Issues of dialect use in education from the Greek Cypriot perspective

Pavlos Pavlou and Andreas Papapavlou University of Cyprus

The issue of mother-tongue education has preoccupied linguists and educationalists for many years. Some bring forward arguments in support of the use of dialects or non-standard languages whereas others question their suitability as mediums of instruction. In multialectal settings, choosing a language for instruction is never an easy matter because many factors need to be considered. In this article an effort is made to examine the situation in Cyprus, where the language of instruction is Standard Modern Greek (SMG) whereas the mother tongue of the students is the Greek Cypriot Dialect (GCD). On the basis of the results obtained from an attitudinal survey of teachers, the practice of using SMG officially and GCD unofficially is examined and assessed. An attempt is made to explore the feasibility of introducing GCD alongside SMG in the educational system of Cyprus.

Introduction

It is commonly believed by non-specialists that most societies in the world are monolingual, but the truth is that multilingual or multialectal societies are the rule rather than the exception (Paulston 1994). Policymakers face many language-related problems when selecting an official language in newly established multilingual/multialectal states and when deciding on the medium of instruction for the educational system. Consequently, in such settings there is a need to allocate the various, often competing, codes – which often have different status or prestige – to certain domains of use such as education, the media and administration. With regard to education, the most commonly used variety is the standard language, with non-standard varieties being generally ignored or even devalued (Westphal 1986). The issue of the use of non-standard dialects in education in various places in the world has attracted the attention of scholars for more than a century (see Cheshire et al. 1989 for Europe; Driessen and Withagen 1999; James 1996; Rickford 1996; McKay and Hornberger 1996).

The current study discusses the use of the Greek Cypriot Dialect (henceforth GCD) at the primary level of education in the Republic of Cyprus, where the official language and the language of instruction is Standard
Modern Greek (henceforth SMG). Specifically, the study investigates the opinions of teachers towards language practices in the classroom and focuses on: (a) the role and use of GCD in primary education, (b) the instances under which Cypriot teachers make use of GCD inside and outside the classroom, (c) the circumstances in which the oral use of GCD by students in the classroom is considered appropriate and acceptable, and (d) why this practice is not regarded as being in conflict with state language policy.

**Linguistic varieties, standard language and dialect**

In discussing the issue of the use of non-standard varieties in education, it is important to distinguish clearly between the terms ‘linguistic variety’, ‘dialect’ and ‘language’. Linguists have experienced difficulties in establishing criteria for drawing a clear distinction among these terms. A linguistic variety is defined by Wardhaugh (1992: 22) as “a specific set of linguistic items or human speech patterns (presumably sounds, words, grammatical features etc.) which can be uniquely associated with some external factor (presumably a geographical area or a social group)”. The term ‘variety’ is thus a neutral term which applies to any kind of language that is considered a single entity (Chambers and Trudgill 1980). According to Macaulay (1997: 3), “its use is noncontroversial for the very good reason that it does not make any theoretical claims about the status of the entity referred to in this way”. The term ‘language’ “can be used to refer either to a single linguistic norm or to a group of related norms” (ibid: 25). When it refers to a single norm, this is the ‘standard variety’. All the other varieties diverging from the standard norm are called ‘dialects’. Nevertheless, the term ‘language’ in its broader sense encompasses all the different dialects (linguistic varieties) of a given language (Baker 1992; Chaika 1989).

The standard variety has certain characteristics. It exhibits congruence between the written and the spoken norms of language, it is codified, and it is elaborated, i.e. it has expanded the expressive resources of the language to meet the increased communication needs that it must serve (Custred 1990: 233–4). The standard variety is used almost exclusively in certain domains of activity such as education, the mass media, courts and the professional world (Baker 2001: 44). In contrast, non-standard varieties tend to be used for private communication, and their use often constitutes an act of solidarity with a certain group. It is clear that in the sphere of education the standard variety has primacy over other varieties, and this obliges the members of a given speech community, on entering school, to acquire and perfect their command of the standard language. Consequently, there is an inherent duty on the part of public education to cater for the linguistic needs of non-standard speakers (Custred 1990).
In the case of Modern Greek, the term ‘the Greek language’ encompasses all the numerous Greek dialects, including Pontic, Cretan, SMG and GCD (Horrocks 1997). Among all these linguistic varieties, one has been selected to operate as the standard norm. The selection or the imposition of a particular variety as a country's standard language is not based on aesthetic or other subjective criteria but rather reflects economic, social, geographic, political and historical circumstances. As for Modern Greek, the variety chosen to become the standard (official) language was predominantly based on the Peloponnesian vernacular, which was spoken in the largest geographical area of the first Greek independent state.

