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Foreign Language Testing and Assessment in Greece: An overview and appraisal

[Επισκόπηση και Εκτίμηση της Γλωσσικής Δοκιμασιολογίας και Αξιολόγησης στην Ελλάδα]

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The aim of this paper is twofold. First, I will briefly review practices in testing and assessment in Greece; I will refer to current practices, their prospects and long term influence inside and outside school contexts. In particular, I will make brief reference to foreign language (FL) demands outside the school context, namely, the job market and appraise the consequences of the choices made so far for FL education in the primary and secondary school context. Second, I will advocate a way forward by advancing the principle 'learn a foreign language(s) for lifelong use' rather than 'get-trained to get a certificate as early in life as possible'.

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Στην παρούσα μελέτη αρχικά παρουσιάζω μια επισκόπηση της γλωσσικής δοκιμασιολογίας και αξιολόγησης στην Ελλάδα, κάνοντας αναφορά σε παρούσες πρακτικές και την επιρροή τους εντός και εκτός εκπαιδευτικού περιβάλλοντος. Επίσης, αναφέρομαι στις γλωσσικές ανάγκες εκτός εκπαιδευτικού περιβάλλοντος, συγκεκριμένα στην αγορά εργασίας και στις επιπτώσεις των μέχρι τώρα επιλογών στην ξενόγλωσση διδασκαλία στην πρωτοβάθμια και δευτεροβάθμια εκπαίδευση. Στη συνέχεια προτείνω την επικράτηση της αρχής «εκμάθηση της ξένης γλώσσας για δια βίου χρήση» έναντι της «απόκτησης ενός πιστοποιητικού γλωσσομάθειας όσο το δυνατόν νωρίτερα στη ζωή κάποιου».

Key words: language testing and assessment, performance, Greece, Foreign Language Learning, school context

The background story

In Greece, foreign language (FL) learning was introduced in state secondary education after the independence of the country in the 19th century. In particular, French had been the compulsory foreign language taught up until 1945 when English was also introduced as the second foreign language in secondary education gaining equal status with French.¹ As a result, French was taught almost in half of the schools and English in the other half. In the 1980s, German as a FL was also introduced in secondary education in a selected number of schools. Since 1989, English has become the compulsory FL in primary education too, whereas other languages such as French and German as FL are taught on an optional basis besides English. After the country joined the European Union (EU) in 1979, due to the language policies of the EU, the tendency has been to teach two foreign languages in compulsory education besides the mother tongue.²

Ever since FL learning was introduced as a school subject there has always been a need to assess learners' performance. Indeed, in the school context³, language teachers are currently expected to assess their students. They may use quizzes focusing on the lesson of the day or progress tests that concern a longer teaching/learning period. This period usually coincides with three or more teaching units of the textbook. At the end of the school year teachers administer an attainment test to learners in order to allocate a summative grade to each student in accordance with the assessment scale adopted by the Ministry of Education and Life Long Learning. The same numerical assessment scale is used for all subjects taught in the curriculum of primary or secondary education.⁴ This FL grade that appears on school certificates demonstrates that students have successfully passed the subject of English as a FL in the class they had been attending.

Teachers are expected to allocate one summative grade incorporating all skills and abilities while taking into account learners' performance in the classroom; in other words, there is no indication of the actual level learners have reached at that point concerning their skills and competences in the FL. Common practices of testing and assessment by skill, knowledge and ability recommended in the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001), for instance, have not yet been introduced in the state school system. What is more, the Ministry recommends that teachers in secondary education, in particular, use a specific type of test format, specific types of test items and follow specific guidelines for how the test is to be carried out. The test modes advocated emphasize use of English, reading and writing, in particular. In other words, testing and assessment in schools is strictly regulated by Ministry Decrees. Therefore, language testing and assessment in state school has become a bureaucratic exercise of grade allocation in accordance with prescribed regulations rather than real assessment of learners' skills, abilities and knowledge. This practice has never meant much to stakeholders such as students and parents alike.

