Portfolio Assessment of Speaking Skills in English as a Foreign Language in Primary Education

[Αξιολόγηση μέσω Φακέλου Μαθητή των Δεξιοτήτων Προφορικού Λόγου στα Αγγλικά ως Ξένη Πλώσα στην Πρωτοβάθμια Εκπαίδευση]

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This study focuses on the assessment of speaking skills with reference to young learners. This is achieved by using an alternative method of assessment, namely portfolios. The general aim is to introduce learners’ to portfolio assessment of their speaking skills and to promote further learning and autonomy making, thus, learning and assessment coexist in a non-threatening mode. Three methodological tools are used for this research; a needs analysis questionnaire addressing the pupils’ needs of the fifth grade of a Greek primary school, the European Portfolio of Languages (ELP) - used in tandem with the oral portfolio Dossier - and a final evaluation questionnaire given to the pupils after the completion of the oral portfolio project. Based on the statistical analysis of pupils’ evaluation results and the teacher’s observation throughout the school year, it is evident that the oral portfolio denotes a time-consuming and laborious assessment process. Nevertheless, the pupils see it as an interesting experience and are willing to use it again in the future. In conclusion, students’ portfolios are an innovative method of assessment that can actually promote the development of speaking skills and young learners’ metacognitive strategies in the EFL classroom, and raise their interest in learning.

Η παρούσα μελέτη επικεντρώνεται στην αξιολόγηση των προφορικών δεξιοτήτων με αναφορά στους νεαρούς μαθητές. Αυτό επιτυγχάνεται χρησιμοποιώντας μία εναλλακτική μέθοδο αξιολόγησης, συγκεκριμένα τους φακέλους μαθητών (portfolios). Ο γενικός στόχος είναι η εισαγωγή των μαθητών στην αξιολόγηση των προφορικών τους δεξιοτήτων μέσω του πορτφόλιο και η προώθηση της περαιτέρω μάθησης και αυτονομίας κάνοντας έτσι την μάθηση και την αξιολόγηση να συνυπάρχουν με έναν μη απειλητικό τρόπο. Τρία μεθοδολογικά εργαλεία χρησιμοποιούνται για αυτή την έρευνα: ένα ερωτηματολόγιο ανάλυσης αναγκών που απευθύνεται στις ανάγκες των μαθητών της πέμπτης τάξης ενός Ελληνικού δημοτικού σχολείου, το Ευρωπαϊκό Πορτφόλι Πλώσων (ΕΠΠ) - το οποίο χρησιμοποιείται παράλληλα με το Ντοσιέ (φάκελος) του προφορικού φακέλου - και ένα τελικό ερωτηματολόγιο αξιολόγησης που δίνεται στους μαθητές μετά την ολοκλήρωση του προγράμματος με το προφορικό φάκελο. Η στατιστική ανάλυση βασισμένη στα
Introduction

Although formal assessment is a mainstay of educational programmes (Butterfield et al., 1999), there has been a recent shift in pedagogy to alternative methods of assessment, which, among other things, is believed to enhance learners’ metacognitive knowledge and strategies leading to the development of lifelong learning skills (Council of Europe, 2001). One of the most prominent forms of alternative and authentic assessment in the language field is portfolio assessment.

Speaking skills assessment in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in Greek primary education is undervalued, because alternative methods of assessment suggested by the Greek Government Gazette (2003, p. 381) are scarcely used, as witnessed by the class teacher and author of this paper. The focus of this study will be to define young learners’ speaking skills needs and difficulties through needs analysis and then try to improve and develop them by using an alternative method of learning and assessment, i.e. oral portfolios, following, thus, the National curriculum specifications both for tasks development and assessment. The European Language Portfolio (ELP), used for the purposes of this study, aims to enhance speaking skills in the English language, through the assignment of communicative speaking tasks that focus on describing people, narration (story-telling), explaining a procedure, and on information transfer. These tasks agree with the objectives set for the A1/A2 level of the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 24) regarding productive skills development. Will the oral portfolio together with the communicative speaking tasks make a difference in learning and assessment in the current teaching context? This is the main research question addressed in the present study.

