

## GENDER DIFFERENCES IN RECOVERY OF COMMUNICATION DIFFICULTIES IN PRESCHOOL CHILDREN

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**Abstract:** *Communication is one of the main tools for the life in society of the human being. Difficulties in communication lead to interpersonal problems and disorders of adaptation in society. This is why these difficulties must be taken seriously and corrected from an early age. Worked in the team (social worker and educator) with a group of 32 children identified as having communication difficulties after starting the small group in kindergarten. As working methods were used didactic games, role-playing games, storytelling after images, storytelling. The activities were carried out daily, in addition to the normal day program. The experiment lasted two months after which the ability to communicate with preschoolers was again appreciated. The obtained results show that teamwork and the choice of appropriate methods lead to the improvement of the communication capacity of the children. The recovery was greater in girls than in boys.*

**Keywords:** *kindergarten children; communication; communication difficulties; recovery;*

### Theoretical framework

The thematic approached is important because it is considered that the processes of human communication are fundamental in the organization of any social grouping. They are the basis of humanization, of the cultural, spiritual, psychological construction of people and have ensured and permanently ensured the transmission of social experience.

Human communication is an exchange of meanings and refers to the transmission and circulation of information between people, from impressions and orders, to living and judgments with a precise purpose through which behavioral changes in individuals are obtained (Giblin, 2000).

Through communication are expressed thoughts, feelings, wishes, intentions, experiences, receive and give information. From the dynamics of these exchanges, through learning the man builds himself as a personality. The ability to communicate represents a premise of the process of building interpersonal relationships and social integration

Communication and language are the basic elements through which the human behavior and personality are developed and expressed, marking their valences and the level of expectations of the individual in the system of integration in the society through which the maximization of the socio-cultural potential is pursued. This process starts from birth and evolves according to the native dowry, but especially in relation to the environmental conditions, more or less favorable, so that communication and language introduce differentiating notes between different people and contribute to the definition, as a whole, of the psychological profile of man. From early childhood, the acquisitions in this field occur in stages or in stages, and their quality and quantity constitute the foundation stones for the construction of human becoming (Verza, 2009).

In the classical definition, communication is the process of transmitting information from one source to one or more receivers (Mocanu, Leanca 2010). Another definition emphasizes that communication is a particular form of the exchange relationship between two or more persons or two or more groups (Chelcea, Ivan, Duduciuc, 2013).

Essential for good communication are the following aspects: the relationship between individuals or groups; the exchange that takes place, ie the transmission and repetition of information; changing the behaviors of those employed in communication (Turk, 2009).

In any communication, a code is used, which is a sign system which means something, that is, by which an informational message is transmitted or received. For the communication to be efficient, the sender and receiver must know the same code.

The contents that are transmitted during the communication can be of several types:

- *informational content* - images, ideas notions are conveyed;
- *affective-emotional content* - the communication allows the manifestation of the affective behaviors (acceptance, rejection, concordance, etc .;
- *motivational content* - transmits needs, aspirations, ideals, appeals to action;
- *volitional content* - it is initiated, it is triggered, it activates or it spoils the activities, it manifests resistance to efforts (Panisoara, 2004).

The difference between sensory and intellectual or semantic signaling is realized in humans, which uses conceptual level meanings, constructed using a complex system of codes that is the language.

Communication is at the same time, relationship and process, having certain characteristics:

- *completeness* - is given by the difference between the amount of information issued and the actual one transmitted to the recipient; the smaller the difference, the more complete the communication.
- *promptness* - is measured by the necessary time between the moment of issuing a message and the moment of receiving it. A communication is considered prompt if the messages it carries can still be used to reach the goal
- *fidelity* - expresses the degree of correspondence on content elements between the message sent and the actual message transmitted and received by the recipient (Gurlui, 2009).

After the spatio-temporal complex in which the communication takes place, it can be direct (face to face) or indirect, when there is a mediator interposed between the transmitter and the receiver (Enea, 2019).

