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Speech Development and Language Education in Preschool Children in the Context of Stefan Szuman's Biography (1889–1972)¹

Rz w j mowy i wychowanie j zykowe dziecka w wieku przedszkolnym w perspektywie biografii Stefana Szumana (1889–1972)

Abstract: The article emphasizes the special significance of speech development and language education in developing cognitive, cultural and moral skills in preschool children. This is demonstrated using the example of research conducted by Stefan Szuman (1889–1972), as placed in the context of contemporary scientific knowledge on the subject. The life of Szuman, a prominent Polish psychologist and pedagogue, provides a crucial context for this analysis and its proposed conclusions.

Keywords: Stefan Szuman, speech, language-related education, preschool children.

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Introduction

In his extensive scientific activity, Stefan Szuman, who is the key person in this article, researched many varieties of human language, including the language of artistic and literary works, as well as body language in various periods of human development. The considerations contained in this article are limited to Szuman's research on speech based on verbal language and acts of speaking, which are here understood as acts of uttering sounds that are important for an individual,² in this case, a preschool child. This is, of course, a small part of Szuman's research activity as more of its aspects cannot be discussed here due to the substantive requirements and word limit of this article.

In the beginning, it should be emphasized that Szuman explored speech development and language acquisition by a child as these are particularly fascinating issues for researchers of human development in general. Language – as Kazimiera Krakowiak writes – is a 'priceless gift' that a person receives 'through society, but to get it, they must acquire and master it themselves'.³ A child's effort to creatively master the language was the subject of many years of Szuman's painstaking research. This article attempts to capture and analyse Szuman's significant achievements in this area and present them in the context of the biography of this outstanding Polish psychologist and educator.

The 'language' biography of Stefan Szuman

Szuman left behind an extensive and unique legacy of works. His biography proves that his research activity was guided by a fascination with human development, in particular, the development of children and their creativity (also in the area of speech). To devote himself entirely to this passion, Szuman abandoned his first profession – medicine (which is discussed below). Against this background, the determinants of Szuman's interest in language and its various variants appear in his biographical threads. To outline some context for

2 F. de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, New York 2002.

3 K. Krakowiak, *Dar języka. Podręcznik metodyki wychowania językowego dzieci i młodzieży z uszkodzeniami narządu słuchu*, Lublin 2012, p. 30.

the topic discussed, the article begins, chronologically, with the 'genetically' determined fascination of this outstanding humanist with the Polish language, or more broadly, 'Polishness'.

In his habilitation (post-doctoral degree) documents prepared for the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, Szuman wrote: 'I come from an old middle-class family from Gdańsk, which became Polish in the 18th century and then changed the spelling of the surname "Schuman" to "Szuman"'.⁴ The family tradition holds the belief that this change was made by Stefan's great-great-grandfather – Jan. There is also a unique document, the so-called *Testament Polaka* [Pole's Testament], written by his great-grandfather – Michał Maurycy Szuman (1784–1861), the content of which confirms the patriotic attachment of the Szumans to Polishness. Many family members paid for this with loss of freedom and exile from their chosen homeland.⁵ Polishness was also an important value for Stefan's father – Leon Szuman (1852–1920) – a doctor from Toruń, owner of the hospital, and his mother – Eugenia, née Gumpert (1856–1895). Stefan was the fourth of this couple's seven children. The seven children of Eugenia and Leon Szuman were in order of birth: Maria, later Plecińska (1881–1927), after her husband Kazimierz, the owner of an agricultural estate; Henryk Szuman (1882–1939) – in his youth, the chairman of the Toruń Philomath Circle for which he was charged and tried in court and not allowed to take the secondary school leaving examination, and later as a priest in the Catholic Church, he conducted extensive patriotic, charitable, educational, publishing and scientific activities, he was a promoter of abstinence, and was shot by the German invaders in 1939; Irena Szuman, later Kozłowska (1885–1968), after her husband Witold (a landowner murdered at the beginning of the war by the German occupiers); Stefan Szuman (1889–1972); Wanda Szuman (1890–1994) – a social activist, organizer of secret education during World War II and an outstanding representative of Polish special education and the theory of aesthetic education;

4 Archives of the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, Akta habilitacji Stefana Szumana (1927), „Curriculum vitae”, p. 2. The same text is also found in Stefan Szuman's personal file (AUJ, sygn. AUJ S II 619); M. M. Tytko, *Dr med. Stefan Szuman jako lekarz w armii niemieckiej (1914–1919). Przyczynek biograficzny*, „Krakowski Rocznik Archiwalny”, 20 (2014) p. 82.

5 Ibidem, p. 82–83.

Leon Szuman (1892–1912 or 1913), who tragically died in his youth; and Jerzy Szuman (1893–1982), who graduated in agricultural studies from the University of Poznań, became an assistant there, and later a professor at the Poznań University of Agriculture.⁶

Stefan Szuman lost his mother when he was six years old. Eugenia died of tuberculosis at the age of 38. Her young son remembered the day of his mother's death as a day of 'confusion and dismay'. Stefan had no clear memories of Eugenia but over time – as he wrote – he began to 'long for her, her face and look and motherly tenderness'.⁷ This feeling for both parents, which deepened over the years, is evidenced by a touching letter that Szuman wrote to his sister at the end of his life:

Dear Wanderka! Read what I wrote to Irenka, I am giving you a great treasure, a letter from our mother Eugenia to our father. It talks about two little children, Marynia and Henryczek. There's nothing in it about Irenka, nothing about Stefan, nothing about Wanderka because they weren't born yet. But the letter expresses our mother's love for our father so directly and vividly. You can read this letter properly, giving each word a heartfelt and warm sound from our mother's heart.⁸

A year after the death of his first wife, Leon Szuman married her sister Emilia (1846–1912), widow of Bolesław Osiecki. It was, after all, the dying Eugenia's wish. The children gained a 'second mother' in Emilia, who took care of them and introduced them to the world of culture, which was particularly important for Stefan (unlike, for example, Leon and Jerzy, who were interested primarily in biology). As the pedagogue's daughter, Grażyna Czyżewiczowa née Szuman, wrote:

Stefanek had his own world and one of the corners of this world was the space under the piano where Mam Emilia played. My dad always

6 A. Wałęga, *Środowisko rodzinne Wandy Szuman (1890–1994)*, „Rocznik Toruński”, 31 (2004) pp. 151–155.

7 G. Szuman-Czyżewiczowa, *Opowiadania rodzinne – fragmenty pamiętników i listów Stefana Szumana*, w: *Stefan Szuman (1889–1989). W stulecie urodzin*, ed. M. Przetacznik-Gierowska, A. Wyszyńska, Kraków 1990, p. 120.

