

**LEARNING THROUGH TRANSLANGUAGING IN AN  
EDUCATIONAL SETTING IN CYPRUS**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study is a classroom linguistic ethnography with a Year 4 class of 18 students, aged 9 years, in a village primary school in bidialectal South Eastern Cyprus. The research methods include a year of participant observation, in-depth interviews and fieldnotes. The study applies Hornberger's (1989) theoretical framework of the biliteracy continuum for a critical perspective on the way this Greek Cypriot community reflects hierarchical views of Cypriot Dialect, (CD) and Standard Modern Greek, (SMG) in academic contexts which involve both linguistic varieties.

The study analyses translanguaging and literacy practices in classroom talk to focus on students' collective efforts when negotiating meanings of texts, helping them to jointly construct knowledge (García, 2009; Creese & Blackledge, 2010). The analysis shows that, regardless of negative views of CD, children and teacher use CD as a learning resource. The students draw on all their available linguistic resources to understand and construct knowledge through types of talk, such as exploratory talk (Mercer, 2000; 2004) enacted through translanguaging practices. Evidence showed that learning through translanguaging can be both cognitive, such as understanding the pedagogic task, as well as social and cultural, based on and embedded in, the way students shared their ideas and reasoned together.

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this thesis to my beloved husband Ilias and my cherished son, Ioannis.

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It is with immense gratitude that I acknowledge the support and invaluable help of my supervisor, Professor Deirdre Martin. She has been a tremendous mentor for me and without her guidance and persistent help this thesis would not have been possible.

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

SMG: Standard Modern Greek

CD: Cyprus Dialect

MOEC: Ministry of Education and Culture

SAE: Standard Australian English

SESD: Standard English as a Second Dialect

AAVE: African-American Vernacular English

## LIST OF TRANSCRIPTIONS CONVENTIONS

<b>Bold</b>	Words in Cyprus dialect
Non- Bold	Standard Modern Greek
T	Teacher
S	Student
M	Mother
F	Father
Two dots ..	Pauses of less than .5second
NR	No Response
(0)	No pause and continuative responses between the speakers(Edwards, 1993/ 2004)
(*)	Inaudible word (Edwards and Westgate, 1987)
<u>Underline:</u>	Emphatic stress (Bucholtz, 2007)
( )	Commenting paralinguistic phenomena (for example (LAUGH)) (Gumperz and Benenz, 1993/2014)
< >	Transcriber comments (Ioannidou, 2009)

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# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Origins of the study

This study began because of my professional and personal interest in literacy and learning development. My original concern was to focus on particular learners because of their literacy skills difficulties. However, this orientation changed in the course of my research and I focused on the way students with and without learning difficulties managed the use of their two linguistic varieties that exist in the Greek- Cypriot social and educational context, that is Standard Modern Greek (hereafter SMG) and Cypriot Dialect (hereafter CD). Further, I was able to explore the co-existence of SMG and CD in primary education in Cyprus and to examine how the whole classroom was managing the two linguistic varieties and how they were responding in classroom interactions in order to understand the pedagogic task. As I observed the way they were acquiring knowledge I was able to gather more data regarding the way children were supporting and developing their ideas across two different linguistic varieties as well as the way they used language collectively as a tool for thinking and achieving joint reasoning.

Before this research began, I was listening to children talking using CD in and out of the classroom. Teachers seemed worried about students' performance in Standard Modern Greek and adopted a negative attitude towards the dialect and its appearance in the context of the classrooms. My classroom consisted of 18 students, aged 9 years, among whom two received special education support, and two more presented with

specific learning difficulties in reading and writing but who had never been assessed by an educational psychologist. My interest in doing this study was motivated by the fact that CD was questioned by teachers and labelled as an inappropriate and less powerful tool for learning than SMG. It was generally believed that students could not express themselves properly in conversations due to their “poor Greek”. The linguistic ideologies that existed within the educational and community context encouraged me to undertake this study and challenge their perspectives.

The study was also motivated by my interest in investigating learning development from a sociocultural perspective to show that language can be a powerful cognitive, social and cultural tool for learning. According to my professional experience, a number of students present difficulties in expressing their ideas and their opinions in SMG. Some students do not participate and remain silent during the lesson. However, when CD is introduced students become more active and thrive on participation. One day, one of my students who attended special education, wrote me a poem in CD. This made me wonder about the benefits for learning if and when a pedagogy was introduced that focused on bidialectal practices.

Therefore, I chose to focus on students’ translanguaging practices and to investigate the collaborative construction of learning by students when drawing on all their available linguistic resources. I wanted to study the creation of a positive ecological framework that would position CD and SMG in an equal continuum of relations and present the benefits of translanguaging for learning and the co-construction of meaning-making.

The position and role of CD in primary education in Cyprus recently started receiving great interest from researchers. Studies in Cyprus focused on teachers' attitudes when students' used CD in the classroom, as well as their own linguistic preferences (Pavlou & Papapavlou, 2002; 2004). Papapavlou & Yiakoumetti's study (2000) focused on the dialectal occurrences in students' writing and concluded that CD is the first language of students even if they had completed six years in primary school. In addition, Yiakoumetti (2003) and Yiakoumetti et al. (2007) studied the degree of dialectal transference by Cypriots in a strict Standard Modern Greek context. These studies showed that students use CD when talking and the higher degree of transfer in speech appeared in morphology, then in phonology, lexicon and finally in syntax. The data also showed that in writing transfer between lexical and morphological levels was most common. Yiakoumetti (2003) and Yiakoumetti et al. (2007) defined the exact nature of the linguistic problem which was supported by teachers in Cyprus. The study presented how the language used by students (CD) differs from the language that is expected from students (SMG) and proved that CD speakers should not be characterised as "poor SMG language speakers" nor that they lack ease in oral expression. Pavlou & Fousias (2005) used 40 recorded classroom lessons from 10 different teachers in 4 different subjects: Greek Language, History, Science and Maths to investigate whether the frequency of using CD is influenced by the subject matter that is being taught. The data surprisingly showed that CD was used mostly in Greek language lessons because students felt free to express their ideas and produce more speech. Constantinou (2012) studied the use of CD in the context of SMG lesson and its effects on students in secondary schools in Cyprus. This study investigated whether the use of CD enhanced or impeded teaching and learning in SMG and whether the non-use of CD had an

impact on students' expression of critical thought. Further, Constantinou (2012) also focused on attitudes towards CD and its possible influence on students' identity construction. The findings of Constantinou's (2012) research revealed that CD was used frequently in secondary classrooms enabling access to the meanings of the subject matter and serving as a tool for facilitating expression; however it did not seem to foster the mastery of SMG. An additional finding was that the imposition of SMG in classroom conversations seemed to stifle the process of expressing and developing critical thinking while CD use improved it (Constantinou, 2012).

I choose to do this research to explore students' language practices since no research to date in Cyprus had studied translanguaging across CD and SMG. Studies in Cyprus have used terms such as bidialectism, code-switching and diglossia. By presenting a bidialectal context such as my classroom where both CD and SMG co-existed I could offer a different perspective on the way students acquire knowledge and meaning.

## **1.2 Aims and purpose of the study**

This study investigates the way students draw on all of their linguistic resources to construct knowledge and acquire meaning collaboratively within a learning context in the classroom setting. The study examines the translanguaging practices of children and offers a typical representation of the Greek-Cypriot classroom where children use both of their linguistic varieties to acquire knowledge and enhance their understanding. Most importantly, it includes the educational issues of children with learning difficulties,

such as the way they construct knowledge collectively or individually within the context of the classroom which is biliterate in nature.

This study provides an insight on bidialectal use of SMG and CD in Cyprus' educational system and educational environment. It shows the educational value of a particular linguistic variety even when it is positioned at the less powerful end of the biliteracy continuum (Hornberger 1989). It aims to show how this rich linguistic context can provide great insights and information regarding translanguaging and its interrelationship with literacy, culture, learning and learning difficulties. It aims to indicate how the different linguistic varieties of home and school are accommodated in pedagogy and schooling. In addition, it aims to influence the wider context of education in Cyprus by informing pedagogy with conceptualisations favouring the creation of L1 CD friendly environments for the beneficial development of L2 SMG, including children with difficulties in developing reading and writing skills. The purpose of this research determines and justifies the use of linguistic ethnography in the classroom as its methodology since it provides an interpretive account of students' language and learning behaviours through systematic descriptions and analyses, in a naturally occurring context of school and classroom.

### **1.3 Significance of this study**

This study offers an original contribution to research since no research to date within the Greek- Cypriot academic context has focused on the way students use both CD and SMG in a collaborative way for achieving joint reasoning, or examined the way

translanguaging and literacy practices facilitate learning development in the construction of sense making. My research shows the way students use all available linguistic resources in primary classroom, as a tool for mediating their learning, maximising their participation, and to contribute to the pedagogic task by co-constructing each other's views and opinions, and most importantly using CD along with SMG as tools for enhancing their thinking to achieve understanding.

This study makes an original contribution to knowledge, and to Cypriot education, by offering rich insights into the sociocultural context of class learning and the way students with and without specific learning difficulties with literacy skills construct knowledge in bidialectal settings. The findings of the current study may aid local researchers, practitioners and educational authorities. The study may draw the Ministry of Education's attention to the need for further research on Cyprus' complex linguistic educational context which hides rich resources related to literacy, language and pedagogic practices.

I have identified four main research questions and some of them are broken into subquestions that explore the content in more detail. The research questions of this study are:

1. How are CD and SMG considered in the Greek Cypriot social and academic context according to the biliteracy continuum relations?

- 1.1 Where are CD and SMG situated according to the biliteracy continuum relations?

- 1.2 What are the local perceptions of CD and SMG regarding their educational, social and historical value?

