

Incorporating Literature into Modern Greek Language Teaching.

What do we teach and how?

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CBI	Content-based Instruction
CBLT	Content-based Language Teaching
CLIL	Content and Language Integrated Learning
CW	Creative Writing
DET	Department of Education and Training
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ESL	English as a Second Language
FFI	Form-focused Instruction
FL	Foreign Language
GOCMV	Greek Orthodox Community of Melbourne and Victoria
HL	Heritage Language
ID	Individual Differences
IPA	International Phonetic Alphabet
IRO	International Refugee Organisation
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
LBI	Literature-based Instruction
MGTAV	Modern Greek Teachers' Association of Victoria
MT	Mother Tongue
NNS	Non-native Speaker
NS	Native Speaker
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
TL	Target Language
TESOL	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

Abstract

The present thesis forms part of my Master's by research at La Trobe University and is related to the incorporation of literary texts into Modern Greek Language Teaching. More specifically, this paper was created to support the artefact of my research, which is a bilingual Handbook for English-speaking learners of the Modern Greek language. The thesis addresses issues concerning the existing theories of language teaching and learning, Greek language education in Australia and global contexts as well as research on grammar acquisition. In addition, it explores the field of content-based instruction, as well as the role of literature and creative writing in language teaching. The structure of the Handbook is described in the last chapter of the thesis, alongside the purpose and the expectations, which are related to addressing the language and cultural needs of Modern Greek language learners and giving practical solutions to teachers who seek an alternative and creative way to teach grammar and to develop the creative writing skills of their students through the Greek literature.

Statement of Authorship

Except where reference is made in the text of the thesis, this thesis contains no material published elsewhere or extracted in whole or in part from a thesis accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma. No other person's work has been used without due acknowledgment in the main text of the thesis. This thesis has not been submitted for the award of any degree or diploma in any other tertiary institution.

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INTRODUCTION

THESIS TOPIC AND PURPOSE

The present study forms part of my cultural and language journey as a migrant teacher in Melbourne. Being the daughter of a migrant, I have always heard funny, nostalgic and moving stories about life in Australia from my father; therefore, I have always had an interest in visiting the country and when I became a teacher, I thought that this could be my chance to meet the land where my father lived for almost 15 years and its rich history, and contribute to maintaining my heritage language by teaching migrant students, as well as students born in Australia with a Greek ancestry. I taught Modern Greek as a first (L1) and as a second language (L2) from 2015 to 2020 as a private tutor and in community schools in Melbourne using a variety of textbooks. Some of them have been very useful; however, I realised that a lot of the textbooks did not address the language and cultural needs of the Greek Australian learners. In addition, the lack of a modern bilingual grammar handbook has been a matter of concern for both teachers and students of the diaspora.

Through my experience as a teacher in Melbourne, I noticed that a lot of students enjoyed learning Modern Greek through literature as it was a new way for them to engage with the Greek language and culture. Among Greek community members, culture can serve as a symbol of identity (Tamis, 2010). Literature plays a significant role in Greek culture, and for the students of the diaspora, it can be a way of connecting themselves with their heritage and cultural identity. At the same time, incorporating literature texts into language teaching helps to develop grammar, and other skills, such as oral and writing competence. As pointed out in O' Donnell (2009, p. 513) literature texts can transmit cultural knowledge while they form models of *linguistic excellence*.

Based on the need and observation mentioned above, I decided to undertake research in relation to the incorporation of literature texts into Modern Greek language teaching. According to Krashen's Second Language Acquisition (SLA) theory stated in Freeman & Freeman (1998, pp. 32-33), English as a Second Language (ESL) learners can naturally acquire language by writing, speaking, reading, and listening with respect to different content types and fields. I found that the integration of Greek poetry and prose into the teaching of Modern Greek helped students learn not only the language, but also the history, customs, traditions, and to acquire

geographical knowledge, as well as to know other aspects of Greek culture and civilization. This observation has led me to the preparation of various activities for teaching grammatical phenomena through literature texts and for developing other skills such as creative writing, focusing on all four skills of language learning: listening, speaking, reading and writing. These literature-based activities are aimed at students of various language levels, while they are suitable for both students who learn Greek as a first and as a second/foreign language.

The result of this overall research is: a. the preparation of a bilingual handbook with literature-based grammar activities, some basic grammatical phenomena explained in English, vocabulary that is related to the activities based on the literature texts and a section with verbs to assist in the learning process and b. the present thesis, explaining the theoretical considerations on which the handbook is based. As stated in Freeman & Freeman (1998) vocabulary and language structures should be taught by providing the language items that students need within a particular content. Literature can provide an interesting content; therefore, it can be used to teach grammar, as well as to develop our students' creative writing skills. The production of such a handbook is likely to meet the language and cultural needs of Greek Australian students and English-speaking students in general, facilitating the acquisition of grammar through a content-based approach.

This thesis is created to support the artefact (handbook) and consists of a review and evaluation of the existing theories of language teaching and learning (chapter 1), a review of research on grammar acquisition and Modern Greek language teaching and learning in Australia and other global contexts (chapters 2, 3). In addition, the thesis includes an evaluation of content-based approaches in second language teaching and learning, the role of literature in language teaching as well as the development of creative writing along with personal empirical information on the literature-based Greek language teaching approach (chapter 4). More details about the artefact (handbook) are included in Chapter 5 of the thesis.

Chapter 1

REVIEW AND EVALUATION OF THE EXISTING THEORIES OF LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING

Introduction

The question “What is language?” has always been an intriguing question for me. From a very young age, I have always had an interest in learning foreign languages (FL), and I wanted to be able to understand all the different systems of the languages I was learning and to distinguish the different language families. Throughout the centuries, language has comprised an interdisciplinary object of study under philosophical, rational, aesthetic, historical and comparative perspectives. Several language teaching and learning methods and approaches have been introduced throughout the decades. When I became a teacher, I realised that teaching a language is a lot more than abstract grammar rules. I agree with De Capua & Winterest (2004, p. 26) that language can be both a *mirror and a window* that can give us insights into a culture. It is a mirror because it allows us to see the values, beliefs and attitudes of a culture, while as a window it can reveal all these cultural aspects. Therefore, languages should be taught based on content, on meanings and symbolisms; and that was the perspective that led me to create my handbook.

What is language?

The evolution of language as a medium of expression and communication has been one of the main concerns of the science of linguistics. From the era of the ancient Greek philosophers such as Aristotle and Dionysius Thrax, until the era of the Port Royal grammarians of the 17th century and the German grammarians of the late 19th century, the art or science of speech, discourse and language as a human activity has comprised an object of study and has led to the formation of theories related to the origin, composition, syntax, word formation, meaning, symbolism and the evolution of the diverse elements of language (Tokatlidou, 2004).

Throughout the centuries, the approach to the study of language and the phenomena mentioned above has been philosophical, rational, aesthetic, historical and comparative. It was initially believed that language is a representation of ideas and rational thinking considered common worldwide; therefore, the existence of a general grammar with general principles that could be respected by all languages seemed feasible. However, towards the end of the 18th century it became widely accepted that languages are not modified by the will of their speakers alone.

The idea that languages may change on their own for reasons of inner necessity started to become popular. Language change is characterised by regularity, and it is subject to the internal structure/organisation of each language. And it is the regularity in language that has become the criterion for philosophers and linguists to study a linguistic phenomenon (Tokatlidou, 2004).

Language is many things. Through language, we can please or displease people. We can show our feelings and communicate our ideas and opinions. Language is the most direct means of communication of people. It is the way we express ourselves and the way we express ourselves shows what and how we think. As pointed out in Babiniotis (1998), according to Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913) language as a whole is complicated, heterogenic and indefinable. It has both a physical and cognitive beingness, while it is a social and individual, as well as a static and dynamic procedure; therefore, it should be an interdisciplinary object of study and not an object of study of a single, self-contained discipline.

Language Teaching: A brief history

The kind of proficiency that language learners need may vary depending on their goals. According to Richards & Rodgers (2001, p. 3), oral proficiency rather than reading comprehension has turned out to be the goal of language study and throughout history this has been reflected through changes in theories regarding the nature of language and how languages are learned, as well as through changes in language teaching methods.

Even though nowadays English is the foreign language that is the most widely studied and the dominant language in the Western World, around 500 years ago the dominant language of education, religion, government, and commerce was Latin. The political changes in Europe during the 16th century had, as a result, the gradual displacement of Latin as a written and spoken communication language as Italian, French and English gained importance. However, Latin had not yet declined completely. From the 17th to the 19th centuries the study of classical Latin grammar and rhetoric was the model for foreign language teaching and learning. Latin grammar (grammar rules, writing sample sentences, conjugation, translations and declensions) was the first contact with grammar for students during the 16th, 17th and 19th centuries in England. Once students had acquired basic proficiency in Latin grammar, they were introduced to the advanced study of rhetoric and grammar (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, pp. 3-4).

The method used for teaching Latin was followed when modern languages were introduced to the European schools' curriculum in the 18th century, and it is still used in some contexts in a modified way (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Translating sentences, learning abstract grammar rules and lists of vocabulary was the standard way of studying foreign languages. As pointed out in Richards & Rodgers (2001), the **Grammar-Translation Method** did not focus on oral practice since textbooks focused on the grammatical system of the language and not on real communication through language.

The rejection of the **Grammar-Translation Method** that had dominated the scene until the 1940s came as a result of the demand for oral proficiency in foreign languages. New language teaching approaches started to develop in several parts of Europe towards the mid-19th century. Claude Marcel (1793-1896) emphasised the importance of meaning in language learning and proposed that reading should be taught before other skills. Thomas Prendergast (1806-1886) proposed the first "structural syllabus" based on the observation that children memorise routines and phrases in speaking while François Gouin (1831-1896) developed an approach to foreign language teaching using themes and situations to organise and present language. He emphasised the use of gestures and actions to convey meaning as well as presenting new teaching items in a context that would make their meaning easy to perceive (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, pp. 7-9). I agree with Richards & Rodgers (2001) that the ideas of the three specialists listed above are of great historical interest, even though they did not have a long-lasting impact.

During the late 19th century new insights into the processes of speech were obtained through the establishment of phonetics. The **reformers** of the 19th century developed new approaches to foreign language teaching through principles that emphasised the scientific analysis of language along with the study of psychology as well as training in phonetics. The foundation of the International Phonetic Association in 1886 and the development of the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) as well as the writings of the linguists Henry Sweet (1845-1912), Wilhelm Viëtor (1850-1918) and Paul Passy (1859-1940) reflect the scientific approach to language teaching and learning, which led to the establishment of the discipline of applied linguistics (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

In the late 1860s a language school was opened in Boston by Lambert Sauveur (1826-1907) who believed that foreign languages should be taught through the **Natural Method** using the

target language (TL) as a medium of oral interaction in the classroom without the use of the learners' mother tongue or translation if action and demonstration could convey the words' meaning. According to F. Franke, a German scholar who also focused on the direct use of the target language, a foreign language is best taught when used actively by learners. New vocabulary would be acquired through demonstration, mime and pictures. Soon this naturalistic approach of language learning became the foundation of the **Direct Method** that was introduced in Germany and France, while it became popular in the United States as well. However, due to its lack of a thorough base in applied linguistics the Direct Method was criticised by the supporters of the scientific approach to language teaching and learning, who pointed out its limitations (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

Approaches to Language Teaching and Learning

A question that arises when exploring approaches to language teaching and learning is: How should second and foreign languages be taught and how are they learned? The notion that changing and improving the teaching methodologies would improve language learning has been reinforced by academics, publishers and teachers with several language teaching approaches emerging from the 1950s until the 1990s, when many language teachers and applied linguists started to believe that alternative methods would provide insights on how L2 and FL should be taught and how they are learned; however, this did not necessarily mean that new methods and approaches would improve language teaching (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

During the 1950s and 1960s approaches such as the Audiolingual Method, the Situational Method, the Communicative Approach, the Silent Way, the Natural Approach, and the Total Physical Response emerged, while in the 1990s new approaches to teaching language such as Content-Based Instruction and Task-Based Language Teaching appeared (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Such methods and approaches in language teaching were developed based on theoretical frameworks with linguistic, socio-cultural, psycholinguistic as well as cognitive dimensions regarding language acquisition. The contribution of these frameworks to understanding the nature of language as well as to the development of effective teaching strategies is recognised by the literature. There are three main theoretical views that have informed the current methods and approaches in language teaching: the **structural view**, the **functional view** and the **interactional view** (VanPatten & Williams, 2015).

According to the **structural view** language is a system of grammatical units, lexical items, phonological units and grammatical operations that, based on a set of rules, are structurally related in order to convey meaning (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013; Richards & Rodgers, 2001). The field of structural linguistics claims that language is based on a finite and discrete set of patterns that can be analysed as a sequence of *building blocks* aiming to acquire all the elements of the language system (e.g. grammar) in order to transmit meaning (VanPatten & Williams, 2015, p. 20).

The **functional view** emphasises the communicative and semantic dimension of language rather than merely its grammatical characteristics. The teaching content is organised by categories of function and meaning and not by elements of grammar and structure. According to functional approaches, language should be seen as a tool that performs significant communicative functions within a community rather than a system of grammar rules (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013; Mohamed Ahmed, 2013; Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

The **interactional view** suggests that language is the medium of interpersonal relations and the tool for creating and maintaining social transactions. Interactional theories emphasise acts, moves and negotiation during the interaction between individuals. The language teaching content is organised by forms of conversational exchanges and social interaction (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

Such different theoretical views related to the nature of language itself have formed the basis for several teaching methods; however, as pointed out in Richards & Rodgers (2001) theories concerning language learning need to complement such theoretical views. Understanding the nature of the language as well as how languages are learned may lead to informing effective approaches and methods in language teaching.