8 Ibidem, p. 164.

claimed that these were the most beautiful experiences of his childhood – ones of the most beautiful in his entire life. The piano sounded in full tones, Emilia put all her experienced and unexperienced feelings into the music, and little Stefan sat curled up under the instrument and absorbed the beauty. This is no exaggeration; already as a small child, he absorbed beauty with his whole soul, which remained the trend that moved him the most until the end, a thread branching into many areas of life and at the same time constituting its essence.⁹

As a child, Stefan took violin lessons. He mastered the secrets of playing this instrument fluently and as a young man played in 'home chamber bands'. These were not his only artistic interests because as a child, he became fascinated with drawing and painting. While spending holidays with his aunt in the Kielce region, admiring the local landscapes, together with his cousin – Janek Bocheński – he improved his skills in fine arts. He emphasized, however, that these experiences were more about admiration for nature than about the artistic value of the images created.¹⁰

Stefan's formal education, which finished with the final secondary school exam, took place at a Prussian school – the *Königliches Realgymnasium* [Royal Junior High School] in Toruń. Considering the key category of these considerations, which is 'language', it must be said that despite his fluent knowledge of German, Szuman did not like to learn in this language (which, of course, was the language of instruction at this school). His family communicated primarily in Polish and his parents took care of home education to complement school teaching. Stefan received satisfactory grades (C) in most subjects, good (B) in French and 'descriptions of nature', and very good (A) in singing and drawing on his certificate.¹¹

His father saw his son as his successor in the clinic he owned. Stefan therefore went to study medicine, first in Wrocław and later in Munich. He obtained the title of Doctor of Medical Sciences. He received his medical diploma *summa*

9 Ibidem, pp. 121–122.

10 Ibidem, pp. 122–124.

11 Ibidem, p. 124.

cum laude.¹² Stefan's diaries from the time of these studies were preserved in the family archives. They were 'full... of philosophical and ideological considerations, ups and downs, the artist's delights, travel memories and personal inspirations' – 'nothing proves that these are the diaries of a medical student'.¹³

The development of Szuman's medical career was influenced by World War I. As a doctor and – formally – a citizen of the German state, he was mobilized into the German army. He accompanied wounded soldiers on both the Eastern and Western Fronts.¹⁴ During the war, in a situation of real threat to his life, he thought intensively about other (non-medical) life tasks that he would like to pursue. This is evidenced in a letter from his sister – Maria Plecińska, of 15 April 1917 – written in response to Stefan's correspondence that has not been preserved:

I have known perfectly well and for a very long time that you have much more material for an aesthete, educator, or professor of medicine than for a practical doctor.... I am firmly convinced that, like it or not, you will become a professor or a teacher sooner or later, but this 'profession' [a doctor], although completed so reluctantly, has given you internal development, financial independence and the very fact that you feel like something finished and you can handle any position, it gives you a feeling of masculinity and strength.... You tell me, my dear boy, that you are a tree without fruit. And which trees bear fruit in spring? You walk through the world, sowing the flowers of your soul around, you are like a Gothic building, shooting high to the sky, full of sun and colourful light, and shady shelters, where everyone will find something for themselves.¹⁵

These words of his oldest sister, a married woman and mother, are an example of the language of admiration and appreciation for her brother and delight in his development potential. They prove that language was a special tool of expression and dialogue in the Szuman family.

12 M. M. Tytko, *Dr med. Stefan Szuman jako lekarz w armii niemieckiej (1914–1919)*, p. 89.

13 G. Szuman-Czyżewiczowa, *Opowiadania rodzinne*, p. 125.

14 M. M. Tytko, *Dr med. Stefan Szuman jako lekarz w armii niemieckiej (1914–1919)*, p. 90.

15 *Ibidem*, p. 97.

Working as a military doctor at the front, Stefan Szuman was seriously wounded in Cambrai, northern France, on 30 November 1917. Having spent the night 'in delirium, on the verge of life and death', he was then subjected to two serious operations that saved his life and health.¹⁶ After these dramatic events, he received Christmas wishes from his youngest sister, Wanda, which included another sample of the Szuman family's language:

Thank God that you are better now, I pray that you will never experience another night like the one on 30 November. ... I am sending you a wafer, ... I am kissing you on the forehead and I wish that your forehead will invent many wise and good things in life, and on your eyes so that they will see many very beautiful things in life.¹⁷

Szuman's convalescence lasted several months. The wounds left a long, deep scar on his leg for the rest of his life.¹⁸ In December 1918, Stefan returned to Toruń and started working in his father's clinic. Until March 1919, it remained officially in the service of the German army. Already at that time, under the influence of the events of the Greater Poland Uprising, he was conspiring for an independent Poland. As a volunteer, in May 1919, he was formally accepted as a captain in the Polish Army and in August 1920, he was nominated as a major.¹⁹ During this period, he received a letter from his father, showing that Leon Szuman was happy with his son's career as a Polish military doctor and at the same time recalled his artistic interests with approval. Therefore, he declared that if Stefan was not attached to the idea of inheriting the Toruń clinic, he could leave it in good hands. This letter was probably one of the factors that later facilitated Stefan's resignation from the medical profession.²⁰ At the end of 1919 and throughout 1920, Szuman participated as a military doctor in many battles and

16 Ibidem, p. 101.

17 Ibidem, p. 102.

18 Ibidem, p. 102.

19 Ibidem, pp. 104–107.

20 M. M. Tytko, *Udział Stefana Szumana w obronie niepodległości (1919–1920)*, https://ruj.uj.edu.pl/xmlui/bitstream/handle/item/32089/tytko_udzial_stefana_szumana_w_obronie_niepodleg%C5%82osci.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y, pp. 3–4, accessed: 15.02.2023.

skirmishes fought by the new Polish state. He became the head of a field hospital. As a surgeon, he performed complex operations in difficult combat conditions. At the Hospital of the Lord's Transfiguration in Poznań, in peacetime, he had already tried to obtain the specialty of a military doctor. This was prevented by a dramatic accident: while operating on a soldier, Szuman injured himself with the gangrene-infected bone. As a result of this incident, he had to fight severe sepsis himself and almost lost his life. Ultimately, this ended with the amputation of the index finger of the right hand. This accident helped him decide to make a significant change in his professional life.²¹

In Poznań, Szuman began working as a school doctor and school board inspector, overseeing matters of hygiene and physical education. He began four years of studies in psychology at the University of Poznań and was also a student of the School of Decorative Arts, which he abandoned, considering his painting skills insufficient. However, it was here that he met his future wife, Zofia Szczepanowska (daughter of Stanisław Prus-Szczepanowski – a Polish chemist, oil entrepreneur, member of the Austrian Parliament and the Galician National Parliament, and an educational activist), whom he married in 1921. While studying and working intensively, he found time for graphic work, weaving, 'constant contact with theatre, music and good books', a social life and fun with friends.²²

Having gained his best life companion in his wife, Szuman entrusted her with all his personal and professional matters. She was the co-creator of the effects of his work. He knew perfectly well that without Zofia, his professional career as a scientist would have been different – it would not have been so fast and brilliant. He admitted, 'I am convinced that if I had not married in 1922, I would have needed not five, but ten years to obtain habilitation....'²³ In his private relationships and letters, he addressed his wife with particular tenderness: 'Zosieńka, my dear one.' He shared with her his deepest beliefs about scientific and existential matters.²⁴ Together they had a daughter, Grażyna (1923–

21 Ibidem, p. 4–11.

22 G. Szuman-Czyżewiczowa, *Opowiadania rodzinne*, p. 132–135.

23 Ibidem, p. 141.

24 Ibidem, pp. 135–143.

2015) and then a son, Krzysztof (1926–1929). The boy died at the age of three. His death was a huge blow to the Szuman family.²⁵ From the time their children were born, both Szumans carefully observed their behaviour and recorded it meticulously in their diaries.²⁶ Similarly to Piaget's children, the offspring of the Polish scholar contributed to the development of science.

