

Exploring the value of culturally responsive pedagogy in English for Specific Purposes teaching: a case study in a Greek context

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the implementation of culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP) in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) teaching, recognizing ESP as a learner-centric approach tailored to individual needs. Despite this acknowledgment, the optimal methods for achieving learner goals remain elusive. Academics stress the need for a personalized approach, emphasizing the teacher's awareness and ability to select or create suitable methodologies. Within the context of a Greek classroom influenced by Katsara's (2021) facilitator-oriented model, the study utilized the Read, Ask, and Paraphrase (RAP) strategy by Schumaker et al. (1984) for a seminar on global citizenship principles in business. Evaluation through reflection journals from 39 Greek business students showed high satisfaction with the seminar, particularly due to the effective management of power dynamics, which made the learning environment more engaging. Students valued the relevance of the seminar's topic to their careers, the facilitative nature of teaching materials, and the academic writing skills they gained. However, they also requested more structured guidelines and a deeper focus on specialized business topics. This feedback indicates that while the facilitative approach and power dynamics were well-received, there is a need to balance this with clearer instructional guidance. The paper suggests implications for foreign language policy that align with this approach.

Key Words: Culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP); English for Specific Purposes (ESP); Greek students; Higher Education

The field of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has been the subject of extensive research and discussion, with scholars and theorists delving into its diverse dimensions. Throughout the literature, numerous definitions of ESP have emerged, reflecting the evolving nature of this specialized approach to language teaching. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) emphasize the fundamental principle of ESP as a learner-centered pedagogy, where content and methodology decisions are driven by the learners' individual reasons for acquiring language skills. Contrary to traditional language teaching, ESP does not prescribe specific materials or methods but rather tailors the learning experience to meet learners' specific needs.

Subsequently, Strevens (1988) refines the notion of ESP as a specialized form of language teaching, characterized by absolute and variable features. Absolute characteristics include designing language instruction to cater to learners' particular requirements, aligning with the methodologies used in their respective disciplines, and focusing on relevant linguistic elements. Variable characteristics acknowledge that ESP might be discipline-specific, utilize different teaching methods than general English, and often target adult learners in professional or tertiary educational contexts.

Over time, theorists Dudley-Evans and St John (1998) reframe the definition, viewing ESP as an "attitude of mind." Their model emphasizes the core elements of catering to learners' specific needs, integrating disciplinary methodologies, and prioritizing language, skills, discourse, and genres pertinent to learners' domains. The diverse array of definitions underscores the central tenet shared among theorists: ESP is inherently learner-centered, serving as a gateway to academic, professional, or workplace linguistic competence.

In striving to actualize the learner-centered vision of ESP, the quest for an optimal teaching methodology emerges as a central theme. As Belcher (2009) notes, while the goal of specific learner-centered language instruction is clear, the means of achieving it remains a subject of exploration. Sifakis (2005, 2009) referring to Robinson (1991, p. 79, as cited in Sifakis (2005, p. 24) and Widdowson (1990, p. 30), as cited in Sifakis (2009, p. 470) highlights the challenge of a one-size-fits-all

approach, advocating for a "principled pragmatism" where language teachers adeptly select or tailor appropriate teaching methods based on individual students' needs and progress. This dynamic interplay between theory and practice necessitates an adaptable and responsive approach to ESP instruction.

Furthermore, cultural considerations play a crucial role in shaping ESP pedagogy. Learners' cultural backgrounds and attitudes toward learning can significantly impact their language acquisition journey. Luo and Garner (2017) assert that in certain cultural contexts, teachers may need to transition from being knowledge authorities to acting as language consultants to foster effective learning. This calls for the integration of culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP) (Gay, 2000), wherein learners' diverse cultural orientations and experiences are harnessed to facilitate language education. This sensitivity to cultural cohorts can lead to innovative teaching methods that resonate with students' unique backgrounds, as exemplified in Katsara's (2021) reconciliatory approach to blend CRP with the traditional teacher-centered nature of Greek classrooms.

In light of these complexities, this paper aims to shed light on the multifaceted dimensions that encompass ESP and the pedagogical approaches employed to cater to learners' specific needs. In congruence with Katsara's proposed approach in 2021, the research seeks to provide an understanding of how ESP is conceptualized and practiced within the realm of language education in the Greek context. By considering the dynamic interplay between theory, practice, and cultural context, this research endeavors to contribute to the ongoing discourse in ESP education and offer insights into fostering effective and learner-centered language instruction

Literature Review

Cross-Cultural Framework: Hofstede's cultural dimensions

The success of any educational endeavor lies in adopting an effective teaching approach that resonates with the cultural characteristics and learning behaviors of the student population. As a diverse academic community, it is crucial to recognize and acknowledge the significant impact of cultural dimensions on students' preferences, expectations, and receptiveness to different teaching methodologies. Hofstede's analysis (1986) reveals significant cultural dimensions among the Greek society. According to Hofstede (1986, 1996, 2001) and Hofstede et al. (2010), Greeks tend to have a relatively high-power distance (60), respecting

authority figures and hierarchical structures in the learning environment. They also score moderately high in masculinity (57), valuing competition and achievement, while seeking recognition for academic success. However, they rank very high in uncertainty avoidance (100), preferring clear guidelines and structured learning settings to reduce ambiguity. Greeks exhibit a low level of individualism (35), emphasizing group cohesion and collaboration. They show an intermediate long-term orientation (45), balancing tradition and innovation in their approach to learning. Their equitable score in indulgence versus restraint (50) suggests a balanced approach to academic pursuits and leisure activities.