The official EFL curriculum for the Greek state primary schools

The Greek EFL curriculum for primary education (Greek Government Gazette, 2003) is based on the Common European Framework of Reference (Council of Europe, 2001). There are three axes on which the curriculum is set, namely, that of literacy, plurilingualism and pluriculturalism. On a syllabus level this means that the pupils of the 4th to 6th grade of the primary school should acquire gradually the following skills: receptive and productive skills, strategies for learning and communication, parallel use of the L1 and L2 and development of multicultural conscience.
Assessment in the curriculum is defined as evaluation of the teaching aims and objectives, the teacher and the pupils (Greek Government Gazette, 2003, p. 381). In relation to pupils, assessment does not concern only learners' language knowledge, but also their ability to use it in various and authentic situations. Assessment methods should be varied and the criteria should be based on the predetermined learning objectives avoiding the comparison of learners with each other. The use of pen-and-paper tests, which assess mostly reading and writing skills, should be combined with alternative forms of assessment, if all four skills are to be assessed properly (ibid, p. 381). Communicative tasks are at the heart of alternative assessment methods, i.e. pupils’ portfolios, project work, self- and group- assessment. In the next section, the classroom material and assessment methods will be compared against the curriculum principles, in order to justify the use of portfolio assessment in this study.

**Implemented syllabus and curriculum compatibility: considerations for portfolio assessment**

The textbook and workbook used in the particular teaching context are *Fun Way 2* (Pedagogical Institute, 2000). The book syllabus, that is, “the content or subject matter of an individual subject” (White, 1988, p. 4) covers the four language skills to one degree or another. It belongs to the Type A syllabi, which are product-oriented focusing “on what is to be learnt by pre-selecting objectives and content before any consideration of the specific learners and by assessing success in terms of achievement” (White, 1988, p. 44). This text-based syllabus comes in conflict with the curriculum ideology; several inconsistencies of the syllabus methodology make it far from communicative. Namely, there is no integration of skills and writing activities are missing. Negotiation of meaning and communication are partially used. Also, activities do not exploit language in a realistic way. Dialogue - active learning - is not used in all kinds of activities. Thus, project and group work are not promoted, either. Lastly, there is no parallel use of the L1 and the L2 language in the activities of the book.

When it comes to the reality of the classroom, the assessment of the particular learners’ performance in the foreign language does not fully reflect the curriculum specifications, either. The technique that is employed by many state school teachers - the author included - is teacher-made, paper and pencil tests, i.e. progress tests, which do not assess oracy skills, mainly due to time limitations. As Brown and Hudson (2002) argue, a mismatch between curriculum objectives and tests can make students want to study only whatever is on the tests.

Since the written standardised tests are the only method of assessment for these primary pupils, they should be complimented, as the curriculum suggests, too (Greek Government Gazette, 2003, p. 381). In terms of speaking skills assessment, this should be done through communicative tasks, which, in turn, call for the use of alternative assessment methods (ibid, p. 381).

**Assessment and alternative assessment: Portfolio**

**Testing and assessing young learners**

Katz (1997, p. 1) very aptly characterises young learners - age group from six to twelve years old - as “notoriously poor test-takers: perhaps because they are sometimes confused by being asked questions that they think the tester must already know the answers to”! For young learners, who come to the second language classroom without their choice and
without still recognizing the usefulness of a foreign language, a special approach to the language assessment\(^2\) is warranted. McKay (2006, p. 25) narrows down what makes young learners’ treatment special to three points: \textit{growth, literacy and vulnerability}. Since they grow cognitively, socially, emotionally and physically at the same time, young learners are unstable. Their literacy knowledge and skills’ development are a slow process for most of them, and they are particularly vulnerable to criticism or failure resulting from assessment.

\textbf{Portfolios: The ELP and the Junior Portfolio}

According to Trim (1997, p. 3) “a language portfolio is a document... in which individual learners... can assemble over a period of time, and display in a systematic way, a record of their qualifications, achievements and experiences in language learning, together with samples of work they have themselves produced”. The portfolio used in this study is the European Language Portfolio documented to fulfill both the assessment and learning functions.

The \textit{European Language Portfolio}\(^3\) (ELP) is the official educational tool produced by the Language Policy Division of the Council of Europe. It was launched in 2001 at a pan-European level to celebrate the European Year of Languages. The ELP is divided in three separate but interconnected sections (Council for Cultural Cooperation, 2000), namely the \textit{Language Passport} (language certificates), the \textit{Language Biography} (language experiences) and the \textit{Dossier} (samples of personal work). Kohonen (2000, p. 8) looks at the \textit{Dossier} as “a dynamic and flexible pedagogical tool that can be used regularly in language teaching”, in contrast to the Biography and the Passport sections that are more detached from the daily language classroom.

