

PLACE OF TOTAL COMMUNICATION IN THE BASIC STRUCTURE OF PERSONALITY

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Abstract. *The concept of total communication appeared relatively recently and developed in relation to the education of deaf and mute persons and of those with problems associated to these handicaps. But the total communication is a fundamental component of the expression and impression of all the people, with or without disabilities, becoming in this context a component of the personality, dimensioning and marking its structure for the expression and relationship level with the others. Consequently a total communication is composed by intellectual aptitude and motivational attitude, energizing the personality.*

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The concept of total communication, used relatively recent, was developed in the specialized literature, especially in the field of education and adaptation of the deaf and mute persons to the communication and interrelation with the others. Even though this kind of approach is relevant and important, with explanations and annotations regarding the constitutive elements of the total communication, limited to only such particular cases, it cannot outrun the character of individuality in order to explain the complex structure and the dimension of total communication which extends certainly not only to the special psychopedagogy field but also in the psychology, pedagogy, linguistic and psycholinguistic fields. These considerations determine us to prove three objectives:

1. the total communication is the basic condition for the education and interrelation of deaf persons or having other deficiencies, in order to ensure the successful adaptation and integration in society;
2. the total communication is very active even in the case of normal people, determining the person's orientation of expression preferences once with the affirmation of the expectations towards the environment;
3. the total communication constitutes a psychological component of the personality, ensuring the success/failure of energizing activity and expansion of the subject, which give his the role of intellectual aptitude and motivational attitude towards the other people.

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Therefore, the total communication is a specific characteristic to all persons and it goes beyond the verbal communication because completes this one by a series of extra linguistic and prosodic means, as: the gestures, mimic, pantomime, the look expression or the movement expression, exclamation, verbal inflexions, pauses, vegetative reactions, which accompany the communication etc.

The persons that cannot have verbal communication, as the deaf and mute people or those suffering from dysphasia, alalia, autism, talk mainly through extra-linguistic means whose efficiency is directly related to the personal level of experience, mental age, personality characteristics, motivation for the relation with the others etc.

The total communication doesn't exclude the verbal communication, which is comprised and extended to the normal persons and in the same time for the persons with language disabilities (in connection with the severity of the problem) is bouncing between the different means of accomplishing the communication where the goal to interrelation and understanding with the others becomes significant.

The total communication, despite its importance and complexity, becomes researched and reported to a series of demands of special education needs only after the 70th. At the basis of this field stood up the studies about sign language which, in fact, constitutes only a face of total communication, but definitely the most important one.

As we know as far, the first course of gesture language was taught at the National Institute from Paris in 1976 (D. Morres and J. Maestas 1989), the total communication becoming after that a discipline introduced in educational-recuperative curricula, especially for deaf and mute people.

The total communication starts to gain appreciation to the prejudice of the oral method which dominated a long period of time in the education of deaf people, pursuing at any price the formation of verbal communication.

As a consequence of the valences of the oral method where were valorized to the maximum any left capacity of hearing, it was acknowledged the idea that using and extending the hearing prothesis could solve the problem of deaf pupils and those ones could be integrated successfully into the mass learning without being requested special schools.

In Holland, Huising adopts the term of "acupedia" which means the practice of the hearing to the deaf children and constitutes programs of helping the children under 3 years old. Some encouraging results were obtained in Sweden and then in England which led to the accreditation of the idea that the left capacities of hearing can be valorized allowing to the deaf child not to follow a special school.

In our country too, there are some voices that believe in the miracles of the protheses and the complete integration of the deaf child into the mass education program.

We don't minimize the positive effects of the prothesis but this one cannot supply the importance of educational-recuperative program from the special school and cannot cancel by an administrative decision a traditional form of education (the special learning), which proved its valences during the time.

The acupedia is based on the priority of hearing over seeing and the therapeutic approach starts from the early diagnosis of the deficiency together with the hearing prothesis and systemic education (Pollak 1970).

Despite the fact that the time passed (more than two decades) from this stipulation, there isn't yet a common agreement over the total communication and its possibilities to become an educative method for the deaf persons or having other handicaps or the normal persons.

For some people, the total communication means only the use simultaneously of oral communication and gestures in teaching the deaf people; for others the total communication is a philosophic modality to put the deaf people into the position to communicate through any means: usage of the word, the gesture language, labial reading, of the dactilemmes etc.

For us, the total communication cannot resume to the education of deaf people (or having other deficiencies), it comprises an entire organized system of systematic intervention into the education and instruction of normal persons or persons having handicaps in order to develop advanced capacities to communicate and interrelation with the others, using all the possible means: verbal – non-verbal, verbal – prosodic, verbal – actionable etc. The adaptation is made in correlation to the chronological and mental age of the subject, to his level of culture and education, to the intellectual and sensorial capacities of the person.

