



## PERSUASION: THE POWER OF PERSUASION AS A TEACHING TOOL FOR LEARNING GREEK AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

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### Abstract

In our study, we examine the compelling reason and the ancient Greek tradition as method of argumentation as this was born and cultivated in the Rhetoric art at the 5th to 4th century BC. We implement the implications of its use in the teaching and learning of Greek as a second or foreign language in everyday life and at school. The most important orators including Demosthenes, Lysias, Aeschinus and Isocrates are our examples for creating teaching tools for our teaching suggestions. Aristotle as a philosopher, teacher and orator inspired scholars from around the world and he is also included in this suggestion. Especially, on the occasion of the year in honor of Aristotle in 2016, we refer to an example inspired from his work for our didactics in Greek language applications. Today, the Greek educational system includes argumentation and the Rhetoric art as part of its curriculum in primary and secondary education. The aim and idea is to teach students how to think, to ponder, to justify and document their views, to argue and learn a foreign language with the help of teachers who are scientifically trained for this role. This article aims to highlight the value of persuasion and the power that is why not only the justification and documentation but a view and use arguments with which to convince his interlocutor in the teaching of Greek as a second or foreign language.

**Keywords:** teaching of Greek as a foreign language, convincing reason, argumentation, rhetoric, speech, writing

### 1. Introduction

Rhetoric is the ability to find a believable argument on any subject; it is a convincing kind of discourse. The art of rhetorical discourse is based entirely on the art of speech, being both art and science. The argument is a means of convincing discourse, used in order to justify one's view (Papanikolaou, 1971). The theoretical approach to the issue

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that concerns us takes into account all the transnational and national changes faced by educators and students in the modern Greek educational system during their teaching work, the social structures that influence them, the European tactics, the awareness and alertness in relation with multiple identities that make students deal with difficult behavioral and communication problems under teacher coordination (Mihalas, 1996). During this process, a strong development of multiculturalism in Greece is noted, as well as internal changes of the sexes moving through various regions [for example, in the previous decade we could talk more about Albanian and Russian minorities, while today we face the challenge of integrating pupils from Afghanistan, Romania, Sudan, Egypt, Syria etc. into Greek schools (Papadimitriou, 2000)]. At the same time, the interest of moving populations, due to wars in the wider region, calls for the need for a systematic as well as attractive approach to the teaching of Greek as a second or foreign language and as a *Lingua Franca* or, a language that will become a bridge for the passage to the Greek country, which for many people marks the end of the immigration journey for a variety of reasons (political, cultural, random, etc.).

As the lack of systematic state training in Greece, along with a common teaching methodology in the Greek Language Learning Centers on the new conditions of teaching creates difficulties, mass cultures are violently incorporated and with constant changes in the Greek school, due to the fact that society has been transforming rapidly over the last decade. Often, nearly 20 years after entering the second millennium, we discover on the news, negative incidents among foreign pupils, issues between people of different religion and/or origin, or between people of the same nationality, (European Commission data from ECHO Factsheet - Greece, December 2016, Ninopoulou, 2014).

It is totally legitimate that specialists of intercultural education and education of repatriates and Greeks in Greece and abroad are puzzled by the attitudes of parents and teachers, when dealing with different attitudes and behaviors than their own. The fact that this country (Greece) is a geographical and cultural crossroad is driving the restless researcher into looking for solutions for developing an effective and correct methodology of language teaching and a flexible adaptation of education to new conditions as a model body, in order to strengthen educational effectiveness and policy during the dissemination of weak languages on a universal basis (Reynolds, 2011).

We assume that the multiple identities that influence the personal development and critical thinking of each student- Greek learner at both an individual level and to the extent that the collective affects the individual, are the reason why we are conducting this study on the training of the teachers, for a humanitarian education through linguistic communication (Hudges, 2014). This need for coexistence and cooperation to find effective training for teachers advancing the teaching of Modern Greek in the Balkans has prompted us to experiment in our teaching material with original ideas from the linguistic and cultural environment of Greek education.

Previously, we found it necessary to investigate the corresponding training of other peoples, examining data from similar training in the form of conferences, scientific meetings, in-school training, language workshops, summer schools. Therefore,

we find in these foreign language learning strategies a transformation of existing educational techniques at an international level, which has influenced us to compose a new model, an idea based on what we have learned from examples of other similar learning models, corresponding relative circumstances, leaving the modern structure of our teaching methodology free to function, in the context of improvisation, inventing a pioneering model of training, bearing in mind that, as is the case with everything new, there are risks of failure and success involved (Papadopoulou, 2004).

