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Many research results show problematic nature of retrospective answers (Hardt, Rutter, 2004). Statements based on memories suffer from lower accurate correspondence with real events; however such statements express a subjective meaning which individuals give to their experiences. This ambivalence must be considered within the research design and during interpretation of data.

In the research, we examine the impact of institutional care during childhood on social and psychological development in adulthood. The sample consisted of 127 adults who spent their childhood or its part out of the original family. All individuals filled the set of standardized psycho-diagnostic tools, including CTQ and Rohner's method of family diagnostics and extended anamnestic questionnaire. After four weeks, selected 20 individuals were asked for interviews covering similar topics as previous tests.

Data gathered via oral and written inquiries were compared. The analysis shows the differences in described experiences on three levels: 1. the factual nature of experiences (process of events, time and space localization), 2. the emotional load of experiences (expressed feelings), 3. the hierarchy of experiences (different subjective meanings and mutual relations). It was found out that correspondence between oral and written answers decreases if questions with certain parameters are used. Moreover, crucial finding is that the validity of retrospective answers increases if methods for data collection are cumulated.

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