The vacuum in language testing and assessment in the country was filled in by foreign institutions, such as the British Council in collaboration with the University of Cambridge Syndicate (UCLES) now called University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations, Alliance Française, the Goethe Institute, the Thervantes Institute, Scuola Italiana to mention but a few, which have administered proficiency tests and issued language certificates for their national languages at various levels of proficiency for a very long time.⁵ For a variety of geo-political, diplomatic, economic, socio-political, administrative and other reasons, that are not within the scope of the present paper to explore, the State has recognized these certificates as valid language

certificates, even though it has had no saying in their philosophy, construction and assessment practices. Moreover, it has recognized the C2 level language certificates they issue as demonstrating their holders' ability to teach the respective languages. In this way, the State has equated mere language certificate holders with University degree holders, graduates of the Faculties of Foreign Languages and Literatures who are especially trained at a pre-service level to teach foreign languages! Indeed, as late as 1985, the State allowed University degree holders and language certificate holders with no teacher training qualifications at all to compete for positions in state secondary education. It was Law 1566/85 that made this practice obsolete in state school education.⁶

These certificates issued outside the official educational context have been long used for professional purposes by adults, either as language certificates to seek employment, particularly, in the state sector or as a teaching qualification to seek employment as a teacher of a FL in the private sector. Consequently, getting a language certificate has become a must in the broader Greek society, since it can eventually function as a life long professional qualification.

This recognition very quickly led to the development of a flourishing language learning industry outside the school system all over the country, the so-called 'Language Centres' or 'Frontistiria'. The sole aim of this industry and its main attraction has been to prepare learners to successfully sit FL examinations offered by the above mentioned foreign examination bodies in order to obtain a language certificate for future professional purposes in the shortest possible time, in the case of adult learners, or as early as possible during their school life, if their learners are school age students. As a matter of fact, the practice promoted among school-age students and their parents has been for students to acquire a B2 level certificate in their lower secondary school years in order to secure a language certificate for life and 'get done with foreign language learning for good' as the popular saying goes. As a result, students as young as 12 years old may sit a B2 level exam in English, in particular, which is the compulsory foreign language in the Greek primary school system. Thus, by lowering the age entry level for such adult certificates, students can sit for the C1 or even C2 level English certificate as young as 14 or 15 years old. It is worth noting, however, that all language certificates Greek school students opt to sit for, are General Language Certificates, in spite of the fact that they aim to make use of them later in life as adults for professional purposes.

The success language certification has had among language learners attending courses in language centres has showed the way to the Pan-Hellenic Association of Language School Owners (PALSO)⁷ to demand that the State should run its own certification system rather than relying solely on foreign institutions. In the 1980s, PALSO introduced its own four-level examination system for its members hoping that the State would recognize their HIGHER certificate (their highest level exam to be certified) as a 'B2' level language certificate as it has done with the relevant certification systems of external examination boards. However, their aspiration never materialized.

Finally, in 1999 the State officially recognized the need to run its own language certification system. This initiative was funded by the EU to help member states improve foreign language learning, teaching and assessment with the purpose of developing multilingualism in the European Union (N 2740/99 ΦΕΚ 186 τ.Α'). The state-owned certification system abbreviated as "ΚΠγ" (KPG in English, State Certificate of Language Proficiency) was launched in 2003⁸. Unfortunately, the State was not forward thinking enough and did not take the opportunity to

abolish the use of C2 level foreign language certificates as official teaching qualifications. Due to the continuous pressure from University Departments of Foreign Languages and Literatures in Greece to introduce a state owned certification system, which will provide language certificate holders with a teaching qualification rather than a mere language qualification, the KPG has not as yet run its own C2 level examinations in any of the languages it examines and certifies so far. The KGP certifies language proficiency levels (C2 excluded) in accordance with CEFR provisions and reflects the ΑΣΕΠ (ASEP in English, Higher Council for the Selection of Personnel for the Public Sector) requirements set by the Ministry of Decentralisation and E-Government for adults interested to join the civil service but need proof of their FL competence.⁹ Nevertheless, the State continues to grant permission to C2 level language certificate holders, issued by other certification bodies as well as to any person who holds a University degree from a FL speaking country, to teach foreign languages in the private sector.

