TEACHING READING STRATEGIES TO YOUNG LEARNERS OF ENGLISH

By

ELEFTHERIA KESOULI

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Thesis Supervisor: ELENI AGATHOPOULOU

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Table of Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ........................................................................................................ iv

ABSTRACT ................................................................................................................................. v

CHAPTER 1 ................................................................................................................................... 1

INTRODUCTION .............................................................................................................................. 1

1.1. Literature review ................................................................................................................ 3

1.2. Examples of reading strategies ............................................................................................ 5

1.3. Strategies and skills ............................................................................................................ 7

1.4. Explicit and implicit strategy instruction ........................................................................... 9

1.5. Inferencing .......................................................................................................................... 12

1.6. Skimming and scanning ..................................................................................................... 13

CHAPTER 2 ..................................................................................................................................... 14

THE PRESENT STUDY .................................................................................................................. 14

2.1. Research questions ........................................................................................................... 15

2.2. Participants ....................................................................................................................... 15

2.3. Instruments and procedure .............................................................................................. 17

2.3.1. The questionnaire ......................................................................................................... 17

2.3.2. The vocabulary test ..................................................................................................... 17

2.3.3. Teaching materials ...................................................................................................... 18

2.4. The teaching sessions ...................................................................................................... 18

2.4.1. Inferencing, prediction ................................................................................................. 18

2.4.2. Inferencing, skimming, scanning .............................................................................. 21

2.4.3. Prediction, inferencing, scanning .............................................................................. 24

CHAPTER 3 ..................................................................................................................................... 26

RESULTS ......................................................................................................................................... 26

3.1. Inferencing, prediction ...................................................................................................... 26

3.2. Inferencing, skimming, scanning ..................................................................................... 29

3.3. Prediction, inferencing, scanning ................................................................................... 32

CHAPTER 4 ..................................................................................................................................... 34

DISCUSSION ................................................................................................................................ 34

4.1. Discussion with learners .................................................................................................... 36

4.2. Recommendations for further research .......................................................................... 36
CHAPTER 5 .........................................................................................................................37
CONCLUSION ......................................................................................................................37
Bibliography .......................................................................................................................39
Appendix 1: The questionnaire ..........................................................................................41
Appendix 2: The vocabulary test .......................................................................................45
Appendix 3: Materials for inferencing and prediction .....................................................47
Appendix 4: Materials for inferencing, skimming and scanning ....................................52
Appendix 5: Materials for prediction, inferencing, scanning ..........................................53
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ABSTRACT

This thesis deals with the issue of teaching reading strategies to young learners of English and explores their effectiveness with the use of a number of English texts and different types of comprehension questions. Research on this field has shown that young learners can be taught to use top-down and bottom-up strategies in order to improve their reading comprehension skills. Learners should be trained to employ strategies such as prediction, activation of background knowledge, imagery, memory, inferencing, skimming and scanning. It is particularly important that learners are trained to be able to guess the meaning of unknown words and phrases that appear in the texts and at the same time control any affective factors that can influence them. Through empirical observation and task analysis this thesis explores the progress in the reading strategies employed by 7 young learners of English (Level A1-A2) who were explicitly taught some reading strategies by means of in-class tasks. Their progress was checked with tests administered before and after the instructional interventions (pre- and post-testing). Results showed that explicit strategy instruction helped improve the learners’ performance in reading comprehension tasks more than implicit instruction. Explicit strategy instruction also led to the learners’ adopting positive attitudes towards strategy use.
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Language learning strategies and their effectiveness in language learning have been examined by numerous researchers. Research findings indicate that it is important for language teaching educators to prioritise the teaching of strategies and to guide learners towards their successful application.

Oxford’s (2011) extensive research on language learning strategies is in favour of their use by learners as they help them “set goals for learning, attending to and concentrating on instruction, use effective strategies to organise, code, and rehearse information holding positive beliefs about one’s capabilities” (Oxford, 2011, p. 11). Strategies can be divided into categories according to their nature and the results that their use can produce. Strategies can be labeled either as self-regulated or tactics, the former being described as conscious and deliberate attempts to take control of the L2 learning process by selecting and employing certain methods over their alternatives in order to optimise language learning. The latter are the specific methods in which strategies are used with the aim of achieving a goal in a given situation (Oxford, 2011, pp. 12, 31). Overall strategies can make learning a more pleasant and effective experience for the learner, they can be transferrable and engage learners’ not only cognitive and meta-cognitive capabilities but their full potential. Strategies can also be part of larger group of strategies that operate together (Mitis, Psaltou-Joycey, & Sougari, 2016, p. 28).

Oxford and Burry-Stock (1995) introduced the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL), an instrument designed with the purpose of evaluating the frequency of strategy use by learners (Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995, p. 4). They assign language learning strategies into the following categories:

1. Memory strategies, such as grouping, imagery, rhyming, and structured reviewing.
2. Cognitive strategies, such as reasoning, analyzing, summarizing (all reflective of deep processing), as well as general practicing.
3. Compensation strategies (to compensate for limited knowledge), such as guessing meanings from the context in reading and listening and using synonyms and gestures to convey meaning when the precise expression is not known.

4. Metacognitive strategies, such as paying attention, consciously searching for practice opportunities, planning for language tasks, self-evaluating one's progress, and monitoring error.

5. Affective (emotional, motivation-related) strategies, such as anxiety reduction, self-encouragement, and self-reward.

6. Social strategies, such as asking questions, cooperating with native speakers of the language, and becoming culturally aware.

(Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995, p. 5)

Language learning strategies can be employed for the teaching of all learners’ skills. The aim of this thesis is to teach learners a number of reading strategies. In order to achieve this aim it describes the teaching sessions at a group of seven young learners of English, their use of reading strategies and the latter’s effectiveness. According to Mitis et al. (2016), upper elementary Greek learners of English resort to a wide range of strategies, such as memory, cognitive, metacognitive, social and affective strategies. They seem to be particularly concerned with accuracy and they employ strategies that help them improve their performance in spelling and pronunciation in order to become better learners, produce the desirable learning outcomes and please both themselves and their families. On the other hand, they appear not to be interested in reading for pleasure in English and they are not particularly fond of guessing strategies, possibly due to their lack of self-confidence (Mitis et al., 2016, p. 36). This thesis attempts to study the effectiveness of explicit and implicit strategy instruction, as well as the employment of top-down and bottom-up processes by young learners in tasks that involve reading texts and comprehension questions. It is assumed that reading for pleasure is an aspect that may possibly affect their performance in the reading strategies tests of this thesis, as one of these tests consists of an extract from a literary text. Guessing, or inferencing, namely the ability to understand the meaning of unfamiliar words and phrases from context, is tested in the current thesis. Learners are also introduced to the strategies of skimming, scanning and prediction through a set of short reading texts accompanied by multiple choice, fill-in-the-blanks and open-ended comprehension questions. Affective factors are also taken into
consideration and learners are asked to account for their attitude towards the application of these strategies and they are encouraged to describe if they find the process stressful.

Macaro has conducted numerous studies on the development of strategies in young learners (Macaro 2001; Macaro 2006; Macaro & Erler, 2008; Macaro & Mutton, 2009). He argues that the teaching of reading strategies at an early age is beneficial for both L1 and L2. It can develop learners’ competence in L2 more rapidly and it can also produce benefits in L1 literacy, especially spelling, as well as help instil positive feelings about learning into learners (Macaro & Mutton, 2009, p. 166). With regard to reading strategies in particular, Macaro and Mutton (2009) insist that young-beginner readers can be taught how to employ top-down and bottom-up strategies with texts that are beyond the their level of proficiency. Top-down strategies refer to “prior-knowledge-based strategies, such as knowledge of context, of the world, or common sense”, whereas bottom-up strategies comprise “text-based strategies, for instance obtaining meaning at word and phrase level, or decoding graphemes” (Macaro & Mutton, 2009, pp. 167-168). Reading comprehension is considered to involve the combination and co-existence of both types of strategies. Reading in L1 and L2 employs top-down and bottom-up strategies, while the reader often triggers their interaction (Macaro & Erler, 2008, p. 93).

Application of language learning strategies in the classroom can be either implicit or explicit. In implicit strategy teaching the teacher refrains from elaborating on or explaining the use of the strategy, and just informs learners of how to carry out classroom activities. Explicit strategy instruction involves a more structured and analytical approach. In explicit strategy teaching the teacher names the strategy, demonstrates its use, explains its effectiveness and asks students to practice it. Learners are also taught how to evaluate the strategy in question and transfer it to different tasks (Vrettou, 2015, p. 33). This thesis attempts to examine the effectiveness of explicit over implicit strategy instruction regarding the use of inferencing, prediction, skimming and scanning reading strategies.

1.1. Literature review

Reading comprehension can be troublesome for many young learners. Rupley, Blair and Nichols (2009) refer to the significance of explicit reading instruction and they point out that young learners benefit considerably from systematic and explicit teaching of reading skills and strategies. The role of the teacher is vital for the development of young learners’
reading comprehension skills as teachers are responsible for guiding learners and for supplying new pieces of information through meaningful interaction with the learners (Rupley, Blair, & Nichols, 2009). Reading comprehension is a complicated skill since it demands learners to both decode and comprehend texts with the activation of background knowledge, the awareness of text structure, the flexible use of language and the coordination of related skills (Rupley et al., 2009, p. 133). Brown (2003) insists that it is necessary for learners to master both bottom-up and top-down strategies. The first category comprises strategies that assist learners to process separate letters, words, and phrases, while the second one includes strategies of a more abstract nature whose purpose is to improve comprehension. To become effective readers, learners ought to build “appropriate content and formal schemata-background information and cultural experience-to carry out those interpretations effectively” (Brown, 2003, p. 185). With regard to extensive reading, which refers to reading texts longer than a page, top-down strategies are more conducive to effective reading, while the use of bottom-up strategies is required less frequently (Brown, 2003). Comprehension of a text’s meaning demands readers to be able to predict the conventions of the particular passage, as well as to take the genre into consideration so that schemata are activated and help learners comprehend what they read (Brown, 2003, p. 186). Macaro and Erler (2008) point out that the distinction between top-down and bottom-up strategies is noticeable in L2 reading texts where readers come across unfamiliar words and, thus, attempt to resort to inference by activating schemata. They argue that “top-down processes imply that the readers would be elaborating the text in their mind and incorporating the meaning that was being extracted into their own knowledge and view of the world, their knowledge structures, their own schemata”, whereas bottom-up strategies involve approaching the text word by word and subsequently clause by clause (Macaro & Erler, 2008, pp. 92-93). Auerbach and Paxton (1997) claim that when it comes to L2 reading it is not only proficiency but also strategy use that plays a crucial role (Auerbach & Paxton, 1997, p. 240). They point out that low proficiency learners rely more heavily on bottom-up strategies, such as word-for-word reading and translation. They are also able, however, to apply top-down and interactive strategies, for instance prediction or activation of prior knowledge, in order to compensate for their low L2 proficiency. Application of reading comprehension strategies is more effective when it is done consciously.

In order for learners to be efficient readers they should be able to understand and interact with the ideas they encounter in the text. To achieve this goal it is essential for
learners to identify and understand new words in the given text. This ability is linked to vocabulary acquisition, word knowledge and is a factor that leads to independent reading. Beginner readers are more dependent on the knowledge of every word that appears in a text in order to understand its content.

It can be concluded that learners would benefit from strategy instruction. Some of the strategies that are related to vocabulary acquisition and its application to reading comprehension are described below.

