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***Genre pedagogies, language teaching and management of cultural diversity: the case of the Greek textbook “Expression - Essay” of the third grade of the Greek Lyceum***

**Abstract**

The multicultural synthesis of pupils in the Greek education of the 21<sup>st</sup> century has been, by now, a given fact, a fact that arose problems of linguistic, racial, national, religious and in general cultural diversity management, (apart from the heterogeneity both in social and geographical stratification). There has not been enough research on the development of school literacy based on the curricula and the relevant textbooks for the teaching of Greek language.

The current paper aims to an evaluative, critical overview of the teaching of Greek language at the third and final grade of Lyceum, the end of secondary education. The specific grade was chosen because it is representative of the overall evaluation of the results of the Greek educational system. We note that the textbook for the teaching of Greek language is common for all students, Greek or not and it is used from 1997 till this day.

Design tools for the research are on the one hand the curricula for the teaching of language, the relevant instructions for teachers, the pupils' textbook as well as a contemporary framework of theoretical principles for the teaching of language. As far as the curricula are concerned we will thoroughly examine the curriculum of 1999 which is still in use, as well as the new curriculum that is being experimentally applied during the current school year 2011-12 and was constructed on the basis of the critical literacy.

The theoretical framework of the paper is that of the genre pedagogies which supports the idea that written discourse has different social functions and uses different language technology than oral discourse. As a result, systematic teaching and instructions are considered essential, especially for pupils coming from non privileged environments compared to the dominant cultural environment (Hinds, 1990 · Connor and Kaplan, 1987· Norment, 1986 in Mc Kay, 1996: 707). School has the obligation to promote powerful discourse and initiate these pupils into the considered as strong genres of specialized discourse that give access to the social pyramid (Kress, 1994).

**Key words:** language teaching, text type pedagogy

## Introduction

The multicultural synthesis of pupils in the Greek education since 1990 has been, by now, a given fact, a fact that arose problems of linguistic, racial, national, religious and in general cultural diversity management, (apart from the heterogeneity both in social and geographical stratification). The definition of school literacy, which is the primary aim of education, became a discussion subject within the fields of didactic sciences, of linguistics and of pedagogy.

The term literacy does not only indicate pupils' ability to read and write, but also their ability to understand and successfully use written discourse and through their involvement with written language to construct school knowledge in order to become capable – critical thinking- users of literacy in everyday life (Matsagouras, 2003). In a broad sense, literacy includes both individual and social independence, it is a complicated phenomenon that combines social, historical and intellectual aspects (Xatzisavidis, 2003) and consequently as a sociocultural function changes according to the relevant contexts and the subjectivities involved (Gee, 2006: 71).

These perspectives influence the context of school literacy and lead to the statement that since the demands of modern times want the student a citizen capable of handling, apart from everyday discourse which is dominated by narrativity, the powerful genres (expository, argumentative, procedural) which are not accessible to the linguistic and cultural environment of everyone, especially if he/she does not belong to the group of the dominant culture, which is supported by school, (Kress, 1994) to manage the multimodal texts that arose from the development of the digital and publishing technology, as well as the multiculturalism that the texts receive in a multicultural society and to approach with a critical eye written discourse (Matsagouras, 2007) teaching and especially language teaching has to adjust to these perspectives (Cope, Kalantzis, 1993 Martin 2000, in Keki, 2011: 85-86). In order to clearly state these approaches the term multiliteracies was preferred to the uniqueness of a global and dominant literacy.

In Greece, despite the reforms that have been made concerning school curricula and textbooks for the teaching of Greek language at compulsory education, the educational goals that concern school literacy have not been met. According to the international researches our country is placed last due to its performances in school literacy. UNICEF (2007), based on facts given by OOSA, published on the 14<sup>th</sup> of February of 2007 a report under the title An Overview of Child Well-being in Rich Countries with the relevant results.

The new School Curriculum for the digital school concerning the teaching of the Greek language at the A' Lyceum gives special attention to the promotion of the critical literacy which is defined as the skill of analysis and evaluation of discourse's expository framework, of the learning procedure under the goal to exploit literacy not only as a way of adjustment to the school demands but as well as a potential of questioning the surface meaning and the "ready given wisdom" (Walsh, 1991: 18; Nikoloudis, 2010: 289-90). As far as language teaching and the pupil's relationship with the teaching texts are concerned, critical literacy seeks the linguistic and other semiotic tools with which the text tries to positively put the reader in front of the

projected reality and considers the view, the motives and the extensions of this representation (Matsagouras, 2008: 93) Thus critical literacy goes beyond a decontextualised text and its writer as far as the teaching of language and other semiotic systems is concerned, giving attention to the transactions between social, cultural context and subjects and their textual identities which are formed as a result of these transactions (Sachinidou, Dimasi, 2011). The text of the school curriculum sets learning goals and their contexts' within a multiliteracies framework (Dimasi, Aravani, 2013: 55-56) having substantial references to the intercultural dimensions of the language teaching as well as references to the formation of individual and social identities (School Curricula, 2011).