Current practices and prospects

State practices such as those described in the previous section along with parental and student attitudes have had severe consequences on FL education in state schools. As a matter of fact, learners have grown indifferent to the FL work carried out in state school classrooms; instead, students work hard, often under tremendous social and parental pressure, to prepare themselves for a language certificate in the language centres. As mentioned earlier and as teachers attest, students typically aim to obtain a language certificate, preferably at B2 level, before entering upper secondary education where they will need to concentrate on preparing for the University Entrance Examinations. As also mentioned earlier, any of these language certificates, regardless of when they were acquired, are a life-long proof of knowledge of the respective foreign language even if certificate holders have hardly ever used the foreign language for school, academic or professional purposes after obtaining the certificate. As a result, the focus of FL teaching in this country has been to train young and adolescent learners to obtain a certificate rather than to help them learn a language for life long use. Equally importantly, B2 level language certificates and beyond address the needs and interests of adults rather than young learners and adolescents.

It is, therefore, high time we reconsidered FL learning in state schools in the light of current educational research and needs. We need to remind ourselves how foreign languages are learnt, at what age and why they are learnt. As of 2010, FL learning has been introduced in the primary school from Grade 1, albeit in a small number of schools for experimental purposes; the compulsory foreign language taught is English.¹⁰ According to the cross-curricular approach purported in the Cross-thematic Curriculum Framework for Modern Foreign Languages¹¹, learning a foreign language aims at developing learners' abilities and skills to communicate effectively with others who come from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds as well as to manage information that is derived from various cognitive and scientific fields. In other words, FL learning in the European context aims at promoting literacy, multilingualism and multiculturalism.

Apart from the basic concepts, principles and the ideological orientation, a curriculum also makes reference to "what pupils learn, ... how they learn it, how teachers help them learn, using what supporting materials, styles and methods of assessment, and in what kind of facilities" as Richards argues (2005, p. 39). Assessment, therefore, is one of the important parameters to consider in language education. It functions as an aid to teachers and learners aiming to

promote learning, awareness as well as self-assessment and other-assessment (cf. West and Tsagari, 2004).

On this issue, in a recent paper titled 'Communicating and learning strategies: Two faces of the same coin' (Papaefthymiou-Lytra, 2009), I have argued that foreign language learning should take into account the developing cognitive, linguistic and social capacities of learners as they grow older. Teachers should make use of these developing capacities and encourage learners to become involved in higher order tasks in accordance with their age and general maturity using the foreign language as a means of communication. After all, what language users are able to do with language is related to the language users' age, cognitive, linguistic, emotional and social development. In other words, for successful language learning, content and strategy use in FL learning tasks should respect the learners' age, cognitive, linguistic, social and emotional development (see also Vanderplank, 2008; Veenman *et al.*, 2004 among others).

Moreover, it is important to remember that FL learning is not meant to be merely a school subject for learners with no specific use later on in their lives. In Greece in particular, learners aspire to make good use of a foreign language and the accompanied certification at a later stage in their professional life. In this sense, Greek society is instrumentally orientated towards foreign language learning leaving emotions, such as enjoyment, fun, satisfaction, curiosity and so on, that may derive from learning a foreign language aside.

These assumptions, however, concerning the work-related benefits of FL learning request that we re-examine the kind of English learners are actually required to use in adult life and the kind of communicative competence(s) they need to be able to demonstrate in the foreign language particularly at work. This raises the following question: Is a general certificate of language acquired by holders at the age of 14 or even younger a good enough proof of their ability, skills and competencies later on in life? In my opinion, this is an important question that all stakeholders involved in language teaching and testing should ask themselves and reflect on.

