

Abstract

The war which took place in the territory of former Yugoslavia from 1991 to 1995 affected the youngest population too.

This research started from the premise that immediate war activities, in all their forms, frequency and intensity, will lead to creation of difficulties in development of general linguistic abilities at the phonologic, lexical, semantic and syntactic level, as well as in quality of handwriting, mastering of grammatically correct written text, and to an increased number of pupils with speech-linguistic difficulties.

The research was focused on pupils from the 2nd to 5th grades of primary school who had been through different war situations at early and preschool age.

The corpus was formed on the basis of answers of parents surveyed through a questionnaire covering 18 war situations that their children had been through. The corpus comprised 428 pupils – an experimental (E) group of 214 pupils, and a control (K) group of 214 pupils. The experimental group included pupils who had been through a few “difficult” war activities and situations, and the control group included those pupils who had been through situations typical of environments outside the war activities zone.

The testing was carried out using a battery of tests which followed up on the course of linguistic development at primary school age, and the results can highlight delayed development at early age. Both quantitative and qualitative analyses of results have been carried out as well as the checking of statistical importance of the differences between groups E and K (t-test for large and small cohorts and χ^2 test). A zero – hypothesis has also been tested.

The basic hypothesis can be deemed proved because 6 out of 7 special hypotheses have been confirmed, based on examination of

statistically significant differences between groups E and K, while the special hypothesis dealing with the phonological level has been rejected.

Key notions: immediate war activities, linguistic levels, speech-linguistic difficulties, experimental and control group, statistical importance of differences.