1.2. Examples of reading strategies

Being able to retell a story is a major aspect of successful reading comprehension. When dealing with young learners teachers can adopt a story-based approach in their lessons. Ellis and Brewster (2014) suggest a Plan-Do-Review cycle according to which the teacher initially prepares the learners for the activity by either drawing on their prior knowledge or introducing new language. During the plan stage the teacher also motivates learners and demonstrates the aim of the activity. After that learners carry out the task and are usually asked to use the language introduced at the plan stage. The final phase of the cycle includes language consolidation (Ellis & Brewster, 2014, p. 23). To ensure comprehension and to arouse learners’ interest in the story and, by extension, in the activities that follow, the teacher can ask questions before or after reading the story. Such questions can be related to learners’ previous experience or their knowledge about the topic, they can be directed towards testing their understanding, encouraging prediction, motivating and increasing curiosity, or drawing their attention to the plot (“Who has seen a real bear? What was it like?”, Where did the characters go?”, “Can you tell me the names of any animals that come from Australia?”, “How many types of bears do you know?” “What do you think the caterpillar eats on Saturday?” “What did the elephant say at the grocer’s shop?”) (Ellis & Brewster, 2014, p. 27). Ellis and Brewster (2014) recommend various activities that can check the retelling skills of the learners, for instance rearranging words to make sentences or rearranging sentences in order to build a whole text. Charts and vocabulary prompt cards that learners can use in order to ask questions or make statements can also be employed to guide learners in the process of retelling a narrative (Ellis & Brewster, 2014, p. 40).

Another very useful strategy that assists learners’ comprehension of both lexical items and whole texts is mind mapping. The reason for which learners benefit from mind maps is
the manner in which words and concepts are represented. It seems that the use of colour and images is much more effective because they draw on images and their associations (Kenyon, 2002). Buzan (2017) also insists on the usefulness and efficiency of mind maps in order to create mental associations between concepts and their representation in the real world. He stresses their importance in terms of establishing relations between words and connotations (Buzan, Dystefl 2, 2017). Tony and Barry Buzan (1994) delineate the characteristics of information that can be stored in memory. They mention among others that

the human brain primarily remembers the following: any items associated with things or patterns already stored, or linked to other aspects of what is being learned, any items which are emphasised as being in some way outstanding or unique, any items which appeal particularly strongly to any of the five senses, those items which are of particular interest to the person (Buzan & Buzan, 1994, p. 34).

They also point out that human brains are inclined to seek patterns and completion and that the concept of mind maps complies with this tendency, since they can involve an unlimited number of ideas associated with any idea or question (Buzan & Buzan, 1994, p. 35). They mention the five major functions of the human brain, namely receiving, holding, analysing, outputting and controlling. These operations are interrelated. Mind maps express the function of outputting, which in turn constitutes the combination of the first three functions - of the information that has been received, held and analysed (Buzan & Buzan, 1994, p. 36). Another argument in favour of the use of mind maps is the inclusion of pictures that are “more evocative than words, more precise and potent in triggering a wide range of associations, thereby enhancing creative thinking and memory” (Buzan & Buzan, 1994, p. 73). The usefulness of associations is reflected on the manner human brain processes information, as it includes numerous pieces of information along with their various associations and it resembles the image of mind maps and their nodes (Buzan & Buzan, 1994, p. 56).

According to Kantaridou and Papadopoulou (2015, p. 144), “visual representation of information may help learners better understand the relation between the different aspects of information presented in the text”. The teacher initially displays a mind map in class and explains to learners that they are going to read a text and complete the missing information on the mind map. The teacher elicits responses about the types of information that learners need to provide. They then model the process by completing a mind map on a story with which learners are familiar in class in collaboration with the learners and ask questions throughout
the process to ensure that learners comprehend the activity. The learners can subsequently practice using mind maps individually or in groups and the teacher monitors and assists them when the learners struggle. This activity helps learners locate key information and it can also be used as a step to guide older or more advanced learners into summarising a text (Kantaridou & Papadopoulou, 2015, pp. 144-146).

It has already been stated that reading comprehension is closely linked to vocabulary acquisition. A very useful memory strategy to assist young learners’ vocabulary acquisition is association related to imagery. Students can be trained to group words that share common characteristics and create mental links between them. This technique can enhance their memory of newly acquired vocabulary, guide them through creating associations between words the learners already know and unfamiliar ones and, by extension, improve their reading comprehension skills. The teacher should first introduce the activity by giving learners a term such as ‘home’ and ask them to list as many word as they can recall that are related to this term. This task can be combined with the concept of mind mapping and learners can attempt to write down the words in this form. When the teacher needs to relate this activity to a reading text they can select a vocabulary category that appears in this text and ask the learners to write down any words they know that can relate to it. The learners can read the text and with the teacher’s guidance they can locate new words that are associated with the given category. The learners can also share their views with the teacher and select the most suitable manner in which they prefer to classify vocabulary (Mitis & Sarafianou, 2015, pp. 185-187).

1.3. Strategies and skills

Before analysing the particular strategies that this thesis aims at teaching and testing, it is important to draw the distinction between skills and strategies. According to Afflerbach, Pearson and Paris (2008), strategies are “constructive, self-controlled theories of information processing”, whereas skills constitute “behavioral descriptions of learning through practice” (Afflerbach, Pearson, & Paris, 2008, p. 366). Learners can be trained to consciously use strategies until they develop them into skills, which are automatic processes and describe the learners’ competence in handling complex tasks. Readers should be taught how to correctly shift between the two categories according to the demands of each situation. Learners can employ familiar skills when they have to deal with simple texts and goals. When they are
asked to handle more demanding texts and intricate tasks however, learners should be able to employ certain reading strategies and make use of these deliberately controlled techniques (Afflerbach et al., 2008, p. 371). Before they are able to successfully move between the skills and strategies and follow the most suitable technique, learners should often go through a period of time during which they need to make conscious use of strategies. With regard to young learners in particular, they “must learn decoding strategies before they can be expected to apply them accurately and automatically” (Afflerbach et al., 2008, pp. 370-371).

Blair, Rupley and Nichols (2007) refer to the differences between skills instruction and cognitive strategies and they mention that skills instruction entails lower level cognitive processing and specific, automatic routines. Comprehension strategies, on the other hand, involve higher-level cognitive processing. Higher-level processing is required in prediction making, summarising, inferencing and reading a text critically (Blair, Rupley & Nichols., 2007, p. 434). They stress “the importance of mastering automatic word identification skills. Without direct/explicit instruction and meaningful practice to the point of overlearning and automaticity, students are less likely to understand and interact with the ideas in the text” (Rupley et al., 2009, p. 132). Examples of reading skills include the decoding of a text, structural and context analysis, sequential development of details presented in a text, understanding the distinction between fact and opinion and identifying the main idea of a reading text. Cognitive strategies, on the other hand, are less specific procedures controlled by the reader. When dealing with cognitive strategies the teacher does not need to follow a strict step-by-step instruction, but they can adopt a more relaxed method by explaining and modelling. Reading comprehension strategies include summary making, inference, prediction and inference (Rupley et al., 2009, pp. 126-127).

It has already been mentioned that strategies refer to a conscious and systematic plan for information processing. Learners should be taught how to make use of certain cognitive strategies when they find themselves struggling to understand what they are reading (Afflerbach et al., 2008, p. 365; National Reading Panel, 2000). As far as reading strategies are concerned in particular, Afflebach et al. (2008) highlight that their aims should be to teach learners how to quickly decode and comprehend a text effectively and fluently, thus leading learners towards converting strategies into skills eventually. Reading strategies generally refer to “deliberate, goal-directed attempts to control and modify the reader’s efforts to decode text, understand words and construct meanings of text” (Afflerbach et al., 2008, p. 368). Reading strategies aim at shaping strategic readers, namely readers who are able to pick the most
suitable path for them to reach a reading goal. Successful strategies ought to provide learners with the opportunity to set relevant goals, means and ways to achieve them as well as assist learners with shifting from conscious and to natural and automatic use of intentional acts (Afflerbach et al., 2008, p. 368). Readers should also become aware of the means to the goal processes to achieve a goal preventing distractions and preserve commitment to the goal (Corno, 1989). It can be concluded that more demanding texts and complicated tasks call for more strategic reading. Strategic readers should be able to control and monitor the text in order to take the right decisions, make their reading efficient and even teach strategies and skills to others (Afflerbach et al., 2008, p. 368).

In more detail, strategic readers should be capable of examining the strategy, assess its effectiveness and reconsider its goal or means. Readers, then, should be effective problem solvers and become aware of difficulties when they arise. When it comes to the goals of a strategy, readers should be attentive when these goals cannot be reached and come up with alternative paths to achieve them. These characteristics entail flexibility and adaptability of readers’ actions throughout the reading process (Afflerbach et al., 2008, p. 369).

1.4. Explicit and implicit strategy instruction

When dealing with language strategies it is necessary for the teacher to resort to metacognitive instruction about the manner and the reason for using those strategies (National Reading Panel, 2000). Young learners as developing readers have to be trained to be metacognitively aware, understand the workings of reading, spot and repair problems. In order for these aims to be achieved the teacher should explicitly motivate learners and present them with scaffolded and guided practice at the application of strategies. Strategic intervention is also crucial, readers should be taught how to cope with difficulties when they struggle with the reading text. At the early stages of reading, instruction of strategies should be described, modeled and supported by the teacher in order to help readers turn their attention to the correct direction, choose the appropriate action and decode print to sound (Afflerbach et al., 2008, p. 369).

All the above suggest that teachers who aim at teaching reading strategies to young learners should resort to explicit instruction of these strategies. Numerous studies demonstrated the effectiveness of explicit strategy teaching. Blair et al. (2007) point out that
explicit strategy instruction “guides students to develop flexible, problem-solving attitudes toward identifying words using the available cue systems—whole-word recognition, phonics, structural analysis, and context” (Blair et al., 2007). Their study also concludes that learners who have received systematic and direct/explicit instruction on word identification can use the alphabetic system more effectively than learners who have not been explicitly taught. Morrow, Tracey, Woo and Pressley (1999) also refer to explicit instruction and insist that “good readers are good decoders. Direct = explicit instruction must provide opportunities for students to apply their word identification skills in meaningful or authentic reading situations” (Morrow, Tracey, Woo, & Pressley, 1999, pp. 463-464). Samuels (2006) also highlights the advantages of direct reading comprehension instruction. He refers to accuracy and claims that it is important in order for learners to be able to identify words, but teachers should also focus on developing learners’ fluency, which is defined as “the ability to decode a word with relative ease with no hesitation” and it can be improved with extensive direct reading instruction (Samuels, 2006, pp. 337-338).

Young learners can benefit greatly from cognitive explanations that will clarify precisely what is required from them and the reasons why this is important. It is very significant for the teachers to display their reasoning throughout the application of a strategy to the learners with the use of think-alouds and talk-alouds. Think-alouds, the detailed description of the reader's reasoning and the presentation of the steps they should follow, are essential when it comes to teaching strategies to young learners. By following the teacher’s reasoning learners can comprehend what strategies they can employ when they are asked to carry out similar tasks. Talk-alouds refer to the discussion of strategies initiated and led by the teacher, as well as the interaction between teachers and learners (Rupley et al., 2009, p. 128).

When teaching strategies the teacher should follow a circle of modelling, explaining and guiding. Rosenshine and Stevens (1995) present the steps the teacher should follow in order to teach strategies explicitly:

1. Review and check previous work.

2. Present new material.

3. Provide guided practice.

4. Provide feedback and corrections.

5. Provide independent practice.
6. Provide weekly and monthly reviews.

(as cited in Rupley et al., 2009, pp. 126-127)

Modelling, the first step of explicit strategy instruction, aims at the learners’ comprehending what they are to learn. When the teachers have ensured that learners are aware of the purpose of the strategy they proceed to the scaffolding stage. During this second stage of instruction the teachers apply the strategy to a text while providing guidance and support to learners. Instruction should be more explicit when the subject-matter or strategy is new to learners, whereas the teachers should transfer the responsibility for learning to learners when it becomes more familiar. After the learners have made a first attempt to apply the strategy the teacher can ask them to proceed to supervised practice by making use of what they have learned in a familiar text. The teacher should monitor and intervene supporting and guiding the learners in case they struggle with the activity. Supervised practice will contribute to making learners more confident users of the strategy. Independent work is the next step in the instruction process and it should be followed when learners are comfortable with applying the strategy. The teachers need to take into consideration the content of the texts with which learners are presented. New strategies ought to be introduced when the text deals with familiar topics, but when the topic is unknown the strategies used should be familiar to facilitate comprehension (Rupley et al., 2009, p. 133).

