National and Kapodistrian University of Athens

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MA Programme "Linguistics: Theory and Applications"

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PEAP CURRICULUM:

TEACHERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE PEAP MATERIALS

AND THEIR ADAPTATION TO DISTANCE LEARNING

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Declaration

This submission is my own work. Any quotation from, or description of, the work of others is acknowledged herein by reference to the sources, whether published or unpublished.

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Abstract

English as a foreign language has been introduced in the first and second grade of primary school since 2010, within the framework of the PEAP program by the Greek Ministry of Education in cooperation with the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens and the Research Centre for Language, Teaching, Testing and Assessment (RCeL). Since 2014, when the official studies on the program's implementation and effectiveness paused, there has been no current indication of the PEAP teachers' attitude towards the materials they have been using. The present research aimed at investigating PEAP teachers' attitude towards the materials and their reported use of the materials especially during the lockdown period due to the pandemic. By means of an electronic questionnaire distributed throughout Athens and Peloponnese and two interviews conducted with Educational Work Coordinators, the researcher attempted to monitor teachers' attitudes and opinions of the materials in the constantly changing setting in 2020. Participants were asked to assess the content and implementation of the materials, report students' response to them and suggest future improvements. Their overall response to the materials seemed to be positive, as the majority of teachers reported to use them frequently and receive encouraging feedback from their students. However, their answers also revealed issues regarding the nature and practicality of the materials that warrant further investigation.

Keywords: PEAP, very young learners, materials, teachers' attitude, teachers' suggestions

Περίληψη

Η διδασκαλεία της Αγγλικής ως ξένη γλώσσα έχει ενταχθεί στο σχολικό πρόγραμμα της πρώτης και δευτέρας τάξης του δημοτικού από το 2010, έπειτα από πρωτοβουλία του Υπουργείου Παιδείας σε συνεργασία με το Εθνικό και Καποδιστριακό Πανεπιστήμιο Αθηνών και το Κέντρο Έρευνας για τη Διδασκαλία Ξένων Γλωσσών και την Αξιολόγηση Γλωσσομάθειας. Το ΠΕΑΠ, τα αρχικά του οποίου αντιστοιχούν σε «Πρόγραμμα Εκμάθησης της Αγγλικής στην Πρώιμη Παιδική Ηλικία», δημιουργήθηκε υπό την αιγίδα του έργου «Νέες Πολιτικές Ξενόγλωσσης Εκπαίδευσης στο Σχολείο: Η Εκμάθηση της Αγγλικής σε Πρώιμη Παιδική Ηλικία». Ωστόσο, το 2014 η συλλογή στοιχείων για την εφαρμογή και την αποτελεσματικότητα του προγράμματος ανεστάλθηκε, έχοντας ως αποτέλεσμα την έλλειψη ικανοποιητικών δεδομένων σχετικά με την θέση των καθηγητών ΠΕΑΠ απέναντι στο υλικό που χρησιμοποιούν από το 2014 μέχρι και σήμερα. Η παρούσα διπλωματική έχει ως στόχο την διερεύνηση της άποψης των καθηγητών ως προς το υλικό του ΠΕΑΠ και την καταγραφή της χρήσης του υλικού, ειδικότερα κατά την περίοδο αναστολής των σχολείων λόγω της πανδημίας που έπληξε την χώρα μας. Τα μεθοδολογικά εργαλεία που χρησιμοποιήθηκαν για την εκπόνηση της έρευνας ήταν ένα ηλεκτρονικό ερωτηματολόγιο, το οποίο διατέθηκε στην Αθήνα και την Πελοπόννησο και δυο συνεντεύξεις με Συντονίστριες Εκπαιδευτικού Υλικού. Σκοπός του ερευνητή ήταν η καταγραφή της στάσης των καθηγητών, οι οποίοι κλήθηκαν να τελέσουν το εκπαιδευτικό τους έργο μέσα σε ένα συνεχώς μεταβαλλόμενο πλαίσιο κατά τη χρονιά 2020. Συγκεντρωτικά, τα αποτελέσματα της έρευνας κατέδειξαν μια θετική στάση προς το υλικό του ΠΕΑΠ. Εντούτοις, αποκαλύφθηκαν και ανησυχίες από την πλευρά των καθηγητών ως προς τη φύση και την πρακτικότητα του υλικού, οι οποίες χρήζουν περαιτέρω έρευνας στο μέλλον.

Λέξεις-κλειδιά: ΠΕΑΠ, εκπαιδευτικό υλικό, απόψεις καθηγητών, προτάσεις καθηγητών, πρώιμη παιδική ηλικία

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Chapter 1
Introduction

1.1. Statement of the Problem

Foreign language acquisition occupies a major position in every modern European country, prioritizing language learning as a vital feature of each members' European identity. Within this framework, English has evolved as the global language of communication and information. As knowledge of a foreign language provides a person with the ability to have access to global markets, politics, industries etc., empowering the younger generations with this asset became a crucial issue addressed by the Ministry of Education in each European country. There has been, though, an ongoing debate regarding the appropriate age of starting a foreign or second language. From Lenneberg's "Critical Period Hypothesis" (1967) to Muñoz' (2008) re-examination of the age factor, researchers seemed ambivalent on whether early starters would outperform in the long term those who entered a foreign language later. As Muñoz stresses, multiple factors should be taken into consideration when analyzing the age factor. Differences between the rate of learning, the context, school or naturalistic setting, in which a foreign language is taught, the amount of input a learners receives and the communicative skills required in a native compared to a non-native contexts are all decisive parameters in acquisition (Celaya, 1992). Ortega (2013) highlighted the importance of combining motivation with high quality instruction in the process of achieving successful learning. Therefore, irrespective of the side policy makers adopt, an early start should be associated with intensive exposure, new materials and resources and at home encouragement and practice, in order to consolidate early foreign/second language learning as a prosperous project.

English as the first compulsory foreign language has been introduced in the third grade of primary schools in Greece since 1987 (Alexiou and Mattheoudakis, 2013). In 2010, the Ministry of Education took the initiative to introduce English in the first two grades of primary school. The Research Centre for Language, Teaching, Testing and Assessment (RCeL) of the Department of English Language and Literature of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (NKUA) was responsible for the development of the curriculum and the materials and the training of teachers. The official title of the project is entitled "New Foreign Language Education Policy in Schools: English for Young Learners", comprised of a curriculum and materials specifically designed for students of the first and second grade with an extension for the students of the third grade, which had no curriculum at the time. Additionally, the PEAP project team designed a training program for both experienced and inexperienced teachers in teaching very young learners. Within this project from 2010 until 2014, students of the first two grades of the primary schools participating in the pilot study attended English classes for two hours per week. Since 2014, the PEAP program was implemented in all schools across the country. However, the weekly amount of exposure was reduced to only one hour in 2016. Recently though, the law changed again allocating two hours per week to teaching English (N. 4692/ ΦΕΚ 111 Α'/12-06-2020).

Multiple pilot studies have been conducted during the first year of the program's implementation. In the following years, there have been numerous studies reporting parents' attitudes towards early foreign language instruction (Karavas, 2014), the benefits of the program and the way it was received by teachers and students (Alexiou and Mattheoudakis, 2013, Dendrinos ,2013), teachers' opinions on their training (Farmaki, 2018), evaluation of the PEAP materials (Tsianti, 2013, Γιαννακάκη & Γκέκα, 2014, Γιαννακοπούλου & Κοσοβίτσα, 2014, Ματθαιουδάκη & Αλεξίου, 2013) etc. However, since the project ended in 2014 there have been no official studies investigating the implementation of the curriculum and the use of materials by teachers. Due to the continuous change of the educational policies and the impact of external factors such as the economic and political reforms and the pandemic outbreak, current data must be obtained,

informing us on how the PEAP teachers are handling the given materials both in online and offline classrooms.

The last four months of the academic year 2019-2020 proved to be extremely challenging for the Greek educational system and for the whole country. The pandemic of COVID-19 reached our country in March 2020 resulting in a massive shutdown of almost all public and private institutions and businesses except for the ones that provided essential products and services. The lockdown measures that the Greek government took for the benefit of the citizens put the educational system to the test. However, the pandemic was an issue that all educational systems across the globe had to address carefully. According to UNESCO (2020), 87% of the world's student population was affected by schools' lockdown; a measure implemented by most countries irrespective of their income level (Wajdi et al., 2020). The schools' closure raised vital questions that needed a quick and effective response from each country's Ministry of Education. Could an educational system, strongly built on traditional methodologies and values, transition to a flexible and online alternative? Was the Ministry of Education, teachers and students ready to adapt to distance learning? Were the materials and the resources enough to support such an operation? "School's out, but class's on" (Zhou et al., 2020).

The PEAP project team provided teachers with written and digital materials in order to give them multiple alternatives and supported them in designing their own lessons. A decade after the curriculum was launched for the first time and in the shadow of the distance learning operation during the pandemic, there is a need to investigate teachers' attitudes towards the materials and their implementation, as well as possible difficulties they faced using them. Distance learning has been forcefully introduced into our lives, but it seems that it stands as a beginning of a new era. As a result, there is a strong demand in evaluating the given materials and their adaptation to the new educational needs (Tzifopoulos, 2020).

1.2. Aim of the Research

The aim of the research is to investigate primary school teachers' opinion on the materials used in the PEAP program and gain a deeper understanding of their adaptation to the school curriculum both on-site and online. The objectives of the research are to: a)examine the frequency with which teachers are currently using the materials and whether any issues arising in the teaching process are related to the materials, b)assess whether and in what way they took advantage of the materials during the lockdown period and c)propose amendments or additions to the materials in order to make them more appropriate and useful both for the teaching and learning process.

1.2.Layout of the dissertation

The present dissertation consists of six chapters. In the first two chapters, the reader is guided from introductory information on foreign language acquisition and Greece's current situation, to a more elaborate analysis of the European policies regarding early language learning, setting some countries as an example of similar existing programs. In these sections, there is also a review of the design and implementation of the PEAP program, concentrated on the materials used in the first and second grade. The third and fourth chapter introduce the reader to the research on which this dissertation is based. The information presented in these chapters are the methodological instruments used in the research and the final results. In chapter five, general conclusions and a discussion stemming from the results are highlighted in order to lead us to the final chapter, where the research is summarized, and practical implications of the study are presented along with its limitations.

Chapter 2
Teaching English to Young Learners in Europe and Greece

2.1. Introduction

The following discusses the concept of early EFL learning, presenting the European policies and relative studies. Moreover, it explores the ELLiE longitudinal study, which set the basis for early language teaching in Europe and the practices followed by European countries, which participated in this project. The final part of the chapter focuses on the PEAP curriculum and materials, which are the main topic of this dissertation. The reader will get acquainted with the design and the features of the materials, and hence it will be easier to understand the focus and the results of the present research.

2.2. European language policy and early language learning

Teaching a foreign language from an early age has been in the scope of European education policy makers since the beginning of the millennium. The Barcelona European Council in March 2002 declared the acquisition of two foreign languages from a very early age to be the leading path towards "the mastery of the basic skills". In an effort to cultivate the need for prosperous language policies in all European countries, in 2008 the Council Resolution on a *European strategy for multilingualism* highlighted the importance of lifelong learning. A year later, in the Strategic Framework for European Cooperation in Education and Training (ET' 2020) the strengthening of linguistic competences was set as a requirement for high quality education (European Commission, 2011). In fact, the member states agreed on the following benchmark "by 2020, at least 95 % of children between 4 years old and the age for starting compulsory primary education should participate in early childhood education", a target set to

increase participation in early childhood education and build a foundation for later educational success (The Council of the European Union, 2009).

By 2011, 13 European member states, among which were Croatia, Poland, Spain and Italy, had lowered their start age policies for foreign language learning, mandating in language learning the age of six to seven years of less (Enever, 2011). However, the approaches to specifying language choice vary across Europe. For instance, Poland and Croatia provided a list of some choices, as to which foreign languages should be offered in primary schools, while Spain assigned the responsibility to local authorities and schools. In contrast, Sweden established a new curriculum in 2011 introducing English from grade 1 as a core subject. Foreign language education in primary school had already become the rule across Europe with the participation of early language learners exceeding 78% in 2010 (Education, Audiovisual & Culture Executive Agency, 2012). Countries throughout Europe started adapting their language policies encouraged by the EU agenda. The main aim was to foster multilingualism and multicultural understanding as well as responding to the demands created by the *Agenda for new skills and jobs* (European Commission, 2010), where language skills were identified once again as key competence for life and employment.

