

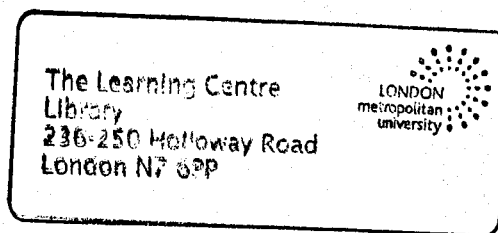
# Early Language Learning Within a Greek Regional Context

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is her own and that appropriate credit has been made where reference was made to the work of others

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## Abstract

This study focuses on the teaching processes involved in foreign language learning, concentrating on the question of why Greek young learners are not more successful in learning English, despite an early start and high exposure to the foreign language. Central to my study are student-teacher and student-student interactions within English language classrooms, including any linguistic, pedagogical, motivational or cultural aspects that inform these interactions and student learning. The study aims to extend the understanding of how to implement interactive methods within the specific region and develop learners' English communicative competence in an examination-oriented education system.

The first part of my study provides an exploratory research, which has been pursued in both state schools and *frodistiria* in a specific Greek region. Research methods included: lesson observations, teacher interviews and transcription analysis. The second part of the research introduces an intervention study dimension, which consisted of monitoring and modification to classroom practice, exploring the perspective of shifting teaching and learning, providing potential of a new Young Language Learning philosophy within the Greek context. This part of the research was achieved in a *frodistirio* in classes of students aged 7-11 in order to improve current language learning classes and use the data for cross-sectional comparative purposes. Data collection included open-ended field notes, video-recorded lessons and speaking tasks were audio recorded. A group of older learners attending English Proficiency classes for the preparation of Certificate of Proficiency Exams (CPE), aged 14-15 years old, based in the *frodistirio*, were also interviewed on their past experience of English language learning in state schools and *frodistiria*. The Director of the *frodistirio*, observed 10 language lessons during the research period. These observations provide feedback on students' reactions to interactive tasks from an external reviewer. Finally, parents were requested to complete a questionnaire at the end of the academic year, regarding their children's progress and their feelings of the new methods introduced.

The thesis reveals the complexities and paradoxes embedded in the learning environment of English for Young Learners (EYL) in South Western Greece. The findings include the identification of an effective interactive methodology that might be applied in the specific regional setting as an outcome of my own teaching and research. The research in question, explores the potential that exists both within the educational structure and in Young Language Learning (YLL) in Greece. It introduces interactive language learning and identifies its role within this context. The research can contribute to the enablement of successful language learners in an environment where children learn to appreciate the foreign language and encounter it as means of communication and not for examination purposes only.

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# Chapter 1: Introduction

## 1.1 Background of the Study

Young Language Learning (YLL) has enjoyed a substantial amount of interest among researchers in recent years. Issues such as the optimum age for language learning, language learning attitudes, the young learner, the language teacher, classroom management and organisation and L1 use in the language learning context have proven to play a vital role in YLL. Nonetheless, very little empirical research has been conducted within the Greek language learning context. This study is an attempt to fill the gap and explore language learning in a Greek regional context within a strongly interactive and student-centred approach.

Early language learning has met many changes and approaches over the years, and the priorities for learning foreign languages have shifted substantially in terms of objectives and motivation. As the science of language teaching evolves, one can only hope to contribute insights related to possible development and guidance with the aim of supporting language teachers in reaching professional fulfillment through the success of their language learners. This goal might be anything from authentic and effective communication in everyday life, to obtaining a language certificate that may be needed for professional purposes. In the first case mentioned, the approach may conform to the concept of communicative language teaching, a feature of contemporary pedagogy with an emphasis on learning through communication. In the second case, it may be important to adjust to a more traditional pedagogical concept where the teacher is the centre of the classroom and the only focus is the successful completion of a course that will lead the learner to certification one day, or so it can be argued.

The present study concentrates on early language teaching within a Greek regional context, where the focus and main goal is language certification. Language lessons are delivered within a teacher-centred environment in primary state and private language schools. The question that may arise is how effective language learning can be in

these situations. Here, it is assumed that when language learning occurs from the age of 7 or 8 to early adolescence, the main goal from the very start is language certification, because in the case of the Greek language learning educational system, it is highly valued in the community and the Greek job market. The present study concentrates on teaching approaches within the region, questions whether implementing student-centred approaches would function in this context, and how learners and educators could benefit from a shift to such an environment.

Should language learners not experience the satisfaction of interaction in a foreign language? Is it not vital that students are given the opportunity of receiving comprehensible input and be guided to modify their output so that language development can take place? These questions do not dismiss the need for examinations and certification; there is not only one approach that can be used in the language classroom. A language can be learned and developed within a student-centred environment, where the students are given the opportunity to interact with others by putting their new knowledge into use. Once the language has been developed, the students may later choose to sit language examinations to gain the qualifications they may need at that given time. The years students have spent on learning a new language could lead to achieving language certification, without it becoming the ultimate purpose for them beginning to learn the language in their primary years. Preparation for examinations at such an early stage could eventually be considered intimidating and uninteresting. The scope of the present study examines the language teaching situation in Greek primary state and private language schools through qualitative research. Additionally, there will be a presentation of the potential for introducing a student-centred approach as demonstrated through an intervention research study that is reported on, as a sub-section of the study.

The developing scholarly interest in YLL is a reflection of the increasing number of young children learning English worldwide. According to Legutke, Müller-Hartmann & Schocker-von Ditfurth (2009), early language learning policy surveys clearly demonstrate an increase of primary Foreign Language (FL) programmes across Europe. Additionally, the increase of global English language teaching as the first FL has been demonstrated. According to Enever (2007:1), who has investigated the early language learning situation across seven contexts in Europe, specifies that:

[...] economic activity has operated in an increasingly global space. This unprecedented degree of interconnectedness has led to a rising value being placed on the acquisition of foreign language skills, which are now viewed by many as essential cultural capital for the future economic success.

Politicians in most countries, including Greece, deem it necessary that their national education system can provide a labour force with the knowledge of English in order to participate in a competitive global market. One of the issues that have been discussed most is the age at which a person should first be exposed to a foreign language. This debate is significant to understanding the current view of the Greek government, which argues that the age of eight is the optimum age of beginning a foreign language in state schools. Rixon (2000) found that the majority of students in Greece start language lessons in private language schools parallel to their studies in state schools. This is a situation which continues to exist 12 years after her research and results in students being exposed to the Target Language (TL) for approximately six to nine hours a week.

Although there has been a significant amount of research in other countries, the study of the teaching of Young Learners (YL) in Greece has been minimal. Specifically, the study of classroom management, authentic communication within the classroom and the potential for increased motivation, as a result, is a non-linguistic construct that would be of interest in the field of communicative language teaching. In the case of YLs in Greece, the preferred approach, as suggested by the Ministry of Education, is the communicative approach. Researchers such as MacIntyre et al. (1998) have advocated that the ultimate goal of language learning should be confidence to communicate and language teachers should therefore seek opportunities for communication in the process of language education. Can this goal be reached in a teacher-centred environment? The teacher-centred approach is preferred in state schools and private language schools (the Greek term *frodistiri-a*, the plural form and *frodistiri-o*, the singular form, are used throughout) where limited communicative methods, whether authentic or guided, were observed. Here, there will be an introduction to the aims and purpose of the study, and the possible potential of change in language learning in Greek primary education.

The attitude towards language learning in Greece has changed over the years. In the past it was considered a form of luxury for the fortunate few. State school

language teachers who were interviewed reported that English was taught in *frodistiria* only, and in the 1970's there were very few available. They were considered expensive at the time; therefore, the students who attended lessons at a private institution were regarded as privileged. Those who were able to use the foreign language and communicate with foreigners were the elite and the highly educated of the community. Their approach towards the foreign language as learners was positive as they felt this would place them in a higher rank in society. Nowadays, the situation has changed. Language learning is no longer a privilege of the wealthy and the few, since languages are now taught in state schools and *frodistiria* which are affordable to a wider public. Language is still essential and learned to serve the purpose of equipping students with additional qualifications for when they decide to enter the job market. There is more of a focus on examinations rather than communication and interaction as was the case in the past.

It is essential at this point to review and clarify the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in Greece today, with the intention of making the purpose of the research more comprehensible. In 1961, EFL was introduced in the Greek curricula of secondary schools nation-wide. In 1988, EFL commenced in some primary schools; from 1993, English was included in the curriculum from Year 4 (age 9) across the country. The course book, *Funway*, which is still used at present, was produced by the Pedagogical Institute of the Ministry of Education, a public and independent institution that plays an advising and executive role in the educational policy for primary, lower, upper secondary and vocational education. The original course book was introduced experimentally and continued to be used in 2003, when the Ministry of Education decided to establish English Language Learning from Year 3. This earlier introduction was considered to be beneficial as, according to the Pedagogical Institute, children from the age of 8 (Year 3) reach linguistic and sociolinguistic development, an essential prerequisite of communication (Kosovitsa & Chrysochoos 2003). The year the research took place, teachers were permitted to choose a course book for year 3 from a list provided by the Ministry of Education. However, in year 4, teachers are obligated to use *Funway* and repeat the material covered in year 3 as the initial course book has not been upgraded since the government's reform of language learning in primary schools. Changes may have been made as to when children will begin to learn English in primary school, nevertheless, preparation for the changes

were not supported to ensure that they would be beneficial to language learners. Even though the decision of including English language learning in the primary school curricula may be viewed positively, taking into account the advantages of language learning at an early stage, it has not been dealt with in a way that could actually prove to be beneficial for students and teachers, as will be discussed later on.

In the private sector, the *frodistiria* are where parents and students entrust their language learning and, therefore, take it more seriously. Based on recent research, approximately 80% of Greek school children attend *frodistiria* and Greek families spend on average 880 million euros on fees and course books every year (Mattheoudakis & Alexiou, 2009). Language learning in *frodistiria* is examination-oriented and from a very young age students are exposed to instruction with little interaction, following a syllabus that is set by the examination requirements. Greek students can only receive preparation for language examinations in the private sector. The aim is to prepare students for language examinations as rapidly as possible to avoid burdening them with lessons at a later stage when they must prepare for the very demanding University Entrance Examinations. Therefore, the entire education system is based on examinations, whether it is for language or otherwise, and students are considered successful if they achieve high scores. The system may seem sensible when students compete for the limited places in Greek Universities, nonetheless, language learning cannot be limited to examination preparation.

In following chapters there will be a discussion on professional development and training of language teachers in Greece, with the aim of accounting for beliefs about language learning in state schools and the reluctance for introducing variety within the classroom. In order to elaborate on these topics, it is useful to mention the procedure for the appointment of a state school language teacher in Greece.

According to the country's educational policies, foreign language teachers are not required to undertake any kind of pre-service teacher education. Gabrielatos (2001:11), however, makes a valid point regarding pre-training requirements when stating that:

[...] since there are quick and easy routes to *becoming* a language teacher, ELT is regarded by many as a fairly low-status occupation, and language teachers are often treated as mere *materials operators* in need of simple and easy-to-use miracle methods.

On the other hand, mainstream primary and secondary school teachers are requested to undertake training in their field of education before completing their studies at university in order to qualify for a profession in education. In the final year of the undergraduate degrees, potential teachers are expected to teach young children while being observed by their supervisor and the mainstream teacher of the class. This is accredited as a university module and potential mainstream teachers are awarded marks based on their performance in the classroom. According to the government, foreign language teachers in the public sector have all the skills needed to teach in a state primary school. On the other hand, the puzzling question still remains of why language lessons in state schools are not considered equivalent to language lessons in private schools by pupils and the broader community, since the government asserts teachers are fully qualified. The training of language teachers has a strategic role in the Greek education system where trained language teachers could meet the challenges of change and assist children in responding effectively to them.

Language educators have the task of expanding their learners' knowledge and cognitive skills in the sphere of language and culture. Their goal should be to allow children to make sense of the world around them and beyond their own community, in order to be able to communicate across cultural and linguistic borders. This, without a doubt is a demanding and worthy task, which entails training in a wide collection of teaching methods and approaches. When teachers have the chance to participate collegially in the forming of education of their country and develop through learning, they may then acquire a sense of ownership over the learning process and escape the notion of a *teacher-dominated method* where they would feel more secure. This self-confidence in a language teacher is more likely to promote learners' success.

## 1.2 Aims of Research

Gabrielatos (2003) argues that even though language learners begin to learn English at a young age, they do not reach the same level of proficiency as other European learners, as is discussed in following chapters. The study sets out to explore the current language learning situation within the Greek context, and the potential and outcomes of introducing change in the traditional teaching approaches that have been



used in language education until now. The following research questions are thus raised in order to investigate why, even though language learners in Greece begin to learn English at a young age, they do not reach the same level of proficiency as other European learners (Gabrielatos, 2003). This nexus of enquiry leads to three main questions and a number of secondary questions.

1a. Do state schools and private language schools in Greece provide language learning opportunities that facilitate the acquisition of key competences for young children?

1b. What are the aims of English for Young Learners (EYL) in Greek state and private language schools?

1c. Do teachers in Greece receive appropriate training for teaching young learners?

2. What are the elements of motivation for a child to learn a foreign language in private language/state schools?

3a. What is the students' perceived goal, when they begin learning English?

3b. What are the parents' goals for their children when learning English?

Furthermore, the study aims to investigate the effects of intervention research, inspired by action research, in the context and how the research may operate in an interactional, student-centred EYL classroom. The first part of the study provides qualitative research, which has been pursued in both state schools and *frodistiria* in one region in South Western Greece. Systematic observations have been completed so that a wide range of activities could be observed and analyzed. The second part focuses on an intervention action research study conducted in a *frodistirio* where various teaching approaches are applied, which are not used in state schools and *frodistiria* where the qualitative research took place. The process of the intervention research provided the researcher with the opportunity to explore how foreign languages could be learnt in the reality of the language classroom by using a different methodological approach. This is fully described in chapter 4. It should be noted here that the researcher has a family relation to the owner (see Appendix 1 for Permission of Operation of Language School with translation) of the *frodistirio* where the

intervention study was conducted, which facilitated ease of access for conducting this research. Ethical considerations in connection with this are detailed fully in chapter 4, under Research Methodology.

The present study provides a holistic view of language learning within a Greek regional context and the potential effects of a student-centred communicative environment, within this context. The study contributes to the understanding of the complexities and paradoxes embedded in the learning environment of EYL in South Western Greece. The findings will include the identification of an effective interactive methodology that might be applied in the specific regional setting as an outcome of my own teaching and research. The research in question, explores the potential that exists both within the educational structure and in YLL in Greece. It intends to introduce the benefits of an interactive language learning environment and identify its role within this context. Additionally, with the findings of this research, I aim to present an environment where children learn to appreciate the foreign language and encounter it as a means of communication and not for examination purposes only. As Sharpe (2001:111) has stated, “we do not simply want all children to be taught MFL (Modern Foreign Languages); we want all children to be taught MFL well, so that they can progress to higher levels of attainment more quickly”. Furthermore, the initial and most vital purpose of this research is to advance teacher development and give language teachers a voice to express their fears and frustration. The current investigation is valuable since little research has been conducted that focuses on EYL teachers in the specific region. Similar studies can supply Greek education with rich data and analysis that could assist in its development.

The following chapter provides the reader with a background theory of language learning and an overview of a scholarly discussion concerning the optimum conditions of an early start to language learning and a summary of teaching approaches relevant to YLs. The chapter will help define concepts of the early language educational practice and effective policies that could bring the benefits of early language instruction to the surface. Additionally, the terms foreign/second language learning/acquisition are clarified in connection to the study for the clarity of the thesis.

## **Chapter 2: Critical Review of Foreign Language Learning in a Primary Education Context**

### **2.1 Background Theory and Relevant Literature on English Language Learning**

In this chapter, I review recent research and theoretical concepts of early language learning and differentiate the term 'foreign/second language learning' and 'language acquisition'. It is a generally accepted outlook that teaching children entails an approach adjusted appropriately to their learning needs. General teaching methodologies do not offer the knowledge of pedagogical content needed to do justice to this particular age group, even though there are insights that are valid for primary and secondary language education (Legutke et al, 2009). This chapter provides a summary of recent research on early language teaching, together with a discussion of what is known about optimal learning conditions.

As an introduction to the broad theme of my study, it seems relevant to reflect on the claim made by Crystal (1997), who argued that the most obvious way of reducing the power of the language barrier is to endorse the study of foreign languages. In order to facilitate communication and interaction, strengthen and promote co-operation, mobility, trade and the European economy, language learning is essential. However, English has overwhelmingly become the main focus of Foreign Language Learners (FLL) across Europe in recent years (EACEA, 2008). The developing interest in YLL is a mirror image of the growing number of young children learning languages in primary schools where, in the case of the current study, the country's official language is Greek and the first foreign language is English. The selection of a particular early language learning model is decided by a combination of aspects such as "the time available for language learning, perceived and realised intensity, material and financial input, starting age, social and geographical settings, as well as the language competence of the teacher" (Edelenbos et al., 2006: 14).

The development of a global attitude has influenced and raised awareness regarding the advantages of early language learning among parents in Greece, who

are determined to provide their children with a rich linguistic background could advantageous in the children's future. The study of a foreign language in primary school, and perseverance in such a study for several years, increases students' chances of developing a high level of proficiency, meaning that students reach an advanced level of communicative competence and cultural understanding. Furthermore, Curtain (1990) argues that the challenge children face when exposed to a foreign language at school enhances cognitive development. The pupil experiences a certain learning strategy that is foreign to their area of understanding, a conflict which becomes the mechanism of new thinking.

According to EACEA (2008), in many European countries, the notion of Modern Foreign Languages at primary schools, implies relatively limited amounts of time per week from teachers who are neither highly fluent nor specialize in language learning, with the goal of developing an initial competence. However, the situation seems to be steadily improving in various European countries (ELLiE Team, 2011). Even though the plan of including a foreign language in the primary curriculum is beneficial since it entails a global perspective, positive attitudes to other cultures assists overcoming prejudice and discrimination. Great complexity can occur due to diverse approaches, views and aims. Driscoll & Frost (1999: 23) argue that the design of primary language learning must be responsive to the actual local context. There may well be an ideal scenario in terms of the age of the child, the allocation of time and the skill of the teacher "but if we are to succeed in giving primary children the benefits of MFL, we have to be realistic and accept that practice has to be shaped by actual circumstances". This valid point is worth considering because of the fact that many language learners practice the FL within the limits of the classroom. The European Commission Action Plan 2004-2006 has recommended that "member states should move towards ensuring that foreign language learning at primary should be effective" (Commission of the European Communities, 2003:7) and it is essential that the learning process be handled in such a way in order to benefit the pupils. There are European countries that are characterised by top-down research projects, in which decision-makers have aimed to develop appropriate curriculum programmes for young learners and have traditionally wanted to gain insights, whereas in other countries, foreign language teaching is introduced as a result of pressure from parents, politicians or other interested parties. Lessons may be obligatory upon schools and carried out with

minimal supervision and control from educational authorities (Nikolov & Curtain, 2000). It is, therefore, clear that young learners can be influenced by a number of situations, which vary from country to country. There is no doubt that the trend of an early start is more complicated than some may acknowledge. What makes it so complex is not just the methodology used in the language classroom, or any debate about the most appropriate age to begin learning a FL, but the fact that behind the linguistic exterior hide political and sociocultural perspectives which influence the success or failure of the field. Enever & Moon (2009), have stated that political demands and changes of leadership can influence or change stable policy formation and continuity. The question we must prompt ourselves to ask is whether these perspectives include pedagogical language learning methods successful enough to equip children for the future and benefit their present and how political and sociocultural perspectives affect the language teachers.

The following section aims to distinguish between gaining an understanding of a FL and actual language acquisition. The development of these two concepts and contemporary distinctions drawn between them provide essential background for this study of young language learners within the current context.

## **2.2 Foreign Language Learning Research and Theory**

In order to investigate primary language education within the region, it is crucial at this stage, to establish a clear statement of what is meant by FLL and refer to its background as it connects to the focus of the methodology of this thesis. Scholars and researchers have defined FLL as a field of study which examines theories of learning an additional language other than the mother tongue (Byram, 2004).

Researchers and linguists have been caught between the terms of second/foreign language learning/acquisition and, it would be essential to clarify the terminology so as not to create any confusion in following chapters. 'Second' and 'foreign' are used in general terms that hold both naturalistic and tutored acquisition. Nonetheless, Ellis does place the open question of whether the acquisition process progresses similarly

or differently in these diverse situations (Ellis, 1986). On the one hand, Littlewood states that a second language has a communicative function within the community where it is learned. The foreign language however, is a language that has no function inside the learner's society but is used for communication with people from other communities (Littlewood, 1984). Krashen (1982) made a distinction between learning and acquiring characterizing language acquisition as a natural process, whereas language learning is a conscious one. Yule (1996) employs a lucid distinction between 'acquisition' and 'learning' where he explains that:

[...] the term 'acquisition', when used of language, refers to the gradual development of ability in a language by using it naturally in communicative situations. The term 'learning', however, applies to a conscious process of accumulating knowledge of the vocabulary and grammar of language (Yule, 1996:191).

For the needs of the thesis and the findings which will be presented in the following chapters, the general terms FLL and early language learning will be used throughout.

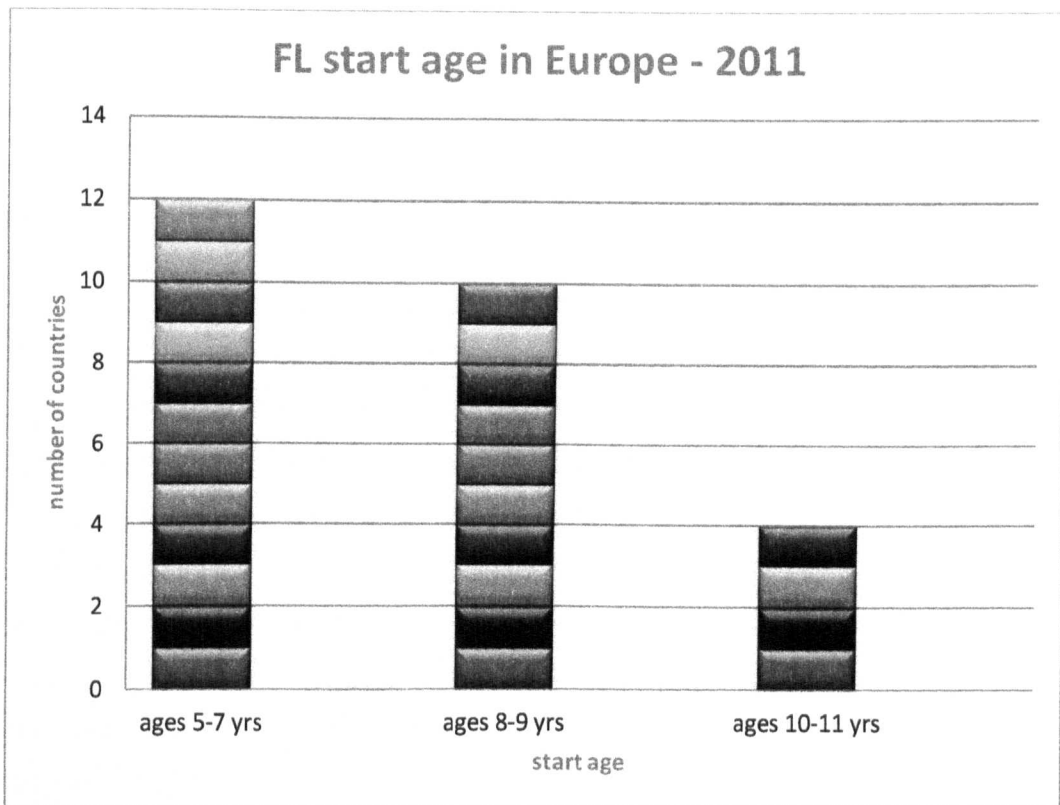
In the case of the current study, I will be referring to FLL within a formal classroom context and when questioning the term of FLL, the language teaching profession will be reflected. In the following section of the chapter, I will become more specific and focus on the sector of early language learning, particularly the optimum conditions of an early start to the foreign language where I will discuss the challenges and benefits of teaching YLLs and present the main arguments used in the literature to justify an early start.

### **2.3 The EFL Policy and Optimum Starting Age**

This section of the thesis will present a discussion of the optimum age of learning an FL in connection with a consideration of the optimum conditions in which the language is introduced. In the EU, almost all countries have lowered the starting age policies in the past 20 years. 13 countries are now consenting for a starting age of 7

whilst 10 other countries commence language learning at the age of 9, with only 4 countries starting at the age of 10 or 11 years old (Enever, in print). The following chart (Enever, 2011:24) summarises the European data, including Greece, where the starting age is eight years. In the case of Greece, early implementation was not followed by a well-planned policy, as will be discussed more in following chapters.

**Figure 1: European national policy requirements for FL introduction (Enever, 2011: 24. Reproduced with permission of author)**



Despite the increasing interest in early language learning, there continue to be difficulties in the processes of implementation and debates regarding the appropriate starting age and the necessary conditions for success. Early attempts of foreign language instruction are often based on the claim that ‘younger is better’, and that the child is likely to prevail in competency because he/she is “endowed with certain language learning abilities that will allow him/her to become a more proficient user of

the language” (Legutke et al, 2009:15). On the other hand, Nikolov (2009:2) argues that:

[...] young learners are widely perceived to acquire languages in a qualitatively different way from adolescents and adults. Children, before a certain age seem to pick up a new language with ease and success, whereas older learners often fail to do so.

Studies of FLL have occupied neurolinguists who support a neurofunctional perspective on language which “attempts to characterize the neurolinguistic information processing systems responsible for the development and use of language” (Lamendella, 1979:5). Children are believed to be cognitively *open* to learning a foreign language, as opposed to adults, and as Johnstone (2009: 36) has outlined, there are additional benefits to learning a foreign language at an early stage when students are less language-anxious. He specifically argues that young language learners have:

- More time available overall (time is a major factor when learning an additional language at school, particularly when it is linked to other factors including pre-eminently good teaching);
- More opportunity to form productive links between their first language and the additional language they are learning. Thereby metalinguistic awareness is developed;
- More opportunity to allow natural acquisition and more formal learning processes over time to complement each other (meaning that if YLs take in certain words in assembled portions, they may be capable to return to these later on, but in more analytical conditions);
- More time in which to integrate their learning of an additional language into their general cognitive, social, emotional and cultural development, hence, to exercise a positive and formative influence on their sense of identity. With older beginners, by contrast, their identity may already largely be formed.

Singleton (2005) argues that in FLL, younger is better in the long run; there are, nevertheless, many exceptions noting that an adult may be successful in a language even though they may have started learning it well into adulthood. Moon (2005) suggests that the claim of ‘younger is better’ can be considered controversial, since there is evidence that adolescents and adults are more efficient learners than children.



However, she argues that children have the advantage of having sensitivity to pronunciation. Pinter (2006) supports this argument and is in favour of the position that young children hold an “intuitive grasp of language and their ability to be more attuned to the phonological system of the new languages and enjoy copying new sounds and patterns of intonation” (Pinter, 2006:29). Driscoll and Frost (1999) explain that young learners have an innate ability to imitate sounds more accurately, compared to older language learners. Nonetheless, there is a risk of not being given the opportunity to use this instinct if their teachers lack in fluency. Edelenbos et al (2006), claim that an optimum starting age has not yet been established. An early start to language learning can offer the child an overall longer period of learning and a prospective of influencing their personal development whilst in a formative stage. Nonetheless, an early start on its own is unlikely to make a spectacular difference. Children have more chances of becoming successful and motivated language learners if their early start comes with quality teaching.

Ideally, the language teacher introduces the child to the foreign language and helps him/her become a successful language learner within a relaxed and comfortable environment. YLLs feel that the classroom is more familiar as it is part of their everyday lives. Singleton and Ryan (2004) reach the conclusion that an early exposure to the foreign language will result to positive outcomes. Learning to communicate in a foreign language and stepping away from the mother tongue can be a demanding task. Students will have to take on various stages in order to reach a level of confidence become successful language learners. This cannot be achieved without the encouragement of the adults around them, starting from their families to their teachers at school. In order to achieve successful language learning in the primary level, the educator is required to supply their pupils with the aspiration to acquire the knowledge and ability to engage in language learning tasks. According to ELLiE (2011: 25):

The close personal relationship which the teacher establishes with each child as an individual is in marked contrast with the more formal relationship that the teacher of older FL learners might have with their class. For the FL teacher of young children then, a combination of FL expertise and age-appropriate teacherly skills for teaching FLs are needed, in addition to a broad educational base related to child development and the psychology of learning.

All areas of education require teaching professionals that are well-trained. This is considered a prerequisite to quality education. As Legutke et al (2009) has argued, governments advocate the implementation of primary language learning, nevertheless, they are reluctant to offer funding to teachers of pre- and in-service level. Specifically, Moon (2005:33) argues that:

When countries first introduce a foreign language at primary school, there is a need for proper professional support from Ministries to guide the implementation, ensuring that schools, teachers and supervisors receive adequate curricular guidelines with clear aims and expected outcomes, sample materials, ideas on the type of methodology suitable for use at primary levels, and guidance on appropriate assessment techniques. These do not have to be prescriptive but should provide indicators of desirable practice for teachers to work with and help to ensure that all children receive the highest quality EYL teaching and assessment.

It can be argued that if language teachers do not undergo the necessary training to teach in the primary level, the optimum conditions to early language learning will not be met. According to Rixon (2000:4) the teachers' command of the foreign language can affect the type of language the students are provided with and the methodology preferred and adopted.

It can easily be seen that a teacher who lacks confidence and fluency in the language is unlikely to be able to set up the occasions for genuine interaction. These factors are crucial for the YL. Firstly, it is widely accepted that one area in which YLs are superior learners is in their ability to imitate a pronunciation model. There is a strong case, therefore, for ensuring that the models available are acceptable ones. Secondly, without adequate opportunities to engage in genuine interaction with other users of the foreign language, another capacity of YLL will go to waste.

Teachers have the responsibility of providing major language input to young language learners. It is necessary for teachers of this age group to have interactive skills with the purpose of introducing activity-based and interactive methods, as well as the appropriate teaching strategies that will generate interest in learning. According to Moon (2005), these methods are more appropriate for teaching children a foreign language. An early phase of appropriate language instruction can equip children with a positive outlook, so the methods in question need to be compatible with their linguistic and cognitive levels. Children are more than capable of learning a foreign

language, however, depending on the age factor alone can be a risk with negative outcomes. According to Moon (2005: 5):

[...] there are many other important factors to consider when deciding whether to begin English early. Unless you have enough time, appropriate materials and curriculum, well trained and competent teachers, there is a high risk that very little is gained by starting younger and quite a lot lost in terms of resources, maybe frustrated teachers and young learners who get demotivated early and yet know they have to continue with English into secondary school.

There were two main purposes of this chapter. The first was to clarify the broad topic of FLL in relation to the current study which is primary classroom-based language learning. The second purpose was to review the theoretical perspectives of the optimum starting age of FLL and the optimum conditions that would provide great value to language education, as the current study investigates early language teaching conditions that might contribute to effective education. I have chosen to separate this chapter from the literature review in Chapter 3, in order to focus on particular theoretical aspects and the background of the language teacher and learner, since the review of early language teaching policies is essential to the current study. The following chapter focuses and elaborates on teaching methods and approaches that are relevant to the research, and will help define concepts of the study and the language teaching situation in Greek state schools and *frodistiria*. By shedding light on the teaching approaches in connection with language teaching policies in Greece, the researcher was able to conduct research which could contribute to language teaching development and advancement of language learning policies.

## **Chapter 3: Language Teaching Methodology: a literature review regarding young language learning and teaching**

### **3.1 Methods of Teaching English to Young Learners**

This chapter presents the theoretical foundation of the study and describes the method, approach and technique of early learning pedagogy in connection to the outcomes that emerged in the study, namely the Grammar Translation Method (GMT), Task-Based-Learning (TBL) and Communicative Language Teaching (CLT).

Pedagogical experts, researchers and linguists alike have been searching for a faultless method that would enhance FLL and successfully teach students a foreign language in the classroom. Anthony (1963) provided his definition, theory and concept of method, stating that a method is a set of suppositions regarding the character of learning, language and teaching. He presented three hierarchical elements that have been enduring: the approach, method and technique. A method was considered to be an overall plan for regular presentation of the foreign language based on an approach. The approach was described as a set of correlative assumptions regarding the nature of language learning and teaching. Techniques on the other hand, were identified as particular classroom activities which depended on a method in agreement with an approach (Richards & Renandya, 2002).

Each teaching method and approach that has been presented in the literature is based on a particular language learning view. In the following section, there will be a focus on teaching methods, in order to explain the effect of each on EYL practice and later relate to the data gathered in the study. There are issues mentioned that are further connected to teaching practices such as teachers' goals, the nature of teacher-student, student-student interaction.

### 3.1.1 Grammar Translation Method

In the literature, the GMT is described as an approach that dominated the early days of modern foreign language learning. Here, it will be portrayed in relation to YLL. In following chapters, I will elaborate that even though such a method may be seen as antiquated, and this is so in spite of the Ministry of Education recommending CLT, as mentioned in Chapter 1, it is widely used in Greek primary state schools and *frodistiria* for the learning of MFLs.

The GMT derives from traditional approaches, where in the Western world the learning of Greek and Latin were thought to promote intellectuality (Brown, 2000). It allowed studying a language *as a subject* where neither teacher nor student needed to 'embarrass themselves' by actually using the language in the classroom. The mother tongue is the medium used to teach the foreign language which enhances a sense of security, especially amongst young learners who may enter a language classroom in fear of the unknown or of being ridiculed by their peers. The method is based on the written word which could eliminate anxiety since learners are given the opportunity to self-edit and identify language errors. Educators who apply this method in their classrooms may argue that children who learn an FL at an early stage are less exposed to listening and speaking, which may increase anxiety and decrease self-esteem.

The GMT is a resource-friendly method since all that is needed is a grammar book, a text and a teacher who can explain the rules and translate the text; there is no need for a language laboratory or computer, nor a near-native speaker, and there are few pronunciation issues. The GMT contains elements used in other approaches as well, such as rote learning through repetition in the audio-lingual approach, contrastive consideration of constructions in any approach that gives insight a place in addition to subconscious acquisition. Translation is likely to occur, apart from the most radical approaches that ban L1. The problematic element of grammar-translation method is that production is limited to written translation into the foreign language, which requires a grammatically perfect output, prohibiting any natural approximation to the target language. This method, according to Crystal (1997:378):

[...] is based on the meticulous analysis of the written language, in which translation exercises, reading comprehension, and the written imitation of texts play a primary role. Learning

mainly involves the mastery of grammatical rules and memorization of long lists of literary vocabulary, related to texts which are chosen more for their prestigious content than for their interest or level of linguistic difficulty. There is little emphasis laid on the activities of listening or speaking.

The method in question reveals a non-communicative nature and is grammar-oriented. It is used nowadays in many contexts, particularly where language teachers have not had access to a substantial amount of pre- or in-service training for teaching YLs.

### 3.1.3 Task-Based Learning

TBL has played a vital role in both research and language education (Seedhouse, 2005) and is typically separated into three parts; the *pre-task*, which is attempted as a whole class activity under the teacher's supervision and guidance, the *task* which is an attempt the learner makes to work individually with limited teacher guidance and the third being the *post-task* which is the evaluation of the task (Prabhu, 1987). This approach may be particularly suitable with young children, offering them extensive listening time to become accustomed to the sounds of the new language. Waer (2009) states that in order to maintain the task outcomes, language learners must negotiate for meaning and communicate with others, asking for clarification, or checking comprehension. Language in this case is used for genuine purposes, meaning that authentic communication takes place. Students are forced, in a way, to take responsibility for their own learning without the constant assistance of the teacher. Breen (1987) characterised TBL as a structured language learning venture which contains a specific objective, content and working procedure. A range of outcomes can occur from this process and as Kaplan has argued, 'task' in this sense, "refers to a range of work plans that have the overall purpose of facilitating language learning, from the simple and brief exercise type, to more complex and lengthy activities such as group problem solving or simulations and decision making" (Kaplan, 2002:217). The assumption made is that the use of the target language during the task is the means to language development as interlanguage development is driven through tasks and not merely by the teacher's control and input (Kaplan, 2002; Long, 1989; Prabhu,

1987). Advocates of TBL suggest that it provides the building blocks for language development and consider this approach an appealing development of CLT, which will be discussed in the following section. In the last twenty years the interest in TBL grew strongly and TBL tasks have often been used as supplementary material. Additionally, a number of course book series claim to be task-based (Kaplan, 2002). The aim of TBL is to encourage fluency, accuracy and complexity as a result of engaging with authentic and communication tasks (Skehan, 1998). Kumaravadivelu (1993) claims that pre-determined language tasks cannot be followed. They ought to be thought of as 'learning material rather than teaching material' as the form of communication provided by these materials can only be used as an indication of content because the negotiation of actual language must be left to the teacher and the language learners. Furthermore, Kumaravadivelu (1993) explains that practicing teachers cannot expect to be given in precise terms what structures and vocabulary they would be introducing in their classes. Cameron (2001:30-31) suggests that task-based learning, focused on young learners, must have a realistic goal if they are to intrigue and give content to language lessons. She specifically states that:

The best we can do is aim for dynamic congruence: choosing activities and content that are appropriate for the children's age and socio-cultural experience, and language that will grow with the children, in that, although some vocabulary will no longer be needed, most of the language will provide a useful base for more grown-up purposes.

Cook (2001) focuses on the disadvantages of task-based learning, arguing that the language that is practiced and then evaluated would only be used in the classroom and that TBL follows the standard line of minimizing L1. There are claims that TBL is only appropriate when the learners have a specific goal such as "an interest for language or personal liberation" (Cook, 2001:223). Task-based pedagogy needs to be presented in such a manner that young language learners are tempted to take advantage of the classroom and become autonomous. Furthermore, it needs to be "balanced with other styles to make certain the coverage of language components is adequate even to achieve its own goal of communicative competence" (ibid). Nonetheless, it is seen as a social dynamic activity and can encourage young students to become active participants in their language development and engage in the negotiation of meaning which is the nucleus of human interaction.

### 3.1.4 Communicative Language Teaching

The initial goal of the communicative method was the ability to use the language successfully achieving one's goal, rather than displaying accuracy of grammatical knowledge. The communicative performance of native speakers was used as a model to imitate and incorporate language functions (Cook, 2001). As the approach developed it came to be evaluated more "in terms of processes that people use to carry out specific tasks rather than static elements such as functions and notion" (Cook, 2001:212). Many researchers and educators consider that the main objectives of language learning and classroom teaching are achieved by using communicative techniques. Cook has attempted to categorise communicative techniques, suggesting that they can be grouped into three main categories of the communicative approach as "social communicative, information communicative and task-based learning" (Cook, 2001:212).

When concentrating on the entity of the classroom, it is necessary to examine the pedagogical aspect of communication and a curriculum framework that accompanies it. Speakers and listeners engage in sharing meanings which are both dependent on the conventions of interpersonal actions and the ideas communicated are of various possible meaning (Breen & Candlin, 2001).

Communicative activities demonstrate characteristics, involve and motivate students in a manner that their desire to interact in the target language increases. Harmer (1991) suggests that such tasks are vital for language learners as they are encouraged to use the language as individuals and arrive at the point of autonomy. The communicative classroom is different from the traditional teacher-centred settings. The teacher is no longer the authoritarian figure who dominates the classroom, controls and guides the pupils every second of the lesson. In this setting the teacher steps back and pupils take responsibility for their own learning, where they are urged to start conversations and learn the language by practicing. Cook (2001:214) argues that ideally, the main difference in the communicative classroom is that the learners are not entailed to:



[...] produce speech with the minimum of mistakes in native terms. Instead, they can use whatever forms and strategies they can devise themselves to solve their communication problem, producing sentences that may be entirely appropriate to their task but are often highly deviant from a native perspective.

Howatt's (1984) concern is that there are classroom practices which focus on either form or meaning and the ability to convey meaning considered fundamental in language learning. The outcome of the method is that form-based activities are not preferred. Kumaradivelu (1993) questions communicative classrooms as well, and refers to research studies that have shown that even teachers that were committed to CLT occasionally failed to create opportunities for authentic interaction during the language lesson. Ellis (1994) clarifies that classrooms have their own rules and that various studies show far less range of speech than in a common everyday dialogue. This may partly be because schools are separate and sheltered environments where one cannot assume that by adopting a communicative approach in the classroom that there is going to be an identical range of language as in the outside world.

Kaplan (2002), states that a certain focus on formal structures of language can be achieved where CLT is nearer to *a methodology-specification* rather than *a syllabus-specification*. In order to portray this limitation Kaplan believes it is more suitable to use the term *approach*. Nonetheless, there have been strong attempts to develop CLT further.

CLT is considered to be a product of the studies of social scientists on group dynamics, teaching, learning and social relationships. Groups of students, who cooperate in the language classroom, discuss material with one another and help each other to comprehend it and encourage each other to work hard with the aim of gaining better results; this is a procedure that can enhance students' relationships and supply them with positive social and cognitive benefits (Willis, 2007). Nevertheless, DelliCarpini (2009) introduces a valuable point when claiming that culture and its influences are present in learning preferences and styles and that in various cases, research has shown that learners are passive because of the environment they are known to be exposed to and have become familiar with. In support of this claim, Gabrielatos (1992), who has conducted action research in Greece where language lessons are mostly teacher-centred and teacher-dominated, has reported that the Greek language learners felt that their confidence was increased and that they learned useful

structures of the language despite the fact that interactive strategies are not used in their classroom contexts.

Effective CLT can promote learners to discuss a topic in various ways and from different points of view as in any everyday discussion that they may have with members of their family, a friend or even a tourist who visits their country for the first time and would like to find out more about it from a local. This form of instruction creates numerous opportunities for input and output, which can be more beneficial than simply answering and asking questions. In spite of the positive indications of CLT, research has indicated that primary and secondary school teachers in DelliCarpini's (2009) study in New York were reluctant to apply it. One would expect this approach to be widely popular, but on the contrary, evidence shows an underuse.

It has been argued that the purpose of language is communication and there is no form of conversation without its social side and a reason to speak. The following section will discuss the social side and communicative approach of the school context.

### **3.2 Schools as a Context for Learning**

The language classroom is not only a space to practice language, but also an environment where meaning-making is a priority. Vygotsky, who looked more into social interaction as a primary source of behaviour and cognition, argued that children are social creatures and fully develop through social interaction.

Every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first, between people (inter-psychological) and then inside the child (intra-psychological). This applies equally to voluntary attention, to logical memory, and the formation of concepts. All the higher functions originate as actual relationships between individuals (Vygotsky, 1978:57).

However, Vygotsky suggests that cognitive development occurs in particular time periods which he refers to as the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), proposing that in this period a learner achieves new skills with help. Vygotsky argued that a child follows the adult's example and learns to develop the ability to perform various tasks without the assistance of others, whether they are adults or more capable peers.

He believed that education served the purpose of providing children with experience which is in their ZPD and encourages the development of autonomous learning.

When students are placed in a classroom, they are put into their own society in a microcosm. There is a distinctive atmosphere where the teacher is partially the determiner. Therefore, any combination of teachers and students would provide a social component, which may differ from any other. Young children find it essential to establish good relations with their peers and apply a great deal of energy in doing so, "at first, relationships are tentative and transitory, but before long the child has acquired one or several friends" (Charles, 1965:54).

According to Cameron (2001:2) "the child is seen as continually interacting with the world around her/him, solving problems that are presented by the environment. It is through taking action to solve problems that learning occurs". Effective learning could be a result of pupils working together. Dörnyei (2001:100), states that cooperation is an advantage in learning and argues that "studies from all over the world are unanimous in claiming that students in cooperative environments have more positive attitudes towards learning and develop higher self-esteem and self-confidence than in other classroom structures". Children become more secure in their language learning environment and learn to express themselves in the L2. Once learners realise their accomplishment, their motivation and self-esteem are likely to strengthen. This could facilitate the development of their communicative ability in the FL.

The logic of using more communicative approaches of teaching, is to move away from teacher-centred approaches and tasks in order to make a more interactive perspective available; as mentioned in the previous chapter, learning takes place in a more self-directed and independent environment. Contemporary language teaching supports the view that language is not simply symbolic, but largely inference based. Although in more traditional settings the emphasis was on presenting the language through rules, now the emphasis is on practicing the language, comprehending and transmitting meaning through real interaction. Long (1996), claims that language learning is made possible when learners attain understandable input and the prospect to negotiate meaning when and if communication breakdown occurs. This fundamental outlook on language can be explained with the following example: *'I've seen a hedgehog today'* where the word *'hedgehog'* is symbolic. If the person does not understand the meaning of the word *'hedgehog'*, they would not be able to

understand *what I have seen*. Although the meaning of words is very important, knowing the code is not the whole story. If somebody asks: *Can you help me for a minute?*, the addressee will infer that this is not a question about ability (cf. *Can you play chess?*) but a request, that the reference to a minute is not to be taken literally (60 seconds), nevertheless, there is nothing in the symbolic content to suggest this. Some inference will be language and culture-specific, but much not, i.e. we are good at figuring out what someone is intending to convey and negotiate meaning. There is disagreement on how often our assumptions are wrong. These assumptions are also based on para- and non-linguistic signs such as gestures, body language, and of course we try to make sense of natural phenomena.

From a humanistic perspective, students must be seen as complex human-beings and not merely as language learners. Language education should explore their "affective and intellectual resources as fully as possible, and be linked into their continuing experience of life" (Tudor, 1993: 22). Nunan (1999) claims that the notion of a student-centred environment has been divisive because of the fact that educators feel that it is devaluing to them and language teaching, whereas researchers believe it to be beneficial for the learner. His personal belief on the matter is that language learners must be systematically trained to reach their goal. Therefore, instead of presuming that students are armed with critical learning skills, the teacher must realise that potential learners will only acquire such skills after a course of instruction.

There is no doubt that in a learner-centred environment, the dynamics of the language classroom strengthen. Primarily, to achieve this, individuals must comprehend and accept others' needs and encourage them through educating and building up their confidence and satisfaction in what they are doing. This is not possible in teacher-directed classrooms (Rivers, 1987). In this type of context CLT is feasible, where language learners' attitudes and practices are tools to promote mutual support in groups and active involvement of all members (Richards & Renandya, 2002). Therefore, students have the opportunity to act as resources towards their peers and adopt an active role in language learning. Furthermore, it is argued that CLT fosters cooperation rather than competition. As Johnson et al. (1994:194) has argued:

[...] cooperation is working together to accomplish shared goals. Within cooperative situations, individuals seek outcomes beneficial to themselves and all other group members. Cooperative learning is the instructional use of small groups through which students work

together to maximise their own and each other's learning. It may be contrasted with competitive learning in which students work against each other to achieve an academic goal such as a grade of A'.

The use of group activities and pair work have been advocated among language teachers and researchers since these learning activities increase students' participation in language lessons and provide more natural means of communication.

In connection to the above, the use of group and pair work is widespread in education. The nature of group interaction has been the topic of extensive research in social psychology and general education. In education, for example, there are a large number of research studies on cooperative groups. This research has identified the essential elements of cooperative groups, the merits of cooperative learning and how learners relate to each other within the groups and factors- such as academic status or as gender- that affect these relations (Storch, 2002).

The next part of the chapter will concentrate on the nature of classroom management and elaborate on group/pair work. I will be drawing on the views of experienced teacher-trainers and researchers observing language lessons, to summarise their understanding on the topic.

### **3.2.1 Classroom Management and Organisation**

Classroom management and organisation can be beneficial for interactive language teaching. This section will focus on research related to the environment necessary for providing the appropriate learning and teaching potential. Graff (2003) suggests that the community of the classroom may provide a sense of trust and interaction among learners. The feeling of community can be argued to be imperative to successful language learning and learning in general, therefore, it is only natural for educators to aim creating an environment advantageous to student learning. According to Paulsel (2004), teachers learn to establish routines, develop classroom rules to maintain order, and arrange the classroom in such a way in order to facilitate the learning process. The teaching environment could be seen as comprising three components: social, physical and educational. Teaching intentions can be communicated to language learners by the way the environment is organised.

In order to accomplish successful interaction and group activities, a teacher must be aware of the importance of the appropriate management in the classroom. It is essential to provide a suitable atmosphere during the lesson, so that students can feel secure and confident. Kaulfers (2006) believes in the significance of organised classroom management by supporting the notion that the principles of class management, efficient ordering of the language learning environment and the effective control of discipline can be effective in all teaching situations. The foreign language class, taking the nature of its subject matter into account, can provide many opportunities for unique and creative types of control, a luxury other curriculum areas do not have. There are times during the lesson, when it is preferable for children to work in pairs rather than in groups, or back-to-back depending on the setting of the classroom. "Left to their own devices pupils will normally choose to sit with their best friends, their friend of the moment, in peer groups or in isolation- none of which is the best arrangement for learning" (Bryson, 1998: 20). When encouraging learners to work together, some difficulties may occur until children realise what is expected of them. Ur (2004:8) argues that:

[...] as regards discipline: this basically depends on the personality of the teacher, her class, and the relationship between them, not on the type of the activity. On the whole it is safe to say that a class, which is controlled in frontal work will be controlled also in groups. Thoughtful and efficient organisations can, however, contribute a good deal to solving the problems.

If teachers are involved in allocating material and looking for equipment they overlook opportunities of organising their classroom. This can lead to valuable time of language teaching being lost. Wright (2005: 291) argues that:

[...] formal education is defined by time periods. The division of education into time units is also a way which it is managed. For a doctor, the consultation may be the defining unit of time, for the athlete, a game or a race may be the natural unit; for the teachers and students it is the lesson.

Unsuccessful chronological management has consequences for classroom events and can demotivate students. Smith and Laslett (1993), based on the work of practitioners, suggest three phases to educators that will facilitate classroom management so that their lesson can be as productive as possible. Being present before the class arrives can institute a role of host. The teacher, in a discreet manner can greet the students and highlight a sense of authority without that being

intimidating to the children. Consequently, the teacher has the comfort to ensure that the classroom is in an appropriate state and that all that is needed for the lesson is there. This will “provide the mental composure essential to relaxed assurance” (Smith and Laslett, 1993: 4). The seating arrangement may vary, according to the age group or nature of the lesson; however, Smith and Laslett (1993) believe that the teacher must primarily decide where the children should be seated. This action would also illustrate ‘the natural establishment of responsibility’. They may encourage children to sit with their friends in order to create a cooperative environment; nonetheless, this is a matter in which the teacher could have control of. It is important to begin the lesson promptly and smoothly, and accomplish mental tuning-in of the student mind, which is necessary for the course of the lesson.

Classroom management and organisation can be considered a vital factor in FLL. As Doyle (1986) has argued on the issue, classroom management is a process of solving the problem of *order* in classrooms. The problems of misbehaviour and student engagement are not insignificant; however, they are not the language teacher’s primary issues. The teacher’s primary and foremost management task is to establish and maintain work systems rather than punishing misbehaviour. Nonetheless, the physical characteristics of the classroom in general are often neglected (Weinstein & Mignano, 2003). The milieu is one aspect of classroom organisation that can reduce the potential of serious disruption by avoiding pupils becoming discouraged, feeling inadequate, incompetent and seeking attention any way possible as a sign of lack of confidence or loss of interest (Smith & Laslett, 1993). The environment can provide the teacher with opportunities when the necessary attention is commanded. This, however, does not imply that organisation of a pleasant learning environment is a simple task. The primary teacher must have a high organisational ability in order to be successful. Kyriakou (1992) argues that the appearance of the classroom designates to children the concern and care that the teacher puts into providing them with an environment that will make them feel comfortable and is advantageous to learning. When children enter a language classroom, especially if it is their first encounter with the foreign language, they need to feel that they are entering an environment where they can feel safe and welcome.