The most crucial stage of explicit instruction is scaffolding. It provides general aids to demonstrate the use of a strategy and specific ones to teach it. According to Rosenshine and Meister (1992) “scaffolds are forms of support provided by the teacher (or another student) to help students bridge the gap between their current abilities and the intended goal. Instead of providing explicit steps, one supports, or scaffolds, the students as they learn the skill” (as cited in Rupley et al., 2009, pp.127-128). Throughout the process of scaffolding the teacher assumes the role of the facilitator in guiding and directing the learners, but they refrain from providing detailed step-by-step explanation of the strategy. As a facilitator the teacher assists the learners with completing comprehension tasks, which would be very demanding to carry out without the teacher’s guidance. When the learners become more comfortable and begin to understand the use of the strategy the teacher can gradually withdraw and leave learners work independently (Rupley et al., 2009, pp. 128-129).

In order for strategy instruction to be effective the teacher needs to ensure that young learners are taught a number of strategies and that instruction takes place early in the learning process. The teacher should also assess the effective use of the strategies and reteach them in
order to facilitate memory retention (Afflerbach et al., 2008, pp. 370-371). This process assists the shift of the conscious use of strategies to their automatic application and, therefore, the development of strategies into skills. Assessment of strategies should be formative and the teacher ought to be able to recognise what poses difficulties to learners and to teach them alternative strategies when the initial ones appear to be ineffective for them. Brown (2003) equates assessment of reading with assessment of reading strategies and he demonstrates that they are closely interrelated (Brown, 2003). Moreover, it seems that repeated rotations of the same strategy instruction can be wearisome and unnecessary. Teaching, reteaching and assessment of strategies is not beneficial only for young learners. As a matter of fact, it seems that learners never outgrow the need to resort to strategies when dealing with challenging tasks (Afflerbach et a, 2008, pp. 370-371).

1.5. Inferencing

Being able to infer the meaning of unfamiliar words and phrases is a significant aspect of reading comprehension. Readers often encounter vocabulary items with which they are not familiar and managing to handle them in a way that could facilitate understanding seems to be of great importance. Hulstijn (1992) is in favour of teaching learners how to understand a word’s meaning from context. His hypothesis is based on the belief that

a) When subjects have to infer or induce the solution of a problem, they will invest more mental effort than when they are given the solution to the problem.

b) Information that has been attained with more mental effort can later be better retrieved and recalled than information that has been attained with less mental effort.

(Hulstijn, 1992, p. 113)

He insists, therefore, that being able to infer the meaning of a word from context is more possible to lead to its retention in long-term memory than if the definition of the word is given to the reader. In order for inferencing to be successful, nevertheless, there are some factors that should be taken into consideration. The nature of the context that contains the unfamiliar words should produce all the necessary information that can lead a reader to deduce their meanings accurately. There is also the possibility that this method is not very effective for readers who lack good problem-solving skills, since the approach makes use of these skills.
to a great extent. Another danger that inferencing entails is the likelihood of readers being led to interpreting unknown words incorrectly and forming false impressions, which they will lately have to rectify and face the challenging task of ‘unlearning’ what they had already mistakenly learnt (Hulstijn, 1992, p. 114).

Activation of schemata is closely related to learners’ attempts at inferencing. Knowledge of a text’s topic, either in a general or more specific way, can facilitate understanding of a text. Activation of schemata, however, does not suffice to compensate for beginner readers’ limited language knowledge. As a matter of fact the reverse appears to be true, readers can make up for their lack of cultural familiarity by paying attention to language details of a text, such as vocabulary. It should be noted that local familiarity of a text can yield better results in terms of comprehension compared to global familiarity (Macaro & Erler, 2008, pp. 93-94). It seems, then, that a reading text should contain sufficient number of vocabulary items and other language aspects with which learners are familiar in order for comprehension to be facilitated. Presenting learners with texts of familiar topics can be also conducive to comprehension but these topics should co-exist with language that is not far above the learners’ level of proficiency.

He has carried out a series of experiments and the results seem to be in favour of inferencing. When readers put in mental effort by trying to deduce the meaning of a word from its context, rather than by simply being given its definition, they appear to be able to retain this knowledge in their memory for a longer period of time. It is important to eliminate the possibility of readers shaping wrong ideas about the meaning of words by ensuring that the context contains sufficient cues, namely words and phrases that hint to the correct definition of key items (Hulstijn, 1992, pp. 122-123).

1.6. Skimming and scanning

Skimming and scanning are also among the most significant strategies that facilitate reading comprehension and, thus, learners should be trained in how to employ these two strategies. Skimming refers to the speedy reading of a text with the aim to identify its main idea and the key information (Brown, 2003). In order for skimming to be effective, learners should control affective factors, such as stress, procrastination and limited concentration. They should also improve their memory and recall techniques, as well as diminish subvocalisation.
According to Brown (2003), skimming is a prediction strategy, as it demands readers to form an idea of the topic and purpose of the text, the writer’s point of you, the text’s level of difficulty and its usefulness. It is a significant strategy in terms of dealing with a text and the assessment process can be fairly straightforward, the reader is usually asked to skim a text and then answer some questions on this text (Brown, 2003). Qismullah et al. (2017) describe the process used to teach and test EFL learners in their study. The learners are asked to read only the first and last paragraphs of a text as the main idea of a text is normally expressed in these particular parts. The teacher encourages learners to omit certain words and focus on key items in order to extract important information. The learners also need to avoid translating all pieces of information in order not to be diverted by unnecessary details (Qismullah et al., 2017).

Scanning, on the other hand, is the process of reading with the aim to locate details, such as dates, names or specific words and phrases. The practice of scanning is similar to skimming in terms of time demands, readers should go through a text quickly while seeking particular pieces of information (Brown, 2003) and they should refrain from reading the whole text to achieve their goal (Qismullah et al., 2017). To assess learners’ use of strategy the teacher presents them with a text and asks them to quickly locate specific pieces of information. The process Qismullah et al. (2017) selected to test learners’ effective use of scanning strategy is to hand them a text and ask them to identify the clues that support the required information. The teacher has picked the relevant clues beforehand and, in case the learners discover them, they read the appropriate section to retrieve the required information (Qismullah et al., 2017).

The following two chapters include the description of the strategy instruction process and its results, as those were produced during the one-to-one sessions with the learners. First person singular is therefore applied in this chapter, in order to describe the process more directly.

CHAPTER 2

THE PRESENT STUDY
2.1. Research questions

Taking the above into consideration the present study aims at answering the following research questions:

1. Do young learners of English make use of top-down or bottom-up processes when they employ reading comprehension strategies?

2. Is explicit strategy instruction in reading comprehension more effective than implicit strategy instruction for young learners?

Before teaching and assessing the use of strategies learners were required to complete a questionnaire about their use of reading strategies as well as a vocabulary test on the key vocabulary items of the reading texts to check their prior knowledge. When they had answered the questionnaire and completed the test learners first took the pre-test and after the lapse of a week they were given the post-test. Each learner was instructed and tested individually during their regular lesson. The structure of all teaching cycles is described in the following section.

2.2. Participants

The participants in the current research were seven EFL learners nine to ten years old with L1 Greek and an estimated level of proficiency in English ranging from A1 to A2. Four of them, three girls and a boy, were 10 years old and at the time of this study they had completed two and a half years of tuition in English. Three of them, two boys and a girl, were 9 years old and had completed one year and a half of tuition in English. All of them also attended the compulsory English lessons at school, which comprised three 45’ lessons three times a week. In addition, all learners with the exception of one of the girls in the group of the older learners (learner 3), had been attending English lessons at school for a 45’ session per week for two years before we commenced our lessons.

Learner 1 is a ten-year-old girl. She is very competent in spelling and reading as well as reading comprehension. She enjoys reading stories in English as a leisure activity. However, she has a short concentration and attention span, she is very fond of kinesthetic activities, and she seems to dislike explicit teaching of structures and rules. She loses interest in activities easily and she requires a quick succession of activities and tasks. She has an aptitude for drawing and her imagination is very vivid.
Learner 2 is also a ten-year-old girl who is really diligent in both Greek and English. She enjoys grammar and she often expresses her interest in the explicit teaching of grammatical phenomena. She does not particularly enjoy games and kinesthetic activities. She is also competent in spelling, reading and reading comprehension but she claims that she does not enjoy reading in L2 despite the fact that she is keen on reading for pleasure in her L1. She has a very good concentration and attention span and she seems able to control affective factors such as dullness or anxiety.

Learner 3 is another ten-year-old girl. Her level in her mother tongue is on grade level. Her concentration and attention span is very short and her performance is usually better when she receives detailed guidance in spelling, phonics, reading and reading comprehension. She is really keen on games and kinesthetic activities. Her imagination is also very active and she is fond of drawing and arts and crafts. Her motivation is not very high and she often complains of weariness.

Learner 4 is a ten-year-old boy. He often struggles in L1 in terms of vocabulary, spelling and writing. He seems to lack motivation in both L1 and L2. He is weak in spelling and reading, as well as reading comprehension and he requires very clear and detailed guidance in order to improve his performance. He appears to benefit from explicit teaching of structures and rules, despite his low interest in it. In fact, he usually produces more correct answers after he has been exposed to explicit instruction. He greatly enjoys kinesthetic activities.

Learner 5 is a nine-year-old girl. She is competent in spelling, reading and reading comprehension although she often expresses her unwillingness to carry out tasks and she sometimes claims that she is not interested in the activities she is asked to complete. Her concentration and attention span are limited. She loves kinesthetic activities but she does not maintain her interest for a long period of time even in activities in which she initially seems eager to be involved.

Learner 6 is a nine-year-old boy, who struggles with L1. He encounters difficulties with spelling and reading, he struggles with reading comprehension and he produces very poor handwriting. On the other hand, he seems to be truly apt to comprehend grammatical concepts and he often expresses his preferences for them. The learner has a short concentration and attention span. Nonetheless, he has an aptitude for drawing and he is also very fond of computers, technology and computer games.
Learner 7 is a nine-year-old boy with low motivation for language learning and for explicit instruction. His performance in reading comprehension questions is usually poor, but he often expresses his interest in reading stories and he is intrigued by following the storylines and discovering their endings. He has a short concentration span, but is really keen on kinesthetic activities and he also enjoys arts and crafts.

2.3. Instruments and procedure

2.3.1. The questionnaire

The questionnaire learners were asked to complete in the beginning of this study comprised 16 questions that related to the strategies they were going to be taught and on which they were instructed (see Appendix 1). Learners were asked to use a five-point Likert scale system to express how often they resort to the strategies described by each question. Since this thesis and the strategy instruction focuses on inferencing, prediction, skimming and scanning strategies, the items in the questionnaire aimed at enquiring after learners’ attitude and approach to them. Some examples of these items are the following: “I underline phrases and words in a text to be able to remember them more easily”, “I can find synonyms in a text”, “I try to understand the general idea of a text even when there are difficult words”, “I try to guess the meaning of unknown words by reading the whole sentence”, “I read the title of a text to understand what it is about”. The questionnaire was adapted in Greek from questionnaires in previous studies on the effectiveness of reading strategies instruction (Barrot, 2016; Kavvadia, 2016; Macaro & Erler, 2008; Macaro & Mutton, 2009; Mokhtari & Sheorey, 2002).

Due to the learners’ young age and in order to assure the accuracy of their responses I assisted them with the completion of the questionnaire; I read aloud each question and explained it to each learner in order to avoid misunderstanding of the items and to ensure that learners had understood the meaning of the scale.

2.3.2. The vocabulary test
Before commencing with the teaching of the strategies I distributed a vocabulary test to learners that included all the items that were going to be encountered and asked learners whether they were aware of their meaning or not (see Appendix 2). I also guided them in the process by reading the items aloud and asking them if they remembered ever encountering the word or phrase before. With the exception of learner 2 who recognised the phrase ‘walk along’ and the word ‘pavement’ and provided their correct translations (περπατώ κατά μήκος, πεζοδρόμιο) none of the other items were familiar to learners.