The \textit{Junior Portfolio} (CILT, 2006) is examined in this study. It was recently designed by the Centre on Information of Language Teaching and Research (CILT) and it specifically addresses young learners; it corresponds to the linguistic development of the particular learners (past A1/A2 CEFR level) and it is child-friendly, i.e. it is colourful, illustrated and easy to follow. It is, in fact, a ring-folder with an attractive blue plastic hard cover. Just as the ELP, it is divided in the three main sections mentioned above. The \textit{Dossier} is the most important part of the ELP for young learners, as it is a personal collection of their own work (CILT, 2006, pp. 17-18). Any special piece of their work can be filed here illustrating their experiences and achievement.

\textbf{Oracy skills development in primary education and needs analysis}

\textit{Communicative speaking tasks}

Communicative tasks can help towards the effective assessment of oracy skills. Nunan (1993, p. 59) defines a communicative task as “...a piece of classroom work which involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is principally focused on meaning rather than form”. If speaking skills development is to receive more attention in the syllabus, then this has to be done through more speaking tasks that are also more communicative. Apart from the irregularities between the national curriculum and the coursebook syllabus mentioned earlier, it is assumed that a particular syllabus should match as closely as possible the needs of the particular learners. Thus, it should not be designed in a vacuum. This is feasible by analysing students’ needs.
Case study: Oral portfolio implementation

Participants

This study involves a mixed-ability, mixed-sex class of sixteen Greek learners of English at the fifth grade of a state primary school. Students attend three English teaching periods per week, lasting 45 minutes each. The level of proficiency expected to be achieved by the pupils at the end of this grade roughly corresponds to the A1/mid A2 level (Basic user) of the Common European Framework of Reference (Council of Europe, 2001). With regard to oral skills, A2 level pupils are expected to be able to comprehend and produce simple phrases and sentences related to familiar topics, handle short social exchanges, simply describe people and places, ask for repetition or clarification and, generally, satisfy their most basic communication needs in everyday situations.

Needs analysis questionnaire

There are many methods for conducting needs analysis. Using a questionnaire is the most practical and thus, the most common needs analysis tool. This is so because it can be adjusted to the language and level of proficiency of the learners. It can also provide tabulated results, which are easier to analyse. The main purpose of the questionnaire (Appendix I) administered to the particular class of primary school learners was to define their subjective needs in speaking skills. It was given to the pupils together with its Greek translation in the classroom at the beginning of a lesson, early in the school year.

Questionnaire results and evaluation

The particular questionnaire focused mostly on learners’ needs in terms of skills development. This was the reason, why section C (Appendix I) was disproportioned in comparison to the other sections. The data collected from the questionnaire analysis showed that pupils reported their willingness to produce language in English, although they felt that speaking is more difficult for them than writing or rote learning of vocabulary and grammar. Additionally, they felt that speaking was practiced less in class and most of them would prefer to have more oral activities. Their communicative nature to learning were also shown by their preference to work in class, either in groups or alone. The fact that they were in favour of innovative forms of teaching and assessment was consolidated by their almost absolute unanimity about self-evaluation, too. In such a traditional text-based classroom with pen-and-paper test routines, learners’ answers denoted both eagerness and preference to alternative methods of teaching and assessment. It is in children’s nature to be explorative and innovative, so we should not only give them roots but also wings, as Donaldson (1978) would argue, providing them with challengeable learning tasks and with self-involving assessment tools.

Rationale for using an oral portfolio as an assessment tool

As the questionnaire results showed, the particular learners needed more speaking practice in English, but they also needed an unthreatening environment, in order to view oral activities as something within their grasp. The oral portfolio can provide such an environment, where learning and assessment are a natural, experimental and harmless process. Additionally, it is an assessment and learning tool, compliant with the National curriculum specifications.
The ELP and the Dossier

The Junior Portfolio (see earlier discussion) booklet of each pupil was accompanied by a cardboard folder that constituted the Dossier. Both were kept in the classroom. Since this was an oral portfolio, the Dossier consisted – by the end of the project - of pupils’ audio recordings of the three out of the four oral tasks performed throughout the year, of notes and summaries that helped them with the performance of the oral tasks, and evaluative forms. A thorough analysis of portfolio tasks and its components follows below.

