

From Knowledge to Wisdom



US-China **Foreign Language**

Volume 8, Number 7, July 2010

ISSN 1539-8080

CBSN 410B0029

David Publishing Company

www.davidpublishing.com

US-China Foreign Language

Volume 8, Number 7, July 2010 (Serial Number 82)



David Publishing Company
www.davidpublishing.com

Publication Information:

US-China Foreign Language (ISSN1539-8080) is published monthly in hard copy and online by David Publishing Company located at 1840 Industrial Drive, Suite 160, Libertyville, Illinois 60048, USA.

Aims and Scope:

US-China Foreign Language, a monthly professional academic journal, covers all sorts of researches on literature criticism, translation research, linguistic research, English teaching and other latest findings and achievements by experts and foreign language scholars all over the world.

Editorial Board Members:

Ali Nasser Harb Mansouri, Rustaq College of Applied Sciences, Oman
Anjali Pandey, Salisbury University, Zimbabwe
BAI Yong-quan, Xi'an Jiaotong University, China
Fawwaz Mohammad Al-Rashed Al-Abed Al-Haq, Yarmouk University, Irbid-Jordan
Shih Chung-ling, National Kaohsiung First University of Science and Technology, Taiwan

Manuscripts and correspondence are invited for publication. You can submit your papers via Web Submission. E-mail to linguist@davidpublishing.com. Submission guidelines and Web Submission system are available at <http://www.davidpublishing.com>.

Editorial Office:

1840 Industrial Drive, Suite 160 Libertyville, Illinois 60048
Tel: 1-847-281-9826
Fax: 1-847-281-9855
E-mail: linguist@davidpublishing.com, usa@linguist.org.cn, china@linguist.org.cn, editor@linguist.org.cn

Copyright©2010 by David Publishing Company and individual contributors. All rights reserved. David Publishing Company holds the exclusive copyright of all the contents of this journal. In accordance with the international convention, no part of this journal may be reproduced or transmitted by any media or publishing organs (including various websites) without the written permission of the copyright holder. Otherwise, any conduct will be considered as the violation of the copyright. The contents of this journal are available for any citation, however, the citations should be clearly indicated with the title of this journal, serial number and the name of the author.

Abstracted/Indexed in:

Database of EBSCO, Massachusetts, USA
Chinese Database of CEPS, Airiti Inc. & OCLC
Chinese Scientific Journals Database, VIP Corporation, Chongqing, P.R.C.
Ulrich's Periodicals Directory
LLBA Database of ProQuest

Subscription Information:

Price (per year):
Print \$360 Online \$300
Print and Online \$560

David Publishing Company
1840 Industrial Drive, Suite 160, Libertyville, Illinois 60048
Tel: 1-847-281-9826. Fax: 1-847-281-9855
E-mail: order@davidpublishing.com



US-C
Volur
David
1840 I
Tel: 1-
http://
linguic



David Publishing Company

US-China Foreign Language

Volume 8, Number 7, July 2010 (Serial Number 82)

Contents

Linguistic Research

- Meta-cognitive and meta-linguistic awareness of students' knowledge on argumentation
in defining the terms "argument" and "counterargument"** 1
Smaragda Papadopoulou, Fotini Egglezou
- A critical discourse analysis on language power and strategy used by jurists** 13
Ahmad Supardi
- (De)constructing humour across languages and genres** 26
Sara Laviosa
- The power of rhetoric and the rhetoric of power in Varro's writings** 38
Aude Lehmann, Yves Lehmann

Translation Research

- Problems in translation of hotel introduction: A case study of translation of hotel introduction
in Changde City** 44
LI Hai-jun
- Translation as dialects' advocate: The case of Algerian Arabic drama and popular poetry** 48
Souâd Hamerlain

Cultural Studies

- Influences of cultural environment on second generation immigrants sense of identity** 57
ZENG Sa

Meta-cognitive and meta-linguistic awareness of students' knowledge on argumentation in defining the terms "argument" and "counterargument"

Smaragda Papadopoulou, Fotini Egglezou

(Department of Primary Education, University of Ioannina, Ioannina 54640, Greece)

Abstract: Definition of the words "argument" and "counterargument" in a case study research with 91 Greek students of 5th and 6th grade present children's prior knowledge on argumentation and persuasive writing. This study is a part of broader research concerning teaching experimental strategies of an intervention program in Greek public schools with teaching and learning persuasive language, and meaning making in a writing class. The authors discuss the results of this study in evaluation of a questionnaire's data. The data confirm the existence of cognitive, meta-cognitive and meta-linguistic limitations in their intervention: Children's pre-existing understanding of concepts and terms, such as "argument", "counterargument", "fallacy", etc., is limited, if not absent. Findings on students' limited declarative knowledge in defining what an "argument" or a "counterargument" is, indicate the need of a systematic and effective integration of "argument" and especially this of "counterargument", as procedural knowledge in teaching argumentative writing with children at the age of 10-12 years.

Key words: definition; argument; counterargument; teaching; writing

1. Introduction

1.1 Theoretical framework

The main pragmatic target of argumentative texts written by children is to secure that the reader will be convinced, in terms of persuasion, for the rationality of a certain argument over a particular subject that is undoubtedly bipolar (Stein & Miller, 1993, p. 185). In other words, the writer—pupil, is given a topic and is called, starting from a disagreement (dissensus), to compromise opposite opinions and lead the reader of the text to agreement and to unanimity (consensus), affecting his/her thoughts, sentiments and choices (Eggs, 1994, p. 19; Papadopoulou, 2004, p. 200).