2. How do translanguaging and literacy practices enhance academic learning in the Greek- Cypriot classroom context?

2.1 To what extent does translanguaging enhance students' with learning difficulties academic learning?

2.2 How does the teacher incorporate translanguaging in the whole classroom?

3. To what extent do students with and without learning difficulties collaborate by drawing on all of their linguistic resources to understand, construct knowledge and achieve the pedagogic task?

3.1 Does translanguaging serve as a facilitator for communication as well as a mediator for acquiring or negotiating meaning and achieving deeper understandings for students with and without specific learning difficulties?

3.2 How does students' (with and without learning difficulties) engagement in translanguaging practices assist their learning?

4. Does translanguaging support communication particularly “exploratory talk”?

4.1 What types of talk were evidenced in the classroom during discussions?

## **1.4 Overview of the study**

Following a presentation of the linguistic landscape of Cyprus and the historical background of Cyprus' education, Chapter 2 reviews the literature related to Hornberger's theoretical framework of a biliteracy continuum. The chapter interprets and applies Hornberger's biliteracy continuum to the context of schools in Cyprus where children use both SMG and CD to acquire knowledge. SMG is considered to be the most powerful and prestigious language in the island while CD is situated at the less

powerful end of the continuum. The chapter offers a sociocultural perspective about the issue of learning in schools which promote monolingualism and do not consider the pedagogical potentials of student's bidialectism. Schools favour literate over oral uses of language, macro over micro literacy practices, while parents' attitudes are negative towards the appropriateness of CD in the classroom.

Chapter 3 is a review of the literature about translanguaging and discusses the theory around bidialectism in education focusing on the perspective of using all available linguistic resources during teaching and learning. The chapter offers a presentation of the theory around translanguaging in the classroom context, focusing on languaging between bidialectal students, literacy practices of students and the positive implications of translanguaging for learning.

Chapter 4 takes a Vygotskian sociocultural perspective to develop the main argument of the chapter, that language can be a powerful tool for thinking and thus for learning but also a social and a cultural tool for constructing knowledge and for contributing to the pedagogic task. Mercer's (2000) ideas are also presented in this chapter to discuss how language can be a tool for mediating learning as well as a tool for collective sense making. Three types of talk, as suggested by Mercer (2000; 2004), are presented – disputational, cumulative and exploratory- aiming to focus on the way translanguaging supports communication and generates understanding via collective contributions in the classroom.

Next, in chapters 5 and 6, I provide the methodological framework that supports my research. In chapter 5, I discuss the study's methodological approach, that is

ethnography, and particularly I explore the theory around classroom ethnography and linguistic ethnography and its application to this study. Chapter 6 presents the methods used for data collection such as participant observation, recordings, and in-depth interviews. Also, the chapter discusses the way data were transcribed and explains how translanguaging was demonstrated in transcription documents since classroom conversations and parents' interviews involved both CD and SMG.

Chapters 7, 8 and 9 deal with the analysis of the data I collected. Chapter 7 applies the theoretical perspective of the biliteracy continuum to offer a critical viewpoint on the way CD and SMG are considered within the educational and social context of Cyprus. The chapter provides an analysis of evidence from the local social context by the parents of students in the study and reveals the complex sociolinguistic context of Cyprus through parents' interviews, where their opinions show an unequal distribution of power across the two linguistic varieties that exist on the island.

Chapter 8 analyses students' translanguaging practices in the context of the classroom. This chapter focuses on the way students relate the curriculum content to their individual and collective experiences in order to analyse the subject of discussion and construct new meanings. The chapter examines the notion of literacy practices and provides evidence that supports that students' use of literacy practices are beneficial pedagogically and enable learning development through sense making.

Chapter 9 provides an analysis of the data drawing on Vygotsky's sociocultural theory of language and on Mercer's theoretical framework of collaborative uses of language which is considered as a tool for sharing knowledge. This chapter presents evidence indicating that the language used within the classroom serves as a communicative and

cultural tool and it is used not only for collective acquisition of knowledge but also as a psychological tool that enables students to develop their thoughts and actions. This chapter focuses on bidialectal talk of students with and without learning difficulties and its role in enhancing sense making through students' collective contributions to the pedagogic task. The three types of talk, disputational, cumulative and exploratory will be presented in combination with students' translanguaging practices.

Finally, chapter 10 summarises the findings of the study and discusses their importance. The limitations of the study and the challenges I faced during the study are also discussed.

## **CHAPTER 2: LANGUAGE IN EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT IN CYPRUS**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents Cyprus' linguistic landscape as well as the situation in Cyprus' educational setting where students attain literacy in Standard Modern Greek (SMG) while their mother tongue is Cyprus Dialect (CD). SMG and CD are described separately so that the specific information about the two varieties are obtained. A small part of this chapter examines the role of dialects in language practices in bidialectal education focusing on the Greek Cypriot bidialectal context. The theoretical framework of Hornberger's model of biliteracy continuum is examined in detail and in association with Cyprus' social context and literacy learning. Then, this chapter deals with literacy difficulties in biliterate academic environments and the accommodation of differences between children's home language and school's language. At the end of this chapter

literacy practices are discussed as a way of enhancing biliteracy development and thus the acquisition of knowledge through the use of all available linguistic resources.

## **2.2 Historical Background of Cyprus**

Cyprus is located in Southeast Europe and it is the third largest island of the Mediterranean sea (Varella, 2006). The island of Cyprus had been ruled by the Mycenaneans, Assyrians, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Byzantines, Franks (1192), Venetians (1489), Ottomans (1571) British (1878- 1960) and Turkish (Varella, 2006; Hadjioannou et al., 2011). Cyprus became independent in 1960, after years of anticolonial efforts, from England (Varella, 2006). After gaining independence from the British Empire, political unrest between the two major communities of the island –the Greek- Cypriots and the Turkish Cypriots- had begun (Hadjioannou et al., 2011). The conflicts between the two communities that lived on the island, the Greek and the Turkish communities, resulted in the military invasion of the island by Turkey in 1974 (Arvaniti, 2006a). The northern part of the island has been under the Turkish military control since 1974 and has led to the division of the island. Turkish Cypriots live in the occupied part of Cyprus and in the free, while the majority of the population, which consists of native speakers of Greek Cypriot, lives in the southern part (Arvaniti, 2006a). The population of Cyprus in the part controlled by the government of the Republic of Cyprus is estimated at 876.600 with 88.900 Turkish Cypriots residing in Northern Cyprus. It is accepted that Greek Cypriots form 80%, Turkish Cypriots 18% and other minority groups like Maronites, Armenian and Roman Catholics form 2% of the Cypriot population. This research study will provide information about the

linguistic situation in the non-occupied areas of the Republic of Cyprus where Greek Cypriot dialect is spoken.

### **2.3 Cyprus' Linguistic Landscape**

Gorter (2006) argued that the concept of linguistic landscape has been used in several ways such as to describe the linguistic situation of a country and thus to provide an overview of the languages that are used in a specific geographical area. The linguistic landscape is defined as “the social context in which more than one language is present. It implies the use in speech or writing of more than one language and thus of multilingualism” (Gorter, 2006, p.1). In this study the concept of linguistic landscape will be used to examine the presence of SMG and CD in the sociocultural and bidialectal context of Southern Cyprus.

The official languages of the Republic of Cyprus are Greek and Turkish which are also the official languages in education in Cyprus (Hadjioannou, et al 2011). The two official languages represent the two major communities of the island which are Greek and Turkish Cypriots. However, it must be noted that Turkish is used only in areas occupied by Turkey. Furthermore, due to the fact that Cyprus has been an English colony in the past (1878-1960), English has also been used for different purposes in the public life of Cyprus as well as a growing number of immigrant languages (Ioannidou, 2009; Hadjioannou, et al 2011). Newton (1972b) argued that Cypriot is divided in two linguistic types; town speech (or urban Cypriot and local Cypriot Koine) and village speech or village Cypriot. Town speech is a linguistic variety talked by educated

Cypriots who live in the capital of the island –Nicosia- and it is considered as the standard of vernacular while speaker believe to be “the Cypriot dialect par excellence” (Karyolemou and Pavlou, 2001, p.119).

This study examines the use of language practices of SMG and CD in the south rural part of Cyprus where the majority of the population is Greek Cypriot citizens who are native speakers of Cypriot (Newton,1972).

## **2.4 The education curriculum in Cyprus: a historical perspective**

Papapavlou (2004) argued that issues related to language policy are complex since various factors (social, political, national) are associated when choosing the formal educational language. In the case of Cyprus, SMG is used as the official language of the island to maintain a national identity not much different from the one in mainland Greece and secondly for not being cut-off from the “motherland” Greece (Papapavlou, 2004). Ioannidou (2012) noted that from a historical perspective language planning and policy in Cyprus has always been shaped according to national and ethnic objectives. Since 1960 when the Republic of Cyprus was created, language education policy has been rigid, static and unchanging promoting SMG, aiming to maintain Greek identity as previously mentioned and national unity (Ioannidou & Sophocleous, 2010). The Greek Cypriot education system followed language policies that have been adopted from Greece over the years. For example, in 1976, *demotic* Greek (known at present as SMG) was formally considered as the official language of education as in mainland Greece (Hadjioannou et al., 2011). In 1982, the Greek Parliament decided to simplify

the written language and adopted the single-language accent system (Hadjioannou et al., 2011). The decision to replace the archaic form of Greek with a standard spoken variety that was only used in mainland Greece was a challenge for Cyprus' education. However this enabled some legitimacy for using Cypriot Greek Dialect (CD) in the Cypriot curriculum (Hadjioannou et al. 2011). Literary texts in CD were studied for the first time but they were considered as texts of historical value and of national heritage rather than a tool for learning. The Ministry of Education moved from accepting the use of CD to sporadic use of CD orally in the classroom (Hadjioannou et al. 2011).