Prior to the 1990s, the explanation of the process of Second Language Acquisition was marked by two distinct periods. Second Language Acquisition was believed to be a matter of processes that take place in the learner's mind and are based on the individual's cognition (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013). During the first period, a theory taken from psychology was used to explain first and second language learning. **Behaviourism**, an animal and human behaviour theory, was used to explain language. Many researchers date the origin of Behaviourism to Pavlov's experiments with dogs. Pavlov's *classical conditioning* was taken a step further by

behaviourists, who believed that the same conditioning could be true for human behaviour as well. According to behaviourists language learning, like all learning, is viewed as the acquisition of a new behaviour (VanPatten & Williams, 2015, p. 18).

As pointed out in VanPatten & Williams (2015) children can learn a language by imitating structures and sounds produced in the surrounding environment. Behaviourists suggested that this is the result of the natural association of events and no mental processes are involved in the process. A positive response to an utterance would probably encourage the child to produce it again, while a negative response would make the possibility of the repetition of the utterance less likely. According to this notion of behaviourism SLA occurs in a similar way; second language learners acquire language by repeatedly imitating the target behaviour, thus resulting in second language production. Since behaviourism saw learning as the acquisition of a distinct set of behaviours it was linked to structural linguistics (VanPatten & Williams, 2015).

One of the most radical and influential theories about linguistic development was formed by Noam Chomsky. Challenging the behaviourist view of language learning, Chomsky published his *Syntactic Structures* in 1957, establishing an innatist view of language acquisition through his **Transformational-generative Grammar** theory (Xia, 2014). Chomsky claimed that children are born with a “language acquisition device” which allows them to use the rules of any language system without having learned them (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013, p. 35). Based on the principles of his Universal Grammar (UG) Chomsky argues that language competence is innate to humans and that learners do not just repeat or imitate sentences, but they generate sentences based on their underlying knowledge. This argument was based on the evidence that children can successfully learn their first language applying the right grammar rules without always being exposed to the right structures of language within their environment (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013; Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

During the second period, the dominant theory of the explanation of SLA was Stephen Krashen’s **Monitor Theory**. As pointed out in Wesche (1994) several factors such as the learners’ individual differences, the linguistic environment as well as the cognitive processes that are involved during learning, can affect language acquisition. Studies on the interaction of learners with their environment have led to research on the input for learning and comprehension as well as on the interactions taking place when learners receive the input. Based on his work with English language learners in the late 1970s and early 1980s Krashen

developed the *Monitor Theory*, the first attempt to explain language learning through a broad scope, suggesting that language acquisition is based on the “comprehension of meaningful messages and the interaction of the linguistic information in those messages with the innate language acquisition faculty” (VanPatten & Williams, 2015, p. 25).

According to Krashen, second language learning mechanisms are similar to those of first language learning (Ortega, 2013, pp. 59-60). Connecting with Chomsky’s language theory Krashen believes that language learning is part of the biological endowment of humans. According to Krashen’s *Natural Order Hypothesis* what guides all language learning is our innate language acquisition ability (VanPatten & Williams, 2015, pp. 24, 26).

The Acquisition - Learning Hypothesis is perhaps the most important part of Krashen’s Monitor Theory. According to this hypothesis acquisition takes place without awareness, when learners are normally interacting in the target language in a context where the focus is on meaning (VanPatten & Williams, 2015). As pointed out in Ortega (2013, p. 59) *grammar learning will naturally occur* when learners are exposed to comprehensible input which is not too easy or too difficult.

According to Krashen’s *Comprehensible input hypothesis* which has been a great influence on research regarding the comprehension of input, what helps learners acquire language is focusing on the meaning and understanding messages. Second Language Acquisition can be facilitated through input that is comprehensible, but at the same time is somewhat beyond the competence and understanding of learners (Ortega, 2013; Wesche, 1994). According to the *Affective Filter Hypothesis* that forms part of Krashen’s *Monitor Theory*, students who enjoy and have a positive attitude towards language learning will be facilitated. Evidence from Krashen’s studies have supported this theory by demonstrating that learners who have a positive attitude towards language learning and are comfortable outperform compared to students who are exposed to a stressful environment while learning (VanPatten & Williams, 2015, p. 27).

In the early 1980s Michael Long developed the **Interaction Hypothesis** as a result of a study where college-level English as a Second Language students were called to interact with ESL native-speaking teachers. Interacting with other speakers is an opportunity that learners need to reach mutual comprehension. Michael Long argues that learning can occur through

comprehensible input, agreeing with Krashen that the more students understand, the more they learn (Ortega, 2013). Input modifications are necessary between native speakers (NS) and non-native speakers (NNS) in order to facilitate the L2 acquisition and make the target language more understandable (Long, 1983b), while interactional modifications, such as “confirmation checks”, “clarification checks”, “comprehension checks”, “paraphrase”, “clarification requests”, “expansions” and “self- and other- repetitions” can be used to make meaning more comprehensible (Long, 1983a, p. 183; Long, 1983b, p. 138; Ortega, 2013, p. 61). Conversational strategies, non-verbal forms common to “foreigner talk”, as well as the simplification of sentence structure and vocabulary, can reinforce language skills and support language learning (Long, 1983a, p. 177).

In the early 1990s Richard Schmidt developed the **Noticing Hypothesis** after examining the role of conscious and unconscious processes in second language learning (Ortega, 2013). According to Schmidt (1990) learning is more likely to occur when learners notice and pay attention to the input rather than when they unconsciously process information. There are several factors that can facilitate learners to comprehend and acquire the target language. As pointed out in Schmidt, for input to be converted to intake, noticing is the sufficient and necessary condition.

In order to understand the several issues related to second language learning, Schmidt (1990, pp. 131-135) distinguishes three dimensions of consciousness: consciousness as awareness, consciousness as intention and consciousness as knowledge. Often consciousness is equated with awareness and awareness can have various levels, such as *perception*, *noticing* and *understanding*. Consciousness as intention is another interesting concept. Schmidt emphasises the importance of distinguishing consciousness as intentional behaviour and consciousness as awareness. Often people become aware of things they do not intend to notice; therefore, intention can be either conscious or unconscious. Having knowledge about something does not necessarily mean to be conscious of it. This is important to keep in mind when creating activities or learning resources.

Conclusion

In this chapter, some thoughts on the nature of language were discussed. Beginning from the era of the ancient Greek philosophers up until the modern approaches, several approaches to

the study of language have been introduced. The **Grammar-Translation method** that was introduced in the 18th century was one of the first methods related to foreign languages studying; however, this method was based on translating sentences, learning abstract grammar rules and lists of vocabulary, so it did not focus on oral practice. Therefore, when the demand and need for oral proficiency increased, during the 1940s, this method was rejected. During the 19th century, the **reformers** had already started to develop new approaches to foreign language teaching. The **Natural Method** that became the foundation of the **Direct Method**, used the target language as a medium of oral interaction without the use of the mother tongue (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

Three main theoretical views informed several language teaching methods: the **structural view**, the **functional view** and the **interactional view**. Effective methods and approaches in language teaching can be formed based on understandings and insights on the nature of language and how languages are learned. Prior to the 1990s, **Behaviourism** was a theory that was used to explain language claiming that language learning can be viewed as the acquisition of a new behaviour (VanPatten & Williams, 2015).

In 1957, Noam Chomsky established his **Transformational-generative Grammar** theory, based on the notion that language competence is innate to humans; therefore, they can generate sentences based on their *language acquisition device* (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013; Richards & Rodgers, 2001). The first attempt to explain language through a broad scope was the development of the *Monitor Theory* by Stephen Krashen in the late 1970s and early 1980s. According to this theory, second language learning mechanisms are similar to those of first language learning (Ortega, 2013, pp. 59-60).

Throughout the decades several theories, methods and approaches related to language teaching and learning have been developed. Language is many procedures happening in one brain at the same time; therefore, the study of language should not be an object of a study of a single discipline but an interdisciplinary object of study. Effective language teaching and learning methods can be developed when we take into consideration all the linguistic, psycholinguistic, cognitive and socio-cultural dimensions of languages and their users.

Chapter 2

GREEK LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING

Introduction

A large number of Greek communities around the world have managed to maintain Greek language and culture through community and church schools. These complementary schools have played an important role in encouraging *heritage identities* (Creese et al., 2006, p. 25) and transmitting the heritage language of Greek diasporic communities to the next generations. As stated in Chatzidaki (2019, p. 154) Greek is taught in more than 60 countries around the globe. In Australia, Greek language teaching commenced in the 1920s (Tamis, 2009) and nowadays there are several church-run, and independent community schools where Greek is taught as a first and as a second/foreign language. In addition, there are some independent/private and government schools offering Greek in their curriculum. In this chapter I will discuss the connection between language and identity, Greek language teaching and learning around the world and the challenges that teachers and students may face in the classroom.

Heritage Language and Identity

The term Heritage Languages (HLs) was introduced in Canada in the 1970s and was particularly referring to the languages of migrants. In the 1990s the term Heritage Language was replaced by the term International Language, and it was used to reflect that these languages had heritage and economic value, as they were relevant to cultural exchanges and business. In other countries many synonyms have been used in the literature to identify Heritage Languages, such as community languages, ethnic languages, languages other than English (LOTE) and foreign or second languages among others (Trifonas & Aravossitas, 2018, pp. 1-2). In Australia the term *home background speakers* is used to identify heritage language speakers (Valdés, 2001, p. 39) whereas the terms LOTE and community languages are widely used to identify heritage languages.

Fishman (2001) points out the personal connection of individuals with their heritage languages when it comes to maintaining migrant languages or strengthening indigenous languages that are at risk of falling out of use. In the United States the term heritage language is broadly used by individuals who wish to maintain, revitalise and study non-English languages (Valdés, 2001). Based on the above, the Greek language would be considered a heritage language for American or Australian students of Greek ancestry even though some of these students might

be monolingual English speakers. As stated in Polinsky & Kagan (2007, p. 369) two conceptions of heritage language have been proposed: the *broad conception* and the *narrow conception*. Polinsky & Kagan (2007) distinguish between a heritage speaker under the narrow sense of the conception and a motivated second language speaker under the broader sense.

According to the broad conception of heritage language there are possible links between linguistic heritage and cultural heritage. There are language learners who have been raised with a cultural connection to their heritage languages through family interaction. Polinsky & Kagan (2007, p. 369) point out that “family relevance” and “heritage motivation” might be important factors that affect language learning; however, they are not sufficient to provide the criteria that identify heritage speakers and do not indicate linguistic competence suitably and that happens because under the broad conception, heritage language is equivalent to second language and it typically begins in the classroom.

Under the narrow conception of the term “heritage language”, students who are raised in homes where non-English languages are spoken, are considered heritage language speakers. They might speak or understand the heritage language and are, to some degree, bilingual since they can have some proficiency in English. As pointed out in (Valdés, 2001) the term “bilingual” implies that individuals might be able to use two languages to some extent in everyday life or be fluent in both languages at the level of a native speaker.

In Melbourne, in the campuses where Greek is taught as a second language most of our students come under Polinsky & Kagan’s **broad conception** of heritage language as they are raised with a cultural connection with Greek; however, they use English at home, and they mainly speak Greek in the classroom and sometimes with their grandparents or during other occasions if their interlocutor is not fluent in English. On the other hand, at the campuses where Greek is taught as a first language a high percentage of students come under the **narrow conception** of heritage language. Most of them are fluent in both English and Greek and they use Greek in the classroom and to communicate with their parents and grandparents; however, on many occasions, they use English to communicate with their siblings; therefore, these students can be considered bilingual.

The diasporic communities’ heritage language education, transmission and maintenance has been a subject of interest for linguists, sociolinguists and anthropologists across the globe

(Borland, 2005). A study conducted by Qin (2006) investigated heritage language speakers' perceptions of heritage languages and identity in the United States. The results drawn from the answers of ten college heritage language speakers showed that despite the fact that most of them identified with English, they had positive attitudes towards heritage language learning, while they felt that family and community support played a significant role in maintaining heritage languages. Most of the participants had some degree of proficiency in their heritage languages (Spanish, Czech, Korean, Portuguese); however, they tended to answer that their competence in understanding their heritage languages was higher than using them in speaking, writing and reading. Most of the participants believed that it was important to maintain the languages of their ancestors; however, most of them were more attached to English than their heritage languages and only a few said they felt that they had two identities. Similar research regarding a sample of students who learn Modern Greek in Melbourne would be essential as it could provide us with insights on the connection between heritage language and identity in the Greek Australian context.

The relationship between heritage language and ethnic identity has been examined predominantly in North American settings (Mu, 2013). There is little research on the interrelation of heritage language learning and identity outside North America. To fill this gap Mu (2013) conducted a sociological study on the role of habitus of Chinese Australians' Chineseness on their heritage language in an Australian context drawing on Bourdieu's notion of habitus. According to the study, the habitus of Chineseness, which is expressed by the Confucian way of thinking, doing and being, is the precondition for their heritage language practices. The results of an online survey that was completed by 230 young Chinese Australians indicated that the participants' Chineseness as habitus, had a strong positive impact on their heritage language proficiency.

There are several factors that influence the migrants' experience in their new homeland. In their study, Kaplan & Chacko (2015) explore the importance of the place and the general context around which migrants form their identity. Religion, nationality, language, legality or not, as well as economic status may determine how migrants will integrate into their new homeland. Focusing on the importance of the national and local context, Kaplan & Chacko analyse the interaction of place with identity and the role that the place plays in its formation as well as the various ways in which the migration process shapes "hybrid identities" (Kaplan & Chacko, 2015, p. 129). The authors address the issue of the implementation of immigration policies at

national and local levels, which according to the literature are designed to meet the economic, demographic and political needs of the host countries. The integration and assimilation of migrants into the new society can vary dramatically depending on the local environment and the personal situation of each migrant. The acquisition of a “hybrid identity” is also interesting as some migrants may feel that they have two homelands. Finally, Kaplan & Chacko point out that there are significant differences in the experience of migrants, which is determined by gender, social status and ethnicity.

