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Postgraduate Dissertation

Unlocking the Potential of Roma Students: A Study on the Impact
of Creative Activities in Teaching English as a Second Language

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Patras, Greece, June 2023

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Abstract

The particular study focuses on the challenge of motivating and involving the Roma pupils in their language and culture via the use of creative activities including role playing, puppetry, and singing. The study's goal is to find out to what degree these methods have improved students' motivation and engagement as well as their social and language abilities. Twelve students of a primary school of various ages and classes participated in the research. Action research was chosen as the best method to allow the person conducting the study to serve as both an investigator and an educator. Participant observations, focus group discussions, and observation diaries were used for collecting data. The findings of the research highlight the value of employing creative tasks to help students develop their linguistic abilities as well as their social skills via incentive and collaboration, such as puppetry, songs, and role play. Additionally, the usage of the Romani language is emphasized as a bridge, a communicative element, and a language component for their participation. Finally, it turned out to be crucial to take advantage of the cultural aspects of their daily life.

Keywords

creative activities, Roma students, Romani language, action research, cultural aspects

Περίληψη

Η συγκεκριμένη μελέτη επικεντρώνεται στην πρόκληση της παρακίνησης και της εμπλοκής των μαθητών Ρομά στη γλώσσα και τον πολιτισμό τους μέσω της χρήσης δημιουργικών δραστηριοτήτων, όπως το παιχνίδι ρόλων, το κουκλοθέατρο και το τραγούδι. Στόχος της μελέτης είναι να διαπιστωθεί σε ποιο βαθμό αυτές οι μέθοδοι βελτίωσαν τα κίνητρα και την εμπλοκή των μαθητών, καθώς και τις κοινωνικές και γλωσσικές τους ικανότητες. Στην έρευνα συμμετείχαν δώδεκα μαθητές διαφόρων ηλικιών και τάξεων από ένα δημοτικό σχολείο. Η έρευνα δράσης επιλέχθηκε ως η καλύτερη μέθοδος για να επιτρέψει στο άτομο που διεξάγει τη μελέτη να λειτουργήσει τόσο ως ερευνητής όσο και ως εκπαιδευτικός. Για τη συλλογή δεδομένων χρησιμοποιήθηκαν συμμετοχικές παρατηρήσεις, συζητήσεις σε ομάδες εστίασης και ημερολόγια παρατήρησης. Τα ευρήματα της έρευνας αναδεικνύουν την αξία της χρησιμοποίησης δημιουργικών εργασιών που βοηθούν τους μαθητές να αναπτύξουν τις γλωσσικές τους ικανότητες καθώς και τις κοινωνικές τους δεξιότητες μέσω της παροχής κινήτρων και της συνεργασίας, όπως το κουκλοθέατρο, τα τραγούδια και το παιχνίδι ρόλων. Επιπλέον, τονίζεται η χρήση της γλώσσας Ρομά ως γέφυρα, επικοινωνιακό στοιχείο και γλωσσικό συστατικό για τη συμμετοχή τους. Τέλος, αποδείχθηκε ότι είναι ζωτικής σημασίας η αξιοποίηση των πολιτιστικών πτυχών της καθημερινής τους ζωής.

Λέξεις – Κλειδιά

δημιουργικές δραστηριότητες, μαθητές Ρομά, Ρομανί γλώσσα, έρευνα δράσης, πολιτιστικές πτυχές

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List of Abbreviations & Acronyms

CEFR	Common European Framework of Reference
CLD	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
DiE	Drama in Education
EU	European Union
IEP	Institute of Educational Policy
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
NRIS	National Roma Integration Strategies
TL	Target Language
ZEP	Educational Priority Zone

1. Introduction

The worldwide socio-political upheavals have resulted in considerable changes in class composition (Unesco, 1995). No one is excused from attendance at the Greek public school. Since Greece is located in the middle of a geopolitical region with a lot of cultural diversity, it is a viable alternative for all migrant workers and minority groups that want to live and work there. The educational setting may need to change in order to meet the new criteria (Gkofa, 2017). Numerous students from ethnic minorities, as well as other cultures that enrich the student body, attend Greek public schools in several places. This group includes Romani students who struggle to combine their Greek educational institutions with their historical and cultural heritage (Gkofa, 2017). They ought to be given chances that would boost their engagement in every level of education, according to the Council of Europe (2006). According to some researchers, the reason for their students' lack of participation at school is their style of life, their customs, their challenges of the language, and their fear of failing (Chatzisavvidis, 2007; Nova-Kaltsouni, 2004; Ploumidi, 2016).

It is clear that steps should be taken to ensure that the student's requirements are satisfied and that teaching process has a purpose. The educational system should move beyond by embracing the students' heterogeneity in all of its threads since traditional teaching methods frequently fall short of meeting the demands of the varied student body (Magos, 2006). The issue of racial education has long interested both Europe and our nation. In order to research the issue and provide potential remedies, the Greek Ministry of Education has created a number of programs in collaboration with Greek institutions over the years. However, the lack of literacy and rates of dropping out of school within the Roma community continue to be exceedingly high. The percentages of early school abandonment are unchanged in Greece despite gradual increases in early childhood and obligatory school attendance (European Commission, 2017).

"World Roma Day" has been declared to fall on April 8. The first World Roma Conference, which took place on April 8, 1971 in London and created the foundation for defending their rights, has been around for about fifty years (Stamatis, 2021). Moreover, the promotion of equality, socioeconomic inclusion, and Roma engagement in political, social, economic, and cultural life are topics that European social policy has prioritized. However, the Roma continue to face enduring obstacles as well as numerous deprivations and forms of exclusion

in the areas of a decent standard of living, health, education, and employment. Particularly, the issue of Roma education in Europe has been the focus of significant national and international concern and effort for decades (Stamatis, 2021).

Living in an area with a significant number of Roma people and often interacting with this community has been a major factor in the researcher's interest in education. The researcher has had the opportunity to learn about their needs and concerns through regular interaction. She has also concluded that instructors must take a greater part in involving them in the educational process if they want to build a community in which they will feel truly embraced.

This study research's questions prioritized creative strategies for this goal, as well as the use of their language Romani and employ elements of their culture and identity for communication reasons in an effort to overcome these barriers and demonstrate ways of motivating and engaging this sensitive population. The research is divided into three substantial components. A literature study is conducted first, including subjects such English language instruction and Roma education, educational initiatives for Roma students, multimodality, the use of Romani in the classroom, and creative methods for teaching English. Following that is a section on research methodology that includes the objectives, the research questions, the tools utilized for data collecting, and the outcomes of the three cycles of action research. The discussion, research credibility and trustworthiness, and limitation sections come last. Additionally, the overall results are offered together with suggestions for future study topics.

2. Literature review

2.1 The Roma' historical path

According to popular belief, the Roma (also known as Gypsies or Travelers) are a nomadic people that originated in northern India and started emigrating progressively around 1000 AD (Chatzisavvidis, 2007) and to scatter throughout Europe. The Roma initially arrived in the Greek region in the fourteenth century, notably in Nafplio and Methoni on the mainland as well as in Crete and Corfu on the island (Terzopoulou & Georgiou, 1996, pp. 13–15). New Roma imports were also seen throughout the 1990s, primarily from Albania and Bulgaria, with the overall number of Roma in Greece estimated to be approximately 250,000-300,000 by the late 1990s (Lydaki, 1998, p.31). Most research dealing with historical data on Gypsies beginning with their language, for example by examining Romani features, they attempted to uncover the enigma surrounding their place of origin gypsies worldwide (Crowe, 2016; Lydaki, 1998; Morar et al., 2004).

They are referred to as Roma, which both means "man" and "husband." The General Secretariat for Social Solidarity and Combating Poverty, of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, conducted a countrywide survey of the socioeconomic conditions in the regions where Roma groups resided as part of the general census of the population in 2021 (Stoukas, 2023). According to the data from the aforementioned study, there are 117,495 permanent citizens who identify as Roma in our nation, making up 1.13% of Greece's total population. However, due to movement and ad hoc Roma registration, this number is not exact (Stoukas, 2023).

Lydaki claims that "the term 'minority' is attributed to a racial, cultural, religious, or ethnic group whose members do not share the dominant group's culture, but insist on the preservation of specific fixed national, religious, or linguistic traditions that differ from those of the rest of the population" (2013, p. 151). Until the beginning of the twenty-first century, Roma/Gypsies were scarcely acknowledged as a distinct ethnic, linguistic, and cultural group in a European context; for example, the European Convention for the Protection of National Minorities does not apply to gypsies (Liégeois & Gheorghe, 2002, p.6). In Greece, they are not recognized as a minority (Kostadinova, 2011). Only the Muslim

Roma of Thrace, together with other Muslims in the region, are recognized as a minority due to their faith (Kostadinova, 2011).

However, during the 1990s, a renewed interest in cultural difference, as well as the official acceptance of multiculturalism/interculturalism discourse, has intensified the desire to modify the way vulnerable socioeconomic groups, including Roma, are studied (Karamitsopoulos, 2016). The Roma found themselves in a constantly deteriorating social balance as a result of their significant cultural differences and lifestyle choice as stagehands and tour guides (Terzopoulou & Georgiou, 1996).

Romani, the language they speak, is an Indo-European language (Chatzisavvidis, 2007). There is more than one language spoken by the Roma. Depending on the dispersal of the Roma groups across the globe, there are numerous distinct languages. However, the local populations that want to preserve their cultural heritage speak Romani (Chatzisavvidis, 2007). Its low social standing is further confirmed by the total omission of it from recognized organizations like educational institutions, as well as by the fact that it includes no form of writing and is exclusively used for communications. In the Roma community, families are teaching their kids the Romani language verbally (Karamitsopoulos, 2016).

The Greek Roma community utilizes Romani inside its own borders, while Greek is used for all other dealings. As a result, they come together to create a bilingual group of people, speaking their mother tongue within their local area and the dominant tongue beyond it (Papakonstantinou, 2000). As a consequence, the Roma coding alter according on an interaction circumstance. In addition, it has absorbed a significant amount of vocabulary from Persian, Greek, Slavic, and Romanian languages. It is not consistent, not even within the framework of the Greek state (Duma, 2019). For instance, there are two recognized varieties of Romany in Greece: those of Southern and Northern Greece. The dialects referred to as the Balkan group are the varieties of Romani that are spoken in the Greek region (Duma, 2019).

2.2 Roma education

Another contentious topic in history is how the Roma people and education are related. The Roma still hold instructors and the educational system in general in low regard because of how they were treated by the government over the years (Bourikos, 2016). High school

dropouts and marginalization still occur. This appears to be evident from the data, particularly in Greece. The rate of illiteracy among the Roma is quite high, reaching 77.9%, especially among the elderly (Stoukas, 2023). Additionally, 9,330 (66%) Roma children between the ages of 4 and 15 are enrolled in kindergarten, elementary school, or high school. However, many of these kids grow up too quickly and drop out of school before learning to write and read (Stoukas, 2023).

Access to a high-quality, inclusive general education is one of the main goals of the Council Recommendation from 2021 on equality, inclusion, and participation of the Roma (Stamatis, 2021). From early childhood education and daycare through higher education, it is important to make sure that Roma receive genuine equitable access to and participation in all kinds and levels of learning (Stamatis, 2021). At the national level, it is suggested that policies and initiatives be adopted with a focus on the abolition of all forms of educational segregation, the promotion of equality, diversity, and participation, the encouragement of parents' significant involvement in their children's education, and teacher awareness (Stamatis, 2021).

Because the child is exposed to a different way of life, another way of thinking, and a heterogeneous value system, the guardian of the gypsy culture who sends his child to school runs the risk of losing the ability to preserve the gypsy culture (Stamatis, 2021). As a result, the school might also be seen as a "threat" of assimilation for their Roma children (Stamatis, 2021). The youngster encounters a new person and a frequently chaotic world when they first enter the school, which has nothing in common with what he has previously known. The range and abundance of knowledge that students learn each day in the classroom can often cause them to get disoriented and distracted (Karamitsopoulos, 2016).

The actual situation for Roma youngsters in Greece is that they generally never went to school or dropped out in their early adolescent years (Kokkinou, 2019). According to Parthenis and Tseliou (2013), this fact is typically attributed to the Central Policy Management, local community institutions, and Roma individuals. Romani people typically become illiterate as a result of students leaving school since they are unable to comprehend even the most basic Greek (Kokkinou, 2019). Roma's parents bear a heavy burden of convincing their children to attend school, and their motivation and upbeat demeanor are crucial to their children's achievement in the classroom (Parthenis & Tseliou, 2013). As a

result, their studies are frequently fragmented, short-term, and piecemeal (Kostadinova, 2011). After all, rather than attending schools, the Roma receive their core education from their families and communities (Purcell-Gates, 2002). Due to pressure from their families and the larger communal society, the Roma continue to stop their children's education despite the progress they are making in school (Vamvoukas, 2002). Of course, there are also instances of Roma kids who were able to finish secondary school, but for financial or economic reasons, they dropped out and started working at the family (Vassiliadou & Pavli-Corre, 2011).

Since 1983, the Council of Europe has offered teacher training seminars for students who identify as Roma (Council of Europe, 2006). In an effort to encourage equitable opportunity for education, the recommendation on the education of Roma/Gypsy children provided for the integration of Roma pupils. To build a supportive atmosphere, education was seen as the essential component for a brighter future. The two things thought to be essential for development were increased language and regular attendance at school (Council of Europe, 2006). It recommended creating instructional materials with the goal of empowering students by promoting their cultural backgrounds and history and working with the Roma population (Council of Europe, 2006).

According to a survey conducted in 2011 about the attendance of Roma students in Greece, Romania, France, Portugal, and Spain, economic hardship and social exclusion constitute a few of the variables that may affect these students' participation in school and their ability to benefit from it in order to build a better future (EUMC, 2006). Roma students are frequently excluded from Greek schools due to factors including continual mobility, underage labor, racist offenses, and others (Parthenis, 2012). The social and economic background of these kids is unavailable, according to Gotovos (2007), because neither their families' socioeconomic status nor their own socioeconomic status have been systematically recorded. The parents' lack of educational background is a crucial contributing factor in addition to poverty and social marginalization. The existence of the school and the conveyance in knowledge have no significance in the gypsy culture since professional training takes place right inside the family (Vassiliadou & Pavli-Corre 2011).

The Regional Observatory of Social Integration (PePKE) (2022) of Thessaly concentrated on the academic difficulties faced by Roma children in the Region of Thessaly. They believe

there are issues with the education of Roma children in general, early marriages, the inability of the educational system to adapt to particular cultural groups, parental illiteracy, access issues, the population's reference value system, a lack of family support, institutional weaknesses for the observance of educational obligations, poor socioeconomic living conditions. Positive attention is given to the uniqueness of the new National Roma Strategy, and there is a desire to work together for this. However, it appears that there was not an in-depth presentation on the subject (Gkana et al., 2012; PePKE, 2022).