2.3.3. Teaching materials

The first teaching session that examined the use of strategies of inferencing and prediction employed a text which was adapted from the well-known Greek children’s novel Wildcat Under Glass (Το Καπλάνι της Βιτρίνας). Following Macaro and Mutton (2009) I inserted the target English vocabulary items into the Greek text (see Appendix 3). I used the first two pages of this novel because it is widely used for literary discussion in Greek primary schools and it contains vocabulary and structures appropriate for young readers (Ζέη, 1963).

The reading texts and comprehension questions used for the second and third sessions were adapted from a skills-based textbook that contains A1 level material (Jones, 2009) (see Appendix 4 and 5). The level of the texts had been also tested using a text evaluation website, The Text Inspector (English Profile).

In all texts the key vocabulary items appeared in bold. Those items affected comprehension of both the particular sentences in which they appeared and of the text as a whole, while they were also vital in finding the correct answers to the comprehension questions. According to Hulstijn (1992), learners are more likely to pay attention on a word or phrase when it is presented in a more conspicuous manner, for example when it is highlighted or coloured. Introducing important vocabulary items in this manner can have very positive results in terms of vocabulary gain (Hulstijn, 1992, pp. 113-114).

2.4. The teaching sessions

2.4.1. Inferencing, prediction
In order to check the learners’ performance in strategies that had been taught implicitly and the ones that had been taught explicitly I proceeded with applying the implicit method in the present teaching session, interfering only when the learners required it or when they appeared to be struggling with the text and the items which they were asked to translate. I then employed a pre-test, post-test method similar to the one used by Macaro and Mutton (2009) (see Appendix 3). The method involved testing the learners’ manner in which they dealt with unknown words in context. After the lapse of a week of the first pre- and post-test I taught the same strategies explicitly. As detailed later in this section, I followed all the stages of strategy instruction in order to teach the learners how to use inferencing and prediction strategies when asked to deal with reading tasks. I finally employed the same pre- and post-test method.

Preparation:

I explained to the learners the importance of being able to guess the meaning of words that they do not know when they encounter them in a text. I pointed out that it is usually feasible for a reader to understand what an unknown word means by reading the full sentence and by focusing on the words that they already know. I also explained that the learners should not be stressed and refrain from reading a text when unfamiliar words appear. I pointed out that most texts contain unfamiliar words and phrases and that by following inferencing and prediction strategies the learners would become more confident readers and better able to understand texts.

Modelling:

I asked the learners if the title and the cover of the book created any images or ideas in the learners’ minds. When they had shared their views I gave the learners a general description of the plot of the story without revealing its deeper context and discussed with them the accuracy of the latter’s guesses. I also informed the learners that they were going to come across some surprise words in the text and asked them about their own idea of ‘surprise words’. I finally elicited the correct answer, ‘surprise words’ were in fact English words. Before the reading of the story commenced I encouraged the learners to try ‘clever guess’, that is to say guess what those English words could possibly mean by reading the whole sentence or paragraph. I started reading the story at normal L1 speed including the English words in the reading and asked the learners to follow the lines with their finger. When I had read the first paragraph I asked about the meaning of the English words and the learners attempted to make a guess. I assisted the learners throughout the process by directing them
towards the words and phrases that could help them discover the meaning of the English items. After I had elicited the meaning of the English words, I gave the learners the actual meaning of the words and we discussed the accuracy of their responses. Finally, I asked the learners to read the same paragraph putting all the words into Greek at their own speed.

Scaffolding / Practice:

I asked the learners to repeat the procedure for the two pages of the story and urged them to gradually increase their speed while they read. The learners read one paragraph at a time and at the end of each one they attempted to infer the meaning of the English items. The learners informed me what words or phrases they believed were useful in guiding them towards a correct guess. I did not give answers to words with which the learners seemed to struggle; I only gave the correct answer if a learner appeared to be very anxious. I also encouraged them to underline or circle the clues that they found useful in guiding them towards an accurate guess.

When the learners had completed both pages of the story they were handed a list with some short English sentences that contained some of the English words that the learners had encountered in the text. The learners were asked whether they already knew each word and they wrote down what they believed each word meant in Greek next to the English items. They were allowed to use the text as a guide to remind them of the context in which the words had been encountered. I finally provided feedback and enquired about the clues the learners had used.

Evaluation:

I asked the learners to share their feelings and thoughts about the activity. I asked them how difficult they found it and whether they believed that the process would help them with dealing with unknown words.

Expansion:

The above process can be followed whenever learners come across demanding reading texts in class. In our subsequent lessons I reminded them of the process and asked the learners to read the full sentence, as well as underline the parts that would help them understand the meaning of unknown items.

The post-test included a short reading passage in English accompanied by a list of words that could be found in the passage. The learners were asked to read the text carefully and to then write the meaning of any words they recognised or could guess their meaning in
Greek. The items that the learners were asked to translate were included in the story used in the pre-test session (see Appendix 3).

2.4.2. Inferencing, skimming, scanning

The next teaching session was carried out explicitly and was followed by a pre- and a post-test (see Appendix 4). It included the discussion of reading strategies that the learners already used and it followed the procedure described by Macaro and Erler (2008). I generated a discussion on the following strategies:

- Guess from words around problem word.
- Think hard about words I might know (i.e. don’t give up easily).
- Use a process of deduction (‘it can’t be that because ...’).
- Sound out the word or phrase.
- Use common sense (prior knowledge).
- Remember to read the whole sentence to see if it makes sense.

(Macaro & Erler, 2008, p. 105)

Preparation:

I reminded the learners of the significance of trying to guess the meaning of unknown words from context. I pointed out that this can be particularly important when they deal with reading comprehension tasks in order to provide correct answers. I introduced the concept of skimming and scanning strategies and informed the learners that many of the reading comprehension activities included in their textbooks aim at developing their use of these strategies. I uttered a few sentences about myself “My name is........ I am......... years old. In my free time I like................. My favourite food is..................” and provided an example of a question that is related to skimming (“What am I talking about?”) and another one of a question related to scanning (“What do I like eating?”, “What hobbies do I have?”).

Modelling:

I informed the learners that I was going to read the first text and that they should identify its main idea, namely the preparation of the birthday party. I pointed out that even if the learners did not understand the meaning of every word of the text they should keep reading having the question “What is the text about?” in their mind without spending too much time trying to comprehend details. They should have been concerned with forming a
general idea of the text. I read the text and the learners contributed with their responses. I provided feedback and discussed their answers. When I had made sure that the learners understood how to approach questions aimed at skimming I proceeded to introduce them to scanning strategies. I explained to the learners that scanning is related to identifying details in a text. I asked the learners some questions, “What kind of food are people eating at the party?”, “Who is cooking?”, “Who is coming to the party?”, “What costume is the boy wearing?” and I encouraged them to underline the parts that hinted to the correct answer while I was reading. This time the learners had to read the text looking for a particular piece of information rather than the general idea. The learners were reminded not to worry if they encountered unfamiliar words, but to try to guess their meaning following the process they had practiced in the previous lesson, when they read a Greek text that contained some English words. I read the text again and listened to the learners’ responses. I provided feedback and discussed the clues that the learners had used to guide themselves in the process.

Scaffolding / Practice:

The learners were given a set of multiple choice questions that enquired both after the main idea and certain details in the passage. Before carrying out the task the learners were reminded to make use of the strategies that had been analysed earlier. I also urged them to underline the language that was familiar to them and circle the unfamiliar parts of the text. I reminded the learners to infer the meaning of unknown words by focusing on the context and on what they knew and could understand. I monitored and encouraged the learners to remember the procedure I had demonstrated. When the learners had answered the questions I provided feedback and asked questions in order to make sure that they had focused on the right part of the text in order to answer correctly. I also asked them about the unknown words that they had come across and encouraged them to guess their meaning.

Evaluation:

I asked the learners if they found the process difficult. I also asked them whether they had felt too worried or confused with the presence of unfamiliar words and whether those words made it very difficult for them to answer the questions.

Expansion:

Skimming and scanning are strategies that apply to most reading comprehension tasks and it is important that learners have opportunity for ample practice, as those types of questions are also required in most language proficiency examinations. I assigned two short reading texts to the learners, each one of them containing information related to similar topics,
for instance life in the city and life in the countryside. The texts were accompanied with questions that asked the learners to spot the text that contained the particular pieces of information. An example of an expansion activity for those strategies is shown below (adapted from Jones, 2009):

_Idea for expansion_

Διάβασε τα κείμενα και απάντησε στις παρακάτω ερωτήσεις:

a. I’m Kim and I live in a big city. There are lots of tall buildings and houses. You are never lonely because there are so many people!

It is a very exciting place and there are always many things you can do. There are lots of shops and cinemas as well as fast food restaurants, cafes and discos. I like it here because my friends and I can go somewhere different every weekend.

b. I’m Nick and I live in a village in the country. It is quite a big village and there are many houses and farms. I know all the people who live here.

It is a very quiet place. There are not many shops, but there are two cafes and two restaurants. There is a small cinema too. There is an enormous park, full of flowers and trees. I like it here because we have so many places where we can play and the air is fresh and clean.

1. Σου αρέσουν τα burgers. Πού πρέπει να πας;
   a. Στην πόλη
   b. Στο χωριό

2. Σου αρέσει να παίζεις έξω στη φύση. Πού πρέπει να πας;
   a. Στην πόλη
   b. Στο χωριό

3. Σου αρέσει να πηγαίνεις για ψώνια. Πού πρέπει να πας;
   a. Στην πόλη
b. Στο χωριό

4. Σου αρέσει να κάνεις διαφορετικά πράγματα κάθε Σαββατοκύριακο. Πού πρέπει να πας;
   a. Στην πόλη
   b. Στο χωριό

5. Σου αρέσει η ησυχία. Πού πρέπει να πας;
   a. Στην πόλη
   b. Στο χωριό

The post-test followed the same procedure and included the same passages as the pre-test. Again the learners had to translate the first passage and to answer a set of multiple choice questions about the main ideas present in the second passage (see Appendix 4). I provided feedback and discussed the answers of all of the learners in both teaching sessions.

2.4.3. Prediction, inferencing, scanning

The next teaching session was also carried out explicitly and it focused on skimming, scanning, activating prior knowledge, prediction and inferencing (Manoli, Papadopoulou, & Metallidou, 2016). After teaching those strategies I employed a pre-test, post-test method (see Appendix 5). I first carried out direct instruction of those strategies following the cycle of explanation, modelling and practice. I employed think-alouds in order to communicate the importance and application of the strategies. In preparation for the pre-test I devoted some time to discussing and refreshing the learners’ awareness of reading strategy use. I initiated a discussion with the learners about the meaning of strategies, the reasons for learning them and their significance when learning a foreign language. The learners also practiced using the strategies in controlled exercises under my guidance. I explained that open-ended and fill-in-the-blanks reading exercises can be answered with the application of relevant strategies, such as inferencing and prediction. The instruction cycle was based on Seperh, Bagheridou and Moghaddam’s (2014) investigation.
When the learners were ready to take the pre-test they were given a series of reading texts each one of which was followed by some questions that examined the reading techniques to which the learners had been exposed. The texts were of a slightly higher level of difficulty than the one the learners usually encountered, in order to encourage them to employ strategies when facing difficulties. For instance, the learners were asked to scan through a text and locate a particular piece of information, and skim another text and identify its main idea. They had to make a note of ideas that came to their mind when reading the title of a text whose topic was known to the learners and guess its content before reading it. I finally provided feedback and discussed the learners’ responses with them.

Preparation:
I explained to the learners that the strategies they had practiced so far can be a very useful tool when they are asked to complete fill-in-the-blanks exercises and to answer open-ended questions. Those types of questions often intimidate learners and applying certain strategies in order to cope with them can help them become more confident readers. I stressed that if they tried to follow the processes they had practiced they would be able to respond to most kinds of questions.

Modelling:
For the modelling stage the learners were handed a short text that was related to the text that the learners were later going to read on their own during the practice stage. This text was accompanied by vocabulary fill-in-the-blanks exercises, multiple choice as well as general comprehension questions. After reading the text to them, I proceeded to read to them the first fill-in-the-blank question. I guided the learners on how to approach those questions reminding them to focus on the context and to read the whole sentences before providing an answer. I asked the learners to identify the particular part in the text that contained the same piece of information as the first question and guided them in the process by pointing out the words that could be found both in the questions and the text. I also carefully read the open-ended questions to the learners and asked the latter to point the sentence that contained the answer. In order to deal with those questions, I asked to the learners to underline the words and phrases that provided them with important clues and to try not to be distracted by unknown words.