The Early Language Learning in Europe (ELLiE) longitudinal and transnational study conducted from 2006 to 2010 opted for the representation of comprehensive data in relation to students' language learning experiences. It covered approximately 1400 children, 200 students per country, aged 7-8 years old in six European countries: England, Spain, Croatia, Netherlands, Italy, Poland and Sweden. The children were followed throughout the three years of the main project, together with their parents, teachers and school principals who participated in research interviews and questionnaires (Enever, 2011). The main aim of this project was to investigate young foreign language learners and their responses in school contexts, where the school curriculum allocated a limited amount of time to foreign languages (Enever and Lopriore, 2014). As Ortega and Iberry-Shea (2005) mention, longitudinal studies may offer information and data otherwise impossible to gather. In this case, researchers took into consideration the rapid changes occurring between these ages and the complexity of monitoring the learners' development over time. The research focus was centered

around three main areas: a) the processes of policy implementation, b) the factors contributing most effectively to the success of early language learning and c) the linguistic and non-linguistic outcomes of early language learning. The teacher's role and the impact of digital media were counted as potentially data-altering parameters and were approached and observed very carefully (Enever and Lopriore, 2014). It should be noted at this point that in the first year of research Croatia participated in EU as an applicant country. This could result in a variation in the way each country conformed with the language policy guidelines published by the Council of Europe in 2001 (Enever, 2012). With this in mind, the research team had to identify common core areas across country systems in order to obtain reliable data and draw valid conclusions.

The space limitations of the present dissertation do not allow for an elaborate account of ELLiE results. However, below I highlight the main findings that offered a better insight into early foreign language learning and inspired future research in the years that followed the completion of the project. In the beginning of the project, learners showed a considerable amount of enthusiasm, with a quarter of them being neutral towards this attempt and very few admitting that they did not like it. In the final year though, the negative reactions became a little more frequent, with the majority being still enthusiastic about foreign language learning (Mihaljevic ́ Djigunovic ́ and Lopriore, 2011). Results also showed that a traditional classroom arrangement facing the teacher or being divided in groups was more desirable than a circle one, as the learners defined learning as a process, which relies heavily on the teacher's input, requiring concentration and order. Furthermore, positive attitudes towards foreign language learning and motivation seemed to be related to higher listening comprehension and higher lexical diversity in oral production.

Among other findings, the ELLiE project verified the following factors as paramount in sustaining a successful foreign language learning system over time: a)there should be careful allocation of foreign language time in the school curriculum, b)continuity of information exchange across school classes and phases about learners' achievement and types of assessment measures may sustain learners' progress in time, c)foreign language materials and resources available should include the use of digital media, d)teachers' in-service training

leads to their professional development and successful use of teaching approaches and finally, e)reinforcement of family-school connections and parental involvement help to maximize out of school exposure to the foreign language (Lopriore and Krikhaar, 2011). Lastly, I could not fail to mention learners' language achievements throughout the study period. Researchers reported that the average ELLiE learner had reached A1 level in their oral and aural skills at the end of the project and that their vocabulary complexity showed significant improvement even from the first years of instruction. In general, learners' level of competence in the three basic skills (reading, listening and speaking) appeared to be developed similarly in the fourth year of instruction (Szpotowicz and Lindgren, 2011). However, for these achievements to be sustainable ELLiE researchers stressed the need for national education systems and policy-makers to make provisions for continuous and manageable learning opportunities, not only within the school context, but also out of it.

2.3. 'Early Bird' projects in Europe

The ELLiE project and the development of many innovative approaches to foreign language teaching and learning inspired many European countries in introducing English from the first grades of primary school. The Dutch government, which participated in the ELLiE study as well, had included early foreign language teaching in its educational agenda since 1998 with only 10 schools providing such programs at that time. However, the number increased rapidly listing 167 schools in 2008 (Goorhuis-Brouwer and de Bot, 2010) and even an estimated 850 primary schools in 2014 offering a foreign language from the first grade to children aged 4 years old. (Unsworth et al., 2014). The starting age is not the only difference though. All learners participating in early EFL programs may had from 15 to 220 min of exposure to English in classroom per week (Persson, 2012). Being a bottom up process with limited governmental regulation, early English education in Netherlands depicted a considerable degree of variation, as students in regular programs attended English classes on average 45 min per week starting from age 10. This could lead to a high deviation among students' proficiency levels.

An additional concern of the Dutch government was that starting English early might be at the expense of the mother tongue development. A 2-year longitudinal study called The Foreign Languages in Primary Schools project (FLIPP) was carried out from 2010 to 2012 to monitor the effects of early start over time and the impact on the development of Dutch (de Bot, 2014). In this study participated 168 children from 14 schools and 26 control children from 3 schools participated. The findings pointed out once again the importance of the mount of input. The time that appeared to be a requirement for the achievement of high scores in English was 120 min or more per week, as children attending classes 60 min per week or lower performed rather poorly. The teacher's proficiency was another significant factor affecting students' results. Not surprisingly, the ideal choice was a native-speaker teacher or even a combination of a native and a nonnative-speaker at C level. Regarding the development of the mother tongue, data showed that the Dutch vocabulary of pupils developed according to age norms, even in children with a non-Dutch language spoken at home (ibid.).

Croatia, another country participating in the ELLiE study, had taken a pioneering decision in 1970s to conduct a research in the field of early foreign language teaching. The Zagreb project of early learning of English in primary schools, launching in 1973, suggested that the optimal age to start foreign language instruction is 8 years old (Vilke, 2013). Almost two decades later, in 1991 a second more extensive project started and lasted for eight years (Djigunović and Vilke, 2000). The project included 352 learners in 12 primary schools in Zagreb, divided in groups smaller than the usual classes with approximately 12-15 pupils per group. The project's main goal was to intensify the language input and encourage learners to cultivate a near native language competence. The most important conclusions drawn from this project were that the optimal age of introducing a foreign language should be lowered to 6 or 7 years old and should be based on fun activities and games. Researchers highlighted that the earlier start in a relaxed and encouraging environment led to a better proficiency in the long run (ibid.). As for the ELLiE study, it seems that Croatian and Dutch pupils together with children from Sweden performed the best in the final year of the project, leading to the conclusion that exposure to the target language through

movies helped researchers predict successfully the development of receptive skills (Lindgren and Muñoz, 2013).

The Croatian Ministry of Education and Science has introduced foreign language learning as a mandatory subject from the first grade of primary school since 2003-2004. The Croatian National Curriculum Framework defined communication in foreign language as a competence needed for lifelong education. The Teaching Curriculum published by the Ministry of Education in 2006 provided a set of guidelines for foreign language instruction. The approach implemented in Croatian primary schools is Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and the time allocated to foreign language teaching is two hours per week in the first cycle, i.e. Grades 1 to 4 (Geli, 2020).

As mentioned above, Sweden is one of the three countries that achieved high scores in the ELLiE project. Sweden seemed to be interested in early foreign language decade since 1995, with a new at that time national curriculum stipulating that English was taught from grade 1,2 or 3 and in some schools from grade 4. The decision about the starting age and the time allocated to English instruction was left at the authority of each school (Sundin, 2000). Since 2011 English is considered a compulsory subject from school year 3, i.e. age 9, although in many schools it is taught from year 1 or earlier (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2011). Out of school instruction in English is rare, but children seem to receive a lot of input from movies, music, games and from the overall increased online activity (Swedish Media Council, 2015). This may be a contributing factor to their high proficiency achievements in international surveys (Nilsson, 2019). The national syllabus provides teachers with general guidelines for school years 1-3 and assessment though grades is not available until grade 6, i.e. 13 years. Additionally, Swedish students are also given the option of the English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) approach, an increasingly popular alternative whereby students are taught school subjects through English (Yoxsimer Paulsrud, 2016). However, government's limited provision of organization and implementation guidelines for the EMI approach leave room for varied interpretation (Toth, 2017).

2.4. The PEAP program

The PEAP program, entitled "New Foreign Language Education Policy in Schools: English for Young Learners", is a two-year course, which was introduced experimentally by the Greek Ministry of Education in 2010-11. Within the context of the new at the time foreign language policy in primary education, English was added as a compulsory subject in the first and second grade of primary school, i.e. to learners age 6-7 years old. As mentioned before, in the beginning the program operated on an experimental basis and was launched in 800 state schools of the country. The General Director of this Project, designed and implemented by the University of Athens, at the Research Centre for Language Teaching Testing and Assessment (RCeL) of the Faculty of English, is Professor Bessie Dendrinos, who collaborated with experts in the field of Early Language Learning from the University of Athens and Thessaloniki, as well as with researchers from Greece and other countries (Dendrinos, 2013). In 2011-12 the program expanded, including 161 more schools. Today, 10 years after its first experimental launch, the PEAP program is operating in all state schools of the country bringing multilingualism closer than ever to the youngest.

The program's acceptance by the public was one of the designers' biggest concerns, as parents, teachers and other stakeholders expressed concerns regarding the age of onset and the effect it could have on learners' native language acquisition. In the midst of a social and political instability caused by the newly implemented economic reforms, the PEAP program managed to evolve into an award-winning innovation (European Language Label award, 2011), involving more than 2000 teachers (Karavas, 2015). Its success derived by the project team's conscious attempts to involve teachers in the curriculum development process and establish efficient communication networks with all stakeholders. As De Lano et al. (1994) mention, being actively involved in all stages of the changes process creates a sense of ownership in the participants and allows them to accept the innovation process through co-operation and common goal accomplishment. However, additionally to contributing to the material development and their evaluation, supporting teachers, also, required a carefully

planned training program and a web-based platform to connect with each other. The website[1] that was created for this purpose is named "PEAP" after the name of the project and includes the curriculum, materials, relevant articles and methodological approaches, advice for teachers and parents, an overview of the PEAP's design and development, relevant announcements and events etc. This electronic gate allows teachers to access not only the materials required for their lessons, but also teaching guidelines on the characteristics of young learners, the most effective approach to teaching young learners, how to make the most out of the proposed materials, a sample of the materials and an extended description of curricular documents of the PEAP junior's course. Additionally, there is a dedicated area to teachers' communication entitled "Teachers' Corner"; an online forum found in the project's website, where teachers can share classroom experiences and practices, express problems they faced and seek solutions and support each other's work with additional activities and advice for teaching young learners. A similar space is available to encourage parents' communication, entitled "Parents' Corner". Parents knowledge on the characteristics of young learners, the aim of the PEAP program and advice on how to work together with their children at home is enriched through easily comprehensible articles, clearly structured advice from the project team and comments made by parents during the second year of the program's implementation.

The core of the PEAP project is deeply rooted in the theory of multiliteracies (Cope and Kalantzis, 2000) and a view of language as social practice (Kress, 1988). It was designed to encourage the development of basic preA1-level language skills that would benefit young learners in interacting socially with others through the target language. In this respect, this two-year course emerged independently from the so far existing EFL program, assuming at the same time the position of a "softer" airway allowing young learners to land in the English world sooner and smoother than in the third grade. Therefore, the PEAP curriculum does not aim at developing learners' ability to express themselves in both oral and written modes, but rather it seeks to cultivate an intercultural awareness in children aged 6-8 years old and further enrich the social literacies

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[1] http://rcel.enl.uoa.gr/peap/

they have already acquired through their mother tongue. It promotes a "learning by doing" approach to language learning and its content takes into consideration learners' social, cognitive, affective and psycho-motor skills (Dendrinos, 2013). In an attempt to sum up the fundamental principles that inspired the design of the curriculum, one could agree to the following:

1). It views pupils as learners with an emerging school literacy in their mother tongue and aims to help them develop in and through English those social literacies that they have already developed in their mother tongue.

2). It makes provisions for differentiated instruction, i.e., its curricular materials have been designed by taking into account the fact that individual pupils have different interests, preferences and learning styles, and that the pupil population of different schools has different types of social experiences and needs.

3). From a language learning point of view, the PEAP curriculum is aimed at developing a pre-A1 level ability to understand and use spoken language" (Dendrinos, 2013 p.8).

The curriculum accompanied by the materials, comprised by a series of pedagogic activities, was designed and developed in an effort to keep the language goals in accordance with the educational goals, broadening the spectrum of the children's learning experiences. By encouraging the use of new technologies in the classroom, students are exposed to a plethora of visual and auditory stimuli, which enables them to understand and produce the English language (PEAP, 2014). The material was developed in three phases. The 1st phase was designing and organizing the content. During the first year of implementation 2010-11 the same material was given to first and second graders as it was their first time learning English. Then, in the 2nd phase the 800 schools participating in the project's experimental stage implemented the material. Throughout this phase, the PEAP project team observed and evaluated the implementation. By the end of that school year, the team collected questionnaires they had already distributed to teachers and was able to revisit the material's weaknesses, according to the target learners' needs (Giannakopoulou & Kosovitsa, 2014).

The material is organized in six cycles, each one corresponding to a specific time unit. Accompanying each activity, there are teachers' resources such as

worksheets and flashcards, linguistic and pedagogic objectives lying behind the design of the activity, a description of its purpose and guidelines instructing teachers through a step-by-step implementation of the activity. All these were initially online and gradually became available for each teacher to use and facilitate the teaching and learning process. An important reminder at this point is that the author team resorted to content drawn by pupils' daily life. Below you will find an example of a cycle borrowed from "THE "PEAP" PROGRAMME: ENGLISH FOR YOUNG LEARNERS IN THE GREEK PRIMARY SCHOOL" (Dendrinos, 2013). The topics of discussion start from the inner circle and gradually expand to the outer as the school year progresses.