In Roma culture, women play a secondary role. Since girls are expected to get married and have kids at ages 15 to 16 or older, they are not permitted to attend school and subsequently legally enter the workforce (Pascual et al., 2020). The function of the Roma woman in the patriarchal framework of the family is to preserve and pass on traditions to the future generations. Although neurotic, she is restricted to home and family care. She occupies a modest status in her community, working alongside her husband and in the background, mostly giving births and raising children (Pascual et al., 2020).

2.3 Initiatives and Programs for Roma education

Europe is currently embracing inclusive education and multicultural education (Hegarty, 1998). Government leaders saw the need for more inclusive education as migration to Europe increased following World War II. These inclusive educational techniques assist students from poor socioeconomic backgrounds, such those from Roma backgrounds, to adjust and put more of an emphasis on improving their academic performance (Themelis, 2009). When educating Roma pupils, teachers may overlook significant cultural nuances, according to Luciak and Liegl (2009). As a result, specialized programs for Roma education have been developed, while Roma viewpoints have been incorporated into general curricula. As an example, other programs, like Second Chance, have a wider perspective and offer alternatives that benefit different types of individuals with disadvantages, whereas the Teacher In-Service Training for Roma Inclusion (INSETRom) program is solely devoted to Roma students from nation-states such as Cyprus, Austria, Greece, Italy, Romania, Slovakia, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom (Crozier et al., 2010).

A few efforts have been made on the side of the Greek Ministry of Education to develop and carry out an educational strategy that upholds their freedoms and fosters intercultural principles because the connection among education and democracy is especially hazardous in the instance of the Greek Roma because educational institutions are unable to supply them with enough educational experiences and possibilities (Parthenis & Tseliou, 2013).

Programs for the inclusion of Roma children in education have been implemented by country university institutions in response to Greece's compliance with European Union directives requiring states with multicultural characteristics to implement intercultural education programs in order to raise awareness of vulnerable social groups (Bourikos, 2016). For the educational needs of Greek-Roma students, an EU and Greek State-funded initiative has been in operation since 1997. The main goal of the program is to guarantee every child's right to a high-quality, simple to obtain education with the intention of satisfying their educational requirements in an environment that is least restrictive while honoring their variety. The pedagogical supervision of students by qualified professors is offered as part of this project's educational assistance (UNCHR, 2008).

Numerous programs have been implemented in Greece since 1992 with the aim of reducing Romani rate of dropping out and raising educational standards (Vasileiadou & Pavli-Korre, 2011). The results were disappointing (Ziomas et al., 2011). The Greek Ministry of Education declared in 2016 that a new, European-inspired initiative for the incorporation and education of the Roma will be implemented. The program is a two-stage process that focuses on children's effectiveness and being accessible in joining school, as well as integrating them and fulfillment of primary schooling and the accessibility of highly educated professionals who might provide psychological, financial, and technical assistance (Ziomas et al., 2011). The Ministry of Education established special reception courses in the final years of the 1990s (Damanakis, 2005). These programs run concurrently with normal classes and were designed to provide additional assistance to students who are struggling with the Greek language (Damanakis, 2005). The official educational strategy, nevertheless, disregards the mother tongue of the pupils (Nikolaou, 2008). Despite the prevalence of linguistic and cultural variety, the Greek school places a strong emphasis on the growth of the Greek knowledge and culture (Karamitsopoulos, 2016). The recognition that the notion of family-child-school is a unity that needs to be particularly attentive in how to assess the results of education and in how the interventions are planned, as mentioned by Dr. Gkavaris

(IMDimitriadou, 2014). However, it appears that there is an imbalance between Roma and silence regarding the system's obligations. In practice, coping with diversity is tough. This is about the standard of education in schools (IMDimitriadou, 2014). The Roma believe that school has no exchangeable value for children's education and is an unknown world; they do not perceive it as a resource and are communicatively apprehensive while communicating with the school (IMDimitriadou, 2014).

Regarding Roma integration, two of the most well-known policy frameworks existed in Europe. The first was called "the Decade for Roma inclusion," (2005-2015) a policy collaboration between governments, non-governmental organizations, and governmental organizations with the primary objective of eradicating prejudice against the Roma in Europe (Ryder et al., 2022). In the second, the four areas of education, employment, health, and housing were all undertaken by the European Union (EU). A recent strategy, which was adopted by the European Council in 2011, was governed by the "Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies" (Ryder et al., 2022). The Commission requested that Member States develop National Roma Integration Strategies (NRIS), which were national strategies for the integration of Roma, and that they conducted progress evaluations up until 2020 under this framework, which establishes more "soft" government measures with active political activity (Council of the European Union 2013, European Commission 2017) (Ryder et al., 2022).

The National Staff for Public Policy for the Social Integration of Roma is the General Secretariat for Social Solidarity and Combating Poverty (Stamatis, 2021). The current period is coming to an end, and in accordance with the new directions and priorities established at the European level, the new National Strategy for the Social Integration of the Roma 2021-2030 and the National Action Plan for the Social Integration of the Roma 2021-2030 is to be made available for public consultation (Stamatis, 2021).

Realistic and targeted interventions are suggested within the framework of the new strategic targeting with the goal of promoting the full integration of the Roma into the nation's social and economic fabric, with a focus on housing, health, education, and employment, as well as to ensure prevention and combating discrimination and their social exclusion (Ryder et al., 2022). The creation of more favorable conditions for active participation, social emancipation, empowerment, and inclusion of Roma, particularly young people and women

in local society, as well as access to high-quality education, digital literacy, the creation of employment and entrepreneurship opportunities, and general improvements in the standard of living, are key areas of intervention (Stamatis, 2021).

2.4 Use of Romani in class

The use of L1 in L2 classrooms—especially in multicultural classrooms—has long been a contentious issue in the field of L2 teaching and learning. On the one hand, prior studies on acquiring L2 has demonstrated that L1 usage should be limited and that students require the greatest knowledge of the TL, or target language, as feasible for learning to happen (Krashen & Terrell, 1983). This is consistent with Chiou's (2014) argument that the best approach for students to pick up another language is to get completely absorbed in it while receiving the most L2 exposure possible in the classroom. Ultimately, these claims are supported by the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach to language acquisition, which holds that "the target language system is learned through the process of struggling to communicate" (Brown, 1994, p.45, as cited in Zulfikar, 2019). According to this approach, instructors and instructors around the world overlook the utilization of learners' first language (L1).

To better comprehend the meaning and patterns of the new language, students may find it helpful to make references to other languages they are already familiar with (Cook, 2001). More precisely, it has been demonstrated that deliberate use of L1 helps students learn L2 more successfully by saving time and serving a variety of cognitive and social tasks (Turnbull, 2018). In terms of cognition, the usage of L1 enhances the acquisition of L2 vocabulary and L2 grammar (Demir, 2012; Liu, 2008) in terms of social interaction, it promotes social cooperation and aids in the scaffolding of learners. Making the L2 and the learning environment understandable helps students to reduce emotional filters (Bhooth et al., 2014).

However, it is advised against overusing L1, as it is capable of serving as an important asset if it is employed purposefully, at the right times, and in the right locations (Atkinson, 1993). In the research of Di Camilla and Anton (2012), for example, it was shown that the L1 learners acquiring an L2 mostly provided this vitally important function in the early stages of L2 learning. As a result, the justifications in favor of capitalizing L1 as a supporting

source have been well-founded and supported by several academics and researchers over the years. Hornberger (2014) contends that respecting minority languages and providing a welcoming environment to the pupil's language repertoires via pair assignments in all languages, language blending, linguistic awareness tasks, etc. are the most important aspects of providing instruction in multicultural and multilingual educational settings. Taking into consideration learners' linguistic and cultural characteristics has a good impact on their happiness and competence level in school, particularly in regard to the language of teaching (Cummins, 2015; European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2019).

This is consistent with Garcia's (2009) theory of translanguaging, which highlights the flexible language usage of bilingual pupils and encompasses "the entire spectrum of linguistic outcomes of multilingual users" (Wei, 2011, p. 1224). Based on translanguaging as an instructional technique, the goal is to improve the way students learn by leveraging all of the pupils' accessible languages instead of disregarding the information multilinguals have owing to their individual linguistic and educational backgrounds (Cenoz & Gorter, 2020).

A bilingual person's mother tongue or first language is crucial since it contributes to the way they are perceived and uses their self-confidence favorably (Papadopoulou, 2009, p. 160). In an effort to promote confidence among learners, instructors in any field of education ought to value the language, culture, and therefore, identity of their pupils. They should also emphasize the value of their native language and their bilingualism in terms of how their intellectual capacity develops (Skourtou, 2011, p.93).

The Roma students in the Greek school are taught Greek as an official language, along with the rest of the students and native speakers of minority languages (Nikolaou, 2009). It is noted that consideration has not been given to the role of language in promoting Roma integration in school, which contributes to the difficulty Roma confront in fostering bilingualism (Gkaintartzi et al., 2015). On the one hand, they experience the exclusion of their mother tongue from the national education system, but on the other, they must accept official Greek because, despite the devaluation of Romani and the sense of inferiority that inspires the linguistic prejudice, the study of Greek is deemed necessary (Fragoudaki, 1987). In the framework of teaching practice policy, there are initiatives to support (mono)cultural and monolingual preservation of the majority (Nikolaou, 2009, p. 550).

However, the use of Romani by instructors to offer instances and pique the attention of students learning a foreign language is a technique they find to be crucial. However, there are several obstacles to bilingual education, or teaching a lesson in both languages, and instructors indicate that it looks to be underperforming (Balatsoukas, 2018). It is significant to note that professors have stated that a Roma student would do better in Greek when he is proficient in his mother tongue, making studying Greek even more successful (Vatamidou 2018). The Council of Europe is still running an experimental program with the title "The role of the Romani language in the educational inclusion of Roma children and young people" that aims to use Romani dialects in the classroom, establish a network of Romani language trainers, adopt best practices for cross-cultural inclusive education with a focus on Roma students, and develop a curriculum and educational materials for kindergarten through sixth grade (Karavasili, 2022).

2.5 Educational Programs for Roma students in Greece

After 1996, the Greek government supported a number of initiatives geared toward ensuring that Roma students received a quality education, including the "National Policy Framework in Favor of Greek Gypsies," "The Education of Roma Children," which was a component of the "Integrated Action Plan for the Social Integration of Greek Roma," which was put into place from 1997 to 2004, and another initiative called "Education for Roma Children," which was a component of "Education and Lifelong Learning," which was put into place from 2002 to 2004 (Ziomas et al., 2011). These programs encountered several challenges and produced only modest improvements in enrollment in schools and rates of dropping out (Ziomas et al., 2011). One of the main issues was the absence of adequate materials and teacher training in regard to the unfavorable responses of the communities in question and the lack of interactions with the Roma minority (Ziomas et al., 2011). In addition to these, technical problems like the naming difference between the first and last programs (from Gypsy to Roma), the time intervals between the programs, and the involvement of various university institutes represent the various policies and delays that could also have impacted the outcomes (Skourtou, 2016).

Following the submission of necessary supporting documents and certificates for registration in a public school, the procedures for acquiring citizenship began in 1978, when

the Ministry of Interior sent a circular to all prefectures of the state (212/20.10.78) for the arrangement of necessary document certificates for all Roma living in Greece (Skourtou, 2016). It is true that European Union directives worked as promotional agents for the Greek state's awareness of educational concerns, socially excluded groups, especially Roma, and were the catalyst for adopting efforts in this regard (Skourtou, 2016).

In order to effectively include Roma children in the education system, the Ministry of Education directed the General Secretariat Popular Education and the Directorates of Primary Education to carry out actions to reach out to Roma communities in 1987 (Ministry of Education/Directorate of Primary Education 1/206/14.4.1987) (Georgiadis & Zisimos, 2012). The Ministers of Education of the Council of Europe, including Greece, endorsed a proposal-resolution in 1989, which calls for the establishment of mechanisms to address the educational access challenges faced by Roma children (Georgiadis & Zisimos, 2012).

The absence of teacher training and information constituted a significant deficiency in educational actions for Roma kids. They were vague exhortations to understanding and absorption in the cultural and socioeconomic particularities of the Roma in the first year, which was done for instructors who taught in schools with Roma students (Skourtou, 2015). Following the proposal of the European Committee responsible for intercultural education issues, the Ministry then recommends in 1992 a group of trainers who undertook to educate primary school instructors who teach pupils from this population group (Skourtou, 2015).

In October 2008, the Ministry of Education ("Programs for Active Integration Returnees, Foreigners, and Roma Students in Our Educational Institution System") included Roma students in the same intercultural group as foreigners and returnees, noting that "in the Specific Additional Intercultural Actions Education, Roma Students Can Also Join" (Parthenis & Fragoulis, 2015). Due to the usage of state resources, Roma students are now required to participate in all of these extra activities and intercultural education practices. They thus attended "preparatory classes" in "receiving departments" to enable their seamless integration throughout the educational process (Parthenis & Fragoulis, 2015).

In order to ensure equal inclusion of vulnerable students in the educational system, the management of otherness in the classroom and the creation of a learning environment that fosters participation in the learning process must be based on flexible educational approaches of differentiated teaching (Stamatis, 2022). On the one hand, successful teaching

is accomplished through the use of the intercultural education principles, which stress and promote the students' cultural diversity. The Differentiation of Teaching, on the other hand, focuses on how the educational material responds to the cognitive and emotional demands of the student as well as how to provide every student the chance to take part in the learning process (Stamatis, 2022).

2.5.1 University of Ioannina

The University of Ioannina's program "Education of Gypsy Children" ran from 1997 to 2001, while the program "Inclusion of Gypsy Children in School" ran from 2001 to 2004 (Gotovos, 2007). It was focused on the systematic research of Roma children as well as their attendance and integration in school (Markou 2013, p. 34). Intensive mapping of Roma kids was carried out as part of the program's activity, while concerns about these children's access to school were created. Issues such as low attendance and school leakage were being studied as social as well as political parameters, because they were no longer only talking about the children of Greek Roma, but also Roma immigrants from Albania, Romania, and Bulgaria, as well as Muslim Roma from Thrace who came to Athens as immigrants (Gotovos, 2007). The same university investigated topics concerning financial issues, education, language, and residency of Roma (Gotovos, 2013). For the first time, there were created instructional materials based on the age and level of kids' language skills, as well as financing for their teacher training.

The organization and operation of school units was formally established for primary and secondary education to provide education to young people with educational, social, cultural, or educational "particularities" through "special syllabi" and "additional or alternative courses" (Gotovos, 2013). This program was implemented nationally with the participation of 227 schools, was co-financed by the E.E. and the Ministry of Health, and it marked the beginning of Greece's real focus on education in accordance with Law 2413/1996 (promotion of intercultural education) (Gotovos, 2007).