Scaffolding / Practice:
The learners were asked to read a text and answer a set of multiple-choice, fill-in-the-blanks and open-ended questions. I monitored and asked the learners to look for particular words and phrases that could lead them to the correct answer. The last part of the text was
missing. I encouraged the learners to come up with their own ideas of how the text should end and they finally proceeded with reading the original ending of the story and discussed how they felt about the outcome. The learners received feedback and we discussed their answers.

**Evaluation:**

I initiated a discussion about the difficulty of the task. I asked the learners how they felt about the different types of questions that they had encountered. We also discussed the similarities and differences between those questions and the usefulness of the strategies they had used.

**Expansion:**

The above strategies can be applied to most reading texts that require learners to spot certain pieces of information. Prediction and inferencing are particularly significant since the texts that learners come across become gradually more demanding and contain more complex vocabulary.

The post-test included tasks that were the same as those employed in the pre-test (see Appendix 5). The learners received feedback at the end of the session.

**CHAPTER 3**

**RESULTS**

3.1. **Inferencing, prediction**

The learners produced more correct answers in the post-test that followed the explicit strategy instruction cycle, although they appeared still unable to remember the meaning of many words that seemed to trouble them from the beginning.

The learners were generally focusing on translating the English phrases employing a word-for-word method. The phrase “day off” for instance was one that appeared to trouble the learners significantly. Learner 1 interestingly managed to arrive at an accurate conclusion about the meaning of the phrase. She translated it as *free day* (ελεύθερη μέρα) and subsequently concluded that the phrase meant *ρεπό* in Greek which is, in fact, the correct translation of the phrase. The Greek text used a word used more frequently in literary texts
(έξοδος), however both words referred to a day when one doesn’t go to work according to the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English - from which all interpretations in English of the vocabulary items are produced - and I considered her response correct. Learner 3 followed the same word-for-word translation process and inferred that the phrase meant ‘free day’ (ελεύθερη μέρα). I considered her response as a valid one as it expressed the same meaning as the Greek phrase in question.

The phrasal verb ‘made up’ meaning to become friendly with someone again after you have had an argument was also very challenging for the learners. It should be mentioned that the learners had not familiarised themselves with the concept of phrasal verbs yet. They were aware, nevertheless, of the existence of phrases whose meaning cannot be derived by the meaning of the separate words that constitute it, such as ‘take a bath’ or ‘have a great time’. All learners attempted to translate the verb “made” ignoring the adverb “up” and soon realised that it could not fit in the sentence meaningfully. All learners abandoned the effort at that point, claiming that they could not guess the answer and moved on to the next item. Learner 1 was the only one who guessed at once the meaning of the phrase and attributed the Greek phrase that means ‘reconciled’ (τα βρήκαμε) to it, without endeavouring to translate it first. I accepted this Greek phrase as accurate since it expresses the meaning of the phrasal verb as precisely as the phrase that was used in the original text (ξαναμονοιάσαμε). Learner 2 also persisted in her attempts to guess the meaning of this phrasal verb. After realising that the verb “made” was not relevant in the sentence she repeated Greek verbs that could replace it, such as ‘we were bored’ (βαρεθήκαμε), ‘we sat down’ (καθίσαμε), or ‘we played’ (παίξαμε). Learner 2 was the only one to interpret the meaning of the phrasal verb ‘carry on’ as ‘continue’ (συνεχίζει). It is remarkable that she was able to utter the Greek word as soon as she read the phrase and exclaimed that this Greek word “just made sense”. Word-for-word translation led learner 5 to interpret this phrasal verb as ‘he takes it with him’. When asked to explain her response she answered that since the verb ‘carry’ means ‘take something with me’ (κουβαλάω) that must be the correct translation of the phrase. The verb ‘regretted’ was also one of the most challenging items in the text. None of the learners was able to grasp the intended meaning of the word, despite my hinting to the appropriate clues in the sentence, after the learners had been struggling for some time. Their responses, however, included words with negative connotations, such as ‘I was disgusted’ (απειδίασα), ‘I refused’ (αρνήθηκα), ‘I was bored’ (βαρέθηκα) that expressed the negative feelings of the characters at that point in the story.
Another common characteristic in all learners is that they were able to use the correct part of speech in their efforts to guess what the English words and phrases meant. They always used verbs when they had to translate a verb, or nouns in place of a noun regardless of the accuracy of their guesses. I considered their tendency to recognise the relevant part of speech an important step towards making correct inferences when encountering unknown items. Some of their guesses were also very close to the connotations of the words and phrases. For example, all learners translated the noun ‘beggar’ as ‘man’ (άνθρωπος) and the verb ‘beg’ as ‘ask for’ (ζητάω). The verb ‘ponder’ was explained by more than one learner as ‘we were ‘bored’ (βαριόμασταν). Although the latter could not be a meaningful part of the sentence since it was followed by the phrase ‘sad stories’ (θλιβερές ιστορίες), it conveyed the idea of the two characters’ spending a dull Sunday afternoon at home, which was prevalent in the extract. Most learners interpreted the noun ‘storm’ as ‘wind’ using Greek synonyms (φυσάει/έχει αέρα/φυσάει δυνατά). Learner 3 used the Greek word for ‘waves’ (κύματα) when she came across the word ‘storm’ despite the fact that waves were already present in the sentence. However, the word she used in her interpretation bore the same connotations as the correct one and it was also related to waves that appeared in the text. The learners translated the adjective ‘delightful’ as ‘great’ (τέλειο) with the exception of learner 3 who came up with the adjectives ‘terrible’ (απαίσιο) and ‘sad’ (στενάχωρο) that conveyed the opposite meaning of the one intended in the text.

All learners were able to attribute the right meaning to certain words after some consideration and a few unsuccessful attempts. The word ‘drops’ was at first interpreted as ‘rocks’ (πέτρες) by learners 5, 6 and 7. I asked them to read the sentence again carefully and I hinted on the word ‘tears’ that was meant to create a simile with the noun ‘drops’. The word was then correctly translated as σταγόνες. The learners were also capable of combining the words ‘storm’ and ‘waves’ to arrive at the correct conclusion of the word ‘drops’. Their approach to the word ‘stepfather’ is noteworthy. All learners without exception came up with the same Greek word when they encountered the noun ‘stepfather’, which is a non-existent coin combining the Greek words that mean ‘stepfather’ and ‘stepmother’ (μητριός). The learners seemed to understand the family relation expressed by the word ‘stepfather’, but they were possibly more familiar with the Greek word ‘stepmother’ (μητριά) which often appears in stories and children’s books. They seemed to use this knowledge as basis to interpret the meaning of the word ‘stepfather’. I managed to finally elicit the correct answer (πατριός) but I
accepted their initial answer as correct, as it demonstrated their understanding of the concept and of the relationship between the characters.

Learner 6 was the only one of the seven learners who seemed to truly struggle with the task and expressed his lack of motivation to be involved in the process. He required guidance throughout the session and taking into consideration the fact that he seems to be easily distracted I assisted him more than the rest of the learners. He was able to identify items, such as ‘drops’ and ‘storm’, which generally appeared to be unproblematic for more learners, but he was not capable of inferring the meaning of more demanding items, such as ‘day off’, ‘carry on’, ‘beggar’.

The learners repeated the same process a week after taking the pre-test. The learners answered correctly to questions that they had found easier during the pre-test, for instance ‘drops’, ‘storm’ and ‘delightful’, but they still seemed to have difficulty remembering or deducing the meaning of the items that had found challenging during the pre-test. The learners repeated their initial guesses, namely the ones they had attempted during the pre-test, and appeared unable to recall the correct translation of the words and phrases. ‘Beggar’ was again translated as ‘man’, ‘beg’ as ‘ask for’ and ‘storm’ as ‘windy’. The learners tried to translate phrasal verbs again based on the meaning of the individual words. ‘Made up’ and ‘carry on’ were among the items whose meanings the learners were unable to remember and repeated their initial inferences. Those items seemed to trouble the learners even after the explicit strategy instruction and they appeared to have difficulty translating them correctly. Hulstijn’s (1992) claim that learners have sometimes difficulty “unlearning” their wrong inferences can be applied here (Hulstijn, 1992, p. 114). It seems that implicit exposure of learners to reading strategies might not be particularly effective when dealing with inferencing. Although the learners appeared to understand the meaning of the words when the answers were revealed to them during the pre-test, they were not able to recall them when encountering them again in the same context.

### 3.2. Inferencing, skimming, scanning

The learners responded very positively to the second pre-test session. They resorted to techniques they had used in the first session in terms of interpreting key items that had been written in bold to draw their attention. They made efforts to translate every single word and seemed to be at a loss when they thought that their inference did not make sense. During the
modelling stage they all appeared concerned with the meaning of the phrase ‘house-warming party’ and most of them focused on the adjective ‘warm’ and declared that the phrase does not make sense. Learner 2 interpreted the phrase as ‘warming up the house’ (ζεσταίνω το σπίτι). When I had provided the correct answer to them they admitted that they had never heard of the concept before, with the exception of learner 1. This particular instance should not considered indicative of the learners’ ability to understand the meaning of unknown words from context due to their lack of personal experience with the concept expressed by the term. Activation of prior knowledge in order to facilitate understanding could not be applied at that point (Macaro & Erler, 2008). The phrase ‘catch up on all your news’ also appeared to be difficult for most learners. Learner’s 2 response, ‘tell you what is new with me’ (να σου πω τα νέα μου) was closer to the correct meaning of the phrase, to spend time finding out what has been happening the time you have not seen someone.

At the practice stage word-for-word translation proved to be effective for the word ‘teamwork’. All learners produced its correct meaning (ατομική δουλειά) and claimed that they arrived at this conclusion because of “the words themselves”. All learners seemed to struggle with the phrase ‘lay hands on’. Learners 1 and 2 resorted to the same word-for-word translation method and based on the word ‘hands’ contained in the phrase managed to discover the meaning of the phrase and described it as ‘catch with my hands’ and ‘touch’ (πιάνω με τα χέρια μου/αγγίζω). Learners 6 and 7 had difficulty inferring the meaning of the phrase but focused on the word ‘goalkeeper’ which they translated correctly as τερματοφύλακας. Those learners insisted that they already knew this word, although they had noted it down as unknown at the vocabulary test they were given prior to the commencement of the teaching cycles. It is possible that they recognised the word when they encountered it in the appropriate context that facilitated comprehension. ‘Football boots’ proved to be particularly troublesome for most of them and they seemed to have difficulty placing the word ‘boots’ in the context of a child playing football. Learner 3 insisted that “they are not boots”, while learner 7 pointed out that “boots are different”. Nevertheless, they finally understood the fact that the phrase refers to the type of shoes footballers wear. Another phrase that seemed to confuse most learners was ‘individual sport’. Learners 1, 2 and 5 were able to instantly provide the correct Greek phrase (ατομικό σπορ) as soon as they finished reading the sentence. Learner 2 explained that she found the correct answer “because of the phrase ‘team sport’”. Being able to focus on the phrase that expressed the opposite meaning and therefore deducing the meaning of the phrase in question can be a useful approach in inferring the
meaning of unknown items in a text. Learners 4, 5 and 6 required more detailed guidance and they were struggling with it even when I directed their attention towards the phrase ‘team sport’ that could hint to the correct answer. The phrase ‘special kit’ was among the ones that learners 3 and 5 devoted more effort in order to decipher its meaning. The rest of the learners seemed to easily understand its meaning and all of them used the Greek words that mean ‘equipment’ (εξοπλισμός). Most of the learners claimed that they had focused on the words mentioned in the parenthesis, like ‘T-shirt’, ‘shorts’ and ‘socks’ in order to translate the phrase correctly.

