

## A Longitudinal Case Study of Greek as a Second Language

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**Abstract :** A primary concern in the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research is to determine the innate mechanisms of second language learning and acquisition through the systematic study of a learner's interlanguage. Errors emerge while a learner attempts to communicate using the target-language and can be seen either as the observable linguistic product of the latent cognitive and language process of mental representations or as an indispensable learning mechanism. Therefore, the study of the learner's erroneous forms may depict the various strategies and mechanisms that take place during the language acquisition process resulting in deviations from the target-language norms and difficulties in communication. Mapping the erroneous utterances of a late adult learner in the process of acquiring Greek as a second language constitutes one of the main aims of this study. For our research purposes, we created an error-tagged learner corpus composed of the participant's written texts produced throughout a period of a 4- year instructed language acquisition. Error analysis and interlanguage theory constitute the methodological and theoretical framework, respectively. The research questions pertain to the learner's most frequent errors per linguistic category and per year as well as his choices concerning the Greek Article System. According to the quantitative analysis of the data, the most frequent errors are observed in the categories of the stress system and syntax, whereas a significant fluctuation and/or gradual reduction throughout the 4 years of instructed acquisition indicate the emergence of developmental stages. The findings with regard to the article usage bespeak fossilization of erroneous structures in certain contexts. In general, our results point towards the existence and further development of an established learner's (inter-) language system governed not only by mother- tongue and target-language influences but also by the learner's assumptions and set of rules as the result of a complex cognitive process. It is expected that this study will contribute not only to the knowledge in the field of Greek as a second language and SLA generally, but it will also provide an insight into the cognitive mechanisms and strategies developed by multilingual learners of late adulthood.

**Keywords :** Greek as a second language, error analysis, interlanguage, late adult learner

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