

THE USAGE OF THE NUMERALS 2, 3 and 5 IN THE SERBOCROATIAN/CROATIAN (S/C) DIASPORA IN SWEDEN

1.

In this report I will present the results of written tests (multiple-choice) conducted in the JUBA Project (The Language Development of Yugoslav Children in Sweden). The material in this paper is limited to the usage of the numerals *dva*, *tri*, *pet* and their derivatives *duoje*, *dujica*, *troje*, *trojica*, *petoro*, *petorica* in subject function. The tests comprise the combination of these numerals with masculine, feminine and collective nouns. (cf. Appendix. The original tests.)

Out of the spectrum of the numeral forms - 2, 3 and 5 - each informant was to choose the type that satisfied his/her idea of what is correct, which, on the other hand, does not necessarily represent personal language behaviour.

The tests were presented in both standard norms of the S/C, but in Latin orthography. Illiterate informants had the tests read to them by the testers.

The informants presented in this paper are 256 S/C speakers attending primary and secondary school, aged 7-18 years.

2.

According to normative grammars (*Priručna gramatika hrvatskoga književnog jezika*, Školska knjiga, Zagreb 1979; M. Stevanović: *Savremeni srpskohrvatski jezik*, Beograd 1964) the S/C numerals are combined with nouns in nominal phrases functioning as subject in accordance with the following rules:

Fig. 1. Rules of combining numerals and nouns.

	masc./neut.		feminine		*collective	
	sg.	pl.	sg.	pl.	sg.	pl.
dva/dvije	G			N/A		
tri	G			N/A		
pet		G		G		
dvoje					G	G
troje					G	G
petoro					G	G
dvojica		G				
trojica		G				
petorica		G				

*Collective gender here denotes:

such nouns as *djeca*, *telad*, *prasad*, which are combined with an adjectival attribute in feminine gender but demand the numerals *dvoje*, *troje*, *petoro*.

such nouns as *starac*, *govedo*, *svinja* etc., which normally are combined with masculine, neuter or feminine adjectives and numerals but demand the numerals *dvoje*, *troje*, *petoro* when referring to groups of both sexes.

The syntagmatic dependence in the subject NP is left or right directed according to the gender of the head of the NP. Feminine nouns require congruent attributes, whilst the form of masculine, neuter and collective nouns is determined by the numeral. Ex.

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Dva dječaka igraju tenis.

*Dječaka igraju tenis.

The usage of the numerals 2, 3 and 5

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 Dvoje djece plaču. *Djece plaču.
 <-----
 Dvije djevojčice čitaju. Djevojčice čitaju.

Fig. 2. Syntagmatic dependence in the NP.

	G E N D E R		
	masc./neut.	femin.	collective
Syntagmatic dependence	====>	<====	====>

3.

Below I give a specification of the answers given by the informants. By correct answers we mean answers which correspond to the normative information given in the grammars mentioned in 2.

Phrase 26: '... dječaka/dečaka ...' (Two boys ...).

Correct:

183 informants answered *dva* ;
 44 " " *dvojica*, also correctly;

Wrong:

21 " " *dvoje*, i.e. collective numeral;
 5 " " *dviije*, i.e. feminine form;
 1 " " *dvaju*, i.e. masc. gen. form;
 2 " did not answer.

Phrase 29: '... dječaka/dečaka ...' (Three boys ...).

Correct:

156 informants answered *tri* ;
 52 " " *trojica*, also correctly;

Wrong:

45 " " *troje*, i.e. collective numeral;
 2 " " *triju*, i.e. genitive form;
 1 " did not answer.

Phrase 32: '... volova ...' (Five oxen ...).

Correct:

181 informants answered *pet*, ;

Wrong:

45	"	"	<i>petoro</i> , i.e. collective numeral;
23	"	"	<i>petorica</i> , i.e. numeral noun;
6	"	"	<i>peti</i> , i.e. ordinal numeral;
1	"		did not answer.

Phrase 27: '... djevojčice/devojčice ...' (Two girls...).

Correct:

216 informants answered *dviije/due*, ;

Wrong:

20	"	"	<i>dvoje</i> , i.e. collective numeral;
11	"	"	<i>dva</i> , i.e. masculine form;
6	"	"	<i>dvojica</i> , i.e. numeral noun;
1	"	"	<i>dvaju</i> , i.e. masc. gen. form;
2	"		did not answer.