As far as the comprehension questions are concerned, most learners attempted at first to answer these questions without referring back to the text to locate the correct answer. Question number 2 (‘What question is Samantha asking her friend’) received the most incorrect responses, apart from learner 1 who re-read the extract quickly and provided the correct answer (‘What are her friend’s hobbies’). I encouraged the learners to go back to the text, identify the right response and even underline the corresponding sentence. I also reminded them to follow this procedure for all questions. The learners seemed willing to follow my advice and they managed to find the correct answers to all questions. Learner 6 required more precise guidance at this stage. I assisted him with finding and circling the clues that were going to guide him towards finding the correct response in the questions. I then urged him to find the part that is related to those clues in the text. He followed the method, managed to locate the correct answers in the text and circled the correct answers but he was seeking reassurance throughout the process and also appeared unwilling to work independently.

When I had discussed their responses with the learners and provided feedback to them I asked them about their feelings on the task. They expressed their liking for the process and declared that underlining the parts of the text that corresponded to each question was very useful and that it helped them save time while doing the exercise. Some learners, 3 and 5, said that they would like to try using different colours to underline the sentences in the text. When asked about affective factors and if they had felt stressed during the process they all responded that they were very comfortable and did not have any negative feelings towards completing the task.

The post-test again comprised the same materials and it took place a week after the pre-test. The learners demonstrated that they remembered most of the items in bold, even the ones that had troubled them during the pre-test. All learners gave correct answers to my
questions about the meaning of phrases ‘individual sport’, ‘special kit’ and ‘football boots’ excepting learners 3 and 6 who were in need of assistance to direct them towards the right clues in the sentences that could lead them to the correct answer. All comprehension questions were answered correctly at this stage and the rest of the learners did not ask for assistance.

3.3. Prediction, inferencing, scanning

During the third pre-test session the learners also appeared willing to read the text, guess the meaning of the words and phrases in bold and answer the different types of comprehension questions. The words ‘purse’ and ‘grab’ were central to the comprehension of both the whole text and the comprehension questions that referred to that particular part of it. The learners produced responses that belonged to the correct part of speech. They used phrases such as ‘fell down’ (έπεσε) and ‘ran off’ (έτρεξε) for the verb ‘grabbed’. The noun ‘purse’ was translated as ‘shoes’ (παπούτσια) and ‘toys’ (παιχνίδια) although the learners had already been aware of the English translation of those two Greek words that they used in their responses. The word ‘headphones’ was translated as ‘hearing aids’ (ακουστικά βαρηκοί) by learner 2, but when I pointed the phrase ‘music’ to her she immediately corrected her answer and provided the correct one.

The learners were generally able to answer the comprehension questions correctly. Younger learners, who had been attending English lessons for one and a half year, struggled more with open questions than those who had been taking English lessons for two and a half years. The former were in need of more precise guidance in order to be able to identify the part that contained the answer to each question. Incorrect responses were observed in that respect where the learners tended to provide longer answers that contained unnecessary information. All learners, apart from learner 6, declared that they were looking for “words that mean the same in Greek and English” both in the text and the questions in order to discover the right answer for each question.

When the learners had completed the task I asked them if they could match synonyms between the texts used at the modelling and practice stage and I also pointed out that they should focus on the items in bold. Learners 1, 2, 4 seemed to easily make connections between the words ‘grab’ and ‘snatch’, ‘strolling along’ and ‘walking along’. They also attempted to resort to word-for-word translation of the phrase ‘cast a glance at’ but were not able to provide any answers due to the presence of many unfamiliar words in the phrase. I
asked them to follow the same process of reading the full sentence carefully and trying to make a guess. Some of their responses included the verbs ‘kissed’ (φίλησε), ‘covered’ (σκέπασε), ‘scolded’ (μάλωσε). Although their answers responded to the correct part of speech, they did not provide the right Greek phrase. When learners had been asked to scan through the first text, which had been used at the modelling stage, in order to spot a synonym to the above unknown phrase, all of them identified the verb ‘checked’ as the correct one. Learner 6 seemed to struggle with identifying the sentence that contained the clue in the first text and required guidance. He finally succeeded in spotting the sentence when I drew his attention to the words that repeated themselves in both texts, like ‘baby’ and ‘stopped’.

While answering the comprehension questions the learners employed the method of underlining the relevant parts of the text, some of them using different colours. All learners answered correctly the fill-in-the-blanks questions independently, apart from learner 6 who seemed to be in need of assistance. I helped him find the clues in the questions asking him questions, such as “What is Kim doing in this question? - she’s eating something – is she eating something in the text?” This process enabled him to locate the sentences in the texts that contained the right answers. The learners required more time to scan the text for specific details, than skim it to find its main ideas. Learners 1, 2, 3, 5, and 7 admitted that they answered some multiple choice questions following the process of elimination. They were able to eliminate some choices that were blatantly wrong and that contained words with which learner’s had already been familiar. I considered their approach successful since the learners seemed to be able to recognise the negative and positive connotations of each word and phrase and, thus, comprehension was facilitated. I also asked the learners to follow a different approach to dealing with multiple choice questions at this stage, read the question first and, without reading the options underneath it, refer to the text and underline the part that includes the answer.

The post-test involved the same tasks and was given to the learners a week later. Their performance improved, especially on open-ended questions. Both learner categories, the more and less proficient ones answered all comprehension questions correctly. Learners 5 and 7 underlined the correct parts in the text in order to help them discover the right answer. The last question that asked learners to complete the story using their imagination produced some very interesting answers, which varied in the pre- and post-test. The central idea in all their responses was that the police arrived intending to arrest the boy, who was mistakenly considered to be a thief. The learners developed stories that involved car chases and
arguments between the characters that finally resulted in the revelation of the boy’s innocence. Learners 1 and 5 came up with the idea of drawing a picture of their version of the continuation of the story and they announced that they enjoyed the activity. The fact that they were able to understand that the boy had not in fact been guilty of robbery, which was the main idea of the text, indicates that they employed the reading strategies of skimming, scanning, and inferencing correctly. In the end, I revealed the ending of the story, which was in fact the same as the one they had predicted, and the learners appeared to be satisfied by it.

During the discussion that followed, the learners declared that they preferred multiple choice questions as they found them simpler and easier. They claimed that the best approach to finding the correct answers to comprehension questions was to find synonyms between the text and the questions. I also asked them if the method of reading the question ignoring the multiple choices that accompany them was useful. They claimed that they found it effective for certain questions. The questions that could be answered more easily in this manner were the ones that enquired after specific information in the text rather than the main ideas. The learners pointed out that they had to read the whole text before answering questions that referred to the main ideas. It seems that they were able to grasp the difference between skimming and scanning strategies and they realised that each one of them requires a different approach.

CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION

In this chapter, let us revisit our research questions:

1. Do young learners of English make use of top-down or bottom-up processes when they employ reading comprehension strategies?

2. Is explicit strategy instruction in reading comprehension more effective than implicit strategy instruction for young learners?

Some of the learners were better able to make use of inferencing and prediction by employing their background knowledge, namely learners 1, 2, 3, and 4 who had had more
hours of instruction in English and thus probably a higher proficiency level in English (A2) than the rest of the learners. Therefore, we can assume the prevalence of top-down processes in those learners. Some focus on bottom-up processes cannot be denied since the learners often modified their original predictions as they were gradually gaining more information throughout the reading process. They also resorted to text analysis at word and clause level which hints to the activation of bottom-up strategies, particularly by learners 3 and 4. Learners 5, 6, 7 who were probably of a lower proficiency in English (A1) often seemed to have difficulty interpreting the cues in order to arrive to the correct answer. They sometimes appeared to focus on separate words, while they struggled to make use of details and required very precise guidance in order to succeed. These learners seemed to rely more heavily on bottom-up strategies and to struggle to see the bigger picture while reading a text. Inferencing and prediction were more challenging for these learners. The distinction between the learners’ proficiency level and the application of top-down and bottom-up strategies is supported by Macaro and Erler (2008). Macaro and Erler (2008) also point out that successful readers are able to combine both processes and avoid lingering on the application of a specific strategy for an extended period of time, especially when the strategy does not appear to be effective. Another characteristic of successful readers is their ability to first employ a bottom-up strategy by focusing on individual words, before they make use of top-down strategies, such as use of prior knowledge (Macaro & Erler, 2008, p. 94). However, it should be noted that “there is probably no hierarchy of top-down processes over bottom-up processes in more successful readers. The balance between the two needs to be arrived at through a metacognitive evaluation of the match between a number of variables including task requirements, text difficulty, and the learners’ own L2 lexical knowledge” (Macaro & Erler, 2008, p. 95).

The answer to the question of whether explicit strategy instruction can yield more benefits than implicit instruction has been dealt with by many researchers mentioned in this thesis who agree on the former’s effectiveness. The results of this thesis are in agreement with the studies that demonstrate the importance of explicit strategy teaching over implicit instruction. According to Vrettou (2015), young language learners in particular benefit greatly from explicit strategy instruction and it is vital that teachers introduce it in their classrooms. Learners would also benefit from the transferring of strategies not only between different tasks, but also between different classes (Vrettou, 2015, p. 34).
4.1. Discussion with learners

When the sessions had been completed I discussed with the learners about their attitudes towards the particular strategies. I asked them what they now thought they should do if they came across unknown words and phrases. They all replied that they should ‘read the whole sentence’, even learners 5 and 7 who had indicated in the questionnaire that they seldom read the whole sentence in order to guess the meaning of a word or sentence. Learners 3, 5 and 7 admitted that underlining the part that they believed included the answer to a question in the text was very useful, while their first response in the questionnaire had been different, as they rarely used to employ this method before. The learners gave interesting answers in terms of attempting to translate difficult words and phrases. Learners 1, 2, 3, 5 and 7 admitted that word-for-word translation might lead them to wrong answers. They also said that sometimes translation helped them because they could understand the meaning of difficult phrases, such as coin words, when they tried to find familiar words that were contained in them. Learner 2 said that “other words in the sentence helped her” when she came across items she did not understand and learner 1 claimed that she “should read the sentence until the full stop and then it would be easy to understand”. The rest of the learners insisted that translation of each individual word was always helpful for them. Learner’s 6 responses did not vary greatly from his initial answers in the questionnaire, excepting the question related to underlining important parts of the text. Given his short attention span and his general lack of motivation it might be concluded that more time should be devoted to the teaching of strategies with students of a similar attitude.

4.2. Recommendations for further research

Since strategy instruction was carried out on only seven learners it is important that further research is carried out on larger groups of participants. Learners’ performance on reading strategy instruction is more effective when it takes place in larger groups of participants (National Reading Panel, 2000, p. 22) rather than when it targets individual learners. Since our lessons were always conducted in one-to-one method the teaching of the strategies was also delivered in the same manner. The learners appeared to feel reassured by my presence and they often asked questions when they could not understand a word or phrase. I repeated that they should try to work independently at the practice stage. Nevertheless, they
seemed to be more confident by the mere presence of their teacher and the possibility of asking questions. As for the implication of affective factors in the process, the learners did not appear to have negative feelings, such as stress or unwillingness to fulfill the tasks. Given the aforementioned conditions, however, with which the learners had already been familiar and the nature of our one-to-one lessons, it can be inferred that these learners would be more self-conscious under different circumstances. Indeed, they later admitted that had they been asked to perform the tasks on their own, they would have felt more nervous with the process and would probably abandon the effort to understand at certain points where the texts’ difficulty increased. The post-tests were conducted a week after the pre-tests and even though the results hint in favour of explicit strategy teaching, further research could test the long-term effects of strategy teaching.

As for the method of assessment of how effective the use of reading strategies by learners has been, Oxford and Burry-Stock (1995) mention that “interviews provide personalised information [….] while think-aloud protocols offer the most detailed information of all because the student describes strategies while doing a strategy task” and they argue that strategy assessment methods usually involve learners’ self-reflection (Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995, p. 2). This thesis has attempted to examine learners’ performance qualitatively through observation, interviews, and think-alouds taking the learners’ own views and attitudes into consideration and it does not examine the correlation between factors that can be measured quantitatively.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Taking our results into consideration, it seems that the learners benefitted from the teaching of reading strategies, they were able to apply them, adopted positive attitudes towards them and also appeared to benefit more from the explicit teaching of these strategies.
The findings of this thesis have some pedagogical implications. Teachers should make sure that learners employ both top-down and bottom-up processes and combine strategies that are relevant to both of these processes in order to become successful readers. The proficiency level of learners can direct the teacher towards the dominant type of process in the former’s approach to reading. Another significant suggestion for teachers is derived from Macaro (2006), who insists that “learner strategy instruction (or "training") appears to be effective in promoting successful learning if it is carried out over lengthy periods of time and if it includes a focus on metacognition” (Macaro, 2006, p. 321). Also, when selecting which strategies to teach, language teachers should keep in mind the importance of the “transferability” of these particular strategies, since it is that characteristic which makes them more effective for learners and yields the most positive results in language learning (Macaro, 2006, p. 328).

