The Verbotonal Method

Petar Guberina
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Editor

Claude ROBERGE

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Contents

Taking Flight (Claude Roberge) ........................................... 5

1. Insertion of the Verbotonal Method in Our Time ............... 9

2. Use of the Tactile Sense in the Understanding
   of Speech .............................................................. 25

3. The Principle of Optimality ........................................... 31

4. Hearing and Articulation from the Verbotonal
   Method Viewpoint (Petar Guberina, Jugoslav
   Gospodnetić) .......................................................... 43

5. Phonetic Rhythms in the Verbotonal System ..................... 51

6. The Verbotonal Method and its Application to the
   Rehabilitation of the Deaf ........................................... 65

7. The Audio-visual Structuro-global Method ....................... 87

8. Structuring and Overtaking of Perception and
   Psycholinguistic Structures According to the
   Structuro-global Audio-visual Methodology (S.G.A.V.) .... 125

9. Theoretical Foundations of the Audio-visual
   Structuro-global Method (Saint-Cloud Zagreb
   Method) – A Linguistics of Speech – .............................. 151

10. The Learning of Foreign Languages According to Age .... 175

11. Integration of Hearing Impaired Children into
    Regular Schools through Speech Communication ............. 209
12. Forty Years of Research in the Fields of Foreign Language Teaching and Speech Hearing Rehabilitation .......................................................... 219
13. Importance and Nature of Intonation ........................................... 235
15. Is it Possible to Become a Fluent Bilingual? ................... 263
16. Problems Concerning the Use of Residual Sight by the Visually Handicapped .......................................................... 273
17. The Role of the Body in Learning Foreign Languages .................................................................................................................. 279
18. Reeducation of Hearing and Speech from the Dynamic Diagnosis Viewpoint .......................................................... 291
20. Intelligibility of Speech through Low Frequencies (PETAR GUBERINA, MIRJANA SIMIĆ) ......................... 321
21. Speech and Space ........................................................................ 349
22. Philosophy, Principles and Developments of the Verbotonal Method .......................................................................................... 363
23. The Idea of Structure in the Audio-visual Structuro-global Methodology .......................................................... 381
24. Early Diagnosis and Early Rehabilitation – The Role of the Body – .......................................................... 391
25. Speech as the Foundation of all the Organizational Elements of the Zagreb School of Phonetics ........... 403
26. Creativity and Rehabilitation .......................................................... 425
27. Philosophy of the Verbotonal System .......................................... 447

506
28. Petar Guberina, a Patriarch, Forefather, Visionary, and Prophet (MiHOVIL PANSINI) ................. 463

Bibliography of Professor Petar Guberina ......................... 475

Main Specific Expressions Used for the Understanding of the Verbotonal System (CLAUDE Roberge) ........ 477

Verbotonal Method Terminology – Index ......................... 491

Short Biography of Professor Claude Roberge .................... 503
Dr PETAR GUBERINA
(1913-2005)

Dr Guberina was born on May 22, 1913 in Šibenik, Croatia, on the Adriatic Sea. He finished high school there, studying Latin and Greek among other subjects.

He graduated from the University of Zagreb in French and Latin (1935) and continued studying French at the Sorbonne, where he obtained his doctorate. His thesis, prepared under the guidance of Dr Pierre Fouché, but mainly Dr Jules Marouzeau, was named *Valeur logique et valeur stylistique des propositions complexes*. This research already opened the way to the linguistics of speech by stressing rhythm, intonation, and gestures as optional features of languages and therefore of their learning. Such an approach put Dr Guberina in contact with the Geneva School (Ferdinand de Saussure – Jean Piaget).

In 1951 he became professor at the Faculty of Liberal Arts at the University of Zagreb, where he continued teaching until 1983. In the beginning, he was a teacher of French and the Dean of the Department of Romance Languages (1951-1965). In 1954, he started the Institute of Phonetics, and the phonetic course the following year. He remained director of the Institute until 1983. From that time on, he devoted his activities to research.

His research in “the linguistics of speech” revolutionized the teaching of modern languages and led him to the Structuro-global Audiovisual method (SGAV) with Paul Rivenc from CREDIF.

From that time on, this method was introduced worldwide in the field of biological and human sciences. The Verbotonal Method was developed in every continent. A great number of institutions (many hundreds of them) all over the world have adopted the principles and ways of the Verbotonal System and have been using the electroacoustic instruments, specializing in the field of rehabilitation and training of hearing impaired subjects, of children with speech handicaps as well as in the therapy of adult subjects with speech handicaps.

The basic principles of the Verbotonal System are also found as the basic components of all modern methods of teaching foreign languages and are the starting points generally acknowledged by the electroacoustic producers and publishers of acoustic material and hearing aids.

The bibliography of the Verbotonal System contains more than 6,100 titles written in 20 languages.

Professor Guberina was a Member of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts from 1963. He became the director of the Poliklinika SUVAG (formerly the Center SUVAG), founded in 1961. He became its scientific and technical adviser.

From 1982, the SUVAG Center has been known worldwide as a center for the development and training of the Verbotonal System for scholars of many international research projects, among them, four financed by the American government. The most important one was *Restricted Bands of Frequencies in the Auditory Rehabilitation of Deaf* (1961).

As a scientific expert, he was appointed (in 1989) to work on a project of the European Union called “COST 219” concerning the hearing improvement of handicapped subjects.

In 1992, within the TEMPUS Program, a subject linked with the Verbotonal training (*Pathology of Hearing and/or Speech: Teaching of Foreign languages*) and the organization of the graduate studies program (MA studies) were established. This program includes the cooperation of the University of Zagreb School of Medicine and four countries of the European Union: Belgium, France, Italy and Spain.

Professor Guberina also served during a period of many years as a visiting or expert professor for UNICEF, UNESCO, the United Nations, and the World Health Organization.

In France, Professor Guberina received two Légion d’Honneur awards:
- Chevalier in 1968,
- Officier in 1989.