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Memorizing Vocabulary in Multilingual Classrooms: Strategies Adopted by Teachers in Distance Education

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Abstract: The aim of this research is to investigate the usage and assessment of vocabulary memorization strategies adopted by teachers of Greek as a second/foreign language (L2) in multilingual classrooms. In particular, it investigates which vocabulary memorization strategies are adopted in distance education and whether or not there are differences in the frequency of their usage within face-to-face education, as well as how effective teachers consider them to be. Research results show that the most popular strategies in distance education are the strategies of reading aloud (92%), linking the new word to students' previous personal experiences (89%), and using synonyms–antonyms (87%), although there is no significant difference among the strategies that teachers adopt in face-to-face and distance education with some minor variations in statistics. Furthermore, it was shown that the frequency of a strategy's usage is related to how important teachers consider it to be. Regarding the assessment of memorization strategies, it is of particular interest that in most cases the frequency of usage of a strategy is proportionate to the effectiveness attributed to it by teachers. After the teachers' assessment, the strategies of reading aloud (89%), picture making (87%) and using synonyms–antonyms (86%) are in the top three.

Keywords: vocabulary; multilingual classrooms; Greek as L2; memorization strategies; distance education; assessment

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1. Introduction

In the last decades, more and more students with different cultural and linguistic backgrounds have been required to learn Greek as a L2 in addition to their first language to integrate themselves into Greek schools and additionally in Greek society. Vocabulary learning plays a crucial role in this effort. However, for years the importance of teaching vocabulary was underestimated, while too much emphasis was placed mainly on grammar [1]. Over time, however, this has changed, with emphasis placed on what Wilkins [2] states: "Without grammar very little can be conveyed. Without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed".

The demanding and endless efforts in learning the vocabulary of a L2, in which the individual differences of learners play a very important role [3,4], as well as the inevitable phenomenon of distance education due to the COVID-19 pandemic, were the impetus for this research which took place during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The aims of this research are to highlight the memorization strategies that teachers usually adopt to teach vocabulary in multilingual classrooms in distance education and to identify if there are any differences in their usage between conventional education and distance education. It also attempts to identify from a number of memorization strategies, according to Schmitt's [5] typology, the most appropriate ones for teaching vocabulary according to teachers' opinions.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Clarification of Concepts

Since the early 1990s, various definitions of learning strategies have been formulated, without this implying that there is one definition that is commonly accepted. Learning strategies are techniques that aim to solve a problem in the learning process and most of them are developed in a conscious way, modified, and adapted according to the needs of each learner [6]. Some of the most widespread definitions are those of O'Malley and Chamot [7], Oxford [8], Cohen [9] and Nation [10].

According to O'Malley and Chamot [7], strategies are defined as "specific thoughts and behaviors that individuals use to help them understand, learn, or retain new information". Oxford [8] defines strategies as "specific actions-steps and behaviors or techniques that learners, often intentionally, use to improve their progress in developing skills in L2".

Another widely used definition is that of Cohen [9], who defines strategies as "... the processes that facilitate a learning process; consciously chosen by learners; and lead to action to improve second or foreign language learning through the acquisition, recall and implementation of information about the language". The relevant literature about strategies includes the terms *strategy*, *technique*, *tactic*, and *move* and includes the split between macro- and micro-strategies and tactics. In this research, we adopt Cohen's proposal for the use of the terminology. According to Cohen [11], a solution to this problem would be to refer to all the aforementioned terms simply as *strategies*, accepting that there is a continuum from the broadest categories to the most specific or low-level ones.

Addressing the issue from another perspective, Nation [10], instead of giving a separate definition of vocabulary learning strategies, listed their characteristics. Thus, according to Nation [10] vocabulary learning strategies should display the following:

- An allowance of choice, i.e., one should be able to choose among several strategies;
- A complex nature, i.e., strategies must support the learner at various stages of the learning process;
- The requirement of knowledge and provision of benefits after learning
- An increase in the effectiveness of learning and vocabulary usage.

In the context of the student-centered approach to language teaching, it appears that teachers' views on vocabulary memorization strategies have not been sufficiently investigated. In a topic on which extensive research is conducted, such as vocabulary learning strategies, this research contrasts the use of memorizing strategies in face-to-face and distance education due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and emphasizes the assessment of their effectiveness by teachers themselves.

2.2. Previous Research

Over the last thirty years, a great number of studies have been conducted in the field of foreign languages, concerning vocabulary learning. However, in this study, emphasis is placed on those studies that investigate vocabulary learning strategies, especially memorization strategies adopted by language teachers in a L2, as well as those that study any changes observed in strategy usage during distance education.