The analysis of cultural dimensions in Greek society suggests that Greek students have specific expectations and preferences when it comes to their learning environment. They generally prefer a teacher-centered classroom, where the teacher assumes a leadership role and provides explicit instruction. Independent learning may not be as favored, and students could feel stressed or uncomfortable when asked to learn on their own. Furthermore, the cultural emphasis on the teacher's academic reputation and achievement is significant. Greek students place a high value on getting good grades and recognition for their academic accomplishments. This motivation for high achievement can be a driving force in their educational pursuits. Collectivism is a prominent cultural trait among Greeks, which also influences their learning behavior. In a classroom setting, students tend to form subgroups, and maintaining 'face' within these groups becomes crucial. Avoiding conflicts and maintaining harmony within the group are essential considerations for Greek students. Another aspect is the expectation of immediate results from their academic efforts. Greek students may desire to see the fruits of their labor quickly and may feel unsettled when faced with delayed outcomes.

Despite their preference for structure and immediate outcomes, Greek students can also exhibit flexibility in their plans. They may adjust their learning approaches to suit their current needs or circumstances, reflecting an adaptive mindset.

Insights from Research at University of Patras

Katsara's studies, conducted at the University of Patras in Agrinio campus, offer valuable insights into how cultural variables influence the Greek teaching context and the academic behaviors of Greek students. These surveys, carried out in various years (2008, 2010, 2018, 2020),

illuminate the alignment and confirmation of certain cultural traits among Greek students as identified by Hofstede's analysis.

In Katsara's investigation on Greek students' motivation to study English for Specific Purposes (ESP) at the university (2008), it was evident that Greek students are predominantly driven by performance goals, aiming to achieve high marks, which is consistent with Greece's high score on Hofstede's cultural dimension of masculinity. Moreover, a strong preference for group work was identified, reflecting the cultural trait of low individualism in the Greek context.

The study on Greek students' concerns within a university setting (2010) revealed a preference for receiving direct information from tutors or specialized sites designed for ESP courses, aligning with cultural traits of power distance and uncertainty avoidance, as indicated by Hofstede's analysis. Analyzing self-assessment questionnaires completed by first-year students at the University of Patras (2018), Katsara found that many Greek students lacked confidence in employing study skills, and their choice of study tasks seemed linked to self-efficacy beliefs and task interest. This emphasized the importance of initiating the learning process and the need for continuous teacher guidance, reflecting Greece's scores on uncertainty avoidance and power distance.

Additionally, the investigation on Greek students' adult learning profile within ESAP courses (2020) demonstrated that Greek students' readiness to learn was pedagogically oriented, with a strong desire to excel academically at the university, aligning with Greece's high score on masculinity, which emphasizes a focus on achievement and material rewards.

Amidst the merits of Hofstede's model, Katsara's studies also revealed some contradictions. In the study on Greek students' self-assessment (2014), it became evident that students desired specific instruction on certain strategies for dealing with exam questions, which challenged the notion of high-power distance, suggesting that students' input could be valuable in teacher practice. Likewise, in surveys conducted by Katsara (2018b, 2020), Greek students expressed a desire for academic support and open communication during tutorials, raising questions about the traditional perception of high-power distance in the Greek teaching context.

The primary implication is that Hofstede model, while offering valuable insights into cultural dimensions, requires further enhancement. Integrating it with other cultural frameworks and theories would yield a

more comprehensive understanding of how cultural influences shape behaviour and attitudes. Given the ever-evolving nature of cultural research, continuous investigation and critical analysis are essential to refine existing models and establish inclusive and reliable frameworks for studying cultural variations.

Understanding Cultural Responsiveness: Gay's (2000) Six Phases

Gay (2000) proposed six phases of cultural responsiveness that can guide educators in creating inclusive and equitable learning environments. These phases are meant to support and promote the success of diverse students and foster a positive educational experience for all. Drawing from the theoretical underpinning, it becomes evident that Hofstede's cultural dimensions analysis and Gay's six phases of cultural responsiveness are interconnected in their focus on comprehending and valuing cultural differences, as evidenced in the available literature (Gay, 2000, Hofstede, 1986, 1996).

While Hofstede's analysis focuses on cultural dimensions at a societal level, the six phases of cultural responsiveness provide practical guidance for educators to create inclusive learning environments that consider students' diverse cultural backgrounds and needs.