In 1926, Szuman defended his doctoral thesis in psychology, written under the supervision of Professor Stefan Błachowski. It was entitled *Psychologia twórczości rysunkowej dziecka* [Psychology of a Child's Drawing Creativity] (the dissertation was published as a monograph entitled *Sztuka Dzieci. Psychologia twórczości rysunkowej dziecka* [Children's Art: Psychology of a Child's Drawing Creativity]). In 1927, he obtained his habilitation based on the dissertation *Badania nad rozwojem apercepcji i reprodukcji prostych kształtów u dzieci* [Research on the Development of Apperception and Reproduction of Simple Shapes in Children].²⁷ Shortly after defending this thesis, in April 1927, Szuman went on a scientific and cultural trip to Switzerland, with significant stops in Germany. He participated in the International Psychological Congress in Bonn. There he met William Stern, Narziss Ach, Charlotta Bühler and many other world-famous psychologists. The most important destination of this trip, however, was the Rousseau Institute in Geneva. There, Szuman participated in lectures by Pierre Bovet, Edouard Claparède and Jean Piaget.²⁸ The trip to Switzerland was crowned with the participation of the Polish scholar in the 4th International Congress of New Education in Locarno, devoted to freedom in education (*Que faut-il entendre par la Liberté en Education?* – What Does Freedom in Education Mean?). Szuman gave a lecture in French (to which he attached great importance as he wanted to emphasize his high competences as a speaker from Poland) on the topic: *La Liberté dans l'Enseignement*

25 M. Łysiak, *Moje wspomnienie o profesorze Stefanie Szumanie i Jego żonie Zofii*, w: *Stefan Szuman (1889–1989). W stulecie urodzin*, pp. 103–104.

26 M. Kielar-Turska, *Stefan Szuman*, in: *Złota księga Wydziału Filozoficznego*, eds. J. Miłkaszewska, J. Mizera, Kraków 2000, p. 206.

27 W. Okoń, *Wizerunki sławnych pedagogów polskich*, Warszawa 1997, p. 351.

28 A. Lisiecka, *Forerunners of the Polish Theory of Aesthetic Education*, „Biografistyka Pedagogiczna”, 7 (2022) No. 1, pp. 181–185.

du Dessin (with slides) [Freedom in Teaching Drawing (with slides)]. The speech was appreciated by the other congress participants.²⁹

After some dilemmas related to choosing a place of work in Poland (he had to choose between the University of Vilnius and the Jagiellonian University in Kraków), Szuman finally chose the latter. There, he became the head of the Department of Psychological Pedagogy, which he headed for ten years. During this time, he created his next works. His monograph entitled *Geneza przedmiotu* [The Genesis of the Subject] (1932) was particularly appreciated and referred to by Piaget in his work, among others. Szuman showed the importance of a child's early sensory experience in learning about the world of material things. Not all of Szuman's important works from that period will be listed here. However, given the issue discussed in this article, it is worth mentioning the monograph *Rozwój pytań dziecka* [The Development of Children's Questions] published in 1939.³⁰

In addition to his scientific work, which also involved issues of children's speech, Szuman wrote poetry, expressing his fascination with the world and language. In 1933, under the pseudonym Łukasz Fils, he published a book of poems entitled *Drzwi uchylone* [The Door Ajar].³¹ He probably did not overestimate the importance of his poetry, yet treated it rather as a way to emphasize the importance of the moment he was experiencing and the history in which he participated. It contains many references to important historical events, usually intertwined with his existential experiences.

On 1 September 1939, Szuman – as a major in the reserve – was probably evacuated together with the field hospital to the Lublin region. It is known that he organized a medical point in Chrzanów near Janów Lubelski, where he treated wounded soldiers for six weeks. Meanwhile, on 6 September, the Wehrmacht entered Kraków. The Szuman family's official flat, along with valuable works of art and the family's heritage, was confiscated by the occupiers.³² Professor Szuman returned to Kraków probably in mid-October. It is known that he

29 Ibidem, pp. 160–161.

30 W. Okoń, *Wizerunki sławnych pedagogów*, pp. 354–355.

31 Ibidem, p. 355.

32 M. M. Tytko, *Mjr prof. Stefan Szuman w walce o niepodległość Polski (1939–1945)*, „Sowiniec”, 44 (2014) pp. 52–55, DOI: 10.12797/Sowiniec.25.2014.44.04.

planned to participate in the meeting of the German occupation authorities with professors of the Jagiellonian University on 6 November. However, he was called by phone to go to his sick wife, who was staying with her daughter in Goszyce, in the manor house of Zofia Kernowa (Jerzy Turowicz's mother-in-law). Thanks to this, he avoided the fate of his acquaintances and friends from the university who, during the above-mentioned meeting, which was part of the criminal plan codenamed *Sonderaktion Krakau*, were treacherously imprisoned and transported to German concentration camps. Some of them died there.³³

Under a different name, Szuman stayed as a guest at the Kerns' house, together with a very large (sometimes 30-person) group of other people: intellectuals, people of culture, their families and support staff. Everyone, to the best of their strength and possibilities, devoted themselves to agriculture and breeding animals (subject to German supervision and contributions) to earn a living. The inhabitants of Goszyce also led a clandestine cultural and patriotic life. Szuman participated in it, using all his artistic talents: he also wrote and recited his poems.³⁴ From mid-1940, he became involved in secret academic teaching. He taught 'pedagogical psychology classes'. Together with Zygmunt Mysłakowski and Stefan Suchoń, he was responsible for educating future teachers.³⁵ In Kraków, he also gave secret lectures on child psychology to Silesian kindergarten teachers (the students came here from the Third Reich, where Upper Silesia was located, while Kraków was in the General Government). In Wilków near Goszyce, he also secretly directed the play *Śluby panińskie* [Maiden Vows] by Aleksander Fredro as well as acting in it. Fredro's work is a comedy but one could pay with their life for participating in its staging. One of the actors of the group led by Szuman was arrested and shot for illegal artistic activity.³⁶