Sanaoui's [12] aim was to investigate how learners approach vocabulary learning activities and to identify the memorization strategies they utilize. The participants of his research were fifty multilingual students with different language backgrounds, who were attending a university program in an English-speaking city in Canada and were already divided into classes. It was a six-week intensive program in which the approaches adopted in terms of vocabulary exercises were discussed in detail daily. His research also included case studies of learners learning English and French as L2s in which various memorization strategies such as word recording, direct repetition, linguistic associations, etc., were used. The results of the study reinforced the view that learners are indeed able to make use of various strategies to learn the vocabulary of a L2 and need to receive instructions from their teachers on how to approach it in the best way.

Schmitt [5] conducted research in order to draw conclusions about the frequency of vocabulary learning strategy usage. The research instrument they used was a questionnaire based on the taxonomy of learning strategies, and the results were found to be reliable as a fairly large sample of six hundred responses were collected. The research participants were Japanese apprentices for which Japanese was their first language and they were learning English as a foreign language. The research result showed that bilingual dictionaries, guessing from context, word lists, verbal and written repetition, and peer questions were most commonly used by the apprentices. In contrast, it turned out that the strategies used least of all were word homonyms with their first language, body movements - which also affect the interaction between teachers and students [13], concept maps and picture cards.

Harley and Hart [14] conducted research on courses of French in Toronto on the strategies used by learners to learn new words in a L2 and to memorize their meaning. They used a questionnaire based on vocabulary learning strategies, which included word identification (25 real strategies which learners adopted, that were different each time, to enable them to discover the meaning of unfamiliar words and to memorize them). The strategies that stood out were guessing from context and using grammatical clues, as well as asking their teacher or their classmates questions.

In another study [15], conducted among Taiwanese students, who were learning English, an attempt was made to record the most useful vocabulary teaching strategies according to the most experienced teachers. Specifically, cognitive strategies were the most widely used, followed by direct vocabulary teaching or morphological word analysis. Linking the word with synonyms–antonyms also scored high on this list, while metacognitive strategies seemed to be particularly popular.

Furthermore, Fu [16] investigated the strategies used by English teachers in China in primary schools and the results showed that most teachers did not consider students' learning styles and adopted more traditional approaches to vocabulary memorization. The effectiveness of the learning process would be enhanced if there was a correlation between the teaching style and the learning style of the students.

In a study by Noor et al. [17], conducted at the National Religious High School in Malaysia, which involved 157 students who were trying to master Arabic vocabulary, it was concluded that effective vocabulary learning strategies should be taught to students during the learning process, so that they can use them to enhance their vocabulary in Arabic.

Furthermore, Rousoulioti and Mouti [18] conducted a study that sought to find the strategies used by multilingual adult learners who were learning Greek as a L2 by examining teachers' experience as an independent variable. They concluded that all teachers encouraged students to be guided to the meaning of unfamiliar words by context, morphological analysis, sound and meaning association with their L1, the use of dictionaries and grouping new words according to the topic taught.

In Tsouri's [19] research, multilingual students, who attended Greek language courses at the Centre for the Teaching of Greek Language and Culture of the University of Ioannina, Greece, during the winter and summer period, participated. One of the most important findings was that most of the participants stated that they seek to understand the meaning of unknown words in a text through the morphological analysis of the word, i.e., the analysis of the word's stem, prefix, suffix, etc.

In addition, Goundar [20] attempted to investigate the use of different vocabulary learning strategies among 53 adult learners of English as a foreign language and to look for the advantages and disadvantages of each strategy. In terms of memory strategies, it was highlighted that 77% of the weak learners repeated words aloud, and 62% created a mental picture of the new word, while only 28% analyzed words by breaking them down into their constituent parts.

Another study is that of Rousoulioti et al. [21] conducted in Istanbul, Turkey, in which 20 teachers, 6 males and 14 females were involved. This research aimed to record the most frequent and effective vocabulary teaching strategies chosen by their teachers. The research results showed that the more advanced the level of the students was, the more synonyms

and antonyms were used by their teachers when teaching vocabulary, while the lower the level of the students was, the more pictures and photographs were used. Furthermore, the keyword usage strategy was frequently used at all levels, but with better results at advanced levels. Furthermore, students at all levels (especially at the A and B language levels) adopted the semantic map strategy in a variety of ways, grouping words according to the topic, and almost never grouping them according to the parts of the speech. Among other things, conclusions emerged on how effective the above memorization strategies are, according to teachers' opinion. In particular, *morphological word segmentation* was considered the most effective strategy, followed by the usage of an unfamiliar word in context, the usage of audiovisual media and the usage of synonyms. In addition, teachers considered word lists, dictionaries, and self-assessment tests, focusing on how a word is written, which although were widely used, to be less effective.

