



*Chrysoula Kaniori, Individual Differences in Second Language*

*Learning: a study on refugee students' motivation*



School of Humanities

Postgraduate Program

Postgraduate Dissertation

**Individual Differences in Second Language Learning: a study  
on refugee students' motivation**

Chrysoula Kaniori

Supervisor: Nikos Roumpis

Patras, Greece, June 2023

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Chrysoula Kaniori

Supervising Committee

Supervisor:

Nikos Roumpis

Hellenic Open University, LRM

Co-Supervisor:

Achilleas Kostoulas

Hellenic Open University, LRM

Patras, Greece, June 2023

*Acknowledgments and Dedication*

*I would like to express my honest gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Nikos Roumpis, for his valuable guidance during these demanding months. His advice and suggestions also improved my work and provided me the confidence required to continue going.*

*I would also like to specially thank my mother. Without her unwavering assistance and support, I would have neither completed this undertaking, nor any other aspect of my life so far.*

*To Mom and to all my refugee students,  
for showing me what it is to never give up, no matter what.*

*So, I know that there is hope.*

## **Abstract**

The research investigates second language learners' motivation, from the scope of learners' individual differences. More specifically, the present research aims to identify strategies to increase unaccompanied refugee students' motivation for Greek language learning. The scope of the study extends beyond this goal to investigate the correlation between motivation and language proficiency as well, and whether or not the increase of the former is associated with the improvement of the latter. In order to answer these questions, a mixed methods approach was employed, involving both qualitative and quantitative data. Observational data in the natural environment of the students, as well as the interview with their teacher, give the research qualitative characteristics, while quantitative data were collected through students' answers to closed-ended questions of a questionnaire. The examination of both data types, led to the development of personalized teaching interventions, taking into account the individual needs of each student. The process also contributed to the formulation of the final findings which will be presented along with some concluding recommendations. The value of the current research derives from the fact that it demonstrates the importance of applying individualized motivational strategies to refugee students in increasing students' motivation for learning the L2 and also better learning outcomes.

**Keywords:** motivation, Second language learning, refugee students, unaccompanied children, language competence

Ατομικές διαφορές στην εκμάθηση της δεύτερης γλώσσας: μια  
μελέτη για τα κίνητρα των προσφύγων μαθητών / Μεταπτυχιακή  
διατριβή

Χρυσούλα Κανιώρη

## Περίληψη

Η έρευνα διερευνά τα κίνητρα των μαθητών/-τριών δεύτερης γλώσσας, από τη σκοπιά των ατομικών διαφορών των μαθητών. Πιο συγκεκριμένα, στοχεύει στον εντοπισμό στρατηγικών αύξησης των κινήτρων των ασυνόδευτων προσφύγων μαθητών/-τριών για την εκμάθηση της ελληνικής γλώσσας. Το εύρος της μελέτης εκτείνεται πέρα από αυτόν τον στόχο για να διερευνήσει τη συσχέτιση μεταξύ κινήτρων και γλωσσικής επάρκειας, καθώς και εάν η αύξηση των πρώτων σχετίζεται ή όχι με τη βελτίωση της δεύτερης. Προκειμένου να απαντηθούν αυτά τα ερωτήματα, χρησιμοποιήθηκε μια προσέγγιση μεικτών μεθόδων, που περιελάμβανε τόσο ποιοτικά όσο και ποσοτικά δεδομένα. Τα δεδομένα παρατήρησης στο αυθεντικό περιβάλλον των μαθητών/-τριών, καθώς και η συνέντευξη με τον δάσκαλό τους, δίνουν στην έρευνα ποιοτικά χαρακτηριστικά, ενώ τα ποσοτικά στοιχεία συλλέχθηκαν μέσω των απαντήσεων των μαθητών/-τριών σε ερωτήσεις ερωτηματολογίου κλειστού τύπου. Η εξέταση και των δύο τύπων δεδομένων, οδήγησε στην ανάπτυξη εξατομικευμένων διδακτικών παρεμβάσεων, λαμβάνοντας υπόψη τις ατομικές ανάγκες κάθε μαθητή/τριας. Η διαδικασία συνέβαλε επίσης στη διατύπωση των τελικών πορισμάτων τα οποία θα παρουσιαστούν μαζί με ορισμένες συμπερασματικές συστάσεις. Η αξία της τρέχουσας έρευνας προέρχεται από το γεγονός ότι καταδεικνύει τη σημασία της εφαρμογής εξατομικευμένων στρατηγικών παρακίνησης στους/στις πρόσφυγες/-ισσες μαθητές/-τριες για την αύξηση των κινήτρων τους για μάθηση της δεύτερης γλώσσας καθώς επίσης και για καλύτερα μαθησιακά αποτελέσματα.

**Λέξεις – Κλειδιά :** κίνητρα, εκμάθηση δεύτερης γλώσσας, πρόσφυγες μαθητές, ασυνόδευτα ανήλικα, γλωσσική ικανότητα

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## **List of Abbreviations & Acronyms**

AMTB	Attitude/Motivation Test Battery
CEFR	Common European Framework of Reference for Language Skills
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
ID	Individual Differences
L1	First Language/Mother Tongue
L2	Second Language
L2 MSS	L2 Motivational Self System
LOTE	Languages Other Than English
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
RC	Reception Class
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
SLL	Second Language Learning
UAM	Unaccompanied Minors
UASC	Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children
URC	Unaccompanied Refugee Children
ZEP	Zones of Educational Priority

## 1. Introduction

Why do people's success rates in learning a second language vary so widely? Children's rates of acquiring the L1 also vary, but all—aside from those who experience extreme diminished environmental stimuli—achieve complete proficiency in their mother language. In contrast with this, when it comes to second language acquisition (SLA), learners differ not just in the rate of learning but also in the degree of competence they achieve, with some obtaining proficiency comparable to native speakers' and others falling significantly behind (Ellis, 2004).

That can explain the significant number of studies that have been conducted in the field of language learners' individual differences and also the reason that the field has a rich history in Second Language Studies. Among all the other factors, language aptitude and motivation are referred to as the "two big" notions by Ellis (2008), who asserts that research has established them as the primary psychological variables influencing individual differences (IDs) in second language acquisition. Since aptitude is a feature that cannot be modified, we may say that, motivation is the most important aspect of IDs that influence SLA.

Truly, motivation constitutes the most investigated factor in the field of language learners' IDs. It has historically formed a major concern for both language teachers and language acquisition researchers and nowadays still remains crucial. Although research studies exploring students' motivation to learn a language have gradually increased, several crucial factors of motivation have not yet been deeply investigated in language learning classes (Fryer, 2019).

The significance of researching motivation as a factor of SLA, became greater with the refugee crisis and the migration flows, which resulted in a substantial increase in the number of language learners, since the major part of the newly arrived refugees and migrants seek for second language learning. Thus, language classrooms encompass learners with wide range of differences such as their mother language, sociocultural background, age, motivation or chances to utilize the target language (Beacco et al., 2017). Unfortunately, despite the rise in the number of refugee children in Greece, access to high-quality education still constitutes a significant obstacle (Ombudsperson, 2019; Stergiou & Simopoulos, 2019 as cited in Simopoulos & Magos, 2020). Thus, it is not surprising, in

addition to the difficulties refugee children face, as well as their ambiguous future, that they are being unmotivated to continue learning.

When it comes to the unaccompanied children, the lack of motivation for learning, and their school failure, becomes even more common. On having unaccompanied status, the Art. 2(l) of Directive 2011/95/EU (Recast Qualification Directive) defines unaccompanied minors as any child “who arrives on the territory of the Member States unaccompanied by an adult responsible for him or her whether by law or by the practice of the Member State concerned, and for as long as he or she is not effectively taken into the care of such a person; it includes a [child] who is left unaccompanied after he or she has entered the territory of the Member States” (Directive 2011/95/EU, Article 2).

Europe received 314,315 asylum requests from unaccompanied minors (UAMs) between 2010 and 2020 (European Statistical Office, 2021). Such young people were compelled to interrupt their schooling and travel on difficult and unsafe travels in search of safety, stability, and protection as a result of negative situations in their hometowns (Chase, 2010; Kohli, 2006 as cited in Aleghfeli & Hunt, 2022). Nevertheless, for UAMs, arriving at their host country and ultimately obtaining asylum and humanitarian protection do not provide a solution. Unaccompanied refugee children frequently encounter a range of difficulties, from racial and ethnic abuse to confusing immigration and legal processes that constantly limit or impede their access to school (Aleghfeli & Hunt, 2022).

However, there are a few refugees who, due to the support and encouragement of their families, communities, educators, and classmates have managed to succeed in their educational paths, in spite of a convergence of variables that hinder education (Dryden-Peterson et al., 2017). Through not giving up on their education, these students and those who are trying to encourage and motivate them, struggle to reestablish a feeling of normality, identity, future prospects, and social relationships (Mosselson, 2006) in a new and not familiar for them setting.

For refugee children, education facilities extend beyond offering merely educational services. Besides, they much more encompass opportunities for socialization and provide psychosocial assistance. Dr James Comer once stated that “No significant learning can occur without a significant relationship”. The quote indicates the significance of the teacher-student relationship for students' progress, as a part of the whole learning environment. Teachers with their practices, but even more with their encouraging attitudes

in the classroom (Kovinthan, 2016), are the primary agents of inclusive education within the context of refugees. It is vital to realize that inclusion has a social component; it encourages students to participate equally in society while at the same time focusing on their educational growth (Mamas, 2011).

Taking into account all the aforementioned, along with the multiculturalism of Greek society and the quality of refugee education in Greece, it was found appropriate in the current study to examine and address the ways that URCs can be motivated to learn the L2. As an expansion of this, the study also, tries to find a link between motivation for learning L2 and language competence. At first, a literature review was conducted to summarize the theoretical framework regarding motivation for learning and refugee education in Greece. Then, the research's conceptual framework is analyzed. The methodology and the research design are described along with additional information on data collecting and participants' profiles. Finally, the researcher's considerations, as well as ethical concerns and certain limitations, are discussed.

## **2. Theoretical framework**

### **2.1 Individual Differences in language learning**

#### **2.1.1 Definition**

Individual differences encompass all characteristics and attributes that differentiate an individual and make him/her one-of-a-kind as a human being (Dornyei, 2005). They generally refer to “dimensions of enduring personal characteristics that are assumed to apply to everybody and on which people differ by degree” (Dornyei, 2006, p. 42 as cited in Li, 2022). These differences are often categorized into affective, cognitive, and personality-related factors (Jonassen & Grabowski, 2012; Kormos, 2012 as cited in Li, 2022).

These individual variations have been studied for several years to identify how they affect language learning. The concept of individual differences in The Sage Glossary of the Social and Behavioral Sciences (Sullivan, 2009 as cited in Williamson, 2018) focuses specifically on learning. Different personalities, motivations, and explanations for learning

successes and failures among learners may have an impact on both the ways and the reasons they learn. They also have different learning preferences and levels of eagerness to learn. Some characteristics may be more adaptable (such as effort or success and failure attributions), whereas others may be more stable and not easily shaped (such as gender and cultural background). Despite the variety of definitions for IDs, the constant component in every one of them is the fact that IDs differ among people and therefore they set individuals apart from one another (Williamson, 2018).

The importance of IDs has received significant recognition in educational settings, and a substantial amount of educational psychology research has focused on how to customize teaching methods to align with the abilities, strengths, and preferences of individual learners (Dornyei, 2005).

### **2.1.2 Individual differences and second language studies**

The field of second language acquisition (SLA) has placed considerable emphasis on investigating IDs, which has resulted in becoming one of the most comprehensively explored psychological aspects in SLA research.

According to Ellis (1989), there are two distinctive traditions in the study of SLA, identified as linguistic and psychological respectively. The first one emphasizes the way second-language (L2) learners develop their linguistic proficiency, and characterized by universal qualities, such as Universal Grammar. The second one stresses the various coping mechanisms that language learners employ to deal with the challenge of learning a second language. The coping mechanisms as well as the learning outcomes vary among learners as a result of each learner's unique characteristics.

The starting point of modern SLA research, according to VanPatten & Benati (2010), is the publication of Corder's 1967 essay "The Significance of Learners' Errors". Corder (1967), observed that unless we comprehend what language learners bring to the process of acquisition, improvements in language education would not take place.

The realm of SLA has piqued the interest of researchers with regards to the individual differences that exist among individuals who learn a second language. A variety of

psychologists and applied linguists have endeavored to define, explain and categorize IDs in order to isolate the factors that contribute to successful second language learning.

When students commence their L2 studies, they bring with them not only an empty mind that requires filling by the teacher, but also a considerable amount of personal baggage that will have a considerable impact on the learning process (Cohen, 2010). Indeed, several variables related to the learner's "baggage" can influence language learning success. Some of these variables are relatively easy to identify, such as age or gender, while others are considerably more difficult to understand due to challenges in their measurement, such as intelligence, aptitude, motivation, learning styles, learning strategies, or personality factors. It has been noted that there exists a broad range of outcomes among individuals learning a second language, concerning their overall proficiency in the language. Consequently, the investigation of IDs, particularly regarding language aptitude and motivation to learn a language, has been a prominent research topic in the field of SLA since the 1960s.

Among the factors that influence learners' IDs, Altman (1980), as cited in Yu et al.(2015), identifies age, sex, prior language learning experience, native language competency, character, linguistics, motivation, attitude, intellectual factor and cognitive strategies. To these factors, Skehan (1989) includes linguistics, language learning strategies, motivation, cognition, and emotion, character, intellect, cognitive styles, anxiety, and other aspects. In addition, Altman and Skehan investigated gender factors, learning techniques, memory, cognitive style, and brain hemisphere lateralization. Across a variety of social, cognitive, and emotional factors that determine Second Language Learning (SLL) success, studies reveal that motivation, age, and language aptitude are considered to be the most important indicators (Abrahamsson & Hyltenstam, 2008; Birdsong & Molis, 2001; Dörnyei & Skehan, 2003 as cited in Turker et al., 2021).

### **2.1.3 What should be included as an individual difference**

The number of factors is almost limitless and extremely challenging to categorize with any degree of accuracy (Ellis, 1985). Various researchers with different criteria have created different classifications of IDs.

The first classifications were Ellis' (1985) who classified IDs into two groups: personal factors and general ones, and also Gardner's (1985), for whom IDs are categorized in language aptitude, personality, attitudes, motivations and orientation. About a decade later, Larsen - Freeman and Long (1994) encompassed in IDs age, aptitude, socio-psychological factors, personality, cognitive style, hemisphere specialization and learning strategies. Williams and Burden (1997) enclose intelligence, cognitive style, motivation, anxiety, aptitude and learning strategies, while Dornyei and Skehan (2003), suggest aptitude, cognitive and learning styles, strategies and motivation. Hence, the concept of "individual differences" is not well-defined and includes various core variables and optional ones.

