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School and illustrations for a deaf
child

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INTRODUCTION

The primary intent of this thesis is to analyze the major social problems which a deaf child may have to face during his life. The biggest problem for a deaf child is represented by communication. The limit of communication that puts the deafness, will be exceeded only if the family, the teachers and the educators are able to show them the right path according to its communicative and social needs. These figures may have a positive or negative consequences that the children will manifest during the years of their growth, and in particular within the socio-cultural context.

The school situation in a particular way is the context in which everything that has been experienced before is put in place: language acquisition, level of communication, adaptability and cognitive development.

The choice of this argument want to give an overview relevance of the main stages of the life of a deaf child, pausing, above all, the possibility of improving the school organization in order to help the child overcome difficulties in communication and learning.

What's more the lack of a linguistic system has implications on many levels such as the communicative, cognitive and psychological level. This affects the socio-relational aspect because the fact that he doesn't know a language allows only marginally the participation in the social plane. The isolation of the individual is very close.

The language is therefore a necessary element in the formation of a person. The hearing gain spontaneous and natural language to which they are exposed and they use it automatically. But for deaf contact with the language is not continuous and they have to learn the spoken language during rehabilitation programs and the work of specialists. Hence, an additional delay in receiving language input, which makes more difficult the linguistic development of the deaf.

The question is how one can operate to prevent such situations, not only in terms of language proficiency very reduced, but also with regard to difficulties in reconciling the same language. If the problem is the delay in receiving the inputs, it is very sensible to start as soon as possible to provide input for the development of the child. How? And most importantly, what kind of input?

Meaningful and useful inputs we are offered by youth albums. The book, its images and their relation to the written text and the communicative burden they create, are elements which can help to give more input. These skills relate to communicative, cognitive, emotional and socio-relational levels. The children's book becomes an educational tool, so the importance of organizing courses which provide appropriate early contact with the book. It is also the aim for the development of an easy relationship with the book and to understand that reading is a fundamental vehicle of knowledge.

The thesis is divided into 5 chapters. In the first I wanted to show the developing of the language in a deaf person and how a deaf child grow up, the relationship with the family. In the second chapter I wrote about the situation at school and what concern the education. In the next chapter I talk about the comprehension, the reading and what happen deeper in a deaf mind. In the fourth I show the relationship between the deaf and the book, the illustrations and the inferences. I also talk about some studies in the linguistic competence of the deaf and which are the main difficulties linguistically talking.

In the last one there is again the proposal to use the images, the illustrated book to help a deaf child to learn the language better and easier.

CHAPTER 1

1.1 Language Development

The acquisition of a language is the main obstacle for a deaf person. A child with a pre-lingual severe or profound deafness stops at around six months of life to produce sounds, and without a systematic action, it is not able to learn verbal language.

Usually all infants acquire language naturally as immersed in a world of sounds and words. The language is that faculty which enables each infant, and therefore every child to learn a language as long as he get exposed to it. It must be added the inter-individual variation related to sex, intelligence, personality and social extraction. The acquisition of language is a prerequisite in the context of learning and socialization. The absence of the acoustic channel allows the activation of a channel equally functional for language requirements: the visual-gestural channel that allows the realization of a real communication.

The language is the property specific of human through which they communicate and which is realized in the form of various languages. What is essential, therefore, is not how the child expressed, but its ability to communicate in any way with any means he needs and to verbalize his fears, anxieties and emotions.

Language is communication, but communication is not language.

In the first months of life there is no distinction between the language of Italian children or Chinese, American, etc, and their ability to communicate is based on exchanging looks and sounds that have not yet linguistic value, accompanied execution of deictic gestures (such as give, show) that translate their social needs and which are retained even after the acquisition of verbal language.

The ongoing research in understanding the meaning of the phonemes "read" on the lips of parents and then try to reproduce them, it is long and difficult.

The deaf child should be able to achieve some objectives in the use of language. The most important one is to be able to communicate better with all those who are part of his life. The hearing children learn to use verbal language with the use of the same, on the other hand, deaf children do not ever adopt the direct use of verbal language if not subjected to adequate language training. One of the main consequences of a failure to capture the feeling is always inadequate in a world that does not perceive the child as their own. The major difficulty which a deaf child faces during the development of his linguistic process is not being able to communicate with everyone and to express themselves in a free way. This difficulty will have a strong effect on its relational process and its social integration which will be often very limited.

1.2 The role of the family

The family is the first environment for a child, and it helps to facilitate the access to all the kind of communication that characterize social life, since the parents are the first people with whom the child establishes a relationship of respect. The birth of a child, is in most cases a wonderful event: a new life that fills the home of noises, voices.

Parents do not immediately notice the presence of the deficit and when they find out it, this causes in parents thousand questions: why, how, how to communicate. Just till before the discovery of deafness, the attitude of the parents is spontaneous and natural.

There will be many different reactions that parents show in front of a problem which until then had not been placed. From here a long journey begins, a journey that involves first the mother and father of every deaf child. It's up to the parents choose competent people to follow the child and know how to help the child.

To all this must be added that the deaf child can be born into a family of deaf parents, both within a family of hearing parents (about 95% of deaf children born from hearing parents, the remaining 5% comes from deaf parents).

1.3 Deaf children of deaf parents

In this case, you have less difficulties in communication: parents experiencing the same condition of the child knows how to relate and their interaction with the child will be spontaneous and natural. In families of deaf parents, the situation is less alarming: parents themselves, and particularly mothers, use communication strategies based on visual solutions. They use facial expressions and tactile contact with the hands and feet of the child (tapping), place their face and hands in the field of view of the child and use the signs directly on the child's body or object on which they want to attract attention.

What's more is the acquisition of a natural language that use of the visual-gestural channel: sign language, mother tongue for the deaf which serves to ensure that they have growth, autonomy and mental learning. Through sign language and family, the life of the child takes place normally: the child becomes aware of his deficit respecting the phases of a regular language and cognitive development. This is due to the fact that the type of communicative interaction adopted by deaf mothers changes over time following the development of language and communication skills of the child. The researcher Volterra talks about Baby Sign and says that it's interesting to find in the communication of deaf parents with a deaf child the same characteristics of the communication of deaf parents with hearing children: how hearing parents with deaf children use language very redundant, very repetitive, in practice very poor, so deaf parents produce very different sign compared with the ones used among adults, performing gestures much broader and more in an easy way. Baby talk is what we call the one addressed to hearing children, so it's a Baby-sig one addressed to

deaf children. Mechanisms of exchange are the same: they ask for things, they make answer, see if the sign is right, they correct hands (Caselli, Maragna, Volterra, 2006).

The mothers who are deaf, therefore, adopt a full disclosure that serves not only the visual channel, but also the tactile and auditory, trying to offer a "rudiment " of spoken language to make it clear that there is something that can be achieved through the lips and voice.

1.4 Deaf children of hearing parents

Contrarily to what happens in the relationship between deaf parents and deaf child, hearing parents go through the early stages before you get to the acceptance of the deficit. Doing that they cause difficulties inherent the early stages of child development. The communicative and linguistic development of the child depends not only on its acoustic inability, but above all depends on where he lives, which in this case, it is unable to accept and offer all the possibilities for access to communication and language. Deaf children with hearing parents, therefore, have a delay in language development (Caselli, Maragna, Volterra, 2006).

The communicative interaction in this case is not based so much on strategies of visual, vocal or tactile input. All hearing parents want their son to be "normal" like other children, but they are not always able to offer the child the right incentives to build an independent life. Maybe because deafness is not seen, not touched, perhaps because the word of the baby does not make sense without lullabies, nursery rhymes, roundabouts and fairytales (Rossi, 2005).

The parents must first acquire the knowledge that this sensory deficit doesn't cause mental retardation, but that will inevitably delay the acquisition of normal developmental processes and relational language. Here the needs to direct him to an educational way able to comply with these processes. When the child is born into a family of deaf parents, the

parents themselves initially go through difficult moments (Luterman, 1983) before being able to accept the child with its deficit.

The quotes of Daniela Rossi in her book "*Il mondo delle cose senza nome*", seem appropriate to better understand the moods tested by parents at various stages.