In order to achieve the aforementioned target, it is not only necessary to provide the requisite asserting evidence that justify and substantiate the writer's beliefs, but also the "negotiation" with the opposite party, that is the introduction and careful examination of the opposite arguments expressed in the speech and the efforts to refutation of them in using rebuttal arguments (Gleason, 1999, p. 88). This is the only way to ensure the so-called "unbiased argumentation" (Gleason, 1999, p. 88), or in other words, to avoid the "locus of my-side bias" (Leitão, 2003, p. 274). The opposite opinion, the different "voice" is created through written argumentation and facilitates the production of opposing arguments, makes them vital and directs (Wolfe & Britt, 2007; Nakas, 2003).

Smaragda Papadopoulou, assistant professor of Department of Primary Education, University of Ioannina; research field: modern Greek language teaching.

Fotini Egglezou, Ph.D. candidate of Department of Primary Education, University of Ioannina; research field: language acquisition and teaching.

1.2 The psycho-cognitive aspect of argumentation

According to the psycho-cognitive approach, implemented by Piaget, the development of argumentative knowledge and writing is not fulfilled, in a completed form, before the children enter the phase of the typical—abstract thinking (12 years old or older). In this phase, the pupil has developed both the ability to decentralize his/her thought from his/her "self" and focus on the thoughts of other people, and the capability to think in hypothetical, productive and inductive ways that are demanded in argumentative—convincing writing¹. According to Piaget (1973, p. 45), "As long as the child believes that everybody necessarily thinks like him/her is intuitively not interested in convincing others or to prove and test their opinions". It is only when pupils develop a feeling of consciousness and empathy, the ability to decentralize from personal bias and beliefs, and to count in every emotion, desire and belief of the "other" that they can convince their interlocutor or receiver of the text (Blakemore & Frith, 2005, pp. 97-98). According to cognitive psychologists, even in cases when pupils of primary school begin to understand the meaning of argument, argumentation and the demands of argumentative writing (declarative knowledge), they still find it is difficult to produce a written argumentation in comparison to older children's procedural knowledge (Knudson, 1992).

1.3 Teaching perspectives of argumentative writing

From a didactic point of view, there has been argued that argumentative texts which are organized around "the axis of the rational correlation and the dialectic composition of facts" do presuppose a particularly developed ability of intellectual and "verbal abstraction" (Moffett, 1968, p. 34). As a result, the organization of an effective didactic methodology, for the purposes of instruction of an argument to children, is hindered. As far as Knudson is concerned, the difficulty in producing arguments in written speech is owed to the "lack of a conversational partner" (Knudson, 1992a; Burkhalter, 1993), and to the consecutive creation of a "closed" speech system, due to lack of inputs that activate data in pupils' memory about a certain subject and contribute to the construction of suitable answers. Brassart (1992, p. 81) talks about the "weakness in refuting an argument" within the scope of argumentation projected by the pupils who employ written speech to express themselves. Pupils tend to provide arguments in favor of their opinion, while Price recognizes that it is hard for young children to understand that it is possible for different voices to operate in a text (Hall, 1989). According to Bereiter and Scardamalia, in cases when it is necessary to employ "a logical schema for organizing argumentation" in writing (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996), pupils find it difficult to implement the familiar knowledge-telling model (Favart & Coirier, 2006). During the production of comparative speech, pupils are restricted in transferring and presenting experiences and facts that pull out from their memory relatively to a particular subject (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996). However, argumentative writing is by its nature a combining effort to solve problems, not only in the field of content (ideas, facts and arguments), but also in the field of a rhetorical problem (subject, receivers, personal targets, etc.) and the perpetual "dialectic procedure" between the 2 fields for the production of a cohesive, communicative text. The "knowledge transforming" model is considered to be suitable in such a situation (Cornaire & Raymond, 1999), but it proves that children of primary school find it difficult to access for, since the transposition into this phase has been argued that is more suitable in the age of 12-14 years old (Lindgren, 2004, p. 260).

1.4 The social theory of Vygotsky in argumentation and meta-cognition

Despite the fact that Vygotsky recognizes the cognitive difficulties entailed in the argumentative speech, he

¹ Piaget's aspects regarding the language practice of children egocentrically is turned down from younger psychologists even for the age of preschool years, which is also seen in: Donaldson, M., 1987. *Children's mind*, pp. 30-31.

