

The use of film making in teaching Modern Greek Language: Case Study in a Minority School's class in Greece.

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Abstract

It is a fact that Greek language is not the mother tongue of Muslim students at Celâl Bayar Minority School (Gymnasium-Lyceum) in the city of Komotini. Modern Greek Language is taught to them in the same manner as to the native speakers. The Modern Greek Language is taught to them just like its native speakers. The challenge for the Secondary Education literature teacher is great, since the creation of appropriate differentiated support material is required, as well as the choice of teaching methods and forms that will arouse students' interest and provide them with incentives to participate in class. The present research derived from the need that arose in a 2nd grade classroom of the "Celâl Bayar" Minority Lyceum of Komotini, as ways were sought in order for students to actively participate in Modern Greek Language and Literature courses. The in-class design of a short film, which is a movie adaptation of a short story, helped students of the Minority School to actively participate in the lesson, practicing their many-minds potential and gaining the ability to compose audiovisual text by reading Literature in Modern Greek Language into the classroom.

Keywords

Minority School, Differentiated instruction, Modern Greek Language, Literature, Filmmaking

1. Introduction

Celâl Bayar is a Minority School (High School, Lyceum) in Komotini city. According to the Curriculum, students in these schools are taught in Greek all the courses of the Greek Language Curriculum. Turkish language, Turkish and Islamic History are taught in Turkish, as well as Arabic language and the Koran. It is a fact that Greek language is not the mother tongue of minority Muslim students. Children have limited contact with Greek language, as they use Turkish almost exclusively in their daily interactions and at the same time they watch Turkish television almost exclusively and on a daily basis (Sarafidou, 2005, pp. 335-340).

At Celâl Bayar, Greek is taught in the same manner as for the native speakers, with textbooks, methodology and a Curriculum made exclusively for them. In other words, it is taught as if it were the Muslim students' mother tongue. The literature teacher is called to face extremely great difficulties in his/her effort to teach Greek as a foreign language. The challenge for him/her is big because Secondary Education (Lyceum) does not provide the possibility to form a teaching program of Greek as a foreign language that will be organically integrated in the school system (Sarafidou & Zerdeli, 2008, p. 739). Thus, the teacher is required to put an effort in order to create appropriate differentiated support material, to select teaching methods and forms that would awaken students' interest and would motivate them to participate in the classroom.

2. Research characteristics: Starting point, purpose, questions, assumptions

The purpose of this research derived from the need that arose in 39 students of a 2nd grade class of the Minority Lyceum of Komotini "Celâl Bayar" the academic year 2017-2018, which is the case that we will study. The children in the class have Turkish as their mother tongue. They do not actively participate in the Modern Greek Language and Literature courses and they use Turkish as a language of communication in the classroom. Therefore, there was a need for new ways to be found for students to actively participate in classroom and use the Greek language. It was observed in the Research Work course that, using the art of cinema to create a short film, students actively participate and use Greek as a language of communication, with an indicative example that all heroes were given Greek names while writing the script. The film was of course intended to be posted on the classroom blog so that other students from Greek schools could have access to it.

The research objective is to identify the skills cultivated while designing a short film in the classroom, which is a film adaptation of a short story. The questions that arise are: What skills do students cultivate while designing a short film to adapt a short story for cinema? Are students actively involved in the activities concerning the designing of a short story film adaptation?

We assume that students are actively involved in the process from the position, the "post" they choose to operate from, and that their many-minds potential is cultivated (Gardner, 1999).

2.1 Means and process of data collection, the sample

In order to achieve the most comprehensive view and understanding of the research situation and to strengthen the reliability and validity of the data, the method of "triangulation" was used (Cohen & Manion, 2000, pp. 332-333). That is, the triple intersection of the data using different data collection methods in the same research subject, through multiple perspectives. So a combination of approaches was adopted. More specifically, the following data collection techniques were used: a) The open observation of teaching, which allowed the systematic collection and recording of data for the purpose of research, b) the written texts of the students that were produced during the teaching, c) the discussion with the teacher on a regular basis. The teaching was recorded, and then a content analysis of the teaching followed.

The case study of the 2nd grade class of the Minority Lyceum of Komotini "Celâl Bayar" was conducted in a descriptive (Yin, 1994) and a critical version (Bassegy, 1999, p.41) within the frame of the Research Work course. In this class, which consisted of 39 students, the literature teacher taught Modern Greek Language, Modern Greek Literature and History courses. In this class, the teacher had seven teaching hours a week. The environmental team of the school was also formed by the students of this class. In this way, they created a functional and "tied" group of 40 people.