Implementation of the portfolio

The oral portfolio was implemented in the academic year 2008-2009 for a period of six months. The idea of the oral portfolio was introduced to the pupils at the beginning of the school year and they were informed that they needed to be equipped with a recording equipment (e.g. a micro-tape recorder, an mp-3/-4 or a cell phone with recording function). Moreover, the parents, as well as the headmaster of the school, were notified of the new component of oral assessment.

The work with the Junior Portfolio, as well as with oral task performance and assessment, was ideally done once a week. By the end of the oral portfolio project an evaluation questionnaire was completed by the pupils (Appendix II). Additionally, as a gesture of appreciation, the teacher distributed to the pupils a certificate of achievement (Appendix III) to take home with their portfolio.

Portfolio tasks and components

The Dossier of the portfolio contained four speaking tasks, so that they could be easily and evenly distributed throughout the school year. It was also thought, that four tasks would be enough to keep young learners’ enthusiasm high. Due to the transient nature of speaking, students’ performance had to be captured and recorded in order to be available for review and analysis after the live performance both by the pupils themselves and by the teacher. A sample of transcripts of the taped tasks can be viewed in Appendix IV.

The four tasks were oral tasks for young learners widely suggested in the literature (McKay, 2006; Heaton, 1990; Underhill, 1987; Byrne, 1986). They were chosen because they met the National curriculum specifications about using communicative tasks (Greek Government Gazette, 2003, p. 381) and because they fell into the A1/A2 level of the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 24). The oral assessment tasks are the following presented in the order they were performed:

   a. Presentation of a person they know well (Description).
   b. Story telling and re-telling based on a book (Appendix V).
   c. Performance task; explaining how to make something (Procedure).
   d. Information transfer task; explaining where to place household items on a worksheet according to others’ description (taken from Ioannou- Georgiou & Pavlou, 2003; see Appendix VI).

All four tasks are characterized by communicative authenticity. In line with Underhill (1987), all these tasks are communicative to an extent. The author explains that, “when a learner says something that is relevant and true (for himself at least), to someone else who is interested and has not heard it before (from the speaker, at least), then that act of speech is communicative” (ibid, p. 8). Accordingly, these tasks are authentic to the extent that we all
need at one time or another to describe things, to transfer information accurately and talk about something we have witnessed. These features are more evident in the fourth task, which also embodies the information transfer technique. Also, a communicative feature of the fourth task is the challenge that it provides by creating suspense for the outcome of the task.

The performance of the first three tasks was tape recorded both by the pupils and by the teacher. The last task was not recorded, because of the noise level anticipated in pair work, but it was evaluated using classroom observation and self-assessment forms. Pupils were allowed to use notes/realia for their oral performances. For instance, for the third performance task the pupils could bring the materials/photos they needed for the explanation of the procedure (i.e. of a construction, a snack, a recipe).

Teacher’s and learners’ assessment tools

Alternative assessment should satisfy the same psychometric qualities, as do conventional tests, a fact accredited by many academics in the relevant literature (Bachman and Palmer, 1996; Brown and Hudson, 1998a/1998b; Council of Europe, 2001; inter alia). Validity, reliability and feasibility are the three fundamental qualities that any method of assessment needs to meet. For the teacher’s assessment and the pupils’ self-evaluation of the oral tasks in the current portfolio, the methods used to minimize subjectivity in scoring and increase validity and reliability are rating scale rubrics and checklists (Appendix VII). All rating scale rubrics consist of three scales of language ability and three to four evaluation criteria. For the sake of sampling and demonstrating evidence, in Appendix VIII there is an assessed oral task taken from a pupil’s portfolio dossier.

Evaluation of the oral portfolio

Reflection of the assessment procedures of the oral tasks

One of the basic merits of portfolios is the possibility to collect the documentation of children’s learning achievements into a coherent whole (Stiggins, 2005). The assessment of the speaking skills in the particular case study was done through two tools; through the Junior Portfolio booklet and through the rating scales and checklists of the oral tasks filed in the Dossier. The former played the role of an “organiser of learning” and of an overall assessment (self-assessment) of pupils’ speaking skills and progress throughout the year. The Dossier of the oral portfolio, on the other hand, was the core of the study used for a scrutinised oral task assessment on the part of teachers, pupils and parents, in extent. The participation of the pupils in the portfolio assessment and their effort to perform the tasks were valued the most, so the certificate of achievement was accredited to all. Undoubtedly, the best judges to evaluate the oral portfolio are the teacher and pupils involved. Their evaluations follow below.