In the context of addressing individual differences from an educational viewpoint, it is necessary to focus on personality, aptitude, and motivation as these are commonly recognized as crucial learner variables. In the field of second language learning, two additional factors, namely learning styles and language learning strategies, have been considered as central individual differences (Dornyei, 2005).

In the upcoming sections, there will be a description of the various types of individual variables, with special emphasis on the factor that is the primary focus of the empirical research presented in this thesis.

#### **2.1.4 Motivation**

L2 motivation has long been acknowledged by L2 theorists as being crucial to sustaining learning in the difficult and time-consuming process of acquiring competency in a second language. In the field of language education, motivation plays a crucial role in understanding why students initiate the language learning process, how long they persevere in it, and how much effort they invest (Winne & Hadwin, 2008; Dörnyei, 2010 as cited in Li, 2022). In other words, motivation serves as the main driving force that initiates and sustains the often challenging and lengthy process of language learning (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015; Winne & Hadwin, 2008; Dörnyei, 2010 as cited in Li, 2022).

It was Krashen (1982) with his early theory on SLA and his Affective Filter hypothesis who stated that emotional factors during the language learning process may distract language learners, potentially hindering their ability to absorb the material being taught in



class. For instance, students may struggle to learn when faced with unfriendly behavior from their teacher or aggressive attitudes from classmates. Krashen (1982) emphasizes that in SLA, learners' emotional state plays a crucial role in their success. Factors such as learner's passion for participating in class and the confidence gained from teachers' encouragement can significantly impact their language acquisition.

Previous research, as reviewed by Krashen (1981), has affirmed that various affective factors are closely related to success in SLA. These factors can generally be categorized into three main categories: motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety. Typically, individuals with high motivation, often referred to as "integrative" motivation, tend to perform better in SLA. Similarly, performers who possess self-confidence and a positive self-image also tend to excel in language learning. At the same time, low levels of anxiety, both in personal and classroom contexts, appear to be helpful for SLA. On the contrary, negative emotions for language learning, such as low motivation, low self-esteem, and overwhelming anxiety, are often formed through passive moods (Krashen, 1991 as cited in Lin, 2008).

Research on motivation in language learning had already begun since 1960, and after Gardner and Lambert (1972) published a detailed summary of the findings of a more than ten-year research program, the study of motivation in second language acquisition emerged as a noteworthy research area. They discovered that a learner's ability to acquire a language depended on their affective propensity towards the target linguistic-cultural group (Dornyei, 1990). Gardner (1985) as cited on Hong, & Ganapathy (2017), as well as Krashen (1982) recognize two types on learning motivation, the integrative and the instrumental motivation, each one affecting the learner's language acquiring ability under a different mechanism.

The work of Gardner and his colleagues in the Canadian bilingual setting characterizes the first phase in the history of research on motivation in SLL, known as the social-psychological phase (1960-1990), according to Dornyei's and Ryan (2015) historical analysis. The underlying presumption of this research is that learning a second language is distinct from learning other academic disciplines since it necessitates increased openness to the L2 group and willingness to acquire elements from it. Integrative motivation is the term that has been given to this idea, according to which, motivation and aptitude have a

favorable impact on one's ability to learn a language, but language anxiety has a negative impact (Al-Hoorie, 2017). In other words, as Taie & Afshari (2015) stated, language achievement impacts attitude and motivation while at the same time attitude and motivation affects language achievement in a nearly circular way.

Gardner developed his socio-educational model concerning the importance of attitudes and motivation in second language learning during the 1960s as a consequence of several empirical studies, and he has since improved and modified it. According to this model, the learning process is influenced by four major factors: social context, individual differences (including motivation), acquisition settings and outcomes (Al-Hoorie, 2017). For the purpose of his research, Gardner (1985) created a study tool called the Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) in order to evaluate the key emotional factors linked to learning a second language. In its initial form the Test included 109 items using the 7 Likert scale format.

For over 30 years, Gardner's socio-educational model maintained a dominant stand in SLA research. But as the 1990s got underway, it started to draw substantial criticism from a range of academics in the discipline, including Dornyei, Oxford, and others.

In Dornyei's (1994) opinion, for example, Gardner's paradigm, places more of an emphasis on broad motivating elements rooted in the social environment than in foreign language instruction. He states that, the section of AMTB where the attitudes of the students regarding the language instructor and the course are evaluated, does not provide sufficient data describing the classroom dimension that could be useful in developing practical suggestions.

This appears to be the area of a more comprehensive evaluation of the models at the time of the social-psychological period, such as Clément's (1980) social context model, Giles and Byrne's (1982) intergroup model, and Schumann's (1978) acculturation model, which along with Gardner's approach, have in common a macro-level examination of the interactions between social groupings and surrounding factors, making them unsuitable for classroom use (Dornyei & Ryan, 2015). According to McClelland (2000) as cited in Al-Hoorie (2017), the concept of integrating with native speakers from Anglophone nations also started to lose significance as World English gained popularity as a decentralized

global language and Gardner's model conceived as out-of date. Other arguments against Gardner's theory as being anti-pedagogical included the causal link between motivation and language proficiency and, more significantly, the sociopsychological perspective's deterministic nature, which ignores the possibility of learners developing intrinsic motivation throughout the learning process (Ellis, 2004).

Dornyei (1994) still accepts the crucial role that motivation plays in determining the success of second/foreign language learning, and the resulted, extensive research that has been conducted in the past decades to understand its nature and significance in the language learning process. He recognizes the pioneering work of Gardner and Lambert, along with their colleagues and students, and their contribution in grounding motivation research in a social psychological framework, their setting of high research standards, the introduction of standardized assessment techniques and instruments, and their major contribution to the maturity and advancement of L2 motivation research.

The research on motivation in SLL entered a second phase, the cognitive-situated period, when the focus of study was broadened to include students in the classroom environment as well as the cognitive mechanisms underpinning language learning (Dornyei, 2015). Dornyei's study of integrativeness under the cognitive scope resulted in the creation of the L2 Motivational Self System (L2 MSS) (Dornyei, 2005, 2009), which included the following three elements:

1. Ideal L2 Self, which is the L2-specific component of one's "ideal self". If the person we would like to become speaks the language, learning it is strongly motivated by the desire to close the gap between our real and ideal selves. This element frequently contains conventional integrative and internalized instrumental goals.
2. Ought-to L2 Self, which is focused on the traits that one believes one should possess to live up to expectations and avoid potential negative outcomes. The more outward (i.e., less internalized) types of instrumental impulses are included in this level.
3. L2 Learning Experience, which emphasizes contextual, "executive" explanations for the current learning environment and learning experience (i.e teacher's impact, the curriculum, the peers, or the success-related experience).

For validation purposes of the L2 Motivational Self System in a range of learning contexts, many quantitative experiments were carried out and their results support Dornyei's notion. For instance, Csizer and Kormos (2009) conducted a study with 400 students, in the context of English classes in Hungary. They used a self-report questionnaire, and the findings demonstrated that although it might appear crucial for students to have an intrinsic motivation in learning a second language and a solid L2 self-concept, the importance of the language learning environment is as crucial. The learner's self-concept and their level of enthusiasm for studying a L2 appear to be influenced by their attitudes towards the learning environment, the teacher, and the activities, tasks, and instructional materials.

The L2 Motivational Self System has also been the subject of extensive empirical studies by Taguchi et al. (2009) and Ryan (2009), focusing on English language learners from a variety of nations (Japan, China, Iran) and educational levels (Dornyei & Ushioda, 2009). Yousefi & Mahmoodi (2022) in their meta-analysis of 17 quantitative studies based on L2MSS, published during the period 2012-2019, involving 18,832 language learners, found a significant impact of L2 motivation on language learning.

On the other hand, Al-Hoorie (2018), in his meta-analysis of 32 research reports published during the period 2009-2016, involving 32,078 language learners, found that the three components of the L2MSS are less reliable indicators of performance in terms of objective measurements. However, he acknowledges that there is an urgent need for experimental studies in the area of linguistic motivation. According to Al Hoorie (2017), studies on this time period mostly focus on what happens in the classroom, classifying it as the "educational period".

The current third period of the language motivation field is highlighted by the transition to socio-dynamic viewpoints. In fact, the increasing emphasis on the dynamic nature of motivation and its temporal change may be the most notable feature of this phase (Al-Hoorie, 2017). For Dornyei & Ryan (2015), context is a dynamic concept that people actively participate in by their actions and responses and the dynamic and mutually constitutive character of the interaction between motivation and circumstance cannot be captured by a linear method.

These three periods of research on language motivation have gone through, and certainly cannot be completely separated from one another, as theories are modified and evolve and do not simply replace each other (Boo et al., 2015).

### **2.1.5 Motivating strategies**

On the practical level of mitigating learners' pessimism and negative mood and in order to enhance their motivation to learn, Krashen (1982) proposes that language teachers should establish a supportive learning environment with a lower affective filter. This includes fostering creating study environments that promote motivation, enabling learners to cultivate higher self-esteem, increased confidence, and a sense of accomplishment. Oxford (2003) also states that L2 proficiency has been proven to be highly correlated with affective tactics.

Gardner (2008) also recognizes to some extent the importance of the supportive teacher, and the use of motivational practices in the classroom. Without offering detailed instructions, he believes that these techniques' continual review in light of their efficacy in each individual class is essential to their success.

On the contrary, Dornyei's (2001) research in the field of motivating teaching practices is very thorough and his proposal can be summarized in the following four key elements:

1. the development of fundamental motivational conditions by building a strong rapport between the teacher and the students, fostering a positive and encouraging classroom environment, and forming a cohesive group of learners
2. the creation of the initial motivating factors, by raising students' expectations for success and encouraging them to see language learning positively
3. the maintenance and protection of motivation, by creating an engaging and entertaining learning environment, setting distinct learning objectives, enhancing the students' self-confidence and self-worth, fostering the autonomy of learners, encouraging self-motivational techniques, and fostering intergroup collaboration among the students
4. the promotion of positive self-evaluation, by encouraging attributions of motive, giving encouraging feedback and offering incentives like prizes and grades.

Dornyei (2001) believes that adopting creative techniques may boost students' motivation, and that this should be demonstrated in the classroom. However, educators must keep in mind that “*not every strategy works in every context!*”

The effectiveness of teachers' motivational tactics in raising pupils' motivation was examined in Guilloteaux & Dornyei's (2008) large-scale study. The study was conducted with 27 teachers, 1.381 students, in the context of 40 ESOL classes in South Korea. They used a self-report questionnaire and conducted classroom observations for about two months. The student motivational state questionnaire had 20 items, rated on a 6-point scale. Some of the items were modified versions of previously used scales (e.g., Clément, Dornyei, & Noels, 1994; Gardner, 1985), while others were entirely original and were written with the intention of gauging the students' attitudes towards their present L2 class, their level of linguistic confidence, and their anxiety in the second-language classroom. The findings of this study suggest that language teachers' use of motivational strategies is associated with higher levels of motivated learning behavior and motivational state in their students. Similarly, Campbell and Storch (2011), in their small-scale qualitative study that was conducted among university students learning Mandarin as a second language in Australia, came to the conclusion that if teachers could use techniques to strengthen students' perceptions of their L2 selves, it may enable them to go through challenging situations and carry on with their L2 learning.

### **2.1.6 Languages other than English (LOTEs)**

Researches such as Campbell's and Storch's (2011), on learning a L2 other than English constitute the minority of the field. According to Boo et al. (2015), 72,67% of the empirical publications that they examined during the period 2006-2015, focused on the study of English as a second language. According to Dornyei and Al-Hoorie (2017) a major focus of L2 motivation research over the past two decades has been on creating models and constructs that can take into account the unique features of English as the target language. They also recognize that one's motivation to learn English is a lot different than the motivation to learn another L2 and that in the very common case when LOTE learning occurs in combination with English study, may lead to comparisons both at conscious and unconscious levels. In most of these cases, English would be favored.

Focusing on LOTEs may be the path to comprehending the complexity of language learning motivation. According to Al-Hoorie (2017) integrative motivation may be an important idea in the context of LOTEs because these languages are typically spoken by a particular community, which is seen as the "owner" of the language. Many people who choose to learn a particular language do so because they already reside in the region where it is spoken or because they intend to move there. Usually, the learning of a second language other than English is associated with special and specific reasons such as religious reasons or as happens in the case of refugees. This realization has significant practical ramifications since it shows that one effective strategy to motivate LOTE students is to provide them the chance to create a narrative identity that supports their individual language-learning endeavor.

## **2.2 Refugee students**

When working with refugee students, one cannot disregard the exogenous elements connected to their migratory experiences, the education they received in the host country, and the impact they have had on the development of their attitude toward language learning.

### **2.2.1 Refugee children's experiences**

Children constitute about half of all refugees worldwide (UNICEF, 2022). These children are arguably the most vulnerable people on earth. War, strife, and relocation are all that refugee children have ever known (Bhutta, Keenan, & Bennett, 2016; Murray, 2018 as cited in Murray, 2019). They have grown up in a world where frequent bombs, aerial assaults, and violent crimes are commonplace (Fegert, Diehl, Leyendecker, Hahlweg, & Prayon-Blum, 2018; Ghumman, McCord, & Chang, 2016; Murray, 2018 as cited in Murray, 2019). Many of them have witnessed the murder of family members (Ayotte 2000; Thomas et al. 2004 as cited in Hek, 2005), or have experienced their imprisonment. Lack of food and water, dangerous types of transportation (such as crowded boats, trains, and cars), violence threats, strict border controls, and overpopulated refugee camps are just a few of the serious difficulties that come with the journey looking for security (Fegert et al., 2018; Murray, 2018; Tyrer & Fazel, 2014 as cited in Murray, 2019). Those children are



significantly more likely to experience mental health issues due to the cumulative effect of stressors (Bosqui & Marshoud, 2018; Fazel & Betancourt, 2018; Fegert et al., 2018; Nocon et al., 2017; Yohani, 2015 as cited in Murray, 2019).

However, their difficulties do not end once they arrive in the destination country. The challenges accompanying resettlement are entirely distinct, as this time children having fled their countries are required to learn a different culture and language. The resettlement process is regularly connected with social exclusion and prejudice, while children may experience family separation as a result of the new living conditions. Not surprisingly, refugee children frequently encounter anxiety, anger, and despair feelings as a result of all the stressful events in their destination country (Calam, 2017; Ghumman et al., 2016 as cited in Murray, 2019). A substantial number of them reside with parents who, as a result of their own emotional upheaval, fail to engage with them appropriately (Levenson and Sharma 1999; McCallin 1996 as cited in Hek,2005), others live alone, or with relatives they do not know, while some are cared for by social services (Stone, 2000 as cited in Hek,2005).

