

A GOOD SCHOOL START FOR PRESCHOOLERS WITH LANGUAGE DISORDERS

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Abstract: Every beginning is accompanied by emotions, especially since this is the beginning of a child, is a school debut, and the everyone's "eyes" of are on him. Language and communication disorders may have a greater negative impact than they should if they are not identified and correctly adressed on time. In the present paper I approach the necessity of interventions during the last year of kindergarten on children's language, so that they have the chance of the best possible start and an efficient integration in the preparatory class.

Keywords: communication, language, language disorders, pre-schooling

Language deficiencies are the result of dysfunctions in the reception, understanding, elaboration and realization of written and oral communication due to some organic, functional, psychological or educational disorders that affect the small child during the debut and development of language. Due to the importance of language in structuring and deploying cognitive processes, any impairment may also have an impact on the quality of thought processes, relationships with others, and the structure of the child's personality.

Knowing and identifying language disorders is a priority of psychopedagogy specialists, the precision and precocity of the diagnosis of these disorders guaranteeing the success of the therapeutic and rehabilitative program of the child with language disorders.

Many times I have met pupils in the preparatory class and in the first grade who, due to uncorrected language disorders, have encountered difficulties in acquiring the written and read language, followed by the appearance of

dyslexo-dysgraphia in the higher classes.

A problem of great importance is, however, their integration into the class of pupils. Most of the time, these children integrate much harder, being shy, disbelieving in their own forces, secluded, afraid to speak in front of the classroom or to the teacher. From these perspectives, we identified for the group of pre-school children with language disorders, the need to speak correctly at the moment of school start, to trust their own forces, to look optimistically at the school debut without fear and uncertainty.

In the present study we intend to analyze the influence of the particularities of the language and communication of preschool children on their integration into the kindergarten, and later into school. The objectives of our research are: identifying the necessary skills of a pre-school child (large group) for future school integration; determining the level of language development of the pre-school child attending the highest kindergarten group; studying the influence that language disorders have on pre-school children regarding their development and integration into the kindergarten; developing an intensive program focused on the development of communication skills necessary for the integration of the pre-school child.

The hypothesis we have assumed presupposes that for a successful integration in the preparatory class, certain communication skills are required with priority, that preschoolers with language disorders will have psychological development disorders, that language disorders will cause difficulties for the integration of preschoolers into kindergarten and school and that following the intensive program focused on developing communication skills, designed by us, language acquisition will be developed in such a way as to allow the child to be well integrated into the preparatory class.

The group of research consists of: 30 teachers and 60 preschoolers (the experimental group: "sample A" - representing the group of children with language disorders, the witness group: "sample B" - the group of children without language disorders).

The main research methods used: *The questionnaire on the skills needed for the school future*; The scale for knowing the psychological age of language (Alice Descoedres); PORTAGE development scale; Scale of Social Inclusion Assessment of Preschool Children. The intensive program focused on the development of communication skills necessary for the integration of the preschool child designed by us includes activities and exercises for the development of communication skills, for example: *"Answer well and fast," "Find the right word," "I say one, you say a lot," "Say further," "Game of syllables"* etc., which were applied both by the kindergarten teachers as well as by the speech therapist, at the speech therapist office.

The results obtained from the research were synthesized as follows.

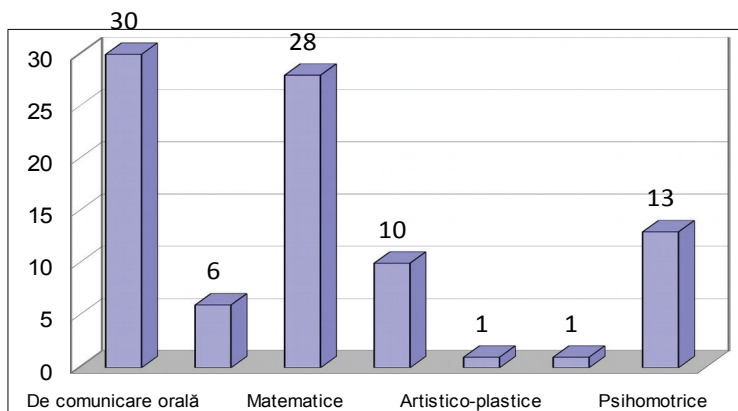


Fig.1. Skills needed for the child to enter the preparatory class

Collaboration with primary school teachers has been one of the major objectives in knowing the requirements of preparing the future pupils. Through the questionnaire applied to this question we found that teachers are interested in forming all the abilities of a good pupil, but among the most important are: verbal communication skills, mathematical skills, psychomotor and practical skills.