Teacher’s evaluation and findings

For the sake of clarity, the difficulties that portfolio development and implementation presented will be differentiated to practical and technical ones. The practical difficulties related to the procedures and processes of portfolio assessment. The most obvious one was that of the workload versus time limit. Although the particular portfolio assessment was restricted to speaking skills, it was marginally accomplished within the scheduled year plan. Moreover, timelines were hard to meet, because of forgetfulness and absences on the part
of the pupils, and unexpected school activities. As a result, some taped performances were lost and some pupils abstained from the tasks.

Class observation showed that pupils took the four oral tasks seriously and they worked hard on them. Nevertheless, it was a stressful time for them when it came to recording their performance. Procedures of the oral portfolio were time-consuming disorienting some pupils to believe that portfolio analysis is a way to miss the traditional English lesson. Lastly, the recording of the three oral tasks presented some delays occasionally, since machines were not always trustworthy. In such cases, the teacher, who, in any case, recorded all performances, made a copy for the pupils who did not have their own recordings.

The technical problems stem from the nature of the oral tasks being assessed. By examining the tasks for evidence of the psychometric qualities mentioned above the following conclusions were reached. On the one hand, validity of inferences was established to an extent because of the unanimity of the oral tasks for all, and of the assessment of tasks by one teacher only as the involvement of more assessors would jeopardise the validity of inferences drawn. On the other hand, reliability, i.e. objectivity in marking (Koretz, 1998), and feasibility were enhanced with the construction of analytic rating scales rubrics and checklists, as well as the use of clear criteria. All these made marking semi-objective, consistent and practical, although some subjectivity remained, due to the nature of the assessment of the oral. However, practicality was hindered in the case of the fourth task, which could not be recorded due to classroom noise.

Self-assessment created a non-competitive environment in the classroom and that led to a beneficial washforward effect® of portfolio assessment. Moreover, the utility of the portfolio was high both for advanced and weaker pupils, because they could all participate. In the following section, the results of pupils’ portfolio evaluation shed some more light to the impact it had on the particular context.

**Learners’ evaluation and aptitude to portfolios**

Making pupils responsible for their own learning is one of the aims of alternative assessment. They were, therefore, asked to evaluate oral portfolio through a questionnaire (Appendix II – presented in both English and Greek to the students). The results of the evaluation questionnaire showed that the 16 pupils not only accepted portfolio assessment and evaluation smoothly, but also embraced it and supported its interesting (13 pupils) and useful nature (8 pupils), although they had been introduced to it for a short time (Table 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question 1</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>more difficult</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>more interesting</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>more useful</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fairer</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 1: Portfolio assessment versus traditional tests assessment*

The pupils seemed eager to move away from the traditional assessment test and typical classroom routines, since the oral portfolio could create more enthusiasm in the English lesson for 11 pupils and motivate 10 of them to improve their speaking skills (Table 2).
Table 2: Portfolio creates...

The preparation and recording of oral tasks (Table 3) presented almost half of the pupils (9 pupils) with some stress and extra work, but the majority (11 out of 16 pupils) said that the tasks were interesting and feasible; pupils performed them more diligently and laboriously, than it was ever expected, with minimum negative reactions. Nevertheless, although pupils liked the audio recorded components of their tasks, only 5 pupils saw its usefulness for their self-assessment and further improvement (Table 3).

Table 3: Oral tasks

Additionally, self-assessment was an exciting experience to them (14 pupils) and helped most of them (13 pupils) to become aware of their language proficiency level (Table 4).

Table 4: Self-evaluation of oral tasks

In effect, the majority (13 out of 16 pupils) favoured portfolio assessment and expressed the desire to use portfolio assessment again in the future (Table 5).

Table 5: Portfolio assessment

In the next section, conclusions will be drawn and relevant suggestions will be proposed.