At the end of 1940, the Szumans found a new place to stay in the estate of Maria and Jan Kozłowski in Luborzyca (Jan Kozłowski was shot by the Germans in Kraków in 1944). There, Szuman found suitable conditions for his scientific writing and prepared, among others, a dissertation entitled *O kunsztzie*

33 Ibidem, p. 56.

34 Ibidem, pp. 57–58.

35 Ibidem, pp. 58–59.

36 Ibidem, pp. 60, 68–69.

i istocie poezji lirycznej [On the Art and Essence of Lyrical Poetry] and a philosophical and psychological monograph entitled *Natura, osobowość i charakter człowieka* [Nature, Personality and Character of Man].³⁷ The work was only published as late as 1995 because its publication was blocked for years by communist censorship.³⁸ In Luborzyca, Szuman also gave conspiratorial lectures on art history and poetry (particularly Norwid's poems) and taught Polish to young people from nearby manors until the end of the war.³⁹

In June 1942, during his trip to Kraków, Szuman was arrested in a street roundup and accused of 'poisoning'. He had medicines in his briefcase containing a therapeutic dose of arsenic and strychnine. As he reported, he was abused during the interrogation and eventually ordered to drink the medicines. When he did not die as a result of taking them, he was released. Well-forged documents and fluent knowledge of German proved helpful. This event did not scare Szuman and he continued to go to Kraków to participate in secret teaching. Moreover, as a member of the Union of Armed Struggle (later the Home Army), he conducted sanitary courses and treated hiding partisans, and from June 1944, he took part in combat operations of the independent Home Army Partisan Battalion 'Skała' [Rock].⁴⁰

After the defeat of the Warsaw Uprising, many refugees from the capital found shelter in the manors in Goszyce and Luborzyca. They included the Tatarkiewicz family, Jan Józef Szczepański, Czesław Miłosz and Jerzy Andrzejewski. Szuman spent a lot of time exchanging ideas with Tatarkiewicz. Their works entitled *Natura, osobowość i charakter człowieka* and *O szczęściu* [On Happiness] contain many common thoughts. After the Soviet Army entered Kraków in January 1945, Szuman resumed working at the Jagiellonian University.⁴¹

After the war, the professor joined the reconstruction of scientific life in Poland. At the Jagiellonian University in Kraków, he initiated independ-

37 Ibidem, s. 60, 70.

38 Ibidem, p. 62.

39 Ibidem, p. 64.

40 Ibidem, pp. 67, 70–73.

41 Ibidem, pp. 75–78.

ent psychological studies, headed the Department of Psychology (until 1960) and was also the rector of the Pedagogical University (1945–1947). He published works in the field of developmental psychology. He was active in the Polish Teachers' Union, heading the aesthetic education section, and in the Committee of Pedagogical Sciences at the Polish Academy of Sciences. As a member of the Mental Hygiene Society, he founded the first mental health clinic after the war. He continued his scientific work, staying in his office from early morning until evening. On days off from work, he often organized trips attended by members of his research team. During these trips, they held additional discussions on their exploration results.⁴²

The time of Stalinism was not a good period for the development of Polish science, particularly the humanities and social sciences. Many distinguished representatives of these disciplines were removed from academic work (including Szuman's close friends, such as Władysław Tatarkiewicz and Roman Ingarden). At the Jagiellonian University, pedagogical studies were abolished in 1953. Ideological influences were aimed at narrowing psychology to the 'science of higher nervous activities'. Szuman was in a very difficult situation because, although he was open to certain elements of Marxist philosophy and highly appreciated Pavlov's theory promoted by Soviet Russia, he did not agree with their 'dogmatic interpretation'. Ultimately, 'he found a field of activity that was relatively safe or at least did not expose him and his team to conflicts and harassment'.⁴³ This field included research on the development of children's speech and thinking.⁴⁴

After retiring, Szuman maintained contacts with the scientific staff of the Jagiellonian University.⁴⁵ Zofia Szumanowa's illness forced the couple to look for a new place to live. The top floor of a tenement house and coal-fired furnaces were conditions beyond the strength of older, increasingly infirm people. However, despite the efforts of Szuman's students, 'Kraków did not find

42 M. Kielar-Turska, *Stefan Szuman*, pp. 207–208.

43 M. Przetacznik-Gierowska, *Profesor Stefan Szuman – nauczyciel i uczony*, w: *Stefan Szuman (1889–1989). W stulecie urodzin*, pp. 13–14, 18.

44 Ibidem.

45 G. Makiełło-Jarża, *O profesorze Szumanie i Jego Żonie Zofii. Wspomnienie sentymentalne*, in: *Stefan Szuman (1889–1972). W stulecie urodzin*, pp. 106–107.

a place for one of its most outstanding scholars'.⁴⁶ The Szumans moved to Warsaw to be closer to their daughter's family. Stefan occasionally visited his old friends from scientific and social circles in Kraków. When the time of serious illness came, he bore it bravely. He died before his wife.⁴⁷

The professor spent the last days and hours of his life in the hospital in Wola in Warsaw. Just before he died, he did something surprising: he sat on his bed and started giving a lecture on child development. His speech was slurred, but everyone listened attentively. Finally, he asked the audience whether they agreed with him and, when no one responded, like a researcher who had obtained evidence to confirm his theses during his research, he said: 'It doesn't matter whether or not you agree. That's how it is and that's how it must be.' Giving the lecture exhausted him, and he fell silent and sank back onto the pillow. After a while, he was dead.⁴⁸

The already quoted Kazimiera Krakowiak saw language as an undeniable gift that we receive from the society in which we live. Appreciating the importance of this gift, Szuman had a strong desire to take it to the afterlife, as he wrote in his poem *Ostatnia modlitwa* [The Last Prayer], once offered to his student and collaborator, Zofia Skórzyńska:

What if this is my last night?
 Let me feel that I am only crossing a bridge
 And that I will be safe with you.
 ...
 Mighty God, let me take it with me
 This sad heart of mine, although ill
 And the Polish language, which caresses the ear...⁴⁹

46 Ibidem, p. 109.

47 Ibidem, pp. 109–110.

48 M. Grudzień, *Spotkanie po latach z Profesorem Szumanem*, w: *Stefan Szuman (1889–1989). W stulecie urodzin*, p. 99.

49 B. Bębenek T. J., *Godzina wspomnień*, w: *Stefan Szuman (1889–1989). W stulecie urodzin*, p. 92–93.

Szuman's research on a child's speech (and not only) at preschool age

Szuman's biography shows that speech played an important role in his life.⁵⁰ The development of a child's speech was one of the most important subjects of his pioneering research.⁵¹ Maria Przetacznik-Gierowska has expressed the belief that Szuman's achievements in learning about the processes of language acquisition and development by children preceded the emergence of psycholinguistics. This was primarily owing to the longitudinal studies he undertook in the 1950s. He described the theoretical assumptions in 1955 in his dissertation *Rozwój treści słownika dzieci* [Development of the Content of Children's Vocabulary]. Przetacznik-Gierowska points to the main thesis: 'verbal representation of reality in children's statements, which serve as a means of social communication with the environment, is the basis for the development... of linguistically consolidated knowledge about the world, shaping lasting ideas and concepts.'⁵² As the cited author further writes, emphasizing the importance of the research initiated by Szuman: 'Many dissertations and monographs developed by the professor... and his colleagues based on... unique... "speech diaries"... are ahead of grammatical, semantic and pragmatic studies on children's language, appearing in rich world literature.'⁵³

