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## **The Teacher Perceived by Children with Damaged Hearing**

Everyone makes various observations about the people whom they are in closed or developed relationships with. Many authors believe that “(...) the people surrounding an individual are almost always a stronger source of emotions and evaluations for the observing subject than most events and physical objects” (A. Soroka-Fedorczuk 2005, p. 96).

Damage of the functioning of the hearing process causes serious consequences in all areas of the child’s psychic development. The consequences of damaged hearing include incomplete understanding of observed events. “*Hearing-impaired children have difficulties in establishing relationships between the object (as a whole) and its specific elements*” (J. Stachyra, J. Łukaszewicz 2000, p. 103). Their observation process takes longer than that of children with good hearing. Observations isolated from concepts influence their quality, and the hearing-impaired pay more attention to distinctive stimulators, such as lighter colour and size of the object (J. Stachyra 2001, p. 174). The quality of perceiving the teacher by the hearing-impaired children in this context is interesting, especially as the process of maintaining relationships within this area makes the process of communication more difficult.

### **The research problem and studied individuals**

Due to the fact that the development and frame of mind of a hearing-impaired child in school and preschool depends in large part on the person of the teacher, the research attempted to define the way the teacher is perceived by hearing-impaired children. In this instance, perception was treated as the subject’s assignation to other people of personal traits and expectations and the adoption by the other individuals of those traits, which are significant to the observing person.

The research problems have been reduced to the following questions

1. What is the type of drawing preferred by hearing-impaired children? What type of strokes do they use? In what form do they present the person of the teacher? And what are the dominating colours in their drawings?
2. What kind of a person is the teacher to the hearing-impaired children (positive or negative)? Is the teacher ready to assist? Does the child feel safe in his presence? Is he evaluated by the children?

The research was conducted by applying the projection method – *The Teacher Drawing Test*, authored by I. Gryniuk and V. Tuszyńska-Bogucka (1996, p. 249).

The research group was composed of 24 children, aged 7 to 12, originating from the Lublin Voivodeship and residing in the Dormitory of the Education and Development Centre for Hearing Impaired Children and Youth at 54 Pogodna Street in Lublin.

### **Analysis of the study results**

The child’s test task was to draw his or her teacher. The work was performed with colour crayons. The drawings were graded according to 13 main criteria, recognising two aspects:

- The technical aspect of the drawing, i.e. the workmanship level, type of stroke, colour, personality disintegration indicators;
- The evaluative aspect of the drawing, i.e. the perception of the teacher – including the character of the person, the drawing’s author and the surroundings (I. Gryniuk, V. Tuszyńska-Bogucka 1996, p. 252- 258).

The performance level of the drawing allowed recognition of the creative development phase of the studied child.

The quality of the drawings varied. A majority of the studied children (70.8%) performed the drawing adequately for their age, i.e. in compliance with development standards, while the drawings of 29.2% were below their age level. There were no works recognised as above the age level.

The type of the drawing was influenced by the child’s emotionality. The studied individuals performed three types of drawings: sensory, rational and mixed. The most works were of mixed nature (54,1%) - some elements were drawn with expression; others, usually related to inhibition and negative emotions, were drawn stereotypically and stiffly. The lowest number of works was rational – 16.7%, being presented with stiff, straight lines, and with immobile and isolated figures. It should be assumed that the individuals who prefer this type of drawing are inhibited by internal censorship and strict obedience to rules. This may be due to the peculiarities of the studied children living in a dormitory, discipline and the necessity to obey rules. The sensory drawing type, which is an indicator of spontaneity and easiness in expression of emotions, was produced by 29.2% of the studied children.

The evaluation of the drawing’s graphic level was based on stroke type, strength of drawn lines, size and method of the allocation of figures. The data is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1 Graphic aspects of the children’s drawings**

Technical elements of the drawing	Attributes	L	%
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stroke	forceful	0	0
	short	17	70.8
	mixed	7	29.2
line strength	strong	6	25
	weak	7	29.2
	mixed	11	45.8
figure size – utilisation of the sheet	large figure	7	29.2
	adequate	11	45.8
	small	6	25
Position in the drawing	central	17	70.8
	lower segment	2	8,3
	upper segment	4	16.7
	right segment	0	0
	left segment	2	8.3

The drawings of the studied individuals were clearly dominated by short strokes, characterised by short, jerky and stiff movements – 70.8%. None of the drawings were done with a forceful stroke. The strength of the line varied, however, with a clear predominance (45.8%) of a mixed line strength..29.2% of the drawings were created with weak lines, which may prove shyness and fragility, as well as stress and nervous behaviour. A little less - 25% - were works with strong lines, drawn with energy, with strong force. The dimensions of the figure were usually of adequate size – 45.8%. A little less – 29.2% - produced drawings with a large figure, while 25% of the studied drew a small figure, which may have been a symbol of shyness, fear, certain limitations and discomfort. Most of the drawings were characterised by the teacher being positioned centrally – 70.8%. Decisively less – 16.7% - presented the teacher in the upper segment as well as the left and lower segments – 8.3% each. The centrally-drawn teacher occupied all the child’s attention, and was the most important and often idolised figure.

**Table 2 The colours in the drawing of the teacher – analysis of the technical aspects**

Technical elements of the drawing	Attribute	Number	%
colours	single colour	4	16.7
	little colour	17	70.8
	multicolour	3	12.5
colour saturation	large	1	4,2
	small	20	83.3
	medium	3	12.5
dominating colour*	no dominating colour	2	8
	gray	4	16
	yellow	3	12
	green	2	8
	orange	2	8
	bronze	3	12
	black	4	16
red	2	8	

	violet	1	4
	blue	3	12

\*% of the number 26, since there were two drawings with two dominating colours

A majority of the studied children created drawings characterised by a small number of colours. The teacher was usually pictured in such colours as black, gray, brown and blue. Such colours symbolise negation, sadness, indifference, authority, longing, calmness. The children used green, orange and red with less frequency. These colours symbolise such traits as fairness, persistence, happiness, authority and emotionality (S. Popek, 1999, p. 78).