An environment that is hostile to their eyes can bring about negative feelings that may be difficult to discard. Colours, drawings, posters can intrigue students and bring

out positivity that can guide them all through their course. The general displays of the language classroom, as Cullingford (1991) states, can make a distinct impression on the pupil. On the other hand, Dörnyei & Murphey (2003) warn that the *perfect* classroom environment will not automatically motivate every language learner into complete focus, “even in environmental paradise there are some groups that do not seem to focus on learning and do not come together effectively. The ideal environment will not save a teacher with insufficient group development and teaching skills” (Dörnyei & Murphey, 2003:76). Wright (1987) makes a point that a teacher’s style and technique is vital to harmonious language lessons. There is more to classroom management than control and spatial organisation, “the teaching style lies at the heart of the interpersonal relationship between the teacher and the learner” (Wright, 1987:68). Nunan (1999) explains that the traditional method of classroom organisation was teacher-fronted; all desks were placed in rows and faced the teacher. Learners in this environment were not encouraged to express themselves, share ideas or cooperate. Today’s educational community is eager to explore a constructivist approach in language education. This can only be constructed in a task-based, cooperative learning environment with language learners working together, either in groups or pairs. Dörnyei (2001) views cooperation as an advantage. Language learners that have participated in numerous studies worldwide have shown that when in a cooperative mode they have higher self-esteem and self-assurance than when exposed to other classroom structures. Dörnyei (2001) has provided the field with a rationale for constructive cooperation which is pertinent to this study:

- All learners in the classroom share a certain goal and the expectations are relatively higher than what they would be if the language learners were to work individually. This is because of the security they feel due to a situation where they can also rely on their peers.
- Learners feel that they belong in a social environment which can increase their motivation and attitude towards language learning.
- When working in a group, students have a sense of moral responsibility, obligation and commitment towards their peers.
- Cooperative situations result in less anxiety and stress as seen in other classroom settings.



- There is an increase in autonomy as children try to work out their learning for themselves. They are aware of the fact that the teacher is there to guide them; however, immediate supervision is not necessary.
- Lastly, language learners have an increased feeling of satisfaction when working with their peers, where a group celebration of their success usually follows. Harmer (1991) advocates the advantages of cooperative learning and provides an analysis of the effects of pair work and group work. Although he mostly focuses on adult learners, his position on pair and group work is also relevant for young learners.

Pair work allows students to use the foreign language and cooperate, which increases motivation. As mentioned earlier, young learners can help each other and release tension since they no longer feel the teacher's control. According to Harmer (1991), when working in pairs, language learners can actually practice the language and joint learning. On the other hand, there are certain worries concerning pair work such as incorrectness. However, "accuracy is not the only standard to judge, learning by communicative efficiency is also vitally important and pair work encourages such efficiency" (Harmer, 1991: 244). Additionally, educators worry about the noise and indiscipline that may occur when children work together. This depends on the teacher and the management techniques they wish to apply during the task. Harmer (1991), suggests that children should not be left in pairs for too long because they may become distressed and restless. This may result in the noise reaching disproportionate levels. Pairing students is a task that needs to be reflected on carefully. Language teachers are required to decide whether the weaker students are going to be seated with stronger students or if there is going to be an alternative combination. Pair work can be used for numerous activities whether the language skill in question is speaking, reading or writing.

Group work on the other hand, has become widely popular among language teachers who have been persuaded that it is a technique which can be quite productive if used wisely. As in pair work, there is an increase in student talk and participation in general. Students are more involved in the lesson and the cooperation with their peers liberates them from the constant need of verification and assistance from the teacher. Harmer (1991:245) states that "students will be teaching and learning in a group

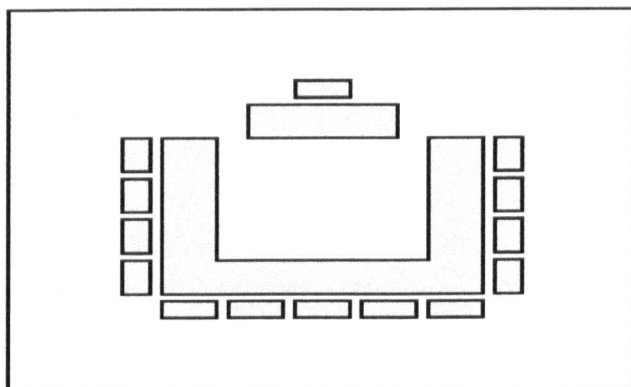
exhibiting a degree of self-reliance that simply is not possible when the teacher is acting as a controller". Group work is livelier than pair work, exactly because there are more students involved and a greater chance for discussion and debate. However, according to Allwright and Bailey (1991:148), there is no key difference between dyads and groups as far as the verbal interaction is concerned, as found in their research "both of these conditions resulted in significantly more modified interaction, more negotiation for meaning, than did the same task in the teacher-fronted condition". Of course, the problems that teachers fear will occur are identical to those of pair work. According to Harmer (1991), the greatest problem is that of the selection of group members where teachers use a sociogram in which students are asked to make a social choice. One possible technique is that they may be asked to write down the name of a classmate with whom they would want to spend time on a desert island. This could give the teacher an idea of how to select group members without that meaning that the issue has been taken care of. Additionally, group size is also an important issue and can be problematic at times. Most teachers prefer groups of no more than 4-5 students to avoid excessive noise and bring out a greater amount of productivity. The use of group work can offer endless possibilities to language learners as it works as a useful tool for a wide variety of activities within the young learners' classroom. It also allows different groups of children with different personalities and abilities to work towards achieving the same goal in the same language classroom.

Neither group nor pair work are possible if the appropriate setting is not provided to the students. If language learners are asked to conduct a task as a group and the layout of the classroom is not appropriate, teachers face the risk of complaints, decrease of enthusiasm, excessive noise and discomfort. The planning of the layout for every task is an indication of successful classroom management and organisation and an understanding that the teacher must take advantage of every corner in the classroom in order to provide the needed layout for the students to carry out the assigned task to the best of their ability. Dornyei (2003), identifies three seating arrangements as suitable for pair and group work:

**The Semi-Circular Seating Arrangement** is considered a common arrangement for group work where the teacher can be seated in the open ending of the U-shape.

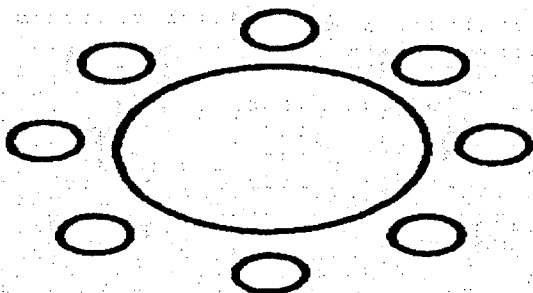
The arrangement in question provides students with direct visual contact and facilitates communication. Nonetheless, it reinforces the leader's status as he/she is the centre of the communication network. (See Figure 2):

**Figure 2: Semi-Circular Seating Structure (Dörnyei, 2003:81).**



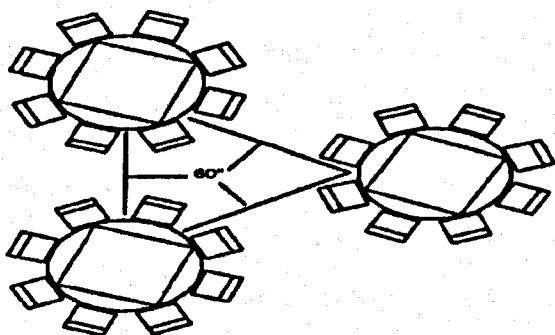
**The Circular Seating Structure** (Figure 3), is where no determined headship is given as the teacher is not part of the group. Ehrman and Dörnyei (1998) have found in their studies that this arrangement draws out a friendlier and relaxed atmosphere and shorter pauses in discussions. However, in order for this arrangement to be achievable desks will have to be removed which may cause confusion at first, especially if the students are accustomed to traditional settings where desks are always present and are considered essential. Dörnyei (2003) argues that inflicted closeness can raise negative feelings and mild aggression. He also raises the point that as studies have shown, people seated opposite to each other tend to interact with each other more than when seated side-by-side.

**Figure 3: The Circular Seating Structure (Dörnyei, 2003:82).**



The Ad Hoc Clusters of Chair/Desks, (Figure 4), may be a useful seating arrangement when aiming to reinforce students' autonomy and accountability. The great benefit of this arrangement is that the teacher is not present or viewed by the students, when students are, in fact, involved in their task. Students are responsible for their own communication network. Dörnyei (2003) specifies that such activities entail space and moveable furniture, which is regrettably not offered in most FL classrooms.

**Figure 4: The Ad Hoc Clusters of Chair/Desks (Dörnyei, 2003:82).**



It is understandable that at times cooperative learning can prove to be more trouble than it is worth (Croll & Hastings, 1996), nonetheless, the advantages seem to outweigh the disadvantages and effective classroom management can be a major contributory factor to EYL. Holliday (1994:54), states that cooperative learning is

ideal for language learning, claiming that it “sets the conditions for a process-oriented, task-based, inductive, collaborative, communicative English language teaching methodology”.

### **3.2.2 The Language Teacher of Young Learners of English**

The language teacher plays a fundamental role in English Language Learning (ELL). According to Nikolov & Mihaljević (2011:21) “they are not only the main sources of input and motivation, but they are also responsible for what happens in classrooms”. Studies that have explored teachers’ classroom practices, use of the foreign language and beliefs are essential in understanding the development of the language learner. As Gabrielatos (2002) has observed, there are two broad views which could determine the efficiency of a language teacher. One element could concentrate on the teacher’s language and teaching approaches (Shulman, 1994; Rivers, 1972). The other element could be the teachers’ personality, in particular, their self-awareness and rapport with the students (Ur, 1997). In this section of the chapter, there will be a focus on the language teachers, specifically those who specialise in young learners. Research understandings of what is known about the role and perceptions of the YL teacher are important for this study, providing a framework within which to evaluate evidence from Greek classrooms.

There is no doubt that language teachers must have different approaches when instructing a foreign language to children than to adults. It is critical for teachers to consider the needs of their target learners when planning their lessons and the approaches they will apply. The very concept of teaching languages to young learners suggests that due to the age difference, the YLs classroom is different to older learners in terms of learning needs and development of cognitive skills. Introducing, for example, children to storytelling in the foreign language, songs and games are only few of the approaches a YL teacher can use to make the lesson more appropriate and interesting to the specific age group. Such techniques increase children’s enthusiasm and make them active language learners. Additionally, children, unlike adults, enjoy learning from direct experiences and physical activities where instead of

seated tasks, students engage in kinesthetic activities which can have a great influence on their instructional design and keep students with a short attention span focused for longer (Brown, 2001).

There has been an increased emphasis on the quality of language teaching in recent educational discourse. Cameron (2001), for instance, studies teachers' approaches to their occupation and the techniques they apply in order to achieve their aims. Here, Cameron (2001) reports that it is important for language teachers to comprehend the perspective that lies within every learner that enters their classroom. Realising the connection between learning and teaching are essential instruments used to maximise the positive impact of what occurs in the language classroom. Williams and Burden (1997) point out the fact that teachers may meet a degree of resistance from some of their students. They, however, state that if language learners "are viewed narrowly as resisters, teachers may well employ methods involving compulsion rather than seeking ways of helping them to want to learn the language or to see the value in what they are doing" (Williams & Burden, 1997: 57). It is crucial that the language teacher has the ability and will to keep students motivated and bring out enthusiasm from those who attended their lesson. Gabrielatos (2002:3) draws attention to the implications of the fact that:

[...] limited or faulty language knowledge will communicate an inaccurate picture of the target language. Inappropriate methodology will make learning too time-consuming and may discourage learners. An uninterested or offensive teacher will offer very little support and few opportunities for learning, and may de-motivate learners.

The role of the language teacher cannot be defined in simplistic terms. Ideally, every teacher would wish to work in an environment where they are free to make their own choices on how they will teach their lessons. The institutions where teachers work also play a vital and decisive role in how the language lessons will be executed. The teacher may, for instance, be obligated to follow a traditional or contemporary teaching approach. When a teacher-centred method is chosen, in some cases this may be decided for them, they select to be in the centre and active. Richards and Rodgers (1986) describe the role as a *teacher-dominated method* where the educator "models the target language, controls the direction and pace of learning, and monitors and corrects the learners' performance. The teacher must keep the learners involved by varying drills and tasks and choosing relevant situations to practice structures"

(Richards & Rodgers, 1986:56). In contrast, in a learner-centred context, the role of the language teacher changes;

Breen and Candlin (2001:99) believe that in this case the teacher is assigned two key roles. The first would be to:

[...] facilitate the communication process between all participants in the classroom, and between these participants and the various activities and texts. The second role is to act as an independent participant within the learning-teaching group. The latter is closely related to the objectives of the first role and arises from it. These roles apply a set of secondary roles for the teacher; first as an organiser of resources and a resource himself, second as a guide within the classroom procedures and activities.

Despite the philosophy of an institution or the training a language teacher may experience, the way one teaches is often a matter of personal interpretation and what they believe would be feasible in a certain situation (Richards & Lockhart 1996). When discussing teachers' roles, it is vital to reflect on the teachers' and learners' cultural background. Attitudes that may coincide in Western education, for example, may not agree with teaching methods of the East. Of course, this is a generalisation, and as will be seen later in the thesis, not all Western policies focus on individual learner creativity and encourage the teacher to promote independent learning as Richards and Lockhart (1996) suggest. Nonetheless, language teachers have a number of responsibilities towards their students and defining their role is essential in order to be able to deliver a productive lesson. Nikolov & Mihaljević Djigunovic (2011:21), argue that there are a certain number of quality measures a teacher must meet; they are "expected to be proficient in their pupils' L1 as well as in their L2, familiar with the content and methodology of the general curriculum, and the principles of how children learn in general and languages in particular". Brumfit, et al. (1991) believe that language teachers, and whoever is involved in students' foreign language learning, need to consider a range of factors to promote language learning development, such as teacher talk, and to examine the learning conditions they provide, and whether they are similar to those through which the child acquired their first language. There is no doubt that language learning conditions at school cannot be similar to the ones at home, however, teachers do have the responsibility to offer their students an age-appropriate learning environment.

In order for language educators to achieve their goal, they must have the knowledge and appropriate teaching skills. This would require that they be sufficiently proficient to have the knowledge and expertise to instruct the language. Undoubtedly, the teacher must have the training and ability to teach the rudiments of the foreign language and encourage pupils to learn the material, and more importantly, to employ it (Gardner, 1991). Every teacher who considers the long-term development of their students has the responsibility, not only to teach the material but to motivate the pupils as well, since one does not exist without the other. Many researchers have concluded that a language teacher must have high expectations as far as their students are concerned. "It is not enough to be merely committed to the students' academic progress, you also need to have sufficiently high expectations for what the students can achieve" (Dörnyei, 2001:35).

According to Dörnyei (2001), the relationship between the student and the teacher plays a significant role in the language learning process. Teachers who share warm, personal interactions with their students, who respond to their concerns in an empathetic manner and who succeed in establishing relationships in mutual trust and respect, are more likely to inspire them in academic matters than those who have no personal ties with the learners. Of course, this again is a highly culture-sensitive issue.

### **3.2.3 Language Learner-beliefs, attitudes and motivation.**

Although the study does not investigate the perceptions YLs hold regarding foreign language teaching and learning, it is important to mention that language instruction can influence their attitude towards the FL which can have an immediate impact on the teacher, who may be challenged with consequences in his/her work. Many teachers feel that they should be aware of the reasons YLs react the way they do during the language learning process. In order for this to be done, learners' beliefs and opinions should be addressed (Psaltou-Joycey & Sougari, 2010).

In education, the teachers are not alone in having expectations. Children have expectations of their teachers and the subject they offer. Many children attend school thinking that their teacher possesses all knowledge and would be able to answer any



question that may occur to them, even if it is not related to the lesson taking place. Wittenberg, Williams and Osborne (1999:25), describe this as:

[...] a notion that the teacher ought to have an encyclopaedic mind which pours out facts and information, rather than someone who is concerned to help children to learn and acquire ways of understanding the world. The desire for a teacher who holds all knowledge derives from a childhood feeling that parents possess all information, facts and wisdom.

The child assumes that the adult knows everything about the world, and this knowledge is to be passed on to them. In a way, children subconsciously hope to become omniscient in the future. It is the teacher's skill and knowledge that will motivate and guide the learner towards the right direction and meet their demands. The students' needs referred to at this point can be described as *objective needs*. Nunan (1999:149) states that they "can be diagnosed by the teacher on the basis of the analysis of personal data about learners along with information about their language proficiency and patterns of language use".

It is important to sustain learners' enthusiasm towards foreign language and accept the qualities they bring to the classroom. Motivation is one of the key factors that could determine the success of L2 attainment. It provides the main encouragement needed to initiate foreign language learning and helps students sustain the will to proceed through a long and even difficult learning process. Even pupils with the best of abilities and intentions cannot achieve long-term goals without being motivated to do so. The term *motivation* is used when describing successful or unsuccessful learners. This reflects the intuitive belief that during a lengthy process of mastering a foreign language (L2), the learner's enthusiasm and commitment are key determiners of their success or failure (Dörnyei, 2001). Therefore, without sufficient motivation, learners would be unable to persist long enough in order to attain useful language. Because of the fact that motivation is difficult to measure, many questions have not been answered fully. As Covington (1998: 1) argues "motivation, like the concept of gravity, is easier to describe than it is to define; of course, this has not stopped people from trying".

The attempts of an individual to satisfy emotional needs have been defined as personality reactions (Skinner, 1974). This notion links to one of the various definitions of motivation that has been proposed over the years. A person's behaviour is governed by needs and interests, which may influence their performance. Language

learners anticipate and desire a reward for their effort; the support received will help motivate students to continue the long term task of FLL. "Driven to acquire positive reinforcement, and driven by previous experiences of reward for behaviour, we act accordingly to achieve further reinforcement. In this view, our acts are likely to be at the mercy of external forces" (Brown, 2000:160). Additionally, another theoretical orientation is the *cognitive* approach, where the focus is on how a learner's behaviour can be influenced by conscious attitudes, thoughts, beliefs, and understanding of actions that is, how mental processes are transformed into accomplishments (Dörnyei, 2005). Therefore, much emphasis is placed on the students' decisions as to what experiences and goals they will attempt to have or even avoid (Keller, 1983).

Finally, the *constructivist* view of motivation concentrates on social context and personal choices. "Each person is motivated differently, and will therefore act on his/her environment in ways that are unique. These unique acts are carried out within a cultural and social milieu and cannot be completely separated by the context" (Brown, 2000: 161). In this case, one reason students are motivated to learn a foreign language could be because this skill is highly valued in the context of a society. If there was no possibility of language learning being appreciated within the social context, and the need of the foreign language was artificial, motivation would not be accomplished regardless of the age of the learner.

As Dörnyei (2001) has argued one's motivation to learn is complex. A number of diverse conditions and sources are involved and derive from the learners' immediate learning environment. As the student develops in the language classroom their attitude towards the language and its peoples are likely to change depending on the influence the teacher and the learning environment may have on them. If language learners, in my opinion, are exposed to more than a textbook, they can develop an understanding for the other culture and therefore understand the language and the reason why it is used the way it is. Various teaching material such as songs, stories and games that originate from English speaking countries can influence and increase children's motivation as they are more likely to make a connection to what it is they are learning.

Learning a foreign language requires, more or less, all levels of situational, global and task-orientated motivation. The fulfillment of needs is rewarding and can be

interpreted in a social context. Brown (2001:161) refers to the example of young children motivated to learn how to read because they can perceive the reward of reading “they meet the needs of exploration, stimulation, knowledge, self-esteem, and autonomy, and they do so in widely varying ways and schedules in the context of a society that values literacy”. There is no doubt that language learning can be a challenge for learners, therefore, motivation is needed to enhance foreign language learning. Since there is now an earlier start in the current context one of the obvious consequences might be that the younger language starters may accomplish levels their peers would at a later stage; consequently, new strategies for building their knowledge and maintaining their motivation over an extended period of time are needed (Nikolov & Mihaljević Djigunovic, 2011). When students are motivated, they are most likely to face the challenge of using the foreign language to communicate their feelings and ideas whether that is in written or spoken form, in a monolingual or multilingual classroom context.

The following section will elaborate on the differences of the L1 (in this case Greek) and the L2 and the use of the Target Language (TL) in the monolingual language classroom.

### **3.2.4 Target Language Use and the Influence of the Diversity of the First and Foreign Language.**

This section of the chapter considers research on the debated issue of the use of TL in the language classroom and will help define concepts and attitudes towards language teaching in a monolingual context. Differences between Greek and English are presented to describe the influence one has on the other, and the dilemma language teachers are faced with when it comes to the exposure of children’s TL during the lesson.

Researchers in foreign language acquisition have long been debating the continuous issue of what is the appropriate amount of the native language (L1) that should be used in the language classroom. Whilst some support the perception that

every second on L1 in the foreign language classroom, is a second wasted and commit themselves to maximizing the target language (Cook, 1991; Turnbull, 2001; Mayfield, 2005), others believe in a humanistic and practical need to allow the use of L1 (Harbord, 1992; Atkinson, 1987; Dendrinos, 2006). Researchers such as Ellis (1984) and Chaudron (1988), emphasize the importance of teachers' foreign language use and the exposure to as many language functions as possible. Chaudron (1985:21), specifically stated that:

[...] in the typical foreign language classroom, the common belief is that the fullest competence in the TL is achieved by means of the teacher providing a rich TL environment, in which not only instruction and drills are executed in the TL, but also disciplinary and management operations.

Peng and Zhang (2009:212) second this notion and have explored the use of TL in China where L2 is not used outside the language classroom. They state that "foreign language learning usually takes place in classroom events; teachers' use of the TL becomes an important source for students to obtain input in the TL". Ellis (1984), for example, argues that language learners are deprived of useful L2 when pedagogical goals and classroom management organisation are not carried out in the TL.

Satchwell (1997) argues that in the primary level, teachers can begin to build the foundations for language learning. For that to be accomplished, children must be able to view how they can use the new language by reproducing phrases and vocabulary they have learnt to create their own messages and meanings. This can be rewarding for both the teacher and the learners. Turnbull (2001) argues that teachers who use less than 25% of the TL, depend a great deal on the learners' L1, using it as a medium to present the language but taking no notice of the fact that language learners need to put what they are instructed into practice in order to obtain fluency and confidence. Additionally, researchers such as Shapson, Kaufmen and Durward (1978) speculated that the appropriate amount of TL use should be as high as 75%. It is a risk to make final statements on this matter, as more research on the topic is needed. According to Cook (2001), expecting to 'license' teachers to use L1 is equally vague and hazardous. Nonetheless, teachers constantly need to evaluate their language use and individually investigate their contribution to their pupils' learning. On the other hand, Atkinson (1987) states that there is a gap in the methodological literature, which to

some extent may be the reason that teachers feel uneasiness towards TL use in the young learner's classroom.

It is not difficult to think of several general advantages of judicious use of the mother tongue. The most significant of these is presumably that translation techniques form a part of the preferred learning strategies of most learners in most places, the importance of which should not be underestimated. It is commonplace to say that little is known about what constitutes effective language learning, yet it is not unusual to discover among teachers the assumption that students are not in the position to judge what is best for them; this is the teacher's job (Atkinson, 1987:242).

It is believed that in a monolingual context where children are only exposed to the foreign language when in class, it is helpful, if not essential, for children to become accustomed to the phonological systems and pronunciation of the foreign language by their teachers since they are their most vital source. The purpose for this would be that students can achieve meaning and perception behind sound patterns, stressed and unstressed syllables and intonation. This, of course, is not a task that is easily implemented.

For teachers to assist their students with the phonetics and phonology of the foreign language, they ought to have an understanding of how these speech sounds are reproduced as physiological and acoustic events (Byram, 2004). The Greek and English phonological systems are largely dissimilar. According to Papaefthimiou-Lytra (2001), Greek learners of English have a great amount of difficulty in articulating many English sounds. Additionally, she refers to a number of features in Greek which language learners use when speaking English:

- Less energetic articulation than English native speakers, with lax vowels, less lip-rounding and less lip-spreading.
- Lack of contrast between weak and strong syllables in natural speech as compared with English.
- Lack of elisions and assimilations; this makes the English of Greek speakers sound slow, drawling and rather formal.
- Tendency to speak at a higher volume and on a more uniform pitch level as is done in the Greek language.

Different stress and intonation patterns where Greek tends to only have one stressed syllable in a word. Greek language learners therefore, when learning English, tend to pronounce one primary stress and give all other syllables a weak stress (Papaefthimiou-Lytra, 2001:129).

Further discussion regarding the significance of stress for language learners is offered by Nunan (1999), who distinguishes the differences of segmental and suprasegmental features of phonology, where the stress in segmental features concern stress on individual sounds, whereas suprasegmental focuses on intonation, stress and rhythm. In foreign language teaching, tasks are known to be designed to offer students the differentiation of sounds. Additionally, the question of L1 influence arises which has been considered a central issue in FLL. Lado (1957) and Fries (1945) reported *transfer* to be a burden on L2. Language educators and researchers may argue that it is only natural for a language learner to encounter difficulties and struggle with the interference from their L1. Legutke, et al. (2009:28) argue that this is:

[...] what comparison of the linguistic systems of the first and a new language by way of contrastive analysis demonstrated- an assumption which was supported by behaviourists who believed that language learning is habit formation. What learners would therefore need is correct input followed by intensive imitation of this input so that gradually new language habits would be formed.

Nonetheless, young language learners may make errors that are not necessarily a result of incorrect transfer of their L1 to the FL, but an indication that the learner is developing linguistic rules. Legutke, et al. (2009) mention the example drawn from their own research where a student used the word '*goed*' instead of '*went*' and placed an -s on the word children to make it plural. They may be at the stage where they begin to realise that these rules are not universally valid and that every rule in a language may have exceptions.

For many teachers, especially within the context in question, the fundamental nature of the language lies in grammar. Others believe that it is not necessary since most young learners cannot relate to grammar even after years of instruction of grammar rules. It would be beneficial if earlier research acted as a warning to those who may argue that any grammar teaching is better than none at all, where the outcomes can derive from actual language learning experience. Many teachers in

Greece consider themselves as grammarians and attempt to describe every rule (a synonym for *patterns*) and display its operation in an exceedingly systematic way. This is mostly due to the fact that this type of learning was introduced to the teachers themselves when they were language learners, and not necessarily YLs. Language teachers of the region would feel inadequate as an educator if they too did not account for well-formed, grammatically acceptable sentences. Interestingly, Byram (2004) refers to traditional grammar and the fact that it generated from Ancient Greece where it was considered “an external observation and analysis of the product, resulting in a form of classification” (Byram, 2004:249). It may be that Modern Greek education has continued to maintain these values regarding the importance of grammar. This matter will be addressed in the analysis of data.

The aim of this chapter was to review the literature that has an immediate connection with the research and context in which it was conducted. The portrayal of the issues mentioned can provide the reader with an outlook of the study and the chapters that will follow. The next chapter will present the research methodology applied for the collection of data. Taking into consideration the significance of design and validity in the choice of the research instruments, justification of the method of data collection will be included followed by a description of the data analysis. The ethical issues regarding the research procedure are also clarified.

## **Chapter 4: Research Methodology**

### **4.1 Introduction to the Course of Action and Organisation of the Study**

This chapter introduces, and includes a discussion of, the research design and methodological approach employed to investigate early language learning within a Greek regional context. A mixed method design (Cresswell, 2009) was developed in order to obtain the required data that could help answer the research questions. The research approaches are of equivalent value- one is not of superior merit to the other. By not depending on a single method, research results are more constructive, due to increased reliability and validity (Dörnyei, 2007). Additionally, by following a mixed method research approach, a fuller background description can be captured of the units under study. The perspective of the classroom nature and its social reality, where these phenomena are so entangled, is also increased. This research approach was essential to maintain the closeness to the situation which evidently permitted a greater understanding of the multiple sources of data. Due to the complexity of English language education in the region where the study took place, and to address the questions aforementioned in section 1.2, a mixed method research approach was designed to carry out the study and present data that will contribute not just to the understanding of the particular Greek situation but also to the field of early language learning in general. In this case, there has been an integration of different types of qualitative research supported by quantitative evidence. The qualitative research includes the interpretation of data from questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and an action-research inspired intervention study. This approach enabled the researcher to answer confirmatory and intervention research questions in the first phase of the study, as mentioned in section 1.2:

- 1a. Do state schools and private language schools in Greece provide language learning opportunities that facilitate the acquisition of key competences for young children?
- 1b. What are the aims of English for Young Learners (EYL) in Greek state and private language schools?



- 1c. Do teachers in Greece receive appropriate training for teaching young learners?
2. What are the elements of motivation for a child to learn a foreign language in private language/state schools?

In collaboration with the participants the researcher addressed the following research questions:

- 3a. What is the students' perceived goal, when they begin learning English?
- 3b. What are the parents' goals for their children when learning English?

Qualitative research generally “seeks understanding by observing phenomena in their natural settings” (Byram, 2004). The central aim to this approach is to “document the world from the point of view of the people studied” (Hammersley, 1992:45). Researchers such as Kumaravadivelu, 1993; Karavas-Doukas, 1996; Scholfield and Gitsaki, 1996; Papathanasiou, 2009; Peng and Zhang, 2009; have all utilized qualitative approaches in their studies in order to understand and study the complexity of the language classroom. Quantitative evidence provides the study with a variation which people show over time and across social and cultural contexts (Dörnyei, 2007). The most vital feature of quantitative research is its focus around numbers. According to Dörnyei (2007:32) ‘numbers are powerful, as attested to by the discipline of mathematics. Yet numbers are also rather powerless in themselves because in research contexts they do not mean anything without contextual *backing*’.

Action research, with the researcher as protagonist, has been introduced as an approach to improving education by taking action into changing it and learning from the outcomes and procedure of this change (Kemmis and McTaggart 1992). According to Mills (2003), action research is founded on a methodical, reflective and collaborative progression that examines school and classroom matters to plan and employ change. This combination allows the researcher to not only describe events, but explore the phenomena when they occur and provide a valid contribution and evaluation, with a view to improving the situation in question. In the case of the current study, qualitative research (including both the Phase 1 classroom study and Phase 2 action research) gave the researcher the opportunity to observe the given

situation, interact with the participants and gain insights and information from the participants' point of view and experience.

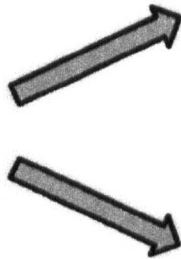
The following visual representations are used to clearly show the different phases of the research, the various types of data collecting tools in each phase, the number of participants and the time period for each phase of the research study.

**Table 1: Different Phases of the Study**

Phases of Study	Year	Schools	Participants	Data Collection Tools
Phase 1	2006-07	7 State Schools	151Ss-7Ts	Class Observations-Teacher Interviews
Phase 1	2006-07	7 Frodistiria	62Ss-7Ts	Class Observations-Teacher Interviews
Phase 2	2007-08	1 Frodistirio	130Ss-10Ts-1 DoS	Audio and video recordings, Researcher's 'Action' lessons, Questionnaires to all Phase 2 primary students and their parents, Interviews with DoS and Proficiency students, DoS observations of 'Action' lessons, Action Research Surveys to Phase 2 teachers, Class observations by researcher, Follow-up Phase 2 teachers' interviews, Follow-up new Proficiency student questionnaires 2 years later

**Table 2: Phase 1 Table of Research Instruments and Questions**

**Observation:**

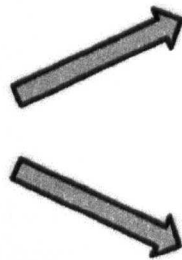


**Research Purpose:**

- a) Indication as to what extent do state schools & frodistiria provide language learning opportunities that facilitate the acquisition of key competencies for young children.
- b) Do teachers in Greece receive appropriate training for teaching young learners?

**Appendix 2, 3, 25**

**Teachers' Interviews:**





**Research Purpose:**


What are the aims of English for Young Learners (EYL) in Greek state schools & frodistiria?


**Appendix 4, 5**

Table 3: Phase 2 Table of Research Instruments and Questions

**Audio & video recordings of Researcher's 'Action lessons':**  **Research Purpose:**  
Effects of interactional & student-centred EYL classes  
**DVDs 1 & 2**

**Questionnaires to all (frodistiria) student:**  **Research Purpose:**  
a) What motivates a child to learn a foreign language in frodistiria?  
b) What is the student's' perceived goal, when they begin learning English?  
**Appendix 9, 10,11**

**Questionnaires to Intermediate & Beginners' primary students:**  **Research Purpose:**  
The effects of Intervention study  
**Appendix 13**

**Questionnaires to Intermediate & Beginners' parents:**  **Research Purpose:**  
What are the parents' goal for their children when learning English?  
**Appendix 9, 21**

**Table 3: Phase 2 Table of Research Instruments and Questions (continued)**

**Class observations – Action Research:**



**Research Purpose:**

Do teachers in Greece receive appropriate training for teaching young learners?



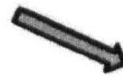
**Appendix 16, 17, 18, 19**

**Participant ‘Action Teacher’ Observations:**



**Research Purpose:**

Familiarising Teachers with Action Research.



**Appendix 19**

**Follow-up - Participant Students’ Questionnaires:**

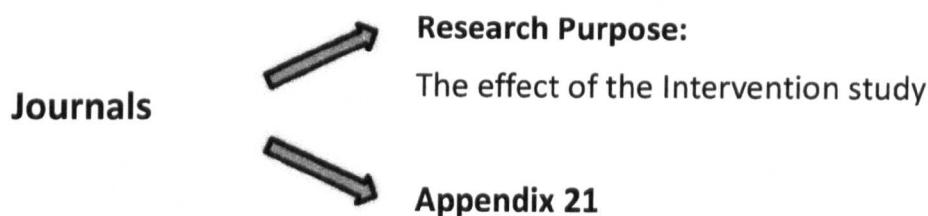
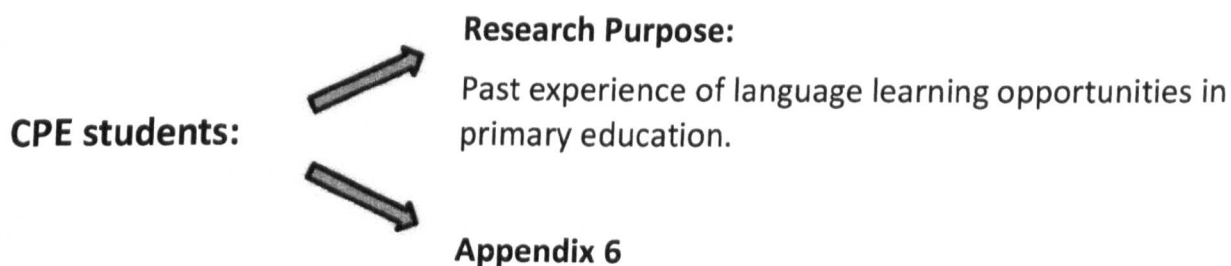
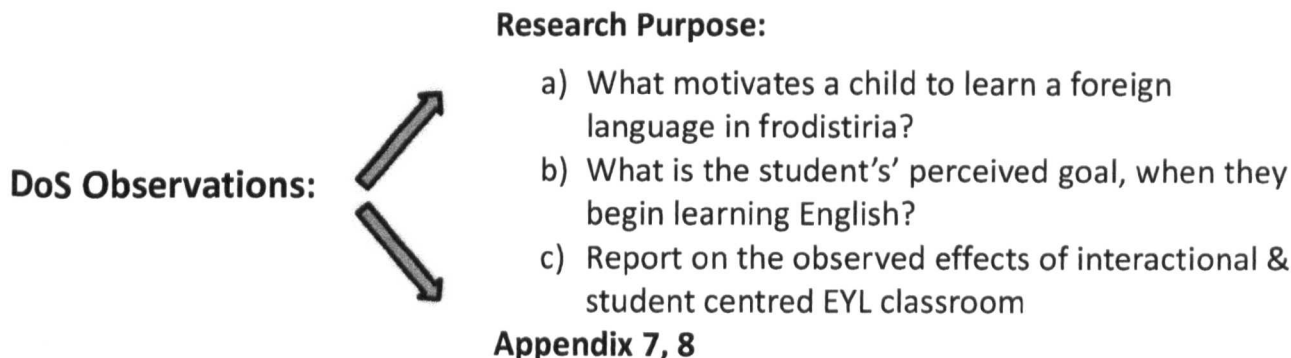


**Research Purpose:**

Facts, attitudes & opinions of participant students after the completion of the study.



**Appendix 23**



This mixed method strategy was considered to be the most appropriate for the present study, as it allowed the phenomena of early language learning to be analysed from different perspectives. According to Dörnyei (2007), the main advantage of applying a mixed method approach is that the researcher can bring out the strengths of one method which can be employed to overcome the weaknesses of the other. In the case of the current study, the researcher was given the opportunity to reach a better understanding of the target phenomenon by studying the matter from different angles. As shown in the tables above, the study was a mixed method sequential design (Cresswell, 2009) conducted over a two-year period where the researcher aimed to

'expand on the findings of one method with another method' (Creswell, 2009:14). Therefore, the intent of the present two-phase, sequential mixed methods study is to explore the reality of the language classroom in state schools and frodistiria within a Greek regional context, and expand on the findings with an intervention study completed in a frodistirio. Phase 1 and Phase 2 will be explained in detail in the following sections.

### **Phase 1**

The Phase 1 data collection took place in seven primary state schools and seven frodistiria in various areas of the region of South western Greece (the precise area of the study is not identified to maintain the anonymity of research participants). None of these schools/frodistiria were included in the Phase 2 study. Schools and frodistiria were selected to reflect a range of geographical and socio-economic backgrounds. The research included observations of English language lessons in both primary state schools and frodistiria, concentrating on young learners aged 7-11. The number of students in the language lessons observed in state schools was from 20-25 students and in frodistiria 5-12. The state school pupils that participated in the investigation studied in English language programmes in the morning. Language lessons at the frodistiria took place in the afternoons, serving the purpose of supplementing the morning language lessons. Additionally, semi-structured interviews with 14 English language teachers from all fourteen schools (state and frodistiria) were conducted, providing the opportunity to probe more deeply and explore the interviewee's opinions.

According to Chaudron (1988:23):

[...] whether an essentially qualitative or quantitative approach is preferred by a researcher, the research goal is to produce descriptions and interpretations of classroom events, and the relationship between them, that will be identified by others as real and meaningful for teachers, learners and learning.

In this research process, triangulation was mainly accomplished in two ways. Initially the data was gathered through a number of sources, strategies and procedures during the two phases of the study. In Phase 1, interviews with English language

teachers from state schools and frodistiria were conducted (first source) correlating with observations (second source). In Phase 2, observations, video/audio recordings, DoS/ Phase 2 teachers' interviews and questionnaires were used to gather data where there was a correlation between each data. Furthermore, as the data was collected, transcriptions of audio recordings of interviews, transcriptions and notes of classroom observations with the participants (language teachers) were returned to them for verification purposes and were later analysed after their approval. The data collected was returned to the language teachers to ensure there was an accurate record of data and to build coherent justification of the themes of the study associated with the research questions (Creswell, 2009). It was crucial to establish inter-rater reliability where the language teacher would review the evaluation and consistency of the researcher and come to an agreement regarding the validity of the data recorded (Selinger & Shohamy, 1989).

Parents (of Phase 1) were not included in the study and did not complete any type of questionnaire, nor did they take part in interviews, as requested by state school headteachers and directors of frodistiria. Semi-structured interviews with the English language teachers took place on the last morning of the observations (Appendix 4, Interview Questions & Appendix 5, Coded Interview Sample, Appendix 24 Biodata, Dates and Classroom Descriptions). The Phase 1 interviews were carried out in Greek, as this is what all teachers preferred. Detailed notes were made during the interviews, marking illuminating responses for the transcriptions of tape recordings, which have been used for cross-referencing. The entire conversation was audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim in Greek. One teacher from a state school and one from a frodistirio requested not to be audio-recorded and notes were taken during their interviews instead. Unstructured discussions supplemented the interviews (see Appendix 5 under the title 'Follow-up Notes') and opportunities were given for the observer to seek clarification and ask questions based on the data collected in observations. Teachers' answers were written up in detail immediately afterwards. Prior to each interview, the researcher noted the various conditions and circumstances under which tasks were performed. In order to obtain essential information effectively, a good rapport between the language teachers and the researcher was carefully established beforehand. Additionally, warm-up questions were included to ensure that teachers felt comfortable enough to share as much information, relating to



their views and experiences as possible. Each interview lasted twenty-five minutes to an hour depending on the amount of detail the participants were willing to offer. The aim of this part of the investigation was to explore the reality of language classrooms in depth.

## **Phase 2**

Phase 2 of the investigation introduces action research, which entailed monitoring, intervention and modification to classroom practice, exploring the perspective of shifting teaching and learning, providing potential of a new YLL philosophy within the Greek context. When implementing action research, the dilemmas and considerations were just as immense, since the action researcher was both a researcher and a teacher and was expected to perform a dual role in an environment where no variety of research had been conducted before. In the role of the teacher, the goal was to provide the pupil, parents and language institution with a service which met satisfactory standards. In the role of the researcher, the aim was to ensure identifying problematic situations or issues considered feasible of investigation, and intervene in the situations in question with the intention of producing critically informed changes in practice (Byram, 2004). In regards to action research, there have been accusations of unavoidable researcher bias in the gathering and analysis of data (Waters-Adams, 2006). Nevertheless, Nunan (1992) argues that action research is justified on research grounds since it consists of a problem, question or hypothesis, data analysis and interpretation of data. The scientific rigor of this type of research is assured by verifying findings and submitting them to others (McNiff, 1994). If other researchers and critical colleagues agree with the interpretations the data reveals, the more valid the study becomes which could be true for any form of research for that matter (Cousin, 2000). In the current study, there was a specific focus on two groups of children. One class of beginners aged 7-9 and a class of intermediate students aged 9-11. The two levels were chosen in order to investigate the element of change with a group that had experience of language learning in this context and a group that was about to start. The intermediate group had been studying English at the frodistirio for 4 years and parallel to this, 3 years at (state) school.

A research journal was kept during the course of the study to keep a record of a rich and detailed account of various routine procedures, phases of daily lessons and record any particularly interesting or theoretically significant events (see coded samples in Appendix 22). Lessons were video-recorded in order to observe students' involvement, enthusiasm and daily progress (see DVDs 1 & 2). Selected speaking tasks were audio-recorded with the intention of analyzing participants' oral skills (see sample in Appendix 15) which were transcribed verbatim and returned to participants for verification. The recordings were initiated by the teacher who provided an audio-recorder to one group per task. The students did not record themselves nor did they have the autonomy to decide what to do during the research (see procedure in DVD 2). The Phase 2 participant students (Beginners & Intermediate) were given follow-up questionnaires (Appendix 23) with the aim of gathering data and insights on how they view the foreign language and how an alternative approach has made a difference in their language learning. The follow-up questionnaires were distributed two years after the study was completed. The beginners had reached intermediate level and the original intermediate students were of proficiency level when the follow-up took place.

A group of older learners attending English proficiency classes for the preparation of Certificate of Proficiency Examinations (CPE), aged 14-15 years old, based in the frodistirio, were also interviewed on their past experience of English language learning in state schools and frodistiria. The interviews, which lasted thirty to forty minutes, consisted of open-ended questions and enabled the participants to elaborate on important issues, which will be discussed later on (interview sample in Appendix 6). The CPE interviews were also audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. Once the interviews were transcribed, they were returned to the students for validation. Since the action research took place at a frodistirio, where I was also a teacher, it was possible to control the environment in which distractions and noises were avoided while the interviews were conducted. Once interviews were transcribed they were returned to the students and their parents to review and approve.

The Director of the frodistirio (DoS), where the action research took place, observed 10 of the researcher's language lessons during the period of the investigation. These observations provide feedback on students' reactions to interactive tasks from an external reviewer. The observer (DoS) kept notes on

observation sheets (see Appendix 7) and within a twenty-four hour period provided me with feedback sheets where the observer was encouraged to clarify ideas, comment on the children's progress and make suggestions for future development. Parents of all young learners at the Phase 2 frodistirio (a total of 80 students) in addition to the parents of the beginners and intermediate students, who took part in the Phase 2 study, were requested to complete a questionnaire at the end of the school year, regarding their children's progress and their feelings of the new methods introduced. The researcher distributed questionnaires to all parents of young learners and not only to those whose children were the immediate focus of the Phase 2 study (Beginners & Intermediate) in order to gather a larger amount of data in order to provide the reader with a more valid answer to research question 1a (Do state schools and private language schools in Greece provide language learning opportunities that facilitate the acquisition of key competences for young children?) and 3a (What are the parents' goals for their children when learning English?) as shown in Figure 6. Since the researcher was encouraged not to involve the Phase 1 parents in the study, Phase 2 parents were all given questionnaires even if their children were not in the Beginners or Intermediate group, who were the focus of the intervention study. The data was important in order to include parental influences in early language learning in the region and the Phase 2 parents were the only accessible source. The questionnaires and a cover letter were given to the children to distribute to their parents in order to ensure a high number of them being returned to the researcher. 80 sets of Phase 2 parents received questionnaires and 80% of them were returned (see Appendix 9 with translations for questionnaires distributed to all parents of young learners and Appendix 21 for the parents of Beginners and Intermediate students). The questionnaire was designed after the Phase 1 study took place and four months after the Phase 2 study had begun. The purpose for this was to address issues of early language learning and teaching as the study unfolded so as to collect data that would contribute to the study. For this reason, the questionnaires were not piloted as they were developed specifically for the Phase 2 parents who would receive them with an immediate focus on the research taking place at the time.

The young, teenage and adult language learners who attended classes at the Phase 2 frodistirio were requested to complete questionnaires (see Appendix 10) which were not the same to those distributed to Phase 2 parents. The students' questionnaires

focused on their lessons both at the frodistirio and primary state schools (older students were requested to answer questions regarding their primary language learning experience), and how these lessons were carried out. A total of 116 questionnaires were given to all students of all ages at the end of the school year and were returned immediately. Item analysis was completed at the pilot stage to examine the quality of items included in the questionnaires. Additionally, because of the immediate analysis, I was able to obtain information regarding whether the items were clear, well phrased, easily understood and not repetitive with the CPE students' interview questions. All questionnaires and interviews were in Greek and, later on, translated.

### **Data Analysis**

The data analysis of the Phase 1 and Phase 2 study were performed separately (Dörnyei, 2003). In Phase 1, semi-structured interviews with teachers were conducted, as mentioned above, which were transcribed into text and formatted so that the margin could be used for classifying individual parts of data. The text was read and items of interest were noted. The procedure was carried out as follows:

- An initial reading of the transcribed text was conducted which allowed themes to emerge from the data gathered. During the first reading, major issues were noted in order to acquire an understanding of the various topics found in the data.
- The text was re-read and thoughts were annotated in the margin (Appendix 5). The text was examined closely to facilitate a micro-analysis of the data. At this point, open-coding was used to identify new information.
- Axial coding was then used, which involves creating categories and making connections between categories (Richards, 2003:276). This was done by considering the research questions and drawing on the major themes of the study.
- The final construction of each theme was re-examined.

The data gathered from the classroom observations were analysed in an analogous manner (Appendix 3). The observation notes were transferred into field notes which were thematically analysed to facilitate the procedure of data analysis. Themes emerged from the data and were then annotated in the margin. The same means were used to analyse the observation sheets (Appendix 2). The analyses of Phase 2 data of interviews, observations and audio/video recordings have undergone an identical analysis to the Phase 1 data. As a first step, the transcripts from audio and video recordings were summarized and placed into categories. Content analysis was then used to analyze the data, a method which according to Patton involves “identifying, coding and categorizing the primary patterns of the data” (Patton, 1990:381). The observation sheets, coding forms and questionnaires were also summarized and put into categories under different headings. The responses from questionnaires were organised and consolidated (Appendix 11). The answers were placed in columns which facilitated the process of calculating numbers and percentages of reoccurring answers where responses were categorized into themes. Finally, the Phase 2 journal notes were annotated in the margin from which themes were emerged and categorised (Appendix 22).

In order to understand the outcomes of the investigation, it is essential to introduce the participants of the study and outline their background. In the following section, the ethical considerations are presented and explained as to how the research is valid and there was a careful consideration of any potential bias in the findings.

## **4.2 Ethics in Educational Research**

When conducting research in a setting where children are involved, care and precision are essential. Conducting qualitative research in the primary level can prove to be a great challenge to research traditions. In this case, the challenge could be greater since research in the particular context was not known as a means of support for educational development; it was vital to the study that the approach was managed

in such a way that the research did not become invasive and remained ethically defensible. The participants were not only in need of security and protection, without exception, but also of a research procedure that would not overwhelm them and would reduce the risk of feeling threatened.

Privacy and confidentiality were respected throughout the study, in accordance with the ethical guidelines which adhere to the professional codes of practice and compliance with the 1998 Data Protection Act (DPA). Before the research commenced, advance information on the study was given in writing, in order to inform the respondents on all points and no relevant information was withheld from the parents, DoS and teachers regarding my research and my relation to the owner of the frodistirio. All participants that took part in both Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the research were assured that their willingness to participate in the study would not affect their grade or their relationship with the school. Students and teachers were provided with Participation Information Sheets and Consent forms which were signed by all parents, teachers and DoS prior to the commencement of the investigation. I was obliged to keep the anonymity and privacy of all research participants. The British Educational Research Association in article 9 states:

The Association considers that educational researchers should operate within an ethic of respect for any persons involved in the research they are undertaking. Individuals should be treated *fairly*, sensitively, with dignity, and within an ethic of respect and freedom from prejudice regardless of age, gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, class, nationality, cultural identity, partnership status, faith, disability, political belief or any other political difference. This ethic of respect should apply to both the researchers themselves and any individuals participating in the research either directly or indirectly.

All participants (students, parents and teachers) were assigned a number in order to ensure their identities remained anonymous. They were assured both orally and in writing that no identifying information would be used in the study and that the information they provided me with would be used for the needs of this research only and held the right to withdraw from the investigation at any time. By not revealing the name of the institutions of where both part of the research took place, I have shown respect for the rights of those directly or indirectly affected and have protected all research subjects as is demanded by ethical conduct. Furthermore, the headmasters of state schools and the frodistiria's Directors were provided with the necessary

information in written form. Additionally, informed consent from parents and students who took part in the action research was gained for the use of tape and video recording.

The researcher had a personal involvement with the frodistirio that took part in the research of Phase 2 (intervention/action research), as it is under family ownership. The study was conducted in the frodistirio in question, due to the fact that research studies are not common in the region, particularly in this context. Other frodistiria owners were reluctant to take part in the Phase 2 study. They were uncertain of whether I would manage to balance the demands of my research with my professional demands, and were not prepared to take the risk this type of research entailed. At the Phase 2 frodistirio, I was allowed to carry out the study to a great extent, as long as data collection and the introduction of new teaching approaches did not undermine the students' learning and did not make any of the participants feel uneasy. The children were in a comfortable, non-threatening environment where they were encouraged to express their creativity and experience new aspects of language learning. We had lessons together every week for an entire school year, where the students had the time to grow accustomed and familiar with their language teacher/researcher. Throughout the study, I was clear about the criteria of the research which only enhanced the transparency of my goals and enabled participants to better understand my values and interests.

Additionally, my research can be validated through the triangulation of the study as a whole where multiple data sources were critical in establishing data trustworthiness since the institution where the intervention study took place was not the only institution or research involved. Seven other frodistiria and seven state schools also participated in Phase 1 of the study and had no connection to the researcher's family. I aimed to be objective and systematic with constant review and checking by language teachers who participated in the study throughout the research. My only intention was to capture the richness and the variety of the lived experience and the complexity of the social world of the language classroom within the region.