The present paper aims to the critical evaluative perspective of the teaching of the Greek language at the third grade of Lyceum. The certain grade was chosen because it is representative of the total evaluation of the results of the Greek educational system. We note that the book is common for all pupils, Greeks or not, and it is in use since 1988-89 until today.

Tools for the study were the school curricula, the directions given to the teachers, the textbook for the pupil<sup>1</sup> as well as a modern theoretical framework of principals for language teaching. As far as school curricula are concerned, it was studied that of 1999 which has been in use up till today as well as the new school curriculum which is now being experimentally used during the school year 2011-12 and is constructed with focus on the notion of critical literacy.

The theoretical framework on which our research is based are the principals of a genre based literacy pedagogy which consists the postmodern pedagogy of inclusion and access (Dimasi, 2012: 26). These principals set as a primary goal the foundation of a philosophy of equal opportunities supporting the equal involvement of the culturally different pupils in learning processes and their access to the discourses of social power and influence (Kekia, 2011: 89) since school has to construct practices based on the discourse pores<sup>2</sup> and the repertoires of the cultural practice that the pupils bring with them to school classroom (Chlopek, 2008). Equal opportunities are related, among others, to the choice of texts with intercultural context which are connected to the multicultural synthesis of the Greek society in order to, within the framework of a multicultural pedagogy (Gotovos, 2002: 26), arose attention to a goal setting that supports the cultivation of a multilingual stance (Archakis, 2006: 43). Basically, through the new school curriculum the model of multiliteracies pedagogy is presented which has as a point of reference the multicultural synthesis of the modern societies as well as texts that present multimodality within the framework of a multiliteracies education having as a basic aim the development of critical language awareness for a successful access to positions of social, professional power and action in every field of the social sphere (Kekia, 2011: 85-86; Kress, 2003).

### **The textbook Expression Essay C' Lyceum grade** **The typical characteristics**

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<sup>1</sup> The pupil's textbook was studied as the point of reference for the 'obligatory' teaching material. We note that its writing and publication had been done before that of the present standing school curriculum and is still in use while the revision of the last has just begun.

<sup>2</sup> Intercultural pedagogy emphasizes and gives priority to the language teaching because it supports the idea that thus the pupil forms his/hers ability to critically exploit messages (Gotovos, 2002: 26).

The book which has been studied for the present paper is that of the edition of 2006. It is the book Expression-Essay, issue C' for the last grade of General Lyceum in its revised, last edition<sup>3</sup>. As members of the revision group are mentioned : Tsolakis, Ch. Adaloglou, K. Avdi, A. Grigoriadis, N. Daniil, A. Zervou, I. Loppa, E. Tanis, D. Intzidis, V. The book has 335 pages. The present paper does not extent to the study of the suplementative material, that is of the books "Thematically Circles" which includes texts (essays, articles, etc.) supportive for the processing of the book Expression-Essay and the book "Language Exercises" which includes Vocabulary and Discourse Organization exercises because these books have been given to the pupils since the A' Lyceum under the remark to be used when it is thought as a necessary point of reference for the three grades of Lyceum.

### **The frame of reference Curriculum**

Among the general goals of the curriculum there are clear references to the command of the language and communicative ability by the pupils as well as to the connection between language and national and sociocultural identity (Paper of the government, State newspaper, 2002: 1341). With the main direction being that of the cultural context of language teaching, the subsequent references are specialized into the field of New Technologies, the participative teaching procedure and the teaching to pupils who don't have Greek as their first language. As far as they are concerned, it is mentioned that they *should be accustomed with the learning of the Greek language and its use in realistic situations both in school and in out of school life but at the same time with respect to the their first, mother language* in an quite early, for Greek relevant bibliography, adoption of the principles of multiliteracies pedagogy. As far as genre is concerned, the curriculum notes that discourse is a *textual discourse...and there are various discourse forms such as diary, curriculum vitae, article, comment, critic, letter etc.* and urges the necessity to use genres with the most appropriate discourse for each occasion without any other essential, genre or other classification.