### **2.2.2 Unaccompanied refugee children**

According to the most recent information provided by Greek authorities on March 2023, there are 2,219 unaccompanied children currently residing in Greece, living in a range of housing options throughout, including camps, hospitals, and educational programs (Infomigrants, 2023). However, their experiences with the facility where they were cared for, depended less on the sort of facility and more on their relationships with specific staff members with whom they frequently interacted (Mishra et al., 2020). The lack of strong relationships that would help them deal with terrible situations makes them more susceptible to post-traumatic stress disorder and in this field the role of caregivers is crucial. As Eide & Hjern (2013) point out in their review, primary determinants of unaccompanied children's emotional well-being and long-term adaptation include the kind of care and education they get in the initial years following relocation, along with their own motivation to build a bright future for themselves.

In a recent research study conducted with UAMs in Greece, youth recognized their interactions with NGO personnel as helpful when they felt that those staff members were



interested in preparing them for their futures, whether by assisting them in building new skills or connections. Through taking part in both educational and social activities that NGO employees promoted, children were able to develop new abilities and have experiences that helped them envision worthwhile futures in Greece (Mische, 2009; Schutz, 1967 as cited in Mishra et al., 2020). When youths were asked about their long-term intentions, those who interacted positively with the NGO staff member, mentioned their planning on remaining in Greece. Even if they had previously been given asylum, those children who thought that the adults in charge of them were not supportive and concerned with their endeavors to establish better futures, mainly planned to leave Greece. The latter was frequently observed in settings that lack educational opportunities or chances for personal development (Mishra et al., 2020). As Martinez-Martinez et al. (2021) suggest, education is the key to ensuring that UAMs fully integrate into the society of the host country.

### **2.2.3 Refugee education framework**

The framework for the education of refugee children in Greece includes three components:

1. Kindergarten school in Reception and Identification Centers (RIC) and camps;
2. Reception Facilities for Refugee Education (DYEP), provided to prepare children living in camps and RICs for mainstream schools. DYEP comprises lessons offered in public schools in the afternoon;
3. Reception Classes (RCs) within Educational Priority Zones (ZEP) aimed to children who lack the Greek language proficiency required for successful integration into the educational system without further help. Students attend the morning courses with Greek fellow students according to the regular curriculum, while additionally enrolling in three hours of Greek language preparatory classes as well.

However, the educational framework's implementation is fraught with several challenges. The list of schools that provide RCs-ZEP and DYEP classes is revised yearly. Before the school year comes to an end, parents and SEP state the number of pupils who plan on enrolling for the following school year. Since it ignores the foreseeable entrance of numerous asylum seekers throughout the course of summer, the entire procedure's

framework appears inadequate. The educators employed for the RCs-ZEP and DYEP are annual substitutes. They are chosen using a points system that excludes factors like past experience in teaching refugee children, or Greek as a second language. Despite their desire to stay and utilize any experience they may have obtained, there is no system that permits instructors to stay in the same workplace after the end of the current school year (Refugee Support Aegean, 2021). Furthermore, some substitute teachers decline job offers after learning the location and duties of their assignment, particularly those who work part-time or for a small number of hours and cannot afford to move far from home. Although the procedure allows for the potential of replacing educators being nominated for those positions, that step could take several months. Due to this, some students registered in reception classes at primary public schools this academic year were limited to taking part in mainstream courses being unable to participate.

As for the teaching material, according to the Institute of Educational Policy's recommendation, consists of a single textbook designed for students of every educational level, ranging in age from six to eighteen. The textbook also requires basic level of knowledge of the Greek language; hence it is not addressed to newly-arrived students with little or no knowledge of it. Research on teachers' opinions shows that the vast majority of them make use of it, yet to ensure that they fulfill the needs of the children, they are compelled to make several modifications and most of the times to develop their own educational materials (Papapostolou et al., 2020).

#### **2.2.4 Teachers' practices**

Engaging with Unaccompanied Refugee Children (URC) constitutes a pedagogical difficulty for teachers. Newly certified teachers typically receive a position at a school with a range of roles and responsibilities. Most of them will come into direct contact with refugee children when they begin their careers as educators, facing a challenge for which they are extremely underprepared (Popov & Stureson, 2015). Their commitment is unquestionable, as is that of the numerous volunteers who contribute to various educational projects conducted by NGOs. Educators make every possible effort to provide this vulnerable group with a warm, welcoming, but professional learning environment in the classroom. To assist their refugee students in language learning, they require support

with the teaching objectives, syllabus development, resources utilized in education, and teaching strategies that will best meet their needs and those of the host community. Without a doubt, language instruction for refugees and immigrants requires the presence of instructors who have received specific training (Celani, 2006 as cited in Kantzou et al., 2017).

Considering instructional methods, teachers in Greek primary schools recognize the need for differentiated instruction in the efforts to address multiculturalism in their classrooms, in accordance to a large-scale research study carried out by Kaldi et al. (2017, as cited in Papadopoulou et al., 2020). However, the majority of the Modern Greek language teachers usually have a focus on forms, grammar accuracy, and correction of errors since they were not provided with the necessary expertise. As far as what happens in mainstream classes, Maligoudi, Tsolakidou & Chiona (2018) in their study, investigated how educators of the regular classes felt about using bilingualism to include refugee pupils and enhance their language proficiency. The study showed that, despite educators' claims, they seldom involve their refugee children in the learning process in their classes. Several of them clarify how including refugee kids in classroom activities might hinder the advancement of the Greek students. According to multiple research studies (Ziomas, Cappella, and Konstantinidou, 2017; Scientific Committee in Support of Refugee Children, 2017 as cited in Manoli et al., 2021), educators commonly lack specialized training and related expertise. In their study, Palaiologou et al. (2019), also make note of the necessity of enhancing teachers' professional capacities and the implementation of modern educational approaches of intercultural education.

### **2.2.5 Meeting the needs of refugee students**

Young migrants have a broad spectrum of emotional and physical necessities. Refugee children often struggle with psychosocial concerns, which affect their ability to focus, learn, and socialize with other students (de Wal Pastoor, 2015; Save the Children, 2018b as cited in Murray, 2019). Young refugees, nevertheless, are also likely to carry with them a multitude of good experiences, talents, and resilience in addition to the experiences mentioned above (Hek, 2005). It really matters to keep in mind that young refugees are not a monolithic group and have a variety of diverse needs, experiences, and expectations

while thinking about the problems they confront, their wants and needs. As Papadopoulos (2018) remarks, 'the loss of home is the only condition that all refugees share' (p. 9).

To be able to help these children settle, recover a feeling of security, and start to establish new goals and objectives within their new environments, educators and caregivers must understand the sorts of distress and the behavior these experiences could generate. For them, teachers serve the roles of parent, mentor, and guardian. They teach not just language skills but also ways of living and behaving. They support kids psychologically, comprehend their worries and phobias, offer solutions to difficulties, and facilitate the development of their personalities (Antonijadu et al., 2022).

Refugee children and youth have pointed out in a lot of qualitative studies that the presence of well-informed, specialized educators with encouraging attitudes helped them integrate and succeed in school (Hek, 2005). Teachers who go above and beyond to assist students are further reported to promote students' self-confidence and motivation to succeed (Thommessen & Todd, 2018 as cited in McDiarmid et al., 2021).

Positive learning experiences were frequently linked to supportive educators. In the UK, a number of minors credited their ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) instructors' individualized teaching for their English improvement (Farmbrough, 2014 as cited in Aleghfeli & Hunt, 2022). These involve teachers' willingness to tutor students at home, schools' placement of students in small learning groups of two to three pupils, interaction between teachers and social workers.

Having an understanding of the children's needs, collaborating with the legal guardians, the caregivers or those who provide social services, on the well-being of the children, and adopting an individualized instruction where the children's needs are taken into consideration one by one, are examples of teaching strategies. In the Netherlands, a number of minors ascribed their success in school with the good ties they had formed with educators whom they viewed as their parents (Ghaemina et al., 2017 as cited in Aleghfeli & Hunt, 2022).

Negative learning experiences were frequently attributed to unsupportive instructors. Several Sudanese adolescents in the US dropped out of school as a result of feeling uncomfortable with the teaching methods and course materials (Luster et al., 2010; Rana

et al., 2011 as cited in Aleghfeli & Hunt, 2022). Some minors in the Netherlands frequently reported being unmotivated by their educators, which had a detrimental effect on their Dutch language (Ghaemina et al., 2017 as cited in Aleghfeli & Hunt, 2022). Many Afghan and Iranian minors in the UK reported that their first school experience was unpleasant since they were unable to connect with their teachers (Doggett, 2012).

### **3. Research Methodology**

#### **3.1 Research Objectives**

During a week (fifteen teaching hours) of observations in a non-formal education class, the researcher identified the low motivation for Greek language learning that most students keep, along with their level of proficiency, their needs and interests. Additionally, these children live without their parents to support and encourage them and no one is deeply involved with them. Neither their psychosocial nor their educational needs seemed to be met. From the first moment the researcher entered to observe the classroom, their need to establish relationships with her was immediately apparent. As a result, this challenging situation served as both the source of inspiration and the motivating force for this study.

The key question in this case is if and how can we help intrigue refugee students who learn the formal language of the receiving country. The previously mentioned literature has demonstrated the significance of motivation in SLL, while additionally described the quality of refugee education in Greece. The latter can easily explain why refugee students usually lack academic motivation.

The current study aims to discover a connection between an increase in students' motivation for learning Greek with better learning outcomes. The research took place at an NGO in Thessaloniki, Greece in non-formal language classes. The procedures of this teaching intervention will be analyzed at a later stage.

### **3.2 Aims & Research Questions**

The research aims to explore unaccompanied refugee children's motivation for Greek language learning and the relationship between motivation and language proficiency. More specifically the research will examine i) how refugee students' motivation for learning can be increased and, ii) whether or not this increase has a positive impact on language proficiency.

The research questions have been shaped as following:

RQ1: In which ways can refugee students' motivation for learning be increased?

RQ2: Could this increase be linked with improvement of the students' language proficiency?

### **3.3 Research design / Research approach**

In order to conduct the present research, a mixed methods approach was chosen, with the aim of a more complete understanding of motivation functioning among unaccompanied refugee students. The collection of observational data in the natural environment of the students, as well as the interview with their teacher, give the research qualitative characteristics. The use of quantitative data from students' answers to simplified closed-ended questions of the questionnaire was dictated on the one hand by the choice of Dorney's L2MSS as the basic theoretical background for motivation research, but also by the language level of the students which would make it difficult to express extensive answers to open-ended questions. Accordingly, the analysis of the two types of data led to the creation of personalized teaching interventions according to the needs of each student as well as the drawing of the final conclusions.

The researcher adopted a constructivist worldview, paying particular attention to the ideological dynamics of exchange and interaction within the research context, since they serve as the foundation of the meanings' co-construction (Creswell, 2014). The study was conducted, looking at the meanings that children assign to their own learning experience. The researcher examined the meaning that URCs give to their schooling, how they experience the language classes and their relationship with their teachers, before and after

a teaching intervention. She will grant her own conclusions, but she will be based on the participants' views (Creswell, 2014). Each participant holds a unique representation based on the meaning that he/she attributes, ensuing to different learning experiences, different ought to-selves and ideal L2 ones.

Finally, the current research constitutes an empirical case study as it investigates a focus group of students during their language lessons. Although case studies entail gathering specified data in a predetermined amount of time using various procedures (Creswell, 2014), they provide valuable and in-depth insights into the research topic by offering a range of relevant descriptions. As a result, case studies are widely employed to investigate the factors that impact educational outcomes during the learning process.

### **3.4 Data collection**

Data were obtained through questionnaires and language tests, while at the same time additional information was gathered through classroom observation and discussion with the classroom teacher.

In order to gather information on the students' personality as well as their language skills, the researcher took field notes. Data were recorded both during and after class. Observation is an integral part of pedagogical documentation (Fleet & Harcourt, 2018 as cited in Birkeland et al., 2020) and it is widely used in research that takes place in educational settings. Classroom observation is the first tool that will be used for collecting data for this research study, as it allows teachers to discern students' proficiency level, their needs and interests. Initially, through observation, the problematic condition was recognized as the reason for organizing and carrying out the educational intervention. It is also useful for teachers as it demonstrates what students are learning and decide on what to teach next. Observation also helps the researcher witness how children use skills and talents in daily activities, ensure each student will be offered the "right" activity and improve the quality of the education provided (Halim et al., 2018; Birkeland et al., 2020).

A total of 8 questionnaires and 8 language tests will be conducted. The same questionnaire will be distributed to each student twice, one before the intervention takes place and another at the end of it. Students' self- assessment of motivation for learning Greek will



be detected before and after intervention, allowing for the comparison of any potential modifications in students' level of engagement in the classroom and motivation to learn the target language.

The survey's questionnaire was created in accordance with the recommendations provided by Dörnyei and Taguchi (2009). On the basis of Dörnyei's (2009) L2 motivational self system, the primary variables were chosen (i.e., ideal L2 self, ought-to L2 self, and L2 learning experience), focusing more on the third variable – that of the learning experience, as this is the one that includes the teaching environment, teacher-students relationships, etc. It is also the most significant indicator of a number of criteria measures, such as the intended effort, or the L2 learning success, and it is commonplace to be referred as the strongest indicator of acts of motivation (Dörnyei, 2019). The other two (i.e., the Ideal L2 self and the Ought-to L2 self) are more personal, and it is thus more difficult for a teacher to intervene and bring upon any changes. The majority of the questionnaire's items were created using data from earlier research (Gardner, 2004; Papi, 2010), and some were newly designed. They were evaluated using five-point Likert scale, with 1 representing “I extremely disagree” and 5 representing “I completely agree”. They were distributed to the three of the participants in Greek and to one of them in English. The researcher provided further clarifications to the participants who required assistance, simplifying some statements, in order to ensure that the students have fully understood each question.

Correspondingly to the questionnaires, the language tests will be completed twice, one before the intervention and the other following it. The tests were teacher-designed aiming to assess students' grammar skills on specific topics. Each student will take a different test, based on his/her proficiency level. In doing the test, the students are called to write down the words that the researcher will tell them to. The test is more or less some kind of dictation which will indicate spelling errors (phonological, orthographic, etc.) or vocabulary knowledge. The words were different for each student and they targeted different grammar topics. The post-test forms will not be an exact copy of the pre-test ones in order to see whether or not the internalization of the grammar rule have been succeeded and not that just some specific words have been simply memorized and can be recalled anytime.