The findings of Kaplan and Chacko's (2015) research have shown that the way in which the identity of migrant populations is shaped and expressed varies according to the generation, social status and experiences they have during their migration. Important aspects of their individual identity, such as gender, nationality, economic status and social status are strengthened as migrants try to integrate into their new homeland. The experiences of integration are in some cases positive and characterised by acceptance, while in other cases they are negative and result in alienation and the creation of prejudices. Further geographical research would contribute to providing more information about the reality that migrants experience both individually and as a group, as well as the social and political factors that shape this reality.

Karidakis & Arunachalam (2016, p. 1) explored the language shift to English among first generation migrants in Australia. They distinguish *language shift* (moving from the use of one language to another) from *language maintenance* (the use of migrant community languages in some domains of life) while they explore the socio-economic variation in the shift in use of community languages in Australia. Their analysis showed that some migrant groups adopt English at home at a faster rate than others; according to the research findings, gender and duration of residence are strongly associated with language shift, while the place of residence as well as the distribution of a linguistic community gave opportunities for language maintenance since migrants who live in major capital cities in Australia tend to better maintain their community language. Even though the gender gap in language shift was negligible, it was found that females tend to maintain their mother tongue; however, female migrants from Oceania and Asia were more likely to shift to English. In addition, the higher the level of education, the lower the likelihood of speaking a community language at home.

Based on the examination of the data of the 1986, 1991, 1996 and 2001 Australian censuses, there was an increase in language shift to English. German, French, Austrian, Hungarian and Dutch were among the languages that displayed greater shift, while Greek was among the low-shift groups. Japanese, Spanish, Polish and Italian were among the groups that displayed an intermediate shift (Karidakis & Arunachalam, 2016, p. 1). Karidakis & Arunachalam's (2016) research showed the rising prominence of Asian and Middle Eastern languages in most capital cities in Australia and a decline in the number of speakers of European community languages, highlighting the need to investigate the maintenance of community languages in Australia, as well as their use outside of the home, such as "at church", "in the work domain" and in "friendship contexts" among others (Karidakis & Arunachalam's, 2016, pp. 19-20). Further research on language maintenance and language shift to English could inform better ideas of how to maintain and foster community languages. For example, the changing nature of language use in the community should be taken into consideration when developing resources for students.

Another aspect that plays a crucial role in the learning process is the relationships between school, families and communities. Language and culture are the foundation between the family and school community. Gaitan's (2012) article presents the main findings and conclusions of a 15-year study in Carpintería, in California. The research focuses on Latino families in communities with students whose parents often feel disadvantaged due to their limited knowledge of English, limited knowledge of the education system, as well as due to the unfavourable economic conditions in some cases. As a result, parents are prevented from supporting their children at school. However, according to the research results, a balanced relationship between parents and schools is possible and can be strengthened when the language and culture of families are recognised and appreciated and when the above is used to empower students and their families, as well as communities and schools.

Through years of research on parent-family-community interaction in numerous communities, Gaitan (2012) identifies three basic types of power-sharing relationships between schools and families, as well as three key principles linking immigrant families to their host countries. These principles relate to how people communicate with each other, what information they exchange and in what language, and what are the characteristics of their literacy. According to the author, the ability of individuals to actively participate in community and school activities can expand their cultural knowledge, which contributes to the development of a strong

communication system between families and schools, a system that strengthens, supports and improves the learning process for the children of these families. The results of Gaitan's research showed that through organisation and mobilisation, families had multiple benefits. Constructive family-school-community collaboration plays a crucial role in students' school careers, as it can improve the process of learning, while by building strong networks and understanding the education system better, families were empowered and changed their lives for the better. In my opinion, in such a multicultural country like Australia, collaboration between communities and schools is essential. Regarding the migrant families from Greece, I believe that building constructive relationships and immersing families in the community schools education system can be beneficial both for the community and students, as well as for the maintenance of the language itself.

Greek Language Teaching and Learning in Global Contexts

Greece has a long history in migration; the first waves of modern migration started to take place during the 19th century. According to Tamis (2009, p. 417) between 1896 and 1931 more than 15,000 Greeks migrated to Australia. Following the second world war, Greeks were mainly motivated to leave the country due to economic and political reasons. During the decades of 1950 and 1970 big migration waves flowed to different continents, such as Europe, America and Australia (Limnios-Sekeris, 2015). More recently, after 2009, more than 400,000 Greeks have left Greece to several destinations as a result of the socio-political consequences of the debt crisis and austerity, making Greece one of the countries with the highest migration rates in Europe (Pratsinakis, 2019, p. 12).

Greek communities around the world have managed to preserve their cultural characteristics over several generations and to transmit their language through community and church schools which have played a crucial role in maintaining the Greek language, culture and traditions. As pointed out in Creese et al. (2006, p. 25) "heritage/community" identities and "learning" identities are privileged and encouraged by complementary schools, while these schools "provide a multilingual space for the exploration and enactment of multicultural identities and flexible bilingualism".

There is a large number of Greek community and church schools serving as "complementary schools" around the world and most of them operate once a week in the afternoon or on

Saturdays (morning and afternoon). Organised Greek language teaching can be found in more than 60 countries around the world (Chatzidaki, 2019, p. 154). In Montreal, complementary schools are supported by the government and largely funded by the Greek community and the Greek church (Panagiotopoulou & Rosen, 2019). As pointed out in Panagiotopoulou & Rosen (2019) the main purpose of these schools is to teach the language as well as Greek heritage to the students.

In Germany, Greek schools that follow the Greek curriculum were originally designed in the 1970s with the aspiration to teach the language and to develop the Greek ethnic and cultural identity (Chatzidaki, 2019). According to Styliou (2019) one of the challenges that teachers face in Greek schools in Germany is that they might have difficulties in addressing the language needs of their students due to the fact that after the new wave of migration after the 2008 crisis in Greece, classrooms host native Greek speakers alongside third or fourth generation students who learn Greek as a second or as a foreign language.

In Australia, Greek community afternoon and Saturday schools have played an essential role in maintaining the language and culture until nowadays. In Melbourne there are two types of Greek schools; campuses where Greek is taught as a first language and campuses where Greek is taught as a second/foreign language. In order to meet the language needs of the newly arrived students from Greece, some providers have created new classes where they host native speakers and Greek is taught as a first language following the curriculum of Greece. This will be further discussed in the following section.

Greek Language Teaching and Learning in Australia

The history of Greek migration to Oceania commences in the early nineteenth century. The transportation of Greek migrants to Australia expanded from the late nineteenth century to the post World War II era. In Greece, the Civil War (1946-1949) succeeded World War II and during the post-war years Australia inaugurated a migration programme for Europeans. After 1945 Australia became the main migratory destination for Greeks. The successive Greek governments encouraged Greeks to migrate in order to reduce unemployment and to foster economic and industrial growth. In 1947 the International Refugee Organisation (IRO) chartered ships to transport displaced persons and refugees to Australia. Ships were then

serving the main Greek port of Piraeus on a more frequent basis. Before that, the average waiting period for a seat could have been over five months. (Limnios-Sekeris, 2015).

Between 1945 and 1970 more than 180,000 Greeks arrived in their new country, Australia. Due to the progressive recovery of the European economy the commercial flights to Australia became more frequent after the second half of the 1950s (Limnios-Sekeris, 2015). According to Fifis (1999) since 1947 and mainly between 1953 and 1972, almost 250,000 people migrated from Greece to Australia. After the Assisted Migration Agreement between Australia and Greece that was signed in 1952, a massive migration wave brought 270,000 Greeks to Australia and 3,500 Greeks to New Zealand (Tamis, 2009). Greek migration to Australia continues up until today. Thousands of Greeks have migrated to Australia after the economic crisis of 2008. Nowadays Greeks form the seventh largest ethnic group in Australia. According to the 2016 census there were 397,431 people of Greek ancestry living in Australia and 113,400 residents born in Greece. Among all states of Australia, Victoria has the largest population of Greeks born in Greece (57,000) (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016).

Greek was first taught in Australia during the 1920s. In 1929 there was one teacher that was brought out from Greece who taught Greek in Perth. In Sydney two schools were opened in 1926 while in Adelaide the first school systematically operated after 1936 (Tamis, 2009). According to the 1924 Minutes of the committee of the Greek Orthodox Community of Melbourne and Victoria (GOCMV) and as stated in Fifis (2009) the first Greek School was established in Melbourne in 1923 under the auspices of the Ithacan Philanthropic Society *Οδυσσεύς* (The Ulysses) and the GOCMV. Nowadays, there are 32 accredited community schools where Greek is taught as a first and/or as a second language in Victoria (State of Victoria, DET, 2021). Some of them are independent schools and others are run by churches. The Greek Orthodox Church has always been an important aspect in the life of Greeks in Australia. In addition to the importance of the role of the Church, football clubs as well as various regional and social clubs played a crucial role in the life of Greek migrants (Tsianikas & Maadad, 2013, p. 369).

As pointed out in Tsianikas & Maadad (2013, p. 369), typical patterns of Greek settlement in Australia included a Church followed by a school to support Greek language teaching, while local football teams were also representing the community in sports. Greek communities around Australia have managed to maintain their language and cultural characteristics;

however, the educational context has changed throughout the decades. The language and cultural needs of the new students may differ from those of the first migrants, who spoke Greek at home. Nowadays, third and fourth generation Greek Australians live in English dominant households. Educational materials for Modern Greek language need to adjust to the new setting. Students should be able to have access to materials that will facilitate their learning and that will keep them connected with the Greek culture. There is a need for the creation of more appealing educational material that will attract the students who learn Greek as a second/foreign language and that will facilitate them, as well as their teachers when it comes to grammar and creative writing activities. Hopefully, the handbook I have prepared will contribute to helping these students stay connected with their language and culture through the literature-based activities.

A study completed in 2011 by Tsianikas & Maadad (2013) examined the situation of Modern Greek in Australia, indicating that the Greek language will face many challenges in the near future; therefore, the authors pointed out that it is essential for all parties to develop practical strategies for the language to stay alive in the antipodes. Australia is a multicultural country that invests approximately \$15.3 million per year in the support and promotion of language teaching. Socio-political factors such as Australia's links with Asia had as a result the introduction of the National Asian Languages and Studies in Schools Programme which was initiated by the Australian federal Labor Government in 2009. The programme included Korean, Japanese, Chinese and Indonesian languages. In addition, according to the 2010 statistics, international students have increased in Australia and this source of income has been continuously growing, representing a third resource of wealth for the country (Tsianikas & Maadad, 2013, pp. 362-364). Minority language groups, such as Modern Greek may struggle to survive in such an "aggressive economic environment" (Tsianikas & Maadad, p. 364).

The number of Greek migrant or Greek Australian students who are interested in continuing their studies in Modern Greek in Australia is low when compared to the number of students who study a popular European or Asian language. Even at a tertiary level, the number of students who include Modern Greek in their studies is relatively low compared to the number of students of other languages. According to the latest report of the Department of Education and Training (2021), in 2020 there were 5,241 (in 2019 there were 5,454) students enrolled in Greek language in accredited community language schools in Victoria, while 2,541 (in 2019 there were 2,086) students were enrolled in Greek in primary and secondary Victorian

Government schools and the Victorian School of Languages (VSL), including distance education in the VSL. In 2020 Greek language was provided as part of the Designated Bilingual Program in Lalor North Primary School. In schools that offer bilingual education the curriculum is taught for between a minimum of 30 per cent and 50 per cent in the target language. Students have the opportunity to learn through both English and the target language. Greek is currently provided in seven primary schools including Lalor North Primary School and in five secondary schools in Victoria. In addition, there are few non-government schools that include Greek in their curriculum. The Victorian School of Languages provides Greek by distance education to home-schooled secondary students and to secondary students whose mainstream school does not offer the language they want to study. In total, in 2020 there were 56 enrolments in Greek by distance education in VSL (State of Victoria, DET, 2021, pp. 11, 65-66).



Figure 1: Types of Schools Offering Greek in Victoria

Many migrant students who come to Australia from Greece at a very young age might enter Australian schools with little or no knowledge of English. Most of these students will have acquired English by the time they arrive in high school. As a result, second, third and fourth generation students are English dominant; however, there is a minority of second and third generation students that can be considered bilinguals.

Research on heritage languages in Australia is restricted to languages with internationally large communities of speakers, such as Italian, Spanish, German or Chinese (Borland, 2005). Little research has been conducted in relation to Greek language teaching and learning in Australia

and the challenges that migrant and non-migrant parents and students might face, as well as the challenges that teachers come across when it comes to teaching students who may lack motivation, or when these teachers are required to teach multilevel classrooms. Some students who learn Greek as a second language attend Greek school because their parents or grandparents want them to; therefore, they may lack motivation to learn the language especially if they do not use it at home. They might not find it necessary, or they think it is too hard for them to learn because they do not speak the language at home. However, the role of community schools where Greek is taught is important; as stated in Tamis (2010, p. 366) these schools contribute to the reinforcement of the sense of identity as students feel somehow connected to Greek culture through engaging with Greek language and interacting with students of the same language and cultural background. Lo Bianco (2021) points out the need of increasing the opportunity for students to engage with the Greek language outside of the classroom, suggesting that immersion camps for learners could revitalise Modern Greek in Victoria.