...asserts that pupils should practice every level of writing (Burkhalter, 1995). According to Vygotsky, learning is internalized into a specific social, cooperative environment, as a result of social interaction among its people and the structure of knowledge (Vanderburg, 2006; Perry & Dockett, 1998). In the field of the zone of proximal development, children's spontaneous concepts and unorganized social experiences become cognitive and are transformed into a "mediated" learning owing to the asserting guidance of more capable peers (Vygotsky, 1991; 1978). Meanings of words are often related to social pragmatics, environment, timing and the beliefs of people about things and meaning making (Xatzisavidis, 2010, p. 158). The process of "imitating" drives the pupil to a "proximal" level of cognitive development (Lenski & Nierstheimer, 2002; Vygotsky, 1978). Finally, the external aspect of "artificial incentives" or "cultural tools" help in the conquest of a certain subject of cognition. The above views, as they are expressed by Vygotsky, are directly connected with the school class, as a social environment; and teaching, as a phenomenon of social interaction². As a result, Vygotsky's theory is directly connected not only with the teaching of argumentative writing and argumentation in general, as an important form of social interactions within a certain social environment that allows children to structure their knowledge (Perry & Dockett, 1998; Vanoye, Mouchon & Sarrazac, 1981). This is the reason why Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory is a fundamental axis of planning and implementation of researching educational programs, which concerns the enhancement of the performance of the pupils of primary school in the argumentative—convincing writing, due to the impact that experienced adults and schoolmates have on them (Burkhalter, 1995; 1994). What is considered to be a prerequisite for the successful outcome of such programs is the detection of previous knowledge owned by pupils concerning the argumentative speech, its constituents and targets, in order to adapt teaching to the pupils' needs. The effort to detect pupils' prior knowledge of a specific cognitive subject and the implementation of more effective teaching and learning programs is closely related to the study of meta-cognitive and meta-linguistic skills, to the degree that meta-linguistic competence is an expression of meta-cognition and meta-cognitive competence, and is related with the ability to "represent the concepts of a person as objects of knowledge" (Mason & Sant, 1994, p. 7). By using the term "meta-cognition", it refers to various "procedural activities and abilities that facilitate the self-consciousness of a person about his/her personal cognitive activities and capabilities" (Carr & Borkowsky, 1989). Moreover, the aforementioned term includes the concept of executive capabilities that are related to personal observation, monitoring and self-adjustment of personal cognitive activities (Schneider, 2008, p. 114). Meta-cognitive awareness is divided into 3 levels: (1) declarative knowledge, which is referred as knowledge "for" the cognitive object; (2) procedural knowledge, which refers to knowledge as to "how" it can use the cognitive object; and (3) conditional knowledge, which refers to "when" and "why" the first and the second types of knowledge are used. Some researching data refer to the important impact of meta-cognition to oral understanding, proficiency of language, problem solving, oral convincing and writing (Flavell, 1979). As far as the field of argumentation is concerned, Pintrich (2002) sheds light on the fact that different meta-cognitive strategies may be implemented for the assessment of the validity of rational statements, the avoidance of argument circularity, the drawing of appropriate conclusions by various sources and facts, and the syntax of suitable examples for the drawing of conclusions. The statement of meta-cognitive awareness is directly connected not only to the use of language, but also to *connaissance meta-linguistic* as "each explicit part of knowledge which is related to structure, function and the use of language", and as a result of the prior knowledge on argumentative

² Vygotskian influence in practicing with teaching programs can be also studied in: Burkhalter, N.. 1995. *A Vygotsky-based curriculum for teaching persuasive writing in the elementary grades*, pp. 192-199, and can be also seen in: Burkhalter, N.. 1994. *Applying Vygotsky: Teaching preformal—operational children a formal-operational task*, p. 17.

writing (Schraw, 1998; Mason & Santi, 1994; Snow, Cancino, de Temple & Schley, 1991).

2. The research study

The object of the following research is the evaluation of the definitions that have been attributed to the concepts of an argument and counterargument by 91 pupils of the 5th and 6th grade of primary school. The target of a quantitative analysis and quality assessment of the written definitions³ that have been given upon the completion of an extensive questionnaire was the detection of any prior knowledge of pupils in relation to these concepts, any declaratory knowledge they might own in relation to terms "argument" and "counterargument", as it is expressed through their meta-cognitive/meta-linguistic capabilities. People suppose that possible restricted knowledge of these terms will also affect negatively the procedural knowledge of the pupils, that is the way pupils will use, will include arguments and counterarguments while writing argumentative texts. The questions they answered were the following: (1a) Do you know the meaning of the word "argument"? Yes—No; (1b) If you do, try to describe in your own words what an argument is. (2a) Do you know the meaning of the word "counterargument"? Yes—No; (2b) If you do, try to explain in your own words what a counterargument is. In the first scale of the above questions, the target was an initial division of pupils who were supposed to have at least a basic understanding of the term, while in the second scale they were asked to find a definition of these terms.

3. The method—description of the research—population sample

The definitions were given by 91 pupils of the 5th and 6th grade of a public primary school in the urban area of Vouliagmeni. Particularly, for the purposes of the research, there were called students from both classes of the 5th grade (49 pupils/53.85%) and from both classes of the 6th grade (42 pupils/46.15%). The 45.05% (N=41) of the participants were girls and the 54.95% (N=50) were boys. A percentage of 16.5% of the population sample (N=15) were bilingual.

4. Procedure

Definitions of the terms were given by the pupils in written and in the form of a questionnaire. They were filled into the classroom and no further explanation was given by the researcher. The questionnaires were filled within a didactic hour (45 mins) for each class.

5. Assessment of the definitions

The positive or negative evaluation of the given definitions made during the quality assessment and the quantitative analysis was not based on the way the formal definitions were phrased, given the difficulties implied for the children of this age group. Besides, an action like that would deviate from the scope of people's interest. Those definitions that maintain the semantic and syntactic relations were assessed positively and managed to attribute the essential characteristics of the concepts argument/counterargument, despite their descriptive or operational character, compared to the canonical definitions of the above concepts given by reputable dictionaries and text-books.

³ These definitions are part of a questionnaire that children answered in terms of a broader unpublished study of the doctorate candidate Egglezou Fotini at the University of Ioannina, in Greece (2006-), as a doctoral dissertation in progress. The basic focus was in teaching strategies of persuasive argumentation in a social constructivist language learning environment.

6. Research limitations

The cooperation with the pupils, aiming at the defining of the aforementioned concepts, was satisfactory and did not cause any difficulties in particular, despite the fact that some pupils preferred to give a negative answer to the first question under the excuse of being bored or that they did not want to give a definition of what an argument is. The pupils included in the research have not participated in any similar activities and were not involved in the systemic instruction of argumentative speech. Moreover, there were involved bilingual pupils in the research group.