Philippou (2007) argued that for practical and political reasons, Greek Cypriot education has always followed the language modifications, textbooks and curricula of Greece and so it was characterised as "hellenocentric". The issue of the dialect has been ignored and was rarely evidenced in formal documents and circulars of the Ministry of Education (Ioannidou & Sophocleous, 2010). In the 1980s and 1990s language policy adopted pedagogical orientations that supported communicative language teaching (Ioannidou, 2012). The thematology promoted by communicative language pedagogy was child-centred and focused on the significance of the communication event and the social communicative nature of the language (Ioannidou, 2012). Therefore language should be analysed within its context (context- grammar), moving away from the traditional and structural approach that focused on grammar only and viewing aspects of language in isolation each other (Ioannidou, 2012). In addition, the renewed national curriculum in 1994 continued on the same basis of the previous policy of teaching SMG with not many differences. Most importantly it maintained excluding the Cypriot dialect from the school and pedagogic context.

In 2002 a circular, sent by the MOEC (Ministry of Education and Culture) to all three sectors of education (kindergarten, primary and secondary), underlined that teachers should use the official variety, SMG, as a tool for instruction in state education. The MOEC (2002) argued that,

*“Educators should use Standard Modern Greek during class time and they should expect the same from their students. The Greek Cypriot dialect is respected and can be used by students in certain cases for communication, such as in role plays representing scenes from everyday life, when reciting poems etc. Furthermore, the use of the Cypriot Dialect is acceptable in cases when children present many difficulties in oral speech, particularly younger children attending the first classes of primary education. The above mentioned should be performed within logical boundaries and not at the expense of the development of Standard Modern Greek, which constitutes our national language”* (Translated by Ioannidou & Sophocleous, 2010; MOEC, August 28, 2002).

However, such language directives to schools and to educators could be characterised as inconsistent questioning the fact that SMG should be acceptable in certain communicational cases. Papapavlou & Pavlou (2005) argued that language policy in Cyprus does not provide specific documents stating clearly what the language of education should be. Ioannidou & Sophocleous (2010) argued that such directives are ambiguous reflected in various opinions expressed by policy makers and educators regarding the ‘official language’ of the classroom and the appropriateness and rejection of bidialectism in formal education. Further my study presented here provides evidence that shows that children use all of their available linguistic resources during learning at any time enabling them to access the curriculum and to negotiate meanings from the texts.

In June 2010 the first draft of the new national curriculum was introduced to educators. The new curriculum focused in using CD a tool for acquiring metalinguistic knowledge and sociolinguistic awareness with regards to the two varieties of Greek spoken in the island (Hadjioannou et al. 2011). Further, according to the new curriculum the dialect use in the classroom is legitimised and becomes a tool for instruction expecting the students to acquire metalinguistic awareness not only at the structural/ grammatical level but most importantly at the communicative and textual level (Hadjioannou et al. 2011). At this point metalinguistic awareness has to be defined as the conscious ability to manipulate the elements of language (Connor, 2008). According to the curriculum, CD is expected to be used as a tool for developing awareness of sociolinguistic differences between CD and SMG and aims to make students critically aware of the dynamics of linguistic communication and literacy practices in sociocultural contexts (Hadjioannou et al. 2011, p.533). Furthermore, the primary focus of the new curriculum was to create “a democratic and humanitarian school for everyone where no child is excluded, marginalised or stigmatised because of any special features” (MOEC, 2010, p.6). Emphasis is given to the creation of a knowledge-based society with students who are critical thinkers and can adjust to the social needs of a modern and technologically progressive society (MOEC, 2010). The new curriculum is influenced by studies on a critical literacy and ‘genre’ approach. Ioannidou (2012) argued that a pedagogy of ‘critical literacy’ refers to

*“the education of speakers and writers who adopt a critical stance towards the texts that surround them and are capable of deconstructing, both in terms of content and of linguistic structure, the embedded values of a text” (p.224) .*

According to the theory of critical literacy the notion of genre as a social practice is considered to be significant because it recognises that various social practices are embedded in society, thus enabling students to produce various types of texts that show their understanding of the social situation and the different power relations between the writer and the reader (Ioannidou, 2012). In addition, the new curriculum follows the theory of social semiotics developed by Halliday (1985) using it as a tool in the theory of critical literacy since grammar is understood according to the meaning and function of the language (Ioannidou, 2012).

In 2011 the new Modern Greek Language curriculum, which is the same for all levels of state education, was presented to educators in Cyprus by the MOEC. In a specific section of the new curriculum regarding ‘Language and Diversity’ it is stated that students should:

- Become acquainted with the structural similarities and differences between SMG and the Cypriot variety and be able to identify elements of other varieties/languages in hybrid, mixed or multilingual texts;
- Approach the Cypriot Dialect as a variety with structure and system in its phonology, morphology, lexicon and syntax;
- Be able to elaborate on the variety of hybrid texts which are produced by the linguistic choices and code-switching which prevail in a multilingual society like the one in Cyprus.

( Translated; MOEC, 2011, p.11)

Moreover, the theoretical and pedagogical framework of the new curriculum differs from the previous curriculum on the following points:

- a) the recognition of linguistic variation,
- b) the interaction of structure and meaning in language teaching,
- c) the role of content (Ioannidou, 2012, p. 224).

Therefore the current language curriculum refers to the existence of bidialectism in Greek Cypriot social and educational context, highlighting the need for recognizing and pedagogically utilising the dialect in the language lesson to enhance students' metalinguistic awareness and thus competence in both SMG and CD (Ioannidou, 2012). The introduction of CD in SMG learning has been an innovative practice and an interesting improvement for Cyprus' education which has been static and rigid regarding language planning for years. However, this change to enhance the role of CD in Cyprus' education has taken place recently, during the latter part of my doctoral studies. Several linguistics from Cyprus interested in the study of CD, such as Yiakoumetti (2006; 2007), Hadjioannou and Tsiplakou (2010), Papapavlou (2004) recommended the legitimisation of CD in the classroom and transformed it to an object of further study (Hadjioannou et al. 2011). Their work influenced official language policy-making and suggested approaches, and insights from their research have been used in the new national curriculum for language. After the implementation of the new curriculum, seminar presentations were undertaken by MOEC in collaboration with the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute (2012) aiming to inform mainly primary school teachers about the new curriculum according to theory and practice. During these seminars it was suggested that teachers teach CD in a comparative way to SMG in order to

maximise language learning and learning of Greek and to enable students to be aware of the differences between the two varieties. However, this caused a lot of questions and negative reactions from teachers since they were not given specific instructions as to how to include CD in their teaching practice to increase the possibilities of progress and learning of students.

In 2013, the MOEC reconsidered some of the curriculum elements on language learning. These reconsiderations have been positioned under the spectrum of a continuous step-up of the educational goals, the content, the learning process and the teaching efficiency of SMG (MOEC, 2013). Within the Ministry's circular CD was not mentioned as a tool for instruction and maintained a monolingual position.

This research does not focus on the changes of the curriculum in language education in Cyprus nor does it provide an analysis of the official documents. However I refer to them as a way of presenting unequal linguistic power relations within Cyprus' educational system as well as to challenge the system by showing the effective translanguaging practices of students who develop understandings and academic learning using all of their available linguistic resources. Furthermore my reference to the curriculum in language education in Cyprus aims to locate my study in relation to the language planning and policy developments. More precisely I started my study and collected my data one year before the implementation of the new curriculum and finished after the language planning reformation. Thus it seems to be one of the first studies, after the implementation of the new curriculum regarding language and diversity in primary education and the accommodation of CD in the classroom,

evidencing CD as a tool for learning and thinking in a primary education classroom. The implications of this research in relation to the progressive policy changes of Cyprus education will be discussed in chapter 10.

## **2.5 Dialects**

In this thesis the examination of language practices in education should be accompanied by the investigation of the notion of dialect as it is also socially practiced and used for meaning –making. This research refers to Cypriot Dialect (CD) as a linguistic variety which is present in everyday discourses in Cyprus’ social context as well as a language practice used for certain purposes usually informal interactions. The term “dialect” is used in linguistics to refer to variations of a linguistic code (García, 2009). Romaine (1994) defined dialect as an inferior language variety and separated this type of language to four categories. Firstly, the regional dialects related to a place, secondly the social dialects connected with social class, thirdly the historical dialects associated with ancestors who used the present linguistic variety and finally the ethnic dialects spoken by specific ethnic groups (García, 2009). However, Pavlou and Papapavlou (2004) stated that any variety that is differentiated from the standard is called “dialect”. The term “dialect” denotes a social stigmatising and people who use such language practices are considered inferior. Yet when the speakers of a certain dialect acquire political and social power then the dialect is designated as language (García, 2009).

The standard linguistic variety is defined as “a prestige variety of language, providing a written institutionalised norm as a reference form for such purposes as language

teaching and the media (Coulmas, 2005:215 in García, 2009, p. 35) The norm is created by people attributed importance in the country represented by officials of the country such as educators and state officials and its continuous usage is put against vernacular or other local language practices such as dialects (García, 2009). Writing about Cyprus, Pavlou and Papapavlou (2004) stated that the standard variety SMG is characterised by similarities between the spoken and the written forms of language and it is codified and exclusively used in educational settings, the media and other formal professional contexts. The non-standard varieties such as CD, are mostly utilised for informal, private interactions and it is often an act of solidarity with a specific group (Pavlou and Papapavlou, 2004). Education embraces the use of the standard variety, SMG, and does not really include the needs of non-standard, CD speakers and their language practices. I will now move to the presentation of SMG and CD.