Finally, in their latest research, Rousoulioti and Melissaropoulou [22] investigated whether or not morphological segmentation is related to the discovery of the meaning of a word. It was found that this strategy was adopted by the students who participated in the aforementioned research in their attempt to understand the meaning of unknown words. Equally importantly, an attempt was made to determine whether or not foreign language learners during distance education adopted different strategies regarding vocabulary comprehension during reading. The research results showed that there were no significant differences between face-to-face and distance education, while other recent studies reported a decrease in social strategies [23] and an increased usage of software such as Quizizz to enhance vocabulary [24].

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Research Questions

This research was addressed to teachers of Greek as a L2 in multilingual classrooms and focused mainly on the investigation of the teaching strategies they adopt to help their students to memorize vocabulary. Specifically, the objectives of the research are to highlight the memorization strategies that teachers use to teach vocabulary in distance education, as well as to prove whether or not, ultimately, different strategies were adopted in relation to face-to-face education. Furthermore, the aim of the research is to identify from a multitude of memorization strategies, according to Schmitt's [5] typology, those that are considered the most appropriate by the teachers themselves. In particular, the following research questions were posed:

1. Which memorization strategies for the teaching of vocabulary are adopted by teachers of Greek as a L2 in multilingual classes in the case of distance education?
2. Are there any differences between the adopted memorization strategies in distance education and those adopted in face-to-face education?
3. Which of the memorization strategies for the teaching of vocabulary are assessed by teachers as most important?

3.2. Participants and Procedure

The present research was conducted from October to December 2021 during the COVID-19 pandemic. Briefly, 100 teachers of Greek as a L2 in multilingual classes who were members of e-teacher groups participated and responded to an online questionnaire. They were 16 men and 84 women of different ages, who neither had the same training in teaching Greek as a L2 in multilingual classes nor the same years of experience. A participant profile is described in Table 1.

An attempt was made to cross-check research results with the method of triangulation. For this reason, participants' answers to the online questionnaire were cross-checked with their answers to the interview questions. Five of the aforementioned teachers were selected by random and participated in the interview process. Four of them were women with ages ranging from 27 to 50 years old and only one was a man aged 43 years old. Four of them were philologists and one graduate of a pedagogical department, while three of them had

a master's degree in teaching Greek as a L2 and two of them had only attended training seminars on this. Their years of teaching experience with multilingual students varied from one year of teaching in multilingual classrooms to 20–21 years at maximum (Table 2).

Table 1. Demographic data of the respondents to the online questionnaire.

Gender	**Male**		**Female**	
	16%		**84%**	
Age	20–30	31–40	41–50	51≥
	29%	33%	27%	11%
Education	**BA**	**MA**	**PhD**	**Seminars**
	39%	42%	1%	18%
Years of teaching	**1–9**	**10–19**	**20–29**	**30≥**
	66%	21%	10%	3%

Table 2. Interviewees' demographics.

Demographics	**T1**	**T2**	**T3**	**T4**	**T5**
Gender	Male	Female	Female	Female	Female
Age	43	50	27	43	43
Profession	Philologist	Philologist	Teacher	Philologist	Philologist
Education	Master's	Master's	Master's	Master's	Master's
Training on the teaching of Greek as L2	Master's and Seminars	Master's	Seminars	Seminars	Master's
Years of experience in teaching Greek as L2	14	2	1	5	21

3.3. Data Collection Tools

An online questionnaire and an interview were selected as research tools to conduct this research. The use of two different tools ensures triangulation, i.e., the use of several research tools instead of one and its advantages, in order to achieve more valid results. Furthermore, it was made clear at the beginning of both the questionnaire and the interview that the anonymity of the participants would be maintained in order to respect the principles of ethics [25].

3.3.1. The Online Questionnaire

The first research tool that preceded the interviews was a structured online questionnaire. It consisted of 25 closed-ended Likert questions, and the survey participants took about fifteen minutes to answer them. The questions of the questionnaire were divided into sections according to the research questions. At the end of the questionnaire, respondents filled in some personal information about their gender, age, level of education and years of experience. Finally, those who wished to had the opportunity to express their interest in giving an interview. The data collected from the research participants to the questionnaire were transferred to an Excel sheet and processed further statistically.

The validity of the questionnaire was ensured due to the fact that its questions were formed on the basis of Schmitt classification for vocabulary memorization strategies. On the other hand, the reliability of the responses was confirmed via the process of triangulating the results by conducting interviews in which the answers to the questionnaires were thoroughly investigated and justified [26].