In most cases, the first reaction is to despair when they discover that their child is deaf and then they go through a period of strong emotional tension. Despair is followed by a state of shock that has a short duration and that leads to admission, the inadequacy of the role, confusion (because there are too many different information accumulated) and anger that lead to a state of helplessness and frustration. The most intense feeling, however, is the sense of guilt, felt especially by the mother. The parents want to find out the "cause" of the child's deafness and manifest attitudes of anxiety and overprotection. After they pass from the stage of despair to that of refusal or illusion represented by the parent volunteer in the non-acceptance of deafness of the child or by feelings of anger toward the doctors who deal with the diagnosis. All this leads to a realization during which parents, experiencing a state of great tension, are forced to face an inevitable reality and finally arrive at a constructive action that will accompany parents and son all his life. The construction of good communication depends on how much attention is placed to stimulate the child in the right way. This is difficult especially in the first years of life when the child is attracted by the objects that surround him and is not interested in communicative interaction.

It is necessary, in any case, to respect the timing of the deaf child. Although deafness is not a deficiency that hinders the construction of a communicative interaction between mother and child, it is necessary to consider that the language acquisition is a long process. What really matters is the communicative intent, manifested in searching a dialog.¹

¹ Favia , Maragna , 1995, p. 32

The attitude of parents is crucial for the child to accept his deficit and to have more confidence in himself. The family has the duty to inform him and to seek the best way to ensure his son a good growth, a good education and its place in society.

To this period belongs also the choice of language education.

1.5 Using the language without the words

Speak, write and know how to communicate today are fundamental prerequisites to be well integrated into the social world. For this reason the linguistic competence of each child is not limited exclusively to the acquisition of spoken language. In fact, the language is developed in various fields, which in theory could be divided into: phonological, lexical, morph syntactic, pragmatic. They actually evolve in close connection between them, even if the child in some moments can be more forward in one and further back in another. Using the language correctly is like putting together the few pieces of a puzzle, which if not properly combined are likely to create a entirely wrong form. It should stimulate the child in the right language skills that embraces not only the development of spoken language, but also the written and we must take into account, first, that the deaf child have different times and ways of acquisition. This is important to know for the parents, which are the first people who relate with the child. The difference between verbal language and written language is not the only way of expression, but lies in the fact that the two languages are two different ways of knowing and then to represent reality. In a film titled " In the Land of the Deaf " ², an old deaf talking to some parent explain the natural ability of deaf children to learn through their eyes. However above all it emphasizes an aspect that should be shared by all, "not despair if your children are deaf! Their eyes are their strength, if you have a deaf child does not protect it but stimulate him! ". Parents can do a lot for their

² A movie by Nicholas Philibert., with Jean-Claude Poulain, Odile Ghermani; original title "*Le pays de sourds*", Documentary, 99 min. - France 1992;

children, but they must first be able to stimulate the child with the help of the simple things that mark the childhood of each subject.

In particular, the family can do a great deal for what will be the attitude towards the future reading of the child. The tales, for example, represent an excellent model of adequate input to reading; moms who read storybooks rich in images, not only can help the child to develop his imaginative abilities, but also his language skills. Learning to write correctly is an essential step in the life of deaf, as it may represent a communication alternative to the use of verbal language difficulties.

To all this must be added that the ability to speak well is not limited to the ability to use the spoken language: communication without words. The overall judgment on the people should not be based on the amount of words, but rather on his personality, vitality and potentiality.

What does it mean, then, to use the language? Use the language does not necessarily achieve it through words.

The case of the deaf is a special linguistic case where there are many choices for the application of the appropriate language method, but there are few cases in which the method brings the subject to develop appropriate communication skills.

Thanks to the language studies of William Stokoe³, sign language is shown as a language in all respects with an internal structure of its own.

He recognizes in sign language the existence of cheremi (corresponding to morphemes of spoken language), achieved through the use of 3 formational parameters, to which he adds a 4th: configuration (i.e. the form that the hand takes the time when you score), place (the space where the sign is executed), movement (the movement made by hand) and the orientation (palm and fingers). The difference between sign language and spoken language lies in the middle of the execution that exploits the intact

³ William Stokoe (1919-2000) was a scholar of the ASL (American Sign Language). He made a comparative study between sign language and spoken language, and noticed that the grammatical structure of signs was similar to the structure of spoken language. The aim of his study was to demonstrate that sign language is a language in all the aspects, with its own vocabulary and grammar, and through which it is possible to express any type of message;

channel through the visual mode-gesture. The signs are a gateway to the actual communication, and when applied from an early age make it easier for the acquisition of knowledge and cultural content. Starting from the comparison with the sign language, the child has opportunity to gain a greater awareness of the use of the morphology and syntax of Italian, or more complex aspects of the language for William Stokoe.

CHAPTER 2

2.1 Short trip around the education of the deaf

The education of the deaf has a history quite old enough to think that was spoken of the inclusion of deaf people already in the biblical texts and in writings of philosophers. In general they were considered as delayed people, that is deficient in cognitive development to be considered equal to all other individuals. The deficit was not attributed only to the impossibility of not hear, but replaced or merged with mental retardation that actually, as we know today, it is completely non-existent. There were many prejudices advanced against the "dull", but the most common mistake that is made even today, is to use the terminology of "deaf and dumb". From the Middle Ages up to 600, the belief that deaf people were intellectually inferior was the main thought in the education of the deaf. Only after the 700 with the introduction of the first sign language and the first school institutions for the deaf we could speak about true education. The first Public School for the Deaf was founded in 1755 by Charles de Michèl L'Epée, who developed a sign language created based on conventional gestures that his students were using to communicate. The work of Abbot De L'Epée continued through Sicard, who refined the method and spread out from the mainland, so in 1791 the school became the first National Institute for the Deaf. This method was then taken into serious consideration by a pupil of Sicard, Roch - Bebiàn Ambroise, who first realized that the signs had a own grammar. The sign language arrived in America thanks to Thomas Gallaudet and Laurent Clerc who founded in the 1817 in Hartford Connecticut the first American school for the deaf using the first American sign language. Later in 1864, was founded in Washington, the first university for the deaf: Gallaudet Univeristy.

Currently Gallaudet University is the only university for the deaf in the world, where deaf teachers, carry out their teaching activities by the ASL (American Sign Language).

2.2 Deaf child in school

The school is the second environment in which the child has to be related to after the family. Indeed after the parents the child is supported by figures who will accompany him throughout the school in which invest not only the commitment useful for his instruction, but also experiences that will live in it. The school, therefore, must be able to accept the child during the precious years of his life, promoting integration and learning.

The case of the deaf child is a case of special integration in which "la qualità dell'integrazione dell'alunno sordo dipende in gran parte dalla capacità della scuola o della classe di diventare una comunità di sostegno, ove è possibile reperire aiuti ed adeguate risposte educative in grado di soddisfare le esigenze comunicativo - apprenditive dell'alunno sordo, che va tuttavia mantenuto in un continuativo clima relazionale con i coetanei normo - udenti, che debbono saper e poter dialogare con lui, nell'ottica del reciproco aiuto e della co-educazione" ⁴. The main task of the school, therefore, should focus on the redefinition of the school environment considering that the hearing deficiency, as mentioned before, only limited ability to hear but it does not cause any cognitive damage.

We must especially consider that education is affected positively or negatively by the personal history of every child. The difficulty will be lower if there has been an early diagnosis, a prosthetic, effective therapy and continuous and a constant and intelligent collaboration of the parents (Caselli, Maragna, Volterra). ⁵

The effectiveness of the educational choices, that parents have taken during the period preceding the school year, can be seen now in the communication skills that the child possesses.

The inclusion within a class of hearing students, choice made today by the majority of the parents, should be based on a strong flexibility from both the

⁴ P. Gasparri, 2005, p.172

⁵ Caselli, Maragna, Volterra, 2006, p. 235;

teachers and students, so that it can be ensured that will be a genuine integration.

However, some research shows that in Italy the situation of inclusive education is not homogeneous, nor classifiable according to territorial criteria.

The "school for all" is not always able to accept and intervene on the educational needs of the deaf child. To protect their school integration, it is important to create a classroom environment in which communication takes place in stimulating and animated contexts, characterized by plurality of languages and kind of communication (verbal and written language, sign language, finger spelling and lip-reading), by various technological tools and types of text (books, magazines, comic books, encyclopaedias, advertising, etc.) and expression of different modes of work organization (individually, in groups, collective).

The academic success of every deaf child, however, is strongly influenced by the type of linguistic methodology acquired: oral, bimodal, bilingual or sign language. No coincidence that the greatest difficulties that the deaf child encounters at school occur in the context of writing lexical and syntactic level, which adds an extra effort to understand and communicate with the entire class context. For all these reasons, living at the school for a child means to be able to overcome a strong test with itself, especially the socio-affective area is rather limited, as the child in school:

- It is isolated from the class;
- It makes the tasks;
- It does not bring the necessary material;
- It is distracted;
- He says he understood even when it is not true;
- It has an aggressive attitude and rejection towards teacher support.