**Standard language and education**

The issue of which linguistic code to use as a medium of instruction in the educational system of multilingual or multidialectal societies has created numerous and acrimonious debates. While some researchers believe that only one language should be used, others extol the virtues of bidialectal education. The majority of those who favour the one-language policy support the adoption of the standard language as a medium of instruction (Custred 1990), which seems to be the most common solution to the problem. Some, however, prefer the use of the dialect (Stinjen and Vallen 1989), while other researchers support the teaching of both the standard language and the local dialect simultaneously (Papapavlou 2001b; Pavlou 1999; Lind and Johnston 1990; Gfeller and Robinson 1998).

With respect to the latter position, Hamers and Blanc (1989) proposed three types of solutions that can be applied in bidialectal situations. The first model is based on the creation of compensatory programmes. Such programmes operate on the perception that non-standard speakers need to learn the ‘proper’ form of the language in order to integrate into mainstream education. The second model focuses on the creation of bidialectal programmes where children are taught the standard variety at school but at the same time are encouraged by the school to continue using the local dialect outside school (Fasold and Shuy 1970; Di Pietro 1973). The third model focuses on the eradication of prejudices. It is often the case that speakers of standard varieties look down on speakers of non-standard varieties and, as a result, dialectal speakers often feel embarrassed about their mother tongue. These programmes attempt to eradicate or at least diminish such negative attitudes and prejudices held by both standard and non-standard dialect speakers (Wolfram and Schilling-Estes 1995).

In many cases, the needs of non-standard speakers are not taken into account, since many governments decide to use only the standard language in education. What are the reasons for this practice? First of all, according to Gupta (1997), in contexts where the mother tongue is not the official
language of the state, some problems are likely to be created if the language of instruction in schools is the mother tongue. Such a situation would create difficulties for individuals who, after receiving their education through their mother tongue, are expected to function communicatively in a language that they have not completely mastered (i.e. where children may have only receptive skills in the standard language). These individuals are discriminated against since very few professional, socio-political and economical opportunities are open to them in many societies. At best, this situation may be considered an unfortunate consequence of the system, but it could easily be a deliberate action by the government (Gupta 1994). Of course, another way of dealing with such situations would be to aim at promoting receptive multilingualism/multidialectism whereby individuals speak their own language or dialect and understand and respect the language of others. Finally, the need to function in the standard language may often be perceived as a threat to non-standard speakers’ cultural identity.

Gupta (1994) reports that often governments choose to privilege one or more languages within a country. According to her, a privileged language has special social or official prominence, and knowledge of it is an important gateway to power. This language is usually chosen on the basis of the number or status of its speakers. In other words, it could be the language of the majority group in a multilingual society or the language of the elite minority. In this way, Gupta argues, the government excludes certain groups from acquiring power.

Additionally, if the variety spoken by a certain group is not the official one, it is difficult to use it as the language of instruction because not only would new materials for all the subjects in the curriculum have to be developed, but the teachers would have to be trained in using them. Such an endeavour usually requires substantial investment in terms of both time and money. This practical aspect is probably the main pretext put forward by education authorities who recognise the need for instruction in the mother tongue but are unwilling to undertake such a major task.