Figure 1: Thematic cycles in the PEAP materials
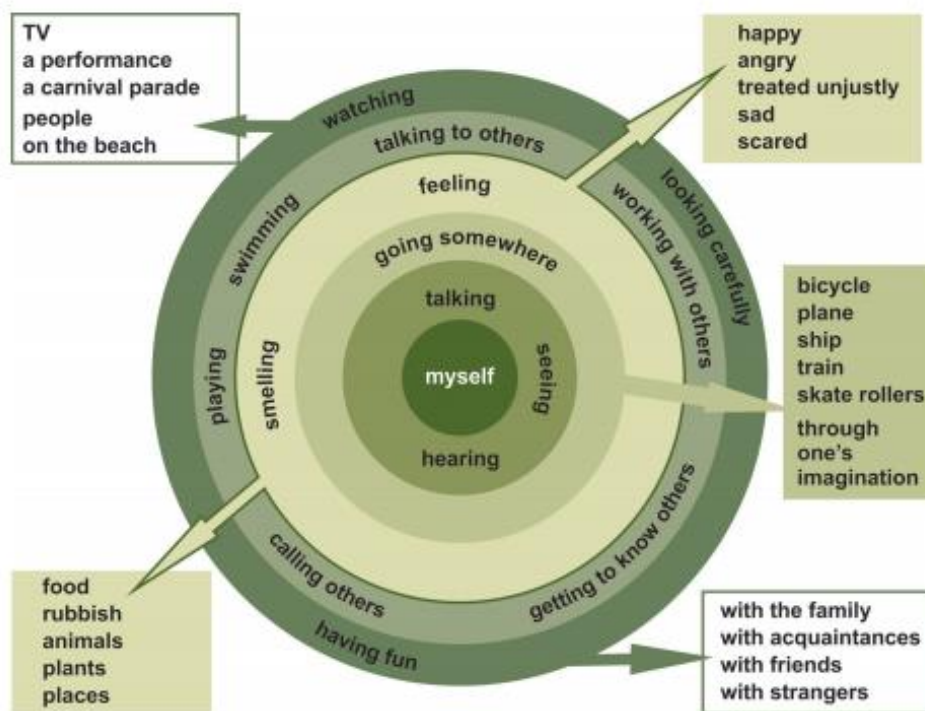
The activities were divided into six cycles for each grade, which form six teaching units. Cycle A represents the introductory unit in each grade, cycles B, C and D correspond to the three terms of the school year and finally cycle E contains material designed for special occasions. In the first grade, cycle A aims

at raising learners' curiosity around English expressions they meet in their daily life, English sounds and classroom language with the help of a custom-made puppet as an English mascot. In the second grade, however, in this first cycle learners revise and recycle skills and knowledge they acquired the previous year. Cycle B of the first grade introduces gradually words beyond oneself, such as animals and things they around them, whereas in the second grade students are actively encouraged to cooperate and interact with one another and not only with their teacher. During cycles C and D, teachers employ stories, fairytales and songs in both grades. Additionally, there also a sixth option which empowers teachers with extra material such as songs, games, labyrinths etc., which can be used as desired in order to assist in reviewing previously acquired knowledge. To seal the end of this fun journey, the author team designed an "end of the school year play" found in the last section, that can be played both with first and second graders.

As mentioned above, in the course of the second school year of implementation the material was evaluated by 70 teachers. To improve the content of the material and perform the necessary changes, the team realized that for pupils aging 6 and 7 years old, the learning process occurs in close connection to their cognitive abilities (Alexiou,2009), which meant that separate steps on how to approach each activity in each grade should have been more explicitly written (Giannakopoulou & Kosovitsa, 2014). At the end of the school year, the University of Thessaloniki closely cooperating with the PEAP team, was asked to assess the material as well. Their detailed comments and suggestions assisted in completing an overall review of the material, leading to the establishment of the PEAP curriculum as we know it today.

2.5. An Overview of the materials

Following the brief representation of the thematic cycles, based on which the materials are divided, we will proceed with the presentation of what is included in the teachers' package. All the pictures appearing below are taken from the PEAP materials for the first and second grade, available in in the website of the

"Digital School"[2] (in Greek *Ψηφιακό Σχολείο*). Through the website teachers are also given access to the audio materials needed for each package.

Both "Alpha English" for the first grade and "Beta English" for the second grade begin with an introduction summarizing the purpose of the materials, outlining the thematic areas covered in each grade and briefly guiding the teacher through the structure of the materials and the teaching approach followed. An additional part to the introduction of the "Beta English" is the detailed reference to the acquisition of writing skills. Teachers are provided with the rationale behind the chosen activities and a proposed way of teaching the materials to achieve the maximum results. In both grades each unit starts with an overview of what is included, namely the content, the language goals, the pedagogical goals, the materials needed, the available worksheets, the suggested online materials, and the proposed teaching hours for the unit. Furthermore, teachers are given a step by step guide in each unit, containing the suggested approach to each activity and any extra materials for the teacher such as flashcards. Figures 2,3 and 4 are an example taken from the first unit of the "Beta English" package.

Figure 2: An overview of the rationale and the main parts of the unit

A1

HELLO, AGAIN!
Γνωριζόμαστε με τους μαθητές μας.

Περιεχόμενο

Τα παιδιά μαθαίνουν να συστήνονται στην αγγλική γλώσσα και να συστήνουν τους φίλους τους. Παίζουν το παιχνίδι της τυφλόμυγας και εξασκούνται σε ερωτήσεις/ απαντήσεις.

Γλωσσικοί στόχοι

• Να χαιρετούν στα Αγγλικά
• Να παρουσιάζουν τον εαυτό τους και τους φίλους τους στα Αγγλικά λέγοντας 'Hello, I'm Mary and this is my friend, George.' και να απαντούν 'Nice to meet you!' όταν γνωρίζουν ένα καινούριο παιδί
• Να ρωτούν 'What's your name?' και να απαντούν 'My name's Mary.'
• Να εξοικειωθούν με τις ερωτήσεις 'Who is it?', 'Is it Maria/ Nikos, etc.?'
• Να απαντούν 'It's Maria/Nikos, etc.' , 'Yes, it is.' και 'No, it isn't.'

Παιδαγωγικοί στόχοι

• Να λειτουργούν ατομικά, σε ζευγάρια και σαν σύνολο και να ακολουθούν μια συγκεκριμένη διαδικασία
• Να ακολουθούν τους κανόνες ενός παιχνιδιού
• Να μάθουν μέσα από τη μίμηση και την επανάληψη
• Να αλλάζουν ρόλους

Υλικά και Μέσα
Υλικά:

• Η μασκότ της τάξης (B_A01_C01-2). Η μασκότ μπορεί να είναι η Μαίρη η αρκουδίτσα ή ένα μικρό λούτρινο αρκουδάκι ή ο Τέρυ. Μπορούμε να χρησιμοποιήσουμε τις εικόνες ή να φτιάξουμε τις μάσκες των μασκότ και να τις χρησιμοποιούμε σε κάθε μάθημα. Η μασκότ μπορεί να έχει το ρόλο του συνεργάτη σε διάφορες δραστηριότητες/παιχνίδια ή του εμψυχωτή σε τραγούδια/ αυτοσχεδιασμούς/παντομίμα/θεατρικό παιχνίδι όλη τη σχολική χρονιά και να χρησιμοποιηθεί σε πλήθος δραστηριοτήτων. Μπορεί να είναι παρούσα σε όλα τα μαθήματα ή μια φορά την εβδομάδα, ή όταν θα παίζονται παιχνίδια, κλπ. Επειδή μιλάει μόνο Αγγλικά, εμείς μπορούμε να έχουμε το ρόλο του 'διερμηνέα', όπου

χρειάζεται. Στα πρώτα μαθήματα θα μπορούσε:
• να χαιρετάει τα παιδιά στα Αγγλικά, π.χ. 'Hello/Hi, children!' και να τα ενθαρρύνει να τη χαιρετούν στη γλώσσα της, τα Αγγλικά
• να χρησιμοποιεί ένα ποιηματάκι ή chant κάθε φορά που εμφανίζεται (βλ. Δραστηριότητα A1_Our mascot, A Δημοτικού)
• να συστηθεί στα Αγγλικά και να ενθαρρύνει τα παιδιά να κάνουν το ίδιο, π.χ. 'Hi, I'm Mary. What's your name?'
• να χαιρετάει τα παιδιά όταν τελειώνει το μάθημα
• Ένα μαντήλι για την τυφλόμυγα
• Ξυλομπογιές ή μαρκαδόροι
• Ψαλίδι
• Καλαμάκια

Φύλλα εργασίας: B_A01_W01-2

Προτεινόμενο υλικό από το διαδίκτυο: 0

Προτεινόμενος διδακτικός χρόνος:
1 διδακτική ώρα

Figure 3: Teaching guidelines step by step

Προτεινόμενη εκπαιδευτική διαδικασία

Βήμα 1 Μπαίνουμε στην τάξη κρατώντας τη μασκότ (B_A01_C01-2) και συστηνόμαστε. Στη συνέχεια η μασκότ της τάξης ρωτάει τα παιδιά ένα-ένα πώς τα λένε. Όταν χρειάζεται, βοηθάμε τα παιδιά να απαντήσουν. Πιθανός διάλογος:
- Hello! My name's Terry and this is my friend, Mary.
- My name's Giorgos. What's your name?
- My name's ... ή I'm ...
- Nice to meet you, ...!

Βήμα 2 Αφού η μασκότ συστηθεί σε όλα τα παιδιά με τη σειρά, δίνουμε τη μασκότ σε ένα παιδί και του ζητάμε να την παρουσιάσει στο διπλανό του ως φίλο του/της. Ενθαρρύνουμε το δεύτερο παιδί να απαντήσει και να συνεχίσει την αλυσίδα των συστάσεων είτε χρησιμοποιώντας τη μασκότ είτε έναν πραγματικό φίλο του από την τάξη.
Ο διάλογος μπορεί να έχει την εξής μορφή:
- Hello! I'm Giorgos and this is my friend, Mary.
- Hello, Mary. Nice to meet you!

Βήμα 3 Κατόπιν λέμε στα παιδιά ότι θα θέλαμε να δούμε αν η μασκότ έμαθε τα ονόματά τους. Ρωτάμε τη μασκότ δείχνοντας ένα παιδί και η μασκότ απαντάει. Μετά ζητάμε από όλα τα παιδιά να επαναλάβουν την ερώτηση κάθε φορά που θα δείχνουμε ένα παιδί και η μασκότ θα απαντάει.
Ο διάλογος μπορεί να έχει την εξής μορφή:
- Who's this?
- It's Maria/Nikos, etc.

Βήμα 4 Λέμε στα παιδιά ότι για να τσεκάρουμε αν η μασκότ έμαθε επιτέλους ποιος είναι ποιος, εμείς θα της δείχνουμε τυχαία διάφορα παιδιά, θα τη ρωτάμε και η μασκότ θα απαντάει. Τα παιδιά θα 'επιβεβαιώνουν' τη σωστή απάντηση της μασκότ επαναλαμβάνοντάς την. Πιθανός διάλογος:
- Is it Maria?
- Yes, it is. / No, it isn't.

Βήμα 5 Παίζουμε την τυφλόμυγα αφού εξηγήσουμε στα παιδιά τους κανόνες του παιχνιδιού (στα Ελληνικά). Διαλέγουμε εμείς (ή και η μασκότ) ένα παιδί και του δένουμε ένα μαντήλι γύρω από τα μάτια. Δείχνουμε ένα άλλο παιδί και χωρίς να μιλάμε του νεύουμε να σταθεί αμίλητο απέναντι από το παιδί με τα κλεισμένα μάτια. Έχουμε ζητήσει από την υπόλοιπη τάξη να μη μιλάει κανείς παρά μόνο να απαντάνε με 'Yes, it is.' ή 'No, it isn't.' στις ερωτήσεις του παιδιού με τα κλεισμένα μάτια μόλις τους δώσουμε το σύνθημα. Καθοδηγούμε το παιδί με τα κλεισμένα μάτια να αγγίξει μια φορά το παιδί που στέκεται απέναντί του. Αμέσως μετά πρέπει να ρωτήσει την υπόλοιπη τάξη:
- Is it Maria/Nikos, etc.?'
και η τάξη να απαντάει εν χορώ:
- Yes, it is. / No, it isn't.

Μέχρι να το βρει συνεχίζεται η ίδια διαδικασία, οπότε γίνεται τυφλόμυγα το παιδί που στεκόταν απέναντι και ξεκινάει καινούριος γύρος.