3.3.2. The Online Interview

After completing the questionnaires, 5 of the participants, who stated they wanted to be interviewed, were invited to take part in semi-structured online interviews. Specifically, the questions in the interviews were the same as those asked in the online questionnaire. However, the interviews focused on justifying participants' responses to the questionnaire questions and reporting on their experiences, thus increasing the credibility of their questionnaire responses. The time of the interview in no case exceeded forty minutes, while the interview was conducted in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere.

After the transcription of the interviews, a qualitative content analysis in accordance with the scheme of Creswell [27] followed. The data were organized using thematic content analysis and a database with coded text segments was created with the participants' responses. In this process, the researchers compared codes and themes to reduce redundancy.

3.4. Research Findings

3.4.1. Memorization Strategies in Distance Education

After the collection and analysis of the research participants' answers to the online questionnaire, the following table emerged in order to present clearly and in descending order the frequency of usage of memorization strategies in distance education. In the following table (Table 3), the results from the questionnaire are presented in detail for each strategy and they are accompanied by corresponding extracts from the interviews, making clear that the answers to the questionnaires were cross-checked with those of the interviews. It is necessary to mention that the teachers who took part in the in the interview process are named as T1 (Teacher 1), T2 (Teacher 2) and so on. Their quotes were translated in English by the researchers. On the other hand, the high frequency of usage of each strategy is indicated by the sum of the responses "often", "very often" and "always". The answers "rarely" and "never" are also grouped together. Based on these, the low frequency of usage of each strategy is inferred.

Table 3. Frequency of memorization strategies' usage in distance education.

Memorization Strategies	High Frequency of Usage in Distance Education	High Frequency of Usage in Face-to-face Education	Difference in Usage Compared with Face-to-face Education
Reading aloud	92%	99%	7%
Linking with previous experiences	89%	92%	3%
Using synonyms-antonyms	87%	91%	4%
Using key words	87%	87%	0%
Depicting the meaning	86%	85%	1%
Thematic grouping	86%	89%	3%
Mental representation	83%	76%	7%
Morphological segmentation	81%	84%	3%
Spelling	75%	70%	5%
Using body movements	74%	89%	15%
Using semantic maps	55%	56%	1%

As shown in Table 3, the greatest preference of 92% of the participants' teachers is for the strategy of *reading aloud*, while there is a difference of 7% compared to when this strategy adopted in face-to-face education, indicating that there is a greater percentage of teachers who use this strategy more in face-to-face education.

The next strategy in ranking is the strategy *linking the new word to students' previous personal experiences* with 89% using it from the grade "often" to the grade "always" in

distance education, while a small percentage of 3% uses this strategy more in face-to-face education. It is worth noting that only one of the respondents uses the strategy *linking the new word to students' previous personal experiences* always in face-to-face education and often in distance education (Extract 1).

Extract 1: "[...] in face-to-face education things are always more spontaneous on the part of the children [. . .] they want to talk about their experiences (...) about their family [...] they express themselves more freely in the classroom (...) in distance education [...] there are difficulties (..) we don't have face-to-face contact so you cannot see their reactions (..) you feel more restricted. [...]", T2.

Next, in the same ranking in the third place is the strategy of *using synonyms–antonyms* and that of *key words*, with 87% making clear the high frequency use of these strategies. It is worth noting that only 4% of the teachers use *synonyms–antonyms* more in face-to-face lessons, while there is absolutely no difference in terms of the use of *key words* between distance and face-to-face education.

In the fourth place are the strategies of *creating a picture to understand the meaning of the word being taught each time* and *grouping the words according to the topic*, with 86%, which is only 1% less in preference than that for the previous two strategies. With regard to the strategy of *creating a picture to understand the meaning of the word being taught each time*, there is a negligible difference of 1% in teachers who prefer to use this strategy in distance education because of the ease of painting that technology offers in computer teaching. On the contrary, regarding the second strategy of *grouping the words according to the topic* only 3% of the teachers make more use of this strategy in face-to-face education (Extract 2).

Extract 2: " [...] in distance education I can find pictures I have prepared [...] or the computer has some tools that you can give to the students more pictures than face-to-face education (..) faster [...] there is a strong interest in combining picture and word or concepts, they like it, they learn easily, they ask for it", T2.

Next (in fifth place) comes *the mental representation of the form of the taught word* with 83% of the participants using it often to always. It is useful to note that this is the strategy with the highest rate of usage (7%) in distance compared to in face-to-face education. There is obviously a greater need in distance education for students to imagine how a word is spelled to retain it more easily in their memory (Extract 3).

Extract 3: " [...] because of the online courses, I asked them to do it mentally [...] it's rare nowadays, I do not do it [. . .]. I did it on the spot in face-to-face education, that is, at the time they think of the word, they draw it", T5.

