

The role of radio in pre-school education

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Introduction

When, over a century ago, Italian physicist and constructor Nikola Tesla¹ invented the radio, no one expected that, decades later, it would undergo a spectacular evolution. Once a medium gathering its listeners only in front of the receivers, today – due to the development of technology – it is available on computers, mobile phones, tablets or other mobile devices. Once offering only sound to the listeners, now – thanks to the internet – it can offer images as well. However, regardless of how it is used, the radio always “acts as a discreet companion, a friend, a tireless informer, a gossip, an adviser, as well as a mood modulator and background sound. It uses natural human ability to divide attention between what we see and what we hear, reaching us through only one (audio) channel – in this case, the ear canal.”²

Radio reaches a diverse audience in many parts of the world. According to J. Gajda, due to how easy it is to reach the listener and how fast the message is, “it is assumed that the radio has the widest scope and the largest auditorium on a global scale”. And thanks to various forms of broadcast: “journals, magazines, interviews, debates, different forms of features, read or broadcast prose, radio series, radio ballads, talks, essays, radio novels, stories, radio theatre, various types of radio drama (radio plays), etc.”, each listener can choose the content they find interesting. Radio is for everyone: young and old, poor and rich, educated and uneducated, those living in the countryside and those living in small towns and big cities.

Children tune in to the radio as well. It is a group of listeners that is the subject of this study. Therefore, by presenting my own research, this article will outline the opinion of parents of pre-school students on the role of radio in the education

¹ W 1945 r. amerykański Sąd Najwyższy przyznał Nikolii Tesla prawa patentowe. Walczył o nie z powszechnie uważanego za wynalazcę radia Guglielmo Marconi. Więcej o historii radia zob. A. Adamski, *Media w analogowym and cyfrowym świecie. Wpływ cyfrowej rewolucji na rekonfigurację komunikacji społeczne*, Warszawa 2012, s. 263-269.

² T. Goban-Klas, *Radiomorfoza w kontekście ewolucji, adaptacji and konwergencji mediów*, „Studia Medioznawcze” 2006, nr 3(26), s. 17-19.

of children. It will be preceded by a study of media competences of pre-school children in relation to the radio and its pedagogical dimension.

Radio-related studies

„Once a form of group listening that emptied churches, [radio] has reverted to private and individual uses.”³ In addition, thanks to the Internet expansion, we can observe a migration of listeners to new media. This phenomenon somehow forced radio journalists not only to create audio programmes, but also to post picture stories on websites, be active on social media, and run blogs.⁴

According to research, Poles are eager to listen to the radio. Every day, 72.2% of Poles turn on the radio and listen to it for more than four hours on average. Radio is most popular among adults between the ages of 25 and 39 (74.4% of them listen to the radio every day), and 40 and 59 (75.4% tune in to the radio every day). Poles like to listen to the radio at work (14% tune in to the radio while working) and in the car (37.6%). More and more people are listening to traditional radio stations on-line, as well as through cable and satellite television. Radio programmes most often reach people with higher education (76.9%) and secondary education (71.6%)⁵. However, there is no radio audience data among the youngest consumers. The National Broadcasting Council conducts research which includes the young listeners, usually aged 15-24.⁶ “Contemporary social pedagogy and media pedagogy should systematically conduct research on children and their media world, learn about the changing face of the media, computer and network childhood.”⁷ According to J. Izdebska, the modern world of huge social and cultural changes and the digitization of the media forces a slightly dif-

³ M. McLuhan, *Wybór pism*, Warszawa 1975, s. 159.

⁴ Por. A. Wójciszyn-Wasil, *Obrazy – nie tylko w wyobraźni. Wizualna ewolucja radia*, „Zeszyty naukowe KUL” 60 (2018), nr 1 (241), s. 374.

⁵ Badanie przeprowadzone przez Radio Track, Kantar MillwardBrown na zlecenie Komitetu Badań Radiowych. Fala I-VI 2018, Dobrze półrocze dla radia w Polsce. W I półroczu 2018 prawie 73 proc. Polaków słuchało radia każdego dnia, <https://badaniaradiowe.pl/dobre-polrocze-dla-radia-w-polsce-w-and-polroczu-2018-prawie-73-proc-polakow-sluchalo-radia-kazdego-dnia/>, [12.11.2018].

⁶ Zob. Krajowa Rada Radiofonii and Telewizji, *Wskaźniki słuchalności and audytorium programów radiowych w 2017 r.*, Warszawa 2018, http://www.krrit.gov.pl/Data/Files/_public/Portals/0/Nadawcy/monitoring/rynek-radiowy-w-roku-2017.pdf, [12.11.2018]; Krajowa Rada Radiofonii and Telewizji, *Analiza danych radiometrycznych pod kątem modelu słuchania radia z uwzględnieniem wskaźników demograficznych*, Warszawa 2009 r., http://www.krrit.gov.pl/Data/Files/_public/Portals/0/kontrola/program/model_sluchania_radia_09.pdf, [12.11.2018].