2.5.2 University of Thessaly

The goal of this initiative ("Inclusion of Gypsy Children in School" program, 2006-2008) was to ensure the easy integration of Roma children into the educational system, as well as their acceptance by instructors, parents, and the society as a whole (Skourtou, 2016). There was also given various information to instructors through the use of relevant educational resources, therefore assisting families with cultural differences while also aiming to raise educational community awareness. The development of teaching resources for Greek as a second foreign language, based on the communicative technique, is also highlighted (Skourtou, 2016).

These program objectives are carried out through corresponding actions, which, in short, concern the incentives for achieving the six-year target of gypsy children's systematic attendance at school, in its improvement of their academic performance and socialization, with the adoption of young people suitable pedagogical methods targeted at the Roma group, as well as the change of perceptions of both teachers who teach in classes with Roma (Gotovos, 2007).

In a speech Dr. Gkovaris presented some actions of the university as they offered pre-kindergarten lessons in Thessaly camps, preparing the children for the transition to kindergarten with the moms and convincing them that the school is worthwhile. They assisted instructors in managing this population and collaborated with mediators to determine where the youngsters who were missing from school were (IMDimitriadou, 2014). The parents were issued a student card that permitted them to register at any school they were attending at the time. To help students who were transferring from one school level to another, they held summer classes (IMDimitriadou, 2014).

2.5.3 APTH-PTDE program

This program's purpose ("Education of Roma Children", 2010-2013). was to provide socio-psychological help to Roma children and their families. A group of 35 psychologists and social workers were present and active in Roma colonies and camps on a regular basis (Papadopoulos, 2016).

2.5.4 The University of Athens (EKPA)

The goal of this program ("Education of Roma Children" in the Department of Philosophy, 2010-2014) was to use educational materials for language teaching and from earlier Roma initiatives, as well as materials from other vulnerable groups, such as material for the program "Inclusion of returnee and foreigner children in school for primary education" (Parthenis & Fragoulis, 2015). So, considering all of the social parameters, educational and intercultural efforts were made to capitalize on educational issues such as Roma bilingualism. Other universities (Ioannina and Thessaly) contributed to this endeavor (Gotovos, 2013).

This program was based on some assumptions about civil rights and what it means to be a citizen (Parthenis & Fragoulis, 2015), individual identity versus ethnic identity (Gotovos, 2013), intercultural and democratic education (Markou, 2013), the role of the school in helping Roma children master the language/norm in Greek, the abolition of Roma social exclusion, and the creation of a single space where social relations of people of different cultures can be formed.

2.5.5 Ministry of Education

Beyond the steps taken by academic institutions to help Roma students academically, the activities that began in 2012 were also significant with a focus on the psycho-emotional and social empowerment of Roma students (Nisargioti, 2020). More typically, the "Education of Roma children" program operated in this setting, with its main objectives being the provision of psychological support to its potential school community, including the vulnerable group of Roma students, with a focus on improving the students' psychosocial conditions. The Ministry of Education suggested co-preparer of interdisciplinary educational and psychological programs, with assistance from teachers, psychologists, and other specialists (Ambadzi, 2022). In order to make learning interesting and meaningful for each student, these programs implemented classes for Roma children and included experiential activities in which students' prior experiences and knowledge would be used. This increased their level of engagement and participation (Nisargioti, 2020).

The Operational Program "Development Manpower, Education and Lifelong Learning 2014-2020" of the Act "Inclusion and Education of Roma Children" included the institutional actors' initiatives for the education and social development of Roma students through the ESPA Structure of the Ministry of Education (Ambadzi, 2022). Three university professor institutions from Athens, Thessaloniki, and Thessaly were in charge of this project's implementation, which had as its main tenets the enrollment and attendance of Roma children in pre-school programs, the enrollment and retention of Roma students in compulsory education, and the provision of a second chance for any Roma who want to pursue further education (Ambadzi, 2022).

2.5.6 Reception classes

The Greek government has provided "reception classes" (ZEP) and "afterschool classes" (Frontistiria) for the education of Roma pupils (YPEPTH, 2009). The "reception class" program involves enrolling students in regular classes while providing language support to reception classes, which function as parallel classes to aid these students in adjusting until they are prepared to integrate with their fellow students (YPEPTH, 2009). Pupils that perhaps have not registered in reception courses and have difficulties with language or who have signed up in reception classes but find it challenging to adhere to the typical class in terms of language participate the "afterschool classes" program. Further teaching support is given outside of scheduled class times in "afterschool classes" (YPEPTH, 2009).

As is evident, the majority of the programs that were put into place throughout time to meet the demand for the education of the student population who were Roma were founded on the concept of multicultural education (Skourtou, 2016). When it comes to the development of academic abilities, Roma culture and more extensive cultural encounters are mostly oral in nature. It is crucial that any educational program aimed at kids of the Roma community pay special attention to this particular aspect (Skourtou, 2016).

2.6 English language learning in minority students

For minority students to successfully integrate into the classroom, language learning is essential (Kantzou et al., 2017). Nevertheless, learning the host language in addition to a foreign language can occasionally be more challenging or even discouraging for immigrant students. From the first year forward, studying a foreign language (in this example, English) is required in Greek public schools, giving all children an equal chance to learn (Kantzou et al., 2017). Particularly, the rise of English, which is regarded as the lingua franca in Europe (Crystal 2003), has encouraged trilingualism among both individuals and society. According to Fueyo and Bechtol (1999), instructors must be capable and open to incorporate the cultures of their students into their courses. They must also appreciate the variety and cultural differences of the pupils they teach. Consequently, a multifaceted strategy to addressing the various needs of every pupil must be used, considering that educators have to adjust to the new principles and requirements (Kantzou et al., 2017). In order to effectively target the linguistic, cultural, and interpersonal growth of both instructors and students, traditional educational approaches to processing, instructing, and acquiring an extra language should be reviewed and reexamined in light of this fact (Fueyo & Bechtol, 1999).

The European Commission published a document in 2004 highlighting the significance of encouraging the varied cultural and linguistic backgrounds of its citizens through acquiring one, and preferably two, languages along with to their mother tongue (Delhey, 2004). This was done in an effort to preserve the multitude of students while implementing multilingual initiatives. As a result, the goal is to foster "the specific set of communication skills needed by particular groups of multilingual learners as reflected in their daily lives" (Cenoz & Genesce, 1998, p.27). According to McManis (2017), it is anticipated to accept heterogeneity and differences among learners and to advance equitable chances for all students, "regardless of gender, language, ability, religion, nationality, or other characteristics" (Maathuis, 2016, p. 6). The development of plurilingual skills is viewed as crucial to being able to travel freely around Europe and converse with diverse cultures (Grica & Chostelidou, 2011). Multilingual individuals, who are viewed as "a precious asset because they act as the glue between different cultures" (European Commission, 2008, pp. 5–6), are responsible for the expansion of the current linguistic spectrum.

The Institute of Educational Policy (IEP), which is in charge of the creation and execution of educational resources, seminars for educators, and the Cross Thematic Curriculum

Framework, has authorized the syllabus for English as a Foreign Language as well as all of the state textbooks (Alachiotis & Karantzia-Stavlioti, 2006). To make it possible pupils to be capable perform in everyday circumstances, it emphasizes the utilization of linguistic, paralinguistic, and extralinguistic means to communicate on their part, providing a focus to purposes, verbal expressions, ideas, and acquiring of knowledge about the form of English (Alachiotis & Karantzia-Stavlioti, 2006).

Students who are culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) might be categorized as having immigrant ancestry (Gay, 2002). Pupils from refugee origins, Greek students who have returned home, and members of the Roma minority are all included in this category (Lucas & Villegas, 2010). On entering primary school, these students are required to be proficient in both the official language of teaching, Greek, and English. The retention of the migrant student's ethnic identity and parental language is necessary for their cognitive and linguistic development, even if there aren't many studies on the teaching methodologies for these kids (Gogonas, 2010).

A variety of factors, including the objective, student readiness levels, and their preferred learning styles, teachers may employ pair-group and independent work as examples of varied techniques (Sougari & Mavroudi, 2019). While group work helps students develop their ability to socialize, acquire the ability to work together, take use of the abilities of their peers, and become aware of their own strengths and flaws, individual work builds self-confidence and makes students feel accomplished. Additionally, kids learn best in a calm, unthreatening setting where they may actively participate in the learning processes when their teachers serve as mentors rather than regulators (Sougari & Mavroudi, 2019).

The Uniform Curriculum for Foreign Languages in compulsory education, as well as other sources of pertinent authorized educational content, were used to develop the Guidelines for the Teaching of a Foreign Language at the Primary School (IEP, n.d.). The communicative language skills that students are expected to master by language level are used to organize and determine the language material that must be taught to the students of each class (IEP, n.d.). As assertions about what the learner is anticipated to perform to be regarded as a sufficient user of the language at each level, indicators of communicative competence are utilized (IEP, n.d.). The learner-centered approach, which is not only a teaching technique but also a means of structuring the teaching/learning subject of the foreign language, is

encouraged in foreign language education with the application of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) (North, 2014). This shift occurs from the material-centered and teacher-centered approaches to the learner-centered approach. From covering the material of the lesson to the student themselves, the teacher's focus shifts from what will be taught to what the student will learn (IEP, n.d.).

The teacher's interest is centered on how the student can act linguistically by utilizing all the sources of meaning that have been made available to him or her through language activities, in order to develop relative competence to communicate satisfactorily through the foreign language in the given situation or in the specific contextual context (IEP, n.d.). In this situation, and given that the teaching manual is not the only tool the teacher has at his or her disposal, the educator is encouraged to enrich the subject matter of his or her instruction with teaching materials that he or she will create on his or her own, based on the interests and needs of the students (IEP, n.d.).

In order to assure the students' active involvement and to foster their cognitive and psychosocial development, the choice of experiential and exploratory learning activities appropriate for the age of the students is advised for both the adaptation and the design of a teaching scenario. In order to make learning enjoyable and interesting for young pupils, instructional techniques including memory games, constructions, fairy tales, practice-and-practice exercises, etc. are recommended (IEP, n.d.).

2.6.1 Multimodality

As pupils are given an opportunity to learn via a variety of options, the use of various ways in the educational process—or "multimodality," as Cope and Kalantzis (2009) put it—is essential. According to Bezemer, (2012), each mode conveys meaning in a unique way. For instance, a sound or a picture used in the process of instruction has a specific purpose and helps with communication. It is believed that using a variety of modes, rather than only the traditional ones like reading and writing, is helpful in helping students make sense of the world and reinforce their own identities (Cope & Kalantzis, 2013). Given that pupils in a multilingual environment may not all have an identical language acquisition and vocabulary, multimodal procedures may be a way to improve the academic achievement of every pupil.

One holistic strategy for teaching a new language is through the use of pictures and other visuals. According to Oxford (1990), learners can correlate new knowledge with the image of it by illuminating new language aspects. Additionally, research has shown that drama strategies are effective multimodal practices that support learning (Vitsou et al., 2020). In particular, theater in language learning classrooms has the ability to advance all language skills and foster cooperation, as Ntelioglou (2011) notes. This is also supported by the study done by Vitsou et al. (2020), in which theatre skills were used with refugee kids to foster teamwork and improve their academic performance. Additionally, a recent study by Al-Jubeh and Vitsou (2021) found that using a Persona Doll with Arabic-speaking students increased their vocabulary and enhanced their reading abilities. In addition to that, theater practices have been found to lower anxiety levels and aid pupils in coping with trauma and identity difficulties by Vitsou et al. (2020) and Al-Jubeh and Vitsou (2021). Therefore, it can be concluded that drama lessons can both encourage language learning and simultaneously foster a welcoming environment where learners are able to express each other and feel appreciated, thereby lowering stress levels.

Not to mention, songs and music are often used multimodal teaching tools while teaching a foreign language. When teaching anything in a foreign language to young students, in particular, employing a song can help the students acquire the material while also keeping them engaged (Kumar et al., 2022). In addition, Lihn et al. (2020) discuss the value of songs as educational resources that may be used in a variety of ways, emphasizing their importance in speaking, writing, listening, and reading. For instance, they may be used to practice writing and pronouncing words, and the lyrics can be utilized to spark conversation and hone speaking abilities, among other things (Lihn et al., 2020).

2.7 English language and Roma

Research at the University of Thrace (Dimasi & Theologou, 2019), in a region where the Roma are a minority among a mixed-race population (Turks, Pomaks, Roma) with distinct cultural and linguistic identities, revealed that their educational and linguistic situation is rife with long-term issues that are associated with the characteristics of Education of Minorities. Years of study have shown that there are challenges in teaching Greek as a

second language, and minority pupils do poorly in school because they are unable to achieve the A2 level of the Greek language (Dimasi & Theologou, 2019).

Similar outcomes have also been noted in their performance in primary minority and public schools' required courses in English as a foreign language. These young people fall short of the language proficiency standards set by their analytical program (Sella-Mazi, 2016). Their mother tongue, Romani, which is a historically spoken language, is seen as the greatest barrier. The languages spoken by the various communities have little to do with their ethnic or religious identities (Dimasi & Theologou, 2019).

The Interdisciplinary Program Framework states that English is taught to students as a foreign language, but with references to Greek, which is regarded as their mother tongue (Sella-Mazi, 2016). The program's goal is for the students to acquire the abilities necessary to utilize their mother tongue and a foreign language simultaneously. It must, therefore, be able to translate verbally or in writing from Greek into English and vice versa (Sella-Mazi, 2016). The new Integrated Foreign Language Program, which is used in compulsory education as well as English textbooks, assumes that students have knowledge of Greek as their mother tongue. It does so while considering both fundamental methodology and the differences between mother tongue and foreign language in terms of structure, vocabulary, and other linguistic aspects (Sella-Mazi, 2016). As a result, these minority-group students in schools are taught English just like the other students who speak Greek at home. Since Romani is not taught and is only spoken, these students are taught English as a foreign language and are considered to speak Greek as their mother tongue (Dimasi & Theologou, 2019).

According to Dimasi & Theologou (2019), there is a need to first clarify and redefine bilingualism and trilingualism in regard to the language of these minority if there is a wish to aid these youngsters in mastering the English language. Then, the people who are responsible should review and redesign the teaching approach as well as the educational materials, which should be created with consideration for both the students' mother tongues and cultural backgrounds (Sella-Mazi, 2016).

2.8 Teaching English through creative techniques in a multicultural setting

2.8.1 Drama in Education

Research has led to the emergence of a multifaceted discipline called "Drama in Education" (DiE), often referred to as "educational drama" or "Theater in Education" (Vitsou, 2019). Using drama activities, roles, and dramatic situations, it is an evolving, collaborative method of learning about the outside world (Vitsou, 2014). Given that theater fosters a group mentality by means of enthusiastic involvement, being exposed to performance methods from an early age constitutes one of the most effective factors for crucial learning (Clark, 2009). Since educational drama is direct and deeply engages every person involved, it produces understanding of the experience and, as a consequence, experiential awareness and learning (Clark, 2009).

