

EXAMINING THE INFLUENCE OF ARTS INTEGRATION IN ENGLISH
LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION WITHIN THE GREEK PRIVATE EDUCATIONAL
SETTING: A QUALITATIVE RESEARCH STUDY

by

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Integrating arts in English language instruction is an approach with great potential. Many studies have addressed the benefits of arts-based instruction in the English learning context. However, research on arts integration in Greece is very limited, especially regarding the private sector of the country. This qualitative study aims to explore both learners' and teachers' perspectives towards arts integration. The sample size consisted of ten participants in total, five students and five teachers. Findings from this study aligned with the existing literature although there were some unique aspects considering the diversity of the Greek private educational system. Intriguingly, while learners and teachers seemed to be in favor of this approach, they noted that several challenges separate theory from practice. In conclusion, this study provides valuable insights regarding arts-integration in English language teaching within the private educational system in Greece, through the experiences and perceptions of the interviewees.

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1. Introduction

Greece is one of the countries that prioritize second language learning as Greek is a lesser spoken world language. Stakeholders support that mastering English is equivalent with significant academic, professional and socioeconomic opportunities and this perception carries a degree of truth (Giannikas & Nikitaki 2022). Inextricably linked with the necessity of the English language competence is the acquisition of the certificates that verify the linguistic proficiency. Exam-oriented practices are a very common phenomenon within the Greek educational system especially in the private domain where the expectations are higher. As Angouri et. al. (2010) suggest, private language institutes are considered to be more trustworthy compared to state institutions. While this situation has been the norm for many years in Greece, it is imperative to note that generations have changed. Traditional English teaching methods cannot cater for the educational needs of students living in the second decade of the 21st century (Chi, 2017). Taking into consideration how many things have changed in the contemporary society, from the rapid advancement of technology to a global pandemic, the newest generation has been exposed to much different stimuli than the oldest one.

This serves to emphasize that English language teaching practices need to change to accommodate learners' needs. There is a plethora of methods and approaches that are proposed in the literature in order to capture learners' interest. In this research paper, arts and more precisely drama, music and films are thoroughly discussed and analyzed as a strategy to motivate, engage and promote learners' participation and academic success. Arts integration is a teaching method that has the potential to alter school culture and boost the learning process while strengthening students' individual abilities (Biscoe & Wilson, 2015). A number of stakeholders hold on the belief that language teachers should teach nothing but language (Kramersch, 2013). In parallel, in many countries worldwide, including Greece, arts instruction has been marginalized, neglected or has diminished in both its educational presence and quality (Mishook & Kornhaber, 2006). However, these challenges represent only one side of the issue. On

the other hand, numerous studies have demonstrated a correlation between arts-integrated lessons and enhanced student achievement. (Anderson & Loughlin, 2014). Additionally, many contemporary researchers have examined the need for integrating a diverse range of cultural studies alongside foreign language instruction (Kostikova, et al., 2018). While arts integration in language teaching offers notable benefits when incorporated in instructional syllabi, there is a limited body of research exploring its impact within the Greek educational context especially in the private domain.

In the private domain specifically, over the past two decades, efforts have been made to modernize foreign language learning through arts integration. However, this approach has not yet been fully embraced due to the lack of structured programs and guidance. Additionally, since 1954, the “teaching through the arts” approach has emerged and it has been promoted by the International Society for Education Through Art, under the guidance of UNESCO (Steers, 2001, as cited in Sotiropoulou-Zorbala, 2012). Despite the ongoing efforts to implement arts across the foreign language curricula numerous challenges persist, hindering the adoption of alternative teaching and learning methods. Greece is not an exception to these challenges. As stated in the relevant literature, many advocate for arts integration in English language teaching, but argue that due to the impoverished educational systems and the strong focus on standardized testing, arts are often dismissed as unnecessary. (Winner & Hetland, 2008). Given the researcher’s background in the arts and the evident gap in the literature regarding the private Greek educational system, this dissertation aims to explore the potential of arts integration in this context.

The process of selecting a research area or topic can be influenced by various factors such as the researcher’s past interests, concerns, or even aspects of their personal history. (Holliday, 2007). In this study, the researcher chose the topic of arts-integrated language learning as she holds a degree in Theater Studies while she is in the process of acquiring a master’s degree in TESOL. She has been teaching English as a tutor for the past six years and by incorporating arts in her teaching she has noticed changes regarding learners’ motivation and achievement. Therefore, the

researcher is intrigued by the difference arts, especially drama, music and films can make in the language acquisition and she wanted to delve in that area of interest. Given the limited research conducted in Greece regarding the integration of arts in English language instruction, this study aims to examine how arts can serve as a tool to boost learner motivation and enhance linguistic proficiency in the target language.

The researcher chose to conduct her study by using qualitative research. This type of research refers to any type of inquiry that generates findings without relying on statistical methods. Qualitative research is concerned with analyzing subjective meanings and practices by gathering non-standardized data (Rahman, 2016). Since this particular research sought to explore individuals' experiences, interpretations and views, qualitative research was the way to collect and analyze this type of data. By interviewing teachers, the researcher aimed to explore their attitudes towards arts mediated instruction and why they choose to include or exclude arts from their teaching. In the same vein, with this study the researcher wanted to investigate students' preferences regarding arts-based instruction in their English lessons. Hence, this study's intention is to analyze interpretations of both teachers and learners and why arts are or are not an important component to a private English language classroom in Greece.

In other words, the main purpose of this research is to investigate the influence of arts integration in English language instruction within the Greek private sector. Private education in this particular context includes every institution that does not originate from the state. This encompasses private schools, private language schools (frodistiria) and private house lessons. By examining both teacher and student perspectives, this study aims to provide a thorough understanding of the benefits and challenges of arts-intergraded language lessons. The research also seeks to answer whether arts-mediated instruction can have a positive impact on learners' motivation and linguistic proficiency and also discuss the potential barriers to its implementation considering teacher and student scope. This study will provide valuable insights into arts integration in English language teaching within the private sector of the country. The interviews consisted of six questions, different for the teachers and learners and a

discussion that followed regarding particular experiences or thoughts. Data analysis focused on seeking patterning of responses and discourse analysis (Cohen et al., 2005). Unfortunately, since in this research only ten participants were interviewed, data may not be generalizable as they are a product of a small-scale study exploring subjective interpretations on arts-integrated English lessons (Escobar et.al, 2019).

This dissertation consists of six sections, this introductory included. More specifically, each of these sections addresses different aspects of the research. This first section discussed the research background providing information about arts integrated English instruction in the Greek context. In parallel, it stated the purpose of the research and the significance of the study. The next section will be devoted in a detailed literature review analyzing the different theories that exist in the literature regarding the implementation of arts in language teaching. Section three summarizes the research methodology, discussing in detail the qualitative approach employed, including the data collection process, the participants, the procedures and the ethical concerns surrounding the research conducted. The fourth section presents thoroughly the findings from the research, analyzing the data collected focusing on seeking patterning of responses and discourse analysis (Cohen et al., 2005). In the fifth section, the findings are discussed in relation to the existing literature. Finally, section six concludes the dissertation by summarizing the key findings.

2. Literature review

Introduction

This section provides a comprehensive review of the relevant literature regarding arts integration in English language teaching. The review begins by exploring the role of arts across the curriculum, as this forms the foundation of the research topic. It then narrows the focus to arts-integrated English language instruction globally, before specifically examining the Greek context. Following this, the study reviews the use of drama, music and films in language teaching, which are the key arts forms discussed in this research. Finally, key issues will be highlighted. Each of these topics plays a significant role in understanding the existing knowledge in the field.

In general, the implementation of arts across a variety of school subjects has been shown to enhance learners' motivation, increase engagement, reduce cultural bias and support learning in a broad sense (Latta & Chan, 2010). More specifically, arts integration in English language learning has been affiliated with higher achievement in language acquisition (Anderson & Loughlin, 2014). Within the Greek context, there are limited studies surrounding arts-integrated language learning, with even fewer focusing on the private sector. As a result, this study aims to address this research gap by providing meaningful insights. Additionally, this study's focus on the integration of drama, music and films in language instruction provides a synthesis often lacking in the existing literature, where the majority of studies tend to concentrate on one form at a time. Finally, summarizing the key issues within the literature will offer a clearer understanding of the current research and further contextualize this particular study.

2.1 Arts across the curriculum

A significant body of research has sought to define arts integration across various school subjects. In their review, Burnaford et al., (2007), use the etymology of the word integration to describe its meaning. Specifically, they explain that the term “integration” derives from the Latin word *integrare* which means to make something a whole. In this context, arts can be seen as the essential component that completes education. Indeed, in real-life scenarios, when faced with complex problems, individuals often approach solutions holistically, rather than separating knowledge into distinct disciplines such as language, math, history or art (Burnaford et al., 2007). Yet, ironically, in education, this separation of knowledge often persists. It was 1976 when the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC acknowledged the vital role arts play in education and a collaboration with local and national schools began to ensure that arts will be included in their syllabi (Duma & Lynee, 2014). Following this, in 1999 the Kennedy Center has been intensively cooperating with a network of partner schools by empowering the professional development for teachers, focusing on the implementation of arts integration. This initiative, named Changing Education Through the Arts (CETA), is built upon a broad and comprehensive definition of arts integration (Silverstein & Layne, 2010). Consequently, these actions influenced more and more educational systems worldwide to consider the integration of arts across the curriculum. In fact, it has been reported that there is an increasing interest in arts integration as an approach through which arts are involved in the teaching of other subjects such as science, language, mathematics and social studies (Silverstein & Layne, 2010).

Burnaford et al., (2007), highlight that the necessity of integrating arts in other subjects stems from the neurological benefits associated with arts engagement, which enhance individuals’ abilities to succeed in non-arts tasks. More precisely, they suggest that an arts integrated curriculum, helps students familiarize themselves with analyzing, evaluating and drawing conclusions based on what they observe and hear. In this way, students learn how to express their perceptions and experiences while communicating ideas, feelings and emotions through artistic activities. Such expression is believed to have a positive impact on learners’ reasoning abilities and critical thinking. In the same vein, Duma and Lynee (2014), argue that arts have the

potential to stimulate several learning modalities such as visual, aural and kinesthetic therefore, enhancing the likelihood of learning to occur. Moreover, it is indicated that when arts are involved in other subjects, students can make strong connections between the arts and other subjects. It is widely demonstrated that arts stimulate long-term memory which enables students to learn in a deeper level. Thus, incorporating arts into history, science and math can have a positive impact on the pedagogical practices of schools (Duma & Lynne 2014). Based on the aforementioned observations, arts can enhance learning as they encourage a multisensory response to the new information acquired. As a result, arts can create an inclusive environment accommodating a diverse range of learners, as Lynch (2007) points out, arts integrations can foster a safe and supportive environment appropriate for taking risks.

