



*Original Contribution*

**DEVELOPMENT OF SKILLS FOR VISUAL PERCEPTION OF THE VERBAL  
SPEECH IN CHILDREN FROM THE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

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**ABSTRACT**

The paper deals with the visual perception of the verbal speech. Change of visual perception exercises is offered. They should not be directed to the language education but to the communicative-orientated education.

**Key words:** visual perception, exercises, communicative-orientated education

Visual perception of the verbal speech called also reading, reading lips, reading eyes, transcription from lips, reading face and etc. is a very complicated process, which recodes acoustic code to optical one.

Alyh (1977) calls Kinemes /movements, through which sounds are optically differentiated and are analogous to the acoustic phonemes. Kinemes are perceived visually thanks to the movements of the visual articulating organs and especially lips/ open, set one to other, stretched in a trunk or smile position and etc.

The conditional segmentation of the otherwise unified and complex process of the visual perception of the verbal speech allows outlining of its basic components:

- kinaesthetic stimulation by reflective repetition of verbal movements;
- information transmission along nerve routes to the brain;
- processing and understanding of the visually perceived speech.

The investigation of the separate components and the complex process as a whole enabled the research workers Beltukov, V.I. (1970), Mett, A.I. and N.A.Nikitina (1974), Mironova,E.V.(1980), Poizlateva,Ts.(1999), Anette Leonghardt

(1999) and others to define visual perception of the verbal speech as imperfect and inaccurate. Similar conclusion is done as a result of many investigations carried out in other countries. The following causes for those are given:

- lack of optical characteristics of some sounds. In Bulgarian language the consonants к, г, х do not have optical characteristics ;
- presence of similar optical characteristics (с – з – ц; ш – ж – ч; т – д – н; п – б – м and etc ).;
- change of the optical characteristics of the sounds in speech.

These peculiarities found by the surdopedagogues did not allow the creation of “optical” /visual/ alphabet. In this respect is well known the unsuccessful experiment of the Russian surdopedagogue Vasilev to create a “cinema print”, i.e. optical image of the phonemes.

Similar to the process of “co-articulation” /accumulation of the articulation positions of the sounds in verbal speech/, in visual perception is observed mutual influence and dependence of the optical codes.

Visual perception of the verbal speech is equally important to hearing children and those with hearing impairments. In the first group it is restricted/ it is used more often in noisy environment or in definite situations, which require elimination

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of the power of voice- for example when parents speak not so loud near their sleeping child.

In the second group /children with hearing impairments/ visual perception of speech plays more significant role especially in children with serious, deep or total loss of hearing. At the same time we should note the fact that even in the children from the last mentioned groups perception of gestures, written and dactyl symbols is easier than the visual perception of the verbal speech. Gesture language, dactyl speech or other manual systems are more effective and preferred ways of communication. In the environment of hearing people, who, as it is well known, do not use very much gestures and non-linguistic ways of communication /eye contact, movements of the body, limbs and head, eye blinking, mouth biting and etc./ deaf children use to the highest degree the acquired skills for visual perception of the verbal speech.

Having in mind that visual perception in small deaf children is characterised with many peculiarities / lower speed of perception, limited volume, difficulties in perception of irregular situated or faster moving objects, analysis and synthesis of the components and the whole and etc./, it becomes clear that there is necessity of purposeful formation and development of skills for visual perception of the verbal speech. This necessity is realised long ago, but the unsatisfactory results require more precise discussion of the problem.

Exercises on visual perception of the speech have special place in the different forms of verbal speech formation – individual, group and lessons.

28 individual and group lessons were observed in order to find the role and significance of such exercises, their relation to the theme, aims, tasks and contents.

The preliminary working hypothesis was: Exercises for the formation of visual perception skills does not always correspond to the communicative orientated education and it is necessary to be improved.

It was found that all lessons contain special exercises on visual perception of the speech, which is very positive.

Positively can be assessed the connection between the contents of the special exercises and the content of the lesson as a whole. The linguistic material used in the exercises is used before that in the lessons, but with different purposes – to clear the meaning of the words, making sentences with

them, correct pronunciation, usage in communicative situation and etc. Without any doubt this makes it easier for the child in the specialised exercises on visual perception of the speech.

Planned by the specialists and done by the children exercises include words, phrases and sentences. We have found 2 short texts /2-3 sentences/ in two of the observed lessons. In 4 lessons syllable material was included too. The refusal to use the latter in the remaining lessons is rather justifiable having in mind the peculiarities of the visual perception in deaf children in primary course and the fact that the significance of the syllable skills in verbal communication is not important.

The analysis of the character of the exercises gives us the reason to claim that there is more to be done in the case of correspondence to the communicative principle, accepted as a very important nowadays for the learning language and speech. Exercises with instructions of the following type prevail:

Repeat the words, which I am going to say.

Write the words, which I am going to say.

I am going to read one of the sentences. Show me which one is it.

I am going to say the name of an animal /fruit, vegetable and etc./ and you are going to show me the picture of it.

The aim of such exercises often remains hidden for the child. Why is it necessary to do such exercises?

Set in that way the educational task aims more at the language education and correspondingly the perception of the verbal speech and not at the education in communication. Visual perception of speech is necessary for the aims of communication and out of that context it does not have any sense.

It is obvious that it is necessary to set as a task developing skills for visual perception of speech in the context of communication orientated education.

Child has to learn to perceive verbal speech adequately in communication.

It could have skills in visual perception of the given instructions and fulfil them correctly and at the same time in real life situations not to understand verbal speech in visual way.

Not education in language, but education in communication should be the aim and this will require domination of other

type of exercises, which will prepare the child to cope with real life situations. In latter very rarely could be found necessity to repeat words or sentences. Real communication practically excludes that.

Visual perception of definite words or syntax constructions has no sense if it is orientated to receptive mastering of the language and not to communication.

It is not necessary the exercises on visual perception of speech to be precise only with respect to the influence of external factors, nevertheless that they are important, too /distance to the interlocutor, proper light, clear articulation and etc./, but should develop skills to establish contact with the child /children/, to see its reaction, to create necessity for communication in a definite situation, to motivate not only to perceive, but to produce adequate speech, to keep the conversation going on, to express its own opinion, to show ability of **anticipation**, to enrich its communicative experience as a whole with verbal and non-verbal means.

To draw general conclusion, children need another type of exercises, which will allow them to develop another type of skills – not visual perception of models and images, but skills for visual perception of speech in different communicative situations possibly closer to the real ones. Conclusions:

The conclusions of the study confirmed entirely the working hypothesis. Developing of such skills should be

considered in the context of the communicative orientated aural-speech rehabilitation, in which active role have children themselves. This approach supposes partial use in small children of non- verbal means and competent use of different forms and methods of work. This way visual perception of speech could be considered as a component of the adequate communicative behaviour of the child.

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