One of the greatest challenges that teachers may face is when they are required to teach multilevel classrooms without being adequately trained to do so. Some teachers might face difficulties in creating lesson plans that meet the needs of all students in a multilevel classroom. I found pair and group work very useful when I had to teach multilevel classrooms; the types of pairs/groups varied in each lesson including role plays, games, study and discussion groups. Through pair and group work the advanced level students would help their peers as I was intentionally including students with different language levels in one group. Another challenge that both, students and teachers might face is that in Melbourne for example, students attend Greek community schools once a week. This can be a discouraging factor as it does not give them the opportunity to engage with the language on a frequent basis. Also, the fact that some teachers are underpaid in several community schools does not give them the motivation to stay in the teaching profession for a long time.

In regard to the teaching material, in some community schools where Greek is taught as a first language teachers use the books that are used in schools in Greece, which are published by the Hellenic Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs. That helps students who are likely to repatriate to keep up with the curriculum in Greece. In community schools where Greek is taught as a second language the material used depends on the administration of each school and on some occasions, teachers might not have access to adequate material with which to teach the language.

Another issue that should be taken into consideration is whether teachers have the qualifications to teach Greek as a first or as a second language. Despite the fact that nowadays thanks to the arrival of new migrants more qualified teachers teach in community schools, there are still several people who teach in community schools who do not have a qualification in Greek language teaching or education. The Hellenic Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs in collaboration with the Consulate General of Greece in Australia brings qualified teachers of the public sector from Greece. However, not all of them are trained to teach Greek as a second/foreign language. The Modern Greek Teachers' Association of Victoria (MGTAV) in cooperation with other institutes and organisations might further support teachers by providing such training and enhance Greek language programs in Victoria. The MGTAV was established in 1971 and its main goal is to maintain and promote the Greek language in Victoria. It is run by volunteers and aims to empower Modern Greek language teachers across all levels of education by providing professional development seminars throughout the school year. Such seminars are an important opportunity for Modern Greek language teachers to develop their knowledge and skills on the methodology of second language teaching.

Conclusion

In this chapter the connection between language and identity has been pointed out. The sense of belonging to a community with which we share common values and traditions is a need that many people may have. To be part of a school community where students can interact using their heritage languages and are able to share insights on their common background, leads to the sense of belonging to a greater community, which may contribute to their well-being. A lot of my students have told me that when they come to Greek school, they feel that they can communicate better with their peers because they feel that they utterly understand each other, not necessarily because they might know Greek, but because they have the same cultural background. Further research on the use and maintenance of community languages in Australia will provide insights and a fuller understanding of the diversity and vitality of the Australian linguistic context, and such insights could be helpful when developing strategies to foster community languages.

Some of the challenges that teachers may face have been noted in this chapter. Students' diverse language backgrounds can be challenging because for some teachers it might be difficult to manage multilevel classrooms; however, this can be an opportunity for creative and responsible

peer work since students who have a better level in Greek language can undertake leadership roles and contribute to facilitating learning for students whose language level is not that advanced.

In addition, the problem of unqualified teachers is a significant aspect of Greek community and independent schools around the globe. Teachers should be trained to teach Greek as a first and as a second/foreign language and school administrators should provide them with the opportunity to attend compulsory professional development courses and seminars that would improve their methodology on teaching Greek in contexts outside of Greece. Lastly, the limited time of teaching the language and the lack of adequate teaching material can be discouraging for students since attending Greek school once a week or having a short session every week may not allow them to fully engage with the language. Teaching material should meet the language and cultural needs of students who learn Greek outside of Greece and it should facilitate their understanding of several aspects of the language but at the same time it should be based on meaningful content and develop their creativity. All the above form part of the underlying goals of the handbook which forms part of this project.

Chapter 3

GRAMMAR ACQUISITION.

WHAT DO WE TEACH AND HOW?

Introduction

Many teachers might have difficulty in finding interesting and engaging ways of providing language input. We know that students need to learn but they should also enjoy the process of learning. How do we engage students and how do we manage to make them learn and produce the target language? This is a major question that has troubled me since I first started to work as a teacher. When I started teaching English-speaking learners in Australia, I realised that I should find new ways of introducing the input, especially when it comes to Greek grammar. This chapter focuses on several sources of introducing input, the role of individual differences, the role of teachers, as well as the role of form-focused classroom activities and multiliteracies in second language teaching.

Introducing Grammar

Providing language input can be challenging for a teacher. One of the teacher's roles is to make sure that students have comprehended what they have heard from them; this means that teachers should be understood and provide suitable and comprehensible input so they can engage students in the process of learning. According to López-Burton (2014, p. 21) language input should have several qualities such as being humorous or even sad, thus interesting in some way. The more interesting the input is the more likely it is that students acquire, internalise and produce words and phrases. López-Burton (2014, pp. 26-34) points out several sources of providing oral input, such as: Personal Stories, Made-up Stories, Stories with Your Own Students as Protagonists, A Familiar Children's Story and Comic Strips.

Personal Stories is an interesting way of introducing grammar points and making input memorable. Students are interested in their teachers' lives. They like listening to something that happened to their teachers, their teachers' friends or family members (López-Burton, 2014). Narrating about our experiences, adventures, our goals and plans, our likes, dislikes and preferences can attract students' interest and it is a motivating way of introducing grammatical phenomena such as past or future tenses. Sharing my own personal stories with my students in Australia has always been an effective way of engaging students in the classroom. Most of them were usually very curious about my life in Greece before I moved to Australia. I use

personal stories quite often when I want to introduce or teach past tenses and it can be very motivating because students find a meaning in narrating their own personal stories as well, using the target language.

Made-up Stories is a nice alternative for teachers who do not wish to share their personal stories with students. Vocabulary, activity verbs, direct and indirect speech can be taught through made-up stories, and this can be a fun way for students to learn but also interact and create their own imaginative stories to share with their peers. When listening to a made-up story, students can participate in learning in a more relaxed way, enjoying their teachers' imagination and creativity (López-Burton, 2014). This source of input can also be an inspiring way to motivate students to use their imagination and creativity to produce their own unique made-up stories using the input they have been taught.

Another source of oral input described in López-Burton (2014) are the **Stories with Your Own Students as Protagonists**. Choosing students that are comfortable with being the protagonists in a made-up story could draw students' attention because they see themselves involved in the process of learning. This activity may encourage students who are more shy or reluctant to allow themselves to be the stars of a story. In addition, teachers can reverse the roles and ask students to make up stories with the teacher being the protagonist; this way they could feel they have control of the plot, and they might want to be even more creative and fun.

A Familiar Children's Story can also be an engaging way of providing input. López-Burton (2014) points out that choosing a well-known children's story reminds students of their childhood; therefore, they are receptive to this source of input. Comic books with **Comic Strips** can be used for several purposes such as tenses and location and identification of nouns, adverbs, or adjectives.

However, oral input is not the only source of input learners can be exposed to. As pointed out in López-Burton (2014), songs, magazine and newspaper articles, fragments from textbooks, short stories and poems can also be sources of input. Readings, such as poems and excerpts from literature are an effective way of integrating grammar and culture. According to the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages "cultural understanding is an important part of world languages education" (López-Burton, 2014, p. 80).

Grammar is important in Second Language Acquisition. However, as stated in Watkins (2014), it is not the most important thing in L2 learning. Practising in all four skills and enriching vocabulary is essential in SLA. Providing students with the opportunity to apply new knowledge can empower their autonomy and their ability to use the target language for the purposes they need (McDonough, et al., 2013).

Many foreign language textbooks include grammar tasks or vocabulary lists that are not content-based. This can have as a result the students' lack of interest or motivation to learn and produce the target language. Some teachers might not be very confident with how to integrate language and content (e.g.: cultural knowledge through literature) or might be restricted by the curriculum design and consider teaching culture as an activity that can take place if there is extra time in the classroom. However, I have noticed that a lot of students enjoy learning a foreign/second language through literature as it is a new way for them to engage with culture. According to O' Donnell (2009, p. 513) cultural knowledge can be transmitted through literature texts. Cultural knowledge is important because it helps learners develop a better understanding of how languages and other cultures are interrelated. Culture is also a form of identity; therefore, teaching culture can facilitate learners understand and appreciate their native culture as well other cultures (López-Burton, 2014).

Individual Differences in Second Language Learning

According to research, L2 language outcomes can be affected by the cognitive abilities of learners. A study conducted by Brooks et al. (2017) evaluating the role of individual differences in L2 language acquisition while examining whether input manipulation may facilitate L2 morphology development, suggested that individual differences play a sustained role in language acquisition. A miniature Russian case-marking system of feminine and masculine nouns in nominative, genitive, dative and instrumental case was used in the study to examine whether less predictable input would affect L2 outcomes and whether vocabulary and morphology learning may be predicted by individual differences. According to the results of the study, individual differences in cognitive skills such as verbal working memory, phonological short-term memory, statistical learning ability, and nonverbal intelligence may affect L2 acquisition more than input manipulation.

Better insights on L2 morphology development can be provided when considering learners' individual characteristics such as age, personality, aptitude, beliefs, learning styles, identity, motivation and ethnic group affiliation. According to Lightbown & Spada (2006) learners' social and linguistic characteristics are interrelated; therefore, further research on how individual differences and social settings interact in L2 morphology development should provide more insights on L2 learning. For example, regarding Greek language teaching and learning in Australia, it would be worth examining how educational and social settings interact with learners' characteristics as some students might have limited opportunities to use L2 at home and consequently, they might lose their motivation to learn the language.

Planning and implementing adequate lessons can be challenging. It is essential for students to feel that their language needs are addressed, and for teachers to be able to understand the way their students learn as well as the nature of the language they teach. Individual differences can provide teachers with insights that can improve the process of learning. In order to achieve effective teaching practices, teachers should take into consideration individual differences, such as language levels, motivation, age, personality and attitudes which are significant parameters that can help them know their students.

The role of Teachers in the Language Learning Process

Teachers are often required to adopt multifaceted roles, from controlling and organising a class to being good performers, listeners, carers, and knowledge transmitters. Identifying the needs of all these roles and endeavouring to be as productive as possible can be very stressful and challenging for an educator. Adopting different roles which facilitate learning can come naturally to many teachers; however, it certainly is a demanding process which needs adequate training and support from the school community.

Research on teacher effectiveness has demonstrated that students' outcomes are related to teacher behaviours (Strong, 2007). Drawing on my personal experience, I can recall that whenever I was not sure about an activity, students would not fully engage themselves, or whenever I took part in the activities or educational games in the classroom, students enjoyed it more and would try their best to achieve and reach their goals. Apart from their teaching skills teachers bring values, beliefs, motivations, aspirations, and knowledge to the classroom (Strong, 2007, p. 3).

Harmer (2007, pp. 108-111) points out that rather than making judgements about teachers' effectiveness, it would be more sensible to describe their different roles, in an attempt to understand the needs and requirements of each role. These different roles include acting as a **controller** who is in charge of the activities and leads the class, as a **prompter** who encourages students in a moderate way, not being too adamant or too retiring, as a **participant** who will join an activity or discussion not as a teacher but as a group member, as a **resource** who will be helpful and available to give guidance about a task or an activity, and finally acting as a **tutor** who will give extra guidance and care if necessary.

Drawing upon a case study on the professional learning of a teacher of Chinese and on a collaborative study conducted with primary and secondary language teachers, Scarino (2014) discusses the role of the process of globalisation and its impact on languages education. The author points out the need for change in the role of language teachers, who are the key to educational change and have a great impact on student learning. Additionally, according to Scarino it is teachers' responsibility to manage the diversity of the classroom. Teachers should be able to meet the challenges of the nature of learning within a context of diversity. I will agree with Scarino (p. 387) that what is needed in the professional learning of teachers is that teachers should develop their capability to critically examine their preconceptions, their learning, teaching and assessment practices, as well as their students' learning, while they should gain better understanding of the dynamic nature of language, focusing on meaning-making. Although the challenges of a globalised world that changes the face of cultural, social and linguistic diversity in societies are many, in my opinion teachers should be flexible and aware of their multifaceted roles, so they can reflect on their practices in a more effective way.

The teachers who participated in Scarino's (2014) case studies were called to continuously reflect on their teaching, their students' learning, as well as their own learning with an integration of their personal knowledge and experience, discussion, analysis and theoretical knowledge. Language teachers who work in the context of diversity face conceptual challenges; therefore, reflection is essential in the process of teaching and learning. Our globalised world should recognise the act of learning as an interpretive chance to explore meanings, developing reflexivity and reflectivity (Scarino, 2014, p. 399). Meaning making is important in the process of teaching and learning. Students need to feel somehow connected to the input, they need to find it meaningful, so they can engage themselves in the classroom. I find the literature-based activities that are included in my handbook quite effective in regard to

engaging students in a reciprocal process of interpretation and meaning-making, while they foster their capability to reflect on their own practices and conceptions in relation to those of their peers.

Le Roux (2002) emphasises the important role of teachers' communication skills as a vital means of education in culturally diverse classrooms. The author points out the fact that teaching and learning take place through communication in the classroom. Interpersonal communication is a key factor in achieving successful teaching and can be a useful source of intercultural knowledge and mutual exchange of perceptions between culturally diverse students. Of course, this can be achieved through proper management by the teacher, as cultural diversity can be a source of frustration and misunderstanding that does not contribute to the smooth running of the learning process. Through bibliographic research, the author highlights the view that effective teachers are those who are effective in communication and therefore capable of managing intercultural encounters and interactions. Le Roux concludes that cultural diversity in classrooms is a major challenge for teachers. Students need to develop their skills as much as possible and teachers need to meet the needs of each student, constantly enhancing their teaching strategies. An effective teacher must be flexible and open to challenges by trying new methods and strategies, which must meet the learning and cultural needs of students, and in a multicultural setting such as Australia, this is incredibly important to keep in mind.