One could argue that the ideal situation would be one where students are taught in their native dialect, as is the case in Norway (Jahr 1984; Trudgill 1995) and to a certain extent in German-speaking Switzerland (Siebenhaar and Wyler 1997). Of course, one has to be realistic and take into consideration the numerous practical problems that such a choice entails (e.g. those already mentioned). However, major innovations in education always start with the implementation of smaller parts of the project. In any case, no matter which educational model is adopted, students should by no means be made to feel that their mother tongue is inferior and inadequate. Since language is closely related to cultural identity, feelings of inferiority and lack of confidence may trigger a general inferiority complex on a personal and societal level, something which is undesirable and can be the cause of many problems, including lack of achievement at school.
The role of the mother tongue in education

While there are strong arguments in support of using the standard language or dialect for instruction, even if this is not the mother tongue or home dialect of the learner, there are equally strong arguments for the promotion of mother-tongue education even where this is not the official language of the state. James (1996) reviews a number of studies which have provided evidence that the use of the mother tongue can play a significant and positive role in the development of a child’s literacy and cognitive skills. The studies referred to by James are those conducted by Garrett et al. (1994), Swain (1996), Ramirez and Yuen (1991), and Kharma and Hajaj (1989). Based on the results of these studies and on relevant theoretical findings, the arguments in favour of the use of the mother tongue in school, according to James (1996: 249) are:

a) To assist academic progress in the content areas (such as maths, science etc.) of the curriculum. Acquiring literacy through a medium which is not the learner’s mother tongue is more difficult than acquiring literacy in one’s mother tongue. In other words, it is believed that the mother tongue is the best way to introduce literacy skills to a learner.

b) To aid continued cognitive development.

c) To facilitate the classroom learning of the L2, since the mother tongue is the medium through which the L2 is taught.

d) To promote a positive self-image. The use of the mother tongue signals to the children that their language and culture have value, and this exerts a positive effect on their motivation, attitudes and ultimately also on their achievement in school.

e) To minimise culture shock, especially where there is a significant difference between the native and the L2 cultures. From the cultural point of view, it is better to use the mother tongue for instruction since there is an intimate relationship between the native variety and an individual’s life. Therefore, instruction in the native variety is more effective.

James’ (1996) compilation of the arguments in favour of mother-tongue education is extremely useful because it helps the reader understand how these arguments are related. The first three arguments focus on cognitive development and learning, which are important factors for academic success. Such success promotes a better self-image, the focal point of the fourth argument. Of course, one should keep in mind that enhanced self-esteem not only or primarily results from improved academic success but, more crucially, results from the acceptance of dialect use in itself. Finally, the last argument focuses on the cultural distance that may exist between the two linguistic codes and on the detrimental effect this may have on academic performance. It is likely that culture shock may prevent students from achieving all their
potential. In light of these major arguments for and against the use of mother-tongue education, we now turn to the context of Cyprus.

Greek Cypriot Dialect and Standard Modern Greek

A familiarization with the dynamics of the two linguistic codes (GCD and SMG) that are used by the members of the Cypriot speech community will help the reader to better understand the role of the GCD in education. With the exception of Pontic Greek, the relationship between GCD and SMG is far more complicated than that between SMG and most other Greek dialects (Papapavlou and Pavlou 1998). The distance from mainland Greece, the existence of a separate Cypriot state, the relatively large number of speakers of GCD (approximately 700,000), and other political and ideological factors constitute the basis of this distinctive relationship which has had a bearing on language attitudes among Cypriots (Papapavlou 1998, 2001a; Pavlou 1999). Finally, the role of English in Cyprus is another factor that adds to the complexity of the situation (Papapavlou 1997, 2001b; Davy and Pavlou 2001). Language attitudes shape patterns of language use among the members of a speech community which eventually lead to the creation of domains of language use. It has been amply demonstrated in the literature that when more than one linguistic code is used in a given speech community, there is a distribution of these codes over distinct domains (Holmes 1992; Fasold 1984). As previously stated, SMG is mainly used in education, the media and administration. As is common with non-standard varieties, GCD is used for daily informal interactions and everyday communication with family members and friends. It is also sometimes used in mass media advertising, plays, live broadcasts and TV comedies, with the aim of establishing a stronger link between the speakers and their audience (Pavlou 2002).

In terms of mutual intelligibility, it is generally accepted that dialect speakers do not have difficulties comprehending SMG speakers, but SMG speakers appear to have difficulties understanding dialect speakers (Papapavlou and Pavlou 1998). This, of course, is related to stereotypical (negative) attitudes and a general lack of exposure to dialects within the Greek-speaking world.

