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Interdisciplinarity of Speech and Language Therapy Profession and Education

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Introduction

The object of research in the SLT field is speech and language, together with human communication and human cognition as well as the social interactions that come into play (Mayer-Crittenden et al, 2013).

Interdisciplinary nature of speech and language is reflected by scientists who made major contributions to the field (ibid; Lowie et al, 2009).

When studying speech and language disorders it's important to be able identify where the difficulties lie. It is not only the linguistic components that must be considered, but also the neurological, anatomical, physiological, cognitive, social and pragmatic aspects that are intrinsically associated (ibid).





Aim(s) and methods:

The aim of the presented research is to analyse the interdisciplinary nature of the speech and language therapy (SLT) science and profession that is emphasized in the scientific sources and international documents, and to reveal the links between the nature of profession and the model of SLT study programme that was constructed on the interdisciplinary basis in Lithuania.

The research was guided by a **qualitative approach**, through a analysis of inter/national documents and research reports, related to SLT studies in EU countries (Netques, 2013) and exploratory research.






Main findings:

The need for SLTs, providing services is very high in all regions of the Lithuania, both in the education and health care sectors. **There is a great shortage of speech therapists with high competencies who are able to work in inter-professional teams at the secondary level services** - Pedagogical Psychological Services, Early Rehabilitation Services, etc.

The exploratory survey showed that the majority (89.5%) of the heads of health care institutions who participated in the survey stated the **lack of speech therapists who are ready to work in health care institutions.**





Main findings:

Education, linguistics, psychology and biomedicine sciences are identified as components of SLT within international documents (ESLA, 2019; ASHA, 2007). **The interdisciplinary nature of speech and language therapy** is based on the prevailing view in the international scientific and professional communities (CPLOL, RCSLT, ASHA, IALP), which brings together speech therapy researchers and practitioners.

Interdisciplinarity of speech and language therapist education is viewed as a **presumption for the interdisciplinary competences development of these professionals.**

It is recommended that **speech and language therapy studies must cover the whole field of speech therapist's activities** (diversity of age, disorders, functions and competencies) in order to prepare a speech therapist for work in various contexts aiming at prevent, assess, identify and provide support for children and adults with speech, language, social communication, cognitive-communication and swallowing disorders "(ASHA).




Main findings:

Following the research data, it was found that internationally, **SLT is recognized as autonomous interdisciplinary science and profession.**

The unity of the profession is recognized regardless the context both health and education.

However, research shows that many already practicing SLTs in the country lack of interdisciplinary competences that are necessary while providing SLT services.





Main references:

1. American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA). (2007). Scope of Practice in Speech-Language Pathology. Available from www.asha.org/policy.
 2. European Speech and Language Therapy Association (ESLA). (2019). Professional Profile. CPLOL WG Professional Profile. Available from <https://eslaeurope.eu/practice/>.
 3. Mayer-Crittenden, Ch., Minor-Corriveau, M., Robillard, M., Bélanger, R., Keating, N. (2013). An Interdisciplinary Framework for Speech-Language Pathologists. A Closer Look at Bilingual Language Development and Its Disorders. *The International Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies in Communication*, 7, 3 [www.thesocialsciences.com, ISSN 2324-7320. Retrieved from: An Interdisciplinary Framework for Speech-Language Pathologists: A Closer Look at Bilingual Language Development and Its Disorders (cgscholar.com)
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