The use of other means besides the oral ones for the development of communication and socialization can only be benefic to the subject because it opens towards him a large field of orientated influence of the capacities of expression and understanding, of learning various forms that facilitate the social interrelation.

The more limited are the subject's verbal structures, the stronger is his tendency to use nonverbal means of expression in order to express himself and become understood, despite the fact that these means weren't learnt in an organized manner.

The child learns spontaneously, through relation with his mother and the loved ones, the meaning of the mimic, knowing some actions or adjectives that he hasn't yet a verbal correspondent: to eat, to drink, to be bad, to be good, to be beautiful etc. The adult develops too such a communication starting from the early ontogenesis and spontaneously adopts extra-linguistic means for some actions and references to various objects.

It has been found out, in an empiric manner, that the learning of the names of some objects, for instance, can be much easier be remembered if there is accompanied by mimic, gestures, prosodic, by an outlining of the affective part of the communication, by the use of the iconic material and by the stimulation of labial reading.

It is very well felt the lack of some researches that highlight the advantages of using equilibrium between the use of verbal and nonverbal communication in the periods of language formation and of organized implementation of the total communication structures.

The first study appeared in our country that fundamentals scientifically the total communication for the normal persons too is recent (E. Verza, 2005). Unfortunately, in our country the term of *total communication* hasn't a fundamental resonance and didn't penetrate in our scientific research. The things aren't very clear neither on the international plan; there are few researches concerning the total communication, based almost exclusively on subjects with hearing problems.

These results prove the fact that the sign language helps the deaf children to better adapt to the interrelation situations because they are less reserved concerning the used forms in communication, but appreciate the level of understanding and affective extension in the general behavior plan to adapt to the environment.

Therefore, the adaptation to the psychosocial environment cannot be reduced to an exclusive linguistic communication because any mean or technique which helps it or even replace it, can become efficient if the subject can handle it in order to accomplish his goal to integrate in a complex relational system which will allow him a more expressive behavior, understood and accepted by the others.

From this point of view, the Romanian school, through his specialists (C. Pufan 1972) and the teachers from the special schools, puts into practice the idea that any mean of communication based on the signs, mimic, gesture, pantomimic, dactilemme, labial reading etc. mustn't be left behind from the deaf children education if it is useful to the communication and can be a form of support in the verbal language development.

Such an interpretation proved to be efficient not only for the psychosocial adaptation of the deaf children, but also in the growing level of outrunning the mute condition and developing the verbal communication. Certainly, it can't be avoided a series of phases and conditions of methodological order necessary to reach the highest possible point of exceeding the mute condition and for the gradually and systematic use of sign language once with the psychic development of the child with hearing problems (E. Verza, 2003).

After all, even the deaf children with whom we use only the oral communication when they can't find the appropriate words employ a complex system of signs which they create or partially adopt from the other peoples they met in order to express pragmatic relations or even semantic ones.

It can be easily seen that all the persons, no matter the motives, have problems of verbal expression and logic construction, grammar construction of the language, use more and more frequently nonverbal means in order to become understood and to transmit the most accurate and fastest way the ideas and situations lived.

In the troubles of language and in verbal retards for the subjects with normal intellect appears the tendency to control and choose gestures, pantomimic expressions which appear to be more adequate in order to replace some verbal formulations. In the early ontogenesis, the children are taught spontaneously by their mothers to communicate through such means, to understand the actions or the unknown words through intonation, vocal timbre, hands movement and facial expression. Later on, in kindergarten and then in classes, the teacher intentionally adopts different nonverbal means in order to reinforce the verbal stimuli and draw the children's attention.

The signs' language and generally the nonverbal techniques are learnt in the same time with the verbal language and together they give the dimension of total communication, supporting each other and determining an equilibrium which shoves the subject's verbal capacities. Therefore, the total communication has all the verbal means (oral and written) and the nonverbal means that help a subject to understand and make him understood at a higher level.

For the normal persons, the verbal communication is, off course, dominant and for those with severe deficiencies of hearing and other deficiencies associated or in cases of severe deterioration of the intellect, at least until the organized and systematic learning of the verbal language, the forms of communication through signs remain the main means of expression.

The verbal language is more loaded with ideas and information, expressing and fulfilling in a complex manner the cognition function comparatively with the nonverbal language which expresses mainly attitudes and emotions giving the impression of an amplification of the affective part of the communication.

The verbal language becomes in time, once with the psychic development of the person, more controlled and censored, where the intention, the meaning and the signification are dominant, comparatively with the nonverbal language which has a distinct spontaneous character, in many cases without intention, provoked and focused on a given event or situation.