Dramatic language learning and teaching has drawn more attention from academics and instructors. According to several studies (Elaldi & Yerliyurt, 2017; Sabilah, 2016; Vitsou, 2019) drama-based exercises have a good effect on students' speaking ability and other language usage characteristics. Drama in education deviates from the conventional technique of instruction since it proposes a fresh methodological instrument that steps in in human relations and interpersonal interactions while encouraging active engagement in social events (Vitsou, 2019).

The instructor might use a variety of instructional strategies or in-class exercises to introduce multicultural awareness in English classes. Dialogues are one of the most often employed methods in the early phases (Sabilah, 2016). Acting out culturally oriented scenarios is easy with a professionally written conversation (Elaldi & Yerliyurt, 2017). Each dialogue should be written to show how people behave in a way that is acceptable to that language's speakers. Students learn how to communicate with individuals of various types through role-playing as they grow accustomed to the discourse and act it out (Elaldi & Yerliyurt, 2017). Drama games are often employed with young students, but they are equally appropriate for older students because they just require a few simple adjustments. In conjunction with their responsibility for skill acquisition and awareness of culture development, they also possess a very strong motivational influence (Elaldi & Yerliyurt,

2017). Young students who are just starting to learn a foreign language can benefit from such an event. As a result, individuals will have a favorable intuition towards the language being studied. Young students who need to burn off some energy can also benefit from these types of activities (Sabilah, 2016).

Dramatic play is the cornerstone of the drama globe, which stresses role-play as a technique to better comprehend everyday circumstances (Elaldi & Yerliyurt, 2017). Drama is a strong learning vehicle that helps learners as well as teachers gain insight into the world. Since learning is conveyed in a manner that is entertaining, youngsters themselves are perpetually eager to find new things through music, storytelling, art, and play (Clark, 2009).

Drama exercises also encourage students' creativity and compassion, offering room for growth along with communication (Vitsou et al., 2019). Communication activities and role-play in combination strengthen vocabulary and listening capabilities. The inspiration, esteem for oneself, and self-assurance of learners are nurtured through engaging and meaningful learning situations (Reed et al., 2014). According to Vitsou et al. (2019), "drama provides students with an opportunity to use a variety of modes to communicate, represent and interpret their worlds collectively and individually" (p. 45).

Roleplay is easily adaptable to any class, and with only a few minor adjustments, it may be utilized for various levels (Sabilah, 2016). Students may be instructed to portray either themselves in hypothetical settings or fictitious characters in hypothetical scenarios (Sabilah, 2016). These two hypothetical scenarios may both be used in the classroom as a learning exercise to promote intercultural understanding (Rojas & Villafuerte, 2018). After long, potentially boring lectures, these activities allow students to get up and move while also exposing them to the culture of the language they are learning (Vitsou, 2014).

Instantaneous interaction and conversation are encouraged as students experience true, intense emotions while they learn, yet they are protected from being made fun of personally (Heyward, 2010). Pupils will be empowered to develop encounters in theoretical-real scenarios through immediately engaging exercises (Vitsou, 2014).

Role play gives learners the chance to fully and deeply engage with applying the language themselves. It is considered one of the engaging-based or focused activities that allows students to utilize their chosen language and relate to others for speaking comprehension (Revathy & Ravindran, 2016). This suggests that role-playing exercises have been crucial

as a speaking technique for advancing learners outside of the learning environment for practical use of language (Asriyani et al., 2019).

2.8.2 Puppetry

Puppet theater is a type of dramatic art in education and a useful pedagogical tool because it fosters interactive and varied education by being complemented by mystery, comedy, friendliness, originality, and imagination (Vitsou, 2016). Puppet theater may be used as a teaching technique to help pupils express their emotions, spark their imaginations, and overcome racial, cultural, religious, language, or social barriers (Vitsou, 2016).

Puppets might be quite helpful, especially for young children in primary school. These prevent those who take part from acting inappropriately or embarrassing themselves in front of their fellow students as it is obvious that the depicted characters, rather than those who participate, are in charge of what is said or done (Sabilah, 2016). It is frequently possible to portray social norms and latent cultural values using puppets (Toledo & Hoit, 2016). Children's imaginations can be stimulated, their feelings and views may be generated and participation is encouraged (Vitsou, 2016).

Because puppetry engages the senses that we use to experience the world—sight, touch, and hearing—it may be a tool for experiential learning (Romer & Tzuriel, 2015). Through the creation of real-world communication scenarios, the puppet theater facilitates language acquisition and comprehension (Dolci & Eleta, 2022).

Without a real theater stage or script, puppets may also be employed in educational settings. For instance, an educator can ask students questions and have conversations with them using a puppet (Kröger, & Nupponen, 2019). When pupils respond to inquiries and engage in conversation, a puppet may also be a useful tool for confirming their comprehension (Remer & Tzuriel, 2015).

Puppet theater is a method that, according to Bravo and Cisterna (2020), helps foreign language learners acquire the language they want more quickly and effectively. The results are positive, showing that the student learns not only more quickly but also more successfully when given the chance to associate movements with words or phrases that are

important to them, to play roles, and, generally, to be in a state of creativity rather than memorization (Ahmadi & Mohamadi, 2017).

A puppet in the classroom is stimulating and empowering learning drive, it can make the instructional process more pleasant and the curriculum can be improved (Montaño & Salgado, 2021). The motivating factors of puppetry include humor and the utopian aspect, which are closely tied to imagination and the weird. Speaking is a crucial ability for learning a second or foreign language, yet many students find it difficult to participate in oral classroom activities because of their poor language comprehension (Ahmadi & Mohamadi, 2017). Children naturally pick up new skills via play, and when they are preoccupied with the puppets, they may not even be aware that they are learning a foreign language (Bravo & Cisterna, 2020). Since observational mistakes and their deliberate correction are crucial for language development, word play may be quite beneficial. The normal progression to the second/foreign language starts with the mother tongue (Dolci & Eleta, 2022).

2.8.3 Songs

Songs are very beneficial for intercultural learning. Because of the way songs are structured, cultural slivers have been formalized. Songs and dances can assist students in understanding various cultures and traditions (Sabilah, 2016). As a result, empathy for both local and other cultures is developed.

Music may inspire students in the classroom and the songs encourage pupils to participate actively in learning activities (Lihn et al., 2020). In order to achieve a state of intense attention and focus where a lot of subject matter knowledge can be digested and learnt, music strengthens mental, bodily, and emotional patterns. When instructors and students use song during lessons regularly, it may be a fantastic approach for them to succeed with English language learners (Kumar et al., 2022). According to studies, music enhances memory, focus, makes learning English entertaining, relieves stress, strengthens a group's feeling of community, and boosts motivation (Engh, 2013; Khaghaninejad & Fahandejsaadi, 2016). Learners should be conversant with the song's language and have been exposed to it repeatedly in order to achieve the greatest results (Kumar et al., 2022).

3. Methodology

3.1 Research goals

The purpose of the research was to understand more about the factors influencing the motivation and interest of Roma students in learning English. The particular objectives of this study were to:

Evaluate the use of content and identity in the teaching of English to Roma students.

Examine the effects of creative activities, such as role-playing, music, and puppets, on the interest of young Roma pupils in learning English.

3.2 Research questions

The subject matter of what we want to know informs the scope of the investigation. As a researcher, I'm interested in knowing whether using some creative activities might increase the enthusiasm and involvement of Roma students in their English-language studies. The research question is:

- How can creative techniques impact the motivation and engagement of young Roma pupils in learning English?
- Can the utilization of content-identity of Roma culture have an impact on English learning?
- How does the usage of the Romani language affect English teaching?

3.3 Research method

3.3.1 Qualitative approach

The focus of qualitative research fields is on discovering and comprehending the significance that people assign to social or human problems (Creswell, 2014). The research process includes a collection of questions pertinent to the issue under investigation, data generally obtained in the participant's environment, analyzing the data from specific to broad concepts, and ultimately data interpretation (Creswell, 2014).

Exploring, analyzing, and characterizing human behaviors and individuals in their natural surroundings are the main goals of qualitative researchers. Concepts relating to relationships and power dynamics between investigators and the study participants are fundamental to qualitative research. The participants' desire to communicate with themselves while conveying what they've experienced is crucial to the process (Orb et al., 2001). The researcher's job is to create, express, and evaluate meaning from the variety of methodological techniques used during social science field. Skills that prompt reflection are necessary, and practices must fit in particular, complicated contexts (Denzin & Lincoln, 2017).

3.3.2 Philosophy Worldview

My thesis's worldview is the transformative one, since it highlights the necessity of understanding and confronting the systematic marginalization and prejudice that Roma communities endure, and it strives to challenge and transform these structures through education (Creswell, 2011). The goal of participatory and collaborative action research is to empower Roma students to become change agents in their communities. The transformational worldview acknowledges education's significance as a social transformation tool and argues for a critical evaluation of power dynamics in the research process and in society as a whole (Creswell, 2011).

3.3.3 Action research

Considering it allows the investigator to concentrate on a social condition in order to improve it, action research was chosen as the best approach to address the challenges raised above (Elliot, 1991). The researcher has the ability to maintain a dual role as both the procedure's educator and investigator (Katsarou & Tsafos, 2003). Those who participate in an action research take an active role and engage in phases of reflective thinking in order to comprehend social contexts and behaviors in request to transform the world and achieve justice (Clark et al., 2020), while simultaneously improving their self-competencies by means of teamwork (Coughlan, & Coughlan, 2016). Their choices will have an impact on more than just the process.

In the end, their choices will increase their sense of autonomy (Cohen et al., 2007), both individually and in terms of their educational attainment (Efron & Ravid, 2019).

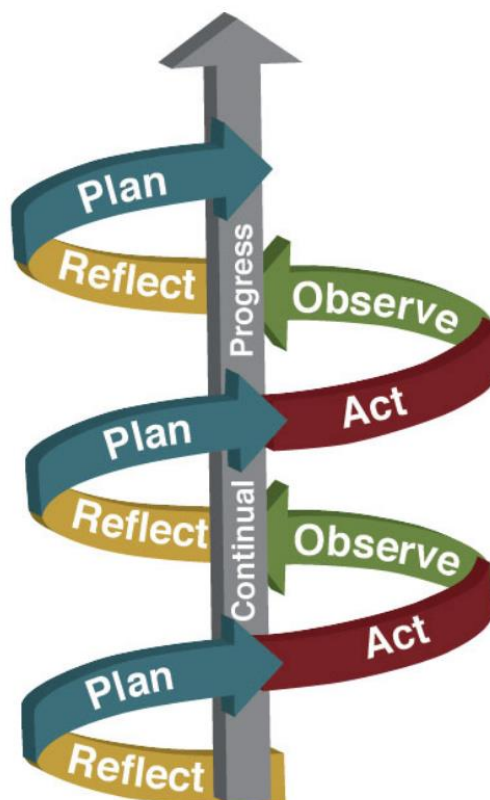


Figure 1 (<https://extensionaus.com.au/extension-practice/action-research/>)

The steps in an action research method (Figure 1) are the following: a) choosing a topic for study, followed by declaring an assumption; b) gathering information to allow for the creation and application of strategies; and c) making inferences that will ultimately confirm or refute the initial theory (Katsarou & Tsafos, 2003). The spiral above provides a graphic representation of this process. There are several cycles here that are essentially repeating. When attempting to initiate a new cycle with the necessary changes, the investigator goes through an ongoing procedure of identifying the issues, developing plans of action to solve them, implementing the plans, and lastly assessing the entire process (Katsarou & Tsafos, 2003). All of the people involved in the procedure interact with and evaluate the data throughout the reflection phase (Glesne, 2016). Each cycle tries to enhance the procedure as a whole by considering all of the techniques used to bring about transformation and assess their effectiveness (Jacobs, 2016).

There are benefits to being both the instructor and the one conducting the study, despite the perception that doing so may require perceiving things from a subjective perspective (Jacobs, 2016). In the first place, because those participating are already familiar with the teacher/researcher and their methods, it is simpler to perform the study in a less threatening setting. Additionally, instructors are given greater freedom to experiment and are in charge of making decisions as opposed to merely carrying out curriculum (Kemmis et al., 2014). They transform into "theory users and generators" (Cochran-Smith, 1994, p. 28). If they have built genuine relationships with those who are involved, they are aware of the effects of their choices and in an advantageous position to talk about the entire process with them (Kemmis et al., 2014).

3.4 Data collection tools

3.4.1 Participant Observation

During the study process in actual circumstances, observations enable the acquisition of useful data (Zainal, 2007). Observation forms were utilized by the researcher to gather data from the students. Lists were used to monitor performance because they made it easy for teachers to report when students had fulfilled their goals (Cameron, 2001). Due to this, the researcher was able to document classroom activities that were then utilized to spark debates among the participants (Karageorgos, 2002). These items primarily concentrated on language usage and involvement. Field notes were also employed to concentrate attention on both the individual descriptions of participants as well as the description of situations (Zainal, 2007).

The ideal technique to examine participant behavior in contextual and an opportunity to learn about the real responses to the choices made at each step of the process are both included in these observations, which also involve seeing how the learners respond throughout the entire procedure (Katsarou & Tsafos, 2003). This also makes it possible for the researcher to observe the individuals' interactions carefully. The researcher spent 16 hours observing the entire process, from the first conversations with those participating to learn about their preferences and needs to the final conversations following the carrying out of the second setting, so as to get around the short period available for conducting the entire research.

3.4.2 Observation diaries

The establishment of a diary has served as among the most important instruments employed since the start of this project. Their production is noteworthy because they are chronologically organized, serving as an overview of the manner in which the present evolves (Allport, 1942). Diaries are moments in time or brief observations of the process. Diaries may contain composites of several types of content, including text and non-textual elements (Plummer, 2001). These details might include narratives of incidents or even more intimate experiences that the traditional techniques of recording could have overlooked (Wheeler & Reis, 1991).

3.4.3 Focus group discussions

Focus group discussions following the intervention are another helpful tool that was employed to help us fully comprehend the study's findings (Hennink, 2013). Discussions in a friendly team setting can encourage expressiveness as routes of communication are established between (Nyumba et al., 2018). Researchers choose the topic according to their study goals, then participants discuss the topic and provide knowledge and researchers summarize the data gathered from the participants. Participants are presented as entities, not as statistics, and results are quick and understandable (Hennink, 2013).

Additionally, while homogeneity and variety are both guaranteed, focus group discussions incorporate elements of information sharing and comparison procedures (Nyumba et al., 2018). The group and its dynamic interactions are highlighted. Additionally, this application will make it simpler to compile information on the team's prior knowledge and whatever lessons they ultimately acquired from the process. The purpose of this group discussion was to explore the students' understanding of the topics and discover which techniques aroused their attention sharing personal experiences (Hennink, 2013).

In the focus group discussion, the mediator's job is to manage the team, coordinate, step in when necessary, and generally support the team's productive operation (Robson, 2007). The mediator must pique interest in the subject matter in accordance with the study objectives without coercing participants to support preexisting views (Robson, 2007).