Being able to teach a combination of strategies is also important especially in terms of reading comprehension. Macaro (2001) encourages teachers to even consider employing strategies that they are not used to applying in their classrooms, such as the controversial method of translation, if they believe that these strategies can facilitate comprehension (Macaro, 2001, p. 191).

Teachers, therefore, should devote some time to explicit and direct teaching of strategies in order to assist learners with becoming more competent, confident and independent language users. They should keep in mind the importance of combination of various strategies, as this approach can produce favourable results by allowing learners to employ the ones they find most useful and transfer them to new tasks.
Bibliography


Ζέη, Ά. (1963). Το καπλάνι της βιτρίνας. Κέδρος.
Appendix 1: The questionnaire

Ενότητα 1

1. Όνομα

2. Επώνυμο

3. Φύλο
   - Αγόρι
   - Κορίτσι

4. Σε ποια τάξη πηγαίνεις;

5. Σε ποια τάξη ξεκίνησες να μαθαίνεις Αγγλικά στο σχολείο;

6. Σε ποια τάξη ξεκίνησες να μαθαίνεις Αγγλικά εκτός σχολείου;

7. Ποιο πιστεύεις πως είναι το επίπεδό σου στα Αγγλικά;
   - Χαμηλό
   - Θα μπορούσα και καλύτερα
   - Ικανοποιητικό
   - Καλό
   - Πολύ καλό

Ενότητα 2

Απάντησε στις ερωτήσεις σύμφωνα με την παρακάτω κλίμακα:
1= Ποτέ ή σχεδόν ποτέ, 2= Σπάνια, 3= Αρκετές φορές, 4= Πολλές φορές, 5= Πάντα

1. Όταν διαβάζω κάτι στα αγγλικά προσπαθώ να το συνδυάσω με αυτά που ήδη γνωρίζω.
   - Ποτέ ή σχεδόν ποτέ
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4
   - 5
   - Πάντα

2. Πριν διαβάσω ένα κείμενο στα αγγλικά προσέχω τον τίτλο για να καταλάβω ποιο είναι το θέμα.
   - Ποτέ ή σχεδόν ποτέ
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4
   - 5
   - Πάντα

3. Μου αρέσει να διαβάζω βιβλία ή περιοδικά στα αγγλικά.
Ποτέ ή σχεδόν ποτέ
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

Πάντα
4. Ψάχνω ευκαιρίες να διαβάζω όσο περισσότερο γίνεται στα αγγλικά.
Ποτέ ή σχεδόν ποτέ
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

Πάντα
5. Υπογραμμίζω λέξεις ή φράσεις για να τις θυμάμαι καλύτερα.
Ποτέ ή σχεδόν ποτέ
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

Πάντα
6. Μπορώ να βρω συνώνυμες λέξεις μέσα σε ένα κείμενο καθώς διαβάζω.
Ποτέ ή σχεδόν ποτέ
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

Πάντα
7. Όταν διαβάζω προσέχω την αρχή της κάθε παραγράφου για να καταλάβω το θέμα της.
Ποτέ ή σχεδόν ποτέ
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

Πάντα
8. Όταν διαβάζω ένα κείμενο προσπαθώ να καταλάβω το γενικό νόημα ακόμα και αν έχω άγνωστες λέξεις.
Ποτέ ή σχεδόν ποτέ
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
Πάντα
9. Όταν συναντάω άγνωστες λέξεις προσπαθώ να μαντέψω τι σημαίνουν διαβάζοντας όλη την πρόταση.
Ποτέ ή σχεδόν ποτέ
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
Πάντα
10. Όταν συναντάω άγνωστες λέξεις ρωτάω κάποιον άλλο να μου πει τι σημαίνουν.
Ποτέ ή σχεδόν ποτέ
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
Πάντα
11. Χρησιμοποιώ λεξικό ή γλωσσάριο όταν μελετάω στα αγγλικά.
Ποτέ ή σχεδόν ποτέ
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
Πάντα
12. Μπορώ να βρω πληροφορίες όπως ονόματα, ημερομηνίες και αριθμούς σε ένα κείμενο ακόμα και αν έχω άγνωστες λέξεις.
Ποτέ ή σχεδόν ποτέ
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
Πάντα
13. Ενθαρρύνω τον εαυτό μου να συνεχίσει να διαβάζει στα αγγλικά ακόμα και όταν δεν είμαι σίγουρος/-η ότι καταλαβαίνω σωστά το κείμενο.
Ποτέ ή σχεδόν ποτέ
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
Πάντα
14. Όταν συναντάω άγνωστες λέξεις αγχώνομαι και θέλω να σταματήσω να διαβάζω.
Ποτέ ή σχεδόν ποτέ
- 1
Πάντα
15. Όταν διαβάζω στα αγγλικά μεταφράζω στο μυαλό μου το κείμενο στα ελληνικά.
Ποτέ ή σχεδόν ποτέ
  o  1
  o  2
  o  3
  o  4
  o  5
Πάντα
16. Όταν διαβάζω ένα κείμενο στα αγγλικά προσπαθώ να μαντέψω τι θα γίνει στη συνέχεια.
Ποτέ ή σχεδόν ποτέ
  o  1
  o  2
  o  3
  o  4
  o  5
Πάντα
17. Όταν συναντώ μια δύσκολη λέξη για δεύτερη φορά θυμάμαι σε ποια πρόταση την είχα
ξαναβρεί.
Ποτέ ή σχεδόν ποτέ
  o  1
  o  2
  o  3
  o  4
  o  5
Πάντα

Items in English

Part 1

1. Name
2. Last name
3. Gender
4. What year are you in at school?
5. What year were you in at school when you started having English lessons at school?
6. What year were you in at school when you started having English lessons at home or at a
language school?
7. What do you think is your level in English?

Part 2

1. When I read a text in English I try to associate it with what I already know.
2. Before I read a text in English I pay attention to its title in order to understand what it is
about.
3. I like reading books or magazines in English.
4. I seek opportunities to read in English as much as possible.
5. I underline words and phrases to help myself with remembering them.
6. I can find synonyms in a text while I’m reading.
7. When I read I pay attention to the beginning of each paragraph to understand what it is about.
8. When I read I try to understand its general meaning even if there are words I don’t know.
9. When I see words I don’t know I try to guess what they mean by reading the whole sentence.
10. When I see words I don’t know I ask someone else to tell me what they mean.
11. I use a dictionary or a glossary when I study English.
12. I can find information such as names, dates and numbers in a text even if there are words I don’t know.
13. I encourage myself to keep reading in English even when I’m not sure that I understand the text correctly.
14. When I see words I don’t know I get stressed and I want to stop reading.
15. When I read in English I translate the text into Greek in my head.
16. When I read a text in English I try to guess what will happen next.
17. When I see a word I don’t know for the second time I remember in what sentence I had seen it before.

Appendix 2: The vocabulary test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Αγγλική λέξη/φράση</th>
<th>Γνωρίζεις την αγγλική λέξη/φράση;</th>
<th>Αν γνωρίζεις την αγγλική λέξη/φράση, γράψε τι σημαίνει στα ελληνικά</th>
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<td>Ναι/Όχι</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>thrilled</td>
<td>Ναι/Όχι</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prepare</td>
<td>Ναι/Όχι</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>loads of</td>
<td>Ναι/Όχι</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>plenty of</td>
<td>Ναι/Όχι</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>catch up on all your news</td>
<td>Ναι/Όχι</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>definitely</td>
<td>Ναι/Όχι</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>local</td>
<td>Ναι/Όχι</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>individual sport</td>
<td>Ναι/Όχι</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>by yourself</td>
<td>Ναι/Όχι</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kit</td>
<td>Ναι/Όχι</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>football boots</td>
<td>Ναι/Όχι</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>simple</td>
<td>Ναι/Όχι</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kick</td>
<td>Ναι/Όχι</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>goalkeeper</td>
<td>Ναι/Όχι</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lay his/her hands on</td>
<td>Ναι/Όχι</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in good shape</td>
<td>Ναι/Όχι</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teamwork</td>
<td>Ναι/Όχι</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>walk along</td>
<td>Ναι/Όχι</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Διάβασε το κείμενο και προσπάθησε να συμπληρώσεις τον πίνακα:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>κατεργασία</th>
<th>Ναι/Όχι</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>take a look at</td>
<td>Ναι/Όχι</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>purse</td>
<td>Ναι/Όχι</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pavement</td>
<td>Ναι/Όχι</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>turn up</td>
<td>Ναι/Όχι</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>earphones</td>
<td>Ναι/Όχι</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>grab</td>
<td>Ναι/Όχι</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stroll along</td>
<td>Ναι/Όχι</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cast a glance at</td>
<td>Ναι/Όχι</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pick up</td>
<td>Ναι/Όχι</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>turn around</td>
<td>Ναι/Όχι</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yell</td>
<td>Ναι/Όχι</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>snatch</td>
<td>Ναι/Όχι</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Appendix 3: Materials for inferencing and prediction**

Διάβασε το κείμενο και προσπάθησε να συμπληρώσεις τον πίνακα:

*Στο Καπλάνι της Βιτρίνας*

Η Κυριακή το χειμώνα είναι η πιο βαρετή μέρα. Θα ’θελα να ξέρω, αν όλα τα παιδιά του κόσμου περνούν τόσο βαρετά, όσο η Μυρτώ κι Ι. Το απόγευμα μάλιστα, όταν αρχίζει να σκοτεινάζει νωρίς νυχτώς, δεν ξέρουμε τι να κάνουμε. Από το πρωί έχουμε παιξεί, έχουμε τσακωθεί, ύστερα made up, έχουμε διαβάσει — εγώ το «Δαβίδ Κόπερφιλδ» και η Μυρτώ τον «Τζάκ» - και δε μένει πια τίποτα, μα τίποτα να κάνεις.

Ο μπαμπάς κι η μαμά, τις Κυριακές, παίζουν χαρτί στο σπίτι του κυρίου Περικλή, που είναι διευθυντής του μπαμπά στην τράπεζα. Η θεία Δέσποινα, η αδελφή του παππού, πάει επίσκεψη στις φίλες της κι η Σταματίνα, η υπηρέτρια, έχει her day off. Έτσι μένουμε τα κυριακάτικα απογεύματα στο σπίτι μόνες με τον παππού. Αν είναι καλός καιρός, ο παππούς μάς πάει περιπάτο κι ύστερα, μόλις σκοτεινάσει, γυρνάμε πίσω. Τότε αρχίζει η μεγάλη βαρεμάρα. Ο παππούς κλείνει στο γραφείο του, με τους «αρχαίους» του. Έτσι λέμε, με την αδελφή μου τη Μυρτώ, τα βιβλία του παππού, γιατί είναι όλα Αρχαία Ελληνικά.
Εμείς πάμε στην τζαμωτή βεράντα και κοιτάμε τη θάλασσα. Όταν έχει storm, τα κύματα σπάνε στους βράχους, πιτσιλάνε τα τζάμια κι έτσι όπως κυλάνε οι drops απάνω τους μοιάζουν με δάκρυα. Τότε είναι που we ponder on τις πιο θλιβερές ιστορίες. Τάχατες πως πέθανε ο μπαμπάς, η μαμά ξαναπαντρεύτηκε κι ο stepfather μας είναι πιο κακός και από του Δαβίδ Κόπερφηλδ. Ή πάλι σκεφτόμαστε, πως ο παππούς είναι φτωχός beggar και μείς ντυμένες κουρέλια, wander μαζί του μέσα στο κρύο και beg, από πόρτα σε πόρτα, ζωμί. Καθετί που συλλογίζαμε, του δίνουμε και τίτλο, λες και είναι ολόκληρο παραμύθι.

