

**National and Kapodistrian University of Athens
School of Philosophy
Department of English Language and Literature**

**TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN GREEK PRIMARY SCHOOLS:
A CONTEXTUALISATION OF “LEARNER AUTONOMY”**

Ioanna Kynigou

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Advisory Committee: Prof. Bessie Dendrinou (Supervisor), Prof. Sophia Papaefthymiou-Lytra,

ABSTRACT

The present thesis systematically investigates a discrepancy between educational “theory” and “practice”, as this is realized in the context of fostering learner autonomy in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms in Greek Primary schools. Autonomy is a notion central to the thesis, which briefly reviews how it has been construed in the theoretical discourses of the human sciences and how it has been appropriated in the discursive practices of education in the Western world, where sociocultural conditions have progressively warranted greater empowerment of the learner and ultimately, learner autonomy. After focusing on the central role played by learner autonomy as a positive goal in teaching practice, the study presents a description of the centralised organisation of the Greek educational system and the content-based paradigm which underlies it. This is followed by the presentation of data collected through interviews with ELT (English Language Teaching) teacher trainers and EFL teachers, which indicate that Greek practitioners and trainers do indeed regard learner autonomy as a positive goal to be pursued, although some constructions of the concept as they were expressed were contradictory or restricted. Finally, there is a presentation of data collected from classrooms and analysed using the linguistic tool of Discourse Analysis, with the aim to interpret the functions of teacher talk from the point of view of the teacher-student relationship, in order to describe how the classroom discourse of teachers maintains and produces a pedagogy which does not foster learner autonomy. The results of this analysis are summarised in a descriptive grid which, it is suggested, may provide a tool for teachers and researchers who want to a. identify existing discursive practices and b. plan strategies for change, based on actual practices rather than theoretical or other external goals.