Another aspect to consider, is the correlation between arts integration and improved academic achievement. Previous studies have explored the relationship between arts-integrated instruction and elevated academic performance (Gullatt, 2008). Arts encompass a type of cognitive value that can help students develop literacy skills (Lynch, 2007). Studies have shown that arts implementation can significantly improve students' performance not only regarding the social aspects but in the standardized tests too (Duma & Lynne 2014). Taking into consideration these findings, it becomes evident that students can be greatly benefited by an arts-integrated approach and that can have an impact on the contemporary society as well. David Kearns (as cited in Garrett, 2013), claims that nowadays economy has been affected by the lack of creative ideas and that situation can be altered by promoting and teaching creativity. The initiative to integrate arts throughout the curriculum concentrated on developing and providing innovative courses, with the goal of fostering creativity through aesthetic engagement for both teachers and students (Garrett, 2013). In this subsection the major effect arts can have when implemented across the curriculum has been analyzed. The following sub-section will discuss the benefits of arts-integration in English language instruction.

2.2 Arts-integrated English Language Instruction

A substantial body of research has explored whether arts should or should not be a part of English language instruction. One perspective, supported by a group of stakeholders and researchers argues that English language teachers should teach nothing else but the target language; thus, culture is designated for literature professors (Kramsch, 2013). On the other hand, much of the previous research on arts integration has highlighted the numerous benefits associated with this approach in English language teaching. Spina (2006, as cited in Latta & Chan, 2010), demonstrated that arts-based curricula not only facilitate English learning but also offer cognitive advantages, enhancing strengths inherent in bilingualism. Furthermore, incorporating arts in EFL classrooms fosters critical thinking and accommodates diverse learning styles. This approach benefits students both linguistically and psychologically, as research shows that arts integration can significantly lower the affective filter, increase motivation and encourage teamwork (Dobos, 2020). Brouillette et al., (2015) highlighted a project called Teaching Artist Project (TAP), a collaboration between the San Diego Unified School District and the University of California, which supported the idea of incorporating arts into English language instruction to strengthen young learners' language acquisition. Their research demonstrated that arts integration had a positive impact on the language development of the participating students.

The positive impact of integrating arts into language teaching is well recognized with research highlighting its role in enhancing student engagement, fostering creativity, and improving language proficiency. Specifically, interviews conducted with English language teachers revealed their positive attitudes towards arts-mediated instruction, as they reported a wide range of benefits stemming from their experience. Firstly, teachers stated that arts-based instruction developed students' social-emotional and academic competencies. In parallel, the interviewed teachers confirmed that arts-integrated instruction offered English language learners numerous opportunities to enhance their vocabulary acquisition while participating in meaningful interactions during speaking activities (Brouillette et al., 2015). These findings are significant as they affirm the notion that an arts-based curriculum facilitates language development within rich, authentic contexts, challenging learners to navigate language in diverse

ways that reflect real-life situations (Latta & Chan, 2010). In addition to teachers noticing positive effects on student progress, standardized tests also showed improvements due to arts integration. Students who participated in arts activities as part of their English lessons performed better on standardized tests (Brouillette et al., 2015). This shows that the benefits of arts integration are supported by measurable outcomes, not just subjective opinions.

To this point, the advantages of arts integration in English language instruction have been thoroughly examined. However, it is essential to also consider the challenges associated with this approach as highlighted in the relevant studies. As Dobos (2020) argues: “The main problem regarding foreign language teaching, is the lack of passion. Following this course of action, lack of passion develops into lack of interest and lack of initiative”. This observation, holds some truth as in foreign language teaching sometimes the ultimate goal for students is to succeed in certificate acquisition and standardized tests. Consequently, creativity and imagination are often considered unnecessary. In the same vein, a recurring problem mentioned in the literature is the lack of teacher training. In many countries, arts education is so limited that teachers do not have the opportunity to learn standard-based arts hence, they feel uncomfortable with the idea of implementing arts in their teaching (Brouillette et al., 2015).

Almost every paper that has been written on arts integration in foreign language teaching addresses the issue of time. More specifically, both researchers and teachers emphasize the limited time available for incorporating arts in English language teaching. In addition to the already constrained classroom hours, arts integration requires significant preparation from teachers, often demanding personal time. Language teachers already have substantial out-of-class responsibilities, such as planning, grading and organizing materials. The additional planning, research, and preparation needed for arts integration can feel overwhelming, leading many teachers to avoid committing to it (Dobos, 2020). The above-stated issues significantly influence the decision to include or exclude arts from English language teaching. The

next section will examine arts-integration in English language instruction within the Greek context.

2.3 Arts-integrated English Language Teaching in Greece

Nowadays, English is no longer tied to a specific culture or region; instead, it has become a lingua franca encompassing areas such as business, technological advancements, travel, sports, music and more (Angouri, et al., 2010). As mentioned in the Introduction, this global status that English language holds, has influenced many countries, Greece included, as Greek is a lesser spoken language (Giannikas & Nikitaki 2022). Consequently, the instruction of English has become compulsory from the beginning of elementary school in Greece. More specifically, English begins to be taught in the first year of elementary school while the second language (French or German) begins at the fifth grade. Foreign language instruction in Greece is offered in both public and private schools or language institutes (Angouri, et al., 2010).

According to research conducted by Angouri et al., (2010), the Greek EFL context is rather different compared to other European countries, reflecting the strong interest of Greek parents and learners in foreign language education. English, given its global prominence, is seen as a gateway to valuable educational, professional, and socioeconomic opportunities, making it the preferred foreign language for most Greeks to learn (Angouri et al., 2010). Moreover, the Greek educational system is exam-driven and certificate-oriented, which often leads to the marginalization and neglect of creativity.

Unfortunately, research on arts integration in English language instruction in Greece remains limited (Kikioni & Zafiri, 2021), with most of the available literature focusing primarily on state elementary schools. In recent years, however, efforts have been made to incorporate arts across the curriculum, both as a taught subject and a teaching medium, with the Hellenic Pedagogical Institute-Hellenic Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs supporting this endeavor (Sotiropoulou-Zorbala, 2012). While the benefits of arts integration are widely recognized the reality in most schools and language institutions remains unchanged, with little progress in implementing these practices. English language teachers in Greece face challenges

that are not encountered by other teachers. Specifically, English teachers often have to teach students across various grade levels and multiple schools while they have to deal with the competition from private tutoring in the same subject (Giannikas, 2022). In parallel, the limited time, the certificate expectations and the lack of proper training are some of the main reasons that arts are excluded from the English language instruction.

In their research, Kikioni & Zafiri (2021) highlight the benefits of arts integration in the English classroom. More specifically, they note that arts serve as a valuable resource that positively impacts language acquisition. Their study focused particularly on visual arts revealing that arts-mediated instruction enhances motivation and improves learners' speaking skills. Similarly, vocabulary acquisition occurs more rapidly due to the multisensory activities arts integration entails. These findings align with the existing literature on arts integration in English language teaching, while they can be used to strengthen the vital role of the arts in education. As Sotiropoulou-Zorbala (2012) states, during the 20th century the idea of "teaching through the arts" was established. In essence, arts-integration has been described as an attempt to create connections between learning in the arts and the development of skills and knowledge in other subjects within the curriculum. Based on her study Sotiropoulou-Zorbala (2012) indicates that it is likely not a coincidence that today's schools often use the arts as a subject or a teaching medium, rather than a method of instruction. This may be because arts teachers follow a set curriculum that outlines specific goals and outcomes for using the arts in education. Taking all these into consideration, research on arts integration in English language instruction in Greece remains insufficient. While efforts have been made to incorporate arts in foreign language teaching, the outcomes have been inadequate. Several factors contribute to the exclusion or neglect of the arts, including the certificate-driven culture, time constraints and lack of teacher training. However, it has been demonstrated that arts can transform the process of learning a foreign language and therefore, continued efforts to incorporate arts into English language instruction in Greece are essential. The following section will provide an in-depth analysis of the integration of three specific art forms-drama, music, and film-into English language teaching.

2.4 Drama, Music and Films in English Language Teaching

To this point, it has become clear that arts integration in English language instruction positively impacts the learning process. In this sub-section, three specific forms of art- drama, music and films- will be analyzed. It is now well established from a variety of studies that these art forms can significantly boost motivation, enhance linguistic competence, create a supportive learning environment, and provide meaningful input (Anderson & Loughlin, 2014). However, each of these arts offers unique opportunities, so, this sub-section will explore them individually.

2.4.1 Drama

In the contemporary society, more and more English teachers recognize the importance of differentiating their instruction to make their classes more inclusive, interactive and of course more interesting. As Banerjee (2014), suggests one of the most effective approaches is the integration of drama in English language classrooms. Introducing drama into foreign language teaching offers numerous benefits. To begin with, it helps non-native English speakers start thinking directly in the target language (Banerjee, 2014). Indeed, most learners have the tendency to think in their L1 and then translate their thoughts into the target language. Drama can be used as a valuable tool for breaking the habit of relying on translation. Moreover, classroom drama can transform the classroom into a constructivist learning environment by encouraging students to explore new concepts while expressing their creativity and imagination (Anderson & Loughlin, 2014). Greenfander & Brouillette (2013), also emphasize the advantages of dramatization. In their paper, they state that through dramatization, learners are able to gain a better understanding of the plot and the feelings of the characters even without comprehending every word. As a result, drama not only enhances students' linguistic skills but also deepens their emotional awareness.

In the same vein, theatre activities have been shown to enhance literacy skills (Brouillette et al., 2015). Specifically, as Banerjee (2014) highlights, drama activities positively influence all four language skills: Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. Drama offers a holistic language experience, as it unfolds in and through

language. Through these activities, students can improve their communication skills and express their thoughts more effectively in the target language. Furthermore, drama significantly boosts students' motivation and creates a supportive environment, ideal for language production. In addition, it provides enjoyment and excitement while offering various opportunities for language use within context, making it valuable for teaching and learning across different subject areas. Finally, through drama, students can develop useful skills such as leadership, team work and the ability to manage real-life situations (Banerjee, 2014). Taking into consideration all the above, integrating drama into English language instruction emerges as a promising approach that can enhance learning. The following sub-section will delve into the benefits of music within the English language context.