These problems make it even more complex the necessity to implement an appropriate educational intervention and a correct evaluation of the student itself, which is placed in a situation of hardship and loneliness.

In order to overcome the difficulties of this nature and win the attention of the student is necessary to aspire to an effective communication, as the main obstacle to overcome consists in communicative level. Therefore, we need to behave with everyone in the same way, during which both the hearing and deaf people should try to work for the success of a good communication strategy. To understand the difficulties to be faced in the education of deaf people must begin have a look at the children who are educated .In this regard, it is necessary that in class ⁶:

- you stop talking when it is turned to write on the board;
- speak in turn, one at a time, and signal with the hand when someone stops and intervenes in the conversation;
- the child touch lightly on the arm to get his attention, and never suddenly behind;
- do participate in everything that happens in the classroom and that he may not have understood.

2.3 The special education for the deaf child

In Italian the term "didactic" comes from the greek *Didàsko* (teach) and refers to the theory and practice of teaching, every teaching. Depending on the subject being taught, is primarily concerned with the relationship between teacher and student. In the didactic approach the educational context should be well structured and it must use appropriate tools that allow the success of a good education planning.

At the general teaching you add that kind of teaching that has been called "special", aimed at people with difficulties in learning in order to integrate them in the context of class and society in general.

Only if you consider deafness simply as a "diversity" and not as a disability, you may be able to achieve "a quality integration" that consists mainly in giving the opportunity to the deaf child to be an active part of the school

⁶ Jhonson, Liddle, Erting, 1991, p. 16;

environment and to overcome all the barriers of communication-relationships. All this is important in order to acquire language skills and psychological help not only for his growth in academic achievement, but also for his personal growth.

According to U.S. researchers, Robert Johnson, Liddell and Scott Carol Erting, the failure of the education of the deaf is mainly due to the lack of accessibility of the curriculum and to the idea that we can be satisfied with low expectations in academic achievement of deaf children.

Being aware that the deaf child is not efficient in the ear canal, teachers and all those involved in the educational work of the child should adapt the lesson from a methodological point of view in order to display the content through educational strategies that are mostly visual. What's more is the relational aspect of the child that today, in most cases, is included in a class of hearing student, with who is difficult to achieve a complete communication.

Therefore you must be able to assess first the starting levels of the boy in the right way to take the objectives and methodology, second know how to dose the individualized interventions in the classroom and outside the classroom, how to intervene promptly in group dynamics to improve the language competence of the guy (Maragna, 2000) ⁷.

Following the dynamics of meta-cognitive teaching, the boy should develop capacity for introspection, self-analysis, self-awareness. These processes are placed in the second level of meta-cognitive teaching and follow the acquisition of knowledge of general cognitive functioning, developed through a normal process of assimilation. These skills make the student directly responsible for his formation, since, according to these dynamics, will be able not only to become an active participant of his teaching, but to develop a personality to deal with the problems in his school career. Developing an attitude of self-awareness and self-analysis is a way to acquire a greater consideration for the work that should be done entirely by

⁷ Maragna, 2007, p. 18;

him. A common case which often occurs in schools where deaf children are inserted is the attitude of excessive tolerance from the teachers. In this way the child will never be conscious of the fact that he can not get to reach educational goals beyond the expectations of the teachers themselves. The task to stimulate and grow the desire to learn is up to the teachers, who should consider the child only in relation to his hearing impairment.

Therefore the educational intervention, in addition to the interest towards the linguistic and logical-mathematical area, should also cover education for creativity, which is a valuable way not only to open your mind to new experiences, but also to critically read the real ⁸. The educational plan should be based on the best use of spontaneous curiosity, partially already repressed by inadequate linguistic tools and protective attitude of the family environment in which the child lived before the school life. However, the picture is a communication tool that is closest to reality, and the use of it can only benefit positively for the curiosity of the deaf child through a channel perfectly intact that the deaf student uses, often in a better way compared to hearing classmates.

The special teaching for the deaf child should puts in the foreground the deaf child with his or her needs and abilities, trying to create an equal balance between school learning and relational life. One must also consider that each student is a deaf person "different and special". Different because each child has a personal history and language of its own, special because they implement the true teaching, that is the construction of an equally relationship between teacher and student, where both members learn from each other. Just as every child, even the deaf child conveys his emotions, his fears, his anxieties, which are the results of a life very personal and unique.

⁸ Maragna, p. 140;

2.4 Faculty of language and deafness

Who is born deaf or lost hearing early in life can not learn the language and therefore becomes, as is usually said, "deaf and dumb". This term, still use in the regulatory Italian system ⁹, does not describe the real situation of the deaf person and generate many misunderstandings because, in essence, the result is confused with the cause. Indeed it suggests a speech impediment, a failure or malfunction of the voice of the deaf that is, in the absence of other specific diseases, absolutely intact, although it is not scheduled to work. The "deaf and dumb" are, at first, only people "deaf" to become "mute" because of their deafness. The deaf person can learn to program the issue of his own voice through a process of training the language.

According to the clinical approach and rehabilitation, not the re-educated deaf to the voice language is dumb, but in a socio-cultural perspective becomes a speaker when he can communicate the message, whatever is the language adopted. Therefore is the faculty of language, and not its way, that allows deaf people to build communication and get out of the silence (Caselli, Maragna, Volterra, 2006; Favia, 2003)¹⁰.

This apparently simple fact has actually many serious consequences, because it means recognizing that the " language faculty " is separate from the phono-articulatory apparatus, or that "not the spoken language is natural to man, but the faculty to built a language" (Saussure, 1968) ¹¹.

The language faculty is the faculty that allows each child to learn a language if he is exposed to that language. Being exposed to a language means to hear and communicate with the environment in a particular language. For example, children who are born in an environment where we talk about the Japanese learn Japanese, children who are born in an environment where they learn Italian they will speak Italian, children who

⁹ The basic rules that identify the conditions to be declared " deaf and dumb " are contained in the Law of 26 May 1970 . 381

¹⁰ Caselli, Maragna, Volterra, 2006, p. 19; Favia, 2003, p. 13-15;

¹¹ Saussure, 1968, p.19-20:

are born in an environment where one parent speaks Japanese and the other Italian, learn both languages and they become bilingual.

It's clear that the acoustic ability is crucial to learn to talk. The deficit of the acoustic channel prevents the deaf child throughout the process of language acquisition in its aspects of comprehension and production. If he is not able to hear the language spoken around him he can not imitate the sounds of the environment, he has no acoustic feedback on his own productions and cannot totally communicate with those around him. His faculty of language suffers as a crash or a forced delay.

While being deeply anchored in the biological aspect of the human species, the faculty of language needs an appropriate environment to be realized, and this in a period of critical age.

In support of this theory may be added a series of studies on particular cases in which a socially difficult situation did not allow the language faculty to unfold in the manner and within the time fixed. They are the so-called "wolf children", those children who, for different circumstances such as abandonment, imprisonment, exclusion, live in complete isolation from human society (Sacks, 1991). Often we have lacking news and fragmentary cases of this kind, but at least two of these have been well documented. The first is represented by Victor and the other of Genie.

From these it seems clear that children who have no contact with a linguistic environment within a critical period, even if re-educated, are able to develop different abilities, but their language remains imperfect. In particular, aspects morpho-syntactical language are never completely mastered.

Unlike the wolf children, the deaf, not living in isolation, realized their language faculty through another way: instead of the acoustic channel they use the visual channel, in place of the vowel sounds and words they use signs to communicate. In essence, the power of language for deaf people has found a way to fulfil themselves spontaneously into another way.

The "deaf and dumb" don't speak not because they lack the language faculty, simply their language faculty is expressed in another way. It would

therefore be more appropriate to replace the term "deaf and dumb" with that of "deaf", specifying whether is a pre-linguistic deaf (born deaf or become such before the acquisition of language), or post-linguistic (became deaf after the acquisition of language), terms which effectively represent the condition of deaf people.¹²

¹² Caselli, Maragna , Volterra, 2006, p. 19-23.

CHAPTER 3

3.1 Comprehension of the text

About 81 % of the deaf school population has serious difficulties in understanding a text, while the estimated impact on the deaf population between 7 and 11 years is 10% (Rualta, 2011)

However the difficulties in reading are not so much in instrumental reading, the decoding of a text, as in the ability to identify the logical relationships in it.

