

## Abstract

**Title:** Vocabulary Acquisition and Input Influence in Early Child Greek- A Study of the Vocabulary Spurt and Function Words.

**Author:** Helena Kotsakidis

**University:** Göteborg University, Department of Classical Studies, Modern Greek section

The aim of the thesis is to bring together a considerable amount of data already collected on Greek child language in order to examine Greek children's early vocabulary acquisition. Within these data I aim to examine the vocabulary spurt and function words, and a study of the adult input in different environments will be discussed.

The build-up of the child's first 25-50 words proceeds slowly, but then there is a sudden increase in lexical growth rate; the so-called *vocabulary spurt* occurs. On average, the vocabulary spurt starts between the age of 16 and 20 months.

Two out of four Greek-speaking children in our data show a spurt during the period under examination. According to previous research we expect to find a vocabulary spurt between 1;2 (1 year and 2 months) and 2;0. In my material the boy Hristos begins his spurt at age 2;3 and the girl Kallina at age 1;9. All children spurt towards the later part of the typical age range found for English speaking children. The four Greek children evidence a spurt in function words earlier than attested in previous studies for other languages. The Greek children seem to combine a verb and function word spurt.

When examining the children's input, i.e. what adults say to children, it shows results similar to those found in the children's production. In the kindergarten input, however, there occurred some differences compared with the input in the longitudinal studies, and here I found a smaller amount of open-class words. The preference for nouns and verbs in the children's early language production may very well be explained as modelled on the input, where the same preference is manifest.

This study introduces a new field in Greek linguistics, a field which requires further studies. Hopefully my contribution will give new ideas to researchers in various disciplines (e.g. linguistics, psychology, education), and open the way to a continued study of Greek children's vocabulary. I also hope that this study will show the need for further data collection on Greek children's early language acquisition in order to perform large-scale studies from which many research fields and parents can benefit.

**Key words:** Greek child language, vocabulary attainment, vocabulary spurt, naming explosion, function words, early child language acquisition, child directed adult input, transcription standard

**Distribution:** Klassiska institutionen, Box 200, 405 30 Göteborg