

Abstract

Curriculum and Materials of Teaching GSL as a First Language to Deaf Pre-school and School Age Students.

Over 90% of Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) children are born to hearing parents who do not use Greek Sign Language (GSL) to communicate. Due to lack of or inconsistent exposure of most of DHH children to a natural language, SL is not acquired on time and properly.

According to theoretical and field research findings, exposing children early to GSL, proper teaching tools, gradual maturation of the language, corresponding developmental milestones of DHH are achieved. The knowledge of a visual, accessible language, such as GSL, is directly related to the degree of knowledge and understanding of written language by DHH children and consequently their literacy (Hoffmeister & Caldwell-Harris, 2014; Hatzopoulou, 2008; Albertini & Schley, 2003; Kourbetis, 1987).

There is a new official language policy by the Greek Ministry of Education, regarding mandatory teaching of GSL as a first language (L1) to DHH students in compulsory education, as a school subject, since September 2017.

Now more than ever it is required to organize and apply new educational material, practices and methodologies for teaching GSL as a L1 to minimize language deprivation.

The main aim of the present field study is to present the educational material that are developed and are under development for teaching of GSL, with explicit instruction, to DHH pre-school and early school age pupils.

A GSL grammar teaching program had been implemented, using recently developed multimedia educational material for pre-school and school-age students for first and second grades as well as newly developed material for third and fourth grades.

In this program the phonology, morphology, syntax and certain discourse features of GSL are taught and assessed in depth (Fig. 1).

We will present the interactive digital library application which offers possibilities to archive and search through the uploaded GSL material and is interactive with the online dictionary (Fig. 2). The search is possible within the framework of several criteria: thematic, grammatical and lexical.

The Greek Sign Language on Line Dictionary contains more than 3,500 lexical entries and more than 1000 sentences, all derived from educational material developed for primary school DHH students. All GSL data is signed by native signers. The dictionary (Fig. 3) is connected to the digital library so the lemmas can be seen in various uses in the narratives.

This is an ongoing research project, and the initial results from the implementation suggest a sound, cohesive and successful pedagogical practice for DHH children to learn grammatical structures of GSL as a L1 which will support them to learn written Greek as a L2 (Kourbetis, Hatzopoulou, Karipi, Boukouras & Gelastopoulou, 2017).

The wide implementation of program will help teachers who are not proficient in SL by providing them all the material and especially pre-recorded videos narratives by native signers and curriculum based assessment material.

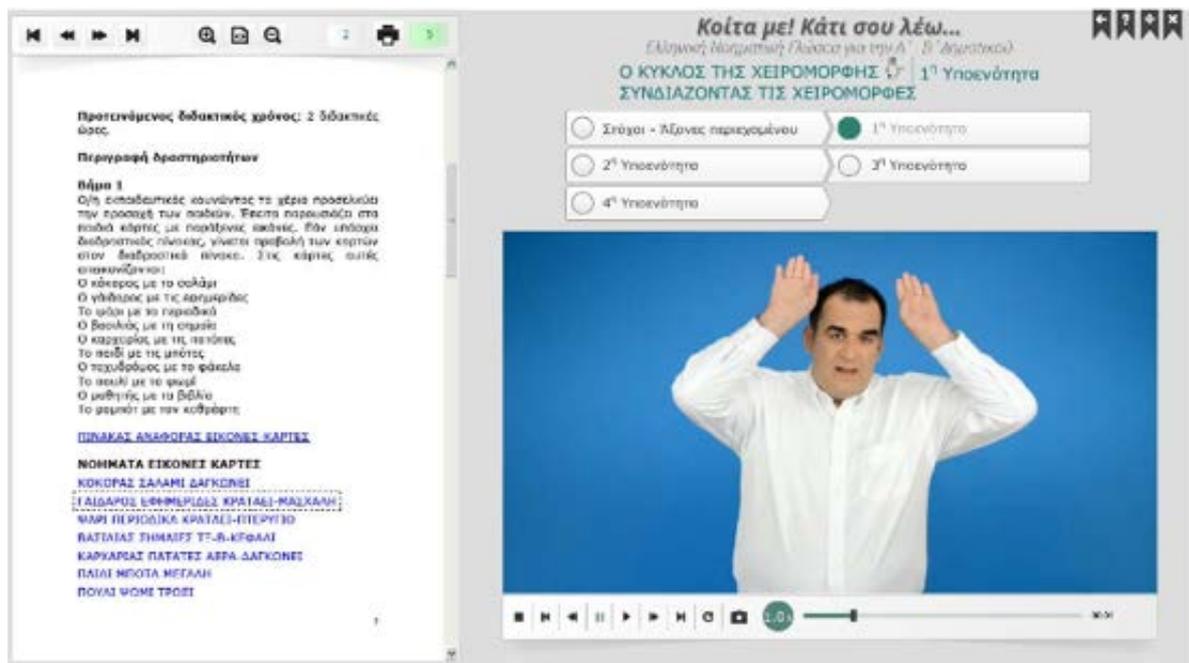


Figure 1. Multimedia interactive interface for teaching GSL as an L1

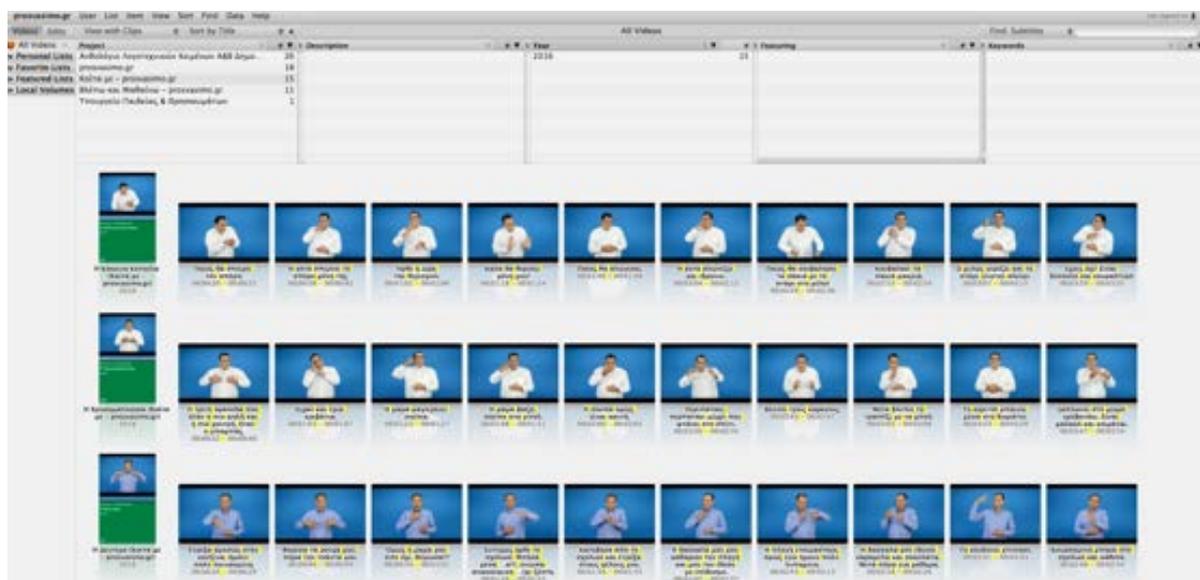


Figure 2. The GSL digital library interactive application

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