Summary

The sixth issue of our journal is devoted to the topic of children's linguistic activity stimulation. The problem is interdisciplinary: it involves psychology, pedagogy, linguistics, methodology, and literature sciences. It is a crucial issue for effective education and even for the very existence of societies and nations. The seven papers presented in this journal show this interdisciplinary and international character of the topic. There are different points of view presented by scientists and researchers from Bulgaria, Poland and Slovakia. Their articles and conclusions should be an inspiration to both theoreticians and practitioners working with children.

The papers lead the readers from the most general of problems, to more detailed ones, from theory to practice. They deal with issues that can be applied to the youngest of children as well as 8–9-year-olds. Marzena M. Szurek writes about basic facts concerning the human brain that have recently been established, especially by neurobiologists. She shows how knowledge of structural and functional asymmetries in human brains helps us to understand children's speech development and special difficulties in this process. It is mainly lateralization that influences language acquisition and, as the author states: "any measures taken with a view to help overcome language difficulties cannot ignore the need to stimulate lateralization". She goes on to present the results of neurobiological research on the human brain, emphasizing the different tasks of the two hemispheres, with focus on the left one (as it is responsible for speech, reading and writing abilities). The attention is paid here to the problems that may occur because of mixed laterality or ambidexterity, and the importance of recognition and treatment when a child is over 3 years old (i.e. in the beginning of pre-school education). In conclusion, M. Szurek claims: "Information on the dominance of hand, eye, ear and foot is important in evaluating the level of speech development in a child."

The problems of diagnosis are also at the centre of the paper by Miriam Valaškova, *Diagnosis of Literacy by the Applications of Digital Technologies*. The concept of understanding literacy based on recent research is innovative. The author presents a stimulative computer program, "Phonemes – our friends", which aims to develop children's phonemic awareness, especially in kindergarten. It is proved that phonemic awareness is very important for a child's linguistic activity and, what is more, it even appears to be "a predictor of school success". It is worth mentioning that new digital technologies are engaged in the processes of diagnosis and stimulation. Nowadays, computers are one of children's favourite tools and "toys" which can be easily used for the purpose of education, even for 4-year-olds. In the paper, the results of pedagogical research on children under the age of 5 are presented. The experiment proved that the development of phonemic awareness is essential for children's linguistic skills. The program proposed by the author not only expands children's vocabularies, but also promotes the strategy of global reading. Whereas the first three papers focus on the linguistic activity stimulation of preschool children or first grade pupils, the following ones consider the problems of second- and third-graders (or even older). The paper entitled *The Quality of Deductive Reasoning in Inferring Words from Context: Compariosn of the Performance of Standard and Talented 9–10-year-old Pupils,* was co-prepared by six authors: Iveta Kovalčikova, PhD., Ivan Ropovik, Jan Ferjenčik, Monika Bobakova, Miriam Slavkovska, Marta Filičkova. They present interdisciplinary research focused on the ability of children to develop hypothetical-deductive thinking and to decode words from context. This is essential for teaching in primary schools as it provides for effective diagnostics and gives hints for the stimulation of pupils with special educational needs. The

conclusion of the research (and the paper) is interesting and inspiring: it shows the importance of the teaching climate in classes and its effect on children's self-perception and, therefore, their willingness to solve linguistic problems. Of additional value is the paper's very rich, up-to-date bibliography, consisting of scientific magazine articles written in English.

The next paper also discusses problems of reading literacy and text comprehension. Ľudmila Liptakova and Dana Cibakova claim that there is no "systematic and conceptual development of reading literacy in primary education in Slovakia". The result of this is the rather poor comprehension of informational texts by Slovak students. The article, *Stimulation of Children's Text Comprehension in Primary Education – on One Educational Strategy,* presents one possible solution to the problem. In the paper, the authors describe their experiment, which was a four-month stimulation programme for children in the second grade of primary school. The results were satisfactory. The article concludes with the educational implications for all phases of the stimulation (input, elaboration, output). Teachers need effective new strategies not only for reading comprehension, but also for developing children's narrative skills. This is the focus of the paper by Martin Klimovič, *Stimulation of Narration: from Examining Preconceptions to Education*. It deals with productive text competence, i.e. "complex skills and strategies of a human which enable him to achieve a communication plan through speaking and writing". The author enumerates the elements of children's narrations according to his own research and then analyzes Slovak textbooks to answer the question of how the narration is taught. The conclusions are not optimistic: the author finds "the current state" unsatisfactory. The last part of the paper is devoted to the presentation of research on a student's ability to create a narrative text in the second grade of primary school. Finally, the researcher describes his contribution to the transformation of the curriculum, proposing a didactic system for three years of early school education (starting from the second year).

The last paper in this issue is concerned with children's ability to understand allegory. Rozalina Engels-Kriditis sees the didactic and educational potential in sayings and proverbs. In her essay, *Children in the World of Allegory: the Key Role of Comparison Skills and Abstract Thinking,* psychological- pedagogical research on the interpretation skills of 5–7-year- -olds is presented. The experiment lasted eight months and was conducted in Bulgarian public kindergartens. It shows that the majority of the children studied could not understand even the literal meaning of chosen sayings and proverbs. But after stimulation exercises, the number of such pupils decreased dramatically. Therefore, the author claims that it is essential to develop comparison skills and elementary abstract thinking in pre-school education. The authors of the papers, as well as the editorial board, hope that all of the texts will inspire teachers to use new methods and strategies in education, and inspire scientists to look for better solutions. The importance of language competence for children's future lives and education is indisputable. It is worth recognizing and making efforts to help preschoolers and pupils in early school age to develop their linguistic skills in speaking, reading and writing as well.

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