Validating Phase and Power Distance: In both Hofstede's analysis (power distance) and the Validating Phase, there is an acknowledgment of hierarchical structures. In high power distance cultures, respecting authority is crucial. The Validating Phase encourages affirming students' cultural backgrounds, which aligns with respecting authority figures in hierarchical settings (Gay, 2000, Hofstede, 1986, 1996).

Comprehensive Phase and Masculinity: Hofstede's masculinity dimension reflects values such as assertiveness and achievement. The Comprehensive Phase, with its focus on setting high expectations and fostering responsibility, aligns with promoting achievement and students' confidence to become successful learners, which relates to masculinity values (Gay, 2000, Hofstede, 1986, 1996).

Multidimensional Phase and Individualism: Hofstede's individualism dimension emphasizes the importance of individual interests over the group. The Multidimensional Phase encourages involving students in curriculum design and considering their individual cultural backgrounds (Gay, 2000, Hofstede, 1986, 1996).

Empowering Phase and Uncertainty Avoidance: Hofstede's uncertainty avoidance dimension highlights societies' preference for clear

guidelines and structure. The Empowering Phase, with its emphasis on instilling confidence in students and providing clear expectations, aligns with addressing the need for certainty and clear direction (Gay, 2000, Hofstede, 1986, 1996).

Transformative Phase and Long-Term Orientation: Hofstede's Long-Term Orientation dimension, which assesses a culture's emphasis on long-term planning and future consequences, can indirectly align with Gay's Transformative Phase in education. Cultures valuing perseverance, forward-thinking, and tradition preservation, often associated with Long-Term Orientation, can indirectly resonate with the Transformative Phase's principles. These shared values encourage critical thinking, social awareness, and adaptability, preparing students for their evolving roles in a changing world.

Emancipatory Phase and Indulgence vs. Restraint: While the Emancipatory Phase in culturally responsive teaching and Hofstede's indulgence vs. restraint dimension aren't directly related, they might indirectly connect in certain educational contexts. The Emancipatory Phase, which promotes autonomy and critical thinking, can indirectly align with cultural norms emphasizing self-control and management of desire found in Hofstede's dimension. For example, in cultures valuing self-control, encouraging students to think critically and independently indirectly supports these values by fostering self-discipline in their intellectual pursuits and encouraging appropriate questioning of authority (Gay, 2000, Hofstede, 1986, 1996).

In summary, the six phases of cultural responsiveness provide practical strategies for educators to navigate and address the cultural dimensions identified in Hofstede's analysis. By recognizing and valuing cultural diversity, educators can create inclusive learning environments that cater to students' unique needs, promoting their academic success and overall well-being.

Main implications within the Greek context

Considering the insights discussed above, Katsara's studies highlight the significance of cultural variables in the Greek teaching context. While Hofstede's analysis provides valuable perspectives, effectively addressing cultural complexities requires a nuanced approach. Embracing culturally responsive pedagogy and valuing students' input can cultivate a more inclusive and impactful learning environment for Greek students. In this regard, Katsara (2021) proposed a teaching approach that

integrates culturally responsive pedagogy, acknowledging the teacher's role as a facilitator in harmonizing learner-centeredness with the teacher-centered nature of the Greek classroom. This approach is in concordance with both Gay's six phases of cultural responsiveness, offering educators a framework to understand and respond to cultural diversity in the classroom, and Hofstede's cultural dimensions analysis, which helps educators navigate cultural differences more effectively. By integrating these two perspectives, educators can create a more inclusive and comprehensive educational experience for Greek students.

The study

Research Method

This section offers a description of an investigation carried out in university of Patras, at the department of Business Administration of Food and Agricultural Enterprises, Greece in relation to undergraduate Greek students' reflections about a seminar based on the Read, Ask, and Paraphrase (RAP) strategy developed by Schumaker, Denton, and Deshler (1984) The structure of the seminar, instrument of the survey, main findings, and discussion of the results are analysed.

Teaching context

The Department of Business Administration and Agricultural Enterprises¹ offers two mandatory EAP/ESP courses to first-year students, with a focus on preparing them for success in the global agribusiness sector. Furthermore, the spring term course structure incorporates a diverse range of seminars designed to boost students' abilities and promote intercultural competence.

In the winter term, students aim to enhance their reading and writing skills for effective communication in the business context. They focus on various reading techniques and strategies to comprehend business-related texts efficiently, while also improving their writing proficiency for clear and coherent business documents. Essential skills such as skimming, scanning, active reading, intensive reading, and the SQ3R method are thoroughly

¹According to article 2 of 52/2022 (Gazette 131/7-7-2022, Vol. A) the department of Business Administration of Food and Agricultural Enterprises of the School of Economics and Business Administration, merged with the department of Food Science and Technology of the School of Agricultural Sciences (University of Patras, Agrinio campus).

explored. Moreover, students learn the art of crafting effective thesis statements and developing well-structured paragraphs. Moreover, the course includes instruction on effectively paraphrasing and summarizing in business writing, ensuring information is conveyed clearly and concisely. By the term's conclusion, students will possess the necessary tools to efficiently comprehend business-related texts, critically analyze information, and adeptly communicate ideas persuasively and coherently in a professional setting.