Communication plays many roles both in relation to the individual and to the group. Among the roles of communication in relation to the individual are mentioned:

- *personal discovery* - during the communication the man learns about himself and others, he discovers himself, especially through social communication that counts in relation to others and, finally, he has a role in evaluating his own person;
- *discovery of the external world* - communication gives a better purpose; understanding of external reality, objects and events (Floyd, 2013).
- *establishing meaningful relationships* - through communication, one gets the opportunity to establish and maintain close relationships with others, because people feel the need to be appreciated by others;
- *changing attitudes and behaviors* - communication, especially that achieved through the media, excels in its ability to change human attitudes and behaviors;
- *play and fun* - communication is a means of relaxation, making jokes, feeling good with others (Amado, Guittet, 2007).

The following are some of the communication functions in relation to the group:

- *the productive-efficient function* - it allows the accomplishment of the tasks, especially in the situation in which they involve a high degree of cooperation between the members of the group, being essential for reaching the set goals;
- *the facilitating function of group cohesion* - a group is born and subsists by communication. The cessation or disruption of communication results either with the death of the group or with the appearance of serious dysfunctions (Gavreliuc, 2006).

- *the valorization function* - almost identical to the one encountered at the individual level; through communication, the group affirms its presence, it is highlighted, it reveals its importance, its originality, it justifies its existence (Abrisc, 2002);
- *the resolving function of the group's problems* - the communication saves the honor of the group, and when the group degrades or goes through difficult periods it can be used as a therapeutic means; sociodrama is the best example in exemplifying this function (Muchielli, 2005).

The communication is carried out on three levels:

- *the logical level*, that of the words that comprises 7% of the communication
- *para-verbal level* (tone, volume of speech speed) - comprising 38% of the total communication act
- *non-verbal level* - facial expression, body position, movement that accounts for 55% of the communication process (Turk, 2009).

*Verbal or oral communication* is the message transmitted through words. In this type of communication the level of expression, the phonetic side of oral communication, the structure of the lexicon, the level of grammatical and literary expression are sought. It is done through language, which is why a good development of the language and a rich lexical baggage greatly helps interpersonal communication. In cases where the language is insufficiently developed and the lexical vocabulary is poor, communication difficulties are common and may have various consequences: misinterpretation, misunderstanding of message, withdrawal, isolation.

*Para-verbal communication* is represented by the way words are spoken, using the features of the voice. In other words, the para-verbal communication refers to the tone of the voice, the speed of speech, the rhythm and inflections of the speech, the intensity, the volume of the voice, the pauses, the underlining, other sounds produced (onomatopoeia, groan, grunt, sigh, laugh). Usually the para-verbal supports the verbal message and shows the nature of the relations between the sender and the receiver. Para-verbal elements can accentuate part of a message, sweeten a command or affectively color the transmitted content (Moldovan 2015).

*Nonverbal communication* is the physical behavior (body language) that accompanies speech. It can be intentional or unintentional. It is a constant presence in the preschool child and is strongly represented by expressors, regulators, illustrators, emblems, adaptations (Toma, 2018). Of the most well-known ways of manifesting nonverbal communication, gestures are one of the most important means of giving access to a person (Chelcea, 2005). Gestures can be classified into three categories:

- *autic gestures* - which have no connection with communication, but which betray a certain affective state of the individual (Duvernois, 2015).
- *common gestures* - raising fingers in the classroom, for example, or gestures used in greeting formulas;
- *symbolic gestures* expressing approval, indifference, enthusiasm (Reiman, 2019).

### *Communication in kindergarten*

Preschoolers' communication is simple. Especially with regard to the little ones, they communicate in a few words, the sentence being used later and installing due to the exercise, in the kindergarten activities.

Also, many of the preschoolers, due to poor expression, have certain inhibitions in communicating with the adult. Many times they are afraid that they do not know how to answer, and other times it is difficult for them to say what they want, even if they know the answer. At the basis of an efficient communication that does not lead to blockages, there are several conditions. One of these would be the communication initiative, which consists in having the courage to express an attitude towards the event and in assuming the responsibility of our

feelings and desires and not to hide the expression of feelings of fear of possible negative repercussions. To encourage the initiative of communication between the child and the educator, it is necessary to listen to what the child wants to say and not to disregard the child due to his lack of experience. For an effective communication it is preferable to treat the child from the position of equality, it is good for him to feel that he is being paid attention, that there is always a visual contact and a posture indicating the listening, that he has no more to do with it. be afraid because he says what he feels and wants. In other words, to feel that there is respect for his person.