Βήμα 6 (παραλλαγή) Παίζουμε την τυφλόμυγα αφού εξηγήσουμε στα παιδιά τους κανόνες του παιχνιδιού (στα Ελληνικά). Διαλέγουμε εμείς (ή και η μασκότ) ένα παιδί και του δένουμε ένα μαντήλι γύρω από τα μάτια. Δείχνουμε ένα άλλο παιδί και χωρίς να μιλάμε του νεύουμε να πει: 'Hello!', αλλάζοντας τη φωνή του. Ο μαθητής που κάνει την τυφλόμυγα ρωτάει:
- Is it Maria/Nikos, etc.?'
και η τάξη να απαντά εν χορώ:
- Yes, it is. / No, it isn't.

Μέχρι να το βρει συνεχίζεται η ίδια διαδικασία, οπότε γίνεται τυφλόμυγα το παιδί που είπε 'Hello!' και ξεκινάει καινούριος γύρος.
Αν οι μαθητές θυμούνται το παιχνίδι της τυφλόμυγας από την Α' τάξη (Δραστηριότητα A4_Blindfolded) μπορούμε να το εμπλουτίσουμε και να ζητήσουμε από το μαθητή πρώτα να προσδιορίσει το φύλο του παιδιού ρωτώντας:
- Is it a boy or a girl?
και εμείς του λέμε:
- It's a boy/girl.

Figure 4: Optional steps and additional material for the teacher

Προτεινόμενη εκπαιδευτική διαδικασία

Στη συνέχεια κάνει την ερώτηση για το ποιος ακριβώς είναι αυτός που είπε 'Hello!'.

ΕΠΙΠΛΕΟΝ ΠΡΟΑΙΡΕΤΙΚΑ ΒΗΜΑΤΑ
Δίνουμε στα παιδιά τα φύλλα εργασίας (B_A01_W01-2) για να τα χρωματίσουν και να τα κόψουν. Στη συνέχεια τα στερεώνουμε σε καλαμάκια. Έτσι κάθε παιδί θα έχει τη μασκότ του, την οποία θα χρησιμοποιεί στους

διαλόγους και τις δραματοποιήσεις στα μαθήματα όλης της χρονιάς.

Υλικό για τον/την εκπαιδευτικό

ΚΑΡΤΕΛΕΣ B_A01_C01-2

As we have already mentioned in the previous section (Section 2.4), the materials consist of stories, songs, coloring activities, flashcards, pictures, arts and crafts etc. Especially the units including a story, or a song seem to analyze in detail the process that should be followed by teachers. Moreover, the teachers have access to the whole story and extra online materials to enrich their storytelling. One such instance is the story of "The three little pigs" appearing in the materials of the first grade. As you will see in the following picture (Figure 5) taken from the "Alpha English" package, there are suggested audiovisual materials for the teacher, which can be easily accessed through the YouTube online platform. Teachers can incorporate an animation video of the story or a puppet show in their lesson, making the lesson more fun and engaging for the students. Since children are becoming more and more familiar with audiovisual content nowadays, through the use of mobile phones, computers and the television, a

video will arise their curiosity and attract their attention more quickly. Additionally to the step by step guidelines offered in every unit, in the last part of this unit teachers can also find the script of the story (Figure 6), accompanied by a small play customized to the students' needs and skills (Figure 7).

Figure 5: An overview of unit on a story.

Figure 6: The script of the story "The three little pigs"

Υλικό για τον/την εκπαιδευτικό

ΚΑΡΤΕΛΕΣ Α_Δ05_C01-5
Η ΙΣΤΟΡΙΑ

☞ THE THREE LITTLE PIGS

[Εικόνα 1]

Once upon a time there were three little pigs, Red, Blue and Green. One day their mum said to them, "You are too big to live here any longer. You must go and build your own house. But be careful. The big bad wolf lives in the woods". So the three little pigs decided to make their own houses.

[Εικόνα 2]

"I want to build a straw house. I want to make it quick", said Red.

So he built a house of straw.

"I want to build a wooden house. I want to make it quick, too", said Blue.

So he built a house of sticks.

"I want to build a brick house. I want to make it strong", said Green.

So he built a house of bricks.

[Εικόνα 3]

One day the big bad wolf was very hungry, so he came to Red's house.

"Little pig, little pig let me come in" said the wolf.

"No, I won't" said Red.

"Then I'll huff and I'll puff and I'll blow your house down" said the wolf.

And he did. The house of straw fell down.

Red was scared. He ran to Blue's house.

And the wolf came to Blue's house. And he said:

"Little pig, little pig let me come in".

"No, I won't" said Blue.

"Then I'll huff and I'll puff and I'll blow your house down" said the wolf.

And he did. The house of sticks fell down.

Red and Blue were scared. They ran to Green's house.

And the wolf came to the brick house. And he said:

"Little pig, little pig let me come in".

"No, no, no, I won't" said Green.

"Then I'll huff and I'll puff and I'll blow your house down" said the wolf.

And he huffed and he puffed but he couldn't blow the house down.

[Εικόνα 4]

So he decided to climb down the chimney and get into the house.

But Green was smart. He put a big pot of hot water in the fireplace.

The wolf fell into the hot water. "Ouch, it's too hot!" he shouted and ran away.

[Εικόνα 5]

The three little pigs lived happily together in the brick house. And they danced and sang...

☞ "Who's afraid ..."

Who's afraid of the big, bad wolf?

the big, bad wolf, the big, bad wolf?

Who's afraid of the big, bad wolf?

Tra-la-la-la-la

Figure 7: A play on the story "The three little pigs"

Υλικό για τον/την εκπαιδευτικό

ΚΕΙΜΕΝΟ ΓΙΑ ΔΡΑΜΑΤΟΠΟΙΗΣΗ ΤΟΥ
ΠΑΡΑΜΥΘΙΟΥ
THE THREE LITTLE PIGS

TEACHER: Once upon a time there were three little pigs.
RED: Hello. I'm Red.
BLUE: Hello. I'm Blue.
GREEN: Hello. I'm Green.

TEACHER: One day their mum said to them, "You are too big to live here any longer. You must go and build your own house".
MOTHER PIG: Be careful! A big bad wolf lives in the wood.
THE THREE LITTLE PIGS: Yes, Mummy.
MOTHER PIG: Goodbye, my children. I love you.
THE THREE LITTLE PIGS: Goodbye, Mummy. We love you, too.
RED: House, house, house,
I want to build a house.
Straw, straw, straw,
I want to build my house of straw.
BLUE: House, house, house,
I want to build a house.
Sticks, sticks, sticks,
I want to build my house of sticks.
GREEN: House, house, house,
I want to build a house.
Bricks, bricks, bricks,
I want to build my house of bricks.

TEACHER: One day the big bad wolf came along and saw the first little pig in his house of straw.
WOLF: Hello. I'm Big Bad Wolf.
I'm hungry. I'm very hungry.
(knock, knock)
RED: Who's there?
WOLF: Little pig, little pig, let me come in.
RED: No, I won't.
WOLF: Then I'll huff and I'll puff and I'll blow your house down.

TEACHER: He huffed and he puffed and he blew the house down. Then the wolf came to the house of sticks.
(knock, knock)
BLUE: Who's there?
WOLF: Little pig, little pig, let me come in.
BLUE: No, I won't.
WOLF: Then I'll huff and I'll puff and I'll blow your house down.

TEACHER: He huffed and he puffed and he blew the house down.
The wolf then came to the house of bricks.
GREEN: Who's there?
WOLF: Little pig, little pig, let me come in.
GREEN: No, no, no, I won't.
WOLF: Then I'll huff and I'll puff and I'll blow your house down.

TEACHER: Well, the wolf huffed and puffed but he could not blow down that brick house.
Then the wolf was very angry, and tried to climb down the chimney and get into the house. The little pig was very smart. He put a big pot full of hot water on the fire, and, just as the wolf was coming down, he fell into the hot water.
Wolf: Ouch! It's too hot!

TEACHER: So the three little pigs lived happily ever after! And they danced and sang ...

The same rationale is followed in the end-of-the-year play of the second grade. In the materials "Beta English", teachers will find a list of videos to be used as songs and audiovisual materials, a detailed analysis of the process they should follow in order to familiarize students with the play and the process of acting in another language and of course the whole script of the play. Regarding the acquisition of the writing skills in the second grade, the letters are not presented in the alphabetical order, but rather they are grouped thematically. Each set of

letters are connected with topics such as animals, toys, food etc. and includes three letters. The first three letters are "Zz, Cc and Ll" and they are presented accompanied by three animals, a zebra, a cat and a lion. At first, students listen to the sound of the letter inside the word (Figure 8). Then, the teacher hands them the specific worksheet in order to practice their writing skills (Figure 9).

Figure 8: The letter "Z"
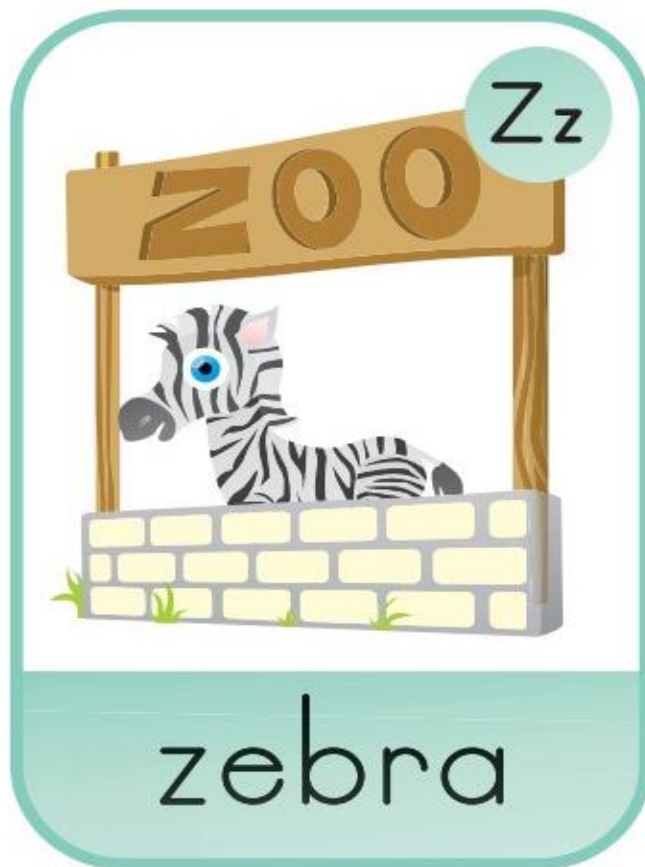
Figure 9: Worksheet on the letter "Z"
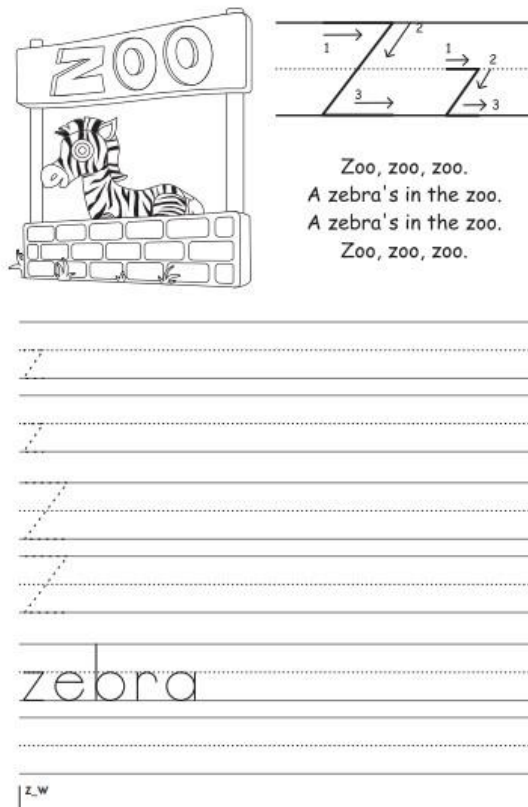
All the above constitute a brief overview of the materials included in the "Alpha English" and "Beta English" packages, handed to teachers of first and second grade, within the framework of the PEAP project. Due to space limitations, only a few necessary examples were presented through pictures, in order to facilitate the reader's understanding of the nature and the content of the materials. In addition to teachers, anyone interested in learning more about the materials can access the website of the "Digital School" and find both the students' and the teachers' materials available there. The rest of the units in both grades follow the structure presented above. Overall, teachers and students need a cohesive and coherent plan throughout the school year in order to perform in their maximum capacity; a need fulfilled through the clear and comprehensible structure of the PEAP materials.

2.6. Conclusion

The second section of this dissertation aimed at familiarizing the reader with previous studies and practices on teaching English to very young learners. Furthermore, a detailed representation of the rationale, the purpose, and the content of the PEAP project was made, accompanied by relevant pictures of the materials. English as a foreign language has secured a valid place in our educational system, creating the need to approach the teaching of the language through more native-like practices. Introducing the target language from the first two grades of primary school, has been an approach followed since the early 2000s across Europe. Students acquire new words and sounds through playing, singing, coloring etc., entering at the same time a world, where learning is fun and creative. In the following section, the reader will explore the methodology of the present research, the participants and the instruments used to conduct it.