Lastly, as the last research tool, a discussion with the teacher of the non-formal class was conducted. As three of the four students attend different schools, it was impossible to visit all of them and observe what was going on in each ZEP class. As a consequence, the information needed was collected from the teacher's sayings as his duties are not limited to teaching Greek and providing students learning support in the afternoon. He is also the legal guardian of the children, who among other things is responsible for the educational paths of every child that currently lives in the accommodation facility, therefore to maintain strong and effective communication with each one's ZEP classroom teacher. For this reason, he is the most appropriate person to discuss with, on what is really happening in children's ZEP classes and schools in general. On this account, a discussion was conducted, during which, the researcher was keeping notes of the teacher's sayings.

### **3.5 Procedure**

The first week on the field started with classroom and children's observation. At the second week, students completed the initial questionnaires and took the pre language tests. Questionnaires completed privately in a quiet area of the house. During the questionnaires, the researcher will be available for participants who require assistance with the translation of the questions. The teaching intervention started the same week, and it drew to an end two months later. In the meanwhile, at the end of the first month the conversation with the classroom teacher took place to give us the necessary information about what happens in the students' school classes. Two months later, and after the intervention has been completed, students retook the questionnaires and the post language tests. The extended time in the field (2 months) ensures that the researcher has awareness of the phenomena being examined. The more experience a researcher has with participants in their authentic surroundings, the more precise and reliable the findings are likely to be (Creswell, 2014).

### **3.6 The participants**

The research was conducted in an accommodation facility for UAMs in Thessaloniki. It is an NGO-run institution, with specialization in providing care and housing to unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC).

The participants are students aged from 9 to 13 years old and they come from Syria, Nigeria or Pakistan. Even after their arrival in Greece, they stayed in different camps, and diverse types of accommodation, even hospitals, before they finally settle in the specific accommodation facility, where they will stay until family unification is succeeded, otherwise when they reach adulthood. They are all separated from their families either because they have travelled alone, or although they have travelled with parents or relatives they were victims of neglect and were at risk due to family or social-economic conditions.

They attend language lessons in ZEP classes in public primary schools and then they attend the rest of the lessons with their Greek classmates. They are in different levels of language knowledge. One of the children has no prior school experience, while the other three of them have experienced interrupted schooling before their arrival in the accommodation facility. Additionally, there is a significant behavioral diversity exhibited by and within students. Some of them get easily offended, while others tend to display irritability and impatience.

To ensure children's anonymity, their names will not be revealed; instead, they will only be referred by alphabet letters. The table below (table 1) provides necessary information about the students who participated in this study. They have different levels of the Greek proficiency. The first child was of A1 level, another was of A2, of B1 and one of them was a complete beginner, as defined by the Common European Framework of Reference for Language Skills (CEFR).

	<b>Age</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Competence in Greek language</b>	<b>Mother tongue</b>
<b>Student A</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>A1</b>	<b>Arabic</b>
<b>Student B</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>A0</b>	<b>Nigerian Pidgin</b>
<b>Student C</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>B1</b>	<b>Arabic</b>
<b>Student D</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>A2</b>	<b>Urdu</b>

**Table 1 Participants' profiles**

## **3.7 Data analysis**

### **3.7.1 Observation data**

Student A is a child with behavioral issues, being loud, hyperactive and short –tempered most of the times. When I once questioned her why she was yelling, she answered that she wanted to be heard by everyone. Apparently, she needed attention and did not know how to express it. She does not like studying, but she adores playing football, in which she is really good at, I must confess. She evidently was not one of the most loved children in the house, and no one was deeply engaged with her, either. The child evidently lacked self confidence. As of her language performance, she is at an early stage of language learning although she attends the 5<sup>th</sup> grade of primary school. It seemed that the student was asked by the teacher to do more advanced subjects such as text comprehension, while she still confuses some letters of the alphabet and therefore makes mistakes in writing and reading.

Student B had an unexpected desire to learn Greek. He had already learnt to read and write in Greek since was he was at the camp. The most unusual fact was that, although he could read Greek fluently and write down anything he was listening without making any mistakes, he neither could understand a word of what he was reading nor he could participate in basic conversations for beginners. Fortunately, he was fluent in English so the teacher of the class used it as their lingua franca. The other children were younger than him and they did not speak English, which combined with the fact that he did not speak any Greek at all, and also that his mother tongue was a non-widespread pidgin language, render him unable to establish new friendships. He constantly did not participate in team games, potentially due to feelings of insecurity about his language proficiency.

Student C was a quite lonely but independent child, with many responsibilities, deriving from her being the eldest of 5 siblings that live unaccompanied, separated from their parents and relatives. She was more melancholic than any other child in the house, but also the most resilient, never complaining about anything. It seemed like she had grown faster than her peers. She was doing relatively well in school, at least she was going as far as they asked her to. From the beginning of the classroom observation, I discovered that she

could go further if she was not given specific limits on what she can achieve, which made her rest on them and stop trying when she reached them.

Student D had more artistic concerns; he enjoyed drawing, not only on paper but also painting faces. He always asked the teachers to bring at the lesson cosmetics in order for him to do their makeup, right after the end of the lesson. He was a quite affectionate child, social, and he had many friends both in school and in the accommodation facility. He was doing well enough in school, and he usually did all his homework. As of his linguistic competence, some difficulties were noticed during the observation based on his repeated mistakes when he was doing his homework.

### **3.7.2 Pre-intervention Questionnaire Data**

As of their previous learning experience student, it seems that all students are absolutely sure that Language is not a subject that they like (statement 12). They all consider language class a waste of time (statement 5). Student A and D answered neutral on whether they were having a good or a bad time in the lesson, while answers of students B and C indicate that they are not having a good time in the language lesson (statement 3). However, all of them believe that they would participate more actively if the lesson was more fun (statement 7). As far as the teacher's impact on their self-improvement, which reflects the relationship with her, student A and C answers were neutral, student B answered negatively, while student D believes the teacher in a way influences his feeling of self-improvement (statement 9). High levels of anxiety and low self-confidence are evident to all children, as their answers of how they feel when they are talking Greek in front of the class indicate, being afraid that their classmates will make fun of them (statements 10,11). Interestingly, student C does not believe that her anxiety comes from her classmates' negative reaction. As of the image of the ideal L2 speaker that the students desire to become in the future, students A and D seem sure that when they finish school, they will quit studying Greek (statement 13), albeit they can imagine themselves studying in a Greek University (statement 14). Students B and C have not decided whether or not they will quit studying, yet. However, they all wish they could speak Greek fluently, and they suppose that if they tried more, their Greek language performance might have been improved (statements 15, 16). Lastly, considering others' expectations from them, students

A and B tend to believe that nobody had any expectations regarding their study of Greek, thus if they fail, this will not make anyone sad (statements 18,19,20). Student C thinks that some people she respects might expect from her to study Greek, and consequently if she fails, this might make some people sad, but student D although he also believes that there might be people who expect from him to study, however his potential failure in the subject would not cause any disappointment or sadness to others.

### 3.7.3 Pre-language test Data

#### Student A

Based on my observation, it seemed that the student was confusing some alphabet letters and thus she made mistakes in writing and reading. To that end, the first test consisted of me dictating certain – not randomly selected - words that included the target letters, and her writing the words in her notebook. Thus, it was observed that there is a complete confusion between φ and θ, of ι and η with ε, as well as of υ with ου. She also often omits the letter α.

#### Student B

The student was able to read Greek fluently and write down anything he was listening without making any mistakes. He surprisingly did not understand anything of those he was reading nor could he participate in basic conversations for beginners, as he ignored the meaning of the basic vocabulary. As the language tests provided, he did not know the house vocabulary (kitchen, bathroom, living room objects – their names and their meanings).

#### Student C

The student is still making mistakes in the passive voices suffixes. Therefore, the pre language test consisted of the researcher dictating a text that included the target structures, and her writing the text in a piece of paper. On this account, it was observed that the student confuses specific grammar structures such as the suffixes of the passive voices (i.e -μαι, -με, -σαι, -στε, -νται), ignoring the rules of which kind of /ε/ to choose each time.

She probably chooses -αι or -ε in a random manner, because in some cases she chooses the correct while in others not. Regardless, she apparently has not yet internalized the specific grammar rule.

#### Student D

Based on my observation, it seemed that the student has difficulty in plural formation of nouns, both in writing and in speaking. To that end, the first test contained a 'fill the gap' activity in which the singular number of male nouns (in -ος, -ης, -ας) was given and the student should complete the plural one. His answers indicate that he confuses the plural number of male and female nouns, as well as the singular with the plural.

### **3.7.4 Data from the Discussion with the teacher**

#### Student A

Student A seems to be in a more unfavorable situation than the other students. Since February, when the teacher of the reception class left on maternity leave, there is no ZEP class in the school. Her position was not filled by any other teacher and the children who attended the ZEP class take all the lessons in the mainstream classroom since then. In this class, the mainstream teacher refraining from adapting the lesson or provide differentiated material to the students who previously attended the ZEP class and need specialized teaching, she assigns them the same homework as in the rest of the class. Children cannot, of course, complete assignments for topics that are above their level of knowledge, such as advanced mathematics, physics, or history, when they have not yet acquired the basic knowledge of them. When the child gets home from school, she wants to start doing her homework, but the teachers at the housing facility are supposed to convince her to focus on the basic elements of Maths and Greek instead, which are more important to her. Although in the housing facility children take language lessons based on their level, student A usually gets frustrated, feeling that she always comes and goes to school unprepared.

#### Student B

He recently came from a camp in Attica, and was placed in a ZEP class. As the school lacked teacher for the reception class, a teacher -whose working position was not in a ZEP class - came unofficially to the school 2 or 3 times a week, to fill the vacancy, caused by

the lack of teachers. At first, the teacher gave him photocopies for drawing. Along the way, she started handing him photocopies of the book *To mikro mou lexiko*. The student had already learnt to read and write since he was in the camp, albeit he could not speak a word. What she gave him did not correspond to his level, either to his needs, or to his age.

#### Student C

Student C attended a reception class until Christmas holidays. Until then, the class teacher was doing a good job, giving his greatest possible effort. He delivered differentiated material, not only in ZEP 1 and ZEP 2, but he also within each class he divided the students into 2 individual levels (thereby creating 4 levels). After Christmas holidays, considering that the student now has the basic knowledge of Greek, he decided that the student can now join the regular class. He followed the tactic of returning students to the regular class, after helping them reach a specific level of knowledge, in order for reception classes to never exceed 20 students. Despite the progress so far, from the time she returned to the regular class she has not been able to succeed in the educational goals of the class, as while her level was higher than an average student in a reception class, unfortunately she was not up to the level of an average student in a regular class. The regular classroom teacher does not give her differentiated material, considering this to be ZEP teacher's responsibility, while she also makes no demands on the student. In consultation with the teacher of the accommodation facility, the teacher accepts that the student copies the exercises from the textbook, as the child does not want to go to school without having done the homework.

#### Student D

Student D goes to the same school with the student B, but attends the second ZEP cycle. (ZEP is separated into ZEP I, for students with little or no Greek knowledge and ZEP II, for students with average Greek knowledge classes.) The class teacher also left on maternity leave in February (student B had not come to school yet), and the school was left without a ZEP teacher until May. Then, after repeated requests from the other teachers as well as parents and guardians, a teacher came unofficially from an administrative position in primary education so that the children would not be left without a reception class for the rest of the year. The teacher comes 2-3 times a week. She hands out

photocopies to the children which they have as homework for the next time she comes again. The rest of the days the child attends the regular class, and the regular classroom teacher does not assign him homework.

### **3.8 Ethical considerations**

When conducting research involving refugee children, researchers need to become engaged with them using ethical approaches that enable them to freely express themselves (Lawrence et al., 2015). When refugee children's experiences involve trauma and dislocation, research needs extra careful consideration, in order not to put them susceptible to further damage (Kaplan, 2013). Researcher was aware of refugee students' experiences, before engaging in research that involves them. She invested time in building relationships with the children, engaged in conversation with them, established connections, and demonstrate her empathy and her genuine interest for them as humans (Kaukko et al., 2017).

Furthermore, the researcher took into account that the participants were unaccompanied refugee children. She took both children's and their legal guardian's permission in order to participate in the research. Regarding confidentiality, they were all informed that the researcher would maintain their anonymity and in addition to this, it was also explained to the guardian the research's aim as well as who would gain access to the collected data.

### **3.9 Teaching intervention**

The teaching intervention was designed under careful consideration of each individual student's level and needs, firmly believing that getting to know your students goes beyond merely learning their names. Students require a genuine sense of care and concern from their teachers, extending beyond mere academic performance. When students perceive this care, it creates a safe learning environment and inspires them to strive for success, seeking



acknowledgment and constructive feedback from a person who they feel that truly value their uniqueness as humans.

#### Student A

Some children need to dedicate extra time and effort to them. At first, to increase her motivation to study, I decided to use extrinsic incentives and exchanges. Regardless, teachers regularly employ external motivation, such as awards, praise, free time, or food to motivate and drive their pupils toward learning (Krause et al., 2006). The lesson was 30 minutes, so I explained to her that we would reduce the duration of the lesson to 20 minutes and the next 10 minutes we would play football. Since it was her favorite hobby, she accepted the deal as she would not only be playing her favorite game but also having company in it. In the next teaching hour, during the reading of a long passage, in order to practice her comprehension skills, we made a deal that she would read half of the text and I would read the rest. After all, half is better than none. She seemed to respond positively to the agreements that were kept not only from her side but also from mine, too, proving our trusting relationship. It can be possible for external motivation in addition to rewards, to also contain punishments that the person will probably try to avoid (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Thus, sometimes, in days with less interest, always in cooperation with the main teacher, we explained to her that she would not go to her afternoon football training if she did not study.

