

## Vocabulary List For 3-5 Years Old Typically Developing Kannada Speaking Children

**Dr. Satish Kumaraswamy**

Professor and Principal

Dr. MV Shetty College of Speech and Hearing

[sat8378@yahoo.com](mailto:sat8378@yahoo.com)

**Mr. Nabeel Musthafa**

Postgraduate Student

Dr. MV Shetty College of Speech and Hearing

[nabeelbaslp2786@gmail.com](mailto:nabeelbaslp2786@gmail.com)

### Introduction

Language is a complex and dynamic system of conventional symbols that is used in various modes for thought and communication (American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, 1982).

The development of language is hierarchical. A basic sequence is followed, and early stages are essential for the development of subsequent stages. A vocabulary is the most important component in language ability. It is an important part of communication without which people cannot convey their messages appropriately (Nemati, 2008). Vocabulary occupies a central place in the language, and it has its own characteristics in terms of meaning and grammatical function (Mallikarjun, 2002). Vocabulary refers to the set of words that a child comprehends and uses (Susie, 2008). Educational research shows that vocabulary strongly relates to reading comprehension, intelligence, and general ability; Building up of vocabulary is essential to the learning of language especially at the primary level (Susie, 2008) Vocabulary can be split into two types: receptive vocabulary and expressive vocabulary.

A child's receptive vocabulary consists of the words the child understands when he/she hears or reads them. A child's expressive vocabulary consists of the words the child uses when he/she speaks. Vocabulary development studies have been conducted where the pattern of acquisition of the various categories like nouns, verbs, adverbs etc are obtained along with the age at which each of the categories are acquired. But the measurement patterns vary. Apart from this, the vocabulary development varies across languages.

It is very natural that parents/caregivers are the child's first vocabulary teachers.

### Review of Literature

Each language has its own unique structural arrangements of its units that are not exactly similar to the structural patterns of other languages. Every word is a complex organization of linguistic and extra-linguistic aspects. There are six important criteria to define a word. They are spatial representation of word, meaning, the intonation of the pronounced word, its vowel harmony, its non-amenability to have other items inserted, and its indivisibility.

Word is the smallest independent unit of language which refers to a certain linguistic reality or to a relation of such realities and is characterized by certain formal features (acoustic and morphemic) either actually (as an independent component of the context) or potentially (as a unit of the lexical plan). Neither the length of the word nor the total vocabulary of any two languages coincides with each other. This is because of the number of phonemes in the language and its phonological system (Komlev, 1976). Language acquisition is a developmental phenomenon that emerges in the early childhood. Most children acquire language naturally and for most of the part without any formal instruction.

When 4-7 years old children were given few nonsense words and asked to transform them into plural, their past and future tenses, possessives, and compound verbs, it was demonstrated that these children operated clearly with morphological rules (Berko, 1958).

### **Types of Vocabulary**

In reading, writing, and speaking vocabulary, language skills are used as a criterion to classify the vocabulary items.

#### 1. Reading vocabulary

A person's reading vocabulary is all the words he or she can recognize when reading. This is the largest type of vocabulary.

#### 2. Listening vocabulary

A person's listening vocabulary is all the words he or she can recognize while listening to speech. This vocabulary is aided in size by context and tone of voice.

#### 3. Writing vocabulary

A person's writing vocabulary is all the words he or she can employ in writing. Contrary to the previous two vocabulary types, the writing vocabulary is stimulated by its user.

#### 4. Speaking vocabulary

A person's speaking vocabulary is all the words he or she can use in speech. Due to the spontaneous nature of the speaking vocabulary, words are often misused. This misuse, though slight and inadvertent may be compensated by facial expressions, tone of voice, or hand gestures.

#### 5. Passive versus active vocabulary

A rough grouping of words we understand when we hear them encompasses our «passive" vocabulary, whereas our "active" vocabulary is made up of words that come to our mind immediately when we have to use them in sentence, as we speak.

#### 6. Recognition and reproduction vocabulary

Recognition vocabulary is defined as that which is recognized or identified in listening or reading response. The reproduction vocabulary is identified either in spoken or written responses.

#### 7. Academic and non-academic vocabulary

Vocabulary items that are formal, used more in writing than in speaking and are associated with sciences, humanities and other areas of formal learning are called academic vocabulary.

#### 8. Form and content vocabulary

Language structure is the major criterion to classify vocabulary. West (2002) classifies the words broadly into two major categories with some sub-categories under each major category.

#### 9. Concrete and abstract vocabulary

Concrete vocabulary represents the concrete entity, the entity that can be physically perceived through the sense either in the form of objects or events. In turn, vocabulary items representing the entities like love, soul, fear etc can be called abstract vocabulary.

#### 10. Basic vocabulary

It's more extensively talked about than any other type of vocabulary. It consists of all vocabulary items that are found in daily use in listening, speaking, reading, and writing contexts of the speakers of that language.