### 4.3 The Participants of the Study

The effect of the participants' perceptions of language learning and education in general can provide those responsible with positive contributions on learning and teaching. As the study began to take place and information was gathered from parents, teachers and students, the results of the language learning situation became clear. For the needs of the Phase 1 study, seven state school language teachers and seven language teachers from *frodistiria* offered their classrooms for observations. Six out of seven state school language teachers were Greek, with one being Belgian of Greek descent. All state school teachers had completed their studies in Greek Universities and only one had a postgraduate degree. This is mentioned because the procedure of teaching staff selection in state schools differs greatly from that of *frodistiria*. According to Chryshochoos & Chourdaki (2003), the 1998 Educational Reform in Greece modified procedures for the recruitment of teaching staff. From 1977-1998, teachers were placed on a waiting list, to be recruited according to the date of their application for appointment in the school. Now, selection is based on national examinations known as ASEP. Foreign language teachers recruited at state schools are university graduates and, according to the language teachers interviewed for this study, no further training is provided before they are employed. Mainstream primary school teachers, however, are obliged to undertake a pre-service course in education before they complete their studies at university, as mentioned in chapter 1. Nevertheless, according to governmental policies, foreign language teachers in the public sector have all the accoutrements to teach in a state primary school. Language teachers who wish to teach in the public sector but hold a university degree of a foreign university must undertake courses at a Greek university followed by examinations. If the candidate is successful, the government then recognizes their degree of equal quality to that of a Greek university and language professionals may be considered for a teaching position in a state school.

The situation in the private sector is quite different. Six out of seven teachers were Greek, with one being Australian of Greek descent. None of the teachers held a university degree from a Greek university; however, two teachers had completed their studies in the United Kingdom. The other five teachers held a certificate of



proficiency in English by either Cambridge or Michigan University. Teachers who hold a language certificate are granted a teaching license from the Greek Ministry of Education and are only licensed to teach in the private sector. They do not necessarily undertake any other form of teacher training and in most cases, if teachers wish to attend teacher development programmes they do so by funding it themselves.

The learners of both state schools and *frodistiria* that participated in the study were of beginner and intermediate level of English and shared the same first language, which is the country's official language. As mentioned earlier, 88% of students in the country attend language lessons in both state schools and *frodistiria* while the rest depended on state schools for their language teaching. In interviews, the state school language teachers stated that the number of children that did not attend *frodistiria* was due to financial difficulties the families were facing and not because they entrusted their children's language learning to state schools. According to Mattheoudakis & Alexiou (2009), a highly unique feature of foreign language education in Greece is a thriving private sector where students attend their language lessons after mainstream school. The high percentage of children who do attend private language institutions indicates the dissatisfaction that exists regarding language teaching in state schools.

The following section focuses and elaborates on the first phase of the study that was conducted in seven state schools and seven *frodistiria*. The purpose of this section is to provide a clear outlook of the Phase 1 research design, conducted in the 7 state schools and private language schools.

#### **4.4 Qualitative Research in Primary State Schools and *Frodistiria***

Qualitative research methods first originated from the field of anthropology and sociology with a focus on human behaviour, the behaviour researched was expected to occur naturally rather than being elicited in an experimental set-up. The research is not meant to affect the participants' normal behaviour. Therefore, these methods would present data from the perception of the participants so that bias would not change the interpretation and presentation of the data gathered (Jacob, 1987).

Qualitative research offers the potential of gaining new knowledge through the dynamic reflection on what observations of the language classroom can disclose. In research on education, it cannot be assumed that the course of knowledge is predetermined; according to Bailey (2010:31), education unavoidably presumes philosophical work in the theory of education and in the researcher's epistemology, where various claims are analysed critically. Furthermore, he argues that:

[...] failure to engage in such philosophical thinking results in the reduction of learning to the ability to memorize and to repeat propositions or formulae, to meet behavioural targets, without the deeper understanding of a particular way of knowing.

Philosophy involves the use of reason in investigating claims and judgments. It is particularly concerned with the understanding of what knowledge consists of and how it can be achieved as well as the nature of what is considered reality. The role of philosophy is not to perform experiments; it is to explore how we think and the assumptions underlying this thinking. In regards to the current research, I could not be aware, in advance, of what might be found and whether the initial questions asked were the right ones. As a researcher, I viewed it as necessary to involve the participants' reality in the investigation in order to bring clarity to thought and make a robust argument of the changes that need to be made in the language classroom, and to construct the groundwork for successful language learning in Greece. This approach can confirm that by entering the discourse, research is valuable and offers clarification for the future of language learning within the Greek regional context where the research of the current study took place. It might have also been discovered that what was taken to be an essential reality of the classroom situation, turned out to be just one aspect while new possibly more important aspects of reality emerged which my initial research questions prohibited me from noticing.

The current intervention research aims to discover new insights and study social events, looking at their interconnections, control and predict events. The key elements of qualitative research are concerned with in-depth understanding, intended to penetrate to the deeper significance of the topic being investigated and includes methods that contain close contact and provide detailed and rich data. Systematic observations, meaning "planned, ordered and public" (Shank, 2002:5), were conducted in language classrooms in state schools and frodistiria. Good (1988: 337)

states that “one role of observational research is to describe what takes place in classrooms in order to delineate the complex practical issues that confront practitioners”. As Audi (2011) has illustrated, for understanding the world around us we acquire knowledge of colours, shapes, objects and events, people and their actions through observation. This approach can also be employed to justify the purpose, a belief one can use in order to justify the purpose of a research study in education where a situation can be observed either in a classroom or in an education system in general. The observations were implemented to acquire a sample that encompassed language learning approaches that exist in primary Greek education. Systematic observations were carried out in both the private and public sector, in order to collect data that would lead to identifying weaknesses and develop language learning in the region. The data collected from classroom observations was supplemented with interviews with teachers, procedures which are used for gathering oral data on particular topics and data that was not anticipated at the phase of research planning (Brown, 2001). The interviews were conducted subsequent to the other observations. The main areas of discussion were (a protocol of interviews is shown in Appendix 4):

- Teachers’ perception of teaching strategies used with young learners.
- Teachers’ perceptions of the impact of student interaction and student-centred lessons.
- Teachers’ responses to proposed changes designed to increase students’ motivation.
- The support they have from teaching material to expand on creative activities from a linguistic and pedagogic point of view.
- Government support.
- What the characteristics of class activities are.

The qualitative research tools were used in understanding and exploring a world of human experience. The aim was to investigate the social world of the language classroom from the viewpoint of the respondents, through their distinct actions and the meaning of their observable behaviour (Wildemuth, 1993). The Phase 1 study in this case is a pre-experimental study to collect data from various schools and foreign language institutions which would give the researcher a complete idea of the language learning situation within the region and provide valuable insights for the second part

of the investigation, therefore, findings of the Phase 1 research have provided methodological foundation for the Phase 2 research.

#### **4.5 Intervention Research at the Frodistirio and the Potential of Change**

In this section of the chapter, the Phase 2 of the research method chosen for the completion of the study is introduced, serving as a pilot study model for a different approach to language learning within a context where locally based language educators considered this approach could not be applied. This part of the study considers monitoring, intervention and modification to classroom practice.

Chamot et al. (1998) propose that language teachers develop insights into language learning by observing students' behaviour. Reflective teachers may analyse these behaviours, identify potential problems and difficulties students may have, alter their teaching practices, and evaluate their results. Some ideas may succeed and others may fail. This process is known, as was briefly introduced above, as 'action research'. This form of research first emerged in Britain in the 1970's where the work of Lawrence Stenhouse, a British Educational thinker, was a major influence; he believed in promoting an active role for teachers with the aim of meeting educational needs (Stenhouse, 1975). Nowadays, participants in educational development are increasingly choosing action research as a way of being involved in the solution needed. For example, Breen, (1985); van Lier, (1988); Allwright and Bailey, (1991); McDonough, (1995) and Freeman, (1998) have presented reflective studies that develop alongside the research area of teacher knowledge, cognition and beliefs. This desire to consider real-world experiences of people in natural settings was the basis on which action research was first developed. Kurt Lewin, a German social psychologist, first attributed the notion of action research as being an alternative to phenomenological and positivist approaches in research methodology. Lewin (1948) defines action research as the investigation of a problem that is significant to all participants. The teachers and the students equally share a stake in the result by taking an active role in the research procedure in which change is the primary objective of their involvement (Nunan, 1990). Lewin's approach consists of a spiral of steps "each

of which is composed of planning, action and fact finding about the result of the action” (Lewin, 1948: 206). Knowledge can no longer solely be a quantifiable goal but a developmental process, which is what action research offers and the reason that I, as a researcher, considered the data of action research valuable.

Systematic and collaborative collection of evidence takes place, where researchers implement the solution in question and consequently gather evidence after considerate planning. The observer intervenes with the situation he/she is researching. The interference is not neutral to the research question but aims to bring about what is being researched, i.e. better practice. The researcher then tries to understand the complexity of interactions in one situation rather than the effect of a small number of factors in many situations. Action can provide change and research can provide understanding of a current situation and its possible need for improvement. This form of self-reflective inquiry can be used in such circumstances where the teachers’ practice can endure the introduction of various teaching approaches, all the while linking practice and its analysis into a developing sequence. To some extent a personal choice of research methodology is a suggestion of one’s epistemological stand. Language educators, and educators in general, should regularly reflect on their teaching, their capabilities, dispositions, beliefs and methods they apply and not only consider resources they are given. My personal commitment as a researcher and language teacher was to ensure that my pupils’ voices could be heard so that evidence can be gathered. I believed it to be helpful if by listening to the students, teachers would benefit and be able to build an informed strategy where they could make changes in the language classroom. This commitment is a belief in students’ capability of becoming able learners given the opportunity, with methods that are appropriate to them.

In the current study, action research was used to support a critical reflection which, in turn, would aim to change not only the immediate environment which was the classroom where the research took place, but language learning in the wider community (Rainey, 2000). The action research dimension considered monitoring, intervention and modification to classroom practice, exploring the perspective of shifting teaching and learning, providing potential of a new YLL philosophy within the Greek context, and raising research awareness. The findings of the action research are divided into sections, where the discussion focuses on dissimilar teaching methods

to those recorded in state schools and frodistiria. In other words, an alternative teaching approach is proposed, with the potential for developing more successful language learners within this context. The action research conducted in the frodistirio set out to evaluate the potential for change in the method and attitude towards language learning. The Phase 2 research took place in a frodistirio and not in a state school because the procedure for gaining a teaching position, as mentioned earlier, is complicated and could be a long and uncertain process. Of course, conducting research at the Phase 2 frodistirio was not as complicated because of my relation to the owner, nonetheless, I had a great responsibility where I had to consider the fact that the Director's main concern is maintaining the success of the business, therefore, presentations were given on the procedure of the action research and letters were sent to all parents involved in order to inform them on ethical grounds with the option of not participating if they did not approve. Fortunately, there was no such request.

My target in this part of the study was to enhance a student-centred environment, where the children would be encouraged to reach goals that were closer to their interests and reality. The Phase 2 language teachers, in the frodistirio where I worked and conducted the intervention study, participated in five workshops in order to be trained for action research which could give them new ideas to implement in class and give their lessons a more interactive and cooperative note. Once teachers realise the advantages of a student-centred environment and the techniques to applying it they could add variety to their lessons and accomplish professional fulfillment when they witness their students' enthusiasm and development. Additionally, by including the workshops in the study, the reader is provided with additional background of teachers' prior training. The professional development was observed during the course of the study, and the outcomes contributed to providing the reader with valuable insights of the early language teaching situation in the region.

The year following the research in state schools, the Phase 2 research study was conducted for one school year, to explore and evaluate the potential impact of creating a more interactive language learning environment. As mentioned in section 4.1, research took place at a frodistirio, focusing on two groups of children. One class of beginners, aged 7-9, and a class of intermediate students level, aged 9-11. The two groups were chosen to facilitate the gathering of information based on the student experience and on how they would respond and develop when exposed to different

classroom techniques from those they were accustomed to, not only in language learning but their general education as well.

The beginners group, having had no experience of language learning, was expected to accept a new environment and adapt to it gradually, whereas the intermediate pupils, having had experience in language learning at the *frodistirio* and at school, were expected to be less adaptable. Furthermore, my intention was to return to the *frodistirio* after a two year period of absence (September 2010) and observe the participants progress and feelings towards the foreign language. At this stage, the intermediate group would have taken their initial language examination where if students are successful, they are presented with a choice of continuing their studies and preparing themselves for English language proficiency examinations. The beginners would have reached an intermediate level where they would have gained language learning experience and a well formed idea of their feelings towards the foreign language and its culture. I aimed to increase the participants' attention and motivation by introducing the language as a new skill they would acquire, not only because one day they would be tested on it, which they were fully aware of despite their young age, but also because it would offer a new means of communication.

The main areas of focus were to observe curriculum tasks, their views of classroom layout, the language learning environment, their relationships and friendships, levels of linguistic difficulty and views on teaching material. The overall aim is to provide a rich and detailed account of various routine procedures, phases of daily lesson and record any particularly interesting or theoretically significant events. Fortunately, as a researcher, I had the opportunity to enjoy this advantage as a result of my relation to the owner of the *frodistirio*. Freedom for experimenting was given as I attempted to redefine language learning at the specific *frodistirio* with the Director's approval, who was cooperative and open to innovative, to this context, ideas brought into the classroom, as long as the course books were not dismissed. It was important for the DoS and parents that the course books were completed two months prior to the end of the academic year. Once the students had completed their course books, it automatically meant they could start the syllabus for the next level and purchase the appropriate books. This resulted in the students completing their studies rapidly and sitting the language examinations they had been preparing for. Even with the use of the assigned books, I found that there were means of making

instructional choices drawing on personalized and context-sensitive networks of knowledge and beliefs. I did make use of the course books during the research and was selective as to what could be used and tasks that could be introduced in a student-centred environment where students could cooperate and work on a task. It was important to organise the time, so that I would be able to work on the books and the material chosen to introduce for the needs of the research. Prior to when the action research commenced, a curriculum was created where I would present teaching approaches and aspects of the language that were not observed in any of the state schools or frodistiria during the academic year when the Phase 1 study took place. Nunan (1999:75) states that language learners:

[language learners] in classrooms characterised by a transmission model of learning are cast in a relative passive role. They are passengers, being carried forward in the language experience by the teacher. In language classrooms operating with such a transmission mode, learners practice patterns provided by teachers, textbooks, and tapes. They are thus cast into passive reproductive roles. Rather than learning how to use language creatively themselves, they spend most learning time copying and reproducing language written down by others. They learn how to communicate in model and predictable situations, but they don't learn how to respond appropriately in novel and authentic communicative situations.

Even though the participants were not aware of it at the time, the need for materials outside the content of the course book and suitable tasks for use with young learners grew. Action research, in this case, also helped the teachers and the DoS seek alternative options in introducing projects that aim to draw upon all aspects of the children's life. Language learners of this age can engage in projects which demand that they take responsibility for their learning. By including these projects in the language lessons the level of the child's personal involvement becomes higher and can consequently enhance motivation (Philips et al, 1999). As Wallace (1998) has stated, action research is problem-focused and arises from explicit dilemmas and issues within professional practice. Systematic approaches and techniques will help researchers make sense of their experiences and through this structured reflection they may come to a solution, without implying that an educator will be able to find an answer for every professional problem; some can only be studied, some we would have to walk away from and some we will just have to accept. This type of research differs from other forms because it involves a collection and analysis of data related to



an aspect of professional practice, so as to reflect on what has been discovered and apply it to professional action.

As a further dimension of this research study, all teachers of the *frodistirio* were encouraged to observe the researcher's lessons once a month, during which they were asked to take notes of tasks they felt they could perform in their own classes and methods they would like to adopt to improve their lessons. Two months prior to the end of the academic year, I conducted observations of these teachers' classes, during which they adopted a student-centred approach. It was evident that the teachers felt nervous at first. For this reason I did not take the first two lessons under consideration because the teachers needed their time to become used to the idea of observations, since this was something completely new to them. Once they felt more comfortable, data would be recorded. As the lessons progressed, the language teachers became more confident. By the end of their lessons, they were more able to ignore being observed and had become entirely involved in the lesson and the outcomes.

In summary, the mixed method strategy was identified as the most appropriate for the present study. It helped provide information of the reality that exists in the language classrooms in the region and experiment by including communicative methods as well. The following chapter of the thesis provides the reader with an analysis of the Phase 1 research data gathered during classroom observations and teachers' interviews. In the light of the findings, the research questions posed in Chapter 1 are reiterated and addressed. The data indicated a number of differences and similarities between the state and private sector, and raised various issues which, if appropriately addressed, can improve language learning within the regional context and Greece in general.

## **Chapter 5: Preliminary Research into Greek EYL State Classrooms**

The present chapter addresses challenges and teaching practices in language learning within a Greek context in state schools and *frodistiria*, as recorded in Phase 1, which was the exploratory portion of the study. There will be a focus on findings

regarding a number of fundamental questions, such as whether state schools and *frodistiria* are providing learning methods appropriate to the age group in question. The chapter will begin by identifying the English language classroom environment in state schools and *frodistiria*. Then, findings will be presented regarding classroom management and organisation, the use of the mother tongue, the use of target language and the effects of a teacher-centred learning environment. These findings will be presented in consideration to the learner, the parents and the teachers who participated in the study.

### **5.1 The English Language Classroom Environment in State Schools**

One main focus of the research was to investigate the environment where language teaching took place. Since the classroom is a place of learning, it may play an important role in affecting the child's attitude.

The nature of the state school classrooms observed was quite similar from school to school. It was clear, and the seven state school English language teachers verified this, they were considered visitors to these classrooms and only mainstream teachers could organise the environment of the classroom as they desired. Only two classrooms from schools SS.14 and SS.16 revealed signs of language learning taking place. Teacher 16a was provided with her own classroom. The two other language teachers had a few English posters on the walls of their classrooms, while other language teachers did not attempt change and revealed that they did not want a dispute over such matters with their colleagues. Language teachers were expected to keep a distance from the structure of the classroom, which makes it difficult to make alterations in the classroom's environment, even though this may make a difference and have an impact on the language lesson.

The year the observations began (2007), the Greek Ministry of Education had altered the mainstream Greek syllabus by introducing the use of new course books designed to encourage mainstream teachers in state schools to apply an interactive approach to learning in their classrooms. The drawback to this rather radical attempt, since the Greek education system has been known to be very traditional in its

approaches in primary education, is that mainstream teachers had limited guidance on how to put this into practice, manage and organise group work. Although some did put effort into adopting a new environment in their classrooms, their enthusiasm soon faded when they realised that they were not prepared for the problems associated with group work and were not aware of how to prevent the problems from occurring.

This attempt of change for the Greek syllabus also had an impact on the English language lessons even though there was no change in the English language curriculum or syllabus, and no input on how to implement and manage the situation since the English language teachers and mainstream teachers shared classes and classrooms. The English language teachers interviewed mentioned that nothing has been done to improve the quality of English language teaching in state schools, as indicated in the following extract:

*Teacher 11a: I wouldn't say that there has been a turn towards better language learning. The Ministry of Education does give promises each year that the course book will change but we are still using the same book since the early 90's which was known as an experimental course book at the time. Furthermore, students in primary schools should be ranked into different levels of English, as it is done in Secondary schools, not that it would make a world of difference but it could be a good start.*

Most of the classroom seating arrangements followed what is considered the norm in primary state schools in Greece, especially in this region: a traditional teacher-fronted structure, columns and rows of desks and chairs with pupils facing their teacher and her desk. This specific layout was most convenient for teachers who wished to apply a teacher-centred lesson where students were being *examined*, a term used in Greek classrooms. An example of this occurred during the study when three of the teachers were observed holding a notebook, asking students theoretical questions on grammatical phenomena and recording the accuracy of their answers, which they would use to evaluate their overall performance at the end of the semester when parents were given their children's school reports. Other classrooms followed a different layout which had no specific purpose or organisation pattern. The structure was mostly chaotic as some classrooms attempted to present an ad hoc cluster of chairs and desks, as displayed in Figure 4 in chapter 3, and others a semi-circular seating as displayed in Figure 2, even though teachers did not desire children to

interact. These structures were not kept in their initial form and desks were arbitrarily set without being placed back, resulting in the learners often not having any sense of spatial organisation and positions appropriate for any type of communicative or cooperative activity. Additionally, seating arrangements had not changed from the beginning of the academic year for any activity or purpose, even though desks and chairs were movable.

The classroom environment was a neglected source in the context and even though this was evident to the researcher's eye, when interviewed, the teachers expressed their anxiety for other matters that they felt were of greater importance such as a poor syllabus, outdated course books and lack of facilities, to name a few. Within this context, teachers appeared to have abandoned the idea of improving the classroom: firstly, as all teachers stated, the buildings were relatively old and secondly, because language teachers in state schools were considered outsiders, where teachers entered the classroom as guests for 45 minutes and were requested not to change anything because this would disrupt the course of the rest of the lessons. Five out of seven language teachers stated that their lessons were considered an intermission for mainstream teachers and students. They believe children to be less motivated to participate in any way since they attended language lessons at *frodistiria* in the afternoons, in classes with fewer students who were all of the same language level. Neither students nor parents take English language learning in state schools seriously due to a long established tradition; parents entrust their children's foreign language learning to private language institutions which run in the afternoons, after mainstream school. According to Scholfield and Gitsaki, *frodistiria*'s:

[...] success in the teaching of English seems not to be founded on overwhelmingly better teaching or learner training. It is perhaps the stricter environment with more class tests and greater discipline: parents pay fees and demand from English teachers that there is no wasting of time during classes. It is also the smaller number of students per classroom, and the greater number of teaching sessions. Above all it is the fact that typically attendance at a Private Institute of Foreign Languages is supplementary to, rather than in place of, attendance at a primary state school (Scholfield & Gitsaki, 1996:126).

Since the parents' and students' main focus is on the language lessons that take place in *frodistiria*, which would mean that since there are more lessons a week compared to state schools, *frodistiria* have a more rapid pace and the curriculum in

frodistiria manages to cover more than in state schools. This results in repetition and students losing interest in lessons at state schools, since they are considered undemanding with no challenge. Therefore, as children progress at frodistiria, they lose faith in their English language lessons at state schools and see no reason for making any effort.

Teacher 11a: *The private language school lessons move rapidly, which means that some children are more proficient than others, especially by the time they have reached Year 6, where students have an indifferent attitude towards their English lesson at school. They believe that since they get good grades in their private language school it does not really matter what grade they get at school.*

Teacher 12a: *When I first started teaching in a state school, I thought I had made the biggest mistake of my life. One minute, you are an important educator, working in a frodistirio, and the next no one asks about their children's progress and the students themselves doubt everything you say in class and may even correct your English because their teacher in the frodistirio said something different, therefore you are the one who is wrong.*

Teacher 13a: *The Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs does say that we should use a more communicative approach, but how do you do that in a class that pays no attention to you?*

The following section reviews the classroom environment in frodistiria and compares the similarities and differences that were revealed during observations.

## **5.2 The English Language Classroom Environment in Frodistiria**

Before revealing findings of the Phase 1 in frodistiria, it is essential to present information regarding the nature of the institutions. Language learning in frodistiria is examination-oriented and from a very young age, children are gradually exposed to instruction following internationally recognised examination syllabuses. Greek pupils endure preparation for English language examinations accredited by the British

Council and the Hellenic American Union, among others, with the intention of achieving formal certification used for professional purposes later on. The aim is to prepare students for language examinations as rapidly as possible to avoid burdening students with additional lessons later on, when reaching the stage of preparing for the very demanding University Entrance Examinations. During the final two years of secondary school, students in Greece are exposed to preparation for the University Entrance Examinations parallel to their schooling. They attend private institutions in the afternoons with the intention of focusing on the subjects they will be assessed on in the final examinations. For this reason, language learning must be completed and language certificates acquired prior to the period of university examination preparation. In cases where students do not succeed in acquiring a language certificate in time, they simply discontinue their language lessons and focus on their entrance examinations. If they successfully enter University, they then resume their language lessons and retake their examinations with the intention of obtaining a certificate which is considered vital in the Greek job market.

In focus of the current study, observations revealed a number of differences between state schools and *frodistiria*. *Frodistiria*, as language institutions, focused entirely on languages. The posters on the walls, the voices of listening tasks coming from classrooms and students' drawings of London or Paris were only a few indications of the emphasis on a foreign language environment. It is important to mention that students of all ages can attend and are separated into groups depending on their linguistic level and the age group they belong in. *Frodistiria* classify the different age groups in different periods of the day, where young learners are requested to attend their language lessons early in the afternoon whereas teenagers and adults attend their lessons later on. These schedules are expected of all *frodistiria* and the younger the children are the earlier in the day are they invited to attend.

It is also important to acknowledge the fact that potential language learners first enter the classroom at a *frodistirio*, usually at the age of eight or nine, with a wider range of literacy skills than when they first attend state schools. At this stage they have developed phonemic awareness and letter naming in their L1 and this can work to the language teachers' advantage since their students are aware of the learning process in general and what is expected of them in a school environment. This can

provide the basis for the language teacher to create an appropriate classroom environment that would accommodate the learners' needs.

Within the region where the study took place, classrooms in frodistiria provide a wider range of critical contexts for language learning. Many factors combine and interact in order to create an appropriate classroom environment with variables which include structural components, such as teachers' organisation of classroom materials and supplies, frequent language opportunities and exposure and stronger classroom management strategies. Teachers' organisation of classroom materials and supplies, for instance, were observed to differ greatly from state schools, having a significant impact on the quality of the learning environment. These differences and other factors all contributed to making the classroom environment more pleasant, where clear goals were presented to the students and their parents. It is important to mention at this point that frodistiria are private institutions, therefore, they choose to improve their facilities regularly and in most cases, have the financial ability to do so. State schools are not supplied with funding for the improvement of the classroom environment or the latest technology to the same extent. Observations recorded that state schools were provided with minimum facilities. Those who attended frodistiria were aware that they would have responsibilities and a purpose, even if that purpose was passing future language examinations for the attainment of a certificate. These goals were mostly implanted by parents who consider language lessons at frodistiria necessary for their children's future. Language certificates are essential to survive in the competitive Greek employment market and the employees of tomorrow are likely to need a strong educational background to succeed.

The classrooms were similar from frodistirio to frodistirio, meaning that they were equipped with what were considered basic facilities such as a whiteboard and a CD player. One out of seven classrooms had a computer, which was used once during observations, for games where students took turns approaching the teachers' desk where the computer was placed and play a round each while others sat behind their desks anxiously awaiting their turn. The classrooms were used exclusively for language learning and consisted of English language posters, phrases and words written on colourful cards around the classroom, labeling various objects in full view of the students.

The layout of the classrooms in frodistiria was analogous to those in state schools. In the private sector the school authority predetermined most of the physical environment. There was a preference for teacher-centred environments as well as a tendency towards examination-focused instruction from the very start of the learners' tuition at frodistiria. Teachers controlled the direction and pace of the lesson, and monitored the learner's performance. Nonetheless, the classroom environment was not as neglected as in state schools. However, language schools are private and parents can choose the school they think will offer the best education to their children; therefore, owners of frodistiria pay more attention to what some may consider detail, because of the fact that it may attract more customers.

Understandably, language learning in state schools and frodistiria faces many challenges; however, ensuring a supportive classroom environment can be regarded as a good starting point. It may not determine how effective teaching can be, but it can be a contributing factor. Displaying posters, labeling objects in the classroom and posting daily schedules could help students understand the different functions of written English. Teachers bringing creativity into the classroom can make children feel more comfortable and secure. Furthermore, by simple changes it may be possible to encourage an entire new attitude towards learning.

By focusing on classroom variables that promote foreign language learning, language teachers have the ability to support language opportunities, exposure and classroom management strategies. In the following section, the effects of the teacher-centred context and the outcomes of classroom management and organisation will be presented.

### **5.3 Classroom Management and Organisation: the effects of the teacher-centred context.**

#### **State Schools**

The English language teachers in state schools had 45 minutes for their lesson as previously mentioned, which in most cases is an acceptable amount of time. If the



management of the classroom is not successful, any amount of time would prove to be limited. State language teachers blamed the perception pupils and parents had towards them, making them feel inadequate, since their work was not taken seriously, as mentioned in section 5.1. Pupils' dependence on *frodistiria* alone resulted in not focusing on the language lessons provided at state schools. Language teachers at state schools continued to work through the course book and did not make any attempts to introduce something new despite being fully aware that the level of their lessons is extremely low for the pupils in question. As teacher 15a mentioned in her interview:

*The teachers are not required to use the course books or complete it by the end of the school year. On the other hand, we have to complete the books because it makes it easier for the children to cope with the new material in the following year.*

Therefore, the teachers chose to solemnly employ course books even though children seemed to resent them and the teachers themselves were not happy with the content as they felt it was outdated as was mentioned by Teacher 11a in section 5.1. In relation to this, Teacher 17a reported:

*As the children grow older, the majority would become less interested in the subject of English so that by the time they reached year 6, they would become even more difficult to manage than when they were younger.*

Teachers blamed the situation on the *frodistiria*, claiming that because the lessons that take place there are of a more rapid pace, children are familiar with the material presented in their class. This claim repeatedly occurred in state school language teachers' interviews. This data relates to Smith and Larsett's (1993:7) argument that:

[...] difficulties in learning and consequent problems with behaviour often happen because the content of a lesson is not matched to the ability of the pupils to whom it is delivered. Because persistent failure can easily result in disgruntled disaffection, careful scrutiny of the curriculum by subject departments and by individual teachers is needed to ensure that it is appropriate.

Data gathered from the observations in state schools indicated that language teachers arrived after the students and entered into a classroom of chaos. When teachers began the lesson after trying to calm the children down, which took approximately 4-7 minutes during which it was impossible to hear the teacher speak,

language educators were recorded to regularly interrupt their lesson in order to make a critical comment on something a pupil may have been doing, which was usually trivial and could have been dealt with privately. These interruptions occurred after the first 10 minutes into the lesson. Language teachers in state schools usually interrupted their lessons for the reasons distributed in Table 4.

**Table 4: Critical Incidents Calculated over Several EYL Lessons.**

Interruption	When
Whispering to peer	20 minutes into the lesson
Did not have books	15 minutes into the lesson
Repeated what teacher said	20 minutes into the lesson
Not paying attention	10 minutes into the lesson
Whispering to peer	20 minutes into the lesson
Did not have books	15 minutes into the lesson

Kounin (1970) describes this as *stimulus-bounded events*, where the teacher draws the attention of the entire class from an on-going task to an insignificant action which does not necessitate attention. One example of this occurred when observing a teacher who was explaining a grammatical point and was writing examples on the board. She became aware that one of the students in the back was writing on a piece of paper rather than in their exercise book, used especially for grammar lessons. When the pupil explained that he had left the activity book at home, she commented that his grades will decrease if he continues this behaviour, a warning that was frequent among teachers. Observation data showed that other students started commenting on this among themselves and all communication between the teacher and the pupils quickly vanished, resulting in the teacher needing to take additional time to reinstate the children’s concentration. This conversation may not only have a negative effect on a child’s motivation to participate, but also took valuable time out of the task. If the

teacher draws her pupils' attention towards such events, then she makes it difficult for them to stay focused and actually appreciate what it is she is trying to teach them. These signs of ineffective managing often disrupted the course of learning and are some of the elements that led parents to believe that the work done in state schools is not adequate, compared to the effort teachers make at frodistiria.

On the other hand, the first 15 minutes of the lessons teachers tried to be more tolerant of students' behaviour. Data showed that in the first part of the lesson actions that were tolerated were far more serious than what was mentioned in Table 5. The following table will display some of students' actions that were overlooked.

**Table 5: Actions Overlooked by the Teacher.**

Interruption	When
Mobile Ringing	10 minutes into the lesson
Flying paper planes	10 minutes into the lesson
Throwing pencils at classmates	15 minutes into the lesson

When this was brought to teachers' attention in interviews they commented that:

Teacher 12a: *I show tolerance in the beginning because I am tired of yelling all the time but at some point enough is enough.*

Teacher 14a: *I think the reason this occurs is that we feel that we have lost the students and their attention and try to be as calm as possible to win them back but to no avail and that is when we burst!*

Observations showed that the first 20 minutes of language lessons were quite chaotic, however, once there were signs of teachers' outburst students began to show signs of good behaviour. The major drawback to this was that precious time was lost since the entire lesson only lasted for 45 minutes which meant that the teachers tried tolerating bad behaviour during the first 10-15 minutes and interrupted students regarding any detail of misbehaving the last 10-20 minutes. Positive reinforcement

was rare, as teachers mostly vigilantly expected the worst from the children. The positive remarks made from teachers such as 'Well Done!' (*Πολύ ωραία!*) and 'Bravo!' (*Μπράβο!*) were mostly when children successfully completed a task and were repeatedly addressed to the same children, usually those seated in the front rows.

Observations showed that teachers who ignored pupils' misbehaviour for most of the lesson and worked with the children who were sat in the front rows. If the situation became unbearable the teacher erupted and yelled until there was absolute silence in the room. According to Collin and Laslett (1993), it is often difficult for a teacher to attend to every sign of misbehaviour, though the emphasis must be *planned ignoring*, rather than hoping that the provocative nuisance will exhaust itself. However, when teachers explode, as most were recorded to do so when ignoring misbehaviour, it did not seem planned but a management technique they had adopted, which was effective for a short amount of time. Nonetheless, this was considered a suitable attempt to manage misbehaviour.

Teacher 13a: *We generally do not have behaviour problems in primary school. They are still at an age where they are easily disciplined. If you yell at them once or twice they will eventually calm down.* (see Appendix 5 sample)

Based on Collin and Laslett's (1993) research in classrooms, teachers deliberately overlooked provocative behaviour since they were not accustomed to other effective layouts to have the children seated that would enhance cooperation with the teacher and fruitful interaction with their peers. Within the Greek regional context, language lessons were performed in a traditional way, as mentioned earlier. Learners were seated in rows and faced the teacher, who was the centre of the communication network. Language teachers felt this was the *right way a classroom should be organised* after years of being exposed to the same environment as students themselves, their own *apprenticeship of observation*, as Lortie (1975) identifies it. Another valuable point that Dörnyei and Murphey (2003) make is that teachers do not often realise that they have a spatial advantage to the students. They are able to see everyone and face anyone they wish, assuming the same for the students. However, for language lessons especially, the principal means of learning is the interaction between members of the classroom as displayed in Figures 1, 2 and 3 in chapter 3

because in these layouts, students are able to use the language and learn from their peers as well as their teacher.

### **Pair and Group Work**

In relation to the above point, there was a particular perception language teachers had concerning group and pair work. In interviews, teachers appeared to be against employing any form of cooperation when tasks were being conducted in class and would only consider it when students played games. In most cases this was not often, especially with children in year 5 and 6 since, according to all teachers, students stop appreciating these activities when reaching the age of 10. Interviews revealed that six out of seven state school language teachers were not aware of the concept of cooperative learning in class and referred to group work as an extracurricular project that was complicated for the young learners of year 3 and 4.

*Teacher 16a: I usually do not assign group work to students of year 3 or 4, they are too young. At the end of every chapter of the book I assign a project and put them (students) into groups and they decide whose home they will go to in order to complete it. We would use the end of one of our lessons for them to present their pictures or posters.*

Six out of seven teachers considered pair work related only to a reading task where students read out dialogues from the book aloud and translated afterwards which was recorded in observations and mentioned in interviews with the teachers. An example of this was recorded in classroom observations taken from Teacher 13a's lesson where she read out a text from the course book which consisted of dialogues. Once she finished reading she translated the text line by line and then assigned roles to the students. Students were asked who would like to take part in the *pair work task* and students volunteered. Language learners were to read their part aloud for the rest of the class, seated behind their desks and if there was a word they had difficulty pronouncing, the teacher would read it for them and the students would repeat. Teacher 15a commented on the matter in her interview:

*Teacher 15a: I use the pair work given in the course book where there are dialogues and the pairs read them aloud, conversations such as 'How old are you?'*

*and so on. I generally do not use pair work a lot because it is not offered in the course book, I do, however, believe that this task helps their language development. As students read to each other, they hear each other and translate and this helps them develop their speaking in the foreign language.*

When an interactive in-class form of learning was brought to their attention, all teachers stated that theory is different to practice. Children are not familiar with group and pair work and the use of it would not be fruitful and not benefit nor contribute to any learning. It was thought that the pupils who were more advanced would complete tasks and simply provide the information to those who were in a lower level to them. The problems that arise from the introduction of group work are many and, according to teachers, there is not enough time to discipline pupils and apply new classroom techniques, therefore, this approach would only add a new dimension of confusion.

*Teacher 17a: It is a waste of time. It would take too long to calm the children down and actually get something done. We do not have much time for the actual lesson. There's a lot of noise and the weak students do not participate, practice is different to theory, the reality is that there are no results. Children do not learn from their peers, they just copy from each other.*

Equivalent observational study and interview material was collected in frodistiria, where there tended to be a feeling of clear existing aims of the teaching-learning process comprising the language examinations and certifications as mentioned previously.

### **Frodistiria**

The classroom layout and arrangement of classrooms at frodistiria did not differ greatly from the hierarchically teacher-centered arrangements in state schools. Students in this context again were seated in rows and communication was only planned to be between the teacher and the students, where the goal is for children to pay more attention to what is being instructed without interruptions, leaving the teacher to occupy the centre of the communication network. Group and pair work were seen as methods used for play as in state schools, and teachers were not convinced that it would improve the children's learning in any way. As a result,

children generally worked alone or in whole-class presentations according to Doyle's (1986) study. In the following statements, Irish language teachers explain their use of interactive teaching:

Teacher 13bF: *I use it (group work) when playing vocabulary and grammar games and likewise pair work where I get a chance to listen to what they are saying and at the end talk about things they've done right or wrong, not for every lesson though.*

Teacher 11bF: *Students do learn from interaction but they learn more from me when I correct them.*

## **5.5 The Use of L1 and the Target Language**

The amount of the TL and whether or not the L1 should be used in the YLL classroom is currently receiving a great amount of attention in the field. The present study investigates language learning within a Greek regional context where teachers are reluctant to maximise TL use, due to traditional teaching styles. The results of this investigation, which will be further discussed and analyzed in the section of the action research outcomes, appears to support the hypothesis that TL can be maximised by creating a student-centred environment where learners would be encouraged to use a significant amount of TL and increase their interest in achieving their goals by offering more chances to practice authentic communication.

English language teachers faced the dilemma of not only the appropriate quantity of TL used in the classroom, but how effective it would be, meaning that many teachers feared students losing interest and becoming restless when the language used in the classroom was not familiar or available to them. The data I have collected provide evidence for a number of differences between the state and private sector. My evidence, which applies both to classroom reality and participants' perceptions, will raise interesting issues throughout the thesis.

One of the central aims of this study was to examine the role L1 plays and the quantity of TL used in the foreign language classroom in both the state and private sector, which contributes to the explanation for the distinct differences between the two. One of the main issues is that young language learners, within this Greek context, are deprived of valuable language input. This is due to traditional approaches to language teaching, teachers' deeply rooted beliefs about language learning, complete commitment to the curriculum and the limited amount and quality of available in-service training. According to Johnson (1995:9), teachers control what goes on in classrooms primarily through the ways in which they use language. In this study, the use of the TL was a greater issue than the participants were aware of as this was one of the factors that 93 % of parents, as recorded in questionnaires (Appendix 9), felt they could not entrust their children's language learning to state schools because they believed that the language lessons that took place were of relatively low quality, compared to language lessons at *frodistiria*. Parents stated in questionnaires that state school language teachers do not use the TL because their ability to use the foreign language was low and the perception of professional development was non-existent. The lack of TL is immediately interpreted by the parents and pupils as lack of knowledge.

It appears that children at state schools are not as exposed to the language as they are in *frodistiria* and the amount of TL may not be adequate for pupils to improve and adopt communicative skills in English. As language learning in Greece is not expected to take place outside the classroom environment, whether the classroom is in a state school or a *frodistirio*, the issue of the teacher's TL use becomes an important source for students to attain input and therefore, a very important issue (Peng & Zhang, 2009). The most common belief among parents in the specific region is that exposing learners to foreign language input is crucial and that it could make a difference to their linguistic development.

### **State School Teachers' Use of TL**

In this section, I will report on how teachers use TL in primary state schools. The participant teachers were interviewed and their lessons were observed. The TL the teachers used in the classroom was initially requested to be calculated via audio-



recordings where the teacher would wear a microphone during the lesson. This made the teachers uncomfortable and they rejected it from the start, fearing that the microphone would cause a distraction. Due to the disruptions and noise in class, it was impossible to make out what was said when audio-recording from the back of the classroom. For this reason audio-recording was not used to collect the TL data. Instead the researcher decided to use a timer when TL was used and counted the number of L2 utterances during observations. The results were analysed and were presented to the teachers in order to establish inter-rater reliability as mentioned in chapter 4. From a pragmatic perspective, the language was not varied and students were observed to be off-task and at times, the L2 the state school teachers in this study used was recorded to be inaccurate, as they misspelled English words-for example, Teacher 15a misspelled Tuesday for *Thuesday* and Teacher 13a misspelled the name Sean for *Shone* when asked by a student when being presented with television personas from Great Britain (the student was writing about Sean Connery). As will be presented, the findings of this study confirm that the current use of TL in English language classrooms in these primary state schools is not adequate, especially when the learner has no access to the TL outside the classroom.

The data shows that there is no immense disparity of teacher talk across different learning levels (year 3-5). However, those who used games in their lessons employed more English and learners unconsciously used the TL as they were involved in the game, recording an average of 20%. Teachers 15a and 12a included games for a more substantial proportion of their lessons which resulted in the use of the TL reaching 45% of teacher talk. This was the highest percentage encountered in the study and reflected the fact that they were the only two teachers that used any form of interactive activities. This compares with data from the ELLiE study which indicates that a recommended average of 60% TL is appropriate (ELLiE Public Report, 2011). Specifically, language teachers reported particular perceptions concerning group and pair work, of crucial significance in relation to their practices. According to all teachers, students stop appreciating these activities and begin to find them childish and unnecessary when reaching the age of 10. Based on observations, the games did not change from year to year. It seems possible that children might lose interest simply because of the lack of variety related to the question of student groupings. Six out of seven state school language teachers were not aware of the concept of

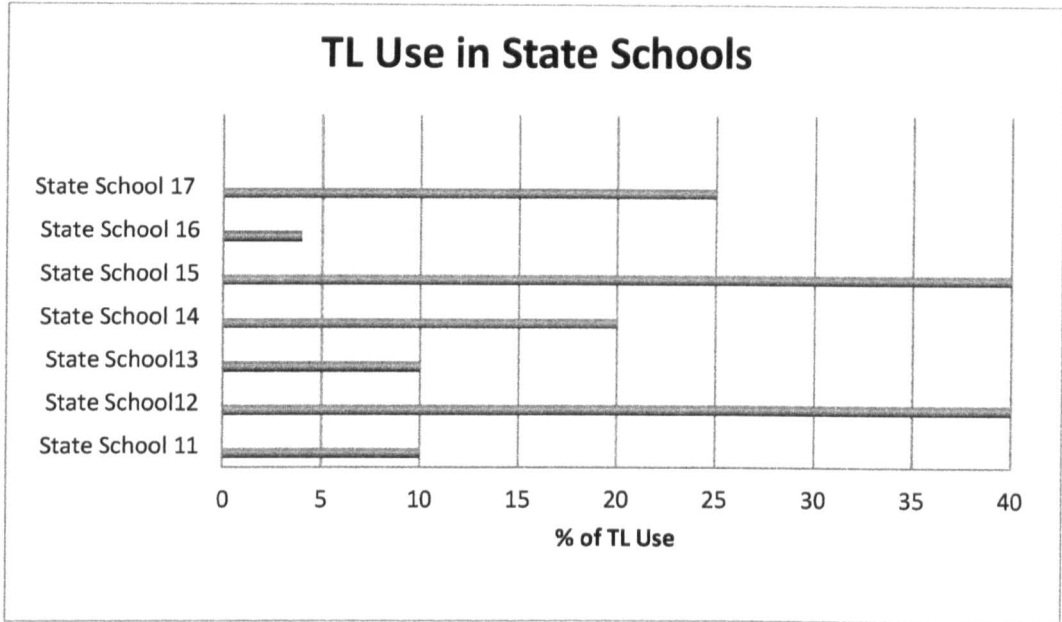
cooperative learning in class and referred to group work as an extracurricular project that was complicated for the young learners of year 3 and 4 (age 8 and 9).

Although such projects can prove to be beneficial for pupils' language learning and increase motivation, children are not encouraged to use L2 to complete the project. Six out of seven teachers considered pair work related only to reading tasks where students read out dialogues from the book and translate afterwards. Teachers seemed to feel threatened by any form of cooperative learning as they considered it would destroy the progress of the lesson as events become less controllable, as indicated by the following comment from Teacher 13a:

*Teacher 13a: Children in primary school are at a difficult age and it is a challenge to prevent misbehaviour. Using group work could mean playing with fire, especially when there is no need for it.*

It was considered essential that children would have to acquire vocabulary and grammatical rules of the TL. These two elements seemed to be the aim of every teacher, while their communicative competence appears to be fairly neglected because of the dominance of traditional classroom exercises. According to the data gathered from 16 lessons (3 lessons per school), where the TL was measured with a timer and the amount of L2 utterances were calculated and noted during observations, as indicated in the table below, Teachers 12a and 15a calculated approximately 40% TL use, Teacher 17a, 25%, Teacher 14a, 20%, Teachers 11a and 13a, 10% and Teachers 16a as low as 4% as displayed in Chart 1.

**Chart 1: Teachers' TL use in State School during the Language Lesson.**



English was mostly used to correct course book activities and play games, whereas L1 was used for instructions, rules, social needs and grammar explanations. Teachers claimed that they used limited amount of English in their lessons because they had a limited time to teach it. The following extracts display teachers' reluctance to maximise L2 in a young learner's classroom:

Teacher 16: *It is not easy to use English in class because the children are young; they get bored and lose interest. By the end of the lesson, it's like talking to the wall.*

Teacher 13: *Children are too young to have a lesson mostly in English. These things need more time.*

Teacher 11: *The truth is I do not use that much English anymore, now that I teach at a primary school, you can say I have forgotten what I once learned.*

Language teachers stated in their interviews that they could not use more than a certain amount of the TL. The children were at a very delicate age and the teachers' fear was that if they use an extensive amount of L2 the learners would eventually resent it. The problems that arise from the introduction of group work are many and, according to teachers, there is not enough time in the lesson to discipline pupils and this approach would only add more confusion. Nonetheless, due to the fact that the

participants lived in a community where English was not used in their daily life, their contact with the foreign language was considered minimal if they did not attend lessons at *frodistiria* in the afternoons.

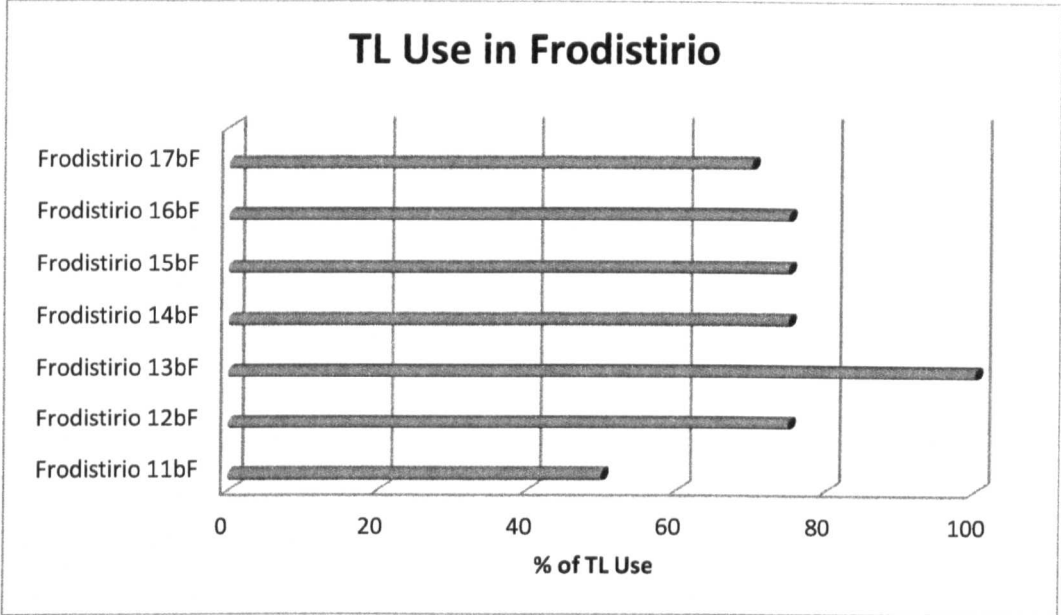
As displayed in the sample of field notes in Appendix 12 from the seven state schools that participated in this study, data indicates that none of the language learners initiated any conversational exchange in the TL with either teachers or peers. The L2 the learners used was specifically to read out a completed task or a text from their course book. As data from my observations showed, teacher talk exceeded student talk and students were not encouraged to be communicative, instead they were instructed which led to controlled rather than more spontaneous and interactive L2 use.

Even though the environment of the *frodistirio* is supposedly more contemporary than state schools, the focus of language learning continues to be on the grammatical aspect of the language. Therefore, the teacher's notion of *learning* is associated with accuracy which can have serious consequences in language learning. The teachers believe that grammatical accuracy can only be achieved when children are exposed to a teacher-centred environment, where they are not encouraged to communicate in L2 because if they were, they would have to be corrected for every grammatical error, according to the teachers' view on grammar acquisition recorded in interviews. This constant correction would result in lowering their self-confidence as L2 users. As L2 learners, they would need an indication of achievement and recognition by their teacher; this cannot be achieved with constant correction of errors and complete emphasis on accuracy. However, the teachers' concentration on accuracy can be understood in terms of the perceived goals. This notion and insistence on accuracy derives from an examination oriented ideology that exists where students are assessed on their writing, reading skills and grammatical competence. The communicative section of the test is quite short and teachers tend not to focus on it as much as on other sections. The emphasis on grammar in language lessons gives EFL the form of every other subject and loses its communicative value.

The data collection procedure at *frodistiria* was identical to the procedure followed at primary state schools. However, the differences between *frodistiria* and state schools were relatively noticeable as far as teacher talk is concerned. The data

shows that, as indicated in the chart below, in frodistirio 13bF the teacher used TL up to 100% of the time, in frodistiria teachers 12bF, 14bF, 15bF, 16bF used 75% of the time, teacher 17bF, 70% and teacher 11bF, 50% of the time being the lowest percentage.

**Chart 2: Teachers' TL Use in Frodistiria during the Language Lesson.**



The chart refers to a mean average of TL use for each teacher, calculated by adding together the total TL use for all lessons observed, then dividing by the number of lesson. Despite the fact that teachers in frodistiria used the target language more than teachers in state schools, this evidence should not be interpreted as confirming that students showed an immense amount of interest in the lesson or maximised their use of the TL. It was noted that the teacher who used 100% of the TL in her class did not adjust the language to the level of the pupils which resulted in the children being confused, continuously asking questions of what they were expected to do when given instructions regarding a task, and asking their peers for clarification in L1. The intermediate students could follow a certain amount of TL during the lesson, without, however, being positive of what was said; the beginners, on the other hand, seemed to struggle. Even so, students were more willing to use the L2 in frodistiria, although L2

use was controlled, language learners in frodistiria developed routines of using English in specific cases, such as to greet their teachers or to ask to be excused. Nonetheless, as in state schools, there was no record of students being the initiators of a conversational exchange. They relied on their L1 as a means of communication whereas L2 was only seen as study content, as part of the lesson. Ironically, the purpose of language learning here could be considered lost since the objective of language learning is to use language as a communicative tool.

