

# TWINS IN THE WORLD OF SPECIFIC LANGUAGE IMPAIRMENT

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The research of Croatian morphology is quite demanding due to its big complexity. It is even more demanding to research the child language acquisition of Croatian morphology because a developmental dimension, i.e. the element of continuous change has to be added to the picture. Many questions remain unanswered e.g. how children acquire such a complicated morphology that plays a great role if a child is to become a competent speaker of Croatian. Therefore, when we want to research morphology in Croatian, it is better to concentrate on a single issue at a time. In this paper that part of Croatian morphology will be a part of the derivative morphology, i.e. derivation of verbs by prefixation. This type of derivation is very productive. Prefixed verbs are very frequent in speech and are therefore available for children to acquire them early. Verbs that are made by prefixes are usually perfective which means that prefixes make verbs perfective. In Croatian verbs have two aspects: perfective, that relates to the action that is completed and imperfective, that relates to the action that lasts.

However, since many related psycholinguistic questions remain unanswered, language and speech pathologists slowly advance in grasping how children with Specific Language Impairment (SLI) acquire such a complicated morphology as in Croatian and how to define and develop work of speech-language therapists to achieve language advance in SLI children. Children with SLI have significant difficulties in the acquisition of morphology, but also with other parts of the language. Some language acquisition researches of twins (Dale, 1998, Bishop, 2002) have shown that twins are generally slower in language development than singles. If we add this usual slower language development in twins to the SLI, we can predict that the language development would be severely inhibited. Therefore, we tried to investigate the prefixation of verbs in SLI twins.

The analysis of answers that children of preschool age gave to the questions that we devised for this research shows significant underdevelopment in the verbal derivation that is related to the aspect. Instead of the production of correct (or target) perfective verbal forms, the twins use various ways to express the same or similar meaning, e.g. they use a synonymous or simply different lexeme. Even when they use the offered imperfective verb, they skip the prefix, produce erroneous inflectional forms or put the wrong prefix. We can conclude that the SLI twins produce a very limited number of correct perfective verbal forms.

This paper tries not only to offer some insight into the morphological problems of the SLI twins, but also opens some other questions about the way verbs are stored in the mental lexicon. Are they stored one by one with all their forms or are prefixes stored separately? Confronted with language impairment do we have to correct the absence of verbal categories in the storage or the inability to connect a verb with its appropriate prefix?