⁷ J. Izdebska, *Badania nad mediami w życiu dziecka and rodziny – próba oceny and nowe wyzwania*, w: Edukacja medialna. Nadzieje and rozczarowania, M. Sokołowski (red.), Warszawa 2010 r., s. 55.

ferent re-interpretation of the child-media relationship.⁸ It is therefore necessary to check if pre-schoolers are eager to listen to the radio or whether it has been ejected from the canon of media readily chosen by children.

Media competences of a pre-schooler

The media and the related development of new communication technologies change children's everyday lives. It changes the way children perceive the world, it is often an instrument of fun, learning, building close relationships, creating identity and indulging life passions. Children are open to new technologies, interested in new solutions. Therefore, it is necessary to prepare young users to consume the media properly, in other words, to prepare them to acquire age-appropriate media competences.

According to A. Kaczmarek, "media competence" should be understood as "a harmonious composition of knowledge, understanding, valuation, and efficient use of the media"⁹. L. Dyczewski, on the other hand, notes that media competence "(...) is a kind of self-defence, safeguarding your own personality and your own way of life in today's media world."¹⁰ According to A. Ogonowska, "education in media literacy should take place throughout a lifetime and start when the child starts showing interest in the media and media coverage."¹¹ Such development should include three areas: media education (theory – acquisition of basic knowledge about the media), education through the media (practice – media literacy), and education for the media (development of media quality and media offer – through the creativity and intellectual development of users and broadcasters of media messages).¹²

In the process of shaping competence, "The Catalogue of Media, Information, and Digital Competences" may come handy – it is a program with a rich set of didactic media education for children, teenagers, and adults developed by the Modern Poland Foundation. The catalogue covers many topics, such as: using information, creative use of media, language of the media, and security, as well as

⁸ Por. Tamże, s. 54-55.

⁹ A. Kaczmarek, *Edukacja medialna wobec zagrożeń cyberprzemocy and cyfrowego wykluczenia*, „Kultura – Media – Teologia” (13) 2013, s. 71.

¹⁰ L. Dyczewski, *Konieczność kompetencji medialnych w nowoczesności*, w: *Konieczność i różnorodność kompetencji medialnej*, A. Sugier-Szerega, M. Sławek-Czochra (red.), Lublin 2012, s. 19.

¹¹ A. Ogonowska, *Współczesna edukacja medialna. Teoria and rzeczywistość*, Kraków 2013, s. 227

¹² Por. Tenże, *Kompetencje medialne*, w: *O potrzebie edukacji medialnej w Polsce*, M. Federowicz, S. Ratajski (red.), Warszawa 2015, s. 104.

economic, ethical, and legal aspects. It is directed to parents, class tutors, teachers, lecturers, community animators, and trainers.¹³

The catalogue separates the competences into 10 categories and then each of them – into specific skills. For pre-school children, the competences related to the radio are as follows:

- **Use of information**

- a) **sources of information**

- children know that information can take various forms (image, text, video, audio) and have various sources (radio, book, newspaper). They can use them.

- b) **critical approach to information**

- children understand that not every piece of information heard is true, they can verify it by asking an adult the right questions.

- c) **use of information**

- children can communicate the information they have heard, they talk about it using their own words

- **Relations in the media environment**

- a) **I**

- children can express their needs and emotions related to the media; for example, they choose their favourite radio drama, a song they like and want to listen to.

- b) **I and others**

- children know the rules of good behaviour while listening to the radio, know that they cannot listen to it too loudly, so as not to disturb others.

- c) **I and the environment**

- children can turn on the radio by themselves, they know what it is for.

- **Media language**

- a) **linguistic nature of the media**

- children can distinguish between fictitious and real characters, for example, they know that the characters from the stories heard on the radio do not exist.

- children understand that the conversation heard on the radio is communicated through the media, they know that despite the fact that they hear voices of the interlocutors, they remain far away. They know that you can record and replay the sounds of speech, nature, the city, etc.

- b) **culture of media communication**

- children can express their opinions about the messages they have heard and justify it, e.g. which fairy-tales heard on the radio they like and why.

- **Creative use of media**

- a) **creating**

¹³ Fundacja Nowoczesna Polska, *Kompetencje medialne and cyfrowe dzieci and młodzieży*, <https://nowoczesnapolska.org.pl/2016/11/30/kompetencje-medialne-and-cyfrowe-dzieci-and-mlodziezy/>, [12.11.2018].

– children know that you can record sound e.g. using a voice recorder. They can use media tools on their own, for example, they can play sounds using the installed applications on a smartphone or tablet.