The main differences between the two codes are:

a) phonology: a set of consonants and geminates are found only in GCD, and certain phonemes (i.e. /k/ and /x/) undergo some typical phonological alterations that do not occur in SMG

b) morphology: GCD has an epenthetic e- prefix in the past tense, a different 3rd person plural ending (/usin/ vs. SMG /un/), and uses final -n in the accusative

c) syntax: mainly the position of clitics

© Blackwell Publishing Ltd. 2004
d) semantics/lexicon: a great number of words in GCD are of Turkish, Arabic, French, Italian or English origin.

(For more details on all of these aspects, see Newton 1972; Papapavlou 1994; Pavlou and Christodoulou 2001.) In terms of verbal fluency, one often reads impressionistic and unscholarly newspaper articles in the local press claiming that Greek Cypriots do not have an adequate mastery of SMG. Such claims completely ignore the fact that SMG is not the speakers’ native language and that these speakers are very fluent and expressive in GCD (this issue is reviewed in Papapavlou 2002).

The Greek Cypriot Dialect in education

National, cultural and religious affiliations with the Greek world and ideals have led Greek Cypriots to place Greek culture and the Christian Orthodox faith at the center of education. This principle has been followed in a structured way by the Cypriot independent state as well as by some groups and institutions (such as the Church) which were in charge of providing education to Greek Cypriots during the times when the island was ruled by numerous foreign powers. As a consequence of this ideology, the education system has closely followed the educational model that exists in Greece. This has meant that the language of instruction is SMG, and the majority of the textbooks are produced in Greece and are provided free of charge by the Greek state. Often these textbooks contain language and notions which are unfamiliar to Cypriots and which sometimes do not relate to Greek Cypriot culture. This policy totally overlooks the fact that the students’ mother tongue is GCD and not SMG, and as such is in opposition to the declared policy of UNESCO (1951) which stipulates that the most appropriate language for the educational development of a person is his/her mother tongue:

... it is important that every effort should be made to provide education in the mother tongue. On educational grounds we recommend that the use of the mother tongue be extended to as late stage in education as possible. In particular, pupils should begin their schooling through the medium of the mother tongue, because they understand it best and because to begin their school life in the mother tongue will make the break between home and school as small as possible. (UNESCO 1951: 691, in Fishman 1969)

With regard to the above quote, a clarification is necessary. When referring to the mother tongue, the UNESCO declaration does not explicitly or necessarily refer to non-standard varieties, but it certainly implies that the more “foreign” a linguistic variety is to the children the less suitable it is to serve as their educational language. Indeed, we would like to emphasize that the
mother tongue of the Greek Cypriots is GCD and also argue that, although SMG cannot be considered a foreign language for them in the strict sense of the word, SMG is a code which (a) is not known or used actively by Cypriot children before entering the educational system, (b) is not felt to be their own natural way of communicating, and (c) is recognised by Cypriot children as the language that “other” Greeks use. As stated earlier, linguistically speaking SMG deviates substantially from GCD, and for these reasons one could argue that SMG cannot be seen as the native code for the overwhelming majority of Greek Cypriot children.

As it is now, the policy in Cyprus indirectly forces teachers to adopt as part of their teaching methodology the following principles: SMG should be the exclusive code of instruction and of general use in class; and students should be “corrected” when using dialect words, when pronouncing words with a Cypriot accent, and when using phonological rules that are part of the phonological system of GCD.

We now turn to an examination of language practices in the Greek Cypriot classroom and to the identification of areas where GCD is used and the circumstances under which its use is considered to be appropriate and acceptable.

The study

Questionnaire

The data were collected through a three-part questionnaire which was prepared specifically for this study (see Appendix). Participants were asked to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed with a series of 38 statements using a five-point Likert scale. Statements in the first part focused on teachers’ attitudes towards the use of GCD by students in the classroom and the teachers’ own linguistic behaviour inside and outside the classroom. The second part was concerned with the teachers’ views on the effects of students using GCD. The third part dealt with the teachers’ views on the current language policy of the state. The questionnaires were completed by 133 Greek Cypriot teachers in 14 schools in the major urban centre of the island, Nicosia.