The purpose of reading is to understand what is read, and then access to the meaning of what the phrases they want to convey in writing. The comprehension is not only in the ability to read, but is a process that requires multiple skills that must be used in a harmonious way. Many components in reading in the adult are automated: the moment in which he finds himself in front of a more difficult text and is able to adapt to carry out the task then he has a good level of self-observation and is able to understand when understanding has failed. To recognize the specific role of these skills and to study the way people interact is important to understand how to strengthen them in their absence.

The comprehension of a text does not consist simply in the abstraction of meaning of the pages, but a much more dynamic process in which there is a combination between the new information provided by the text and what the reader already knows. This means that this process is always constructive. There are usually three factors that influence comprehension: the characteristics of the reader, the inferential processes and the characteristics of the text (De Beni, Cisotto, Carretti, 2005).

3.2 Previous knowledge and mental schemes

Prior knowledge are fundamental for the comprehension. Knowing the topic discussed in a text facilitates the reading process and the acquisition of

new information. Bransford and Johnson (1973) observed that the presentation of a figure represented an appropriate framework for the text that would be read helps in the comprehension. The figure or picture was reminiscent of the skills necessary to understand.

Bartlett (1932) refers to the concept of schema as a structure in which knowledge is organized and put in relation to each other.

If, accepting this definition, comprehension is the construction and activation of schemas, then the deficit of it could be due to the inability to activate useful patterns or to the activation of an incorrect schema (De Beni and Pazzaglia, 1995). Indeed the schemes have a reference function for discriminating important information, they provide an ordered structure in which we can store knowledge, allow to make inferences from the text and facilitate memorization.

3.3 The working memory

Although memory is an important component for the process of comprehension. The processes of working memory and long term memory are critical in reading.

Several studies have investigated the involvement of working memory in the process of comprehension of the text (De Beni, Pazzaglia, 1995) and the results showed that poor readers have a significantly lower performance compared to good readers in all tests of working memory, regardless of the type of processing, verbal or visual-spatial. Yuill et al. have observed that the evaluation of the verbal working memory appears to be a predictive ability of comprehension in children aged 6 to 11 years, and also the extent of that seems to be predictive of the same visual-spatial skills in older children.

The working memory also has a decisive role in the inferential process: to do inferences it is necessary to retrieve information from long-term memory, than the collected information are kept active in working memory, and so may be used to supplement those contained in the text.

3.4 Capacity to make inferences

To face the reading of a passage means to activate semantic links, locate the structure of the text and the relationships between the various information contained in it, means to re-build the meaning. The inferential processes are required for this purpose, the ones by which the reader integrates his knowledge with those derived from the text or links the phrases and information contained in it. This step is essential because it allows the learning of create a mental representation of the text. The good reader is able in a text to recover the meaning of an unknown or polysemic word based on the context in which it appears, confirming whether or not his intuition in the course of reading; he also manages to gather information that is not clearly spelled out in the text. Just and Carpenter (1987) believe that the peculiar function of inferences is to create connections when these are not explicitly expressed and that this is precisely the activity responsible for the lexical enrichment. Actually the vocabulary of a person is not enriched by an exercise of memorization of words and nothing more, but by an intense inferential activity that allows the actual acquisition of new meanings.

Inferences can be made at a referent level when it is determined that two different expressions refer to the same character, or schema level, when you insert a new concept into a pattern of knowledge already formed. They can also be prospective or retrospective: the first complete the formation of the meaning of the text just read, the second allow us to get the meaning of a sentence referring to the previous one. The number of inferences made during the reading of a text depends from the reader and from the type of task required: obviously a superficial reading will create a smaller number of inferences compared to an accurate reading, perhaps aimed at studying. In narrative texts, the ability to re-construct causal and temporal relations between events, constitutes the central aspect of the comprehension and inferences of the reader.

Part of this ability is in identifying and understanding the logical relationships expressed by connective (temporal or causal).

3.5 Characteristics of the text

The text is not a set of words of which we have to know the meaning or a number of disconnected sentences. It is a complex network of semantic relations that the reader will get, whether they are expressed or they should be inferred. The difficulties in the comprehension of a text are many: mainly lexical, syntactic, and structural and inferential.

From the lexical point of view, text with difficult words, not frequent or that define the same object with many synonyms, will be more difficult than the texts that use simple vocabulary.

There are various difficulties due to inconsistencies between the syntactic structure of the sentence and strategies implemented by the reader to understand the text. For example when it is altered the usual order of the components of a sentence or when the main clause is placed after a subject. Other difficulties arise when we use the passive voice, because children are inclined to interpret the first sentence as the subject of the action or adversative conjunctions that express relationships, such as "although" that require processing more complex than, for example, a causal conjunctions such as "because" or time as "after".

From the point of view of textual coherence there are steps that help the creation of a conceptual framework able to organize the information in close sentences: using lists to provide detailed information, comparing and contrasting two concepts through similarities and differences, exposing ideas and events according to a timeline, highlighting the cause-effect relationships and conveying two concepts in problem-solution structure (De Beni, Cisotto, Carretti, 2005).

Cohesive texts and explicit information make the comprehension easier because they avoid the reader to reread to memorize subjects and creating the right links. To this must be proportionate to the use of pronouns that

refer antecedent parts of the text or particle adversative, difficult to understand. Helpful elements are: the use of images that illustrate the key content of the text and that are as a guide for the reader's attention, explanatory examples and questions at the beginning or end of the text: the first allows the reader to recover the knowledge they already have about the content of the text, the second help in concentration of a particular concept and allow you to fix important information.

3.6 Reading in deaf children

Reading is very important for the progress in studies, to be a informed citizen, to succeed at work and for personal fulfilment.

Learning to read, however, is not natural nor easy for many children (American Federation of Teacher, 1999).

This is due to the fact that a good reading requires the integration of many abilities. The good readers are able to:

- Identify the objectives of reading;
- Apply their knowledge and experiences to the text;
- Read fluently;
- Use strategies to rebuild the meaning;
- Adopt strategies and be able to adapt to different purposes (read for pleasure, to identify information, etc.).
- Have perseverance in reading;
- Recognize the author's purpose;
- To recognize one track between facts and opinions;
- Draw logical conclusions.

If you give the right importance to reading and pleasure involved this may facilitate the development of reading skills. This is very difficult for deaf students sure enough several studies document that the most of them complete their studies without being able to read well, and with difficulties in reading and writing. This is one of the reason why they need someone who follow them.

Although oral language is not necessarily the only system of symbolic mediation of thought, the absence of a shared language with their parents does not allow access to narratives that can be understood (Steinberg, 2000). Therefore the experience of narrative speech in deaf child is less rich than the hearing child and this can have impacts on the development of his literacy skills (Arfè, 2006).

Indeed learning to read is a process in which deaf children have great difficulties: many studies in literature show that in this area the children have one or more of the following behaviours that prevent the development of this ability (Kelly, 2003; Paul 1998; Strassman, 1997):

- Struggling to recognize the written words;
- Have a limited vocabulary;
- Have difficulty understanding figurative language;
- Have weak knowledge of many subjects;
- Their reading is slow;
- Have an inadequate understanding of the syntax;
- Have a limited knowledge of different kinds;
- Do not understand the structure of the text;
- Have a limited range of comprehension strategies;
- Fail in self-supervising their reading (Bertone, Cardinaletti, Groselle, Volpato, 2011).

It is very important to ensure that the interventions are able to develop these skills. If these are effective, there could be some considerable advantages: would prevent demotivation facing a difficult text, will increase the levels of concentration and motivation in reading, would transfer information and knowledge, the child would understand the written information and is offered autonomy in the process of school learning (Fogarolo, 2007).

However the U.S. Department of Education (2003) says that for many years, many schools, lessons and materials have been inefficient. The data in our possession on the subject at the moment are thus still insufficient to determine which is a good method of intervention (Luckner, 2006). Luckner

and Handley (2008) analyzed the studies on the ability to read and write to deaf students in the literature from 1963 to 2003 and identified five teaching strategies used to enhance the comprehension of the text which are the teaching of specific reading strategies, teaching the fundamentals of grammar, specific techniques such as guided reading through questions, discussions, gradual enrichment of the lexicon, the activation of their knowledge, the use of texts written in an accessible way and of high interest.

A multimedia method is an interesting way to explore but the educational method most useful is what contemplates the use of text and images. Reading a text can be a very difficult task for a deaf child, the information conveyed by the images seem to make more accessible the comprehension.

A strategy often used by educators and teachers is the use of images as support for the comprehension.

