

Undertaking this doctoral research has been a truly life-changing experience for me and it would not have been possible without Macquarie University. I was awarded with a scholarship to complete my PhD. Macquarie funded not only my research but also my trips to present to international conferences in Europe. Macquarie University gave me the ability to have full access in all resources and the opportunity to study in an environment where study spaces and facilities are designed to suit the needs of my research. I was given the opportunity to work in a world-leading community of academic scholars. Last but not least, Macquarie University provided me with the prospect to combine my candidature with valuable teaching experience. Teaching has been an important part of my five-year position as A/Lecturer at the Department of International Studies: Languages & Cultures and at the Department of Ancient History of Faculty of Arts at Macquarie University. I have also worked as researcher in different projects.

- **The innovative aim and results of the doctoral research**

The title of my doctoral thesis is “The role of gender-marked information in second language processing” and it was awarded the Vice-Chancellor’s Commendation for Academic Excellence 2017. No previous second language Greek study has ever examined *what assists* second language learners of Greek language to acquire Greek grammatical gender of Greek nouns, that is masculine, feminine and neuter gender. This thesis filled this gap by using novel words, an innovative methodology, a large number of materials, and, finally, 105 participants who all were second language learners of Greek language from Macquarie University, Sydney University and UNSW.

This doctoral research investigated the role of gender-marked information (that is articles, nouns and adjectives) in processing Greek as a second language. In other words, this study examined how second language learners of Greek language process the Greek grammatical gender and produce accurately phrases like ο άσπρος πίνακας, η κόκκινη καρέκλα, το νόστιμο φαγητό.

The innovative characteristic of this research focuses on the fact that it follows an ‘opposite’ method in examining the acquisition of Greek grammatical gender. The traditional way of teaching the grammatical aspect of gender is by grouping a large number of nouns in masculine nouns (ο αθλητής, ο δάσκαλος, ο ταμίας), feminine nouns (η μηχανή, η δασκάλα) and neuter nouns (το μάθημα, το παγωτό, το παιδί). Then by indicating that masculine nouns take the masculine article ο/ ένας,



feminine nouns take the feminine article η/ μια and neuter nouns take the neuter article το/ ένα. While, my research findings suggest that grammatical gender has to be taught in a non-segmented way with articles– adjectives–nouns sequences/ phrases (like children) in order for second language learners to establish strong lexical gender representations and produce accurately nominal phrases.

After examining the written production of 105 adult students of Greek language in an online experiment, the research results indicated that second language learners of Greek produce more accurately Greek phrases including article – adjective – noun *only when* they have been presented initially with a linguistic input which contains nouns preceded by a single article form with such regularity that the sequence could be memorized as a single lexical item. In more simple words, learners of Greek are more successful when they have been taught the Greek grammatical gender in phrases like ο άσπρος πίνακας, η καινούργια καρέκλα, το ωραίο φόρεμα, rather than when they have to memorize lists of masculine, feminine and neuter nouns or even lists of masculine, feminine and neuter endings trying after to apply them in nouns. This innovative teaching and learning method of Greek grammatical gender can be also applied to other aspects of Greek grammar (e.g. tenses of the verbs).

- **Innovative Method: Teaching and Learning Greek as a Second Language in the same learning environment as Native Speakers**

Understanding a language is one of the hardest things