyond the existing structures founded to the care of the deaf children and their families. The contacts with the surdoeducators and logopedists, who work with hearing impaired children every day at the health centers or the training - educational centers, show that lots of them do not have the awareness of the existing implemented diagnostic and rehabilitation procedures.

⁴ <http://www.dzwiekimarzen.pl/>

Another danger for the proper rehabilitating action towards the children and their families is still too few trained specialists to work with the deaf infant. For many years, because of the long-lasting diagnosis, the deaf infant aged four, five and even six got to the logopedists.⁵ At present the children are six months, but unfortunately it sometimes happens that the parents are sent to come back when the child will be able to cooperate, that is at the age of three-four years!

Assuming the successful scenario- the child diagnosed earlier and taken under the early rehabilitation, whose family got the proper support, has got the chances to be the spoken person who is able to speak native language and who has the access to the education and the culture⁶ In the circumstances, it is hard to blame parents that they want their children learn in the general or the integrated system, in their place of residence, instead of training - educational centers (that is at the segregated system) which is connected with the stay at the boarding school.

The ruling about the need to the special education has finished meaning the necessity of educating at the special school – on the ground of the law this statement is obvious, nevertheless the educational reality needed a certain time to receive, accept and implement it. Until recently the disabled children (no matter what kind of handicap it was) had to fulfill the number of conditions to be able to get the education in the integrated school system, especially they had to represent the same level of the intellectual and linguistic development to enable the education on the same or similar level as their fit peers can get at school. The idea of the integration has developed and nowadays the school and the teacher attach great importance to the condition they should fulfill. It is said about the adapting the education's condition and the requirement to the possibilities and the character of the children` handicap, and it is also recommended to apply the special method of education depending on the individual children` needs. The psychological and pedagogical health centers, in their ruling about the need to the special education, point out the necessity of formulating and implementing the individual educational programs for the particular children The individual educational program is the solution that is guaranteed in the educational law, it is very practical, it let for the planning of achievements and applying the evaluation system while taking into consideration all needs and limitations of the particular students.

⁵ Leszka J.(2000) „*Trudne wybory rodziców dzieci niesłyszących*” in: : Kornas- Biela D. „Rodzina – źródło życia i szkoła miłości” Wyd. KUL 2000, pp.480.

⁶ Białas M. (2007) „*Głusi, Język, Metafora*” Naukowe Wydawnictwo Piotrkowskie, Piotrków Trybunalski, pp. 103-104

We can suppose, and it is confirmed by the practice that such solutions inspire the ambivalent feelings in the psychologists` community. On one hand each child is extremely precious at school, especially at the time of the demographic low and the real “danger of being dismissed” it is quite a big problem at some schools, on the other hand we should take into consideration that a child who is not able to hear can be taught at the general class, without the supporting teacher, the child for whom the individual educational program should be formulated and implemented and the special communication supporting elements ought to be used. This vision discourages the headmasters and the teachers effectively from taking such challenges. In this context another demand and challenge have appeared for the surdoeducators- the need for the meritorical and organizational support for the teachers of the general and integrated schools where the deaf children are taught. It should have been taken into consideration to support such schools by introducing the training programs and to give the permanent surdoeducator`s support but also the direct cooperation ought to be taken between the child`s teachers, the logopedist and the educator who take care about the family from the moment of the diagnosis.

In the contemporary Poland at the area of the deaf rehabilitation we come across a lot of challenges supported by many unexpected chances: the early diagnosis that had been postulated for many years, now it has become a reality, more and more perfect hearing aids and also its service are commonly available, from year to year the expenditure for the surgery of the cochlear implant for the children with the more extensive hearing damage has been increasing. The challenge is organizing the rehabilitation and education program as the medical program and developing the support system for the parents of the deaf children at their local community.

The main advantages from the changes on thinking about the deaf children education is stressing on the necessity of the existing educational variety, adapting it to the deaf children`s needs and taking steps supporting the family rather than concentrating on the demands that are submitted to the child and his family. The role and the tasks of the local community but also the local government as the one responsible for creating the appropriate conditions for the education of all children ought to be emphasize. Surdoeducators and logopedists should play a major role in that kind of actions, they act for the increasing the level of the awareness and the skills at the other educators community as well as the local.

References:

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5. http://www.wosp.org.pl/medycyna_sluch/
6. <http://www.dzwiekimarzen.pl/>