7. Findings

According to the quantitative analysis and the quality assessment of the definitions given by the pupils, the authors conclude that any prior argumentative knowledge of the children of the concept argument, especially the counterargument, is limited. Next, they are going to examine the facts that led to the above conclusion: according to the quantitative analysis of the facts, 74 of the 91 pupils (81.32%) answered at the first scale of the first question that they are aware of the meaning of the term "argument". There is a slight advantage of the 5th grade pupils (87.8%) over the 6th grade pupils (73.8%) (see Table 1), without discovering any serious statistical relation among the answers given by the pupils of both grades ($p=0.076>0.05$), after the implementation of the Fisher's exact test. A similar advantage can be discerned for the 5th grade pupils (65.1%) in their ability to give a definition of the term "argument" at the second scale of the first question without indicating any serious statistic relationship ($p=0.115>0.05$) between the class and the meta-cognitive/meta-linguistic skill of the pupils to define the term "argument".

Table 1 Children's knowledge of the term "argument" and correlation with their grade

			Children's answer to the question: "Do you know what an argument is?"		Total amount
			Answered "Yes"	Answered "No"	
Grade	5th	Population	43	6	49
		Class (%)	87.8	12.2	100.0
		Do you know what an argument is? (%)	58.1	35.3	53.8
		Total (%)	47.3	6.6	53.8
	6th	Population	31	11	42
		Class (%)	73.8	26.2	100.0
		Do you know what an argument is? (%)	41.9	64.7	46.2
		Total (%)	34.1	12.1	46.2
Total	Population	74	17	91	
	Class (%)	81.3	18.7	100.0	
	Do you know what an argument is? (%)	100.0	100.0	100.0	
	Total (%)	81.3	18.7	100.0	

Qualitative analysis of the answers given for the second scale proves that pupils have only a partial knowledge of the term "argument", if not plasmatic, due to their weakness to give an exact definition of the "argument" as a linguistic phenomenon. In particular, 31 pupils (41.89%) out of those who answered positively to the first scale of the question do not manage to give an equally acceptable definition of the term "argument", after having the definitions analyzed on quality terms.

Meta-cognitive and meta-linguistic awareness of students' knowledge on argumentation in defining the terms "argument" and "counterargument"

The difficulties that pupils had to confront with, while trying to define the term argument, are attributed to the following reasons: (1) misunderstandings that are closely connected to the acoustic similarity of the term with derivatives; (2) weakness to express an argument as fragment of speech comprised by a statement or a conclusion and reasoning or the point at issue. The argument is outlined on simple terms: (1) as a wording of an opinion, an idea, a notion, a proposal upon a specific subject; (2) as a means to inform; (3) as a means to flatter; (4) as a prohibition; and (5) as a question. For example, an argument is called forth by the speaker, in order to give information to his/her interlocutor (Iasonas, 6th grade). The argument is the question you ask someone who wants to do something that is not legal (Kimonas, 5th grade). Definitions lacking "reasoning and rational asserting of one's word"—which is a prerequisite for the "assertion or reversion of a proposed stance" during argumentation are also assessed as insufficient, although pupils did point out that persuasion is a communicative result of the argument. The argument is the opinion of a man, who wants to convince you for something (Eleana, 5th grade). Argument is when someone tries to convince someone else for the correctness of his/her opinion (Tasos, 6th grade). Forty-three (58%) of the positive answers that were given to the first scale were assessed as consistent with the definitions given by valid dictionaries (see Figure 1). In these cases, pupils equate and define the term "argument" as a collection and provision of reasons that favor a certain opinion, as a justification, explanation, vindication, assertion and evidence of a suggested opinion, stance, idea, wish and action. An argument is the reason you give to someone, so as to convince him/her that what you believe right (Magia, 5th grade). Pupils that seem to be thinking of an argument as means used within a debate make only a small percentage of the research sample. An argument is to explain to your interlocutor that your opinion is better than the other's (Panos, 6th grade). Furthermore, teachers should lay emphasis on the fact that none of the pupils give a negative definition of the term "argument" a sum of rational opinions against an opposite stance.

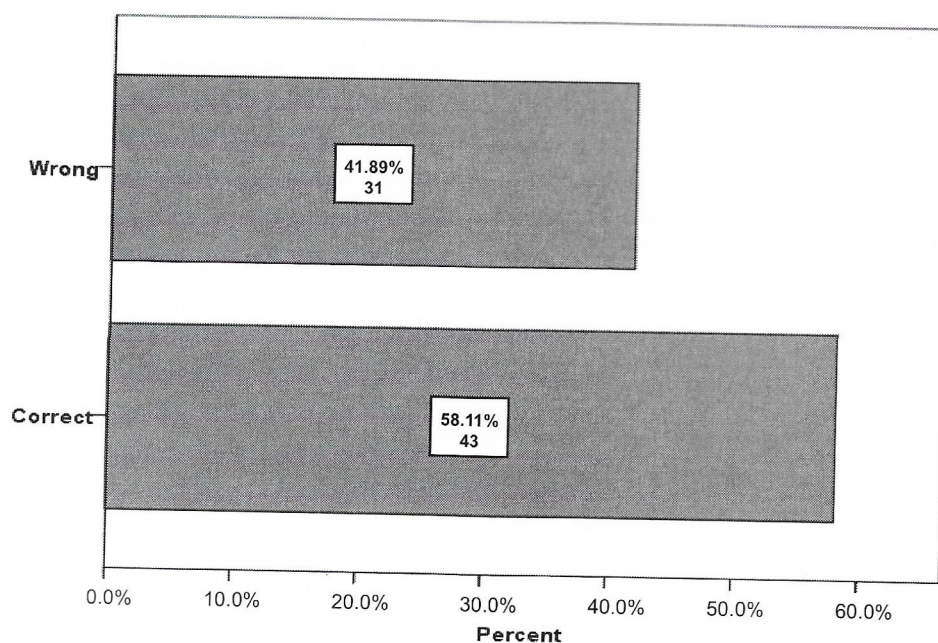


Figure 1 Correct and wrong answers regarding the term "argument"

To sum up, considering the total of the positive answers given, only 8 pupils manage to relate an argument with its communicative consequence, persuasion.