Referring to the earliest period of a child's life, Szuman showed the significant importance of the 'pointing gesture' in a child's language acquisition (*Badania nad rozwojem i znaczeniem gestu wskazywania* [Studies on the Development and Meaning of the Pointing Gesture], 1929), and also emphasized the importance of 'the mother's early contacts with the child and their role in the development of the child's communicative competences' (*Kształtowanie się kontaktów porozumienia i współdziałania między matką a niemowlęciem* [The Formation of Contacts of Understanding and Cooperation between Mother and Infant], 1961). Researching the narrative, many contemporary authors often refer to the conclusions presented in the dissertation

50 F. de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*.

51 M. Kielar-Turska, *Stefan Szuman*, p. 210.

52 M. Przetacznik-Gierowska, *Profesor Stefan Szuman – nauczyciel i uczony*, p. 26–27.

53 Ibidem, p. 27.

Rozwój umiejętności opisywania i wyjaśniania przez dzieci splotu zdarzeń przedstawionego na obrazku [Development of Children's Ability to Describe and Explain the Sequence of Events Presented in a Picture] (1957) that Szuman wrote together with Anna Dzierżanka.⁵⁴ Research on the earliest period of a child's speech development has become the foundation for understanding this phenomenon in subsequent periods of life, including the preschool period considered here.

Therefore, using Szuman's words, making a concise description of the earliest stage of a child's speech development, preceding the preschool period, it can be stated that:

In the first year..., a child prepares for speaking skills and in the second year, they begin to speak – first using single words and then forming short and simple sentences. By the end of the second year of life, children already communicate well and although they cannot say much, they already understand a lot of what adults say.⁵⁵

When talking about children's communication with adults, Szuman emphasized the communicative function of language but then began to reflect on the relationship between a child's speech and thinking – the cognitive function of language. He wrote:

The disputable issue is... whether a person thinks only based on words and sentences, or whether they also think even when, as a small child, they still understand little of their native language and have minimal command of it – whether they then think on some non-linguistic basis, namely based on what they perceive and do or what they imagine.⁵⁶

To resolve this 'dispute', Szuman conducted a dialogue with the views of Ivan P. Pavlov, Lev S. Vygotsky and Adam Schaff, accepting their partial

54 M. Kielar-Turska, *Stefan Szuman*, p. 210–211.

55 S. Szuman, *Psychologia wychowawcza wieku dziecięcego. Podręcznik dla matek i wychowawczyń w przedszkolach i domach dziecięcych oraz dla nauczycieli i studentów studiujących rozwój psychiczny dziecka*, Warszawa 1947, p. 129.

56 Idem, *Przedmowa*, w: *O rozwoju języka i myślenia dziecka*, ed. S. Szuman, Warszawa 1968, p. 7.

arguments. He gave arguments in favour of the existence of first image-motor thinking and later abstract-linguistic thinking (following Pavlov), as well as the fact that at a certain period of life, speech and thinking unite – ‘speech then becomes intellectual, and thinking becomes verbal’ (the thesis adopted after Vygotsky), and that ‘man... thinks in some language’ (after Schaff).⁵⁷

Szuman found positive verification of these three theses simultaneously in the preschool period. He argued as follows:

...between the ages of three and six, children's utterances become increasingly rich... and the grammatical and syntactic form of these utterances becomes increasingly correct. The child's statements then become more and more understandable to both the child's surroundings and to themselves. Only then..., when this has happened, can it be claimed that their speech and thinking can constitute an organic, inseparable unity.⁵⁸

Moreover, referring to the research results of Maria Przetacznikowa, Szuman stated that at this stage of life:

...we are dealing not only with the unity of a child's speech and thinking..., but also with the unity of those statements in which their will is expressed and so are their various desires and aspirations, the problems that bother them in their consciousness and all sorts of feelings awakening in them – with their volitional, emotional and problematic experiences.⁵⁹

In his work entitled *Rola działania w rozwoju umysłowym małego dziecka* [The Role of Action in the Mental Development of a Young Child], first published in 1955, Szuman used the results of observations recorded by his research team over 30 years.⁶⁰ On this basis, he also developed an issue that he himself entitled *Rola myśli ukształtowanej za pomocą słów i zdań w przygotowaniu planu działania i w świadomym kontrolowaniu jego przebiegu* [The Role

57 Ibidem, pp. 7–8.

58 Ibidem, p. 10.

59 Ibidem, pp. 14–15.

60 M. Przetacznikowa, *Przedmowa*, in: S. Szuman, *Dzieła wybrane*, vol. 1: *Studia nad rozwojem psychicznym dziecka*, eds. M. Przetacznikowa, G. Makiełło-Jarża, Warszawa 1985, pp. 12–13.

of Thought Shaped by Words and Sentences in Developing an Action Plan and in Consciously Controlling Its Course].⁶¹ There he described the issue of 'verbal-linguisticized thinking'. This is secondary to the original, concrete, image-motor thinking. It is abstract and based on speech: words and sentences. This 'linguisticization of thoughts' is expressed by saying them out loud or in the form of 'inner speech'.⁶² When a child begins to speak and understand the language, they not only verbally distinguish people and objects (e.g. 'mum', 'hand', 'shoe', 'dog', 'window'), which is possible thanks to the acquisition of nouns and also of the states, actions and changes resulting from some action ('it is standing', 'it is raining', 'it is building', 'it is spilt – it is wet', 'the light went out – it is dark'). This in turn requires the use of verbs (other members of the research team led by Szuman wrote about the importance of other parts of speech in the development of a child's language⁶³). As Szuman stated, based on his research results:

...around the third year of life, children already acquire a very rich vocabulary of verbs that help them name, distinguish and mentally represent a multitude of different movements, activities and actions through which a person influences objects of the external world, transforming them according to their will and needs.⁶⁴

Language plays a significant role in shaping awareness of action – in planning ways to achieve specific results. It becomes redundant when the resulting action becomes automated.⁶⁵

To sum up this issue, it can be said that linguisticization (in the area of 'inner speech' – thinking in words, and in the dimension of speaking out loud) allows a child to 'see in words' the surrounding reality, themselves and

61 S. Szuman, *Dzieła wybrane*, t. 1: *nad rozwojem psychicznym dziecka*, pp. 146–159.

62 Ibidem, p. 146.

63 M. Przetacznikowa, *Rozwój i funkcje przymiotników w mowie dzieci do lat sześciu*, in: *O rozwoju języka i myślenia dziecka*, ed. S. Szuman, Warszawa 1968, pp. 97–147; L. Geppertowa, *Rozwój rozumienia i posługiwania się przez dzieci pojęciami stosunków określanymi przez przyimki i przysłówki*, in: *O rozwoju języka i myślenia dziecka*, pp. 149–381.