The forms of collaboration between the teacher of speech therapy, kindergarden educators and primary school teachers are varied and effective in knowing and successfully preparing pre-school children for school. Among these I enumerate the following: thematic discussions on the objectives and requirements of the two curricula within the methodical committee organized each week; assistance with kindergarden activities in order to study methods and working procedures, familiarization with the future pupils, teaching materials used in acquiring and verifying knowledge; joint activities in partnership with the school within different educational projects, setting up exercises that can be done by educators and teachers etc.

Primary school teachers consider pre-school education as the first stage in the preparation and formation of future schoolchildren, appreciate the important role of the educator in the formation of school skills, of order, discipline and civilized behavior.

From the discussions conducted, the difference between the children who regularly attended the kindergarden and those who attended it sporadically for various reasons appear, most of the time by the initial assessments that are carried out at the beginning of the school year. That is why it is considered that the work of the educator in the process of preparing children for school is very consistent.

The 60 subjects were evaluated at the beginning of the school year in

terms of the age of language development. The age of language development was established for each of them. The percentage diagram in Figure 2 shows the difference between the two groups of subjects in terms of age of language development. For children in sample A, language is at a lower age. There are more children who have the age of language development under their chronological age - 8 children, compared to only 2 in case of sample B. Children in sample B, compared to sample A, show more developed language. Most of them are in the age range of 6 to 7 years.

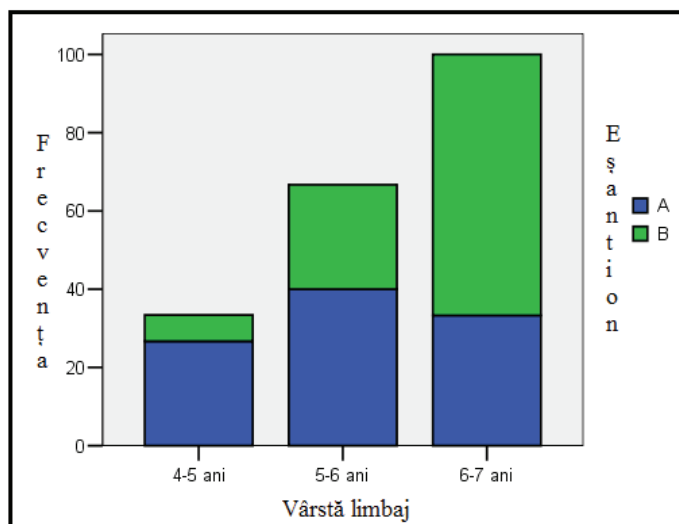


Figure 2. Percentage chart A. Descoedures

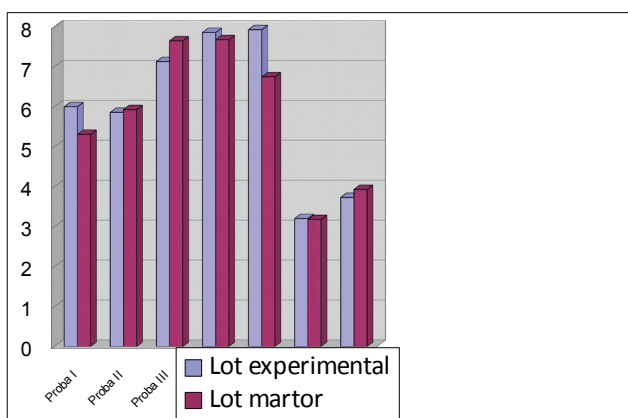


Figure 3. Average results obtained at the Language Assessment Test - experimental batch compared to the control group (initial assessment)

The results obtained by applying the initial evaluation tests helped to

establish the level of language acquisition acquired by pre-school age groups and to establish the second objective of the research objectives, namely to establish the level of development of language skills in the pre-schooler attending the last kindergarten group. This initial evaluation has given me the opportunity to follow, through the games played during the school year, tasks that aim at developing the language in terms of vocabulary, grammar, syntax, but also at understanding of the significance of the messages.