Evidently, the fact that TL is used more, or in the one case exclusively by the teacher, does not necessarily mean that teaching is efficient and that the learners are met with a challenge. Learners that are exposed to the TL for 70%-75% of the lesson, as evidence shown in observations, give the impression that they are more comfortable in class and involved in the lesson and their questions are centred more on the new language introduced. The fact that TL percentages in frodistiria are higher than in state schools, even though language lessons are equally grammar-oriented, is mainly because teachers in frodistiria present the grammar in the TL and use drills and utterances mainly for accuracy practice which is seen in traditional teacher-centred environments. Teachers spend a long time on asking children to repeat words they presented, and go over their grammar activities in class which resulted in most students not participating in the lesson unless it was their turn. The language used is mainly controlled practice where students were not encouraged to use the language as a form of communication where they would freely put sentences together and create dialogues with their teacher or peers. Whatever was said in class was in a form of controlled speech, where the teacher directed everything that was told with the use of the course book. On rare occasions though, body language was applied, when giving the meaning of a single word, instead of the use of translation. Instructions and class rules were mostly delivered in L1. In these classrooms, social discourse in the TL was relatively rare, as low as 5% which was usually small talk at the start of the lesson, for example, 'How are you?' 'I'm fine, thanks'. Nonetheless, teachers in frodistiria were recorded to give positive or negative feedback in the TL, in contrast to state schools where this is hardly ever done, according to the data.

One may claim that the reason English is used more in frodistiria than in state schools in the region, is that private tuition is a very competitive market. Teachers are

encouraged by their directors to use the TL as much as possible, since this is something most parents appreciate and expect from such institutions. If employers are not satisfied, teachers may find themselves out of work. Language teachers that teach in state schools have a permanent position and their lessons are never evaluated. Headmasters are not involved in the progress of the language lesson, as all seven of the state language teachers confirmed, and consequently do not have any expectations from the teachers. This is known to students and parents who assume, as shown in data gathered from interviews, that since there is no competition or direction, there is little interest in the language learning process in state schools. One explanation given in an interview from the Director of the frodistirio where Phase 2 research took place was:

*DoS: It is mostly because frodistiria, being private, a lot of them try to do a good job and compete among themselves; they also teach just that, languages. The public sector is not well organised and teachers have lost the feeling of responsibility. They are very secure about their positions and do not have any incentive with reference to whether they do a better job for example, they would be rewarded. Most of them just give up because of the philosophy in Greece that if you want to learn a language, you have to go to a frodistirio. Even language teachers who teach in state schools send their children to frodistiria.*

This attitude towards the TL in state schools affected the children's perception of language learning and the limited contact they had with the foreign language made it impossible for them to perceive their lessons as productive and useful. Parents are aware of the situation and know that their children will be given a 'second chance' to learn English in a frodistirio; for that reason, they do not fear that their children's foreign language learning will be jeopardized.

Nevertheless, the data shows that an analogous procedure to what was going on in the state schools took place in frodistiria as well, although it did not affect the students as much. Their approach towards frodistiria is completely different; they are convinced that if they did not make an effort to learn English in that environment, or the quality of language lessons was not satisfactory, the results would be catastrophic. They are fully aware of the goal and what is expected of them. The entire environment concentrates on language learning and the teachers' use the TL in class

to perform the lesson which is what students and their parents expect. No evaluation of whether its use is actually effective is carried out, although, according to the older students, the more English the teacher uses, the more prestigious their lessons are perceived to be.

A crucial point that arose from the study, which influenced the use of TL and L1 in the language classroom and foreign language teaching within this region, was the attitude teachers and students had towards language learning in state schools and frodistiria and the evidence that parental influence had on the field of EYL which will be further discussed in the following section.

## **5.6 Attitudes towards Language Learning and the Role of Parental Influences**

Students' and teachers' attitude is an integral part of learning and should become a fundamental element of foreign language learning pedagogy. Their attitudes can be considered a large proportion of emotional involvement that may influence behaviour and achievement, as Brown (2001) characterizes it.

In order to investigate the attitude towards foreign language learning in the region, data was collected from three separate groups, the language learner, the teacher and the parents (as mentioned in section 4.1); on the basis that given the FL situation of language learning in the region and Greece in general, the three groups find themselves in a vicious circle where only extended research could help raise awareness and study best practices of language teaching, training and professional management and can change the circle from vicious to virtuous. By discovering and studying the attitudes of these three groups, voices can be heard and informed decisions can be made. Firstly, there will be a focus on the attitude of the language learner, since they illustrate the direction of the other two groups.



## **The Language Learner**

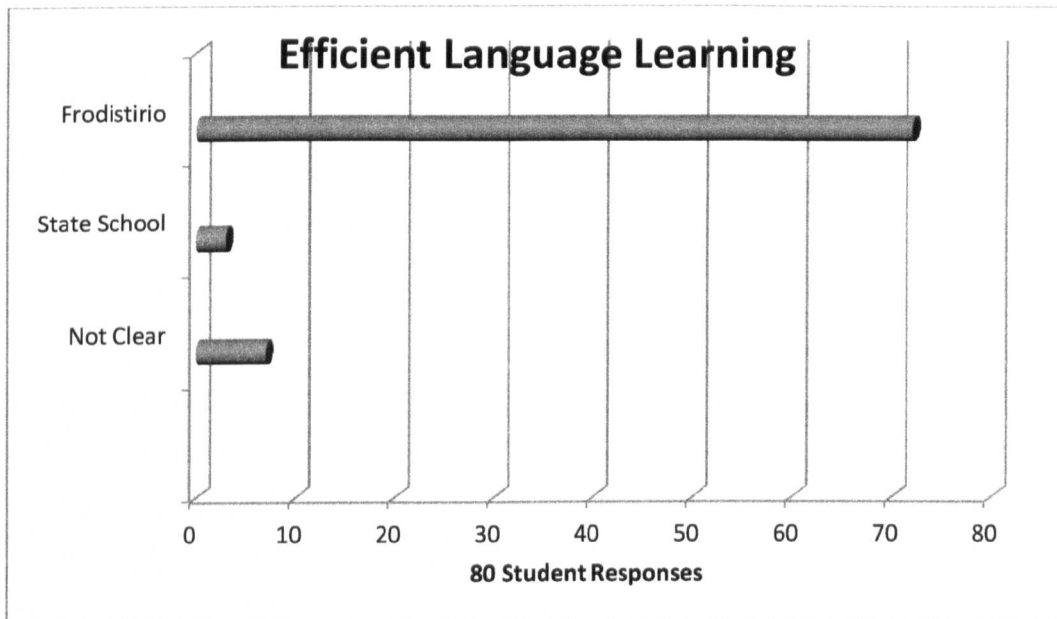
Both negative and positive attitudes have an impact on the success of language learning and one may argue that the attitude of every individual child heavily depends on different stimuli. In order to investigate the interaction between ELL and the environmental components to which students are exposed, questionnaires were distributed to 80 children, aged 7-11, who attend language lessons at the frodistirio where the Phase 2 study took place. All young learners were given questionnaires in order to gather data 'lost' as students at state schools were distributed questionnaires at first, but were later withdrawn from the research as they were completed with the personal influence of their teacher (Appendix 25), as mentioned in the previous section. The students were requested to complete the questionnaire (see Appendix 13) which focused on their language learning experience at state schools and frodistiria, and their feelings towards language learning with the aim of gathering information needed to answer research questions 2 (What motivates a child to learn a foreign language in private language/state schools?) and 3(What is the students' perceived goal, when they begin learning English?) as shown in Figure 6.

With the aim of guiding the children's answers towards a specific direction, since their replies were significant to the results of the study, the first question displayed on the questionnaire was 'What is your favourite subject in school?' Only 3 out of 80 students stated that English was rated highest in their preferences. These three children had just begun their language lessons in school and as observations and teachers' interviews revealed, children in year three, when language lessons begin at state schools, show greater enthusiasm than their older peers. The young learners stated that they enjoy themselves during their English lessons in year three because their lessons have an entertainment element which, according to the participants' questionnaires, slowly vanishes by year five and six.

*Teacher 13a: In Year 3 they play the most games and sing songs, after Year 4 they stop, by Year 5 they have lost all their enthusiasm. The younger they are the more motivated they appear to be and they show it in different ways. They pay attention in class and they want to please the teacher. Generally, I believe this happens with all their lessons, because of their age.*

This was also verified in observations, where I observed all levels and classes in the seven state schools where the Phase 1 study occurred. The beginners in year 3 were exposed to games and songs, whereas from year 4 and onwards 6 out of 7 schools no longer presented English as an entertaining and engaging subject. After year 4, the English language lessons took the form of every other subject with a teacher-centred manner and a tendency towards the grammar-translation method. 72% of students that participated in the study stated that they found the English lessons at the frodistirio more interesting, pleasant and more efficient than at school because of the new books they were given which were illustrated with numerous colourful pictures, the songs they sang and the games they played and the knowledge their teachers at the frodistirio had. 3% of students stated that they learnt more at state schools because they could learn the language by using L1 and had more space in the classroom. 7% of the students did not understand the question and did not give an answer. This information is displayed below in chart 3:

**Chart 3: Students Preferred Institution for Efficient Language Learning.**



However, it seems likely that these may not have been the only reasons; parental influence may also have played a vital role in where the children's attitude was directed.

These doubts grew stronger when data showed that 89% of the young language learners stated in their questionnaires that the reason they were learning English was because it is a global language and that when they were older they would sit language examinations and, if successful, they would be awarded a language certificate. Realistically, a goal such as this, for such a high percentage of young participants can only occur as a result of parental influence. The English language may represent different elements to different people. To some, it may mean communication with peoples of foreign countries; to others it may mean more opportunities for employment or simply a means of doing business. Nonetheless, these goals would not be of relevance to a child. In the context in question, children are exposed to language learning that is either in a teacher-centred manner where teachers have adopted teaching approaches similar to other subjects or an examination-oriented environment where there may be more elements of excitement in the early years of language learning, however, the concept of the final step is well implanted in their subconscious. In interviews conducted with teenage language learners, as mentioned in chapter 3, the participants stated that the relationship with their language teacher at state schools was compromised. After year 3, frustration dominated the language classroom since children had undergone a year of more intense language learning at a *frodistirio* parallel to school and had become more advanced than the syllabus level set for the year. By year 4, most students are in various language levels due to the fact that they attend different *frodistiria* or are tutored privately at home.

### **Language Teachers**

Even though to many the word 'attitude' is associated with the learner because it is believed that they direct classroom life, in this current study the teacher's attitude plays a vital role. According to Enever (2011), language teachers are one of the most important factors contributing to learners' successful FL achievement.

State school language teachers and language teachers who teach in *frodistiria* are perceived to be very different in skill by the wider community.

Teacher 11a: *We are state school teachers, so as far as parents are concerned we are not to be trusted. I actually experienced this myself. I first started working at a*

*frodistiria when I first began teaching. I felt like a real professional and most importantly I had the respect of my students and parents. When I began teaching at the state school, all of a sudden, I had lost all the respect and trust of my students. If I ever said or pronounced something differently to their teacher from the frodistiria they would say our teacher at the frodistiria pronounced this word-that way and that is how I will say it. (State school English teacher)*

Teacher 14f: *There is a different attitude towards frodistiria because the work we do here is different, we are organised and the children enjoy learning English here. The parents also trust us more since they believe that we are more motivated than state school language teachers. (Frodistiria English teacher)*

State school language teachers in the region, carry the stereotype of the teacher who does not make an effort to improve and update their teaching skills because of the security they feel once they start working for the state. The frustration of poor working conditions and facilities eventually lead from motivated to indifferent educators. State school language teachers on the other hand, made it a point to emphasize the extent to which they take pride in their profession. Those who have been in the profession longer have stated that they have become exhausted from the constant criticism since they are not the ones to blame. State school language teachers feel they have been neglected without any facilities or even an updated course book. They have not received training and are coping with various teaching approaches suggested by the Ministry of Education that have little hope of being achieved, due to the fact that teachers have had no guidance to make any new adjustments to their lessons. The interesting aspect to this is that all state school teachers mentioned in their interviews that they had begun their teaching at a frodistirio until they attained their position in the state school.

Data showed that language teachers in state schools are caught between different perceptions of authority and are suggested contemporary approaches by the Ministry of Education, for which they received no guidance. They are aware that early language learning is changing around the world, but feel they can do nothing to keep up with what their colleagues are doing in other countries. Language teachers are not funded for any professional development and all state school teachers stated that there is no reason to use any private means for any professional workshops or conferences

as they are not appreciated as professionals by students or parents. They believe that it is important for them to employ an authoritative manner of teaching, as their own teachers did before them. The communicative approach which the Ministry has suggested, without elaborating on how it was to be applied, could not be adjusted to a teacher-centred style of teaching. Furthermore, language teachers appear to hold very general aims for their students and propose achievements by the end of the school year. In interviews, they stated that the Ministry of Education does not oblige them to cover the entire course book, as mentioned earlier.

Teacher15a: *We are not obligated to complete the course book; of course, teachers have to do as much as possible. No one is going to blame you for not completing the book but it is best for the children that the book is completed so that the children can start the new course book the following year.*

Language teachers in schools are free to use any material they consider valuable and would meet students' needs. Nevertheless, none of the teachers who participated in this study used any material other than what was provided apart from photocopies of grammar tasks. In the interviews, all teachers expressed strong feelings about completing the entire course book, even though they are aware that their students are often at a more advanced level than what is instructed in class. This led to students developing a negative attitude towards language learning within the specific context where there was a lack of stimulating, authentic teaching material and tasks that could be meaningful to children and challenge their cognitive abilities.

In contrast, language teachers at frodistiria had a very different frame of mind towards their occupation and how their community accepted them as qualified professionals.

Teacher 12f: *I don't think they [state school language teachers] have a motive to do something. I have been watching my children and their work at school and I have realized that their English teacher does not feel as confident. It is not that way with teachers at frodistiria. We are appreciated and this boosts our ego.*

However this does not necessarily mean that the English teachers at the frodistiria were more qualified than the English teachers in state schools. As mentioned earlier, some of these teachers did not hold a degree and none of them had undergone teacher

training apart from the instruction they received when they were first given the teaching position. The teachers who did hold a University degree viewed their teaching position in the *frodistirio* as temporary, since their main and final aim was to work for a state school. Despite the fact that they were aware that the acceptance and admiration of them as educators would come to an end once their teaching position changed, the desire for professional stability was much too strong.

Language teachers in *frodistiria* had certain privileges state school teachers did not possess. One very important advantage was the fact that they were equipped with a wider range of facilities which made their work less complicated and problematic. Furthermore, since teacher training is not provided to teachers after they have completed university, or at any other time, owners of *frodistiria* supply English teachers with a detailed curriculum and lesson plans for every class they will be teaching that school year, which teachers are expected to follow explicitly. The teachers have clear goals of what they are to accomplish with each level and urge students to reach it as well.

Parents, who are fully aware of the learning-teaching situation in the EYL field in their country, do whatever possible for their children to reach and succeed in the final step, language certification, which will give them the recognition they require to gain the professional position their children would deserve.

### **Parents**

Parental attitudes towards language learning in the community play a decisive role. As would be expected, the parents who participated in the study were observed to do whatever possible to offer a fulfilling and fruitful education to their children. Not all parents had the financial ability to afford *frodistiria*, however, they made immense sacrifices to offer the language lessons that would engender their children's interest in learning and to ensure that they provide them with qualifications for their future. According to the data gathered from questionnaires, eighty-seven per cent of the parents stated that they encourage their children to study the FL and complete their tasks assigned from the *frodistiria*, monitor their performance and assist them where possible. Within the Greek community, the parents' role is considered a key determining factor in childhood. Family bonds are strong and the children stay with the family over a period of time that may lead into early adulthood. In this study,

parental influence was recorded to operate in a number of ways as most parents are known to supervise their children and keep record of their improvement.

Before children begin language lessons at frodistiria, they are fully aware of the purpose of their registration: future language examinations. All teachers of frodistiria mentioned in interviews that when a 7 or 8 year old child first enrolls in a frodistirio, the first question the parent will ask is when he/she will be ready to sit the examinations. This is a very important issue for parents because of their concerns that their children are to experience very intense preparation for the university entrance examinations at the age of 16 and cannot have any other distractions. Therefore, they prefer to keep their children focused on university examinations at this stage and sit the language examinations before the age of 14-15. Since this is the parents' main concern, and state schools do not offer preparation for language examinations, it is not surprising that they focus on their children's progress in frodistiria in order to be certain that their children complete their language studies within the desired time-frame.

All state school language teachers stated in their interviews that parents only ask about their children's progress if their grades are low.

Teacher 11a: *I have only seen the parents whose children have received bad grades. I do not even know the rest.*

Teacher 13a: *Parents come to the school to ask about their children's English lessons when their grades are low, especially when there is a great difference with the grades their children get at the frodistirio, because they do better there than at the state school. This could be because the children do not make the effort at school, meaning that they do not study English for school but they do at the frodistirio or I don't know what, I just do not believe that a very good student at a frodistirio will do so poorly at school, in the same subject. I guess the grades given at frodistiria are not that objective.*

According to Teacher 12a and 13a, some parents appear to be baffled when in school their children's grades are not satisfactory, whereas at frodistiria, even if the child makes no progress at all, language teachers are reluctant to give them the grade they actually deserve because they fear that this would result to the student blaming their

teacher for their poor progress and will change frodistiria. State school teachers do not share this fear since there is no competition from school to school and the teachers or school principal have no profit whether the child changes schools or not. Therefore, according to state school teachers the grades given to their students honestly reflect their performance. Nonetheless, parents are not persuaded by this argument and entrust their children's language learning to frodistiria and their teachers where the tuition is private and expected to provide them with a better quality of teaching to their children. Chamber (1999) has stated that language learning takes place when there is a positive attitude towards language and learning. The question is whether or not this can be achieved in a context where there are particular stereotypes for state schools and frodistiria, where goals do not enhance language learning but only concentrate on the preparation of language examinations.

### **5.7 Teachers, Teacher Training and Professional Development**

According to Chryshochoos & Chourdaki (2003), as mentioned in chapter 1, the 1998 Educational Reform in Greece modified recruitment procedures in the educational department. Instead of language teachers being placed on a waiting list to be recruited according to the date of their application for appointment in the school, there is now a selection based on national examinations (ASEP).

All seven state school language teachers stated in their interviews that they had not been requested to undertake any practical pre-service training that would equip them in their teaching. Those who intended to teach English in primary school, were to complete their undergraduate degree which included courses in literature, linguistics, psychology, pedagogy, methodology and ICT. Two out of seven language teachers stated that out of personal interest they attended seminars held by English language publishers which guided them in how to use various course books that are on the market. The Ministry of Education does not offer any other options of professional development and the negligence of this ongoing learning process may be one of the reasons that teachers are entrapped in their outdated teaching methods and the frustration of a community that has lost faith in them. The language educators who



participated in this study, due to the lack of training, were unsure of the best technique to adjust their teaching to their students' learning needs and felt a sense of security when being guided by the course book. One may argue that the Educational Reform of 1998 was not complete, since not all aspects of education were asserted. I agree with Diaz-Maggioli (2003:1) who argues that:

[...] professional development has become increasingly important as a way to ensure that teachers succeed in matching their teaching goals with their students' learning needs. In the case of second language teachers, professional development is needed to enable them to help their students develop proficiency in the target language and an understanding of the cultures associated with that language.

In interviews, 6 out of 7 state school language teachers stated that they had never been observed or been involved in any type of research in the past. Teacher 12a, out of seven, had been observed by a postgraduate student who had been working on a dissertation on the teaching of grammar at the primary level. In general, teachers were not informed of the various advantages of research in their field and had not been introduced to various publications that may offer them innovative ideas. None of the teachers had ever conducted research themselves, and when asked if they would be interested in initiating a study they were opposed to the idea. All teachers believed that conducting their own research would not help improve their situation, since their findings would not be acknowledged by the Ministry of Education.

## **5.8 A Rationale for Introducing a New Perspective to Young Language Learning in Greece**

In this chapter, I have reported on findings related to the complexity of early language learning in the region where the study took place. The chapter reveals the initial purposes of foreign language instruction and highlights the ways in which the entire system of language learning in Greece prioritizes examinations over learning to communicate, and appears to neglect the important contributions to be made through the negotiation of meaning. State schools, however, cannot become a part of the language examination process since they are not permitted to by the government;

nonetheless Greek education policies influence Greek citizens' decision to acquire language certificates as they would make them favourable candidates within the Greek job market. Even though state school language teachers are not burdened with the pressure of language examinations, they still prefer a teacher-centred environment where the teachers are the centre of attention (as mentioned in the sample of Appendix 5). The preparation of English language examinations in private institutions begins gradually from an early stage and overshadows any other language learning aspect children could experience in an interactive and communicative environment. Teachers, whose teaching approaches do not differ whether in the private or public sector, are reluctant to apply any other approach in their teaching of young learners due to their lack of training, and use methods which they have witnessed as language learners themselves.

The fact that young learners are presented with a future language certificate as a motive to learn a foreign language will only lead to children viewing English as a subject like any other. Once they reach their goal there would be no reason to continue the use of the language. It is a fact that once students pass their examinations, they automatically terminate any meaningful connection they had to the FL since they believe they have reached their goal successfully and can move on to other achievements. The students in question are not exposed to the FL in any other way, since they live in a monolingual society and the English language is used only to communicate with tourists, which in the specific area can be rare. Based on the evidence gathered in Phase 1, it can be argued that children are deprived of essential elements of early language learning and are rarely provided with opportunities that facilitate the acquisition of key competences for young children (research question 1).

As mentioned previously, observations showed that after the first year of language learning in state schools and *frodistiria*, English lessons took the form of a subject focusing mainly on the learning of grammar, no different to mathematics or science. Language learners were expected, from a very young age, to memorize grammatical rules and then be *examined* (a term used quite widely in the Greek educational context). Their ability to memorize these rules would affect their grades as Teacher 11a, 14a and 15a mentioned in their interviews. However, when the children were observed applying these rules, even though they may have memorised them perfectly,

they had great difficulty in putting what they had memorized into practice. In teachers' interviews, frustration with this phenomenon was expressed and it was stated that the curriculum demands grammar learning; despite the learners' difficulties there were no changes in grammar teaching observed, nor was a possible need for change mentioned in interviews. This was something the learners were to become accustomed to, in the precise manner taught, despite their young age.

In frodistiria, there was a great focus on L2 writing skills. The reason for this, according to the language teachers interviewed, was mostly the fact that for most of the language tests there was a focus on grammar, writing and reading and very little time spent on listening and speaking.

*Teacher 14f: The main parts of the language tests are grammar, essay writing and reading tasks. The speaking part last 10-15 minutes, surely the students will be able to say something in that time, they can handle a short conversation.*

The CPE students in interviews came to interpret grammar, essay writing and reading tasks as aspects of importance and difficulty, meaning that the written part of the test was the most difficult and most important aspect of the foreign language.

*CPE st.1: Speaking is easy because it isn't very long and we usually prepare for it 3 weeks before the test, grammar, reading and writing are difficult and for these three aspects of the tests we need to practice extensively. If we are not good at grammar especially, we cannot do anything else.*

This teaching method fails to meet the needs of a group of young learners. It is inevitable for the child to lose interest in the subject and what the teacher is trying to teach. A child of this age cannot relate to theories of grammar or the rules of syntax. At this early stage it is more plausible for a young learner to comprehend the FL through learning techniques they can relate to. If children are taught the FL as if they are adolescents or adults, they eventually become restless and frequently interrupt the course of the lesson. This is a distinct sign that teaching approaches and aims should change in order to maintain the young learners' initial enthusiasm and interest towards the new knowledge they are exposed to.

It appears that language teachers in *frodistiria* feel that they are providing their students with an education that will help and prepare children for the future, which is found purposeful and reassuring by the broader community. In contrast, the state school language teachers feel neglected and have been driven to feeling that the entire professional part of their life has no objective. Language learners are not fulfilled with their language education in the public sector and are forced to put all their hope and effort in learning English in the private sector, where, to a large extent, different methods and approaches to language learning are not fully implemented. They are offered a more pleasant learning environment and a clear goal of what they are expected to accomplish, however, they are still encouraged to view language as another school subject rather than a means of communication. None of the parties mentioned in this section benefits by the current situation and the genuine purpose of language learning is not met. By introducing a new perspective to young language learning and teaching in Greece realistic aims can be set for early programmes. As Nikolov (2000:39) has argued regarding the early language learning situation in Hungary “it would be extremely important to make teachers and parents understand what young children are capable of achieving and how attitudinal and linguistic gains may continue to success in adulthood”. Children are immediately exposed to teacher-centred, examination-oriented language lessons due to a poor curriculum, lack of teacher training and a misleading language learning policy. The current language learning and teaching situation could prove to be inadequate at this early stage and prevent young learners from being successful.

In this chapter, I attempted to present data gathered during classroom observations and interviews at seven state schools and seven *frodistiria* in a region of Southwestern Greece. In the next chapter, I will report on a small-scale intervention research study conducted in one *frodistirio* in the same region for the purpose of shedding more light on the questioning of appropriate methodologies in such contexts and age group, and contribute the outcomes to the field of language learning in Greek education. As mentioned in Chapter 4, the *frodistirio* of Phase 2 was not included in the seven Phase 1 *frodistiria*.

## Chapter 6: Intervention Research into the Greek EYL Frodistirio Classrooms

### 6.1 Data from Older Students' Past Experience

Before presenting the Phase 2 findings of the research in this chapter, it would be helpful to contextualise the findings by discussing the interview data collected from older teenage CPE students who were studying at the frodistirio whilst the research took place. The analysis of the interviews conducted with the 8 teenage CPE students is presented here, in order to provide the reader with a connection of the reality of early language learning in primary education (Phase 1), based on the CPE students' experience, and the intervention study (Phase 2) which follows.

During interviews, these students were able to reflect insightfully on their prior experience of learning English at state primary schools and the frodistirio where the Phase 2 study took place. The students in question were studying at the Phase 2 frodistirio, preparing to sit the CPE and were asked to recollect their language learning experience from when they were in primary school. They were invited to participate in the study because they were young enough to remember their experience in primary school in detail, and because they were students that had an excellent work record, which was provided by their teacher at the frodistirio with the students' consent. The students admitted not showing any interest in what was instructed at school and to becoming restless as the state school teachers spent most of the session correcting children's homework and written work in class as CPE st.2 reported:

*I remember that the English language lesson at school was quite dull and boring because we spent most of our time correcting everyone's homework and reading aloud what we have written. It is very tiring to hear the same things 23 times (there were 23 students in the classroom).*

Students regarded this as classroom time that was not spent productively and it affected their behaviour. Since students felt that there was no organisation in the time they had with the language teachers they found it difficult to adjust to formal education where the aim of the lesson was not entirely clear to them. Since there was no preparation for language examinations in state schools, teachers focused mostly on the grammar of the language, neglecting to provide material that would help their students develop other skills in English.

*CPEst.5: When we had English lessons it was very difficult to focus, most of us already knew what the teacher was trying to teach but others didn't know anything and the teacher just went back and forth with information. We never discussed anything in English and our lesson was based on the exercises in the book, which were mostly grammar. Our only goal, you could say, was to read aloud what we had done in our exercises.*

It can be argued that unsuccessful chronological management has consequences for classroom events and can demotivate students. Due to the fact that the language lessons at frodistiria are longer and student groups are smaller, even though there is a focus on written work in class and homework, it does not have such a negative effect on students' behaviour. Nonetheless, evidence from Phase 1 observations supports the idea that even in frodistiria, when homework correction occupied the lesson for a substantial amount of time it had an impact on students' engagement and induced general lack of interest during the lesson.

One of the main disadvantages the older learners believed affected their performance and differentiated their attitude towards language learning in school and the frodistirio was the fact that in school, teachers' disciplinary strategies towards disruption, interruption of the flow of instructional activity, undone homework or daily chaotic classroom discussions were considered severe and degrading for the students, as they all mentioned in interviews, often resulting in an atmosphere uncondusive to a harmonious lesson. Moreover, students were of the opinion that at school there is limited positive reinforcement to strengthen their actions as illustrated in the following statement:

CPEst.1: *I believe that at primary school, and this is only regarding the English language lesson, our teachers used punishment to discipline us for something we had done or if we hadn't done our homework, so that that we would improve.*

According to the CPE students' interviews, frodistiria are not as severe in their penalties; however, they are quite strict and focused on fulfilling parents' expectations and maintain a great amount of discipline in their classes. According to CPEst.1:

*Especially at school, our English teacher frequently used 'punishment' when we misbehaved or when we had not done our homework. This way they would make us try harder so that we would learn things by heart. We never cooperated or had a discussion to share ideas, we only worked on books and this was quite boring. The teachers at the frodistirio were also strict when we misbehaved or forgot our homework, but they did not yell as the teachers at state school did but they would assign more homework.*

This correlated with observations at frodistiria which revealed that students are rewarded at frodistiria for their effort. This behaviour reinforced children's learning and since they are treated in a more positive manner at frodistiria, their attitude toward the private sector was very different to that of the public. Even though the classroom environment is an important factor, state schools do not provide a suitable setting for a successful language lesson. The case for introducing a change in the manner of classroom management and organisation of activity tasks will be demonstrated by the outcomes of the Phase 2 research in following sections.

The use of a teacher-centred approach in this study has revealed evidence of the involvement of only the minority of language learners, meaning that the pupils seated in the front rows were active during the lesson and the students in back rows were rarely acknowledged, as mentioned in the previous chapter. Additionally, a teacher-centred environment may give the children knowledge of the language; however, it does not necessarily allow them to use it for communicative purposes. This thesis does not suggest that at times this model of language teaching is not useful; nonetheless, language learning is likely to be more effective if there are a variety of approaches that facilitate learning in different aspects. When children are in groups

they have the opportunity to share their knowledge of the foreign language, learn from their peers and even be corrected in a non-threatening manner and environment.

The following section describes the frodistirio where the Phase 2 research took place and its procedure.

## **6.2 The Frodistirio Research Context**

### **The Phase 2 Frodistirio**

The frodistirio where the Phase 2 research took place was well known in the region for the high rates of accomplishments of the students and the good quality of language learning. Many parents stated in questionnaires that they trusted the teachers of the school because of the many years of experience they had. However, it is unlikely that parents had any knowledge of teachers' educational backgrounds or relevant training undertaken since they never requested this information according to the Director of the frodistirio.

The school was quite traditional in its ways, concentrating on leading their students to success, as represented by attaining a language certificate. They worked with various course books and all levels had a different book for reading, writing and grammar. The teachers were given a curriculum plan for the entire academic year mainly requiring teachers to follow the books the students were asked to purchase and complete them by the end of the academic year. The Director stated that if books are not completed by the end of the year, parents may take this to be because the necessary work was not done and the purchase of the books would be seen as a waste of their money.

### **The Language Teachers exposed to Action Research**

The purpose for introducing the language teachers exposed to action research so early in the chapter was to provide the reader with additional background on teachers' prior training. In the Greek region where the study took place, teachers were reluctant



to attempt conducting their own research due to their lack of knowledge, experience and training. Action research tends to be directly connected to achieving improvement in the classroom setting and introducing teachers to an exploratory approach, in the hope that it would provide them with more confidence in their professional abilities and benefit their language learners in the process.

The researcher's aim in this part of the study was to guide Phase 2 language teachers through the process of action research and observed pre-scheduled lessons of the participants' classes with young learners (levels chosen at random but were not interchangeable once observations had begun). The outcomes would benefit the teachers and provide them with professional development which could later be applied in their own classes at their own pace. Their language lessons could improve as their immediate focus would be the needs of the student and not the completion of the coursebook, a strategy which could help their students become successful language learners. Additionally, the findings could provide the researcher with data regarding language teachers' training. Attempts were made in order to assist language teachers in their professional development, since language educators are not exposed to pre/in-service teacher training, as established in Phase 1 of the study. In this section of the chapter there will be a presentation of the action research the Phase 2 language teachers were exposed to, what the process involved and how it developed and progressed.

The data was to be collected through:

- Action research awareness surveys
- Workshops: Familiarisation to Action Research
- 10 pre-scheduled observations where the researcher observed the Phase 2 teachers.
- Follow-up interviews.

After the data was collected it was thematically analysed by addressing the identification of important features of the findings (Richards, 2003). The main themes by which the data was analysed were as follows:

- Action Research Awareness

- Teachers' cooperation and peer observations
- The outcomes of the action research
- Reactions

Initially, the language teachers were asked to complete an Action Research awareness survey which the researcher used as information to decide what the workshops would entail (see Appendix 16). The survey was separated into three sections in order to gather information about the teacher and their work experience (Section A), their understanding of action research (Section B) and whether teachers have conducted action research in the past (Section C). None of the teachers answered sections B and C and only two attempted to give an explanation of what they thought action research was:

*Questionnaire1: It is an online site where you can find specific articles, journals etc. that will help you with research or just to get information on a specific topic.*

*Questionnaire2: As teachers, we should care about whether pupils really activate in classrooms or not.*

As a result of responses to the surveys, informative workshops seemed essential at the time, not only to inform teachers of action research which they could include in their own professional development but to also develop a better understanding of what the Phase 2 study entailed.

In order to ease language teachers in the concept of action research and help them familiarize themselves with acting on their own studies, the researcher provided the participants with five workshops held at the school premise (Appendix 17). The purpose of the workshops was to cover themes related to various methods of collecting data and using it to their advantage. The workshops were introduced as part of the action research in order to enhance teacher training in the region, which were one of the issues of the study, and through this procedure, awareness would be raised regarding students' needs, one of which was helping them to feel comfortable to express themselves and communicate in the TL with their teacher and peers. The five workshops were designed and conducted by the researcher and entailed the following:

1. An introduction to Action Research- The use of research tools.

- The Benefits and the Process of Action Research.
  - Keeping Journals, Creating Questionnaires & Audio/Video Recording Lessons.
  - Resources (Burns, 1999; Freeman, 1998; Wallace, 1998).
2. Ethical Issues.
    - Conducting Research in the Young Learners' Classroom.
    - Parents: keeping them involved and informed.
    - Letters of Consent.
  3. 'Getting Started' & 'Acting'.
    - Which topic area would you like to describe, document and research?
    - Research Questions.
    - Planning: How to carry out the project.
    - Collecting the Necessary Data.
  4. 'Reflecting-Rethinking-Reporting'
    - How to organize and review your work.
    - How to display data clearly.
    - How to share with others.
    - Rethinking your Teaching Practice-Involving your Students.
    - How to report back to DoS.
    - Presenting your Findings to Peers.
  5. Peer observations- Evaluating Action Research.
    - The Benefits of Peer Observations
    - Your Role as the Observer.
    - Creating Observation Sheets and Coding Forms.
    - Sharing Information with your Colleague.

Not all teachers were convinced of the benefits of research immediately, there were, however, two teachers that took the risk and attempted action research as a part of their routine-teaching one week after the fifth workshop. Teachers were encouraged to pick a topic area that they felt would help them improve their students' learning. Participants were presented with the procedure of data collection and keeping a research journal which would help them remain focused and improve their observational skills. Teachers were requested to organise their records and submit

research questions and additional information on the topic. This process could help the teachers find their own character in language teaching, encourage creativity and motivate their students and themselves to be as productive as possible. Once the workshops were completed and the teachers chose their area of research focus, they were asked to first observe the researcher to become accustomed with the nature of observations. The researcher then began observing the Phase 2 language teachers (see Appendix 19) where the main focus would be the implementation of the action research in a student-centred classroom. Phase 2 language teachers were informed of the researcher's focus and were made aware in the workshops that they would be able to focus on their learners' need by using a student-centred approach in their classes. The teachers were reluctant at first and overcompensated with interactive teaching approaches which confused the students. For this reason, the researcher did not take the first three observed lessons into consideration and began recording data on the fourth lesson and onwards. By the time the observations took place the teachers had the opportunity, from their own practice and the information shared with their peers, to become accustomed to the nature of action research and had the knowledge to discuss it in the follow-up interviews (Appendix 18 with sample) which took place after the observations were completed. Interviews with language teachers at the Phase 2 frodistirio, in June 2008, provided the evidence that after introducing action research, they had developed more confidence in language teaching, were more comfortable with student-centred approaches and shared questions and ideas with colleagues regarding their lessons and the needs of individual students.

Teacher 5Bf stated that:

*I was afraid to use action research at first. Now, I cannot believe I had never used it before. It really helps teachers open their eyes and see where the problem is. It does not affect the lesson, it makes it better.*

The reasearcher and DoS organised a meeting with the Phase 2 teachers after the process was completed in order to give them feedback on the research. It was essential for the teachers to hear the praising they deserved since they not only became open to something entirely new to them but were willing to expose themselves and take a leap of faith. The positive feedback was an additional element

to making the teacher more comfortable using action research and raising their self-esteem as language educators.

Based on observations, Phase 2 teachers became aware of how to detect an issue in the classroom and study it to the students' advantage. Many teachers examined grammar and pronunciation difficulties, behaviour issues and low motivation. Once the teachers focused on the issues they had noticed they examined ways of assisting their students overcome it. They became more eager to search for resources, mostly online, and address the issue. The Phase 2 teachers stated in their interviews that the students progressed in the points they had addressed and their progress was also evident to the parents who provided the DoS and teachers with positive feedback as well. Of course, a need for practice was obvious to the teachers who stated that they would require reading more on action research and practising it as much as possible in order to improve and draw upon effective results. According to Teacher 5Bf:

*I am not perfect, I have a lot to learn but this was a good first step, although at the beginning I didn't want to take this first step. Language teachers in my country are not used to workshops and observations. It is a shame because it seems that we were missing out.*

Nonetheless, they gained the motivation to try working with the models themselves. They became more open to change and observing its effects and evaluating it at the end of a series of lessons, a procedure which led to improvement in practice. By the end of the school year all teachers attempted action research in their teaching routine to explore changes of children's attitudes towards FL, their phonological and phonetic difficulties and teaching methods that may prove to be successful in the development of accuracy and fluency in English. Teacher 7Bf stated:

*I would very much like to use action research in the near future because I see it helps me understand my students' difficulties so that I can turn my focus towards their language learning needs. I plan to focus on some grammar points soon, such as Present Continuous which does not exist in the Greek language and children find confusing when using it.*

The data could provide the Director and parents with productive advice and suggestions for the children's success.

The main focus of action research is to provoke thought about what occurs in the classroom which can simultaneously work as a tool for professional development. Through the process of small scale studies, the teacher becomes more aware of the learning environment and this awareness may empower the teacher to become a more efficient decision maker about what should be done in the classroom in order to deliver a lesson with meaningful communication. Foreign language teachers develop insights into their students' learning from observing their behaviour and collecting data that would not only be useful for the class they are conducting the research on but for other classes as well. The teachers become reflective, analyze the data and evaluate the results.

A number of hypotheses have been raised over the years about the relation of attitudes, motivation and the orientation of achievement in language learning and teaching (Dörnyei & Noels, 1994; Dörnyei, 1990; Ellis, 1994; Oxford, 1996). My main consideration when conducting Phase 2 of the study was that young language learners are expected to increase their motivation, and gain a positive attitude towards the foreign language if their lessons became more approachable to their age and more creative as far as communication is concerned. According to Nunan (1999:115):

The usual meaning of motivation for the teacher is probably the interest that something generates in the students. A particular exercise, a particular topic, a particular song may interest students in the class, to the teacher's delight. Obvious enjoyment is not necessarily a sign that learning is taking place.

Introducing other aspects of learning in this context are needed to be organised in such a way that it would not jeopardize the frodistirio's reliability but would give the students the chance to work on various tasks that would bring them closer to a more realistic use of the language and its culture. Nunan (1999:75) makes an important statement on the matter where he indicates that:

The teacher's primary role is the provision of pedagogical opportunities through which learners might structure and restructure their own understanding. The ultimate goal is to enable the learner to communicate with others in the world beyond the classroom where they

will not have a teacher on hand. In helping learners achieve this goal, however, teachers need to redefine their approach to teaching.

In the case of the Greek language learning reality, if changes in the pedagogical system are to take place, either in the private or public sector, the 'ultimate goal' Nunan refers to must be taken into consideration.

### **6.3 Classroom Context: the researcher's intervention**

This section of the chapter concentrates on the classroom context of the intervention study. Here, the changes of the classroom environment are presented in connection to the communicative approaches applied in Phase 2. The reason for this is to provide the reader with a clearer image of the process of change.

As one part of the Phase 2 research procedure, the 'traditional' layout of the classroom was not rearranged when the beginners were first welcomed (Appendix 22, 2). The children were seated in rows, as they would be normally, so that they would not endure a change from the very beginning. With the start of the new school year, there was general enthusiasm when students returned to the *frodistirio* after the summer holidays, which quickly faded as the typical situation in classes progressed. The curriculum assigned was book-oriented and children were requested to go through every bit of homework reading out each task, taking turns and receiving feedback, a teaching approach seen in state schools as well. Children eventually became very quiet awaiting their turn, without receiving any meaningful instruction by the teacher. Their engagement was more mechanical than spontaneous and communicative.

After analyzing pedagogical structures and activities in state schools, where children were not exposed to an interactive student-centred environment, I anticipated that an immediate exposure to change at the *frodistirio* would confuse or maybe even intimidate pupils. This would make the adaptation of any type of change even more difficult for YLs to become accustomed to. Since the children were very young and familiar with a predominant discourse under the direction and control of the teacher,

the new environment being introduced gradually was regarded as likely to be more efficient. The intermediate group, for instance, was accustomed to routine lessons, at the frodistirio and at their state school, as they were seated in rows next to the same children they were seated next to every year.

As research progressed, it was important to introduce as much of the foreign language as possible, in a manner that would not intimidate the learners of either group. A student-centred environment was deemed as an excellent solution as the children would not only be exposed to the language the teacher used, they would be exposed to L2 coming from their peers, something they had never experienced in the past. This would offer the potential for maximising L2 and ensuring that it was presented in a fun, relaxing and moderate way so that the learners would not resent it. Nonetheless, in order to achieve this, the researcher/teacher did not consider dismissing L1, on the contrary, it was used less frequently, with a reduction from approximately 80% to 40% of the teacher's talk time, as children became more familiar with the student-centred environment. From the very first encounters, children learned how to greet their teacher and peers in English how to use polite language and how to ask to be excused (Appendix 22, 3). They also were given an English form of their names and from then on the children referred to each other using these, even when talking about their peers in Greek. The fact that in a short period of two weeks, with three lessons a week, children were able to not only utter these expressions or words, but also to communicate which gave them confidence, motivation and interest to learn even more. The following extract displays a conversation between a beginner and teacher in the third week of their lessons where the child demonstrates the language he had learned so far and was keen to put it into practice:

Beg. 1457: Hello Miss!

Teacher: Hello!

Beg. 1457: How are you today?

Teacher: Fine thanks

Beg. 1456: Good, καλά τα είπα Κυρία; (did I say it right Miss?)



Teacher: Ναι! Είσαι πολύ καλός, μπράβο! (Yes! You were very good, well done!)

During this process, I hoped to strengthen the frequency of good behaviour and progress by rewarding students with stars, a tool that stems from Behaviourism. Before stars were awarded to students, parents were sent letters by the researcher on the procedure of rewards and the actions that would gain their children stars (Appendix 14 with translation). This was also explained to the students in class so that they were aware of the type of behaviour that was expected of them and would help them reach their target. The more stars pupils collected the more chances they had to receive a certificate at the end of the month, during a ceremony that took place at the frodistirio with other classes, teachers and at times, the presence of parents. This procedure was in contrast to state schools, where praising students was a neglected action, as mentioned in the previous chapter. When teachers did praise students it would be for successfully completing their homework and providing the class with the correct answer. The teachers observed would exclaim *Excellent* to the student and the teacher's approval and maybe a good grade at the end of the semester was considered their reward. Observations conducted in Phase 1 frodistiria, on the other hand, indicated that teachers praise students more often than at state schools, not only for the answers YLs provided in class but for good behaviour as well. When learners made progress in their learning and made the necessary effort at home they were given a sticker. However, when the intervention research was conducted at the specific frodistirio, it was noted during the lessons that students took pride in the fact that they received an award at a ceremony held especially for them and their effort. They shared their joy with other children, teachers and parents who were present to applaud their accomplishment.

#### **6.4 The Outcomes of Students' Awards**

With the aim of increasing the status of the award, students at the frodistirio were also a part of the selection process. They were requested to give their opinions which led to them producing innovative and sensible ideas. After the first 'award ceremony' more and more children made the effort to obtain stars. A further outcome to this was

that pupils developed an atmosphere of competition in class which did not interfere with their performance and resulted in them focusing more on their own progress than others' by the end of the year. Students were made aware and reminded by their teacher that when they used a certain amount of the TL in every lesson, or spoke to their peers and other teachers in English, in and outside the classroom, they would be rewarded with a star (see DVD1 03:47-03:48). This response resulted mainly because the children were introduced to group and pair work as an alternative to a teacher-centred learning environment (see examples in DVD1 03:47-12:23, DVD2 11:56-15:00 & 1:00-1:49) and were given stars based on how well they cooperated and communicated with each other in the new-to-them context; they, therefore, urged their peers to be successful as that would reflect positively on the entire group and would increase their chances of being rewarded. This applied especially to the intermediate group, who happily maximised the use of TL and were proud to actually put into practice the language they had been learning, as recorded in the journal during the lessons. Data from students' statements in questionnaires indicated it was reassuring and fulfilling for them to actually realise that what they had been learning so far was not only for the purpose of homework and future preparation for examinations. They had become aware that the language they were learning and the skills they had developed could be used as a communicative tool (as displayed in DVDs 1 & 2). The next phase of the intervention research programme was introduced at a point when it was apparent that the children from both groups were inspired enough and strived to do their best as indicated by the Director's observation data:

*The students were motivated, very cooperative and paid attention to the task (activity observed). They were not only involved but they had fun at the same time. (Appendix 8 observation sample).*

At this point, collaborative grouping strategies were implemented.

## 6.5 The Effects of Various Classroom Layouts

As a part of the introduction of the set up of the Phase 2 research the *rules* of group work and its purpose were explained to students and parents in writing. It was also emphasized that stars were to be used frequently if pupils followed the guidelines (Appendix 14). Great emphasis was placed on the way they behaved towards each other and children were warned that there would be no rewards if any kind of bullying, either physical or verbal occurred. The explanation given for this new system of classroom organisation was that of raising children's understanding that languages are learned in order to enable communication and this is what should be done in our language classroom where every child in class should feel safe and comfortable enough to participate. Within two weeks of beginning the intervention research, the children of both levels were considered prepared to endure their first change, which would entail a re-arrangement of the classroom layout (see process in Appendix 22 samples). Some had experienced various classroom layouts at their state schools; however, those layouts appeared not to have any clear purpose. The new and unusual (to the students) layouts, which were interchangeable during the lesson (see DVD 1 & 2), were given a name identified as group work, whilst when students worked in dyads this was identified as pair work. These concepts proved to be baffling for the children at first, necessitating management, coordination and the children's cooperation. Drawing on the documented evidence during the Phase 2 research, it was interesting to note that at the start of this newly established seating arrangement the pupils with strongest personalities dominated the groups (see DVD 2 11:56-15:00). The students in question took the responsibility of assigning turns within the group and decided whether the answers their peers provided were correct or not. This made the shy students quieter, which created the need for regular repetition of the rules and the purpose of group work. This procedure was applied in order for all members of the groups to participate and put forward their ideas and knowledge equally. This took some time for the students to comprehend and put into practice, especially with the beginners' group. The young learners needed confirmation by their teacher that they had as much to offer as their peers. The evidence was recorded in the Phase 2 journal kept whilst observing the students working with their peers, interrupting the task to ask the teacher if the answer they

suggested was correct. This would usually follow with 'Κυρία θυμάμαι που το λέγαται προχθές' ('Miss, I remember you mentioned this the other day') and awaiting a form of praise in return. By the end of the school year, all group members played a significant part in task completions and cooperated well together in response to given time limits, by which children were expected to complete their task so as not to overlap the next planned activity. In these tasks children assigned roles to each other, cooperated and stayed focused on what was asked of them.

The use of group and pair work in the Phase 2 frodistirio classes appears to have resulted in the learners connecting this approach to English speaking time and automatically using English with their peers, an act that could be considered rare, since the children were in a monolingual context and, therefore, shared the same L1. There were students that were reluctant to speak to their peers in a foreign language at first, this was observed mostly with the intermediate group, but when in groups the children reminded each other of their goal of maximizing L2 by using the phrase 'English, please'. Students were introduced to the idea that languages are learned in order to enable communication and that is what should be done in the language classroom.

As an additional procedure for encouraging further use of L2, the young language learners who participated in this study were asked to audio-record themselves when doing pair or group work so that they could evaluate their TL use for the needs of this study (procedure can be seen in DVD 2 'Guys vs. Girls'). The TL was calculated by recording the time the students spoke (a sample of a transcription is displayed in Appendix 15). In the beginning of the school year, there was an average of 30% of learners' L2 use recorded and students themselves deemed this percentage low. They gradually maximised L2 use in the recordings and by the end of the academic year the percentage of L2 use rose to an average of 60%. The children were constantly praised for their progress and all received a 'Great Worker Award' certificate as a reward (as explained to parents/students in the letter in Appendix 14). In interviews, the same students stated that they actually enjoyed using audio recordings and hearing themselves speak English to their peers because it helped them assess their performance. Initially, the beginners used a combination of L1 and L2 as shown in the beginners' conversation below whilst working in groups:

Beg. 1457: Κυρία, να κάνουμε και την exercise three? (Miss, shall we do exercise three?)

T: Yes, please.

Beg.1458: and four?

Beg.1459: Είναι επανάληψη. (It is a review)

Beg.1453: Review

Beg.1458: Ποιός λέει τώρα; Ο Beg.1456 [*name replaced with pseudonym*];  
(Whose turn is it? Beg.'s 1456?).

They did, however, use L2 when available to them and steadily developed L2 routine vocabulary in the classroom, as illustrated by the following short conversation:

Beg1456: Miss, group work?

Teacher: Yes, fix your desks.

Beg1456: OK Miss.

Beg1458: I love group work.

Beg1456: Me too, fix the desks.

The children's attitude towards group work can be considered a spontaneous response. They enjoyed being in a cooperative environment where they had discovered new means of expression (also see DVDs 1&2 for reaction to group work from intermediate class for tasks 'The BBC News' and 'Guys vs. Girls'). This asymmetry connects L2 conversational use with establishing a sense of community-a feature that Graff (2003) identifies as imperative to successful learning. When the beginners were asked about this dialogue in informal discussions in the classroom that were recorded in field notes, they stated that they felt secure in this supportive learning environment where the stigma of failure was reduced as indicated below, translated from Greek:

Beg1456: *I feel that there is no pressure when we are in groups and I feel happy to speak English because it becomes a way to talk to my partner and not a subject where I may make a mistake and my teacher will correct me.*

Beg1458: *It is also fun! We can pretend we are in England and in an English school!*

Int. 13b: *I like doing group work because all tasks can be done easier this way.*

Int. 16b: *Group work is my favourite thing to do, especially when we work on different projects together. I learn new things every time. I wish we could do this at school too because English at school is a bit boring, especially since we do the same thing over and over again.*

Since the lessons were of a more student-centred nature and young learners were more involved in the process and progress of the lesson, students felt the need for the emotional involvement where they knew that making a mistake was a natural process of learning and together this appeared to strengthen their motivation and approach to the English language. They felt they were in an authentic foreign atmosphere where they were encouraged to cooperate and take initiative in putting what they learned into practice.