3. The teaching: Creation of a short film in the classroom in "Celâl Bayar" Minority Lyceum of Komotini – film adaptation of a literary work (short story)

Within the context of the Research Work course, regarding the topic of the research work, at the beginning of the school year various topics for research were proposed to the plenary of the class by the students. After voting, the students undertook the creation of two short films. The creation of two films was decided due to the large number of students in the class –39 students–, in order for all of them to have the opportunity to participate with different roles each time. These films would be based on screenplays written by the students. The objectives of the course were set jointly with the students as follows: To watch movies. To know the equipment necessary for a film creation. To discover the film genres. To film our own script.

The students of the specific 2nd grade Lyceum class became gradually acquainted with the creation of a short film, they followed the stages of a film creation and handled the corresponding tools of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). It was decided in the classroom the subject of the second project: "*Creating a short film in the classroom – film adaptation of a literary work (short story)*". The new challenge was that the script for this film would not be exclusively a product of the students' imagination; instead it would be an adaptation of a literary work. The whole process would help the students of the minority school to get familiar with Modern Greek Literature and Modern Greek Language as well as deepen and expand the knowledge which result from these courses. Since the project was related to the Modern Greek Language and Literature courses, the selected work would belong to *Modern Greek Literature*. The chosen short story was "The teacher's

house" by Konstantinos Hatzopoulos, available in the textbook "Texts of Modern Greek Literature" 2nd Grade Lyceum, 2nd issue, pp. 121-126. So another goal was added to the lesson by the group: To adapt a literary work, specifically a short story, into a movie, specifically a short film.

3.1 How the class worked

Creating a student short film requires very good preparation and a series of tasks before, during and of course after creation. As it is typically said, behind a good short film there is a lot of preparation time compared to the time of the shooting (Poulios, 2013, p. 4). Teaching will focus on the students' preparation phase in the classroom. In detail:

Phase I: preparation – planning. The plenary of the class worked in the classroom. Students want to select a well-known text. For this reason they searched among the texts included in the textbook of Modern Greek Literature of the 2nd grade Lyceum and especially among the works they have already studied in the Literature course. The discussion sets out the selection criteria. Inspired by the students' question "which text is most suitable for a short film adaptation?" they discuss and set the selection criteria: the text's main idea, images, dialogues, number of scenes, sets and actors required. The plenary of the class chooses the short story "The Teacher's House" by Konstantinos Hatzopoulos. Discussion follows. The process of making a short film is being explored.

Phase II: implementation. *1st step.* We give the students a worksheet which says: "We will shoot a short film based on the short story 'The Teacher's House' by Konstantinos Hatzopoulos. Present some of its scenes either by photos or by creating a storyboard". Students work in groups in the classroom. Each team has access to a mobile phone which can take high quality pictures. To take pictures, children can move to other places, indoors or outdoors. *2nd step.* The students then work in the plenary of the class in the classroom. Each group presents and supports its proposal. The groups present the suggested scenario's scenes using the photos they took for each scene. Discussion and voting follow. The children vote the scenario that will be implemented. After the results come out, comments follow and the team that proposed the selected scenario receives feedback from the other groups. *3rd step.* Then the students are again divided into groups according to the responsibilities they now undertake for the production of the film: screenwriting team, directorial team, set designers and venue finders, actors, camera operators 1 and 2, background camera operators, make-up artists, film editors. In each group, depending on the responsibilities, we distribute the 2nd worksheet. So the scriptwriters team is assigned: "Write the script and create the storyboards with the help of the programs: <https://www.storyboardthat.com/storyboard-creator>, <https://www.canva.com/create/storyboards/> or by hand drawing". To the directors' group we assign: "Distribute the roles of the heroes to your classmates and organize the shooting in the sets that have been selected by the people in charge. Guide the actors properly." The venue finders are assigned to find the sets for each scene. The editing team is assigned to edit the film using the Windows Movie Maker or Vegas programs.

4th step. Screenwriters write the script for the film and create a storyboard with the help of the programs, but mostly by hand drawing. At the same time, those in charge of finding venues discover the sets where the shooting will take place and adjust them appropriately for the needs of the film. A group is also created, consisting of one child from each group, which undertakes to keep the activity's diary. *5th step.* The film is shot. Each shot is filmed three times with two cameras from a different angle.

6th step. The film is then edited.

Phase III: *film presentation:* The film is shown in the classroom to the plenary of the class. Discussion, comments, feedback follow. Another group is formed, staffed by a child from each group, that will keep a diary of activities in the form of a blog. The film will be posted on this blog. The film is then shown to the school community. Phase IV: *evaluation:* The whole effort is evaluated in the plenary session of the class. The children created a short film that is an adaptation from a literary work. The effort is evaluated and the students' emotional state regarding the project is expressed.

The project was implemented by the plenary of the class into the classroom, with some changes to the original plan, taking into account some objective difficulties –lack of equipment, little time available to complete the work– as well as the students' experience in making films. There was one video projector in the classroom and an internet connection wired to a single computer. The teacher's personal computer and speakers were used.