In sixth place is the strategy *segmentation of words into their components* with 81% of the teachers using it very systematically, while it seems that only 3% implement this strategy more in face-to-face lessons. For example, one of the interviewees makes use of this strategy very often in face-to-face teaching, while they rarely use it in distance learning due to pressure of time in online courses.

In seventh place is *spelling when reading the new word* at 75%, while 5% (the second highest percentage concerning distance education after *mental representation*) use this strategy more in online courses than in face-to-face education. This probably happens because in distance education students cannot easily see a new word written on the whiteboard (Extract 4).

Extract 4: " I use spelling very often in face-to-face education (.) I also use it always in distance education (.) because in distance education it is always more difficult to teach, so students need to hear the sounds more clearly", T2.

Regarding *body movements*, which are in the penultimate (eighth) place in Table 3 with 74%, it is expected that teachers use them more in face-to-face education. In distance education, body movements are limited only to the image of the face that is usually visible during teaching from a distance (Extract 5).

Extract 5: "[...] de facto in distance education this was not so feasible (..) now in face-to-face education body movement was a strategy that I used when there was no other

way to show something (.) and maybe it helped a lot of times but mainly that was because I was working with pictures, so it was like a second option let's say this strategy [...] T3".

Finally, the usage of *semantic/conceptual maps* is in the last (ninth) place of Table 3 by a wide margin, with only 55% of the teachers using semantic/conceptual maps in distance education and a negligible difference (1%) which shows that teachers use this strategy more often in face-to-face education. Possibly, this may be due to the lack of familiarity of the teachers with such tools, such as the e-marker in distance education or the fact that the platforms they use for distance education do not give them such possibilities. In fact, one of the interviewees claims the following (Extract 6):

Extract 6: "[...] it is easier for me in face-to-face education to take the marker and write on the board quick/fast, while I find it difficult to use the proper tools in distance education", T2.

In summary, on average, 81.3% of teacher's surveyed use memorizing strategies in distance education, while 83.4% use them in face-to-face education. The difference between them is 4.4% and this could be characterized as negligible, demonstrating the importance of using memorizing strategies in all forms of education.

3.4.2. Assessment of Memorization Strategic

The analysis of the data collected from the online questionnaire and the interviews conclude with the second research question, which is the assessment of the memorization strategies adopted for teaching vocabulary (Figure 1). The results of the assessment of each strategy separately follow below.

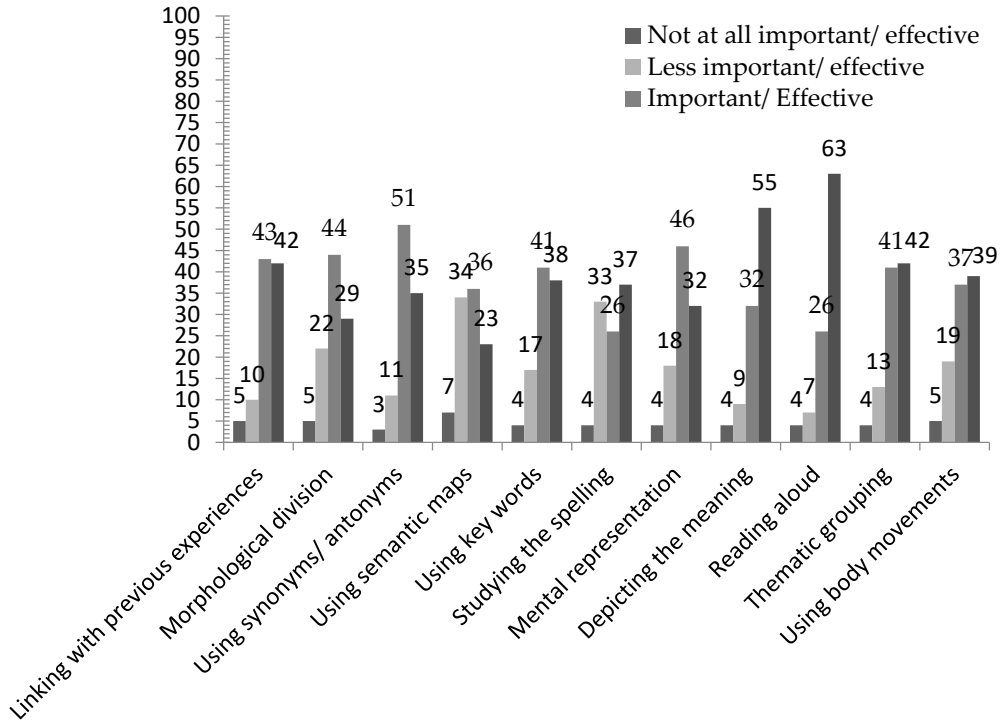


Figure 1. Assessment of memorization strategies.