Suggestions for future action

The evaluation of the teacher and pupils discussed above suggests that portfolio assessment intrigued pupils and attracted their attention. To become effective, though, portfolios have to become an undivided part of current pedagogy in the ELT classroom. This may still seem
to be a long and bumpy road, but it is a one-way road, because recent underpinning theories of learning and the curriculum design favour the implementation of portfolios in the classroom. As De Fina (1992, p. 65) argues, “any approach that involves students in their education and that stimulates and excites them to evaluate themselves and build expertise is certainly worth the effort”. Undoubtedly, careful programming and deadlines should be made early in the school year making sure that they are followed strictly by all. Portfolios are a complimentary means of assessment. They could substitute formal assessment anytime, though, especially in the primary school, where there is no large-scale formal assessment of skills, like speaking elaborated in the current study. Cooperation among all those concerned in the teaching, learning and assessment process and support through adequate resources is needed, too.

Improving learning with the help of a portfolio-based assessment remains a challenge. Nevertheless, change for the change’s sake is of no value if ELT teachers are not trained in how to employ the oral portfolio. The more the teacher’s abilities to assess and report on young learners’ progress is trusted, the less the reliance on standardised testing.

**Conclusion**

Portfolio pedagogy is limited because of the overreliance on standardised testing in the assessment of young learners flowing from the social demand “to prove rather than improve learning” (Klenowski, 2002, p. 76). In the present study, portfolio assessment aimed to outbalance or lessen this reliance by promoting pupils’ metacognitive development, and to compensate for the lack of assessment of oracy skills in ELT in Greek primary schools, too. The *Junior Portfolio* aligned with the theoretical principles of the *CEFR* and the oral tasks were developed taking into consideration the National curriculum’s aims and objectives, adjusted to the developmental and proficiency level of the particular context. As far as the assessment methods and criteria are concerned, they accommodated what constitutes effective oral and portfolio assessment.

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**Notes**

1. White (1988, p. 44) labels the early communicative syllabi as *Type A* syllabi and the more process-oriented ones as *Type B* syllabi.
2. Although used interchangeably, the term *assessment* refers to the judgement carried about the “learner’s level of skills and knowledge” (Nunan, 1990, p. 62), whereas *testing* is a subset of assessment dealing with the evaluation of specific learning objectives on the base of standardised tests carried out at specified times of the school year (West, 2004).
3. For more about the ELP see [www.coe.int/portfolio](http://www.coe.int/portfolio).
4. Subjective needs refer to the process of learning, that is, how the foreign language needs to be taught for effective learning to take place (Manolopoulou-Sergi, 2004).
5. The tabulated statistical charts can be viewed in Efthymiou (2009).
6. As West (2004, p. 244) explains, a communicatively authentic task replicates all the processes of spoken communication, namely, descriptions, narrations, explanations, instructions, regardless of whether such a task would exist in the real world.
7. In information transfer, there is an information gap between the pupils and they have to convey it to one another in order to complete the task (Johnson, 1982).
8. The washforward effect “refers to the extent to which a test includes and tests language relevant to the post-language learning situation” (West 2004, p. 88).
References


Appendix I

Pupils’ needs analysis questionnaire:

NEEDS ANALYSIS QUESTIONNAIRE FOR 5TH GRADE LEARNERS OF A GREEK PRIMARY SCHOOL

The questionnaire that follows will help with specifying your needs better, as far as learning the English language is concerned, and with making the planning of your lessons as good as possible.

A. Background information

Please, give some information about yourself:

Name: ……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

Class: ……………………………………… Age: ……………………………

Mark your answer with a tick ☑.

A.1- Do you learn English outside school?           Yes ☐       No ☐

A.2- If yes, what class are you in?     A class ☐    B class ☐    C class ☐    D class ☐

B. Learning attitude

English is mostly useful for you, because:

Number the boxes with 1-3 (1= not important, 2= important, 3= the most important).

- you can communicate/write letters to English speaking friends ☐
- you get better marks at this subject at school ☐
- you can use your computer (games, Internet, e-mail) ☐

C. Needs

C.1- What do you consider most difficult in English? Put only one tick (✓).

- Learning new vocabulary/grammar ☐
- Writing descriptions/letters/stories ☐
- Speaking with someone ☐

C.2- Evaluate your abilities and knowledge in English in the following areas.