### **2.5.1 Cypriot Dialect (CD)**

Greek Cypriot is characterised as a dialect of Greek (Arvaniti, 2006). According to historical sources, the Greek CD belongs to the eastern Greek dialect group (Hadjioannou et al. 2006). The ancient form of CD known as Arcado- Cypriot was spoken in the island since its colonization by the Mycenaneans up until Hellenistic period when Hellenistic (Koinè) Greek substituted regional languages and dialects (Hadjioannou et al. 2006).

Cypriot Dialect (CD) can be considered as a regional as well as a historical dialect that belongs to the Southern dialects of Greece and is spoken by the 700,000 Greek Cypriots, by minority communities of Armenian and Maronite that live in Cyprus as

well as by a number of Turkish Cypriots (Papapavlou, 2001). Additionally, CD is also spoken by 300,000 Greek Cypriots of the diaspora. However, CD has not been designated as a language but as a dialect with Standard Modern Greek (SMG) as the official language of the island.

Dialects of a language are usually mutually intelligible and so the speakers of each language can understand each other (García, 2009). It is generally accepted in Cyprus that CD and SMG are mutually intelligible (Pavlou and Papapavlou, 2004). CD speakers understand SMG speakers, but SMG speakers some in Cyprus and some in mainland Greece seem not to understand dialect speakers completely. As Pavlou and Papapavlou (2004) argued, this is because of a general limited contact with dialect speakers within the Greek-speaking world. The differences between dialects and languages are usually socially constructed and for this reason and in my thesis I will use the term “varieties” of language practices when we refer to speakers who use either standard or non-standard ways of languaging (García, 2009). Furthermore, Pavlou and Papapavlou (2004, p.248-249) categorised the main differences between the two codes as follow:

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

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

c) *syntax*: mainly the position of clitics

d) *semantics/ lexicon*: a greater number of words in CD are Turkish, Arabic, French, Italian or English origin.

### **2.5.2 Standard Modern Greek (SMG)**

SMG is the official language of the Republic of Cyprus and it is spoken in Greece (Hadjioannou et al., 2011). The establishment of SMG as the national language of Greece occurred in 1976 after controversies in the educational, political and linguistic field trying to resolve the “language question” which involved the diglossic situation between the vernacular (δημοτική/ dimotiki) and ‘katharevousa’ (Hadjioannou et al., 2011). Hadjioannou et al. (2011) stated that the type of SMG that is used for educational and formal situations is based on southern varieties (mainly Peloponnese ones) but is also influenced by ‘katharevousa’ and loans from other languages.

At the primary level of education in the Republic of Cyprus, SMG is the official language and the language of instruction while the CD is the unofficial everyday language spoken by the majority of the population. SMG is considered the language of power used in education, the media and the written code (Ioannidou, 2009). SMG is the privileged language with more prestige and the language of the elite minority. In contrast, CD is considered less prestigious as it is language used in rural. However, it is spoken by the majority of the population. The educational system of Cyprus follows the framework of the Greek educational system since the majority of instructive material is offered from the Greek government (Papadima & Kyriakou, 2014). One of the primary educational aims of Cyprus’ education is the fine linguistic cultivation of SMG that involves learning, understanding and using proficiently Greek language (Ministry of

Education and Culture –MOEC-, 2013). MOEC (2013) suggested that school handbooks can be used as an additional resource and not as the only one for teaching SMG. This suggests that teachers can use other material such as articles, and resources in the internet according through a combination of teaching approaches for teaching language is; this combination may involve material according to students' age, their interests, their experiences according to the needs and abilities of the whole classroom (MOEC, 2013).

## **2.6. The linguistic situation in Cyprus**

As previously mentioned, SMG is mainly used in education, the media and administration. Pavlou and Papapavlou (2004) argued that CD is used for daily informal interactions and unofficial communications with friends and family members. It must be also added that CD is used in the media for advertising purposes, plays, TV comedies. Pavlou and Papapavlou (2004) stated that this phenomenon aims to create stronger links between the speakers and the audience. Further, they argued that CD is used in poems and plays showing that the country considers CD as a historical language that deserves people's respect and admiration.

At this point, it is important to clarify that L1 and L2 in Cyprus' linguistic context are not fixed but it depends on the discourse and situation the two language forms are used; the basis of this distinction is that if it is an official education discourse, then L1 would mean SMG but if using a developmental socialisation discourse, L1 would mean CD. However, Hornberger (2006) indicated that the power relations in the continua of

biliteracy define L1 as the less privileged language (CD) and L2 as the powerful (SMG).

The situation where the standard and non- standard variety of the same language are used together and at the same time is reflected in Cyprus' educational settings. Papapavlou (2004) noted that in the first six years of their lives, Greek Cypriot children listen to and use only the CD in their everyday relations with their parents and friends. In addition, children hear SMG on radio or television; however, a systematic and structured exposure to SMG starts once children begin formal schooling. As far as the accommodation of differences between the language of home and school is concerned, it seems that the CD is generally devalued and ignored in school as it is a non- standard language variety. Teachers correct students when using Cyprus dialect by repeating the proper form of each word; consequently, students often feel that their natural way of speaking is wrong, inferior or impolite (Papapavlou, 2004).

During breaks in school, children use the dialect to communicate outside the classroom as well as at home after school. Therefore, SMG is used only for academic purposes, as the "language of school", and children often have difficulty and feel uncomfortable using this linguistic code. Researchers, such as Willey (2008), argued that when instruction is provided in the language of home and community, there are typically fewer "language problems". Cypriot children are forced to receive education in another language form, possibly creating other kind of problems for some children such as linguistic difficulties, less motivation to learn as well as difficulties operating and communicating in a language that is not their mother tongue while receiving their education (Pavlou and Papapavlou, 2004).

Minority languages and non-standard language varieties have not been accepted by policy makers even to accommodate schooling for language minorities (Willey 2008). Similarly, the Cyprus Educational Commission proposed to the Educational Authorities that “they should try to avoid, within the schools terms, favoring the formation of a Cyprus national conscience. To this effect, the use of the CD should be avoided in the classrooms” (Persianis 1981: 78, quoted Papapavlou, 2004, p.94). This educational language policy ignored the existence of CD and students are taught SMG as their standard variety (Yiakoumetti, 2007). However, Cypriot classrooms indicate a different reality where the CD cannot be avoided and instead, it is used extensively by students. At the same time, the educational model promotes a feeling of inferiority and inadequacy on the part of the students when they express themselves in their mother tongue and CD is not recognized as the mother tongue of students (Pavlou and Papapavlou, 2004; Yiakoumetti, 2007). Such feelings promote lack of confidence and learning problems in students. A part from my fieldnotes presented in the methodology chapter (records how students’ “tongues were untied” so they felt comfortable and participated in the lesson using their local variety.

The right to an education in one’s mother tongue, heritage or community language(s) was endorsed by the United Nations in 1953 in a UNESCO resolution which called for children to have the right to attain literacy in their mother tongue. However, many countries did not establish this decision in their educational system (Willey, 2008). Willey (2008) argued that the language used in school should be related to the language of the home and community; however, this does not occur and many countries’

educational approaches and educators consider minority languages of the community or home as deficient, influenced by societal structures of power relations (Willey, 2008).

In the past few years multilingualism/ bidialectism in education and the recognition of all languages and linguistic varieties as equal has become the centre of discussions in multilingual and bidialectal societies. However, countries create linguistic hierarchies or taxonomies with some languages having more power than others. It used to be assumed that societies are monolingual while the reality indicates that multilingual and multidialectal societies are the majority (Pavlou and Papapavlou, 2004). Establishing an official language in a multilingual setting is difficult since a variety of codes of different prestige or social status exist García et al. (2006) stated that schools promote monolingualism. In Cyprus' case, Yiakoumetti et al. (2005) argued that Greek Cypriot students are treated as monodialectal within the official educational context. Pavlou and Papapavlou (2004) argued that Cyprus' education often ignores CD as it is a non-standard variety while the standard language such as SMG is regarded as the official one.

Furthermore, the discrimination between languages is explained through language ideology. Language ideologies are defined as “sets of beliefs about language articulated by users as a rationalization or perceived language structure and use” (Woolard & Schieffelin, 1994, p.57). Language ideologies are shared opinions that a group holds related to the attribution of specific roles in certain languages (Woolard & Schieffelin, 1994). Blackledge (2005; Creese & Blackledge, 2011) argued that language ideology is a socially constructed phenomenon and that language uses are strongly related with the beliefs and attitudes that exist in societies. The language ideology that persists in

collective social views in Cyprus is that –as previously discussed- SMG is the official language while CD is considered as a linguistic variety of lower prestige and status used in informal interactions outside the school context or as a language used by ‘peasants’. The tool that I am using to analyse this ideological differentiation is Hornberger’s biliteracy continuum (Hornberger, 1989). I use the biliteracy continuum as a lens that enables me to investigate the ideologies of parents and to analyse the placement of literacy and language within the educational context. However, I am mostly interested in the way students learn by using CD as a tool for thinking.

## **2.7 Biliteracy continuum**

Biliteracy is defined by sociocultural theorists such as García (2006), as the successful acquisition of reading and writing in two languages. Some researchers considered literacy as an independent notion and referred to “literacy and bilingualism or literacy across languages and cultures” (García et al., 2006, p.3).

Dworin (2003, p.171) defined biliteracy as “a term used to describe children’s literate competencies in two languages, to whatever degree, developed either simultaneously or successively”. Some researchers did not use the term biliteracy and referred only to literacy as a single area of studies; instead they referred to “literacy and bilingualism” (García et al., 2006) or spoke of “literacy across languages and cultures” (Ferdman et al., 1994; García et al., 2006). Dworin (2003) argues that biliteracy is important because it may possibly broaden children’s intellectual abilities by gaining access to a great variety of social and cultural influences. However, there is little research in second language studies of literacy development in two languages or how literacy is

constructed in different social contexts and only focus on reading and writing skills second language learners. (Dworin, 2003).