An argument is what we use so as to provide reasons for our opinion or our actions, so as to convince our

Meta-cognitive and meta-linguistic awareness of students' knowledge on argumentation in defining the terms "argument" and "counterargument"

...or someone else (Stella, 5th grade).

According to Fisher's exact test, out of the 16 boys (21.6%) and 27 girls (36.5%) (see Tables 2 (a, b & c)), girls seemed to be statistically predominant over boys in terms of their meta-linguistic skills in defining the term "argument" ($p=0.002<5\%$).

Table 2 (a) Children's correct definitions in relation with gender

		Children's answer to the question: "Since you know, try to tell me in your own words what an argument is".		Total amount	
		Correct answer-definition	Wrong answer-definition		
Gender	Boy	Population	16	23	39
		Gender (%)	41.0	59.0	100.0
		Since you know, try to tell me in your own words what an argument is. (%)	37.2	74.2	52.7
		Total (%)	21.6	31.1	52.7
	Girl	Population	27	8	35
		Gender (%)	77.1	22.9	100.0
		Since you know, try to tell me in your own words what an argument is. (%)	62.8	25.8	47.3
		Total (%)	36.5	10.8	47.3
	Total	Population	43	31	74
		Gender (%)	58.1	41.9	100.0
Since you know, try to tell me in your own words what an argument is. (%)		100.0	100.0	100.0	
Total (%)		58.1	41.9	100.0	

Table 2 (b) Correct and wrong answers in defining the term "argument"

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-square	9.885	1	0.002		
Continuity correction	8.457	1	0.004		
Likelihood ratio	10.201	1	0.001		
Fisher's exact test				0.002	0.002
Linear-by-linear association	9.751	1	0.002		
No. of Valid cases	74				

Table 2 (c) Previous awareness of the term "argument"

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-square	9.297	1	0.002		
Continuity correction	7.229	1	0.007		
Likelihood ratio	9.879	1	0.002		
Fisher's exact test				0.003	0.003
Linear-by-linear association	9.171	1	0.002		
No. of valid cases	74				

What is interesting is the discovery that only one pupil (11.1%) out of a total of 9 pupils, who state that they are aware of what an argument is, manage to provide a valid definition. Moreover, it is ascertained that there is a serious statistical relationship between the meta-cognitive/meta-linguistic skill to define the term "argument" between pupils that are bilingual and the rest ($p=0.003<0.05$), after applying the Fisher's exact test.

As far as the concept of the term "counterargument" is concerned, 51 pupils (56.04%) claim that they are

Meta-cognitive and meta-linguistic awareness of students' knowledge on argumentation in defining the terms "argument" and "counterargument"

aware of the concept of the term, while 40 pupils (43.96%) provide a negative answer. Pupils seem to be less familiar with the concept of counterargument in comparison to that of argument. After crossing the positive answers, which were given to the first scale of both questions, it becomes clear that a percentage of 56.04% of the pupils states that is aware of the concept of the term "counterargument" in comparison to a percentage of 81.3% of the positive answers given.

The application of the Fisher's exact test detected an important statistical relation between the stated knowledge given by the pupils of the sample upon the concept of the term "argument" and "counterargument" ($p=0.000<0.05$) (see Tables 3 (a & b)).

Table 3 (a) Children's knowledge of the term "counterargument"

			Children's answer to the question: "Do you know what the word 'counterargument' means?"		Total amount
			Yes	No	
Do you know what the word "argument" means?	Yes	Population	51	23	74
		Do you know what an argument is? (%)	68.9	31.1	100.0
		Do you know what a counterargument is? (%)	100.0	57.5	81.3
	No	Population	0	17	17
		Do you know what an argument is? (%)	0.0	100.0	100.0
		Do you know what counterargument is? (%)	0.0	42.5	18.7
Total	Population	51	40	91	
	Do you know what an argument is? (%)	56.0	44.0	100.0	
	Do you know what a counterargument is? (%)	100.0	100.0	100.0	

Table 3 (b) Relation between stated knowledge upon the concept of both terms ("argument" and "counterargument")

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-square	26.654	1	0.000		
Continuity correction	23.930	1	0.000		
Likelihood ratio	33.097	1	0.000		
Fisher's exact test				0.000	0.000
Linear-by-linear association	26.361	1	0.000		
No. of valid cases	91				

The difficulty that was detected during the meta-cognitive/meta-linguistic definition of the term "counterargument" given by the pupils boosts the initial assumption that locating and using counterarguments in argumentative writing is considered to be hard for the children of this age. Moreover, according to the study's findings, it becomes clear that out of the pupils used as a sample and claimed that they are aware of the concept of the term "argument", the percentage is 68.9% claiming that they are also aware of the concept of the term "argument" and "counterargument" (see Table 4).