In the spring term, the course places emphasis on essential writing principles in the business context, covering the composition of memos, press releases, corporate blogs, and business reports. Students actively participate in diverse communication activities, such as presenting reports, analyzing graphs, engaging in negotiations, and participating in debates to address staff concerns. Notably, the course integrates seminars that underscore the importance of intercultural competence. Through role-playing cross-cultural scenarios, students develop empathy and sensitivity to diverse perspectives, while specialized intercultural conflict resolution seminars equip them with effective strategies for handling conflicts in business settings. These seminars specifically focus on understanding cultural differences, norms, and values, providing essential guidance for adeptly navigating intercultural interactions. Additionally, group reflective discussions are carried out in class to foster a profound understanding of students' ethical responsibilities towards society and the environment, encouraging them to make positive contributions through responsible business decisions.

Given the distinct Greek cultural context, it becomes essential to consider Katsara's (2021) suggested approach, which leverages cultural backgrounds to enhance the courses' effectiveness. By tailoring the instruction to meet the specific needs and preferences of Greek students, this approach can result in increased engagement, improved learning outcomes, and a more comprehensive understanding of the subject matter that deeply resonates with Greek students.

Suggested Teaching Method

The approach known as the Read, Ask, and Put the main idea into your own words (RAP) strategy, devised by Schumaker, Denton, and Deshler (1984) was selected because it offers a structured and effective method for enhancing reading comprehension through a three-step process. First, students read a paragraph; next, they ask themselves about the main

idea and supporting details; finally, they rephrase the information in their own words. The RAP strategy is based on information processing theory, employing chunking and paraphrasing techniques to enhance the memory of key concepts and details within a text. By breaking down reading passages into smaller chunks (paragraphs), students can improve their ability to remember and recall information (Schumaker et al., 1984). By necessitating students to rephrase the material they read using their own words, the strategy actively engages them in the reading process, fostering an active approach rather than a passive one (Schumaker et al., 1984).

Teaching Procedure

The seminar was structured into two sessions. In the initial session, the teacher delivered a thorough review of skills covered in the winter term. To facilitate understanding, the review incorporated a hands-on practice and doing strategy. The teacher employed a PowerPoint presentation to revisit reading and paraphrasing techniques and supported the discussion with illustrative examples.

After the review, handouts outlining the main points were distributed. Students were then divided into groups and given two tasks: practicing reading comprehension by identifying the main topic and supporting information in texts, and practicing paraphrasing by working on assigned paragraphs. The students were given the autonomy to select their own partners for this task. Throughout the activity, the teacher moved around her tables, offering guidance and support to the students.

In the second session, that took place the following week, the teacher demonstrated the application of the RAP strategy. At the outset, the teacher demonstrated the technique using the opening paragraph extracted from a selected sample passage among various article excerpts, sourced from a published literature review article discussing organizational inequality in hiring practices. Additionally, the teacher delivered clear instructions for each step of the strategy. For instance, the first step, represented by the letter "R," entailed carefully reading and focusing on one paragraph at a time. The second step, denoted by the letter "A," involved asking themselves about the main idea and supporting details. Finally, the third step, indicated by the letter "P," required students to rephrase the information in their own words. After the initial modeling, students were divided into groups and granted the freedom to pick their own partners for the purpose of rephrasing the remaining paragraphs. During this stage of the strategy learning, the students applied the strategy

independently during their practice. As the students were involved in independent practice, the teacher ensured continuous supervision by moving around the room, actively listening to their paraphrasing, and providing additional feedback whenever necessary. Furthermore, at the conclusion of each weekly three-hour session, students are encouraged to schedule individual tutorial sessions if they require further clarification or in-depth explanations pertaining to the concept taught. This personalized approach ensures that students have the opportunity to address any specific challenges or queries they may encounter in their learning journey.

The teaching process in the seminar aligns with Katsara's approach in 2021, emphasizing the teacher as a facilitator of learning and adopting culturally responsive pedagogy. The seminar takes into account Hofstede's cultural dimensions. The teacher's continuous guidance during group activities aligns with Greek students' preference for receiving direct information from authoritative figures and their emphasis on collective goals, group cohesion, and harmony, as evidenced in Katsara's surveys. The clear instructions provided during the application of the RAP strategy address students' preference for structured approaches, catering to their uncertainty avoidance.

