

**Argumentation as pedagogical and teaching practice: implementation and results of a teaching intervention in primary school**

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**Abstract:** Given that the person’s cognitive development is a result of social interaction, according to the sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1997), the issue regarding how the ability of argumentation is built in the framework of the learning process, is investigated in this paper.

“Study of Environment” was chosen as a mediating framework for fostering argumentative speech, because, in this particular subject, insights from social and natural sciences are weaved together, creating a single learning area (Μπενέκος, 1984-85 & Χριστιάς, 1998). At the same time, the key elements on which SoE focuses, are the acquisition of critical-thinking skills and the preparation of opportunities for creative expression (Κουλουμπαρίτη, 2006).

In the first part of the paper, we outline the general theoretical framework regarding the main axes of teaching the subject of Study of Environment in Primary School, as well as the main concepts relating to argumentation and its didactics.

In the second part, we present the teaching outline and the research results of the teaching intervention, as expressed by the pupils.

In this paper, argumentation is considered as a pedagogical and teaching practice, meaning that argumentative speech includes elements of dialogue, which, consequently, are elements in order to carry out every pedagogical work and teaching practice.

**Key words:** Language teaching, Study of Environment, argumentative speech.

## 1. Introduction

The development of the pupils’ ability to communicate effectively, both in written and oral form, by making use of linguistic conventions at different levels of speech, falls within the scope of the demands of the language subject. Argumentation is a main teaching area, given that it creates the background for a substantial and substantiated communicative process at social level.

On the basis of this perspective, the school must not only foster the ability of argumentation within the framework of the language subject, but also integrate this demand into the teaching environment of other subjects, in order for the pupils to realize, firstly, that language is not a decontextualized subject and, secondly, in order for them to have a wider range of opportunities for education and practice.

As regards the abilities of argumentation, on the part of pupils, it has been observed that, in many cases, pupils:

- Confuse the argument with the view, the opinion.
- When they are faced with an issue’s complexity, they are not able to provide reasoned replies.
- During the conversation, they utilize the argument in an attempt to impose their opinion.
- In many cases, they remain faithful to the argument they make, without taking into account the opposing views regarding the conversation’s topic.
- They construct an argument that is not supported and is not completely reasoned.

On the basis of the problems mentioned, issues are raised as to the organization of the teaching, in order for the pupils to become able to express their opinions and criticize, based on specific and convincing logical arguments.

Therefore, the pupils should:

- Practice on the well-supported presentation of views and opinions.
- Know the difference between reliable and unreliable informational data.
- Be good observers and scholars, in order to observe objectively and in detail and to collect adequate evidence substantiating their opinions.
- Identify patterns or relations in what they have observed or discovered in their reading.
- Understand that arguments form an integral part of social interaction.

In the framework of the paper, the cultivation of argumentation skills is implemented in the learning environment of Study of Environment of the 4<sup>th</sup> Grade, given that the subject of this course sets the conditions for interdisciplinary approach to knowledge and speech production.

The teaching intervention that we present starts from and is supported by the theoretical developments and approaches of both Study of Environment and the teaching of argumentation.

## **2. Theoretical framework**

### **2.1. The main axes of teaching the language subject in Primary School**

In the environment of the Cross-Thematic Curriculum Framework (CTCF) and the New Detailed Curriculum (DC), the framework of the proposals and the demands for teaching the language subject is obvious (Detailed Curriculum (DC) of the Greek Language for Primary School, Government Gazette 303 issue B’/13-3-03).

According to the CTCF, the language subject aims at: “the development of the pupils’ ability to handle with adequacy and confidence, consciously, responsibly, effectively and creatively, written and oral speech, in order for them to participate actively in their school and broader community.” This general objective is specified in the framework of the Detailed Curriculum as “the pupils being able to use the language as communication code in order to meet their practical, sentimental, intellectual and social needs” (Detailed Curriculum (DC) of the Greek Language for Primary School, Government Gazette 303 issue B’/13-3-03. p. 26).

The pupils, having become aware of the diversity of language, namely of the several levels of style, are called upon to produce oral or written speech based on the type they were taught (Μπασλής, 2002).

Under the influence of Linguistics and text linguistics, the study of language is orientated toward the study of its communicative and functional character. (Χατζησαββίδης, 2009). The fostering of oral and written speech, as expressions of the communicative dimension of language, is an overarching objective, given that communication is the process through which the person’s surrounding world is invested with meaning, and through which attitudes, opinions and behaviors are shaped (Χατζησαββίδης, 2009). The target is, according to Matsaggouras, the person’s ability to be adapted to the communicative circumstances in the framework of social interaction (Ματσαγγούρας, 2004).