Put a number from 1–3 in the boxes according to the scale:

[1 = Satisfactory,    2 = Good,    3 = Unsatisfactory]

- Reading/Reading comprehension ☐
- Writing (postcard, letter, story) ☐
- Conversation/oral speech (speaking) ☐
- Listening comprehension (listening) ☐
C.3- What activities do you think you do less in the English classroom at school? Put only one tick (✓).

- Writing activities (writing)
- Reading activities (reading)
- Speaking activities/conversations (speaking)
- Listening activities (listening)

C.4- Which one of the previous four activities would you like to do more?
Write only one: .............................................

D. Learning and assessment preferences

D.1- How do you think you learn best? Put up to four ticks (✓).

- By watching videos/ pictures/ performing?
- By reading what you want to learn?
- By listening to songs/ rhymes/ music?
- By playing games/doing role-plays/ projects?

D.2- Do you learn better when you do tasks/activities:
Put only one tick (✓).

- In class (alone or in groups)?
- At home in peace and quiet?

D.3- Do you like the current way of your assessment in English, i.e. with written tests? Put only one tick (✓).

- Yes
- No

D.4- Would you like to take part, too, in your report making your own assessment?
Put only one tick (✓).

- Yes
- No
Appendix II

Students’ evaluation questionnaire

Evaluation of the oral ELP & Junior Portfolio

Now that you have completed your own oral portfolio, I would like you to answer sincerely to the following questions. Your answers will help improve your lessons in the future. Put a tick (✓) where necessary.

1) Portfolio, in comparison with a traditional assessment test is:
   a. more difficult. [ ]
   b. more interesting. [ ]
   c. more useful. [ ]
   d. fairer. [ ]

2) Has the portfolio helped you to:
   a. become more confident in your oral speech in English? [ ]
   b. become more responsible for your own learning? [ ]
   c. become more interested in the English lesson? [ ]
   d. understand your weak spots in speaking in English? [ ]

3) The four oral tasks were:
   a. understandable and interesting. [ ]
   b. a stressful experience. [ ]
   c. meaningful, because of the audio recording. [ ]
   d. demanding in preparation. [ ]

4) Your self-assessment in the four oral tasks of the portfolio:
   a. was an interesting experience for you. [ ]
   b. helped you to see for yourself your weaknesses and your strengths. [ ]
   c. was boring and worthless. [ ]
   d. was difficult for you. [ ]

5) Would you like to use portfolio again for your assessment?
   a. Yes [ ]
   b. No [ ]

Thank you for your cooperation.

Your teacher,

Georgia Efthymiou
Appendix III

Certificate of achievement for the oral portfolio

Speaking in English
(Front page)

Certificate of Achievement

Christina has earned this certificate for participating in the oral portfolio project. She accomplished the oral tasks successfully and showed improvement in her speaking and conversational skills

Keep up the great work!

The teacher,
Georgia Efthymiou
June 2009
Class: E2
Appendix IV

Sample transcription of the three taped oral portfolio tasks:

**Task 1: Description of a person you know well**

T= Teacher, C= Chrysa (pupil)
1. T: Chrysa, tell us about the person you are going to describe.
2. C: I describe my mum. Her name is Toula. Er… she has got blue eyes and long fair hair. Em… she likes..eh… dress..eh.. she likes dress and… and drive cars. She likes cooking, too. She doesn’t like false and playing chess... and the noise. I love my mum..eh.. and... I love my mum!
3. T: Okay. Good. Er… what about her… That’s all?
4. C: Yes.
5. T: Her character? Have you talked about her character?
6. C: Eh, yes. Er… she is very good character and eh….she always… she always eh... good for us.

**Task 2: Story-telling**

T= Teacher, A= Andreas (pupil) - *The snowman*
1. T: So, Andreas. Tell us about your story.
2. A: This story is about a snowman and a child. Er… one morning the child is wake up and see the window and out is snowing. It wear his clothes and it goes out to play. Er… it makes a snowman and the night… eh… the boy brush his teeth and see the snowman. When it goes to bed, the.. the.. child is go down, open the door and it can see the snowman. They are playing all the night and the snowman takes the child from his hand and they fly in the sky and they go in a party for snowmen. Then they drink, they dance, and they do a lot of things. Then, te child is go to home, it goes to sleep and the other morning the child is…see the snowman, but the snowman doesn’t… isn’t there, and then the child is crying… and… and…(pause).
3. T: Okay, what happens next? That’s all?
5. T: Yes? So, the story ends there. What happens to the snowman?
6. A: Er… (in greek) Πώς είναι το «έλιωσε»; Δεν ξέρω.
7. T: He melts?
8. A: Yes.
9. T: Okay, the sun is out and the snow… becomes water.
10. A: Yes.
11. T: Okay. This is it. I think something else happens at the end. The child has got something from the snowman.
13. So, he knows that the whole thing is real.
Task 3: Procedure description