## **2. From Theory to Practice**

Our model is based on all-round cognitive, social and emotional learning through critical thinking, spontaneous and organized discourse and dialogue inside the group, demonstration of body language experiences, as well as with every form of linguistic expression (Psychopedis, 2000). The art of discourse was slow to manifest itself systematically by rules that determine the spoken word. In ancient Greece, the speeches of our orators make an irresistible case that speaking can be the highest expression of freedom. The ancient Greek word "rhetoric" means "art of speech" and occupied an important place both in ancient world and the modern one (Aristotle, 1984).

In the prevailing view, rhetoric was defined as the power of "persuasion". Persuasion is achieved by speaking. Aristotle states that the rhetorical art is neutral, able to negotiate both sides of a matter. It determines what is most interesting, fair or honest, and uses a method clearly of its own, utilized in our teaching model.

Demonstration method, which is also often used in the scientific environment of western training and educational models that have similarities to the Greek one, was chosen in our case (McKee, 2007). It is characterized by a practice of exposing a process to the participants in a living way of creating a reality like the one we seek to create in the classroom. At the same time, with this expression, the trainer can explain what he / she is doing by incorporating the participant in the process into a state of awareness of the process as a teaching practice, (Newell & ... 2015).

The aforementioned process does not exclude the use of mental maps, oral evaluations of the process as metacognition, (Kontos & Malagardi, 2011). These features are also considered positive in selecting an application on this method. Using the method of demonstration during the use of argumentation and persuasive language, the trainer shows in practice how the language learning in the language of learning is done, with the ideological approach of a thematic unit with interest to participants as a good practice. In this way, the participants, as learners, experience the process as a role play, and can then transfer good practices to teaching classes with young students and children in various schools, who wish to learn a second language. (Henry, 2011).

### 3. Description of Indicative Application

#### a) Preparatory stage

In creation of a collaborative climate in the classroom, we specify learning objectives for argumentation and the goals of role-taking in a convincing language match. Trainees are briefed on how much time has the speaker available for his/ her first speech, how the rebuttal takes place and the ability of the other side, supporting a different view, to interrupt the speakers, to retort or pose questions (Dundar, 2013).

#### b) Spatial organization and environment arrangement in groups

In the game of argument roles, groups are formed, at will. The groups come to an agreement (in about 15 minutes), regarding the contents of the cognitive object (value, timeliness, dilemma in a situation of one of the participants in terms of a lifestyle or behavior in search.) For example, the issue of help or negative attitude towards Syrian refugees at a school in Oreokastro, Thessaloniki, the war as a human historical presence and choice and political interests, altruism in a problem of saving the other, euthanasia and the death penalty, the compulsory character of education whether education makes us better people, or whether it is enough to have been born to be good (Good for the community is the one who does not hurt anyone? Who has actively helped fellow humans or animals, without having any self-serving interest?).

Then, come the following teaching steps:

- Preparation of the resources on which the participants will work, sharing roles among the participants.
- Preparation of an assessment activity for cognitive and collaborative goals

The action of discharging the team and returning in reality beyond the demonstration of the implementation model is common in groups of argumentation; so is the discussion about how the orator-speakers experienced the process. In this phase, they state whether they have encountered difficulties in communicating within the group and how the speech match could have been improved by cooperation between members. The free assessment of the process is an exercise of oral speech, with dialogue and a cultural basis of views exchange. It is important to respect the opposite view as a quest for truth, to learn to observe rules in a discussion so that speakers do not speak at the same time, resulting in incomprehension. The ability to observe the other and listen to his/her arguments is improved throughout the process, if we insert a jury to judge the duty.

### 4. Argumentation Cards: Teaching Practice for Language Learning

#### 4.1 Thematic Unity in an Example of Teaching: Behavior towards Foreigners

Symbolically, participants record positive and negative phrases during the formulation of positions-arguments relating to the subject. They place them depending on the attitude towards the different-Foreign in two polls. One says “yes” to strangers and the other says “no”, noting that it is not necessary that what we write is our position, but

arguments that are usually heard from different sides. This exercise in the written language allows students of Greek as a second language to ask how a word is spoken, for example, how they formulate in a proper syntax a sentence they want to express with correct spelling and rich vocabulary, in order to persuade the potential recipient of the card. Learning through this game also involves the oral speech that emerges as a natural way of learning when working together in the group and communicating with the teacher / coordinator of the argumentation matches [identifying with the teacher of the second language, (Nakas, 1987)].

Alternative creative teaching rhetoric game of the proposed activities after the stage of ... "the Polis"-Description of the activities:

The educator can recommend to the participants appropriate teaching activities for their pupils / students etc., and they can suggest ideas for improving the process with the "Polls", which are our own creative construction for teaching activity.

The participants, with the help of the cards they drew, seven from each group or three per person and per ballot, compose convincing monologues, to give out to their audience. They decide themselves, which of these papers they will hold as their opinion.