### **Directions for school language subjects**

References to the expected pupil's response in the composition of texts functioning in a communicative environment during the writing stage are traced in the directions to the language teachers (Directions, 2002-3: 102-105). We note the suggestion to have as home duty the pupil's work for the writing of texts which is directed to a specific respondent, is written for a specific goal and takes a certain form, for example news article, statement, final evaluation etc. Pupils can exercise on such texts in classroom as well, usually during one or two teaching hours... In the specific point that concerns

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<sup>3</sup> The books under the title Expression- Essay were first published in the school year 1988-89. Up until today there have been made revisions that concern the restructure of their material, the deduction of questions, the appearance (Papadopoulou, 2008: 44). The specific textbooks have received quite a few positive evaluations based on the connection between theory and didactic practice, the targeted pragmatic framing, from the choice of the thematic sections to the cultural-value orientation of contexts' and the pupil centered philosophy of questions-practices for the discourse production (Mpalaskas, 1991: 14· Makris, 2001: 190). There has been put forward a lot of questioning concerning the plethora of teaching and learning material and the neutral, compared to the pupils' interests, character of questions (Kapsalis, Charalampous, 1995: 145· Mitsis, 2005: 192).

the textbook of the C' grade of Lyceum as genres are mentioned: article, essay, literature, interview (144-145).

### **Teacher's book**

The same logic underlines the comments and remarks for the teachers. The reference to the text moves towards two directions: towards the approach of the text through reading and understanding, whether in home or in classroom and towards the production of discourse again with the view of a macro level goal setting (Teacher's book, 2002-3: 10). Specifically it is noted by the authors that pupils at the C' grade of Lyceum are called to exploit into their expression, both oral and written, the critical, evaluative way, into a certain communicative context each time. They can write an article or a paper to be published in order to announce their thoughts or views etc. in a broader public. On the whole, the references of the framework for the teaching of Greek language in Lyceum move towards its didactic exploitation/use outside its cultural contexts which only silently are accepted, in a hidden agenda, in a hidden but close to text in use curriculum.

### **Student's book**

One of the main interests of student's book is its context. It's importance is very crucial since it is a point of reference for education both for the teaching and learning subject as well as its evaluation (Choppin, 1993: 9) within the principles of the curriculum and mainly because it contributes to the formation of stances and values through teaching (Mavroskoufis, 2001: 510) as a way of connection between school life and reality (Bruner, 1966: 10-13, 49· Koliadis, 1990: 43). The research of contexts with the aid of qualitative and quantitative context analysis tries to analyze clear references and hidden issues in relation to the intercultural ideology of the book (Gerard, Rogiers, 1993: 185).

### **The texts**

As far as the classification of texts is concerned the specific textbook even from its title states that its contexts refer to the pupil reader and writer of persuasive texts, essays, articles, and newspaper columns. The classification of the writing team does not have unified criteria since it follows either the criterion of genre either that of textual types, a typological categorization. There are also cases where the classification of texts is based on their communicative characteristics. In order to visualize the textual categories of the book we then try to make a systematic registration according to the proposal by Matsagouras for the classification of texts for school use (Matsagouras, 2001: 320).

According to that classification proposal the book's texts are all<sup>4</sup> registered into the third category: non narrative, one dimensional which are characterized as powerful genres (Matsagouras, 2001: 421-22). From that point of view it seems that the principles of the genre based literacy pedagogy, which have been briefly presented

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<sup>4</sup> All the texts of the textbook were studied whether they belong to the theory as examples or whether they are part of exercises or their teaching is proposed as optional.



in this paper, are mainly followed. We note that they are authentic texts, 10 of which are literary texts and even few of the above belong to the category of the literary essay.

**TABLE 1: TAXONOMY OF TEXTS OF THE SCHOOL TEXTBOOK EXPOSITION-ESSAY OF THE C' LYCEUM GRADE**

TEXTUAL GENRES	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
ARGUMENTATIVE	27	24,5%
PRAGMATOLOGICAL	83	75,5%
TOTAL	110	100%

The expository texts are of explanatory description, of analysis of circumstances, of ethical documentation and of intentional action. The argumentative texts belong to both categories: ethical and logical dominant.

We note the multimodal aspect of school textbook's contexts. Most of the texts are accompanied by photographs, sketches, pictures in general which in very few cases are nothing else but of decorative nature. There is also a multimodal synthesis that support thematically sections such as persuasion in publicity. It is an exceptional good management of the multimodal production of messages and meanings which are not exploited neither by the pupil's book neither by the directions to the teachers. It seems to be the tool of assurance for the synchrony of textbook's contexts in the hands of experienced teachers who have realized that the texts out of their multimodal context are not appealing to the pupil since the most contemporary one has been written in 1998<sup>5</sup>.

### **Intercultural reading of contexts**

The research of the textbook was based on the assumption that:

- Textbooks function as carriers of ideologies and subsequently of cultural elements.
- Curriculum for the teaching of Greek language in Lyceum refers to the connection of language and culture with special references to the civilization of the dominant group (that have Greek as their mother language) as well as the management of language and cultural heterogeneity.
- The specific book concerns the pupils of the C' Lyceum, (Greeks, repatriated Greeks, immigrants, foreigners) and should include elements of the Greek civilization as well as elements from other cultures<sup>6</sup>. If these civilizations are connected to the cases of heterogeneity in the Greek Lyceum remains to be proved by the research<sup>7</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> The reference to facts and situations of the past make it almost "inactive" at the level of learning motivation. We note as characteristic for the above the texts that concern Mundial of 1998. How much more interesting would it be if they concern Mundial of 2004!