Beg1459: *When I'm in our classroom, I feel I'm in England!*

As Nunan and Lamb (2003: 36) argue,

[...] the language curriculum should concern itself, not only with language content goals, but also with learning process goals. Learners should be focused on the process through which learning takes place as well as on the target language they are learning. It is our contention that learners who have developed skills in identifying their own preferred learning skills and strategies will be more effective language learners.

Nunan and Lamb's (2003) recommendation which implies that learners should be able to identify how they learn best was clearly reflected in this study. Records illustrated that students were comfortable cooperating, using L2 among their peers and completing their work within a time limit. Parents also reported being particularly pleased with the outcomes of these changes in class and reported that their children

spent less time studying at home because they had acquired the new linguistic elements introduced in class after being more involved. One parent responded, saying:

Parents 1453: *I am surprised Beg. 1453 has learned all these irregular verbs so easily. When this was covered in class I asked him to study and make sure he knew them all for the next lesson and when he said that he remembered them all from what was done in class I got worried and thought he was being difficult. When I asked him to tell me which irregular verbs he had learned, he repeated them all without a problem. The effort his older sister made to memorise irregular verbs a few years ago was a real nightmare, with Beg. 1453 it was effortless.*

As the beginners' class progressed, the pupils became more attached to language learning. Students were encouraged to develop and learn new vocabulary through games and stories, most of which were interactive. The fact that they were included in this manner gave them the opportunity to take part in the language learning process. This approach was quite different to what the students were used to since they were obliged, for each lesson, to learn 15-20 new words and write dictation (see example in DVDs 1&2) at the start of the lesson. However, learning through games and stories gave a different note to vocabulary learning which children found much more enjoyable. Furthermore, they were reminded to use English when something was said in L1 but might more generally be spoken in L2 as a result of the student's limited fluency as illustrated in the extract below.

Beg.1456: 'Κυρία, έχουμε workbook σήμερα'

Beg.1459: 'English please!'

Beg.1456: 'Yes, sorry, Miss, we have workbook today'

Being encouraged and not forced to use the TL was crucial to the children's attitude towards the language. The environment was relaxed and they had all learned to accept the use mainly of L2 and the fact that they were all in that class for the same reason. They were in an environment where there was no prejudice or fear of using English. This allowed them to make connections between their L1 and the TL, and they would confidently share their thoughts with the teacher and the rest of the class as in the following example:

Teacher (eliciting meaning of new vocabulary from a text): *He has a good memory* (using gestures and pointing to her head)

Beg1453: *Memory! Μνήμη!* (Greek word for *memory*) *Ο υπολογιστής μου έχει memory 8 gigabyte!* (My computer has an 8 gigabyte memory).

A major priority in the design of the study was to ensure tasks were selected that would keep the learners interested and engaged. To achieve this, a variety of TL use was offered, such as games, telling stories and introducing cultural events such as Halloween, which is not known in Greece (Appendix 22, section 4). There was an effort to involve the learners in the lesson and elicit vocabulary and information using the TL as much as possible. Special events were organised within the school, including all pupils of the frodistirio. These opportunities gave children the enjoyment of demonstrating the language in front of their peers, other teachers, their parents and accept praise for their outstanding work. For example, one event which proved to be highly successful and increased the students' TL speaking and awareness about British culture was *English Day*. Children were given the project a month in advance, where they would discover and illustrate British culture, music, food and traditions. Pupils were aware that they would be expected to use TL to the maximum of their ability and that they would be rewarded with double the amount of stars for the day. The result was that pupils and teachers socialized in English to honour *English Day*. The impact of this event is reflected in one parent's comment:

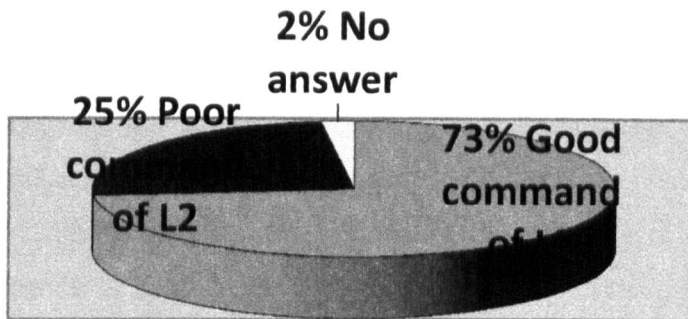
Parent 1463: *It looked so natural; I thought I was in England. It was really a great way for the children to connect the language to the culture, especially since most of them will probably never visit the country.*

As mentioned earlier, Greek is the medium which is used to teach all subjects at state schools. Judging by the responses recorded from this intervention study, introducing the lesson in English, or at least maximizing the use of L2 had the effect of engaging and motivating the pupils to a great extent and helping them realise their competence in using the FL. Later, when the same students were given questionnaires 73% of the students stated that they had a very good command of the language, 25 % did not have confidence in themselves and stated that their English was not as good as it should be, and 2% did not give an answer, as displayed in Chart 4:



**Chart 4: Students' Self-reporting on Foreign Language Proficiency.**

### **Students' Self-reporting on Foreign Language Proficiency**



The findings of my AR broadly correlate with the experience of the frodistiria teachers who attended the researcher's workshops, and subsequently introduced small group work in their own classes. Furthermore, language teachers of the Phase 2 frodistirio who were observed became accustomed to the idea of peer observations and accepted each others' feedback. They focused on student-centred approaches and commented that they were pleased to experience full participation from the students and productive cooperation, as reflected by the quote below provided by Phase 2 Teacher after being observed:

Teacher 4Bf: *I was afraid that when I introduced group work, most students would see it as an opportunity to copy the work of the stronger ones. I was given the impression though that when I explained what was considered appropriate cooperation and that it would be rewarded, the students immediately made great effort to carry out the task as they were instructed to and actually enjoyed doing it.*

It is understandable as to why Teacher 4Bf had second thoughts about the approach of a student-centred environment. I also came across difficulties when first introducing group and pair work to the children at the frodistirio. Although, I believed

this new-to-the-context approach would be more of a challenge for the beginners, it turned out to be more difficult for the intermediate group to adopt. Having been used to a teacher-centred approach at school and the *frodistirio*, the students were not sure of how to handle this new freedom given to them, by a new teacher who, to their eyes, wanted to make changes because she had influences from abroad. In the beginning, it took the children a couple of minutes to start talking to each other, and after they were prompted they started communicating all the while being very careful about how loud they were and start their group work by whispering (see DVDs 1 & 2). If they were ever left unsupervised they would naturally return to working on their own, as the DoS observed. The intermediate class enjoyed the fact that they would be working with their peers, however, some did see it as an opportunity to lose focus and misbehave (Appendix 22, section 1); this took some time to overcome and rewarding good behaviour with stars expedited the process. After the first month, when the certificates were given in the ceremony, the students started realising the benefits of gaining as many stars as possible. Once they were rewarded with more stars while working together in their groups and focusing on their task, they could realise they learned while they were having fun.

It is essential to consider the fact that teachers were reluctant to use a student-centred approach due to the fear of losing control, and that the use of group/pair work may lead to disastrous effects. In this case, once Teacher 4Bf (previous statement) realised the positive aspects of interactive learning she became willing to apply it in her classroom regularly. It is also important to consider whether the teacher would be as reluctant to apply interactive methods in her lesson if she was provided with the appropriate teacher training. With the introduction of the dual characteristics of a student-centred environment and classroom management and organisation, the young learners who participated in the study were able to evaluate their lessons and become aware of the fact that the English language was not learned predominately for pragmatic reasons, such as securing one's professional future. Even though children were awarded in ceremonies with a certificate, as time went by, they expressed the pride they felt in the fact that they could speak the language and use it for communicative purposes. They wanted to learn more about the foreign culture, the slang children their age used, and games they played in English speaking countries:

Beg.1459: *Miss, what games do children play in England?*

Beg.1457: *What songs do children our age sing at school?*

Int.14b: *How many hours is school for children our age in England?*

Gradually, their achievement became a strong motivating factor which was reflected by their teachers' appraisal and their own language knowledge. With their existing success, they felt an urge for more and developed "the desire to learn for its own sake" (Lamb, 2001:85). At this point, it should be recalled that before the Phase 2 study took place at the frodistirio, the teachers and the DoS were quite uncertain about the consequences the research would have. Not having used a student-centred approach before, the Director feared that the students would disregard the lesson as play time which would evidently bring great discontentment to the parents. Having discussed evidence from the post-research observation of the other teachers at the frodistirio, and keeping in mind the Director's reluctance, I asked the group to complete surveys focusing on research awareness (Appendix 16). Data from the questionnaires revealed that, despite their considerably long teaching experience of more than ten years average, the teachers and the DoS had not been aware that research might assist them in professional development. This acknowledgement of the value of action research indicated that not only had the study facilitated and improved language learning in this context and encouraged a more communicative approach but had also helped to promote techniques such as teachers' self-evaluation and action research that would in time help language educators meet their students' needs and develop an enhanced understanding of their strengths and weaknesses, thus providing professional development.

In the following section, there will be a discussion and evaluation of the results of the Phase 2 research, the students' attitude towards the changes made and the teachers' reaction to the possibility of action research for the future.

## 6.6 The Student-Centred Environment

Data from students' interviews and questionnaires revealed students were predominately learning English for pragmatic reasons, such as future job hunting and travelling, goals that could be labeled unrealistic for this age group. One may interpret this phenomenon as leading children to a mistaken aim when learning how to use a communicative tool. For children of the age of 8-11, it may be argued that it is unrealistic to set such goals. At this age children are too young to grasp the anxiety of their elders concerning their professional future. They need goals which are closer to their age and interests, if they are not provided with aims they can relate to and become familiar with, teachers and parents run the risk of exhausting any kind of motivation the children have when first walking into the classroom. According to Nikolov (1999:53) "the most important motivating factors for children between 6 and 14 years of age included positive attitudes towards the learning context and the teacher; intrinsically motivating activities, tasks and materials; and they were more motivated by classroom practice than integrative or instrumental reasons". This is one reason I chose to work with the beginners as well as the intermediate class. I had anticipated that giving the students the start that is appropriate to their age group, their interest would bring them closer to the foreign language and assist them in their future learning.

The procedure was arranged in a way that would not bring any discomfort to the students which could interfere with their learning progress. The Director of the *frodistiro* requested that some techniques stay the same, such as the use of *dictation* where the students would study 10-20 English words, depending on the age and the language level, for each lesson and write down and translate the ones the teacher chose to dictate (10 each time), as mentioned in section 6.5. Fortunately, the DoS had no objections to additional vocabulary methods being used as well, such as storytelling, mind games and warm-ups to various tasks. Essentially, adjusting my plans to local conditions was the meaning and purpose of the intervention study. I deemed it best to focus on one topic at a time, so that the changes would not be overwhelming and the recording of the data would be more accurate and complete, since one may risk losing valuable information when multitasking in the initial steps of coordinating

research with young participants that are in the process of experiencing change in learning techniques.

One important factor that presented itself from the data gathered in Phase 1 of the study was that ineffective classroom management could prove to be harmful for language teaching. It was essential that in Phase 2 the issue was addressed because this would also facilitate the coordination of the study. Before giving any instructions or simply speaking to the class, attention was gained by getting pupils to stop their work and pay attention to what their teacher was saying. This form of communication between the teacher and the students prevented interruptions since any information that was distributed in this way was considered vital. My intention was to have all students listen to what was being said and verify that I was understood without interruptions and repetition of the same questions. I took some care to ensure that my way of speaking was not intimidating or authoritative towards the children. On the contrary, the goal was to speak using a friendly, well-moderated tone, avoiding increased volume and shouting, a style somewhat in contrast to data evidence from state schools (see example of this in DVD 1 & 2). I was able to use this voice for hours without strain, a phenomenon not observed in state schools as mentioned in the previous chapter. This became a routine for the students and was beneficial for them, since they appreciated the fact that by providing the teacher with attention, they gained all the information they needed at the time which resulted in them working more autonomously (see example in DVD 2 1:00'-1:49'). This helped the pupils' motivation increase because of the fact that they felt the satisfaction of being independent from their teacher. They began to believe in their abilities and became more ambitious and enthusiastic about their future as language users. In the Phase 1 study in state schools, it was observed that children were often discouraged, by feelings of inadequacy and incompetence, because of the fact that they were constantly corrected and rarely praised for their effort. The various aspects of classroom organisation, in state schools especially, were not efficient enough to reduce the potential for serious disruption. Observations showed that children who were strong language learners were seated in front seats and had the teachers' undivided attention, as mentioned in the previous chapter. There were students that were not as strong and attempted to draw attention with anti-social means because they had lost interest in the subject and lacked confidence in their linguistic abilities.

On the other hand, there were those who were quiet by nature and even though they may have had the knowledge to cope, they were hesitant to participate in this environment, a fact acknowledged by all state school teachers and frodistiria teachers in interviews. Given these findings, it was considered important in the initial stages of the Phase 2 study to provide pupils with clear sensible rules so that time, effort, motivation and teacher's credibility was not unreasonably expended on restriction and enforcement.

Here, the rewarding approach of giving students stars facilitated the process. I believed that this new environment would stimulate the students' curiosity in some of the directions identified by Garcio Mayo and Garcia Lecumberri (2003:113):

[...] by providing unusual activities and providing the unexpected, children's thinking can be challenged, causing them to need to draw on past experiences to make sense of the new. This is the most effective way to learn: to have a concept that is already held challenged by something new. When this happens, the child has to reconsider his current understanding of the concept and check it against new criteria. This may confirm what he already knew, or lead him to reject what he previously thought, or it might create a new level of understanding.

Students were not aware of how to work with each other and their cooperation could turn into quarreling. Nonetheless, they were all very keen on obtaining stars and at the end they would count how many stars they had. The star chart was on display so that children could view their progress at any time and they were informed that peaceful and productive cooperation would lead to their reward. With this technique, the potential of the teacher losing control over their students when working in groups was immediately dealt with. Detailed guidance was given at the beginning, starting with the fact that children were given instructions to set the layout themselves. The instructions were given in L2 from the start; with both levels I was repetitive and used gestures to facilitate communication. Children were given the freedom to sit wherever they wanted while their teacher monitored all groups from a distance that would give the language learners' independence but not feel unaided. They were, nonetheless, encouraged to change seats often and rearrange groups and change partners. This approach was endorsed by Garcia Mayo and Garcia Lecumberri (2003:115) who similarly considered that:

[...] children benefit from working in a variety of group arrangements. It is important to ensure that each child has experience of different types of grouping. Each type of

grouping creates different types of language and interactions. It is important to build a solid grounding for learning to work in a larger group.

When group or pair work was undertaken, the children were assigned different tasks from their course book or the material which were organised according to the level of the students. The groups were not permanent to avoid the approach of a student-centred environment leading to stigmatization and the lowering of pupils' aspiration. The Director of the frodistirio was invited to observe the lessons where there was an attempt to introduce a different learning environment to the classroom. This provided the Director with an opportunity for observation and note taking, together with a chance to appreciate the organisation of such a layout and the benefits that would follow. Additionally, these lessons were video-recorded, to later be used with teachers in workshops as examples of how to approach a student-centred environment with minimum disruption and difficulty by incorporating a classroom layout that facilitated group work and a communicative learning environment. During the recordings, teaching material was selected specifically to engage students' attention and keep them interested in the lesson and strengthen their enthusiasm.

Students informally stated in class that at the beginning, they were skeptical about working with others in a group. Since they had never experienced such a technique at school or at the frodistirio before, they could not understand its purpose why the layout of the classroom had to change. All students were observed to be confused in the beginning as to what was expected of them. Two students from the intermediate level perceived the new layout to be a way to socialize with their peers in their language or to copy each other's work, as indicated by statements which were made in students' questionnaires. In the process, students realised that they would be rewarded for their effort in learning and would not benefit their group if they attempted to copy someone's work, simply because that was not how group work functions. There is no suggestion that this was an effortless task. Since the students were not accustomed to this type of learning, they were not exactly certain of how to handle it without the teacher's guidance. There were students who were tempted to do less work and leave the task up to their peers, there were those who were not sure of themselves and their abilities and tried to avoid being ridiculed by their peers, as observed in the classroom. This new approach was not something that came naturally to the learners because of their past learning experience.

Evidence from classroom observation recorded that students were no longer the centre of attention in an uncomfortable situation, when, for instance, they did not know the answer to a question. Now they were part of a group that worked together and learned from each other. According to the feedback students gave in class, they felt more empowered and confident because they were a group and every student had a right to their opinion and their success or failure depended on every single member of the group. As an intermediate student stated in class whilst working on a team project:

Int. 12b: *Miss, it is better for us to work in a group, we may not always agree but at least we're in it together!*

According to Ellis & Morrow (2004:11):

[...] good EYL teaching will provide opportunities for children to construct meaning in the language they encounter by incorporating it in purposeful action and interaction. As children move through their primary years, they become more able to work with abstract concepts and thus to take an 'outside' stance to the language, and work with it as decontextualized and as an object of study.

YLs eventually learned how to communicate their difference of opinion and explain their point of view, making an effort to do this in the TL or a mixture of the TL and L1. The following transcript was audio-recorded during the beginner's lesson when the children were working in pairs on a task where they were requested to fill in gaps (the parts that are not in italics are translated from Greek). The task was recorded in March of the Phase 2 school year. The children, due to the early stage of EYL, used a mixture of TL and L1. They learned and communicated with each other and corrected their partner when needed. The teacher did not interfere.

Beg. 1459: You start.

Beg. 1458: *Ok, the first one is ice-cream, i-c-e c-r-e-a-m*

Beg. 1459: *Ok, I wrote it down, you?*

Beg. 1458: *Yes, ice-cream means παγωτό (the Greek word for ice-cream)*



Beg. 1459: *Yes, I know but is it pronounced /ais.krim/ or /ais.krɛəm/?* (Beg. 1459 asked peer, not teacher. students know that they can learn from each other)

Beg. 1459: /ais.krim/

Beg.1458: *Yes but it is not read that way, are you sure? (The learner is comfortable to question their peer to make sure that the information he is given is correct)*

Beg. 1459: *Yes, it's /ais.krim/ trust me.*

Beg. 1458: *But it has an -e and -a not -i*

Beg.1459: *Listen, once our teacher gave me a sticker that said Great! (/gret/)*

Beg. 1458: *Ok, so?*

Beg.1459: *It is spelled with an -ea and I pronounced it /gret/*

Beg. 1458: *How do you know it is read/gret/? (Students connect their past experience to what they come across in the task. Their experience helps them understand the language and how it works)*

Beg. 1459: *The teacher told me and she said that in English we do not pronounce everything as we see it in writing. (The students' proof)*

Beg. 1458: *Ok then.*

Beg. 1459: *Ok, next. I think chicken but can we say chicken and chips or is it only fish and chips?*

Beg.1458: *No, chicken and chips, you can eat chicken and chips or chicken and pasta, or chicken and carrots why not chicken and chips. I love chicken and chips! Mmm!*

Beg. 1459: *What is your favourite? Chips?*

Beg.1458: *Chicken and chips together.*

This phenomenon was considered a great accomplishment not only by the researcher but the Director of the frodistirio as well, who stated that she had never before witnessed negotiation of meaning between students of such a young age. This action also assisted their teacher, in this case the researcher, in understanding the learners' strengths and weaknesses since group work or pair work gives the teacher the opportunity to become an observer and monitor the students and the language they use. The advantage of this approach is that it clarifies which language points needed to be further addressed. The Director noted that there was less confusion and a more effective communication network within the classroom because communication was the main focus in defining the management and organization of the classroom was efficient. The Director recorded in her observations of the specific context that the well organised classroom relaxed the students as well as the teacher and less time was wasted due to less disruption (Appendix 8). Furthermore, within months (the intervention study continued for a 10 month period) the DoS recorded both students and parents giving her positive reactions and criticism to the student-centred environment. Parents informally claimed to see an academic advancement in their children after the different approaches were introduced. As a result of the intervention research, it was decided that group and pair work would be conducted in all classes, beginning from a young age where students would be given the opportunity to interact and develop their communication skills in the foreign language. There was general encouragement to enhance a student-centred environment with the teachers, focusing more on the needs of the students and incorporating various methods and techniques that would motivate them to engage in learning the English language and learn more about the cultural context where English is used.

The teacher/researcher did not bring any additional equipment to the classroom apart from professional training, a different view of language teaching and the belief that with planned strategies one can increase students' motivation. With the new approach to language learning, there was a clear purpose why YLs were at the frodistirio and how they could enjoy their lessons and learn from them. Language teachers in state schools felt resentment and exhaustion of constantly having to prove that they were also professional language teachers and as qualified as the language teachers of frodistiria. In addition to this, they were aware of the fact that the material they used was not of the appropriate level because the language learners in question

attended lessons in frodistiria which helped them move to a more advanced level. Therefore, consequent problems with behaviour could have to do with the fact that the children found no interest or challenge in the content of the lesson and was not matched to their ability. One may argue that it is the lack of training that has brought the language teachers to a cul-de-sac, others may say that it is the lack of teaching material; teachers claim the government officials are aware that there are a number of issues in language learning in the country that need to be addressed but funding for development and pre-/in-service training cannot be covered, which is a general problem in many countries as mentioned in chapter 2. In the Greek case, one may ask, is the government not spending a substantial amount of money on a system that does not work? However, one must acknowledge the fact that teachers themselves seem to be unable to rise above this cycle of demoralization and take some initiative in order to improve the situation in the classroom and maintain their students' interest.

## **6.7 L2 Use in the Language Classroom**

In the present Phase 2 study, two classes were observed, video/audio recorded and transcribed, resulting in a total of 360 minutes of material from both classes. Each lesson lasted for an hour and a half; however, the use of TL was less than that because students needed clarification in L1. In this time period I used approximately 55% L1 with the beginners per lesson for the first two months. 45% English was used along with gestures, miming, pictures and flash cards in order to help the learners connect the vocabulary with their meaning. This was measured by recording the number of utterances per hour. The teacher talk lasted for approximately 35 minutes per lesson. The rest of the time students were engaged in other activities such as reading, course book activities that included writing and speaking tasks, listening tasks and written exercises. During this time, the teacher/researcher only spoke if a student needed some kind of clarification. In this case, there was an attempt to guide the child in English or at least a combination of English and Greek. Slowly, the number of questions decreased as the children became more familiar with their teacher and the environment. In the third month of the students' tuition at the frodistirio, the use of

their L1 went to 45% and by the fifth month to 30% and remained at this level until the end of the academic year, based on audio/video recordings.

Two months into the research, children had a clear understanding of the way cooperative learning operates, and perceived it as an organisational device for using the foreign language in the classroom, since there was emphasis that language was used to negotiate meaning. For example, once children were told that they were going to be working together they would automatically stand up and rearrange their desks and sit with their partners (see example in DVD 2 1:27'-1:31'). When group or pair work was over, they stood up again and put their desks back in their initial place. Within this time, students expected that interaction in class has to be managed and that everyone was entitled to their opinion, a phenomenon they come across outside the classroom as well, with the use of L1.

Peng and Zhang (2009:212) have stated that the input of the TL is crucial and “as FL learning usually takes place in classroom environments, teachers’ use of the TL becomes an important source for students to obtain input in the TL”. Researchers such as Ellis (1984), Chaudron (1988) and Turnbull (2001) emphasize the importance of the students’ exposure to as many language functions as possible. Nonetheless, little published research focuses on a context where the teacher maximises the TL or a mixture of the TL and L1 with young learners whose TL proficiency level is low. Thus in this study, the data shows that YLs, who have a low proficiency level, are eager and willing to maximise their TL in class when the appropriate environment is available to them. It was a process they needed to become accustomed to, but throughout the academic year it became a goal which they were motivated to reach.

As the lessons unfolded, over the period of the Phase 2 research, children were offered innumerable learning opportunities (see Appendix 22 and DVDs 1 & 2). Some were originated from my initial planning and some arose from the interaction that took place in class, whether it was interaction between the teacher and the students or among the students alone. Language learners in this context were given the chance to take part in the lesson and not accept the language passively. Once they realised that they were an essential part in the process they showed a *profound willingness*, as the Director stated after her observations, “to encounter the language and explore the culture it represents as much as possible”. This was considered a vital

point to reach, since it would give the children the motive to employ the TL in class without believing it to be odd to use a foreign language with their peers even though they shared the same native language. In an effort to present optimal conditions for learning, the researcher aimed to present the language classroom as something different from the environment the students had been used to at the time (Giannikas, 2011).

In order to encourage students to use the L2 at every opportunity, it was very important for me to establish an interaction pattern that would be fundamental, both to the activities presented and to the consistency of L2 use. L2 was first established as a routine, expecting that the children of both groups, beginners and intermediate, were greeted in English and given instructions in English. The intermediate class found no difficulty in comprehending what the teacher was saying when the communication pattern moved at a more rapid pace than with the beginners. Nonetheless, they did express surprise with the regular use of L2 in class. The interaction continued with a focus on curriculum instruction, listening, reading and giving feedback (example of listening task can be seen in DVD 1 00:01'-03:42'). As the children became accustomed to maximizing the TL in class, as mentioned earlier, they too made an effort to speak more English, even if they were not entirely sure of the accuracy of what it was they were trying to say. Some of their responses were spontaneous because, as stated in 70% of the questionnaires, students heard the English language during the lesson and began to think in this language rather than their own. When it was brought to their attention that this was a remarkable accomplishment which may take other language learners years to accomplish, if they ever do, they became more enthusiastic and keen to use the TL.

From Journal Notes:

Res: You are doing very well children, well done! It takes years to accomplish what you have.

Int. 13b: Miss, εγώ θέλω να μάθω να τα λέω όλα στ'Αγγλικά! (I want to learn to say everything in English!)

The interaction that took place was with the whole class at times, individual pupils, small groups and pairs (see example in DVDs 1 & 2). As the discussions

progressed, they moved to social and personal conversations. The students could not carry out an entire conversation in the L2, they searched their native language, making a conscious effort to retrieve something in English that might be suitable and surprised even themselves with the knowledge they had at their disposal. According to Cameron (2001), if young learners' language resources are not adequate, then the social motivation to build shared understanding may lead to use of L1 or a combination of L1 and L2. The point where the students became more familiar with L2 use in the classroom and, in reality, gained in confidence was when they were introduced to audio recordings and set the goal of maximizing the TL by recording the English used in class by each group once every month, as mentioned earlier in the chapter (see sample in Appendix 15). This attempt gave the students a challenge which shifted the focus of attaining a language certificate in the far future to being able to use the language more and more each month. Their interactions with their teacher and peers became central to their classroom life and educational purpose.

The amount of the teacher/researcher's L1 with the Intermediate level was less than with the Beginners, since the children of the Intermediate level had a wider knowledge of the FL (this can be seen in DVDs 1 & 2). The L1 use with the students reached 40% in first encounters. Four weeks into their language lessons, during the time which the learners and the teacher/researcher became familiar with each other and a comfortable rapport was created, the use of L1 decreased to 30% for 40 minutes teacher talk. Within two months, the percentage decreased again to 25 % and remained the same until the end of the year. The participant students were asked in questionnaires whether they felt that the use of the teacher's TL was excessive.

*St.14b: I like to use English in class. It makes me feel like I'm learning without doing a lot of homework*

*St.12a: We use English at the frodistirio because that is what we are here for.*

Language learners of this age can engage in projects which demand that they take responsibility for their learning. By including these projects in the language lessons the level of the child's personal involvement becomes higher and can consequently enhance motivation (Philips et al, 1999). In the current study there was an effort to introduce games, story-telling, role plays and various other activities that would

intrigue the students and help them use the TL in class in a more spontaneous manner. One example of this is a lesson with the beginners' class where students were introduced to story-telling, which was also observed by the DoS (see observation sample in Appendix 8). I first went through the homework with the children and assigned more for their next class. Once their course book responsibilities were settled, it was explained to the students that they would be doing something different that day. Before the story was told, I pre-taught some of the vocabulary that students were not familiar with. This was done by writing the unknown lexical items on the board and eliciting their meaning by miming or placing the words in context. The children were recorded to be involved and felt great pleasure when they correctly estimated the meaning of the word.

After all the unknown vocabulary was clarified, the children were asked to sit in a circle whilst the teacher/researcher was seated in the centre of the network. The students were comfortable and excited since they had never experienced story-telling in this context in the past. Because of the fact that they were eager to hear the story, I had their undivided attention. The story told was taken from Vanessa Reilly and Sheila M. Ward's 'Very Young Learners', a resource book for teachers. The story was called 'Why do Rabbits Have Long Ears?' and the aim of the story was to enhance students' listening, enrich vocabulary by introducing names of animals and the phrases *I am a...* *You are a...* before telling the story, it was suggested to inform students that rabbits did not always have long ears and that they were going to discover how rabbits changed. Students were involved in the story-telling process where they were encouraged to mime and pretend to be different animals and elicit names of animals, which made the plot interesting and challenging since their participation was carried out in English.

After the story was told once, the students were asked to tell their teacher what they understood from it and what the main point was. All children volunteered to provide the class with the information, giving a sense of confidence as they enthusiastically and eagerly raised their hands. When I selected one of the children to give a short summary, the student immediately asked whether the answer should be given in Greek or English. Given that the child was a beginner and it would be difficult to deliver the summary in L2, I suggested that the summary be given in

Greek. This way, the child could freely express himself because the key of giving the summary at this stage was to evaluate the participants' comprehension rather than oral skills. The child selected gave a precise summary of the story, proving that everything was understood even though the story was presented in the L2 entirely. Since the children enjoyed story-telling, I followed with a task connected to the plot of the story. The children were requested to create masks of various animals that appeared in the story. Children continued to be seated in groups and were encouraged to communicate to each other in the L2, being reminded that they would be rewarded for their effort. By the end of the lesson, the task was completed successfully and students wore their masks as they left the classroom and walked out to their parents producing the animal sounds that matched their mask (see Appendix 8 for Dos' observation notes).

The intermediate group was involved in communicative tasks appropriate to their age as well. Students of this level were not introduced to story-telling but to other tasks they could relate to. An example of such a task was a speaking activity, where students were asked to work in groups and interview their peers on their everyday routine presenting them as celebrities (DVD 13:7'-12:22'). Students were provided with questions, and their task was to collect information and present it as if they were broadcasting news. A small desk and chair were placed in the front of the classroom and the whiteboard read BBC in red bold letters for when the girls presented their work. The boys were journalists for the CNN, so the channel on the whiteboard changed when it was the boys' turn. Once the students were given the task, they began asking their peers questions about their daily routine, hobbies and favourite music with great enthusiasm. After collecting their information, they were given some time to prepare what it was they were going to mention in their 'broadcast' and the register they were going to use. For the second part of the task, one by one, the students took a seat at the front of the classroom and presented the news. The teacher did not interfere when students made a mistake to avoid disruption since the task was focused more on the children's fluency. Additionally, as a teacher, I wanted the children to build their self-esteem and become comfortable in speaking English and presenting their work in front of others. Some chose to be entertaining, some to be serious and others were creative. A sample of the children's work is illustrated below:



BBC broadcast: Int. 17b (DVD 1:13’):

Int. 17b: Hello women and mens, now we are a BBC and we are taking a *πως λέμε ‘συνέντευξη’*; (How do we say ‘interview’)

T: *Interview*

Int. 17b: An interview from Vicky Sotiropoulou again. The first question was ‘How old are you?’ and she is ten years old. The second ‘How big is your family?’ and her family isn’t big enough he’s got only one brother, the third ‘Where do you live?’ she lives in Rio in Referatos street. The fourth *ναι* (yes) ‘What time do you get up?’ she gets up at quarter past five in the morning. The fifth ‘What do you like doing?’ She likes listening to music, going to the cinema and reading books and the last one ‘What you don’t like doing’ and she don’t like playing tennis and she don’t like, she doesn’t like writing tests, tests. Bye-bye.

CNN broadcast: Int.16b (DVD 1: 23’)

Int. 16b: Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen. I am the American President Nick Evagelatos (Popular Greek Journalist).

T: Journalist not President.

Int. 16b: Journalist.

T: President είναι ο (is) Bush.

Int. 16b: *Ναι* (Yes), I took an-

T: An interview

Int. 16b: An interview from Kon Haralabopoulos. The first question was ‘How old are you?’ he answered ‘I thirteen years old’, the second question was ‘How big is your family?’ and he answered to me ‘I’ve got a big family’ the third question is ‘Where do you live?’ and he answered ‘I live in Kastelokabos’ the next question is eh- was, ‘When do you get up?’ and he

answered, 'I get up at half past eight'. The next question was 'What do you like doing?' and he answered 'I like playing football' and the last question was 'What don't you like doing?' and he answered 'I play-I hate playing tennis'.

After every 'broadcast' the audience applauded, giving the student broadcasting the news the verification of a successful presentation. It is also important to mention here that not only are the learners of this context not accustomed to a communicative student-centred classroom, they are also not used to presentations of this nature, meaning that if a student is asked to stand at the front of the classroom, it would be to recite a grammatical point the teacher had covered in the previous lesson or to simply be *examined*. Therefore, when students were asked to stand up they became anxious of what was to follow and how successful they would be. It came as a surprise to them when they were told that the presentations they would give were not of a strict examination nature. The purpose of the presentations was to make the students comfortable to speak English in front of their peers and teacher, in their own way of expression, to use the new vocabulary they had been working on at the time and to enjoy themselves whilst carrying out the task.

The L1 used did not contain any evidence of 'real talk' which, according to Hauser (2006), is different to 'teacher talk' which is pedagogical and related to teaching. I introduced 'real talk' in English so that students would become familiar with a different register. As part of the initial Phase 1 study, all the teachers of the frodistirio were asked in questionnaires regarding their use of the TL if they believed it was adequate for the children's language development. They all replied that they use the TL as much as possible during the lesson. The use of the TL for everyday conversation (real talk) did not occur to them as they only considered using the TL in class when teaching the language and asking and answering questions with the students. The conversations they had with the students were of a formal and structured nature and all spontaneous conversation with students and colleagues was carried out in L1. As I gave the example of keeping the TL as the main communicative tool within the premises of the frodistirio, teachers began to follow. They became curious about whether this 'new technique' would work and expressed their enquiries in workshops held at the frodistirio. Teacher 2Bf stated that:

*It occurred to me that children became familiar with everyday vocabulary. The language we used in class was so stiff because it was basically repeating what we read in the course books. This feels more natural.*

## **Chapter 7: A Discussion of Greek Classroom Contexts for Early Language Learning**

The aim of this chapter is to revisit the Greek EYL classroom context in the light of the findings of chapters 5 and 6, specifically, what was established about English language teaching/learning in primary state schools and what emerged from the intervention study in the Phase 2 frodistirio. The discussion will be outlined in two different sections; the first section will discuss the outcomes of Phase 1 of the research conducted in the seven state schools and seven frodistiria where data shows an unsatisfactory state of affairs. The second section will outline Phase 2 of the study and show how the research of Phase 1 'feeds into' the intervention study conducted in one frodistirio. The nexus between the two sectors is a complex web of factors which interact with each other. This chapter aims to focus on this issue. The Phase 1 state schools and frodistiria supported traditional language teaching, where the learners were exposed to and focused on grammatical rules and translation. The Phase 2 study in the frodistirio gave the researcher the opportunity to introduce other aspects of language teaching which were applicable to the age of primary language learners.

The intervention research at the frodistirio was applied to introduce not only a student-centred environment where the TL would be used more than in the past, but also to offer other aspects of language learning apart from grammar and vocabulary instruction. As recorded in observations during Phase 1 of the study, routine practice in schools and frodistiria concentrated on the structure of the language rather than its usage. The intention was to explore the potential for change, grounded in the belief that a child's attitude may be entirely transformed when language pedagogy is more interactive. Data evidence on language teaching in this region of Greece confirmed a lack of interactive opportunities and promoted a sentence-based view of language.

## **7.1 Phase 1: A critical examination of evidence from classroom observation and teacher interviews.**

As mentioned earlier in the thesis, Phase 1 of the study focuses on 7 state schools and 7 frodistiria across the region where the researcher explored the language teaching reality in primary education. From the observations and interviews that took place valuable information was collected since there is an absence of research data regarding language teaching to young learners within the framework of state and private primary education. In this section I will follow the outline below in order to discuss the outcomes of the first phase of the research:

- The EYL classroom environment in state schools and frodistiria.
- Classroom management and organisation.
- The use of L1 and the TL.
- Attitudes towards language learning from the teacher's point of view.
- Teacher training

### **7.1.1 The EYL Classroom Environment: the seven state schools and frodistiria of Phase**

**1.**

The EYL classroom should be conducive to promoting the foreign language whilst being a welcoming and comfortable space for students to practice their new knowledge. According to Read (2007:8):

Children make sense of the world and of language through the context they find themselves in. Children pay far more attention to the whole situation than to language, and the younger they are, the truer this is.

It is difficult for successful language learning to take place when, in addition to inefficient teaching approaches, the classroom environment is overlooked and lacks inspiration and enjoyment which are elements which could eventually lead to students' enhanced motivation. As mentioned in section 5.2, observations showed that there were quite a few differences regarding classroom environment which

illustrated that students are influenced by their surroundings. Frodistiria had posters on walls with English words and phrases, pictures of English speaking cities, and children's drawings. Although this might seem a minor point to some teachers who believe that teaching practices and material are far more important than drawings on the wall, a neglected motivational source such as the classroom environment can cost teachers and young learners the potential of establishing effective language learning and teaching. Even though frodistiria followed the same teacher-centred layout as state schools, a welcoming environment had an effect on the students as they were more well-behaved at the frodistirio and eager to give the teacher drawings to hang on the wall, which could be considered a way to build a strong community in the classroom. Students build a sense of community as they see their mark in their classroom. It was the teacher's way of showing the young learners that their efforts are acknowledged and by putting their work up on display teachers help students feel more involved in the lesson and appreciated.

One could argue that teachers at frodistiria have the privilege of teaching in new and well-maintained buildings where they can use the classroom any way they please, since the entire establishment is based on the learning of languages. It is a fact that most state schools are situated in old buildings and, as mentioned in section 5.1, language teachers and mainstream teachers share the same classrooms. Language teachers are viewed as guests and are consequently reluctant to make any changes or additions to the classroom design. The fact that they do not have the freedom to express themselves as professionals holds them back from creating an approach to the desirable outcome, which is successful language learning in a harmonious and pleasant setting. Terrifying as it might be at first, if the state school language teachers let go of their fear of adding elements of their subject in the classroom they could make a new beginning by organising their classrooms which could increase the learners' motivation and view the English lesson at school differently instead of disregarding it as is done in the present. This can also make a difference in the teachers' motivation as well. A warmer environment can give them the feeling that their work is respected, not only by their students but by their colleagues as well. Mainstream and language teachers can cooperate towards a classroom organisation that could benefit them, so that both educators feel equally valuable. Language teachers need to feel stimulated by their role and happy in the environment they are

in. Recognition of what state school language teachers have to offer can be a key component to their motivation.

### **7.1.2 Classroom Management and Organisation: the seven state schools and frodistiria of Phase 1.**

The language classroom, ideally, consists of a logical and organised shelter where children can feel safe and comfortable enough to let go and enjoy the learning experience. In order to optimise language learning and create an environment where their efforts will not go to waste, it is essential that language teachers develop a strategic plan of how the classroom should be arranged for students to benefit and feel the need and freedom to learn. This would enhance their motivation and interest towards the lesson and consequently make the teacher feel successful and fulfilled as a professional.

There is no doubt that the task of changing the perception children have of language learning and their behaviour in the language classroom is demanding, however, it is worth making changes and aiming towards a more organised and manageable environment which would bring positive long-term outcomes. According to Nunan (2011), the younger the language learner, the shorter their attention span is. Teachers need to carefully monitor their teaching and offer various age-appropriate activities which would keep the children interested and hold their attention. Good classroom management skills are fundamental if teachers wish to accomplish this.

As mentioned earlier, in chapter 5.3, the language teachers in state schools chose to rely on the course book for providing the teaching material, leaving no freedom for any kind of cooperative and interactive learning. This approach could work in various contexts, however, when teaching young language learners it is a challenge to keep children focused and interested, especially when the setting does not encourage interaction or cooperation. Students lose their initial enthusiasm of learning a new language and soon feel restless. As mentioned in chapter 2, Moon (2005) suggests that interactive learning is better suited for young learners and by acknowledging that the child is a social being, the teacher needs to adopt an interactive approach in the

classroom which can keep the children motivated and behave appropriately at the same time. As mentioned in section 3.7, Paulsel (2004) has made a point of effective classroom management and organisation by applying routines and classroom rules. According to the teachers in interviews, tackling misbehaviour was done by interrupting the lesson and shouting at the child misbehaving (Teacher 13a, section 5.3). By introducing clear rules in a manner where children do not feel intimidated but informed of the way their community in the classroom is expected to function, the teacher can be given the opportunity to be creative. Language teachers can show their students what is expected of them and avoid misunderstandings which could be disastrous for their rapport with the children. During observations, it was difficult to notice any established rules as there was no reference to them or any indication on display, such as a chart with stickers that would display children's positive or negative behaviour. Observation data shows that pupils were well-behaved at frodistiria compared to state schools which, since management techniques are similar, may be simply because language lessons at frodistiria are taken more seriously by parents, who evidently have an influence on the children, as mentioned earlier in the chapter.

In interviews, state school teachers blamed frodistiria regarding their difficulty to maintain classroom management, feeling that they had lost the students' trust and interest once they entered the doors of the frodistiria. Due to the faster pace of the lessons which take place at the frodistiria, the state school teachers are convinced that no matter how hard they try to organise and manage their classes, they will fail. A teacher-centred approach was preferred, however, there were fewer children at the frodistiria and the environment was focused on language learning with a more welcoming design as mentioned in the previous section. Children appreciate such settings and it would be a mistake to assume that they are not highly aware of how their direct surroundings form their learning experience. A classroom design which is more welcoming to the eye of the young learner may achieve every teacher's desirable outcome as suggested by Pollard (2008:281) "good organisation can increase freedom for the teacher to teach and the learner to learn".

The layout of the classroom plays a vital role in effective classroom management and organisation. In the case of the specific region, teachers and students are familiar with a teacher-centred environment where the desks are placed in rows facing the



teacher which can be challenging and overwhelming for the language educator. One must take into account that language teachers in both sectors do not undergo any training or supervision, therefore, the mission of planning the classroom design is something they will have to come up with on their own, make mistakes, learn from them and try again, in order to reach their goal and create the appropriate milieu for their young students. The *normal* layout is considered to be the traditional setting, which teachers themselves grew accustomed to as students and later on as professional educators. Introducing anything new would immediately remove them from their comfort zone and place them in the unknown. It is, therefore, no surprise that language teachers in both sectors were against any type of cooperation. They viewed cooperative learning as mythical and the claims that harmonious learning can occur whilst children are cooperating towards the same goal to be unrealistic. Cooperation can turn into fighting and most commonly cheating, where the strongest member of the group would be obliged to perform the task alone while the other members of the group copy what is said or written (Teacher 17, section 5.3). This statement contrasts sharply with the view of Smith and Larsett (1993:22) who argue that:

[...] group work is considered usually in terms of cooperative learning in a less threatening setting than individual performance. Astute tailoring of tasks or questions can ensure that team or group success depends as much on the least able as on the most able member. Competition can be an enjoyable method of enlivening the learning and recall essential facts, but it carries the threat of being the source of heightened illumination of individual ignorance. Working with groups offers the chance of providing the element of excitement without the potential limelight hogging or ego bruising of individual competition.

An important benefit of a layout which encourages interactive teaching is that by introducing a setting where communication is supported, the use of the foreign language is more likely to increase. Classroom management and organization are multi-faceted activities. In order to receive positive results, teachers must organise and implement instruction in ways that optimise students' access to learning. Additionally, language teachers in both sectors should become familiar with group management methods which will encourage learners' engagement with in-class activities and promote the development of the YLs' social skills in the TL. A teacher-centred class is not given the opportunity to communicate in any language let alone the TL. The fact that students are deprived of communication would explain why they

seek any opportunity they can to interact with their peers, briefly and usually secretly. For this, children will use the language which comes easily and naturally to them, which would be their L1. A different layout can increase the use of TL with the correct management and 'negotiations' among teacher and students. Students can learn in a classroom where interaction does not need to be secret but it can be actual communication where the entire class can be involved. This could help the children understand that they all have the same goal which is to learn to communicate in English and could do so freely, in the language classroom, as long as they follow the rules the teacher has provided them.

### **7.1.3 The Use of L1 and the TL: the seven state schools and frodistiria of Phase 1.**

Teacher-talk is a important source of speech during the lesson, regardless whether the teacher chooses a teacher-centred or student-centred approach. The results of the study show that there were no considerable variations and that most teachers followed the same teaching approach. Nonetheless, state school teachers seemed to use an extensive amount of L1 in the classroom, whereas frodistiria teachers used an extensive amount of TL. In this section, I will discuss how teachers use the TL in the state schools and fridistiria that took part in the Phase 1 investigation.

L1 can have positive effects on the language classroom (Cameron, 2001) as long as it is used in an appropriate amount as to not overshadow the TL. The use of L1 can make YLLs feel more secure in the language classroom and be of support to the children in this context. L1 can be valuable in the language learning process and can even be necessary for increased comprehension and students' acceptance of the TL. However, this use of L1 could mostly be used for clarifying purposes and less for the main form of communication in the foreign language classroom. It was observed in the language classrooms in state schools that there was no effort to balance L1 and L2 since the mother tongue was used as the medium of instruction and teaching. Consequently, the lesson was based on the written word which could quietly be re-edited and thought over individually as opposed to a spontaneous conversation in L2 which requires more risk-taking. There were few opportunities for communication in

the TL where students could put their knowledge into practice, especially because of the teacher-centred approach adopted, where the teacher was the centre of the communication network. Students spoke to their teacher in English when they were requested to answer a question as part of a task. Many chances of TL use were missed since teachers chose to use L1 for all communication and TL was used only when texts or tasks were read aloud from the course books. As mentioned in chapter 5, only the teachers who included games in their lessons had a higher percentage of TL use, however, the games were repetitive and became part of a routine.

To make a desirable start for young learners, it was essential that the language teacher made an attempt to use a range of phrases using TL in the classroom. This enhances students' familiarity with the foreign language and the phrases that are used in class such as 'close the window please' or 'please sit down' can also be used in classroom management in a planned and consistent way. Students can learn through meaning and focused input. Additionally, this could subconsciously let the child know that the language lesson is different to other subjects since there are different rules to be respected and the teacher can communicate with the students in a different language, which could add excitement and increase motivation as well.

It can be argued that the use of the TL should be maximised whenever possible (Cameron, 2001; Ellis, 1984; Brewster, Ellis & Girard, 2002; Pinter, 2006) and it is important to keep the L1 separate from the L2 in mind (Cameron, 2001). The language teachers in state schools were reluctant to maximise the L2 in fear that they would lose the attention of their students all together. Teachers who are not trained to use this particular strategy might have difficulty in finding the appropriate balance between the L1 and L2. Furthermore, the fact that language teachers in state schools show a preference towards a teacher-centred setting does not give them the opportunity to create an environment where there could be communication in the foreign language for both teachers and students. A teacher-centred approach comes with restrictions and even though it may work in some cases, preparation for language examinations for instance, the practice of early language learning can be limited.

As was presented in chapter 5, data shows that the percentages of frodistiria teachers' TL use are much higher than teachers' TL use in state schools. This could be explained since there is great competition amongst frodistiria. As mentioned earlier,

parents appreciate the maximum use of TL in the language classroom and are convinced that this shows the teacher's competence as an educator and their knowledge of the foreign language, neglecting to appreciate how this language can be beneficial to the students and what approach can guide them to become successful language learners. A sharp increase in the use of TL cannot be introduced to the students from one lesson to the next. The teacher can gradually adapt an increasing amount of TL in the young learners' classroom which can build their knowledge and confidence in the process. This way the maximum use of the FL can be more efficient. Due to the pressure of competition, teachers of frodostiria feel that the only way for them to survive and keep their position, is to turn to the maximum use of TL, overlooking the fact that this does not necessarily mean the appropriate amount of exposure for each level and age group is being used and that students benefit from this. As mentioned in section 5.5, the highest percentage of use of the TL was 100% to all levels and the lowest was 50%. Young learners, especially beginners, may find it difficult to follow the teacher and the course of the lesson when they cannot make sense of its content. This could be intimidating to the children and hurt their self-esteem. Even though they are fully exposed to the foreign language, they would have difficulty concentrating in class when most of the lesson seems to be alienating them. Paving the way for L2 and gradually using a reduced amount of L1 could be less intimidating to young learners. L2 exposure will not be lost if teachers phase in the TL in appropriate portions.

#### **7.1.4 Attitudes towards language learning from a teacher's point of view: the seven state schools and frodistiria of Phase 1.**

Early language learning helps children develop positive attitudes towards other cultures and language, as well as laying the foundation for foreign language learning later on (European Commission, 2003). The teachers' attitude is an important factor in the present context where teachers are in despair, since they do want to help students develop a positive attitude but do not know how or where to start. Phase 1 consists of data of attitudes towards language learning derived from the behaviour of the language teachers from the state schools and frodistiria where the study took place.

The state school language teachers had become indifferent due to the fact that their work is not appreciated by students and parents whereas the language teachers at frodistiria had a more positive view towards their work and its outcomes.

Even though state school language teachers claimed they felt unappreciated, it seems that there was another reason for their demotivation as well. One main difference between the language teachers at state schools and frodistiria was not teaching practices or classroom facilities; it was that language teachers in the private sector had a goal, namely to gradually prepare their students for language examinations, whereas language teachers in the public sector did not have any. This affected their attitude towards their students and the lessons they provided them with. Since teachers did not have a clear objective, as language teachers in frodistiria did, parents considered the lessons in the private sector of more importance, which affected the state school language educator even more. Observations showed that it was challenging to keep a positive outlook for the sake of the students since teachers struggled to find the purpose in delivering a meaningful language lesson. Language educators in this context appear lost and feel they have to maintain a strict disciplinarian behaviour rather than play the role of the facilitator just to be able to have their lesson and move on to the next class. Due to these circumstances, optimism of coming closer to the students seems meaningless.

New course books were the language teachers' source of hope. New books would provide them with fresh materials that could draw some interest and eventually help improve the language teaching situation at state schools, as teachers believed. They hoped for this change, believing that their students would see them differently and have a more pleasant experience in the classroom. New books, however, could not automatically change the students' attitudes towards language learning at state schools and their teachers. It is not up to the students to change the attitude towards language learning and strengthen the dynamics of the classroom, it is up to the adults. Adults lead the way to positivity in the classroom and since expecting new books will doubtfully provide the teachers with the improvement and changes they anticipate, teaching techniques must be adjusted. If teaching practices and resources are developed, then the students' attitude towards state school language lessons could be transformed, and teachers could feel more comfortable introducing new approaches to

language learning. A positive attitude towards foreign language learning has cognitive and affective advantages; thoughts as well as feelings play an important role and preside over how a student approaches learning and a teacher approaches teaching.

Language teachers at frodistiria have a very different approach as mentioned earlier. Their attitude has an immediate effect on the children who have a completely different approach to language learning when they attend their afternoon lessons at the frodistirio. Young language learners need to be intrigued and motivated to speak the foreign language, move in the classroom and cooperate with their peers. Positive outcomes can arise when teachers are responsible for using the TL in the classroom and being capable of correcting their students' mistakes in a manner that does not hurt their ego. Learners of this age are in need of feeling comfortable in an informal environment where they can learn by having fun. These techniques were not observed in state schools and it can be that if teachers in the public sector made such alterations and developed a balance of using the L1 and L2 combined with, error correction which students did not find intimidating in an appropriate learning environment, the teachers would receive more positive responses from both students and parents. Attitude changes can begin with alterations in teaching practices where simple techniques are applied and effective language teaching can occur.