The story selected for a film adaption had already been studied by the students in the Literature course, so they were familiar with its content. The critical point in the process of adapting a literary text for cinema is for the students to choose what to show – which elements of the content they will keep and which they will omit. When adapting a text such as a short story, where there are few dialogues and there is a first person dramatized narration –in the chosen one, one of the children in the family of the text–, it must be decided whether dialogues will be created, whether the narration will be preserved, whether the narrator will appear or it will be a narration with voice over. The first problem that arises during the comparative approach of literature and cinema is the nature and role of the narrator and especially the function of the narrative voice and narrative focus (Kyriakos, 2012, p.10).

Another thing that needs to be decided is which will be the main idea of the film and how the original text will be handled by the students (Bloom, 1989, p. 51). So the students ask: "Shall we copy it faithfully?", "Shall we continue it?", "Shall we complete it?", "Shall we oppose it?", "Shall we make fun of it?". Another concern is the placement of the film's action in time and space. The students ask: "Shall we represent the time in which the action is placed in the story?", "Shall we put the plot to present day?", "Will it be timeless?", "Will the place where the action takes place be that of the short story?", "Shall we put it to present day Greece?", "Will there be any references to the site?", "Shall the heroes be the ones presented in the story?".

In order to be addressed, these issues are discussed in the plenary session of the class. The teacher has the role of motivator-coordinator of the group. The various suggestions of the students are voted. Their "notebook" is the whiteboard. A student takes notes on the whiteboard. A student undertakes to photograph the whiteboard with a mobile phone in order to "save" the notes.

4. Answers to the concerns and questions made by the plenary of the class

Following the decision-making process, the class decides to keep the idea and the spirit of the story. As for time and setting, the students chose to represent a timeless story. Not all the information given in the story can be included in the script. Some will be removed. The few dialogues that already exist in the story will be used and the students will create their own based on the narration. In some cases, the narration will be maintained, which will take place by the child who will be heard narrating with the "voice over" technique. The narrator's point of view will be maintained. The heroes of the film will be the grandfather, the father, the mother, the narrator and his two brothers, the male teacher, the female teacher and their children (many, no number is mentioned), the bailiff, the buyer. The remaining persons mentioned in the short story will be omitted. After the plenary session of the class has made these decisions, the creation of the script proceeds.

To write the script, students first divide the story into scenes. Students make suggestions. A student notes on the whiteboard the division into scenes that has been voted. In this way, seven scenes are distinguished. For each scene, the setting in which it unfolds is noted, which is distinguished in interior or exterior, as well as the time: morning, noon, evening, the people which appear, the sounds that are heard, the dialogues or the narration and which part of the story is adapted. There is also a second student on the whiteboard who fills in the notes with a marker of a different colour. Students who take notes take turns.

Creating the storyboard is the most important part of the job before shooting the film. The storyboard accurately captures the shots that will be shot. From the experience of the previous two films, students know that the more expensive the storyboard, the easier and faster we will shoot. Questions raised by students were: "How do we draw heroes on the storyboard? Everyone as they please or shall we all agree from the beginning?"

This is a very important question, considering that the same heroes are involved in all the scenes. The concern raised here is of particular importance for another reason. When adapting the story, students must choose the setting and time in which the story unfolds. This choice will be reflected in the costumes; that is, it will be revealed by the outfit and the appearance of the story's heroes in general as well as the setting. So the above question extends to the design of the setting. The question arises: "how will it be for the exterior and interior of the houses which constitute the setting?". A vote was taken to answer these questions. The students decided to have each group represent the heroes as they pleased. Before the shooting of the film it will be seen how each group designed its own

scene on the storyboard and they will all choose together how each hero of the film will be in the end.

Having already made two films, the class is well aware that, in addition to the wishes of the directors, objective conditions also play an important role in these choices. That is, what venues are available for the film to be shot, what changes can be made, how the actors can be presented. It is very interesting the discussion that followed in each group about how they would represent the heroes and place them in the setting.

5. Discussion

The adaptation of a short story into a short film was a very good exercise in learning the second language of the students, that is Greek. The children were trained in reading comprehension, produced written speech, and eventually created a new work of art that has maintained, given life and continued the original work.

For the design that was presented, through the creation of a short film it was possible to practice the many-minds potential of the students (Gardner, 1999, pp.41-44, 48-52). The students set the criteria for choosing the appropriate literary text for the occasion. They chose a short story. They read, heard the short story. They kept notes on the whiteboard with markers of different colours. Regarding the production of notes, it is worth emphasizing that this is a complex process, because it requires the student to listen, watch carefully and understand at the same time, to distinguish the insignificant from the significant information and by writing to organize the latter. They had a discussion. They wrote their own dialogues. They turned the narrative text into. They raised questions. They intervened in the text and changed the order of the words of the heroes, omitted parts of the short story, omitted repeated events.