- **Ethics and values in communication and media**

- a) **communication and media as the subject of ethical reflection**

– children at a basic level can distinguish good from evil in the media; for example, they can indicate the wrong behaviour of a character of the story they heard.

- **Safety in communication and media**

- a) **image protection and privacy**

– children can communicate that they are embarrassed and do not want to participate in a given communication situation; for example, they do not want their speech to be recorded.

- b) **secure communication**

– children can communicate that they are afraid of the content they hear. They can ask an adult for help, e.g. to turn off the radio

- c) **addiction and hygiene of using the media**

– children know that adults – parents and carers – decide on the time they can listen to the radio and on the selection of appropriate content.

- **Law in communication and media**

- a) **regulation of operator's activity in the media**

– children know who is a journalist, an author, a publisher, an editor. They understand that there are special programmes or radio stations dedicated for children.

- b) **rights of people with disabilities**

– children know and understand that everyone, including people with disabilities, have an equal right to use the media, listen to the radio.

- **Economic aspects of media activity**

- a) **the media market and elements of media policy**

– based on the stories children know, they can point to fairy tales you can listen to on the radio, as an audiobook.

- b) **information as an economic good**

– children can share information with others, e.g., tell their friends where they can listen to favourite stories, which radio or programme they listen to.¹⁴

The acquisition of media competences by children can take place both in a targeted way – in the areas of institutional education, as well as in an unintentional way. They will be manifested in the children's games, in role playing and, in the absorption, and interpretation of the content heard. The competencies will also

¹⁴ Por. W. Budzisz, M. Cywińska, R. Czajka and inni, *Katalog kompetencji medialnych, informacyjnych and cyfrowych*, <https://edukacjamedialna.edu.pl/kompetencje/?level=przedszkole>, [12.11.2018].

help children to develop communication strategies in the future and to get to know the world and form their cognitive representation.¹⁵

Educational aspect of the radio

Children come into contact with the sounds coming from the radio almost from their very first days, and more and more often – even during their foetal life. This is of great importance for their psychophysical development and it can have a positive effect on them.

Contemporary researchers of the nature of the radio, both media experts and pedagogues, agree that it contributes to the development of children's **imagination**. By engaging only the sense of hearing, radio forces children to stimulate their imagination and thus their own knowledge.¹⁶ It becomes a participant in the "home theatre of images" of great influence.¹⁷ Radio plays have the greatest impact on the development of child's imagination. They contribute to improving their knowledge and support "the development of spatial, plastic, motion, colour, and musical imagination."¹⁸ Everything that is supposed to reach the child as a listener must be told by means of sound that activates their imagination. They start to create real or fictional images, which they are also part of, for example, the sounds of a big city, animals in the forest, weather phenomena, elements etc. Various types of voice modulations, different speech tempo, and improvisation of phenomena trigger various associations. Silence as well, "although it is an unusual situation for the radio, it is thanks to silence that you can 'hear' it on the radio even more 'loudly'."¹⁹ It helps in creating images, emphasizes emotions, gives reflection, creates mystery, encourages cognition. Music also plays an important role in the development of imagination. It allows us to put the listener into the right mood, strengthen the emotional and aesthetic layers of the message, increase the depth and the meaning of the words heard, and evoke emotional associations. It can even help to become a participant in the event or facilitate its interpretation.²⁰

Radio shapes the way children **think**. It takes place through the language rich in mental shortcuts, concepts, symbols, comparisons and interpretations of the reality heard. And the concentration of thoughts on specific content draws our attention.²¹ Children have to concentrate on the radio play, otherwise they lose the thread of what it is about. This way, children develop their **memory**, remember the content

¹⁵ Por. A. Ogonowska, *Kompetencje...*, dz. cyt. s. 106.

¹⁶ Por. A. Adamski, *Media w analogowym...*, dz. cyt. s. 279.

¹⁷ Por. W. Grelowska, *Rola przekazu radiowego w kształceniu językowym dziecka*, „Edukacja elementarna w teorii i praktyce”, 4 (2007), s. 37.

¹⁸ M. Więczkowska, *Co wciąga twoje dziecko?*, Kraków 2012 r, s. 97.

¹⁹ A. Adamski, *Media w analogowym...*, dz. cyt. s. 279.

²⁰ Por. J. Gajda, *Media w*, dz. cyt. s. 98-99.

²¹ W. Grelowska, *Rola przekazu...*, art. cyt., s. 41.

of the programme, characters, questions and tasks asked, the course of events, etc. All this, in turn, not only develops the child's cognitive functions, but also their **language**. By listening to different kinds of stories, speeches, discussions on the radio, the child listens to the model speech. In addition, frequent contact with such language strengthens their grammatical system, i.e. inflection and syntax, allowing for “the thoughts conveyed to take on a more and more perfect and accurate form. Children’s speech becomes enriched with semantic and abstract categories.”²² On the other hand, stories and fairy tales rich in beautiful phrases and expressions develop the ability to use phraseological compounds, improve both the passive and active vocabulary and the ability to speak independently.