Through qualitative and quantitative methodologies Sharma (2005) investigated teachers' perceptions of multicultural education and their vocational training in teaching culturally diverse students in Northwest Florida. The purpose of her research was to study and analyse the perceptions and attitudes of primary and secondary school teachers regarding multicultural education, as well as their professional preparation to teach culturally different students. The participants were a total of 165 primary, secondary and high school teachers, who were randomly selected. Of these, 150 teachers answered questionnaires, while an additional 15 took part in interviews. The results of Sharma's research showed that teachers need more university courses in multicultural education, as well as the inclusion of multicultural subjects in other subjects. In addition, the data revealed the need for educational workshops and the interaction of teachers with culturally different people. Finally, the participants suggested further training abroad in developing and less developing countries, while the need for a change in the overall teacher education programs at the academic level was also mentioned.

Pantić & Florian (2015, p. 333) refer to educational policies around the world, which examine the role of teachers as “representatives of change” and are linked to social justice programs. In the context of the theories of pedagogical integration/inclusion and theories of teachers' ability to act and how these theories can be combined, the authors attempt to investigate the above role and how this role can be developed. The authors conclude that in order to cultivate the ability of teachers to act as representatives of pedagogy, inclusion and social justice, we need to cooperate with organisations and parties, who will jointly aim to transform schools, practices and systems. Also, teachers should be sufficiently trained to develop appropriate professional relationships with their students in order to meet the different needs that they may have. Finally, preparing teachers to succeed in their role as representatives of change lies in the ability to commit to social justice and the principles of pedagogy, to be able to work with others, and to be flexible and able to systematically evaluate their own practices and policies of the respective educational systems.

Teachers should also be able to develop their students' as well as their own intercultural competence. Such skills are essential in multicultural contexts and educators should be well trained to meet the needs of a multicultural classroom. In their article Hernández-Bravo et al. (2017) address the issue of growing cultural diversity in the modern Spanish education system, a diversity that has brought about dramatic changes in demographics and student relations. In the context of the perception that the development of intercultural competence in students can strengthen and foster communication and avoid misunderstandings and problems of coexistence, the authors investigated the effect of a tutoring action program in students' intercultural competence (Hernández-Bravo, et al., p. 20). The program included lessons and activities that aimed to show whether the students who took part in it developed their intercultural competence more than students who did not take part in the program. Data collection was mainly based on quantitative methods (ICSES, Lawshe Content Validity Index, Varimax rotation) (Hernández-Bravo, et al., pp. 24, 25-26), in combination with qualitative methods (semi-structured interviews-recording and notes from interviews). The participants were 187 students from third to sixth grade, of whom 84 percent were children with a Spanish background and 16 percent were children with a migrant background. After twenty weeks of implementing the program, the results of the research showed that the program was successful, as the participants developed their intercultural skills compared to the students who did not participate in the program. The students recognised the importance of intercultural knowledge in school environments where there is cultural diversity. In particular, the concept of

intercultural competence became more understood by fifth and sixth graders, while third and fourth graders developed their intercultural attitudes and skills.

In the modern world, the need to acquire intercultural skills is growing. Intercultural communication has already begun to acquire great importance both within the classroom and within the school as a whole. As pointed out in Nikolaou (2006), the school is a miniature of society and as a miniature, it depicts diversity and multiculturalism, as well as the need for the existence and continuous finding of successful communication codes between people with different cultures and civilisations. The acquisition of intercultural skills in the classroom is considered necessary, so that the connection of intercultural theory with intercultural communication and school practices can take effect. According to Nikolaou, the priority of interculturalism is the creation of a school environment, which promotes respect for people's individuality and provides equal opportunities by creating an environment of cooperation and communication. Nikolaou also discusses the repressive factors which can block intercultural communication. Some of these factors are the low expectations and the lack of teacher training, the teaching methodology, and even the school environment, among others.

Spinthouraki et al. (1996) emphasise the inextricable link between language, culture and intercultural communication, noting the relative lack of research on Balkan cultures, research that could contribute to effective communication across different cultures. Knowledge of the relationships between language and culture is essential, as it is knowledge that can improve the conditions of interaction between different cultures, thus creating an environment of collectivity, cooperation and successful communication. Higher education programs, and in particular intercultural education programs, play a key role in improving intercultural communication. According to Spinthouraki et al. the operation of such programs should be based on the development of specific strategies stemming from theories and research, and should also incorporate language, civilisation and culture, concepts that are changing and closely related to each other.

The role of intercultural communication is important in both the work and educational environments. In relation to education, the development of intercultural skills is necessary in order to create the right environment for collegiality, communication and cooperation. In conclusion, the development of appropriate intercultural education programs based on theory and research, plays a major role in improving intercultural communication. In my opinion,

teachers in Australia should be trained to acquire intercultural communication skills, as they live and work in a very multicultural society. More specifically, teachers who come from Greece to teach Greek as a first or second/foreign language should be adequately trained in order to be able to understand the multicultural educational environment they interact with, so they can address their students' needs and facilitate themselves during the teaching process.

Modelling and Teaching Intercultural Communication Strategies

When it comes to modelling and teaching intercultural communication strategies, when I create an activity so these strategies can be used, I often consult the table below (Griva & Kofou, 2020, p. 292), which I find very practical and concrete, both for teachers and students. These strategies can help students to bridge the gap between the limited language proficiency and the communication goals they want to achieve. I found it very interesting when I started to share these templates with my secondary school students, especially with students in the early years of secondary schooling; they felt orientated and somehow more responsible for the upcoming activities because they realised that they were part of a group and that a cooperative effort was needed for the interaction in the classroom and the activities to be successful. In addition, such guidelines for interaction also provide students with the tools to help them experiment using the target language while respecting the background of everyone involved.

Table 1: Modelling and Teaching Intercultural Communication Strategies (Griva & Kofou, 2020, p. 292)

Goal	Communication strategies/Intercultural communication strategies
Avoiding intercultural misunderstandings	Use non-verbal communication / Ask for explanations / Correct intercultural misinterpretations / Apologise by giving explanations.
Review	Rephrase / Check comprehension / Check if I am interpreting the specific cultural context correctly.

Compensation for difficulties	Find time to think with ‘fills’ (hmm, hum...) / Ask for help or clarifications / Use extralinguistic or non-linguistic elements
Social Interaction	Start and end a conversation / Try to be understood / Initiate speech

Focusing on Form Activities in Second Language Teaching

The Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) pedagogy that emerged in the 1970s emphasised the importance of meaning-focused activities in language development. Based on this theoretical view, classroom activities were designed focusing on the interaction among learners and using language in exchanging and seeking information. Content-based Instruction (CBI) (see chapter 4) is a type of CLT in which students can learn a language based on a subject that is of value and interest to them. There has been a debate on whether more attention should be given to language forms rather than meaning-focused instruction. Even though young children can acquire high levels of second language without form-focused instruction (FFI), students who begin second language learning beyond early childhood benefit from FFI since it enables them to use the target language efficiently (Spada & Lightbown, 2008, pp. 181-182). According to Savignon (1997) communication requires a focus on form and can only exist with grammatical or structural consciousness as it is integral to form constructions.

Harmer (2007) divides the approaches of introducing focus on form activities as “deductive” and “inductive”. The “deductive” or “explain and practise” approach includes presentation, practice and production (PPP) in which students receive grammar rules and explanations before they form sentences and phrases with the new language. The “inductive” or “discover and practise” approach is differentiated from the deductive approach because students are asked to discover the grammar rules based on language examples. I find both approaches useful; however, the inductive approach can be more challenging, in a positive way, for students of intermediate or upper intermediate level who want to be more creative and might find the explanation of rules boring (Harmer, 2007, pp. 203, 207).

Another factor that plays a crucial role in language learning and more specifically in reading comprehension, writing competence and the vocabulary development is the knowledge of morphology. Regarding grammar, morphology is essential in grammatical accuracy, while

morphological knowledge is associated with literacy development and acquisition. As pointed out in Nagy et al. (2014), word reading, spelling and knowledge of vocabulary are related to morphological awareness in several languages. In Modern Greek, English, Spanish and many other languages, there are thousands of words that are formed with prefixes and suffixes or by joining two or more words together (Saville-Troike, 2006).

In 2001 a group of instructional researchers, cognitive psychologists and curriculum theorists proposed a revised version of Bloom's Taxonomy, providing a new framework to determine and clarify learning objectives. This version reconsiders the cognitive domain as the intersection of the *Knowledge Dimension* and the *Cognitive Process Dimension* (Anderson et al., 2001). The Knowledge Dimension classifies four major types of knowledge (factual, conceptual, procedural, metacognitive) that learners are expected to construct or acquire and ranges from concrete to abstract knowledge, while the Cognitive Process Dimension represents an increasing cognitive complexity from lower order thinking skills to higher order thinking skills. The Cognitive Process Dimension includes six categories and cognitive processes: remember, understand, apply, analyse, evaluate, create. In contrast to Bloom's original taxonomy of learning objectives that was published in 1956, the revised version of Anderson et al. (2001) uses verbs and gerunds (action words that refer to the intended cognitive process), rather than nouns, to label the categories and subcategories. In addition, according to the revised taxonomy, creating is more important than remembering or evaluating.

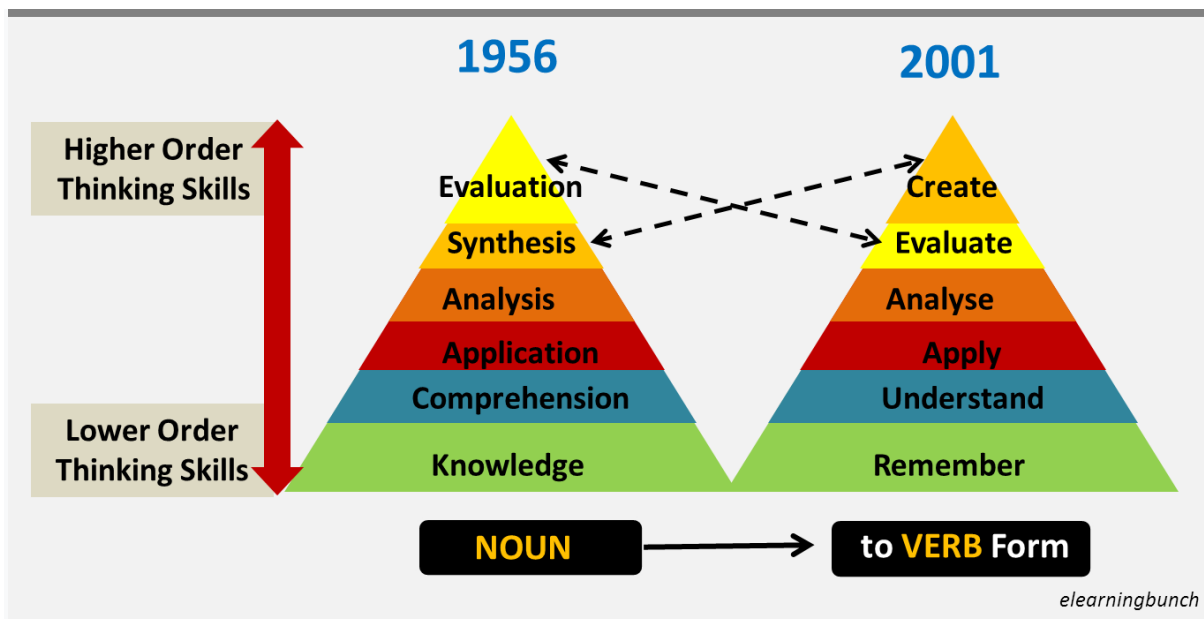


Figure 2: Bloom's Revised Taxonomy

From “Learning Mama. Tips, Tricks, Ideas and Cool Stuff Related to Learning, eLearning, Instructional Design, Gamification and more...”, by Fareeza Marican, 2013

<https://elearningbunch.wordpress.com/2013/02/20/revised-bloom-taxonomy/>

The diagram above can help us understand how the learning objectives and goals have changed throughout the decades. Through my experience as a teacher, I have observed that students can be more active and engaged in the classroom when they are required to create, rather than memorise and remember abstract rules and vocabulary. It was remarkably interesting to see students of an elementary or intermediate level who do not use Greek language at home to be able to create their own poems in Greek through the creative writing activities that we did in the classroom. Some students may lack confidence when it comes to producing a text in Greek; however, when they are given the chance to do so through engaging activities, they can be very creative and productive, surprising even themselves. Drawing upon Bloom's revised taxonomy, teachers can plan and assess language courses to ensure that higher order thinking tasks are implemented as proposed by the Victorian Curriculum for languages (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority).

When it comes to assessing our students' progress the procedures may vary. Diagnostic and formative assessment, or alternative assessment, is usually applied together with traditional assessment methods, so that students are aware of their progress, and teachers can monitor performance, knowledge, but also the needs of students (Rousoulioti, 2015). In O' Malley &

Valdez Pierce (1996, p. 4) the term “authentic assessment” is used to describe the multiple assessment forms that can give us insights on students’ learning, attitudes, achievement or motivation. Alternative or authentic assessment methods include the following methods: diaries, individual portfolios, European language portfolio, assessment for learning, assessment of learning, descriptive assessment, synthetic tasks, student self-assessment, hetero-assessment, systematic observation, storytelling, dramatization, counselling meetings and the confrontation of opinions, among others (Nika et al., 2017; O’ Malley & Valdez Pierce, 1996; Rousoulioti, 2015).