64 S. Szuman, *Dzieła wybrane*, vol. 1: *Studia nad rozwojem psychicznym dziecka*, p. 158.

65 Ibidem, p. 150.

their own actions.⁶⁶ Thanks to nouns, the child isolates and consolidates in their consciousness 'various entities of events and perpetrators of activity, as well as the objects to which their activity is directed'.⁶⁷ In turn, thanks to the knowledge of verbs, they 'isolate and acquire general concepts about various types of activities that are actualized in various specific forms of happening and action'.⁶⁸ However, 'using sentence formulations, a child recreates in a specific way the structure of the processes of happening and action, separating the essential elements of each activity in these structures with words'.⁶⁹

In the above-mentioned work *Psychologia wychowawcza wieku dziecięcego. Podręcznik dla matek i wychowawczyń w przedszkolach i domach dziecięcych oraz dla nauczycieli i studentów studiujących rozwój psychiczny dziecka* [Educational Psychology of Childhood: A Manual for Mothers and Educators in Kindergartens and Child Care Homes], edited at the request of Jan Smoleń (an organizer of secret teaching of kindergarten teachers in Kraków and a Silesian curator), and published after the war, Szuman devoted an entire chapter to the characteristics of the issue of *Rozwój mowy i umysłowości dziecka od 3 do 7 lat* [Development of Speech and Mentality of Children from Three to Seven Years of Age]. He emphasized that the preschool period is a time when a child's speech improves. Using examples from his observation results, he showed how a preschool child's vocabulary grows. On this basis, he drew conclusions about the development of children's speech in this period. For example, a two-year-old child composes sentences of two and three words, preschool children build longer sentences consisting of four to six or more words, and increasingly often they build extended and complex, first, coordinate and then subordinate sentences.⁷⁰

It would be interesting to compare the vocabulary of contemporary preschool children with the vocabulary of their peers from several decades ago. In his work, Szuman provided the nouns and verbs used by a four-year-old girl and a boy aged three years and nine months. Below are those that are rather

66 Ibidem, pp. 147–148.

67 Ibidem, p. 159.

68 Ibidem.

69 Ibidem.

70 Idem, *Psychologia wychowawcza wieku dziecięcego*, p. 130–131.

unused by contemporary children and would probably not be understandable to them. The words that only the girl used included: 'groom', 'wicker hay cart', 'a farm living quarter for servants', 'stearin', 'apron', 'kippah', 'goat', 'hoe' and 'thresh'. The boy's vocabulary included words such as: 'plant park caretaker', 'herring seller', 'cabman', 'coal truck', 'synagogue', 'naphthalene', 'dresser', 'wooden ceiling', 'shako', 'screw' and 'tar'. Both children used the following words, rarely used today: 'papa', 'carter', 'buckboard', 'drawbar', 'tub', 'junket', 'crikey', 'make dirty' and 'beat'.⁷¹

Interestingly, the vocabulary of the two children included a relatively small percentage (less than 1.4%) of nouns related to toys (out of over 1,400 recorded names, only 19 referred to toys). Specifically, both children's vocabularies contained the following nouns: 'toy', 'swing', 'ball', 'domino', 'doll', 'teddy bear', 'clown', 'cards' and 'ticket'. Only the girl's vocabulary included 'chess' and 'rocking horse'. Only the set of words used by the boy examined included the following nouns: 'scooter', 'carousel', 'lamp', 'mask', 'spinning top', 'balloon', 'ping-pong' and 'tid-dlywinks'.⁷² Szuman had commented earlier on this relatively low representation of names related to toys in the entire vocabulary of the examined children in reference to the study of 20 two-year-old children (there, the names of toys and means of locomotion constituted 4.7% of the words used by the children):

This fairly poor representation of toys in children's vocabulary is also evidenced by the fact that a young child – as some people believe – not only plays and lives 'in the world of toys', but they also and above all learn at every step the real world of things and beings with which they have to deal.⁷³

Szuman noted that the enrichment of preschool children's utterances, including the development of vocabulary and the 'increase in the length of sentences', is not only an expression of 'gaining more and more skill in speaking', but it also proves that the child's thinking abilities have matured and developed

71 Idem, *Rozwój treści słownika dzieci. Zagadnienie i niektóre wyniki badań*, in: *O rozwoju języka i myślenia dziecka*, pp. 81–85, 91–95.

72 Ibidem, p. 85.

73 Ibidem, p. 46.

because the child 'increasingly better analyses, that is, breaks down a given subject into concepts....' In addition to the analytical abilities revealed during the development of a preschool child's speech, Szuman noticed and emphasized the dynamic development of synthesis abilities visible in a child's speech. He pointed to the increasingly better ability to 'build sentences composed of main and subordinate (superordinate and subordinate) clauses'.⁷⁴

Formulating and asking questions by children plays a special role in realizing the cognitive function of language during the development of a child's speech. The monograph entitled *Rozwój pytań dziecka. Badania nad rozwojem umysłowości dziecka na tle jego pytań* [The Development of Children's Questions: Research on the Development of Children's Mind in the Context of Their Questions] is entirely devoted to this issue.⁷⁵ *Psychologii wychowawczej wieku dziecięcego* [Childhood Educational Psychology] addresses issues particularly relating to questions asked by preschool children. Based on his research, Szuman indicated the second year of life (actually the end of it) as the moment when children start asking adults questions. However, the actual 'age of questions' is the third, fourth and fifth years of a child's life. The questions a child asks first arise in their mind. The inability to answer a question on their own directs the young child to the people around them. This experience allows the child to notice that others can be a source of knowledge and, what is more, the child relies on this knowledge. At the same time, 'however – as Szuman writes – [the child] owes their development to questions and answers just as much as they do to play and imitation, initiative and the exploratory curiosity of their mind'.⁷⁶

As Szuman noted, preschool children can conduct thought experiments through questions, allowing their creative imagination to work and forcing their interlocutors to do the same. Here are two quotes that confirm this thesis. They come from conversations recorded during research led by Szuman:

'As if the people in the pictures were alive?' 'It's impossible,' the mother replies. – 'But I'm asking', says the boy, 'if they were alive, they would

74 Idem, *Psychologia wychowawcza wieku dziecięcego*, p. 132.

75 Idem, *Rozwój pytań dziecka. Badania nad rozwojem umysłowości dziecka na tle jego pytań*, Warszawa–Wilno–Lublin 1939.

76 Idem, *Psychologia wychowawcza wieku dziecięcego*, p. 14.

come out of this little picture, wouldn't they?'... 'Does anyone have ten fingers on one hand?' – Answer: 'No, it doesn't happen.' – 'But if he had ten fingers?'⁷⁷