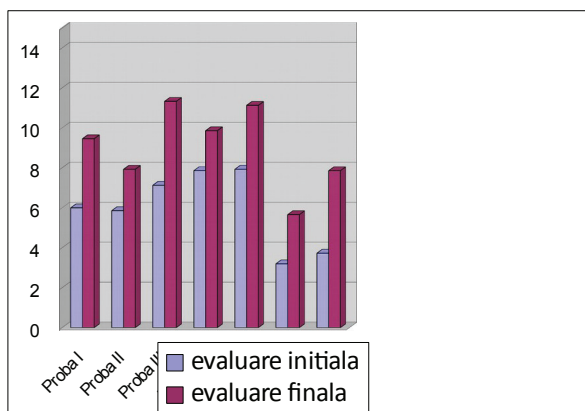


Figure 4. Average results obtained at the language evaluation test - experimental batch (comparative initial assessment - final assessment)

From Figure 4 we note that the results obtained by the pre-school children in the experimental group at the final evaluation are significantly higher than the results obtained at the initial evaluation of all the language scales applied by us.

This demonstrates the veridicity of the hypothesis stating that following the implementation of the intensive program developed by us, focused on the development of communication skills necessary for the integration of the pre-school children attending the last kindergarten group, the acquisition of language will be developed in such a way as to allow the child to integrate well into school.

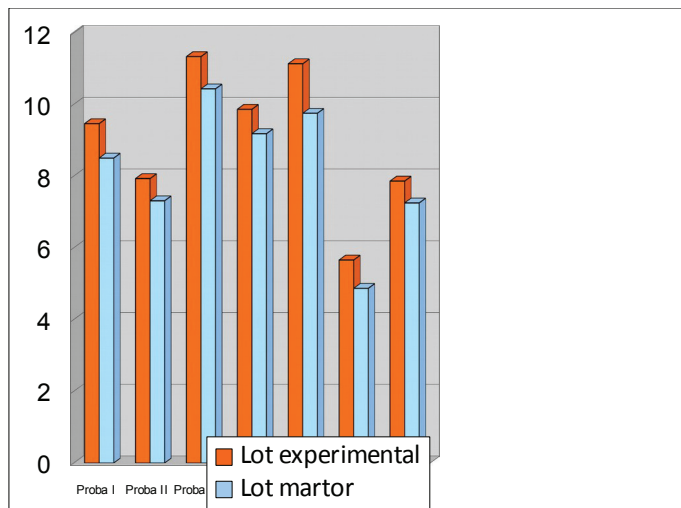


Figure 5. Average results obtained at the language evaluation test - experimental lot compared to the control group (final evaluation)

From the above graph we can observe that the results obtained by the pre-school children in the experimental group at the final evaluation are significantly higher than the results obtained by the preschoolers in the witness group, thus confirming the hypothesis no. 4, the fact that following the implementation of the intensive program program designed by us and focused on the development of the necessary skills for the integration of the pre-school child attending the last kindergarten group, the language acquisitions will be developed in such a way that it will allow a good integration of the child into the school.

These results are due, on the one hand, to the implementation of the intensive program, to the specific activities carried out in the kindergarten, according to the specific curricula, but they are also due to the attendance the children with language disorder made to the speech therapy teacher office where they practiced language therapy and communication development.

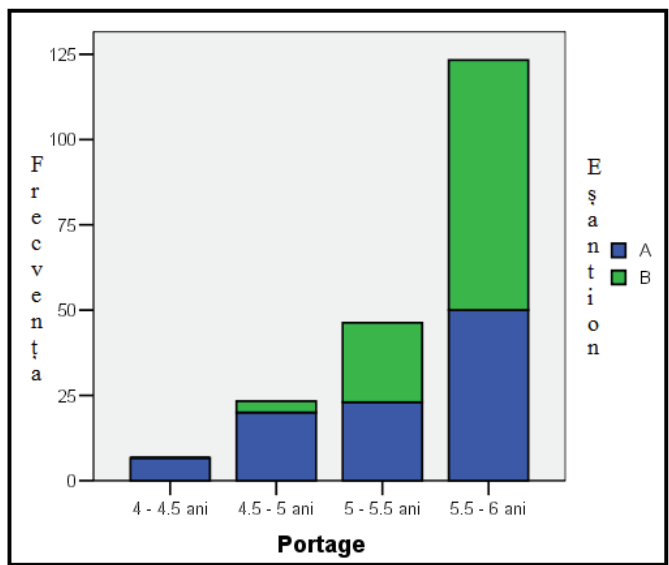


Figure 6. Results at the Portage Development Scale

In sample A, a cumulative percentage of 33.40% of children is in the first two age ranges. Two children are aged between 4 and 4.5 years of age and 6 of them are between 4.5 and 5 years of age. Another 23.30% have psychological development ages ranging from 5 to 5.5 years (7 children). The remaining 50% of S sample participants are grouped in the last interval, 5.5-6 years.