Phrase 30: '... djevojčice/devojčice...' (Three girls...).

Correct:

185 informants answered *tri*, ;

Wrong:

54	"	"	<i>troje</i> , i.e. collective numeral;
10	"	"	<i>trojica</i> , i.e. numeral noun;
6	"	"	<i>triju</i> , i.e. genitive form;
1	"		did not answer.

Phrase 33: '... žena ...' (Five women ...).

Correct:

178 informants answered *pet*, ;

Wrong:

64	"	"	<i>petero/petoro</i> , i.e. collective numeral;
12	"	"	<i>petorica</i> , i.e. numeral noun;
1	"	"	<i>peti</i> , i.e. ordinal numeral;
1	"		did not answer.

Phrase 28: '... djece/dece ...' (Two children ...).

Correct:

156 informants answered *dvoje*, ;

Wrong:

38	"	"	<i>dvojica</i> , i.e. numeral noun;
36	"	"	<i>dviije/due</i> , i.e. feminine form;
23	"	"	<i>dva</i> , i.e. masculine form;
1	"	"	<i>dvaju</i> , i.e. masc. gen. form;
2	"		did not answer.

Phrase 31: '... djece/dece ...' (Three children ...).

Correct:

149 informants answered *troje* ;

Wrong:

72 " " *tri*, i.e. masc./fem./neut. form;
 32 " " *trojica*, i.e. numeral noun;
 2 " " *triju*, i.e. masc./fem./neut. - genitive;
 1 " did not answer.

Phrase 34: '... djece/dece ...' (Five children ...).

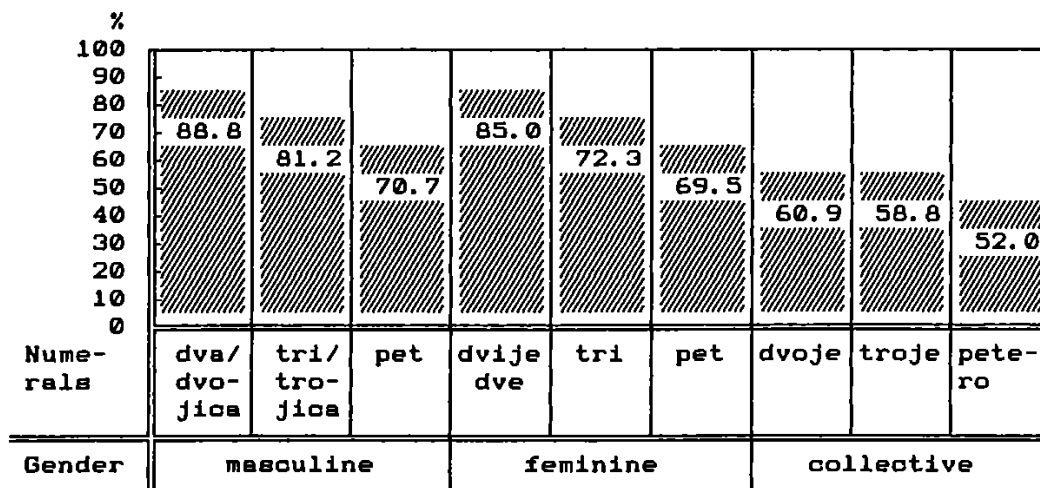
Correct:

133 informants answered *petero/petoro* ;

Wrong:

103 " " *pet*, i.e. masc./fem./neuter form;
 18 " " *petorica*, i.e. numeral noun;
 1 " " *peti*, i.e. ordinal numeral;

Fig. 3. The distribution of correct and incorrect answers.



 correct answers

The most clear tendencies in the material are:

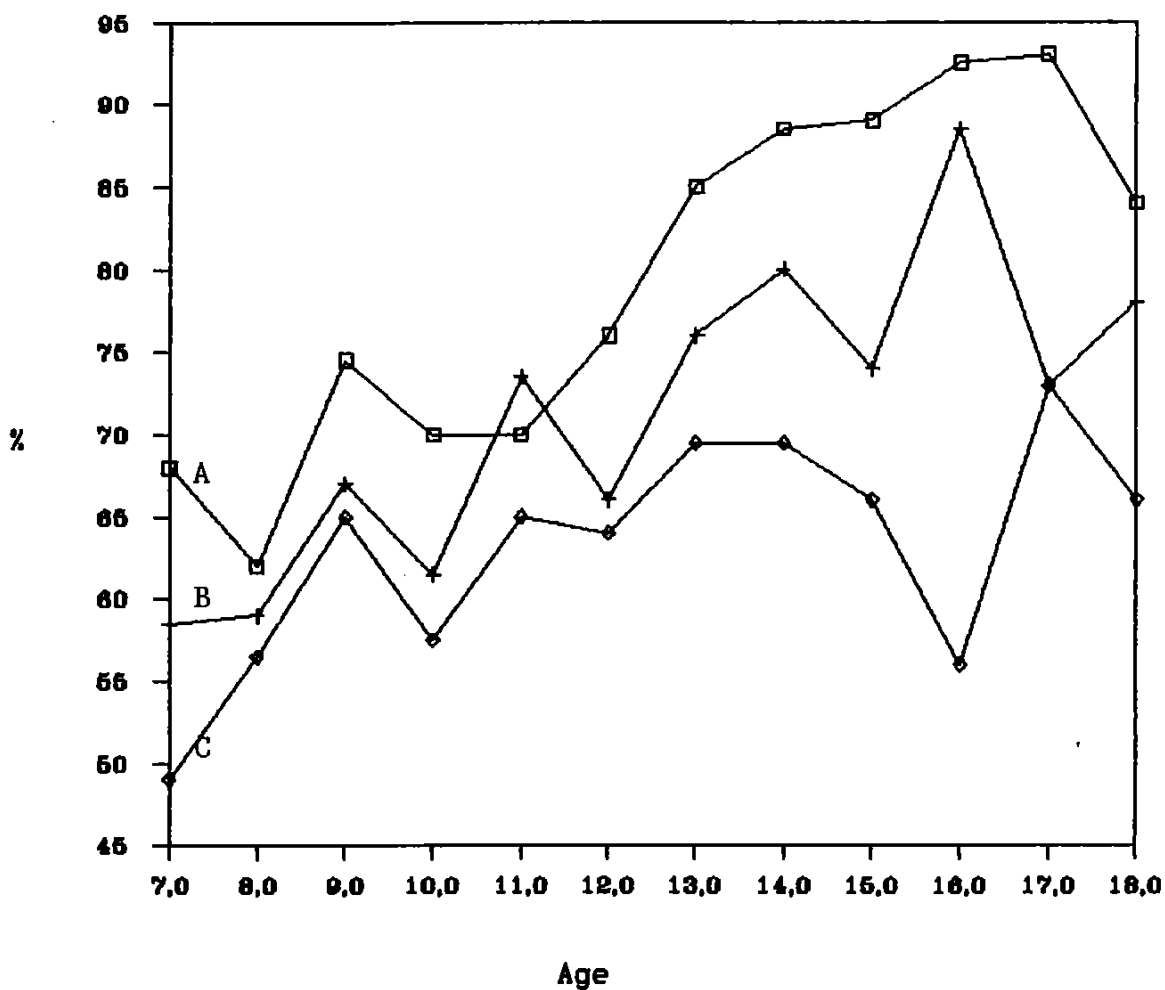
- 1) The discrepancy between the S/C standard and the diaspora usage is most evident in the syntagms with collective gender nouns.

2) The stability is lower in the syntagms containing higher numerals than in those with lower ones.

4.

