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## Hypocoristic and augmentative constructions in the speech of profoundly hearing-impaired children

### SUMMARY

The article discusses the problems of difficulties in the acquisition of derivational rules in profoundly hearing-impaired children in terms of the degree of knowledge of expressive constructions. On the basis of studies in two groups of children with an analogous (profound) hearing loss measured in audiological terms, but with a different level of actual hearing performance (speaking children and children using a sign language), the paper presents and discusses their achieved level of comprehension and production of selected hypocoristic and augmentative construction.

**Keywords:** hard-of-hearing children, deaf children, hypocoristic constructions, augmentative constructions

### INTRODUCTION

Profoundly hearing-impaired children have serious problems with word-formation (Muzyka-Furtak 2010), which manifest themselves as quantitative (Muzyka 2008) and qualitative (Muzyka 2009) deficits. The results of studies show their better knowledge of modification constructions (particularly diminutives) than mutation constructions. Regardless of a derivational category, the level of understanding derived forms is higher than the level of producing them. In the group of profoundly hearing-impaired children a marked difference in the test results is observable depending on the actual hearing efficiency that they achieve

(cf. the typology of hearing impairments, Krakowiak 2012b). Children who do not practically use the hearing sense and communicate by means of the sign language exhibit weaker word-formation skills than the children who, despite being profoundly hearing-impaired, use hearing aids and have acquired the speaking skill. The comprehensive results of the conducted studies are specified in Table 1.<sup>1</sup>

Table 1. The degree of comprehension and production of modification constructions and mutation constructions by profoundly hearing-impaired children, juxtaposed with the comparison group of hearing children

Children \ Task	Comprehension		Production	
	Modifications	Mutations	Modifications	Mutations
Hearing children	90%	80%	80%	65%
Severely hard-of-hearing	50%	40%	35%	25%
Deaf	35%	20%	10%	3%

The conducted study proved that profoundly hearing-impaired children know expressive constructions the least (both in respect of comprehension and production) out of various modification and mutation constructions. The reason for this may lie in the adopted investigation method (questionnaire survey),<sup>2</sup> which does not, however, fully exclude other possibilities, for example a very weak knowledge of expressive constructions in profoundly hearing-impaired children. The difficulty in investigating the knowledge of expressive constructions stems from the specific character of the object of study. For the foregoing reasons the research material was re-analyzed in order to determine the level of understanding expressive constructions by profoundly hearing-impaired children.

## HYPOCORISTIC AND AUGMENTATIVE CONSTRUCTIONS

Expressive constructions are characterized by a high semantic diversity and constantly enlarged number of derivational devices serving to convey many varied meanings, often contextually determined (Grabias 1981; Grzegorzczkova 1982; Grzegorzczkova and Puzynina 1984). They belong to the category of modification names (cf. Dokulil 1979), i.e. in their case a derivational morpheme contributes the meaning of *the speaker's subjective attitude to the referent of the derivational base*, e.g. *babsko* 'an (old) woman whom the speaker regards as disgusting

<sup>1</sup> The comparison is based on the results of surveys published in the monograph: Muzyka-Furtak (2010), which were discussed and interpreted in detail in: Muzyka (2007, 2008, 2012).

<sup>2</sup> These reasons were given as justifying the omission of the analysis of this research material in the monograph (Muzyka-Furtak 2010: 136).

and unpleasant', *babina* 'a good old woman, miserable woman whom the speaker treats in pitiful way' (cf. Grzegorzczkova 1982: 55–56).<sup>3</sup>

The present article adopted the division (proposed by S. Grabias 1981) of expressive derivational morphemes into meliorative affixes – expressing approval/acceptance, and pejorative affixes – expressing dislike/aversion.