Hornberger (1989; 2004; Hornberger & Skilton- Sylvester, 2000) developed the continua model of biliteracy which offers a framework in which to situate research, teaching and language planning in linguistically diverse settings. This continua model of biliteracy is based on sociocultural and critical approaches to biliteracy (Martin 2009). Biliteracy itself is a combination of literacy and bilingualism (Hornberger, 1989). This analysis was developed for comprehending biliteracy utilising the idea of continuum to provide a model for explaining biliterate contexts, development and media (Hornberger 1989). The model draws on the notion of intersecting and nested continua to represent the various and multifaceted correlations manifested among bilingualism and biliteracy. The four continua in which biliteracy continuum is developed are:

- Contexts of biliteracy
- Development of biliteracy
- Content of biliteracy
- Media of biliteracy (Hornberger, 2004).

Hornberger defined biliteracy as “any and all instances in which communication occurs in two (or more) languages in or around writing” (Hornberger, 2004 p.156) while the concept of a continuum was created to suggest that there are points nested in the model of continua and these points are not finite, static, or discrete but relate to each other (Hornberger, 2004). The notion of continuum was also used to present the numerous

relations between bilingualism and biliteracy and highlight the continuity of experiences, skills and practices from one end to the other (Hornberger, 2004).

Moreover, Hornberger and Skilton – Sylvester (2003) argued that:

*Biliteracy continua describes the development of biliteracy along intersecting first language-second language, receptive-productive, and oral-written language skills continua; through the medium of two (or more) languages and literacies whose linguistic structures vary from similar to dissimilar, whose scripts range from convergent to divergent, and to which the developing biliterate exposure varies from simultaneous to successive; in contexts that encompass micro to macro levels and are characterized by varying mixes along the monolingual-bilingual and oral-literacy continua; and with content that ranges from majority to minority perspectives and experiences, literary to vernacular styles and genres, and decontextualized to contextualized language texts (Hornberger and Skilton- Sylvester, 2003 p.35)*

Educators, policy makers, researchers and the society needs to regard all dimensions of the continua while the ideology of the continua is that one can focus at one point without neglecting the importance of the others (Hornberger and Skilton- Sylvester, 2000). Hornberger (1989; 2001) noted that the more students' learning environments and contexts of use permit them to draw on all points of the continua, the greater are the chances for their full biliterate development. However, Hornberger and Skilton- Sylvester (2003) argue that educational policy and practice tends to favour one end of the continuum over the other promoting uneven relations of power between the ends of the continuum; for example, written development over oral development, decontextualised media (academic texts) over contextualised (magazines), L1 over L2 and orthographic texts that are similar to the orthography of the dominant language, over dissimilar (Hornberger and Skilton- Sylvester, 2000). Similarly, Martin (2009) states that biliteracy continua model indicates that students who are competent readers

are advantaged over students with reading difficulties whose learning inadequacies are due to gender, race and poverty. Power relations may also refer to learners who are bidialectal or monolingual readers over bidialectal and monolingual readers with dyslexia difficulties and language problems.

In the next section I interpret and apply Hornberger's biliteracy continuum to the context in schools in Cyprus. Cyprus' educational context favours one end of the continuum based on Hornberger's model. Focusing on learning SMG at school should not ignore CD existence and allow students to draw on all points of the continuum relations that exist such as, associating the development of written and oral skills and being aware of the specific difficulties of some students providing them with resources that will balance unequal relations of power and promote their biliterate development.

## **2.8 Contexts and Development of Biliteracy: The Cyprus reality**

### **2.8.1 Contexts of biliteracy**

Hornberger (1989) suggested that any specific context of biliteracy is described by the connection of three continua- the micro-macro continuum, the oral-literate continuum and the monolingual-bilingual continuum. Society has the tendency to distribute greater power to the macro, literate and monolingual ends of the continuum (Hornberger and Skilton- Sylvester, 2000).

### **2.8.1.1 Micro-macro continuum**

Micro literacy practices involve the use of non-standard or non-dominant language practices in education while macro language practices are related with the use of standard dominant discourse practices which favour monolingualism and exclude students' local non standard language practices in school contexts (Hornberger, 1989; Hornberger and Skilton- Sylvester, 2000). Micro and macro levels are described by Hornberger as a continuum and any instance of biliteracy is defined at one point along the continuum (Hornberger, 1989). At the macro level, biliteracy often exists in a context of unequal power relations; one or another literacy becomes marginalised. Macro-macro level is associated with language functions in the official level of discourse in a society while micro- macro level indicates individual's choice of language depending on the situation or speech event (Hornberger, 1989).

In the case of Cyprus, SMG is situated at the macro end of the continuum (most powerful) and the indigenous CD at the micro level (powerless) end. Macro – macro level is related to the powerful aspects of Cypriot society and to the purpose SMG is used in Cyprus. Micro- macro level indicates individual's choice of language- SMG or CD- depending on the situation such as, formal occasions- meetings, academic purposes or speech event as well as the domain- official (educational) or personal (Farah, 1997). If the speech event is related to an informal discussion among people, student-teacher, parent-child then CD is chosen to be used; however, if the speech event is situated in a formal setting, then SMG is used. In a classroom, students choose to use CD when they need instructions or just want to share a personal experience; thus, when formal discussions occur in the classroom, based on the daily lesson, students choose to

use SMG but often move to CD feeling more confident with their speech. The field of education or else the formal context where SMG is used influences the choice of language, dialect, style in Cypriot bidialectal society (Farah, 1997). Teachers following the national curriculum promote SMG learning only, ignore CD choice of students and characterise the choice of CD in speaking as lack of oral fluency while the use of CD in writing is considered as learning difficulty. My study examines the use of micro literacy practices in the classroom and challenges the use of macro language practices that exist in the official education context. As a teacher-researcher I used micro levels of language practices to help students acquire meanings and knowledge demanded at the macro level of educational practices (SMG)..

#### **2.8.1.2 Oral-literate continuum**

The oral-literate continuum is the second of the defining continua for contexts of biliteracy which represents the oral and the literate uses of language. Ute's oral – literate uses is an example that Hornberger (1989) presented suggesting that there were barriers to literacy ranging from macro to micro level across Ute and English and from oral to literate functions. Ute is a language variety used by American Indian people who live in Utah and Colorado at United States.

Difficulties in Ute included issues such as, the limited usefulness of Ute literacy in the wider world; the inappropriateness of expressing Ute in writing; Ute's lack of flexibility of possibilities of individual expression in written Ute as compared to expression in oral Ute. Research suggests that there may be many varieties of literacy in each society used for different purposes, for example, literacy at work, home, school, or

uses of literacy for bedtime stories or for private notes (Hornberger, 1989). However, the power of these literacies is not equally distributed in each social context (Hornberger, 1989). Hornberger (1989) argued that orality and literacy are related and their characteristics are based on the social context and culture in which language is used rather than with oral versus literate use.

The example of Ute oral discourse characteristics and implications for their literacy learning can be associated with local perceptions regarding oral- literacy unequal relations of CD and SMG in Cyprus' educational context. Oral and literate uses are not equal in the Cyprus' educational system; SMG is the privileged language for the Cyprus' school context. However, children during breaks thrive off oral participation in conversations in their first language which is CD. Why then should Cyprus' educational system consider the use of CD as a negative language medium for learning? If this perception of language is revised and reversed then what are the implications for Cypriot learners? In my study I will look at the oral-literate continuum in the classroom where students use CD when talking around a text that is written in SMG and then have to write in SMG.

### **2.8.1.3 The monolingual- bilingual continuum**

The monolingual and bilingual continuum is described through the context language is used (micro and macro) and then I link it to my own study. At the macro level Hornberger's attention is on the specialisation functions for languages and varieties in a bilingual society while in a monolingual society different varieties of one language may be identified with high or low functions; this indicates the use of a language according

to the context, function and use at specific occasions (Hornberger, 1989). At the micro level the difference between monolingual and bilingual individuals is that bilinguals change language according to specific functions and uses while monolinguals switch styles in the same context (Hornberger, 1989). Hence, Cypriot students change from CD to SMG when entering the classroom or for any other activities which demand formal speaking either within the educational context or in their community and that is the issue of specification of functions. This study will draw on the monolingual-bilingual continuum by presenting the way students use oral bidialectal interaction at their local, micro, context (both CD and SMG) over oral monolingual interaction that is demanded at school (only SMG).

## **2.9 Development of Biliteracy**

The development of biliteracy occurs in at least three continua which are: reception-production, oral language-written language, and L1 – L2 transfer (Hornberger, 1989; 2003). The three continua define the communicative repertoire of the individual which indicates the knowledge and ability of a person to use language in social interactions in a particular context of speech. Individuals use their already existing communicative repertoire to socialise and talk in any given context or event.

### **2.9.1 The reception – production continuum**

Recent studies suggest that receptive (reading and listening) and productive (speaking and writing) occur along a continuum and not separately, with oral language development and skills preceding written language ones (Hornberger, 2003). In

addition, speaking in second language learning as well as listening, contribute to the acquisition of meaning when communicating and lead to language learning (Hornberger, 2003; 1989). Attention is given to a single standardised schooled literacy in the L2 (SMG). However, according to the continua of biliterate development, an autonomous skill-based view of literacy development in L2 will not help students' language learning progress (Hornberger and Skilton- Silvester, 2000). Hornberger & Silvester (2000) argued for the implementation of an ideological and cultural practice view of literacy. One of the characteristics of this view is that students demand their right to speak through L1(CD) spoken and receptive language, as well as L2 written productive ones (Hornberger and Skilton- Silvester, 2000). Based on biliteracy continuum L1 in Cyprus' sociocultural context is CD since it is student's everyday linguistic variety and SMG is L2 as it is the language they are trying to learn and become proficient readers and writers. According to prevailing opinions in the wider social context of Cyprus, L1 is SMG as it is the official language of the island and the language demanded within educational contexts and official gatherings while CD is L2 as it a linguistic variety that is used only for unofficial purposes.