This means that textual types are the educational environment of the pupils for the cultivation of linguistic and metalinguistic skills (Halliday & Hasan, 1991). On the basis of this perspective, language teaching in genuine communicative environments focuses more on fostering the ability to choose the conventions of the respective textual type in order to achieve the social objectives set by the pupils in every field of action (Τσιπλάκου, Χατζηϊωάννου & Κωνσταντίνου, 2006).

With the paper we submit, we focus on the cultivation of argumentation skills by pupils in the framework of SoE, following the principles for communicative and functional use of language.

## **2.2 The main axes of teaching Study of Environment in Primary School**

Study of Environment (SoE) for the first four classes of Primary School is a single and unified learning area, in which insights from humanitarian, social sciences and natural sciences are weaved together. The topic-based approach to knowledge is a key feature of SoE, following the spiral structure of the curriculum along the classes of Primary School, is structured in topics regarding the community and the life within it, the social organization, the individual and its needs, the space and the interdependency with the life of humans, the rights and obligations of the members of a community, the municipality, the geographical divisions of Greece, the natural environment, the ecosystems and their protection, the time in daily life, the life and needs of humans, the communication and the information, the civilization. The overall aim of Study of Environment is the acquisition of knowledge, the development of

skills, values and attitudes that allow the pupil to observe, describe, interpret and, to a certain extent, make predictions about the operation, the associations and the interactions of the natural and man-made environment (CTCF, Government Gazette 303- B´13-3-2003).

On the basis of the methodological principles of the subject, the pupil is called upon to actively participate in the learning process through the essential involvement in individual and group research and actions. Therefore, it becomes clear that, in order for the multiple objectives of Study of Environment to be achieved, the principles of diversified teaching, the research work plans, the guided and collaborative exploration, as well as verbal exchange, should be followed.

### **2.3 Argumentative speech in Primary School**

In Primary School, the teaching of argumentation basically starts from the Third Grade. Pupils become gradually familiar with the first causal relations (Μηρτσέκη 2011), are trained to take into account the opposing views, acquire skills on using connective relations (Μηρτσέκη 2012), adequately apply the structural elements of argumentation, present, confute (Ευαγγέλου, Ε.& Παπαδημητρίου 2014) and synthesize opposing views (Μηρτσέκη 2012).

As Chelmis points out, we distinguish two key features of argumentation (Χέλμης, 2010: 62), namely the integration of claims and the communicativeness of the process. The claims are statements (sentences) which support, justify or explain another statement or some other statements and are exposed in logical “steps” until they reach a conclusion. The second feature of argumentation, namely communicativeness, means that the claims are organized with not only the speaker’s or the writer’s view, which he/she tries to support, as a reference framework, but also with the claims of other sides, which he/she tries to confute. In a few words, we reach arguments and counterarguments, which become either a dialogue or an essay speech (Χέλμης: 2010).

These two features of argumentation highlight the need to teach the structural features of argumentative speech in school and the practice of pupils on the use and selection of different standards of justification in different circumstances and conditions and within the communicative framework advocated by Text-centered Approach and Mediating Pedagogy. Besides, the interaction in the classroom in the form of dialogue and argumentation contributes significantly to the data review through alternative perspectives, to reflection, and to the acquisition of social knowledge. Moreover, the interactive process leads the pupils to realize the multitude of opinions on an issue, to understand the view of the others through the exposition of their arguments and mainly to realize their responsibility toward the different view-opinion. And as Babiniotis aptly observes, argumentation signifies a specific type of social interaction, which can also include a disagreement (Μπαμπινιώτης, 2008). Besides, the objective of justification is to convince the interlocutor about the benefits of the proposed view, by arguing about the problems related to the opposing view (Stein & Bernas, 1999).

Based on what we mentioned about argumentation, we are led to the view that the practice of argumentation meets important parameters of pedagogy, such as: the principle of the dialectic of codification and decodification of information and of critical consciousness (Okazaki,2005), (Christiansen &Aldridge, 2013:7-9).

### **3. The teaching intervention**

#### **3.1 Objective of the teaching intervention**

The objective of this teaching intervention was the investigation of the ability to foster argumentative speech in the 4<sup>th</sup> Grade of Primary School in the framework of SoE, following the conventions of directive speech.

