

### **Brief presentation of the method of statement validity analysis**

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Statement validity analysis is a method used to establish the credibility of testimony given by victims of crime. Although this method has been in use in certain countries of Central and Eastern Europe for some fifty years and is considered to be the best verbal method for verifying the truthfulness of statements with satisfactory accuracy, it is practically unknown and unused in Slovenia. The aim of this contribution is to present in brief the application of this method, its theoretical background, its scientific reliability and validity and applicability in pre-trial and criminal proceedings. The method was originally aimed at assessing the veracity of children's statements, alleged victims of sexual abuse. However, in the last twenty years the method has been improved and extended and has since also been used for adult victims of criminal offences. Although criteria indicating the truthfulness of statements are nowadays experimentally relatively well verified and confirmed, they can nevertheless be expected to be upgraded in the future and the reliability of this procedure thus improved. The principal difficulties of the method of statement validity analysis are, firstly, the criteria by which the assessors decide whether the statements of a person analysed are true or not and secondly, great differences in the abilities of assessors. In spite of some shortcomings, it is nevertheless generally recognized among experts that this method is a useful instrument in the hands of a trained and scrupulous person. This method is not used in practice in Slovenia, which can be attributed to ignorance about it, although its use could also be recommended in this cultural environment.

Key words: credibility of testimony, victims, sexual abuse, usefulness of procedure

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