

LANGUAGE AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF A CHILD WITH PROFOUND HEARING LOSS

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Abstract

The article describes the case of a child with an profound prelingual hearing loss considering etiology, pathomechanism of speech disorders and results of the diagnosis. Linguistic and communication skills were taken into consideration in the child's detailed analysis and assessment. Besides, observations and family interviews were implemented to the following research methods in order to evaluate levels of psychomotor development, hearing perception, motor skills of the speech apparatus, pronunciation, the child's mental lexicon, narrative skills, reading and writing skills. Thanks to the case study we could create dynamical picture of the hearing-impaired child speech development, and acquire linguistics and communicative abilities, define the results of earlier therapeutic process and determine its next stages.

Key words: linguistic skills • communication skills • hearing impairment

Background

The ability to communicate with others is one of the child's most important mental needs. Language communication is necessary for social and emotional development of each person [1]. In the case of profound hearing loss it is very important to early provide hearing aid, and therefore increase the range of information reaching the child in the auditory way [2]. A child with a damaged hearing organ has limited possibilities of using the phonic language. The lack of language development handicaps many mental processes, and distorts social and emotional development [3]. Thus, it is obvious that hearing disorders affect not only speech, but the child's overall development [4].

Aims

This paper aims at presenting how a deaf child develops socially and acquires language and communication skills. The study involved 8-year-old girl with the extent to the deep hearing impairment. The whole family is affected by hearing damage. There are two types of damages, to the receiver and congenital.

Methods

Using a number of research methods and information from different sources made it possible to produce a description of the child's multifaceted characteristics. Levels of psychomotor development, hearing perception, motor skills of the speech apparatus, pronunciation, the child's mental lexicon, narrative skills, reading and writing skills, and general language performance were graded. Moreover, the development of child's and mother's communication skills was analyzed.

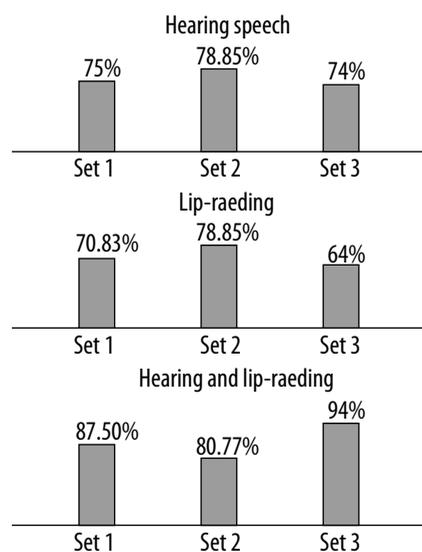
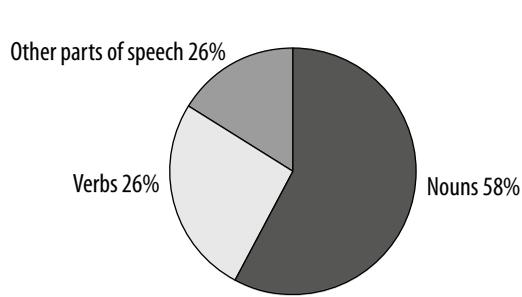


Figure 1. Assessment of auditory perception. Set 1 – words composed of three speech sounds. Set 2 – words composed of four speech sounds. Set 3 – words composed of five speech sounds.

Results

The results of research and information on language and social development of the 8-year-old girl shows:

- Child's psychomotor development is proceeding correctly, deficits occur only in the sphere of speech.
- Child receives profits from a hearing aid, but in receiving speech there is a great extent with paragraph reads. The results are shown in Figure 1.
- There is a high level of child's lexical development. The child's vocabulary is dominated by nouns (58%), verbs



(16%) and other parts of speech (26%). The results are shown in Figure 2.

- Girl's ability to narrate is weak. She understands the cause-effect relationship and basic components of storytelling. However, the narrative technique, linguistic realization of speech, fluency and grammar correctness were very low.
- The level of reading skills is very high. The impact on this state of affairs was probably the use of early learning of reading (Alternative method of teaching the sign language from birth [5]).

Figure 2. The level of lexical development of children.