Moreover, I always set clear learning goals so she would not get confused (i.e today we will learn to distinguish  $\phi$  from  $\theta$ ). As for the subjects of the texts, I tried to find subjects of interest to her, categorically avoiding the book *Geia sas*, which she resented as soon as she saw it. Individual interests are evidently related to learning achievement, especially on text comprehension. Not only does it affect the amount of information that was retained, but it also has an incredible effect on the quality of learning (Krapp, 1999). Football, boys, friends were topics she liked to talk about, so I incorporated them into the teaching procedure, by choosing texts of these topics in order for her to find the subject interesting. Teaching material related to the learner is a key component in creating the initial motivation (Dornyei, 2001), so I used and also created new material relevant to her. Also, when she got bored or resentful of reading a story, I would always put her name in place of the hero/heroine, in order for her to feel that she was part of a story and intrigue her to

keep on reading to find out what happens at the end. But it should be made obvious that what needs to be done is not as simple as saying to children, “You can do it!”. It is not enough to merely tell them they are wonderful (Reasoner, 1992); such efforts are ineffective because they cannot strengthen the internal resources that contribute to the development of self-esteem, namely integrity, accountability, and accomplishment. Thus, throughout the lessons, there was constant encouragement that she is doing well and that her progress makes both me and the main teacher happy. Parts of every lesson were pointing out that when she tries, the results are noticeable along with the constant provision of encouraging feedback. She also loved to laugh, so she often asks me to read her funny stories. In order to establish the basic motivational conditions, a pleasant classroom atmosphere is crucial (Dornyei, 2001). I changed my voice and used distinct accents and intonation for each hero/heroine, something that she found funny and always asked for more. I applied the same in class when we did text comprehension to keep her focused. In every lesson I always pointed out the positive of what she achieved every day and many times I also gave her good student awards. Teacher’s active listening makes the student feel cared for and understood, and that is why I was always there to listen to her, to discuss about her day or anything she thought worth mentioning, always showing interest in what she told me, never taking her away due to lack of time or interest.

#### Student B

Student B arrived in the house from a camp in Athens, quite recently. His initial -far greater than any other child’s- intrinsic motivation, seemed to be lost as the time passed, as there was no established curriculum or organized schedule for learning Greek, and every teacher (at school and at the NGO) got him confused with new unrelated information. For this reason I decided, at least in this regard, not to overload him with extra information and to set clear and realistic performance goals in each lesson. Students’ goal-orientedness should be increased (Dornyei, 2001), by making clear to them right from the start, which specific target is trying to accomplish (Doran, 1981). Also, as he was older than the other children, I preferred a teaching material that was more suitable for his age than *Geia sas* or *To mikro mou lexiko* that his school teacher used, as it is not appropriate for every age and cannot be used by someone who does not have a basic knowledge of Greek. The student was making fun of how childish was the material the zep

teacher brought to him, and could not be motivated to learn anything. The teaching material should necessarily be relevant to the student (Dornyei, 2001). Promoting cooperation among the students can help maintain and protect their motivation (Dornyei, 2001). That is why I asked for the children's help to take part in some activities, in order to strengthen the group collaboration, the sense of belonging and the connections between them. In this way, he felt that he was being helped by another child of the house, and also the other student felt that she was offering her help. Without realizing it, it seemed that they started to like each other.

The student himself desperately repeated that he needed to learn to speak and not to write anymore. Based on his strong need for communication and listening to his strong desire and eagerness to succeed, I applied a more communicative approach to the specific student, focusing on learning new vocabulary. The student had a greater need to communicate with everyone around him, particularly with the other children at the house who were younger and did not speak English, which could not and must not be overlooked. Besides, the most effective way to boost one's self esteem is to actually succeed at utilizing the target language in meaningful communication (Arnold, 2011).

In addition, I always encouraged him that he is an excellent student, that he made an unexpectedly quick progress, supporting him to remember his 'why', and to never give up, despite the tough times. We talked about what was on his mind. I was trying to manage his anxiety mainly about the asylum process, but also about making friends, establishing strong relationships, his worries for whether he will finally manage to speak Greek or not and if he will ever feel that he belonged somewhere. We also used the outdoor environment. When the weather was fine, we went out of the classroom and practice the new vocabulary in real world things. Regardless, although instructors feel like they rule certain areas indoors, students are more likely to assert control of time and space while they are outside (Dillon et al.2007 as cited in Davies et al., 2013). Learning activities outside are more likely to entail teamwork than activities inside the classroom (Davies et al., 2013). Going on a walk, is suggested by Bancroft et al. (2008, as cited in Davies et al., 2013), as it may offer a rich environment for gaining insights about children's attitudes and interests, which instructors may draw upon to develop their creativity.

### Student C

When I once asked Student C what about her school homework, she replied that she has 5 words out of 20 (of the mainstream class) to spell – the school teacher told her to choose to learn any 5 she wanted. Not every strategy works in every context though, or if it works it does not have the best results possible. This particular tactic, while it would work for student A, for student C simply makes her resign and rest on the bare minimum of her capabilities since this is also done with the approval of a teacher. I decided that, since she learns them easily, to try learning all 20, not just 5 of them. When I explained it to her, at first she resented it. Later, she seemed happy to me, after she understood that I set for her high goals, but attainable ones. Students frequently experience a stronger feeling of self-worth and self-esteem when they realize what they are achieving (Rader, 2005).

Additionally, her favorite game was Name- Animal-Thing. There were not a few times that we together played her favorite game after the lesson. Especially on days when she was not in the mood, it was our deal that we first do the lesson, and then we play together.

In order to encourage positive self-evaluation, an educator should provide motivational feedback (Dornyei, 2001). I constantly shared my enthusiasm for teaching her, underlining her positive attitude both as a student and as a person. All students need positive feedback from significant adults of their lives in order to consider themselves successful (Rader, 2005).

### Student D

Student D had a talent in drawing. I considered incorporating drawing in the lessons, to keen on his interest could be a useful strategy. There were not a few times in understanding text activities, to choose texts which contained descriptions. Under the text, the activity followed included drawing what the text described. This way, he practiced both reading and text comprehension in a creative way, in accordance with his interests. He also liked to paint faces using make-up, so I and other girls became his models sometimes. The encouragement that the child is doing very well, does not only refer to his school performance, but also in everything that the child is good at. I constantly pointed out to him that he has a talent in painting.

He was the only child that had been to school in his home country and did know how to write his mother tongue. He often also spoke about his past time experiences, the countries he had travelled, his long stay in Turkey, and many other. I myself would not ask any personal questions about his or anyone's journey to reach safety. However, the child talked about his traumatic experiences, and when he did so, I showed my interest for his lived experiences which I always listened with empathy. I also asked him to teach me two new words of his mother language, at the end of each lesson. This should not unfairly be considered as an external motivation of the type I learn some words of your language; you learn some words of mine. It is much more to show him that his mother tongue is valued, and thus to have a positive impact on his identity and self esteem.

#### **4. Findings**

The second questionnaire was distributed to the participants after the implementation of the researcher's teaching intervention. The statements were common for the initial and the final questionnaire. The second language tests were also taken after the implementation of the teaching intervention, but they were not identical to the first ones. The latter is explained by the fact that we aim to investigate whether or not a specific linguistic feature has been acquired and a grammar rule has been internalized by the students. If the tests were identical, it could be possible for the answers to not result from the intervention but they might emerge from students' ability to memorize the correct ones.

In accordance with the students' statements, their behavioral engagement increased after the two months of the researcher's teaching intervention in the field, and students displayed a more favorable attitude toward language learning (statements 2,3,5,12).

A number of positive changes can be observed on the way students experience language learning (see Figures 5,6). Language did not out of sudden become everyone's favorite subject, but it seems that they no longer hate it either (see figure 5, statement 12). It appears that all students started to view Language lesson in a more positive way (statement 12), yet considering that they do not waste their time when they attend

language class (statement 5). Everyone's answers on whether they were having a good or a bad time in the language lesson changed towards a more positive orientation (statement 3), both for students A and D who previously gave a neutral answer (see Figures 1,4), and also for students B and C who previously did experience a bad time during lessons (See figures 2,3). Teacher's impact on students' feeling for self-improvement is evident at every student at least to some extent (statement 9), and also a desire to attend the lesson as a result of their sympathy towards to their teacher (statement 4). The intervention has not impacted all students' anxiety levels, albeit to student B who did, the impact was positive (see figure 2), slightly reducing those levels (statements 10,11).

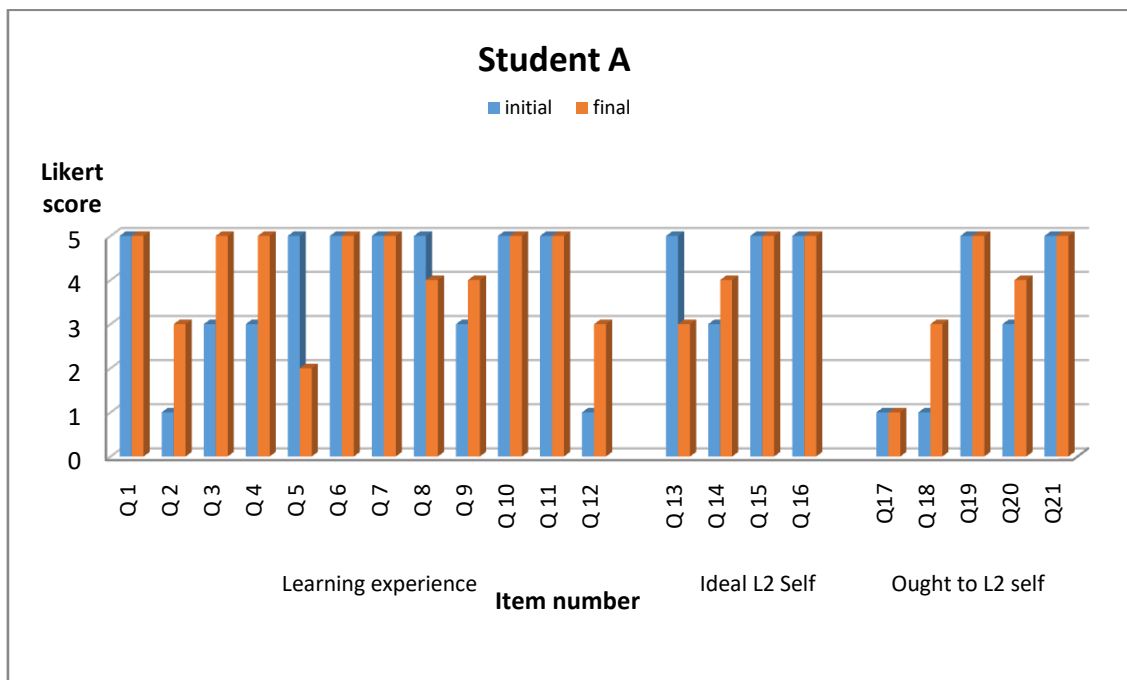
As of the image of the ideal L2 speaker that the students desire to become in the future, all students started thinking of not quitting studying when they finish school, even those students who previously felt sure for their quit (statement 13). Lastly, considering others' expectations from them, they started thinking that some people they respect might expect from them to study Greek (statements 19, 20), and if they fail, someone will be sad for them because after all, there might be people that care about them (statement 18). Surprisingly, this applied not only to student C and D who in the pre-intervention questionnaire answered that some people might have expectations regarding their studying of Greek, but also for students A and B who held the belief that nobody had any expectations from them (see Figures 7,8).

As of the results of the language tests, it seems that all students provided high scores in their answers. The vast majority of the mistakes they have made in the pre intervention language test, was not present in the post-tests, while some students hand in tests without any mistakes. More specifically, student A seems to understood the difference between φ and θ, between ι, η and ε, as well as of υ with ου, as there is only one mistake in all the words she has written (She wrote φαθο instead of θαβω, but only once). Additionally the letter /a/ which she previously omitted, is present in all the words that contain it. Student B has learned among others, the house vocabulary, and he completed the activity that was given to him without making any errors. For student C, it was found out that her confusion of which /e/ to choose to form the suffixes of the passive voice ,-μαι,-με, -σαι, στε, νται, no longer exists, as the errors in the words that contain them appear reduced. Lastly,

student D improved his performance in plural formation, minimizing errors in plural suffixes (-οι, -ες/-ές).

On the whole, the data collected from the language tests and the questionnaires provide answers to both research questions 1 and 2. The two research questions can be answered because, according to the questionnaires and the language tests, there is an increase, albeit slight, after the researcher's teaching intervention regarding students' motivation and language competence.

The following charts sum up and describe the responses provided by the students to the two questionnaires. Initially, individual presentations for each student are illustrated, followed by a presentation in a comparative manner.



**Figure 1 Comparative illustration of Student A's responses on the pre intervention (initial) and post intervention (final) questionnaires**

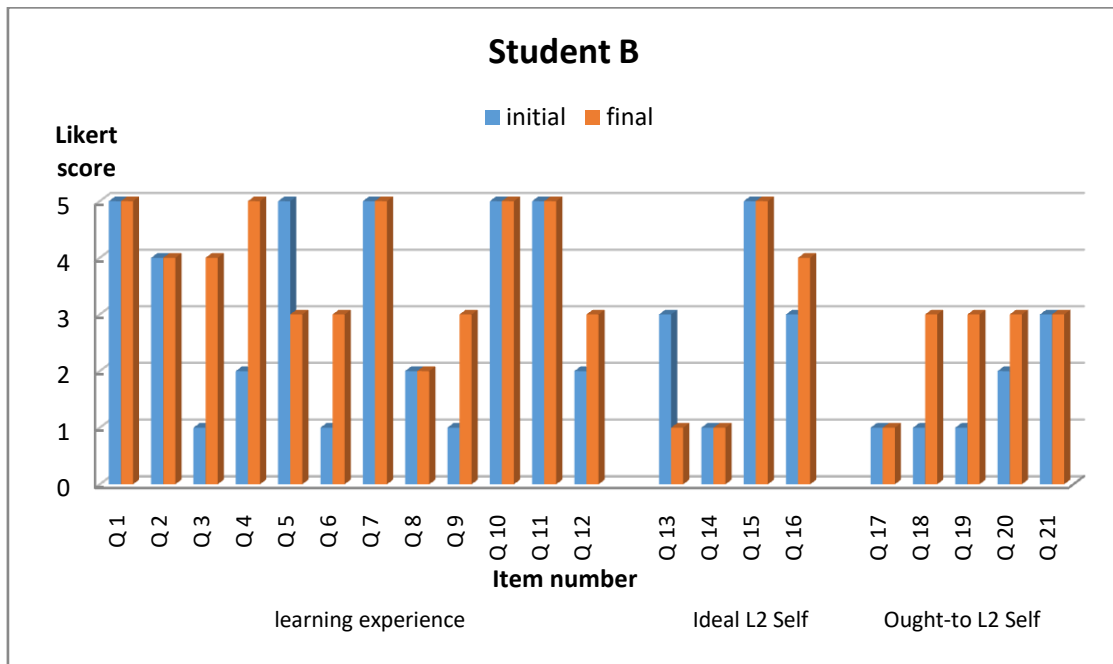


Figure 2 Comparative illustration of Student B's responses on the pre intervention (initial) and post intervention (final) questionnaires