2.4.2 Music

English language teaching is a field that has seen numerous approaches and methods researched and proposed to enhance its effectiveness. To this day, modern science continues to investigate new effective ways of teaching English. One of the revisited methods is teaching through music (Akhamadullina et al., 2016). Music consists of different components such as rhythm, form and lyrics. Research indicates that music is fundamentally a linguistic phenomenon, as every language possesses its unique musical characteristics, including elements such as pace, dynamics, metrical rhythm, pitch, and form (Akhamadullina et al., 2016). Therefore, music can serve as an effective tool for language acquisition. As Erten (2015) points out, songs contain a significant amount of lexical and grammatical repetitions, making them particularly suitable for foreign language learning. Integrating music into English language teaching offers several benefits, encompassing both linguistic and psychological aspects.

Firstly, music is rich in content providing learners with both lexical and grammatical stimuli (Lems, 2016). Lyrics convey complex messages while maintaining rhyme. The words used in songs are often vivid and multifaceted; therefore, by listening to music, students can acquire new expressions and generally, enhance their vocabulary. In addition to vocabulary acquisition, music exposes learners to different native

pronunciations allowing them to improve their own (Lems, 2016). According to the literature, teachers can incorporate multiple activities involving music beyond just playing songs in their classrooms. For instance, karaoke is suggested as a beneficial alternative. As Erten (2015) proposes, karaoke is a popular leisure activity in Western countries. The process of keeping up with the lyrics fosters linguistic processing and language articulation simultaneously. Similarly, Lems (2016) supports the idea that karaoke can enhance learners' pronunciation.

As mentioned, there are many ways for English teachers to integrate music into their teaching, including listening and reading activities, fill-in-the-blanks, dictation, and even true-false questions (Erten, 2015). All these activities boost language acquisition and fluency. Apart from the linguistic benefits, there is evidence of psychological advantages to integrating music in English language learning. When music is a part of foreign language teaching, the classroom atmosphere becomes more enjoyable, interactive and engaging for students. Today, modern technology allows easy access to all kinds of music with a click of a button. Numerous online platforms enable teachers to use music effectively in the classroom (Lems, 2016). Music along with drama, are two rather promising approaches in English language learning; however, there are not the only ones. Films are also considered an effective form of art that falls under the category of arts integration, and the following sub-section analyzes their benefits.

2.4.3 Films

According to the relevant literature, several studies emphasize the important role that films can play in facilitating language acquisition. As previously discussed with drama and music, English language teachers and researchers continue to strive for new methods and approaches to improve their teaching (Roslim et al., 2021). Films seem to be a fruitful addition. Despite the fact that films are often associated with an entertaining pastime activity, research suggests that they can be used as an effective educational tool in foreign language teaching (Rao, 2019). More specifically, films provide rich input in the target language, exposing learners to various native pronunciations. Beyond pronunciation, films offer natural exposure to real-life

language, including grammar structures, syntax and vocabulary, which textbooks often lack. Integrating English movies in language teaching can enhance reading comprehension, speaking and listening as well as improve writing skills and motivation (Rao, 2019).

According to research by Roslim et al., (2021), students reported feeling more motivated to learn English when movies were incorporated into their lessons. Films also introduce learners to correct stress and intonation-skills that are rarely emphasized in traditional language classrooms. Furthermore, when vocabulary is presented within meaningful contexts, such as through films, learners are more likely to acquire and use it accurately (Roslim et al., 2021). Similarly, Rao (2019) suggests that subtitles in the target language positively impact reading comprehension by offering both oral and visual input. When teachers introduce films within a meaningful learning context, they spark conversation and stimulate learners' imagination. Researchers emphasize the importance of selecting films appropriate to students' age and level, as the right choice can greatly enhance learning outcomes.

Like with music, modern learners benefit from advanced technology, which makes accessing films with subtitles on various online platforms easier than ever (Rao, 2019). Schools and language schools are now equipped with projectors and smart boards, facilitating the integration of films into foreign language instruction. Overall, films can significantly enhance language learning when integrated into a meaningful context, boosting motivation, offering rich input and assisting language production. In conclusion, after examining three specific forms of art-drama, music, and films-it is clear that each has much to offer in an English language classroom. Research consistently demonstrates that arts integration fosters engagement and drives English language acquisition. Teachers are strongly encouraged to incorporate arts-based experiences into their instruction (Anderson & Loughlin, 2014). The final section will synthesize the key issues of this literature review and introduce the methodology employed in this qualitative research study.

2.5 Key Issues and Conclusion

This section provided a thorough analysis of the existing literature on arts integration in English language teaching, particularly in the Greek educational system, focusing on the three art forms-drama, music and films- on which this study is based. In sum, there are different views on whether arts should be integrated into English language instruction. Some argue that English teachers should focus solely on language teaching (Kramsch, 2013). While these opinions exist, a vast majority of researchers and teachers advocate for arts integration, as numerous studies suggest that arts foster critical thinking, cater to diverse learning styles and boost students' motivation (Dobos, 2020). Many teachers also noted that arts-based instruction helps develop students' emotional, social and academic competences. Research further supports that arts integration improves vocabulary acquisition and language skills while making lessons more engaging (Brouillette et al., 2015).

The challenges associated with arts integration include time constraints, lack of teacher training and shortage of passion. Limited classroom hours combined with the additional preparation required, were noted as significant barriers (Dobos, 2020). Moreover, inadequate teacher training discouraged the implementation of arts in English language teaching. Furthermore, the lack of passion often stemming from strict schedules and exam-oriented systems further hinders the integration of arts. While these challenges are observed globally, the situation in Greece is uniquely complex. The country's certificate-driven practices combined with English being a part of mandatory education, complicate the situation. Despite the proven benefits, arts-integration in English language teaching remains under-researched in Greece.

Among the many art forms believed to enhance language acquisition, this study focuses on three: drama, music, and films. Banerjee (2014) supports that drama fosters creativity and creates a non-threatening environment, by helping learners to think in the target language. Drama also promotes collaboration and team work (Anderson & Loughlin, 2014). Music, on the other hand, offers rich lexical and grammatical input (Lems, 2016). Erten (2015) argues that the repetition and vivid language in song lyrics help improve students' pronunciation and vocabulary acquisition. In a similar way, films provide authentic, real-life language exposure,

enhancing learners' pronunciation, vocabulary and comprehension (Roslim et al., 2021). When used with subtitles, films can also strengthen reading skills (Rao, 2019).

In conclusion, this study aims to explore teachers' and students' perspectives regarding arts integration in the Greek private educational system. Given the lack of research on this topic in Greece, particularly in private education, this qualitative research aims to provide insights into that gap. The next section outlines the research methodology, including participant selection, research procedure, data analysis, and ethical considerations.

3. Research Methodology

The purpose of this section is to introduce the research methodology for this qualitative study regarding teachers' and learners' perceptions of arts integration in English language learning. The qualitative approach allowed for a more profound comprehension of teachers' and learners' experiences in that domain and provided insights to develop an understanding of how arts can have an impact in language learning. Qualitative research is inherently interpretive, it suggests that the researcher can shed light on fragments of reality. Consequently, qualitative research does not have to prove things as strongly as other types of research, but rather, it builds a picture gradually (Holliday, 2007). The applicability of qualitative research is thoroughly explained in this section including the methodology, study's participants, procedure and ethical considerations.

3.1 Methodology Selected

As previously discussed, qualitative research offers more profound insights into experiences and preferences therefore, it was the most suitable choice for the present study. Regarding the instrument for data collection, semi-structured interviews were used. Semi-structured interviews allow for an in-depth exploration of participants' experiences and perspectives. This procedure typically provides rich and detailed data. Additionally, semi-structured interviews ensure flexibility as the interviewer can explore further the most interesting points. Thus, qualitative research with semi-structured interviews was the most powerful tool for gaining a deep understanding of complex phenomena such those explored in this study (Rahman, 2016).

3.2 Participants

The sample was drawn from a population of teachers and learners who have been familiar with arts integration in the English language teaching and learning context. All participants had to be fluent in the English language therefore, the only exclusive criterion was for the students to be certified in the C2 (CEFR) level. Regarding the students, the researcher opted for teenagers, seventeen years old as she wanted to

examine their thoughts from their holistic learning experience throughout all their school years.

Participants were recruited through the researcher's existing academic and personal network, the American College of Greece (ACG), Arsakeio Tositseio Ekalis (a private school in Athens that the researcher is familiar with) and some individuals that she considered eligible for the study. The researcher emailed contacts in her academic network and asked her classmates if they were interested in participating in her research. The other participants were contacted via phone calls and texts. Regarding the students that are minors the researcher contacted initially their parents and then proceeded with getting into touch with the students themselves. An informed consent form (separate for the adults and the parents of the minors), an assent form (for the minors) and an audio release form as shown in Appendix A, were required for each participant prior to participating. The researcher anticipated approximately 10-12 participants for this study. The final number of participants was 10; five teachers and five students participated in total.

3.3 Procedure

This study used a semi-structure interviewing method as outlined earlier. The participants had to answer six questions as shown in Appendix B while the researcher asked them to elaborate on their personal experiences and opinions. There were two different lists of six questions one for the teachers and one for the students participating in the study. The interviews were recorded electronically using an application called Voice Memos Copyright © 2024 Apple Inc. All rights reserved. The interviews began with the first question that was more general as it was about the thoughts of the participants about arts integration in English language teaching and learning, respectively. More detailed questions followed, with the intent to gather data with more depth on experiences, perceptions, motivation and barriers regarding arts-mediated lessons.

Interviews were conducted both in person and via Skype. The vast majority of the participants could meet face to face with the researcher but for those that for various

reasons, such as personal preference and time related issues could not arrange an in-person appointment, Skype was proposed. In the contemporary society, many people lack time to devote into research especially when there is a need for an interview. Therefore, literature suggests the use of Skype as an effective alternative to conduct interviews (Peters & Halcomb, 2015). In the present study, since the beginning participants were offered the choice of face-to-face or Skype interviews. As it happens sometimes when using technology, there were some worth-mentioning technical issues. In one of the interviews, the unstable internet connection led to terminating the Skype video call and using a traditional phone call instead. Consequently, the recording was impeded and the researcher needed to keep notes. No interview was conducted without confirming the written and verbal informed consent of the participants. Each participant interview took place in a single interview session.

Approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) was sought from the American College of Greece-Deree (ACG). Once approval was given (see Appendix A) the researcher contacted the participants and after the forms were signed the interviews were scheduled. Regarding the Skype interviews, both the researcher and the participant were in a separate private room. As for the face-to-face interviews the researcher and the participant were in the decided location (some of the interviews occurred in the researcher's house and some in silent cafeterias). Throughout all the interviews, the researcher and the participants were in a quiet environment that enabled the concentrated conversation and the confidentiality of the procedure. Qualitative research yields rich, in-depth data through discussions, with interpretations grounded in subjective analysis (Rahman, 2016). Therefore, apart from asking the participants the six questions, the researcher used clarifications and initiated conversations regarding the personal experiences and thoughts of the teachers and the students. The interviews occurred only once and participants did not have the option to add information after the end of their meeting. The interviewees had the chance to add any further information before the end of the session as the researcher asked them to.

3.4 Data analysis

Data analysis focused on seeking patterning of responses and discourse analysis (Cohen et al., 2005). As previously discussed, the researcher recorded (following the acquisition of the audio release form) the interviews while she also kept thorough notes of the participants' responses. Breaking down the responses into meaningful and manageable categories helped the researcher with the process of data analysis. The data were processed manually and verbally. The researcher tried to ensure a thorough analysis of the entire interview. Data were analyzed and compared at the same time so that the points could lead into meaningful conclusions. Data collected on this research may not be generalizable as they are a product of a small-scale research exploring subjective interpretations on arts-integrated English lessons in Greece.

The reliability and validity of qualitative research are largely dependent on the researcher's ability to accurately perceive and interpret data. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), key factors in establishing trustworthiness include credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. Credibility and transferability can be established by ensuring that participants selected for the interviews have adequate experience to discuss the phenomenon investigated in the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this particular qualitative study, the researcher chose very carefully the participants to ensure that they had the sufficient experience needed. Regarding this study, transferability is limited as it focuses on a narrowed and specific topic. Going forward, dependability refers to whether the findings of a research are consistent and could be potentially repeated. For this study, the researcher kept thorough notes and folders with the procedures and the analysis therefore everything included in the final result is well documented. Finally, to ensure confirmability in this study, the researcher took deliberate measures to minimize bias, thereby allowing for an impartial interpretation of the data. This was achieved by manually transcribing the key points of the interviews and keeping careful manual notes. Due to ensuring trustworthiness all data collected will be destroyed at the end of six months hence, there is a case of potential limitation to the repetition of this study in the future.

3.5 Ethical Concerns

Every research should take into serious consideration ethics before, during and after the study. The researcher prioritized ethical considerations on every stage of this study. Adhering to the methods detailed in this section was vital for maintaining the study's validity and reliability. Firstly, the informed consent form signed by the participant or its parent/guardian in the case of the minor participants (shown in Appendix A). The informed consent form follows the instructions and the specifications dictated by the responsible IRB department of the American College of Greece. More precisely, the informed consent form includes a detailed explanation of procedures, description of the interview and what would be expected from the participants and the instruction that the participant had the right to withdraw.

Additionally, there is a reference to the potential risks and benefits this study can possibly entail. Regarding the risks, there were not any personal questions or references to experiences that could potentially cause harm in the participants. The principle of informed consent originates from the participant's right to freedom and self-determination, therefore it was fully respected in this study (Cohen et al., 2005). In the case of the minors participated in this study apart from providing an informed consent form to their parents/guardians they also received an assent form (shown in Appendix A) in order to be personally informed regarding the procedure of the interview. In parallel, a record release form was signed by the participants prior to their recording during the interview. As previously noted, all recorded materials will be erased after six months, minimizing the possibility of any future risks surrounding confidentiality.

4. Data analysis

This section presents the analysis of data collected from interviews with both teachers and learners, aiming to explore the influence of arts integration in English language teaching within the Greek private educational setting. Mainly, the research analysis aimed to identify the categories, relationships and underlying assumptions that shape the interviewees' perspectives on both the broader context and the specific topic under investigation (Basit, 2003) regarding this particular research, into how arts integration can have an impact on the language acquisition process. By employing a qualitative approach, the researcher gained an in-depth understanding of the subjective experiences and perceptions of the participants (Rahman, 2016). The following sub-sections summarize the interpretation of the emerging themes, emphasizing on the points of convergence and divergence between the opinions and experiences of the participants.

4.1 Challenges in Students' Perceptions of Arts Integration in English Language Lessons

As mentioned in the Methodology section, five students participated in this particular qualitative study. Students were both males and females while all of them were seventeen years old. All students were native Greeks. Regarding the English language, they had been studying it since they were six years old. For the needs of this study, they were asked to share their whole learning experience surrounding arts integration in their English lessons including the private schools they studied in, the language schools (frodistiria) they went and their private lessons they had during their language learning journey.

Arts across the curriculum initiative aimed to create and provide unique classes that encourage creativity and engage students in aesthetic experiences. Incorporating arts into foreign language learning recognizes the importance of promoting creativity and critical thinking as a valuable part of education (Garrett, 2013). In many cases, syllabi are destined to meet the demands of administrations surrounding student achievement on standardized assessments (McFadden, 2012). Therefore, in many countries around

the globe, Greece included, arts integration tends to be marginalized and neglected (Mishook & Kornhaber, 2006). Data collected in this research confirm this reality as well as the undeniable benefits of arts-mediated instruction.

To begin with, the interviewees were asked a series of six questions regarding their thoughts, their experiences and their beliefs surrounding the topic of arts integration in English language learning. A high number of respondents 4/5 felt that arts integration is important to them in their English lessons. There was a convergence between the students opinions that arts can provide a better understanding of the target language while they also valued the exposure to the target culture. More specifically, 4/5 felt that arts and in particular films and music enhanced their interest towards learning the language with increased motivation because of the cultural background arts offered to them. In parallel, 4/5 argued that they understood the language better when arts were involved in their learning. Students seemed to agree that arts “should be a part” of their English lessons while they all agreed that they had a limited experience of arts-mediated instruction because of the exam-oriented system that is prevalent in Greece.

A strong theme that emerged was how book-centered is the educational system in Greece. Of course, the book-centered culture is part and parcel with the certificate-oriented system. Greece is known as an exam-centric country therefore, arts often become subjugated and are considered extracurricular (Kikioni & Zafiri, 2021). This situation was one of the reasons the researcher was intrigued by conducting this study, to gain insights in how students feel about this status quo. Based on their answers in the relevant discussion, a vast majority of students agreed that the expectations of acquiring a certificate in English did not allow them or the teacher to deviate from the coursebooks’ materials. More precisely, student B complained that *“It was not possible to integrate arts in our English lessons. There were always so many things to do; grammar, vocabulary lists and past papers. My teachers always did everything by the book, that was very boring and predictable, but we had to keep our minds in the exam. I understand why that was the situation”*.

Another problem that seemed to concern 5/5 students was the loss of control in the classroom when arts were employed. More specifically, in the related question of what challenges have they encountered when arts were a part of their English lessons, students mentioned that the classroom “was transformed into a jungle”. When the researcher asked the students to elaborate on this issue a lot of them mentioned that some of their classmates viewed arts-integrated lessons as a waste of time or as something they did not have to pay attention in. Student D shared the image that came to her mind when discussing about an arts-based lesson in her English class:

“It was so loud you know, every time the teacher decided to play a movie for us, almost everyone would start talking, laughing or mocking the whole thing. Many teachers could not maintain control of the classroom, it was like the lesson was over”. Student E tried to rationalize this situation by saying that: *“We are not used in this type of learning, I believe that because we did not have many opportunities of being exposed in arts-based lessons we cannot adapt easily, maybe the teachers should be more interested in what they are doing and train us better”*. These confessions were very honest and since all of the five participants had similar experiences, this challenge holds some truth.

4.2 What Benefits Arts-Integrated Lessons Offer in Language Learning?

While 4/5 students expressed similar concerns as the aforementioned, some of them focused on the benefits surrounding arts integration in English language learning. In more detail, 4/5 students discussed how arts have helped them understand better the language. Vocabulary acquisition was the first thing that came in their mind when discussing about how arts helped them in learning English. The vast majority mentioned that through music, in particular English songs, they were able to broaden their vocabulary, search for unknown words while several of them indicated that through songs words “stick in your memory better”. Similarly, 3/5 students expressed positive views about films. Student A said: *“Personally, I love movies, for me it is the best way to understand the language you are learning and regarding English I find it so important to have films in our lessons as English are popular around the world therefore, they helped me interact with arts more than my mother tongue”*. This

student expressed the vice versa role that arts integration can provide in a language lesson. Not only you can learn better a language when arts are implemented but you can also learn about arts when language is taught.

Moreover, 3/5 students felt that when arts were a part of their English lessons, they found themselves being less anxious and more fluent. Almost all of the students mentioned that being exposed to native speakers' accents through films and music helped them develop a better accent while they were not afraid of speaking in the activities that followed. In the same vein, 4/5 students discussed how arts boosted their sensitivity and their empathy. They all seemed to believe that arts-mediated instruction helped them understand the world better and gain experiences that textbooks could not offer. Furthermore, 2/5 students said that they felt more creative when arts were incorporated in their English lessons and all of them agreed that their motivation was boosted when the lesson did not followed strictly the book. Student C had many good experiences in his language school (frodistiria) when arts were a part of his English lessons, he shared that: *“Arts have helped me so much, I love arts I engage to arts activities in my free time but when I encountered them in my language lessons I was beyond happy. Until this day I can resurrect this thing my frodistirio did. The teacher asked us to bring a song we liked in the classroom and we voted which one we liked the best. Then we would rehearse it and at the end of the year we would present it to the parents. This is one of my favorite memories in my learning journey”*.

4.3 Learners' Preferences in English Learning Through Arts

The previous sub-sections delved into students positive and negative experiences with arts-integrated lessons. In this sub-section there will be an analysis of the data collected regarding learners' preferable arts in English language teaching. Up to this point, it has become clear that music and films were the most popular arts among students. Given that music was ever-present in all levels in their English learning process students, were very prone to prefer it in comparison with drama. It was not so time-consuming; it was interesting and relaxing as they said. Films had also a very special place into students preferences; as they said they always watched a movie

related to Christmas and Halloween while teachers tended to bring a film into the classroom several times within their school years. 4/5 students stated that music and films were very helpful and engaging arts activities.