The radio also has an effect on shaping the social and moral attitudes of children. The main characters of radio plays often become role models engaged in the struggle between good and evil, teaching children about appropriate relationships and to respect social property. They also constitute model rules of behaviour, expression, and cooperation. Children want to help the positive characters and such desire does not disappear when they finish listening but is manifested later too. It can have an outlet in games, movement, words, music, art, and specific life situations.

Presentation of research

The aim of the research carried out was to get to know the opinions of parents of pre-school children on the radio’s influence on the development of the youngest users. The research focused on the willingness of children to use the radio, as well as its role in teaching and pre-school education. In order to obtain answers to the research problems defined, I conducted an online survey. The research was carried out in November 2018, among 100 parents of pre-school children who were asked to answer some questions.

For the needs of this research, the following research hypotheses have been adopted:

- Listening to the radio can have impact on the intellectual development and shaping of the socio-moral attitudes of the youngest users.
- Lack of interest from the pre-school teachers in using media for the implemented educational programs may be a factor increasing the risk of inappropriate media reception by children in the future.

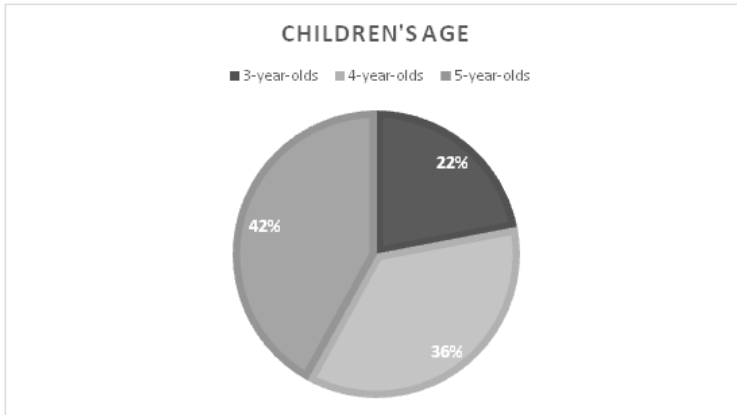
The research group included 67 women (67%) and 33 men (33%). The biggest group of respondents consisted of people aged 26-39 (76%), the second biggest group – of parents aged 21-25 (13%) and aged 40 and more (11%). Most of the respondents live in a city with more than 50,000 residents (44%), 36% – in a city with less than 50,000 residents, and 20% – in the countryside. Most people have

²² Tamže, s. 40.

Master's degrees (63%). People with licentiate degree constitute 25% of respondents and people with secondary education – 12%.

They are parents of both boys (49%) and girls (51%), who are at the following age:

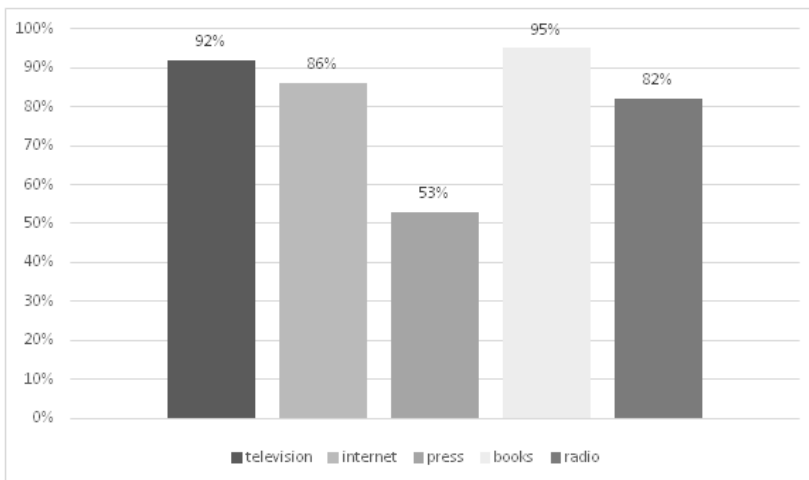
Figure 1. Age of preschool children



Source: own study based on research.

The respondents were first asked what types of media their child has access to. The parents could give more than one answer.

Figure 2. Media availability.

