

Stavros Kamaroudis

Learning greek as a mother language: research at modern school textbooks about family issues in modern greek primary education

Introduction

Primary school textbooks are approved teaching aids which are in book form and are used by school students as they meet the requirements of the Analytical Program. School textbooks define the content of instruction and the pedagogical scope of value systems that outline the mindset. From researches that have been carried out, it appears that the time spent by the students with the textbook is greater than the time of the teacher's interpersonal relationships with the students.¹ Also, research data shows that teachers use the textbook as a basic tool for their teaching.

Learning in Greek educational system relies on the text book instead of the teachers' and students' interaction and there is no experiential learning in most of the studies in the Public School in Greece for learning Greek as Mother tongue. Faithful adherence to the "material" of teaching is proverbial in Greek Education. Recently, school textbooks, focus to the important role of a changing society in the educational process and have been the subject of systematic research and study either through institutions or through individual researchers on an international and national scale.²

1 Kefallinaiou, Eugenia. *Modern Greek Alphabets 1771–1981*. Athens: Paraskinio Publications, 1995

2 Kapsalis – Charalambous, 1995, pp. 113–120. and Vambukas, M. *Introduction to Psychopedagogical research and methodology*. Athens: Grigoris Publications, 1991 and Papadopoulou, Sm. 2004, *The socioemotional teaching of language through the realistic children's fiction books': an example on the subject of Divorce* (in Greek), Athens Gutenberg.

Historical frame

The Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs in 2003 introduced innovations, among which are the Interdisciplinary Unified Curriculum Framework (D.E.P.P.S) and the interdisciplinary approach to knowledge. At D.E.P.P.S. for the teaching of the Greek Language, Literature was included, where the general objectives are focused on experiential speech and the linguistic means of literary works. While the subsequent Analytical Study Programs (A.P.S.) were drawn up in the period 1999–2003 with the aim of modernizing the content of the studies.³ At A.P.S. for the Greek Language Course, Literature as a separate course is included where the general goal is to acquaint students with national and world literature.

The Ministry of Education with its representative bodies (IEP), in its effort to upgrade the quality of education, included in its planning the writing of Anthologies of Literary Texts,⁴ for primary school, in order to replace the three volumes of the old Anthologies. The first book written was the 3rd issue for the 5th and 6th grade in 2001, while in 2006 the 1st issue was written for the 1st and 2nd grade and the 2nd issue for the 3rd and 4th grade. The new Anthologies aim to bring the student into contact with texts that were selected based on specially developed specifications, with a common denominator of certain concepts and values, such as love, honesty, strong character, family, language, national consciousness, orthodoxy, the acceptance of otherness, the universality of Hellenism as well as its current possibilities.⁵

Purpose and objectives of the research

The purpose of this work is to capture the image of the family as it is projected through the analysis of the interpersonal relationships of the family members. The work focuses on the contents of the school textbooks “Anthologies of Literary Texts” of the elementary school which were released in the school year 2006–2007.

As a working hypothesis it is defined that since all texts function as carriers of ideologies, attitudes and are a basic means for the formation of perceptions and

3 Kopidakis, Michalis. HISTORY OF THE GREEK LANGUAGE. Athens: National Bank Educational Foundation Publications, 2010

4 Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs – Pedagogical Institute, “Interdisciplinary Greek Language Curriculum Framework for Primary School, INTRODUCTORY NOTE BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE PEDAGOGICAL INSTITUTE”, 2003, pp. 1–2. <http://ebooks.edu.gr/info/cps/prologos.pdf> (accessed 27/08/2020)

5 GOVERNMENT 303B/13-03-2003 “SUBJECT-BASED UNIFORM FRAMEWORK OF STUDY PROGRAMS (D.E.P.S.) and DETAILED STUDY PROGRAMS (A.P.S.) OF COMPULSORY EDUCATION”, pp. 3745–3777. In: <http://www.pi-schools.gr/download/programs/depps/fek303.pdf> (accessed 27/08/2020). Also Kataki, Harris. The three identities of the Greek family. Athena: Kedros publications, 1994

attitudes on the part of students, they can project and bring the student into contact with the value of the family as well as the interpersonal relationships that develop among its members.

The following scientific questions were formulated from the above working case:

- How often is the institution of the family found in the contents of the Anthologies?
- What forms of family are presented in the Anthologies?
- Which family model is shown in the Anthologies?
- Which interpersonal relationship, between family members, is found most often?

In the context of this research, we will analyze the issues that reflect the institution of the family, either directly or indirectly.⁶ The research is a content analysis of the school textbooks of the Anthologies of Literary Texts of primary education.

RESEARCH DURATION: 14 months (2017–2019)

Research methodology

The research method used for this work is the content analysis method. The use of content analysis was dictated by the research material itself, i.e. books, because they are means of communication that lend themselves to analysis.⁷

Also, a key parameter for the implementation of content analysis is the determination of the classification unit. A taxonomy is the part of the content that is placed in a specific category depending on the purposes of the research being conducted.⁸

The semantic unit was chosen as the unit of classification, which is included in each of the individual units of the program of the Anthologies manuals. The part of the material that was analyzed and in which the meanings and messages of the course content were sought, was the subject of processing which is a subset of the units and is the subject of didactic treatment in a two-hour didactic.