CHAPTER 4

4.1 The album

The term "illustrated narrative" or even "coloured literature" ¹³ refers to the books of images with text and illustrations that tell a story, or that represent objects and environments, or expose concepts. This production, directed in the past, especially for children of preschool or early education, today, thanks to a sophisticated graphic-care aesthetic and narrative of unprecedented complexity and conceptual, is an interesting reading material for boys, teenagers and even for adults. In this way you can offer to young boys, mostly audiovisual and multimedia, the pleasure of a different reading in which the narrative and even the words are still valued even if it remains the primacy of images (Blezza Picherle, 2002).

With regard to the terminology in Italy there is not ambiguity, and is therefore called regardless of picture book, book with pictures to define the same type of product-book. To these are added other names in reference to the material, the structure and age of the target, such as hardcover, first-books, books-game, toy-books, animated books. In addition, the frequent confusion of the term "picture book " with "album / register" which consists of a booklet containing pre-printed images to colour and complete. Abroad the situation is much clearer and more linear, even terminologically speaking, where for many years now theoretical studies in this field are highly developed and advanced, unlike what happens in Italy.

Especially in Anglo-Saxon ¹⁴ there are three macro-categories according to different ways of interaction between text-illustration: illustrated books, Picturebooks and wordless books (Nikolajeva, 1997; Blezza Picherle, 1996). In the illustrated book, the text is complete even without images, in the sense that it is already meaningful and does not need to be understood with iconic part (Nikolajeva 1997, 2006). In this book images (sometimes

¹³ This expression was used for the first time by Janine Despinette;

¹⁴ For Anglo-Saxon we mean American, Australian, Canadian and British;

also many) give an important contribution to the interpretive story (Blezza Picherle, 1996, 2002, 2004a). Consider, for example, different versions of fairy tales illustrated or other classic the childhood ¹⁵ (Zipes, 1996). In the picturebook the meaning of history is created and transmitted through the interaction of words and pictures (Nikolajeva, 1997; Blezza Picherle, 1996, 2002, 2004a, 2004b; Nikolajeva, 2006).

With the emergence of this definition, the term that in the past was composed of two separate words ("picture book") is now commonly used as a single term (picturebook). In this book the verbal and iconic parts establish between them a continuous game of cross references, so as to define an indivisible combination, where neither of the two way of expression has its own autonomy (Nikolajeva, 2006). The quantitative relationship between text and images change every time: some books in the verbal part consists of a few words or phrases, while in others the text can be quite substantial. There were proposed several classifications of picture books, based on the size, the types of text-image interaction, content, materials, structure, etc..

The third macro-category is represented by wordless books (without words), that is those books that tell a story only through images, while the title, if present, becomes the only written part. The presence of this single verbal element (the title), makes some controversial recognition of this macro-category to the extent that some scholars believe more correct to include it among the Picturebooks and in these cases the term is prevalent wordless Picturebooks (Nikolajeva 2006).

It creates an iconic story and structure, through which transmits actions, events, thoughts, emotions, feelings, styles life and values. Many of these stories, seemingly simple, are quite complex because the reader, in order to understand the meaning and implied meaning of history, must have considerable cognitive skills, logical narrative (Blezza Picherle 2002).

¹⁵ Should be compared, for example, the illustrated versions of classic tales, among others, Eric Battut, Octavia Monaco, Lisbeth Zwerger and Tony Ross.

A key concept is that it should be pointed out is that wordless picture book and picturebook are not a "kind", but rather are a "medium" that carries various narrative genres (Nikolajeva, 1997).

In relation to the category 0-3 the multiple classifications do not always appear fully convincing and unambiguous. Indeed, the inclination is a resumption of commercial categorizations ¹⁶, even in the context of criticism, with predictable and inevitable inaccuracies and contradictions. For this age group, rather than books that tell stories, prevail works that show objects, events and family situations ¹⁷.

In this field France is always an important reference. Even for the French, however, the question of terminology in relation to books and picture books, is in some ways comparable to the Italian situation. Critics and scholars now seem to agree in using the English term picturebook instead of album (sometimes enriched by "pour jeunesse").

4.2 Importance of the images for the inferences and the lexical enrichment

The images have a double meaning: motivational and informative. The illustrations in the books can convey the information behind the text, for example by establishing the historical context, the setting of the story, setting it in time and space, can strengthen the facts described in the story, describe the characters showing their actions or reactions, develop the plot and give an alternative point of view. Clark and Lyons (2004) argue that the images that accompany the text can facilitate the learning process, help construction of mental models, support attention, lighten cognitive work.

The images help understanding because let you create a mental representation which is the same as the story told. They can then help students to study and learn from the text .

¹⁶ To categorizations commercial means as those used to differentiate from publishing for children and classify the various types of books.

¹⁷ Examples of books for 0-3 are: Tom goes to bed by Lieve Baeten (1995) and *The noisy book* by Bravi Soledad (2005)

Studies of Corrigan and Surber (2010) have verified that the comprehension of a texts with images is deeper than a texts without them. In children's books there are often illustrations that provide a range of information that must be processed along the text. The illustrations play a prominent role in almost all the books that children use to learn reading. In the past, especially in recent decades, these have become increasingly elaborate: often dominate the pages of the texts. However, it is still poorly studied how they affect the comprehension of the reader, in particular that of narrative text. Almost all of the research aimed at evaluation of the influence of illustrations in text comprehension, have examined only the literal understanding, and more specifically the effect of illustrations on how to store details of the story.

Dozens of studies in which they present text with or without the corresponding images have shown that the illustrations increase the ability to remember specific and concrete information of the text. Although reference in a text is an important component of understanding, the conclusions on the effects of the illustrations can not be based only on this skill: it is necessary to study how they affect other aspects, such as to make inferences and construct mental models, which are essential components for a coherent representation of the text, or how they interact with the cognitive skills associated with the comprehension, such as working memory.

The ability to make inferences is a strong predictor of comprehension: capable readers are used to do different types of inferences as they go along in the text. The result of this process is a network of meanings, essential for the development and maintenance of a coherent comprehension.

The ability to build this network through semantic inferences is a skill that grows with age and is facilitated by certain factors of the text, such as the distance between the ideas that must be connected, the presence of linguistic signals (connective and anaphora) or by some individual factors as working memory (Pike, Barnes, Barron, 2009). It is interesting to see

whether illustrations can facilitate the inferences of the reader and the construction of a network of meanings.

Although making inferences is important to build the meaning during the reading, a reader can never make connections between all of the information he reads, but must activate some and suppress other, thanks to some suggestions from the context that allow you to select between relevant information and not. It has been hypothesized that the illustrations can be a tool to facilitate the development of mental representations and the information is to remain active (Glenberg & Langston, 1992). The figures giving a description of the most important relationships between elements of the text can also be tools facilitators in the process of inference.

The children are more accurate in making inferences when guided by an illustration. This shows that a picture facilitates the access to the information that the children is building . However, the image may also hinder the comprehension, whether related to information that you need to ignore to make the correct inference: the illustrations are compatible with the text, but incompatible with the situation described, can activate a mental model competitor. The illustrations may also facilitate the comprehension reducing the workload of the working memory for more precise text processing (Marcus et al. 1996). However, the results of the research (Pike et al. 2009) indicate that a good memory work leads us to make efficient inferences in all conditions, when supported by good images or in their absence. In working memory, however, different aspects are involved. For example Pike, Barnes and Barron (2009) assume that, since the images are a source of a more rich text, children who have more difficulties in suppressing irrelevant information may find easier to get information from the images rather than from the text to make inferences.

All these results have allowed us to understand the importance that the pictures may have for the generation of inferences, if used properly.

4.3 Some studies about deaf

Difficulties expressed by the deaf in language use have been studied by several professionals. The research of Bertone, Cardinaletti, Grosselle, Volpato (2011), studies by Rinaldi and Caselli (2009), those of Chesi (2006), are interesting.

These studies have involved deaf participants of different age, type of deafness, beginning of the deficit period, educational methodology and performance of tests used. Despite the diversity that characterizes them, the importance of this work is shown by the results they have achieved. Indeed, they all showed more or less the same kind of difficulty in the use of spoken language by deaf people, while considering, of course, the diversity of topics and variables that influenced the development and training of each participant. The data that connects together these studies is the difficulty encountered with the functional components. These are the elements that are used to connect different parts of a proposition, as determiners, pronouns, auxiliary verbs, prepositions and conjunctions. They have no visible effect, concrete and therefore not find their match in the real world. Problems in the use of these elements are quite common. Lack of control of these words brings indeed not be able to interpret the sentence correctly. The comprehension is so much compromised.

There are different kind of test used to understand the difficulties that deaf people has.