Drama was the less frequent art in this sample's experience. More precisely, 4/5 learners had not encountered any drama-related activities in their English lessons neither at school or language school (frodistirio) nor in a private lesson. Only one of the students had come across some drama activities in her English lessons. Student B had enrolled in role playing activities. More specifically, she mentioned that her language school provided stories with dialogues that the students represented in a form of an unofficial play within the classroom. The student shared that these types of activities were very common when she was attending elementary school, she said that: *"It was nice having role plays we would have so much fun and without realizing it we were speaking English throughout the whole thing. I am very sorry that these activities stopped when I got older, we could have benefited by them"*. Certainly, students provided the researcher with rich data that illustrate the situation regarding arts integrated lesson in the Greek private educational system therefore, teachers also shared their perspectives and they will be thoroughly presented in the next subsection.

4.4 Exploring English Teachers' Perspectives on Arts-Integrated Instruction

This study involved five English language teachers from varied professional backgrounds. More precisely, all the participating teachers were committed in the private educational system in Greece; some of them were tutors, some were language school (frodistirio) teachers while some others were teachers in private schools. There was a variety regarding their teaching experience ranging from four years to twenty years of teaching. In parallel, the interviewees had worked with multiple levels in their careers ranging from A Junior to Senior levels. All the teachers were native Greeks as well as the students. The interview was composed of six questions surrounding their thoughts, experiences and perceptions towards arts-based instruction.

To begin with, there was a convergence between teachers' positive opinions regarding arts-based instruction. 5/5 teachers agreed that they have a favorable view towards the idea of incorporating arts in their lessons while the same fraction applies to the belief that students can benefit from the experience of learning English through arts-related activities. Overall, arts-mediated instruction is believed to be beneficial in foreign language teaching as it gives the freedom to students to strive for independent learning and self-expression (Mishook & Kornhaber, 2006). Thus, all the participants agreed that arts can have a positive impact in their students' learning progress.

Teachers were positively inclined to integrate arts in their instruction. When asked about which circumstances determined their decision to include or exclude arts in their teaching the vast majority replied that they were willing to incorporate arts in their lessons as based on their experience it alleviated learners' anxiety. Teachers also identified additional factors that influenced their decision to embrace or omit the use of arts in their instruction. Teacher B mentioned that: *“Especially when a student is artistic outside of the English classroom, for instance he or she is playing a musical instrument then arts integrated lessons are the way to go, his or her motivation to learn the language will be undeniable”*. In the same vein, teacher D shared a story from when she was a student. She shared a particular experience she had with her English teacher in the past that had a major impact in her decision to include arts in her lessons as a teacher herself. More specifically, she said: *“When I was a teenager, we had an English teacher that did not follow exclusively the book. One day- I remember it as vividly as if it happened yesterday- she played two songs for us both about money. The first one was a 70s groovy song that was against the materialistic value of money, while the other one was a 90s pop song that praised money. After we listened to both songs, she opened a discussion about money and then she re-played the songs and had us to notice the beat. Based on the beat she made us realize which song was for and which against the concept of money. She taught us much more than just language”*.

The most common answer regarding arts exclusion was time. Specifically, 4/5 teachers agreed that time restriction was the first exclusive criterion in their decision

to omit arts activities. Teacher B shared her experience: *“Personally, I would like to incorporate more music, more role playing and definitely more films in my teaching but there is no time to do all these creative additions; especially when there is a certificate involved then, it is out of the question”*. Another worth-mentioning issue seemed to be the lack of resources and training to implement arts in English lessons effectively. 2/5 teachers agreed that it is rather important to have the proper resources in order to teach through arts. Teacher C remarked: *“As a teacher you need to devote personal time and effort, in some cases you need to pay a lot of money too, it is not an easy endeavor to implement arts in your teaching, it should be a collective effort”*. In a similar way, 3/5 teachers agreed that the lack of training is a significant exclusive factor; as teacher A said: *“Incorporating new and creative methods both starts and ends with the teacher. If a teacher is well-trained and well-prepared every initiative will turn out to be successful, but teachers need seminars and training courses”*. A key research question in this study was how stakeholders within the Greek private educational system respond to the integration of arts in English language instruction. The following sub-section explores teachers’ experiences and perspectives on this subject in greater detail.

4.5 Teachers’ Experiences Regarding Stakeholders’ Roles in Arts-Integrated Instruction

This sub-section explores the role that stakeholders, in particular school administrators and parents play in arts-mediated language lesson based on the experiences of the teachers interviewed. Stakeholders can influence the decision of including or excluding arts in English language teaching therefore, it is a central issue in this research. Teachers shared their perspectives by answering to two relevant questions. The researcher asked the interviewees to elaborate on this matter to gather the most detailed data possible.

As a starting point, the majority of the teachers agreed that the Greek private educational system is conventional and exam-oriented. In fact, 5/5 teachers commented that there are not many opportunities to integrate arts within this context. The main problem described by the teachers is that school administrations and school

owners are focused on the success of the students in the certificate exams, thus they are not so open-minded about implementing different approaches in their classrooms. Teacher D said that: *“It is not our-the teachers- fault that arts are omitted. The materials we have to cover throughout the school year are specific and strict. Even if we want to, we are not always able to be creative in our classrooms”*. On the other hand, teacher C shared a more optimistic view: *“In my opinion the private education domain is doing a conscious effort to incorporate arts in English lessons. There is a swift in the society and administrators realize that. In the near future, I expect to see an even bigger difference in the educational system”*. Apart from school owners, parents’ attitudes towards arts-mediated lessons appear to have a major impact in teachers’ determination to incorporate or disregard arts in their teaching.

Parents’ perspectives can potentially play a crucial role in the implementation of any new method, as they can influence both the students’ experience and the teachers’ approach. Nonetheless, in the Greek context, the misconception that second language acquisition is solely the responsibility of teachers creates a complex situation regarding parental involvement (Giannikas & Nikitaki, 2022). In response to the relevant question in this research, teachers shared varied experiences and perspectives on parents’ reactions to arts-integrated instruction. With greater accuracy 3/5 teachers said that in their experience parents were not in favor of arts-mediated instruction. *“In the Greek context knowledge is associated with books and exhausting studying, it is sterilized in a way; parents seem to believe that if their kids are having fun consequently, they are not learning”*, shared teacher D. On the contrary, 2/5 teachers had completely opposite experiences; as teacher C shared: *“Many parents want something new. The new generation of parents is more focused on their kids emotions rather than their academic progress hence, they value the impact of arts in their children’s foreign language learning”*. Based on the aforementioned data, there is a divergence in teachers’ perspectives regarding their experiences with stakeholders. The following sub-section analyze the positive impact of arts-mediated instruction as reported by teachers.

4.6 The Positive Impact of Arts-Integrated Lessons on Students' Learning: Enhancing Motivation and Proficiency

Arts-integrated lessons are considered beneficial for foreign language acquisition as they help students grow socially, academically and personally (Latta & Chan, 2010). In a similar vein, arts integration has the potential to boost students' motivation and enhance engagement. The participants of this study provided data that reinforce these assumptions as 5/5 teachers agreed that arts-mediated instruction can positively influence both students' motivation and linguistic proficiency. Teachers noted that films offer authentic language input, with learners becoming more fluent, particularly when watching films with English subtitles. Regarding music, teachers observed that students tend to be more relaxed and focused, when songs are played in the classroom. As teacher B explained: *"In my experience I have had students who only focused and completed their homework while listening to music. That was when I decided to incorporate it more frequently in my lessons. Adding some arts-related activities can cater to various student profiles"*. Lastly, based on the responses from this sample, drama activities alleviated learner anxiety and enhanced oral skills, particularly in speaking and listening.

Taking it a step further, teacher D stated: *"Arts can help students learn within a meaningful context. Through arts activities they can enhance their fluency, vocabulary, communication and social skills. Arts offer so much in a foreign language environment; they can boost students' confidence and consequently, their motivation to learn as well"*. Echoing teacher D's perspectives, other participants in this study also emphasized on the benefits of arts-based instruction. Teacher C discussed about the subconscious learning that can occur when students are engaged in arts-related activities: *"It is not just about the conscious learning but also the subconscious. Arts can transport students' minds helping them make connections and understand language on a level beyond traditional methods. Arts can shape their critical thinking and empathy, and after all, language is more than just grammar and vocabulary"*. Similarly, 3/5 teachers agreed that arts can help students develop their critical thinking and their empathy as through interpretation learners can get trained to think outside of the box. Teacher E added that: *"Teenagers in particular, can benefit from*

arts-mediated instruction. At this age, they have so many ideas, and it is crucial that they find ways to express them. While teaching a foreign language, especially English, is essential encouraging your learners to be confident and articulate their thoughts is even more significant". Indeed, many participants expressed similar thoughts regarding this aspect of arts-integrated instruction. Based on the data gathered from this sample, arts can have multiple benefits when implemented in English language teaching not only regarding learners' motivation but language skills too.

To sum up, based on the perspectives of this sample arts can have a positive impact in English language learning in the Greek private context. Students clearly stated that they feel more motivated to learn when arts are part of their learning. While motivation is an important factor, students also noted that through arts they can understand better language concepts; the vast majority mentioned that vocabulary acquisition and speaking activities became easier to them after being exposed on arts-related activities. Based on the answers they gave, students seemed to prefer more films and music in their English lessons compared to drama as they relate more to these types of arts. Regarding the challenges faced in arts-integrated lessons, nearly all students agreed that these issues emerged from the exam-oriented culture which prevails in Greece. In parallel, the lack of maturity of the students' classmates and the occasional inability of the English teachers to maintain classroom control were also some obstacles of arts-mediated lessons according to the students.