<sup>6</sup> Interculturality in language teaching should be revised according to its methodological framework and the teaching material which should include elements from many cultures, known or unknown to pupils, that will be a subject of negotiated meaning and interpretation during teaching, (Hatzisavidis, S. 2001, Literacy, Interculturality and communication in the teaching of Greek as second language to beginning students, in the volume P. Georgogiannis rev. Greek as first or second foreign language: an intercultural approach,(In Greek). Patras: Center of Intercultural Education, volume 1, p. 125-142.)

<sup>7</sup> In order to define the criteria of categories construction for the findings of the research, we adopted the historic-developmental definition of civilization as a an idea that includes: the whole plegma of the intellectual, material, conceptual and emotional characteristics that distinguish a society or a social

For the detection of the intercultural elements as a more appropriate method was considered the combination of both quantitative and qualitative example of context analysis<sup>8</sup>. It was also tried an interpretation of the quantitative data within the framework of principals by the interpretive method in the part of the quantitative analysis<sup>9</sup>. Due to the limited length of the present paper we thematically group our findings into two main categories: Greek culture, other cultures, universal culture and values which appear universally<sup>10</sup>.

**TABLE 2: INTERCULTURAL REFERENCES**

Type of reference	Sketches	Photography Painting	Text	Paragraph	Statement	Word	Total references	percentages
Context category	<b>Density</b>							
Greek civilization	2	22	34	6	6	22	92	41,82%
Other civilizations	-	2	10	11	6	18	47	21,36%
Universal civilization	-	1	22	8	4	1	36	16,36%
Values	-	10	21	11	3	-	45	20,46%
<b>Total based on unit of registration</b>	2	35	87	36	19	41	<b>220</b>	100%
<b>Percentage</b>	0,9%	15,9%	39,55%	16,37%	8,64%	18,64%	100%	

The balance between the context categories is obvious. Greek and foreign writers write texts that negotiate issues which can support the intercultural dialogue: education, civilization, history, human rights social values, everyday life, universal problems and solving possibilities consist a context that supports the dialogical negotiation in the level of reading as well as that of writing by pupils'. The book as

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group and consist the elements of its cultural heritage (It was stated on the 14<sup>th</sup> of September 1992, at the 43<sup>rd</sup> International Conference of UNESCO for Education and Civilization in Geneva).

(Mpalassa, Retrieved from <http://www.libver.gr:4551/documents/balassa.doc>).

<sup>8</sup> For the context analysis: Berelson, 1952 · Holsti, 1968 · Mponidis, 2004. In the present paper we applied the following process: specification of subject, of the sample unities (verbal text, multimodal text, paragraph, sentence, phrase, word, picture: photography, sketch), indexing of research material (indexing was done based on semantic and not grammatical or syntactic criteria), coding of findings (system of thematic categories was created) and their analysis Mponidis, 2004: 50-55).

<sup>9</sup> In an important number of researches on the school textbooks the interpretive method, according to the statement of researchers, is used. However it seems that usually a methodology which includes elements of the historical, phenomenological and of interpretational method is followed (Mponidis, 2004: 84).

<sup>10</sup> For the present paper we choose a sociological approach of the notion of value *as a perception of the desirable, explicit or not, characteristic of the individual or of the group which influences as well the choice of standard media and actions that already exist in society* (Kluckhohn, 1951: 395).

well as according to that parameter follows a multiliteracies framework of didactic goals.

## Conclusions

The textbook Expression-Essay of the C' grade of Lyceum follows in general terms the theoretical framework of the Curricula as well as the principles for the didactics of language. It includes for teaching non narrative single semiotic texts, an expected choice due to their high difficulty and the grade in which they are taught. They are not characterized as Greek oriented, with this indicating a nationalistic meaning of the word oriented, but move towards an intercultural dialogue of texts and their subjects (Sachinidou, Dimasi, 2011).

The texts lag substantially behind in the following points:

- Texts are not modern as far as their context is concerned.
- The stances that support move towards the same direction and thus they don't promote dialogue, negotiation and critical thinking.
- It has not been taken into account the pupils' national synthesis in the modern Lyceum and thus there exist no text which concerns the culture of the origin countries for a substantial group of pupils: foreigners, repatriates, minorities.
- New technologies are faced in a linear neutral view without essential involvement into the language teaching.

Even if it is an exceptional good textbook for its time of writing, the intercultural, multilingual, multimodal of Greek society, among other countries, demands its modernization.

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