

# The initial training of the Speech Therapist for the attention to dysarthria, from a pedagogical conception

*La formación inicial del Logopeda para la atención logopédica a la Disartria*

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Recibido: 02/03/2020

Aceptado: 01/04/2020

Publicado: 15/05/2020

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.4074328>

## Abstract

The initial training of the professional speech therapist as part of their permanent preparation process is a fundamental period in which the foundations of their professional performance begin to be developed. Speech Therapy care starts from this training moment, when students in this career must appropriate different language pathologies, in which the methodological treatment of dysarthria becomes more complex from its didactic treatment. This discipline is based on the need to achieve the integration of contents and the practical implementation of the professional's performance modes, based on the correct direction of the teaching-learning process, which goes beyond the whole professional performance context and must be developed from the undergraduate level. In this paper, the theoretical foundation is offered, based on the background of the initial training of the speech therapist teacher with the indicators that characterize it, as well as important basic elements to be taken into account about dysarthria, with the aim of offering an approach to the treatment of dysarthria from the theoretical foundations of the initial training.

**Keywords:** Initial training, competencies, teachers, speech therapy care.

## Resumen

La formación inicial del profesional del maestro logopeda como parte de su proceso de preparación permanente, es un período fundamental en el que se comienzan a desarrollar las bases de su desempeño profesional. La atención logopédica comienza desde este momento de formación en el cual el estudiante de esta carrera debe apropiarse de diferentes patologías del lenguaje en el cual el tratamiento metodológico a la disartria se complejiza desde su tratamiento didáctico, siendo parte de la disciplina rectora logopedia la que se fundamenta a partir de la necesidad de lograr la integración de contenidos hasta la implementación práctica de los modos de actuación del profesional de la carrera a partir de la dirección acertada del proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje que trasciende a todo el contexto de actuación profesional y debe ser desarrollada desde el pregrado. En el trabajo se ofrece la fundamentación teórica partir de los antecedentes de la formación inicial del maestro logopeda con los indicadores que la caracterizan, así como elementos importantes básicos a tener en cuenta sobre la disartria con el objetivo de ofrecer desde la teoría un acercamiento al tratamiento a la disartria a partir de los fundamentos teóricos de la formación inicial.

**Palabras Clave:** Formación inicial, competencias, profesores, atención de logopedia.

The training of Higher Education professionals has been the object of study throughout the development of Pedagogy; in current conditions, the development of the training process for Education professionals demands the search for new ways to access efficient professional performance, which allows teachers to reflect critically on their professional practice and make decisions as researchers in their classrooms in order to become, according to Gimeno "... someone who solves problems, who chooses to face dilemmas, intellectually and critically"<sup>1</sup>.

It is important to take into account some criteria of authors such as Parra, and Chirino who consider initial training as the first instance of the profession where the development of skills occupies an important place<sup>2,3</sup>.

Initial teacher training in Cuba is a process that takes place in the original training institution and in the school, which becomes the training institution, since it is the fundamental setting for professional performance given the links of the profession with society.

It is a process that integrates the experiences of both contexts. This condition offers the students advantages for their training through the systematization of experiences necessary for his or her professional development and maturation. However, whose mission is to train professionals to place them in different ministries, institutions and/or organizations while they are an advantage for their training, makes this process more complex given the diversity of situations and experiences that the future speech therapy graduate must learn to face in both contexts<sup>4,5</sup>.

Speech therapy attention within this initial training process of the speech therapy career student implies challenges in scientific and academic performance in which this student must master the different communication levels such as language, voice, and speech. In the latter, we find dysarthria as a language disorder that requires a more personalized treatment due to the level of complexity it requires.

Dysarthria is the characteristic verbal symptom of cerebral palsy, with alterations in speech which affect the pronunciation of phonemes and also rhythm, fluency and therefore comprehension; as well as voice and breathing, as a consequence of neurological damage.

Pedagogical practice shows that until today, in the educational sphere, there is still little preparation for dysarthria care in the curricula and programs of study of pre-graduate students. In the case of dysarthria, there has been a lack of integration of speech therapy care for each of its symptoms, which is declared in the curricular designs

and methodological documents as an intention, as an aspiration; But the specific actions to be carried out in the pedagogical activity are not completely effective, which is a problem to be solved by scientific means, despite the valuable contributions made on this subject<sup>6</sup>.

All the above reveals the need to improve, from the Speech Therapy discipline that is the main one, in the classroom modality with a more generalised approach, the theoretical and practical preparation of the Speech Therapy Education graduate from the place where he/she will work and how to interrelate, in the assimilation of contents and in the search for solutions to the professional problems that the student faces in his/her training, so that there is an adequate speech therapy attention. For this purpose, we propose the objective of offering an approach to the treatment of dysarthria from a theoretical point of view, based on the theoretical foundations of initial training

## Methods

In order to carry out this review about the research carried out on the subject, methods such as observation were used to interact in the main processes developed from the initial training of the Speech Therapy Education professional, as well as to check the changes operated after the use of the methodology developed.

The interview with teachers, head of the year group, head of the specialty, and heads of discipline, which allowed for the collection of valid and reliable bibliographic information about the object of research, as well as the possible causes that generate the research problem, and to determine, from the participants' opinions, if the methodology developed contributes to the development of the competence of integral speech therapy attention to dysarthria in the initial training of speech therapy education professionals.