6 Meraklis, Michalis. Greek folklore, volume A, Social. Formation. Athens: Odysseus Publications, 1984. See and Bonidis, Kyriakos. The content of the school textbook as an object of research – Long-term examination of the relevant research and methodological observations. Athens: Metaichmio Publications, 2004.

7 Vambukas Michalis, "Introduction to Psychopedagogical research and methodology", Ed. Grigoris, Athens, 1991, pp. 263–281.

8 Falias, 1993, p. 206. • Diakogeorgiou, Archontoula. FROM PATRIOTIC KNOWLEDGE TO THE STUDY OF THE ENVIRONMENT, Content analysis of the books "We and the world" of grades A-B-C-D of primary school. Rhodes: Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences, Department of Political Science and History, 1999. At: <http://thesis.ekt.gr/thesis-BookReader/id/11978#page/104/mode/2up> (accessed 28/08/2020).

Subcategories of study

From the analysis of the content of the 214 processing topics of the basic program that are registered as teaching subjects in the three issues of the Anthologies of Literary Texts, five individual categories of interpersonal relationships between family members emerged.

The first category that emerged, based on the data analyzed from the Anthologies of Literary Texts, is “Mother-Child Relationships The second category that emerged during the analysis of the data is “Parent-Child Relationships The third category formed during the process of analyzing the material is “Relationships between father and children. The fourth category formed is “Relationships between grandparents and their grandchildren”.

Identifying our topic for investigation

Family is defined as the group of people who are related by blood and usually reside under the same roof. The family has always been one of the most important institutions of human society where various interpersonal relationships are formed between its members. The institution of the family is ancient and was a milestone in the history of humanity, because it took the first shape of social life. The Greek family has been formed on the monogamous institution and comes at the same time from a centuries-old patriarchal tradition.⁹ The structure of the traditional family was preserved longer and more coherently especially in rural areas. However, with urbanism, immigration, low fertility, the professional employment of women, there have been radical changes in the structure, organization and functioning of the family.¹⁰

In the three issues of the new Primary School Anthologies the institution of the family has a strong presence in the texts as in the first issue the family is presented with 29 (46.8%) topics out of a total of 62 topics to be processed, in the second issue the family is presented with 27 (45.76%) subjects out of a total of 59 subjects to be processed, while in the 3rd issue the family is presented with 44 (47.3%) subjects out of a total of 93 subjects to be processed. In this way, we find that the family endures over time and remains a constant of Greek society.¹¹

The family in its nuclear form is presented with the greatest frequency in all three issues. In contrast to the model of the traditional extended family where we find that it is absent, while whenever we have reference to the extended family it

9 Meraklis, 1984, p. 47.

10 Myrizakis, 1981, p. 204.

11 Myrizakis Ioannis, “The elderly in Greece”, Review of Social Research, vol. 42, 1981. See also in: Filias, Vassilis. Introduction to social research methodology and techniques. Athens: Gutenberg Publications, 1993. Also in: Francopoulou, Irini. Education and its constitutional protection. Athens: Sakkoulas Publications, 1986.

is incomplete in terms of composition. Thus, we find that the traditional extended family structure, which was maintained longer and more cohesively, has now been replaced by the traditional family form.

As a model family, the Anthologies of Greek Literature for Children show the typical family in a small-membered form, because as mentioned above in the second part, the composition of the nuclear family is presented in all three issues mostly with small members. Parents with one or two children are mainly presented, while there are few references to families with three and many children. Motherhood is not presented as a value, as there are very few references to families with three and many children, despite the great demographic problem the country is facing.¹²

There are no references to single-parent families nor to children growing up out of wedlock, models which are widely found in today's Greek society. While other family types are not found in the Anthologies despite the fact that same-sex couples can enter into a cohabitation agreement and adopt children in today's Greek society. Also, no references are made to orphaned children or childless couples. In addition, the phenomenon of divorce, which shows increasing trends in our time, is not mentioned.

In the interpersonal relationships between family members in the first and third issue, the references to the relationship between mother and child predominate with percentages of 31% and 38.64% respectively. While also in the second issue, references to the relationship between mother and child are in second place with a rate of 29.63%. Thus, we find that in the anthologies the close relationship that exists throughout time between mother and child is more often displayed.

In the second place of references, in terms of interpersonal relationships, are the relationships between parents and children. More specifically in the first and third issues they are in second place with percentages of 24.15% and (25%) respectively. While in the first issue, references to the relationships between parents and children predominate with a rate of 29.63%.