It is common knowledge that mastering a foreign language in the school context takes time and effort; learners are able to demonstrate various competences over time and acquire different sets of knowledge in accordance with their age and overall maturity. This view is also supported by research carried out in bilingual classrooms where the participants are migrant students. Indeed, as Cummins (2001, cited in Lyons 2011, p. 34) argues it takes five to nine years for students to become proficient in English. These migrant students may be fluent in everyday use of language in a couple of years but it takes them longer and requires hard work to master academic English for use in schools and, I would add here, good enough English for the job market later. As students grow up, they are understandably expected not only to deal with more cognitively demanding tasks, but also to use appropriate 'linguistic skills to access higher-order thinking, to interpret, infer, and synthesise information; to pick out the main idea; to relate ideas and information to their background experiences; to recognize the conventions of different genres; and to recognise text structure' (*ibid.*). Therefore it could be argued that Greek learners, who strive to acquire language certificates at such an early age, lack the knowledge, experience, skills and competences of mature foreign language users who can make successful use of the foreign language(s) at work.

Here I would like to add some anecdotal evidence to illustrate my point. A few years back, I received a telephone call by a high ranking official from ASEP. The caller wanted my advice to

address a recurring problem ASEP was facing. As I explained earlier in this paper, those interested to join the ranks of the civil service must take certain examinations organized by ASEP. Examinations vary depending on the duties prospective civil servants will undertake. The requirements are set by the various Ministries or other state-affiliated bodies. Knowledge of a foreign language is usually a requirement. Candidates do not sit exams administered by ASEP in the foreign language(s) they claim they know, but they merely attach the language certificates they once gained at school age to their application as valid proof of foreign language learning and use. However, ministerial officials among others repeatedly complained to the caller that newly appointed civil servants did not use foreign language(s) well enough as had been required. I explained to the caller that this was to be expected. A language certificate gained eight or ten years before entering the civil service or even much earlier reflects the holders' language skills, abilities and knowledge of the foreign language(s) at the time they were examined. If holders had not practiced/used the language ever since, they have lost many of the language skills they once possessed. The only solution to the problem, I suggested to the caller, was for ASEP to declare that certificates need to have been issued over or during the last two or three years at the most before submitting them as evidence of good knowledge of the foreign language.

Assessment, testing and certification: ways forward

Given the current state of language learning and assessment in Greece today, it is high time that we went back to basics. It is necessary to make a clear distinction between assessment, testing and testing for certification as three separate entities that serve different purposes for stakeholders and the society at large. Taking this line of thought as a point of departure, I will also attempt to reposition the role and the status of the FL teacher in the primary and secondary school context.

In the literature, assessment, and in particular alternative assessment, is defined by West and Tsagari, (2004, p. 12), for instance, as the means "to assess and understand student performance in class, identify the specific needs of individual students, tailor instruction to meet these needs, monitor the effectiveness of instruction, and make decisions about advancement or promotion of individual students to the next level of instruction". Testing, on the other hand, West and Tsagari (2004, p. 13) claim "is generally associated with more formal measurement procedures which are carried out at specific times of a school year when all students are usually tested on the same content." Last but not least, testing for certification purposes involve standardized tests often administered country-wide in a specific country or world wide. Assessment and testing as defined above are geared primarily towards educational contexts, be it primary, secondary or tertiary education. Testing for certification purposes, however, is usually the function of external bodies that can serve adults aged 18 and beyond who require language certificates for professional purposes.