Language and communication disorders are grouped for study according to the levels of communication whether oral, written or facilitated, the first one has three levels: language, speech and voice, in each of them various disorders are studied.

In this direction and considering its importance, initial training has been the object of study of research numbers, and consider initial training to be the first stage of the profession in which the development of skills occupies an important place<sup>6,7</sup>.

From this point of view, the researcher of the thesis considers initial training as the first step in bringing students in training closer to the essential contents of the different disciplines that contribute to the development of skills for their professional work, also because it relates the theoretical and practical components with the attitudinal, which today more than ever requires an integrating vi-

sion. In the national scope in the last decades, authors who have directed their works towards the improvement of initial training of speech therapy education professionals and reveal the need for speech therapy attention in the pedagogical process stand out<sup>8</sup>.

These works are reference points for the study of this research, supporting the fact that there are still weaknesses in this professional training process, which is focused on didactics and directed to speech therapy attention, specifically to the dysarthria that limits the integrative way of acting of speech therapy graduates and its incidence in the personality formation of university students<sup>9</sup>.

In accordance with the professional pedagogical approach of the researchers Gilberto García and Fátima Addine in the process of formation of the professional of Education an early incorporation to the professional practice takes place where it assumes the professional functions in its integrity, incorporates the investigation to its task, analyzes the practice like pivot of its improvement and favors the communicative interchange<sup>10,11</sup>.

### Develops and discussion

An analysis of an updated and specialized bibliography on speech therapist's initial training was carried out. This aimed to find theoretical elements that would allow them to receive speech therapy through Speech Therapy Subject under the specific conditions of this mayor at Guantánamo College. Furthermore, it was required an analysis of the norms governing methodological work, which are the legal basis of speech therapy services. These included norms of the Ministry of Education (200/14) and the Ministry of High Education (2010/07). It was also necessary to consult members of the Board of this department, as well as professors who teach this subject.

The diagnosis was developed at the "Universidad de Guantánamo", from 2017-2018 to 2020, in the Speech Therapy Career Department, integrated by a population of 3 Speech Therapy teachers:

Sixty percent of the teachers in the sample have over 15 years of experience both teaching the same subject and working in High Education institutions. 35% of them have 10-15 years of experience and just 5% (1) less than 5 years. In addition to it they all have experience working in this department and have been scientifically and academically endorsed in different a category, which allows them to fulfill their roles.

The systematization of the theoretical study carried out, allowed the precision of the dimensions and indicators to achieve a greater level of concreteness in the search and analysis of the information, in addition it allowed the evaluation of the behavior in the speech therapy attention and the proposal of a methodology for its execution.

Two population groups and one sample group were intentionally selected. The first population group is formed by 27 students from the third and fourth years of the Speech

Therapy career, aged between 18 and 23 years old, from different municipalities in the province. This is an opinion, not a fact based on some kind of measurement. And any such measurement should be in the methods section.

The second population group is composed of the 3 teachers of the Speech Therapy discipline at the Special Education Department of the University of Guantánamo, all of them with a degree in Education in the specialty of Defectology, and in Speech Therapy with a specialty in Speech Therapy Two. They have more than 10 years of professional experience in Higher Education and Speech Therapy.

In order to put the proposal into practice according to the subject to be developed, dimensions and indicators that guide both teachers and students towards where to direct the work from theory and practice must be taken into account:

In the first dimension, two sub-dimensions were determined:

- Theoretical sub-dimension. It is directly related to the mastery of theoretical aspects that support the development of professional pedagogical skills in initial speech therapist training for dysarthria care. It answers to what teachers should know in order for students to diagnose, model, direct and investigate dysarthria.
- Methodological sub-dimension. It is understood as the methodological resources used by the teacher for students to apply the cognitive, procedural and attitudinal aspects to diagnose, model, direct and investigate dysarthria. It responds to how they should do.
  - In dimension 2, three sub-dimensions with their indicators were determined to investigate this process: cognitive, procedural and attitudinal.
- Cognitive sub-dimension: it is conceived as the set of theoretical knowledge needed by Speech Therapy students in relation to the development of professional competence for dysarthria care. (what the student should know).
- Procedural sub-dimension: it is conceived as the set of procedures that Speech Therapy students carry out in practice to diagnose and characterize, model and direct preventive and corrective compensatory work in case of dysarthria. (what the student must know how to do).
- Attitudinal sub-dimension: it is conceived as the manifestation of qualities and behaviors of Speech Therapy students in relation to the development of professional competences for dysarthria care.

In the determination of theoretical references, the need to achieve speech therapy attention to speech therapy discipline dysarthria is emphasized, in order to empower speech therapy graduates both from theory and practice, so that it pays tribute to the training of the professional's model<sup>12</sup>.

The reflections on Initial training are conceived from a procedural perspective, a criterion that is considered valid given that it is essential that the training process enable the comprehensive development of the professional from the very beginning of training as one of the ways to fulfill the social responsibility of Higher Education in Cuba<sup>13,14</sup>.

The dimensions with their sub-dimensions and indicators complement the training system for attention to dysarthria from the training process<sup>15,16</sup>.

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