Duff, Tomblin and Catts (2015) did a study on the influence of reading on Vocabulary Growth: A case for a Matthew effects and concluded that Vocabulary growth rate differences accumulated over time such that the effect on vocabulary size was large.

Ghalebi, Sadghi (2020) researched on vocabulary learning strategies; A comparative study of EFL learners and summarised that memory strategies as the most frequently used strategies.

#### **Need for the Study**

Kannada is a Dravidian language spoken in the Southern part of India. Native speakers are called Kannadigas numbered roughly about 40 million in the state of Karnataka (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kannada> language, 2007). Vocabulary list named '\*Pada Patti'

(Kuppuswamy, 1947) for school going typically developing Kannada speaking children aged 6-12 years has been reported, but Pre-school vocabulary list across age groups has not been reported. Hence an attempt has been made to develop a vocabulary list for 3-5 years old typically developing Kannada speaking children which can be used as a clinical tool to identify the children with receptive and expressive vocabulary deficits who are at risk for language impairment.

### **Aim of the Study**

The aim of the present study was to construct a receptive and expressive vocabulary list in Kannada by parental reports for 3-5 years old typically developing Kannada speaking children.

### **Subjects**

40 parents and children (25 girls and 15 boys) participated in the study. These children were divided into two groups of one year interval each i.e., 9 children in 3-4 years group and 31 children in 4.1-5 years group. All children were native speakers of Kannada. All children had normal speech and language development. All children were within the age range of 3-5 years and had normal hearing as it was important for assessing receptive and expressive vocabulary. Children did not have any ontological, neurological, psychological or ophthalmic problems and were from the community using the same dialect of Kannada and had same socio-economic background. Parents who participated in the study were all mothers and graduates.

The study was conducted in two stages.

1. Formulation of the word list
2. Obtaining parental reports

### **Formulation of the Word List**

A word list in Kannada was formulated with the help of Kannada dictionaries, Kannada textbooks, Kannada grammar books, clinical test materials and other available resources. This list comprised a checklist of words that a 3–5-year-old child might know. The word list consisted of 360 words in 7 major categories which are as follows:

- Nouns
- Action verbs
- Noun modifiers
- Verb modifiers
- Pronouns
- Conjunctions
- The nouns were again subdivided into animals, birds, vegetables, grains, fruits, food items, vehicles, insects, trees, kitchen items, clothes, accessories, body parts,

furniture, colours, family members, toys and common items. The word list consisted of receptive and expressive vocabulary for both 3-4- and 4.1-5-years old children. These were meant for listing out the comprehension and expression vocabulary of each child.

### Obtaining Parental Reports

- Each parent received a copy of the word list.
- The parents were explained about the purpose of the study.
- The parents were instructed to tick each word from the list which their children understand and produce.
- Parents were given 3 days time to return the word list copy.
- In addition, each parent was encouraged to write additional words which are not there in the given word list. They were asked to do this only if their child understands or produces the word.

### Descriptive Statistical Procedures

- Following descriptive statistical procedures were done, Frequencies of each word in a category for both the groups were found.
- Percentage of words comprehended and expressed across categories for both the groups.
- Percentage of words comprehended and expressed within category for both the groups.

### Results and Discussion

The present study attempted to make a vocabulary list in Kannada for 3-5 years old children based on parental report. Vocabulary list was developed by obtaining the parental data of 40 typically developing Kannada speaking children in the age range of 3-5 years. 9 children in 3-4 years range and 31 children in 4.1-5 years range children participated in the study.

In both age groups random selection was done. Subjects were selected from the same socio-economic background. The parents participated in the study were very co-operative and motivated. Demographic details of children are given in table 2. The participants, 2 boys and 7 girls in 3-4years group and 13 boys and 18 girls in 4.1-5 years group were selected randomly. Exact age of the participants in year and month is given in the table below:

SL.NO	AGE (3-4)	GENDER	AGE(4.1-5)	GENDER
1	3.3	F	4.6	F
2	3.10	M	4.6	F
3	3.8	F	4.3	F
4	4	F	4	F
5	4	M	5	F

6	3.10	F	4.5	F
7	3	F	5	F
8	4	F	4	F
9	4	F	4	F
10			5	F
11			4.11	M
12			4	F
13			4	M
14			4.8	F
15			5	M
16			4.8	F
17			4.8	M
18			4.6	F
19			4	F
20			4.4	M
21			4.6	M
22			4	F
23			4.2	M
24			4	F
25			4	M
26			4.8	M
27			4.11	F
28			4.8	M
29			4.2	M
30			4	F
31			4.6	M

The word list was analyzed according to the frequency of response obtained from the children through parental reports. Comprehension and expression among the group and between the groups were then compared.

### Discussion

The study was designed to develop a receptive and expressive vocabulary list in typically developing Kannada speaking 3-5 years old children based on parental report.

Results obtained show a general trend in word learning, that there is a vocabulary spurt in comprehension and production, and it develops in a more linear fashion. Children show acceleration in rate of growth of expressive vocabulary during the second year with limited increase in rate of growth towards the middle of third year.