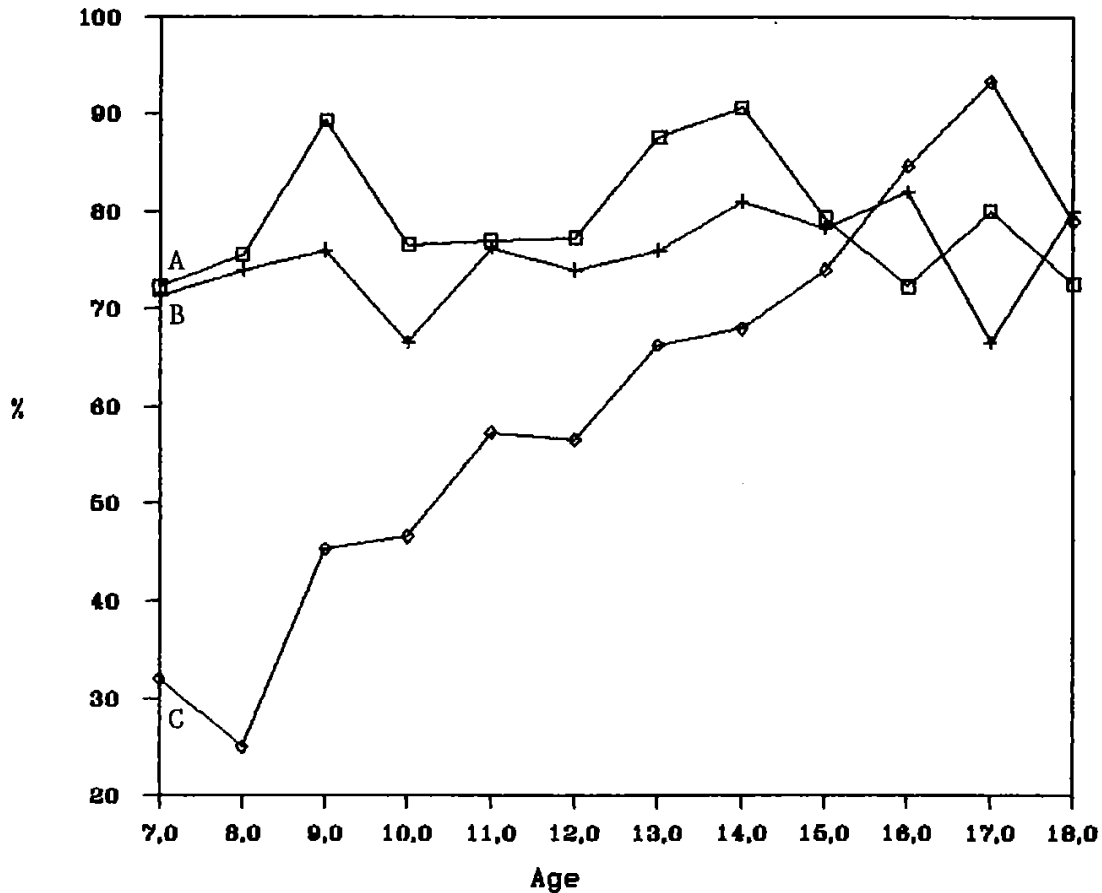
However, these two tendencies are not equal from a diachronical viewpoint:

Fig. 4. Development of the correct usage of numerals - 2, 3, 5 - regardless of the gender of the noun.



A) *dua/dvojica, dviije/dve, duoje;*
 B) *tri/trojica, troje;*
 C) *pet, petoro.*

Fig. 5. Development of the correct usage of numerals with regard to gender.



- A) *dva/dujica, tri/trojica, pet* (masculine);
 B) *dvije/dve, tri, pet* (feminine);
 C) *duoje, troje, petoro* (collective).

Thus the percentage of correct answers in syntagms with the numeral *pet* is permanently 10-20 % lower than in those representing the numerals *tri* and *pet*.

The ability to use the collective numerals (C) is extremely low in the ages 7-8 years but increases rapidly after 9 years of age. At the age of 15 the correct usage of the collectives reaches a level of 80 %, i.e. the same as the feminine (B) and masculine (A) forms. Hence the lack of collective gender forms is a retardation feature and not a permanent phenomenon.

5.

I will also give some comments upon the distribution of the different types of wrong answers.

Fig. 6. Collective numerals incorrectly combined with masculine and feminine nouns (% of all incorrect answers).