As Rousoulioti (2015) points out, through alternative assessment teachers have the opportunity to collect students' personal data, such as their cultural or family status and the way they study, among other things, which helps to meet the needs of each student. Thus, teachers can help effectively in the development of students' language skills, while students cultivate autonomous and self-directed learning, as they are able to gain an idea of their own potential.

While alternative assessment methods may differ in form and approach, they are used with the common goal of improving the learning process and outcome. For example, assessment for learning and assessment of learning differ in the information that the teacher collects and in the way she/he uses it. However, in both cases the teacher and the students can use the information and data as effectively as possible, in order to improve the learning process. I find alternative assessment methods, such as games, storytelling and dramatization very effective. These methods can be useful to motivate students and to cultivate their imagination and creativity. In addition, they enable learners to interact with their classmates in a pleasant way, which allows the teacher to gather enough information in terms of language performance and the character of each child, and such information can be used to improve the learning process.

Multiliteracies

One of the main concerns of a small group of people who gathered in New London in the United States in 1994, was how the language intersects with cultural and linguistic diversity. The ten educators met for a week in order to discuss the state and future of literacy pedagogy. The main topics that were discussed were the challenge of cultural and linguistic diversity, the pedagogical tension between explicit and immersion models of teaching, the changing text usage in restructured workplaces, and the new technologies and modes of communication. The

educators came up with the term “multiliteracies” as a way to focus on the increasing local diversity and global connectedness. Coming from different countries and fields, the members of the New London group had the same aspirations; they wanted the students of their countries to gain the skills and knowledge needed to improve their educational outcomes. Therefore, they knew that they had to rethink the fundamental premises of literacy teaching, in order to influence change through new practices (Cazden et al., 1996, pp. 62, 64, Cope & Kalantzis, 2012).

Change is the key word, which teachers should have in mind when designing activities and lesson plans. Nowadays we live in a world of changes; everything flows quickly, and our students have many different influences through their familiarisation with new communications technologies, such as digital media, multimedia, and their interaction in social media and use of internet. The way we used to learn as children may not be the most adequate way to teach the new generations. Societies are becoming more and more multilingual; therefore, the social and language needs of the communities are changing. In many countries students live in multicultural and multilingual communities in globalised environments. The linguistic representation and expression have obtained multimodal forms and language teaching should follow suit. The way our students communicate nowadays is not the same as the way we used to communicate when we were at their age. Language is a form of communication; therefore, since our ways of communication have been influenced by the environment we live in, language teaching should address the needs of the contemporary societies and adapt to the proliferation of the diverse modes of communication.

Internet, digital media and multimedia, such as videos, images, animations, texts, and audio are significant tools in a classroom. Even though we can design our lesson plans without being dependent on these new communications technologies, multimedia as a form of communicating language and content is necessary for successful and effective teaching on some occasions. For example, during the remote teaching period in Melbourne due to Covid-19 in 2020, we had to find alternative ways of transmitting knowledge and information, engaging our students not only during the lesson but also at home, and making e-learning a more enjoyable experience.

Language Teaching and Learning in Digital Environments

The benefits and challenges of implementing digital learning has been the subject of many research papers. Kodrle & Savchenko (2021) conducted empirical research applying, survey, observation and quantitative research in regard to the application of digital education media in foreign language learning in the Kuban State University. They defined digital education media as the umbrella term for computer-based media, Internet-based media, and mobile-media, while they classified the digital media used for educational purposes into interactive, productive, communicative, and narrative, outlining effective ways of incorporating such media in foreign language learning. The results of their research indicated that digital media could contribute to developing both language and general learning skills. Relevant research in schools where Modern Greek is taught as a second/foreign language could provide insights on the overall students' learning experience and engagement with the Greek language.

Game-based learning can be very motivating especially for young children. Games can help students integrate into a group, they offer authentic communication opportunities and feature real-life communication situations where students are able to use the target language in a meaningful context (Wright et al., 2006). In addition, games entertain young learners and as a result they can learn faster and retain vocabulary in their memory better without feeling that learning and repeating vocabulary is a boring process (Uberman, 1998).

Designing and implementing game-based activities should be governed by specific principles in order to serve specific educational purposes. Such activities should be more than just fun, they should encourage learners to use and help them consolidate the target language, promote a healthy competition between the participants, while they should maintain the interest of all. Nowadays, most of the young learners are very familiar with technology and have advanced digital literacy skills. Therefore, using multimodal tools in digital environments can be motivating and creative. There are numerous platforms that can be used for several educational purposes. Digital storytelling, creating posters, short films and webpages, as well as other digital-based game activities are fun activities not only for young learners, but even for adults. Some of the activities that are included in the handbook incorporate such tasks giving the opportunity to the students to enjoy learning and to be creative using the target language.

Arnott et al. (2019) conducted international research on child use of Internet-connected toys (IoToys) in Scotland, England, Greece and Northern Ireland. The authors researched practices with IoToys involving young children. Data were collected from twelve families and about 200 children, who interacted with children in preschool settings. In addition, data were collected from interviews with parents and teachers. The findings showed that the differentiation in the use of IoToys at home in relation to the school environment is repeated due to infrastructure and budget issues in early childhood settings. The researchers observed that the use of IoToys at home was game-based, in contrast to early childhood learning environments, where the use of these games is structured and directed by teachers. Based on a socio-ecological context, it was observed that children could skilfully switch from digital to non-digital play both at home and in the school environment.

Although the use of IoToys at home has increased in developed countries, the same is not true in the school environments of these countries. According to Arnott et al. (2019), digital games cannot replace physical play. However, the modern way of life forces many parents to keep their children busy with the use of digital games, which has given a new form and nature to the play. The popularity of digital games lies in their flexibility but also in the immediate feedback they offer to children. On the other hand, digital technology can limit children's imagination or negatively affect the brain, and for these reasons the use of digital games should be time-limited and under the supervision of adults in school environments with young children. The theoretical approach of this research is based on a synergy between the theory of developmental psychology and the theory of social ecology. Developmental psychology examines play as a mental behaviour, while social ecology perceives human behaviour as a function of the interactions between the various contexts in which children live and learn.

Using digital games at home is different from using them in educational settings. This difference may be to the benefit of the children, and to expect digital games to be used in the same way at home and at school may have been an unrealistic expectation. In conclusion, I would agree with the authors that digital play should be projected through the prism of social ecology in our effort to understand the nature of children's play and learning at home and in the school environment.

Conclusion

Introducing input and especially grammar can be challenging for teachers and students. As pointed out in López-Burton (2014), Personal Stories, Made-up Stories, Stories with Your Own Students as Protagonists, A Familiar Children's Story and Comic Strips are some of the sources of providing oral input. I find these sources as well as songs and music quite effective, as they can be very motivating and inspiring. Many students like to listen or even create their own stories and when these content-based approaches are supported by well-designed activities, students can have the chance to enrich their vocabulary and practise in all four skills, which is essential in language learning. In addition, the use of digital education media is a key aspect in language teaching. Designing activities based on multimedia or digital games can be very motivating, especially for visual and auditory learners.

Apart from the sources, another factor that plays an important role in language acquisition are the individual differences. Research has shown that individual differences in cognitive skills can affect second language acquisition more than input manipulation. In addition, age, personality, beliefs and identity amongst other characteristics, can play a crucial role in language learning. Therefore, it is important for teachers to be aware of their students' linguistic and social characteristics, which according to Lightbown & Spada (2006) are interrelated.

Effective form-focused classroom activities can contribute to developing and enriching vocabulary. As pointed out in Nagy et al. (2014), morphological awareness is related to literacy development and acquisition. In my opinion, combining form-focused activities with content-based activities that address students' needs, expectations and interests can be an effective approach to first and second/foreign language teaching.

Chapter 4

CONTENT-BASED APPROACHES, LITERATURE AND CREATIVE WRITING

Introduction

The advantages of content-based instruction have been acknowledged in the literature. Through content-based approaches we can teach grammar and vocabulary. By designing activities based on our students' interests and needs within a particular content, we can increase their motivation to learn. Integrating skills is also an engaging, related approach which can promote communicative competence (McDonough et al., 2013). Literature can be used for the development of content-based activities through which we can teach content, grammatical phenomena and creative writing. This chapter focuses on the advantages of content-based approaches and integrated-skills approaches, while it explores the role of literature in language teaching.

The Advantages of Content-Based Instruction

Content-based Instruction (CBI) has gained recognition in recent years due to its potential to address students' content and language needs (Lyster, 2007). As stated in Bula Villalobos (2013, p. 72) "CBI proposes an approach in which students acquire the target language through content". According to Brinton (2003, p. 201) CBI is the teaching of language through exposure to content that is interesting and relevant to learners. Freeman and Freeman (1998, p. 32) point out that through CBI we can teach English language learners through a meaningful content related to several topics, such as mathematics, social studies and science. It is true that students can learn in a more pleasant way, when they enjoy the content and of course, when they use it to communicate and exchange ideas and opinions.

Dale & Tanner (2012, p. 4) point out the main difference between Content-based language teaching (CBLT) and Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), which is that CBLT deals with teaching content in language lessons, whereas CLIL deals with teaching a subject at the same time as teaching language. These two approaches are quite confused with one another, as they have many similarities. Both are content-based approaches, that focus on some different features of the learning and teaching process. Content-based language teaching has been implemented in several contexts. Lyster & Ballinger (2011) provide an overview of five studies in distinct settings: a Spanish-English immersion school in the USA, sheltered instruction for

English language learners in US schools, CLIL classes in Spain where history is taught through the English language, lessons taught in English in the People's Republic of China and English-medium science and mathematics classes in Malaysia. The five studies underline the critical role that teachers play in CBLT, while they underscore the need for professional development to support instructors to overcome the challenges related to CBLT.

The integration of content and language can be complex and challenging (Baecher et al., 2014). Baecher et al. (2014) conducted a study in order to investigate the major patterns of practicum teachers of a Master of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) programme in New York. The analysis of 107 lesson plans indicated that the participants were more successful in writing clear content objectives, while they were not as successful at developing language objectives. A question that arises based on the research mentioned above is: How much language and how much content do we teach? In my opinion, this depends on the language objectives we want to set for each class or individual among other factors.

The advantages of content-based approaches are various. Freeman & Freeman (1998, pp. 32-33) discuss Krashen's Second Language Acquisition theory pointing out that ESL learners can naturally acquire the target language by writing, speaking, reading and listening about different content types and fields. Freeman & Freeman (1998, p. 32) discuss the five rationales presented by Brinton et al. in 1989 regarding the integration of language teaching and content. According to these rationales, teaching language through content can be motivating for students who prefer learning based on a subject or topic of their interest; therefore, such an approach is learner-centered, rather than teacher-centered, making learning meaningful. Teachers can teach language and content simultaneously by developing both language and content objectives. Through content-based instruction, teachers can design activities based on authentic texts using contextualised language, rather than doing activities out of context. Students can learn language structures and acquire vocabulary through the real-life language forms they need. If we know our students' strengths, weaknesses, and interests well, we can create lesson plans based on their background knowledge and priorities and this may contribute to facilitating their language learning. Nguyen (2011) also reflects on Brinton et al.'s rationales pointing out that through CBI teachers can increase students' motivation since they can match their needs and interests with comprehensible, meaningful and interesting content and that can make learning more enjoyable.

Providing students with the language items they need within a content is essential. As pointed out in Freeman & Freeman (1998) language and vocabulary structures should be taught through a meaningful content. Content-based instruction methods can be very motivating; students can acquire vocabulary using contextualised language and this can give a meaning and purpose to the process since individuals can learn a language as they use it. Content-based activities that are related to our students' interests are likely to promote their engagement in the classroom, while integrating content and language teaching can improve learners' second language competence. Since I first started to develop and implement activities based on Greek literature, I observed that this approach drew students' attention. They became curious about the poets' and writers' lives, and they were able to learn the language as well as familiarise themselves with the different aspects of Greek history and culture. Creating my own activities gave me the opportunity to adapt the material to different language levels, while producing meaningful and engaging resources based on my students' needs.

Integrating Skills

As pointed out in Spada & Lightbown (2008, p. 187) integrating skills in language teaching includes teaching reading, writing, speaking and listening in conjunction with each other, and this can be achieved through content-based or communicative instruction. According to McDonough et al. (2013, p. 202) integrating skills in language teaching can motivate learners to participate in diverse activities and tasks, while such an approach can promote communicative competence.

I have observed an integrated-skills approach can motivate students, while it helps them express their thoughts in a more effective way and be more accurate with what they want to say within the communicative interaction with their peers. Integrating all four skills can help learners acquire a better understanding of how they should interact naturally using the target language, while it can give teachers a better image of their students' language proficiency and progress. The integrated-skills approach has allowed me to gain a better understanding of my students' strengths and weaknesses and consequently, has made me able to provide them with effective feedback focusing on their personal academic needs.

Exposing learners to authentic language through the integrated-skills approach can challenge students to interact naturally in the classroom; therefore, the target language can become a

“real means of interaction” rather than “an object of academic interest” (McDonough et al., 2013, p. 202). Adapting and modifying our resources and teaching material is significant while integrating skills; we might have lots of different learner types in one classroom, with different needs and priorities. Some students might be stronger in writing, others in reading etc.; therefore, adapting our material does not necessarily mean that the coursebooks/textbooks we are using are deficit. Updating and adapting our material based on our students’ needs and on the new teaching methodologies and pedagogical approaches is essential. In the handbook that I have prepared I have designed activities that integrate skills; however, these activities are suggestions on approaching, teaching and consolidating several aspects of language and can be adapted depending on the context of each group of students or individuals.