Meliorative morphemes serve to produce hypocoristic constructions (endearments). They are *derivational constructions that contain information about the speaker's approving attitude to the designated phenomenon (kotuś → kot [cat] + the feeling of pleasure derived from being with it)* (Grabias 1981: 63). Formed for emotional purposes, they are contrasted with the intellectual category of diminutives as informing exclusively about the smallness of a referent (Grabias 1981). This contrast is not always obvious, however, and it is largely theoretical because in practice, out of meliorative affixes one can distinguish those that contribute an expressive value only, and those that contribute an expressive value together with diminutiveness (or even with other semantic elements) (Grabias 1981: 64–66). Therefore, three groups of formations are distinguished among the diminutives: they can be compared in respect of the size of referents, and the intensity of emotional values (Heltberg 1964). These are: derivatives denoting small-size referents without stylistic-emotional coloring, exclusively emotional-stylistic formations, and the most frequent – derivatives denoting the size of referents and emotional-stylistic character. The first type covers “pure” diminutives, the second comprises a large group of hypocoristic formations, and the third “constitutes a complete utilization of diminutive word-formation”. Additionally, the last type has the characteristics analogous to augmentative-pejorative formations (Heltberg 1964: 94–96).

Pejorative affixes are used to form augmentative constructions. In this type of derivatives *the information about the size of an object is combined with the information about the speaker's emotional, this time negative, assessment* (Grabias 1997: 214). In these cases it is difficult to distinguish between the designation of the size of a referent and its emotional-stylistic characteristics (Heltberg 1964). While there are neutral exponents of diminutiveness, there are no neutral exponents of augmentativeness (Grzegorzczkova 1982: 55). All derivational morphemes swerving to produce augmentatives are multi-categorical (Grabias 1981: 66).

The present paper adopted the solution that the expressive function of word-formation is associated with the expressiveness of derivational morphemes (cf. a survey of literature by Kaproń-Charzyńska 2014). Among the exponents characteristic of hypocorisms the following affixes (morphemes) are listed: *–ś*; *–sia*;

<sup>3</sup> In R. Grzegorzczkova's classification (1982) a separate category of expressive and augmentative names was distinguished.

–sio; –iś; –uś; –usia; –usio; –cia; –cio; –unia; –unio; –ula; –ulo; –uchna; –qtko; –usia; –iś; –isia; –ula; –ulo; –cia; –cio; –unia; –unio, etc. They also include complex morphemes that form second-degree diminutives (e.g. *pióreczko*, *buziulka*) (Grabias 1981: 63–66). The exponents of augmentativeness are the affixes: –sko; –isko; –idło; –al; –uch, and others (Grabias 1981: 66–69; Grzegorzczkova, Puzynina 1984: 368–371). This set is far larger (cf. the classification of expressive derivational morphemes by S. Grabias 1981: 70–76). Although the meaning of many expressive affixes is contextually determined, there is a certain specialized group of derivational morphemes (Grzegorzczkova, Puzynina 1984: 369–370). In the present investigative procedure, it was them that were chosen as the object of investigation. They were assumed to be “the expressive system elements”, excluding isolated morphemes (Grabias 1981: 70–76).

## INVESTIGATION PROBLEMS

The subject of the present study, in the large sense, is speech disorders in profoundly hearing-impaired children. The aspect selected for analysis concerns the linguistic awareness of this study group in the area of word-formation, or specifically, the ability to understand and produce expressive constructions: hypocoristic and augmentative.

## INVESTIGATIVE PROCEDURE<sup>4</sup>

The ability to comprehend (decode) expressive constructions by profoundly hearing-impaired children was studied using two investigation techniques.

The applied technique 1 required formulating a derivational paraphrase of selected expressive formations. A sequence of constructions was given according to the following pattern:

1. diminutive construction – augmentative construction:

*Co to jest ptaszek? – Co to jest ptaszysko?*

2. diminutive construction – augmentative construction – hypocoristic constructions:

*Co to jest kotek? – Co to jest kocisko? – Co to jest koteczek? – Co to jest kotuś?*

The applied technique 2 required giving the semantic features that made up the structural meaning of the indicated formations. The task of the subjects was to