What is characteristic is that, the quantitative analysis of the facts in the first scale of the second question appoints one more statistically important difference between the positive answers given by the pupils of the 6th grade (66.7%) in comparison to the pupils of the 5th grade (46.9%) at this particular question, as it becomes obvious by the hypothesis testing done via the Fisher's exact test ($p=0.046<5\%$). Sixth grade pupils seem to be able to provide a more complete definition of the term "counterargument" in comparison to the 5th grade pupils of primary school. In the second scale, where pupils were asked to define the term "counterargument", it was no

Metalinguistic and meta-linguistic awareness of students' knowledge on argumentation in defining the terms "argument" and "counterargument"

...to be a qualitative assessment of the answers given by those pupils who claimed to be aware of the meaning of the term "counterargument", due to the weakness of most children (68.63%) to give a semantically and syntactically correct definition. Pupils have difficulty in providing an explicit definition of the concept of "counterargument", despite their positive answer to the corresponding question. A counterargument is when someone tries to do something else but the other has a different opinion and counter-argues (Giorgos, 6th grade). The concept of counterargument is registered in general terms and broadly speaking as a concept opposite to an argument. Counterargument is the opposite thing of an argument (Konstantinos, 5th grade). On another occasion, the term "counterargument" is placed within the frame of language interaction with another person, without, however, making clear the idea of the opposing stances on a certain subject. In particular, a counterargument is characterized: As an excuse. Orestis, a student from the 5th grade that participated to the experiment, said, "A counterargument is the excuse of the person that receives the arguments".

Table 4 Children's definition of the term "counterargument" in relation with gender and age in total

			Children's answer to the question: "Do you know the word 'counterargument'?"		Total amount
			Answered "Yes"	Answered "No"	
Grade	5th	Population	23	26	49
		Class (%)	46.9	53.1	100.0
		Do you know what the word counterargument means? (%)	45.1	65.0	53.8
		Total (%)	25.3	28.6	53.8
	6th	Population	28	14	42
		Class (%)	66.7	33.3	100.0
		Do you know what the word counterargument means? (%)	54.9	35.0	46.2
		Total (%)	30.8	15.4	46.2
Total	Population	51	40	91	
	Class (%)	56.0	44.0	100.0	
	Do you know what the word counterargument means? (%)	100.0	100.0	100.0	
	Total (%)	56.0	44.0	100.0	

In other cases, the research revealed that it is common for a young person to assert arguments upon a specific subject without making clear the concept of juxtaposition. As other students characteristically said, "A counterargument means that the other person speaks of his/her arguments upon a particular subject" (Konstantina, 5th grade), "When someone supports his/her own argument" (Giannis, 6th grade).

There were cases of children's definitions that came up in terms of a dialogue as an answer of one speaker to the arguments opposed by the other. For example, "The answer of one person to an argument" (Vasilis, 5th grade), "A counterargument responds to an argument that is an opinion expressed by someone" (Marianna, 5th grade).

For certain pupils, a counterargument is related to a simple disagreement of opinions or arguments upon a specific subject: When two persons disagree for something they want to happen (Filippos, 6th grade). Counterargument is when someone has his/her own opinion and someone else has a different opinion (Mikaela, 6th grade). When someone says an argument and the other does not assert his/her opinion and poses a counterargument that is he/she says his/her own opinion (Iasonas, 6th grade).

Children's interesting definitions of counterarguments came up as the quoting of opposing opinions upon a certain subject. For example, a counterargument is when someone has a different opinion from someone else

Meta-cognitive and meta-linguistic awareness of students' knowledge on argumentation in defining the terms "argument" and "counterargument"

(Kalliopi, 5th grade). Counterargument means that someone has a certain opinion and the other has exactly a different one (Mairi, 6th grade). When someone listens to his/her interlocutor, but then he/she expresses an opposite opinion and insists that he/she is right (Ioanna, 6th grade).

However, the expression of a simple disagreement with a certain opinion or an argument or the juxtaposition of 2 different opinions is not enough to make a counterargument, if people take Voss's definition under consideration, according to which the concept of counterargument relates to the creation of arguments that bring out as their main idea an opposite conclusion in relation to an initial argument (Voss & Means, 1991). Closer to the above definition are the following ideas according to which a counterargument is related to providing opposite arguments respectively to a certain subject.

When you express an argument and someone else expresses another argument opposite to yours. (Nikos, 6th grade) When someone expresses an argument and the other one claims exactly the opposite justifying the disagreement part, by asserting one's different, opposite opinion (Christos, 6th grade). When someone expresses his/her opinion, but then comes someone else, who also expresses his/her opinion, but he/she also justifies it (Ludia, 6th grade). A counterargument is when someone else tries to justify his/her opinion by saying the opposite of what you said (Konstantinos, 5th grade).

Acceptable are considered to be those answers that include in their definition of the communicative effect of a counterargument, since according to the *Dictionary of Modern Greek Language* written by Babiniotis (2008, p. 200), a counterargument is characterized as "an argument used to refute and reverse another argument".

According to students' explanations about counterarguments in the research, a counterargument appears as a means of convincing an interlocutor, who appears to have a different opinion. A counterargument is a total of clauses which we use in order to convince someone with an opinion opposite to ours (Antigoni, 5th grade). When someone else tries to convince his/her interlocutor for an opposite opinion (Alexia, 6th grade). A counterargument is when someone tries to convince another person for his/her opinion, while the other tries to convince his/her for his/her opinion (Tasos, 6th grade).

In other examples of students' knowledge on counterarguments, it seems that a counterargument is defined as a means to refute a different opinion. A counterargument is when someone changes his argument, in order to change the argument of the other person (Ioannis, 6th grade). People say that someone uses a counterargument when he/she tries to prove that his/her argument is superior to another and prevail over the excuses he/she gives (Theseas, 6th grade).