We believe that the sincerity note is present in the entire way of the personality expression and behavior, the subject couldn't elude it, neither verbal nor nonverbal, without provoking from the interlocutor suspicions and doubts regarding the quality and the personality of the speaker. As the body as an entire and each of its segments can express a certain affective content – informational, to which it is added a series of prosodic elements of the speech, as the intonation, the timbre, the rhythm, the accent, the pause etc., we are determined to underline the great variety of the complex psychic conditions, which can be expressed in a certain moment.

We emphasized the fact that given the situation, the complex where it takes place and the interlocutor, the nonverbal language can have superior valences in comparison with the verbal language. For instances, the small child or the one who has troubles in verbal expression adopt nonverbal forms in communication with the others. Even in the intimate relations of the adult person, the nonverbal communication has the tendency to become dominant and preferred for its discreet and complex presentation of the attitudes, emotions, thoughts and intentions.

Therefore, we can say that the nonverbal language is important not only for the expression of attitudes and affective states and for the completion and support of information produced through the verbal language, but also for the fact that allows the people to have a wider extension of the communication from all the points of view. Some authors sustain that the nonverbal language is superior to the verbal one because the majority of information or messages produced nonverbal have a higher degree of sincerity (Ray Birdwhistell, 1970, Albert Mehrabian, 1972), but of course, we can't minimize the importance of the word in communication and in the interaction with the others.

Equilibrium between the two forms of language, with tendency to practice the verbal communication, contributes to the improvement of personal capacities of expression, in a complete manner, relations and causes inside the informational and attitudinal-affective messages. *The total communication contains the two forms of language, verbal and nonverbal, which means a complete expression of all the intentions and ideas of the subject once with the growth of understanding resources of the others, interaction and adaptation to the environment.*

This type of communication can be educated and developed under the influence of socio-cultural environment becoming in time patterns of expression where a person's genetic hereditary component cannot be neglected it. Once with the psychic development of the subject, the total communication improves attaining a maximum level in the psychic maturity, when it performs a role of exchanging information and attitudinal-affective states but also of adaptation and complex integration into the environment.

In the total communication, the accent can be put in a certain moment either on the verbal language or on the nonverbal one. This fact depends on the pragmatic function followed by the subject, but also on the communication content, mainly cognitive of attitudinal-affective and on the speaker's capacities and experience to exercise a great persuasion over the interlocutor.

There are several sequences in the total communication with a particular accent upon one side or another, without disturbing the equilibrium between the two forms of language. A good speaker knows exactly, depending on the situation, which form of language is more suitable and has a greater impact over the interlocutor, as well as he knows how to use on purpose the whole spectrum of possibilities offered by the language techniques without renouncing to the equilibrium imposed by the law and logic in the total communication. This is the way in which the total communication attains maximal values in expression and deciphering the personality.

Given the close connection between the verbal communication and the nonverbal one, the messages elaborated through a form or another complete each other and enrich themselves from the point of view of the content with messages obtained from the other channel increasing in this manner the unity of total communication and its determinant place in the superior psychic activity.

Some authors speak about two minds, one of the thought (informational) and the other one of the body (dispositional-attitudinal). But they cannot be separated arbitrarily, only considered into a unity particular to each subject, the subject being also responsible of the rapports and relations of his personality to the environment.

The schema presented bellow expresses the basic components of the total communication disposed, as you can see in a hierarchical form, but in a perpetual interaction and, in the same time, depending on the level attained by the two forms of intelligence: the cognitive intelligence and the emotional intelligence, as well as their development is also related with the performances of verbal and nonverbal communication. The two forms of communication make possible not only the expression of the content elaborated at the level of strategic intelligence (cognitive or emotional), but also nourishes a code system more or less rich, loaded

afterwards, semantically and affectively, by the elaborated messages. Finally it is developing a specific form of psychosocial adaptation where results the development of a new form of thought materialized in a social intelligence, which marks the subject's success or the failure in the social-professional life.

In this context, the total communication plays a decisive role into the subject's adaptation to the environment and implies all the language forms and basic structure of the personality and life lived experiences.