#### **3.2 General question**

Can the fostering of argumentative speech be a training subject in the framework of the subject of SoE?

##### **3.2.1. Individual questions**

- a. Can the thematic scope of SoE enrich the generation of ideas for the development of argumentative speech?
- b. Can the targeted learning environment, on the basis of the didactics of argumentative speech produce the expected results regarding ease in formulating arguments?

##### **3.2.2. Methodology**

The interventional action was implemented during the school year 2019-20 from October until May and was developed in two classes, for four hours per week, namely two hours per class, within the framework of SoE.

Our starting point for shaping this particular framework was the fact that the teaching of argumentative speech is an integral part of the teaching-learning course of subjects. This demand boosted the implementation of the interventional action we present.

At the planning stage, we took into account parameters related, on one hand, to the pupils' population and, on the other hand, to the processes and the methodology of the project's implementation. Given that in every classroom there is a diverse mix of pupils, as far as it concerns their cognitive and learning abilities, our priority was to organize a pedagogically and instructionally appropriate teaching environment in order to ensure the response of all the pupils to the learning process.

At the core of the interventional project, we set the credibility of implementation, by applying a common way of intervention in all the groups of trainees. Additionally, we took into account factors such as the systematic character of the intervention, the combination of methods, the duration and the prospects for continued intervention (Barry, 2013).

In the framework of the target setting of the interventional action, the pupils had to respond to a series of actions, by following the conventions of argumentative speech. The pupils were called upon to focus on the central topic of the topic sentence, to associate the relevant information with their preexisting knowledge and to express their view by using the appropriate arguments.

Apart from fostering skills of argumentative speech, an additional objective was to cultivate skills of interpersonal communication and interaction, team-working spirit, exchange of opinions, expression and support of views.

The investigation of the preexisting knowledge of the pupils on the argumentation process followed by the interlocutors was integrated into the phase of pre-control. Taking into account the research results of Golder & Favart, which indicate that pupils face significant difficulties in using these connectives during the coherent organization of their texts (Εγγλέζου, 2015: 187–209&Golder & Favart, 2006, 197), after control, it was deemed necessary to train the pupils on the use of connectives in order to depict the inter-sentential relations in the argumentative text of the pupils (Εγγλέζου, 2015: 163-64). They were taught the use of cause and purpose connectives (because, since, in order...), contrasting connectives (but, however, whereas...), concessive (despite, even though...) and finally effect connectives (therefore, so...).

The environment of implementation was framed by a series of activities, which are described in detail in the chapter regarding the teaching outline of the teaching intervention we present.

At the initial phase of the interventional project, the training phase, October-November, the pupils, through examples, enriched theoretically their knowledge on the role, the significance, the features of argumentative speech and on the need for argumentation, and, at the same time, they were trained on the way to present the arguments, through specific examples and themes, related to the subject of SoE, by adopting the technique of argument mapping. The argument map was chosen as a practise because the logical or obvious relations developed between view-opinion, arguments and counterarguments, facilitate the pupils’ expression of speech.

Following a comprehensive development form, the pupils were taught the three levels of argumentative speech, level of Thesis, level of Confrontation: Thesis and Antithesis and level of Dialectical Synthesis: Thesis and Antithesis (Ματσαγγούρας, 2001: 440). However, given that the pupils had difficulty producing syllogisms regarding thesis and anti-thesis, levels of teaching process were shaped, in order for them to understand the value and the importance of exposing logical and convincing arguments, of respecting the opposing view, and of dialectical synthesis where deemed necessary.



Given that our objective was that the pupils manage, through mapping their arguments, to produce an argumentative text, it was considered appropriate to adopt the form of the collaborating micro-team of pupils. Matsaggouras points out that, the direct intercommunication of the members about a developing topic, ensures the interactive element, which they subsequently have to depict monologically in their argumentative text (Ματσαγγούρας, 2001: 449).

At a first level, pupils come in touch with the topic-view and attempt to take a stand based on their preexisting knowledge and experience. Starting from the level of Thesis, using green post-its as argument cards, the pupils, at individual level on this initial phase, under the framework of the View that was written down on the table, were placing the card with their argument as agreement thesis. Subsequently, green post-its were given as argument cards, which were placed next to the first cards of arguments, as an anti-thesis, where the disagreements regarding the opinion were written down. The objective was not the simple exposition of a thesis and anti-thesis but their substantiation with logical arguments. This phase was deemed necessary in order for the pupils to become familiar with the exposition of their arguments. This first phase, where the pupils work at individual level, despite the repetitiveness of the theses and anti-theses, was a preparatory phase where the pupils became familiar with practices of argumentation and syllogisms.