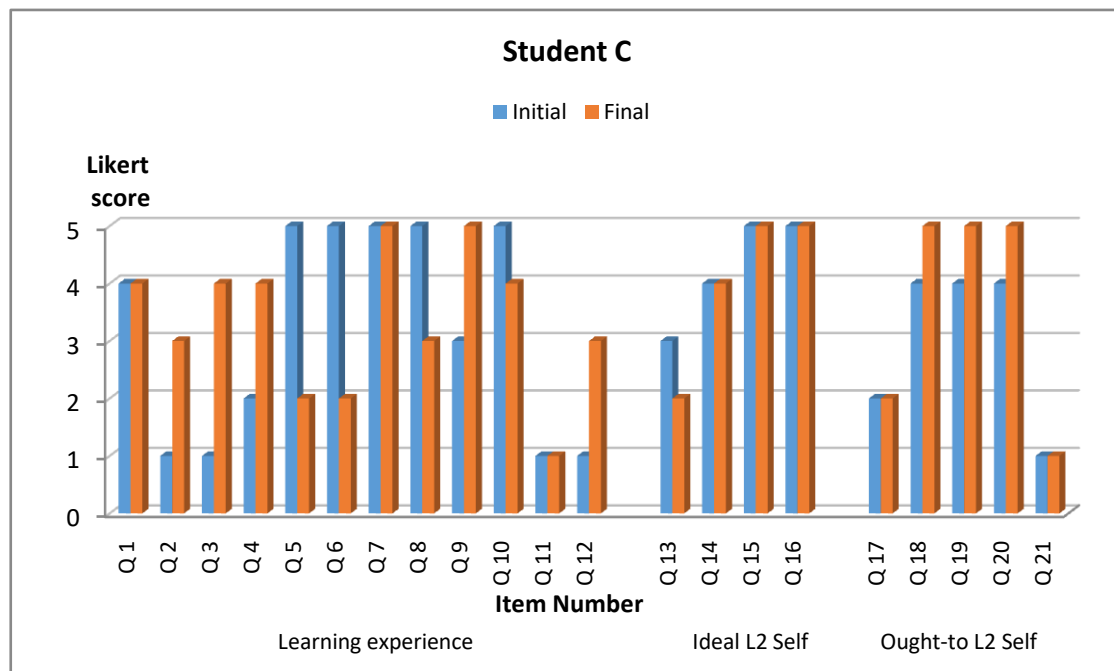
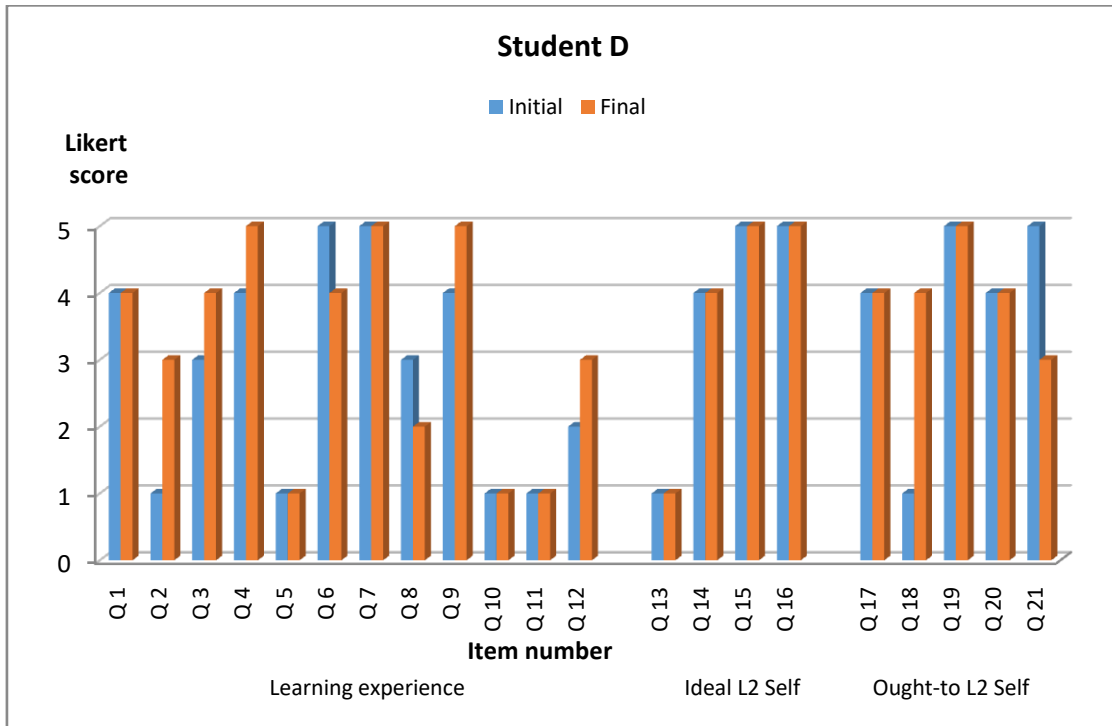
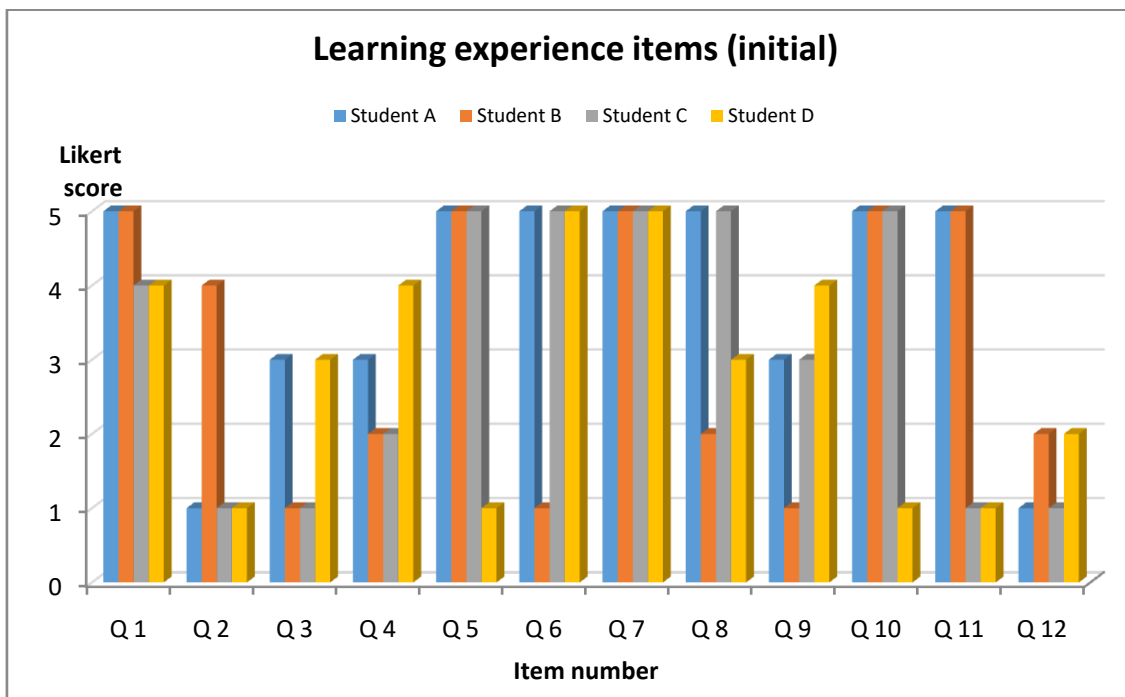


Figure 3 Comparative illustration of Student C's responses on the pre intervention (initial) and post intervention (final) questionnaires





**Figure 4** Comparative illustration of Student D's responses on the pre intervention (initial) and post intervention (final) questionnaires



**Figure 5** Students' responses on the pre intervention questionnaire concerning their learning experience

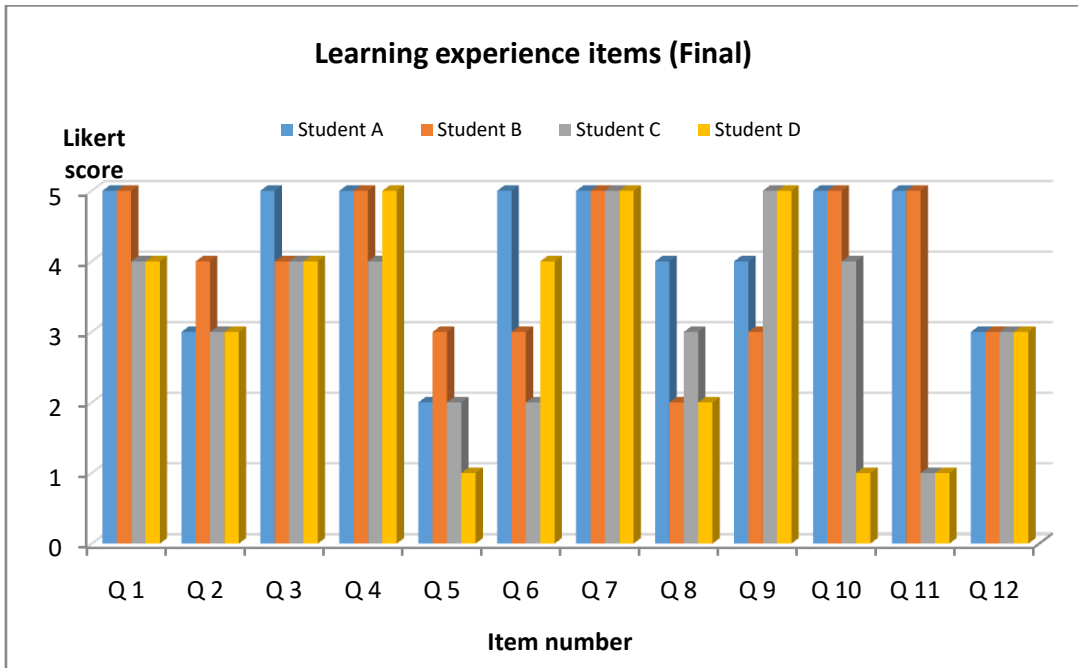


Figure 6 Students' responses on the post intervention questionnaire concerning their learning experience

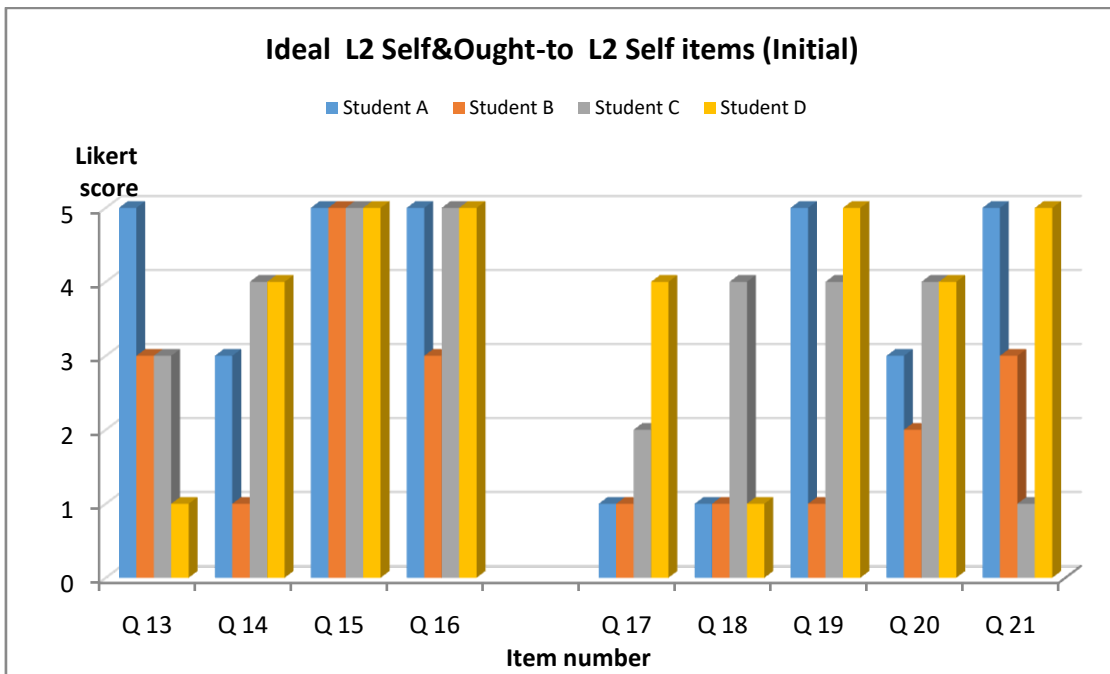


Figure 7 Students' responses on the pre intervention questionnaire concerning their Ideal and Ought-to L2 self

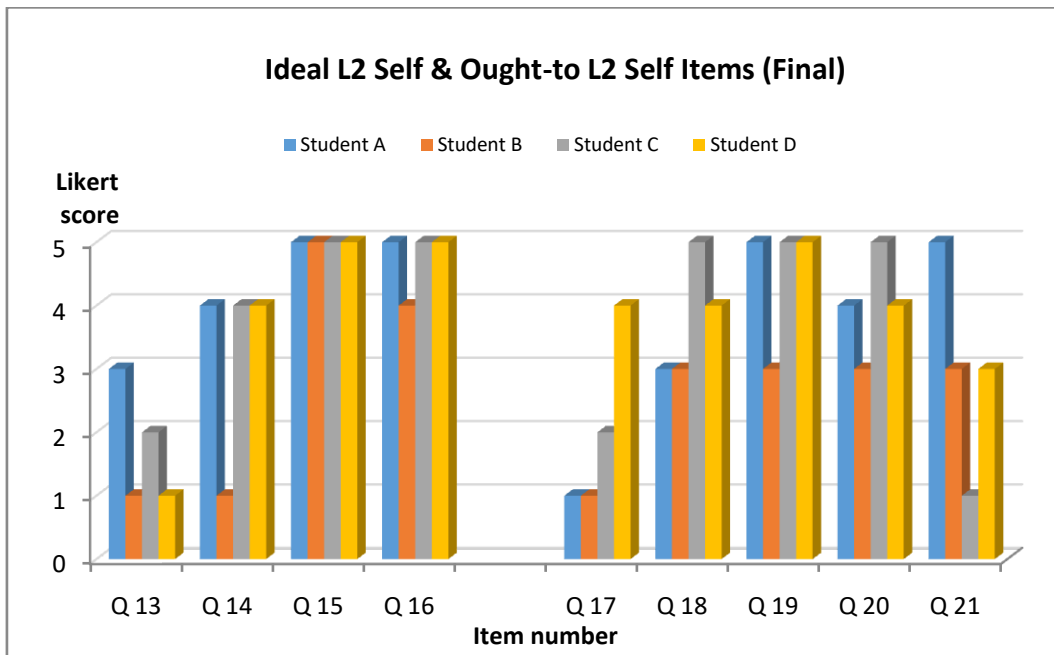


Figure 8 Students' responses on the post intervention questionnaire concerning their Ideal and Ought-to L2 self

## 5. Discussion

The data obtained from the questionnaires after the teaching interventions, where specific practices - adapted to students' needs and interests were implemented, demonstrate that there was an improvement in all three components of L2MSS taxonomy, suggesting an increase on students' motivation, according to Dornyei's (2005) theory.