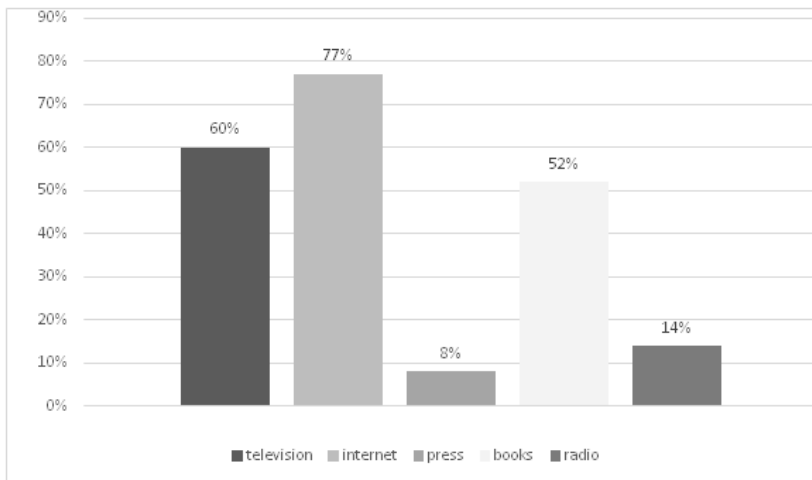


Source: own study based on research.

The above results suggest that children have access to all types of media. Mostly to books (95%) and television (92%). Slightly fewer children can use the Internet (86%) and radio (82%). Newspapers and magazines are the least available type of media among the youngest group of recipients – 53% of children have access to them.

The respondents were also asked which of the above-mentioned types of media are most likely to be used by their child. The parents could choose more than one option.

Figure 3. The most popular media among children

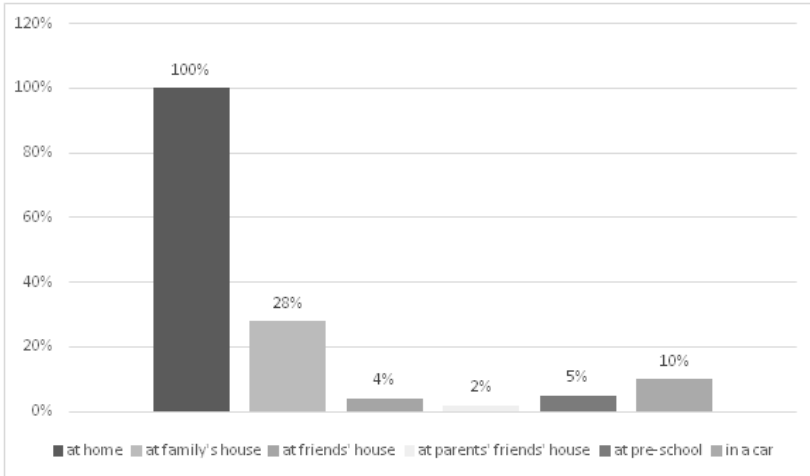


Source: own study based on research.

Internet (77%) and television (60%) are the most popular types of media among children. It can be noted that, despite the high availability of each medium, including radio, only 14% of respondents choose to listen to it.

In the next two questions, parents were asked to tell where their children most often use the media and how much time a day, they spend doing it.

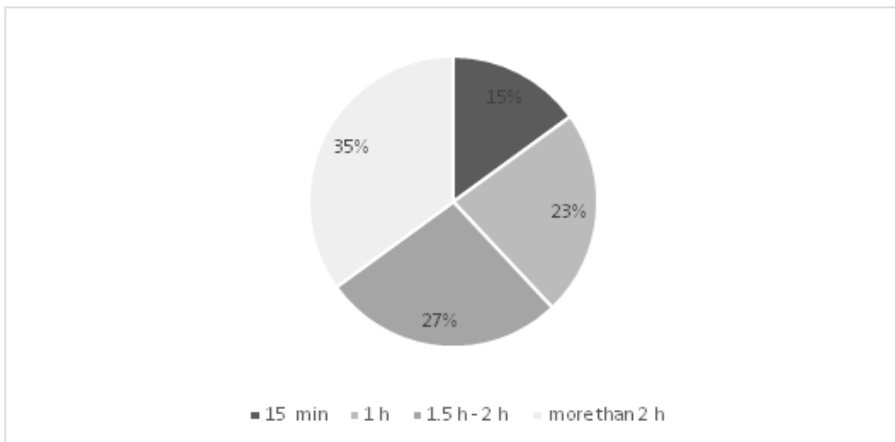
Figure 4. Where children most often use the media.



Source: own study based on research.

Children use the media mainly at home. 100% of the respondents gave that answer. The youngest ones sometimes use the media while visiting their family (28%) and travelling in a car (10%). They also occasionally use them when their parents' friends (2%). Only 5% of the questioned parents answered that their children use the media at pre-school. This suggests that pre-school teachers do not often use the media during educational activities.

Figure 5. Daily amount of time devoted to the use of media.