Regarding the *connection of a new word with previous personal experiences of the students*, the majority of the participants (43%) estimate the aforementioned strategy as important or otherwise effective, while the next highest percentage (42%) assess it as very important. In fact, most of them try to connect new words with their students' first language (Extract 7).

Extract 7: "[...] I try to teach using their own language, how to say e.g., object [...]", T1.

Regarding *the segmentation of the word into its components*, 44% of the total rated this strategy as important/effective and 29% as very important. More than half, namely 51% of

the teachers, assessed the strategy of *using synonyms-antonyms* as an effective strategy and 35% assessed it as a very effective strategy (Extract 8).

Extract 8: "[...] it has been proven that children learn by having fun (.) The BIG opposite to a small one, a HORSE opposite to a mouse [. . .] is pleasant for them this activity, is fun, because they can look at each other or look at pictures of objects and they like that (.) and so they learn more easily, I think", T2.

Designing a concept/semantic map is judged by most (36%) as an important strategy and by 23% of the teachers it is considered very effective. It is worth noting that a teacher/participant rates it as more effective with older children, while another teacher assesses it as a more effective strategy for a student, when learning the first language (Extract 9).

Extract 9: " I also think that the age of the students was important in this case, i.e., I had to teach young children. Maybe that's why it was a strategy that I didn't use [...], but maybe it could be quite useful for older children, I think", T3.

Then, *keywords* usage is rated by 41% of the teachers as an important strategy and by 38% of them as a very important strategy, because in this way students can learn vocabulary that is useful for them every day easily and effectively. However, opinions were divided between two interviewees, as one of them argued that this strategy does not help all types of learners (Extracts 10–12). On the other hand, in the research of Salihoğlu and Yalçın [28] and Woodeson et al. [29] the keyword strategy was considered very successful in terms of word recall.

Extract 10: "[...] many keywords are found in texts, they are found in everyday life, students have heard them before and they can remember them more easily (.) I try to find words that will be useful to them (.) [...]", T2.

Extract 11: "I think that it is a strategy that can help some students, some students maybe not, it has to do with the learning style of each child [...]", T3.

Extract 12: "[...] one child may be a visual type, another child may be a kinesthetic type, another may be an auditory type [...] key words always help almost most of these types [...]", T4.

Briefly, 37% of respondents rated *spelling a word* as a very important and 26% of them reported it as an important strategy. However, two of them, who did not consider word spelling as a less effective, claimed that they considered it inappropriate for their students' level, and their views on this were a bit contradictory. In another case, both research participants considered it a less effective strategy (Extracts 13–16).

Extract 13: "[...] besides learning what the new word means (..) children learn to write it, they also learn to write it on the paper and I think this also helps a lot in spelling and in understanding the meaning (.) of a word, "T1.

Extract 14: "It makes it easier for the children themselves to say the word a little bit (_)" T2.

Extract 15: "[...] in part of the lesson that had to do with the reading and the writing, I worked a lot with spelling so that the children start to understand how writing and reading (.) [...] work", T3.

Extract 16: "[...] it helps from B2 level and above, it helps ([...] if they are beginners, they will do it more often (.) Both in class and online, but it always depends on the level of the students [...]", T5.

Most of the participants, 46% of them, rated *creating a mental representation of the word form* as an important strategy and 32% rater it as a very important. The strategy *creating a picture of the meaning of a word* was also characterized by 55% of the teachers as very important and as important by 32% of them (Extracts 17–18).

Extract 17: " [...] the picture you know is the primary factor for learning the meaning of a word, this picture brings to their mind how this word is in their first language and respectively they learn its Greek version [...] it is a very important parameter", T1.

Extract 18: "[...] I try to create a picture for the students, in the face-to-face education. I made them draw a beach or the word *island* and they made very nice renderings of what

is the sea and what is an island (.) everyone imagined very nice things (.)"; "[...] especially for children of this age, six, seven and eight years old, I think it is a very good strategy to paint pictures (.) Either to show them to me or to paint them mentally by themselves (.) I think it helps a lot in the acquisition of a new language [...]", T3.

The most important strategy seems to be rated by most participants (63%) as the strategy of *aloud word reading*, although 26% of the teachers rated it as an important strategy (Extracts 19–20).

Extract 19: "because first of all they are active learners, there is a purpose (.) an interest to speak Greek (_) it helps them to improve their level to learn the form of the words, to learn the sound (.) and then when they hear this word to understand it [...]", T2.

Extract 20: "[...] I do it because it is part of the practice of pronunciation. Greek is a difficult language, we need to speak it, we need to do readings and together with the students to make them feel more comfortable with the language [...]", T5.