The teacher initiates the seminar with a comprehensive review of skills covered in the winter term, providing continuous guidance and support to the students ensuring Gay's validation and affirmation of the students' prior knowledge. Moving into the second session, the comprehensive phase was evident as the teacher set high expectations for the students. By introducing the RAP strategy and clearly instructing each step, the teacher fostered a sense of responsibility for their learning among the students. Creating an academic community of learners, the teacher encouraged the students to practice the strategy independently in groups, promoting a collaborative learning environment. By incorporating a hands-on practice and doing strategy, the teacher fosters active engagement and learner-centeredness, encouraging students to take an active role in their learning process. The seminar thus embraced the empowering phase by designing syllabi that supported high levels of achievement. The teacher's clear expectations and guidance illustrated to the students what was expected of them, empowering them to strive for success in their learning journey.

The seminar's structure also touched upon the multidimensional phase by involving students in the design of their curriculum. Students were given assignments on reading comprehension and paraphrasing, which

allowed them to be responsive to the information presented in the texts. Furthermore, the teacher encouraged them to take charge of their own cultural and socialization aspects, thereby fostering a more holistic learning experience. Elements of the transformative phase were evident within the seminar structure. The teacher's demonstration of new strategies, like the RAP strategy, and encouraging students to challenge traditional approaches to reading and paraphrasing could lead to a transformative learning experience.

Finally, through the provision of tutorial sessions for individual support, the teacher created an environment that encouraged students to challenge the 'absolute authority' of traditional instruction and assume greater control over their own learning journey, reflecting the principles of the emancipatory phase.

Participants, Instrument and Data Collection

The survey's participant selection followed purposeful sampling, as discussed by Patton (1990). This sampling strategy involves carefully selecting cases that are rich in information, enabling a thorough examination of the central issues relevant to the research objective. In this study, the objective was to understand the feedback of Greek undergraduate students from the Department of Business Administration of Food and Agricultural Enterprises who attended the seminar. The collected data will inform the redesign of the seminar syllabus to meet the specific needs of the identified group of undergraduate students from a particular department. This targeted approach will yield valuable insights, as opposed to collecting data from a larger sample encompassing all Greek students at the University of Patras, Greece.

At the end of the spring term seminar, all 39 students were encouraged to voluntarily write reflection journals to share their experiences and thoughts about the seminar. According to the University of Patras Research Ethics Committee (2019), at the University of Patras, the Ethics and Research Integrity Committee ensures that research adheres to Law 4521/2018 and university regulations. An ethical review is required for research seeking funding, and the committee mandates written, revocable consent for research involving personal data, specifying details about data controllers, the purpose of data collection, confidentiality, retention, and participants' rights. Since this survey was not funded, the author did not submit an application for ethical review to the committee. However, in accordance with the University of Patras guidelines on ethical research,

students were still required to sign their reflection journals underneath the ethical statement, confirming their understanding of the confidentiality and anonymity provisions. Students were also informed of their right to access, correct, withdraw or delete their data at any time without consequences. It was clearly communicated that the primary purpose of the survey was to gather feedback to improve future seminars by better addressing their specific needs, and that all reflection journals would be securely disposed of after one year.

The reflection journal consisted of ten questions, with the first two pertaining to students' gender and English proficiency level. Questions 3, 4, and 5 focused on seminar evaluation, while questions 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 allowed students to express their reflections on their performance, their favorite and least favorite aspects of the seminar, as well as offer suggestions for improvement both their own and teacher's part. A five-point Likert scale was employed, ranging from "very satisfied" to "very dissatisfied."

Data analysis

The study used a conventional content analysis approach, following the methodology discussed by Hsieh and Shannon (2005). The primary data obtained from the survey were systematically analyzed and classified into distinct categories. According to the researchers (*ibid*, p.1279), conventional content analysis is commonly employed in studies that seek to depict a particular phenomenon. Kondracki and Wellman (2002, as cited in Hsieh and Shannon, *ibid*, p.1279) argue that in this type of research design, researchers refrain from using predetermined categories and instead allow the categories and their labels to emerge naturally from the data. This particular study focuses on investigating the thoughts and responses of Greeks towards the effectiveness of the RAP seminar, specifically in relation to their comprehension of the significance of global citizenship principles in the business domain, in this specific case to understand issues of equality in the workplace. According to the United Nations (UN), (2021), global citizenship education (GCED) provides the skills, values, and behaviors that students need to meet the intellectual challenges of the twenty-first century, which include climate change, conflict, poverty, famine, and issues of equality and sustainability.

Results

39 students completed the reflection journal resulting in a 100% response rate. About 53.84% were female and 46.15% were male. Most students' level of English was between C2 (53.84%) and B2 (28.20%).²

Table 1.