One kind of test is the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-Revised (PPVT) ¹⁸ is a test that examines the amount of auditory receptive vocabulary of an individual with a standard language level.

In this test they show the participant a series of illustrated tables of four images. The examiner must read a word from a list, which corresponds to a single image of the four, while the subject must indicate the drawing he believes correct.

¹⁸ Stella, G. , Pizzoli, C., Tressoldi, P.E., (2000).

According to the results of Vangelista, the data clearly tell us that two out of six are at the same level of children between 3 years and 9 months old to 4 years and 2 months old, while all the others are at a lower level. It is clear that knowledge of the vocabulary is greatly reduced, so that it is comparable to a very young children. This happen because often deaf children fail in giving the correct name to a common object, although it is a familiar objects. In fact, the process which assigns a linguistic label to its referent in reality is much more natural for hearing. Through immersion in the language environment, they receive directly and indirectly lexical input which they experience. So he begins a process of oral memorization of vocabulary specific to a language. Only after a listening experience, children come into contact with the written word and start learning. Deaf children, on the contrary, meet immediate written input and not its oral form. Therefore, they often are not able to associate the meaning of the written reference to its actual sign.

Lexical poverty is a problem that threatens the comprehension of the language and it is a symptom of the great difficulty to get into not only the reading language but also in the oral language. The vocabulary is not the only linguistic component to be heavily damaged in the competence of deaf. Grammar and syntax are also two critical areas in the linguistic knowledge but which pose serious problems to the deaf population.

A test used to understand the linguistic competition is the TCGB (Chilosi, Cipriani, Giorgi, Fazzi, Pfanner, 2006).

The test of grammatical understanding for children (TCGB) assesses the verbal comprehension in children with average IQ and those with problems in their development, while following an approach that aims at analyzing processes and strategies that underlie the acquisition of certain elements of the linguistic competence. It allows you to verify the performance of participants in eight different types of structures: Leasehold proposals, inflectional, active affirmative, active negative, passive affirmative, passive negative, relative and dative. The proposed sentences are 76.

TCGB usually is tested in children from 3 years and 6 months old to 8 years old.

The test consists of 76 tables with four images each. The examiner must write a sentence, while the subject must select and specify the corresponding single picture. If the first answer is correct, the participant earns 0 points. If instead the answer is wrong, the subject has a second chance. In the event that the second answer is correct he gets 0.5 points, while if it is still wrong it is assigned 1.5 points.

The data are clear and show that the majority of errors made by the group of deaf studied from Bertone, Cardinaletti, Grosselle, Volpato (2011) refers to passive, active and negative sentences.

Instead the test on passives structures ¹⁹ allows the study of skills production and comprehension of passive sentences. The test is divided in two parts: the first checks the production capacity, the second analyzes the comprehension.

For the first part, after the time dedicated to take a look at the materials, it is possible to start the test which consists of 24 experimental sentences, or passive, and 12 said filler, or active sentences. The examiner described the images for generating a passive structure.

For the test of comprehension of passive sentence begins with the knowledge of verbs. Then the test, consisting of 40 experimental sentences and 10 filler sentences, starts. The participant can see on the computer screen three pictures together. The examiner reads a sentence and the participant must indicate the picture that the sentence is coupled. As a result passive structures are very difficult to produce and to understand for a deaf.

So we can confirm as in the study of Bertone, Cardinaletti, Groselle, Volpato (2011) that there is a delay in the development of linguistic competence in Italian. Despite this delay, the comparison between the group of deaf adolescents and the control group hearing showed that the

¹⁹ Verin, L., (2010).

development of comprehension skills seem to follow a pattern very similar in deaf and hearing subjects.

The quantitative and qualitative analysis has shown that in most cases the deaf subjects commit the same errors in the control group. This suggests that the two groups have followed a very similar pattern of acquisition of Italian, which in deaf subjects has slowed down or stopped at some point.

As the consequences that come from lack of language proficiency are many, the need to intervene during the preschool period is increasing.

We can say that the use of books and reading are important activities for children since they are designed as a means of :

- educate and impart knowledge ;
- achieve mastery of the language;
- stimulate creativity and imagination, which is good for teaching evolution socio-cultural life of the child;
- experience a form of pleasure in the learning process of the child ;
- integrate past knowledge by the school.

For what comes out from the test of Vangelista we can affirm that by comparing the variables related to deafness and childhood experiences of enjoyment of books, the second seems to have a greater influence on the creation of a good report with books and reading.

In particular, it is possible to do with children activities designed to compensate what they didn't receive because of the deficit, always considering their interests, abilities and motivations. These activities are an effective way to achieve in picture books.

It is necessary to think about the choices and the ways in which propose books, so they can be pleasant objects which the child can enjoy.

The images create the story, they are apparently less complex to understand and the dialogue they establish with the written text is linear and offers scenes/events around the reality that they experienced.

The illustration enters the daily routine as well as the facts of daily life are printed on the page.

Relive the experiences in albums or vice versa re-experience the scenes book in the daily equivalent to explore the reality.

Then, the narrative should be based on simple words not to cause additional difficulties.

Finally, the album should still be in the area known as "proximal development". The stimulus, or the album should be a step above the one already achieved so that the child can continue its evolutionary development. Should not it be on the bottom step because it would result demotivational, because that would cause frustration and loss of self-esteem.

The proposal for an album whose content is accessible to understand is the first step to achieve a pleasant and lasting encounter between the child and reading. The book should be so nice it should be born in the reader the desire to flip through the pages and continue reading the text and images. If the deaf child reaches this, there will come more easily to love books and stories.

4.4 Relationship between the deaf and the books

When we talk about albums and deaf should be questioned on the issue of accessibility, because books are products closely related to language. Even children who cannot read enjoy reading. Hearing child can still enjoy this type of activity. Reading a book and observe the images, to give them a sense while listening to the friendly and reassuring voice of the adult who reads the story is pleasant moments. And even if the child reads alone, without an adult who does it for him, he would continue to experience the pleasure because reading is a skill that, after being acquired, becomes natural.

Research in the field of cognitive psychology have shown that reading is a spontaneous activity that happens sometimes, even unintentionally. This is the result which has been achieved through the analysis of responses to the Stroop test. The test consists of presenting words written in different

colours and ask about saying the name of the colour used to write the word, not the written word. The results obtained by relating the response time of the relevant input, as green word written in green, with the response time of irrelevant input, for example the written word blue in red. The time to respond to irrelevant input is longer because they encounter an obstacle, the interference, which causes a slowdown in the development of the operation. The Stroop effect, thus it is named this process, indicates that the development of the input is independent from the subject's will and therefore, it demonstrates the automaticity of reading activity.

Read does not mean simply operate decoding phonics, but also understand the meaning of decoding and assign semantic value. Thus reading becomes a cognitive task that requires effort to the child.

The reading of a sentence or text is very different from reading the words taken individually. Reading a statement, is not as accidental as a word, since we start other processes in addition to decoding phonics. You must have syntactic, pragmatic, grammatical and lexical skills. You should simply know a language, only then, reading will be more spontaneous and less difficult.

People who have difficulties in the comprehension of the language might consider reading as a strenuous activity. This is also the case deaf ²⁰ people who fail often to enjoy reading the same way as hearing children. In addition to language skills to read text, the relationship between cognitive and motivational aspects acquires a fundamental role since playing for or against reading.

However, the present work deals mainly with deaf who do not reach this level of language development, so that access to language and reading is severely limited.

Indeed people who has cognitive and language difficulties are excluded from the opportunity to enjoy pleasant moment considering that reading is a challenging activity and therefore even frustrating. Even more because we

²⁰ There is no question of putting everything in the same bag. There are deaf people who have a very good level of proficiency for which reading is not so difficult.

must not forget that these are often young people living relationship with the book as related to the school during which the activities are imposed, which negatively influences the motivation (Vangelista, 2011).

4.5 The visual literacy

The information conveyed by the illustrations are complex and children must acquire the tools to learn to read consciously.

The skill of reading a written or illustrated text is not innate. It is true that image allows a bigger enjoyment, but this kind of reading is based on process of comprehension and interpretation that require active participation of the reader. What is required is to bring into a play and interpret objects, actions and events from the child experiences. The aim is to make sense within the context where the image is located. The reader is able to observe the object/event in depth, to perceive the hidden and new aspects, and to create links with other objects/events. All perceptions and knowledge are strengthened and useful. The information collected settle and therefore all the skills enrich and contribute to the construction of future experiments. A kind of metaphor of the iceberg of Cummins (Balboni, 2000) instead of explaining the principle of linguistic interdependence explains the interdependence of general experience. All the experiments we do, reflections, arguments, assumptions that affect them, contribute to the formation of the submerged part of the iceberg that grows progressively as new input and adds cognitive processes. The result is the rise of the part out of the water, which constitutes one or more peaks, which represent the skills.