The applied personalized interventions were built on the same two-level strategy, focusing at first on the immediate learning environment and the learning experience and on a second deeper level on the students' self-perception and the activation of their "possible" selves.

The intervention's impact is most apparent in the learning experience's constituent items. In qualitative terms, this impact is evaluated as quite favorable, since after the implementation of the teaching intervention, all four students, appear to receive positive influence from the teacher (Items 4,9), perceive language learning in a more positive way (Items 2, 3,5, 12), and to some extent, their intended effort is increased (Item 8). Relevant

literature confirms that a positive learning experience is a reliable indicator of motivated behavior (Csizér & Kormos, 2009; Papi, 2010; Taguchi, Magid, & Papi, 2009).

Taking into consideration that motivation is a rather complex evolving process that takes time to build, particularly in a population that may have experienced prolonged demotivation due to challenging living conditions, the aforementioned results are regarded as satisfactory. The presence of any increase, no matter how slight, is still encouraging and inspiring.

Optimistic signs also pertain to the evidence we have regarding the impact of the intervention on the other two parameters of L2MSS, the Ideal L2 self and the Ought-to L2 self. According to the L2MSS theory, the function of the Ideal and Ought-to L2 Selves as motivational factors, lies in the belief that they feed the motivational actions as the individual tries to reduce the gap between his actual and the “possible” selves. Students A, B, and C who expressed a desire to speak Greek fluently in their responses to the initial questionnaire but did not appear to picture themselves as proficient speakers of the language in the future, exhibit a slight shift in this belief (responses to the final questionnaire Ideal L2 Self Items 13,14). Similar changes are apparent in the third component of the L2MSS (the Ought-to L2 Self), and particularly in Items 18, 19, and 20, where a rise in the sense of responsibility toward others is detected. The practices of the teacher's ongoing effort to help students create objectives, strengthen their confidence and expectations of success, and encourage them even in aspects of their lives that extend beyond the boundaries of the classroom, seem to be the factor that led to this shift.

We thus conclude, that by applying suitable techniques, unaccompanied refugee children's language motivation may be increased. The following principles provide the foundation for all of these techniques:

- Course individualization to meet each student's needs
- Focusing on the activation of both immediate motives and more powerful ones connected to their aspirations for their future

Our findings are in agreement with those of Guilloteaux & Dornyei's (2008) study in ESOL classes in South Korea and those of Campbell and Storch's (2011), as previously mentioned in the literature review. Additionally, they implicitly concur with the findings

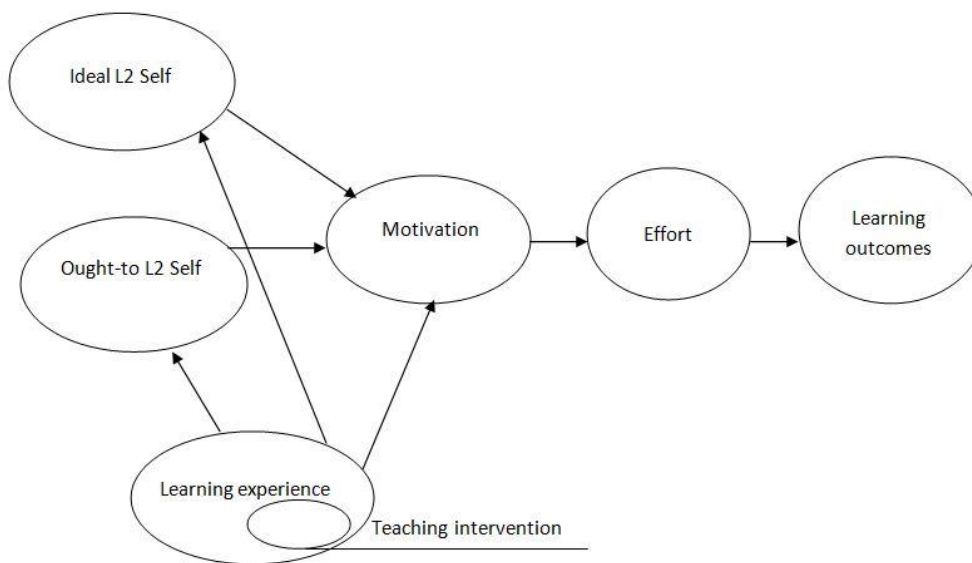
of Mishra et al.'s (2020) study on UAMs in Greece who express a wish to leave the country when they did not receive a motivating and encouraging treatment.

The students' pre and post-intervention test results suggested that they also made improvements in their language learning outcomes, indicating that motivation and learning outcomes are positively associated. This finding may be interpreted if we take into account that the students' increased enthusiasm and perception that their efforts had a purpose, motivated them to pursue efforts in language learning, which at this early stage of acquisition improved the learning outcomes. It is also in agreement with Krashen's (1982) assertion that SLA may be strongly impacted by elements like a learner's enthusiasm for engaging in class and the confidence they develop from teachers' support.

According to the results of recent studies in this field, the impact of motivation on learning outcomes is not completely clarified (Yousefi & Mahmoodi, 2022; Al-Hoorie, 2018). On the other hand, many researches (Csizér & Kormos, 2009; Taguchi et al., 2009) have demonstrated that "intended effort"—that is, the intention to devote time and effort, to language learning —was substantially correlated with each of the three L2MSS components.

However, in the case of the UAMs and from another point of view, we should acknowledge the crucial role that refugee children's emotional and social wellness play in their willingness to learn. A great deal of support is needed to recover from trauma they might have encountered and perceive learning as a worthwhile process (Save the Children, 2018). In such cases, teachers play a significant role in supporting their students and assisting them on their educational journey. In the current study, the teacher's close connection with the students and her knowledge of their personalities, interests, and backgrounds, allowed her to utilize appropriate techniques to motivate each one as a unique person and not just as an individual learner and that exactly, in our opinion, had an essential impact on improving student motivation and performance.

Considering all that has been said so far, we propose that Figure 9 illustrates the function of the instructional intervention in the current research.



**Figure 9 Function of the instructional intervention**

## 6. Research Contribution and Limitations

A practical implication of this study could be to provide teachers ways to help their students improve their motivation for learning and to shed light on the relationship that motivation plays in language learning. The study also contributes to help educators realize how their students view them, what they need from them, and how much of an influence they have on them. Finally, the research's findings demonstrate the necessity of establishing a more humane process for the integration of refugee students into the educational system of the receiving country, through taking into account their individual differences, their unique needs and interests.

The fact that all the aforementioned will be investigated from the scope of unaccompanied children renders the research even more important, as they constitute an even more vulnerable category of refugee students. The fact that they live without their parents and family environment underscores the significant role that teachers assume, often acting

along with the caregivers as prominent figures for their lives. It is teachers who take on the responsibility of motivating these children to grow and develop.

Lastly, the study is an important contribution to the academic community, conducted with Greek as L2, when the studies with LOTE's in the SLA field are limited. The existing theories generally represent motivation for learning English, but motivation to learn English for one is quite different from learning a L2 other than English. Typically, the learning of a second language other than English is associated with special and specific reasons as in the case of refugees, rather than being driven by the desire to be a global citizen (Al-Hoorie, 2017).

Nonetheless, we should not neglect to mention some limitations of the present research. The potential influence of confounding variables, such as the presence of other teachers, on the questionnaire and test results should not be overlooked. Specifically, if a grammatical mistake detected in the pre-intervention language test is absent in the post-intervention language test, it is plausible that the students learned the grammar rule in a setting other than the intervention field. This underscores the fact that students acquire knowledge from multiple sources.

Lastly, the research implemented with only 4 children, in order to examine more in depth children's experiences. However, as a result of this fact, it would be prudent to interpret the data carefully, considering that results from case studies cannot freely be extrapolated from a sample to the general population.

## **7. Conclusion**

The purpose of the current research was to examine unaccompanied refugee children's motivation for Greek language learning and explore strategies to enhance students' motivation for learning. At the same time, the second aim of this study was to investigate the potential impact of this increased motivation in students' language proficiency. The final conclusions were drawn through the analysis of both qualitative data (i.e

observational data and discussion with the classroom teacher) and quantitative ones (i.e. close-ended questionnaires and tests).

The significant role that motivation plays in understanding how much effort will students invest in their language learning was confirmed. It serves as the main driving force that initiates and sustains the often challenging and lengthy process of language learning (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015; Winne & Hadwin, 2008; Dörnyei, 2010 as cited in Li, 2022). The significance of motivation becomes even greater for children experiencing challenges in school adjustment and academic performance. Among these students, UACs are particularly susceptible to such difficulties due to their exposure to a new cultural and linguistic environment, without the parental support and guidance they deserve to have.

Teachers should bear in mind that students' positive learning experiences are frequently linked to supportive educators. Especially for unaccompanied children, educators fulfill multiple roles as parental figures, mentors, and guardians for their students (Antonijadu et al., 2022). Thus, motivation strategies shall constitute a part of the educational process as they can help teachers to inspire and support their students as well as to keep them engaged in the learning process. Having an understanding of the children's needs, collaborating with the legal guardians, the caregivers or those who provide social services on the well-being of the children, and pursuing an individualized approach where the needs of the children are taken into consideration one by one, are examples of good teaching strategies.

Overall, this study reinforces the importance of educators being cognizant of their students' unique and diverse characteristics, enabling them to facilitate more effective integration into the learning process. Besides, effective teachers are not only those who encourage students to generate motivations, but also those who take into consideration their students' individual differences, namely their age, sex, intelligence, aptitude, level of competence, personalities and motivation (Brophy, 1983 as cited in Kostaridou-Eukleidi, 2010). By combining this understanding with opportunities for self-expression among students with refugee background, their integration can be achieved in a successful and unimpeded way. Even though the research examined unaccompanied refugee students' motivation, the findings might have broader implications that extend to all students.



Both the psychological and the social well-being of refugee children have a substantial influence on their ability to learn. It is crucial that educators understand the importance of emotional experiences for the learning process, and how they relate to motivation. They are the most capable of providing students with support to overcome the negative experiences they have endured, enabling them to reengage in the learning process and resume their educational journey. Educational environments are considered the most suitable environments to help the majority of refugee children through offering them the necessary support (Save the children, 2018).

Merely acknowledging that every student is unique is insufficient for a teacher. The teacher must also possess the ability and willingness to assist students in utilizing these distinctions to their benefit during the course of learning a second language. Consequently, by exploring the implications of individual differences in language learning and their teaching methods, it is anticipated that teaching practices will emerge that boost the likelihood of success in acquiring a second language (Zafar & Meenakshi, 2012).

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## Appendix A: Questionnaire for Motivation

Ακολουθούν ορισμένες δηλώσεις με τις οποίες κάποιος συμφωνούν και άλλοι διαφωνούν. Παρακαλώ κυκλώστε μία εναλλακτική κάτω από κάθε δήλωση ανάλογα με το ποσό της συμφωνίας σας ή της διαφωνίας σας με αυτό το σημείο. Το παρακάτω δείγμα θα χρησιμεύσει για να επεξηγήσει τη βασική διαδικασία.

1. Οι Ισπανοί ποδοσφαιριστές είναι πολύ καλύτεροι από τους Βραζιλιάνους.

Απαντώντας σε αυτήν την ερώτηση, θα έπρεπε να έχετε κυκλώσει μία εναλλακτική. Μερικοί άνθρωποι έχουν κυκλώσει 1 (ΑΠΟΛΥΤΑ Διαφωνώ), άλλοι θα είχαν κυκλώσει 5 (ΑΠΟΛΥΤΑ Συμφωνώ), ενώ άλλοι οποιαδήποτε από τις εναλλακτικές στο μεταξύ.

Σημείωση: δεν υπάρχει σωστή ή λανθασμένη απάντηση.