In the school context, primary and secondary, the purpose of assessment and, in particular, alternative assessment should be to help learners understand the learning process, overcome the difficulties they face by becoming aware of alternative solutions to remedy problems of production and reception. By doing so, learners become autonomous and independent of teacher intervention. They develop strategies for dealing with problems, but also furthering their possibilities and advancing their knowledge, skills, abilities and competences in the foreign language drawing on self-assessment and other-assessment processes and practices to suit their

lifelong learning goals. In other words, during school years, emphasis needs to be placed on *foreign language learning and language development for lifelong use* rather than on *training students to take an examination*, which often focuses on content and strategy beyond the learners' capacities in accordance with their age. In this way, learners' knowledge, abilities, skills and competences in the foreign language will grow and mature along with their cognitive, linguistic, social and emotional maturity, which comes with age.

As I have argued in Papaefthymiou-Lytra (2011), primary school learners are '*activity*' motivated (see also Papaefthymiou-Lytra, 1987). They want to be actively involved in doing things in the classroom rather than passively receiving information delivered by the teacher or other media. They love to play, move around and have fun with their classmates, explore the world around them and discover new, interesting and challenging ways for doing things, which I have called *activity* motivation.

Similarly, secondary school students, and in particular, the so-called gymnasio students aged 12 to 14/15 of age, are in a transitional stage between childhood and early teens. They notice changes in their bodies and in their mood. They are not always easy to handle, they often become rebellious and disobedient. What they are interested in mostly and are motivated by is to explore and understand themselves, their relationships with others and the world around them, which I have called '*exploring thyself and the world at large*' motivation (cf. Papaefthymiou-Lytra, 2011). Still it is at that crucial age when parents and the society at large puts pressure on them to work hard not to learn foreign languages but to get trained in order to obtain a language certificate that they will be able to use some time in the future. As a result, during those crucial years of their emotional and personality development, emphasis is not placed on learning foreign language(s) for lifelong use as an alternative way to handling personal matters, understanding oneself, discovering and understanding others and the world at large. Instead emphasis is placed on training students to pass a language examination offered by external bodies that will secure them a certificate for future use. Thus, learning a foreign language has become devoid of the fun aspect of learning. It has become a series of repetitive '*drills*': mostly working on past papers in a language centre or with a tutor so as they can master the necessary testing strategies to pass B2, C1 or C2 level examinations that are intended for adults and not for their age and interests. No wonder as soon as they manage to obtain a language certificate, they are not interested at all in advancing their learning of the language any more.

Pupil and parental attitudes that prevail among low secondary school students create similar problems in upper secondary education too. Teachers claim that Upper Secondary or Lykio students are not interested in FL learning any more as they are preoccupied with University Entrance Exams. What is more, the students who have secured a language certificate usually at a B2 level feel that they have completed the study of FLs (*teacher attestations-personal communication*). As a result, upper secondary school students are not engaged in advancing and refining their knowledge and use of the foreign language(s) they have been learning in understanding differences in attitudes, stances and beliefs of writers or speakers, for instance (cf. Garidi, 2011).

Rather than merely getting trained to pass a certificate examination, it is more conducive to successfully learning a foreign language for lifelong use if students, depending on their age, become involved in such activities as project work, role playing and one-act plays, sing-along

and pair work tasks that can also involve use of the Internet and other multi-media which allow for collaborative learning (cf. Vlachos and Papaefthymiou-Lytra, 2008). The present generation of students is much more knowledgeable concerning the use of the Internet and multi-media than their teachers. Here teachers are presented with the opportunity to learn from their students as their learners learn from them; teachers can allocate them duties and responsibilities that will make them proud of and willing to work hard. Adopting learning-teaching approaches, such as task-based learning and CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning), will help teachers come up with their own repertoire of learning activities that are appropriate for their own students and respond well to local circumstances and needs.

Besides strategies for learning and advancing the language as well as coping with difficulties in perception and production of the FL, a good way to expand foreign language for lifelong use is through extensive reading and listening. This practice has been undervalued in or deprived from schools for quite some time now – most probably because school libraries are an exception rather than the rule in most Greek state schools. It is important, therefore, that teachers try to instill in learners good extensive reading and listening habits (cf. Papaefthymiou-Lytra, 1984).