Level of English

Level of English	%
C2	53.84
C1	7.69
B2	28.20
B1	2.56
A2	5.12
A1	2.56
None	0

Around sixty-two percent (61.53%) of the students expressed a high level of satisfaction with the seminar as a whole. As part of the evaluation process, students were asked to assess various aspects of the presentations, which included the relevance of the course topic, the usefulness of the information presented, the quality of the presentation itself, the effectiveness of visual aids, and the quality of handouts provided during the course. The analysis of the students' responses revealed that a substantial portion of the participants held positive views regarding these different facets. Specifically, 69.23% of students found the course topic to be highly relevant, while 76.92% deemed the presentation's usefulness as very satisfactory. Furthermore, 43.58% of students expressed high satisfaction with the visual aids, and 41.02% reported that handouts provided were rated as satisfactory. Conversely, 15.38% of students expressed dissatisfaction with the quality of the handouts.

² To ensure convenience students provided their reflections in Greek, which were subsequently translated into English for analysis.

Table 2.*Overall evaluation*

Overall evaluation	%
Very Satisfied	61.53
Satisfied	23.07
Neutral	15.38
Dissatisfied	0
Very dissatisfied	0

Table 3.*Aspects of the presentation*

Aspects of the presentation	Very Satisfied %	Satisfied %	Neutral %	Dissatisfied%	Very Dissatisfied %
Relevance of the information	69.23	23.07	7.69	0	0
Usefulness of information	76.92	20.51	2.56	0	0
Quality of the presentation	64.10	25.64	10.25	0	0
Visual Aids	43.58	17.94	38.46	0	0
Handouts	41.02	17.94	28.20	15.38	0

Table 4.*Aspects of teaching*

Aspects of teaching	Very Satisfied %	Satisfied %	Neutral %	Dissatisfied%	Very Dissatisfied %
Group work	66.66	33.33	0	0	0

Choose own partner	41.02	30.76	17.94	7.69	2.56
Teacher as an instructor	64.10	35.89	0	0	0
Teacher as a consultant	69.23	30.76	0	0	0

Table 5.
Favourite part

Components of the seminar	%
RAP method	94.87
SQ3R method	89.74
Change word class	84.61
Change Positive to negative or vice versa	79.62
Intensive Reading	71.79
Active reading	66.66
Scanning	61.53
Skimming	53.84
Change word order	48.71
Change Active voice to passive voice or vice versa	38.46
Use of synonyms	35.89
Use of a replacement subject	28.20

Students were asked to comment on their favorite parts of the seminar. Some feedback was similar but worded differently, and thus not all comments are included to reduce redundancy.

I enjoyed the part of the seminar that focused on the paraphrasing techniques known as "change word class" and "change positive to negative." Although I found these techniques challenging, I appreciated the teacher's use of illustrative examples to demonstrate them

I liked the strategy 'change of word order' because rearranging the words in a sentence helps you change the paraphrase to match a particular goal, while still keeping the main idea of the original text intact.

I found the SQ3R method to be particularly interesting because it provides a structured framework that guides the reader through specific stages of engagement with a text.

I appreciate the SQ3R method, particularly the step that encourages us to examine the questions we've generated from the headings and subheadings. This approach greatly assists in establishing a sense of purpose and understanding while reading.

I liked the RAP technique because it promotes self-questioning and active reading by analyzing the first sentence of a paragraph to assess its accuracy in reflecting the main idea being conveyed in the paragraph.

In our seminar, we emphasized the significance of global citizenship principles in business. I believe that employing the RAP method is highly valuable for comprehending and critically assessing specific arguments in a paper through questioning and restating information in simpler terms.

Overall, these comments highlight that the seminar's targeted approach effectively equips students with practical tools for clearer comprehension and precise articulation, significantly enhancing their ability to engage with and analyze complex texts.

Table 6.

Least Favourite part

Components of the seminar	%
Use of a replacement subject	89/74
Use of synonyms	79.48
Change word order	74.35
Skimming	53.84
Scanning	48.71
Intensive reading	0
Active reading	0
RAP method	0
SQ3R Method	0
Change word class	0
Change Positive to negative or vice versa	0
Change Active voice to passive voice or vice versa	0

Students were also asked to comment on their least favorite parts of the seminar. Some feedback was similar but worded differently, and thus not all comments are included to reduce redundancy.

I found the paraphrasing technique of 'use of replacement subject' to be of little value as it appeared meaningless to me. The application of this technique did not seem to bring about any notable difference in the paraphrased text

Using synonyms in paraphrasing can be ineffective because while some may offer a general substitution, others may be more specific or limited in scope, resulting in a loss of specificity and omission of important details.

Scanning undermines the depth and comprehension necessary for complex issues such as global citizenship principles in business.

The main implication is that students found these techniques ineffective for improving their comprehension and analysis, suggesting that more effective alternatives are needed to better enhance understanding and address complex topics.

Students' reflections about the seminar

Students were also invited to reflect about the seminar. The students' reflections about the seminar appear predominantly positive, highlighting the effectiveness of the teaching approach, the benefits of collaboration, the importance of understanding specialized texts through paraphrasing, and the value of practice and tailored instructions to enhance learning outcomes. An indicative selection of their comments categorized under themes are given below:

Teaching approach

The teaching approach greatly supported our learning process.