The majority of the respondents (42%) assessed *word grouping* as a very important strategy, followed by only one participant less (dropping from 42% to 41%) assessing it as an important strategy (Extract 21). These results are consistent with the results of Mohammed's research [30] in which one out of three of the teachers rated this strategy as important.

Extract 21: "[...] always the teaching of the new vocabulary of a text was done by *categorizing the words*, i.e., we would take one topic at a time and we would try to support students in learning the vocabulary as much as we could, so that next time they had to understand a similar text/topic, students would master the relevant vocabulary", T3.

Finally, 39% of participants assessed the usage of *body movements* as a very effective strategy, while 37% of them assessed it as an important strategy (Extracts 22–23).

Extract 22: "[...] when I taught them, for example, *the door is open-the door is closed* and I showed it to them with my body movements, they learned it immediately and they liked it so much with the movements I made that they even imitated my movements themselves in order to make fun of me, they learned it on the fly [...] as if it was a pleasant game, i.e., I learn by playing", T2.

Extract 23: "[...] and with mime and with some movement and with the theatre [...] they want the movement [...] they go crazy for this strategy, it helps them a lot and that is what they remember, at the end", T4.

4. Discussion

Ellis [31] mentions that learners can enhance their retention of new words if they implement various memorization strategies, strongly connected with visual and verbal methods. As Thompson [32] argues, 'Mnemonics work by utilizing some well-known principles of psychology: a retrieval plan is developed during encoding, and mental imagery, both visual and verbal, is used. Memorizing strategies helps individuals learn faster and recall better, because it aids the integration of new material into existing cognitive units and because it provides retrieval cues.

In the first research question, the aim of this research was to find which memorization strategies for teaching vocabulary are adopted by teachers of Greek as a L2 in multilingual classes in the case of distance education. Regarding this research question, it was found that *reading aloud* ranks first with 92%, a finding that is in line with Goundar's [20] research, followed in second and third place by the *connection of a new word with previous personal experiences* (89%) and the use of *synonyms-antonyms* (87%), a strategy frequently used in the studies of Ling [15] and Rousoulioti et al. [21]. In fourth place, *keywords usage* (87%) follows. This is a strategy that, according to Rousoulioti and Mouti [18], students are also encouraged by their teachers to use. The strategy of *depicting the meaning of a word* lies in the next place, the fifth place, almost with the same percentage (86%). Research results for this strategy are contradictory. In the research of Schmitt [5], the aforementioned strategy is in the last places although it occupies a very important position in the research results of Goundar [20].

The *mental representation of the word form* (83%) and the *segmentation of the word into its components* (81%) follow in order in the sixth place, in line with the research of Harley and Hart [14], Ling [15], Rousoulioti and Mouti [18], Tsouri [19], Goundar [20], and Rousoulioti and Melissaropoulou [22].

The last three positions in the ranking are occupied by *spelling* (75%) and *body movements* (74%), which are also placed last in the research of Schmitt [5], although in the research of Harrath [33] *body movements* are considered an extremely important strategy for teaching vocabulary to middle school students. *Semantic map usage* is placed at the bottom of the ranking (ninth place) with a much lower percentage (55%), a result that agrees with the findings of the research of Schmitt [5] in which students used *conceptual maps* less than other strategies. These results are not consistent with Rousoulioti et al. [21] research, which concludes that teachers adopt the strategy of *semantic maps* at all levels and in a variety of ways.

In the second research question, our aim was to find out if there are any differences in the adopted memorizing strategies in distance education compared to face-to-face education. Comparing the respondents' answers for the frequency of strategies in face-to-face and distance education, it can be concluded that there is not much of a difference in the strategies that teachers choose to use in their conventional and online teaching. This finding agrees with the research of Nguyen [34] and Rousoulioti and Melissaropoulou [22], although the latter stresses the need for language teachers to know the morphology of the language they teach, while other existing research identifies differences in the reduction in social strategies [23] and the increased use of software such as Quizizz to enhance vocabulary [24]. The question that arises is whether or not by changing the teaching medium distance education is implemented as it should be and therefore whether or not one would expect different strategies to be adopted.

However, most strategies are used with a higher degree of frequency in face-to-face than in distance education. This is probably due to audio and video limitations, lack of time, lack of participation on the part of the learners and generally the difficulties stemming from distance education, according to the argumentation of the interviewees. For example, a large difference in the degree of frequency of strategy usage is found in *body movements*, since it is not always possible to implement this strategy in distance education. The strategies of *image-making*, *mental representation of a word form* and *spelling*, which are more frequently used in distance education than in face-to-face teaching are exceptions. This is because the need for students to imagine words is greater in the case of distance education, since in most cases of distance education there is not a whiteboard and therefore *mental representation of a word* is very helpful to them, while *spelling* is preferred more because they need to hear sounds more clearly when a course is online, as the interviewees argue.