The child communicates permanently with the educator and vice versa, enriching his vocabulary, becoming more refined in expression and communication.

Important in the accomplishment of the tasks and objectives of the preschool education are the qualities and competences of the educator. Through everything she understands, through her personality, the educator represents a model for the child, a support for the family, a cultural factor to her community. In order to fulfill her role as much as possible to the dialogue partners, the educator must communicate.

Dumitrana (2001) mentions a series of attitudes, frequently encountered, that not only inhibit or diminish the efficiency of communication, but predispose the emergence of conflicts and implicitly of the blockages refers to:

*Threat*

Consequence: - the main concern of the child will be not to make mistakes, he will not have the courage to solve it if he is not sure that the result is positive; thus fear, lie, intolerance appear.

*Criticize*

Consequence: - the child's receptivity to the opinions issued by the educator decreases and thus indifference is born.

*Labeling*

Consequence: - if the statements are repeated frequently then the children will be followed by this idea; in their subconscious they will be convinced that they are as they were labeled and thus the inferiority complex appears.

*Indifference*

Consequence: - the child will try to draw attention to it even through negative facts.

*Irony*

Consequence: - decreases the confidence of the child in his own strengths and towards the educator and seeks appreciation elsewhere; thus the distance appears.

*Dissatisfaction*

Consequences: - her enthusiasm and motivation for school tasks decrease and thus passivity appears.

*Raise of voice*

Consequences: - this form of "communication" may attract the depreciation of the educator.

*Humiliation*

Consequence: - the educator is not a reliable man, he makes you laugh in front of the others; the child will learn to hide the truth and thus the distrust of the others appears.

Adopting such attitudes leads to decreased communication efficiency and sometimes predisposes to conflict. The negative consequences may occur sooner or later, but in order to be prevented it is good to pay special attention to communication both in school institutions and in the family environment. From here comes another feature of the preschoolers' communication or their attitude when they have to express something, namely, the timidity of the verbalization. Not only that they have a poor vocabulary, but more, they need to be encouraged, approached with tact and skill. In fact, for this reason, most of the activities carried

out with them are done through the game; we, the educators play theater with them, in order to make some progress, both in cognitive, and verbal, communicative level. Sometimes the little preschooler is more timid in expression when it comes to the group (Enea, 2019).

The child learns to communicate in the family, in the general social environment, but especially in the educational and educational activities organized institutionally. In the kindergarten, the educator must cultivate and strengthen the status of interlocutor, partner of the child towards his / her own becoming and allow the child to progressively construct the positive image of self, in a favorable and appropriate climate for his own expression and successful interpersonal communication. Therefore, balancing the cognitive balance with the affective and the motivational must be a constant of the trainer's activity. In the process of training the preschool children the ability to communicate, the educator must prove his communicative competence. His expression should always be correct, clear, stimulating, encouraging and never be offensive, inhibiting, annoying, irritating, reproachful. The area of information that he has mastered in relation to the communication process should be as comprehensive as possible (Gurlui, 2009).

Didactic communication, as well as general human communication, is subjected to numerous and varied disturbances. An extended analysis of them and a rigorous systematization of them gives us Salavăstru (2002) in one of his works. The author classifies these disturbances as follows: - a. Blockages determined by the characteristics of the person engaged in the didactic communication (the teacher on the one hand, the student on the other); - b. blockages determined by the social-value relations existing between the participants in the didactic communication relationship; - c. blockages determined by the particularities of the field in which the didactic communication is carried out. Didactic communication plays a decisive role in the development and efficiency of the educational act. It constitutes a premise of the success of the pedagogical acts, but also a purpose of them, because, a general objective of the education is the formation and development of the communicative competence of the preschoolers.

### Hypothesis and objectives

The main objective of the research was to recover the communication difficulties found in preschool children. In this sense, the following working hypothesis was formulated:

**H:** *It was assumed that there are differences between boys and girls in terms of acquiring socializing skills and language development.*

### The studied lot

A number of 32 children between 3 and 4 years old were enrolled in the kindergarten. Of these, 15 are girls and 17 are boys, 21 are Romanians and 11 are Roma. As for the type of family of origin, 17 come from organized families, 9 come from organized families but with strained relationships and the remaining 7 come from disorganized families. From this presentation it appears that there are differences between the socio-cultural environments from which children come that have repercussions on the development of their communication and language. As the research aims at gender differences, the structure of the group studied from this perspective is oriented in table 1 and figure 1.