3.5 Context of the research

This study was conducted at a primary school in the Thessalian region, near the city of Larissa. This city is home to one of the most important Roma villages in the Thessaly region. The school offers ZEP lessons as well as extra courses after school. This was chosen because there is a Roma village just outside of town, and the majority of these children attend this school. There are three other schools that work with the community to send their children there, but this is the largest in town, thus the bulk goes there. This would ensure that there will be enough children to attend the sessions on a regular basis in order to achieve the desired results. The Roma people reside permanently in this area since they work in the surrounding region and have built houses, stores, and cafeterias that function as an entire community. They have incorporated in the local region because they have genuine relationships and friendships with the residents, and they must do so in order to provide their services.

3.6 Participants

Twelve students—nine girls and three boys—participated in the study procedure. They all went to a public school in the Thessalian area, close to the city of Larissa, for the first years of their required primary education. The children speak Greek at school and Romani at home.

The majority of children assist their parents in farming and as street vendors after school, which is what most of them do for a living. As a result, there aren't many options for students to participate in extracurricular activities that improve their language and cultural understanding. The pupils' names are presented in Table 1 by abbreviations due to the confidentiality of personal data.

There are numerous instructors who work in the school's mandatory morning hours, and there are also two teachers who work in the ZEP classes. Additionally, the English instructor visits each class at the school two to three times per week. In order for this to happen, all of the educators engage and cooperate. To fulfill the needs of today's diverse and multicultural society, learners need to enhance their social and civic abilities.

NAME	AGE	GENDER	CLASS
AL.	8 years old	Female	3 rd grade
PAR.	9 years old	Female	4 th grade
AN.	8 years old	Female	3 rd grade
VIV.	8 years old	Female	3 rd grade
MA.	10 years old	Female	5 th grade
KON.	9 years old	Female	4 th grade
DES.	8 years old	Female	3 rd grade
DIM.	10 years old	Female	5 th grade
VAS.	10 years old	Female	5 th grade
TAX.	8 years old	Male	3 rd grade
ANT.	10 years old	Male	5 th grade
GIO.	9 years old	Male	4 th grade

Table 1

3.7 Ethical considerations

The treatment of participants as well as how and why the findings will be utilized constitute ethical considerations while planning and carrying out a research study (Connelly, 2014). Unquestionably, a study that concentrates on kids, particularly kids that fall into a vulnerable category, is a highly delicate matter that the person conducting the study should be mindful of (Bell & Bryman, 2007). Although it developed primarily in medical studies, research ethics are relevant in all contexts of science (Connelly, 2014).

Ethical issues, which include participant security, constitute one of the most important research concepts (Bell & Bryman, 2007). The people taking part were also instructed to respond to questions with pseudonyms in order to maintain their privacy. The data was only

handled by the study's investigator and was erased once the study was over to safeguard the confidentiality of the subjects (Connelly, 2014).

3.8 Design of the action research cycles

Three research cycles were used to construct the action research, and three themes were chosen for each cycle (See Table 2). The selection of themes was influenced by what the pupils liked, desired, and had as mental attributes, as well as by discussion and collaboration with the English instructor. Since the students had finished learning the alphabet with examples of various fruits and vegetables when the first research cycle was constructed, it was a project for that cycle. During this cycle, students were required to use their prior knowledge and cognitive abilities to engage in activities that involved familiarizing themselves with fruit and vegetables. These tasks included an introduction to the subject with flashcards, a group discussion, introducing themselves using fruit and vegetables along with puppet fingers, as well as a vocabulary game, a puppet show using the props for various concepts, and an open market role play. It was observed that the pupils were reluctant to use the puppets to communicate in language and they first formed groups based on their friends. As many of them claimed to accompany their parents to the market or use a car as street vendors, the open market role play piqued their attention because they were quite familiar with the activity. Since some of the pupils' parents sell irons rather than fruit and vegetables, they didn't all have the same experiences at outdoor markets, which necessitated consideration for the following action cycle in order to take into account all of the students' interests and needs. The students' use of translanguaging in all tasks was extremely effective and was carried over to the next cycle.

The second cycle came up as a result of the fact that during the first cycle, several of the colors that were intended for usage in the activities—like green and grey—were mistakenly written in Romani. In this cycle students had to find specific objects in the classroom and pair them with the assigned color during this cycle in order to identify and name various colors. Then, a song was used in which they had to sing and interact while holding up flashcards with the requested color. They also had to name their favorite color and pair various classroom items with it. Finally, they were required to take part in a performance

with fruit and vegetable finger puppets by creating a quick kit and having the other person find which color it was. Some of the pupils misinterpreted the colors for being only for girls or boys and found it difficult to participate in the activities, which was something to consider for the following action cycle. The students were looking forward to the English classes and were excited to undertake an activity with the puppets. The employment of puppets to explain and the use of a color display confined them, made it tough for some of them, and provided food for thought for the following cycle. The students looked to participate with great enthusiasm and intent, as they appeared to make stronger links between the colors they learned and their listening talents and ability to retain the new information. However, some children did not show a willingness to use the English language to participate in the activities and instead started making facial gestures at one another and using unrelated songs to taunt one another. The usage of the Romani language in the classroom was quite favorable.

Moreover, there was a conversation with the English instructor on the subject of the last cycle. Strictly color-based tasks didn't seem to be very enthusiastic about all of the exercises; they appeared uninterested in some of them. As the teacher highlighted the students frequently talk about the animals and pets they have at home, she specifically proposed certain instructional scenarios that relate to animals. Flashcards and a game of acting out the animals and discovering them were employed in the most last cycle. In addition, a collection of adjectives used to characterize animals was introduced, and students were asked to match as many descriptors as they could with the animals. The children then picked animal puppets to showcase and describe each puppet's traits. The last activity was singing along to a song in both English and Romani, making animal sounds thereafter, and playing a game of matching animals. The students believed they had a more structured script to use with the puppets and a more secure, constrained environment in which they felt they could use the target language and respond to the exercises' questions. The guessing exercises in the third cycle seemed to make the pupils smile and have fun. Regardless of their gender or other preferences, it made them all want to join, and none of them objected as happened in the first round. All of the pupils expressed interest in taking part. Their attention was piqued by the engagement of animals in various activities, and they showed a great desire to take part. They showed a willingness to engage in English language activities by wanting to share this knowledge with friends and family after leaving the classroom and school. Because it was more pertinent to their needs and interests and reinforced cultural content that was familiar

to them, the incorporation of real-world aspects with real-world scenarios helped them with their language and communication abilities. Even in the third action cycle, when the students felt comfortable singing the English song with the words that had been given to them in Romani, the advantages of employing the Romani language were clear.

Duration	Activities	Topic
12/03/23	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Warm-up 2. Introduction to fruit and vegetables 	Action research cycle 1
15/03/23	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Practicing 4. Vocabulary 	
16/03/23	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Puppetry time 6. Open market 	
17/03/23	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Assessment worksheet 8. reflection 	
22/03/23	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. introduction 2. color matching 3. color hunt 	Action research cycle 2
23/03/23	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. rainbow song 5. sing altogether 	
27/03/23	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. show time 	
29/03/23	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. assessment 8. reflection 	
25/04/23	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. introduction to animals 2. animals and adjectives 	

		Action Research Cycle 3
26/04/23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3. animal puppets 4. act out show 	
27/04/23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5. animal song 6. assessment 7. reflection 	

Table 2

3.9 Method of data analysis

A technique for assessing qualitative data called thematic analysis involves carefully locating, compiling, and illuminating recurring patterns of meaning (themes). Commonalities with discussed subjects are found through similar experiences and meanings, and sense is produced through these commonalities (Braune & Clarke, 2012). It is a way to describe facts, but it also requires interpretation through the use of codes and themes. The ideas of theme analysis center on social experiences that affect people's lives and disclose socially created meanings as well as knowledge that is gained by experiencing reality (Kiger & Varpio, 2020).

The identified relationships between a certain issue and the research question under investigation are made clear to the researcher by the patterns they have established (Guest et al., 2011). Even if meaning is inferred from the context, the analysis answers the question(s). Thematic analysis offers the chance to more completely concentrate on meaning throughout the entire dataset or just one particular feature of specific phenomena. This method for assessing qualitative data is skimming through a collection of data and searching for patterns in the interpretation of the data to identify themes (Guest et al., 2011). Creating meaning from the information is an active reflexive process where the researcher's personal experience is crucial.

The requirements and interests of the pupils were taken into consideration by the researcher when designing the lesson plans. A teacher of English worked at the educational institution,

so the study's investigator spoke with her about the study and its goals as well as invited her to take part in the assignments. As a result, the English instructor took part in the exercises and monitored the study process while letting the researcher know what she thought was crucial. The English instructor served as a critical friend in accordance with the action research technique (Magos & Panagopoulou, 2008). Particularly, an individual who oversees the execution and advancement of action research is present. The critical friend's job is to make pertinent and helpful remarks about the investigation.

4. Results

4.1 The effect of creative activities (puppetry, role-play, songs) in the engagement and motivation of Roma students in learning English

4.1.1 Puppetry

Concerning the creative techniques in the first cycle of action, it was observed that there was a greater tendency for participation and pupils felt more comfortable to connect words with meanings. In particular, it was observed that in addition to linguistic reinforcement, there was a tendency to strengthen participation in the class by bypassing any obstacles that students may have encountered when trying to use the language to participate in the activities. For example, when the teacher showed them the puppets and described what they had to do in the activity, TAX inquired whether the puppets could say whatever they wanted and if they had to say it in English, demonstrating tremendous eagerness for involvement, as observed from the observation diary. To confirm these claims, there was an exercise in the first action cycle where the pupils had to use the puppets to attempt to explain to others what fruit or vegetable they have (Figure 2 & 3). Then they had to assume they were in the kitchen, cooking, and they had to use language to make dialogues in this context (see Appendix B). The usage of finger puppets aroused the interest of the youngsters who were eager to engage in the whole activities and group exercises, as shown in the following extracts from the interviews.



Figure 2- practicing

“TAX: It was the ideal one with the fingers... VIV: Yes, the one we held in our hands was the most ideal.”

At certain points, it was noticed that the students were hesitant to utilize the language through the puppets, and the teacher's assistance was required to urge them to direct and answer questions. Through observation diaries as well as their own responses in group interviews, it appeared that they used humorous dialogues, as AL said “How can I put you (VAS) in the fridge?”.

“AN: Miss, I liked it when we played kitchen and I told GIO to chop me since I was a tomato...hahaha...”

They were in groups in the beginning based on their friends, but later on they were mixed with students from all the classroom and they used their imagination sufficiently to make up the dialogues in one of scenarios they thought of acting out, which was cooking in the kitchen (see Appendix B). Vas and Tax had a funny dialogue as recorded in the observation notes: “Tax: -Vas you put an apple in the tomato soup, are you sure this is the recipe?” “-Vas: if it is red, it is the same...haha”. In this way, it appeared that they used the language to express their feelings and did not consider that it might embarrass them or not express their point of view properly. But it seemed that what was asked of them required more words in English and sometimes they didn't know what else to say.

In the second cycle, there was a puppet show (see Appendix B) in which the students had to utilize the puppets and make up dialogues based on the colors assigned to them by their instructor by combining the fruits and vegetables studied in the previous unit (Figure 4). Some of the youngsters mistook the colors for being solely for girls or boys and found it difficult to engage in the activities, as seen in the extracts from the interview below and the as shown in the observation diary, when PAR asked DES, "Well, why does the teacher give us the blue color?"; something that was a need to think about for the next action cycle.



Figure 3-practicing



Figure 4- show time

“VA: TAX refused to speak because the pink you gave us says it's for girls, and I was telling him yes, but the lady told us what to do with it.... VIV: miss, and in our group, MA wanted the pink that the other children had, because it's her favorite color, and not the blue because she also said it's for boys.”

Others stated that utilizing the puppets gave them the impression that they were also speaking English and that they were expressing everything in that language.

“AL:as though they are also speaking regularly. Moreover, we communicated a lot in English with the puppets”

The pupils stated that they were eagerly waiting for the English lessons at school to come and they were delighted to do an activity with the puppets. The use of puppets to explain

and the use of a show with colors was something that limited them, made it difficult for them, as seen in the extract below from the interviews. It was food for thought for the next cycle as it was not what would have excited their imagination and gotten them involved in the activities, as seen also from the observation diary where DIM said that “this is red and round” but she didn't know what else to add to it and she stuck.

“AN: ...she did not want to participate and sat on the chair”

This changed in the third cycle, when the pupils felt they had a more ordered script to use with the puppets and a safer, more confined context in which they felt they were able to use the target language and answer the questions in the exercises. The students were no longer required to go on a puppet show in this third cycle exercise (see Appendix B), but instead used puppets to discuss the characteristics and color of the animal they picked (Figure 5).



Figure 5- animal puppets

4.1.2 Role-Play

There was also a role play in the first cycle (see Appendix B) in which the students, after being divided into groups, had to pretend to be in an open market (Figure 6) and do these dialogues in such a way that they understood the real world better and related the target

language they learned to fruit and vegetables with real conversations. This is supported by one student's opinion, as seen below in the group interview, who loved performing this exercise so much that when he gets home, he wanted to tell his family that from now on, while he is at work, he would speak with this vocabulary.



Figure 6-open market



Figure 7- open market

“ANT: I'll go home and tell my father this is how I'm going to talk from now on.”

It is worth emphasizing that, according to the observation diary, the students actively engaged in the activities (Figure 7) and utilized the target language to finish the exercise with great eagerness and enthusiasm in this specific activity. However, based on observation, when invited to form groups, they first elected to join the three males together and all the girls individually, with Gio saying, "I want to be with my mates, because we play

together all the time" and An saying, "I want us to be only girls, because you don't know English well." Instead of thinking about how to say the dialogues in English, they thought about how to be with those who want to be in the same group.

So, throughout the third cycle there was also a role-playing assignment in which the pupils were instructed to describe the qualities of an animal (see Appendix B). Following the students' responses participants stated that the flashcards provided in a prior exercise regarding learning new words were quite helpful (Figure 8).



Figure 8- animals and adjectives

"GIO: We understood how to tell each other since you had given us the animals and the cards with the adjectives previously, for example, if it was thin or big."

Furthermore, the students showed eagerness for things they did not know about actual life until they learned about facts about animals, as seen from the group interview. Also as seen from the observation diary Kon said to Ma "this picture is not chicken is a rooster, it's not the same".

"DIM: I loved that we learnt how to call these animals in English since I didn't know what their names were and wanted to use them but didn't know how they were called. I also assumed that the sheep and goat was the same animal"

Moreover, the students appeared to chuckle and enjoy one of the third cycle's guessing activities, in which they had to utilize gestures, motions, and sound to help the other class guess the animal (Figure 9 & 10). It made them all want to participate, and none of them resisted, despite their gender or any other preferences as happened in the first cycle, as seen

in the group interview below and in the observation diary where Al told “can we play it again?”.

“TAX: It was quite funny, miss, when you were presenting us different animals... VAS: and when we performed the animals, I also laughed a lot.”



