

## LITERATURE AND LANGUAGE SKILLS IN PRIMARY SCHOOL: A CASE STUDY OF A STUDENT-CENTERED TEACHING INTERVENTION

**Alexandra Prentza**  
University of Ioannina  
GREECE  
aprentza@uoi.gr

### ABSTRACT

This paper discusses a case study which examines whether a student-centered teaching intervention would improve language skills in a class of 23 Greek-speaking 8-year-old primary school children. The targeted language skills involve acquaintance with literary text conventions like personification and metaphorical language, as well as the use of these conventions in a guided writing activity, along with the use of grammatically accurate and stylistically appropriate language. The student-centered intervention is based on a specific model of differentiated teaching (see Fykaris, 2014; Tomlinson, 2005) and employs literary texts that the students are familiar with, since the school implements a project which aims at cultivating positive book reading habits and attitudes. According to the National Curricula, acquainting students with Literature and cultivating a culture of reading is identified both as one of the main goals of language teaching and as one of the means of improving language skills. Qualitative data was obtained by means of class observation which targeted the implementation and the outcomes of the intervention according to the goals set, while data from activities was analyzed by both the teacher and the researcher against the following criteria: a) student understanding of the literary conventions investigated and b) student ability to use grammatically accurate and stylistically appropriate language in the guided production task. As regards the overall evaluation of the process, emphasis is placed on student involvement and participation. The results showed that students produced texts which purposefully used personification and metaphorical language, while they used language accurately and appropriately according to their age. What is more, student involvement was enhanced advancing positive attitudes towards book-reading and language instruction in general.

**Keywords:** Primary school, language skills, student-centered approach, literature.