### **7.1.5 Teacher Training: the seven state schools and frodistiria of Phase 1.**

Fterniati and Spinthourakis (2006:40) commenting on the Greek context, suggest that:

[...] for the teacher who has traditionally dealt with language teaching exclusively through linguistic analysis, the National Curriculum (NC) provides sample directions promoting communicative context as the teaching framework. This represents an innovation in the teaching methodology for the majority of Greek teachers and requires a change of attitude and practice on their part.

The state school language teachers who were interviewed were aware of the reform and its suggestions for using a communicative approach; however, they were not trained to apply it. The language teachers at the frodistirio were not informed

about the reform in state schools and had not undergone any sort of training that would assist them in introducing interactive opportunities in their classes. The reform may have introduced innovation in the NC not only in language arts but for all subjects, nonetheless, having teaching techniques and methods written in formal documentation does not necessarily lead to an improvement in practice. Teachers are in need of being both fully informed and trained in order for them to feel less reluctant in abandoning their traditional ways. Related to this, Cameron (2003:105-106) suggests that:

The expansion of Teaching English to Young Learners (TEYL) is a phenomenon that needs to be taken seriously by the ELT field. It is not a minor change that can be left to young learner experts, but a shift that will have knock-on effects for the rest of ELT, particularly secondary level teaching and teacher education. For secondary teachers, there will be two major areas of impact: the need to cope with classes of mixed levels of language skills and knowledge, and the task of maintaining or restoring motivation over these long periods of language learning.

It is a terrifying experience to walk into a classroom without knowing what to do or what is really expected of you. A lack of training could result in lack of confidence and skills to carry out governmental plans for language learning. Language teachers deserve the same treatment as mainstream teachers and undergo pre-service training whilst at University, so as not to struggle later with lack of objectives. Teacher training programmes and pre-service activities could equip potential language teachers with the skills to face and respond to the challenges that await them (Giannikas, 2013b). In the current context, language teachers have not learned practical classroom skills and cannot meet target language needs. Even though current educational policies encourage communicative language teaching, primary language educators are not in a position to apply such an approach in their classrooms and find themselves imitating their own language teachers and apply a grammar-translation method where little TL is used and the main focus is on learning grammar rules, vocabulary and translation of texts in course books. Providing teachers with training, appropriate guidelines and improving teachers' language proficiency appears to be urgent. Apart from improving communicative English skills, teachers' immediate need is to acquire practical knowledge of daily teaching practices.

All the evidence gathered from Phase 1 of the study was the result of exploring young language teaching reality within a Greek region and illustrates a complex and

undeveloped context of teacher training. The results of the study have answered the questions posed by the researcher and has brought various issues to the surface. State schools and frodistiria do not provide children with the appropriate opportunities that could facilitate the acquisition of YLs' competences. Students are presented with a demotivating environment in state schools and the teaching approaches in both sectors are not appropriate for learners of the specific age group. The targets set in early language education at frodistiria, influenced by parents, are unrealistic since it is impossible for the YL to relate to the anxiety of examinations and a future competitive market. By presenting children with the objectives in question, they soon lose their enthusiasm and motivation.

After the analysis of the data, the intervention study took place the following year, and what has been discussed in this section of the chapter was put into practice in Phase 2, in order to intervene and offer alternatives to language teaching in the region. The aim of this segment of the Phase 2 study was to create a more comfortable and organised environment, where the teachers feel appreciated and content with their profession and gain the motivation and positivity to carry out their teaching. The following section will discuss Phase 2 of the research where there will be a comparison of teaching approaches and attitudes towards language teaching/learning and the benefits of rewarding learners for their effort and the effect it has on the classroom.

## **7.2 Phase 2: Intervention Study**

The frodistirio, where the Phase 2 research took place, supported traditional language teaching, as mentioned in 6.1, where the learners were exposed to language and its grammatical rules as in the Phase 1 state schools and frodistiria observed. This method of language learning has been described by Nunan (1999:74) as an approach where "they learn facts about language rather than how to use it communicatively to express ideas, to talk and write to other people, to read and listen to real language, and to learn how to cooperate with others". The initial aim of the intervention research in Phase 2 was to introduce, not only a student-centred environment where



the TL would be used more than in the past, but to shift the focus and offer other aspects of language learning apart from grammar instruction. As recorded in observations in Phase 1, routine practice in schools concentrated on the structure of the language rather than its usage. The action research design took the form of an intervention which aimed to explore the potential of change, grounded in the belief that a child's attitude may be entirely transformed when language pedagogy is more communicative. In this section, I consider the following themes in order to discuss the outcomes of the second phase of the research:

- Teacher Training.
- Classroom Context.
- The Outcomes of Students' Awards.
- The Effects of the Various Classroom Layouts.
- The Student-Centred Environment.
- L2 Use in the Language Classroom.
- Parents Views on Interactive Learning.

### **7.2.1 Teacher Training: the frodistirio of the Phase 2 study.**

Teachers at the frodistirio where the Phase 2 study was conducted held either a university degree or the more limited qualification of a language proficiency certificate with a license to teach in the private sector. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the frodistirio provided all teachers with a curriculum and step-by-step lesson plans as to how to teach their class. Phase 2 language teachers are also accustomed to *traditional* teaching and learning where the foreign language is introduced in a teacher-centred manner with specific and controlled input from students, explained in Greek through grammar translation and speaking practice using the audio-lingual and grammar-translation approach. These teaching approaches were viewed as appropriate for leading students to language examinations even though they were very young to be exposed to the specific teaching practices and comprehend their purpose. The frodistirio in question was the perfect opportunity to introduce something new in an environment where the teachers had a personal relationship with

the researcher, due to my relation with the owner. This being said, they felt uneasy when they were told about observations, which was true of all teachers who participated in both Phase 1 and 2. Once classroom doors close, educators feel they have the privacy to conduct their lesson any way they choose; by opening the doors to their peers, they open their doors to judgment which can be frightening at first.

The researcher introduced workshops to the language teachers, which helped them develop new ideas and learn of new material and using the internet in their language lessons. Furthermore, they were introduced to the concept of CLT, which, as mentioned in chapter 3, primarily focuses on the meaning, the function and use of the target language in a learner-centred environment where the teacher is no longer the centre of the communication network. Language teachers at the Phase 2 *frodistirio* were introduced to the concept of real-life tasks, situations and roles in order to develop students' language ability, proficiency and spontaneity. Five workshops alone could not be enough to persuade teachers to suddenly change their classroom routines; therefore, they were encouraged to observe the researchers lessons where such techniques were applied whilst conducting action research. The fact that teachers were invited to observe lessons indicates that I was willing to expose myself to critique in the hope of building trust and shared understandings, which could encourage other teachers to do the same and benefit from it in the future. This helped the teachers realise that I was a teacher, just like them, regardless of my relation to the owner of the *frodistirio*, and was concerned with the same classroom issues as they were. It was important to make clear that this procedure could help us, the teachers, come closer as colleagues and discuss our ideas and concerns. Additionally, by observing the researcher's classes, the language teachers had the opportunity to witness that theory can be put into practice by using various techniques in the classroom that relate well to young language learners. Parallel to teaching approaches, teachers also witnessed teaching and research happening simultaneously and, according to the Phase 2 teachers' statements, became more willing to apply it in their teaching when they witnessed the advantages of the process.

Teacher 4Bf: *I am surprised at how the children adjusted to real-life tasks. They seemed to have more fun and enjoyed themselves which made the teacher's life easier*

*too. If research can help me test the waters, I am willing to apply it and study what my students need.*

*Teacher 7Bf: I was not willing to try researching during teaching at first but after observations I realised that my teaching and research can link in a way that can be helpful to my students.*

Fterniati and Spinthourakis (2006:40) claim that “through this innovation students will amass a body of knowledge and skills, a holistic awareness of knowledge that allows the forming of personal perspectives on related scientific topics as well as common place issues” and as a result of findings of the action research conducted, teachers at the frodistirio, were subsequently given the opportunity to explore these views in action.

In the Greek region where the research took place, teachers were reluctant to entertain an action research-inspired approach, i.e. to apply changes as a result of reflecting their practice. Given that action research tends to be directly connected to achieving results in the classroom setting, the researcher worked towards introducing the teachers to this experimental approach in the hope that this would provide them with more confidence in their professional abilities, urge them to take risks when teaching, which in the long-run would benefit their language learners. Since it was not possible for language teachers of the school to undertake teacher training at this stage, action research helped them focus on their students’ needs, keep records of activities that worked, of activities that did not and keep full records of students’ progress. Teachers also applied their own questions in their research, questions they had been struggling with but did not know how to answer or address. Action research presented them with helpful insight into their own teaching and gave them more confidence and motivation to become innovative and explore their profession from different angles. Additionally, this procedure helped language teachers of the specific frodistirio raise their awareness and understand the necessity of research and the effect the outcomes might have to language learning in the region.

### **7.2.2 Classroom Context: the frodistirio of the Phase 2 study.**

The classroom context sets the ground for what will occur in the lesson. Once students walk into the classroom, they are sent an instant message of what the teacher expects of them. As mentioned in the previous chapter, immediate changes were not made to the classroom to avoid students' misinterpretation of the researcher's intentions. It was important for language learners to first become familiar with their teacher and then gradually experience changes in the classroom together. By guiding the YLs into change there were more positive initial responses, and because students were informed of the changes that would occur in the layout and its purpose, misbehaviour and restlessness were avoided to a great extent. The facts that students' enthusiasm of returning to their language school after the summer break quickly faded, as mentioned in chapter 6, helped introduce a new non-individualistic classroom to the young learners who were very receptive at this point.

The classroom context served as the beginning of a new layout where interactive learning would be encouraged and the use of L2 would be rewarded. The classroom was to become a social context where children were not expected to cope individually but as a group. It was important to encourage them to come out of their shell and take risks in learning, which mainly consisted of the written word and experience other purposes for using the FL. They would cooperate, learn from each other and realise that they had the same questions and difficulties. The language classroom should be conducive to promoting the TL and this was presented to students as their goal. It was necessary for the children to understand that they would be working in an interactive and cooperative environment in order to increase L2 use and benefit from it. The YLs of the frodistirio were given the opportunity to use English as a communicative tool and not a path that would lead to certification, which was years away. Within this social context they were presented with new goals which were to use a foreign language to communicate. Even though the children were intrigued at first, it was vital to keep them interested; therefore, rewards were presented to sustain motivation. This is discussed further in the following section.

### **7.2.3 The Outcomes of Students' Awards: the frodistirio of the Phase 2 study.**

As mentioned in chapter 6, young learners were introduced to rewards for their effort in using the TL, cooperating with their peers and behaving properly in the classroom. According to Read (2007:14) "If used effectively, they [teachers] can help promote collaboration, appropriate behaviour and individual as well as class effort". The clarity of the rules and what the teacher regarded as acceptable and unacceptable classroom behaviour were stated from the start to avoid any misunderstandings with children or their parents. Children were aware that they now worked as a group and felt a responsibility towards their classmates who they did not want to disappoint. Through this procedure and involving the students in the change of context and the introduction of awards, the learning process became clearer to them. YLs had the chance to escape routine homework evaluation and begin working together towards purposeful language learning. The students acquired goals, which they did not have before the research took place. With clear and age-appropriate aims YLs could focus and make more of an effort to maintain a positive and optimistic atmosphere since the approaches used were appealing and preferred them, rather than the routine they were exposed to before.

During the Phase 2 study, praising the students and rewarding them for their good work and behaviour strengthened the children's self-confidence. Language learners who took part in the Phase 2 study, as mentioned in chapter 6, felt proud and privileged because, as time went by, due to their encouragement to maximise their use of TL as much as possible and efficiently cooperate with their peers, they were able to produce the language to their teacher's satisfaction, who rewarded them in return. The immediate reward was a star which was visually accessible to the children on a poster on the wall of their classroom. They could count their stars at the end of the lesson which built up their anticipation for the end of the month awards. The fact that the certificates were to be given in the near future seemed more realistic, which helped the children not give up waiting endlessly for a reward to come, as the case was before the research began when students knew that they would be awarded five years from when they began their language lessons, if they were successful in their language examinations.

#### **7.2.4 The Effects of Various Classroom Layouts: the frodistirio of the Phase 2 study.**

Based on the findings of Phase 1, the layout of the language classroom can have a serious effect on how one teaches the foreign language and how students perceive it. In the context in question, because various layouts such as the semi-circular layout, the ad-hoc clusters of chairs/desks and the circular seating were unknown territory, the children were not persuaded of how the new seating arrangement would benefit them and if they would soon enjoy learning in this manner. Of course, there was reluctance at first, since children were still unaware of their ability to put their knowledge into practice and carry out a conversation or task in English. Students needed reassurance that they could meet their goal and that they were in a safe environment where everyone makes mistakes and everyone may need help from their teacher or peers. It was important that the children felt at ease before getting involved in different layouts that encouraged student-centred learning and teaching. Once they let go, the learning could begin.

It was not long before the language learners in question began enjoying the new environment. Once in pairs or in groups, they were given the opportunity to communicate in the foreign language which meant that this action would be rewarded by gaining more stars which only brought them closer to a certificate in the awards held at the end of the month. When collaborating with their peers they could prove to the teacher that they were making an effort to maximise the TL use and work within the time limits they were assigned. Without pressure, the students enjoyed themselves whilst learning and staying focused on the task at hand.

Despite a teacher's efforts, some students may disregard a new social environment in the classroom or his/her persuasion to maximise their TL when working with their peers, especially in a class where all language learners share the same mother tongue. They may attempt to use the FL when the teacher is in close proximity to their group and once they move away, some students would revert to their native language. In the Phase 2 study, this did occur since the children were accustomed to a traditional manner where the teacher played an authoritative role in the classroom and children feared the consequences if they did not do what they were told. The new layout gave the students more freedom to express themselves and feel

more relaxed in the learning environment which could be misinterpreted. Most students were not sure of how to handle this freedom at first, and needed clear guidance when it came to cooperating with others. It was, therefore, necessary for the seating arrangement to be well-thought-out so that students, who were likely to become tempted to misbehave or use the L1 when they could be using the L2, were reminded of the goal they all shared. With the phrase 'Fix the desks!' children knew they were expected to stand up and arrange the desks for group work. They became comfortable with the foreign language, responded well to instruction and were willing to move around the classroom when it was requested. Even if students spoke Greek unintentionally they quickly reverted to the TL once they were reminded to do so. This led to an increase of TL in the classroom which in itself motivated the students as they took pride on this enormous accomplishment. The cooperative and interactive classes helped students come closer as a group and enhance their imagination as well. Hearing themselves speak the foreign language and were exposed to enjoyable games and tasks, that could be done by native English speakers in England or the United States, students achieved a better understanding of the foreign culture.

#### **7.2.5 The Student-Centred Environment: the frodistirio of the Phase 2 study.**

The introduction of the student-centred environment was a very important part of the intervention study. Considering the classes that had been observed the previous year, as a researcher I was curious as to how the children would react to an environment where they were given responsibility for their own learning. Due to the fact that this approach was completely new to the students, if the previous steps of classroom management, a well-thought-out layout and clarity of classroom rules, had not proceeded, a student-centred environment would seem overwhelming to the young learners and teacher/researcher. The student-centred approach would eventually fail to be established. In order for the approach to be accepted by the students, they had to be certain that their classroom was a place where they can fearlessly use the target language to communicate and explore new ways of expressing meaning, negotiating and learning from their success and failures. The need for a YL-friendly environment is supported by Williams & Burden's (1997:202)

who state that “emotionally, a suitable environment for language learning should be one that enhances the trust needed to communicate and which enhances confidence and self-esteem”.

At first, as mentioned in chapter 6, the children found the change of the centre of the communication network confusing. After becoming accustomed to being led to learning the language, now they cooperated with their peers towards a specific goal. They realised that they were more independent than driven from the teacher for the completion of every task. The teacher stood back and observed and encouraged them to make sense of the task they were given. This exploratory procedure could be frightening at first but very rewarding as well, eventually the children realised this and the purpose of the task. It took time for the students to realise that they were a team and if one person did not follow the rules, this would reflect negatively on the entire group. Once they became familiar with this cooperative method, they realised that it was a less threatening setting than the one that they were accustomed to. It was now obvious that the purpose of a student-centred environment was to provide opportunities to put their knowledge of the English language into practice. Young children find it essential to establish good relations with their peers and apply a great deal of energy in achieving this, and it is one of the reasons why group work should be used in a language classroom. When students are placed in a classroom, they are put into their own society in microcosm and must learn to co-exist within their small community. There is a distinctive atmosphere where the teacher is partially the determiner. Bull & Solity's (1987:17) findings explain the students' small communities and the role of the teacher, offering the potential for an alternative approach that could be implemented in a Greek foreign language learning context:

A teacher would work with different groups (large and small, mixed ability or 'sets') and with individuals within the larger group. At times and particularly in the open plan situation, teachers may work as a team, sharing responsibility for the learning of perhaps an entire school year group. Nevertheless there are general principles that can be applied to the group context so that, when managed effectively, the whole group functions cohesively. Teaching objectives are best served when teacher and pupils are cooperating towards a common purpose.

Effective learning could be a result of pupils working together. Class discussions give children the opportunity to share ideas and understanding where “it is vital, of



course, that discussions be guided and not be mere wordplay. In the first place, a few children may dominate the discussion, either through strength of character or ability, if the teacher does not guide” (Charles, 1965:66). Dörnyei (2001:100) states that cooperation is an advantage in learning and “studies from all over the world are unanimous in claiming that students in cooperative environments have more positive attitudes towards learning and develop higher self-esteem and self-confidence than in other classroom structures”.

As a teacher, the progress the children made and how autonomous they had become was very fulfilling. Every educator wants to see their students succeed through the methods they apply in the classroom. The students’ enthusiasm and cooperation with the teacher create a strong sense of satisfaction and increase teachers’ motivation and will to become more imaginative, take initiative and improve their lessons.

#### **7.2.6 L2 Use in the Language Classroom: the frodistirio of the Phase 2 study.**

One of the issues that parents brought up in questionnaires, was their dissatisfaction of the state school language teachers and the lack of TL in their classes. The data from Phase 2 questionnaires distributed to parents can be supported by the low percentages of TL use recorded in language classrooms in state schools with the lowest being 2% of teachers’ TL and the highest being 40%. This can be a sensitive issue to discuss with language teachers since their professional integrity is being compromised when students and parents give up on their ability to fluently speak the language they have been hired to teach. Understandably, a teacher cannot abandon the idea of L1 use, especially in this context where students expect L1 clarification when experiencing difficulties comprehending L2 and the lack of it could cause considerable demotivation.

In comparison with the Phase 1 study, there was an effort in Phase 2 where the teacher attempted to use the appropriate amount of TL with language learners, depending on the language level of the students. In the YL context the appropriate amount of TL and L1 use could prove to be more effective than 100% of TL use

(Frod. 13bF) or 20% TL (St.School 14). Additionally, in the environment created in the Phase 2 study, the students' L2 use was more evident since, in the Phase 1 study, learners' TL use was responding to teachers' questions.

The context, prepared for the needs of the study, gave the language learners the chance to explore their linguistic abilities and use their knowledge of the foreign language and maximise their L2 according to the task given, whether in groups or pairs. Since there was a connection of L2 use, the task and the surroundings supported the purpose of L2 increase. Not only did students have the opportunity to think of the structure of the language and work it out whilst attempting communication in the TL, but they also became empowered to learn since they overcame the unnatural language they produced (Teacher 2Bf, chapter 6), and moved on to more meaningful everyday communication. Learning empowerment occurs, as Frymier et al. (1996) propose, when a student finds the tasks meaningful, feels confident to perform them and feels that his/her efforts have an impact on the course of the lesson. Frymier et al. (1996) concluded that when teachers were more direct and adjusted the content to become more relevant, students felt they were given more power to learn. Peng and Zhang (2009:222) have suggested that in order to assist children into becoming successful language learners, teachers should give them confidence:

[...] to self-evaluate their answers, or try to give them more opportunities to guess or expand their answers, to try and stimulate students to focus on the content and the subject matter of the questions, instead of the language structure of the question itself. They should try to encourage students to express their own idea about the question, even with the simplest language rather than to force them to drill sentence patterns. Thus, they could create a friendly environment for communication in the classroom.

Encouraging the language learners to increase the TL does not mean that I viewed the L1 as harmful in the language classroom. On the contrary, there was acknowledgment that the L1 and TL can exist simultaneously depending on the characteristics of the language learning process (Stern, 1992). The children were not forbidden from using the L1 but rewarded for maximising their TL as much as possible; therefore, their focus was on a reward and not a punishment such as low grades, as threatened in state schools. The aims set between the teacher and the students are an important factor, and it would be considered more natural to teach intralingually, using L1 in order to assist children with difficult grammar or unknown vocabulary. Additionally, I tried to avoid a 100% TL use with both the beginners and

intermediate group so as to not expose students to an unnatural lesson, since they were not in an English speaking country, shared the same L1 with their peers and their teacher was fluent in Greek. This attempt was observed to function effectively in a student-centred environment where children were encouraged to give their opinions and express their educational needs.

### **7.2.7 Parents Views on Interactive Learning: the frodistirio of the Phase 2 study.**

Parents whose children participated in the study were happy to see them involved in various tasks and develop a positive attitude towards language learning, as was recorded in parents' questionnaires. The fact that the students became so involved in their learning the language and took pleasure in receiving new information regarding the linguistic aspects and the culture of the countries connected to English, took the pressure of the language examinations off the parents. They began to appreciate the fact that their children could confidently communicate in the foreign language, limited as the communication might have been at the time. Before the results of the intervention research, their main concern was the examination results the children would acquire in the future. According to Hoque (2009:66), regarding the language learning situation in Bangladesh:

[...] exam results are the only educational goal for the majority of the parents, who are poor, mostly illiterate, and generally less educated. All the teaching-learning strategies and activities used by teachers are geared to getting 'good results' for students in the exams.

In Greece the situation was similar since all parents, no matter what their economic status or educational background may be, desired successful results in their children's examinations and their success was regarded as a major factor in their education. This notion appeared to have little to do with the parents' educational background; it was mostly due to the fact that these were requirements for succeeding in the professional world later on. With the country's financial difficulties and the high degree of unemployment, parents try to ensure a future for their children. The matter that was of great importance was the certification of the various qualifications such as the knowledge of a foreign language, to be achieved by the end of the children's language tuition. The outcomes of the Phase 2 study showed the parents

that examination results do not necessarily reflect every aspect of their children's proficiency in the foreign language. Hoque (2009:67) has stated that since reading and writing occupy most of the Bangladeshi examinations:

[...] they are mostly based on textbook content, which pupils memorize. Most pupils pass the exams in English without acquiring any language skills. Therefore, teachers can comfortably teach in the grammar translation method and pupils learn the textbook content and grammar rules by rote.

Similarly in Greece the pupils' success in these examinations was considered an immense achievement to Greek parents, and although to some extent it was, evidently a child's achievement in language learning cannot and should not be limited to an examination. The study of Phase 2 was conducted to evaluate the impact, for the purposes of my research and as a device to convince the language teachers and Director of Studies of the benefits for learners. Additionally, the participants would experience other aspects of the language and develop listening and speaking skills. Furthermore, as the children developed these skills they felt a great amount of satisfaction which could result to intrinsic reinforcement. Within these tasks, when completed successfully, children were recorded to feel self-achievement and satisfaction. When participating in real life everyday situations and activities, young language learners were observed to enhance their sense of self-achievement. Therefore, the children's intrinsic reinforcement derives from real life tasks and their need of a sense of success is in the process of language learning. Pinter (2006:20) argues that "during these early years, children are immensely creative with language and enjoy playing with words. They make up their own words, create jokes, and experiment with language even when they have to rely on limited resources". In this case, I encouraged children to be creative with language on various occasions and make the foreign language their own, aiming that their creativity would enhance their enthusiasm and confidence into becoming successful L2 users. Pinter (2006) suggests that given the opportunity, willingness to experiment with the language could result in language learning where students can enjoy the language for what it is. Such activities as those mentioned earlier stimulate the young mind, allowing young learners to use their imagination and can be used regularly in different forms. Brown (2000:161) makes a valid point when he suggests that:

[...] the *needs* concept of motivation in some ways belongs to all three schools of thought: the fulfillment of needs is rewarding, requires choices, and in many cases must be interpreted in a social context.

Fischer (2005) argues that when children are provided with activities where they discover the need for exploration, self-esteem, stimulation and autonomy, language learning is more successful. In a creative climate, adults and children can value innovation and the difference of ideas. On the other hand, Brown (2000:161) argues that one “may be unmotivated to learn a foreign language because you fail to see the rewards, connect the learning only to superficial needs and see no possibility of a social context in which this skill is useful”. The children’s need to *achieve* in their educational environment is considered human behaviour (Dörnyei, 2001). The motivational influence by the teacher/researcher had an effect on the language learners in both groups and a supportive relationship was established. From the very start of the Phase 2 research I made it a priority to remind students that they are more than capable of succeeding in their quest for knowledge. Their curiosity was heightened and they were intrigued to join in their teacher’s enthusiasm and impart a sense of commitment and interest in the foreign language. It is suggested here that this combination of support from the teacher and the learners self-perception of ability, helped children to remain motivated as they explored and gained confidence in working with a learner-centred approach to ELL.

The last section of the chapter provides the reader with key findings of Phase 2 of the research. The results are discussed in relation to Phase 1 of the study conducted at the seven state schools and seven *frodistiria*. There is a comparison in teaching approaches and attitudes towards language learning and the benefits of rewarding learners for their effort of trying to learn the language for what it is and not for the needs of developing language examination skills.

### **7.3 The Students’ Development beyond the Research Period.**

The participants of the Phase 2 research developed a sense of satisfaction which reinforced their achievement behaviour. Language learners who took part in this

study were encouraged to be proud of their accomplishments and celebrate their success with their peers and parents. The satisfaction of the students is displayed in the following statement made by intermediate students in an interview at the end of the academic year:

*Int.12b: The lessons are very different now. We do a lot of interesting things and learned how to use English in different situations! I can't wait to see what we will be doing next year!*

*Int. 17b: I like that we don't have to use the books all the time and we do activities in groups and work as a team. It is nice to feel that we are learning together.*

*Int.15b: This year I think I learned many new things and that I have improved my English.*

Good and Brophy (1994) have argued that learner motivation will reach its highest level when the students are in a safe classroom environment, where they can freely express their opinions without feeling they run the risk of being ridiculed. To intrigue students and help their motivation increase, they must be given opportunities to learn, be supported and encouraged for their efforts. Additionally, because of the fact that students who feel anxiety or alienation are unlikely to develop the motivation to learn, it is important that language learning occurs within a relaxed and supportive atmosphere. I viewed this approach as beneficial for the participants and their future in language learning. When the study was completed the students continued language lessons with their regular teachers at the frodistirio for two years. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, it was intended that the students should have the time and space to decide on how they felt about the language and to see how they progressed compared to their peers in other classes of the same level.

By 2010, the Intermediate class who participated in the study had reached Proficiency level and six out of eight students decided to continue with their studies.

All students were successful in their first language examinations which gave them and their parents' great pleasure. There was also a second Intermediate class the year the intervention study took place at the frodistirio; these children were not a part of the research and had language lessons of a more traditional nature. Three out of nine students were not successful and only two out of nine decided to continue their English language studies. The beginner's class involved in the research has now reached an Intermediate level and all students have continued their language studies at the frodistirio and plan to stay and complete their studies there. Two years after the data collection, I returned to the frodistirio and taught these two classes (the beginners and intermediate group of 2007) in order to collect information on how the students have developed within the two year fissure. As mentioned in chapter 4, follow-up questionnaires (Appendix 23) were distributed to the original participant students to gather data which would report on the effects the Phase 2 study had on the students. The replies were very detailed and provided the researcher with rich data. The questions were in L2 and were first read to the students and explained so that the answers were descriptive, complete and precise.

The language learners who participated in this study now have the ability to work with others without constant assistance from their teacher, according to the field notes taken at the time, comparing to the evidence gathered two years prior to the teacher/researcher's return to the school. The questions the students asked were less and students knew what was expected of them which became evident to the teacher/researcher when eliciting the 'rules' of working with others. Students were autonomous and motivated to reach the goal presented to them at the given time. Additionally, I recorded that the participants of both the current Intermediate and Proficiency class had an excellent command of the language for the level they have reached. They were able and willing to have long conversations with their teachers in L2, comprehend what they are told and respond. This is not something their peers of the same level, either Intermediate or Proficiency choose to do. Most students in this region, even of the highest level, do not feel comfortable speaking to their teacher or their peers in the L2 whether within or out of the classroom context.

The new Proficiency students stated that they had been studying English for a total of seven years and enjoyed their language lessons at the frodistirio because they

made friends there with whom they were comfortable enough to cooperate in class with, learn from each other and felt they were part of a group of successful people.

Questionnaire 1S: *I really like English and I prefer learning it at the frodistirio than having private lessons because here I can be a part of a group of successful people, we learn from each other, we enjoy ourselves and have become very good friends.*

The fact that a positive environment was created in this class at the time of the Phase 2 research, and students began cooperating and learning from each other made them come closer as a group. The sense of belonging in a group and working towards the same goal gave the students a sense of camaraderie and assisted them in working towards the same goal and continuing with the same enthusiasm.

Additionally, students were asked whether it was their choice to continue their studies in English after they had passed their first examinations or if they felt pressure from their parents to do so. All students replied that the choice was entirely theirs and their parents agreed.

Questionnaire 3S: *It was my decision because I like English and it is very useful and because I do not believe I have completed what I started.*

Questionnaire 2S: *It was my decision because I wanted to acquire all my language certificates and later on study English literature at university.*

Questionnaire 6S: *It was my choice because I like learning English very much and I want to complete my knowledge.*

They felt that there was no reason to terminate their studies just because they were successful in their first language examinations and would like to complete what they had started. All students mentioned that they enjoy learning English, appreciate it as a language and would like to continue their studies and enrich their knowledge. The participants stated that with their knowledge of the English language, they hope to be as comfortable speaking English as they are in their native language, travel abroad,



specifically to Great Britain, and communicate with others with ease as this would be very satisfying after all these years of language learning and practice.

Questionnaire 4S: *I can use the language I've learned in my everyday life like travelling, especially the UK, watching films and understanding English songs.*

Questionnaire 7S: *First of all I want to take the Proficiency exam and then I want to travel to England someday and speak the language comfortably. A great satisfaction...*

They believe it to be vital to use the language for communicative purposes. However, they do also want to complete their studies successfully by obtaining an English language proficiency certificate. According to the data from questionnaires, the students considered that this certification would help them not only improve their language skills but would also help them in the professional world in the future.

Questionnaire 8S: *I will need my knowledge in English to acquire a Proficiency certificate to find work in the future and I also want to travel to England.*

Moreover, 2 out of 6 students stated that they would like to complete their studies at the *frodistirio* and their dream was to become accepted at a university and study English Literature (Questionnaire 2S above). Additionally, 2 out of 6 students stated that they are considering moving to Great Britain and working there in the future. Students were requested to state what features of their language lessons they enjoy most and offer reasons for their preference. All students stated that their favourite part of their language lessons was speaking. They enjoy communicating in the L2 in groups and discuss topics given to them. They appreciate the fact that they are encouraged to think of the vocabulary they have learned and feel proud of the way they can use the language, as one of the new Proficiency stated in the questionnaire:

*'We may be having fun when we do group work and speaking in class but we learn as well and that is the best combination'.*

They believe that using the language in a spoken form is proof that they have done well as language learners. All students stated with confidence that they are successful language learners because they have worked hard to reach the level they

are in, they cooperate with and trust their teachers, and have reached a stage in their learning where they can communicate in the foreign language well and have a rich vocabulary.

The younger students, who were beginners when they first participated in the study, provided the researcher with interesting feedback. The participants who are now in an intermediate level group, aged 10 and 11, have been learning English at the frodistirio for four years and stated in their questionnaires that they have very positive feelings towards their frodistirio because, over the years, they have developed an ability to speak a foreign language and it was very important for them to continue their studies and reach the final level, which according to the participants was proficiency. Three out of five students wish to become English teachers whilst all of the students stated that they wish to visit Great Britain. This fact indicates that students have developed an appreciation and interest in the foreign culture and people. This has assisted an increase in motivation and high achievement where students view a visit to an English speaking country as a goal that may happen in the near future and feel that they will need to be fluent in the foreign language to be able to communicate with native speakers. Importantly, the children expressed their preference to games in their language lessons and comprehend that it is a different way of learning compared to the more traditional teaching approaches they are exposed to at school.

Questionnaire 14S: *I like the games most because they are fun and different and it is also a way to forget bad things.*

Overall, the current intermediate students have stated that they are confident that they are successful students not only because their grades are good but because they are able to understand the English they hear even outside the classroom context.

Questionnaire 16S: *I believe I am successful because I watch English speaking films and understand what is said. I try not to read the subtitles to check if I am learning and I think I am.*

The data gathered has revealed that the participants were predominantly learning English for pragmatic reasons such as travelling or employment purposes; nonetheless, they expressed enjoyment and satisfaction in the learning process.

Comments from individual questionnaires suggested that there are students that have been inspired by the language, its background and the procedure of language learning that they are considering it as a career giving them motivation to enhance L2 proficiency and evaluate themselves consistently in order to reach their goal. They were eager to express their pride in being competent in speaking and comprehending English comparing their abilities to their peers at the state school.

#### **7.4 Summary of Responses**

An important outcome of the study was that the participants had learned to appreciate the foreign language not only for the future qualifications it would one day offer, but for the ability they acquired in communicating in the foreign language and using it in order to get every day messages across, freely and not only in a structured manner that was required in many traditional language classrooms in the region where the research took place. After students acquired fluency they became more at ease in the classroom without fearing to express themselves. This enhanced their motivation and encouraged them to continue their studies and take risks while using the language, both in speaking and writing.

The pedagogical approach applied is likely to influence the children's view of language learning and behaviour in the classroom in a number of ways. Cooperative and communicative learning created a particular context which appeared to affect the participants with them reporting in their questionnaires that being able to cooperate with their peers is preferable to traditional layouts and approaches. The question and concern many state school teachers expressed in their interviews is whether the students' behaviour would be controllable when the layout and method of teaching changes. The intervention research recorded that classroom management was successful as the children worked together and completed the tasks assigned within the time limit. Due to the fact that they enjoyed the procedure, they took their responsibilities seriously and cooperated with the teachers and their peers in such a way that it would not jeopardize the future of cooperative learning at the frodistirio.

This chapter has summarized the findings of the present study, and discussed them in relation to the research questions displayed in the following headings:

- Appropriate Teaching Methods for Young Children at State Schools and Frodistiria
- The Aim for EYL in State Schools and Frodistiria
- Necessary Training Acquired by Teachers
- Elements of Motivation for Language Learning

The study suggests that a student-centred environment where a communicative approach is encouraged will not prevent effective classroom management and organisation. The study shows that the approach in question can strengthen the bond of students among themselves and their teacher and can create a positive climate in the classroom for learning and communication. The Phase 2 research study has suggested that traits of the environment described, determine a general tendency to initiate communication in L2, stimulating the best of the children's ability, even in a monolingual context where English is not spoken outside the classroom.

The qualitative study that first took place in state schools and frodistiria provided data revealing that state school language teachers are in a profession where they have received no appropriate training and struggle to keep their students interested in their lesson. Students, on the other hand, have no appraisal for their efforts in language achievement at state schools and lose interest once the lessons at the frodistiria begin to flourish. They find themselves repeating what has already been covered in frodistiria and have no goal for language learning in state schools. Lastly, in frodistiria, children and teachers have a specific focus which is language examinations, however, the focus is not age-appropriate for young learners and the goal seems to be too far into the future to keep children motivated, nonetheless, the friendly environment and welcoming surroundings has gained students' cooperation to a greater extent than in state schools. The aim of the current study was to investigate the complexities and paradoxes embedded in the learning environment of EYL and explore a possible relationship between a communicative and examination-focused environment. The learning that takes place may be goal-driven in the sense that students can learn the foreign language and its background and receive input and offer output, as mentioned in the first chapter. They can later use their knowledge of

the foreign language for various purposes, one of which may be language examinations. My intention in Phase 1 of the study was to investigate:

- The teaching methods for young children in state schools and frodistiria
- The aims that exist in state schools and frodistiria for YL
- Teacher training
- Elements of motivation for language learning within the regional context

In Phase 2 my aspiration was to explore the potential that exists both within the educational system and in young language learners in Greece. The researcher has aimed to introduce interactive language learning by using student-centred approaches and encourage learners to work together as a whole class, dyads or in groups. Additionally, within the Phase 2 study there was an attempt to introduce teachers to action research as a form of self-evaluation and self training since language teachers are not offered pre/in-service training in the region. Since teacher training has a major impact on language learning but the Ministry of Education is not in a position to provide funding, action research was a valuable technique to help teachers develop professionally. Teachers were also exposed to workshops and peer observations where they became familiar with an interactive method that was more appropriate for students of this age. Once teachers became more comfortable in using various techniques in their classes and noticed a change in the students' attitude and behavior, they too were willing to include more interactive and cooperative tasks in their lessons. These outcomes gave the teacher self-confidence and motivation to improve, be creative and inspire the students with the interest to learn more in this manner and cooperate with their teacher and peers.

## **Chapter 8: Conclusion**

### **8.1 Restatement of Aims and Methodological Approach of the Study.**

This chapter revisits, and presents a summary of, the key findings of the research conducted together with proposals and a consideration of implications for language teachers in the state and private sector in Greece. Additionally, I have made recommendations for further research which is needed in the specific region, where language learning in primary education has been neglected. The limitations of the study are subsequently assessed. The chapter then concludes with an epigrammatic summary of the preceding sections.

As Pinter (2006) suggests, there are many significant reasons why primary school children can profit by learning foreign languages, which is the purpose of the present study. Language learning investigation is of great value and studies can supply Greek education with rich data and analysis that could facilitate its development. The initial and most vital purpose of this research is to contribute to advancing language education in Greece which is in need of development. The aim of the Phase 1 study was to examine language learning in state schools and *frodistiria*. Secondly, it was important for the course of the study to examine whether and how certain changes can be established using the framework of the Phase 2 methodology to take action through the research and explore the issue closely. Observations showed that language lessons in the specific context continue to be carried out in a rather traditional manner, even though the nature of classroom management and interaction have been topics of extensive research, due to the potential benefits they may offer. The qualitative analysis of data supplied me with inside information of the lack of language teacher training, how language lessons were conducted in the region and the teachers' views and reluctance to implement changes in classroom management and organisation, peer interaction and maximizing L2 use. According to the data collected, all language teachers were entirely aware of the serious issues of language learning in their region but were unsure of how they would overcome these problems.

What has been identified in the research was that in the study context, the teachers who participated preferred to establish a teacher-centred environment supporting the notion that this would be the only environment possible that students would participate in, where language learning could occur. Furthermore, it was observed that the young language learners in state schools who participated in the Phase 1 study soon lost interest in the lessons and the material they were exposed to in state schools. Their teachers were aware of this issue and blamed their pupils' change of heart on the *frodistiria*, where the same students worked in a more rapid pace so as to complete their studies early and take their language examinations before it was time to begin preparation for the University entrance examinations at the age of 16. Additionally, the organisation of the classes in the private and public sector did not give the opportunity to all students to become involved in the lessons often resulting in the teacher working only with the students who were seated in the front desks. This evidence suggested that a student-centred environment might assist YLLs in participating, and by being encouraged to work with their peers they would enhance their confidence in using the foreign language in the classroom through group activities which could help improve language learning in the region. If language learners began to work in small groups where they would be encouraged to cooperate and communicate in the foreign language, students might connect this approach to foreign language learning exclusively. Further evidence from the small scale investigation suggested that this approach might give the teacher the encouragement and confidence needed to understand the value of maximising the use of L2 instead of providing their students with a language lesson mostly in L1 where the main focus was accuracy rather than interaction. Based on the data presented in this thesis, the use of the first language seems to be a teacher's professional weakness, in the sense that the first language is used to make up for the lack of knowledge of the foreign language. The use of the mother tongue can be seen as advantageous as well. By no means does the researcher suggest the dismissal of L1 within the language classroom. The use of L1 can save time, which could be needed more in state schools than in *frodistiria*, since time there is more limited and, according to all teachers, a specified section of the syllabus needs to be completed by the end of the academic year. Furthermore, it gives the students a sense of security when knowing that they can switch to their L1 when they cannot fully understand or express themselves through the L2, this reduces students' anxiety. Teachers also rely on the L1 when ensuring that

what is being said and presented in the classroom is understood. It is, however, crucial to provide learners with as much TL as possible in contexts where students only spend a limited amount of time exposed to L2 and little, if any, contact with TL outside the language classroom. Relying heavily on L1 could prove to be an unfortunate waste of class time and may discourage language learners.

The information provided in this thesis offers educators and curriculum developers guidance on how to anticipate the necessary and precise changes needed to improve language learning at primary level. It may also contribute to maintaining stability in a system which tends to fluctuate in this context, as a result of changes of leadership which affect the language learning policy in primary state schools across the country. Drawing on both linguistic and educational evidence it is apparent that YLs must be encouraged to undertake those vital steps into becoming confident foreign language users. In order for this to be accomplished, politicians must ensure that the language learning programmes of state schools and frodistiria provide their learners with “a robust, sustainable model for delivery capable of full integration within a state school framework” (Enever, 2007:1). In order to apply and introduce various approaches to the language learning context, many provisional factors must be considered such as class size, professional development, teachers’ L2 proficiency and accessibility of suitable materials (Edelenbos et al, 2006). These conditions to improve language learning in Greece have not yet been met and should be set as priorities because of the urgent need of improvement. If teachers are given the training needed for professional development, their increased knowledge of the subject and the potential effects of an interactive environment could benefit their students on a pedagogical and linguistic level, not to mention their own self-esteem as teachers, which has suffered. If these actions are taken, the teachers can assist their students to enhance their L2 communication skills and encourage students to develop their abilities in the classroom by creating the appropriate environment as identified in chapter four. It is essential for the national FL education policy to pay particular attention to primary language teachers’ s training “by offering language improvement opportunities to non-native teachers and appropriate teaching methodology courses both at the pre-service level and as part of a continuous professional development system” (Enever, 2011:79).



Political leadership recently changed in the country and although changes in the education sector were made, the new measures taken were not applied as is revealed by research studies or investigation. Specifically, the foreign languages department of the Ministry of Education focused on the starting age of the learner and not pedagogical approaches that could offer improvement. As of September 2010, primary school children begin their language lessons in year 1 (age 6); however, language teachers are expected to use the communicative approach which has been suggested in the curriculum since 1992. Unfortunately, there has not been any further teacher training or development, therefore the teachers are reluctant to make any changes in their teaching practices and, as students have stated in questionnaires, they continue to teach the language exactly as they did before. Furthermore, the changes that were made in primary schools across the country cannot be considered complete or well-planned since the students who attended year 3 in September 2010, who had never been introduced to the target language in state schools before, were expected to use English language course books that would be instructed in year 3 if they had begun their language learning in year 1, skipping two years of language teaching. The students that were to start their English lessons from the beginning in year 3, are treated as if they have completed two years of language learning. The Ministry of Education changed the entire curriculum overnight without considering the fact that for the next five years the children in state schools will only be confused and lost. One can argue that this was done in order to avoid confusion with the beginners' material whilst others would accuse the Ministry of Education of poor execution. The outcome is that language teachers in state schools are now met with an even greater challenge when trying to motivate their learners. Those responsible will need to deflect teachers' and students' negative responses so that progress can be achieved and handle any changes with careful reflection and research. In practice, this will require a phased plan of implementation in Greece.

## **8.2 The Need for Further Research**

In education, it should be a teacher's concern how they may improve the quality of learning and teaching in their environment and acceptance of the fact that

classroom-based research is required which must focus on the needs of the language learner and teacher. Dörnyei (2007) has defined research as a method used when one seeks answers to questions and wishes to gain more knowledge of the world around them. Through action research, there is great potential for improving language teaching in Greece as the concept of action research in education is to identify problematic situations or issues researchers consider worthwhile for investigation and to intervene in situations with the intention of producing critically informed changes in practice (Byram, 2004; Lundberg, 2007). In the present study, the follow-up procedure of introducing the concept of research to the teachers, providing workshops and peer observations, gave them the prospect of developing their teaching skills and ideology of language instruction which could benefit educators and further their professional development.

The field of FL study has for some time emphasised the importance of teaching practices, learning experiences and various other pedagogical matters originating from the language classroom (Nunan, 1990). It would be valuable if, the Ministry of Education facilitated teacher professional development by organising a series of qualitative research programmes, where teachers may be given the opportunity to observe others and improve their techniques as they adopt different methods of language learning and teaching. This is likely to promote progress in language learning in the broader sense. Nikolov & Mihaljević (2011) have suggested in their study that realistic aims and goals must be re-examined constantly, especially in these specific educational contexts. This will facilitate meeting the local needs and mirror on local conditions. Nikolov & Mihaljević (2011:30) have stated, based on the results of their research that:

[...] one of the most encouraging results of research in this view concerns the complex relationships between ELL and learners' development in their academic, affective, strategic, and other domains of school curricula. Interactions of children's languages and various skills can give insight into the multi-competence that YLs start building up from the very beginning of their foreign language learning.

### 8.3 Limitations of the Study

The limitations of the study should be taken into consideration in interpreting the results reported above.

The teachers that participated in this study had never taken part in such an investigation before and were quite reluctant to do so in the beginning. To some extent, this may have been a weakness in the research since more time was needed to reduce anxiety from limiting conditions and teachers' limitations that they expressively feared would be the true focus and the hypothesis of the study. Additionally, the study required the calculation of the teachers' L1/L2 use in the classroom. Due to the language teachers' hesitation, the researcher did not audio record them during their lessons, which left her with the option of counting utterances, as mentioned in chapter 5. This method brought certain problems to the surface. It was difficult to determine in spoken language where one utterance finished and the next one began. Also, as recording was not an option the researcher concentrated on counting utterances which, at times, prevented her from observing anything else with concentration. Lastly it was not possible to record exact figures, as the tendency was obvious.

The headmasters of the state schools and *frodistiria* that took part in Phase 1 of the research did not wish to share their views with the researcher either. Also, interviews with children and parents were not permitted as headmasters feared this would complicate the situation and bring distress to the teachers. If parents, students and headmasters had agreed to participate in the first phase of the study, I would have more data that would give an even clearer view of the language learning state within the regional context and could have used the additional data to compare with the findings from the second phase of the study. Furthermore, if the second phase of the study had not occurred, I would have no immediate contact with the children whose information was vital to the study.

There were limitations in Phase 2 of the research as far as the language teachers of the *frodistirio* were concerned. Because of the fact that I had a personal relationship with the owner of the *frodistirio*, as mentioned in chapter 4, the language teachers

were quite hesitant to accept me in their classrooms for observations. Their anxiety had an effect on their lessons at first since teachers had difficulty relaxing and being themselves in class. As mentioned in section 6.2, for the first few lessons, the teachers tried to apply group work which they were not familiar with, and did not have the training to apply. Due to the sudden changes, the children became confused and lost. This situation made it all that difficult for the teachers to manage their classes, which they were not used to doing when in an interactive environment. In order for teachers to adapt to the observations and be themselves, it took time and reassurance from both the researcher and the Director of the Phase 2 frodistirio. The data from the first three observations of all language teachers were not used since they were not representative of what actually happened in class.

As Bassey (1999:38) has stated, the enhancement of educational research can:

[...] contribute to the advancement of knowledge and wisdom about the experience, nurture of personal and social development towards worthwhile living and the acquisition, development, transmission, conservation, discovery and renewal of worthwhile culture.

In reporting on this context, I hope to encourage institutional confidence and inspiration by presenting the positive outcomes. In the future, I hope to make concrete suggestions in order to inspire individuals to conduct their own research, perhaps in their own classrooms, with the aim of improving pedagogy and language learning. Samuda & Bygate (2008:190-191) validly argue that:

[...] until classroom-based studies become a mainstream for research..., the pedagogical use of language learning tasks will never be properly reached, and we will have to make do with whatever researchers feel motivated to explore.

The data gathered through the multiple research methods applied in the present study is valuable not only for the useful information gathered in the process, but also for the validation of the use of action research as a method where teachers can study their own work in the classroom and provide the field with compelling arguments for the improvement in language learning. This research indicates that there is a need for teacher education on this vital subject. There is also a need for more research in order to understand what prompts teachers in using L1/L2 and how official guidelines may influence teachers in their language teaching (Turnbull, 2001:537). Studies such as

this, can supply language learning in Greece with rich data and analysis that could facilitate its language teaching development. This research offers the possibility that the future of language learning in state schools and frodistiria has every reason to look brighter. With the appropriate material and training, state school language teachers can regain the self-belief they need to deliver a productive language lesson. Teachers at frodistiria can also feel more confident and gain the fulfillment of teaching a language when using the appropriate amount of L2 for each level and consider themselves something more than a teacher who prepares students for language examination.

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## Appendix 1: Permission to the owner of operating the frodistirio



ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ



ΥΠΟΥΡΓΕΙΟ  
ΕΘΝΙΚΗΣ ΠΑΙΔΕΙΑΣ  
ΚΑΙ ΘΡΗΣΚΕΥΜΑΤΩΝ

Πάτρα 7-10-2009

Αριθ. πρωτ. Φ. 17.2 / 3161

Όλα είναι θέμα Παιδείας

ΠΕΡΙΦΕΡ. Δ/ΝΣΗ Π. κ' Α. ΕΚΠ/ΣΗΣ  
ΑΥΤΙΚΗΣ ΕΛΛΑΔΑΣ  
Δ/ΝΣΗ Δ/ΘΜΙΑΣ ΕΚΠ/ΣΗΣ ΑΧΑΪΑΣ  
1<sup>ο</sup> ΓΡΑΦΕΙΟ Δ/ΘΜΙΑΣ ΕΚΠ/ΣΗΣ

Τηλ. Κλάδος : 261 10  
Τηλ. Δ/νση : Αλ. Υψηλάντου 216  
Πληροφορίες : Β. Γαίου  
Τηλέφωνο : ( 2610 ) 310277

### ΑΠΟΦΑΣΗ

**ΘΕΜΑ :** Χορήγηση άδειας λειτουργίας Κέντρου Ξένων Γλωσσών  
( εκ μεταφοράς )

Έχοντας υπόψη :

1. Τις διατάξεις του ΑΝ 2545/40 "Περί Ιδιωτικών Σχολείων Φροντιστηρίων κ. Οικοτροφείων"
2. Την αριθ. ΣΤ5/56/13-11-2000 απόφαση του ΥΠΕΠΘ περί μεταβίβασης διοικήσεως υπογραφής "με εντολή Υπουργού" στους Προϊσταμένους των Δ/νσεων και Γραφείων Π. και Δ. Εκπ/σης των νομών [ ΦΕΚ 1409/17-11-2000 τ. Β ]
3. Την αριθ. 12/7-10-2009 πράξη της Επιτροπής για καταλληλότητα φροντιστηρίων
4. Την από 28-9-2009 αίτηση του Γεωργίου Νικολάου του Παναγιώτη

### Αποφασίζουμε

Χορηγούμε άδεια λειτουργίας Κέντρου Ξένων Γλωσσών στον Γεωργίου Νικόλαο στην οδό Σάμιερστ 107 , πρόγειο (μεταφορά από Σάμιερστ 59) στο Ρίο με την προϋπόθεση ότι ο αριθμός των μαθητών δεν θα υπερβαίνει τον αριθμό που καθόρισε η επιτροπή καταλληλότητας, δηλαδή: 1<sup>ο</sup> αίθουσα: 12 μαθητές, 2<sup>ο</sup> αίθουσα: 10 μαθητές, 3<sup>ο</sup> αίθουσα: 10 μαθητές, 4<sup>ο</sup> αίθουσα: 11 μαθητές.  
Σύνολο : 43 μαθητές

### ΚΟΙΝ.

1. Κέντρο Ξένων Γλωσσών  
Γεωργίου Νικολάου  
Σάμιερστ 107  
261 04 ΡΙΟ
2. Α' Αστυνομικό Τμήμα Πατρών

Ε.Υ.