At a second level, following the same pattern as regards presenting and writing down the arguments, we moved to teamwork where the pupils of each group, with the teacher’s guidance and after collaboration, could present a thesis or anti-thesis, which was written down on the mapping table.

At a third level, the learning objective moved from the horizontal exposition of arguments to more complex working forms. At this stage, the pupils working in groups, were called upon to work in an environment of dialectical confrontation. The argument of each group was written down and then the other group was called upon to confute or agree either totally or partly with the previous argument.

Finally, the learning outcome was the production of a completed text, which would combine creatively and broadly the total of arguments and counterarguments, following all the conventions of producing argumentative speech.

### **3.2.3 The sample**

This intervention was carried out in two classes of the 4<sup>th</sup> Grade in a school of the Directorate of Primary Education in B’ Athens, in a total of twenty-seven pupils.

The demographic data of the participants are listed in the following table (Table 2).

**Table 2: Participants per class and gender**

<b>4<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>	<b>Class 1</b>	<b>Class 2</b>	<b>Grand totals</b>
<b>Boys</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Girls</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>27</b>

Among the participants, there were pupils with special educational needs. A pupil diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder participated in the first class, who was integrated into the standard curriculum.

#### **3.2.4. The research tools**

In the framework of research planning and in particular at the stage of data collection (Creswell, 2002), the two classes of the 4<sup>th</sup> Grade set up an experimental group, which was the main pillar of the process and was instrumental in drawing conclusions.

As regards the stage of data analysis and report writing on the result assessment, we adopted the technique of focus groups, in the framework of qualitative research (Vaughn et al., 1996). Based also on the findings of the research community, this practice was chosen because it is a “carefully organized discussion, which is planned to draw perceptions and beliefs on a specified research topic, in an allowing, non-threatening environment” (Krueger, 1988), and also an environment in which the researchers are faced with the multilevel and dynamic nature of human perception, with the flux, the oppositions and the plurality of views, the feelings and the experiences of the respondents (Wilkinson, 1998). At the same time, it is characterized as a research tool, which provides access to the ways in which people think or to why they think as they think (Kitzinger, 1994). Essentially, it is “a way to listen to people and to learn from them” (Morgan, 1998), according to the views of the scientific community.

#### **3.2.5. Mode of data collection**

For the collection of research data, we adopted a twofold pattern. The pre-control preceded, namely the assessment of pupils before the initiation of the teaching intervention, and the post-control followed, namely the assessment of the research data after the completion of the teaching intervention.



With regard to pre-control, first, the exploration of the pre-existing knowledge of pupils on the concept of argument and the way of using it, were the starting points for the development of the teaching intervention.

A questionnaire was organized, as described in the relevant sheet of table 3 below, in which the pupils, at individual level, wrote down their opinions.

**Table 3**

**Pre-control**

**Assessment sheet before the initiation of the teaching intervention**

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<b>Questionnaire</b>	
<b>Name</b>	
<b>Grade/Class</b>	
<b>1<sup>st</sup> Question</b>	<b>What does the word argument mean?</b>
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Question</b>	<b>When and why do we use arguments?</b>
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Question</b>	<b>Do you know with which words you should justify your arguments?</b>
<b>4<sup>th</sup> Question</b>	<b>Apart from the subject of Language, have you practiced on formulating your arguments in another subject?</b>

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As far as it concerns post-control, the assessment sheet of pre-control, as described in table 3, was given to the pupils, as well as the assessment sheet regarding the methodological framework we followed, as described in table 5 below.

**Table 5**

**Post-control**

**Assessment sheet after the completion of the teaching intervention**

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<b>Questionnaire</b>	
<b>Name</b>	
<b>Grade/Class</b>	
<b>1<sup>st</sup> Question</b>	<b>Do you believe that the topics we</b>

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approached in the subject of SoE helped you to formulate your arguments and produce a comprehensive text? [Justify your opinion]

2<sup>nd</sup> Question

Did the way of teaching that we followed help you to formulate your arguments? [Justify your opinion]

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At the stage of post-control, the pupils’ answers were processed at level of groups of the class and were written down on a relevant sheet.