In terms of the receptive use of the standard language by dialectal speakers, such as Cypriots, it is stated that non- standard users do not encounter many difficulties because of the continuous receptive exposure to the standard variety (SMG) through everyday contacts with the mass media, that is reading and listening frequently to the standard variety (Yiakoumetti, 2007). However, Yiakoumetti (2007) argued that the productive use of language, that is speaking and writing is mostly affected by the bidialectal environment of Cyprus. Other factors such as, teachers' behaviours regarding dialect

use, the linguistic differences between CD and SMG and students' attitudes at school, may create difficulties for speaking the dialect as well as difficulties for educational progress.

### **2.9.2 The oral language – written language continuum**

Children acquire oral language naturally based on their communicative interactions in their family environment and local speech community (Willey, 2008). Studies showed that Quechua students who were taught through their first language as medium of instruction have progressed in oral participation and developed their reading and writing performance at school (Hornberger, 2006). In Cyprus, children learn to read and write in SMG (which is their L2 since it is not their developmental discourse) before they have mastered well its oral systems. Heath (1982) and Hornberger, (1989) suggested that many literacy events occur around language use and children learn to read and write by relying on spoken language. Literacy skills development is based on grammatical and discourse abilities. Interrelations between oral and written language affect literacy progress (Verhoeven, 2002). It is well established that reading demands a combination of skills such as, visual perception, auditory perception, linguistic knowledge, cultural knowledge and knowledge about print and communication (Frederickson & Cline, 2002). Learning to read and write may be more complex for students with specific learning difficulties/dyslexia who live in a biliterate society. The basis of the complexity is the fact that these children who appear to have problems in the above domains, may have difficulties in comprehending and applying the

differences of the language they hear at home and the language used in school in writing.

This study does not examine students' writing skills but focuses in oral uses of language (SMG- CD) and examines the way students with and without learning difficulties respond and contribute to the pedagogic task achieving meaning- making.

### **2.9.3 The L1 - L2 Transfer Continuum**

First language (L1) and second language (L2) continuity also affects biliteracy development; development in one language is connected with the progress in the other language (Hornberger, 1989). Studies tried to investigate “to what extent knowledge of one language transfers to the other (and aids learning) and to what extent knowledge of the one interferes with the other (and impedes learning)” (Hornberger, 1989 p.282; 2003 p.15). Findings suggest that interference from L1 to L2 is interpreted as evidence for learning by applying knowledge of L1 to L2; secondly, L2 learning can be improved if L1 is developing continuously creating strong learning foundations (Hornberger, 1989). It has to be noted that “interference” is considered as a positive transfer of language knowledge and not negative.

Dworin (2003), viewed biliteracy development as a bidirectional process and not just as a linear course which involves transfer from the first language to the second and vice versa. Particularly, it was argued that biliteracy development is a dynamic, flexible process since children may use two forms of written literacies mediating their language

learning for both languages. Yiakoumetti's learning programme used CD as a linguistic tool which assisted learning of SMG that is using L1 (CD) to create conscious knowledge of the differences between L1 and L2 and promote language learning (Yiakoumetti, 2007). Dialect interferences were not considered negatively since CD was the language variety which assisted the transfer from L1 to L2. To address this gap in the literature I ask whether CD scaffolds the acquisition of SMG and promotes academic achievement for students with and without dyslexia-type needs.

## **2.10 Content of Biliteracy**

The content continuum of biliteracy is formed in terms of continuities from minority to majority representations, vernacular to literary expressions, and contextualised to traditional decontextualised educational forms (Hornberger and Skilton- Sylvester, 2000). These content dimensions are used in order to examine the particular meanings that literacy acquires when it is expressed in specific biliterate contexts.

Hornberger and Skilton- Sylvester (2000) argued that school knowledge is acquired when students are able to include and use it in their everyday lives. The association of school knowledge and personal knowledge is significant because it focuses on the minority end of the content continua instead of the majority. Additionally, the vernacular end of the literary- vernacular content continuum is usually not used in school discourse. Hornberger and Skilton- Sylvester (2000) found that students who were proficient vernacular writers were usually considered as non-writers in academic contexts.

Cypriot students' performances in the classroom could be situated in the minority, vernacular continua since they often use their personal experiences to express themselves through vernacular writing. A student one day offered to recite a poem to me written in Cyprus' dialect when he had never before shown such will to participate in the lesson, to read a text or express himself. At school teachers consider him as a non-competent writer and struggling reader in SMG. The performance in vernacular writing is not evident in Cyprus' school contexts. What does this proficiency in vernacular writing really reveal about literacy learning? What is then the role of teachers and educational officials? These are some questions that drive my research.

## **2.11 Media of Biliteracy**

Educational policy and practice ignores the fact that multiple languages, cultures and identities exist in today's classrooms (Hornberger, 2002). Educational systems of the world incorporated the powerful ends of the content and media of biliteracy. In the next section I will present the three levels of the fourth continuum which is the media of biliteracy.

### **2.11.1 The simultaneous – successive exposure continuum**

Simultaneous language acquisition occurs when a child is learning two languages before age 3; one individual who learns one language before age 3 and the other after age 3 is acquiring them successively (Hornberger, 1989). Hornberger and Skilton-Sylvester (2000) argued that educational approaches to biliteracy focus on successive

acquisition and similar, convergent, standard language varieties. Studies showed that children could simultaneously learn two languages even if they had different script and discourse mode (García et al., 2006). Supporters of simultaneous literacy noted that children are able to learn two languages at the same time even if their L2 cognitive and oral skills are not fully acquired (García et al., 2006).

Working through both languages can allow students to construct their identity as bidialectal and biliterate learners. Building on prior knowledge in the home and language practices academic achievement may be developed (Martin 2009). Therefore, it can be argued that such pedagogical approaches could occur in Cypriot classroom practices letting students interact spontaneously sharing cultural values and their home and literacy.

### **2.11.2 The Similar- Dissimilar Language Structures Continuum**

The continuum of biliterate media focuses on the similarities and convergences between two languages which may function as possible tools for transfer of literacy from one end to the other, rather than the dissimilarities and divergences across linguistic varieties within two languages which not benefit or support literacy development even in one language (Hornberger & Sylvester, 2000, pp. 115). Orthographic scripts that are similar to the orthography of the dominant language have been the center of attention of the continua of biliterate media over dissimilar language forms which have been the focus of societies (Hornberger, 1989; Martin, 2009). Hornberger (1989) stated that learning to read in a second language which has no linguistic association to the L1 follows completely different learning paths from

learning a second language (L2) that has linguistic relations with the L1 such as, SMG and CD. Bidialectal settings, such as Cyprus, provide appropriate contexts for the study of biliteracy.

### **2.11.3 The Convergent- Divergent Scripts Continuum.**

Hornberger and Skilton- Sylvester (2000) suggested that similarities and convergences between two languages and their writing systems may offer more possibilities for transferring literacy from one to another. Cyprus has two languages (CD and SMG) with one orthographic system. SMG and CD have morphological, phonological, syntactical and semantic/ lexical differences which are manifested in speaking and writing in SMG. Research suggests that the more characteristics two orthographic systems have in common then transferring literacy skills may be greater and faster (Hornberger, 1989). In relation to the Cypriot context, transfer of literacy skills occurs easily but such transfer is considered inappropriate and sometimes as a barrier for their full literacy development.

### **2.12 Literacy Difficulties and Biliteracy**

Labov (2003) based on research stated that children with dyslexia are the small percentage of children who have reading difficulties because of specific cognitive difficulties. His studies showed that struggling readers in the inner city are at the same level as dyslexic readers in rural areas (Labov, 2003). An important fact is that social linguistic differences may be the reason for failing to achieve in reading acquisition rather than psychological deficits (Labov, 2003).

Snowling (1998), suggested that literacy achievement is determined by a child's speech processing skills. Psychological perspectives investigate literacy attainment through the acquisition of technical knowledge skills, such as phonemic awareness, cognitive strategies (Martin, 2009). Psycholinguistic approaches investigate reading comprehension while sociocultural approaches explore social activities related to literacy which may derive from and create common social behaviours (Martin, 2009). This study will try to examine a possible relationship of both areas, cognitive and social and their role in literacy achievement. Both may influence their educational achievement, especially that of students with specific learning difficulties. However, are their reading and writing difficulties related to the differences between the non-standard local variety (CD) and the powerful standard SMG that affect their literacy learning? Should we seek a balance between social and cultural notions and assist students with learning problems using a multidimensional model of pedagogy? This chapter focuses on the discussion about the social-cultural aspect of learning.

Many children enter school where there are differences between their home language and that used by the school (Willey, 2008). Yiakoumetti (2007) stated that bidialectal students' learning difficulties when learning the standard variety are due to lack of awareness of the exact differences between the two forms of languages. Reading difficulties may be associated with differences between non- standard everyday dialect and the dominant standard language variety (Labov, 2003). Labov (2003) also argued that some of the reasons for children failing to achieve literacy skills are linguistic differences. Labov (2003) advised that educators need to be aware of the structure of the linguistic knowledge that accompanies children to school and how words are

represented in that system. The orthographic system of CD is the same as SMG; however, the meaning of the words, as well as sentence structure and syntax differs. Therefore, no judgment should be undertaken by teachers when students have problems in writing and reading without considering children's prior linguistic knowledge.

