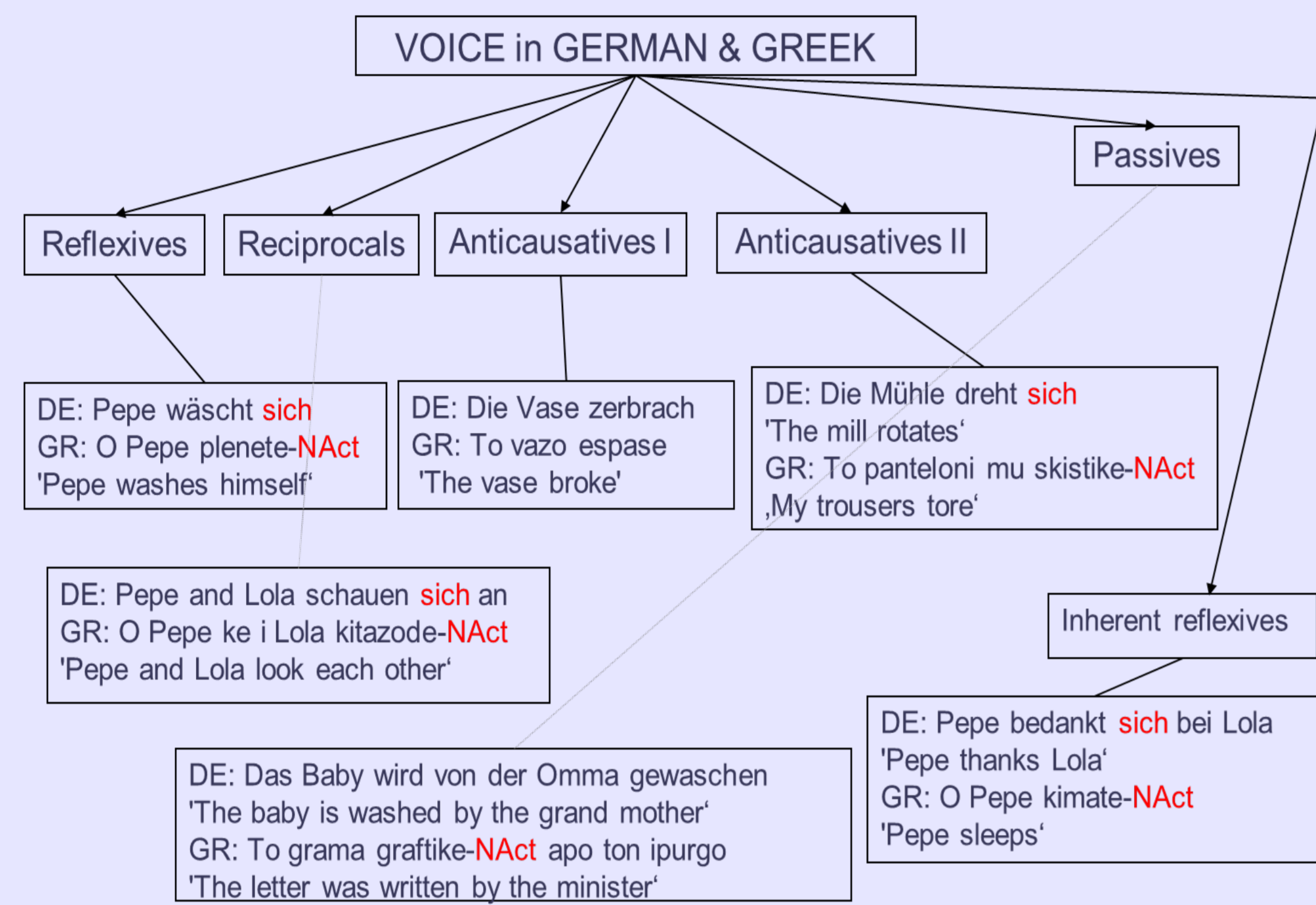


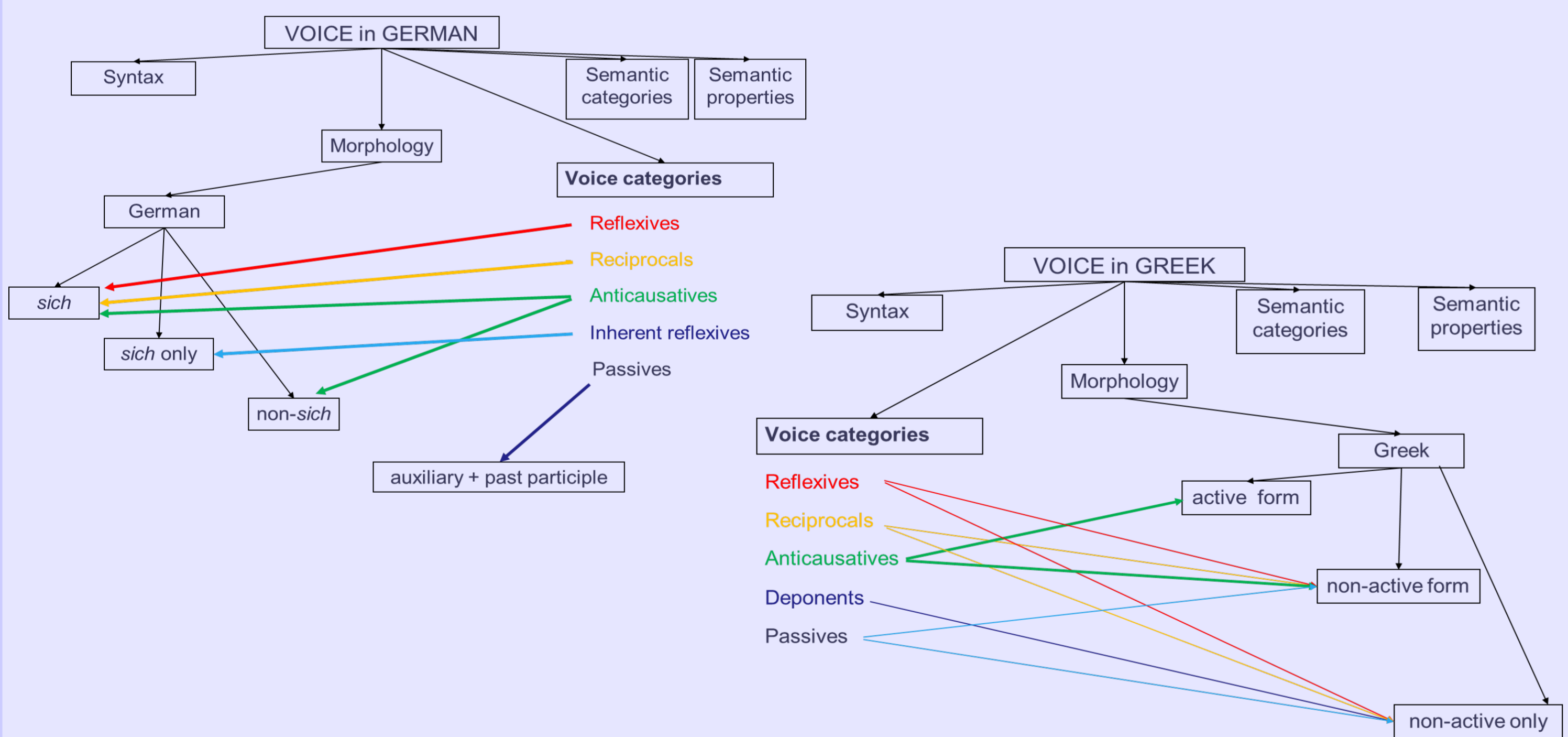
The hundred languages of children

International Congress, Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport Baden-Württemberg and the State Capital of Stuttgart, Liederhalle, Stuttgart, October 9-10, 2014

Grammatical structures studied: VOICE CONSTRUCTIONS



Voice constructions in both German and Greek involve multiple syncretisms and disambiguation from a morpho-syntactic point of view. This might make it difficult to transparently relate form to function for young children.



RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- 1. When does Voice emerge in children? Does the input from parents and kindergarten teachers matter in Voice acquisition or is it a question of maturation of grammar and cognitive abilities?
2. Do some Voice constructions emerge earlier than others?
3. Does Voice emerge and develop similarly for both languages of the bilinguals?
4. Do the two languages interfere with regard to Voice constructions?
5. Does bilingualism delay and/or accelerate Voice acquisition?
6. How do Voice constructions develop in late bilinguals (children exposed to language after 3 of the age?)

DATA COLLECTION: METHODS & PARTICIPANTS

PARTICIPANTS

Children aged 3-6 years:

- a. L1-German (in collaboration with the Educational Office Stuttgart)
b. 2L1-German-Greek (in collaboration with the Educational Office Stuttgart)
c. L1-Greek (in collaboration with TEI-Patras)

Adults as Input Control group:

Parents & kindergarten teachers for all children target groups.



METHODS

Project's data collection:

- a. Longitudinal studies (two years), started February 2013, 1x monthly, 45-60 minutes

Table with 3 columns: Participants, Languages, Age. Lists Child-1 to Child-5 with their respective language backgrounds and ages.

- b. Narratives & c. Elicitation and Verification (Judgment) tasks



Concept, script & direction Katerina Zombolou
Animation: Anselm Pyta

The „Pepe at Home“-Story is an animated film (5 min.) showing scenes of the every day life of a child, Pepe. Pepe is involved in actions that contain VOICE, e.g. Pepe washes, dresses and combs himself or two people get married and a house burns in TV. Children (N=180) and adults (N=180) will be presented the film and will be kindly asked to describe Pepe's story, in both German and Greek (for bilinguals).