Figure 9 -guessing activity



Figure 10- guessing activity

4.1.3 Songs

During the second cycle, there was a song activity (Figure 11) in which the pupils were allocated a color and had to pick up their card when the song mentioned their color (Figure 12) (see Appendix B). There, the learners appeared to participate with great excitement and intent, as they appeared to create greater connections between the colors they learnt and their listening abilities and capacity to recall the new knowledge. Some of them found it a bit childish and didn't show much enthusiasm as recorded in the observation diary where TAX and VIV said “-This song is entertaining since the colors appear on the board. -Yes, but only for small children.”



Figure 11-sing altogether



Figure 12-sing altogether

"TAX: I liked that we raised our hands with the colors, although at first I didn't have time to raise my color."

The positive outcomes of this activity prompted the development of a similar activity in the third activity cycle, in which the pupils had to engage in a song with a comparable title and lyrics in Greek. There, the students recognized the music that inspired them to join (Figure 13). They were clearly interested in how this translates into English, as seen in the group interview.



Figure 13-animal song

“VAS: I had heard this song in the past, I just knew it in Greek”

It also aided their capacity to identify words that sounded similar and puzzled them when listening to the music.

“PAR: After that, I heard how the words were in English better because I wasn't sure earlier and had mixed up two animals.”

According to the observation diaries, the activities related to the song appeared to enhance language learning because all of the students were interested and wanted to participate, as recorded in the observation notes where AN said “If there are songs, we will be the first to join”. Furthermore, they improved their pronunciation of the words by listening to actual material, and via the songs, they realized that there are distinctions, such as the goose and duck, which had a motivational effect, as seen in the group interview.

"PAR: I called pig "big" when we used the flashcards with the... And then I heard it in the song and I understood...And the goose and the duck I heard they have a different word for each while I thought they were the same"

A lot of concentration was also observed during the activities, and it was also observed that their memory was improved, as when they were later asked about some elements of the songs that they liked or found difficult, they knew how to respond, indicating that their knowledge of the English language was improved.

"TAX: And how do I know these are named duck and goose, Miss?"

4.2 Enhancing the identity of Roma students through the teaching of the English language based on the communicative approach

The production of material based on their cultural heritage has resulted in an improvement in linguistic proficiency as well as the preservation of their traditions and culture. School is a place where they may build their identity and engage in active communication, involvement, and inclusion. For this reason, there was an exercise in the first cycle where the students had to pretend to be in an open market and buy, order, and interact with one another using fruit and vegetables (see Appendix B). This aroused their interest since they are extremely familiar with the action, as several claimed to travel with their parents to the market or utilize a car as street sellers as seen in the interviews below. They also said that now that they know how to speak about vegetables and fruit in English, they would be able to use them in their jobs.

"ANT: we go with my father all the time. I'll go home and tell him and say this is how I'll talk from now on"

"AL: And we go there by car. Miss, we go to many places"

"GIO: Miss do you know how much we sell every time?"

However, according on what the kids told during the activity and based on the observation notes, they didn't all have the same experiences when it came to outdoor markets, because some of the kids' parents sell irons rather than fruit and vegetables, so it wasn't as engaging for these kids, which was a need to think about on the next action cycle in order to include all of the students' interests and needs. More precisely, according to the observation diary

Viv stated "What should I do with the fruit and vegetables? Since my father doesn't sell them."

So, when they had to sing different songs in the second cycle, the kids seemed to get really excited. This reminded them of everyday activities and happenings in their community, and they appeared especially pleased to engage with great passion and mobility in what was requested, as seen in the interviews below.

"DIM: ... I enjoy singing and dancing."

"GIO: Me too, you have to check our dances from now on at home."

"DES: Yes, we have a lot of holidays now, and it's good to listen to songs like these."

The observation notes showed that their enthusiasm was evident from the fact that when they were announced that the next activity would involve the use of a song, it appeared that they dropped what they had been working on at the desk and stood straight up in front of the desk before they were even explained what they should do, as they stated that songs are their favorite. As evident in the observation diary, Kon was encouraging Vas and Ma to give up the exercise they were doing in the notebook and get up because the teacher had stated they would listen to a song afterwards.

However, some youngsters did not demonstrate a willingness to utilize the English language to engage in the activities, and instead began making facial gestures at one other and utilizing unrelated songs to taunt each other, as evidenced by the observation diary. Ant, for example, was purposefully repeating the colors wrong in order to make others laugh. This exercise appeared to be rather monotonous and unrelated to things and occurrences associated with their own culture and cultural heritage.

So, in the third cycle, the involvement of animals in various activities captivated their curiosity, and they demonstrated a strong willingness to participate (see Appendix B). They claimed to have enough animals in their community and surroundings, and it appeared to them to be rather familiar. They desired to impart this information to friends and family after leaving the classroom and school, demonstrating a willingness to participate in English language activities, as noted in the group interviews.

"ANT: We have cows in the land outside our house, and I knew precisely what to say and do."

"AL: My uncle keeps sheep, and I visit him frequently to assist him."

"MA: And we, miss, go out in the open markets and sell chicks. I will bring you whenever you desire."

According to the observations, it appeared that the integration of real-world elements with real world scenarios aided them with their language skills and communication skills because it was more relevant to their needs and interests, reinforcing cultural content that was more familiar to them. This was also evident from the conversation with the teacher who urged that a song with animals would be more relevant and familiar to them, but also from the observation diary and some conversations of the children. Des, for example, stated that she and her classmates will speak in English to the animals they have at home, while Al said that she will teach her parents to say them in English from now on, and Gio mentioned that he wants to learn the title of the song so that he can listen to it and sing it at home.

4.3 Use of Romani language in teaching English to Roma students

Using the Romani language and saying the fruit and vegetables sometimes in Romani helped them participate all at the same time but also translated the words that they did not remember in English, serving as a bridge for the completion of the task during the first cycle activity where the pupils had to do a role play going to an open market, as seen in the group interview. They also employed translanguaging, especially in group exercises to provide meaning to these specific tasks, as recorded from the observation diary as many kids used both languages to tell the same things in all group activities.

"PAR: I, miss, didn't know what red apple and yellow were called in that English you speak, and KON continued confusing me until I told her in Romani, and she handed them to me."

However, there were some difficulties where the students did not understand that they had to use the target language, English, and said everything in Romani, as noted in the observation diary where Al was talking only in Romani and the instructor could not understand anything in order to help her; their classmates assisted them with the help of the teacher and strengthened their participation in the English language as far as they could, as seen in the group interview.

"VAS: yes, but you didn't say everything in English... you said it in ours too "

"TAX: Miss, something else happened to me; at first, I was saying everything the way we say it, but MA poked me and said, "How do we say apple?" Not «παμπάι», the other one. Then I said it."

Furthermore, at the end of the first cycle, the students were required to create a poster with the fruit and vegetables (see Appendix B) they had learnt by putting their names on it, using both English and Romani to record the fruits and vegetables (Figure 14). This delighted them because they thought that by utilizing their language, they were acknowledged in the classroom and that if they forgot something, they could return to this poster to see what they didn't remember in English, as they stated in the group interview.



Figure 14- fruit and vegetable poster

"VIV: Yes, miss, let me tell you, I didn't know we knew so much and whenever I forget something, I'll look at how we wrote it and say it."

According to the observation diary, there was a lot of energy from the students and a desire to participate in the activities because they felt there was no exclusion from people who did not feel comfortable with the language, and it helped their emotional well-being because they felt that even the shy pupils or those who were not comfortable using the target language could participate in their own way. This was especially evident in the observation notes, when VIV asked AI in the open market role play task something in Romani and AI

responded in English with "it's 2 euros a kilo", making it fully meaningful. A few minutes after that ANT said to Tax "Can you give me three kilos of «νταραβί», no pomegranate?"

The pupils' positive reaction to the use of the Romani language in the classroom provided an opportunity to continue in the next action cycle, where they had to sing a song and were allowed to use the colors of the song by saying them and in their own language, stating that this helped them remember and understand them more easily, as students mentioned in the group interview.

"VAS: Miss, I liked that we also said them in our own language because then I remembered them more easily."

Even in the role play task, this opportunity of using the Romani existed, and the pupils demonstrated that they were quite confident in this manner, and they were extremely pleased since there was equal involvement in the exercises, as recorded even in the observation diaries and the group interview where Kon told another friend of hers all the colours she learnt in the classroom, telling them in English and explaining them to Romani.

"AL: However, we said a lot of things in English with the puppets and the colors and when someone didn't remember something, the others said it to him either in English or in Romani."

At the end of the cycle, when the pupils created their own rainbows (Figure 15), they utilized the colors in both English and Romani. This was additionally identified in the observation notes, where the students sang the songs during the breaks while describing the words in both languages.

"VIV: miss, did you see that we wrote them at the end in the drawing with the rainbow?"

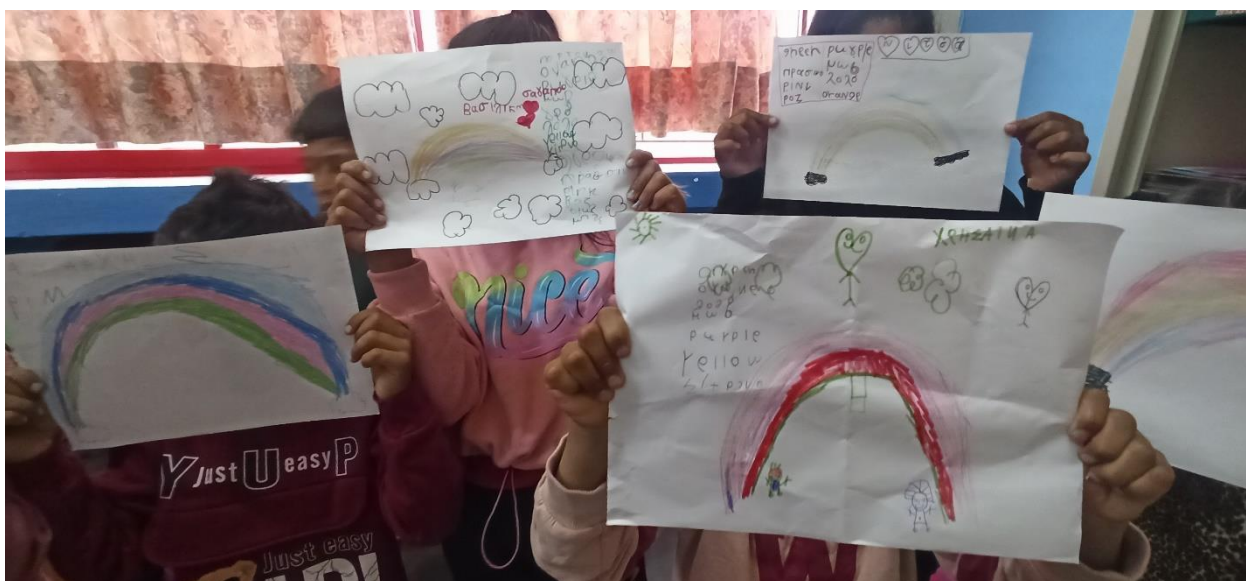


Figure 15- rainbows paintings

The benefits of using the Romani language were evident even in the third action cycle, where the students felt confident singing the lyrics of the English song that was taught to them in Romani. As a result of lowering the pressure they would have felt when forced to use English, they felt more comfortable, as they were understanding the language and remembering what they needed, as mentioned in the interview.

“PAR: And when we said the words in our own language it was very nice. I think after that I heard better how the words were in English because before I wasn't sure”

The beneficial usage of translanguaging was obvious during a conversation between the students and their music teacher, when they told the teacher the song in Romani and in English, demonstrating their enthusiasm as recorded in the observation notes. “Did you know miss that «καγνί» is chicken in English? The English teacher told us... Do you want to tell you the song we learnt? She let us tell this song in Romani!”

5. Discussion

The overall evaluation from the three cycles of the action research confirmed the overall effect of three interconnected aspects, including the use of creative activities to motivate and involve Roma students in learning English, the use of the Romani language as a successful tool for instruction and enhancement in education, and the use of Roma students' cultural characteristics as a communicative approach to address this population in education.

According to the first research question, the use of creative techniques such as puppetry, role play and songs were effective in terms of activating and engaging Roma students in learning English as a foreign language. More specifically, puppetry was proven an effective educational instrument, due to its emphasis on enigma, humor, warmth, inventiveness, and creativity (Bravo & Cisterna, 2020; Vitsou, 2016). This encouraged participatory learning and a wide range of subjects, as observed by the Roma students. In the classroom, students seemed to express their feelings, ignite their imaginations, and break down boundaries, thanks to the puppet fingers (Romer & Tzuriel, 2015; Vitsou, 2016). Moreover, it was proven that the simulated figures, rather than the participants, were in control of everything they said and did, thus protected students who engaged from behaving improperly or humiliating themselves in the presence of other students (Sabilah, 2016). Roma children's engagement was supported by the teacher, creativity was sparked, and their thoughts and opinions could be expressed, based on their responses (Dolci & Eleta, 2022; Vitsou, 2016).

In some activities puppets were used in the learning environment without an actual theatrical set or text. In this way puppets were used by the teacher to converse with children and ask them something (Kröger & Nupponen, 2019). In this case a puppet was a helpful tool for gauging Roma children's comprehension when they answered questions and engaged in dialogues (Remer & Tzuriel, 2015). The findings were encouraging and demonstrated that when given the opportunity to link actions with concepts or terms that were significant to them, played various roles, and, on average, to be in an environment of imaginative thinking rather than memorizing information, the pupil acquired knowledge not solely faster but also more effectively (Ahmadi & Mohamadi, 2017). However due to their poor linguistic understanding, numerous Roma pupils found it challenging to get involved in spoken activities in the classroom (Ahmadi & Mohamadi, 2017).

Furthermore, it was proven that drama in education techniques were beneficial multimodal techniques that assisted learning, according to research (Vitsou et al., 2020). As observed in the activities, role play had the power to develop all language abilities and promote teamwork (Ntelioglou, 2011). As a result, it can be said that theatre tasks promoted both language acquisition and generated a friendly atmosphere where Roma students were able to speak about themselves and hence reducing stress, when using the target language (Vitsou et al., 2020). Drama in education intervened in interactions between individuals and human relationships while promoting active participation in cultural activities (Vitsou, 2019).

Educational theater activities, like participating in an open market simulation, generated comprehension of the occurrence and, as a result, experiential consciousness and knowledge acquisition since it was something direct and fully involved every individual participating (Clark, 2009). Through instantly engaging tasks, Roma students were given the opportunity to create interactions in theoretical-real contexts (Vitsou, 2014). Through stimulating and fulfilling learning environments, learners' inspiration, self-esteem, and confidence were fostered (Reed et al., 2014). While learning, pupils were given the opportunity to engage in immediate engagement and discourse whilst being shielded away from personally mocked (Heyward, 2010). Role play allowed Roma students to fully and thoroughly interact with using the language themselves, as suggested by the aforementioned. As Revathy and Ravindran (2016) note, it constituted one of the engaging-based or targeted activities that enabled pupils to make use of their selected language and connect to other people, such as their parents and friends for speaking ability. This showed that speaking techniques such as role-playing are essential for developing Roma students beyond the classroom for practical application of language (Asriyani et al., 2019). Then, the use of flashcards proved quite helpful and beneficial in the development of the language, because a visual utilized during education can promote communication and understand the world, adopting a range of modes (Cope & Kalantzis, 2013). Utilizing images and other visualizations is one all-inclusive method of introducing another language. As Oxford (1990) asserts, by highlighting new linguistic features, Roma students may connect new information with the mental representation of it.