Teachers also shared their experiences with arts-integrated lessons, addressing both the benefits and the challenges of this method. More specifically, all teachers acknowledged the positive outcomes that arts can bring in their students' learning. Specifically, teachers highlighted that arts-mediated instruction promotes critical thinking, engagement, motivation and language learning. However, when discussing the reasons for excluding arts from their instruction there was a common theme-high-stakes exams, particularly certificates exams, constrained their ability to implement creative approaches. Time limitations due to exams preparation was also a factor that concerned the majority of the teachers. Furthermore, when asked about the

educational system and the parental reaction to arts-integrated teaching they highlighted that the educational system in Greece does not provide many-or any- opportunities to incorporate arts in their lessons. Regarding the parents' perspectives most of them were portrayed as old-school and not very willing to see arts as an effective way to teach English. Nevertheless, some teachers pointed out that newer generations of parents appear to be more open-minded to arts-integration into their children's language learning process. Having presented the findings from the research, the following section will delve into a detailed interpretation and discussion of the data gathered.

5. Discussion

5.1 Introduction

This section examines the findings of the qualitative research and relates them to previous studies on arts-integration in English language teaching. This research aimed to explore the perspectives, experiences, and preferences of students and teachers regarding arts-based instruction within the context of Greek private education.

Numerous studies have strongly advocated for the role of the arts in language acquisition, and the findings from this study align with prior research on the positive impact of drama, music, and films in language learning. The discussion will focus on three main aspects: the challenges faced by students and teachers, the benefits of arts in English language learning, and the impact of arts on learner motivation and linguistic proficiency. Following this analysis, the limitations of the study will be outlined.

5.2 Findings in Relation to the Literature

This sub-section connects the key findings of this study to the existing literature. As discussed in earlier sections, arts integration in Greece's private education sector is an under-researched area, with most existing studies focusing on the public sector.

Given the limited research on private schools in Greece, the findings of this study will be compared with both global studies and research conducted in Greek public schools.

5.2.1 The Challenges of Arts-Integration in English Language Teaching

While all participants both students and teachers, acknowledged the benefits of arts integration in English language teaching, several noteworthy challenges were raised. Specifically, participants expressed concerns about the certificate-oriented system, time constraints, parental disapproval, and loss of classroom control. Some of these challenges stem from the broader educational system in Greece, while others are linked to more personal or contextual factors.

The challenges surrounding the certificate-oriented educational culture in Greece are consistent with what is stated regarding this issue in the literature. Kikioni and Zafiri (2021), indicate that Greece is an exam-centric country in which there are not many opportunities to be creative. Similarly, students in this study criticized that the Greek educational system for being overly book-centered, a direct consequence of the focus on certification. McFadden (2012), demonstrates a similar issue, noting that in several cases, syllabi are destined to meet the demands of administrations surrounding student achievement on standardized assessment. In line with this, both students and teachers in this research noted that the pressure to obtain English certificates limited their ability to deviate from textbook materials. In terms of time constraints, participants' concerns also mirror the findings in the literature. Teachers emphasized that there is simply not enough time to incorporate arts into their instruction because of the focus on exam preparation. Some also mentioned the lack of personal time to plan arts-based lessons. This corresponds with Sotiropoulou-Zorbala (2012), argument that teachers are required to follow a set curriculum that outlines specific goals and outcomes. Additionally, as Giannikas and Nikitaki (2022), note, English teachers in Greece often work across multiple schools and grade levels, leaving little time for creative lesson planning, a point also supported by Dobos (2020).

An interesting challenge in this study was parental disapproval. Since this research focused on the private sector, it became evident that parents, who are financially investing in their children's education, have high expectations. Teachers reported that many Greek parents were initially skeptical of arts-based instruction, Although Giannikas and Nikitaki (2022) discuss parent-teacher issues in the public sector, they note that the misconception that second language acquisition is solely the teacher's responsibility complicates parental involvement, which resonates with the findings in this study. One significant difference between this study's findings and existing research was the issue of classroom management. Several students mentioned that arts-related activities often led to chaos, with complaints of noise, lack of attention, and a perceived loss of control during lessons. This finding was not as prominent in existing literature, suggesting it may be a context-specific challenge. In summary, this sub-section analyzed the challenges faced by students and teachers when integrating

arts into English language teaching. The following sub-section will examine the benefits of arts integration.

5.2.2 The Benefits of Arts Integration in English Language Teaching

Previous research on arts integration in English language teaching reveals that an arts-based curriculum facilitates language development within rich, authentic contexts, challenging learners to navigate language in diverse ways that reflect real-life situations (Latta & Chan, 2010). Numerous studies have explored the benefits of arts in English language learning. Most teachers supported the idea that arts-based instruction developed students' social, emotional and academic competencies while providing learners with ample opportunities to enhance their lexical and oral skills (Brouillette et al., 2015). These findings are consistent with the results of this study, as participating teachers expressed positive attitudes towards arts integration. They emphasized that, in their experience, the arts helped students develop critical thinking and empathy, encouraging them to think outside the box. Similarly, relevant literature suggests that an arts-based approach can significantly reduce the affective filter and promote teamwork (Dobos, 2020). However, while teachers in this study discussed the positive impact of the arts on reducing student anxiety, none of them highlighted the role of arts in fostering collaboration or teamwork.

On the other hand, students' answers in this qualitative study closely aligned with the literature. More specifically, students reported that arts helped them understand better linguistic concepts. All participants noted that vocabulary acquisition became easier through the arts. In their research Brouillette et al. (2015) supported the idea that arts integration in English language teaching helps students develop lexical competence and even perform better on standardized texts. Another point raised by students in this study was that their fluency improved due to exposure to native speakers' accents through films and music. Roslim et al., (2021) emphasized the significant role films can play in enhancing students' speaking skills. Similarly, Rao (2019), discussed how films offer authentic language input that enhances learners' fluency. Regarding the impact of music on improving students' oral skills, Lems (2016) stated that songs are rich in linguistic content and they can help with students' pronunciation. Thus, the

results of this study support the literature on the benefits of arts-based instruction in English language learning.

Interestingly, while the literature highlights the benefits of drama in English language teaching, neither the teachers nor the students had extensive experience with this art form. Banerjee (2014) argues that, in addition to developing communication skills, drama can encourage leadership, collaboration, listening skills and practice with real life situations. Several teachers and students in this research acknowledged that drama offers a meaningful context for learning, which aligns with Banerjee's (2014) claim that drama bridges the gap between course-book dialogues and natural use of the English language. Despite this, most teachers admitted to seldom or never using drama in their lessons, and while students had positive experiences with films and music, they had not participated in many drama activities. To sum up, this sub-section analyzed the benefits of arts-integration based on the data collected in this study and existing research. The next sub-section will explore the role of the arts in enhancing learners' motivation.

5.2.3 Learners' Motivation

Motivation plays a crucial role in determining the success or failure of complex tasks, such as learning a foreign language (Alizadeh, 2016). Almost every paper that has been written on arts integration includes a section relating to motivation. Kikioni and Zafiri (2021) point out that arts-based instruction significantly enhances motivation, while Dobos (2020) argues that the implementation of arts in English language teaching has been shown to increase learners' motivation and engagement. Similarly, data collected from this study align with these findings, as students clearly expressed that they feel more motivated to learn when arts are a part of their English lessons. All participants agreed that arts made them more interested in acquiring the foreign language being taught. Teachers similarly highlighted how incorporating arts into the classroom sparked motivation among their students.

A particularly interesting finding in this research was that some students noted their motivation to learn English stemmed from the cultural exposure they gained through arts. Given that Greek is a less widely spoken language, popular culture is often inaccessible in their mother tongue. Students reported that learning English enabled them to engage with culture in various forms-such as films, music, and videos-that they could not fully appreciate in their first language. Consequently, their motivation to learn was significantly enhanced. This observation aligns with Kramsch's (2013) statement that many English learners globally are motivated to study the language because it provides them with access to a culture they admire and a lifestyle they aspire to achieve. In this context, arts serve as a vital source of cultural input that motivates students to learn. In summary, this sub-section has addressed the significant role of motivation in language learning, emphasizing how arts integration can enhance learners' engagement. The next sub-section will provide a critical analysis of the findings of this study.

5.3 Critical Analysis

This section provides a critical evaluation of the findings of this study in relation to the existing research context of arts integration in English language teaching. The findings of this study reveal the complex position of arts within the teaching of English in the private educational system in Greece. To this point, it has become evident that relevant literature supports the integration of arts as a way to enhance language acquisition. This study aimed to explore how this approach is perceived and implemented in the specific context of private education in Greece, illustrating its benefits and its limitations.

5.3.1 The Impact of Arts Integration in English Language Learning

The findings of this study support the growing body of research that highlights the positive outcomes of arts integration in language learning. While the benefits associated with this approach have been thoroughly analyzed in the literature, the Greek context presents some particularities that cannot be addressed in broader research. As previously discussed, Greece's educational system is heavily certificate-oriented and exam-driven, placing significant emphasis on learners' performance in

standardized tests. This pressure makes it difficult to adopt innovative and creative teaching approaches, such as arts integration.

Teachers who participated in this study expressed that they often had to prioritize exam preparation over creative methods. Consequently, teachers are confronted with the dilemma of sacrificing creative endeavors in order to focus on exam preparation. This issue needs further exploration as the tension between innovation and standardized assessment raises significant questions about how to teach effectively in such an exam-driven environment. In the same vein, existing literature emphasizes on the transformative power of arts-based teaching, often noting its psychological, social and linguistic benefits. The findings of this study also highlight these benefits while emphasizing the need to acknowledge the difficulties of implementing arts in exam-oriented environments such as Greece's. This study adds to the discussion by questioning whether arts integration is truly feasible in such contexts, where the pressure to achieve measurable outcomes on standardized tests may outweigh the desire to cultivate creativity in the classroom.

5.3.2 Teachers' Attitudes Regarding Arts Integration

The teachers in this study expressed positive attitudes towards arts-mediated instruction, with their perspectives aligning with the existing literature. They agreed that when implemented effectively, arts integration can enhance English language learning. As noted earlier, arts have been shown to improve linguistic competence especially vocabulary, speaking and listening skills. Additionally, the teachers noted that arts boost learners' motivation and engagement while they can lower the affective filter and stimulate critical thinking. Overall, participants seemed to be in favor of arts integration in their instruction. However, a gap exists between their theoretical support and actual classroom practices.

Despite their openness to arts integration, several obstacles demotivate teachers from putting theory into practice. This study revealed that the lack of autonomy often drives teachers to exclude arts from their teaching. While much of the existing research highlights the positive outcomes of arts integration, it does not adequately

address the barriers that prevent teachers from implementing these approaches. The findings here suggest that there is a need for institutional support regarding arts integration, as currently teachers tend to feel guilty to sacrifice exam preparation to teach through the arts. Thus, a collective effort and systemic support are needed to empower teachers to integrate arts into their lessons effectively.