Chapter 3
Research Methodology

3.1. Introduction

This chapter discusses the methodological process upon which the present research was conducted. In the following sub-sections I will present the research questions I attempt to address in my dissertation, the participants of this research and the methodological instruments employed to facilitate my attempt. The methodology followed was carefully chosen to ensure that the aims of this project will be met at the most suitable way possible

.

3.2. Research Questions

As mentioned in the introductory section of this thesis, its aim is to report teacher's attitudes on the PEAP materials, and the way teachers adapted their practices to distance learning. The following research questions formed the basis for choosing and designing the research instruments and will be employed as a map to guide you through the results:

1. What are the teachers' attitudes towards the PEAP materials? Are they using the proposed materials? If yes, to what extent?
2. To what extent and how were the materials implemented during the distance learning period?
3. What kind of problems did the teachers face when using the materials online?

3.3.   Participants

Stated obviously in the title, this dissertation is focused on primary EFL teachers and specifically those teaching the first and second grade of primary school, as

they are the ones following the PEAP program. During October and November 2020, several attempts were made to approach EFL teachers in order to participate in this research. However, since the school year had already started before my attempts, their workload along with the ongoing socio-political changes are parts of this thesis limitations, which will be analyzed in the concluding chapter. With the help of Professor Evdokia Karava, Professor Kosmas Vlachos and the principal of primary education of Peloponnese Dimitris Economopoulos, teachers throughout Athens and Peloponnese were reached. In the end, a total of 33 participants are the ones who desired to participate, as well as two Educational Work Coordinators.

3.4. The Research Instruments: Design and Rationale

3.4.1. The Questionnaire

For the present study a combination of both qualitative and quantitative instruments has been chosen, as the purpose is to explore teachers' view of the PEAP materials both from their own viewpoint and from a distance more objective position. The quantitative aspect of the research aims at obtaining a large number of data irrespective of the participants' geographical location (Dawson, 2002). In this approach, the results are presented in tables and graphs and the researcher is able to draw more general conclusions (Greener, 2008).

The quantitative methodological instrument chosen is the questionnaire, as it states the straightforward and reader- friendly questions and it allows the results to be quantified and analyzed (Dörnyei, 2003). As aforementioned, the participants in this research come from different places of Athens and Peloponnese. Their geographical dispersion and the current pandemic measures would make it impossible to address them all, requiring my physical presence in the schools. For this reason, an online questionnaire appeared to be the ideal option for me, ensuring that the questions will reach everyone who wanted to participate. The *Google Forms* platform was utilized in order to design it and

facilitate the administration phase. As a consequence, there is no indication of the participants geographic origin mentioned. The principles of anonymity and confidentiality were preserved throughout this process and they were highlighted at the introductory paragraph of the questionnaire as well (Appendix 1).

The questionnaire was designed to fit the qualified respondents needs and address the research questions presented in the above section (Section 3.2.). It is divided in three parts corresponding to the three research questions, accordingly, including multiple- choice questions, as well as open ended ones requiring either a short answer or an elaborate one depending on the subject. The questions designed to address the first research question constitute the largest part of the questionnaire. The first set of nine questions aims at recording demographic and background information on teachers' gender, age, years of teaching experience in general and specifically in young learners, qualifications and finally on any type of formal training they might have received on teaching young learners. This information constitutes a salient part of the research, as it allows us to build the profile of the respondents. The second group includes sixteen questions on teachers' attitudes towards the PEAP materials. In order to obtain the necessary data and ensure an adequate degree of objectivity in the results teachers were asked the following: a)to describe their view on the content of the material, b)the frequency with which they are using them, c)whether they combine them with their own ideas, d)if and how often they use the PEAP website, e)to describe the students' reaction towards the material, both positive and negative and finally, f) to suggest any possible updates and improvements that need to be made. Last but not least, since last year's transition to distance learning proved to be a challenge for teachers worldwide, I could never omit a set of questions on this issue from the present questionnaire. The third and final part contains four questions on the frequency of English classes during the lockdown, the use of the materials in these classes, any problems teachers faced with online teaching and recommendations to update the material to facilitate distance teaching. The questionnaire is available in the Appendix section (Appendix 1).

3.4.2. The Interviews

An important part of any dissertation is the triangulation of data to enhance research validity (Cohen, Manion, & Morisson, 2007). The qualitative approach was also used with a smaller sample, though, to serve this purpose. The small-scale interviews included eleven questions designed based on the research questions. As stated in the previous section (Section 3.3) the interviewees were two Educational Work Coordinators. The first one is responsible for East Attica and the second for Central Greece (with headquarters in Lamia). The Educational Work Coordinators deal with both the primary and secondary education within their area of duty and they are employed by the Ministry of Education to support the school units, promote new educational practices, inform teachers on books, curriculum changes and assessment practices, conduct seminars for teachers and parents etc. Overall, they are responsible for organizing, implementing and assessing the educational plan delivered by the Ministry of Education. The purpose of the interviews was to summarize and report any guidelines given to teachers on how to approach the materials and possible problems they faced related to the materials. They were, also, asked to assess the appropriateness of the approach followed in the first and second grade of primary school. Regarding the distance learning period, the coordinators were asked to mention whether they organized training seminars and recall the three most common difficulties or issues that teachers reported during the same period.

The interviews were conducted online through the *Zoom* platform and lasted about 30 minutes. The participants were handed the questions beforehand, in order for them to be prepare for the questions that required a longer and more elaborate answer. Having first required the participants consent, the interviews were recorded and later transcribed. The transcript is available in the Appendices (Appendix 2). Due to space limitations, the transcript includes only the participants' answers to the questions and not any additional personal comments made at the beginning or the end of the interview.

3.5. Conclusion

The chapter included the rationale based on which the current research was carried out and the research questions we address later in the dissertation. The reader learned about the participants of the study and the research tools used, i.e. the questionnaire and the interviews. Guided from the instruments' design to the process of data collection, the reader will have a better understanding of the results displayed in the following chapter.

Chapter 4
Presentation of the Results

4.1. Introduction

In this chapter, there is a graphic representation of the data obtained from the research. The analysis following each table or graph and the interviews opts for a comprehensible "reading" of the data, drawing readers' attention on the important points of this study. This section is concentrated on classifying the reporting the respondents' answers. Their interpretation is presented in the last part of Chapter 4. In the next chapter, the reader will have the chance to revisit the research questions, as they are all addressed and answered based on the findings.

4.2. Results from the Questionnaire

4.2.1. Demographic Information

The main part questionnaire was divided in three parts, corresponding to the research questions. In the first section, we wanted to collect demographic information about the respondents. The vast majority of the participants were female teachers (97 %), whereas the male population of the sample was represented by only one male teacher (3%). All the participants were over 30 years old, almost equally divided to three age groups: a)31-40 (30,3 %), b)41-50 (30,3 %) and c)51+ (39,4 %). In this respect, we could realize even from the beginning of the questionnaire that all the answers are given by highly experienced teachers, as none of them was a newly qualified teacher. Indeed, more than half of them (60,6%) reported having teaching experience more than 21 years and another 27,3 % having 11-15 years teaching experience. As for their qualifications, most teachers reported to hold a Bachelors' Degree in English

language and literature (75, 8 %). However, among the respondents more than half of them (63,6%) hold a Masters' Degree as well and some are now doing their Ph.D. (18,2%).

Subsequently, the participants were asked to respond to a set of questions centered around their experience on specific educational levels. It appeared that the sample was divided in two almost perfect halves when asked about their experience in secondary education, with 54,5 % of them reporting that they have worked in Gymnasiums and Lyceums and 45,5 % of them saying they haven't. However, when asked about their experience in primary education and especially with first and second graders, half of them (51,5%) reported to have worked with primary school learners for 6-10 years, followed by 21,2 % 1-5 years and 18,2 % 16+ years. Last but not least, it was of high importance to learn about any related training they have ever received. Around 50% (52%) replied that they had attended seminars or training courses before starting to teach young learners, for instance PEAP seminars, EFL courses on Young Learners, seminars organized by school supervisors and local advisors, as well as on-site or online seminars they found and paid themselves.

In an attempt to build a profile of the participants, we could attribute the following characteristics to the average respondent: a)teaching experience more than 11 years, b)holder of a B.A. and an M.A. , c)probably experienced with both young and teen learners, and d)teaching first and second graders for more than 6 years.

4.2.2. Teachers' attitudes towards the PEAP materials

Moving forward to the main part of the questionnaire, participants were asked to respond to questions addressing the process of teaching very young learners, the content of the PEAP materials and students' stance towards them. The most common problems mentioned when teaching learners of this age were: 1) adjusting the tasks to their needs (45,5 %), 2)teaching without a coursebook (33,3 %) and 3) preparing a fun and engaging lesson (21,2 %). Among others, the respondents also pointed that they find it difficult to speak English during the whole lesson, teach in a traditional classroom and have a homogenous class in

terms of their learning needs. As can be seen in Figure 10 below, in the question *When teaching 1st and 2nd grade learners, do you use the materials of the PEAP program?*, the vast majority responded that they follow the materials assigned by the program, with more than half of the stating in the next question they use them in every lesson (Figure 11). It seems that even from the beginning of the research teachers display a positive attitude and a general preference towards the materials when they are called to teach the first and second grade.

Figure 10: Teacher's use of the PEAP materials

11. When teaching 1st and 2nd grade learners, do you use the materials of the PEAP program?
33 responses
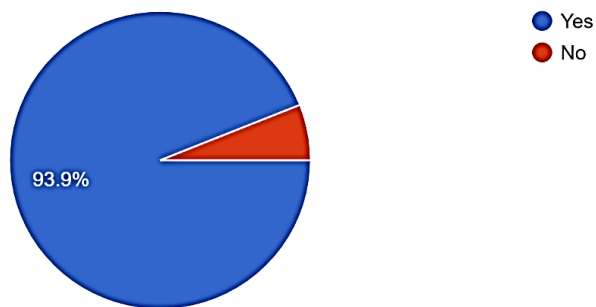
Figure 11: Frequency of using the PEAP materials

12. If yes, how often do you use them?
33 responses

- ● once or twice a month
- ● three or more times per month
- ● in every lesson

66.7%
9.1%
24.2%
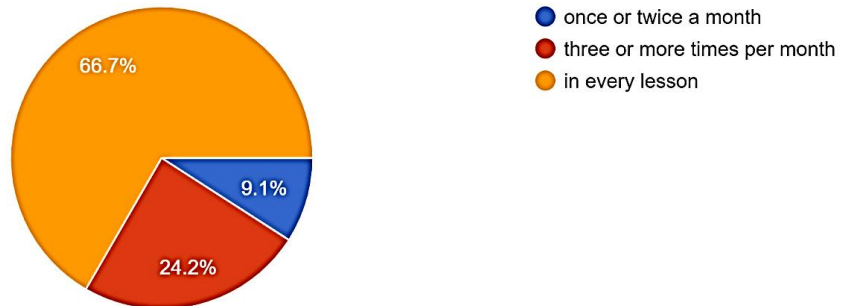
After stating whether they choose to use the PEAP materials in their lesson and how often, teachers were asked in an open-ended question to give their opinion on the materials. The majority of the respondents (78,8%) displayed a positive attitude towards the materials, while the negative or more skeptical opinions were approximately 20% (21,2%). Some of the answers are mentioned below, directly quoted from the Google platform: a) positive comments: "They are interesting and useful", "Helpful", "Well-structured", "Flexible, fun, creative", "Suitable for the age and level", "Very appealing to young learners", "Comprehensive and diverse", "Well- prepared. They offer teachers a lot of choices", b)negative of skeptical comments: "They must be adjusted to present time primary pupils' competence", "Interesting but not very functional", "Not very motivating, difficult to use in a classroom of 20-25 pupils", "I think that if each student had the worksheets as a book it would be better" and other similar comments. The two most common answers appearing on this list are the need to update the materials to fit students' needs and their fun and interesting aspect of

the activities. The first view was verified later in the questionnaire, when the question focused on the updates (Figure 12).

Figure 12: Is there a need to update the PEAP materials?

17. Do you think that the PEAP materials should be updated?
33 responses
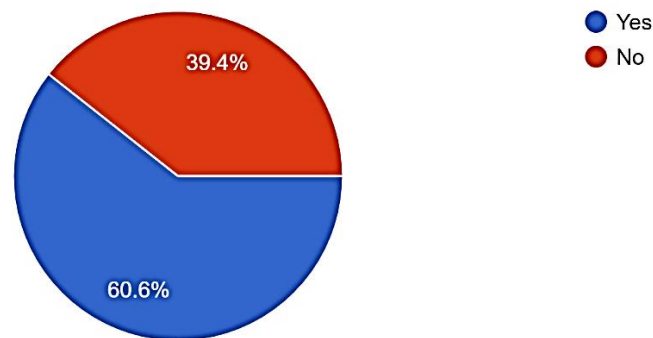
Nevertheless, since the majority of teachers use the materials in every lesson, we wanted to learn whether they use them interchangeably with their own ideas. In fact, 81,8 % of the respondents replied that they add extra material to enrich their lesson. Most of them (60,6 %) reported that they search for activities on the Internet, such as videos, games, songs, stories, coloring pages etc. Some (15%) are even creating their own set of flashcards to combine them with the PEAP materials. All these activities that teachers try to design or find by themselves online are associated with parts of the materials that should be updated. When asked to give examples and suggestions of the parts that need to be updated, the most common answers given were the following: "The songs and videos", "The leaflets and stories", "The audio part", "The dialogues and stories are difficult for the children to act out and follow", "The use of books is necessary for both pupils and teachers", "Activities made with the Adobe Flash Player need updating, because they do not run in tablets and smartphones", " All parts need some more elaboration plus some activities on more updated issues like Gender equality, Community cohesion, Multicultural Education, Intercultural competences etc.", "The stories and related websites", "The B Grade material",

"There should be added some methodology part" and other similar comments on the same issues.