More specifically, teachers can start reading to young learners, for instance, original children's books as well as simplified books appropriate for their age that they can find in abundance in bookshops. Children's stories, such as Aesop's fables, Andersen's stories, Greek myths etc. that learners are familiar with already are ideal to start with. It will be a good idea to try to build up a class 'library' with English books of this kind.¹² A good way to go about it is by asking students to bring an English book they have read and would like to share with others. The next step is for students to start borrowing books from the class 'library' – this can be a project run by learners themselves while the teacher supervises the whole process. Students are asked to keep a record of the title of the book and the date they borrowed it. Eventually, they can add information concerning what the book was about and how much they liked it and why. The next big leap forward is to ask learners to write a summary of the story. Similar procedures can be followed for listening practice. The Internet can provide learners and teachers alike with a plethora of authentic listening material that can be exploited in the classroom and out of the classroom.

As for secondary school learners, emphasis should be placed on learning practices similar to those mentioned above crossing over to other subjects of the curriculum too. Content-wise the learning material should reflect the students' interests, needs, cognitive, linguistic and emotional maturity among others rather than training-learners-to-learn certificate practices. In this way, schoolteachers become learners' collaborators and facilitators for learning purposes rather than trainers for testing purposes. The different kinds of learning activities briefly outlined for school learners need to be combined with alternative assessment practices such as self- and peer-assessment and other testing practices such as, quizzes, short progress tests, attainment tests etc. that aim to make learners become proactive in taking responsibility for their own learning.¹³

In short, FL education needs to refocus on FL learning from a learning and assessment perspective, whereas the FL learning process should evoke emotions of fun, satisfaction, curiosity, fulfillment, anticipation and happiness among others. Following Sternberg (1999), positive emotions release learners' imagination, creativity and inventiveness, which may lead learners to express in the foreign language "a mental entity that has never been represented before, an idea that has never been expressed before" (Vega Moreno, 2007, p. 5). This feeling of

pleasant surprise, fulfillment and joy makes the communication of thoughts in the L2 worthwhile for older and younger learners alike.

Conclusions

In this paper I have argued that foreign language learning for lifelong use has been subsided by a 'get-trained-to-get-the-certificate' ideology. Inordinate weight has been placed on FL testing for certification purposes by all stakeholders rather than learning for lifelong use. Similarly, assessment and testing practices in schools in the form of placement, progress, attainment tests and so on have followed a testing rather than a learning orientation. As a result, teachers and learners alike have been primarily interested in the product of learning rather than the process of learning, which will allow students to become autonomous and independent learners for life. I have also presented some of the ways this situation may be remedied. The longer learners study a foreign language the better lifelong users they will be.

This is particularly true for English which learners start learning at a very early age. We must give learners time and space so that the foreign language grows as they grow cognitively, linguistically, socially and emotionally. In schools, we must highlight foreign language learning for life long use rather than the short-sighted testing for certification purposes. This attitude will also reinstate teachers as educators rather than mere trainers. And once our students have learnt the language they can easily train themselves - with minimal help from a teacher if need be - in the mechanics of test taking. The important thing is to enjoy using the foreign language(s) for life.

After all, foreign language certification, and, in particular, language certification for specific purposes, can be a professional qualification for adults provided that they have acquired it close to the time of employment and forthcoming use as an indication of what competences they have currently acquired in the foreign language. After all, all higher level certificates, namely, B2, C1 or C2 level certificates are attuned to the cognitive development as well as the needs and interests of adults rather than adolescents or young learners.