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<sup>4</sup> The methodological and analytical part is the expansion of the chapter in the doctoral dissertation, the chapter not being included in the monograph *Konstrukcje słowotwórcze w świadomości językowej dzieci niesłyszących* (2010) for reasons indicated at the beginning of the paper, inter alia because of the fragmentary character of the obtained conclusions. Currently, the material was re-analyzed and its interpretation was enlarged.

provide those features in reply to auxiliary questions by writing them in the spaces provided in the table. The following auxiliary questions were used:

- about the identifying component of a formation: *Co to jest?* [what is this]
- about the differentiating component of a formation: *Jaki jest?* [what is ... like]

In both techniques an expressive construction was preceded each time by a diminutive construction in order that – in the context of emerging oppositions – the children would be persuaded to specify semantic differences between different types of constructions.

The ability to produce (encode) expressive constructions was also studied using two techniques. Like in the test for comprehension of expressive formations, diminutive constructions were used as the starting point: from the same base word the child was expected to form first a diminutive construction, then expressive constructions – a hypocoristic and an augmentative one.

**Technique 1** consisted in giving answers (providing a formation) to derivational paraphrases, e.g. from the base word *pies* [dog]

- ‘*Pies, który jest mały*’;
- ‘*Pies, który jest bardzo mały, bardzo ładny i dobry*’;
- ‘*Pies, który jest bardzo duży, bardzo brzydki i zły*’.

In contrast, technique 2 contained sets of semantic features explicated from the meaning of formations and appropriately graphically presented in the table spaces, e.g. from the base word *but* [shoe]:

- *But + mały*;
- *But + bardzo mały i ładny*;
- *But + bardzo duży i brzydki*.

## STUDY GROUPS

Studies were conducted in two groups – thirty-subjects each – of profoundly hearing-impaired children attending special schools (after completing primary education). The first group were children who used the sense of hearing, wearing hearing aids, the consequence of which being the acquisition of the ability to speak; the other consisted of children who never or negligibly used hearing aids, the consequence of which was the failure to acquire speech (children in this group fluently used the natural sign language). In the case of this distinction, it is useful to refer to K. Krakowiak’s Logopedic Typology of Hearing Loss, in which, on the basis of the criterion for the actually achieved efficiency of hearing and acquired linguistic skills, four groups of hearing-impaired children were distinguished: functionally hearing, hard-of-hearing, severely hard-of-hearing, and functionally deaf (Krakowiak 2012a, b, 2015).

In reference to the Logopedic Typology of Hearing Loss (LTHL), the first group in the presented investigation were **severely hard-of-hearing children**, or those unable to accurately receive speech signals, even with a hearing aid and under conditions conducive to hearing. What predominates in their communication with the environment is visual perception in relation to auditory perception, which only assists the former. The other study group consists of **functionally deaf children**, who do not utilize the sense of hearing in acts of linguistic communication and mainly use the sign language (only some of them speak in an understandable way) (Krakowiak 2015). None of the deaf children in this study group acquired speech.

## ANALYSIS OF THE MATERIAL

The order in which the analysis of the material will be presented is as follows: first, the comprehension of expressive constructions will be characterized in both study groups of hearing-impaired children (with a division into two investigation techniques), and then – production of expressive constructions also in each group of children (without a division into two techniques because of analogies in the results obtained).

### **Comprehension of expressive constructions by severely hard-of-hearing children (SHD) and by functionally deaf children (FDC)**

We will start by characterizing the ability to interpret expressive constructions by severely hard-of-hearing children (SHC) and functionally deaf children (FDC). In both cases the first to be described will be the ability to formulate a derivational phrase (T1), and the second – the ability to explicate semantic features that make up the structural meaning of a formation, using auxiliary questions and clues (T2).

### **Severely hard-of-hearing children: correctly formulated derivational paraphrases (SHC T1)**

To formulate paraphrases of expressive constructions turned out to be a very difficult task to SHC. The identification of the base word with a correct explication of the meaning of a derivational morpheme appeared only in 11% of answers. Most of them were paraphrases of hypocoristic constructions, with essentially isolated cases of paraphrases of augmentative constructions e.g.

