

## **ABSTRACT:**

The aim of this thesis was to investigate how does child's age affect the identification and categorization of audio and audio-visual recordings of dog barks expressing the emotion of anger, sadness and happiness. The key importance was in to reveal in what age is the child able to distinguish safely among dog's emotions and the situations during which the recordings were taken. Moreover, the study also researches in what age is the child able to match the typical expressions of the human's facial muscles. The study also aimed to research the influence of gender, experience with the dog and type of the recording (audio/video) on respondent's final decision.

265 children from nursery and primary schools in the age of 4 to 12 years were included in the study. The same version of the questionnaire was given to all of the respondents and every one of them evaluated identical recordings. The questionnaire and secondary material were arranged in the form of illustrations and coloured codes due to the lower age limit of children.

It has been shown that age and type of emotion captured in the recording played important role when children were identifying and categorizing them. The success of correct responds was rising with the higher age of children, whereas concrete misinterpretations appeared among pre-school children. Seven-years-old children succeeded even more as it could be seen from the results evaluation. Children older than 7 years old displayed similar results as the 7-years-old.

The emotion which was identified most successfully from all of the three evaluated parts was anger, independently on the age spectrum. The emotion of happiness was on the contrary the most difficult one to identify.

The answers of respondents were not affected by their gender, experience with the dog nor the type of recording (audio/video). Since the aim of this study is the pre-school children, which is quite unique among researches in this field, we recommend to particularity focus on them in the future. It is especially these children who have difficulties with interpreting the signals of voice and physical signals which might lead to higher risk of conflicts with dog in case of real contact.

**Key words:** dog, child, communication, emotion, barking