

Melodic Intonation Therapy - a method of speech rehabilitation through music and movement

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Each year, in Poland 60000 -70000 people start to suffer from different speech disorders due to stroke. Very often their life changes dramatically and many of them start to have speech and communication problems. In many cases the problems persist and cannot be solved even with many different and long-term rehabilitation strategies.

Very often small children cannot learn how to speak and appropriately communicate with the people around them, which generates many psychological and social problems. Although these children have normal intelligence they cannot speak and due to that, they are separated and somehow excluded from our society.

Many methods have been used to help these people (both adults after stroke and children with speech developmental apraxia) recover or build their speech abilities, however, there is no method that can help all subjects in a similar way.

Interestingly, during recent years, researchers in several countries (e.g. US, France and Israel) have been working on the effectiveness of Melodic Intonation Therapy - method using singing to recover/teach speaking. This method seems to be promising in patients with specific brain impairments.

In my presentation I will provide the audience with the principles of the method, procedures that use music and hand movements to help patients, as well as some data on the already confirmed effectiveness achieved in recent research studies. I will also explain when the method works and can be helpful and why it may be promising for those, who cannot recover their speech even after many years from the stroke. Both linguistic, musical, social and psychological implications will be discussed.

The main idea is to acquaint the audience with a not very popular alternative in speech rehabilitation techniques. It is also intended to show and promote the role of music in speech processing, and explain why it can be helpful in adults after stroke and in children with speech developmental apraxia to use music in their speech rehabilitation.

In the presentation will be also provided an overview of a newly started research project devoted to MIT, its assumptions, methodology as well as expected outcomes.

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