In addition, songs as well as music served as multimodal resources for instruction while introducing the English language. In example, when it was a need to teach in a language that is unfamiliar, using songs assisted Roma pupils to retain the information whilst simultaneously kept them enthusiastic (Kumar et al., 2022). Furthermore, Lihn et al. (2020) talked on the relevance of songs as learning tools that can be applied in a range of contexts, highlighting the significance of songs in speaking, writing, listening, and reading. As an example, the songs were utilized for practicing word pronunciation, and the song's lyrics were used, to start conversations and improve speaking skills (Lihn et al., 2020).

Roma pupils were inspired by music in the learning environment, and the songs motivated them to actively engage in educational activities (Lihn et al., 2020). It proved to be a great strategy for teachers and students to achieve success with English language (Kumar et al., 2022). As studies have shown (Engh, 2013; Khaghaninejad & Fahandejsaadi, 2016) listening to music improves memory, concentration, makes learning English fun, reduces stress, fosters a sense of community, and increases motivation, as was observed from the students' responses and their interaction in the activities. Finally, as Roma students were familiar with the song's lyrics and have had enough of exposure to it, it proved an ideal way of active participation (Kumar et al., 2022).

The results regarding the second research question showed that the educational materials developed with the intention of highlighting their cultural heritage and engaging with the Roma population, were really beneficial (Council of Europe, 2006). According to Luciak and Liegl (2009), teachers shouldn't ignore important cultural details when instructing Roma students. In other words, as unique educational programs for Roma people have been created, a stimulation in an open market for instance, incorporating Roma perspectives, can focus on the development of the Roma culture and understanding the linguistic and cultural diversity (Karamitsopoulos, 2016).

Teachers must be able and willing to include their Roma students' cultures in their lessons (Fueyo & Bechtol, 1999) and adapt to concepts and criteria to meet the diverse needs of each student (Kantzou et al., 2017). Traditional instructing and learning a second language was reconsidered in accordance with this reality so as to successfully promote the linguistic, cultural, and interpersonal evolution of Roma learners, as shown by the role play activities and the topics of the songs (Fueyo & Bechtol, 1999). The results highlighted the use of

language-related, paralinguistic, and extralinguistic means of communication on behalf of the Roma students in order to enable them to function in everyday situations, giving an emphasis to reasons, expressing themselves verbally, ideas, and acquiring understanding of the form of English (Alachiotis & Karantzia-Stavlioti, 2006).

The instructor was urged to enhance the content of her lessons with instructional resources, in accordance with the preferences and requirements of the Roma pupils (IEP, n.d.). The educational resources were revised to be developed taking into account equally the mother tongue and cultural identities of the Roma pupils (Sella-Mazi, 2016).

Moreover, it was proven that the use of Roma students' cultural features, such as use of songs and the simulation of open markets had a positive effect on their academic success and language proficiency (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2019); Cummins, 2015). The appreciation of the Roma students' cultures and identities fostered the learners' confidence (Skourtou, 2011) and kept learning engaging and relevant for every pupil, with the result to become more involved and motivated (Nisargioti, 2020). More specifically the use of songs served as an educational initiative intended for children from the Roma community and gave emphasis to this unique feature since Roma culture and more comprehensive cultural interactions are mostly oral in character (Skourtou, 2016).

Moreover, employing theater activities, roles and dramatic scenarios depending on cultural background (Vitsou, 2014) were proven one of the most effective aspects for important learning, since theater encourages a group attitude through passionate engagement (Clark, 2009). Moreover, the puppet theater promoted language learning and understanding by modeling everyday life interactions (Dolci & Eleta, 2022). In addition, songs were a great tool for learning about different cultures. Parts of culture have been institutionalized due to the manner in which songs are composed.

Concerning the third research question it is identified that language acquisition is crucial for Roma students' successful integration into educational settings (Kantzou et al., 2017). It was noted that, for these students, studying the national language in addition to a foreign language can frequently be more difficult or even disheartening as Kantzou et al. (2017) stated.

Roma pupils, in comparison, considered it useful to make comparisons with Romani language and they felt comfortable in order to better understand the use and structure of the

English language, serving as a bridge for the fulfillment of the tasks (Cook, 2001). More specifically, it has been shown that intentional usage of Romani language accelerated English language learning by reducing time and facilitating a range of cognitive and social activities (Turnbull, 2018). When it came to cognition, using L1 improved the learning of L2 vocabulary and L2 grammar (Demir, 2012; Liu, 2008) when it came to social interaction, it encouraged social collaboration and helped Roma learners. Students' personal biases were reduced when the L2 and the learning environment were made intelligible, feeling less shy (Bhooth et al., 2014).

According to Hornberger (2014), the most crucial elements of delivering guidance in multicultural and multilingual learning environments include recognizing minority languages and creating an atmosphere of acceptance for the students' language capabilities through pair tasks in multiple languages, language mixing, linguistic understanding tasks, etc. The enjoyment and academic performance of Roma learners were positively impacted by taking into account their linguistic and cultural traits, especially when it came to the language of instruction (Cummins, 2015; European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2019). This is in line with Garcia's (2009) translanguaging terms of theory, which emphasizes bilingual students' adaptable language use and covers "the entire spectrum of linguistic outcomes of multilingual users" (Wei, 2011, p. 1224). Based on the use of translanguaging as a teaching strategy, the objective was to enhance Roma student learning by utilizing all of the students' available languages rather than ignoring the knowledge Roma students have (Cenoz & Gorter, 2020). Their use of their mother tongue shaped how they are viewed and positively affected their sense of self-worth (Papadopoulou, 2009, p. 160) and encouraged confidence in Roma students. However, the instructor warned against overusing Romani, since it has the potential to be a valuable resource if used intentionally, at the appropriate times, and in the appropriate places, reducing the use of English language (Atkinson, 1993).

6. Research credibility and trustworthiness

Research credibility refers to the disclosure of the veracity of the data or opinions of the respondents and the investigator's evaluation of them, which results in the validation of the study findings. Credibility is a topic of conversation when typical human experiences are acknowledged in the action research (Cope, 2014). It is crucial to employ a variety of techniques and resources with the goal to make conclusions and have a complete picture of the phenomena under study in order to increase trustworthiness and reliability. For instance, during the process, interviews, observation notes, and observation diaries are possible to be employed (Cope, 2014).

Additionally, to increase trustworthiness, statements from those who participated might provide a critical analysis of the research and support the findings (Cope, 2014). Focus group discussions, participant observation, and observation diaries were employed in this study to increase the reliability and credibility of the results. Through their responses, the people who participated presented a critical view of the procedure and emphasized the need of outcome confirmation.

7. Limitations and further research

Due to the constraints and allotted school time, the length of the plan is regarded as being restricted. A maximum of twelve Roma students who live in a small region in Larissa, Greece, are the subject of this research. The number of students is insufficient and no other researcher was present to assess the results. The short implementation period for the present study represented one of its constraints, as was already indicated. Consequently, it is impossible to generalize the results of the particular research since they only relate to the particular set of students. If additional educational institutions with mixed student populations of Roma and non-Roma learners had been part of this study, it could have produced more favorable and conclusive findings. The study may have taken into account the parents' viewpoints.

The results of the particular study might serve as the foundation for longer studies that incorporate the opinions of the parents. If there is support for studying foreign languages other than Greek in schools, this inquiry may concentrate on that, or it might even look into the potential of learning Romani. A larger-scale study would produce additional information that would increase instructors' understanding of these requirements and help them embrace the techniques they need.

8. Conclusion

The major objective of this study was to investigate the effects of creative activities on Roma pupils' motivation, engagement, and usage of the Romani language, as well as the use of content and identity in a primary school. This study followed the principles of action research, which uses ongoing reflection and review to improve knowledge about the context and effect changes. In an attempt to elaborate on these requirements and the challenges they encounter and to reinvest in the students' identities in order to promote their self-determination, issues like incentive and active involvement were extensively studied.

According to data analysis, Roma students are at ease and ready to participate in puppetry because they believe it helps them overcome language barriers by connecting words with their meanings and providing linguistic reinforcement. Additionally, puppets piqued their curiosity and increased participation since they encouraged creativity, fun, and erased any feelings of embarrassment. Additionally, via role-playing exercises, Roma students gained a deeper understanding of the real world and connected the target language with actual dialogues, with full participation from all students. Additionally, using songs gave students the ability to retain new information, motivate them to participate in the activities since they were familiar to them, improve pronunciation, and accelerate language acquisition. The real content utilized aided in concentration, memory improvement, and knowledge growth.

Additionally, it was shown that using their cultural heritage enhanced both their verbal competence and culture and tradition preservation. Roma pupils develop their identities at school and engage in active communication while demonstrating their engagement, inclusivity, and piqued curiosity. The students learn to utilize language in real life depending on their needs and interests since they are familiar with everyday happenings. By appealing to their cultural qualities and piquing their interest with things from the actual world, it is noted that they can strengthen communication.

Last but not least, the usage of Romani enables participants to interpret terms they can't recall and acts as a bridge for accomplishing the activities. The use of translanguaging to convey meaning is essential because it improves communication, ends exclusion, and makes Roma pupils feel more at ease with the language. This helps even the more reticent children and lessens the pressure to speak English, which in turn increases their enthusiasm.

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Appendix A: Focus group discussions

Focus group discussion of 1st cycle

Δ: Τελειώσαμε λοιπόν την πρώτη ενότητα παιδάκια μου. Πώς σας φάνηκε; Σας άρεσαν αυτά που κάναμε;

ΑΛ: Κυρία ήταν τέλεια, θα ξανακάνουμε και άλλα τέτοια;

ΜΑ: Φανταστικά. Θέλω και άλλα παιχνίδια.

ΔΕΣ: και μένα μ' άρεσαν όλα αυτά που κάναμε.

Δ: Για πείτε μου λοιπόν τι ήταν αυτό που σας άρεσε;

ΤΑΞ: Αυτό με τα δαχτυλάκια, ήταν το πιο τέλειο...

ΒΙΒ: Αυτό που βάζαμε στα χέρια μας.

Δ: τις μαριονέτες που βάλουμε στα χέρια λέτε; Με τα φρούτα και τα λαχανικά;

ΑΝΤ: ναι ήταν το πιο τέλειο, πολύ μ' άρεσε που παίζαμε.

Δ: Υπάρχει κάτι άλλο που σας άρεσε;

ΑΝΤ: εμένα μ' άρεσε που κάναμε την λαϊκή, πάμε με τον πατέρα μου συνέχεια. Θα πάω σπίτι και θα του τα πω και θα λέω έτσι θα μιλάω από εδώ και πέρα.

ΑΛ: Και εμείς πάμε με το αμάξι. Κυρία πάμε σε πολλά μέρη. Τέτοια ίδια σαν αυτά εδώ δίνουμε (δείχνει τις ντομάτες, τις πατάτες και τις μπανάνες)

ΓΙΩ: κυρία ξέρετε πόσα πουλάμε κάθε φορά; Είμαι πολύ καλός, έτσι (στα Αγγλικά) θα τα λέω τώρα αν είναι..

ΑΝ: Εμένα μ' άρεσε κυρία που παίζαμε κουζίνα και έλεγα στον ΓΙΩ να με κόψει επειδή ήμουν ντομάτα...χαχαχα...

ΠΑΡ: Εγώ κυρία δεν ήξερα σ' αυτά τα Αγγλικά που λέτε πώς λένε το κόκκινο μήλο και το κίτρινο και η ΚΩΝ με έδινε συνέχεια μπερδεμένα και μετά της τα έλεγα στα Ρομανί και μου τα έδινε.

ΔΕΣ: πάντως το κουκλοθέατρο ήταν τέλειο.

ΒΑΣ: ναι δεν τα έλεγες όμως όλα στα Αγγλικά... τα έλεγες και στη δικιά μας.

ΔΕΣ: ε τι θες να κάνω που να τα θυμάμαι όλα.

Δ: Δεν πειράζει ας τα λέμε και στη Ρομανί αν κάτι δεν θυμόμαστε ίσως να τα ξέρει κάποιος από την ομάδα και να βοηθήσει ο ένας τον άλλον. Έτσι θα μάθω και εγώ καμιά λέξη ε;;;

ΑΝΤ: Ναι κυρία πείτε μας ότι θέλετε...χαχα

Δ: να ρωτήσω τώρα.. υπάρχει κάτι που σας δυσκόλεψε;

ΔΗΜ: εγώ κυρία όταν έλεγα στην ΒΑΣ να με δώσει κάτι green λέει δεν μας έδωσε τέτοιο η κυρία και να την λέω green green δεν το βλέπεις; Μπροστά σου είναι.

ΒΑΣ: ε κυρία εγώ κατάλαβα γκρι. Και να λέω καλά δεν βλέπω δεν υπάρχει γκρι εδώ. Που είδατε κυρία γκρι ντομάτες;

ΤΑΞ: εγώ κυρία έπαθα το άλλο στην αρχή τα έλεγα όλα όπως τα λέμε εμείς και με σκουντάει η ΜΑ και μου λέει βρε το μήλο πώς το λέμε; Όχι παμπάι το άλλο. Και μετά το είπα.

Δ: τι είναι δηλαδή το παμπάι;

ΔΗΜ: το μήλο κυρία.

Δ: Ποιο ήταν το αγαπημένο σας φρούτο ή λαχανικό απ' αυτά που κάναμε;

ΔΗΜ: το χαρπουζί κυρία.

ΚΩΝ: ναι κυρία εμείς λέμε μόνο χαρπουζί και στα Αγγλικά είναι τεράστιο.

Δ: θυμάσαι πώς το λέμε;

ΚΩΝ: watermelon. Το τρώω πολύ το καλοκαίρι.

Δ: τέλεια μ' αρέσει που μου τα λέτε, όλο γλώσσες μαθαίνουμε εδώ μέσα. Ωραίο ε;

ΜΑ: Ναι κυρία τα γράψαμε όλα και στο χαρτόνι

ΑΛ: ναι βάλαμε ότι μπορούσαμε να τα βλέπετε.

Δ: σας άρεσε που συνεργαστήκατε όλοι μαζί για την αφίσα που κάναμε στο τέλος με το χαρτόνι;

ΒΙΒ: Ναι κυρία να σας πω δεν ήξερα ότι ξέραμε τόσα πολλά και όποτε ξεχνάω κάτι θα το κοιτάω πώς το γράψαμε και θα το λέω.