The last three questions of this part of the questionnaire concerned students' responses to the materials. In the question *What is the students' attitude towards the PEAP materials?,* respondents had to choose among three already given answers covering both positive and negative opinions, or the option "other" , where they had to specify (Figure 13).

Figure 13: Students' attitude towards the materials

22. What is the students' attitude towards the PEAP materials?
33 responses

- curious and enthusiastic
- neutral, depending on the activity
- bored and unmotivated
- They enjoy it because I do. I have rejected the lessons that are boring and work with the rest. The material is more than enough
- Responsive, positive, engaging

33.3%

54.5%

As you can see in the above Figure, students are usually curious and enthusiastic (54,5%) and sometimes neutral depending on the activity (33,3%). We should not overlook, however, a participant's answer stating the impact of the teachers' attitude on the students as "They enjoy it because I do". Subsequently, teachers analyzed the parts that students enjoy the most and the parts they enjoy the least. Among the most enjoyable activities, the ones mentioned by most teachers were the crafts, the songs and photocopiable materials, the coloring pages, the activities that require cutting and sticking, the group activities and the songs. On the other side, among the least enjoyable activities were the speaking and act out parts, the writing, the storytelling as it is difficult for some groups and the songs appearing in the second grade's book.

4.2.3. Teachers' practices during the distance learning period

The previous lockdown from March to May 2020 caught educational system "off guard", as very few seemed to be prepared and equipped in order to cope with the distance teaching and learning process. Teachers, parents and students had the minimum amount of time available to acquaint themselves with new online platforms such as Zoom and Webex used to maximize the effectiveness of the government's efforts to keep the schools closed. Dealing with teachers' current opinion on the materials, we could not omit the distance learning period from the questionnaire as it proved to be challenging for everyone. The last part of the questionnaire was designed to record the frequency of the lessons conducted during the previous lockdown, the obstacles teachers had overcome and any suggestions for future revisions. Unfortunately, the majority of the teachers reported having classes once a week (42,4%) or not at all (30,3 %) during the lockdown period, with their hardest task being the technical difficulties they had to overcome (42,4 %) and the effort they put to keep the students engaged (33,3 %).

Additionally, the respondents were asked to point the frequency with which they used the PEAP materials during the lockdown (Figure 14). In the chart below, we need to highlight that almost one third of the respondents used the materials in every lesson, whereas another third of them didn't use the materials at all. These two seemingly contrasting groups were possibly divided in accordance with the previous

question on whether they used the materials or not.

Figure 14: Frequency of using the materials during the distance learning period

27. How often did you use the PEAP materials during the quarantine period?
33 responses

- never
- once or twice a month
- in every lesson
- almost in every lesson
- X
- I cannot answer.
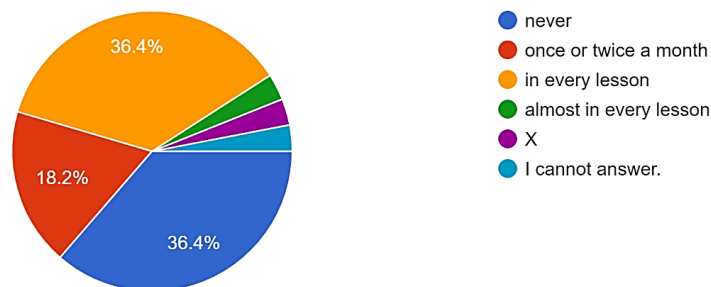
4.3. Results from the Interviews

The results of the questionnaires could never be enough to lead us to valid conclusions on whether teachers adopt a positive or a negative stance towards the materials. In an effort to add validity to the results. Both Mrs. Karagianni and Mrs. Mavrovounioti declared from the beginning that the answers to the questions are completely subjective, based on their own experience, point of view and relation to the PEAP program. On this account, we have to state that the following results concern teachers in their areas of responsibility and may not correspond to the rest of the Greek teachers across the country. In this section, only the most important statements from the interviews will be presented. The rest of the answers appear in Appendix 2.

Mrs. Karagianni, the first Educational Work Coordinator, has been responsible for the area of East Attica, covering approximately 400 teachers both from primary and secondary education in the public and the private sector for the last three years, since 2018. When asked whether specialized seminars are conducted to train teachers and the frequency of their attendance, she replied that all the seminars are optional. She highlighted that teachers are not able to leave work and attend any seminar if the director of the school does not approve it. As she specifically stated: "the only call I have received is from a newly assigned teacher who didn't know what the PEAP program was and where to find the appropriate materials in her school". However, she expressed a strong desire to conduct a seminar dedicated to the PEAP materials and their use. She characterized the content of the materials and the methodological details already provided for teachers as of great significance. Overall, she adopted a positive stance towards the materials and the approach they follow for young learners and she believes that as teachers get acquainted with the program they become more and more eager to work with it and customize their lesson according to the students' needs.

Later in the interview, when asked to recall teachers' problems and their possible relation to the materials she said that the teachers' greatest obstacle used to be the time allocated to English classes, which some years ago was one hour per week. She believes that all the materials used in the first and second grade as well as the

book of the third grade are of good quality and it is the teachers' use of them that defines the quality of the lesson. Finally, towards the end of the interview Mrs. Karagianni was asked about the distance learning period and any worries expressed by teachers. She mentioned that general guidelines were given to all teachers in primary and secondary education. As for the PEAP teachers, most of them were worried about the accessibility of the materials, the technical problems that would arise and the young learners' lack of computer skills and the impact of too much 'screen time' on children.

The second interview was held with Mrs. Mavrovounioti, Educational Work Coordinator for all regional units of Central Greece (Sterea Ellada) including Boeotia, Euboea, Evrytania, Phocis and Phthiotis. She has been responsible for this area since 2018, covering approximately 186 primary education teachers. As a former primary school teacher, she has worked with the PEAP materials herself and she, too, expressed a desire to conduct a training seminar on the materials, because there are many teachers that do not know how to approach learners of that age. For her, teaching young learners was "a challenge" that she always accepted as a teacher. She strongly supports the learning and pedagogical approaches on the basis of which the materials were designed, highlighting that the goal in the first and second grade is to improve students' interaction with each other and cultivate their social skills.

When asked to recall any problems the PEAP teachers face, she mentioned the three most common ones: 1) the time allocated to English class, which used to be one hour per week, 2)the lack of a sufficient bridging between the second and third grade, in relation to the students' writing skills, and 3)the parents objection over the materials efficiency. Furthermore, she said that there should have been more writing exercises preparing students for the third grade's book, as well as more methodological advice for teachers available on the PEAP website. In her opinion, teachers need additional training on how to work with students of this age.

Mrs. Mavrovounioti was, also, asked about the distance learning period and how she dealt with teachers worries. She explained that she conducted separate training seminars for primary and secondary education teachers on how to use

the online platforms. She gave explicit advice to PEAP teachers on how to enrich the materials with songs, stories, images etc. available on the Internet. Nevertheless, there were teachers whose classes were neglected at first and were excluded from the school's online timetable. Her advice to those teachers was to assert their right to online classes or else all their previous work especially with first grade students would collapse. This seemed to be the biggest obstacle they had to overcome, in addition to their concern on how they would communicate their ideas and knowledge to students through distance teaching. Overall, during her service as a coordinator she has realized that the key for a positive attitude towards the materials is teachers' imagination and will to work. In her experience, the guidelines may prove to be essential to some teachers, but at the same time restricting to others. In the end, as she says, "it's up to the teachers if they want to enrich the materials with something they have designed themselves, or leave them aside and follow their own way".

It is obvious from the above that there are points of agreement and disagreement between the two coordinators. We must pinpoint that they are responsible for two completely different districts, the first one for schools located within Attica or in the suburbs and the second one for school located in smaller regional units of Central Greece. A comparative analysis between the two will be presented in the following section accompanied by analysis on the questionnaire's results.

4.4. Brief discussion of the Results

In this part of the thesis the reader, who was previously presented with the results obtained from research, will be guided from numbers and quotations to the conclusions we could draw based on the above.

It is of crucial importance to stress that as it appears in from the demographic information all teachers had more than 11 years of teaching experience. This fact contributes to the validity of their opinions and increases their importance, since all of them have met hundreds of students throughout these years, they have experimented and worked on their practices and they are definitely acquainted with the strengths and weaknesses of the materials. Furthermore, most teachers

are holders of a B.A and an M.A., proving that they value their lifelong progress and want to have more qualifications. As it was verified in the FLIPP project in the Netherlands (Section 2.2), teachers' high proficiency played a decisive role in students' successful learning (de Baut, 2014). It was shown that the teachers chosen to teach these ages were native or near-native speakers. Teachers are considered to be the main source of target language input and they need to provide the optimal conditions for early language learning (Nikolov and Mihaljevic Djigunovic 2011, Rixon, 2015). Since it is extremely rare to find a native speaker in the Greek public sector, our teachers seem to work their way towards this profile by attending seminars and applying for Master of even Ph.D. degrees.

Throughout the study, teachers seemed to hold a positive attitude towards the materials as they reported to use them frequently. Apart from being the official materials assigned for the first and second grade of primary school, teachers seemed to consider them appropriate for this age. The materials, consisting of songs, games, stories and fun activities, are parallel to the findings of the ELLiE project conducted earlier than the launch of the PEAP (2006- 2010), whereby learners of that age reported to acquire knowledge better through creative teaching and learning means. Halliwell (1992) formed a list with six advantageous qualities of young learners. Games, songs and other creative activities of this kind, which are part of the PEAP materials, relate to Halliwell's third, fourth and fifth categories. She highlighted children's capacity for indirect learning (third category) and their instinct for play and fun (fourth category). Cultivating their imagination is another powerful tool in teachers' hand (fifth category). As it was, also, proven in our research students seemed to enjoy most the arts and crafts and in general anything that is inspiring and gives them the opportunity to be creative.

However, when they converted to distance learning these advantageous qualities appeared to pose the greatest difficulty to teachers. Johnstone (2002) recognized that very young learners do not possess all the necessary skills to learn a foreign language in comparison to older learners, as they have not yet mastered the process of learning. Learners of the first grade experiencing the school environment for the first time are hard to manage and they need a lot of support

by the teachers. If we move this challenge to an online setting, one could imagine why teachers agreed that keeping students engaged was among their hardest tasks, especially when the language of instruction is not their mother tongue. Due to their young age, they may lose interest more quickly (Cameron, 2001). The latter was also stressed by both coordinators in their interview as the teachers' main concern.

Comparing the two interviews used in this research, we observe that both coordinators adopt a positive stance towards the materials, reporting the same for the teachers in their responsibility. Nevertheless, there is a difference between the two regarding the materials of the second grade and their connection to the third. Based on her experience, one of the two coordinators underlined the importance to update the materials and include more writing practice starting earlier in the school year, as in some cases there is a gap between these two grades and students struggle to keep up with the third grade's expectations. Furthermore, while the first coordinator mentioned that the guidelines appearing on the PEAP website and included in the materials are adequate for teachers to follow, the second one emphasized the need to provide teachers with further training on these two grades and more methodological guidelines on how to make the most out of the materials. In my opinion, teacher training could only be an asset to a more effective approach, and it would fuel teachers' motivation and creativity even more.

4.5. Conclusion

To sum up, the above chapter discussed and interpreted the results obtained from the research. The findings of the study reveal an overall positive attitude towards the materials, stressing at the same time the need for future updates. In the following chapter, we will revisit the research questions attempting to answer them based on the research findings. Moreover, there will be an account of the

suggested updates for further improvement of the materials and the research limitations.

Chapter 5
Conclusion and Limitations

The present thesis sought to investigate the PEAP teachers' attitudes towards the materials they use in their classes, and whether they managed to adapt to the distance learning period of March 2020 until May 2020. The research presented in the above sections was specifically designed to suit the purpose of the dissertation and the methodological instruments chosen were the ones that would best serve the research questions. In this section, I am attempting to answer the research questions, posed at the beginning of the paper, one by one to discover if the results provide us with adequate answers.