Co to jest ptaszysko? – *to jest duży ptak// duży ptak;*

Co to jest koteczek? – *to jest mały kotek// mały kot;*

Co to jest kotuś? – *mały kot.*

The majority of paraphrases produced by SHC were entirely correct in grammatical terms. There were only several grammatically incorrect definitional utterances yet they showed the correct comprehension of formations:

Co to jest koteczek? – *to male kotek // to mala kota.*

The collected material demonstrates that SHC interpreted expressive constructions as diminutive or augmentative, i.e. they decoded the meaning of derivational morphemes in terms of a neutral exponent which informed about the size of the referent indicated by the base form. Only two children, by forming with the *-utki* suffix the adjectival formation *malutki*, which denotes the intensity of feature (so-called intensivum), interpreted the construction *koteczek* as expressive, thus expressing a subjective attitude to the referent of the base word: Co to jest koteczek? *To malutki kotek// To jest malutki kot.* One child used the same definitional form but he substituted ‘m’ for ‘p’ (*kotuś – palutkie kota*).

An additional significant item of information is the fact that all children who were able to produce paraphrases of expressive constructions also correctly interpreted the diminutive formations formed from the same bases.

### **Severely hard-of-hearing children: the correctly identified base word and the meaning of a derivational morpheme (SHC T2)**

The base word and derivational morpheme (affix) were correctly identified in 33% of possible answers (there were only 11% of correct paraphrases).

*Koteczek* → *kot + mały// kot + mniejszy// kotek + mały// kotek + malutki.*

The vast majority of answers were entirely grammatically correct. There were, however, sporadic cases of grammatical mistakes resulting from difficulties in producing agreement, e.g. *koteczek* → *kota mały* and in changing the number category – from the singular into the plural, e.g. *koteczek* → *kotki mały*. There was one case (repeated by the same child in both techniques) of ‘m:p’ substitution: (*kotuś* → *kot palutka*).

Only two children, by forming with the *-utki* suffix the adjectival formation *malutki*, interpreted the constructions *koteczek* and *kotuś* as expressive. One child used the expression *mniejszy kot*, when defining the formation *koteczek* in comparison with the earlier formation *kotek*.

It proved most difficult for SHC to interpret augmentative constructions produced with the affix *-i(y)sko*: *ptaszysko* and *kocisko*. Only four children provided answers of the type:

*Ptaszysko* → *ptak + duży// ptaka + duży;*

*Kocisko* → *kot + duży// kot + duże.*

Again there were examples of ungrammatical explications: *ptaka duży, kot duże.*

Twice as many children were able to give the explication of the formation *szklanica*:

*Szklanica* → *szklanka + duża// szklanka + duży.*

The reason why the interpretation of this type of augmentative formation was comparatively easy may have been the absence of morphological alternations in

the derivational base, significantly changing its form (the alternation *n:ń szklanica* – *szklanka* is a sound alternation, it does not manifest itself in letter exchanges; in the examples *ptaszysko* and *kocisko* there are qualitative alternations – *k:sz* and *t:ć*). It was therefore the formation that realized the principle of simplicity of form, thus facilitating the process of acquisition of derivational formations (cf. principles of acquisition of derivative words Clark, Berman 1984; Clark 1993), unlike the other augmentative constructions, in which the occurrence of alternations in the base made their form difficult to interpret.<sup>5</sup>

The meaning of expressive affixes (derivational morphemes) was associated by all SHC exclusively with the provision of information about the size of the referent indicated by the base form.

The comparison of the results obtained using two investigation techniques is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Comparison of the ability to interpret expressive constructions by SHC, using different techniques for collecting material

Expressive Construction	Derivational paraphrase	Semantic features
Ptaszysko	2	4
Szklanica	2	7
Kocisko	2	4
Koteczek	7	21
Kotuś	4	14
TOTAL	17	50
%	11.33%	33.33%

To generalize, severely hard-of-hearing children found it very easy to interpret hypocoristic constructions. As much as two thirds of the studied children were able to explicate the semantic features from the structural meaning of the construction *koteczek*. The features that make up the structural meaning of the construction *kotuś* were named by half of the subjects. The level of comprehension of augmentative constructions is significantly lower. The occurrence of alternation in the derivational base is an obstacle to the identification of their meaning.

