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Determining through data analysis the Mean Length of Utterance in Morphemes (MLUm) and Mean Length of Utterance in Words (MLUw) in Cypriot Greek speaking children

Louiza Voniati¹, Myria Adamou¹, Evangelia I. Kosma^{2,3}, Spyridon K. Chronopoulos^{4,5}, Dionysios Tafiadis⁶
¹Department of Speech & Language Therapy, European University of Cyprus, Nicosia, Cyprus; ²Faculty of Medicine, School of Health Sciences, University of Thessaly, Biopolis, Larissa, Greece; ³Psychologist, Private Practice, Mihail Aggelou 18, Ioannina, Greece; ⁴Department of Informatics and Telecommunications Engineering, University of Western Macedonia, Kozani, Greece; ⁵Department of Computer Engineering, Technological Educational Institute of Epirus, Arta, Greece; ⁶Department of Speech & Language Therapy, Technological Educational Institute of Epirus, Ioannina, Greece

Correspondence: Dionysios Tafiadis - d.tafiadis@ioa.teiep.gr; tafiadis@gmail.com

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Background: The collection and analysis of a language sample is of particular research and clinical interest due to its high validity [1–5]. The most widely used language indicator is the Mean Length of Utterance (MLU). MLU is usually counted in words (MLU-w) or morphemes (MLU-m). A brief review of the literature revealed a lack of research evidence which is whether MLU-w or MLU-m would be more suitable for use in children speaking the Cypriot Greek dialect [6–7]. The aim of this study was to compare MLU-w and MLU-m with children Cypriot Greek dialect of typical language development aged from 36 to 48 months.

Materials and methods: This study was based on existing data, from the Early Childhood Research Laboratory Centre of the University of Cyprus database. Thirty children aged from 36 to 48 months, of typical linguistic development, participated in this study. In 12 months duration, the children underwent three re-evaluations every 4 months and in particular 36, 40, 44 and 48 months. The children who had language or any other disorder and did not come from a mono-lingual Cypriot Greek dialect family were excluded from this study.

Results: According to the results at each specified age point (36, 40, 44 & 48 months), the children showed very high positive correlation to the association of MLU-w and MLU-m.

Conclusions: MLU-w could be presented as an assessment tool for Cypriot Greek speakers and will contribute to a valid diagnosis [8–9]. However, it is noteworthy that the findings of this study reflect an average beneficial level. Therefore, an individual's linguistic development may deviate from the standards described in this research.

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Ethics Approval: The study was approved by the Ethical Committee of Department of Speech Language Therapy (School of Health and Welfare Professions) TEI of Epirus.

Consent to publish: Informed consent to publish has been obtained from each participant.