

# Chapter 9

## Visual Literacy and Multimodality as Language Teaching Tools in Reception Classes: Z.E.P. (Zones of Educational Priority) in Greek Primary Schools

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### **ABSTRACT**

*In modern multicultural societies the teaching of a language has to face challenges that go beyond the limits of classical language teaching. In Greek multicultural and multilingual primary schools the Greek language is taught in addition to the native language as a second/foreign language in Reception Classes - Z.E.P. (Zones of Educational Priority). An important tool in language teaching is, among others, images, videos and generally multimodal material. In this research, 162 teachers were asked to answer how important is the use of images and multimodal texts in school textbooks and in the teaching of the Greek language and in addition, what are the benefits and what are the difficulties of the students during the use of images in the language lesson. Through statistical analysis, it was found that images, videos and various multimodal materials contribute significantly to the teaching of Greek as a second/foreign language, providing multiple cognitive and learning benefits to students, despite the difficulties they may face.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Modern multicultural societies require new didactic approaches to the language course and therefore teachers are faced with new challenges and difficulties. Especially in the modern Greek multicultural educational reality, teaching is adapted to the special needs of foreign and bilingual students, with teachers being asked to apply appropriate teaching practices. Learning and teaching must be organized and structured based on the particular needs and interests of students (Kanaki, 2007). The learning of a foreign language, according to Krashen (2002), is achieved to a large extent, mainly, by participating or observing the natural environment of the language to be learned and in any case there is a significant correlation in the teaching of the native and foreign language (Mitakidou, 2005). Also, an important role in language teaching is played by technology and, in general, the modern way of life, which influence people's communication practices, overcoming the borders of the place in which they live. In Greek society, approximately 10% of students in Greek schools (especially in public schools) are foreigners, therefore the percentage of bilingual students studying in Greek classes is increasing significantly (Kesidou, 2008). Teaching of the Greek language in schools with an increased population of foreign language students takes place within the framework of Reception Departments – Zones of Educational Priority, in accordance with LAW 3879/2010 (Government Gazette 163A/21.09.2010) art. 26 par. 1a and 1b and Official Gazette Issue B' 2687/29.08.2016 (p. 28876). All of this makes multimodality and multiliteracies important tools of language teaching. Visual literacy is particularly important, since the image in any case is more attractive than any other informative text and in any case a text accompanied by an image attracts the reader more. In addition, multimodal texts enable students to interpret various stimuli wherever they come from and not only through a written or spoken text.

### 1. Teaching Greek as a Second/Foreign Language

The native/mother language of multilingual students may be noticeably absent from the teaching practice and transmission of knowledge but is noticeably present throughout the learning process (Baker, 2001; Skourtou, 2002). Refugee and immigrant students are taught the Greek language as if it were their native language, regardless of whether for many it is a second/foreign language (Hatzidaki, 2001). The Greek language as taught is common to all without taking into account other parameters, resulting in school failure in many teaching subjects and fields (Fragkoudaki, 2001).

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