<sup>5</sup> The principle of simplicity of form indicates the lack of formal changes (or minimal changes) in the derivational base in a derivational construction relative to the base word; consequently, the fewer changes in the form of a derivative word, the easier and faster it is for the child to learn it in the acquisition process (Clark, Berman 1984; Clark 1993).



### **Functionally deaf children: correctly formulated derivational paraphrases (FDC T1)**

FDC correctly formulated 6% of derivational paraphrases. Somewhat better in terms of figures were the interpretations of hypocoristic formations than of augmentative ones:

Co to jest kotuś? – *mały kot*// *mała kota*// *piękna kot*.

However, some of the answers have to be treated with great caution. They do not always testify to the acquired skill in formulating paraphrases. Several of them owe its correctness exclusively to chance, or, more precisely, to the analogy effect. FDC adopted a strategy for giving answers to the paraphrase question, i.e. they added the attribute *mały* [small] to every identified base word or to its different forms. This strategy was bound to finally yield a correct answer.

The recorded cases of single paraphrases of augmentative constructions did not in turn appear accidental (because of the correct interpretations of diminutives motivated by the same bases):

Co to jest ptaszysko? *ptak duży* (the same child interpreted: Co to jest ptaszek? as *ptak mały*);

Co to jest szklanica? *stara szklana* (the same child interpreted: Co to jest szklaneczka? as *szklanka nowa*);

Co to jest kocisko? *kot duży* (the same child interpreted: Co to jest kotek? as *kot mały*)

It can be therefore said that the ability to interpret expressive constructions in the form of paraphrases turned out to be at the same low level in the FDC group both in respect of positively and negatively evaluative formations.

Especially worth noting, however, is the fact that despite the so weak general frequency of correct answers, there were answers that testify to the decoding of expressive meaning of the analyzed formations: *stara szklana* (“szklanica”), *ładny kot* (“koteczek”), *piękna kot* (“kotuś”). The children who formulated these paraphrases also correctly interpreted diminutive formations motivated by the same base words, which excludes the element of coincidence in producing these answers.

### **Functionally deaf children: correctly identified base words and the meaning of derivational morphemes (FDC T2)**

FDC correctly identified the base word and the meaning of the derivational morpheme (T2) of expressive constructions in 25% of cases, which means a four-fold increase in correctness as compared with the previous technique (T1) which requires formulating a paraphrase without being given any additional clues. However, the high score suggests exercising certain caution in recognizing the answers as actually rather than accidentally correct:

Ptaszysko → *ptak + duży// ptaki + dużo// ptaki + ptaszysko duży*;  
 Koteczek → *kot + mały// kotek + mały// kot + małe// kot + mało// kota + koteczek mała// kot + koteczek mały*.

In the collected material worth noting is the significant discrepancy between a very small number of correctly decoded augmentative constructions and a large number of hypocoristic ones: half of the children were able to identify the semantic features that made up the structural meaning of the construction *koteczek* and over one third - *kotuś*, while only a negligible number of children could do the same with the formation: *ptaszysko, szklanica, kocisko*.

We cannot however exclude – like in technique 1 – that some of the correct answers concerning hypocoristic constructions were a matter of chance. The analyses of both formations (*koteczek* and *kotuś*) only required cutting off the affix (to separate the base) and adding the name of the feature *mały* [small] (which differentiates the meaning of the base word and the formation based on it). The two operation procedures were influenced in the FDC group by a strong process of analogy (they were part of those repeated most often) (cf. Muzyka-Furtak 2010). To validate the obtained results, the interpretations in which this kind of recurrence was observed should be separated from those that actually prove the ability to decode expressive formations. This is made possible only by analyzing particular answers coming from the same child, the analysis being conducted not in isolation but in the wider context of other answers given by the child. Certainly, the proper decoding of expressive constructions is confirmed by the examples of interpretations by two deaf pupils, provided below.