Ο Προϊστάμενος

Τάσος Παναγιώτης

## **Translation**

**Greek Democracy**

**Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs**

**1<sup>st</sup> Office of Education**

**Southwestern Greece**

Post code: Removed for Ethical Purposes

Address: Removed for Ethical Purposes

Information: V. Gazou

Phone number: 2610-319277

## **Decision**

**Topic: Permission of Operation the Foreign Language School**

**Keeping in consideration:**

1. The conditions of article AN 2545/40 'For Owners of Private Language Schools and/or Boarding Schools'
2. The article ΣΤ 5/56/13-11-2000 decision of the Ministry Education and Religious Affairs regarding transfer of right with signature "with the command of the Minister of Education" and head of office of Education of laws [ΦΕΚ /409/17-11-2000 τΒ']
3. The number 12/7-10-2009 action of the committee of suitable space.
4. 28-9-2009 application renewal of Giannikas Nocholaos of Panagiotis.

### **We Decide**

To renew the operation license of the Foreign Language School to Giannikas Nicholas on (address removed for ethical reasons), first floor (transferred from address removed for ethical reasons) in (area removed for ethical reasons) under the condition that the number of students does not exceed the following numbers at a time. 1st classroom 12 students, 2nd classroom: 10 students, 3rd classroom: 10 students, 4th classroom: 11 students. Total: 43 students

#### **Informed:**

1. Private Language School

Nicholaos Giannikas

(Address removed for ethical purposes)

2. 1st Police Station of Patras

## **Appendix 2**

### **Phase 1 Observation Sheet**

**Methodology**

**Management/ Classroom Management**

**Classroom layout/Environment**

**Learner Autonomy**

**Monitoring**

**Student interaction/Teacher-Student interaction**

**Authentic material and language**

**L1 use and translation/Gesture and mime**

**Use of games, stories etc.**

**Use of board**

**Do students move around the classroom**

**Elicitation**

**Pronunciation and spelling**

**Working with a course book**

**Can children understand instructions in class?**

**Communicative activities**

**Focus on students' needs rather than the syllabus or course book**

**Sample of Completed and Annotated Observation Sheet & Table of Categories,**

**Coding and Narrative**

**5<sup>th</sup> Primary school Grade 4 Day 1 and 2**

**Methodology** Teacher-centered (there is an obvious distance between students and teacher)

*Distance between children and teacher-*

*The T was seated behind her desk for most of the lesson even though there was space for monitoring and walking around desks to guide the Ss with their tasks.*

**Management/ Classroom Management** The desks are placed in a round layout from the classroom teacher, when I asked the English teacher about it she said that she doesn't know why the teacher prefers this layout and that she doesn't really see the point. She would rather have them sitting in rows as not to have any backs facing her (as she is always behind her desk). The students were generally well-behaved; the teacher was quite strict if someone did not behave. *T is unaware of the use of a different*

*layout and what it could offer*

**Classroom layout/Environment** (layout mentioned above) the classroom was quite spacious, however it was empty. There were no drawings, no bookcase. Nothing that indicates a warm classroom environment. *Not age-appropriate/ motivating*

**Learner Autonomy** None, everyone depended on the teacher for everything. For example, the children did not make any requests or take initiative. They completed their exercises as requested and every few seconds one of the students would ask the teacher how to answer one of the questions in the task. The teacher would give them the answer. This phenomenon occurred in every task the students were asked to complete in class. *100% dependency- why would the Ss make the effort if the answer was served to them whenever they came across something they did not know.*

**Monitoring** None. The whole time students were working on tasks or writing down new words, the teacher sat behind her desk and made corrections on H/W or dictations. *No connection with the Ss. Does not feel like a YLs classroom*

**Student interaction/Teacher-Student interaction** there was no student interaction concerning the lesson, there was teacher-student interaction initialized by the teacher after strict turn-taking. *Same procedure in all schools so far-0 peer interaction*

**Authentic material and language** None. The teacher used 95% (evidence collected in class during observations) of L1 in class and the material she used was strictly from the book. *The L1 used was only to read out of the book, provide Ss with dictation and for appraisal which was heard twice. The T also used the words Yes and No in English.*

**L1 use and translation/Gesture and mime** There was a constant use of L1 and translation. Whatever the teacher read from the book (that was the only L2 heard from her) she immediately translated. There was no gesturing or miming. Anything that needed explaining was done in L1, although very little explaining was needed since almost the entire lesson was carried out in L1. *Constant L1 Translation*



**Use of games, stories etc.** the students played a game at the end of the lesson and in the last two lessons I observed the children played the same game. They did have time for one more too which they also played. They had a choice between the two. From what it seemed they play either one or the other whenever they have some time left. There is no variety, nor creativity in games. In every game the teacher is sat behind her desk the entire time.

*Games are for filling time and have become a routine, but only when there is some spare time in the end.*

**Use of board** the teacher writes on the board to give students new vocabulary from the book and the translation. She also gives them the pronunciation of the words in Greek, not IPA. This was done in the first lesson but not the second.

**Do students move around the classroom?** Not at all.

**Elicitation** None

**Pronunciation and spelling** students write dictation (the vocabulary given to them from teacher)

**Working with a course book constantly** *Reluctance to use material other than what the Ministry provides.*

**Can children understand instructions in class?** Easily, since they are all given in Greek.

**Communicative activities** None

**Focus on students' needs rather than the syllabus or course book** None.

Category	Code	Narrative
Methodology	MeT	Teacher-centred/ T seated behind her desk
Communication	S/T interaction	No S-S interaction/ T-S interaction in L1 and strict turn-taking
Teaching Material	Com. Mat.	Material used was only from Funway. No other authentic material that could stimulate communication was used.
Means of Communication	L1/L2	Constant use of L1 and very little L2. The T used her translation skills throughout the lesson which made children ignore L2 and wait for its translation.
Fun Activities	FUN	Games were used for filling time. There was no obvious educational purpose nor connection to the lesson.
Aim of the Lesson	AIM	The aim of the lesson was to read-a-loud and translate.
Classroom Layout	Layout	A round layout/ not well organized.

## Appendix 3

### Annotated Observation Sample:

#### 5<sup>th</sup> Primary school Grade 4 Day 1 and 2

**Time: 11:45am**

Layout: **Round layout, once might have been ad-hoc clusters** *chaotic layout*

Classroom is big, beige colour, no drawings/posters *Plain for children of this age*

T gives out dictations from last time.

It's one of the children's turn to write the date on the board.

T does not say 'Hello' in English, all conversation is in L1 *lose of L2 opportunity*

Students start writing their dictation as T reads out the words

Children are expected to write the word in L2 and L1 translation

T is seated behind her desk while this happens. *Layout is not teacher-centred which means that the teacher cannot clearly see the students and vice versa.*

Words children are writing down are from coursebook

As the children write their dictation, the teacher is correcting notebooks *Little attention is paid to the students at this point*

No monitoring is done at this point.

Once dictation is over a child is asked to collect them

and take them to the teacher who is still seated behind

her desk. The T then asks the students what they had for homework.

No homework was assigned last time so the T asks one of the

Ss to go to another classroom and bring her the CD player.

*There is only one CD player in the entire school. All Ts have to share.*

When the student comes back with the CD player, she plays a story from the coursebook (Funway).

*Until now everything evolves around the coursebook. There are no other books on the T's desk apart from Funway.*

Once the T reads the story to the children she asked them what the story was about.

The T and Ss talk about the story in their L1.

The T also began to explain the use of 'the' in front of 'the sun', the Ss did not ask about this.

*A simple phenomenon to explain.*

*Children of this level are aware of the use of the definite article.*

*There were other grammatical phenomena that were more difficult and could need explaining.*

The T then started to translate the entire story bit by bit on her own, at the end she tried to elicit the last sentence of translation from the Ss but they were not paying attention so she carried on translating it herself.

*Why was translation needed?*

*The story was already explained.*

*The teacher relies on translation*

*No one is paying attention though.*

The teacher then asked the meaning of words from the story

*Relying on translation again*

The Ss raise their hand and the T decides who answers.

The Ss are asked to work on a task from Funway.

*No student interaction so far. Everyone works alone.*

Meanwhile the T corrects the dictations

*No monitoring involved. Teacher does work that could be done another time.*

When the students complete the task the T

'examines' them. Again Ss raise their hands

and the teacher decides who will give the answer.

The T then tells the Ss that they will listen to a song.

The children listen to the singers sing and look at

*The first smiles...*

each other and start laughing.

The teacher explained the task, in L1 and

keywords in L2, after the Ss listened to the task.

The children were to distinguish the dancers from the singers or musicians.

*The children finally start showing*

*interest. They seem to enjoy the songs and the music.*

After the listening task was over, the Ss asked for more.

The T said 'Next time'

The Ss seemed disappointed.

The Ss were then asked to copy the words the T wrote on the board.

Until now the students did not move from their desks

*Words are not pre-taught.*

at all and neither did the T.

The T writes the words on the board in English with

the translation next to them and gives the pronunciation

in Greek letters (not IPA) for example:

school show= σχολική παράσταση /σκούλ σόου/

*How useful is this?*

Ss copy 18 words and the T gives them some time to do so.

*Tiring*

**End of Lesson 1.**

## Appendix 4

### Interview Questions with Phase 1 teachers.

I would like to ask you some questions related to the methodology in the English language classrooms. Which do you believe are the teaching strategies that should be used with young learners? For example, what would your typical lesson with young learners consist?

1. Do you encourage student interaction during the lesson?
2. Why do you think many teachers here in Greece prefer traditional language classes?
3. Do you think that group work involves negative effects to the classroom?
4. What is the students' reaction to working with their classmates? Is it something they are used to?
5. A) Do children behave during group work? B) What age group would you use such a classroom layout in?
6. Do you believe that group/pair work helps develop the students' learning skills? Why? Why not?
7. Do you use course books, grammar books in your classes?
8. Do you also bring in extra material of your own?
9. How do you choose extra material? Based on which criteria?

10. How do you think students are motivated?
  
11. How do you keep your students motivated?
  
12. Does the government support teachers who would like to acquire further training in order to develop in their profession?
  
13. Are children exposed to cooperative learning during their other lessons in school?
  
14. Do you believe learning English at school and foreign language schools is too much pressure for the students?

## Appendix 5

### Sample of Phase 1 Teacher's Interview with Translation, Table of Categories, Coding and Narrative & Follow-up Notes

There were changes in the questions due the semi-structured nature of the interview. The interview questions were asked in English.

Res: First of all, I would like to thank you for the interview.  
(Teacher smiles)

Res: Do you encourage student interaction during the lesson?

Teacher 13a: Ναι, θα σου απαντήσω στα Ελληνικά για καλύτερα έτσι;

Res: Ναι, ναι.

Teacher 13a: Συνήθως όχι, το αποφεύγω.

Res: Ok, what do you think is the most preferable teaching method here in Greece?

Teacher 13a: Λοιπόν... εμ--- πιστεύω ότι η καλύτερη μέθοδος θα ήταν learner-centred έτσι

Res: Hm

Teachers 13a: Η καλύτερη μέθοδος θα ήταν αλλά είναι τελικά η teacher-centred.

Res: teacher-centred γενικά στην---

Teacher 13a: Γενικότερα νομίζω ότι ο δάσκαλος είναι ο πρωταγωνιστής μέσα στην τάξη--- παρ'όλο που δεν θα έπρεπε κανονικά αλλά έτσι είναι.

Res: Do you think that group work evolves negative effects to the classroom?

Teacher 13a: Είναι δύσκολο με τα παιδιά του δημοτικού γιατί δεν ξέρουν πως να το χειριστούν. Είναι καλύτερα να μην τα μπερδεύεις.

Res: Do you believe that student-interaction can benefit children to learn within the current situation in primary schools?

Teacher 13a: Εμ--- μερικές φορές ναι, μερικές φορές όχι, εξαρτάται εμ---απο το πόσο ενδιαφέρονται γι'αυτό που ακούνε. \*\*

Res: I see.

Teacher 13a: Νομίζω δηλαδή το να ακούνε εσένα ή να ακούνε το συμμαθητή τους --- κάποιες φορές τα βοηθάει---εμ---επειδή είναι πιο κοντά στην ηλικία τους, έτσι, εμ--- το να διορθώνουν ένα λάθος απο το λάθος που θα έκανε και το άλλο παιδάκι.

Res: Hm, ναι.



Teacher 13a: Μ'αυτήν---

Res: Hm, ok, what is the students' reaction to working with their classmates? For example, what do you think would happen if last week you asked them to complete the photocopy with comparative and superlative exercises in groups, do you think they would behave?

Teacher 13a: --- και πάλι, μερικά ναι, μερικά όχι

Res: Hm

Teacher 13a: Είναι πολλά τα επίπεδα μέσα στην τάξη, είναι και πολλά τα παιδιά δεν—δεν μπορείς να μιλήσεις στάνταρ για κάποια παιδιά.

Res: Η πλειοψηφεία;

Teacher 13a: Η πλειοψηφεία θα κάνανε λίγο φασαρία αλλά μετά θα ηρεμούσαν. Γενικά δεν έχουμε behaviour problems στο δημοτικό. Είναι ακόμα σε μια ηλικία που πειθαρχούνται εύκολα. Αν τους φωνάξεις λίγο, μια δυο φορές κάποια στιγμή θα ησυχάσουν.

Res: Εμ—εάν βάζατε τα παιδιά να είναι σε γκρουπάκια, ξέρουνε να συνεργαστούνε;

Teacher 13a: Αυτό---

Res: Θα ήταν λίγο στα χαμένα στην αρχή;

Teacher 13a: Όχι συνεργάζονται αλλά αυτή η συνεργασία δεν είναι συνήθως πολύ καλή γιατί αυτά (τα παιδιά) που ξέρουν λένε στ'άλλα που δεν ξέρουν (τα παιδιά).

Res: Ναι.

Teacher 13a: Δεν είναι δηλαδή κάποια συνεργασία που αποδίδει.

Res: Hm, δηλαδή τα πιο αδύναμα παιδιά---

Teacher 13a: Απλά αντιγράφουν, δεν κάνουν κάτι.

Res: Do you use course books, grammar books in your classes?

Teacher 13a: Ναι, χρησιμοποιώ τα βιβλία του υπουργείου.

Res: Do those books encourage pair work or group work?

Teacher 13a: Όχι ιδιαίτερα

Res: I see

Teacher 13a: Όχι ιδιαίτερα—έχει βέβαια κάποιες ασκήσεις μέσα που είναι με pair work σε στυλ με διαλογάκια εμ--- αλλά μέχρι εκεί δηλαδή κάποια διαλογάκια του στυλ πόσο χρονών είσαι *how old are you* το ένα στο άλλο--- εμ---αλλά έτσι διαλογάκια και συνήθως τα βάζω και τα διαβάζουν μαζί στη τάξη.

Res: Are children exposed to cooperative learning during their other lessons in school?

Teacher 13a: Όχι, απ'ότι ξέρω, όλα τα μαθήματα είναι teacher-centred.

Res: How do you choose extra material? Based on which criteria?

Teacher 13a: Χρησιμοποιώ πάρα πολλά γιατί τα βιβλία του υπουργείου είναι περιορισμένα.

Res: Ναι

Teacher 13a: Δεν έχουμε βιβλίο γραμματικής, δεν έχουμε βιβλίο λεξιλογίου, δεν έχουμε τίποτα και έτσι αναγκαστικά δουλεύω πιο πολύ φωτοτυπίες, και την γραμματική τους και ασκήσεις και τα τεστ και όλα είναι---σε φωτοτυπίες, δηλαδή σε καθημερινή βάση έχουμε άπειρες φωτοτυπίες.

Res: I understand, um, do you believe that extra material helps your students and your lesson in general?

Teacher 13a: Φυσικά

Res: Hm

Teacher 13a: Φυσικά γιατί--- εντάξει όταν κάνεις ένα γραμματικό φαινόμενο και μες στο βιβλίο στο δίνει μόνο σαν ιδέα και θα χει δυο ασκήσεις είναι λογικό αν δεν κάνεις extra ασκήσεις γι'αυτό εδω το πράγμα ή αν δεν τους το εξηγήσεις ή εαν δεν τους το δώσεις σε κανόνες δεν θα το μάθουνε.

Res:Hm

Teacher 13a: Δεν μπορώ δηλαδή να στηροχτώ μόνο στο βιβλίο.

Res: Do you believe that students here in Greece are motivated? If not what do you think can be done to help them?

Teacher 13a: Είναι motivated απο την τηλεόραση αλλά για μένα, στην τάξη δηλαδή το να κάνεις ένα ικανοποιητικό μάθημα ε--- να τους δώσεις λίγο motivation και να μπει και να κάνεις αυτό που πρέπει να κάνεις γίνεται αλλά σπανιότερα και πρέπει να υπάρχει χρόνος και διάθεση.

Res: Sure

Teacher 13a: Έτσι, η διάθεση ακόμα και να υπήρχε, δεν υπάρχει ο χρόνος γιατί πρέπει να βγάλεις συγκεκριμένο υλικό.

Res: Hm

Teacher 13a: Τότε γίνεται πολύ πιο σπάνια δηλαδή ε--- θα το κάνεις ξέρω γω μια μέρα που έχεις και συ πολύ διάθεση που λες δεν πειράζει θα πάω κι ένα μάθημα πίσω και θα το κάνουμε έτσι πιο ωραίο και θα φέρω και υλικό απο το σπίτι αλλά αυτό δεν θα γίνει συχνά.

Res: Απο το υπουργείο σας έχουν πει ότι πρέπει να βγάλετε συγκεκριμένη ύλη;

Teacher 13a: Ε, το βιβλίο

Res: Όλο το βιβλίο πρέπει

Teacher 13a: Ε ντάξει, δεν θα σου κόψουν και το κεφάλι αλλά κοιτάς να είσαι εντάξει στην ύλη σου.

Res: Ok, thank you very much for your time.

### **Translation and sample of annotated data analysis:**

There were changes in the questions due the semi-structured nature of the interview.

Res: First of all, I would like to thank you for the interview.  
(Teacher smiles)

Res: Do you encourage student interaction during the lesson? *Teaching Methods*

Teacher 13a: Yes, it's best that I answer in Greek, ok?

Res: Yes, yes.

Teacher 13a: Usually no, I avoid it. *Reluctant to apply an interactive approach*

Res: Ok, what do you think is the most preferable *General ELT approaches in Greece.*  
teaching method here in Greece?

Teacher 13a: Well...em—I believe *Aware*  
that the best method would be learner-centred, ok.

Res: Hm

Teachers 13a: It would be the best but the preferred *Learner-centred best*  
method is teacher-centred. *But teacher-centred preferred*

Res: teacher-centred in general in—

Teacher 13a: In general I think the teacher is the  
protagonist in the classroom.

Even though he/she shouldn't be *Teacher believes she is making a mistake*  
that is the way it is. *But cannot do anything about it.*

Res: Do you think that group work evolves *The Use of Group Work*  
negative effects to the classroom?

Teacher 13a: It is difficult with the primary school *Not suitable for this age group*

children because they do not know how to handle it. It's best not to confuse them.

*Confusing for children*

Res: Do you believe that student-interaction can benefit children to learn within the current situation in primary schools?

*Student-interaction*

Teacher 13a: Em--- sometimes yes, sometimes no, it depends em--- on how interested they are in what they are listening to.

*Vague Response*

Res: I see.

Teacher 13a: I think that comparing listening to you and listening to their classmate---

*T becomes confused*

sometimes it helps them em---

because they are closer to their age ok, em—

to correct a mistake that the other child may make as well.

Res: Hm, vai.

Teacher 13a: That is what---

Res: Hm, ok, what is the students' reaction *Working with a classmate from Ss perspective*

to working with their classmates? For example,

what do you think would happen if last

week you asked them to complete the photocopy

with comparative and superlative exercises

in groups, do you think they would behave?

Teacher 13a: --- again, some yes, some no.

Res: Hm

Teacher 13a: There are many levels in the classroom,

*Mixed levels causes problems*

there are many children, you cannot---

you cannot be sure for some children.

Res: The majority?

Teacher 13a: The majority would be noisy *The majority of children would misbehave*

but would eventually calm down. In general

we do not have behaviour problems at primary schools.

They are still at an age where they are easily disciplined.

*Discipline Technique*

If you yell at them a little, once or twice they will stop.

Res: Em—if you asked children to work in groups,

do they know how to cooperate?

*Are children taught how to cooperate?*

Teacher 13a: ΑυτόThat's the thing---

Res: Would they be a bit lost at first?

Teacher 13a: No, they would cooperate but this *They do not know how to cooperate*  
cooperation is usually not very good because they *productively*  
(the children) who know (the answers) would just  
tell the other ones (the other children).

Res: Yes.

Teacher 13a: It is not an effective cooperation. *T is convinced the Ss would cheat*

Res: Hm, so the weaker student--- *(group work has never been attempted)*

Teacher 13a: Would just copy, they wouldn't do anything else.

Res: Do you use course books, grammar books in your classes? *Coursebooks*

Teacher 13a: Yes, I use the Ministry's books.

Res: Do those books encourage pair work or group work?

Teacher 13a: Not really. *The book does not encourage*

Res: I see *GW but the Ministry does*

Teacher 13a: Not really—they have some activities *witout guiding the Ts to do so*  
with pair-work in the form of dialogues em---

but that is all meaning there are some dialogues *T's perception of PW*

like *how old are you* where they ask each other---  
em--- just dialogues which I ask them to read in class.

Res: Are children exposed to cooperative learning  
during their other lessons in school?

Teacher 13a: No, from what I know all classes are teacher-centred. *No Cooperation*

Res: How do you choose extra material? Based on which criteria? *Extra Material & Use*

Teacher 13a: I use a lot because the Ministry books are limiting.

Res: Yes.

Teacher 13a: We do not have a grammar book, *Extra Material to make up for Grammar*  
we do not have a vocabulary book, we do not have *& Vocabulary*

anything so I have to work with a lot of  
photocopies, their grammar and their  
activities and test and everything are photocopied,  
daily we have a numerous amount of photocopies.

Res: I understand, um, do you believe that extra  
material helps your students and your lesson in general?

Teacher 13a: Of course.

Res: Hm

Teacher 13a: Of course because---ok

when you work on one grammar phenomenon and in the book they only give you an idea and will have two activities it is logical if you do not do extra activities on that specific phenomenon if you don't explain it or not give them the grammar rules they will not learn.

*Grammar Translation Approach*

Res:Hm

Teacher 13a: I cannot rely on the coursebook alone.

*T needs more grammar*

Res: Do you believe that students here in Greece are motivated? If not what do you think can be done to help them?

Teacher 13a: They are motivated from TV but for me, in the classroom to have a satisfactory lesson e--- you have to give them a bit of motivation and go in there and do what you have to do but rarely and there has to be time and will to do that.

*The case of motivation*

Res: Sure

Teacher 13a: So, even if there was the will, there is no time because you have to cover a specific amount of teaching material.

*No time for a new approach*

Res: Hm

Teacher 13a: Then it becomes very rare e--- you'll try harder when you are in the mood and it would not matter if you are set back a bit, you'll try and have a nice lesson and bring material from home, but this does not happen often.

*No desire for a new approach*

Res: Does the Ministry of Education say that you should cover a specific amount of material?

Teacher 13a: E, the book.

Res: The entire book

Teacher 13a: E ok, they won't chope your head

*T's goal is to cover the entire book*

of if you don't but you want to be responsible towards the material you have.

*which to the Ts is considered responsible*

Res: Ok, thank you very much for your time.

Teacher smiles.

Category	Code	Narrative
Methodology	MeT.	Reluctant the use an interactive approach and resulted to T-centred approaches.
Communication	S/T interaction	Reluctant to use group work. When asked about this the teacher gave a confusing and vague response. This could be interpreted as unfamiliar territory.
Teaching Material	Com.Mat.	T uses a large amount of photocopies and focuses on grammar. She uses Funway and makes sure to complete the book by the end of the year. No mention of authentic communicative material.
Means of Communication	L1/L2	Not mentioned in interviews as to not put Ts on the spot.
Fun Activities	FUN	Not mentioned specifically, however T says that she rarely applies other approaches and focuses on grammar and book completion. If this is her main concern there is very little room for fun activities.
Aims of the Lesson(s)	AIM	Complete the coursebook by the end of the year and cover the grammar 'needed'
Classroom Layout	Layout	Not mentioned

### Follow-up Notes:

Day of interview, 13a Primary School, March 13th, 2007

Today was the last visit to Rio's school and the day where I was going to interview the English teacher. I showed the teacher the questions before hand and from what I saw she was a bit nervous. In the beginning she told me that she didn't know what to answer. I asked if there was a specific question she had difficulty with and her response was that she had specific difficulty with all of them. Since this was the case, we went through all the questions one by one and I explained them for her.

Everything went well during the interview but after the interview ended and the tape recorder stopped was when the teacher started to give useful information. She told me that she has never been interviewed or observed before and it is not something that happens in Greece with English teachers. Although mainstream schools teachers are requested to observe classes and teach while their professor and the class's teacher observes and marks them. This is when they are still doing their degree. English teachers are not requested to do any training and she was saying that it was a very scary experience to walk in the classroom the first day and not know what to do. She also said that at the beginning of her career, she had to make lesson plans for her lesson although that's not exactly the term she used, she did not use this plan to keep an order of what she would be doing or guide her through the tasks she was going to do in her lesson, but to keep time. She had difficulty managing her time and wrote down the time she would need for each task.

Then she asked me what my plans were for the future, when I told her that I am not yet certain of where I want to go and what I want to do, she started talking about options. She said that there are not many places in universities (the two universities in Greece that have an English literature department- after graduating English literature one can teach English)



and working in frondistiria may not be the best option because it is a lot of work and the money is not that good. In general I got the feeling that money was the main goal. She started telling about when she owned a frondistirio with a partner and complained about the taxes and sharing the earnings with her partner. However, she later on said that her son has not yet decided what he would like to do in the future. Her advice to him was to get the proficiency certificate and open up a frondistirio with her guidance. She did not mention anything about him going to university.

## Appendix 6

### Interview Questions CPE students with Sample & Translation

1. How old were you when you started learning English and how old are you now?
2. Do you remember your first experience of learning English at school?
3. Where do you feel you learned more? At school or at the language school? Why?
4. What do you believe was the disadvantage? (in school/language school)
5. What was your experience of English language learning in secondary school?
6. Would you prefer to learn English only at school?
7. What sort of activities did you do during English at primary/secondary school? Was there any group/pair work?
8. Do you find the lessons interesting (at school/language school)? Do you now think that more or something different should have been done?
9. Do you remember using English in primary school?
10. How would you rate your command of English now?
11. What do you find particularly easy or difficult? (a) Understanding spoken English (b) understanding written English (c) speaking English (d) writing English [Very easy – quite easy – neither easy nor difficult – quite difficult – very difficult]
12. Do you feel you have received too little / adequate / too much grammar teaching?
13. What is your favourite lesson at school?

### Sample of CPE student's interview with translation

Res: Well, thank you very much for coming.

CPEst.5: You're welcome.

Res: How old were you when you started learning English and how old are you now?

CPEst.5: Αρχισα Αγγλικά όταν πήγα Γ' δημοτικού, δηλαδή στην ηλικία των 9 εμ--- και τώρα είμαι 15 χρονών και πηγαίνω στην Γ' γυμνασίου

Res: Do you remember your first experience of learning English at primary school?

CPEst.5: Θυμάμαι μόνο την καθηγήτρια και ότι κάναμε αταξίες, τιποτ' άλλο.

Res: Ήταν πολλά παιδάκια στην τάξη;

CPEst.5: Ήταν 24, φωνάζαμε.

Res: Στο σχολείο, τι έκανε η δασκάλα σας για να σας ηρεμήσει όταν φωνάζατε;

CPEst.5: Ε, ντάξει, χτύπαγε το χέρι στην έδρα, φώναζε λίγο, ηρεμούσαμε και μετά ξαναφωνάζαμε.

Res: Where do you feel you learned more, at school or at your language school?

CPEst.5: Στο φροντιστήριο περισσότερο γιατί εκεί είναι που δίνεις περισσότερες φορές μάθημα, περισσότερη προσοχή εμ—είναι και ως μικρός που είσαι, δεν είσαι με τους συμμαθητές σου, είσαι με λιγότερα παιδιά στην τάξη και είναι διαφορετικά τελείως. Γίνεσαι πιο εύκολα φίλος με τους άλλους όταν είναι λιγότερα παιδιά και είναι πιο ήσυχα στην τάξη.

Res: Ok, what do you think was the disadvantage at school? Δηλαδή, το μειονέκτημα που δεν έμαθες τόσα στο σχολείο όσο στο φροντιστήριο.

CPEst.5: Το γεγονός ότι στο σχολείο αρχίζαμε τ' Αγγλικά στην Ε' δημοτικού ενώ τα ξέρουμε ήδη από την Γ' δημοτικού που είχαμε αρχίσει το φροντιστήριο και έτσι όταν πηγαίναμε στο σχολείο αυτά που μας διδάσκανε τα ξέραμε ήδη και το θεωρούσαμε βαρετό έτσι ώστε που δεν προσέχαμε τόσο και αδιαφορούσαμε.

Res: Ok, what was your experience of English language learning in secondary school?

CPEst.5: Εκεί πλέον βασικά είναι που χωριζόμαστε σε τμήματα αρχάριους και προχωρημένους, οι περισσότεροι μαθητές βέβαια το κάνουν εξεπτήηδες και πάνε

στους απροχώρητους έτσι ώστε- ή να μην είναι τόσο δύσκολα όσο τους προχωρημένους.

Res: Και να πάρουν και καλύτερους βαθμούς;

CPEst.5: Ναι

Res: Εσύ σε ποιό τμήμα ήσουν;

CPEst.5: Προχωρημένους

Res: Would you rather learn English only at school?

CPEst.5: Όχι, είναι η θεωρία που έχουμε απ'όταν είμαστε μικρά που θεωρούμε ότι δεν μπορούμε να μάθουμε Αγγλικά απο το σχολείο, μας έχουν στο φροντιστήριο απο μικρή ηλικία και έτσι, πιστεύω είναι αυτό που μας έχει μείνει. Στο φροντιστήριο μαθαίνεις, στο σχολείο γιατί λες είναι Αγγλικά ντάξει.

Res: Ντάξει θα τα κάνω στο φροντιστήριο;

CPEst.5: Ντάξει τα' χω κάνει στο φροντιστήριο.

Res: Άμα δεν υπήρχε το φροντιστήριο;

CPEst.5: Τότε πιστεύω θα προσέχαμε περισσότερο. Θα είμαστε πιο ήσυχοι θα τα πέραμα στα σοβαρά.

Res: Θα σου άρεσε καλύτερα έτσι και να είχες και το απόγευμα ελεύθερο;

CPEst.5: Ναι, θα ήταν πολύ ωραία, πραγματικά πολύ ωραία γιατί σου δίνει την ευκαιρία και κάτι να διαβάσεις επιπλέον και να έχεις ελεύθερο χρόνοπράγμα που συγκεκριμένα στη χώρα μας, δεν υπάρχει (ελεύθερος χρόνος για τα παιδιά).

Res: What sort of activities did you do during English at primary and secondary school? Ότι θυμάσαι δηλαδή.

CPEst.5: Τι activities κυρία;

Res: Δηλαδή, άμα κάνετε group work ή άμα σας βάζει η κυρία να κάνετε πράγματα έξω απο το σχολείο, να βρείτε πληροφορίες για κάτι.

CPEst.5: Όχι

Res: Do you find the English language lessons interesting at school?

CPEst.5: No, not at all.

Res: Why not?

CPEst.5: Είναι η όλη ιδέα που έχουμε, δηλαδή σκεφτόμαστε είναι συνήθως τ' Αγγλικά και τελευταίες ώρες που είμαστε πιο χαλαροί είναι πολλά τα τμήματα, καθόμαστε όπως θέλουμε είναι που είναι και τ' Αγγλικά, μηλάς και τον διπλανό σου, γίνεται ένας χαμός στη τάξη.

Res: Do you now think more or something different should have been done? Όσο αφορά την μάθηση των Αγγλικών ας πούμε, έπρεπε να είχε γίνει κάτι διαφορετικό ή περισσότερο είτε στο σχολείο ή στο φροντιστήριο;

CPEst.5: Εμ—για το φροντιστήριο μια χαρά κάνει την δουλειά του, για το σχολείο, πρέπει να διορθωθεί, να δώσουν περισσότερη βάση π.χ όταν αρχίζουν απο νεώτερη ηλικία να μαθαίνουνε έτσι ώστε τα παιδιά να τα βρήσκουν ενδιαφέρον, περισσότερο, γιατί είναι αυτό που λέμε αμα δεν έχεις κάτι ενδιαφέρον το βαριέσαι και δεν ασχολείσαι μαζί του.

Res: Do you remember using English in primary school?

CPEst.5: Τι εννοείται;

Res: Δηλαδή στην τάξη, όταν κάνατε Αγγλικά.

CPEst.5: Όχι.

Res: Η κυρία;

CPEst.5: Η κυρία ναι, μερικές φορές, αλλά άμα δεν καταλαβαίναμε μας τα έλεγε στα Ελληνικά αλλά επειδή ήτανε που είχαμε αρχίσει εμείς στην Ε' δημοτικού και μέχρι ΣΤ' και γυμνάσιο είναι μόνο 2 τάξεις ήταν να μας μάθει ABC τα εύκολα και ήταν και παιδιά που δεν ήξεραν οπότε έπρεπε να πηγαίνει σιγά σιγά πράγμα το οποίο γι' αυτούς που ήξεραν ήταν βαρετό.

Res: Ήταν κάποια παιδιά που δεν πηγαίνανε φροντιστήριο;

CPEst.5: Ναι, 5-6 παιδιά.

Res: Ok, how would you rate your command of the English language now?

CPEst.5: Ικανοποιητικά.

Res: Do you feel you have received too much or an adequate amount of grammar?

CPEst.5: Πιστεύω ότι έχω αρκετή όχι πολύ αλλά δεν έχω έλλειψη, άμα θέλω να εκφράσω κάτι το λέω αλλά μερικές φορές δεν το έχω πάντα σωστό, την σύνταξη.

Res: What is your favourite lesson at school?

CPEst.5: Maths

Res: Why?

CPEst.5: Βασικά τα φιλολογικά ποτέ δεν μ'άρεσαν, ήτανε ν'απαντήσεις πάρα πολύ στις πράξεις τα κατάφερνα πολύ καλύτερα και γι'αυτό μ'άρεσαν, μου έλεγε ο καθηγητής ότι ήμουν καλή στα μαθηματικά.

Res: Do you have a good Maths teacher?

CPEst.5: Ναι την έχουμε απο την πρώτη γυμνασίου, πολύ καλή καθηγήτρια. Προσπαθεί να κάνει τους μαθητές ακόμα και αυτοί που δεν διαβάζουνε να το καταλαβαίνουνε.

Res: Κάνετε και πράγματα μέσα στην τάξη μαζί της;

CPEst.5: Ναι κάνουμε ασκήσεις, μας τα εξηγεί μας σηκώνει στον πίνακα, μας τα διορθώνει, καθόμαστε στο ίδιο κεφάλαιο δυο μαθήματα ενώ άλλοι καθηγητές λένε κάτσε διάβασε για να τελειώσουν την ύλη.

Res: Ok, thank you for your time.

### Translation

Res: Well, thank you very much for coming.

CPEst.5: You're welcome.

Res: How old were you when you started learning English and how old are you now?

CPEst.5: I started learning English when I was in year 3, I was 9 years old and now I am 15 and I am in the third year of secondary school.

Res: Do you remember your first experience of learning English at primary school?

CPEst.5: I remember the teacher and the fact that we were quite naughty.

Res: Were there many children in class?

CPEst.5: There were 24, we yelled.

Res: What did your language teacher at school do to calm you down?

CPEst.5: Well, ok, she would bang her hand on the desk and yell, we would calm down for a bit and then yell again.

Res: Where do you feel you learned more, at school or at your language school?

CPEst.5: At the frodistirio mostly because he had more language lessons there and paid more attention er—when you are younger, you are not with your classmates, there are lesser children in class and it's completely different. You become friends with others at the frodistirio because it is quieter.

Res: Ok, what do you think was the disadvantage at school? Meaning, what was the reason you did not learn as much at primary state school than at the frodistirio.

CPEst.5: The fact that we started English at school in year 5 of primary school but we knew what the teachers were trying to teach from when we were in year 3 when we started English at the frodistirio so when we had English at school we thought the lesson was boring because we knew everything already so we never paid attention.

Res: Ok, what was your experience of English language learning in secondary school?

CPEst.5: In secondary school we were separated in different levels, beginner's and advanced, most students chose to go to the beginner's level on purpose so that the lessons are not as difficult.

Res: And get better grades?

CPEst.5: Yes

Res: What level were you in?

CPEst.5: Advanced

Res: Would you rather learn English only at school?

CPEst.5: No, it's a theory we have from when we were younger when we thought we couldn't learn English at school, we attend language lessons at the frodistirio from an early age so, I believe this what we all have in mind. We learn at the frodistirio, you don't pay attention to the language lessons at school.

Res: You believe you'll learn what is taught in school at the frodistirio?

CPEst.5: We've already learned it at the frodistirio.

Res: f there was no frodistirio?

CPEst.5: Then we would pay more attention and take the lessons more seriously.

Res: Would you prefer this and have your afternoons free?

CPEst.5: Yes, that would be great, really great because that would give you the opportunity to study more and have more free time but his does not exist I our country, there is no free time (for children).

Res: What sort of activities did you do during English at primary and secondary school? What do you remember?

CPEst.5: What activities Miss?

Res: Meaning, if you do group work or if the teacher asks you to do things outside school activities, or find information about something.



CPEst.5: No

Res: Do you find the English language lessons interesting at school?

CPEst.5: No, not at all.

Res: Why not?

CPEst.5: It's the whole idea we have, we think that because English lessons take place at the end of the day when we are more relaxed, there are a lot of classes together, we sit wherever and with whomever we want, you talk to your partner, generally there is chaos in class.

Res: Do you now think more or something different should have been done? As far as English language learning is concerned let's say, should things had been done differently either at school or at the froditstirio?

CPEst.5: Em—as far as the froditstirio is concerned, it's fine, the situation at school should change and more attention should be paid i.e when children start learning languages early to make it interesting for children because it is easy for children to lose focus when they are not interested.

Res: Do you remember using English in primary school?

CPEst.5: Wat do you mean?

Res: In class, when you had English lessons.

CPEst.5: No

Res: Your teacher?

CPEst.5: The teacher did speak English, sometimes, but we didn't understand something she would say it in Greek but because we had started earlier and the school teacher only had two years to teach us so they would start from ABC and the easy stuff and there were also children who did not go to frodistirio so the teacher had to teach everything slowly which was boring for those who knew (what was being taught).

Res: Were there students who did not go to frodistiria?

CPEst.5: Yes, 5-6 children.

Res: Ok, how would you rate your command of the English language now?

CPEst.5: Satisfactory.

Res: Do you feel you have received too much or an adequate amount of grammar?

CPEst.5: I think I received the appropriate amount, I do not lack grammar knowledge, I can express myself although I don't always get it right, the syntax.

Res: What is your favourite lesson at school?

CPEst.5: Maths

Res: Why?

CPEst.5: Basically, I never liked literature, I was better at math problems and that is why I liked it more, the teacher would also tell me that I was good.

Res: Do you have a good Maths teacher?

CPEst.5: Yes, we've had her since the first year of secondary school, she is very good. She tries to get all the students involved, even the ones who do not study.

Res: Do you work on tasks with her in class?

CPEst.5: Yes we do and she explains everything and asks us to solve problems on the board, she corrects us and we may work on the same chapter for a couple of lessons whilst other teachers just tell the students to study the chapters themselves so they can complete the book by the end of the school year.

Res: Ok, thank you for your time.

## Appendix 7

### Action Research Observation Sheet given to Director of School

### Also used when observing Phase 2 Language Teachers who took part in AR workshops

Date: .....

Please complete the following:

1. Steps in the lesson:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

2. Linguistic objectives of the lesson

.....

.....

.....

.....

3. Functional/ communicative objectives of the lesson

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**4. Your beliefs about the nature of the English language**

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**5. Your beliefs about the nature of learning**

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

6. Learner groupings (what percentage of the lesson was devoted to the following organisational patterns?)

Individual:

.....

.....

Pair Work:

.....

.....

Small Group Work:

.....

.....

Activities. form of interaction:

.....

.....

Whole class:

.....

.....

Teacher-students students-teacher interaction

.....

.....

Please rate the lesson according to the following key:

- 1 Does not reflect what went on
- 2 Marginally reflects what went on
- 3 All instructions were clear
- 4 Describes rather well what went on
- 5 Is an accurate reflection of what went on

1. There were no cultural misunderstandings	1	2	3	4	5
2. The class understood what was wanted at all times	1	2	3	4	5
3. All instructions were clear	1	2	3	4	5
4. Every student was involved at some point	1	2	3	4	5
5. All students were interested in the lesson	1	2	3	4	5
6. The teacher carried out comprehension checks	1	2	3	4	5
7. Materials and activities were level-appropriate	1	2	3	4	5
8. Class atmosphere was positive	1	2	3	4	5
9. The pacing of the lesson was appropriate	1	2	3	4	5
10. There was enough variety	1	2	3	4	5
11. The teacher did not talk much	1	2	3	4	5

<b>12. Error correction was appropriate</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>13. There was genuine everyday communication</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>14. There was teacher skill in organising groups</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>15. Students were enthusiastic</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>16. General classroom management was good</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>

## Appendix 8

### Sample of DoS Observation Notes with Coding

A B Junior  
2nd Session

L2 Instructions -  
Not wasting valuable  
input

The children enter the classroom and they are greeted by the teacher. Instructions are given in English. F.e. Fix the desks. The children move the desks to face each other so that they can do group work. Students have developed a routine.

The lesson starts ~~by~~ the teacher introduces vocabulary so that she can proceed with the reading of a story. → (re-taught) words Ss were not familiar with.

Keeping Ss involved

The vocabulary is introduced in a fun playful way pointing to posters around the classroom or to parts of the body. f.e. monkey, rabbit, ears, nose, King. Most of the words are familiar to the children who easily come up with the translation in Greek. Moving on to more advanced vocabulary like the word 'memory' the teacher explains the meaning in Greek and one student comments that computers have memory, eight megabite thus connecting the word with previous knowledge he possessed.

Recollection of their existing knowledge

Next the word angry is introduced and another student pretends to be angry thus defining the word.

Context



Since the story included several irregular verbs the teacher mentions the verb in present tense and then introduces the past Tense form -Shake -Shook -see -saw <sup>she</sup> also mentions the words in Greek [Not disregarding transition since it is on SS are used to]

The reading of the story begins. It is the story of the animals who kept forgetting their names and at the beginning of the story the teacher <sup>KEEPING SS INVOLVED</sup> gives each student the role of being <sup>INTERACTING</sup> an animal, a monkey and she points at a student, a lion and points at another one etc.

The children were very involved in the story since they were the animals and listened very intently. <sup>Interaction</sup> During the reading there was involvement and exchange among the teacher and the students. E.g. the teacher stopped reading and she asked "what did the rabbit ask?" and the student (rabbit) responded "what is my name". The involvement produced better understanding of the task ~~and~~ which was very pleasant for the students. <sup>Positive Outcomes - Obvious to DoS</sup>

At the conclusion of the story one student was asked to repeat the story.

Full Comprehension

The student told the story in Greek and demonstrated that he ~~understood~~ <sup>understood</sup> the story thoroughly.  
Learning in a Relaxed & Pleasant Environment

It was very impressive to hear all the details of the story. The students were able to practice their listening skills. They learnt new vocabulary in a relaxed pleasant manner, they practised their comprehension skills and they were able to act out parts of the dialogue. ~~of the story~~

Layout of class

The area use of posters

The ~~large~~ classroom was pleasantly decorated ~~and~~ with plenty of space to move around. The posters on the walls (posters of animals) were used during the lesson to point out the animals. The children sat together ~~the desks far~~ close to the teacher's desk and were able to interact comfortably. The classroom was well lit. ~~and~~ ~~pleasantly decorated~~

↖  
Everyone worked together

Usage of English / Linguistic abilities

This was a class of beginners ~~but children were much~~

- however all the instructions such as
  - Open your books ✓
  - Move the desks ✓
  - Take out your student's book ✓
  - Collect up / Take out your notebooks ✓
- were given in English and children responded in English in most cases

What was impressive was that the children understood the instructions and the story ~~and they understood~~ <sup>out</sup> everything in Greek as they seemed ~~that they were able to understand~~ wanted to make sure that they understood correctly. Children still need reassurance.

The children demonstrated excellent linguistic abilities as they were able to produce the language used the vocabulary correctly and their ~~pronounce~~ pronunciation of the words was very good to excellent

Progress in Linguistic Abilities

5  
Not much is needed  
Class activities / Student's motivation

The activities done in class were very good and interesting. During this task the teacher used mostly few posters to introduce the vocabulary and the Story Look which she read the story from.

The students were motivated very cooperative and paid attention to the task. They were not only involved but they had fun at the same time. They show enthusiasm and desire to learn new words.

ENTHUSIASM & DESIRE TO LEARN - THE GAIN OF THE TEACHER.

Positive aspects / Negative aspect of lesson

I found the lesson very interesting and stimulating. There was no negative aspect whatsoever. ~~Teacher's strategy~~  
~~Student's bad behavior~~  
~~not right~~

## Appendix 9

### Ερωτηματολόγιο

Με αυτό το ερωτηματολόγιο δίνετε πληροφορίες σχετικά με το μάθημα των Αγγλικών σε παιδιά δημοτικού. Για το παρόν ερωτηματολόγιο δεν χρειάζεται να δώσετε το όνομά σας.

Για κάθε ερώτηση, παρακαλώ βάλτε ένα Χ δίπλα από την απάντηση που θέλετε να δώσετε.

#### Παράδειγμα:

Σε ποιά τάξη είναι το παιδί σας στο σχολείο;

Γ' δημοτικού  Δ' δημοτικού  Ε' δημοτικού  ΣΤ' δημοτικού

1. Πότε πιστεύετε ότι πρέπει να ξεκινάει ένα παιδί Αγγλικά;

Β' δημοτικού  Γ' δημοτικού  Δ' δημοτικού

2. Σε ποιόν τομέα πιστεύετε ότι δυσκολεύεται περισσότερο το παιδί σας;

Γραμματική  Προφορικά  Ακουστική  Σε τίποτα

3. Εκτός από Ελληνικά, μιλάτε άλλη γλώσσα στο σπίτι;

Ναί  Όχι

4. Εσείς μιλάτε Αγγλικά;

Ναί  Όχι

5. Αρέσουν τ'Αγγλικά στο παιδί σας;

Πολύ  Μέτρια  Καθόλου

6. 'Αισθάνομαι άνετα να συζητήσω την πρόοδο του παιδιού μου με τους δασκάλους του σχολείου'.

Συμφωνώ

Διαφωνώ

Δεν έχω γνώμη

7. Είμαι ευχαριστιμένος-η με τον/την καθηγητή-τρια Αγγλικών στο σχολείο.

Ναί

Όχι

Δεν έχω γνώμη

8. Είμαι ευχαριστιμένος-η με την πρόοδο του παιδιού μου στ'Αγγλικά.

Ναί

Όχι

9. Πληροφορούμαι συχνά για την πρόοδο του παιδιού μου στ'Αγγλικά.

Συμφωνώ

Μόνο απ'το φροντιστήριο

Δεν

χρειάζεται

Δεν έχω χρόνο

10. Πόσο σημαντικό είναι για σας ν'αποκτήσει πτυχίο Αγγλικών το παιδί σας;

Πολύ σημαντικό

Σημαντικό

Δεν μ'αποσχολεύει

*Σας ευχαριστώ πολύ για την συνεργασία!*

## Translation

### *Questionnaire*

With this questionnaire you provide information regarding your children's progress. For the completion of the questionnaire there is no need to give your name.

Please cross the relevant answer box.

### Example:

Which grade is your child in at school?

Year 3  Year 4

Year 5  Year 6

1. When do you believe a child should start learning English?

Year 2

Year 3

Year 4

2. Does your child have difficulties in any of the following – or none?

Grammar

Speaking

Listening

Nothing

3. Apart from Greek, is another language spoken at home?

Yes

No

4. Do you speak English?

Yes

No

5. Do your children like learning English?

Very much

A bit

Not at all

6. 'I feel comfortable discussing my children's progress with their language teacher at school.

I agree

I disagree

I don't know

7. I am happy with my children's English teacher at school.

Yes

No

I don't know

8. I am happy with my child's progress in English

Yes

No

9. I am often informed regarding my child's progress at school.

I agree

Only from the frodistirio

There is no need

I don't have time

10. How important is your child gaining a language certificate to you?

Very important

Important

I don't mind

*Thank you very much for your cooperation!*

## Appendix 10

### Questionnaire to all Students of Phase 2 Frodistirio

This questionnaire is for personal use and is not related to the lessons or other teachers involved in your language school.

By giving your honest answers to the questions, you contribute to developing English language learning in your area and hopefully your country.

Please do not state your name, due to ethical reasons the questionnaire must remain anonymous.

For answers that do not require writing, please tick the box next to the answers you wish to give. If you have any further inquiry please bring it to your teacher's attention.

You CAN give your answers in Greek.

---

1. What is your favourite lesson at school/ University?

.....  
.....  
.....



2. How old were you when you started learning English and how old are you now?

.....  
.....

3. Where do you feel you learned more?

At school                       At my Language School (frodistirio)

Why?

.....  
.....

4. Would you prefer to learn English only at school/ University?

YES                       NO

Why/ Why not?

.....  
.....  
.....

5. Do you do any group work/ pair work at school/ University?

YES

SOMETIMES

NO, NEVER

6. Do you do any group work/ pair work at your frodistirio?

YES

SOMETIMES

NO, NEVER

7. Do you find the language lessons interesting (at school/ University)?

YES

SOMETIMES

NO, NEVER

**Why/ Why not?**

.....  
.....

8. Do you remember speaking in English in primary school?

YES, WE SPOKE ENGLISH ALL THE TIME

SOMETIMES, WE DIDN'T KNOW A LOT ABOUT THE LANGUAGE

NOT OFTEN, I WAS TOO SHY

NO, NEVER

ONLY WHEN MY TEACHER MADE ME

9. How would you rate your command of English now?

Excellent       Good       So-So       Not Good

10. What do you find easy or difficult?

(a) Understanding spoken English

Very Easy     Quite Easy     Neither Easy Nor Difficult     Quite Difficult     Very Difficult

(b) Understanding written English

Very Easy     Quite Easy     Neither Easy Nor Difficult     Quite Difficult     Very Difficult

(c) Speaking English

Very Easy     Quite Easy     Neither Easy Nor Difficult     Quite Difficult     Very Difficult

(d) Writing English

Very Easy     Quite Easy     Neither Easy Nor Difficult     Quite Difficult     Very Difficult

***Thank you for completing this questionnaire!***

## Appendix 11

### Appendix 9 Original Questionnaire Analysis Sample

From the questionnaires handed out to Secondary School students and university students, none of them referred to English as their favourite lesson.

**STARTING AGE:** 2 Ss stated that they started Eng lessons at the age of 11. 23 Ss stated that they started learning English at the age of 8. 6 Ss stated that they started learning English at the age of 7. 1 Ss stated that they started learning English at the age of 10.