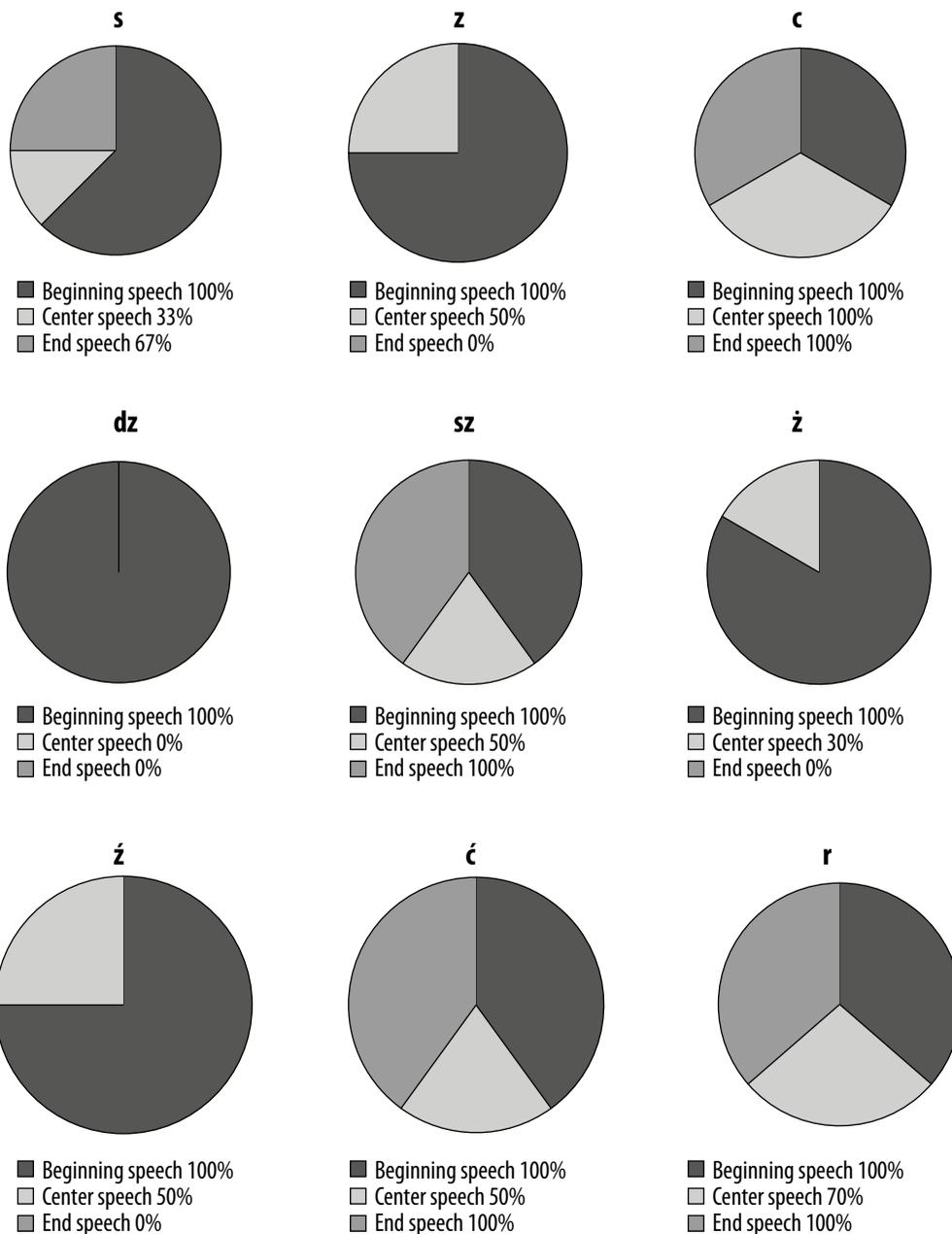


Figure 3. Implementation more difficult sounds by girl [in Polish].

- Writing skills are lower than reading. Girl has trouble hearing certain sounds differentiation (as shown in Figure 3.), so she couldn't write many words. Although she is left-handed, she has a great manual dexterity and graphomotor development.
- Linguistic competence are developed at a high level.
- Girl's communication behaviors are at a very high level.
- Girl is fully accepted by deaf parents, which positively stimulate her emotional, mental and cognitive development.

Conclusions

The research results confirm that if proper rehabilitation is provided a profound prelingual hearing loss does not pose a significant obstacle in communicating in the phonic language. It is crucial to detect hearing disorders early, use

hearing aid, undertake proper rehabilitative actions, and engage the environment in the therapy. The rehabilitation should be based on auditory education which aims at raising the child's interest in the world of sounds by providing it with sound stimuli. Early hearing improvement helps to acquire the understanding of speech faster, and constitutes a basis for further development of speaking [6,7].

Moreover, early learning to read is of great significance. A deaf child should receive help to learn the rules of language and its phonemic structure. However, acquiring grammatical rules does not always guarantee the desired communicative effect. And vice versa - deaf children who did not master grammar fully, can easily communicate with the environment. Thus, during the language formation process three kinds of competence, namely linguistic, communicative, and cognitive, are developed simultaneously [5].

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