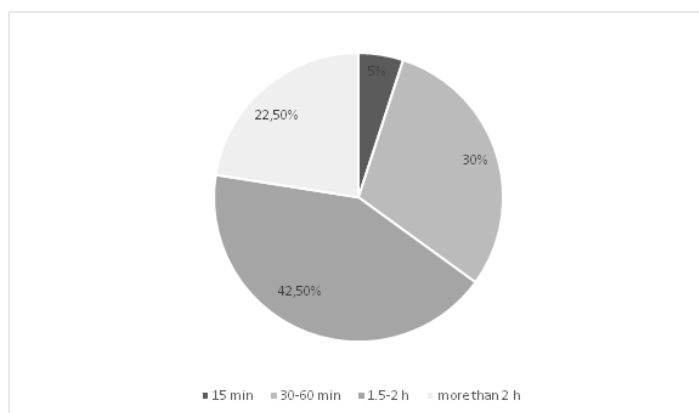


Source: own study based on research.

Pre-school children spend a lot of time using the media. As the above data indicate, the vast majority spend 1.5-2 hours (27%) or more than 2 hours (35%) per day on this activity. The group of children devoting 1 hour a day to the media constitutes 23% of the respondents and those who spend only 15 minutes per day – only 15%.

The surveyed parents were asked to answer the following question: Are their children interested in radio? In response, 60% of the respondents said that their child is not interested in radio, 40% said 'Yes'. The parents who answered in the affirmative were also asked how much time the child devoted to listening to the radio.

Figure 6. Daily amount of time spent listening to the radio.

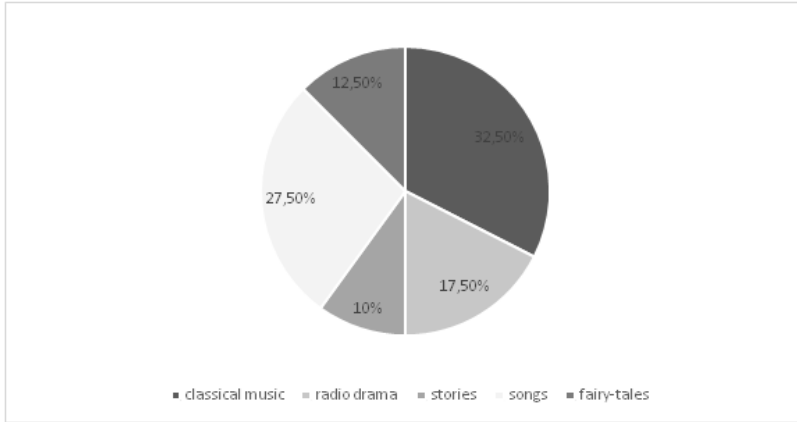


Source: own study based on research.

The above data show that children who choose to listen to the radio spend 1.5-2 hours a day on this activity – 42.5% of respondents gave that answer, while 30% of children tune in to the radio for over 2 hours a day. Only 5% of pre-schoolers listen to the radio 15 minutes a day and 22.5% spend between 30 and 60 minutes on this activity a day.

Parents who declared that their children were listening to the radio were also asked what programmes their child most often listened to on the radio. The question was open-ended and the parents themselves could give any answer.

Figure 7. Most popular programmes among children



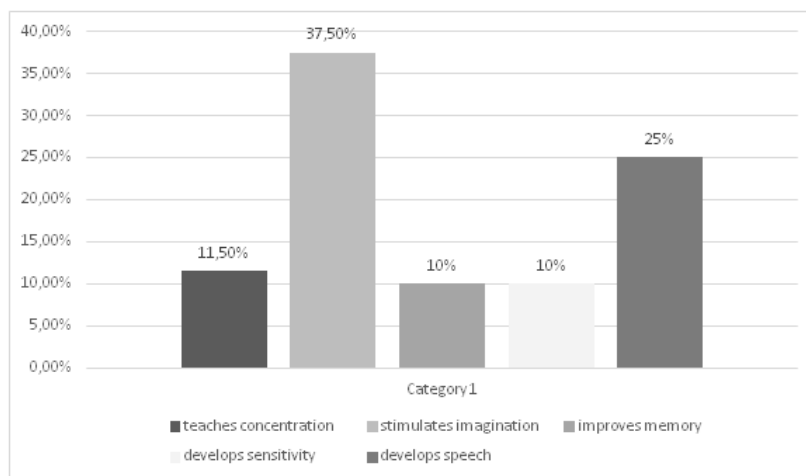
Source: own study based on research.

According to their parents, pre-schoolers who tune in to the radio usually have contact with classical music (32.5%). In addition, they often listen to children's songs (27.5%) and radio plays (17.5%). Pre-schoolers also choose fairy tales (12.5%) and stories (10%) from the radio offer.

Parents are willing to control the subject matter of programmes addressed to their children. 50% of the respondents confirmed that they always check the subject of radio broadcasts, 37.5% of parents do it sporadically, while 12.5% of respondents do not do it at all. When asked about the criterion of selecting a programme suitable for their children's needs in an open-ended question, parents most often give the following: the time of the programme and its duration, subject matter, competences of the host, interesting and valuable topic: "The broadcast must be interesting, consistent with my values, suitable for children", "The level of speech, choice of content and themes and the author of radio plays", "The broadcast, the subject matter, and the host are the most important things for me".