Κυκλώστε την απάντηση με την οποία συμφωνείτε περισσότερο, 1 = «διαφωνώ απόλυτα», 2= «διαφωνώ», 3= «ούτε συμφωνώ ούτε διαφωνώ», 4= «συμφωνώ» και 5 «συμφωνώ απόλυτα»

### ΕΡΩΤΗΜΑΤΟΛΟΓΙΟ

#### Greek learning experience items

1	Κάνω όλες τις ασκήσεις στα μαθήματα που μου αρέσουν.	1	2	3	4	5
2	Θα ήθελα να έχω περισσότερες ώρες μάθημα ελληνικών	1	2	3	4	5
3	Περνάω ωραία στο μάθημα.	1	2	3	4	5
4	Ανυπομονώ να πάω στο μάθημα γιατί ο κύριος/η κυρία των Ελληνικών είναι πολύ καλός/ή.	1	2	3	4	5
5	Η τάξη των ελληνικών είναι τελείως χάσιμο χρόνου.	1	2	3	4	5
6	Μου αρέσει περισσότερο να κάνω ασκήσεις άλλων μαθημάτων, παρά για το μάθημα της γλώσσας.	1	2	3	4	5

7	Θα συμμετείχα πιο πολύ στα μαθήματα Ελληνικών, αν ήταν πιο διασκεδαστικά.	1	2	3	4	5
8	Συνήθως τα παρατάω και δεν προσέχω όταν δεν καταλαβαίνω αυτό που εξηγεί η κυρία.	1	2	3	4	5
9	Με την κυρία των ελληνικών νιώθω ότι μπορώ να γίνω καλύτερη/-ος.	1	2	3	4	5
10	Αγχώνομαι όταν μιλάω μπροστά στην τάξη.	1	2	3	4	5
11	Κάποιες φορές νιώθω άγχος ότι οι άλλοι μαθητές στην τάξη θα γελάσουν όταν μιλάω ελληνικά.	1	2	3	4	5
12	Η γλώσσα είναι ένα μάθημα που μου αρέσει.	1	2	3	4	5

**Ideal L2 self items**

13	Όταν τελειώσω το σχολείο, θα παρατήσω το διάβασμα των ελληνικών γιατί δεν με ενδιαφέρει καθόλου.	1	2	3	4	5
14	Μπορώ να φανταστώ τον εαυτό μου να σπουδάζω σε ένα πανεπιστήμιο όπου όλα τα μαθήματά μου διδάσκονται στα ελληνικά.	1	2	3	4	5
15	Εύχομαι να μιλούσα τέλεια ελληνικά.	1	2	3	4	5
16	Εάν προσπαθούσα περισσότερο, θα βελτιώνα τα Ελληνικά μου και θα συμμετείχα περισσότερο.	1	2	3	4	5

**Ought-to L2 self items**

17	Διαβάζω/μαθαίνω ελληνικά γιατί οι καλύτεροί μου φίλοι πιστεύουν ότι είναι σημαντικό.	1	2	3	4	5
18	Αν αποτύχω στη Γλώσσα, θα στεναχωρήσω πολλούς ανθρώπους.	1	2	3	4	5

19	Είναι σημαντικό το να μαθαίνω ελληνικά επειδή οι άνθρωποι που σέβομαι μου λένε ότι πρέπει να το κάνω.	1	2	3	4	5
20	Το να μαθαίνω ελληνικά είναι σημαντικό γιατί οι άνθρωποι γύρω μου περιμένουν από μένα να το κάνω.	1	2	3	4	5
21	Το να μαθαίνω/διαβάζω ελληνικά είναι σημαντικό για μένα επειδή οι άλλοι άνθρωποι θα με σέβονται περισσότερο αν ξέρω ελληνικά.	1	2	3	4	5

## Appendix B: Pre and post-intervention Language tests

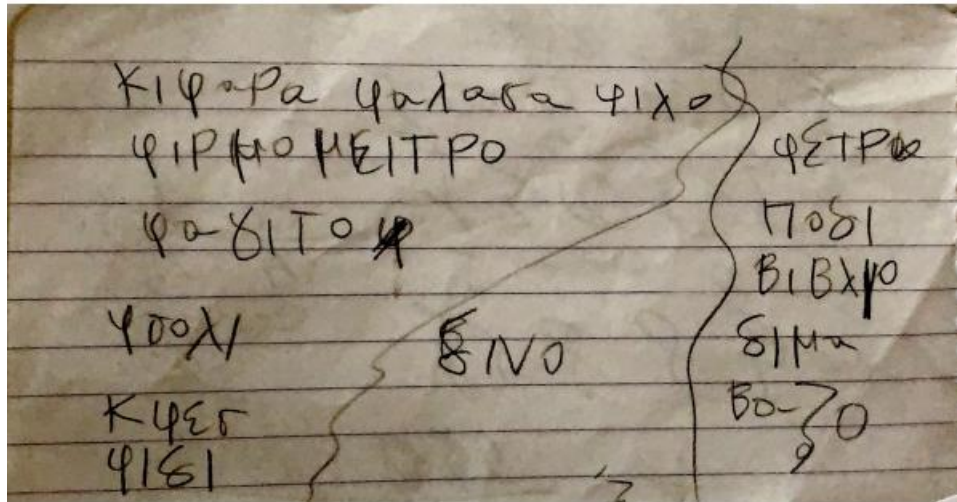


Figure 8 Student A's pre-intervention language test

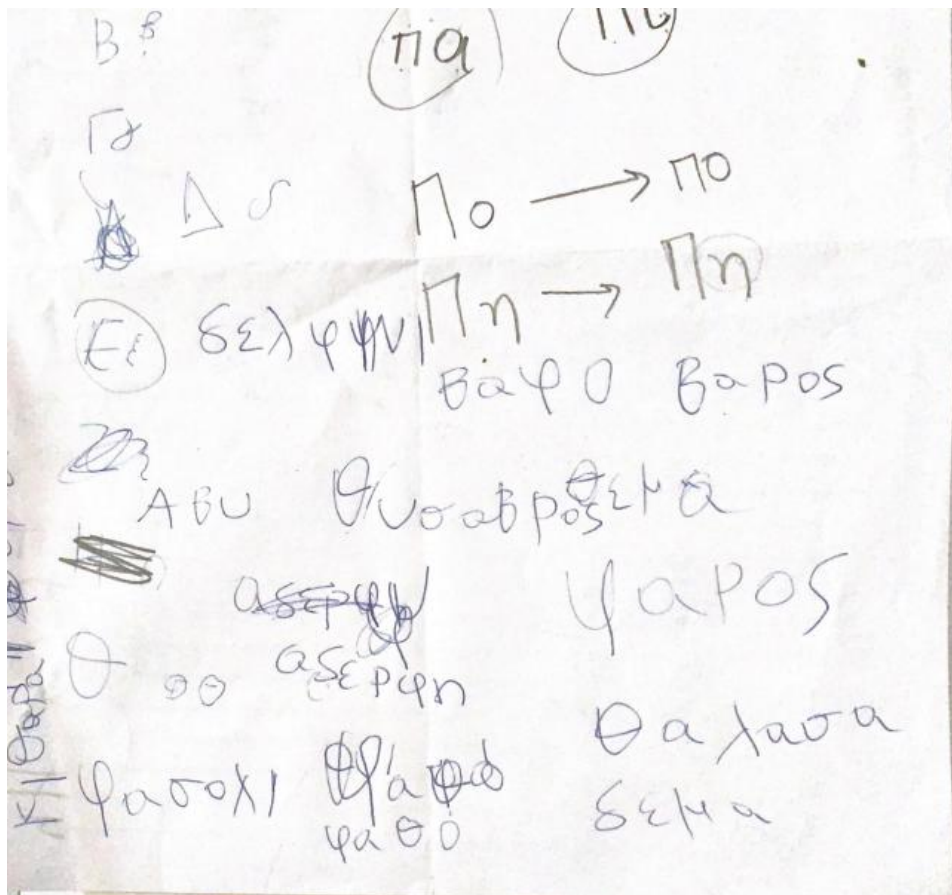


Figure 9 Student A's post-intervention language test

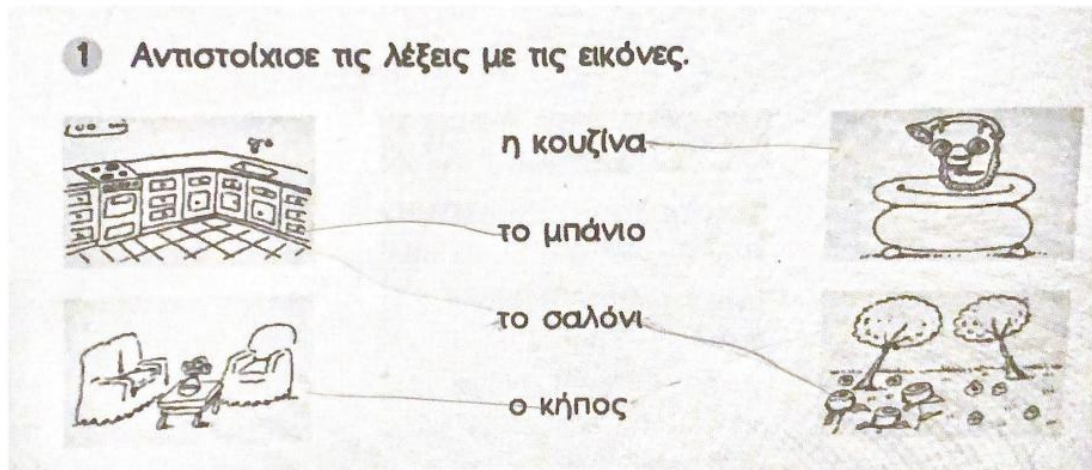


Figure 10 Student B's pre intervention language test



Βάλε ✓ στο σωστό. (✓ = correct)

1. Ο μπαμπάς είναι στην κουζίνα.
2. Το σκυλάκι είναι στο δωμάτιο.
3. Η γιαγιά είναι στην κουζίνα.
4. Το αγόρι είναι στο μπάνιο.
5. Το κορίτσι είναι στο σαλόνι.
6. Η μαμά είναι στον κήπο.

Figure 11 Student B's post-intervention language test



εμεις που ζουμε στις πολεις μενοχμεις  
 σε ανοδοκοικιες και δηλωνοχμεις  
 κωδε ε προ στο ογυδαο Ανεβρανοχμεις  
 τωσ οκατες και μηνοχμεις τωσ τωσ.  
 ηασομωστε στο ερενα και η δωρε  
 να στο ηραχιο ογυ. Γραφωμωσ οφωρ  
 φωρ και δ.αφωσωμωσ. Ητωμωσ (οφωρ)

Figure 12 Student C's pre intervention language test

-μαι η με; -σαι η σε; -ται η τε;  
 Αωταμωε που το λεω, αλλα πρεπει να φυγεωμωε καταναβαινωμωε  
 σε δεν επιτρενωμωε να ειστε εδω. Ηδη η κορη μου  
 ειδοποιησωμωε την αστυχμια. Τι με κοιταωμωε; Ειναι κατι που  
 δεν καταλαβαωμωε, σας ειπα οτι απαγορευωμωε εμωε.  
 Δεν ειναι σωστο να μηλεεσωμωε στη ζωη του παιδιου σου.  
 Η κορη μου νοικιασωμωε μονη της ενα οπιτε και αισθανωμωε  
 χαρωμωενη. Προσπαθω και εγω να μην στεναχωριωμωε που  
 εφυγε απο το οπιτε μας, αφω η ιδια χαιρωμωε με αυτω.

Figure 13 Student C's post-intervention language test

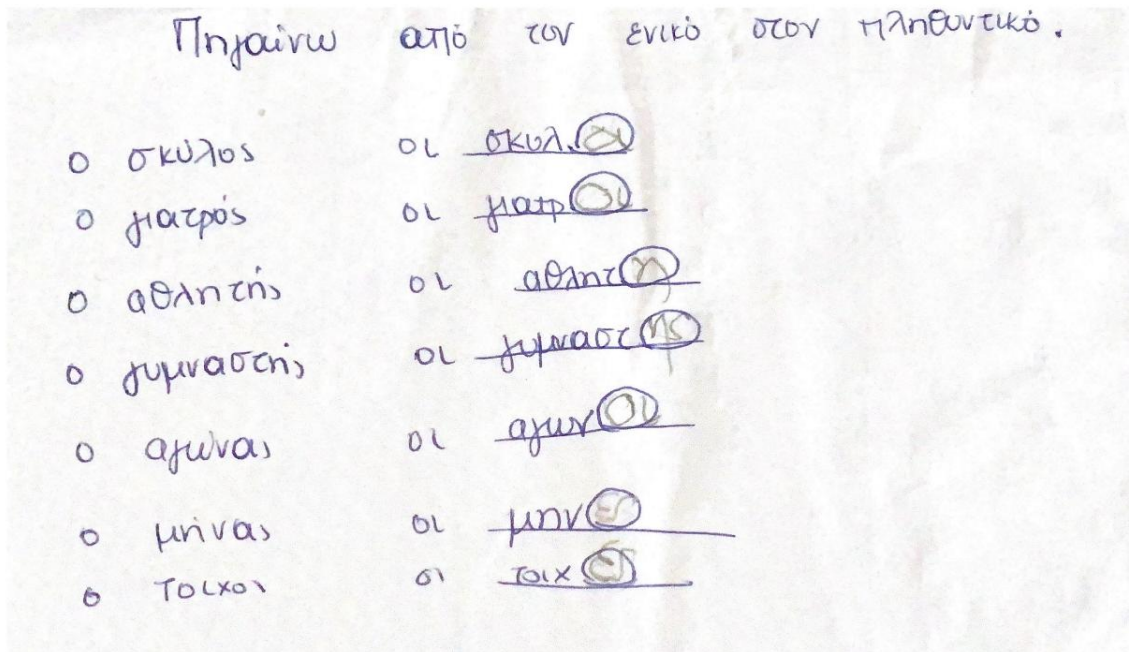


Figure 14 Student D's pre-intervention language test

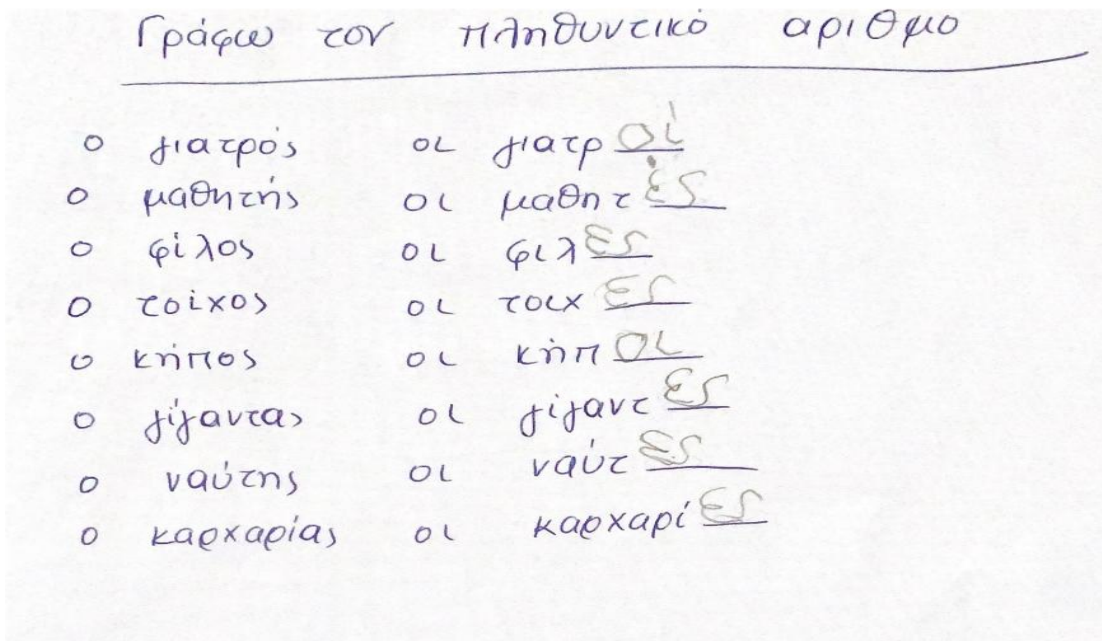


Figure 15 Student D's post-intervention language test



Author's Statement:

I hereby expressly declare that, according to the article 8 of Law 1559/1986, this dissertation is solely the product of my personal work, does not infringe any intellectual property, personality and personal data rights of third parties, does not contain works/contributions from third parties for which the permission of the authors/beneficiaries is required, is not the product of partial or total plagiarism, and that the sources used are limited to the literature references alone and meet the rules of scientific citations.