Analysis of sample B shows that no participant with developmental age in the range of 4 to 4.5 years is found in this group. Most of the children in this sample have psychological development ages ranging from 5.5 to 6 years (22 of the total of 30).

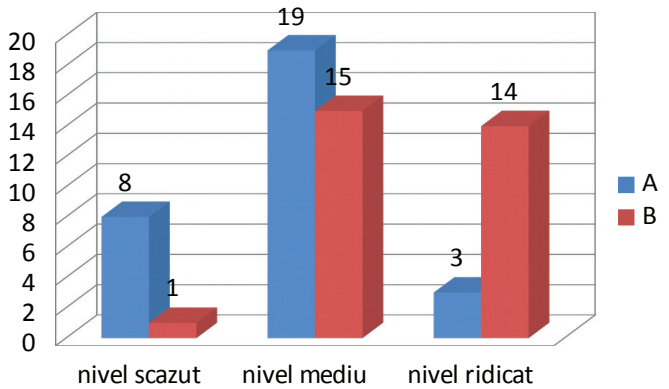


Figure 7. Results obtained at the Level of Social Inclusion Evaluation Scale

The percentage chart in the above figure, which graphically expresses the frequency of the scores on the integration scale obtained by the two sample of participants, shows how at the beginning of the school year the two groups resemble in some respects. But it also shows the differences, especially in terms of social integration. The difference is visible in the low level of social integration skills, where more children are found in sample A than in sample B, and at the high level we find only 3 children with poor integration skills. The latter come from good families, working people, where parents are concerned about their children's education and development.

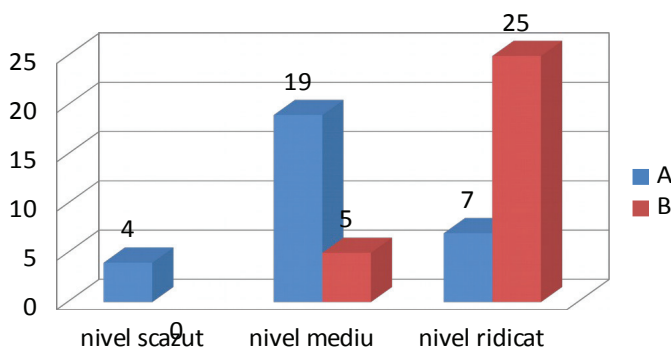


Figure 8. Percentage diagram integration scale (final phase)

In the above graph one can see the difference between the two samples of children at the end of the school year. Participation in kindergarten activities as well as in the intensive program resulted in changes of the social behavior of children and the degree of their integration into the group of children and their adaptation to the requirements of the environment. However, there are significant differences between them. Children in sample B have a high level of social integration. In the case of children in sample A the degree of integration is medium. This demonstrates that language disorders have had a strong impact on the personality of preschool children, and this impact can be gradually eliminated through game activities, communication and socialization development etc.

As a result of our research, our objectives have been achieved and the assumptions we started have been confirmed, so it can be said that following the implementation of the intensive program focused on the development of communication skills necessary for the integration of preschool children, language acquisitions have been developed in such a way as to allow their good integration into school. The results obtained by the preschool in the

experimental group following the application of the final phase assessment scales were superior to those obtained in the initial phase, demonstrating that the intensive program applied between the two moments contributed to the development of language skills.

Communication of preschoolers can be improved if the learning activity is based on principles of hierarchical organization of intellectual operations from actions to notions, concepts, meanings. Information content structured on meaningful units can not be acquired by the child unless it is based on a certain operational, cognitive level. Improving verbal communication has as a central dimension the level of language operationalization. Learning through play and learning by action are superior to all forms of learning at pre-school age.

Through our method we have identified a series of language and communication operations that underpin the development of the personality and autonomy of the child:

- verbal fluency, as a means of expressing thoughts, needs, experiences and relationships seeking, group integration;
- the volume of active and passive vocabulary as the organization of words in words-notions, words-attitudes, words-actions, word-requests, words-moral attributes etc.;
- fixation and reproduction abilities of visual material with support and without visual support;
- abilities to express in sentences, in a cursive, expressive, logical and chronological flow, respecting the logical-grammatical norms;
- the ability to represent objectual actions in mental images with the help of verbal operators;
- oral communication skills with the use of own stylistic means;
- emotional reactivity in consensus with experiencing the situation, disinhibition, participation.

References

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