For the elicitation and verification tasks, participants will be asked to reply to concrete questions, such as „What happened to x?“ or „Which action corresponds to the orally presented sentence“. Altogether approx. 55 verbs will be tested.

CHILDES-Data:

- a. Narrative data elicited by FROG-Story 3-years (av. 3;5, N=12), 5-years (av. 5;3, N=11), 9-years old (av. 9;2, N=10) and adults (N=10)
b. Longitudinal study (spontaneous speech), CAROLINE corpus, a girl aged 0;10-4;3 communicating with her mother (1988-1992, Berlin)



PRELIMINARY RESULTS

Diagram 1 Voice constructions in types, 3-years, 5-years, 9-years and adults

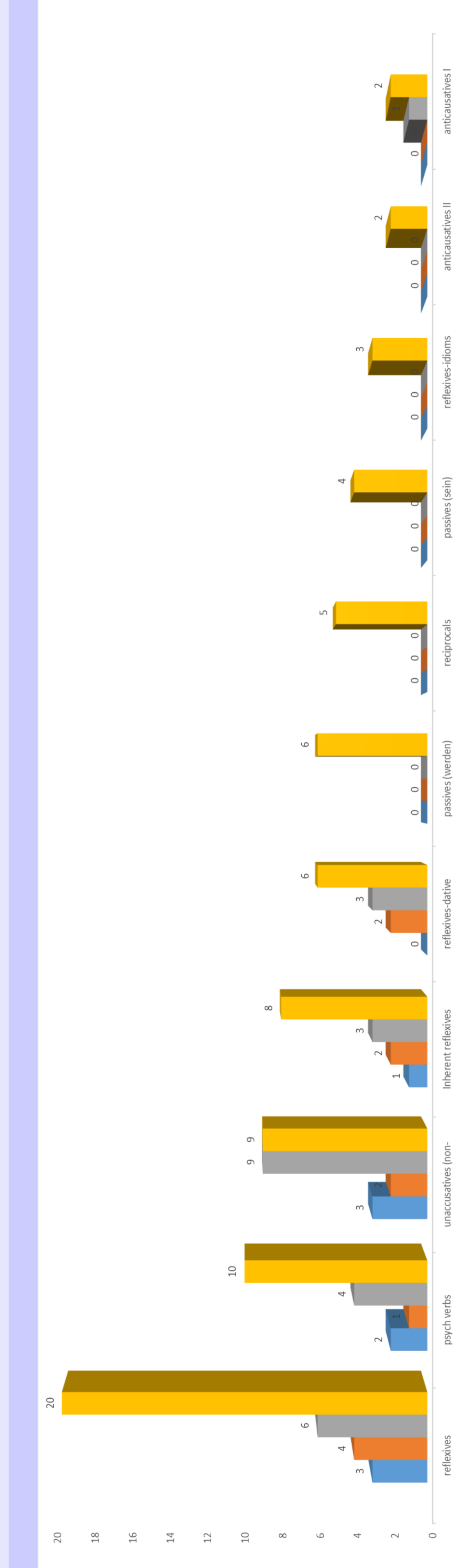


Diagram 1 illustrates the final results found in FROG-Data with respect to L1-German. However, similar results are found in project's longitudinal studies. In sum:

- Low frequency of Voice constructions, by both children and parents/kindergarten teachers. However, adults use them more than children, especially with older children
• Some Voice constructions occur extremely rarely in both children and adults, e.g. anticausatives, middles and passives, whereas reflexives, psych verbs benefactives and unaccusatives occur more than aforementioned constructions (frequency effect & acquisition hierarchy?).
• Low frequency Voice constructions are substituted by simple monomorphemic words by both children and parents, e.g. kaputt gehen i.of (zer)brechen ‚break‘, aufgehen i.of sich öffnen ‚open‘, Schreck bekommen i.of erschreckt werden/ sich erschrecken ‚get scared‘. ?Maturation effect
• Motherese-effect and Age-effect, quantitatively and qualitatively: the older the children are the more they use Voice constructions. The same holds for the child-directed speech. Maturation effect?
• L1 vs 2L1s. 2L1s (3;7) uses quantitatively and qualitatively more Voice constructions in German than L1s (3;7 & 4;7). Positive interference from Greek?
• Late bilinguals (German onset 5;3): Voice constructions are fully acquired in Greek by 7;2 (no passive is used though); no negative interference from German. Voice constructions in German are completely absent. Reflexives are used without the pronoun sich ‚oneself‘. No neg. interf.

Preliminary results of project's longitudinal studies

Table with 7 columns: Participants, Language, Age, Types, Tokens, MLU, SD. Shows data for Child-1, Parents-child-1, Child-2, Parents-child 2, Child-3, and Kindergarten teacher.