All the questions were answered by the pupils and the answers highlighted aspects of the questions we posed, as they are mentioned in detailed in the conclusions we expose.

#### 4. The learning environment of the teaching intervention.

During the implementation of the **teaching intervention**, we followed the form of **mapping the arguments** (table 4), which are linked to each other in a functional and effective way. The argument mapping, as a supportive tool, as determined by effect, contributed to the pupils being able to defend their views, to face the opposing opinions and to organize more easily their argumentative texts (Weinstock, Neuman, & Tabak, 2004).

Table 4: Argument mapping

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#### Map of arguments

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#### VIEW

#### THESIS

#### ANTITHESIS

Because..

However..

Arguments supporting the View

Arguments opposing the View

Because..

However..

Information supporting the arguments

Information supporting the arguments

Dialectical Synthesis  
of Thesis-Antithesis

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*Reduction of absoluteness, Formulating conditions and recognizing exemptions*

**Production of argumentative speech**

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**Practical example**

**UNIT 1. GREECE – OUR COUNTRY**

(Place)

**Chapter 10. How does an important project change our life?**

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**Map of arguments**

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**VIEW**

**The construction of a modern motorway improves human life**

**THESIS**

**ANTITHESIS**

**Because..**

**However..**

A. People reach faster their destination

A. Many accidents happen

**Because..**

**Because..**

The means of transport can travel at higher speed

Cars travel at high speed on such highways, as we have read in the press

B. The products will be more fresh when they reach their destination

B. Citizens will bear the financial burden of such a construction

**Because..**

**Because..**

The means of transport can travel at higher speed

The construction cost is too high to be covered by the state

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## Dialectical Synthesis

### of Thesis-Antithesis

[I think, believe that..., because..., however..., as a result..., it would be useful..., despite that..]

### Production of argumentative speech

I believe that the construction of a modern highway improves human life, because humans reach their destination faster, since the means of transport can travel at higher speed. Moreover, an area’s residents will be able to be supplied with more fresh products, because these will reach faster their destination.

However, since such a project demands a lot of money, the citizens may need to be taxed in order for such a project to be carried out.

Despite that, there should be progress and development in a place.

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## 5.Data analysis-writing a report on the research outcome

### 5.1 Analysis of pre-control data

The answers given to us by the pupils before our teaching intervention, revealed the need for their additional training on argumentative speech, a fact that served as a basis for the integration of our intervention into the learning course of SoE.

In the first question: *what does the word argument mean*, in order to interpret the pupils’ answers, we took into account definitions such as: an argument is the most comprehensive logical construction, according to which a person, through a series of syllogisms, reaches judgements and conclusions, supporting the truth of a sentence or assertion (Παπανούτσος, 1985:123 in Ματσαγγούρας, 2001:439). Therefore, based on the above definition, a basic structure of argumentative speech is position taking, supportive speech and conclusion. Moreover, as an argument, we took into account definitions such as: “..reason or reasons provided in favor of or against a topic..” (Agnes, 2005), as well as “..statement of reason in favor of or against a sentence” (Murray, 1985 in Εγγλέζου, 2015).

The following arose from data analysis. The argument was defined as providing reasons for grounds, justification and for supporting a view. Out of a total of twenty-seven (27) pupils, five (5) pupils did not give any answer, eight (8) pupils interpreted the argument as the need to convince someone of something, one (1) pupil as grounds, three (3) pupils as justification, four (4) pupils as supporting a view. At the same time, unacceptable definitions were given as regards the conceptual approach to the term. Six (6) of their answers were unrelated to the conceptualization of the term. This category includes the answers of two (2) pupils who associated the argument with business (Translator’s note: the words “argument” and

“business” have the same etymological root and sound similar in Greek). A series of various answers were recorded. We indicatively mention: *“An argument is a few words supporting our opinions. An argument is when I want to say that this is the right thing. It is the job. An argument means that you want to convince someone. An argument is a few words supporting our opinions. . The word argument helps us to convince someone. It means that I say some phrases to get what we want. It means job.”*