The systematic instructions provided step by step were appreciated, as they allowed us to tackle the tasks gradually, making it more manageable and reducing our stress levels.

Students' collaboration

Engaging in teamwork with other students was highly advantageous as it cultivated a shared commitment to completing the task by accessing and utilizing the distinct strengths and capabilities of each team member.

The option to choose my collaboration partners was something I enjoyed, as it played a significant role in creating a sense of psychological ease.

Learning outcomes

I realized that understanding specialized texts is closely related to paraphrasing as it involves the ability to grasp the specialized meaning and essence of the original text and express it in one's own words while maintaining the key ideas and concepts.

Restating the text using my own words assisted me in recalling the central idea more effectively.

Students' contributions

I successfully grouped together paraphrased sentences to ensure a clear understanding of the main idea of the text.

I cultivated harmony within my team despite encountering members who displayed laziness and depended on others to carry the workload.

I effectively conveyed the main idea of the text to my team, enabling them to perform the paraphrasing task with clarity.

Students' practice

I need additional practice in utilizing various paraphrasing techniques.

I need additional practice in identifying the elements of a topic sentence and the supporting sentences that elaborate on it.

Suggestions

Students also offered suggestions for improvement. Comments included:

While I found the power presentation and handouts informative, I personally believe that receiving more specific instructions from the teacher regarding the RAP method would be beneficial. For instance, having clearer guidelines on the Ask step would greatly help me understand and implement the method effectively.

I really enjoyed the RAP method, and I believe it would be valuable to apply this approach in discussing additional specialized business topics relevant to our studies.

As we are all unique, not everyone may get along with everyone else. In my experience, I found myself working in groups where most of us preferred to collaborate together, but I had to tolerate a couple of individuals because they were chosen by others for our team. It would be helpful if the teacher could explore potential solutions to address this issue.

Discussion

Upon comprehensive examination and synthesis of various findings, this study illuminates specific facets of Greek cultural learning behavior that are notably significant.

Firstly, Greek learners tend to appreciate group work and collaboration in their learning process. They value the guidance and support of their teachers while also desiring some autonomy and freedom in selecting their partners. This suggests a cultural behavior that leans towards collectivism and emphasizes working together to utilize individual strengths within a group. This is reflected in a study conducted by Koutrouba, Kariotaki and Christopoulos (2012), who investigated the perspectives of 428 Greek students aged 13 to 18. These students attended 30 secondary education schools in Athens and have practical experience with cooperative learning in group work. Through data elaboration, statistical analysis, and factor analysis, it was revealed that students are more inclined to actively

engage in group work when they are given greater autonomy and when their friends are also part of the group.

The main implication is that the Greek learners' value for collaboration and teacher guidance aligns with Katsara's (2021) critique of Hofstede's dimensions, emphasizing nuanced cultural behaviors. Their preference for the teacher to serve as a facilitator supports Katsara's call for culturally responsive teaching, revealing limitations in Hofstede's framework.

Secondly, Greek learners find value in having clear instructions and structured frameworks that provide a pathway for engagement with the material. They prefer explicit guidance from educators on how to approach texts, ask questions, and express information in a more straightforward language. This behavior aligns with Hofstede's analysis, indicating a preference for clear instruction in a context of power distance. This was also found in a survey conducted by Asonitou et al. (2018) to assess the Course Experience Questionnaire's validity in three out of ten Technical Educational Institutes (TEI) in Greece. According to the survey findings, it was evident that the respondents placed significant importance on the clarity with which the teaching staff communicated the expected academic standards and program goals.

Thirdly, Greek learners demonstrate a willingness to invest time and effort for future benefits. They recognize the need to thoroughly grasp complex topics and prioritize the acquisition of skills that will be beneficial in the long run. This aligns with a cultural behavior of having a long-term orientation towards education and personal development. This is reflected in a study by Kantaridou et al. (2021) who found that Greek learners who adopt a promotion orientation, emphasizing the pursuit of positive outcomes and opportunities in their language learning, are more likely to invest time and effort for future advantages. They are motivated to improve their L2 skills and achieve successful learning outcomes. The key implication is that the current study's findings exhibit a partial correlation with Hofstede's intermediate long-term orientation score for Greece. While indicating moderate alignment, the strong dedication to future-focused learning among Greek learners suggests a potentially deeper cultural emphasis on sustained personal development, as evidenced in the outcomes highlighted by Kantaridou et al. (2021).

Fourthly, Greek learners showcase a critical and discerning approach to learning. They recognize the limitations of certain techniques, such as using synonyms in paraphrasing, and emphasize the importance of

capturing nuanced details and avoiding superficial scanning. This indicates a cultural behavior of valuing depth, accuracy, and a thorough understanding of the content.