T= teacher, F= Fanis, P= pupil – How to make a rice pudding
1. T: Fani, tell us. What are you going to make?
2. F: I am going to make a rice pudding.
3. T: Okay.
4. F: I must have rice, milk, sugar, and, if I want, cinnamon. First, we are boiling the rice. After that, we are putting the… rice in a bowl with milk.
5. T: Okay.
6. F: Eh… then… we are putting the sugar inside the milk and the rice…
8. F: And finally, we got our rice pudding. If we want, we can put cinnamon eh… over it.
9. T: … on top of it.
10. F: Yes.
11. T: Do you boil the milk with the rice?
12. F: No.
13. T: No?
14. F: Only the rice with water.
15. T: Okay. I did not know we make pudding like this. Have you done this?
16. F: Yes.
18. C: Is it delicious?
19. F: Yes.
20. T: Okay, anything else?
21. P: What is pudding?
22. Class: Ποτήρια. Ρυζόγαλο.
23. T: Okay, thank you, Fanis.
Appendix V

The list of books read by the pupils for the story telling and re-telling task:

Appendix VI

Task 4 worksheet – Taken from Ioannou-Georgiou & Pavlou (2003).

Describe your room to your partner:
Appendix VII

A checklist form and a rating scale rubric used both for the teacher’s assessment and pupils’ self-assessment of the description task (Task 1):

1. Description checklist

☐ Physical description of the person
☐ Character description
☐ Likes
☐ Dislikes
☐ Other details/information

1. Rating scale rubric

Put a tick (✓) in the right box:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>😊</th>
<th>😊</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
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<td>Grammar</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Fluency</td>
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Appendix VIII

A sample of an assessed oral task, i.e. task 3 – story telling and retelling:

A1. Teacher’s assessment form of storytelling:
A2. Teacher’s assessment form of story retelling:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points: 8</th>
<th>Points: 9</th>
<th>Points: 10</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary growth</td>
<td>Simple</td>
<td>Developed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sentence length</td>
<td>Small</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fluency</td>
<td>Many pauses</td>
<td>Few pauses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sequence</td>
<td>No neat story line sequence</td>
<td>Quite clear story line</td>
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</table>
B1. Pupil’s summary of his story (for the story retelling part of task 3):

This story is about dinosaurs. Two dinosaur kinds dug a hole accidentally in Mrs. Larry’s patio but they had no idea what this patio. When Grandpa has learnt about this was really angry. Then Mr. Ichthyosaurus had popped his head out of the water to see what happened. First, Grandpa explained what a patio is and ask them about the hole. Moschops said that the truth can be different thing to different people. Everyone looked at Moschops with puzzled faces even Uncle Rex. Then they took to example. The Ichthyosaurus Grandpa is a signal for sleep. Ally is a wall to rest and for Uncle Rex is a hill that you can see your enemies. Suddenly a flower began to sing but they didn’t understand what it wanted to say. Finally, Moschops understand that Grandpa is a shadow for the flower. But Grandpa still didn’t understand what is. This all about the hole. Moschops said that they just lowered the floor. Then they taught and went to Mrs. Larry’s patio. In the end Ally find a solution and they all learnt more or less.
B2. Pupil’s self-evaluation form in Greek for the story retelling task:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points: 8</th>
<th>Points: 9</th>
<th>Points: 10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Λεξιλόγιο</td>
<td>Απλό</td>
<td>Αναπτυγμένο</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Μέγεθος προτάσεων</td>
<td>Μικρό</td>
<td>Μεσαίο</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ενχέρεια λόγου</td>
<td>Πολλές παύσεις</td>
<td>Μερικές παύσεις</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Συνοχή</td>
<td>Οχι ομαλή σειρά γεγονότων</td>
<td>Αρκετά ξεκάθαρη σειρά γεγονότων</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bάλε στο κατάλληλο κουτάκι  ένα √.

Moschops
Digs a Hole