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Notes

1. For a historical account about English as a FL in Greek education, see Μαλιβίτση (2004). For a survey of the geopolitical and other reasons that have helped English as a *lingua franca* to gain ground in Greek education and society, see Σηφάκης (2012).
2. Concerning EU and plurilingualism see the Language Policy Division of the Council of Europe: a Platform of resources and references for plurilingual and intercultural education – language across curriculum (http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Schoollang_EN.asp).
3. English is a compulsory subject taught in lower secondary education, the so-called 'gymnasio' attended by learners aged 12-15 as well as the first two years of upper secondary school the so-called 'lykio' attended by learners aged 15-17. A more detailed description of the situation is beyond the scope of the present paper.
4. The scale that has been used in upper and lower secondary education ranges from 01 to 20. The highest grade is 20 whereas the passing grade is 10. Any grade below 10 is a fail. In primary education for the 3rd and the 4th grade a letter assessment scale has been introduced ranging from A to D, D is a

- fail. For the 5th and the 6th grade the scale ranges from 01-10. Any grade below 5 is a fail. A fail grade is scarcely ever granted in primary education unless there are severe learning problems. There is no grading scale of either type for Grades 1 and 2 in the primary school.
5. Ever since the introduction of the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001), these institutions have conformed to its requirements and language proficiency levels. For a comparison of these certificates across languages and their stakeholders, see <http://www.ALTE.org>.
 6. Use of these certificates as teaching qualifications originate in the decrees AN 1100/1938 and A.N. 752/1945. The latter, in particular, states that as soon as there would be trained university graduates to teach foreign languages in the school system, this law would become obsolete. Although the Faculties of English Language and Literature in Athens and Thessaloniki were established in 1951 (cf. Παπαευθυμίου-Λύτρα *et al.* 2008) the aforementioned law became obsolete in 1985 (Law 1566/85). However, certificate holders can still teach in the private sector in the so-called Language Centres or Frontistiria where they can compete for positions with University graduates.
 7. For more information about PALSO visit www.palso.gr
 8. For more information about the 'ΚΠγ' visit <http://www.kpg.ypepth.gr/>
 9. (ASEP) ΑΣΕΠ - Ανώτατο Συμβούλιο Επιλογής Προσωπικού. For more information about ASEP visit <http://www.asep.gr/>
 10. English as a FL was introduced from the 3rd grade of the primary school onwards in 1989; for experimental purposes the teaching of English has been introduced to selected schools from the 1st grade in 2010.
 11. Διαθεματικό Εννιαίο Πλαίσιο Προγραμμάτων Σπουδών Ξένων Γλωσσών (Cross-thematic Curriculum Framework for Modern Foreign Languages). For more information visit <http://www-pi-schools.gr> Also see ΦΕΚ 303 και 304/13-3/2003 Προγράμματα Σπουδών για την Αγγλική Γλώσσα στην Α/θμια και Β/θμια Εκπαίδευση.
 12. As mentioned, school libraries are usually the missing link in Greek schools. So it is advisable that teachers start their own class library for ELT books. They can invite their pupils to bring English books to class for the class library which they can share with their classmates during the school year. Pupils take their books back home at the end of the year.
 13. Although it is beyond the scope of this paper, it is worth noting that the situation in tertiary education is equally bleak. As the limited research on FL learning in tertiary education shows, students are expected to attend language courses for special purpose (LSP) or academic purposes (LAP). Wherever in higher education FL learning is mandatory, a summative grade is allocated, as is the case in secondary education, slotting in all skills and abilities. Tests usually assess the reading and writing modes only. As a result, tertiary education students who have acquired a language certificate(s) have very little interest in advancing their knowledge, skills and ability of the respective foreign language(s) (cf. Psaltou-Joycey and Kantaridou, 2009; Sifakis, 2006; also Παπαευθυμίου-Λύτρα, 1990a, 1990b). After all, it is the language certificate(s) they may already hold that constitutes proof of knowledge rather than their having studied foreign languages at university level. Of course, this is the case particularly for state sector employment and less so for private sector employment. It is true that small business may rely on language certification when they look for employees. However, corporations, banks etc. invite candidates for an interview in the foreign language they are expected to be able to use efficiently later on at work.

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