They searched and chose soundtrack for depicting the agony, they invested scenes with two folk songs which thematically matched the scenes and rendered the feelings of the heroes. They also became acquainted with the art of sound. They wondered and chose what would be heard and when it would be stopped. Spatial intelligence. Students selected settings and suggested how they should be designed, and designed them per scene. The setting was connected with the time when the story will unfold for the scenographic choices and the costume choices. The students visualized, through the storyboard, the scenes, the heroes, the gestures. Interpersonal intelligence. Processing that took place in the plenary session of the classroom to create the film promoted the collaborative teaching, helped the students to take initiatives within the groups and helped to provide equal opportunities for them. With the strengthening of the students' initiatives during the tasks assigned to them, but also during the announcement of their tasks in the classroom, emphasis was placed on the balance between communication freedom and teaching control. Regarding the issue of communication, there was a two-way interaction in the communication of the members of the groups, but also in the communication of the students amongst them. The teacher was a member of the group. The revisions in the design made by the students promoted self-motivation both at the guided-by-the-teacher

form and at the spontaneous side in the students' part. Intrapersonal intelligence. The students wondered, puzzled about the creation of a short film, taking into account their strengths and weaknesses in order to complete the project. The students presented the teacher-heroine as angry and dynamic. No relation to the text which presents her pale, motionless. Utilizing their interpersonal intelligence and empathy skills, they recognized the teacher's feelings from verbal and non-verbal reactions, understood her reality as well as the conditions in which this reality has developed. Conquering self-awareness and realizing the "me-other" separation, they decided to sketch and highlight the teacher differently than the text (Korre, 2017, pp.146-147).

Regarding the participation of students, which was active. The main pedagogical principles that govern the Research Projects, in the framework of which the above design was carried out, are: the exploratory approach to learning, the differentiated approach to learning, the group collaboration of students (Matsagouras et al., n.d., pp. 18-25). The principle of inter-student collaboration is implemented by what is known as a "cooperative learning approach", which organizes students in small groups. In the specific 2nd grade Lyceum class, the students were divided into different groups each time. The form of teaching was interactive, collaborative. Through dialogue, the exchange of views, the students raise questions, common questions that have been formed in the plenary session of the class, present arguments, make decisions, become mentally activate and actively participate in the learning process. No guilt is put upon mistakes, while emphasis is placed not so much on the result as on the learning process. The classroom is a group of collaborating members. The teacher through fading scaffolding was an equal interlocutor, collaborator, coresearcher and coordinator.

During the work, data from previous knowledge of the students were used, both on how to design the short film and on the approach of the short story, from the teaching of the Literature course. In this way, learning and teaching were implemented in a related context, in order to search for meaning. There has been a contextualization form of learning, which is a key element of modern constructivist theory.

The students raised questions during their work and included different processes of data collection and processing and alternative ways of representing and communicating new knowledge and relating it to personal experiences and social situations. Through such variations, an educational framework has been created that manages to maximize the learning and developmental capabilities of all students (Tomlinson, 2001, Llewellyn, 2011). Their work has revealed the talents and skills of students in various fields as well as their ability to choose the position that suits them and achieve their goal as a team.

6. Conclusion

In the classroom, the adaptation of a literary text, especially a short story, into film offered the students of the Minority School a very intense experience. During the teaching of the literary text, the students "saw" and "heard" what the author allowed them to "see" and "hear". With the transfer, students were given the freedom to make an image out of

what was not possible to transfer from the author's words. The design of the short film consisted of a summary of the events and situations by the creators-students. The students, however, saw and heard so much that it would be absurd to ask a writer of a literary text to describe them as in the film adaptation (Monaco, 2019, p. 52).

The literature teachers of Minority Schools should encourage their students to design and create a short film by adapting literary texts that have been taught. The whole process is a unique educational tool that can be used in the teaching of Modern Greek Language and Literature, as it is not possible to formulate a curriculum for teaching Greek as a foreign language organically integrated into the school system. Designing the adaptation of a literary work (short story) into a movie presupposes linguistic activities, soundtrack, artistic expression with the student group as a core. Thus, the interdisciplinary approach enhances the participation of all students who may be unable to express themselves in the second language without fear of error. Also, the differentiation of teaching contributes to the cultivation of students' skills in various fields that could be expressed as "students acquire a cinematic look when reading Literature". In the particular class, the students later, while teaching Literature, wondered "what dialogues should we write here", "what the setting should be like", "what music should we choose" and tried to give answers. Thus, from the effort to understand and process specific symbols, in this case those who compose the written text ("print literacy"), students begin to cultivate the ability to compose audiovisual text, to realize its expressive potential, in other words to use creatively an "audiovisual literacy" (Korre, 2014).

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