In the following two open-ended questions, parents were asked how they assess the influence of radio on the child's intellectual development and on the formation of socio-moral attitudes.

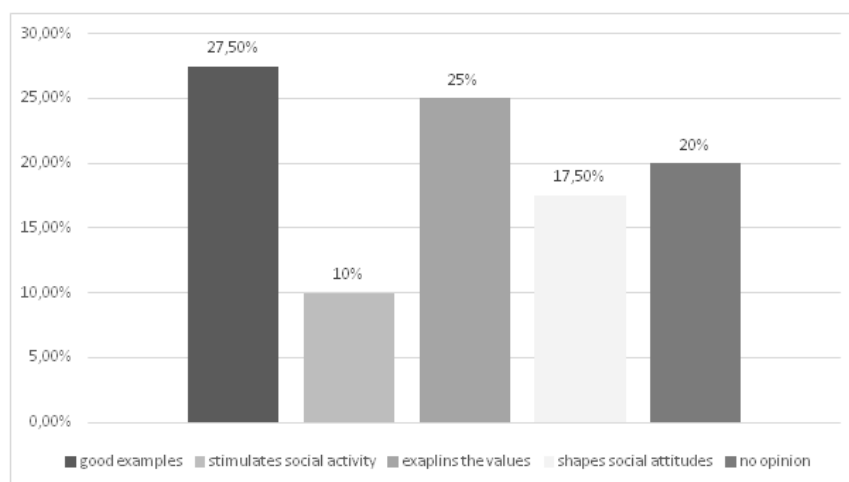
Figure 8. The influence of radio on the child's intellectual development



Source: own study based on research

Parents notice the positive influence of radio on the intellectual development of children. Most respondents noticed radio broadcasts help to stimulate children's imagination (37.5%) and develop their speech (25%). In the parents' opinion, the radio teaches concentration (11.5%), improves memory (10%) and develops sensitivity (10%).

Figure 9. The influence of radio on shaping socio-moral attitudes in a child

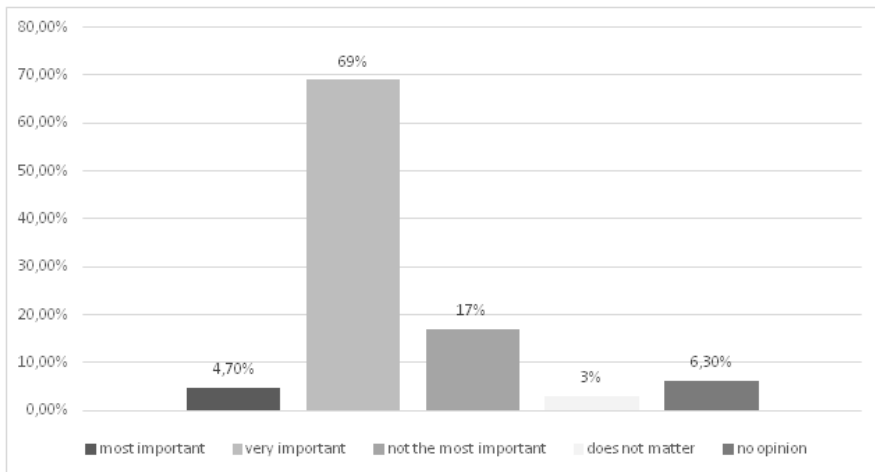


Source: own study based on research.

The surveyed parents also notice that the radio shapes social and moral attitudes of children. Most often, the radio teaches children such attitudes by giving them examples of good behaviour (27%), explaining values (25%), shaping social attitudes (17.5%) and stimulating social action (10%). As many as 20% of parents surveyed have no opinion on this topic.

In the last part of the survey, parents were asked how important it is for them to prepare children for proper media use before they go to school, whether pre-school teachers should do it and whether the pre-schools their child attend implement elements of media education.

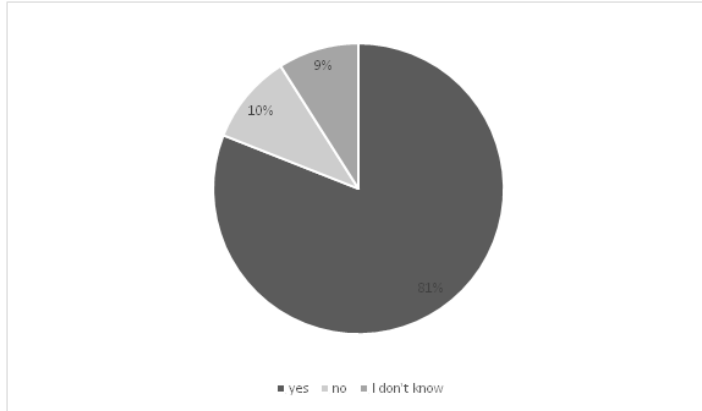
Figure 10. The importance of preparing children for proper media use.