Language education according to Szuman

Szuman's conclusions from research on the development of a child's speech convey a deep belief in the priority of the child's internal developmental dynamics over the secondary external forces of upbringing. Szuman, however, also saw the necessity and need for the existence of the latter in language education, which is the key issue in this text. Although he did not use this concept himself, his works contain many specific indications regarding this field of educational activities, which should be specified here. The concept of 'language education' is not clearly understood in the literature on the subject.⁷⁸ For the purposes of these considerations, a position has been adopted that was established within the framework of Polish language education as a result of phenomena such as: 'the development of personalistic philosophy, the flourishing of Polish axiolinguistics and a specific axiological turn in pedagogy'.⁷⁹ Given these factors, the 'personal dimension of interpersonal communication' should be considered a necessary aspect of human linguistic activity and language education. This means that speech cannot be reduced to a tool for reproducing the 'linguistic, social and pragmatic patterns' it offers; it is a tool for human (self-)realization, a 'manifestation of one's way of thinking'.⁸⁰

In light of the above, the main goal of language education (understood in a broad sense) is to 'shape axiolinguistic competence, which is built at the lev-

77 Ibidem, p. 139.

78 A. Rypel, *Wychowanie językowe, czyli jak scalić rozproszoną świadomość językową*, in: *Świadomość językowa*, eds. J. Nocoń, A. Tabisz, Opole 2014, p. 54; *Nauka języka obcego w perspektywie ucznia. Edukacja językowa dzisiaj: podręcznik akademicki*, ed. H. Komorowska, Warszawa 2011; A. Jaroszevska, *Budowanie przyjaznego środowiska wspierającego efektywną naukę języków obcych. Poradnik nie tylko dla nauczycieli*, Warszawa 2014.

79 A. Rypel, *Wychowanie językowe*, p. 55.

80 Ibidem, p. 55.

els of language, interpersonal communication and cultural communication'.⁸¹ Preschool children are not yet covered by subject-specific Polish language education, as Agnieszka Rypel mentions in the context of the subject discussed. Nevertheless, they experience it from the beginning of life in the form of social interactions related to speech, first in relationships with their loved ones and then in relationships with the expanding group of people engaging in dialogue with a child.

In his article entitled *O wychowaniu językowym w domu i przedszkolu* [On Language Education at Home and in a Kindergarten], Józef Porayski-Pomsta emphasizes that 'for proper development, a child requires: 1) interest from adults and contact with them; and 2) being treated as a thinking being.' Referring to these general principles, the linguistic education of preschool children carries with it specific rules that can be summarized in the following detailed norms: 1) provide a child, through a personal example, and not through commands and prohibitions, with good models of linguistic behaviour; 2) provide information about a child's natural and social world, starting with the child's immediate environment, explaining the meanings of words and expressions; 3) give verbal instructions and explain – if necessary – when a child performs specific actions; 4) show respect for even the clumsiest of a child's statements, take an interest in what the child is interested in, pay attention to the child's linguistic creativity and participate in the child's games; 5) respect the rule of treating a child as a partner in conversation.⁸²

Szuman's scientific work clearly corresponds to these contemporary approaches to language education. As already mentioned, he strongly emphasized that 'a preschool child usually learns thanks to the spontaneous activity of their mind, thanks to the fact that they set themselves tasks in play, imitation and questions.'⁸³ At the same time – as Kielar-Turska notes – Szuman also drew attention to the fact that 'the upbringing of a child is supposed to strengthen their courage and lead them out of the vicious circle of subjective reactions'.

81 Ibidem, p. 61.

82 J. Porayski-Pomsta, *O wychowaniu językowym w domu i przedszkolu*, <http://www.tkj.uw.edu.pl/art/o-wychowaniu-jezykowym-w-domu-i-przedszkolu>, accessed: 22.03.2023.

83 S. Szuman, *Psychologia wychowawcza wieku dziecięcego*, p. 14.

Szuman also stated, addressing educators, that 'it is great our responsibility for those whom we build up or whom we offend with ourselves.'⁸⁴

When analysing detailed educational tasks related to the development of a child's speech, Szuman emphasized the leading importance of the family, which provides particularly favourable opportunities to talk to a child. Thanks to this, long before going to school, a child can experience the informative and thought-shaping ('tool') role of speech. In kindergartens, educators are limited by the size of a children's group and cannot address a specific child directly in the same way or as often as in a family. While emphasizing the role of a family in the discussed issue, Szuman also saw the pitfalls of family life related to a child's presence during conversations between adults. In this regard, he wrote, 'In a family, people usually talk a lot to a child and a lot about various things in front of them. In a good and wise family, one does not talk about things that are inappropriate for a child in front of a child.'⁸⁵

Here, Szuman touched on the issue of the emotional and moral role of speech, emphasizing its importance for shaping the sphere of experience from the beginning of a child's life, which is infancy.⁸⁶ Writing about the development of a preschool child, he analysed the issue of the 'development of feelings, will and coexistence with people'. He expressed the belief that 'the emotional experiences of young children are, among other things, deeper than we think,' but are still insufficiently researched. One thing is certain: a child has great difficulty in expressing them externally.⁸⁷ However, in the part of the work devoted to this topic, an important goal of preschool education is indicated, namely to educate children for the 'joy of life'. In the area of language education, Szuman recommended using cheerful literary works, verbal jokes and situational humour in which a child converses with other people. Here is one of the examples described by Szuman: 'Our daughter (aged four

84 M. Kielar-Turska, *Czy warto dzisiaj czytać dzieła klasyków?*, Prezentacja autora Stefana Szumana i jego książki *Osobowość i charakter*. Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN. Biblioteka Klasyków Psychologii. Warszawa 2014, „Psychologia Rozwojowa”, 19 (2014) No. 4, p. 107.