5.3.3 The True Source of Motivation

Much of the previous research emphasizes on the linguistic benefits of arts integration in English language teaching. Numerous studies highlight how this approach positively influences learners' linguistic competence, psychology and overall motivation (Brouillette et al., 2015). While the positive effects of arts integration have been extensively discussed, relatively little attention has been given to what specifically drives learners' motivation. Although arts undoubtedly capture learners' interest and promote engagement, this study found that cultural exposure is the real driving force behind their motivation. This aligns with Kramsch's (2013) claim that a great number of learners worldwide are motivated to learn the target language because it provides access to a culture they admire and wish to be part of.

Students participating in this study noted that their native language-Greek- is less widely spoken globally, which limits their access to popular culture in their own language. In today's world, where streaming platforms offer endless access to music, films and videos, young non-English speakers can feel excluded from participating in modern culture. For these learners, English is a gateway to the globalized world and through arts, they acquire the language skills they truly need. These findings suggest that learners' motivation stems more from a desire for cultural access than language alone. This raises an important question: is arts integration a more effective approach in English language instruction, given its alignment with learners' actual needs and cultural preferences?

5.3.4 The Challenges of Practical Implementation

The findings of this study indicate that arts integration in English language instruction can provoke classroom management issues. While students expressed enjoyment of

arts-mediated instruction, they also admitted that the noise and the chaos frequently disrupted these creative initiatives. Participants noted that maintaining control of the classroom was an issue with this approach. Teachers also suggested that learners tended to misbehave when arts were introduced, as they did not perceive it as part of the lesson. Even though this study highlights the difficulty of maintaining classroom control, the literature primarily emphasizes the collaborative potential that arts integration fosters in English language classrooms.

This situation reveals a gap in the literature regarding the practical challenges of implementing arts-based instruction. Research often overlooks the downsides of arts implementation offering limited insights into how educators can address these issues effectively. As it happens with many theories, the reality of implementation often differs from the theoretical framework. The findings of this research highlight the need for additional studies focused specifically on the classroom management challenges that accompany arts integration, as well as practical solutions for overcoming these obstacles. As Brouillette et al. (2015) suggest, sometimes arts education is so limited that teachers lack the opportunity to engage with these practices. As a result, they may feel uncomfortable with the idea of implementing arts in their teaching, which could contribute to the classroom becoming chaotic. Thus, in addition to further research, teacher training is essential to help educators gain the confidence and skills necessary for effective arts integration. Such training could play a critical role in alleviating the classroom management issues identified in this study.

5.3.5 The Greek Case

As previously noted, Greece's educational system presents several unique characteristics that distinguish it from other countries. Specifically, the exam-oriented culture, the parental pressure-especially prevalent in the private sector-and the challenges in classroom management raise critical questions about the extent to which arts integration is feasible. Much of the relevant literature has focused on other European countries, the United States, and India. While these global studies offer valuable insights, there is a distinct need for more localized research to address the

specific challenges faced in Greece. Currently, there is limited research exploring the integration of arts in the Greek private educational context.

The findings of this study suggest that successful arts integration requires more than just the good will of teachers and the openness of students. The obstacles remain significant and it appears that structural changes are needed to facilitate this approach. First and foremost, further local research is essential to better understand the Greek context. In addition, as some teachers mentioned in their interviews, the youngest generation of parents appears to be more open-minded, which presents an opportunity for progress. Effective communication between parents and teachers, combined with a deeper understanding of how to optimize arts integration and more teacher training, could pave the way for a more successful implementation. In conclusion, arts integration in English language teaching in Greece must be viewed as a collective effort. While there are many challenges, the advantages of incorporating arts into foreign language instruction outweigh the downsides. With the appropriate support and the collaboration between teachers, parents, and institutions, arts integration can become a valuable tool in enhancing English language instruction in Greece's private educational sector.

5.4 Limitations of the Study

The researcher acknowledges that despite the effort to carry out a meaningful study there are several limitations that should be mentioned. To begin with, the sample size was undoubtedly small as it contained only ten participants, five teachers and five students. Data would be richer if the participants were at least doubled. Unfortunately, the limited time did not allow to search for more interviewees or conduct more interviews. In addition, the insights they offered were valuable but they may not be generalizable as they were product of their subjective interpretations. Generally, when qualitative research is conducted, the data are not statistical and they include multiple realities (Rahman, 2016). When the sample size is so narrowed findings cannot be generatable. Finally, another worth-mentioning limitation is that the researcher processed data manually. In a small-scale study it is acceptable to process data in such

a way but if it was a bigger one a software would have been used, therefore findings would be more organized.

Even though the above-stated limitations exist, the data collected revealed insights that had not been researched before. Maybe the participants were limited but none of them decided to withdraw while all of them analyzed thoroughly their experiences and their perspectives in the interviews. This study contributed to the research field of TESOL, as it addressed an approach in a specific context that has limited presence. If it was for this study to be more generatable it would be recommended that the sample size would be bigger, the time to be more and the data processed by software. With these improvements a further study in this topic would provide valuable insights in arts integration in the Greek private education. There are still a lot of remaining questions and research is needed to address them further.

6. Conclusion

This study sought to investigate students' and teachers' perspectives and experiences of arts integration in English language instruction within the Greek private sector. From the middle of the past century to the recent years, research on English language teaching has found and developed several methods and approaches that are believed to accommodate better learners' needs. One of these approaches is arts integration in English language teaching. Many forms of arts have been thoroughly analyzed in the relevant literature, however this study focused on drama, music and films. Qualitative research was used to conduct this study, which aimed to gain valuable insights of students' and teachers' views and beliefs. Therefore, qualitative research was the most suitable way to explore individuals' experiences (Rahman, 2016). The sample consisted of ten participants, five students and five teachers. In addition, both learners and teachers participating in this study were asked a series of six questions different for teachers and learners. The interviews were recorded and the researcher kept manual notes of the participants' answers. The research analysis primarily aimed to identify the categories and relationships that form participants' beliefs (Basit, 2003). The findings of this study highlighted several interesting points while they addressed gaps in the existing literature, especially regarding the Greek context.

This section will begin with a summary of the literature and will address the place of this study in the broad context of arts integration in English language teaching in Greece (Woodrow, 2019). Next, it will provide a summary of the findings and their significance to the field. Finally, it will conclude with some recommendations for future research.

Overall, the studies discussed in the literature review section highlight the significant impact of arts in English language learning. In summary, arts have been found to foster critical thinking, accommodate diverse learning styles and boost students'

motivation (Dobos, 2020). In addition to these important aspects of learning, arts can also enhance social and academic competences. It is suggested that when arts are incorporated in English language lessons, they can help students improve their vocabulary acquisition and generally their language skills, while transforming the classroom into a supportive and engaging environment (Brouillette et al., 2015).

Each form of art contributes to the learning process in a different way. Drama can help students understand complex concepts better, without relying on translation (Greenfander & Brouillette, 2013). In the same vein, research suggests that drama can positively influence all four language skills (Banerjee, 2014). On the other hand, music encompasses a rich content providing learners with both lexical and grammatical stimuli (Lems, 2016). Finally, films expose learners to various native pronunciations providing them with real-life spoken language (Rao, 2019). Consequently, every form of art has a different value to offer in the language learning procedure. While arts are viewed as an effective approach towards English language teaching, there are limited studies discussing arts implementation in the Greek context and even fewer focusing particularly on the private sector of the country. Hence, this study aimed to explore this under-researched domain to contribute to the field of TESOL in Greece.

While reviewing the literature, some worth-mentioning gaps in the literature became evident. To begin with, as discussed in the previous section, Greece has a particular educational system that presents some distinguishing characteristics compared to other countries. There is limited research on the feasibility of arts integration in a certificate-oriented country like Greece. Moreover, nearly all the papers included in this dissertation's literature review discuss learners' motivation, but none of them delves to analyze its real source. Finally, a small portion of the research focuses on the practical challenges of arts-based instruction. This study aimed to address these gaps in the literature, specifically through researching arts integration in the Greek private educational setting.

Findings of this research offered significant insights into additional knowledge gaps as well. These findings can be summarized in three main categories: challenges, benefits and impact on learners' motivation. To begin with, both students and teachers addressed the certificate-driven system in Greece as a challenge. Specifically, students noted that this system encourages book-oriented practices. On the other hand, teachers felt guilty sacrificing exam preparation for the sake of incorporating arts in their lessons. In addition, teachers argued that the parental disapproval also affected their decision to exclude arts from their teaching. A particular finding that emerged from this study was the issue of class management when arts were part of the instruction. Both teachers and learners agreed that the loss of control was an ever-present phenomenon. This issue is not addressed adequately in the relevant literature. Regarding the benefits, students shared that through arts they were able to understand better linguistic concepts. In the same vein, they added that vocabulary acquisition was easier while their fluency was also enhanced. Teachers also stressed the benefits of arts integration in English language instruction. More precisely, they confirmed that arts helped learners develop critical thinking and empathy while they also mentioned that their anxiety was notably reduced.

Additionally, this research revealed that arts can play a vital role in learners' motivation beyond the conventional expectations. Cultural exposure seemed to be the true source of learners' motivation. Participants noted that they had the feeling of learning the language they truly needed. In the contemporary society, there is a plethora of cultural stimuli offered almost exclusively in English such as social media, videos, films and music. Therefore, when students were introduced to arts-based instruction they felt more motivated to learn. This finding is rather significant as it highlights the need for arts integration in English language teaching. As discussed in the previous section, despite its significance, this study had several limitations. Namely, the small sample size, the limited time and the manual processing of the data make this study's generalizability limited.

To this point, arts integration in English language teaching in the Greek private educational system has been thoroughly analyzed. There are numerous benefits

associated with this approach while there are also several noteworthy challenges. As previously discussed, this specific context has been seriously under-researched. There is a vital need for more studies focusing on the private sector in Greece. The vast majority of studies has occurred in the public-school setting, neglecting the current situation in the private education of the country. There are several suggestions considering how this topic could be further analyzed. As noted above, there were some important limitations in this study, one of them being the small sample size. It is crucial to note that future studies could be conducted with an expanded number of participants. Moreover, the methodology could be altered to a mixed-method, conducting qualitative and quantitative research together. By adding a questionnaire, researchers could collect data with statistical significance through a larger sample size. These two recommendations would enhance the generalizability of the findings. Furthermore, this study emphasized on three specific forms of art, namely drama, music and films. Interestingly, drama was the least frequent encountered art in this study, as participants had almost no experience with it. In the future, studies could also address other forms of arts such as visual arts, literary arts or even photography.