Table 1. Lot structure by gender

Gender	number
boys	17
girls	15

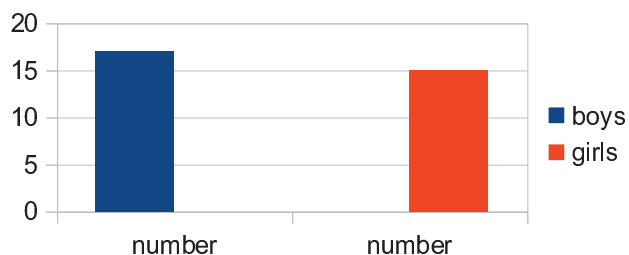


Figure 1. Lot structure by gender

## Methodology

### Methods

They were used to correct and recover the communication difficulties, methods specific to the educational act in kindergarten.

*The talks after the images* make a significant contribution to fixing and specifying the children's consciousness, in activating the vocabulary and in forming a correct and coherent oral expression: "How do we take care of the flowers?". a correct grammatical form.

*Story* - The child may acquire information from true events or truths presented in stories, stories, fairy tales or ballads.

The small class uses a *simple story*, not loaded with comments, without many episodes. Gradually move to larger stories. The child must know all the words and expressions used in the story or be told the unknown words during the story, otherwise there is a risk of memorizing words whose meaning he does not know and assigning them wrong meanings.

The contribution of the *conversations* to the formation of social communication skills, to the respectful dialogue between the partners, to the mutual exchange of messages should not be neglected.

Role-playing games are simulation games in which children become actors of social life, they are replicas games according to a proposed scenario, but with obvious linguistic effects from the point of view of the dialogue between the 'small actors'. A particular aspect of role-playing is dramatization. It has an activating character, taking over some of the spectacular effects of the scene. It can be organized on exact, textual replicas, based on creative replicas or on the spontaneity of 'actors'.

### Conducting the research

An initial assessment of the degree of communication difficulties of the children was made. It followed the actual part of the experience in which he worked daily for two months with the children. The work consisted of using the methods mentioned above. We worked in the team of social worker-educator to fully cover the number of children with communication difficulties and to be able to provide the sustained assistance needed for each child.

The final evaluation was made after the passing of the two months of activities supported with the children, in order to be able to evaluate the progress that they have achieved.

## Results and discussions

The initial evaluation was made one month after the beginning of the school year, after the educator could figure out the level of communication of each child. The level of communication capacity, the situation obtained at the initial evaluation by sex is shown in table 2 and figure 2.

**Table 2 The ability to communicate based on gender at the initial assessment**

Communication ability	boys	girls	Total
good	0	1	1
medium	1	3	4
weak	16	11	27
total	17	15	32

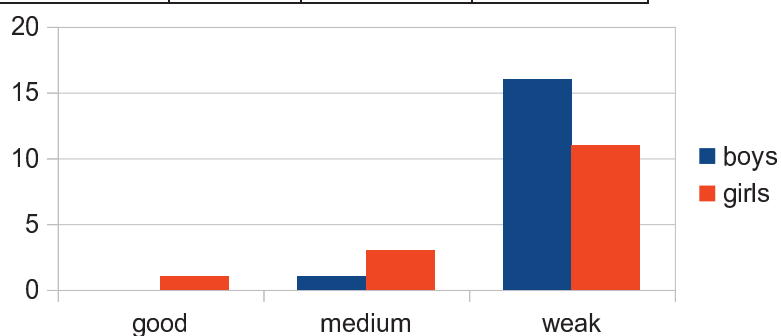


Figure 2. The ability to communicate based on gender at the initial assessment

It can be seen from the table and figure that girls have a higher number of subjects that fall into the good and medium categories (1 and 4 respectively) and a smaller number of subjects who fall into poor communication (11). The boys have no case with good communication, but they have one with average communication and 16 with poor communication. We could say that most boys have poor communication skills (16 out of 17 subjects). During the research, we worked with children with communication difficulties for two months. As mentioned in the methodology chapter, the stories were used after the images, the talks, the role-playing games. These activities were supported daily by educators and social workers to ensure continuity in the work of recovering communication difficulties. After the passing of the two months, a final evaluation of the children's communication skills was made. At the second assessment, made after completing the program of developing the ability to communicate and enrich the vocabulary, the situation changes significantly. The results of the final evaluation for the communication capacity can be seen in table 3 and figure 3.