For a child reaches the ability to read, listen, observe, experiencing pleasure, are skills developed through the exercise.

It implies its inclusion in an education course conducted by the adult and based on the strength of the motivation that comes from emotional involvement. Discoveries, creating relationships, making assumptions, can

become habits and learning can be seen in a positive and constructive manner.

As explained Campagnaro (2012), all the skills, the visual too, are the result of an acquisition process. In this case we can talk about visual literacy. This expression indicates the ability to read images and sustain the development of visual skills for the reader so he will develop a critical perspective. To achieve this, the reader must be able to decode all the elements shown, analyze the images and obtain meaning through complex cognitive processes such as linkages, referrals, inferences.

As the development of the visual literacy is not spontaneous, children need to be stimulated to observe in depth the reality that surrounds them, to describe and to insert it in their speeches, to search for hidden meanings under their iconic surface.

The ability to read images, or visual literacy, lets the child to be able to recognize and interpret images (objects, characters, actions, symbols), use the knowledge he got in different communicative situations and have critical interpretation of the iconic text.

The album meets and supports these skills, which are very important in the development of children. In fact the youth album enables the skills which aid the child to enhance cognitive and learning processes, because the child becomes conscious due to the simultaneous presence of several levels of reading, analysis and interpretation text. The album is therefore useful for the development of critical competence, the aim is also to train an individual "thinking". So it works in the field of the imagination developing aesthetic ideas and artistic order that serve the child to visual development. This is the field of visual literacy. Moreover it help to stimulate active and emotional participation. It is a tool to promote reading.

Visual communication images responds to a set of rules that could define a grammar. The idea is that there are syntactic, semantic and pragmatic standards used to organize and interpret a language text, as it there are standards for the iconic code. It is then necessary to master all the

elements of the visual grammar to produce and understand an illustrated text.

CHAPTER 5

5.1 Utility of the album

Besides the power of pictures in itself, the whole book has potential, including the album and the album without words. Relationships that mutually bind the illustrations in a book leads the reader to trigger processes more than taken illustrations singularly. That is why it makes sense also to point out the potential of albums always thinking about the development of the child, in order to clarify the reason to use this type of books during the early childhood years.

The idea on which the share of early reading promotion is based is that reading is a formative experience. If the time spent on this activity is a high-quality time (which is defined by the choice of books and the organization of the moment), the educational force pervades all levels that define the overall development of the child.

The use of albums brings children to extrapolate from a text read, seen or told, so they develop an idea that reading is not based on the decoding of letters, but assigning meaning to linguistic and iconic symbols. This is a very important aspect that is at the origin of this proposal. Indeed, assigning meaning to symbols is not surely correct, however it is a skill that everyone learns and is particularly important for language development and reading and writing skills. The report that a linguistic sign has a precise meaning is neither logical nor therefore predictable as language, whether spoken or written, but is a conventional system of arbitrary signs and meanings. Similarly there is no logical reason why so domestic animal with four legs barking is called dog, so there is no reason why the sound [a] is represented by grapheme A. It is then necessary to acquire mechanisms that lead us to assign a label, language and meaning signs. Youth albums begin the process when they ask the child to extract an important meaning from the symbols shown in those writings and then attach to the story.

Make inferences from a real situation, oral, written, visual, is a rather complex process since it is based on a sound system of knowledge possessed by the individual.

The visual input is useful because the printed image can not escape observation of the reader. It therefore gives the opportunity to better decode information, such that the perspectives that a baby placed in foreground is taller than a man put in the background. Otherwise, it leads to think more about the characters' emotions, which is also an exercise in deduction. Of course this is at the beginning of a basic inference derived from a overall vision, but then the reader grows more and more attentive its capabilities and development allowing him to interpret even situations that might seem ambiguous.

The album is also useful to understand aspects such as irony, jokes, sentences in both directions and all languages that are based on a deviation relative to normal.

Recognizing only an image in which represents a smiling child and a doctor doing him a shot, the player understands that this is a joke and therefore reaches the correct interpretation of the illustration.²¹

The observation of images and their sequence through the inference process used to develop the foresight that, as said Beatrice Vitali, is fundamental because it leads to the creation of mental images and expectations of a new dimension. In this case the voice plays an important role. Changes of rhythm, intonation, pauses made aloud, or sign language, that is the reader is informed when the page is turned.

Forecasting ability is closely linked to the ability to imagine the events, actions, objects or characters form the rest of the story.

Just like the characters, even the context must be created in the mind of the child. On the page, home, park, games are mere specks of colour. The reader should turn his imagination, so that we can say that the albums are also useful for triggering the fantastic journey .

²¹ Example from Tucker, N., (1996), p. 57.

This example we enter the world of symbolic play that binds the concept of pretend.

The most common objects are a resource for the child to explore that analysis through experience, through its imaginative capacities through knowledge as well as through process of symbolization. While explore them and get to know him, the child plays, makes assumptions about the same objects. And everything he draws he uses continually in a fantastic way (Rodari, 2010).

The images that we find in the pages of albums then become a kind of stage where the reader attends the transformations of an object that can then experiment or invent new ones. Then, the use of albums is good for the ability to create logical links. The function of the images, which do not serve to embellish the page or repeating in a different code the written text, leads the child to develop relationships of meaning between the images and text and between the first and the facts of reality. Not only the particular organization of albums brings the reader to make connections but also the written language of the story, where he gets the information to be integrated with the perceptual analysis of the drawing.

The narrative and observation youth albums are useful because they help the reader to understand that the story is formed by a series of events that follow a specific sequence. The link between a scene and the other is not immediate understood but it is supported by the organization of the pages.

The use of albums is also important for triggering the process of abstraction. There are different types of abstraction: the first allows you to isolate a property common to several phenomena. The this is called generalization.

The ability to generalize is related to the ability to create semantic classes. It is in this case the classification phenomenon. Thus, if an album uses the word "fruit" and the picture shows apples, bananas, grapes, the reader can combine all the elements in the same semantic category.

The third type of abstraction is finally aggregation through which the elements that belong to the same object are grouped. For example roots, leaves and fruits are gathered around the concept tree.

To read an album often materializes in a communicative exchange reading with an adult or with other children in a group. Moments of dialogue that create influence towards the linguistic development of a reader are grammatical, syntactic and pragmatic source of lexical inputs which lead gradually to the creation of a linguistic system increasingly complex and complete.

For example, the field of language takes advantage from the use of albums regarding the use of rhetorical figures. The relationship that develops between illustrations and writing, which are present simultaneously, helps the child to understand.

Away from ordinary speech, figures of speech play an important role in the birth of the pleasure of reading as they lead the reader to a world similar but different at the same time and therefore intriguing.

Figures of speech are also essential because they help the child in the process of construction of reasoning. In fact they combine aspects of reality that apparently have nothing in common but with less obvious links that the reader must discover through the integration of knowledge and several cognitive processes. Metaphor, for example, is often used.

To be understood, however it requires a sophisticated message development because it makes a new and subjective worldview.

Children today are accustomed to use against a stereotyped language, rich in fixed formulas taken from advertising but poor regarding the lexicon, grammatical and syntactical structures. The expression of thoughts, ideas, emotions is therefore damaged if we think they usually have a linguistic form. The meeting between the figures of speech and the child through books is then an opportunity for the reader to begin to employ them. So he can choose the most appropriate way to express themselves according to their communicative goals and the context of interaction. Finally, the composition of the picture books regarding the relationship between verbal

text and iconic text helps the child to get in touch with the written language. Indeed, the dialogue that is created from two codes, causes the recipient to stop the text on certain expressions or words of which are useful for the complete understanding of the work.

The reader therefore moves continuously from one image to another, as an image to the written text, so that through the integration of iconic information and verbal information, the story takes shape. Similarly, when the illustrations fill the holes left empty by written information, or provide a gap, the reader is invited to return to the text, the words, the sequence events. The need to understand is so strong that the child manifested the desire to read or listen to the story in order to capture the sense and link to information gathered from the pictorial representation.

The intervention of the adult-reader becomes necessary because it should prevent a superficial understanding and lead the reader to give attention, in terms of quality and time, not only to images but also to the written text.