In conclusion, while this research collected valuable insights regarding arts integration within the private educational system of Greece, a lot of unanswered questions remain. Further research is needed to help educators use arts-based instruction as a valuable tool in English language teaching. The benefits of this approach outweigh the downsides and it is important to make a collective effort to promote this creative way of learning.

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APPENDIX A

Informed-consent forms (adults/parents), Assent form, Record release form and IRB approval letter

The American College of Greece Informed Consent Form for Human Research Subjects

You are being asked to volunteer in a research study called EXAMINING THE INFLUENCE OF ARTS INTERGRATION IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION WITHIN THE GREEK PRIVATE EDUCATIONAL SETTING: A QUALITATIVE RESEARCH STUDY, conducted by Eleni Ainalaki-Papastavrou. This project will be supervised by Dr. Jane Mandalios, Assistant Professor, Dep. Of English Co-Ordinator, faculty MA in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages. The purpose of the research is to explore English teachers' attitudes towards arts mediated instruction and why they choose to include or exclude art from their teaching. At the same time, this study will investigate learners' preferences regarding arts-based instruction in their English lessons. Hence, this study's intention is to analyze interpretations of both teachers and learners and why art is or is not an important component to an English language classroom in Greece.

As a participant, you will be asked to be interviewed and answer to some questions regarding your beliefs and experiences of arts-based instruction in English language lessons. It will take approximately 40 minutes. The interviews will take place by the end of August and beginning of September 2024. You will have an individual appointment based on your availability. The meeting will be either face to face or online (via Skype). Participation at this study does not entail any known risks. If you agree to take part, you will gain experience from participating at educational research. Additionally, you will be contributing to the furthering of knowledge regarding the art-mediated instruction in English language teaching in Greece. While there is no direct benefit for your participation in the study, it is reasonable to expect that the results may provide information of value for the field of TESOL.

Your identity as a participant will remain confidential. Your name will not be included in any forms, questionnaires, etc. This consent form is the only document identifying you as a participant in this study; it will be stored securely in a password protected file available only to the investigator. Data collected will be destroyed at the

end of six months. Results will be reported only in the aggregate. If you are interested in seeing these results, you may contact the principal investigator.

If you have questions about the research, you may contact the student investigator, Eleni Ainalaki-Papastavrou, e.ainalaki@acg.edu, the faculty advisor Jane Mandalios jmandalios@acg.edu.

Your participation in this research is voluntary. Refusal to participate (or discontinue participation) will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

You have fully read the above text and have had the opportunity to ask questions about the purposes and procedures of this study. Your signature acknowledges receipt of a copy of the consent form as well as your willingness to participate.

Typed/Printed Name of Participant

Signature of Participant

Date

Typed/Printed Name of Investigator

Signature of Investigator

Date

The American College of Greece
Informed Consent Form for Human Research Subjects

Your child is being asked to volunteer in a research study called EXAMINING THE INFLUENCE OF ARTS INTERGRATION IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION WITHIN THE GREEK PRIVATE EDUCATIONAL SETTING: A QUALITATIVE RESEARCH STUDY, conducted by Eleni Ainalaki-Papastavrou. This project will be supervised by Dr. Jane Mandalios, Assistant Professor, Dep. Of English Co-Ordinator, faculty MA in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages. The purpose of the research is to explore English teachers' attitudes towards arts mediated instruction and why they choose to include or exclude art from their teaching. At the same time, this study will investigate learners' preferences regarding arts-based instruction in their English lessons. Hence, this study's intention is to analyze interpretations of both teachers and learners and why art is or is not an important component to an English language classroom in Greece.

As a participant your child will be asked to be interviewed and answer to some questions regarding his/her beliefs and experiences of arts-based instruction in English language lessons. It will take approximately 40 minutes. The interviews will take place by the end of August and beginning of September 2024. They will have an individual appointment based on their availability. The meeting will be either face to face or online (via Skype). Participation at this study does not entail any known risks. If you agree with your child taking part, he/she will gain experience from participating at educational research. Additionally, he/she will be contributing to the furthering of knowledge regarding the art-mediated instruction in English language teaching in Greece. While there is no direct benefit for his/her participation in the study, it is reasonable to expect that the results may provide information of value for the field of TESOL.

Your child's identity as a participant will remain confidential. His/her name will not be included in any forms, questionnaires, etc. The interview **will be recorded** but your child's identity will be protected. All data collected will be available only to the researcher and they will be stored in password protected files. The files will be destroyed after six months.

This consent form is the only document identifying you as a participant in this study; it will be stored securely in a password protected file available only to the investigator. Results will be reported only in the aggregate. If you are interested in seeing these results, you may contact the principal investigator.

If you have questions about the research, you may contact the student investigator, Eleni Ainalaki-Papastavrou, e.ainalaki@acg.edu, the faculty advisor Jane Mandalios jmandalios@acg.edu.

Your child's participation in this research is voluntary. Refusal to participate (or discontinue participation) will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

You have fully read the above text and have had the opportunity to ask questions about the purposes and procedures of this study. Your signature acknowledges receipt of a copy of the consent form as well as your willingness for your child to participate.

Typed/Printed Name of Participant

Signature of Participant

Date

Typed/Printed Name of Investigator

Signature of Investigator

Date

The American College of Greece
Assent Form for Human Research Subjects

Title: EXAMINING THE INFLUENCE OF ARTS INTEGRATION IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION WITHIN THE GREEK PRIVATE EDUCATIONAL SETTING: A QUALITATIVE RESEARCH STUDY.

Principal Investigator: Eleni Ainalaki-Papastavrou

Supervising Investigator: Jane Mandalios

Why are you here?

The researchers (that's us) want to tell you about a study looking at your preferences regarding arts-based instruction in your English lessons. We want to discuss your thoughts and experiences surrounding the topic of arts integration in English Language Learning. We decided to invite you to be in the study because we want to learn more about the beliefs of Greek students towards arts-mediated instruction in the private education context (school, language schools/frodistiria and private lessons) and because your parent or guardian thought you might like to be in the study too.

Why is this study being done?

We want to learn more about English teachers' attitudes towards arts mediated instruction and why they choose to include or exclude art from their teaching. At the same time, this study will investigate learners' preferences regarding arts-based instruction in their English lessons. Hence, this study's intention is to analyze interpretations of both teachers and learners and why art is or is not an important component to an English language classroom in Greece.

What will happen to me?

Only if you want, these things will happen:

- 1) Be interviewed and answer to some questions regarding your beliefs and experiences of arts-based instruction in your English language lessons. The interview will be recorded but your identity will remain confidential. All data collected will be available only to the researcher and they will be stored in password protected files. The files will be destroyed after six months.

Will the study hurt?

Nothing in this study will hurt.

Will the study help me?

You will gain experience from participating at educational research.

What if I have questions?

You can ask us questions any time. You can ask questions now or later. You can talk to any of the people who are helping with the study.

Do my parents know about this?

This study was explained to your parents and they said that you could be in it. You can talk this over with them before you decide.

Do I have to be in the study?

You do not have to be in the study. No one will be upset if you don't want to do this. If you don't want to be in this study, you just have to tell us. If you want to be in the study, you just have to tell us. You can say yes now and change your mind later. It's up to you.

Writing your name on this page means that the page was read by you or to you and that you agree to be in the study. You know what will happen to you. If you decide to quit the study all you have to do is to tell the person in charge,

MY NAME

TODAY'S DATE

INVESTIGATOR'S SIGNATURE

DATE

*The American College of Greece
Institutional Review Board
Audio Release Form*

I voluntarily agree to be recorded during the study being conducted by Eleni Ainalaki-Papastavrou. I understand that the recordings will be used only for the research study procedure EXAMINING THE INFLUENCE OF ARTS INTEGRATION IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION WITHIN THE GREEK PRIVATE EDUCATIONAL SETTING: A QUALITATIVE RESEARCH STUDY and only the investigator will have access to them. The recordings will be kept for six months and they will be stored in password protected files. After data is collected the recordings will be erased.

Signature of the Participant

Date

Signature of Investigator

Date

Refusal to be Taped

I do not agree to be recorded during this research study conducted by Eleni Ainalaki-Papastavrou. I understand I (will/will not) receive compensation by such a refusal. By refusing to be recorded, I understand that I (may/may not) continue to participate in the study.

Signature of the Participant

Date



Institutional Review Board

July 29th, 2024

Principal Investigator: Eleni Ainalaki-Papastavrou, MA Tesol

Re: Exempt determination (IRB protocol #202407451)

Dear Researcher,

Thank you for submitting your study entitled, "*Exploring the Impact of Arts Integration in English Language Teaching: A qualitative research study*". The IRB has reviewed and approved your study.

Please keep in mind that the IRB Committee must be contacted if there are any changes to your research protocol. Feel free to contact the IRB [irb@acg.edu] if you have any questions.

Best Wishes for your research work.

Ion Beratis, Ph.D.

Chair, IRB

Cc: Office of the Chief Academic Officer

APPENDIX B

Interview questions

For English Teachers:

1. What are your thoughts about arts integration (drama, music and films) in English language teaching?
2. Which circumstances determine your decision to include or exclude arts (drama, music and films) in your instruction?
3. Does the Greek educational system provide opportunities of arts integration (drama, music and films) in your English lessons?
4. Based on your experience how do Greek parents react when you decide to integrate arts (drama, music and films) in your teaching?
5. What barriers have you faced when you incorporated arts (drama, music and films) in your lessons?
6. What are your perceptions regarding the impact of arts integration (drama, music and films) on students' language proficiency and motivation?

For English Students:

1. What do you think about arts (drama, music and films) being part of your English lessons?
2. What type of arts activities have you encountered in your English lessons, if any?
3. Do you believe that arts (drama, music and films) have helped you or would have helped you understand better language concepts? Why or why not?
4. Does arts integration (drama, music and films) influence your creativity and motivation in learning English?
5. What kind of arts would you prefer in an English language class? Why?
6. What benefits or challenges have you experienced with arts-based instruction (drama, music and films) in English language learning?