

General Project Information	
Project Title	Early Identification and Assessment of Preschool Children with Specific Language Impairment in Cyprus
Project Code	ANPΩΠΙΣΤΙΚΕΣ/ΠΑΙΔΙ/0609(BIE)

Summary	<p>Specific Language Impairment (SLI) is a disorder of language acquisition affecting approx. 7% of preschool-aged children. The objective is to conduct an epidemiological study to identify SLI in pre-school years using a multidisciplinary team of speech-language professionals in the areas of first language acquisition of typically developing (TD) children, linguistic analysis, and speech and language therapy; early intervention specialists, teachers, and parents will also become involved.</p> <p>Among the main activities will be the design of specific tools to carry out the project for Cypriot Greek (CG), as opposed to Standard Greek, the native variety of Modern Greek spoken by most children in Cyprus. In order to attain tangible results and allow for research on SLI, experimental studies will first be carried out on CG first language acquisition in TD children. While early SLI is often first identified by parents, preschool teachers also play a vital role in this identification.</p> <p>This project aims to support preschool teachers with a Communication Checklist Protocol designed to identify language impairments in CG-speaking, monolingual five-year-old preschoolers in Cyprus. Following identification of preschoolers with language deficits, early referral to a Speech-Language Therapist (SLT) can occur. The project aims to offer to SLTs servicing the preschool population a speech-language screening test followed by a battery of specific diagnostic tests for SLI. Children labeled “at risk” after the screening stage will be further assessed using the specific diagnostic tools for the (differential) diagnosis of SLI. Also, the parents of the children identified “at risk” (screening stage) will be invited to participate. Results regarding the number of preschoolers presenting with SLI will help establish overall prevalence rates of SLI among monolingual CG preschool children and any potential gender differences. Furthermore, a diagnostic test battery identifying such prevalent language difficulties or the antecedents to literacy and learning difficulties before the child’s entrance into first grade will be an invaluable tool for health- and education-related issues, policies, and practices in Cyprus.</p> <p>Results will be made available to the relevant ministries for the provision of services and the development of policies. Research findings can be used by SLTs for appropriate management of children with SLI and providing counseling to parents, liaising with preschool teachers, and disseminating up-to-date information. This will be done through the development of an internet portal on SLI in Cyprus for therapists, teachers, parents, and adolescents. The identification or detection of SLI in preschool years is a vital first step in preventing the risk for social, emotional, and behavioral problems as well as reduced literacy and mathematical skills in later school years. Early intervention for SLI is time- and cost-effective, and it would liberate children from a lifetime of frustration and embarrassment about language.</p>
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Funding	
Funding Agency	Research Promotion Foundation
Framework	2009-2010
Programme	Socio-Economic Sciences and Humanities
Action	Education

Internal Coordination					
Project Submitted Under	University of Nicosia Research Foundation (UNRF)				
Role in Project	Partner				
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3	Ministry of Education & Culture	Cyprus	Andry Kontou	

Schedule			
Year Awarded	Duration (in months)	Start Date	Expected End Date
2010	24	10/2011	09/2012

Budget			
	%	Euro	
Funding Agency Contribution to UNRF	100	6,900	
Total Project Budget		119,540	

Dissemination	
Funding Website	www.research.org.cy
Project Website	http://www.research.biolinguistics.eu/CySLI/



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