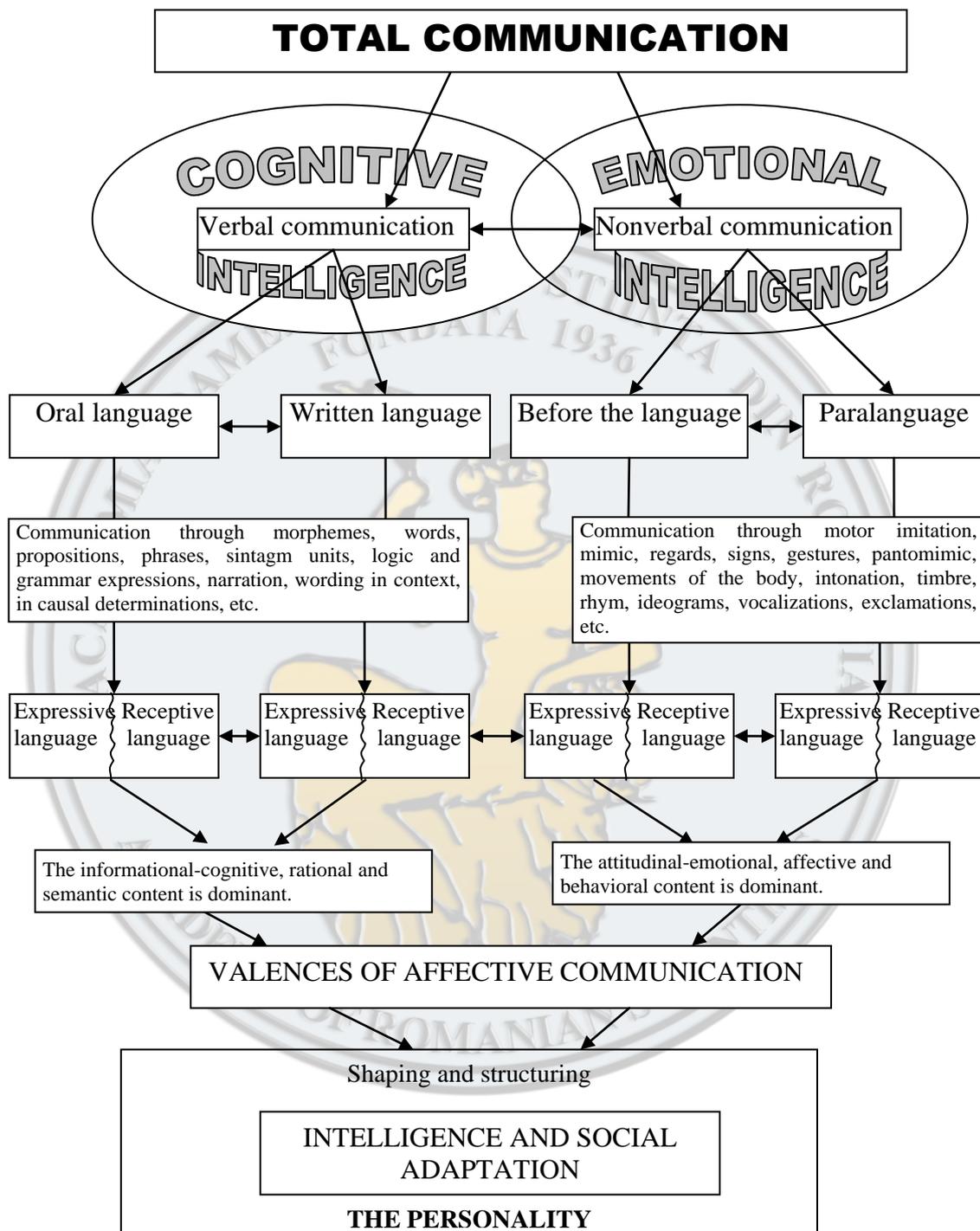
The appreciation and the intelligence evaluation and the social adaptation suppose a dynamic relation between genetic and acquired, on the basis which evolves the entire psychic activity of the person. At the persons with a psychic superior development, in the communication through language the accent is made on the semantic side and the ideated operative part shows a high level of conscience. Contrary to this case, at the persons with a low level of intellect, the communication is less made in the idea's plan and more on the attitudinal plan.

There are differences of culture and communication between the persons with a higher degree of psychic development and those less evolved (see the cases of intellect handicapped people). For the normal persons it is important the communication of information and for the intellect handicapped persons there are important the relation and the context.

From the attitudinal system and the subject's capacities to communicate information, it is constructed an important part of total communication, the affective side. The valences of this one confer quality to the affective communication determining a maximum impact over the interlocutors. There are accentuated the intimacy and the accessibility to the others.

Therefore, the affective communication dimensions the content of total communication (verbal or nonverbal) and has also a significant impact upon the personality construction and structure. The affective communication supposes the understanding of affective states of the interlocutor and creates a psychic tonus of comfort which stimulates the progress in the personality development.

Therefore, generally the communication is a subtle instrument of influence and humanization. When there are established stimulating relations, a feed-back of stabilization is installed and when the compensatory operational isn't enough the feed-backs of entropic precipitation are reached (see the chart).



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