It is worth noting that the essential difference between face-to-face and distance education may lie in how teachers implement the strategies in each case, as shown by the increased use of software in Huei and Hashim's [24] research. For example, as mentioned above in the research results (see Section 3.4), in the case of the strategy of *creating a picture for the new word being taught*, a teacher claims that in face-to-face teaching she uses conventional means and specific pictures to show students to understand the meaning of a word, while in distance education she searches for a multitude of pictures on the internet.

Finally, regarding the third research question and the assessment of memorization strategies by the teachers who participated in this research, it is of particular interest that in most cases the frequency of usage of a strategy is proportionate to the effectiveness attributed to it by teachers, which enhances the reliability, transparency, and validity of this research. In first place is again *the aloud reading strategy*, with 89% of the research participants considering it effective to very effective. Additionally, according to Icht and Mama [35], the benefits of *reading aloud* for memorizing vocabulary are well-known. Reading aloud involves high levels of attention; it is active, explicit and purposeful and enhances memory in relation to silent reading for different types of learning materials (words, non-words and text) [36].

In the second place one can find the strategies of *picture making* (87%) and the use of *synonyms-antonyms* (86%), a strategy which is also reflected in the research by Rousoulioti et al. [21]. Teachers in both cases use them and consider them effective. Next, in the third place, is the *linking of the word with previous experiences of the students* (85%).

In the fourth place, one can find the strategies *grouping according to the topic* (83%) and *keywords usage*, which although used by 87% of the teachers on scales from quite a lot to always in face-to-face and in distance education too are considered to be effective to very effective only by 79% of the teachers. In fact, according to Jenpattarakul [37], students store and retrieve new sets of words with the usage of keywords while expanding their imagination and creativity.

This assessment ranking is followed in the fifth place by the *mental representation of a word form* (78%) and the use of *body movements* (76%), which is also considered a less effective strategy than is that of keywords in Khorasgani and Khanehgir's [38] research. Two more strategies, in which a slight difference is found between their frequency of use and their effectiveness are *word segmentation into its components* and *spelling*. The former is used by 82.5% on average, while it is rated as an effective strategy by 73% of the research participants, which is surprising, since morphological awareness is crucial in reading ability, as reported in the relevant literature by Laufer and Girsai [39], Laufer and Hulstijn [40], Nation [41], Oakhill et al. [42], Tankersley [43], Angelelli et al. [44], Carlisle [45], and Rousoulioti and Melissaropoulou [46]. This is probably because the *morphological segmentation of a word into its components* requires linguistic knowledge that L2 teachers are often not required to have, although they should have it [22]. The second is *spelling* which is utilized by an average of 72.5% of the teachers from quite to always, while only 63% of the teachers consider it to be an effective or very effective strategy. In conclusion, in the last place is again the strategy of *semantic map design* as the least effective strategy for memorizing vocabulary compared to the others. This result is also confirmed by the research of Rousoulioti et al. [21].

5. Conclusions

The results of the present research reveal that there is no significant difference between the strategies used by teachers for the memorization of vocabulary by multilingual learners of Greek in face-to-face education compared to the memorization strategies adopted in distance education. In fact, in both cases, the strategies that are used most often are *reading aloud*, *linking the new word with the learners' previous personal experiences* and the usage of *synonyms–antonyms*, while the strategy of *drawing semantic/conceptual maps* is used less than all the others by a wide margin. Extremely interesting is also the low usage of the strategy of *body movements* in face-to-face education, a research result that is not confirmed by other research.

Finally, the assessment of strategy usage revealed that in most cases the frequency of the usage of a strategy is strongly connected to how effective or important teachers consider this to be. This conclusion shows that teachers' choice of vocabulary memorization strategies is empirical and raises questions about the assessment literacy [46] of teachers and the quality of their assessment practices [47]. Further research could investigate whether or not teachers' choice of specific strategies is related to their years of service, their educational background and/or related training.

This research was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic lasted for an unexpected duration with a continuous transition from face-to-face to distance education from time to time. This continuous rotation, without teachers having been trained to distance education beforehand [48], kept vague the distinction between distance and face-to-face education. In this emergency, teachers tried to survive rather than implement appropriate teaching strategies. In fact, in most cases, it was only the means of teaching that changed, not the way of teaching. In other words, distance education was delivered in almost the same way as face-to-face education was, with the exception that a teacher communicated with his/her students with the help of a camera and a microphone.

However, the question that arises is whether or not distance education comprises only this, also taking into consideration multilingual and multicultural classes in Greece nowadays and multilingual students' educational needs [49,50].

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