Data analysis

The responses to Part A of the questionnaires were tabulated, and the findings (reported in percentages) are divided into (a) teachers’ reactions to the use of GCD in the classroom, and (b) teachers’ own linguistic behaviour inside and outside the classroom. (The findings of the second and third part of the questionnaire will be treated in another paper). For statistical purposes the
responses for “strongly agree” and “agree” are presented as a combined value labelled “agree”, and “strongly disagree” and “disagree” are combined under “disagree”.

Teachers’ reactions to the use of GCD in the classroom

The issue of encouraging or discouraging the use of GCD in class was the first to be examined. Almost one-third of the teachers stated that they discourage students who express themselves in GCD (30.1%), and twice as many (60.2%) stated that they “correct” (i.e. give the SMG form to) students who express themselves orally in GCD. Of course, repeated correction may be perceived by the students as a form of discouragement from using the dialect.

The great majority of the teachers (77.4%) declared that they correct students more frequently when they use GCD in writing rather than in speaking. The teachers also appear to be more tolerant when GCD is used in speaking (85.7%). These findings are as expected, since the written form of GCD is not standardized, and there is more tolerance towards oral language in general.

The next issue was whether teachers pay more attention to the code used (SMG or GCD) or to the content of students’ responses. Here, teachers’ opinions diverged; 36.8% declared that they do not pay attention to the code, 36.9% do, while the remaining 26.3% were uncertain. Furthermore, the results show that teachers’ strictness about the use of the GCD in class subsides when the dialect is used for purposes such as joking, being witty, complaining, and chatting about everyday issues.

Very few teachers (5.3%) stated that they evaluate negatively the overall classroom performance of students who often use GCD expressions during lessons. This finding is very encouraging: The small group of teachers who do evaluate those students negatively reflect the view that speakers of non-standard dialects have less chance of succeeding than speakers of standard dialects.

Teachers’ own linguistic behaviour inside and outside the classroom

Two-thirds of the teachers declared that they consciously avoid the use of GCD in class, and a similar number of teachers stated that they correct themselves when they realize that they have lapsed into using the dialect. This shows a certain degree of consistency on the teachers’ part. The use of GCD by the teacher seems to be accepted more when this choice serves such purposes as joking, counselling a student, or providing explanations of concepts that the students have difficulty comprehending. A total of 71.3% of the teachers stated that they use GCD expressions when they want to be
humorous or when they want to create a relaxed atmosphere, while only 13.6% stated that they do not follow this practice. The use of GCD for these specific functions indirectly shows that teachers recognize that GCD is the code most familiar to the students and that students might find the continuous effort to comprehend SMG mentally tiring.

When approaching students who are facing personal problems, 60% of the participants stated that they use GCD. Feelings and intentions are normally perceived as being more sincere and honest when expressed in GCD and not in a code which immediately signifies distance between the speakers (Papavolou 1998; Sciriha 1996). While 70% of the teachers stated that they use GCD to explain concepts that students have difficulty understanding, only 18.8% stated that they do not follow this practice. This again illustrates that teachers indirectly recognize that GCD is the code that students best understand and feel comfortable with in moments of intimacy.

Around 60% of the teachers do not use GCD when reprimanding students. A possible explanation for this phenomenon is the perception that serious messages that are expressed through a code which represents officialdom and authority are taken more seriously than those expressed through a code which represents familiarity and intimacy.

Finally, while the use of SMG predominates in class, 70% of the teachers admitted that they often use the GCD with colleagues outside the classroom.

In conclusion, we can state that GCD is not absent from the classroom, but it is confined to very specific functions and domains which do not relate to either the subject taught or to the teaching procedure. In the classroom, GCD mainly serves the formation and maintenance of personal relationships and the creation of an intimate and comfortable learning environment. These findings, coupled with sound educational principles pertaining to multicultural education (Baker 2001; Cummins 1993), may encourage teachers to capitalise on the beneficial effects of using GCD in the classroom and further prompt those in charge of language policy to consider its introduction, along with SMG, into the Cypriot educational system. Studies reporting on actual beneficial educational effects of the use of GCD in the classroom (e.g. Yiakoumetti 2003) offer stronger support for the implementation of such a policy.

