

1. The aim of the project: The main aim of the study is to analyze function of a school classroom as an environment that can be meaningful for theory of mind (ToM) development among typically-developing children. We would like to observe which characteristics of classrooms could be responsible for faster ToM development. In our previous project we observed that ToM among children with and without disabilities develops faster in heterogeneous/inclusive classrooms (IC), in which children with and without disabilities learn together, than in homogeneous/general classroom (GC), where there are no children with disabilities (Smogorzewska, in press; Smogorzewska et al., in review), but we were not able to determine what characteristics of classrooms are responsible for these results. Preparing the current project we assume that there are some observable characteristics of inclusive classrooms—such as educational methods used in the classroom, interactions between teacher and children, and interactions between children with and without disabilities—that can help to predict ToM development among children. One theory of ToM development says that ToM develops during interactions between people (Carpendale & Lewis, 2004). Some experimental research shows that educational methods are non-negligible for ToM development among school-age children (Bianco et al., 2016; Lecce et al., 2014; Ornaghi et al., 2014; Wang et al., 2016). However, results illustrating the influence of natural school environment on ToM are unavailable. Thus, this area is worth studying in more depth, using laboratory tests and questionnaires as well as observational methods. Our research has practical value and importance to the process of education. The results can positively influence the effectiveness of teaching and show determinants of ToM development in a classroom setting.

2. Methods: We plan to conduct a longitudinal research with children without disabilities with three waves: during the 1st, 2nd and 3rd year of school education (with 10-12-month breaks), and invite 50 classrooms (25 IC and GC) to participate. Although our analytical plans are focused on children without disabilities, we will not exclude children with disabilities from our study. In our research we plan to combine executive tests and questionnaires, given to children, teachers and parents, with natural observations of classrooms. We plan to analyze such variables as:

Independent variable: type of classroom: heterogeneous/inclusive (with 3-5 children with an official statement of disability) vs. homogeneous/general education classroom (with no children with disabilities).

Dependent variables:

Children: tests/questionnaires: 1) **ToM** – we will measure different aspects of ToM (cognitive and emotional: ToM scale (Peterson et al., 2012), Faux Pas Recognition Test (Baron-Cohen et al., 1999), Strange Stories (White et al., 2009), Eyes Test (Baron-Cohen et al., 2001), 2) **Social networks**, 3) **Control variable** (during the 1st wave): **executive functions (EF)**: Test of Working Memory (Test Pamięci Roboczej, Krejtz et al., 2012).

Teachers: questionnaires to fill out for every child taking part in the research: 1) **Prosocial skills** – Prosocial Behavior Questionnaire (Weir & Duveen, 1981), 2) **Social Skills** – Social Skills Improvement System (SSIS) Rating Scale for teachers (Gresham & Elliott, 2008), 3) **Teacher-Children Relationship** - Student-Teacher Relationship Scale, short form (Pianta, 1992).

Teachers: general questionnaires (during the first wave): 1) **Mind-mindedness** (Meins & Fernyhough, 2015), 2) **Educational practices questionnaire**, 3) **Classroom demographic characteristics..**

Parents: 1) **Children's social skills** – SSIS Rating Scale for parents (Gresham & Elliott, 2008), 2)

Demographic characteristics of the family (e.g. SES, number of siblings etc.) filling out during the first wave.

Classroom observations will focus on classroom organisation, interactions between teacher and children, and between children and will be prepared according to the CLASS and inCLASS tools (Downer et al., 2010; Pianta et al., 2008).

The project assumes the use of a number of **advanced analytical methods and also methods used for the development of results**, such as SEM (exploratory, exploratory-confirmatory and confirmatory, as well as growth models), invariance analysis, multilevel modeling, and regression models.

Peer networks will be analyzed not only with the use of traditional indicators, such as indegree, outdegree, eigenvector centrality, but also with the use of **exponential random graph models and stochastic actor-oriented models**.

Data analysis will be carried out using specialized statistical packages: **SPSS, Mplus, igraph, ERGM and/or RSiena** (the last three operating in the R environment).

3. Impact: The proposed study is important for developing educational theory and practice as well as developmental and educational psychology because: 1) It focuses attention on social characteristics, which are connected to the school classroom, that, in turn, can be meaningful for ToM development. Until now classroom was hardly analyzed as an environment important for ToM development; 2) It potentially develops theory of inclusive education, especially in the aspect of its effectiveness for developing social skills among children. Such research are underrepresented in the literature.