In the third place of references are the relations between father and child. More specifically, in the second and third issues they are in third place with 18.52% and 22.73% respectively, while in the first issue they are in fourth place with 13.8%. In the relations between father and child, in the Anthologies, the change that has taken place in today's Greek society is reflected to a certain extent, as the father today participates more actively in the upbringing of the children, in contrast to the past when it was the sole responsibility of the mother.

There are few references to the relationships between grandparents and grandchildren. More specifically, in the first and second issues they are in the penultimate position with 17.25% and 14.82% respectively, while in the third issue they are in the last position with 4.54%. Thus we notice that the traditional extended family is

12 At: <https://www.cnn.gr/ellada/story/201619/dimografiko-provlima-molis-8-ekatommyria-o-plithysmos-stin-ellada-eos-to-2050> (accessed 27/07/2019). See also Georgiou – Nielsen, Myrto. *The family in elementary school textbooks*. Athens: Kedros Publications, 1980

not presented in the Anthologies as the grandparents, as reflected in the texts, do not intervene in the family but their role is determined by their relationship with the grandchildren.

In the last place with the fewest mentions are sibling relationships. More specifically, in the third issue it is in the penultimate position with a percentage of 9.09%, while in the first and second issues they are in the last position with percentages of 13.8% and 11.1% respectively.

Findings

Attempting a review of the results of previous research with the results of the present research we find that:

- The institution of the family is a timeless value which is a constant of Greek Society as well as in today's as well as in the oldest school textbooks the family remains a basic and primary value.
- In contrast to the earlier school textbooks which presented the traditional extended family, today's Anthologies present the typical Greek family in a small-membered form.
- The interpersonal relationship between mother and child remains dominant in both old and current school textbooks.
- There are no issues of sharing modern categories of real life problems and problem solving in family where the adults decide: issues such as this of health, friendship and loneliness, jealousy between brothers and sisters or conflicts between members of the family, the different recognition of a boy or a girl as the chosen one and other stereotypes. These could be a research that can give as a sequence of this and in progress other results.¹³

Conclusions

The new Greek Anthologies of Literary Texts satisfactorily present the institution of the family as well as the interpersonal relationships that develop between family members. However, today's Anthologies, which were written twenty years ago, need renewal to be able to present to students today's social reality, regarding the institution of the family.¹⁴ Thus, it is proposed to enrich the Anthologies with texts that will present the new forms of family encountered in Greek society, orphaned children, the phenomenon of divorce so that they respond to the family reality of each child.

¹³ Papadopoulou, Smaragda. Discussing Moral Issues of Pain Language With Children, *Open Journal for Studies in Philosophy* (Vol. 2, No. 2) Page: 47–52, 2018.

¹⁴ Frederickou, Alexandra. Jenny behind the glass. REPRESENTATIONS OF THE LEAVES IN PRIMARY SCHOOL LANGUAGE TEACHING MANUALS. Athens: Greek Letters Publications, 1995.

It is also suggested to enrich the Anthologies with texts which will multifacetedly present interpersonal relationships between family members, gender and age relationships, social data of each nation in order to respond to children's experiences and not present only a beautified version of family relationships that do not reflect the current version of reality and the needs of modern Greek society in comparison of these from other countries or continents.

INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS	DIRECT REPORT	INDIRECT REFERENCE	TOTAL	PERCENTAGE
MOTHER CHILDREN	9	12	19	38,64%
PARENTS CHILDREN	2	10	12	25%
FATHER CHILDREN	1	10	12	22,73%
GRANDPARENTS GRANDCHILDREN	3	2	5	11,36%
BROTHERS	1	4	5	11,36%
TOTAL	8	35	43	100%

INDICATIVE TABLE 1. Distribution of interpersonal relationships between family members in the Anthology "With calculation and with a dream"

Source: Anthology of Literary Texts for the 5th and 6th Grades "With rationality and with a dream"



RESEARCH INDICATORS GRAPH. Percentage of interpersonal relationships in the Anthology "With a thought and a dream"

Source: Anthology of Literary Texts for the 5th and 6th Grades "In rationality and with dreaming"

In conclusion, through Literature, students have the opportunity to learn about the institution of the family, which is a timeless value of the utmost importance for humans, through great literary texts that contribute to the all-round development of children.

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Abstract

This research of teaching materials in Modern Greek Language education of primary public schools records and studies the mother tongue of Greek related to the family issues in the contents of the elementary school curriculum. It is an analysis of the content of the language books and literature for children as an anthology for learning reading. Content analysis which was used for this attempt is a method which concerns less the tone of the text and more the ideas expressed. This research method examined the frequency at which the concept of the family is found, the forms and patterns of family shown, as well as interpersonal relationships between its members to find the concept of family as it appears at the text books in relation with contemporary needs and situations of Greek Society.

Key words: Modern Greek Language Education, Primary Public Schools, Language Books and Literature, Family issues, School Curricula

Prof. Stavros Kamaroudis

University of Western Macedonia, School of Social and Human Studies,
Department of Pedagogy, Florina, Greece

email: akamarou@uowm.gr

ORCID: I don't have anyone