Suggestions for the introduction of GCD in the education system

Given the situation described above, the introduction of GCD as a medium of instruction along with SMG could be of great benefit to Cypriot pupils. However, this would be difficult, primarily for ideological reasons related to the ethnic identity of Cypriots and the lack of a solution to the Cyprus problem. In addition, the implementation of such a change in language policy might fail unless certain practical steps, such as the codification and elevation
of the status of GCD, are already in place or concurrent. GCD grammars, dictionaries and other reference material need to be written and disseminated. There are some linguistic descriptions of GCD (Newton 1972; Hadjioannou 1999), but the full codification of the dialect will be a long, laborious process involving linguists, educators and lexicographers. This would help to elevate the prestige of the dialect and foster the creation of positive feelings towards it among the population, many of whom erroneously believe that GCD has no grammar. Policymakers and linguists could also present examples of other dialect-using nations (e.g. Norway, Luxembourg and Switzerland), as well as point to the demonstrated potential and richness of the dialect as seen in the literary works of such Cypriot writers as Vassilis Michaelides, Demetres Lipertis and others. However, some might argue that the codification of a dialect may not be a necessary step in enhancing its status but might in fact complicate the situation unnecessarily, and that a more effective way to elevate the status of the dialect would be to promote positive attitudes to the dialect and the local culture.

The initial stages of implementing GCD in the education system should begin with dialect grammar lessons, linguistically sound and detailed comparisons of the two codes (GCD and SMG) on all levels (phonology, morphology and syntax), and an extended familiarization with dialect literature (beyond the current rudimentary exposure). These measures can greatly help Cypriot students appreciate the differences between the two codes and come to recognize the potential that both codes have in adequately fulfilling all language functions. It must be noted here that in other bidialectal settings, different approaches have been adopted in education. For example, in Norway, a country with an enormous societal tolerance for linguistic diversity, lessons at school are conducted in the local dialect, and there is a law preventing teachers from attempting to change the way children speak in the classroom (Trudgill 1995). Along the same lines, lessons in German-speaking Switzerland are conducted in the local dialect, at least in the first years of schooling (Siebenharr and Wyler 1997).

Another important step is the “enlightenment” of teachers about current universally accepted sociolinguistic principles. Teachers, especially those who received their training some time ago, should be encouraged to attend seminars on sociolinguistics where they would be informed about issues such as (a) the equal potential of languages in meeting communicative needs, (b) findings on language attitudes, and (c) the benefits of bidialectal and multicultural education. Furthermore, teachers should attend pedagogical workshops where they can learn more about the psychological burdens that dialect speakers face (such as being called ‘peasants’ and other derogatory remarks based on the language they use). It is hoped that such seminars can enhance teachers’ awareness of language matters, eliminate possible negative feelings toward their own dialect, and increase their understanding of the sensitivities and needs of dialect speakers. Positive attitudes toward the dialect can foster the gradual elimination of inferiority feelings and will.
in turn, encourage speakers to express themselves more freely regardless of the code they use. This line of argumentation receives further support from two recently completed doctoral theses (Ioannidou 2002; Yiakoumetti 2003), which provide ample evidence for the beneficial effects of the use of the dialect in the classroom. For example, Yiakoumetti's study revealed that the explicit and conscious comparison of GCD and SMG led to a marked improvement in pupils' linguistic performance in SMG.