**Table 3**  
The ability to communicate based on gender at the final evaluation

Communication ability	boys	girls	Total
good	8	12	20
medium	7	3	10
weak	2	0	2
total	17	15	32

It was found that girls no longer present any subject in the poor communication category, the vast majority of the subjects being after attending the program, in the good

communication category (12 subjects). In the category of average communication we have included two cases. It turns out that the girls managed to enrich their vocabulary faster and with more words during the two months of the special program. Their communication was much easier, managing to share ideas, emotions, participate actively in the group's activities and get involved in solving the situations proposed by the educators.

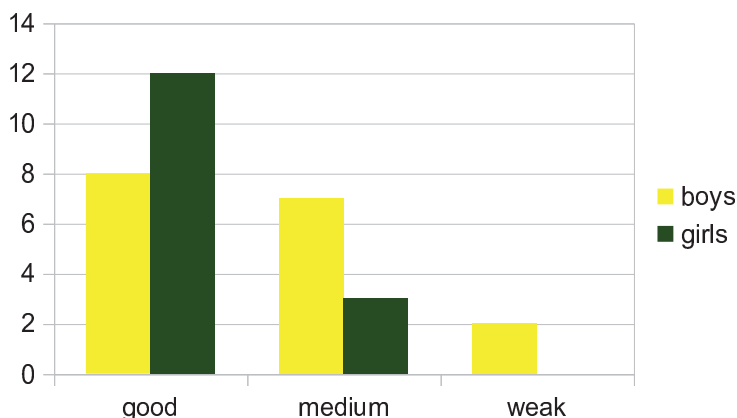


Figure 3. The ability to communicate based on gender at the final evaluation

The boys present an approximately equal number of subjects in the categories of good communication and medium communication (8 respectively 7 subjects), proving that they have also made progress in enriching the vocabulary and in developing the communication capacity. But their pace is a bit slower, so we still have 7 cases in the category of communication with girls who have only 3 subjects in this category.

The boys also have 2 subjects who remain in the category of poor communication and who, as I mentioned during the paper, have speech disorders of a speech-language nature requiring specialized help.

To highlight more precisely whether the difference between boys and girls is statistically significant, in terms of communication ability, the averages were calculated and using the t-test the difference between the means and its significance was established. The results obtained are presented in table 4.

**Table 4.**  
**Meaning of the difference between the average between boys and girls for communication capacity**

	Boys average	Girls average	t	p
Values	2,86	3,79	2.77	0.01

The value obtained for t shows that there is a statistically significant difference at a significance level  $p = 0.01$ , between boys and girls in terms of the evolution of communication skills.

All the results presented in this sub-point justify us to affirm that hypothesis 3 formulated by us at the beginning of the research is confirmed: there were gender differences regarding the recovery of communication difficulties ( $p = .01$ ).

**Conclusions:**



Recovering the difficulties of communication with preschoolers is a team work (educator, social worker) that must be carried out in a sustained way, taking into account the individual psychological characteristics of the children, the particularities of the age and the degree of communication difficulty it presents. In recovering from these difficulties, storytelling, communication, role play can be used as methods.

The results confirm that there are statistically significant differences between boys and girls in terms of the rate of communication skills development and vocabulary volume.

We believe that this type of research must be continued and developed in order to find the best methods to recover the communication difficulties in children, thus contributing to a good future integration in their society.

**Acknowledgement:** We hereby state that the subjects involved in our research were informed about the voluntary character of participation in this research, about the understanding of information and of that fact that withdrawal from research is possible at any time without negative consequences upon the participant. The research complied with all ethical research standards, the research participants/participants' guardians giving their consent to participate in the research.

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