Then follows a discussion about how what we chose and presented, is different or the same, compared to our original argument card or cards. We each mention separately if we would once again choose the same (card), according to our belief, or another one, if not all of the previous phases had preceded it. Here the correction of spoken and written word/discourse, as well as the vocabulary enrichment, is an important part of a decisive process of language learning, as a processing of the first writing, or an announcement in a rebuttal at an individual level (Yi Song, Paul Deane, Edith Aurora Graf and Peter van Rijn, 2013). The trainee, i.e., first expresses himself/herself through the group and then as an individual with freedom of speech.

#### **4.2 General Alternative Rhetorical Language Learning Strategies for Greek as a Second Language in the Classroom:**

- Familiarity with the nature of the rhetorical argument, the types of reasoning and the sophistries (Fukuda & Shinji 2003, Krieger 2005).
- Implementing correct, according to the Greek grammar, structure of the text, acquaintance with types of prologues and epilogues, structural words and phraseology.
- Debate (see Krieger, 2005).
- Promotion of group spirit
- Cooperation and respect for opposing views
- Educating the audience/ listener
- Ability to define and creatively resolve problems
- Familiarization with global search
- Understanding and opposing arguments, using ideas-making techniques, eg. The one of the six thinking hats by De Bono (De Bono 2004)

- Practice of summarizing a speech (Martnet, 1976)
- Getting acquainted with research methodology
- Material search, collection, selection and synthesis (Nakas, 1987, Martinet A., 1976).

In the selected text, the distinction between people in need or not, conceals an ideological inducement of the teacher, to use it, in a foreign language learning classroom. Students have the opportunity to listen to the ancient text, to study its translation in Modern Greek, as well as the related meanings, before engaging in arguments using spontaneous or motivating speech techniques. The teacher-trainer adapts the text to the level of language and understanding of the participants by changing the translation.

The text: *“It is not natural for the poor and those who have nothing to behave cheekily, rather, it is natural for those who have many more than they need; it is also unnatural for those who are physically weak, but natural for those who are strong, and unnatural for those who are old, but natural for those who are young and with a young mind. Because, rich people can buy out risks, while poor ones are coerced to behave, due to their poverty; young people are deemed forgivable by older people, while older people making the same mistakes are condemned by both old and young. And while physically strong people are able to behave as cheekily as they want, without fearing for their safety, physically weak people are unable, either to defend themselves when wronged, or to prevail over others, in case they desperately want to be cheeky. Thus, I get the feeling that the prosecutor spoke of my audacity, not in an important way, rather in a funny one, joking, not because he had the intention to persuade you that I am brazen, but because he wanted to make fun of me, to mock me. You see, he imagines, that he is doing something great, something important”.*

### **4.3 Applied Rhetoric Art in learning Greek as a Modern Second Language**

Proem (§1–3): The prosecutor’s motives – Narration – Proof/documentation (§4–20): Attempt to overturn the prosecutor’s claim about the physical ability of the “weak one” – Epilogue (§21–27): Appeal to judges for a fair verdict Lysias: In speech defending the weak one, Lysias, 24.1–27.

The speaker, in our case, a person with a physical disability and therefore a symbol of a person belonging to a vulnerable social group, speaks before the (Parliament) House of 500 and tries to maintain the right to receive the annual cash allowance granted by the public fund to the disabled and the poor. This example may be drawn from the ancient Greek literature, but is relative to timeless situations and contemporary cases of everyday life in Greece (Polychronidis, 2014). On the subject of the selection of students / trainees who are invited to investigate translated ancient Greek sources and modern themes, "rhetorical events" are organized, regardless of the level of Greek learning, thus, methodologically strengthening the engagement with the learning language (Williams, 2009).

## 5. Discussion

According to an overview of the literature, as well as the case studies of language learning, that answer our hypotheses, as appropriate/ κατά περίπτωση, we conclude that our teaching proposal is expressed as an alternative model of the existing foreign language learning strategies, so that an experimental study group is able to exist for more time and we are able to compare results (Weinreich U., 1972). We believe that the present reference to the specific teaching venture will lead the researchers of rhetoric and the teaching methodology of language to implement the practices presented here (Newell & Bloome & Hirvela, 2015, Shirkhani & Mansour Fahimb, 2011, Yi Song, Paul Deane&, 2013, Reynolds, 2011). To sum it up, we present useful practices for the aforementioned texts, or other thematic fields, according to the needs and the interests of the participants in the six categories that can form a teaching method unit for a foreign language, through making arguments, with the following order of application:

- Expressive reading
- Role playing
- Impulsive discourse/ word/ speech
- Motivating discourse/ word/ speech
- Debate
- Rhetorical events.

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