1. *What are the teachers' attitudes towards the PEAP materials? Are they using the proposed materials? If yes, to what extent?*

All the results gathered from the questionnaire and the interviews indicated that the vast majority of the teachers, who teach in the first and second grade, have approved the PEAP materials. A remarkable 93,9 % of them reported to use the PEAP materials, in every lesson or three or more times a month. In fact, teachers and coordinators, both attributed positive qualities to the materials characterizing them as "interesting, excellent, creative, remarkable, of good quality, appropriate for this level etc.". Moreover, the coordinators summarized the attitude they have received from teachers over the last two years saying that as the time goes by, they become more and more acquainted with and positive towards the materials. The questionnaire did not only reveal teachers' attitudes though. The respondents highlighted that students tend to enjoy the most of the materials and even though some tasks are more challenging than others, they still remain fun for young learners. This would be mainly due to the adaptation of the materials to students needs and their blending with teachers' own ideas. However, there were also some teachers who adopted a more skeptical view towards the materials, mentioning that the materials should be updated to conform to present time students' needs. Their view will be taken into consideration further down in this section.

*2.	To what extent and how were the materials implemented during the distance learning period?*

Unfortunately, the previous lockdown alienated to some extent the PEAP teachers from their students, because according to the coordinators some schools did not include English in their online schedule. Furthermore, taking into account that teaching English to 6- and 7-year olds is a challenging task by definition, we could image how difficult it would be to adjust to distance learning. Most of the participants said that they had classes once a week or not at all. Nevertheless, they were encouraged by the coordinators not to miss their classes and to try to enrich the lesson as much as possible. When asked about how often they incorporated the PEAP materials in their online classes the results were divided accordingly, either never or in every lesson.

*3.	What kind of problems did the teachers face when using the materials online?*

Throughout the questionnaire and the interviews, the participants were asked to recall problems they had to deal with when using the materials either in on-site or online lessons. In this question, we will sum up the most common problems mentioned for each occasion. Overall, teachers' hardest task is to adjust the materials and the lesson to their students' needs especially when they do not have a coursebook. Even though there is a plethora of activities to use, they said that it is difficult to prepare a fun and engaging lesson. This task proved to be even more difficult a few years ago, when the time allocated to English classes was one hour per week, said the coordinators. Teachers had to accumulate all the knowledge and ideas they had and combine them in one lesson every week, while some of them might even lack the proper methodological knowledge needed to teach this age. Regarding the distance learning period, both in the questionnaire and the interviews teachers underlined the issue of technical obstacles, they had to overcome in a short period of time. They, also, reported that parents and students faced the same technical issues. Not surprisingly, all the respondents highlighted the difficulty of keeping the students engaged in an online lesson, a concern that was expressed by the coordinators as well. As we

have already stressed, it is hard to arouse students' curiosity in this age and it requires great physical and mental effort from the part of the teachers. Trying to manage the first and second grade through the screen would undoubtedly be a challenge not only for English teachers, but also for their regular Greek teachers as well.

The significance of the research lays in the fact that it provides current data on the teachers' view of the materials and how the latter are used in the lessons. We were able to record the teachers' practices during the first lockdown and collect their suggestions for future updates, as more than half of the respondents (60,2 %) replied that there are necessary updates that need to be made; an opinion shared by the coordinators as well. Future research centered on these updates will give a more detailed picture of what the teachers' needs are. However, we managed to review some of them and present them below. The most important update underlined by one of the coordinators was the need to reform the second grade's materials, so that students are given the opportunity to practice their writing skills more systematically. She reported that there is no efficient bridge between the second and the third grade. Other teachers, also, emphasized on the second grade's materials suggesting that songs and stories should change. Apart from the general updates, teachers were asked to stress how the distance teaching process could be facilitated. They explained that the materials should also include a digital form, with more online worksheets, more interactive online activities, animated stories and convert the files to other text forms as well, so that they are accessible through smartphones and tablets

Despite achieving our goal to answer all three research questions, we cannot overlook some limitations of this research. As explained earlier in the dissertation, the task to contact primary school teachers proved to be a lot more difficult than expected. Due to their workload and the ongoing changes while entering the second lockdown, we managed to communicate with only 33 teachers. A sample of this size, however, is not enough to draw general conclusion for the whole population of Greek PEAP teachers. As declared in the beginning of this dissertation, the results abide by the characteristics of this particular group of participants. Additionally, time limitations and COVID measures did not allow us to come in personal contact with school teachers to

conduct more interviews or observe their classes, which would have added more validity to the research and would have increased the degree of triangulation of results. All the results obtained from this research could contribute to future studies and could give the Ministry of Education the opportunity to improve the materials based on actual facts from currently employed teachers.

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Appendix A: The questionnaire of the study

Dear colleagues

The following questionnaire is part of a research for my MA dissertation in the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Department of English Language and Literature, entitled **"Implementation of the PEAP curriculum: Teachers' attitudes on the PEAP material and their adaptation to distance learning".** The questionnaire is **anonymous,** and it will take you around 15-20 minutes to complete. The data will be used **only** for the analysis of the present study and for no other purpose

Please submit your answer until the 13th of November.

Thank you in advance for your time and participation in my research.

Athanasia Katsa

Part 1. Background Information (Please tick those that apply to you)

1. Gender
a) Male
b) Female

2. Age
a) 21-30
b) 31-40

c) 41-50

d) 51+

3. Teaching experience in years

a) 1-5

b) 6-10

c) 11-15

d) 16-20

e) 21+

4. Qualifications (Tick those that apply)

a) BA in English Language and Literature

b) Master's Degree

c) Master's in Progress

d) Ph.D.

e) Ph.D. in progress

f) Other (please specify: ...……..…)

5. How many years have you worked with 1st and 2nd grade learners?

a) Less than one year

b) 1-5

c) 6-10

d) 11-15

e) 16+

f) Other (please specify: ...……..…)

6. Have you ever worked in secondary education?

a) Yes

b) No

7. If yes, how many years? (please specify)…….

8. Did you attend seminars or training courses on young learners before starting to teach the first two grades of primary school?

a) Yes

b) No

9. If yes, please specify the type of training program: (short answer)………..

Part 2. Teachers' attitudes towards the PEAP material

10. When teaching young learners, it is difficult: (You may tick more than one).

a) To teach without a coursebook

b) To motivate them

c) To prepare a fun and engaging lesson

d) To adjust tasks to students' needs

e) Other (please specify)…………………

11. When teaching 1ˢᵗ and 2ⁿᵈ grade learners do you use the materials of the PEAP program?:

a) yes

b) no

12.If yes, how often do you use the PEAP material in your lesson?

a) once or twice a month

b) three or more times per month

c) in every lesson

13. If not, why not? (short answer)……..

14. What is your opinion of the PEAP materials? (short answer)……………………….

15. Do you need to add extra material of your own in your lessons?

a) Yes

b) No

16. If yes, what kind of material do you use (e.g. activities and materials from published textbooks for young learners, ideas for activities from the internet, etc.): (short answer)……………

17. Do you think that the PEAP materials should be updated?

a) Yes

b) No

18. If yes, which part of it? (short answer)………….

19. Do you find the PEAP website useful?:

a)Yes

b)No

20. If yes, how often do you use it?

a) not at all

b) sometimes

c) a lot

21. If not, why not? (short answer)…………..

22. What is the students' attitude towards the PEAP materials?

a) curious and enthusiastic

b) neutral, depending on the activity

c) bored and unmotivated

d) Other: (please specify)……..

23. What do the students enjoy the most regarding the materials? (short answer)…..

24. What do the students enjoy the least regarding the materials? (short answer)……..

Part 3. Distance learning period

25. How often did you have English classes with the first and second grade during the quarantine period?

a) never

b) less than once a week

c)once a week

d) twice a week

26. What was the hardest task in the distance learning process? (You may circle more than one)

a) keeping students engaged

b) overcoming technical difficulties

c) assessing students' performance

d) adjust the material for online teaching

e)Other: (please specify)……………

27. How often did you use the PEAP materials during the quarantine period?

a) never

b) once or twice a month

c) in every lesson

28. How could the PEAP materials be enriched so as to facilitate distance teaching? (short answer)…………………

Thank you for your time and participation

Appendix B: The interview transcripts

Interview No.1

1. **Ποιες είναι οι περιοχές ευθύνης σας;**

-Όλη η <mark>ανατολική Αττική</mark>, πρωτοβάθμια, δευτεροβάθμια, δημόσια και ιδιωτικά σχολεία και πρόσφατα προστέθηκε και ένα νηπιαγωγείο.

2. **Πόσους εκπαιδευτικούς πρωτοβάθμιας περίπου καλύπτετε;**

-Όταν ολοκληρωθεί η πρόσληψη των αναπληρωτών εκπαιδευτικών, ο αριθμός φτάνει περίπου τους 500. Αυτή τη στιγμή είμαστε περίπου 400.

3. **Πόσα χρόνια εργάζεστε ως σχολικός σύμβουλος- συντονίστρια εκπαιδευτικού έργου;**

-<mark>Ανέλαβα το Σεπτέμβριο του 2018 και η θητεία μου τελειώνει τον Ιούλιο του 2021.</mark>

4. **Μέσα στις τελευταία 2ετία σας έχει ζητηθεί κάποια καθοδήγηση σχετικά με την αξιοποίηση του υλικού του ΠΕΑΠ;   Αν ναι, μπορείτε να αναφέρετε έναν μέσο όρο για το σύνολο των φορών που κληθήκατε να συμβουλεύσετε κάποιον εκπαιδευτικό;**

-<mark>Οι επιμορφώσεις που γίνονται είναι αναγκαστικά προαιρετικές</mark>, καθώς <mark>δεν μπορείς να πάρεις τους εκπαιδευτικού από την ώρα εργασίας αν δεν συμφωνήσει ο διευθυντής</mark> ή αν ο εκπαιδευτικός δεν προσπαθήσει να τροποποιήσει το πρόγραμμα του. <mark>Η μοναδική ειδοποίηση ήρθε φέτος από αναπληρώτρια</mark> που δεν ήξερε τι είναι το ΠΕΑΠ και αυτό έτυχε να το

ανακαλύψω επειδή στα σχολεία της δεν έβρισκε το υλικό του ΠΕΑΠ ή ήταν ανακατεμένο.

5. **Με τι κριτήρια θεωρείτε ότι θα έπρεπε να προσεγγίζουμε την ξένη γλώσσα στην 1 η και 2 α τάξη του δημοτικού;**

-Όσον αφορά την επιμόρφωση, θα έπρεπε να μπορώ κάθε χρόνο αφού έχουν τακτοποιηθεί τα προγράμματα των σχολείων, να τραβήξω όσους έχουν ώρες σε πρώτη και Δευτέρα δημοτικού ίσως και Τρίτη και να τους κάνω ένα ταχύρρυθμο σεμινάριο μίας μέρας δουλεύοντας πάνω στο υλικό αυτό και τον τρόπο προσέγγισης. Από την άλλη, το υλικό που έχει το ΠΕΑΠ πάνω στην επιμόρφωση για τις ενότητες το θεωρώ αξιολογότατο και δεν χρειάζεται κανέναν επιμορφωτή για να το δει ο εκπαιδευτικός, να το ακολουθήσει και να πάρει μια πολύ καλή βασική γνώση. Όσον αφορά την προσέγγιση της διδασκαλίας, θεωρώ ότι το ΠΕΑΠ το προσεγγίζει έτσι ακριβώς όπως πρέπει. Όσον αφορά το υλικό, είναι τόσο πολύ που μπορείς να φτιάξεις το δικό σου syllabus και να το προσαρμόσεις στις ανάγκες των μαθητών.

6. **Πιστεύετε ότι το υλικό του ΠΕΑΠ πληροί αυτά τα κριτήρια;**

-Θεωρώ πως ναι, εφόσον υπάρχουν και οι αντίστοιχες ώρες διαθέσιμες.

7. **Μπορείτε να ανακαλέσετε τα τρία πιο συχνά προβλήματα που σας αναφέρουν οι καθηγητές Αγγλικών σχετικά με την ξένη γλώσσα στην 1 η και 2 α δημοτικού;**

-Σίγουρα μέχρι πέρυσι είχε αναφερθεί ότι η 1 ώρα δεν επαρκεί. Νομίζω καταργείται η ουσία του μαθήματος. Υπήρχε δυσκολία πρόσβασης στο έντυπο υλικό. Συχνά επίσης αναφέρονται στην αλλαγή νοοτροπίας των παιδιών και επίσης ότι μεγαλύτερο ποσοστό παιδιών έχει πλέον μαθησιακά προβλήματα.