#### Child I:

Ptaszek → *ptak + mały//* Ptaszysko → *ptak + duży//* Kotek → *kot + mały//* Kocisko → *kot + duży//* Koteczek → *kot + mały//* Kotuś → *kot + dobry* (there was no correct interpretation of the formation: *Szklaneczka* → *szklenie mały//* *Szklanica* → *szklenie + duży*, the explication of the meaning of derivational morphemes being correct);

#### Child II:

Ptaszek → *ptaki + mały//* Ptaszysko → *ptaki + ptaszysko duży//* Szklaneczka → *szklanka + szklaneczek mały//* Szklanica → *szklanica + duży//* Kotek → *kot + kotek mały//* Kocisko → *kot + kocisko duży//* Koteczek → *kot + koteczek mały//* Kotuś → *kot + kotuś piękna*.

A further analysis of the kind of answers given by particular children shows that barely five children intentionally listed the semantic features that made up the structural meaning of the construction *koteczek* and only four made correct explication of the meaning of the formation *kotuś*.

Striving to eliminate such accidentally correct interpretations of augmentative formations *ptaszysko* and *kocisko* makes us classify as such the explications like: *ptaszysko* → *ptaki* + *dużo*// *szklanica* → *szklanka* + *szklanki duży*// *szklanka* → *szklanki* + *dużo*. The analysis of answers of individual children demonstrated that they produced the plural form of the base word, and they understood the auxiliary question (*Jaki jest?* [what is ... like]) as one meant to check their comprehension of the grammatical category of number, therefore they added to the nominative plural of the base word the feature defining the size of the set (*dużo* [many/much], *duży* [large]).

If we accepted so strictly defined assessment criteria, the correctness of decoding the expressive constructions in the FDC group would not be 25% but slightly over 9% (again with a majority, although only minimal, of diminutive constructions). Interpretations of augmentative formations in terms of expressive signs were not found in this group whereas with regard to hypocoristic formations there were two answers of this type (*kotuś* was described by one child as *piękny* [pretty], and by the other – as *dobry* [good]).

The comparison of the results obtained in the FDC group, using two testing techniques is shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Comparison of the ability to interpret expressive constructions by FDC, using different techniques for collecting material collection

Expressive construction	Derivational paraphrase	Semantic features
<i>ptaszysko</i>	1	4
<i>szklanica</i>	1	3
<i>kocisko</i>	1	3
<i>koteczek</i>	3	15
<i>kotuś</i>	3	12
TOTAL	9	37
%	6.00%	24.67%

Taking into account the conclusions from the analyses, it should be said that the use of additional clues in the FDC group contributed to a considerable increase in the correct interpretations of expressive formations, particularly hypocoristic. The high probability of randomly correct answers (produced by analogy and automatic addition of the attribute *mały* [small] to the correctly identified base word) makes us interpret such analyses in the wide context of answers given to other questions (about diminutive and augmentative constructions). In view of this fact,

the degree of comprehension of expressive constructions in the FDC group is very low. The comprehension of hypocoristic constructions was slightly higher than that of augmentative constructions. Only in very few interpretations there were references to the expressive meaning of formations (in their interpretations, most children referred exclusively to the size of the referents).

### **Production of expressive constructions by severely hard-of-hearing children (SHC) and by functionally deaf children (FDC)**

The results concerning the formation of expressive constructions will be shown without a division into the results obtained by particular investigation techniques. The results obtained by each technique were analogous, which means that the introduction of additional clues in T2 did not influence the level of production of expressive formations.

#### **Severely hard-of-hearing children (SHC): correctly formed expressive constructions**

On the whole, with the use of both techniques SHC correctly formed less than 4% of expressive constructions. In both techniques the results were comparably low, which is illustrated in Table 4.

