

INTERPRETATION OF COMPOUND WORDS BY PATIENTS WITH ALZHEIMER'S DEMENTIA

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Abstract

OBJECTIVE: The present study tested the comprehension and production of two-constituent compound words at the single-word level for Greek (e.g., *pondikopayitha* 'mouse trap'). The Compound Word Test (CWT: Kambanaros, 2014), measured on a range of psycholinguistic variables, was used to assess the comprehension, definition, and production of compositional noun–noun compounds in four individuals diagnosed with AD (mean age: 79 years). Their results were compared to a neurologically healthy group matched for chronological age and education. Comprehension was probed in relation to the word's constituents, for which semantic interpretation involved explaining the meaning of the compound. Production of compound words was tested using a picture confrontation naming task.

MATERIAL – METHOD: The present study tested the comprehension and production of two-constituent compound words at the single-word level for Greek (e.g., *pondikopayitha* 'mouse trap'). The Compound Word Test (CWT: Kambanaros, 2014), measured on a range of psycholinguistic variables, was used to assess the comprehension, definition, and production of compositional noun–noun compounds in four individuals diagnosed with AD (mean age: 79 years). Their results were compared to a neurologically healthy group matched for chronological age and education. Comprehension was probed in relation to the word's constituents, for which semantic interpretation involved explaining the meaning of the compound. Production of compound words was tested using a picture confrontation naming task. **RESULTS:** Each subtest of the CWT had a total score of 30. For the parsing (comprehension) subtest the mean score was 22.13. For the definition (explaining subtest), the mean was 14.25 and for the naming subtest the mean was 22.3.

CONCLUSIONS: The results revealed that individuals with AD had less difficulty recognizing the compound constituents but showed a significant deficit in deriving the compound meaning but naming compounds from pictures was relatively intact. The findings suggest a dissociation between linguistic and conceptual knowledge in the early stage of AD for compound words.