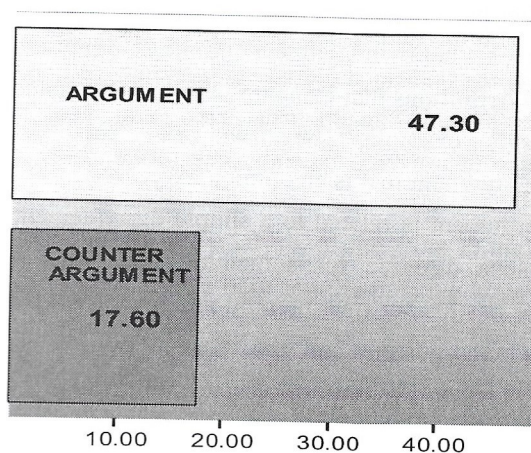


Figure 2 Valid definitions on "argument" and "counterargument"

According to the aforementioned qualitative analysis, the authors come to the following conclusions: (1) A percentage of 47.3% of the pupils' sample managed to give a valid definition in relation to the concept of the term "argument"; and (2) A percentage of 17.6% of the pupils' sample managed to give a valid definition of the term "counterargument". As it can be seen in Figure 2, there is a remarkable reduction of the percentage upon the meta-cognitive/meta-linguistic awareness of the concept of a counterargument in relation to that of an argument via the definitions given by the pupils.

3. Conclusion

The majority of the pupils, as sensible beings—subjects, do not appear to have sufficient meta-cognitive and meta-linguistic awareness of the declarative knowledge they carry for the concepts of "argument" and "counterargument", as it comes up by the choice they made in the first scale of both questions, where there is being made a coarse distinction between understanding/non-understanding of the concepts of "argument" and "counterargument". It becomes obvious that the pupils have not sufficiently developed a "feeling-of-knowing", as a personal assessment of the grade they were given for their declarative knowledge of the terms "argument" and "counterargument"⁴.

The meta-cognitive/meta-linguistic awareness of prior argumentative knowledge pupils have about the concept of the argument is limited as it becomes obvious by their efforts to define it. The understanding of the term "argument" proved to be partial, fragmental and even plasmatic; Pupils' meta-cognitive/meta-linguistic awareness over their prior declarative knowledge about the concept of the term "counterargument" appear to be especially in low levels. The above conclusions agree and boost, at least initially, the reservations expressed by cognitive psychologists, as the authors have mentioned in the first part of the paper, concerning capability and readiness of the pupils of Primary Education to occupy themselves with argumentative speech and especially argumentative writing, because of the complex and demanding character it poses within the framework of language teaching.

References:

2005. *Webster's new world college dictionary*. Cleveland, Ohio: Wiley Publishing, Inc..
- Andrews, R.. 1995. *Teaching and learning argument*. London: Cassell.
- Andrews, R.. 2007. Argumentation, critical thinking and the postgraduate dissertation. *Educational Review*, 59(1), 1-18.
- Balimiotis, G.. 2008. *Dictionary of modern Greek language (3rd ed.)*. Athens: Centre of Lexicology.
- Blakemore, S. J. & Frith, U.. 2005. *The learning brain lessons for education*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
- Brassart, D. G.. 1992. Negation, concession and refutation in counter-argumentative composition by pupils from 8 to 12 years old and adults. *Argumentation*, 6(1), 77-98.
- Carr, M. & Borkowski, J. G.. 1989. Attributional training and the generalization of reading strategies with underachieving children. *Learning and Individual Differences*, 1(3), 327-341.
- Cornaire, C. & Raymond, P. M.. 1999. *Written production*. Paris: CLE International. (in French)
- Donaldson, M.. 1987. *Children's mind*. London: Fontana Press.
- Eggs, E.. 1994. *Grammar of argumentative discourse: The topical, the credits, the figure*. Paris, Editions Kimé. (in French)
- Favart, M. & Coirier, P.. 2006. Acquisition of the linearization process in text composition in 3rd to 9th graders: Effects of textual super structural and macro structural organization. *Journal of Psycholinguistic Research*, 35(4), 305-328.
- Flavell, J. H.. 1979. Meta-cognition and cognitive monitoring: A new area of cognitive—developmental inquiry. *American Psychologist*, 34(10), 906-911.
- Gleason, M. M.. 1999. The role of evidence in argumentative writing. *Reading and Writing Quarterly*, 15(1), 81-106.
- Grabe, W. & Kaplan, R. B.. 1996. Theory and practice of writing. In: Candlin, C. N. (Ed.). *Writing*. London: Longman.

⁴ The sense or feeling of knowing is categorized as a note of component monitoring in meta-gnostic and meta-linguistic context, seen in: Schneider, W.. 2008. *The development of meta-cognitive knowledge in children and adolescents: Major trends and implications for education*, p. 116.

**Meta-cognitive and meta-linguistic awareness of students' knowledge on argumentation in defining
the terms "argument" and "counterargument"**

