

An ethnographic case study of the linguistic practices of children with migrant background in a Cypriot primary school

1. Cypriot educational context

- Primary school classrooms: increasing number of foreign pupils' enrolling in the Cypriot education system due to migration and the refugee crisis in the the Middle East → children in Cypriot classroom speak: Greek, Arabic, Farsi and many more.
- Multilingual policies:
 - Schools become part of a Zone of Educational Priority (ZEP) now replaced by the name of ACTION-*Actions for Schools and Social Inclusion*
 - Pedagogical Institution (P.I): organises elective seminars on multicultural education introducing to teachers issues on how to teach Greek as Additional language
 - allocation of extra hours for teaching Greek to Children with Migrant Background (CMB)
- However: in Cyprus, teachers, parents and local communities are largely left without clear guidance regarding the integration of migrant children (European Commission, 2013).

3. Research Questions and Methodology

1. What are the linguistic repertoires of Children with Migrant Background (CMB) in Cyprus ?
 2. What are the linguistic/communicative practices of CMB as language learners in the school/classroom domain?
 3. How are these communicative resources used by children and their teachers to facilitate CMB's learning of Greek?
 4. What are the implications of these practices for enabling CMB to become participants in the school community?
- Qualitative approach on research: ethnographic approach applied in educational settings with a concern on language learning in the classroom (Hammersley, 1990)
 - Research Tools:
 - Classroom observations + recordings
 - Interviews: students and teachers
 - Collection of artefacts: samples of students' work, school records



Children assisting each other



Children playing '**Rock - Paper – Scissors**': a game that is similar to both cultures (Greek-Cypriot and Arabic)

2. Theoretical framework: Sociocultural theory and second language learning

- Sociocultural Theory of Learning (SCT): learning occurs through social interaction and specifically when assistance is given
- Mediation: the relationship that people have with themselves and with each other so as to regulate, construct and affect their learning.
→ mediational tools: language, books, applications, computers, games
- Zone of Proximal Development: the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86)
- Communities of Practice: 'a group of people who share a common concern, set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis' (Wenger, McDermott and Snyder (2002, p.4). → similarly a classroom could be seen as a community where children co-construct their learning.

4. Preliminary Results

Good practices

1. Translanguaging: all languages are used in a dynamic and functional manner to organise and mediate mental processes in understanding, (Lewis, Jones, and Baker, 2012)
2. Children assisting each other by showing expertise in their own language (scaffolding)
3. Use of multimodal resources (combining different modes for the representation of meaning: image, moving images, colour)
4. Mediational tools for learning: schools' translators, children (help on the creation of meaning or new meaning), google translate

References

- European Commission (2013). *Study on educational support for newly arrived migrant children final report*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.
- Hammersley, M. (1990). *Classroom Ethnography*. Milton Keynes, Open University Press.
- Lewis, G., Jones, B. and Baker, C. (2012). Translanguaging: origins and development from school to street and beyond. *Educational Research and Evaluation*, 18 (7), pp.641-654
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Wenger, E., McDermott, R.A. and Snyder, W. (2002). *Cultivating communities of practice: A guide to managing knowledge*. Harvard Business Press.