Source: own study based on research.

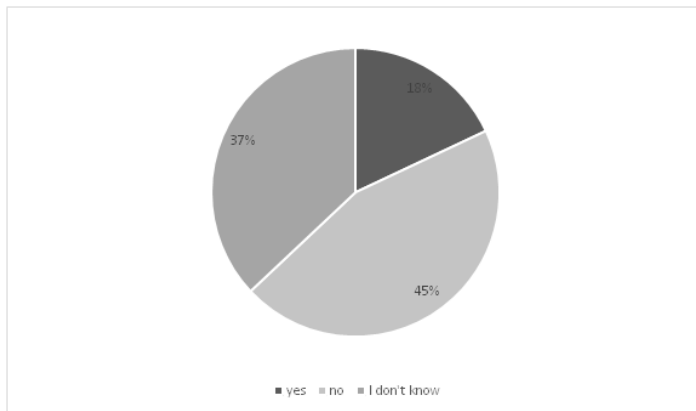
As the above data show, up to 69% of parents of pre-school children consider it very important to prepare their children for proper media use. 17% of respondents answered that this is not the most important thing and only 3% – that it does not matter to them. 4.7% of respondents find media education to be the most important issue and 6.3% of parents declare that they have no opinion on this matter.

Figure 11. The importance of preparing children for using the media at pre-school.



According to the parents surveyed, media education is very important. 81% of parents have that opinion; 9% of respondents have no opinion whether pre-school should prepare their children for proper media consumption and 10% of them believe that pre-school should not do that.

Figure 12. Preparing children for proper media use at pre-school.



As many as 45% of children of the surveyed parents are not prepared for proper use of the media at pre-school. Only 18% of pre-school teachers prepare children for this and 37% of parents do not know whether the educational institution their child attends runs any classes with elements of media education.

Conclusions:

1. Pre-schoolers have unlimited access to the media. They are the most willing to use the media which can interest them with images, i.e. television, internet. The radio is not an attractive medium for this audience.

2. Pre-school children spend too much time on consuming media. 1.5 – 2 hours and over two hours usually declared by parents is a threat to the development of cognitive functions of the child, their emotional sphere and personality.

3. When tuning in to the radio, pre-schoolers are most likely to choose music, songs, radio plays, stories and fairy tales. Parents are happy to control the subject matter of the programmes listened to by the children. They often decide for themselves what their child will listen to. The following are the most important criteria for the selection of programmes for children: the time and duration of the programme, the subject of the programme and the competences of the host.

4. Parents notice that radio programmes have a positive impact on the intellectual development of their children and contribute to shaping socio-moral attitudes. Thus, they confirm that the pedagogical dimension of the radio is effective.

5. Parents want their children to be prepared for proper media consumption. For the most part, they would like the pre-school teachers to prepare their children before they go to school, but only a few institutions that children attend have a curriculum with elements of media education.

6. Pre-school teachers should be encouraged to use the media in the process of educating children, to appreciate the pedagogical value of the media and, above all, of the radio. Undervaluation of the media in pre-school education and lack of preparation for consuming them in the future may result in greater susceptibility of these children to the destructive impact of the media.

Radio is an effective learning resource. Used properly by both parents and teachers from the first years of a child's life may influence its growth and develop its potential. It is therefore an imperative to introduce media education at every stage of children's education not only to protect children from negative media influence, but most importantly to prepare them to make use of media as didactic means in the future.

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Słowa kluczowe:

Radio, przedszkolaki, dzieci, edukacja medialna, kompetencje medialne

Key words:

Radio, kindergartners, children, media education, media competence

Summary

In this article author explains the need to utilize radio among the youngest media users. Recent surveys regarding radio listening habits are presented and attention is drawn to the necessity of media education among kindergartners.

Author presents additionally radio's pedagogical role and its positive character in children's education. At the end author describes results of a self-conducted survey regarding kindergartners' parents opinion on the role of radio in the youngest education process.

Streszczenie

W prezentowanym artykule autorka wyjaśnia potrzebę wykorzystania radia wśród najmłodszych użytkowników mediów. Przedstawia aktualne badania w zakresie słuchalności radia oraz potrzebę i zakres kształcenia kompetencji medialnych przedszkolaków. Autorka przedstawia również pedagogiczny wymiar radia i jego pozytywny wymiar w kształceniu dzieci. Prezentuje również wyniki własnych badań dotyczących opinii rodziców dzieci przedszkolnych na temat roli radia w edukacji najmłodszych.