

Abstract

The aim of this diploma thesis is to describe the realizations of consonant clusters in an age-homogenous group of Czech-speaking children.

The theoretical part of this thesis deals with the syllable and consonant clusters as language universals, as well as with the syllable structure and consonant clusters in Czech. Furthermore, some theories of speech acquisition which take combinations of segments and forming of syllable structure in children's speech into account are also presented. A number of studies in consonant cluster acquisition is also summarized.

The practical part of this work consists of an experiment in which consonant clusters in 16 typically developing Czech children aged 3;8–4;9 ($\bar{x} = 4,4$) were analysed. Eleven various two-element consonant clusters were selected according to their frequency of occurrence in the corpus of written Czech. Clusters were placed in 30 real words and 30 pseudowords – the pseudowords had the same structure as real words. Imitation was used as a elicitation method. Pictures were used only as complementary elements.

The entire sample consisted of 461 consonant clusters realized in real words and 464 clusters realized in pseudowords. We described the structure of the target consonant clusters (i.e. manner and quality/accuracy of realizations) and their temporal characteristics. We compared a number of canonical and non-canonical realizations of clusters :1) in a group of real word and in a group of pseudoword; 2) in clusters placed in different positions within a word (i.e. initial, medial and final clusters); 3) in clusters with a different frequency of occurrence. We examined the temporal properties of: 1) canonical and non-canonical realizations of clusters; 2) clusters placed in different positions within a word; 3) clusters composed of different types of consonants (obstruent + obstruent; obstruent + sonorant).