

Investigating Teaching and Learning Greek as an Additional Language in Public Primary Schools in Cyprus

Nansia Kyriakou

47, Marinou Yeroulanou, Limassol, 4154, Cyprus

nk261@exeter.ac.uk

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Abstract. The current research investigates the ways language is used by mainstream primary school teachers and language learners whose native language is other than the official language of instruction. The setting of the study is the island of Cyprus, where the mainstream population's language (Standard Modern Greek) is taught as the educational first language to native speakers of the Greek Cypriot dialect. At the same time, it is taught as an additional language to non-native Greek speakers (GAL learners). The main aim of the study is the investigation of the use of language and other contextual cues as a tool to participation, communication and eventually teaching and learning acts. Upon examination of this use, the existence of the sociolinguistic phenomenon of bidialectism (the coexistence of two varieties), presents a further complication. The investigation is set within a sociocultural framework, following a neo-Vygotskian perspective. This paper reports a multiple case study conducted in three first grade primary school classrooms in Cyprus, in which ten GAL learners and three mainstream teachers were observed for more than 1500 minutes inside the classroom and in the playground area. The study was also supported by interviews of the teachers and the GAL learners. In addition, drawing activities and persona dolls were used to investigate the perspectives of the participating children. The variety of research methods used, the inclusion of young children in the research, the consideration of bidialectism, the reflection upon all four different acts where language is used and, finally, the different settings where the participants were observed, compose the originality of the study. In this paper, I will present the way the participants of the study used Standard Modern Greek, Greek Cypriot Dialect, English and, finally, GAL learners' L1.