Within the study's findings, the meticulous approach of Greek learners towards learning techniques, alongside their awareness of method limitations, demonstrates a fusion of Katsara's and Hofstede's influences. Their critical disposition implies an appreciation for the teacher's role as a facilitator, as emphasized by Katsara. This critical stance involves seeking profound comprehension, posing insightful inquiries, and questioning assumptions. Furthermore, their focus on grasping intricate details while avoiding superficiality resonates with Hofstede's call for clear directives and structured learning. In Manataki's (2020) survey, which involved 250 undergraduate and postgraduate students from diverse Greek universities, similar patterns emerged. The findings demonstrated that a considerable majority of the participants held elevated expectations concerning the cultivation of critical thinking skills and competence through university teaching. Encouragingly, the survey results revealed that these expectations were effectively fulfilled.

These aspects of Greek cultural learning behavior suggest a preference for collaborative and structured learning environments, a long-term focus on education, and a critical engagement with complex topics. An instance illustrating this is an undergraduate research methodology course offered at Panteion University, Athens, Greece, which demonstrated the benefits for Greek students (Braials et al., 2017). The researchers described and researched the course design which centered around a project-based structure, progressing through four phases: a concise lecture on a specific research method, followed by an "early practice" activity and guided small group collaborations for reflection on practice, ultimately leading to a deeper understanding of the research method. This innovative course design represents a significant shift from the prevailing didactic pedagogical model commonly found in Greek higher education. The study aimed to explore how this paradigm shift was received and experienced by the participating students (N=15) by adopting a blended qualitative research approach. The approach combined thematic analysis with students' critical reflections on their experiences, with the goal of generating a detailed description of the intervention. Braials et al. (ibid) found in their survey that the narrative essays and thematic analysis model indicate that when individuals learn by actively doing and participate in group learning guided by a facilitative tutor, it can result in a transformative experience. This

approach, known as the "guide on the side," empowers learners to engage in experiential learning, leading to significant personal growth and learning outcomes.

To sum up, the aforementioned findings highlight the importance of harmonizing educational methods with Greek cultural learning tendencies. Educators in Greece can leverage these insights to tailor their instructional approaches and create learning environments that align with the cultural preferences and learning behaviors of Greek students.

Some implications and concluding remarks

In conclusion, the conducted seminar provided valuable insights into Greek students' experiences, revealing their high satisfaction with the teaching approach and collaborative opportunities. The student's positive feedback on the RAP method illuminates its effectiveness in engaging and benefiting learners, highlighting the broader potential of active learning approaches to enhance the educational experience. The student's recognition of the RAP method's applicability to specialized business topics emphasizes the importance of adaptable teaching techniques that foster critical thinking across diverse subject areas.

Additionally, the student's acknowledgment of the challenges posed by varying personalities and preferences within group work underscores the need for educators to address interpersonal dynamics. This involves creating an inclusive environment where all student contributions are valued, irrespective of compatibility. Diverse viewpoints are to be encouraged, with differences viewed as opportunities for personal and collective growth. To address group collaboration hurdles, educators are encouraged to develop tailored activities. These activities may involve role assignments, regular progress updates, guided discussions on team dynamics, and strategies for harnessing diverse strengths to achieve shared objectives. Such initiatives aim to cultivate effective teamwork skills and prepare students for real-world collaborative scenarios. In addition, in the context of promoting an inclusive environment where each student's contributions are highly regarded, it is proposed that the concept of autonomy encounters limits through the stipulation of selecting a fresh partner on a weekly basis. This intentional strategy is recommended to counteract the formation of isolated groups, thus ensuring that all students engage in a balanced and just manner, making equitable contributions to the assigned tasks.

Moreover, the study's findings accentuated essential cultural dimensions in the Greek educational context, reflecting a collectivist nature, a value for clarity and structure, a long-term orientation towards learning, and a critical approach to understanding. Ultimately, recognizing and embracing the cultural dimensions spotlighted in this study can pave the way for fostering a rich and dynamic learning environment that caters to the unique needs and preferences of Greek students, promoting their academic growth and success in the educational journey.

However, it is crucial to recognize the study's limitations. The sample size of 39 students may not fully capture the diverse population of Greek language learners, limiting the generalizability of the findings. Moreover, even though all students completed the journal, the voluntary nature of the reflection journals could still introduce a bias. This is because students who had extremely positive or negative experiences might have been more motivated to participate and share their thoughts. Consequently, the broader spectrum of student experiences might not be fully captured, potentially influencing the overall portrayal of their collective experiences.

Future research endeavors should aim to address these limitations by conducting larger-scale and longitudinal studies to capture a more comprehensive understanding of Greek cultural learning behavior. Exploring how cultural dimensions interact with other individual differences, such as age and academic background, can offer deeper insights into the complexities of Greek students' learning preferences and behaviors. To further enhance language policy development and instructional approaches, future research could explore the long-term impact of RAP seminars on language proficiency and academic performance. A longitudinal study could assess the retention of paraphrasing skills and their application in different academic contexts. Moreover, investigating the preferences and experiences of language instructors in implementing innovative teaching methods, such as the "guide on the side" approach, can provide valuable insights into effective pedagogy.

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