In Cyprus' social context, spoken language is different for Greek- Cypriot children (who live in Cyprus, especially in rural areas) from that of Greek resident students (students in Greece). Cypriot teachers also use CD as their everyday language and their spoken language and linguistic resources are different from teachers in Greece. A research question can be generated asking if some children, who may seem to have a specific learning difficulty, are failing in learning to read and write because of the bidialectal society they live in and the lack of material and biliterate learning resources available to teachers who are also bidialectal speakers.

A great amount of Greek-Cypriot children in primary education are struggling writers due to dialectal interference in their SMG writing at school (Yiakoumetti, 2007; 2006). Woolley (2010) argued that L2 learners may read less material and with easier vocabulary. Less exposure to print provokes a slower growth of sight vocabulary creating reading and oral language difficulties. Yiakoumetti (2006) revealed that Greek Cypriots SMG lexical inventory is insufficient. Lexical interference in writing was high and this may indicate that students have less vocabulary than Greek students or have difficulties accessing lexicon lists meaning that students have difficulties understanding catalogues of words in SMG (Yiakoumetti, 2006).

Reading comprehension and listening comprehension problems are often presented by beginner readers since their vocabulary knowledge may be limited. Hutchinson et al., (2003) suggested that, even if students read accurately, comprehension of text may be equal with general language ability. Frequent exposure to print as well as oral language proficiency contributes to reading comprehension. Greek Cypriot students use CD in their everyday interactions resulting in limited exposure to SMG where they need to develop a richer vocabulary and general language knowledge. However, my study examines the way students move across the two languages and tries to challenge the notion that the greater exposure to CD the less opportunity to achieve SMG learning. This study focuses on translanguaging practices while findings suggest that students' active participation to the lesson through the use of any available linguistic resources enables them to achieve sense-making and thus comprehend texts through their discussions.

### **2.13 Biliteracy and Literacy Practices**

New Literacy Studies argue that literacy is not an autonomous skill that focuses only on specific and structural sets of skills in reading and writing but view literacy learning as an independent skill characterised by a set of literacy practices that students can utilise to offer their personal knowledge and experiences through their available linguistic resources (Street, 1984). García (2009) argued that literacy learning and use varies according to the communicative purpose and includes the use of more than one linguistic variety. Literacy practices are defined as social, culturally and politically contextualised practices that reflect the diversity of a student's home, academic and

community experiences (Conteh, 2013). Further, García (2009, p. 339) supported that literacy practices are “culture specific ways of knowing” indicating that literacy practices are influenced by knowledge drawn from a specific sociocultural context during an interaction.

Hornberger and Link (2012) argued that utilising literacy practices that accept the constructive use of students’ home language can serve the acquisition of literacy in other languages alongside English. Therefore it could be argued that the development of meanings in SMG can be supported through the constructive use of CD which is the students’ home language variety”. Such practices can expand the resources that students can utilise when learning by focusing on the experiences and stories of the students and their families and thus empowering the minority ends of the content of educational curriculum (Hornberger & Link, 2012).

Moll (1992; Gonzalez, Moll & Amanti, 2005) argued that household funds of knowledge introducing culturally based knowledge can be a useful resource for language minority communities. Pedagogy that uses funds of knowledge driven from home, community, parents’ or grandparents’ experiences can become highly relevant to students with different backgrounds (García, 2009). The production of a dialogic teaching and pedagogy that uses both the standard curriculum and students’ household funds of knowledge driven from their sociocultural context enables students to control their own learning (Hornberger & Link, 2012).

Literacy Studies primarily have focused their attention on face-to-face interactions and spoken language (Barton, 2010). This focus has been broadened by examining the role

of texts during interactions and thus the role of literacy events (Barton, 2010). Literacy events are specific instances where students communicate around print such as the reading and comprehension of a story (Martin, 2013 p.3; Goldfus, 2013). Barton et al. (2000) argued that events are observable activities that occur when discussing about a written text. Martin-Jones & Jones (2000) argued that talk around a text and specifically using all available linguistic resources to talk around monolingual texts can benefit learning. My study will analyse literacy events in order to present how students use both linguistic varieties to discuss and construct meanings around texts that are written in SMG.

According to the model of New Literacy studies, literacy should be understood through multimodal and multiliterate approach where children are engaged in learning using different media (visual, audio, semiotic systems) and various written linguistic modes (Conteh, 2013; García, 2009). Martin- Jones & Jones (2000) introduced the term multilingual literacies to refer to the various communicative repertoires used for different communicative purposes where individuals combine linguistic codes when they speak, talk or sign (García, 2009). The pluriliteracy practices approach as proposed by García, Bartlett and Kleigen (2007; García, 2009) provides significant emphasis on literacy practices in their appropriate sociocultural contexts as well as an extended valuing of the various literacy practices including those who are not allowed in school. The model of pluriliteracy practices proposes the use of multiple language practices in literacy practices and promotes the use of all available language varieties as a way of achieving sense- making through active engagement in the learning process.

Pluriliteracy approach recognises that all literacy practices have equal value and that languages are interrelated and characterised by flexible linguistic practices.

Scholars argue that education should recognise and utilise the linguistic codes and literacy practices that students bring from home and that pedagogical approaches should start to use hybrid and flexible linguistic practices and not to forward or enforce language separation that may not consider social context and community learning of the individual (García & Flores, 2013). This study uses the notion of literacy practices to analyse literacy based on sociocultural theory. Further, this research used the theoretical framework of biliteracy as a notion that refers to communication as a process where one or more languages are used in or around writing together with the notion of literacy practices as a tool used for using culturally specific knowledge through combinations of multiple communicative codes (Hornberger, 1989; García, 2009).

## **2.14 Research Questions:**

I will next refer to the research questions arising from the literature above.

1. How are CD and SMG considered in the Greek Cypriot social and academic context according to the biliteracy continuum relations?
  - 1.1 Where CD and SMG are situated according to the biliteracy continuum relations?
  - 1.2 What are the local perceptions of CD and SMG regarding their educational, social and historical value?

## **2.15 Conclusion**

This chapter presented Hornberger's model of biliteracy continuum as a tool to explain the complexity of biliteracy associated with Cyprus' sociocultural context and linguistic practices. Bidialectal children such as Greek-Cypriot children learn in an educational context where there are linguistic inequalities. First, SMG is considered the official language of school; secondly, communication occurs in two languages but children are constructed as monolinguals; thirdly, attention is given to children who have literacy difficulties as monolinguals and not as biliterate learners with literacy difficulties. Using translanguaging practices is a pedagogical orientation which is further examined in this study in relation to those children who learn differently offering an original contribution to knowledge. In the next chapter I focus in translanguaging in the class context, emphasising in languaging between bidialectals, literacy practices of bidialectals and the positive implications of translanguaging for learning.

# CHAPTER 3: TRANSLANGUAGING IN THE CLASSROOM CONTEXT

## 3.1 Introduction

This chapter develops the theoretical framework around bidialectism in education and focuses on the perspective of teaching through a combination of linguistic varieties. This chapter presents the complexities around language and languaging practices and highlights language's social and fluid character. Bidialectism is examined exploring the position of standard and non-standard varieties in educational contexts internationally. The discussion then focuses on the possible positive outcomes of bidialectal educational programmes if implemented in bidialectal schools. Further, translanguaging is examined not on the structures of languages but on the languaging practices of bidialectals/bilinguals which enable them to use all of their available linguistic resources and to draw on personal funds of knowledge and afford their learning. Perspectives in the field of research are discussed with a focus on the advantages of translanguaging, such as maximisation of participation, helping students to control their own learning, enhancing criticality, creating links and close relations with home and achieving meaning-making. This chapter also presents the notion of code-switching and its historical relationship with translanguaging as well as the differences and similarities between the two concepts in practices and theory. Finally, I present the research questions that emerge through this examination of relevant literature.

### **3.2 Bidialectism and Education**

Bidialectism is considered to be a phenomenon that exists in a lot of countries around the world in different degrees and has received great attention during several decades (Papapavlou & Yiakoumetti, 2003). Researchers in favour of linguistic equality argue that nonstandard dialects are as valuable linguistic tools for achieving communication as standard varieties (Yiakoumetti, 2012).

However there are people who view dialects as inferior and that they lead to educational underachievement while at the same time also view dialect speakers as inferior to standard speakers (Yiakoumetti, 2012). Siegel (2006) argued that some varieties are considered as incorrect or degenerate forms of the standard language that is used in the mass media, formal education and in formal written genres. Therefore these varieties are marginalised and regarded as inappropriate for education, business and politics. Particularly, Siegel (1999) stated that even though non-standard varieties are just varieties of the powerful standard they are stigmatised and kept out of the classroom. Examples of stigmatised varieties include social dialects such as working class English; regional dialects such as Appalachian in the United States; and ethnic or minority dialects such as African American Vernacular English (AAVE) and Australian Aboriginal English (Siegel, 1999). Pidgins and creoles such as Melanesian Pidgin and Hawai'i Creole are also considered as inferior and degenerated varieties of the standard which they are lexically related (Siegel, 1999).

At this point I have to provide a definition for pidgin and creole languages. Siegel, (1996, p.86) defined a pidgin language as *“a new language that emerges as a contact*

*vernacular among people who need to communicate but do not share a common language*". At the same time a creole language is *"a language that arises as the mother tongue of a newly formed community of people who do not share a common language other than an emerging or already established pidgin"* (Siegel, 1996, p.86). Dialects appear to represent a late stage in processes of depidginisation and decreolisation and are considered to be a specific type of a language that it is not used in a specific region or social group (Ball, 2012). Dialects are shaped by social features of communication and they are associated with speakers who share ethnicity, historical events, geography and first language background (Ball, 2012), such as Greek Cypriots who are associated in similar ways with Greek residents.