In the second question: *When someone is using arguments, what is his/her objective?* Out of a total of twenty-seven (27) pupils, eleven (11) pupils defined as objective the supporting of a view, 5 (5) the objective of convincing, three (3) the justification of something by someone, one answer was the proof of something by someone, and another one was the explanation of something by someone. Meanwhile, three (3) pupils did not reply at all and three (3) gave answers unrelated to the topic. It is noteworthy that, among the right answers of the pupils, none of them took into account that the argument is used in the framework of a debate. We indicatively mention: *“In order to support our view. When we want something. When, for example, you want a chocolate and your mom has other views. In order to justify something. In order to defend ourselves in a difficult moment. In order to convince the others to say Yes. It aims to convince the other for something that he wants or desires. A word with which we are trying to convince someone. It aims to train someone to work. When someone wants to show something or explain something. To make the others agree. In order for someone to say what they want in fewer words.”*

As it is apparent from the pupils’ answers, the pupils had not adequately understood the objective of argumentation. It turned out that pupils use the argument to support a view, when they are about to acquire something they desire or to explain something, without entering into debate situations. The pupils’ answers supported the need to familiarize them with processes of interactive debate.

In the third question: *Do you know which words you can use in order to present your arguments?* In a total of twenty-seven (27) pupils, the pupils’ inability to mention the relevant words became clear, given that the right answers were only three (3). In particular, six (6) pupils did not give any answer, eight (8) pupils gave unacceptable answers and five (5) pupils only mentioned the word “because”, relating it to a wish of theirs to acquire something. In the fourth question: *Apart from the subject of Language, have you practiced on formulating your arguments in another subject?* The total of pupils replied negatively. This question highlighted the need to deepen teaching in the field of argumentation, to integrate it into the teaching practice of other subjects and to shape a respective teaching framework. These findings underlined the need to train pupils in order for them to become familiar with the argumentative and interactive way of expression.

## 5.2 Analysis of post-control data

The answers given to us by the pupils after our teaching intervention support the view on the

importance of the additional training of the pupils on argumentative speech through a broad and varying thematic area.

As regards the first question: *Do you believe that the topics we approached in the subject of SoE helped you to formulate your arguments and produce a comprehensive text? [Justify your opinion]. We indicatively mention: I come across a lot of topics in everyday life and through homework I learned to say my opinion. I learned to express myself freely and I learned how to better formulate my arguments. I practiced better and the topics were more or less known. The topics were from the daily routine and now I can say daily arguments. In classroom we did a lot of things related to everyday life and now I formulate them more easily.*

As regards the second question: *Did the way of teaching that we followed help you to formulate your arguments? [Justify your opinion]. We indicatively mention: The exercises we did, had a sequence. We learned to say our arguments little by little. At first we were working on the table individually, then in groups. We took roles and said our opinion. We formed sketches with little papers where we had written our arguments. We learned how to create texts by combining all the arguments.*

## 6. Conclusions

In the framework of the pilot teaching intervention, we observed difficulties in, on one hand, the pupils’ response regarding the exposition of arguments and counterarguments and, on the other hand, writing an argumentative text. As demonstrated, the difficulties derived from the lack of the pupils’ familiarization with argumentative speech in general. In specific, at an initial stage, pupils focused on the search for arguments to support the view and did not provide counterarguments. A teaching hour was needed in order for the pupils to understand the importance and necessity of counterarguments. A great difficulty was also observed in writing argumentative texts. At an initial stage, they produced texts supporting the view by using causal conjunctions and, after becoming familiar with the exposition of the opposing view, they managed to integrate the other opinion into their texts by using a few conjunctions. In order to face the above difficulty, the pupils’ improvement came gradually, after they understood the role of connectives in order to depict the inter-sentential relations in their argumentative texts. As demonstrated, through practices of declining guidance (Ferretti et al, 2007: 271) and appropriate teaching intervention, the pupils, overcoming the difficulties, managed to reach the textualization of argumentative speech, by using logical, evaluative and factual arguments (Ματσαγγούρας 2001:450).

In conclusion, the answers given to us by the pupils, positively substantiate the general research question about the possibility to develop the pupils’ argumentative speech in the framework of SoE. It turns out that, in the micro-system of the classroom, an environment of a learning community was created. The pupils fostered their social skills of communication, collaboration and interaction, while, at the same time, they broadened their perceptions regarding a series of issues of social, cultural and natural interest and, meanwhile, the pupils’

skills of producing oral speech, writing and critical thinking were fostered and additionally broadened. The conclusions of the research verify the results of other research studies as well, regarding the importance of teaching argumentative speech in primary school in order to develop and foster skills of argumentation and critical thinking.

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