Conclusion

As previously stated, most speech communities in the world are multilingual or multidialectal, and in such societies there is often a question about which code should be used in education. According to UNESCO, the acquisition of initial literacy should be carried out in the mother tongue (i.e. the code children are most familiar with) for various psychological, educational and cultural reasons. However, in most cases dialect-speaking children are forced to be educated in a standard variety that is to varying degrees foreign to them, and therefore their performance may be considered inadequate because they are invariably judged against the performance of standard language speakers. Many states nowadays do recognise this form of injustice and are trying to find solutions to it. Various models of bidialectal education have been proposed, each of which has advantages and disadvantages. Finding the best solution for any bidialectal situation is very difficult because each setting is unique. Moreover, factors such as financial constraints, national sensitivities, ideological stances and unwillingness to face the political costs that such a choice may bring about play a far more important role in selecting the most appropriate kind of bidialectal education for the specific setting. In Cyprus, where the language of instruction is SMG, GCD is not totally banned from the school environment but is tolerated in certain circumstances. The teachers themselves use the dialect occasionally in class in order to explain difficult concepts and to enhance interpersonal relationships with their students.

The situation in Cyprus, however, is more complicated than in other similar situations because of the "national problem" (the division of the island), which consumes most of the politicians' efforts and siphons off substantial amounts of money that could be used for educational purposes. It is also regrettable that not much research has been carried out yet in the area of bidialectal education in Cyprus which could have encouraged its introduction, as happened in the late 1970s and '80s in many European nations, leading to educational reforms (see Cheshire et al. 1989). As a consequence of the lack of relevant research and the unwillingness of the authorities to take action, children in Cyprus may still be deprived of the opportunity to develop to their full potential, which might be more easily achieved if their mother tongue were creatively used in the educational setting.
References


© Blackwell Publishing Ltd. 2004


© Blackwell Publishing Ltd. 2004
Greek Cypriot dialect use in education • 257


[Received 11/1/03; revised 10/5/03]

Andreas Papapavlou / Pavlos Pavlou
Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures
University of Cyprus
P.O.Box 20537
CY 1678 Nicosia
Cyprus
e-mails: andreasp@ucy.ac.cy / ppavlou@ucy.ac.cy

Appendix

Questionnaire for language classroom use and teachers’ attitudes

(Note: The original questionnaire distributed to primary school teachers was in Greek. This is a translation of the original.)

Dear Teachers,

This study is in the area of language policy and planning and aims at ascertaining your views and opinions on the role and level of dialect use (Greek Cypriot Dialect – GCD) and official language use (Standard Modern Greek – SMG) in the classroom during primary education. Your participation in this study is of paramount importance and, therefore, we urge you to complete the enclosed questionnaire as soon as possible and return it to the Principal of your school.

The information provided is anonymous, will remain confidential and will be used only for the purposes of this study. It is hoped that the results obtained will be of value to educators like yourselves and to researchers engaged in this area of research. We thank you in advance for your participation.

A. Papapavlou and P. Pavlou, University of Cyprus

Instructions

The questionnaire consists of three parts. First, please provide the personal information requested, and then indicate your agreement or disagreement with certain
statements by using the Likert scale from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree). Simply circle the number of your choice at the end of each statement.

Personal Information

Sex: __ Male __ Female
Nationality: __ Cypriot __ Non-Cypriot
Total teaching experience: ___ years; ___ in rural areas ___ in urban areas
Grade level you are teaching now: ___
Do you hold an administrative position now: Yes ___ No ___

PART A

Please use the following scale:
5 Strongly agree; 4 Agree; 3 Uncertain; 2 Disagree; 1 Strongly disagree

As a teacher:

1. I discourage students from expressing themselves in GCD during lessons.
2. I correct students when they express themselves in GCD during lessons.
3. I correct the use of GCD more often in written assignments than in speaking.
4. I do not pay particular attention to the code used (GCD or SMG) when the student provides correct answers.
5. I am more tolerant when a student uses GCD in speaking rather than in his/her written assignments.
6. I evaluate more negatively a student who often uses GCD during the lesson.
7. I am more lenient when students use GCD for such purposes as joking, complaining and for topics related to everyday matters.
8. I consciously avoid the use of GCD during lessons.
9. I correct myself when I realize that I am using GCD in class.
10. I use GCD expressions when reprimanding a student.
11. I use GCD humorous expressions when I want to ‘entertain’ my students.
12. I use GCD expressions when I want to get ‘close’ to a student facing a problem.
13. I use GCD when I try to explain concepts that students find difficult to comprehend.
14. I often use GCD when conversing with colleagues outside the classroom.