The Role of Literature in Language Teaching

The value of literature in foreign/second language teaching and learning should not be underestimated. As pointed out by Paran (2008), incorporating literature in language teaching can increase learners’ engagement and motivation, while it is an interesting approach because, as argued in Hanauer (1997), it combines attention to form with attention to meaning. Teaching through Literature-based Instruction (LBI) gives students the opportunity to edit all types of texts (essay, letter, poem, etc.) and to know the different writing styles through authentic texts (Elyasi, 2013). Depending on the goals we want to set in each lesson when teaching a second language through literature, we can either focus on teaching the content or language or combine both equally.

The reasons for using literature in the classroom vary. As Lazar (1993) points out, the use of literary texts is a way of providing memorable and meaningful contexts for interpreting and processing new language and this may encourage language acquisition and stimulate students’ imagination. Literature can also be motivating in SLA when students, who are familiar with literature of their own culture in their language, make comparisons with literature in the target-language. Literary language, especially poetry, might be somehow different from other forms of language; however, this is not necessarily a matter of concern, as it can expand students’ language awareness if educators choose the right material for the cognitive and language level, as well as for the lesson objective. By familiarising themselves with literary language students can think about the language norms, while they can also “become aware of specific stylistic effects” (Lazar, 1993, p. 19). In addition, learning a new language through literature can

provide students with the opportunity to increase their emotional awareness and to develop their interpretative and critical abilities as they are actively involved in making assumptions and implications about the meaning of the texts or poems they are reading.

Lazar (1993, pp. 23-24) describes three possible approaches of using literature for ESL learners. The *Language-based approach* is likely to increase the general awareness and understanding of the target-language. Students can draw on their knowledge of grammatical, discursal or lexical categories to analyse and make aesthetic judgements of the texts. In the *Language as content* approach, the literature itself is the content. Students acquire language focusing on the content, which can be relevant to political, social, or historical topics. Students can use their mother tongue to talk about the text, while they can also translate poems or parts of the text from one language to the other. The *Literature for personal enrichment* approach provides students with the opportunity to draw on their personal experiences and express their opinions and feelings. It is an approach that facilitates language acquisition, while it allows students to become more actively involved, both emotionally and intellectually. Combining all three approaches could benefit different types of learners, who would have the opportunity to participate in a variety of activities.

When I first started to incorporate literature in Modern Greek language teaching, I was using literature excerpts designing activities that were mainly focusing on reading comprehension. When I realised that students were learning a lot more than just reading and understanding a text, I decided to design different types of activities, to integrate skills and to connect my students in Australia with their heritage through Greek literature. Literature can be a source of cultural knowledge, providing students with the opportunity to learn about the history, customs and traditions of a nation. In addition, through literature-based activities, students can discuss and exchange ideas on a variety of topics, including mythology, the concept of freedom, selflessness, immigration, the concept of happiness and loss, among other topics. I found integrated-skills approaches remarkably effective because students were engaged and willing to participate in diverse tasks, while these approaches gave me a better understanding of the students' progress, and this facilitated the process of learning. Most of my students had never been exposed to Greek literature in such a way, and I was thrilled when they immediately embraced my approach and began to write their own poems, asking questions about Greece, Greek culture and carrying out their own research on the lives of the Greek writers and poets I

was introducing to them. This has been a great motivation for me to continue designing new activities focusing on listening, writing, reading and speaking through the medium of literature. The process of reading is associated with the acquisition of written language and plays a crucial role in learning a second language. Reading can be done through bottom-up, inductive (top-down) and interactive approaches and to be considered successful, readers need to use the appropriate strategies to enhance and accelerate learning (Mastrothanasis, et al., 2009). Mastrothanasis et al. (2009) surveyed 32 bilingual students of Albanian and Romanian origin (10 intermediate level students and 22 weak students) of the 5th and 6th grade in the prefecture of Viotia in Greece, in order to record the difficulties that students faced in reading, the strategies they adopt in order to process the reading of texts in the Greek language, as well as the differences in the use of strategies in students belonging to different types of bilingualism. The classification followed by the researchers consists of cognitive, metacognitive and socio-emotional strategies (Chamot and O'Malley model, Mastrothanasis et al., 2009, p. 8). In particular, the results of the research showed that students with a better language level are more flexible in the use of cognitive, metacognitive and social strategies, as they use a wider variety of these strategies (extracting main meaning, using titles for text summarization, underlining words or phrases), while the weakest students use fewer cognitive strategies, which are less productive (omission of difficult points, re-reading, use of image, translation into mother tongue). In relation to metacognitive strategies, it was observed that most of the students were able to correct their mistakes on their own. Students appeared to be aware of reading difficulties and to be able to adjust their performance.

The results of the above research are in line with the results of the research of Griva and Penekelis (2013, p. 191) on 32 bilingual children of Albanian migrants (21 students in the category of "simultaneous bilingualism" and 11 students in the category of "successive bilingualism") of the 5th and 6th grade in Kozani, Greece. The data were obtained through questionnaires that recorded the profile of students and investigated their reading needs, the Reading test (Test-A), the process of oral externalization and review interviews. The results of the research revealed differences between the efficient and the less efficient readers, as well as the students who belonged to the category of "simultaneous" and "successive bilingualism". In particular, as in the first study, students with better reading skills used more variety in the use of strategies by adopting "higher" reading procedures than the weaker students, who had more difficulty understanding vocabulary and acquisition of syntactic and textual structure.

The above qualitative and quantitative research has shown significant differences in the use of strategies in “simultaneous” and “successive bilingual” students. Enhancing reading skills with the aim of learning a second language can be achieved through the teaching of cognitive and metacognitive strategies, therefore their facilitation is considered important. In addition, pre-reading activities are essential as they prepare students, while group activities are an effective way to reinforce and facilitate the use of social strategies. Through reading literary texts, students have the opportunity to practice all four basic language skills while cultivating their cognitive and metacognitive strategies. Literature lends itself to creating activities that integrate skills, while reading literary books or excerpts and poems enriches vocabulary, which often encourages children to write with more confidence. An additional factor that plays a key role in the learning process is the way we present classroom activities. For example, when it comes to writing activities, it is important to emphasize the pre-writing, writing, and post-writing stages. In conclusion, it is important to consider all the above when planning activities for our classroom.

The benefits of acquiring two languages in childhood (early bilingualism) have been highlighted through interdisciplinary research. According to Yoshida (2008), studies in bilingual children have shown that the use of two languages in childhood can affect fundamental aspects of cognitive development and the development of the nervous system by influencing the way knowledge is acquired and used. In particular, the author refers to the positive effects of early bilingualism in relation to executive functions (executive function tasks), as children who speak more than one language, seem to show developed self-control and advanced control in the various executive functions (Yoshida, 2008, p. 26). In addition, bilingual children show greater cognitive flexibility in learning words than monolingual children. Early bilingualism seems to have a positive effect on the transfer of knowledge from one language to another, as learning new ideas in one language may facilitate the understanding of these ideas even if they are presented in another language. The benefits of early bilingualism are not limited to behavioural control, but also extend to learning and transferring knowledge (Yoshida, 2008, p. 28).

Byers-Heinlein and Lew-Williams (2013) emphasize that children are born ready to learn the language or languages of their environment without delay or confusion. Research has shown that bilingual infants are more sensitive to language discrimination than monolingual infants. Knowledge of many languages is also important for finding work, traveling, maintaining a

connection to family, culture and history as well as making friends with people from different backgrounds. Bilingual children seem to be able to better understand the desires, thoughts, perceptions and intentions of others. The advantages of early bilingualism in terms of cognitive ability have also been highlighted through research. Bilinguals seem to perform slightly better than monolinguals in tasks that involve switching between activities, while bilingual babies excel in certain areas of memory, such as generalizing information from one event to a later event. In addition, the phenomenon of code mixing observed in bilingual children, but also the understanding of sentences with code mixing could be considered a sign of children's language ingenuity and not a condition that could create confusion (Byers-Heinlein & Lew-Williams, 2013, p. 97).

Research on monolingual and bilingual children through the interdisciplinary approach has shown that children are born with the ability to learn the languages to which they are exposed. It is interesting to explore the cognitive flexibility of bilingual children in terms of the learning process in the classroom, but also in terms of the development of relationships within the close and wider family environment. The incorporation of literature in the learning process as a means of developing bilingualism, should be embraced, especially in contexts like Australia, where lots of students are bilingual or speak heritage languages at home. Research on bilingual Greek community school students in Australia could provide new knowledge on students' learning strategies, and this could help teachers inform their teaching strategies.

Introducing Creative Writing in the Classroom

“Writing can be taught and learned” and all writing can be creative (Morley, 2012, p. 41). Regarding creative writing in the classroom, what I focus on is how to inspire students to cultivate their creativity in writing through the literature-based activities. Students have the opportunity to develop their writing skills and most of the time they manage to do so, because they find it fun. Once they realise that what is more important is how they write and not what they write about, they start to enjoy the process and become more creative.

The benefits of creative writing activities for students vary. Through creative writing, students can practise a variety of skills, in addition to grammar and spelling. They develop and enrich their vocabulary based on their own original texts. Especially in relation to second/foreign language students, creative writing activities are important, as they enable them to practice the

vocabulary they have acquired. Writing original texts cultivates their creativity, which is essential in the learning process. Creative writing enables students to externalise their inner world. For example, when students are asked to write a text type or a text topic of their preference without restrictions, they can express their thoughts, opinions and feelings by developing their imagination and unfolding their personality. I agree with Raimes (1983, p. 3) that “The close relationship between writing and thinking makes writing a valuable part of any language course.”

As pointed out in Raimes (1983) writing can help second language students learn by reinforcing the grammatical idioms, structures and vocabulary that we have been teaching. In addition, when students write they have the chance to experiment with the language and get very involved with it. Their effort to express opinions, ideas, wishes and emotions reinforces learning. It is true that due to developing technologies, writing skills are used less in the classroom (Gökçen, 2019); therefore, teachers should pay more attention to developing their students’ creative writing skills. There are several interactive tools, such as VoiceThread that enable students to develop their writing skills by creating PowerPoint presentations and documents.

Elhussien Mohammed (2019) conducted a study investigating the efficiency of using creative writing multitasks in level 4 female English major students’ creative writing competence at Majmaah University in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The participants were 64 female students divided into two groups: the experimental group (32 participants) and the controlled group (32 participants). The experimental group studied an advanced writing course that included the creative writing multitasks. The controlled group did not study the same creative writing multitasks as the experimental group. An English writing pre-test was designed to test the experimental and controlled groups’ writing competence before applying the creative writing multitasks. A post-test was carried out to measure the difference between the experimental and controlled groups’ scores. The research findings indicated that using diversified creative writing multitasks plays an important role in developing EFL students’ creative writing competence in fiction and non-fiction essays. There was a significant difference between the experimental and controlled group post-test’s scores, favouring the experimental group’s scores. According to the researcher, at the end of the experiment, most of the experimental group’s participants felt excited and confident about their creative writing competence development. I agree with Elhussien Mohammed that regular practice and determination can

be beneficial for students who want to improve their creative writing skills. I will never forget the joyfulness of one of my students in Melbourne when she wrote her first poem in Greek, which is her second language. She had never imagined that she could become “a little Greek poet” as she shouted out loud in the classroom full of confidence and pride. For a language teacher, this moment can be more than rewarding.

Gökçen (2019) examined the impact of creative writing activities on native Turkish-speaking students' creative writing competence, writing attitudes and motivation in learning their mother tongue. Elementary school teachers teaching 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th grades from 33 different schools volunteered to implement creative writing activities in the classrooms. Pre-tests and post-tests were designed for the research. In total, 630 students participated in all the creative writing activities and completed the pre and post-tests. The research results indicated that creative writing activities have a positive impact on students' writing attitude, motivation and creative writing competence. I agree with Gökçen that implementing creative writing activities in first language teaching enables students to advance their skills, develop positive attitudes towards writing and increase their motivation. When students get motivated to brainstorm ideas and when they are given the opportunity to express their thoughts and choose their own text topic, they find a meaningful purpose in writing and this can have a positive impact on the use of grammar, word choice, punctuation and sentence structure among other points. These benefits can extend to second and foreign language teaching.

Conclusion

Despite the complexity of integrating content and language, CBI has been recognised as an effective method of teaching languages. Through the content-based approaches students can acquire vocabulary and grammatical phenomena if they are provided with the language forms they need and are doing activities based on subjects of their interest. This method can be very motivating, especially when lessons are designed based on the background knowledge of learners. Using contextualised language of authentic texts can motivate students to read, listen and write about different content fields and types (Freeman and Freeman, 1998).

Integrating writing, listening, reading and speaking through LBI and CBI is likely to promote communicative competence and motivate students to participate in classroom activities (McDonough et al., 2013). Introducing literature into language teaching can be a successful

content-based approach. The process of reading is related to the acquisition of written language and it is important in second language learning (Mastrothanas, et al., 2009). Drawn on the international research related to bilingual students' reading strategies, similar studies involving English-Greek speaking students in Australia, could inform teachers of their students' techniques and strategies and contribute to forming new teaching approaches. When students are exposed to literature by reading or listening, they enrich their vocabulary, and this can be motivating when it comes to producing a text in the target language, while it also helps them develop their creative writing competence. According to the research, creative writing activities can have a positive impact on students' first and second language learning. Therefore, it is important for teachers to implement such activities that allow students to develop their vocabulary and grammar.

Chapter 5

APPROACH USED TO CREATE THE HANDBOOK

Introduction

The idea of preparing a handbook for English-speaking learners of the Modern Greek language came as a result of my experience as a teacher of Modern Greek as a first and as a second language in Melbourne. I have always had a passion for literature and teaching and when I realised that both can be combined in a creative way, I decided to incorporate some of the literature texts that I appreciate into Modern Greek language teaching through the preparation of a bilingual handbook. Literature can also be a window and a mirror, which can give us insights into the values, beliefs, attitudes, and concepts of a society or group of people. Literary texts can be used to teach grammar, cultivate imagination and enrich vocabulary, while they can be the content which reveals all the above cultural aspects.