The content of the drawing is more important to the analysis than the technical aspect. **The evaluative aspect of the drawing** presents the child's perception of the surrounding world, himself and global relationships (I. Gryniuk, V. Tuszyńska-Bogucka, 1996), which is why a large part of the analysis was dedicated to this matter.

A decisive majority of the studied children (95,8%), drew the teacher as a human being, i.e. associated him with a specific perception of a person, which exhibited a sense of reality and identification of the child related to his situation in school and the dormitory. One child presented the teacher as a symbol. Symbols may be proof of insufficient contact between the child and the teacher or of reluctance to speak about personal emotions and present them metaphorically. As stated by I. Gryniuk *“the application of symbols is somewhat devaluating; it does not contain information understandable to all”* (1999, p. 147).

Almost all of the studied children (i.e. 23, as one of the girls used a symbol), presented the entire figure of the teacher in the drawing. None of the children drew a portrait.

The evaluation of the whole figure also accounted for the connection between the elements presented in the drawing and the general significance of the whole drawing. The positive figure is friendly and secure. The negative figure does not invoke confidence, is positioned with hostility, defensively or indifferently but does not invoke fear and seems harmless, but at the same time does not encourage closer contact.

**Table 3 Perception of the entire figure**

Evaluative elements of the drawing	Number	%
positive	12	50
negative	3	12.5
- protective	1	4.2
- hostile	2	8.3
neutral	9	37.5

Half the children portrayed the teacher as a positive person, with whom they are in positive relations. Almost 40% of the studied presented him as a neutral figure who does not arouse particular emotions. Three students presented the teacher as a decidedly negative

person, with a hostile attitude towards children or evading contact with them. Such traits can be interpreted as a lack of a sense of security in the children, who are far away from their family home and have problems with adaptation, or who experience antipathy from the teacher, which further strengthens alienation and a lack of the sense of belonging to a group.

A majority of the studied children – 66.7% - presented the teacher mainly with a cheerful face. This proves that he is a trustworthy person who creates a desire for contact. 29.1% of the studied children drew the teacher with an indifferent face. This is proof that these children have no or insufficient contact with the teacher. One child presented the teacher with a menacing and hostile face, clearly arousing fear.

The next category defines the method of perceiving the teacher's arms and legs.

**Table 4 Presentation of the teacher's appearance – arms and legs**

Figure of the teacher	Characteristics	L	%
arms	ready for contact	15	62.5
	no contact	0	0
	no contact- protection	2	8.3
	no contact- unwillingness	7	29.2
legs*	stable	8	34.8
	unstable	15	65.2

\*% calculated from 23, since one child applied a symbol in one instance

A significant majority of the children portrayed the teacher as being ready for contact and willing to assist, as well as being in close and direct contact with the child. About one third of the children believed the teacher to be distant and reluctant to have close relationships; and two children perceived him as a person who avoids contact (tight, closed, large and busy hands).

Most of the studied children see the teacher as unstable, irresolute (65%), not identifying himself with his profession. One third of the drawn figures were presented as stable, proving they identify themselves with their profession. All the studied children saw the teacher as a significant person, who was the most important part of the drawing, in the central part, and was highly valued.

Despite the teacher being the subject of the drawing, it is also important if the child pictures himself. His presence within the drawing may be marked (the child feels like a partner, a subject of interaction) or unmarked (no sense of subjectivity). None of the children presented relationships between themselves and the teacher. Only one person presented the surroundings.

The drawings had a lot of content indicating fear in the children.

**Table 5 Content indicating fear**

Attribute		%

	Number	
large, white spaces	15	62.5
low number of colours	12	50
no movement	24	100
small figures	6	25
shift to the left	2	8.3
no foreground	20	83.3
incomplete figure	6	25
missing elements	8	30.3
stress symptoms (domination of black, horror, fear)	10	41.7

All drawings presented a lack of motion, which may prove a lack of a sense of freedom and security. Many of the works – 83.3% - contained a lack of foreground, which indicated no sense of stability and belonging to a given community. 62.5% of the drawings contained large, white spaces, which are also proof of fear. Half the drawings did not contain many colours, and 41.7% of the works presented signs of stress, in the form of dominating black, fear and anxiety. A quarter of the works contained small and incomplete figures. 30.3% of the drawings presented the teacher with missing elements. Two drawings contained a characteristic shift of the figure to the left, which is proof of the anxiety neurosis in the studied individuals.

### **Conclusions**

The analysed drawings created by children with a hearing impediment, living in dormitories, necessarily deprived of direct contact with their families and as a result requiring special support from the teachers and educators, exhibit some disturbance. The presented study results should be treated with care, due to the small number of studied individuals; however the acquired analysis results allow the following conclusions

- The drawings of hearing-impaired children are mainly characterised by an adequate performance quality in relation to their age.
- The drawings of the children are dominated by short, interrupted and stiff strokes, which is proof of inhibition, uncertainty, impulsive behaviour and anxiety neurosis.
- The teacher was an important figure to all the studied children - he was the focal point of their drawings; he mainly had a cheerful face; and was eager to help, however many of the children (40%) perceived him as a neutral person, with whom the child has no relation and closer emotional contact.
- The studied children exhibit many symptoms associated with the experience of stress connected with their school.

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