

## ABSTRACT

### *Speech sound disorders and their importance for educational performance and school integration of the third-grade primary school students*

A large number of children who need school-based speech-language pathologists' support is a growing problem in a school environment. Polish researchers estimate the prevalence of speech sound disorder up to 47% among primary school students aged 7-9 yr. Those children may be at greater risk of educational failures, namely literacy, mathematics, or peer relationships relative to their peers with typical speech. However, nature and the extent of this possible risk can vary significantly from one child to another, depending on the individual and environmental conditions.

The present thesis aimed to explore the academic achievement and school integration of 18 third-grade primary school students with speech sound disorders from three complementary perspectives: 1. children, 2. parents, 3. teachers. Applying a mixed methods design with a collective case study strategy helped better understand the children's heterogeneity at different levels. Although each case was primarily considered individually, the cross-case analysis identified some overall tendencies applicable to children who participated in the study. Those subjects with higher academic achievements were more likely to have an articulation disorder without a significant deficit in phonological processing. In turn, those with a distinct phonological deficit were characterized with lower educational achievements. However, most of children felt well-integrated with their peers, which might be partially explained by the teachers' supportive attitude or by the observed general diversity among children in the classroom.

The overall research results may support the need for a continuous functional assessment of all children with speech sound disorders according to their individual, diverse needs and abilities. It seems that apart from well-planned speech therapy, it is essential to recognize the role that persistent problems in speech production may play in children's school life, to ensure appropriate support on time.

**Key words:** persistent speech sound disorder, residual speech errors, speech sound disorder, educational performance, school integration, primary school, functional assessment