

Summary

The main motive of the present study was to emphasize the role of analogy in the period of acquisition of morphological structures of language and to change the approach in viewing analogical word production not as linguistic errors, but as one of the stages of speech development, necessary when learning the (grammatical) rules of language.

The interest in the issue of inference by analogy and in the development and verification of this skill on the grounds of linguistic research has been somewhat greater in recent years. Concentrated on this issue, the publications refer mainly to phonetic and semantic phenomena, as well as selected lexical issues. In the last few years there has been an increase in the number of publications on this subject, mainly focusing on phonetic, semantic, and selected lexical phenomena.

Analysing the morphological subsystem, in the Polish literature there are mostly such studies that discuss the effect of analogy in the creation of original word-forming constructions. There are few works, which in the description of lexical innovations would include inflectional categories, constituting the basis for the creation of grammatical forms of a given lexeme. If such works appear, they are of one-sided (subjective) nature, in which the newly created forms are considered in the category of grammatical error. The empirical research carried out from this point of view also aimed at looking at the process of language system acquisition in a holistic way and at emphasising the importance of linguistic phenomena that take place within the scope of inflexion and word formation.

In order to investigate the impact of reasoning by analogy on language building, a group of 120 children aged between two and four years were observed. This was done in three settings: a nursery school and two municipal nursery schools. Depending on the place chosen, the research lasted from four to five months and consisted of systematic, weekly observations and the recording of children's expressions during free play.

This approach was dictated by the desire to obtain complete linguistic behaviour. In order to gather the richest possible material, all linguistic realisations were written down and recorded. The context of the utterances was also taken into account in order to identify the basic word. Moreover, children who showed abnormalities in the formation of the language system were excluded from the study.

The present work has a dichotomous character - it consists of a theoretical part and an analytical part. It opens with an introduction to the research question and concludes with a synthesis of information obtained from the conducted research.

The theoretical part presents the biological determinants of linguistic communication, with particular emphasis on the cerebral organisation of language function. The mechanism of imitation was also described in terms of its importance for language development. Focus was also given to the characterisation of the stages of language acquisition, which have been the source of information from a number of periodisations of speech development established by linguists. The importance of the mechanism of inference by analogy for building knowledge about the structure of language is explained. Furthermore, a historical outline of the understanding of the principle of similarity over the centuries is presented. The concluding chapter of the theoretical part is a review of the research conducted so far, which has verified the role of analogy in the process of language system formation. It also includes the aim of the study and research hypotheses.

In turn, the analytical part, consisting of four chapters, discusses the methodology of own research, describes the research group and assesses the level of linguistic competence of children belonging to different institutions. On the basis of the collected material, the word forms and formations were classified and the reasons favoring the creation of lexical innovations were determined. The influence of thinking by analogy on the formation of derived words was also assessed.

The study concludes by presenting the results of the research which were then used to verify the veracity of the hypotheses.