#### **WHERE HAVE Ss LEARNED MORE ENGLISH:**

27 Ss stated that they learnt more at the Frodo studio, 1 stated at school and 2 didn't understand the question.

#### **RATHER LEARN ENGLISH AT SCHOOL ONLY:**

**WHY?:** 71,9 NO.  
21,9 YES.

- Less students in class
- Lack of teachers interest at Sch
- Paid more attention to learning the language and could explain grammar in detail
- Better and more responsible teachers
- More hours of lang learning
- Language lessons at school are boring
- Practice more
- The level is better as far as students are concerned
- Better books
- Teachers give up on them at school because they believe students aren't interested in their lesson anyway
- Negatively challenge them at school by telling them that they don't know the language and that their grad isn't good / Asking difficult quest. and tests

\* Because one could learn the lang. using LI

### (Written Part of Questionnaire)

## RESULTS FROM QUESTIONNAIRE ②

### -ACTION RESEARCH-

#### GROUP/PAIR WORK AT SCHOOL/UNIVERSITY:

1 student did not complete the second and third part of the questionnaire.  
8 students stated that they never do group/pair work at school/univ.  
18 students stated sometimes

56,3% 25%

#### G/P WORK AT FRODISTIRIO:

1 NC 3,13  
7 stated Yes 21,9%  
8 stated NO 25%  
15 sometimes 46,9

#### INTERESTING LANGUAGE LESSONS AT SCHOOL/UNI:

15 sometimes 46,9  
8 Yes 25  
7 NO 21,9  
1 NC 3,13

#### REMEMBER SPEAKING ENG. IN PRIMARY SCHOOL? :

8 students stated that they spoke English in Prim. School when their T made them.  
5 students stated that they never spoke Eng. in Pr. School  
7 said that they wouldn't speak English because they were shy (2, 5  
3 said not often. 9 (1 stated sometimes, because they didn't know a lot about the language at the time. 54,3

#### COMMAND OF ENGLISH:

23 students stated that they had a good command of the lang.  
while 8 stated that their command of the lang was not that good  
1 NC 3,13

# RESULTS FROM QUESTIONNAIRE (3)

## - ACTION RESEARCH -

### - WHAT DO YOU FIND EASY OR DIFFICULT? -

#### a) UNDERSTANDING SPOKEN ENGLISH

6 stated VERY EASY 18,75 INC. 3,13  
20 QUITE EASY 63%  
5 Neither Easy Nor Difficult 9,4  
1 Quite difficult 3,13

#### b) UNDERSTANDING WRITTEN ENGLISH

4 stated Very Easy 12,5 INC 3,13  
15 Quite Easy 46,9  
4 Neither Easy Nor Difficult 12,5  
1 Quite Difficult 3,13

#### c) SPEAKING ENGLISH

6 Stated Very Easy 18,75  
12 Quite Easy 37,5  
5 Neither Easy Nor Difficult 15,6  
1 Quite Difficult 3,13  
1 NC 3,13

#### d) WRITING ENGLISH

7 stated Very Easy 21,9  
9 Quite Easy 28,1  
6 Neither Easy Nor Difficult 18,75  
1 Quite Difficult 3,13

Ages 15-16 yrs old:

4/6 said NO

2/6 said YES

Ages 21-22 years old:

3/4 YES

1/4 NO

Ages 13-14 yrs old stated that they wouldn't like to learn English only at school because they believe.

- They wouldn't learn the language that well because the teaching hours are limited
- Opportunity to also study a second and third foreign language
- Better work done by teachers in fradistiria
- Students take lang schools more seriously
- Teachers at school don't care about the students but in the fradistiria they do because they prepare them for lang Exams

Ages 14-15 yrs old

- Disappointing teaching methods/approaches.
- Teachers in fradistiria spend more time to explain grammatical phenomena than in school
- Because by attending classes in a fradistiria you can take the exams for a certificate.
- Teachers lack of patience/Rude to students
- Never speak English in class.
- Not interesting

The students that prefer to learn English only at school stated that frad are expensive and that if there weren't frad they would have more free time.

### Ages 15-16 yrs old:

- Extra help is needed because efficient learning does not take place at school
- Duration of the lesson is short and the lesson is not done properly since teachers do not explain the lesson well.
- Poor material
- Prof deliver a more interesting lesson
- Teachers are not interested

those that did want to have a lesson only at school longed for free time and that English is easy and additional help is not needed

### Ages 17-22 yrs old:

Most of the students stated that they would rather learn Eng only at the because it is more economic and they would have more free time.

The student that prefers to learn English in Fredistria states that the way things are done now the best way to learn Eng is at Fred since Prof do not pay much attention because they know that Es have been taught the material before



## Appendix 12

### Sample of Phase 1 Field Notes

Date: November 2006

Time: 11:45am

Class: Year 5

Number of Students: 18

The classroom was spacious. It was painted in a white colour and there were two maps of Greece on the wall. There was a blackboard and the teacher's desk was placed in front of it. The layout of the classroom did not change before or during the lesson.

#### Specific facts and details of what happens in the classroom

- Teacher-centred classroom
- Homework is assigned at the end of every lesson
- Students worked on tasks individually
- Strict turn-taking

The lesson was based on a story which was not read to the students by the teacher but provided to them in copies. Students were to read the story by taking turns. As the students read the story to the rest of the class, their teacher corrected the words they mispronounced. The students would sometimes repeat the word pronounced correctly or would continue reading without correcting themselves.

The students were asked to answer questions regarding the story. The teacher asked the questions in L1 to which the students responded to in the same language. Once the questions were all answered the teacher assigned homework where students were to study the story at home and practice reading it out loud *properly*, as the teacher told the children, for the next lesson so that they could read it again in front of their peers.

### Encouragement

When the teacher started asking questions about the story only three children raised their hands. In order to engage the rest of the class, the teacher repeatedly asked the children who did not raise their hands and not those who did.

### In-class tasks

As a follow-up task the students were asked to complete questions from the story. The children were to work individually, however, once they found a question difficult or were not sure of the answer they would ask the teacher for help. The teacher would provide the child the answer. A minute later another child would ask a question about a question they could not answer and the teacher would provide the answer again. This would go on for the entire task.

### Misbehaviour

Students who misbehaved in class would be asked to change seats and sit in the front row to be near the teacher. The students found this intimidating, however, if the teacher stepped away to the back of the classroom they would misbehave again. This led to the teacher raising her voice at the child, threatening that their behavior would affect their grades.

### Participants' Interactions

There were no informal discussions between the teacher and the students. Their only interactions involved the lesson and the maintenance of the order of the classroom. A phrase the teacher used the observer found interesting was:

T: Are you sleeping? Wake up!

The teacher raised her voice when saying this to student who was not paying attention to her when she was asking questions about the story they were studying in class.

For the last five minutes of the language lesson, the teacher asked the students to write down questions in their notebooks. The teacher read out the questions and the

children wrote down what the teacher said. The students were comfortable doing this and looked like they had done this before.

**Appendix 13**

**Questionnaire to Intermediates & Beginners**

I would like to find out some things about you.

*The first section is about you. Please tick the correct box.*

1. I am    male       female

*Please fill in the gap.*

3. When did you start learning English?

.....

4. As a language I find English:

*(Please circle a number. E.g. if you find English very easy circle 6)*

Difficult    1 2 3 4 5 6      Easy

Important    1 2 3 4 5 6      Unimportant

Useful        1 2 3 4 5 6      Useless

Interesting 1 2 3 4 5 6 Uninteresting

*This section is about activities you do in lessons.*

Circle a number for each question, e.g. If you like doing listening activities a lot, circle 1.

1. How do you feel about these activities on a scale of 1-5 (1 being *you like them very much* and 5 *you don't like them at all*)

Group work

1 2 3 4 5

Sitting in circle

1 2 3 4 5

Projects in groups

1 2 3 4 5

Do you prefer sitting in 2s

1 2 3 4 5



To explain an activity

To teach new words

To correct answers

To encourage you

How do you feel when your teacher speaks English?

Yes, always

Yes, sometimes

No, never

a) Do you feel confident?

Yes, always

Yes, sometimes

No, never

b) Do you feel happy?

Yes, always

Yes, sometimes

No, never

c) Do you feel worried? Yes, always Yes, sometimes

No, never

d) Do you enjoy learning English?

YES

NO

***Thank you for completing this Questionnaire!***

## Appendix 14

### Letter to parents about stars with translation

Αγαπητοί Γονείς,

Θα ήθελα να σας ευχηθώ καλή σχολική χρονιά και καλή προόδο στα παιδιά σας. Ελπίζω να είχατε ένα ευχάριστο και ξεκούραστο καλοκαίρι.

Ξεκινώντας τα μαθήματα φέτος, θα ήθελα να σας ενημερώσω για κάποιες τεχνικές, οι οποίες χρησιμοποιούνται στο εξωτερικό, ιδίως στην Αγγλία όπου εργαζόμαστε (ICS International Community School, London Primary) και σκοπεύουμε να τις υιοθετήσουμε και στο φροντιστήριό μας.

Ένας καλός τρόπος να αυξήσουμε το κίνητρο και ενθουσιασμό των παιδιών είναι η επιβράβευση, επομένως κάθε μήνα, θα υπάρχει μία λίστα μαθητών στις αίθουσες για κάθε τμήμα, όπου δίπλα από τα ονόματα των παιδιών θα αναγράφονται *αστεράκια* όταν θα εκπληρώνουν τα παρακάτω:

- Μέγιστη χρήση Αγγλικών στην τάξη.
- Επιμελής προετοιμασία των μαθημάτων.
- Χρήση Αγγλικών φράσεων που υποδηλώνουν ευγένεια.
- Καλή συνεργασία με τους συμμαθητές τους.
- Καλή διαγωγή εντός φροντιστηρίου.

Το παιδί με τα περισσότερα αστεράκια θα επιβραβεύεται με ένα πτυχίο από το φροντιστήριο που θα λέγεται *Great Worker Award*. Θα απονέμονται επίσης πτυχία *Teacher's Special Award, Being Good, Outstanding Work, Being Helpful, IT Certificate*.

Για οποιαδήποτε απορία θα με βρείτε στο φροντιστήριο της Πάτρας Τρίτη και Παρασκευή και στο φροντιστήριο του Ρίου Δευτέρα, Τετάρτη και Πέμπτη ή στα τηλέφωνα (2610) 435-322 και (2610) 992-221 αντίστοιχα.

Μετά τιμής,

Χριστίνα Ν. Γιαννίκα



## Translation:

Dear Parents,

I would like to wish you a happy new school year to you and your children. I hope you had a good and relaxing summer.

I would like to inform you about some new techniques that plan to apply in class this year. I have used these techniques whilst working in London at ICS International Community School, London Primary.

A good way to increase students' motivation is to reward them, therefore, every month there will be a list of students' names in the classrooms for every class; Next to the names stars will be displayed when they achieve the following:

- Use the English language at the maximum of their potential.
- Diligent preparation of their homework.
- Use of polite English phrases.
- Good cooperation with their peers.
- Good behaviour within the frodistirio.

The children that receive the most stars will be rewarded with a certificate from the frodistirio entitled 'Great Worker Award'. There will also be certificates entitled *Teacher's Special Award, Being Good, Outstanding Work, Being Helpful, IT Certificate.*

For any questions you may have please do not hesitate to contact me at our frodistirio from Monday to Friday at 2610) 435-322 or (2610) 992-221.

Yours faithfully,

Christina N. Giannikas

## Appendix 15

### Intermediate Group Work Transcription

October 31<sup>st</sup> 2007

Int. 18b and Int. 14b

From Journal Notes

Task:

The task was to talk about a story that was read by the teacher in class. The students were asked to talk to their partners about it in English. One pair was recorded, however all students spoke English (and Greek if they find difficulty) during the entire time and the weaker students did make an effort and were not afraid of making a mistake. After discussing the first part of the story that was read to them they would have to write down a summary of it. The children in this classroom have a very good relationship with each other and most of them go to the same Greek school as well.

All children were paying attention while I read apart from Int 1444 who got lost a few times not because he couldn't understand the story but because he was not paying attention, however he did get the gist. The students did not have a copy in front of them, something they are used to doing. Having a copy of what is being read in class.

Stathis was absent.

Transcription:

The teacher gives explanations- what the students say are not very clear because they do not speak loud enough.

1447: E then he sta-he was starved to death and he go to (whispers to help from classmate) to the shrine and then he sit there for twenty days

1448: twenty days and nights

1447: Then the Goddess of Mercy doesn't do anything

1448: An old man

1447: And an old man in his dreams

1448: in his dreams

1447: an old man tell him

1448: in his dreams

1447: in his dreams to leave the temple

1448: to leave the temple

1448: then he he πιάσει

1447: he catch

1448: he catch in his hand e

1447: will

1448: will give him money

1447: give him money ok?

1448: μετά

1447: μετά e and then e the straw and take the straw and e first and throw it on the floor and then put the straw in his hand again

1448: again. Κυρία one word I can't understand in the end εκεί που πως να σας πω θέλω να πω ότι εκεί που πήγε να πιάσει με το χέρι του κυρία κάπου εκεί που το πέταξε που το πέταξε σε ποιόν; (how can I say this, where he went to catch it with his hands and then threw it)

Teacher: Πήγε να το πετάξει (He threw it)

1448: στο δρόμο και μετά το πήρε και μετά τι το έκανε (in the street, what did he do then?)

Teacher: Μετά το πήρε και επειδή πέραγε μια μύγα, παίρνει τη μύγα και την έβαλε πάνω στο άχυρο (then he took the fly and put it on a straw)

1448: why?

Teacher: you will see later

1448: Κυρία η μύγα πως είναι στα Αγγλικά; (Miss, how do we say fly in English?)

Teacher: Αυτή η μύγα λέγεται horsefly είναι το αλογάκι της Παναγίτσας.

[Teacher explains the difference between fly and horsefly that was mentioned in the story]

1448: then the horsefly fly around him then he touch the horsefly and put it on the straw

Background teacher explaining part of the story to another group, last bit was unclear to most students.

1448: a young man they was to help him to

1447: no no

1448: and one day one day he had gone out then he go in front of

1447: he goes

1448: he goes in front of the shrine and please e

1447: and please

1448: to help and a priest of the shrine (asked teacher for preposition use) to help him

1447: no the Goddess of Mercy the young man went to the Goddess of Mercy

Teacher: the young man went to the Goddess of Mercy

1447: yes not the priest

Teacher: then the priest saw him later (teacher translates this bit of information)

1448: can we have a little spelling wrong

Teacher: of course, it doesn't matter it is ok

1447: hm

1448: but

1447: but

1448: but

1447: but she didn't help the young in front of the shrine for 21 days στην 21<sup>η</sup> το  
είπε

1448: 21 days

1447: Κυρία 21 ή 21<sup>st</sup>; (Miss is it 21 or 21<sup>st</sup>)

Teacher: 21 days

1448: in the 21<sup>st</sup> day he saw a dream an old man an old man tell him told him em  
to leave the temple

1447: and temple what it means?

Teacher: temple means ναός

1448: leave the temple and first thing να τον βάλουμε να μιλάει

1447: να του βάλουμε άνω κάτω τελεία (shall we put a semicolon)

1448: the first thing

1447: you touch

1448: on your

1447: on your hand

1448: will bring you money when he leave the temple

1447: he leave the temple yes

1448: em

1447: he catch

1448: he catch and he

1447: straw

1448: he touch πως λέμε πέφτει πάνω; (how do we say falls on?)

Teacher: he fell on

1448: he fell on em em

1447: on the straw

1448: on the straw

1448: em em then he

Teacher: ok time to go

## Appendix 16

### Action Research

#### Phase 2 Language Teacher's Survey

The research reported below is mostly of a fact-finding, descriptive nature. The data collected is required for personal reasons and for the completion of my PhD thesis. Your sincere answers will be appreciated.

#### Section A

Firstly I would like to know some things about you...

1. How long have you been in this profession?

.....

2. How many hours do you work per week?

.....

3. What kind of degrees or teaching qualifications do you have?

.....



4. How frequently do you attend professional development events (seminars/conferences)?

.....  
.....

5. Have you ever heard of Action Research? (Please circle your answer)

YES

NO

Section B

1. What do you understand by the term Action Research? Feel free to use your imagination if you have never heard of the term.

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

The rest of Section B should only be answered if the last question from Section A was answered positively.

2. Where did you hear about Action Research?

.....  
.....

3. Have you ever practiced Action Research? Why do you or do not practice it?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Section C

Section C is directed only at those respondents who do Action Research.

1. How often do you conduct Action Research?

.....

.....

**2. Do you write it up? Are there any other comments you would want to make about Action Research?**

.....

.....

.....

.....

Appendix 17

Workshop Invitation:



*Dear Colleague,*

*Please join Christina Nicole Giannikas on November 10<sup>th</sup> 2008 for the first Action Research Workshop.*

*The workshop will entail an Introduction to Action Research where Christina will give you an idea of how AR works and what you can do with it. It will give us all a good chance to work together towards learning something new!*

*The workshop will take place in the computer room.*

*See you there!*

*Christina N. Giannikas*

## **Appendix 18**

### **Phase 2 Action Research Follow-up Interviews with Sample**

1. Have you attended the AR workshop?
2. What did you find interesting about the workshop?
3. Have you attended a workshop before?
4. Have you ever been observed before?
5. Have you ever observed one of your peers before?
6. How would you describe this experience?
7. Would you say that you now know how AR works?
8. Would you be willing to apply it again in the future?
9. How has AR helped you in your teaching?

### Interview Sample:

Res: First of all, thank you very much for coming.

Teacher 7Bf: You are very welcome.

Res: Have you attended the AR workshop?

Teacher 7Bf: Yes.

Res: What did you find interesting about the workshop?

Teacher 7Bf: Μπορώ να απαντάω στα Ελληνικά;

Res: Βεβαίως.

Teacher 7Bf: Ωραία. Βασικά δεν έχω ξαναπάει σε workshop και ήταν γενικά κάτι νέο για μένα, πόσο μάλλον το θέμα που ήταν η έρευνα. Μου άρεσε που δεν ήταν σαν σεμινάριο αλλά λάβαμε και εμείς μέρος στο workshop και κάναμε και ασκήσεις με τους συναδελφους στην αίθουσα και μετά συζητάγαμε με όλους τ'αποτελέσματα, ήταν ενδιαφέρον.

Res: Have you ever been observed before?

Teacher 7Bf: Όχι, ποτέ.

Res: Have you ever observed one of your peers before?

Teacher 7Bf: Όχι, όχι.

Res: How would you describe this experience?

Teacher 7Bf: Ε, στην αρχή δεν μου άρεσε γιατί θεώρησα ότι θα είχε αρνητικές συνέπειες στο μάθημά μου. Ντάξει μετά απέκτησε ενδιαφέρον.

Res: Hm-- Would you say that you now know how AR works?

Teacher 7Bf: Ε, Δεν είμαι τέλεια, έχω πολλά να μάθω ακόμα αλλά αυτό ήταν ένα καλό πρώτο βήμα, αν και στην αρχή δεν ήθελα να κάνω αυτό το πρώτο βήμα. Οι καθηγητές αγγλικών στη χώρα μου δεν είναι συνηθισμένοι στα workshops και στα observations. Είναι κρίμα γιατί χάνουμε πολλά.

Res: Hm-- Would you be willing to apply it again in the future?

Teacher 7Bf: Ναι σίγουρα, βοηθάει πολυ την διδασκαλία και τους μαθητές ταυτόχρονα.

Res: Hm-- How has AR helped you in your teaching?

Teacher 7Bf: Ε, Σίγουρα έχει βοηθήσει, έχει βοηθήσει στο να κάνω νέα πράγματα και να παίρνω τον ρίσκο να δοκιμάσω κάτι καινούριο στη τάξη.

### Translation:

Res: First of all, thank you very much for coming.

Teacher 7Bf: You are very welcome.

Res: Have you attended the AR workshop?

Teacher 7Bf: Yes.

Res: What did you find interesting about the workshop?

Teacher 7Bf: May I answer in Greek?

Res: Of course.

Teacher 7Bf: Great. Basically I have never been to a workshop before and it was generally something new for me, even more so when the topic is research. I liked that it wasn't like a seminar and we participated in the workshop and did tasks with the colleagues and discussed about the outcomes, it was interesting.

Res: Have you ever been observed before?

Teacher 7Bf: No, never.

Res: Have you ever observed one of your peers before?

Teacher 7Bf: No, no.

Res: How would you describe this experience?

Teacher 7Bf: E, I didn't like it at first because I thought it would have a negative effect on my lesson. Ok, it eventually became interesting.

Res: Would you say that you now know how AR works?

Teacher 7Bf: I am not perfect, I have a lot to learn but this was a good first step, although at the beginning I didn't want to take this first step. Language teachers in my country are not used to workshops and observations. It is a shame because it seems that we were missing out.

Res: Would you be willing to apply it again in the future?

Teacher 7Bf: Yes, surely, it helps teaching and the students as well.

Res: Hm-- How has AR helped you in your teaching?

Teacher 7Bf: E, of course it has helped, it has helped me do new things and take risks to try something new in class.

Res: Ok, thank you very much for your time.

Teacher 7Bf: You're welcome.



**Appendix 19**

**Phase 2 Observation Sheet for Language Teachers**

**Research Tools Used:**

Journals

Audio Recordings

Video Recordings

Other

Teacher-centred approach

Students-centred approach

Use of group/pair work:

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**Use of coursebook:**

.....

.....

.....

**Research Management:**

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

## Appendix 20

### Cover Letter to Intermediate & Beginners' Parents enclosed with end-of-the-year Questionnaires

Αγαπητοί γονείς,

Καθώς η σχολική χρονιά φθάνει στο τέλος της για τους μαθητές μας, φθάνει και στο τέλος η έρευνα που έχω αναλάβει τα τελευταία δύο χρόνια. Όπως ήδη θα γνωρίζεται, είμαι υποψήφια διδάκτωρ σε πανεπιστήμιο του Λονδίνου (London Metropolitan University) με την έρευνά μου να εστιάζεται στο *πώς μαθαίνουν Αγγλικά τα παιδιά στην Ελλάδα και συγκεκριμένα στην (περιοχή ανώνυμη)*. Το αντικείμενο της έρευνάς μου εστιάζεται σε Έλληνες μαθητές, 8-11 ετών, οι οποίοι μαθαίνουν Αγγλικά σε δημόσια σχολεία και φροντιστήρια. Συγκεκριμένα μελετώ τις γλωσσολογικές δυσκολίες, τον ενθουσιασμό, το κίνητρο και τη δημιουργικότητα των μαθητών μέσα από την ξένη γλώσσα.

Προσωπικά πιστεύω ότι η φετινή χρονιά αποδείχθηκε σταθμός όχι μόνο όσο αφορά τη έρευνά μου, αλλά και όσο αφορά την εξέλιξη και τις επιδόσεις των μαθητών μας στα Αγγλικά. Τα παιδιά έχουν μάθει να δουλεύουν ομαδικά, να βοηθούν τους συμμαθητές τους, να ετοιμάζουν εργασίες εκτός φροντιστηρίου, να βρίσκουν πληροφορίες για την Αγγλία, να μαθαίνουν για την κουλτούρα Αγγλόφωνων λαών, να εμπλουτίζουν το λεξιλόγιο τους μέσα απο τραγούδια, παραμύθια και παιχνίδια. Με το πέρασμα της φετινής χρονιάς το κίνητρο των παιδιών έχει φτάσει σε εντυπωσιακό επίπεδο και οι βάσεις που έχουν αποκτήσει είναι πολλά υποσχόμενες όχι μόνο για την επιτυχία των εν λόγω μαθητών αλλά και για την επιτυχία των μαθητών που θα ακολουθήσουν.

Για να ενισχυθούν τα αποτελέσματα της έρευνας, θα ήθελα να σας παρακαλέσω να συμπληρώσετε το εσώκλειστο ερωτηματολόγιο, για τους γονείς των μαθητών της AB Junior και της Csenior 1, το οποίο θα μπορούσε να μου επιστραφεί μέσω των παιδιών και να σας διαβεβαιώσω ότι τα δεδομένα θα είναι εμπιστευτικά και τα στοιχεία σας θα παραμείνουν ανώνυμα.

Ευχαριστώ πολύ εκ των προτέρων για την βοήθεια σας.

Για οποιαδήποτε ερώτηση μη διστάσετε να καλέσετε στο 2610-000000, όπου θα με βρείτε Τρίτη και Παρασκευή και στο 2610-000000, Δευτέρα, Τετάρτη και Πέμπτη.

Μετά τιμής,

Χριστίνα Ν. Γιαννίκα

### **Translation**

Dear Parents,

As the school year is coming to an end for the students, so is the research that I have been conducting. As you already know, I am a PhD candidate at a London University (London Metropolitan University) conducting research which focuses on how children learn English in Greece, specifically in (area removed). My main focus is on Greek students, 8-11 years old, who learn English at state schools and foreign language schools. Specifically I am studying linguistic difficulties, enthusiasm, motivation and students' creativity through the foreign language.

I personally believe that this year proved to be beneficial not only for my research, but for the students' progress and performance in English. The children have learnt to work in groups, help their classmates outside the school, prepare projects, finding information about England, learning about the culture of English speaking people, enriching their vocabulary through songs, stories and games (Appendix 22, 5, 6, 7 & Appendix 8). During the year children's motivation has impressively increased and

has created very promising ground not only for the students in question but for students who will follow.

In order to reinforce the results of my research I would appreciate it if you could complete the enclosed questionnaire, for the parents of the students of AB junior and Csenior 1, which you could return to me with the children and I would like to inform you that your personal data will be confidential and your data will remain anonymous. Thank you in advance for your help. For any question please do not hesitate to contact me on 2610-000000 where you will find me on Tuesdays and Fridays and on 2610-000000 on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

Yours faithfully,

Christina N. Giannikas

## Appendix 21

### End-of-the-Year Questionnaire for Parents

#### *Ερωτηματολόγιο*

Με αυτό το ερωτηματολόγιο δίνετε πληροφορίες σχετικά με τις επιδόσεις των μαθητών. Για το παρόν ερωτηματολόγιο δεν χρειάζεται να δώσετε το όνομά σας.

Για κάθε ερώτηση, παρακαλώ βάλτε ένα X δίπλα από την απάντηση που θέλετε να δώσετε.

#### Παράδειγμα:

Σε ποιά τάξη είναι το παιδί σας στο σχολείο;

Γ' δημοτικού  Δ' δημοτικού  Ε' δημοτικού  ΣΤ' δημοτικού

1. Το παιδί σας ασχολείται με τα μαθήματα του φροντιστηρίου μόνο του στο σπίτι;

ΝΑΙ  ΟΧΙ, ΠΡΕΠΕΙ ΝΑ ΤΟΥ/ΤΗΣ ΤΟ ΥΠΕΝΘΥΜΗΣΩ

2. Ζητά τη βοήθειά σας για να κάνει τις ασκήσεις του/της;

ΜΕΡΙΚΕΣ ΦΟΡΕΣ  ΣΠΑΝΙΑ  ΟΧΙ, ΠΟΤΕ

ΜΟΝΟ ΟΤΑΝ ΈΧΕΙ ΈΓΝΩΣΤΟ ΛΕΞΙΛΟΓΙΟ Ή ΔΥΣΚΟΛΕΥΕΤΑΙ ΣΤΗ ΓΡΑΜΜΑΤΙΚΗ

3. Διαβάζει με ενθουσιασμό;

ΠΟΛΥ

ΜΕΤΡΙΑ

ΚΑΘΟΛΟΥ

4. Θα λέγαται ότι τ'αγγλικά του παιδιού σας, για την ηλικία του/της είναι:

ΠΟΛΥ ΚΑΛΑ

ΚΑΛΑ,

ΜΕΤΡΙΑ

ΠΡΕΠΕΙ ΝΑ ΒΕΛΤΙΩΘΕΙ

5. Χρησιμοποιεί αγγλικές λέξεις στο σπίτι;

ΣΥΝΕΧΕΙΑ

ΜΕΡΙΚΕΣ ΦΟΡΕΣ

ΣΠΑΝΙΑ

ΠΟΤΕ

6. Σας μιλάει για τα μαθήματα του φροντιστηρίου;

ΝΑΙ, ΠΑΝΤΑ

ΜΕΡΙΚΕΣ ΦΟΡΕΣ

ΟΧΙ, ΠΟΤΕ

7. Σας μιλάει για ομαδικές εργασίες που γίνονται στην τάξη;

ΝΑΙ

ΟΧΙ, ΠΟΤΕ

8. Σας μιλάει για τραγούδια, παιχνίδια, εργασίες εκτός βιβλίου που γίνονται μέσα στη τάξη;

ΝΑΙ

ΟΧΙ, ΠΟΤΕ

9. Πιστεύετε ότι οι εργασίες εκτός βιβλίου παίζουν εξίσου μεγάλο ρόλο όσο η ύλη του βιβλίου;

ΝΑΙ

ΟΧΙ

ΔΕΝ ΕΧΩ ΓΝΩΜΗ

10. Είστε ευχαριστημένοι απο τη πρόοδο του παιδιού σας φέτος στ' Αγγλικά;

ΝΑΙ

ΟΧΙ

ΓΙΑΤΙ;

.....  
.....

11. Υπάρχει κάτι που θα θέλατε να προσθέσετε για την φετινή χρονιά σχετικά με τα μαθήματα των Αγγλικών στο φροντιστήριο;

.....  
.....

12. Υπάρχει κάτι που θα θέλατε να προτείνετε για τα μαθήματα των παιδιών σας του χρόνου στο φροντιστήριο;

.....  
.....

**ΕΥΧΑΡΙΣΤΩ ΓΙΑ ΤΗΝ ΒΟΗΘΕΙΑ ΣΑΣ.**



## Translation

### *Questionnaire*

With this questionnaire you provide information regarding your children's progress. For the completion of the questionnaire there is no need to give your name.

Please cross the answer box.

### Example:

Which grade is your child in at school?

Year 3  Year 4  Year 5  Year 6

1. Does your child study his/her homework for the frodistirio at home alone?

YES

NO, I HAVE TO REMIND THEM

2. Do they ask for your help when doing their homework?

SOMETIMES

RARELY

NO, NEVER

ONLY WHEN THEY HAVE UNKNOWN VOCABULARY  
OR DIFFICULT GRAMMAR

3. Do they study with enthusiasm?

YES, ALOT

WITH SOME

NOT AT ALL

4. How would you rate your child's English:

VERY GOOD

MODERATE

NEEDS IMPROVEMENT

5. Does he/she use English at home?

ALL THE TIME

SOMETIMES

RARELY

NEVER

6. Does he/she tell you about their lessons at the frodistirio?

YES, ALWAYS

SOMETIMES

NO, NEVER

7. Do they talk to you about the group work at the frodistirio?

YES

NO, NEVER

8. Do they talk to you about the songs, games and tasks that are done in class that are not from the book?

YES

NO, NEVER

9. Do you think that tasks outside the course books are as important as the material in the course books?

YES

NO

I DON'T KNOW

10. Are you happy with your child's progress in English?

YES

NO

WHY?

.....  
.....

11. Is there something you would like to add regarding the children's English lessons at the frodistirio?

.....  
.....  
.....

12. Is there something you would like to propose for your children's lessons for next year?

.....  
.....

**Thank you for your help.**

## Appendix 22

### Samples of Annotated Journal Notes.

1.

Intermediate  
Date: 25/9/2007

An increase of L2

The students were quite excited today. They were told all about the "stars" and wanted to know details about them. They made quite an amazing effort to use English in class and seemed to feel good about themselves while doing it. They had made quite an effort to properly prepare their work for the day (only two children had left an exercise out, but had done the rest). <sup>Working harder; taking responsibility for their learning</sup> When we finished the books we started a project on planets and students brought coloured cardboard paper and made the planets for the solar system display. All the desks were joined and students worked together. At first, the boys were a bit louder than the girls and I had to give one of the boys a time out (Kon) where he had to sit alone for 5 minutes and do his H/W. I then asked him to rejoin the group and not to cause any more trouble, he was fine after that. <sup>Children learn when to stop</sup> They all worked well together and were trying to use as much English as they could (even though this is a monolingual surely group). Those who did not use English were reminded to by their classmates. They left feeling happy, cleaning up the classroom for extra stars!

Group work has brought a different side to language learners. They are willing to cooperate and follow instructions.

2.

Beginners

Date: 26/9/2007

The help of stars

With the changing of the Ss

Stars are important

The Development of group work

The children pleasantly surprised me today. Nick who was not motivated and showed very little interest so far studied and learned the alphabet! Last time he was promised two stars if he did. When he was given his dictation he reminded me that I had promised him stars. When I praised him for his good work, he kept working harder and stayed very focused. All the children did their best to get as many stars as possible. They worked very well together and were well-behaved - it looks like they're getting the hang of it. They sat as normal, in rows. I don't feel they are quite ready for a different layout just yet. I do feel that they are a bit more comfortable and can pronounce what they learn with ease. I left the classroom feeling happy and proud of Nick, stars may be what he needed.

Teacher feeling happy when leaving the classroom. That's a good sign and the start of evident progress.

3.

Beginners

Date: 1/12/2007

Genuine Communication - All they could have done is...

Small-talk in 18

When students came in today they greeted each other and made small-talk in English as they were in the waiting room because they were told they would get

5 stars if they did. They came in, sat in their seats

Motive

and started their lesson routine which involved revising the ABC and writing it as dictation. Today we learned numbers from 1-5 and a song from the book.

We also did some extra words like 'Sorry' 'Thank you' and 'Have a nice day'. ← Preparing Ss for everyday talk.

Notes: Mothers heard their children speaking English as they were in the corridor. They seemed quite happy about it.

How parents felt → could this influence the Ss?

4.

Beginners.

Date: 22/10/2007

The weather started changing and as hard as it might be to believe, the children were excited about the constant rain. Mike was telling us how he was wearing layers. Children need a change, even when it comes to weather...

Today one of the boys were a bit under the weather, so I told him that if he didn't feel well during the lesson to let me know and I would call his parents. We started with dictation as we always do. All the students wrote everything perfectly and studied very well. → SS are doing well & making an effort.

There was no need to work on the book today since we are ahead so I told the children that today we were going to learn about some foreign traditions. They were so amazed and started saying that they know a few things about England. I asked them if they knew of any upcoming holidays celebrated in America and the UK by children their age and Pete said "The 28<sup>th</sup> of October which is a Greek National Holiday and I explained to the class that the 28<sup>th</sup> of October is only celebrated by Greeks. ← influenced by their own traditions.

Introduction  
Culture

age appropriate  
wh they could  
relate to

Sth new

Raised their  
interest

Learning &  
Having fun!

Then I started telling them about Halloween and wrote the word on the board and explained what children their age do during Halloween and told them about my personal experienc when I was their age. I asked them if they wanted to Trick or Treat around the fructipino and they were so happy about it that they tried to learn the Trick or Treat rhyme by heart. They copied it in their notebooks and asked questions about what it meant. They also learned some Halloween vocab. When our time was up the children collected their things and Pete asked whether they should get in line to leave the classroom → Classroom etiquette.

5.

Beginners

Date: 31/10/07

Children love this!  
They started asking as a trick <sup>amazing</sup> <sup>new eth. so small can bring such enthusiasm</sup>

Today our day started a little differently. Because today was Halloween, I had taught the children about Trick or Treating and brought in a pumpkin bucket. The children were dressed

lot of Fort staves sl. s were to...

up and went to other classes, holding the bucket, and Trick or Treated for candy from other teachers. They loved gathering candy and couldn't wait to eat them. They were only allowed one in class, the rest they could have at home. <sup>as were co-operating even after all the excitement</sup>

When we got back to our classroom we did our dictation and then the children were introduced to a song 'Head, shoulder, knees and toes'

ed we thing about of children when

I decided not to write anything on the board and sang the song verse by verse until the children got the hang of it. <sup>they started everything</sup> Once they did, I asked them to stand up and act out the song as I did. As they started acting out the song, they sang it as well and before I knew it they were singing the song on their own, without any help.

They said they really enjoyed it!

Proving that when children are involved they take their learning into their own hand and become the protagonists.



6.

Beginners  
Date: 24/3/2008

started with dictation. <sup>taking responsibility</sup>  
We then moved on to the irregular verbs students were to study (5ir. verbs). They had studied very well.  
Theodore came in late today, open the door and said 'I'm fine, thank you' Pete corrected him by saying 'Apuwa nes Hello, how are you? Kai petā I'm fine, thank you.' Theodore corrected himself although this is not the first time he has made the same mistake. — T stands back

We did some group work on a new grammatical phenomenon (Simple Past), they had already worked on the interrogative so they were a bit more aware. They handled it quite well and could use the tense accurately in the activity they were working on.

(Cooperation) They helped each other when someone got stuck. After feedback was given we listened to two songs from the book. The students said they liked the first song better (ACE song), the second one was an Easter song. —> They prefer up beat songs

Guessing - We then moved on to a story. I asked children to have a quick look and tell me what they think it's about.  
Preparing Ss  
Getting them Involved  
Pete offered to tell us what he thought, he asked if he should say it in L1 or L2, I asked him to tell us in L2 and he happily did. Using L2 & feeling comfortable.  
S: 'There is a family mice, Kupia, to kumyāw nws nejeēau;  
T: Chase  
S: 'and chase a cat for eat'  
T: Well done! —> focusing on fluency, not accuracy

The student said he did his best with a smile on his face. We then read the story and Mike told us what it was about in L1.  
Use more details here needed  
Appropriate doing that in L1

7.

Intermediate

Date: 26/3/08

Did not spend too much time on feedback - keep Ss interested

When the children walked in we started with a bit of chat, then dictation.

We then moved to SB and I gave them feedback on their HW and students' were assigned HW.

Today I introduced a new kind of listening task and I told Ss this they got a little nervous. I showed the Ss a CD cover and asked them if they had ever heard of

'Take That' before. No one had. I showed them the worksheet and explained to them that they would listen

to a song and fill in the gaps. When I first played the song, the Ss all made remarks that it was too hard and that they couldn't understand anything even though I paused frequently. I told them to stop

concentrating on what they can't understand and focus on what they can. Once their attitude changed they started filling in the gaps.

We all worked on the feedback together, I wrote the answers on the board and Ss corrected their spelling.

They did not have unknown words, they were pre-taught any possible unknown vocabulary.

We then all sang the song (Patience) and the Ss got really into it. They kept singing the song!

which proved that they had nothing to panic about

Appendix 23

Follow-Up Questionnaire to Participant Students two Years Later:

1. How long have you been studying English?

.....  
.....

2. Do you enjoy your language lessons at the frodistirio? Why?

YES, VERY MUCH                       THEY'RE OK

NO

WHY?.....

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

3. What do you enjoy most? What is your favourite part of the lesson?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

4. Do you like cooperating with your classmates when in class?

YES, VERY MUCH                       IT'S OK

NO

WHY?.....

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

5. Was it your choice to continue your studies after your first examinations?  
(Proficiency students only)

YES

NO

6. Why do you want to continue your English language studies?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

7. What will an English language certificate offer you in the future?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

8. Do you think you are a successful language learner?

Yes, I am because .....

No, I am not because .....

## Appendix 24

### Biodata, dates and classroom descriptions

#### **Biodata of State School Teachers' Interviewed:**

**Teacher 11a** holds a BA in English Literature from the University of Athens (Εθνικό Καποδιστριακό Πανεπιστήμιο Αθηνών). She first began teaching at a frodistirio for 7 years and then began teaching at the state school where the research took place for 6 years and 9 years of teaching in various schools around the region.

**Teacher 11a was interviewed on December 7th 2006**

**Teacher 12a** holds a BA in English Literature from the University of Thessaloniki (Αριστοτέλειο Πανεπιστήμιο Θεσσαλονίκης). She began teaching English at a frodistirio for 4 years and then began teaching English at various primary state schools in the region for 10 years.

**Teacher 12a was interviewed on December 12th 2006**

**Teacher 13a** holds a BA in English Literature from the University of Athens (Εθνικό Καποδιστριακό Πανεπιστήμιο Αθηνών). She used to own a frodistirio with a partner in Corfu. She has been teaching English at primary state schools for 15 years.

**Teacher 13a was interviewed on March 13th 2007**

**Teacher 14a** holds a BA from Belgium (the teacher chose not to specify). The teacher grew up in Belgium and is of Greek descent. She began teaching for 15 years at state schools. She had no prior teaching experience to this.

**Teacher 14a was interviewed on May 25th 2007**

**Teacher 15a** holds a BA in English Literature from the University of Thessaloniki (Αριστοτέλειο Πανεπιστήμιο Θεσσαλονίκης). She worked at a frodistirio for 2 years

and 7 years at primary state schools. During the study Teacher 15a worked in 2 different primary schools.

**Teacher 15a was interviewed on June 6th 2007**

Teacher 16a holds a BA in English Literature from the University of Athens (Εθνικό Καποδιστριακό Πανεπιστήμιο Αθηνών) and an MA TEFL from the Open University of Patras. She worked at a frodistirio for 2 years, for 6 years she taught at various primary schools and for 3 years she taught at the school where the study took place.

**Teacher 16a was interviewed on May 23rd 2007**

Teacher 17a holds a BA in English Literature from the University of Thessaloniki (Αριστοτέλειο Πανεπιστήμιο Θεσσαλονίκης). She taught at a frodistirio for 2 years and 7 years at various state schools. During the study she taught at 3 different primary schools.

**Teacher 17a was interviewed on June 1st 2007**

**Dates of Observations:**

**Primary State School 11a:**

October	November	December
12/10/06	1/11/06	6/12/06
18/10/06	2/11/06	7/12/06
19/10/06	8/11/06	
	9/11/06	

**Primary State School 12a:**

January	February
8/1/07	5/2/07
10/1/07	7/2/07
15/1/07	12/2/07
17/1/07	
22/1/07	
24/1/07	
29/1/07	

**Primary State School 13a:**

February	March
12/2/07	5/3/07
13/2/07	6/3/07
19/2/07	12/3/07
20/2/07	13/3/07
26/2/07	
27/2/07	

**Primary State School 14a:**

March	May
13/3/07	8/5/07
16/3/07	11/5/07
20/3/07	15/5/07
23/3/07	18/5/07
	22/5/07
	25/5/07

**Primary State School 15a:**

May	June
9/5/07	1/6/07
11/5/07	6/6/07
16/5/07	
25/5/07	
30/5/07	

**Primary State School 16a:**

March	May
12/3/07	14/5/07
14/3/07	16/5/07
19/3/07	21/5/07
21/3/07	23/5/07
26/3/07	

**Primary State School 17a:**

May	June
2/5/07	1/6/07
4/5/07	
9/5/07	
11/5/07	
16/5/07	
18/5/07	
23/5/07	
30/5/07	



## Classroom Descriptions

Schools/Description	Layout	Library	Technology	Decor	Posters	Drawings
<b>Classroom 11a</b>	Rows of desks	None	None	Basic-Desks and Maps	None	None
<b>Classroom 12a</b>	Attempt ad-hoc	None	None	Basic-Desks and Maps	None	None
<b>Classroom 13a</b>	Rows of desks	None	None	Basic-Desks and Maps	None	None
<b>Classroom 14a</b>	Rows of desks	None	None	Basic-Desks and Maps	None	1 drawing next to the board
<b>Classroom 15a</b>	Rows of desks	None	None	Basic-Desks and Maps	None	None
<b>Classroom 16a</b>	Attempt ad-hoc	None	None	Basic-Desks and Maps	2 English Poster	None
<b>Classroom 17a</b>	Rows of desks	None	None	Basic-Desks and Maps	2 English Posters	None

**Biodata of Frodistiria School Teachers' Interviewed:**

**Teacher 11Bf:** holds a Proficiency Certificate awarded by Cambridge University. She has been teaching at frodistiria for 12 years.

**Teacher 11Bf was interviewed on November 11th 2006**

**Teacher 12Bf:** holds a BA in English Language and Linguistics from the University of York. She has taught at various frodistiria for 7 years. She has no interest in teaching at a state school.

**Teacher 12Bf was interviewed on Decenber 14th 2006**

**Teacher 13Bf:** holds a Proficiency Certificate awarded by Michigan University. She has been teaching at various frodistiria for 15 years.

**Teacher 13Bf was interviewed on February 9th 2007**

**Teacher 14Bf:** holds a Proficiency Certificate awarded by Cambridge University. She has been teaching at frodistiria for 17 years. She is Greek Australian and finished school in Melbourne, Australia.

**Teacher 14Bf was interviewed on March 22nd 2007**

**Teacher 15Bf:** holds a BA in English Literature from the University of Bristol. She has taught at the same frodistirio for 13 years. She has no interest in teaching at a state school.

**Teacher 15Bf was interviewed on June 14th 2007**

**Teacher 16Bf:** holds a Proficiency Certificate awarded by Michigan University. She has been teaching at the same frodistirio for 17 years.

**Teacher 16Bf was interviewed on June 26th 2007**

**Teacher 17Bf:** holds a Proficiency Certificate awarded by Cambridge University. She has been teaching at various frodistiria for 12 years. She has travelled to the UK many times.

**Teacher 17Bf was interviewed on June 27th 2007**

**Dates of Observations:**

**Frodistirio 11Bf:**

October	November
9/10/06	6/11/06
10/10/06	7/11/06
16/10/06	
18/10/06	
23/10/06	
24/10/06	
30/10/06	
31/10/06	

**Frodistirio 12Bf:**

November	December
14/11/06	5/12/06
16/11/06	7/12/06
21/11/06	12/12/06
23/11/06	14/12/06
28/11/06	
30/11/06	

**Frodistirio 13Bf:**

January	February
11/1/07	1/2/07
12/1/07	2/2/07
18/1/07	8/2/07
19/1/07	9/2/07
25/1/07	
26/1/07	

**Frodistirio 14Bf:**

February	March
21/2/07	1/3/07
22/2/07	7/3/07
28/2/07	8/3/07
	14/3/07
	15/3/07
	21/3/07

**Frodistirio 15Bf:**

May	June
15/5/07	5/6/07
17/5/07	7/6/07
22/5/07	12/6/07
24/5/07	14/6/07
29/5/07	
31/5/07	

**Frodistirio 16Bf:**

May	June
28/5/07	4/6/07
29/5/07	5/6/07
	11/6/07
	12/6/07
	18/6/07
	19/6/07
	25/6/07
	26/6/07

**Frodistirio 17Bf:**

May	June
29/5/07	5/6/07
30/5/07	6/6/07
	12/6/07
	13/6/07
	19/6/07
	20/6/07
	26/6/07
	27/6/07

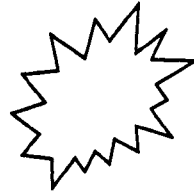
## Classroom Descriptions

Schools/Description	Layout	Library	Technology	Decor	Posters	Drawings
<b>Classroom 11Bf</b>	Rows of desks	1 small library in the corner	1 computer	Posters and drawings around the room. Two plants	5	Numerous
<b>Classroom 12a</b>	Rows of desks	None	None	Posters and drawings around the room.	3	Numerous
<b>Classroom 13a</b>	Rows of desks	None	1 computer	Posters and drawings around the room.	3	Numerous
<b>Classroom 14a</b>	Rows of desks	1 used exclusively by teacher	None	Posters and drawings around the room.	2	5 drawings near the teacher's desk
<b>Classroom 15a</b>	Rows of desks	None	None	Posters and drawings around the room.	6	Numerous
<b>Classroom 16a</b>	Rows of desks	None	None	Posters and drawings around the room.	6	4
<b>Classroom 17a</b>	Rows of desks	None	None	Posters and drawings around the room. One plant	6	Numerous

Removed Phase 1 Students' Questionnaire



**ΕΡΩΤΗΜΑΤΟΛΟΓΙΟ**



Θα ήθελα να μάθω μερικά πράγματα για σένα!

Παρακαλώ βάλε ένα ✓ στό κούτακι που σου ταιριάζει.

1. Είμαι αγόρι  κορίτσι

2. Πότε άρχισες να μαθαίνεις Αγγλικά;

.....

.....

### 3. Σαν γλώσσα βρίσκω τα Αγγλικά

(Βάλε ένα ✓)

Δύσκολα

Εύκολα

Απαραίτητα

Ασήμαντα

Ενδιαφέρον

Βαρετά



Σ'αρέσει να κάνεις τις παρακάτω ασκήσεις;

(Βάλε ένα ✓)

Να κάνεις εργασίες σε ομάδες;

Ναι

Όχι

Να κάθεσαι με τους συμμαθητές σε κύκλο;

Ναι

Όχι

Προτιμάς να κάθεσαι σε дуάδες;



Ναι  Όχι

Να παίζεις παιχνιδάκια με όλα τα παιδιά στην τάξη;

Ναι  Όχι

Σ'αρέσει να δουλεύεις με άλλα παιδάκια;

Ναι  Όχι

Πιστεύεις ότι θα είσαι ήσυχος –η όταν κάνεις ομαδική δουλειά;

Ναι  Όχι



Πότε σας μιλάει η δασκάλα σου Αγγλικά;

(Βάλε ενα ✓)

Για να μας χαιρετίσει

Για να μας δώσει οδηγίες

Για να εξηγήσει μια άσκηση

Για να μας μάθει καινούργιες λέξεις

Για να μας διορθώσει

Για να μας ενθαρρύνει

Όταν η Κυρία σου μιλάει Αγγλικά

Νοιώθεις άνετα;

Ναι  Όχι

Νοιώθεις ενθουσιασμένος -η;

Ναι  Όχι

Σ'αρέσει να μαθαίνεις Αγγλικά;

Ναι  Όχι

***Ευχαριστώ που συμπλήρωσες αυτό το Ερωτηματολόγιο!!***

Translation:

**Questionnaire**



I would like to learn some things about you!

Please ✓ your answer.

1. I am            a boy             a girl

2. When did you start learning English?

.....  
.....

3. As a language I find English to be

(Please ✓)

Difficult                Easy

Necessary

Unnecessary

Interesting

Boring



Do you like doing the following activities?

(Please ✓)

Do you like doing group work?

Yes

No

Do you like being seated in a circle with your classmates?

Yes

No

Do you prefer being seated in pairs?

Yes

No

Do you play games with other children in class?

Yes

No

Do you like working with other children?

Yes

No

Do you believe you are well-behaved when you do group work?

Yes

No



When does your teacher speak English to you?;

(Please ✓)

To greet us

To give us instructions

To explain an activity

To teach us new words

To correct us

To encourage us

When your teacher speaks English do you:

Feel comfortable?

Yes

No

Do you feel excited?

Yes           No

Do you like learning English?

Yes           No

***Thank you for completing this questionnaire!!***

## **Glossary of Abbreviations**

<b>AR</b>	<b>Action Research</b>
<b>CLL</b>	<b>Communicative Language Learning</b>
<b>CLT</b>	<b>Communicative Language Teaching</b>
<b>CPE</b>	<b>Cambridge Proficiency Examinations</b>
<b>DoS</b>	<b>Director of Frodistirio</b>
<b>EFL</b>	<b>English as a Foreign Language</b>
<b>ELT</b>	<b>English Language Teaching</b>
<b>EYL</b>	<b>English for Young Learners</b>
<b>FL</b>	<b>Foreign Language</b>
<b>FLL</b>	<b>Foreign Language Learning</b>
<b>GTM</b>	<b>Grammar-Translation Method</b>
<b>L1</b>	<b>First Language</b>
<b>L2</b>	<b>Second Language</b>
<b>MFL</b>	<b>Modern Foreign Languages</b>
<b>NC</b>	<b>National Curriculum</b>
<b>SLA</b>	<b>Second Language Acquisition</b>
<b>Ss</b>	<b>Students</b>
<b>TBL</b>	<b>Task-Based Learning</b>
<b>TL</b>	<b>Target Language</b>
<b>Ts</b>	<b>Teachers</b>
<b>YL</b>	<b>Young Learner</b>
<b>YLL</b>	<b>Young Language Learner</b>
<b>ZPD</b>	<b>Zone of Proximal Development</b>