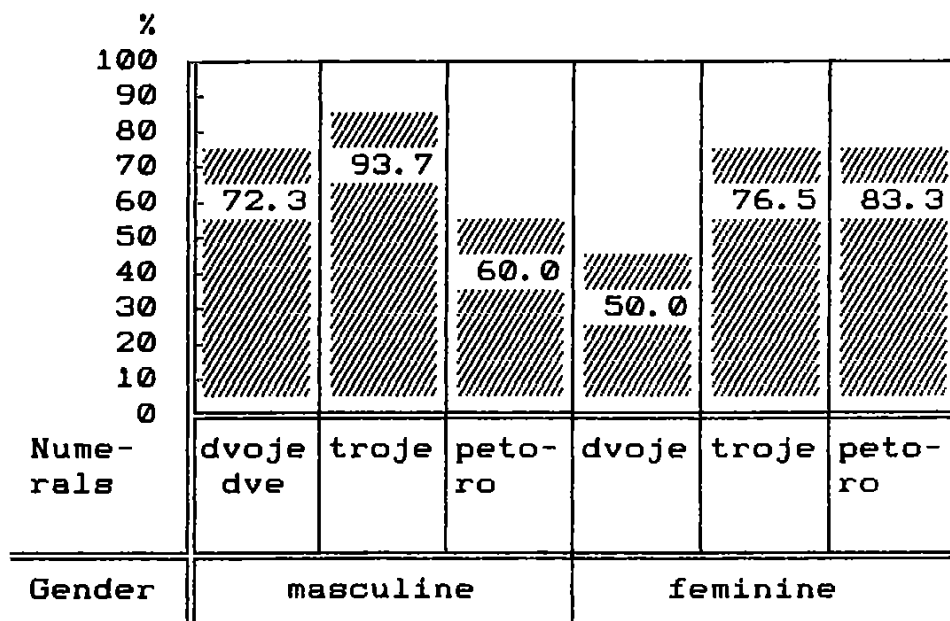
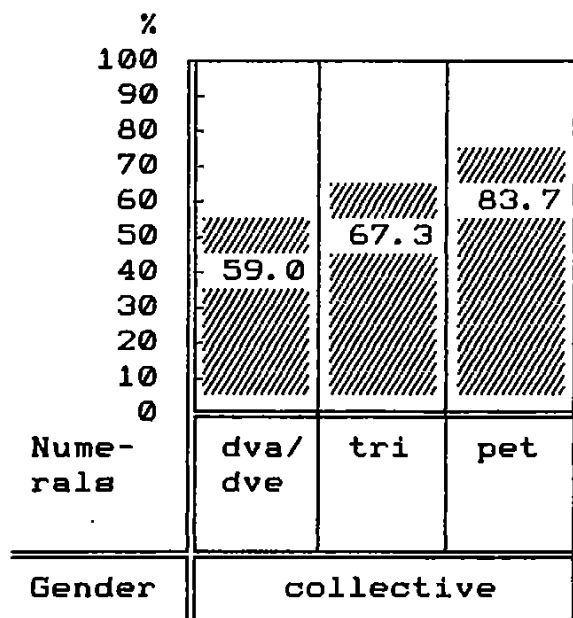


Fig. 7. Non-collective cardinal numerals combined with collective nouns (% of all incorrect answers.)



We notice here that the collective numerals *duoje*, *troje*, *petoro* are the most frequent incorrect answers in combination with masculine and feminine nouns. Thus the rather low frequency of the collective numerals in syntagms where they ought to be used can not be considered as an indication that they have a weak position among the diaspora speakers. We must rather reckon with some kind of system restructuring with regard to the gender opposition. However, this restructuring seems to take place only in the early school age and then successively disappears. It is worth noting that the surrounding Swedish language has totally undeclinable numerals, which, no doubt, could be a source for simplification of the diaspora morphology. However, the precise art of system changes possibly hidden in this twofold tendency - lack of collective gender forms in contexts where they ought to be used and abundant use of them together with masculine and feminine nouns - can only be established after individual examination of each informant in the JUBA Corpus, which will be the subject of a forthcoming report.

APPENDIX The original tests.

Phrase 26.

1. Dvaju
2. Dva
3. Dvaju dječaka igraju tenis.
4. Dvije
5. Dvojica

Phrase 27.

1. Dva
2. Dvaju
3. Dvojica djevojčice čitaju knjigu.
4. Dvije
5. Dvoje

Phrase 28.

1. Dvoje
2. Dva
3. Dvije djece plaču.
4. Dvaju
5. Dvojica

Phrase 29.

1. Troje
2. Tri dječaka crtaju.
3. Triju
4. Trojica

Phrase 30.

1. Tri
2. Trojica djevojčice čitaju.
3. Triju
4. Troje

Phrase 31.

1. Trojica
2. Troje djece plaču.
3. Tri
4. Triju

Phrase 32.

1. Peti
2. Petero volova pasu.
3. Pet
4. Petorica

Phrase 33.

1. Petero
2. Pet žena pletu čarape.
3. Peti
4. Petorica

Phrase 34.

1. Pet
2. Petero djece jedu jabuke.
3. Peti
4. Petorica