However, it is better to remember that in the use of youth albums the comprehension of the two codes is almost never simultaneously (Vangelista, 2011). With reference to the younger children, it is likely that this is the iconic part that will attract immediate attention, but then get to the overall meaning they are called to direct their attention also to the written text. The language level therefore benefits from the use of albums because the balanced integration between text and image leads to give equal importance to the illustrated text (which could reach more young readers) and written text, so that the child understands that even reading the words is nice.

The use of albums is useful because, thanks to the integration of the two codes that complement each other, the reader is required to listen to the story or look at the pictures very carefully, even if it does not understand the story.

As children are attracted by an object, as they look fast scenes. In fact, the force exerted by the charming illustrations and written language interpreted by the adult happens to generate, and gradually increase the degree of

attention of children. As the ability to perceive details, differences, inconsistencies she will also be developed.

The book is also important because it is a mirror of the experience for the child as inexperienced protagonist of reality. In the pages of the album, instead of colours, characters and stories, the reader comes to recognize items that are part of his daily life: activities and games, routine actions, emotional reactions and thus away. Book pages offer all these subjects. They become a world player, as small as it is, can enter, recognize and through which he is able to understand, to build its own identity also helps the dimension of fantasy .

In case the book is the subject of work group, such as in kindergarten, it becomes the means through which the report also stimulate communication between the children themselves.

5.2 The youth album: a useful tool for deaf children

We have already had occasion to explain that the people called deaf differ in several aspects: the period of onset of deafness, degree of hearing loss and its typology, age at diagnosis was formulated, the wearing or not wearing dentures, the type of assistance available to them, the method of rehabilitation followed.

Similarly, we had the opportunity to note that hearing loss does not prevent the acquisition of a language. Indeed it is not impossible to meet deaf people who have as good level of linguistic competence as hearing people. However, it happens that despite the development of techniques for early diagnosis and interventions such as hearing aids and cochlear implants, there is the case of the deaf who fail to acquire a language.

Often the course of language development is associated with years of school. Because of the difficulties of communication and understanding expressed by the deaf, there was the tendency to divert the problem without actually face him before the beginning of the school.

So it happens when deaf children have to begin school, instead of possessing deep linguistic knowledge and following a similar course of hearing children, they were imposed to do things without yet achieving satisfactory results. Moreover, these are activities that are detrimental to the motivation to learn the language because they lack the conditions of free enterprise which are at the base. This does not mean that the work of professionals specialized in teaching is useless. It is against the need to continue to work on the language through special exercises created for deaf activities, always considering the variables involved, the mechanisms of learning and use of languages. But it is also important to make sure that these children arrive at the beginning of their school careers with the least possible deviation from the others, or at least with tools they can use in the long term language development.

Since it is impossible to know from the outset the degree of linguistic development of a deaf student, the use of the albums can be helpful with all types of hearing impaired.

There is also work for the skills of imagination and foresight that are still running and are continually confirmed or denied. Cognitive work necessary to meet the duty is quite complex, especially if one considers that the ownership of comics to use expressions of spoken language is an additional element of difficulty. The use of albums, as instruments that develop skills that were needed is good for the cognitive maturation.

Perception is developing sensations gathered by the sensory organs which are decoded, recognized and interpreted as attention is the selection of input that comes from the environment and affects the senses to identify and develop only information of interest. Perception is an activity done by our senses without the will of the individual. Instead, the intention of the subject has to give attention to what we perceive.

The simplest and the most salient features of objects in the perceptual field are identified very quickly through a process called pre-attentive attention, only after this initial phase the perceived properties are integrated to achieve full recognition of objects. It is focused attention.

What influences the attitude of some deaf is the goal of attention and therefore its quality.

Give attention to something meet the requirement of record information concerning the observed input. Attention does not mean just watching, but instead look to retain information. This process is spontaneous for inputs that interest us the most, but it is more difficult to activate when the importance of information can be used is not so obvious.

Recognizing the importance of the inputs is essential for the activation of careful quality processes.

Regarding the perception, the use of albums is useful for another aspect that is quite special considering the condition of deafness. Deaf children can not hear, but they can learn to recognize and imagine. Indeed deaf children, even profoundly deaf perceive vibrations and they are able to reproduce sounds. It is possible that they are different sounds Italian, but also the variation across languages is a characteristic of onomatopoeic sounds. That is why the albums that have onomatopoeia are very important for the development of the child.

The use of albums acts on deaf children in the same way it acts on hearing children (Vangelista, 2011). The expressiveness of iconic language create a series of emotions and feelings that the child recognizes as belonging to his experiences.

Control feelings is an important aspect, especially if one considers that give them voice is fundamental. Children usually continually express their emotions, their feelings through gestures, reactions more or less controlled as tears or laugh, but also through words. Talking is a way to express the bad feelings, share those positive, question about doubts. Talking is important as the emotional level. And then, when the language is weak it 's better to have partners who, although silent, always know listen and understand.

Communication with deaf people is different from communication with hearing people. Indeed, although they use the same code, they do not use it the same way because the oral-verbal languages is spoken by the

majority. Just think about the interactions that take place between foreign people who do not share the same language, communication is difficult. The same is true during interactions with deaf people.

Sign language is the most natural language for the deaf because it is based on the visual-gestural message transmission. Studies show (as we already said) that it is a real language and has a grammar, syntax, phonology, semantics and pragmatics. The acquisition of sign language is fundamental to the process of language development in deaf since it prevents that language acquisition circuits would atrophy. In addition, proficiency in sign language can be functional to learn vocal language, the same way as when learning a foreign language is based on the skills of the language.

The recipient of the albums is both hearing or deaf child. The importance of using books that are not made on purpose for a class of readers, except of course by age groups, comes from natural input. We are not witnessing the loss of input which the deaf are too often subjected. Richness and variety of inputs with respect to language, themes, reflections aroused, reasoning, logical operations are necessary elements.

So the album is important for deaf children not only because it gives them the necessary input for the development of expressive and communicative system, but because it gives them the same input of hearing children.

Through the description of the emotional states of others through identification with a character, not only the child is able to explain the emotions, but he manages to give them the appropriate name. In this way the loneliness, anger, disappointment or fear are emotions that do not belong exclusively to the personal life, but that can be shared, communicated and be recognized.

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, a course that is based on the use of albums to stimulate cognition is useful for the future of the child as a reader. Reading picture books is constituted as an experiment at different levels (linguistic, emotional, psychological, etc.). Read gives the opportunity to meet input, to meet new realities, to identify with a character and relive emotions. Read him to reflect and think, to see things from different angles, to expand the horizon of knowledge.

Early and intensive reading is important for access to linguistic and grammatical information, but also requires the presence and mastery of many skills, such as inferring the meaning of words based on the context in which they are inserted, establish semantic links monitor and interpret the syntactic structure of the sentence, see discrepancies and assumptions, the literal meaning of the sentence or phrase and know modify, translate through paraphrases. These skills develop after exposure to the language and its consequent after acquisition (as spoken language or sign language).

The analysis of data coming from a group of deaf subjects showed that deaf people have difficulty accessing the reading and language. Given that when similar situations arise it is too late to intervene, it is necessary to ask what could be done in previous years (Vangelista, 2011). By focusing on a very specific age, that is to say 0-6 years, they discovered that the album can meet this requirement. Indeed, the attractive force of the album, for his images and structure is the basis of the activation of a series of mechanisms that are involved in the formation of global child. These concern the cognitive level, through the development of processes such as abstraction, the construction of logical links, imagination, communicative level that takes advantage of trade that are established around reading an illustrated history the domain perceptual-attentive, affective-emotional and socio-relational terms, because the use of the book promotes the integration of deaf children in the hearing group. The begin in the first

months of life by contact with the albums can provide preschoolers instruments that will be useful for school programs. It suffices to recall the utility to read the illustrated stories to the true reading.

In addition, the fact precociously propose the use of books in colour on one side allows the discovery by child-readers, range of books and reading as a source of knowledge, the other enjoy personal reading experiences that lead to the birth of the pleasure of reading, which is a fundamental aspect of motivation. You should also note the importance of the book as a input equal for everyone, album not expressly for the deaf, but valid for hearing and deaf too. Or better, any kind of deaf, wearing, knowing the sign language or not, could take advantage of the early use of the album, since it offers all input.

But it is better to emphasize that there is no interventions in language teaching, but input-interventions that could promote language learning in deaf children.

Despite the similarities between reading picture books and reading in the strict sense, even early contact with the album does not imply full access to the book, because it takes the child reaches linguistic comprehension. Early use of albums therefore does not constitute as a solution to the problems in the use of language by deaf but as operative proposal to stimulate the development of the child as soon as possible, while avoiding wasting precious time.

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