Similarly, the verb modifiers are dominated in children's receptive and expressive vocabulary of 3-4 years old, whereas 4.1-5 years old had higher comprehension and

expression of verb and noun modifiers. By the end of 4 years noun modifiers were comprehended rapidly along with other words category, action verbs, nouns, and pronouns. By the end of 5 years verb and noun modifiers were comprehended more rapidly along with action verbs, other words category, pronouns, and nouns. The results indicate a substantial growth in vocabulary acquisition between 4.1-5 years. For example, children at the age of 3-4 years can comprehend 76% of the vocabulary and children at the age of 4.1-5 years can comprehend 88% of the vocabulary. Also, children at the age of 3-4 years can produce 65% of the vocabulary, but at the age of 4.1-5 years they can produce 82% of the vocabulary. Action verbs, noun and verb modifiers significantly develop in child's expressive vocabulary by 5 years of age. Conjunctions were expressed least among all categories.

### **Summary and Conclusion**

The present study attempted to make a vocabulary list in for 3-5 years old typically developing Kannada speaking children based on parental report. Forty typically developing children in the age range of 3-5 years were taken as subjects. In both age groups discrepancy was there. It wasn't a uniform group. 3-4 years group had 9 children and 4.1-5 years had 31 children belonging to the same socioeconomic background.

A word list in Kannada was made and it consisted of 360 words under 7 major categories such as nouns, action verbs, pronouns, verb modifiers, noun modifiers, connecting words and other words. The nouns were further divided into animals, body parts, vehicles, fruits, vegetables, food drink, family members, trees, insects, birds, flowers, dresses, household, items, furniture, colours and common items.

The word list consisted of receptive and expressive category of both 3-4 and 4.1-5 years old typically developing Kannada speaking children. These were meant for listing out the comprehensive and expressive vocabulary of each child. Each parent was instructed to tick a word from the list which their children understood and produced. The obtained data was subjected to statistical analysis. Frequency of each word in a category and percentage word comprehended and expressed were noted. The receptive and expressive word list was formulated based on the frequency of each word reported by the parents. Vocabulary distributions across age groups were also finding out using this method.

### **Implications of the Present Study**

- This vocabulary list can be used to find out the growth of vocabulary development for 3-5 years old typically developing Kannada speaking children.
- This list can be used as a useful clinical tool to identify the children with receptive and expressive vocabulary deficits who are at risk for language impairment.

### **Limitations**

- This study is based only on parental report.
- The divided age groups of 3-4 years and 4.1-5 years are not uniform.

- The vocabulary list is not validated.
- A large sample size would have yielded more reliable results.

### Future Recommendations

- Clinical validation of this vocabulary list can be done.
- This list can be further continued with the extended age group.
- Another vocabulary list can be made with more subjects included.
- This list can be developed as a screening or diagnostic tool.
- Instead of parental report an alternate method involving the parent, child, clinician interaction can be used.
- Instead of a broad and vague vocabulary list a narrowed list which consists of one of the categories ex: vocabulary list for action verbs in Kannada, as such can be done.
- More children can be included in the age group 3-4 Years.

---



---

### References

Arunjatai, V. & Srinivasachari, G. (1968). Functional Vocabulary of Pre-school Children. The SITU Council of Educational Research, Madras.

Beko, J. (1958). The Child's Learning of English Morphology. Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Retrieved from <http://www.clips.ua.ac.be/childes/topics/wugs/wugs.pdf>

Beverly, G. A., & Steven, R. J. (2009). Early lexical acquisition: rate, content and the vocabulary spurt. Journal of child language, 17, 171-183.  
DOI:10.1017/S0305000900013167.

Bloom, L. (1973). One Word at a Time: The Use of Single Word Utterances before Syntax. The Hague, Mouton.

British Council. (2014). Retrieved from <http://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/en/english-grammar/adjectives/noun-modifiers>

Brown, R. (1973). A First Language: The Early Stages. London, George Allen and Unwin.

Butcher, S. J., & Ramirez, G. M. Vocabulary development for English language learners. Retrieved from [www.kendallhunt.com/contentarealiteracy/articles/butcherramirez.pdf](http://www.kendallhunt.com/contentarealiteracy/articles/butcherramirez.pdf)

Chandrashekharaiyah, B. K. (1966). An Investigation into the Basic Vocabulary (in Kannada) of Elementary School Children of Standards I to VII of Mysore State. Bangalore, Educational Research Bureau.

---



---





**Dr. Satish Kumaraswamy**  
Professor and Principal, Dr.  
MV Shetty College of Speech and Hearing  
Mangaluru, Karnataka 575013  
[sat8378@yahoo.com](mailto:sat8378@yahoo.com)



**Mr. Nabeel Musthafa**

Postgraduate Student  
Dr. MV Shetty College of Speech and Hearing

[nabeelbaslp2786@gmail.com](mailto:nabeelbaslp2786@gmail.com)