85 S. Szuman, *Psychologia wychowawcza wieku dziecięcego*, p. 48–49.

86 Ibidem, p. 37.

87 Ibidem, pp. 166–167.

years and seven months) gives me a radish and claims it is a red bead: "Bite this bead", she says. "Who would eat beads," I reply. "Bite it," the child asks and laughs.⁸⁸ Suggesting the selection of teaching material for preschool children, Szuman recommended 'stories, fairy tales, descriptions and instructive phrases', but, as he wrote: 'the whole trick is to make these stories free and interesting and, at the same time, well adapted to the child's mental needs, that is, instructive and educating.'⁸⁹

Szuman devoted a significant part of his considerations on the development of a child's questions to the so-called pedagogy of questions. Once again, he drew attention to a certain weakness of the institution of kindergarten (compared to a family), resulting from the number of children in a group and the related difficulty in reaching each child faced by an educator. He also criticized contemporary kindergartens for not appreciating children's questions in preschool education programmes.⁹⁰ However, he concluded his reservations with the words: "The more a kindergarten can recreate the educational conditions provided by a good family, the more questions there will be."⁹¹ Then, he formulated two main tasks of 'the didactics of questions'. They are: 1) creating conditions for a child to ask as many questions as possible; and 2) giving good answers that have informative power, are interesting and satisfy a child's curiosity.⁹²

Being aware that in the so-called age of questions, children sometimes experience hypertrophy in the field of questioning, Szuman tried to convince educators:

However, you must be able to keep alive a child's natural developmental tendency to ask questions, willingly providing them with the necessary information and explanations. You need to answer your child's questions and answer them willingly so that they do not get the impression that they

88 Ibidem, pp. 171–174.

89 Ibidem, p. 49.

90 Tenże, *Dzieła wybrane*, vol. 1: *Studia nad rozwojem psychicznym dziecka*, pp. 306–307.

91 Ibidem, p. 307.

92 Ibidem, p. 307.

are boring us with their questions. The child's questions and our answers must create a free and interesting conversation and an exchange of ideas. ...A child will only learn the pleasure of asking questions if they enjoy the answers. Not only may the type of answers (their content) be more or less satisfactory for them; the tone and manner of answering alone will determine whether the child will learn to ask questions willingly. ...Whoever restrains a child in this natural striving, particularly whoever paralyzes the child's questions, who has taught them not to ask 'silly questions', does irreparable harm to them.⁹³

Szuman emphasized that at preschool age, a child 'learns by playing and asking questions, not by learning and answering questions'.⁹⁴ Therefore, the child's questions should be answered when they ask something and truthful answers should be provided, in particular concerning issues related to natural science. However, we must also take into account a child's 'illusionistic and playful' attitudes, which are expressed, for example, in experiencing the world of fairy tales, charm and fantasy, and help the child mature towards realism by creating conditions for the 'natural clash of anthropomorphic and animistic views with factual and objectively real ones in the experiences and activities of a young child'.⁹⁵

According to Szuman, the fundamental teaching mistake is not considering a child's questioning attitude. A three-year-old begins the dynamic development of their thought activity with questions, expecting answers from an adult. Meanwhile, the practice of teaching sets certain tasks for a child and requires the child to solve them. However, in natural development, the opposite happens: a child searches for questions appropriate to their mental level and asks an adult to solve them. Szuman was convinced that 'The most insightful educator would not be able to find for a child mental tasks that are so appropriate and so necessary for their further mental development as those that they set for themselves and, indirectly, for us to solve – for them'.⁹⁶

93 Ibidem, pp. 307–308.

94 Ibidem, p. 320.

95 Ibidem, p. 321.

96 Ibidem, p. 323.

Conclusions

Szuman's scientific work contains many priceless observations regarding the development of children and humans throughout life.⁹⁷ Much of it lies in his research on children's language, which is less known to educators than Szuman's research and works in the field of aesthetic education theory.⁹⁸ Meanwhile, they have not been lost to the scientific archive. They continue to prompt contemporary researchers (and not only them) of children's language to think. This is evidenced by the collective work entitled *Język w biegu życia* [Language in the Course of Life], edited by Maria Kielar-Turska and Stanisław Milewski, where Szuman's works are repeatedly cited. What is particularly interesting, this collective monograph includes a chapter by Maria Ligęza, entitled *Interpersonalna funkcja pytań pojedynczych i serii pytań u dzieci w wieku 1,6–6,0* [Interpersonal Function of Single Questions and Series of Questions in Children Aged 1.6 to 6 Years]. The title issue has been developed by the author based on 'questions recorded from the speech diaries of four children – 5,085 single questions and 5,094 questions forming 1,775 series'. These questions have been obtained from the 'speech diaries from 1955 to 1962',⁹⁹ collected on the initiative of Professor Szuman. The literature on the subject also includes considerations of contemporary linguists, directly devoted to Szuman's research on children's vocabulary.¹⁰⁰

Exploring the biography of this outstanding Polish scholar, it is easy to notice that his scientific interest in the development of children's speech significantly resonated with his life story. Research on children's creative language acquisition also shows Szuman as a pedagogue who was interested not only

97 L. Witkowski, *Przełom dwoistości w pedagogice polskiej. Historia, teoria, krytyka*, Kraków 2013, pp. 519–550.

98 A. Lisiecka, *Forerunners of the Polish Theory of Aesthetic Education*, p. 182.

99 M. Ligęza, *Interpersonalna funkcja pytań pojedynczych i serii pytań u dzieci w wieku 1,6–6,0*, in: *Język w biegu życia*, eds. M. Kielar-Turska, S. Milewski, Gdańsk 2019, pp. 360–399.

100 J. Porayski-Pomsta, *Badanie Stefana Szumana nad słownictwem dzieci*, in: *Studia logopedyczno-lingwistyczne. Księga jubileuszowa z okazji 70-lecia urodzin profesora Edwarda Łuczyńskiego*, eds. S. Milewski, K. Kaczorowska-Bray, B. Kamińska, Gdańsk 2017, pp. 404–417.

in the psychological mechanisms of this phenomenon but also in the social and educational dimensions of this process. Szuman built it by revealing his pedagogical talent¹⁰¹ and he did it subtly, showing, above all, the great need to open a field for a child's independent activities. At the same time, he showed that it is the educator who should be responsible for creating favourable conditions for the development of a child's speech, including the cognitive and socio-moral aspects. Let the conclusion of these considerations be Szuman's statement:

One thing is absolutely clear: a small child should not only be in a sunny, ventilated and free-to-move environment, in an environment where they encounter things that are still new to their mind, that are worth looking at and are worth playing with productively but also in an environment where you talk enough in front of the child, to the child and for the child, knowing and feeling what nice things you have to say to them.¹⁰²

Streszczenie: Tekst artykułu akcentuje tezę zakładającą szczególne znaczenie rozwoju mowy i wychowania językowego w budowaniu kompetencji poznawczych, kulturowych i moralnych dziecka w wieku przedszkolnym. Znaczenie to ukazane jest na przykładzie wyników badań, przeprowadzonych przez Stefana Szumana (1889–1972) i odniesienia ich do współczesnej wiedzy naukowej na ten temat. Perspektywą, która odgrywa kluczową rolę w dokonywanych analizach i formułowanych wnioskach, jest kontekst biografii badacza – wybitnego polskiego psychologa i pedagoga, jakim był Stefan Szuman.

Słowa kluczowe: Stefan Szuman, mowa, wychowanie językowe, dziecko w wieku przedszkolnym.

101 S. Szuman, *Talent pedagogiczny*, in: *Osobowość nauczyciela*, ed. W. Okoń, Warszawa 1959, pp. 73–108.

102 S. Szuman, *Psychologia wychowawcza wieku dziecięcego*, p. 49.

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