8. **Σε τι βαθμό πιστεύετε ότι συνδέονται αυτά τα προβλήματα με το υλικό του ΠΕΑΠ;**

-Είμαι λίγο απόλυτη σε αυτό. Κανένα υλικό δε θα σου λύσει θέματα αν δε ξέρεις να τα λύσεις εσύ σαν εκπαιδευτικός. Φυσικά υπάρχει μεγάλη διαφορά στην ποιότητα του υλικού. *Το ΠΕΑΠ έχει καλή ποιότητα και αντίστοιχα και το βιβλίο της τρίτης δημοτικού.*

9. **Κατά την περίοδο της εξ αποστάσεως εκπαίδευσης δόθηκαν κάποιες κατευθυντήριες γραμμές για την προσέγγιση της διδασκαλίας των Αγγλικών στην 1η και 2α δημοτικού;**

-*Δόθηκα γενικές οδηγίες προσέγγισης. Εγώ κάνω τα σεμινάρια μαζί σε πρωτοβάθμια και δευτεροβάθμια, εκτός αν υπάρχει κάποιο συγκεκριμένο ζήτημα. Δεν έχω κάνει κάτι συγκεκριμένο για το ΠΕΑΠ.* Υπήρξαν κάποια ερωτήματα σχετικά με το τι κάνουμε με τα μικρά παιδιά, αλλά έχω την αίσθηση ότι τα δημοτικά δούλεψαν ελάχιστα στο περσινό lockdown και θεωρώ ότι το γεγονός ότι φέτος δεν έχουν κλείσει τα δημοτικά έχει να κάνει και με αυτό. Δεν ήταν συγκροτημένη η μετάβαση στην εξ αποστάσεως εκπαίδευση, όχι τόσο από τους ίδιους τους εκπαιδευτικούς όσο από την διεύθυνση του σχολείου. *Με μεγάλη περηφάνεια θα σου πω ότι οι ΠΕ06 της ανατολικής Αττικής που παρακολούθησαν τα σεμινάρια πρωτοστάτησαν και έκανα και σεμινάρια ενδοσχολικά για να βοηθήσουν τους υπόλοιπους συναδέλφους τους.*

10. **Υπήρξαν καθηγητές που σας γνωστοποίησαν σχετικές ανησυχίες τους κατά την περίοδο της εξ αποστάσεων εκπαίδευσης; Αν ναι, μπορείτε να αναφέρετε τις δυο κυριότερες;**

-Οι κυριότερες ανησυχίες είναι <mark>τι θα γίνει με τόσο μικρά παιδιά που δεν γνωρίζουν πώς να χειρίζονται τον υπολογιστή</mark> και <mark>πόσο υγιές είναι να ζητάμε από τα παιδιά να βρίσκονται μπροστά στις οθόνες για τόση ώρα</mark>. Πέρυσι ήταν μια εξαιρετικά δύσκολη περίοδος, καθώς ούτε τα παιδιά ούτε οι εκπαιδευτικοί ήταν εξοικειωμένοι με την εξ αποστάσεως εκπαίδευση. Φέτος η οδηγία που έδινα από τον Σεπτέμβριο ήταν να δείξουν στους μαθητές πως λειτουργεί η Webex μέσα στην τάξη.

11. Κρίνοντας συνολικά τη στάση των καθηγητών από την έναρξη λειτουργίας τους ΠΕΑΠ θεωρείτε ότι είναι θετικά ή αρνητικά προσκείμενοι σχετικά με την ελευθερία που τους παρέχει το δοθέν υλικό να σχεδιάσουν οι ίδιοι το μάθημα τους;

-<mark>Σταδιακά βαίνουν θετικοί.</mark> Ακόμα εκπαιδεύονται και πάρα πολλοί δεν το θέλουν. Την μετάβαση την έζησα ως εκπαιδευτικός , όχι ως συντονίστρια. Γενικά καθετί το οποίο θέλει δουλειά για να μη το πάρεις από την πρώτη σελίδα μέχρι την τελευταία δεν βρίσκει τους εκπαιδευτικούς ενθουσιώδεις υποστηρικτές. <mark>Είναι η παλιά γενιά εκπαιδευτικών. Αν δεν έχει προσωπικό ενδιαφέρον ο εκπαιδευτικός να εξελιχθεί, το πιο πιθανό είναι ότι θα αναπαράγει αυτό το οποίο διδάχθηκε.</mark>

Interview No.2

1. **Ποιες είναι οι περιοχές ευθύνης σας;**

-Είμαι συντονίστρια εκπαιδευτικού έργου στο ==ΠΕΚΕΣ Στερεάς Ελλάδας. Έχει έδρα τη Λαμία. Εγώ έχω στην ευθύνη μου όλες τις περιφερειακές ενότητες, Εύβοια, Βοιωτία, Φθιώτιδα, Ευρυτανία, Φωκίδα.==

2. **Πόσους εκπαιδευτικούς πρωτοβάθμιας περίπου καλύπτετε;**

-Έχω 186 εκπαιδευτικούς πρωτοβάθμιας εκπαίδευσης.

3. **Πόσα χρόνια εργάζεστε ως σχολικός σύμβουλος- συντονίστρια εκπαιδευτικού έργου;**

-==Από τον Σεπτέμβριο του 2018 και η θητεία μου τελειώνει το καλοκαίρι του 2021.==

4. **Μέσα στις τελευταία 2ετία σας έχει ζητηθεί κάποια καθοδήγηση σχετικά με την αξιοποίηση του υλικού του ΠΕΑΠ; Αν ναι, μπορείτε να αναφέρετε έναν μέσο όρο για το σύνολο των φορών που κληθήκατε να συμβουλεύσετε κάποιον εκπαιδευτικό;**

-Καταρχήν να πούμε ότι ==προέρχομαι από το χώρο της πρωτοβάθμιας εκπαίδευσης== ως καθηγήτρια αγγλικών, το οποίο σημαίνει ότι ==από τότε που μπήκαν τα αγγλικά σε αυτές τις δυο τάξεις είχα άμεση σχέση με το υλικό και τα παιδιά αυτής της ηλικίας. Παρόλα αυτά δε μου έχει ζητηθεί κάποια καθοδήγηση. Θα ήθελα βέβαια να έχω κάποια ευκαιρία να κάνω κάποιο σεμινάριο πάνω στο υλικό του ΠΕΑΠ.== Υπάρχουν πολλοί καθηγητές που δεν γνωρίζουν πώς να διδάξουν αυτές τις τάξεις και επιλέγουν μεγαλύτερες. Για

μένα είναι μια πρόκληση. Πολλές φορές υπάρχει αμφισβήτηση από την πλευρά των γονέων.

5. Με τι κριτήρια θεωρείτε ότι θα έπρεπε να προσεγγίζουμε την ξένη γλώσσα στην 1ᵉ και 2ᵃ τάξη του δημοτικού;

-Εγώ συμφωνώ με την προσέγγιση που έχει υιοθετήσει το ΠΕΑΠ, γιατί ακολουθεί τις θεματικές περιοχές ανάπτυξης που έχει η πρώτη και δευτέρα δημοτικού. Επίσης, θεωρώ ότι η μαθησιοκεντρική προσέγγιση που ακολουθεί το ΠΕΑΠ ενδείκνυται γι' αυτές τις ηλικίες και ο στόχος είναι η διάδραση που αναπτύσσεται μεταξύ των μαθητών και η ανάπτυξη των κοινωνικών δεξιοτήτων τους.

6. Πιστεύετε ότι το υλικό του ΠΕΑΠ πληροί αυτά τα κριτήρια;

-Ναι

7. Μπορείτε να ανακαλέσετε τα τρία πιο συχνά προβλήματα που σας αναφέρουν οι καθηγητές Αγγλικών σχετικά με την ξένη γλώσσα στην 1ᵉ και 2ᵃ δημοτικού;

-Το πιο συχνό πρόβλημα έχει να κάνει με τον διαθέσιμο χρόνο. Ακόμα και τώρα με τις δυο ώρες εξακολουθεί είναι δύσκολο. Ένα επίσης συχνό πρόβλημα είναι η έλλειψη γέφυρας με το υλικό της τρίτης τάξης. Θεωρώ ότι ο αναδυόμενος γραμματισμός που ξεκινάει από το δεύτερο τρίμηνο δεν είναι αρκετός για να γεφυρωθεί το χάσμα με την τρίτη δημοτικού. Ίσως θα έπρεπε όλη η δευτέρα δημοτικού να ασχολείται με τον αναδυόμενο γραμματισμό. Οι καθηγήτριες «παραπονιούνται» και για τη θέση τους στο ωρολόγιο πρόγραμμα, καθώς συνήθως μπαίνουν στην τελευταία ώρα που είναι μικρότερη. Το ότι δεν υπάρχει ειδική αίθουσα για τη διδασκαλία της Αγγλικής και οι καθηγήτριες

πρέπει να μεταφέρουν τα υλικά από τη μια τάξη στην άλλη. Σαν τρίτο πρόβλημα σιγουρά θα αναφέρουμε την <mark>αμφισβήτηση από τους γονείς</mark>. Όσο πιο μικρή είναι η τάξη ηλικιακά τόσο περισσότερη ενέργεια πρέπει να δώσει μια καθηγήτρια. Παρόλα αυτά δεν γίνεται αποδεκτό το έργο της ως επιτυχία.

8. **Σε τι βαθμό πιστεύετε ότι συνδέονται αυτά τα προβλήματα με το υλικό του ΠΕΑΠ;**

-<mark>Η έλλειψη σύνδεσης από τη δευτέρα στην τρίτη δημοτικού.</mark> Επίσης, ενώ στην ιστοσελίδα υπήρχε αρκετό υλικό για την επιμόρφωση των καθηγητών, πολλές καθηγήτριες μου λένε ότι δε το βρίσκουν. <mark>Οι εκπαιδευτικοί χρειάζονται κάποια επιπλέον επιμόρφωση</mark> και για το υλικό και για την μεθοδολογία και την αντιμετώπιση αυτής της ηλικίας.

9. **Κατά την περίοδο της εξ αποστάσεως εκπαίδευσης δόθηκαν κάποιες κατευθυντήριες γραμμές για την προσέγγιση της διδασκαλίας των Αγγλικών στην 1ʰ και 2ᵃ δημοτικού;**

-<mark>Εγώ έκανα τηλεδιάσκεψη ξεχωριστά ανά βαθμίδες, πρωτοβάθμια και δευτεροβάθμια, και τους καθοδήγησα στη χρήση της πλατφόρμας WebEx σε σχέση με το υλικό της πρώτης και δευτέρας.</mark> Τους έδωσα ξεχωριστές κατευθύνσεις, να χρησιμοποιούν ακόμη περισσότερα τραγούδια και ιστορίες, δίνοντας περισσότερο υλικό με εικόνες, ζωγραφιές, λίγα γράμματα κλπ. Σίγουρα δεν ήταν εύκολο να καθοδηγήσεις τα μικρά παιδιά να έχουν διάδραση στην εξ αποστάσεως εκπαίδευση. Πιστεύω ότι οι εκπαιδευτικοί είχαν υλικό να δώσουν καθώς υπάρχουν πάρα πολλές σελίδες και στο διαδίκτυο με καλό υλικό. <mark>Σε κάποια σχολεία αρχικά δεν έβαζαν καθόλου τις καθηγήτριες αγγλικών στο πρόγραμμα. Τις συμβούλευσα ότι θα έπρεπε να το διεκδικήσουν,</mark>

αλλιώς ότι είχαν προσπαθήσει να χτίσουν θα γκρεμιζόταν μέσα σε μια *βδομάδα.*

10. Υπήρξαν καθηγητές που σας γνωστοποίησαν σχετικές ανησυχίες τους κατά την περίοδο της εξ αποστάσεων εκπαίδευσης; Αν ναι, μπορείτε να αναφέρετε τις δυο κυριότερες;

-Οι ανησυχίες τους εστιάζονταν στο θέμα του υλικού, δηλαδή πως θα μπορούσαν να επικοινωνήσουν το υλικό και αυτό που ήθελαν στα παιδιά με τον καλύτερο τρόπο. Επίσης, να διατηρήσουν την εκπαιδευτική διαδικασία όσον αφορά την αγγλική γλώσσα για να εξασφαλιστεί αυτή η γέφυρα αναμεσά στη δευτέρα και στην τρίτη.

11. Κρίνοντας συνολικά τη στάση των καθηγητών από την έναρξη λειτουργίας τους ΠΕΑΠ θεωρείτε ότι είναι θετικά ή αρνητικά προσκείμενοι σχετικά με την ελευθερία που τους παρέχει το δοθέν υλικό να σχεδιάσουν οι ίδιοι το μάθημα τους;

-Το αν είναι θετικά ή αρνητικά προσκείμενοι δεν εξαρτάται από το υλικό αυτό καθαυτό, αλλά από τη διάθεση που έχει ο κάθε καθηγητής να σχεδιάσει ή να εμπλουτίσει το υλικό με κάτι δικό του ή να το αφήσει «στην άκρη» και να χαράξει μια δική του πορεία. Υπάρχουν καθηγητές που έχουν ανάγκη την καθοδήγηση που δίνει το υλικό του ΠΕΑΠ, υπάρχουν και άλλοι που το θεωρούν δέσμευση. Ο καθοριστικός παράγοντας είναι πόση φαντασία και πόση διάθεση έχει ο καθηγητής.