ΑΝ: ναι ναι και εγώ.

Focus group discussion of 2nd cycle

Δ: λοιπόν παιδιά για να μαζευτούμε λίγο όλοι εδώ, μόλις τελειώσαμε και την δεύτερη ενότητα. Πώς σας φάνηκαν όσα κάναμε;

ΚΩΝ: κυρία είστε πολύ καλή

ΑΝ: ναι κυρία παίζουμε τέλεια

ΤΑΞ: πολύ μ' αρέσουν τελικά αυτά τα αγγλικά

Δ: τι σας άρεσε περισσότερο;

ΓΙΩ: εμένα μ' άρεσε όταν μας βάλατε τα χρώματα και έπρεπε να τρέξουμε σε όλη την τάξη να βρούμε τα πράγματα και να τα βάλουμε πάνω στα χρώματα

ΒΙΒ: κυρία γέλασα πολύ ο ΓΙΩ πήγε να μου βγάλει τα χρυσά τα βραχιόλια γιατί τα πέρασε για κίτρινα...χαχα

ΑΛ: η κυρία (των αγγλικών του σχολείου) έλεγε ότι θα κάνουμε χάλια την τάξη αλλά και μένα μ' άρεσε

ΑΝΤ: η ΠΑΡ όμως κυρία δεν σηκώθηκε να ψάξει

Δ: Γιατί ΠΑΡ δεν σηκώθηκες εσύ;

ΠΑΡ: Ε κυρία βαριόμουν σ' αυτό

ΒΙΒ: κυρία, καθόταν με την ΜΑ και έκανα τα μαλλιά τους, τις είδα.

Δ: οκ.. τι άλλο σας άρεσε;

ΜΑ: όταν τραγουδήσαμε ήταν τέλεια..

Δ: το τραγούδι με το ουράνιο τόξο;

ΔΗΜ: ναι... πολύ μ' αρέσει να χορεύω και να τραγουδάω

ΓΙΩ: και μένα κυρία, στο σπίτι να δείτε τι χορούς θα αρχίσουμε να κάνουμε τώρα

ΔΕΣ: ναι κυρία έχουμε πολλές γιορτές τώρα, τέτοια τραγούδια να μας βάζετε είναι ωραία.

ΤΑΞ: εμένα μ' άρεσε που σηκώναμε τα χέρια με τα χρώματα αν και στην αρχή δεν προλάβαινα να σηκώσω το χρώμα μου.

ΒΑΣ: κυρία εμένα μ' άρεσε που τα λέγαμε και στην δικιά μας γλώσσα γιατί μετά τα θυμόμουν πιο εύκολα.

Δ: υπάρχει κάτι που δεν σας άρεσε τόσο; Ή που σας δυσκόλεψε;

ΒΑΣ: κυρία όταν μας χωρίσατε σε ομάδες και μας βάλατε από ένα χρώμα να κάνουμε με τις μαριονέτες ο ΤΑΞ δεν ήθελε να μιλήσει γιατί το ρόζ που μας βάλατε λέει είναι για κορίτσια και εγώ του έλεγα ναι αλλά η κυρία μας είπε να κάνουμε με αυτό

BIB: κυρία και στη δικιά μας ομάδα η ΜΑ ήθελε το ροζ που είχαν τα άλλα παιδιά γιατί λέει είναι το αγαπημένο της χρώμα και όχι το μπλέ γιατί είπε και αυτή ότι είναι για αγόρια αυτό.

AN: ναι κυρία πόση ώρα μαλώναμε και μετά δεν ήθελε να συμμετέχει και έκατσε στην καρέκλα.

ΓΙΩ: εμένα κυρία πάντως μ' άρεσε που παίξαμε πάλι με τις μαριονέτες. Θα μας φέρετε και άλλη φορά;

ΑΛ: ναι είναι τέλειο σαν να μιλάνε κανονικά και αυτά. Πάντως εμείς είπαμε πολλά πράγματα στα αγγλικά με τις μαριονέτες και τα χρώματα και όταν δεν θυμόταν κάτι κάποιος τα λέγαμε οι άλλοι σε αυτόν είτε στα αγγλικά είτε στα Ρομανί.

Δ: μου λέτε λοιπόν κανένα χρώμα πώς το λέτε στα ρομανί;

ANT: το λολό είναι το red

ΔΗΜ: Το κίτρινο είναι το σαρύ

BIB: κυρία τα είδατε που τα γράψαμε στο τέλος και στην ζωγραφιά με το ουράνιο τόξο;

Δ: ναι ναι τα είδα τέλεια είστε πολύ καλοί μπράβο σας.

Focus group discussion of 3rd cycle

Δ: μόλις τελειώσαμε και την τρίτη μας ενότητα που είχε σχέση με τα ζώακια. Πώς σας φάνηκε; Για πείτε μου.

ΒΑΣ: νομίζω κυρία μου άρεσε πιο πολύ απ' όλα

ΤΑΞ: και εγώ πέρασα πολύ ωραία και γέλασα πολύ

Δ: με τι γέλασες ΤΑΞ;

ΤΑΞ: κυρία όταν μας κάνατε εσείς διάφορα ζώα ήταν πολύ αστείο

ΒΑΣ: και όταν κάναμε και εμείς τα ζώα γέλασα και εγώ πολύ

ΔΗΜ: εγώ κυρία έχω μια απορία καλά που τα βρήκατε τόσα ζώα σε μαριονέτες και μας τα φέρατε;

Δ: ελπίζω τουλάχιστον να το διασκεδάσατε.. όταν έπρεπε να πείτε τα χαρακτηριστικά του κάθε ζώου σας φάνηκε δύσκολο; ξέρατε πώς να το πείτε;

ΓΙΩ: επειδή μας είχατε δώσει τα ζώα και τις καρτέλες με τα επίθετα πιο πριν για παράδειγμα αν είναι λεπτό ή μεγάλο, ξέραμε να τα πούμε, εμάς δεν μας δυσκόλεψε.

ΔΗΜ: εμένα μ' άρεσε που μάθαμε να τα λέμε στα αγγλικά αυτά τα ζώα γιατί δεν τα ήξερα όλα και ήθελα να τα πω και δεν ήξερα πώς λέγονται. Επίσης νόμιζα ότι το πρόβατο και το κατσίκι ήταν το ίδιο ζώο

ΑΝ: καλά πας καλά; Πώς γίνεται να μην τα έχεις δει;

ΔΗΜ: πού να ξέρω; Εμείς πάμε μόνο στην λαϊκή δεν έχουμε ζώα

ΑΝΤ: εμείς κυρία έχουμε αγελάδες στο χωράφι έξω από το σπίτι και ήξερα ακριβώς και τι πω και τι να κάνω.

ΑΛ: εμείς κυρία έχει ο θείος μου πρόβατα και πάω και τον βλέπω πολλές φορές και βοηθάω.

ΜΑ: και εμείς κυρία πάμε στις λαϊκές και πουλάμε κότες. Αν θέλετε καμία φορά νας φέρω.

Δ: χαχα ευχαριστώ ΜΑ μα δεν έχω χώρο να τις βάλω κάπου, αν βρω όμως θα σου πω.

ΚΩΝ: εμένα μ' αρέσει πολύ όμως κάθε φορά που μας φέρνετε μαριονέτες.. μακάρι να κάναμε συνέχεια κάτι με αυτά

Δ: το τραγούδι που σας έκανα πώς σας φάνηκε;

ΒΑΣ: εγώ το είχα ξανακούσει αυτό το τραγούδι, απλά το ήξερα στα ελληνικά.

ΒΙΒ: και εγώ

ΠΑΡ: και εγώ. Και όταν λέγαμε τα λόγια στη δικιά μας γλώσσα ήταν πολύ ωραία. Νομίζω μετά από αυτό άκουγα καλύτερα πώς ήταν οι λέξεις στα αγγλικά γιατί ποιο πριν δεν ήμουν σίγουρη και είχα μπερδέψει δυο ζώα, νόμιζα ήταν τα ίδια.

Δ: Ποια ήταν αυτά;

ΠΑΡ: το pig το έλεγα big όταν κάναμε τις καρτέλες με τα επίθετα και να λέω καλά όλα το ίδιο λέγονται; Και μετά το άκουσα στο τραγούδι και κατάλαβα. Και για την πάπια με τον χήνα άκουσα ότι έχουν άλλη λέξη για το καθένα ενώ εγώ νόμιζα ότι ήταν το ίδιο.

ΤΑΞ: και εγώ κυρία που να ξέρω ότι λέγονται duck και goose αυτά;

ΑΛ: εγώ κυρία όταν φύγουμε σήμερα από εδώ θα πάω να τραγουδήσω στα αδέρφια μου το τραγούδι που είπαμε στα αγγλικά και στην δικιά μας (Ρομανί) να δω αν θα το καταλάβουν.

Να το ξανακάνουμε και άλλη φορά;

ΒΑΣ: ναι και εγώ θέλω.

Appendix B: Action research cycles

1st cycle

Age: 8-9 years old

Level of English: pre-A1

Lesson Plan 1

Fruit and Vegetables

Aim: To identify different fruits and vegetables and practice basic oral skills through puppetry and role play.

Objective:

- To introduce and familiarize students with different types of vegetables and fruit
- To enhance their vocabulary and communication skills
- To develop their social skills through role play

Materials: Fruit and vegetable finger puppets, flashcards with pictures of fruits and vegetables, a small table to set up as a pretend fruit and vegetables stand. Props for role play (e.g. baskets)

Duration: 5 teaching hours

Procedure:

1. **Warm-up** (15 minutes): Create flashcards with pictures of different types of fruit and vegetables on them. Show the cards to the students one at a time and have them repeat the names of the fruit and vegetables.
2. **Introduction to fruit and vegetables** (30 minutes). Use the fruit and vegetable puppets to engage the students in a conversation about vegetables. Ask questions such as "What is your favorite vegetable?" and "Have you ever tried this fruit before?"
3. **Practicing** (30 minutes): Have the students sit in a circle and pass around different fruit and vegetable puppets. Encourage each student to introduce themselves and the fruit they are holding. For example, "Hi, I'm Maria and I have an apple puppet."
4. **Vocabulary** (15 minutes): Play a game: Create a game where students have to match pictures of fruit and vegetables with the names of the fruit and vegetables.
5. **Puppetry time** (45 minutes): Perform a puppet show with the vegetable and fruit puppets. Have the puppets act out different scenarios, such as cooking with

vegetables in the kitchen. After the puppet show, discuss the scenarios with the students and ask them to identify the vegetables used in each one.

6. **Open market** (45 minutes): Provide costumes and props for role-playing activities. Divide the class into groups and assign each group a different vegetable or fruit to role-play. For example, one group can be assigned to act out a scene where they are picking carrots or apples in a garden, while another group acts out a scene where they are making a salad with lettuce and tomatoes. Encourage the students to use the correct vocabulary when acting out their scenarios.
7. **Assessment Worksheet** (30 minutes): have the students stick to a carton paper some fruit and vegetables and write the names both in English and Romani, according to what they want.
8. **Reflection** (15 minutes): Gather the class together and ask them to reflect on what they learned. Ask them questions like, "What was your favorite fruit to play with?" and "Did you learn any new words?"

2nd cycle

Title: Colors

Aim: to learn and recognize the colours using songs and puppetry

Objectives:

- Learners will be competent to recognize and name various colors.
- Learners will be ready to associate various items
- Learners will be equipped to explain how various items differ in terms of color.

Materials:

- Color flashcards
- Fruit and vegetable puppet fingers
- Markers

Procedure: (6 teaching hours)

1. Introduction (45 minutes)

Introduce the vocabulary by showing the color flashcards and having students repeat the colors after you.

Show students a variety of colorful objects and ask them to name the colors they see.

Have students take turns saying their favorite color and why they like it.

2. Color Matching Game (45 minutes)

Have students work in pairs and give each pair a set of color flashcards.

Scatter the colorful objects around the classroom and have students take turns finding objects that match the colors on their flashcards.

Once all objects have been found, have students take turns sharing their findings with the class.

3. Color Hunt (45 minutes)

students work in pairs and give each pair a list of colors to find (e.g. red apple, green notebook, yellow pencil).

Send students around the classroom or school to find objects that match the colors on their list.

Once all objects have been found, students take turns sharing their findings with the class.

4. Rainbow song (15 minutes)

The teacher reads the song 'I can sing a rainbow'.

Then ask students to identify the colors they hear.

5. Sing altogether (30 minutes)

Assign each student a color flashcard and ask to sing along with the teacher raising the flashcards with the color they hear and act it out.

6. Show time (45 minutes)

Show the fruit and vegetables puppet fingers to the students and explain that they will be creating a puppet show

Divide the class into small groups, and assign each group two to three different colors to focus on.

Each group will create a short show, incorporating fruits and vegetables of their assigned color.

After each group has completed their puppet show, have the other students guess which colors they were representing.

7. Assessment (30 minutes)

Ask children to draw a rainbow using different colors and label them

8. Reflection (10 minutes)

Gather the students together for a group discussion about the different colors and fruits and vegetables they learned about during the role play puppet show.

3rd cycle

Theme: Animals

Duration: 6 teaching hours

Objectives:

- To learn the names of common animals in English
- To understand the characteristics and habitats of different animals
- To use creative skills such as puppetry, role play, and songs to express knowledge and understanding

Materials:

- Pictures of different animals
- Animal puppets
- Whiteboard and markers
- 3d animal cards

Procedure:

1. Introduction to Animals (45 minutes)

Begin by introducing the theme of animals. Ask the students to name some animals they know and write them on the whiteboard.

Use pictures of different animals to illustrate the concept of animals and their colours and have them repeat.

Play a game of "Guess the Animal" where you show cards with animals and students act them out while their classmates guess what animal they are.

2. Animals and adjectives (45 minutes)

Introduce adjectives to describe animals (e.g. big, small, furry, slimy, fast, slow).

Show animal picture cards and ask students to describe them using adjectives.

Show pictures of adjectives and encourage students to match the animals to as many adjectives they think they fit.

3. Animal Puppets (45 minutes)

Show them animals finger puppets.

Have the students present the puppets they chose to the class and explain the characteristics and the colours of their animal.

4. Act out (45 minutes)

Divide the class into small groups and assign each group an animal.

Instruct the groups to create a short skit or role play where they act out the characteristics of their assigned animal.

Have each group present their skit to the class.

5. Animal Song (45 minutes)

Introduce the song "Old MacDonald Had a Farm"

After the song finishes, ask them to tell which animals did they hear and see and encourage them to sing along telling the lyrics in English and translate them on Romani singing in both languages.

All children walk around the room making the noise of their favourite animal. When they find another child, who is making the same noise they hold hands with them and continue to walk around and find some more children making the animal noise. In the end ask them to tell what animals did they choose and share it in the class.

6. Assessment: 3d matching task (30 minutes)

Match animals with their name and describe them a little.

7. Reflection (15 minutes)

Gather the students together for a group discussion about the different animals they learned about.

Author's Statement:

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