- Hatzisavidis, S.. 2010. *Grammar of modern Greek language (Vol. II)*. Thessaloniki: Vaniias.
- Knudson, R. E.. 1992a. The development of written argumentation: An analysis and comparison of argumentative writing at four grade levels. *Child Study Journal*, 22(3), 167-184.
- Leitão, S.. 2003. Evaluating and selecting counterarguments: Studies of children's rhetorical awareness. *Written Communication*, 20(3), 269-306.
- Lenski, S. D. & Nierstheimer, S. L.. 2002. Strategy instruction from a socio-cognitive perspective. *Reading Psychology*, 23, 127-143.
- Lewis, M. & Wray, D.. 1995. *Developing children's non fiction writing: Working with writing frames*. Leamington Spa: Scholastic.
- Lindgren, E.. 2004. The uptake of peer-based intervention in the writing classroom. In: Rijlaarsdam, G. (Series Ed.) & Rijlaarsdam, G., Van der Bergh, H. & Couzijn, M.. (Vol. Eds.). *Studies in writing (Vol. 14), Effective learning and teaching of writing (2nd ed.)*, 259-274.
- Moffett, J.. 1968. *Teaching the universe of discourse*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Papadopoulou, S. M.. 2004. Uses of the obstetric-dialectical method as a suggestion in teaching language: The Socrates definition and the Socrates' arguments in compulsory education. *Scientific Journal Dodoni of the Department of Philosophy (University of Ioannina)*, 72, 197-217. (In Greek)
- Perry, B. & Dockett, S.. 1998. Play, argumentation and social constructivism. *Early Child Development and Care*, 140, 5-15.
- Piaget, J.. 1973. *The child's conception of the world*. Tomlinson, J. & Tomlinson, A.. (Trans.). Granada, Paladin.
- Pintrich, P. R.. 2002. *The role of meta-cognitive knowledge in learning, teaching and assessing: Theory into practice*. Retrieved April 17th, 2007, from <http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi-m0I>.
- Schneider, W.. 2008. The development of meta-cognitive knowledge in children and adolescents: Major trends and implications for education. *Journal Compilation*, 2(3) 114-121.
- Schraw, G. 1998. Promoting general meta-cognitive awareness. *Instructional Science*, 26, 113-125.
- Simpson, J. & Weiner, E.. 1989. *Oxford English dictionary: The definitive record of the English language (2nd ed.)*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Snow, C. E., Cancino, H., De Temple, J. & Schley, S.. 1991. Giving formal definitions: A linguistic or meta-linguistic skill? In: Bialystok, E. (Ed.). *Language processing in bilingual children*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 90-111.
- Stein, N. & Miller, C. A.. 1993. A theory of argumentative understanding: Relation-ships among position preference, judgments of goodness, memory and reasoning. *Argumentation*, 7, 183-204.
- Stolarek, E. A.. 1996. *Dialectic: Rhetoric's neglected step-sister comes of age*. USA, 1-9. (Eric Document, # 398 574#).
- Vanderburg, R. M.. 2006. Reviewing research on teaching writing based on Vygotsky's theories: What we can learn. *Reading and Writing Quarterly*, 22, 375-393.
- Vanoye, F., Mouchon, J. & Sarrazac, J. P.. 1981. *Practices of morality oral practice: Listening, social communications, Thurs Theatre*. Paris: Armand Colin. (In French)
- Voss, J. F. & Means, M. L.. 1991. *Learning to reason via instruction in argumentation*. Office of Educational Research and Development Center, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA 15260. (Eric Document, #330 019#).
- Vygotsky, L.. 1978. *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. London: Harvard University Press.
- Vygotsky, L.. 1991. *Thought and language*. Cambridge: The MIT Press.
- Wolfe, C. R. & Britt, M. A.. 2007. The locus of the my-side bias in written argumentation. *Thinking and Reasoning*, 14(1). (DOI: 10.1080/13546780701527674).
- Xatzisavidis, S.. 2010. *Grammar of modern Greek language theoretical bases and description (Vol. B)*. Thessaloniki: Vaniias Publishing House. (in Greek)
- Bereiter, C. & Scardamalia, M.. 1982. From conversation to composition: The role of instruction in a developmental process. In: Glaser, R. (Ed.). *Advances in instructional psychology (Vol. 2)*. Hillsdale: N. J. Erlbaum, 1-64.
- Bredart, S. & Rondal, J. A.. 1982. *Children: Meta-linguistic activities (2nd ed.)*. Brussels: Mardaga. (in French)
- Burkhalter, N.. 1993. How persuasive writing aids critical thinking. Paper Presented at the 79th Annual Meeting of the Speech Communication Association (Miami Beach, FL, November 18-21, 1993). (Eric Document, #366 988#).
- Burkhalter, N.. 1994. *Applying Vygotsky: Teaching pre formal-operational children a formal-operational task*. USA. (Eric Document, #379 208#).
- Burkhalter, N.. 1995. A Vygotsky—based curriculum for teaching persuasive writing in the elementary grades. *Language Arts*, 72, 192-199.
- Hall, N.. (Ed). 1989. *Writing with reason: The emergence of authorship in young children*. London: Hodder & Stoughton.
- Halpern, D. F.. 1996. *Thought and knowledge: An introduction to critical thinking*. Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.
- Knudson, R. E.. 1992b. Analysis of argumentative writing at two grade levels. *Journal of Educational Research*, 85(3), 169-179.
- Magoula, E. & Kapothanasi, A.. 2008. *Teaching language in using meta-cognitive capacities*. Retrieved March, 3rd, 2010, from [http://www.cc.uoa.gr/ptde/Forum of new scientists E. Magoula-A. Kapothanasi.doc](http://www.cc.uoa.gr/ptde/Forum%20of%20new%20scientists%20E.%20Magoula-A.%20Kapothanasi.doc). (in Greek)
- Mason, L. & Santi, M.. 1994. Argumentation structure and meta-cognition in constructing shared knowledge at school. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (New Orleans, LA, April 4-8, 1994). (Eric Document, # 371 041#).
- Nakas, T. H.. 2003. How children define words. *Glossofilologica, D. (Studies in language and literature)*. Athens.

(Edited by Sunny and Chris)



US-China Foreign Language

Volume 8, Number 7, July 2010

David Publishing Company

1840 Industrial Drive, Suite 160, Libertyville, IL 60048

Tel: 1-847-281-9826; Fax: 1-847-281-9855

<http://www.davidpublishing.com>

linguist@davidpublishing.com