Table 4. Correctly formed expressive constructions by SHC

Derivational paraphrase	Technique1	Technique2	Total
Pies, który jest bardzo mały, bardzo ładny i dobry	1	2	3
But, który jest bardzo mały i bardzo ładny	4	2	6
Pies, który jest bardzo duży, bardzo brzydki i zły	0	0	0
But, który jest bardzo duży i bardzo brzydki	0	0	0
TOTAL	5	4	9
%	4.17%	3.33%	3.75%

All the correctly produced expressive constructions were hypocorisms. None of the children produced an augmentative construction, e.g.

But, który jest bardzo mały i bardzo ładny// But + bardzo mały i ładny → *buciczek// budzicek// budziczek*.

The constructions in the nominative plural (*pieseczki*) were recognized as correct, as were those whose non-normativeness stemmed from disorders at the phonetic-phonological rather than morphological level: it was the result of difficulties in distinguishing between voiced and voiceless sounds and distinguishing

dental sounds (hence, instead of the probably intended construction *buciczek* the child produced the forms *budziczek* and *budziczek*).<sup>6</sup>

All the above-mentioned hypocoristic constructions were formed using complex derivational morphemes, thereby several children showed their knowledge of meliorative morphemes. However, in this group there were also structurally incorrect constructions, e.g.:

But, który jest bardzo mały i bardzo ładny// But + bardzo mały i ładny → *buteczki*// *buteczek*// *buteczka*.

SHC formed masculine constructions using feminine morphemes and, instead of the required affix *-iczek*, they used the wrong affixes *-eczek*; *-eczki*. Thus, their knowledge failed in respect of inflectional and phonetic rules that determined the choice of particular derivational morphemes.

### Functionally deaf children (FDC): correctly formed expressive constructions

FDC could not, essentially, produce expressive constructions. Altogether, the correct answers in both techniques were barely less than 3%.

Table 5. Correctly formed expressive constructions by FDC

Derivational paraphrase	Technique1	Technique2	Total
Pies, który jest bardzo mały, bardzo ładny i dobry	1	1	2
But, który jest bardzo mały i bardzo ładny	2	3	5
Pies, który jest bardzo duży, bardzo brzydki i zły	0	0	0
But, który jest bardzo duży i bardzo brzydki	0	0	0
TOTAL	3	4	7
%	2.5%	3.33%	2.92%

The recorded constructions were hypocoristic formations: *piesuś* and *butuś* (used by individual children). The formation *buteczka* was formed using a correct morpheme but it cannot be recognized as entirely correct because of the change in the gender category. However, this indisputably proves the child's familiarity with hypocoristic derivational morphemes. FDC did not show any knowledge of any derivational affix with a pejorative meaning, whereas they used two kinds of meliorative affixes.

<sup>6</sup> The phenomenon of sound associations cannot be entirely excluded in this case (cf. Muzyka-Furtak 2013).

## INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS. CONCLUSIONS

Profoundly hearing-impaired children who finish primary school have great difficulties understanding expressive constructions. Sporadically, they interpret them in terms of expressive signs. More often, they attribute to the expressive affixes the function of providing information exclusively about the size of a referent. They exhibit a significantly higher degree of comprehension of hypocoristic constructions than augmentative ones. As the actually achieved hearing efficiency declines in the group of children with profound hearing deficits, a decrease in the level of comprehension of expressive names is noticeable.

Profoundly hearing-impaired children (in both groups: SHC and FDC) have great difficulties in forming expressive constructions. When they finish school they essentially do not use expressive formations. They negligibly know meliorative derivational affixes, and they do not know pejorative affixes. None of the studied profoundly hearing-impaired children was able to produce an augmentative formation. Differences in the knowledge of expressive constructions among the severely hard-of-hearing and functionally deaf children manifest themselves more pronouncedly at the level of comprehending such constructions than at the level of forming them. In the described investigation procedure concerning the comprehension of expressive constructions, severely hard-of-hearing children achieved significantly higher results than functionally deaf children whereas all the children achieved comparably low results in the formation of both hypocoristic and augmentative constructions.

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