Many foreign language textbooks include grammar tasks or vocabulary lists that are not based on a particular content. This can lead to students' lack of interest or motivation to learn and produce the target language. Additionally, practising in all four skills and enriching vocabulary through meaningful content and activities is essential in SLA. We can empower students' autonomy by providing them with the opportunity to apply new knowledge, while by doing so, they can become more confident in using the target language (McDonough, et al., 2013). Therefore, I have chosen to include activities in the handbook that focus on all four skills and can enrich learners' vocabulary, while they can provide students with the opportunity to apply the new vocabulary and the new knowledge, as well as to use the target language through a literature-based approach.

In addition, I have included pair/group activities because I believe that they are effective teaching practices as they promote a learner-centered rather than a teacher-centered environment in the classroom. Even though sometimes students can get distracted while working in a group, I find pair/group activities important because they promote communication, interaction and collaboration. As pointed out in Kayi-Aydar (2013), such an approach can raise the learners' cognitive performances to higher levels. My observations from the pair/group activities that I have tried in the classroom come to confirm that communicative activities can contribute to learners' language development. Encouraging students to help each other and providing them with sufficient scaffolding is essential in L2 learning. The concept of

scaffolding is associated with the socio-cultural theory of Vygotsky. According to Vygotsky, learning takes place on a social level before it takes place on an individual level. Based on this notion, scaffolding is an interpersonal process in which both teacher and student are active participants in the process of learning; therefore, the use of scaffolding “refers to the temporary support provided for the completion of a task that learners otherwise might not be able to complete” (Van de Pol et al., 2010, pp. 271-272). According to Gibbons (2002, p. 10) scaffolding helps learners develop the skills and levels of understanding and can be provided in several ways; therefore, it is essential to take this into consideration when we design activities for our students.

Most of the students enjoyed learning Greek through literature as it allows them to learn in an imaginative and appealing way, while they can learn grammar and develop writing and reading competence. In addition, due to the exposure in excellent linguistic examples through literature, students can acquire a better idea of how they should write or how the structure or syntax should be in different contexts. It is quite rewarding when I see students developing their skills in creative writing or when they improve their written, reading, listening and oral competence through the activities that are based on Greek literature. It is important to note that I have used original poems and excerpts from literature, without tweaking the original content in any way.

The activities included in the handbook focus on language, meaning and usage. The focus on language aims to cultivate language awareness through the formal forms of the language, while it contributes to the acquisition of critical linguistic awareness. The focus on meaning involves the development of critical literacy and understanding the input, while the focus on use is based on the notion that students should use the target language actively as a means of expressing their ideas, thoughts and identity. In addition, emphasis is given to increase students’ intrinsic motivation and to metalinguistic awareness. Through the process of learning based on the literature-based activities, students familiarise themselves with the lives, writing styles and language of Greek poets and writers. Through this connection with their heritage and culture as well as with the stories and meanings of the poems and literature excerpts, learning Greek becomes a meaningful and purposeful process for learners.

Structure of the Handbook

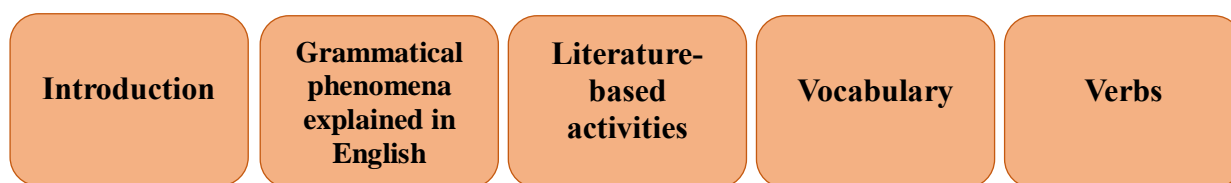


Figure 3: Structure of the Handbook

The handbook consists of five main parts and includes a brief introduction, some grammatical phenomena explained in English, literature-based grammar activities, reading and listening comprehension activities, oral language development activities, creative writing tasks (35 activities in total), as well as a vocabulary section; a part of this section is related to the activities based on the literature texts. There are task-based activities, role play, translation from one language into the other, use of multimedia, audio and music, as well as game-based activities in the handbook. In addition, there is a variety of topics and easily accessible resources, such as vocabulary lists that include the parts of the human body, the house, fruits and vegetables, colours, animals, professions, nouns, adjectives, prepositions, connectives, Greek words in the English language, verbs in alphabetical order, as well as some phrases that can be used in several situations. The last section of the book includes a list of some basic verbs in active and passive voice in all moods. I have found that verb forms can be particularly challenging for Greek language students. I hope that this easily accessible selection of basic verbs will enable students to use them more confidently. The handbook also includes a CD which consists of narrations of ten excerpts that form part of the activities. The teachers and students will have the opportunity to listen to native speakers narrating the texts and this will be very helpful for the completion of some of the activities. Some of the narrations are accompanied by music; there are also some music tracks before and/or after some narrations, as music creates a nice atmosphere and can help students relax and expand their imagination, while according to research, there are indications of strong overlap in structural processing between music and language (Fedorenko et al., 2009; Koelsch et al., 2005). Therefore, music may facilitate language understanding.

The handbook is suitable for:

- Intermediate, advanced, proficient (year 6-12, levels B1-C2) students who learn Greek as a second/foreign language

- Native Greek (year 6-12, levels B1-C2) students who learn Greek in English dominant contexts
- Intermediate, advanced, proficient (levels B1-C2) adult students who learn Greek as a second/foreign language

Creating useful and effective classroom activities depends on several factors, such as language level, age, goals, and objectives. Harmer (2007) points out that age is a major factor that teachers should take into consideration when they need to decide how and what to teach, because different age groups have different needs, competences and cognitive skills. In this project I have deliberately decided not to restrict the age group and the language level audience, because I believe that the activities that are included in the handbook are suitable for all the groups mentioned above since they are designed to address the needs of several target groups. I have also indicated which activities are more suitable for particular audiences. In addition, some activities address the multilevel classroom.

The handbook includes activities for practising the voices and grammatical mood of verbs, the noun, pronoun and adjective declensions, adjective and adverb degrees, derived and compound words, direct-indirect speech and subordinate clauses, among other grammatical phenomena. In addition, there are several creative writing activities through which students have the opportunity to cultivate their imagination and develop their creative writing skills. The activities are designed so students can practise oral, listening, writing skills, as well as reading comprehension. Taking into consideration the **functional** and **interactional views** (VanPatten & Williams, 2015) of language teaching, as well as Schmidt's "Noticing Hypothesis" and the various levels of awareness, such as perception, noticing and understanding (Schmidt, 1990), I have intended to develop activities that promote students' awareness of the learning process, so that they can process input consciously and become active learners. In addition, through the literary texts, students familiarise themselves with the poetic discourse and literary discourse, while they get to know important female and male Greek writers and poets. The activities included in the handbook are a suggestion on how we can use literature to teach language and teachers can use them as they are or even modify them to address their own students' interests and language needs. I have found these activities useful for year 6 up to adult students. Sometimes I modify the activities, or I combine them with role playing games or drama,

depending on the group (Most of the information included in the above three paragraphs that describe the handbook are also part of the handbook's introduction).

Role playing as an alternative assessment method is one of the methods I often choose to use in the classroom, especially with students in the last grades of elementary school up to the first grades of high school. Students usually find this method enjoyable, as it enables them to interact with their classmates in a creative way. At the same time, through role play, the teacher can collect information about the use and consolidation of new knowledge, while we can receive information about the characters and personalities of students, which can contribute to improving the process of learning.

An example of the use of role play as an alternative evaluation method, which is combined with pantomime, is the activity described below, which aims to understand text with a focus on the consolidation of indirect speech. This is an activity based on the work "Peace" by Aristophanes, adapted for children by Sofia Zarabouka. First, the teacher reads an excerpt from "Peace", modelling the target language for students. She/he then selects five words from the passage and students are asked to describe the words to their classmates in pantomime. After the pantomime game is over, students read the passage again silently, to encourage independent learning before introducing group work, trying to follow the flow of the text. They take notes from the text, while preparing their roles. Finally, pretending to talk on the phone, they tell the story to a friend by turning the direct speech of the text into indirect speech.

e.g. ...Did you learn the news;

- No, what happened?

-Trygaios said that he wants to...

This activity gives the teacher the opportunity to gather the appropriate information in order to understand if students have consolidated the use of indirect speech, as well as the correct wording of verb forms (tenses, persons). It also enables students to express themselves creatively, leaving them free to create their own text, but also to try to express the requested emotion. For example, in the activity mentioned above, the key word was the word "surprised". Students are therefore asked not only to use indirect speech correctly, having of course understood the text, but also to express a specific emotion through role play.

Through this method, it is possible for teachers to monitor the performance, knowledge, characters and needs of students, in order to use this information effectively by improving the

learning process. Through role play, students express themselves creatively by cultivating their imagination and knowledge. In addition, when such activities are done in groups or in pairs, students are given the opportunity to learn from each other, but also to develop their autonomy in the learning process, as they are the ones who are called on to carry out a role. On the other hand, there may be challenges in relation to this method of alternative assessment, which vary depending on the age groups of the students. One of these challenges may be the development of competitiveness or disagreement over the choice/distribution of the roles. However, this is a challenge that can be overcome relatively easily through discussion and dialogue.

Future Possibilities

A suggestion for the future could be a qualitative research on the implementation of these activities in different educational contexts, such as private, public, community schools, and universities as well as private institutions where Greek is taught around the globe. Such a study could provide us with insights on the results of the use of these activities regarding language acquisition. I would be very interested in examining and exploring the effectiveness of this approach in several settings and explore students' engagement, as well as teachers' understandings and insights into this literature-based approach in Modern Greek language teaching. The purpose of the current handbook is to provide excerpts of literature by established Greek poets and writers. In the future, it would be worthwhile to include poetry and prose by the local artists of the Greek diaspora in Australia and other countries. In addition, one of my future aspirations is the creation a series of handbooks for early year learners, divided in levels (e.g. year 1-2, year 3-4, year 5-6). It will certainly be a challenging attempt; however, I believe that it would be worth the effort.

Conclusion

I strongly believe that educational material should be informed and adjusted to the language and cultural needs of the students. Preparing an educational handbook from scratch is certainly not an easy task. Preparing material for our students can be very challenging but at the same time it can be fun, interesting and motivating. I do not believe that there is a "perfect book" out there, and I did not intend to create one. My intention and motivation are based upon my teaching experience and especially upon the experiences I gained while teaching Modern Greek in Australia. Hopefully, such a handbook will be useful for both teachers and students, not only because it covers a wide range of grammatical phenomena, but also due to its connection with

Greek culture through the literary texts, as well as due to its practicality, as it includes the grammar translated in English, a large vocabulary list and a list of basic verbs. In addition, the audio material that forms part of the handbook will provide students with the opportunity to listen to some of the excerpts of literature from native speakers of the Modern Greek language. Overall, students will be able to practise all four skills with activities that are based on texts which will probably bring students of Greek background closer to their heritage and culture, while they will be a great opportunity for non-Greek learners to connect with Greek literature.

CONCLUSION

When I decided to leave Greece and migrate to Australia, I never imagined that I would end up making one of my most important dreams come true in Melbourne. I was very lucky to be part of the Greek community schools where I could teach Greek as a first and as a second/foreign language. The experiences I gained from this educational journey are incredibly rewarding. Thanks to the wonderful students I have met over the years, I have been able to get the inspiration that I needed and try to fulfill my vision: an educational handbook, that initially was exclusively designed for my students in Melbourne. As time went by, I began to realise that this handbook could be useful, not only to underage students of Greek heritage, but also to adult students of Modern Greek language around the world. Somehow, the seed was planted, and I found myself designing, organising, and writing.

When I started to write the thesis that would support this handbook, I confess that I felt like I was in a beautiful but vast ocean, and I had not only to swim, but I also had to make the raft that would keep me afloat, so I could enjoy this trip. In this thesis, I chose to talk about topics that I am particularly interested in, such as the various theories about language learning and teaching and how they have influenced the contemporary teaching approaches. Going from a general, to a more specific field, I provided an overview of teaching and learning Modern Greek in Australia, but also worldwide. The general feeling through this study is that the Greek language, despite the challenges, has shown that it can withstand time, which is extremely promising for everyone, parents, students, and teachers.

Another topic that has occasionally preoccupied me personally, as well as several colleagues of mine, is the teaching of grammar. The Greek language has numerous grammatical rules, and teachers need to find ways so that their teaching becomes interesting and attractive for their students. I find that the literature-based activities that I propose as an approach to Modern Greek language teaching are an interesting case for several reasons. Firstly, students find meaning in such activities, as they are based on a specific content and through such activities, they can cultivate not only their language skills, but also their imagination. Moreover, when that happens through Greek literature, it becomes more interesting for students of Greek heritage, who get to know one more aspect of Greek culture, as well as for non-Greek students, who familiarise themselves with the Greek writers and poets. I came to these conclusions by

observing and evaluating my students' progress before, while and after implementing the literature-based activities.

My aspiration is for my handbook to be useful in different educational environments, fulfilling its purpose, which is to make our students like Greek grammar a little more, enrich their vocabulary and discover several aspects of the Greek culture and Modern Greek language through the remarkably rich world of Greek literature. I owe a big “thank you” to all my students, both junior and senior learners, because without them, I would not have known the magic of this ocean!

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