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**THE EVERYDAY LITERACY PRACTICES IN ENGLISH OF TEENAGERS
LIVING IN GREECE: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC MULTIPLE CASE STUDY**

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is concerned with the everyday literacy practices of young people aged 14-15 in English as a foreign language in contemporary Greece. Starting from the premise that young people use, encounter and draw upon the English language not only in educational but also in informal settings in Greece, the study's main aim is to provide a fine-grained account of the rich, creative, and personally meaningful ways in which English is used by young people in their everyday lives and to obtain a more in-depth understanding of their English language and literacy practices as a whole.

Within the broader framework of ethnography, the investigation employed a multiple case-study design with an ethnographic perspective. Drawing on theoretical and methodological perspectives offered by the New Literacy Studies, ethnography and discourse analysis, the study extended over a period of eighteen months (March 2010 to September 2011) and employed a combination of multiple data collection tools and data sources (i.e., in-depth interviews, field notes, literacy diaries, in-home observations, text and document collection, photographs, visualisations) to document and provide a holistic, 'emic' account of the literacy practices in English of fifteen adolescents from varied backgrounds living in Athens, Greece. Analysis involved coding transcripts, documents/artefacts and field notes for

literacy events, identifying themes, patterns and analytical categories in the coded data and analysing visual data.

By being one of the few ethnographically-based projects studying everyday literacy in English as a foreign language from a social point of view, the study provides important empirical insights into the complex nature of teenagers' everyday literacy practices in English. Contrary to conventional understandings of home and school as mutually exclusive domains, the empirical findings highlight the tension between school-based and everyday uses of English and essentially present a view of young people's English literacy as a complex configuration of practices which cannot be easily disaggregated into separable school and home practices. Significantly, the findings also suggest that young people's textually sophisticated and interest-driven everyday engagements with English, characterised by rich appropriation and circulation of pop culture texts and literacy artefacts that 'cross over' or mix media genres, provide them with access to "communities of practice" and "imagined communities" wherein they express their social and cultural alignments, reaffirm their in-group membership and enact their identities as young and contemporary individuals. On the basis of its findings the thesis argues for a rethinking of English as a powerful youth resource creatively and purposefully used by young people in their everyday literacy practices to reach their highly personal needs and goals; in other words, as a readily available means for self-expression, meaning-making and communication in socially meaningful ways, strongly connected to complex processes of identity work. This perspective may lead to a reconceptualisation of English language pedagogy in Greece which might involve an increasing engagement with learners' distinctive "ways with English".