Τούτη ομώς την Κυριακή είχαμε τόσο βαρεθεί, που σαν είπα στη Μυρτώ να παίξουμε «Ο παππούς ζητιάνος», μου απάντησε πως πιο σαχλή ιστορία δεν είχαμε ξανασκεφτεί. Καθίσαμε κάμποση ώρα sullen και ύστερα πήρε καθεμιά ένα pane για δικό της και είπαμε, σ' όποιο πέσουν οι πιο πολλές drops εκείνη θα κερδίσει. Επειδή όμως κέρδιζα συνέχεια εγώ, η Μυρτώ είπε πάλι, πως πιο κουτό παιχνίδι δεν ξαναπαίξαμε.

Δε φτιάχνουμε μια ιστορία για το καπλάνι; έκαμα, μα το regretted αμέσως, πριν καλοτελειώσω τη φράση μου και μούδιασα.

- Shame on you! Αυτό μονάχα σου λέω, αγρίεψε η Μυρτώ. Έχεις τόσο μεγάλη ιδέα για τον yourself, που νομίζεις πως μπορείς να φτιάχνεις ιστορίες για το καπλάνι!

Ισως να 'χε δίκιο. Γιατί, για το καπλάνι, που είναι βαλσαμωμένο κάτω στο μεγάλο σαλόνι, μονάχα ο ξάδελφός μας ο Νίκος ξέρει να narrate. Ο Νίκος μένει στην Αθήνα και σπουδάζει χημικός στο Πανεπιστήμιο. Κάθε καλοκαίρι έρχεται στο νησί και πηγαίνει μαζί μας. Μπορεί, βέβαια, η θεία Δέσποινα να έλεγε, πως το σκότωσε το καπλάνι ο άντρας της, γιατί περνούσε κολυμπώντας από την Τουρκία και έτρωγε τα πρόβατα στο νησί – αυτό όμως είναι ιστορία για τους μεγάλους και κανένα παιδί δεν την πιστεύει. Ο Νίκος ξέρει ένα delightful παραμύθι για το καπλάνι της βιτρίνας, που δεν τελειώνει ποτέ και κάθε καλοκαίρι το carries on.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ολόκληρη η φράση που περιέχει την αγγλική λέξη/φράση</th>
<th>Δύσκολη αγγλική λέξη/φράση</th>
<th>Γνωρίζεις την αγγλική λέξη/φράση;</th>
<th>Τι μπορεί να σημαίνει η αγγλική λέξη/φράση στα ελληνικά;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Θα ήθελα να έρω, αν όλα τα παιδιά του κόσμου περνούν γύρω τον βαρετά, όσο η Μυρτώ κι ί</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Ναι / Οχι</td>
<td>Εγώ</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Από το πρωί έχουμε παίξει, έχουμε τσακώθει, ύστερα *made up*, έχουμε διαβάσει

| Η θεία Δέσποινα, η αδελφή του παππού, πάει επίσκεψη στις φίλες της κι η Σταματίνα, η υπηρέτρια, έχει her day off |
| day off | Ναι / Όχι |

Όταν έχει *storm*, τα κύματα σπάνε στους βράχους, πιτσιλάνε τα τζάμια κι έτσι όπως κυλάνε οι *drops* απάνω τους μοιάζουν με δάκρυα.

| Όταν έχει *storm*, τα κύματα σπάνε στους βράχους, πιτσιλάνε τα τζάμια κι έτσι όπως κυλάνε οι *drops* απάνω τους μοιάζουν με δάκρυα. |
| storm | drops | Ναι / Όχι |

Τότε είναι που we *ponder on* τις πιο θλιβερές ιστορίες

| Τότε είναι που we *ponder on* τις πιο θλιβερές ιστορίες |
| ponder on | Ναι / Όχι |

Τάχατες πως πέθανε ο μπαμπάς, η μαμά ξαναπαντρεύτηκε κι ο *stepfather* μας είναι πιο κακός και από του Δαβίδ Κόπερφιλδ.

| Τάχατες πως πέθανε ο μπαμπάς, η μαμά ξαναπαντρεύτηκε κι ο *stepfather* μας είναι πιο κακός και από του Δαβίδ Κόπερφιλδ. |
| stepfather | Ναι / Όχι |

Ή πάλι *beggar*  

| Ή πάλι *beggar* |
| beggar | Ναι / Όχι |
σκεφτόμαστε, πως ο παππούς είναι ένας φτωχός beggar και μείς ντυμένες κουρέλια, wander μαζί του μέσα στο κρύο και beg, από πόρτα σε πόρτα, ζωμί.

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>wander</td>
<td>Ναι / Όχι</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>beg</td>
<td>Ναι / Όχι</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Καθίσαμε κάμποση ώρα sullen και ύστερα πήρε καθεμιά ένα pane για δικό της και είπαμε, σ’ όπου πέσουν οι πιο πολλές drops εκείνη θα κερδίσει.

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>sullen</td>
<td>Ναι / Όχι</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pane</td>
<td>Ναι / Όχι</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>drops</td>
<td>Ναι / Όχι</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
μα το regretted αμέσως

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>regretted</th>
<th>Nαι / Οχι</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Shame on you! Αυτό μονάχα σου λέω, αγρίεψε η Μυρτώ

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>shame on you</th>
<th>Nαι / Οχι</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Έχεις τόσο μεγάλη idéa για τον yourself

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>yourself</th>
<th>Nαι / Οχι</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

gια το καπλάνι, που είναι βαλσαμωμένο μέσα σε μια βιτρίνα κάτω στο μεγάλο σαλόνι, μονάχα ο ξάδελφος μας ο Νίκος ξέρει να narrate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>narrate</th>
<th>Nαι / Οχι</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Ο Νίκος ξέρει ένα delightful παραμύθι για το καπλάνι της βιτρίνας, που δεν τελειώνει ποτέ και κάθε καλοκαίρι το carries on.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>carries on</th>
<th>Nαι / Οχι</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Appendix 4: Materials for inferencing, skimming and scanning

Text 1 (used for teacher’s modelling of strategies)
Διάβασε το παρακάτω κείμενο και απάντησε στις ερωτήσεις της δασκάλας σου:

Hi Jerry,

How are you? We’re having a house-warming party and I’m writing to ask you if you’d like to come.

All my friends from my old neighbourhood are coming and I’m thrilled.

Everyone is very busy here because they are preparing things for the party. We’re having loads of really nice food and there’ll be plenty of soft drinks too. Mum is making sandwiches and biscuits. crisps and jelly. Oh, and we’re also having pizza.

I can’t wait to see you and catch up on all your news.

Text 2 (used for learners’ practice)
Διάβασε το κείμενο και απάντησε στις παρακάτω ερωτήσεις:

I’ve got a lot of hobbies, but my favourite one is definitely football. I haven’t got much free time, but I always find time for this. I’m a member of the local football club and I go three times a week after school. Some of my friends go to the same club too and we often play together.

Football is not an individual sport, it’s a team sport so you can’t really play it by yourself. You don’t need much equipment to play football, but you need a special kit (football shirt, shorts and socks) and football boots. It’s a simple game to learn, there are two teams of eleven players and the idea is to kick the ball into the other team’s goal. The goalkeeper is the only player who can lay his/her hands on the ball. I believe that football is a good sport because it keeps you in good shape and it teaches you about teamwork.

What hobbies have you got?

Write back soon and tell me all about yourself.

From,
Samantha

1. Γιατί γράφει αυτό το γράμμα η Samantha?
   a. Για να μιλήσει για το αγαπημένο της χόμπι
   b. Για να μιλήσει για τον ελεύθερο της χρόνο
   c. Για να καλέσει τη φίλη της να παίξουν ποδόσφαιρο

52
2. Τι θέλει να μάθει από τη φίλη της η Samantha;  
   a. Τι κάνει στον ελεύθερό της χρόνο  
   b. Αν της αρέσει το ποδόσφαιρο  
   c. Ποια είναι τα χόμπι της

3. Γιατί αρέσει το ποδόσφαιρο στη Samantha?  
   a. Επειδή είναι εύκολο  
   b. Επειδή της διδάσκει την ομαδικότητα  
   c. Επειδή παίζουν και οι φίλοι της ποδόσφαιρο

4. Τι από τα παρακάτω είναι απαραίτητα για να παίξει κανείς ποδόσφαιρο;  
   a. Γάντια  
   b. Επιγονατίδες  
   c. Ειδικά ποδοσφαιρικά παπούτσια

Appendix 5: Materials for prediction, inferencing, scanning

Text 1 (used for teacher’s modelling of strategies)

Διάβασε το κείμενο και απάντησε στις παρακάτω ερωτήσεις:

It was a nice spring day and I had decided to walk into the town centre with the baby. I was walking along Bolton Road when I stopped to take a look at the baby. My purse fell on the pavement next to me. Suddenly, a teenage boy turned up – he was wearing earphones and he was listening to music. I didn’t see where he had come from, but he grabbed my purse.

Συμπλήρωσε τα κενά με μία λέξη από το κείμενο.

1. The woman decided to walk into the .............................. centre.  
2. The woman’s ......................... fell on the pavement.  
3. The teenage boy was wearing..................

Απάντησε στις παρακάτω ερωτήσεις:

1. Γιατί σταμάτησε στον δρόμο η γυναίκα;  
   a. Για να μιλήσει στο τηλέφωνο  
   b. Για να ελέγξει το μωρό  
   c. Για να χαιρετίσει το αγόρι
2. Τι έκανε το αγόρι;
   d. Χαιρέτισε τη γυναίκα
   e. Άρπαξε την τσάντα της γυναίκας
   f. Άρχισε να τρέχει

3. Τι φορούσε το αγόρι;
4. Πού συνέβη το περιστάτικο;

Text 2 (used for learners’ practice)
Διάβασε το κείμενο και απάντησε στις παρακάτω ερωτήσεις:

My name is Kim. Yesterday my brother and I were strolling along Bolton Road. I had just bought an ice cream and I was eating it while my brother was playing with his ball. I saw Mrs Roberts strolling along the road and there was a boy behind her. He was listening to music. Mrs Roberts stopped and cast a glance at her baby. Her purse had fallen on the pavement. The boy stopped and picked up the purse. I think somebody had shouted the boy’s name because he turned around. Mrs Roberts saw him and she started yelling at him. Lots of people had stopped to see what was happening. Mrs Roberts thought the boy wanted to snatch her purse.

Συμπλήρωσε τα κενά με μία λέξη από το κείμενο.

4. Kim was eating a(n) ..........................................
5. The boy was ............................................. to music.
6. Mrs Roberts ............................... at her baby.
7. Mrs Roberts saw the boy and started ......................... at him.

Απάντησε στις παρακάτω ερωτήσεις:

5. Με ποιον ήταν η Kim?
   g. Με τη μητέρα της
   h. Με τον αδερφό της
   i. Με την κυρία Roberts

6. Τι έκανε το αγόρι όταν είδε την τσάντα της κυρίας Roberts?
   a. Την πήρε και άρχισε να τρέχει
   b. Την άνοιξε
   c. Την σήκωσε από το πεζοδρόμιο

7. Τι σκέφτηκε η κυρία Roberts για το αγόρι;
   a. Ότι ήθελε να κλέψει την τσάντα της
   b. Ότι ήθελε να της δώσει την τσάντα της
   c. Ότι ήθελε να πετάξει την τσάντα της

8. Τι έκανε η κυρία Roberts όταν είδε το αγόρι με την τσάντα της;
a. Τον ευχαρίστησε
b. Του έβαλε της φωνές
c. Τον ρώτησε τι συμβαίνει.

9. Γιατί σταμάτησε στο πεζοδρόμιο η κυρία Roberts;
10. Σε ποια οδό συνέβη το περιστατικό;
11. Πού βρισκόταν το αγόρι την ώρα που περπατούσε στο πεζοδρόμιο η κυρία Roberts;
12. Πώς πιστεύει ότι τελειώνει η ιστορία;