Furthermore, Pavlou, (2004) argued that what characterises a bidialectal individual is his/her ability to move from one language variety to the other. Yiakoumetti and Esch (2010, p.294; Yiakoumetti, 2007, p.51) stated that *"a bidialectal situation is one in which two varieties of the same language are used alongside each other"*. Further, Yiakoumetti and Esch (2010) argued that a bidialectal speaker is considered to be the one who speaks both the standard and the non- standard varieties. This point presents one of the difficulties for understanding bidialectism. What makes the concept of bidialectism complex is the fact that the use of the terms standard and non- standard mean the existence of *"clearly identifiable linguistic codes"* (Yiakoumetti and Esch, 2010, p.294). This is true for certain cases where the standard and the non- standard dialects are so different from each other that the variation in peoples' speech can be considered as changing between different systems (Yiakoumetti and Esch, 2010). That is why Yiakoumetti and Esch (2010) stress the need to consider Cyprus education as a

bidialectal context where the variation between the standard and the non- standard varieties is better regarded as a continuum. Further, Yiakoumetti (2007, p.51) argued that “SMG and CD differ linguistically but at the same time sufficiently related so as to overlap somewhat in pronunciation, grammar and lexicon”.

Papadima & Kyriakou (2014) argued that the Greek Cypriot community is characterised by social dimorphism and that the two linguistic varieties (SMG and CD) co-exist in a continuum with each variety serving different communicative functions and presenting different prestige. Arvaniti (2006a) also argued that the linguistic situation of Cyprus has been described by scholars as a “dialectal continuum” or as bidialectalism. Furthermore, Arvaniti (2006a) added to her argument that the linguistic situation in Cyprus should be characterised as diglossic since CD is the Low local language variety used by the population and SMG is the High language learned in formal schooling. Both these language varieties have a different function; SMG is used in formal situations and in writing and CD is used in informal situations and oral interactions (Arvaniti, 2006a). However by using the term “diglossic” we instantly shape a linguistic separation and a functional separation of each language at a time when languages co-exist and “co-function” without having to set linguistic boundaries. SMG is the language of school but it always co-exists with CD during break-times at school, in TV shows, in everyday interactions with friends, parents and even teachers. Even if there seems to be a linguistic separation, “diglossia” is not the most appropriate characterisation of the linguistic situation in Cypriot classrooms. Interactions should be investigated under the spectrum of translanguaging as a more dynamic notion characterised by interrelational linguistic function (García, 2009). This study does not

accept the characterisation of Cyprus' linguistic context as diglossic since it promotes linguistic hierarchies (García, 2009) and functional separation. In this study I prefer to use the notion of bidialectal continuum which can be explored and analysed through the concept of translanguaging. I discuss about the notion of translanguaging in section 3.4 of this chapter.

### **3.2.1 Bidialectism in educational settings internationally**

Bidialectal education attracted important research interest during the last decades. A number of studies have been conducted in Canada, Australia, USA and Europe regarding bidialectal education (Yiakoumetti & Esch, 2010). The efforts to educate Indigenous children to add second English dialect rather than replacing their home dialect has been significant in countries such as Canada, Australia and United States. In Europe, countries such as the Netherlands, Sweden and Cyprus, have been exploring regional bidialectism as regards to “the differences between the standard and non-standard varieties, identification of attitudes towards dialects, proposals for bidialectal language programmes and suggestions for teacher-training programmes” (Yiakoumetti & Esch, 2010, p.292). These efforts are explored below.

- **Canada**

The existence of Aboriginal English dialects in Canada is an important factor that policy approaches needed to consider in order to improve learning attainment of Aboriginal children (Ball, 2009). Ball & Bernhardt (2012) argued that language-in-education policies ignore, criticise and even pathologise the language or dialect that

children bring with them when entering formal education. In Canada for a long period of time educational policies have excluded Indigenous histories, cultures and language forms from public school pedagogy and curriculum (Ball & Bernhardt, 2012). Ball et al. (2005) argued that research has to distinguish between language differences and language deficits in order to enable the creation and development of suitable training, policies and practices for educators and speech language pathologists. Ball and Bernhardt (2012) called for the urgent need to create new approaches in education that will recognise, support and assess Indigenous children's oral language. School-based Standard English as a Second Language (SESD) programmes are funded in a lot of provinces in Canada. Little research information is provided regarding the effects of these programmes except from British Columbia where some research has been conducted (Ball and Bernhardt 2012). In this province schools are offered additional funding to support students who speak variations of English that differ greatly from the standard English used in Canadian educational and social context (Ball and Bernhardt 2012). A study for examining the learning benefits of such programmes indicated that,

*“...strategies included specific pedagogical strategies for vocabulary development, specialised oral language instruction on a weekly basis, acquiring reading materials for Aboriginal content and integrating strategies for oral language development into regular literacy programmes” (Ball and Bernhardt 2012, p. 213).*

Such programmes seemed to benefit Aboriginal students' reading skills. Also due to the fact that First Nation children could be misdiagnosed as having speech and language impairments because of their use of an English dialect, a specialised SESD program was created which:

- focused on differences between the child's dialect and the standard dialect

- helped the child to be aware of the situations for appropriate use of the dialect, rather than identifying one dialect as ‘correct’
- provided opportunities for the child to learn the grammar and phonology of the standard dialect (Ball, 2005, p.12).

These findings suggest the beginning of important initiatives for Aboriginal students’ language skills and stress attention to the need for recognising the possible effectiveness of using student’s oral language in education (Ball, 2005). Further, Ball & Bernhardt (2012) stated that there is a need for providing culturally safe and sensitive educational programmes that view dialects under the spectrum of equality of dialects in an effort to develop tolerance and recognition of the positive implications of bidialectal education. Culturally safe programmes in Canada encourage students to express themselves using their nonstandard dialect and introduce the standard later and once they have acclimatised to school environment (Ball & Bernhardt, 2012). However these programmes need for culturally self-aware educators that acknowledge the different forms of interactions as appropriate and worthy for consideration (Ball & Bernhardt 2012). Ball (2004) argued that a mainstream, standardised, one-size-fits-all curriculum results in a homogenising, monocultural approach that is inappropriate for the different social ecologies of Indigenous students and families. Education should be compatible with the worldview of the community exploring the unique dynamics of relationships of its members (Ball, 2004). In such context community members can actively participate and collectively create, share and develop the emergent worldview promoting high levels of students’ involvement during the learning. Cyprus’ curriculum may seem to have changed in papers adopting a bicultural approach respecting the

students' bidialectism but still follows a one-size-fits-all curriculum ideology since approaches as to how to use CD are not being used in the classroom neither teachers' have attended any kind of training to use a bidialectal approach.

- **Australia**

In Australia two varieties of English exist such as Standard Australian English (SAE) and Aboriginal English (Malcolm & Truscott, 2012; Malcolm, 2011). Sociolinguistic studies focused in ethnic varieties leading to the official recognition of the validity of English varieties spoken by minority indigenous groups (Yiakoumetti & Esch, 2010). SAE is the language of administration and education while Aboriginal English is not recognised as “a dialect in its own terms but as a corrupt form of their own English” (Malcolm & Truscott, 2012, p.231). Malcolm (2011) argued that Aboriginal English is comprehensible with SAE but passing through generations in indigenous contexts, it has obtained an indigenous character in many of its features. Educators and official authorities have wrongly believed that speakers of Aboriginal English are able to learn and learn through SAE without the support of a bidialectal programme (Malcolm, 2011). Furthermore, many teachers ‘correct’ the English of Aboriginal students and thus exclude its use from the classroom promoting monocultural outcomes (Malcolm & Truscott, 2012). Hence, in order to recognise the bidialectal nature of Australian educational contexts a pioneering work has been undertaken on ‘English as a Second Dialect’ for supporting the transition of children to school and prepare them to succeed in education (Ball, 2009).

Efforts have been made for raising and cultivating bidialectal awareness among all members of society and not just Indigenous people. Such efforts included the development of programmes to teach Australian students about dialect diversity (Siegel, 1999). Two-way bidialectal education in Australia tried to reduce feelings of embarrassment if/when Aboriginal English is used for classroom communication and learning (Malcolm & Truscott, 2012). Siegel (2006) noted that this ‘Two-way’ English program recognises the cultural and linguistic differences as a significant empowering educational opportunity for both students and teachers. Malcolm & Truscott (2012) argued that it is ‘two-way’ because firstly it engages both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal teachers, principals, students and Aboriginal staff members, and secondly it foresees that both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students will learn from one another through equal and respectful use of their dialects. The implementation of two-way bidialectal education took place in three different schools: fringe metropolitan, fringe rural and rural/remote.

I will now provide a short description of this programme. The framework of the two-way bidialectal program is following four dimensions: relationship building, mutual comprehension building, repertoire building and skill building. Data showed that relationship building that is the first dimension can create effective outcomes in schools with large number of Aboriginal enrolment. The active engagement of Aboriginal and non Aboriginal staff in the programme created an inclusive educational environment of Aboriginal culture. Aboriginal students were able to communicate without shame while teachers’ entrusted role enabled the creation of cross-cultural communication which enabled learning (Malcolm and Truscott, 2012). As regards to the second dimension -

“mutual comprehension building”- evidence showed that students were able to use their Aboriginal English when learning while Aboriginal staff served as cross-dialectal interpreters and non-Aboriginal showed a receptive attitude. Repertoire building which was the third aim of the programme enabled students to use their home language in the classroom while teachers did not consider dialect features as ‘errors’. Resources had been developed to raise awareness of home talk/ school talk differences. Finally, the fourth dimension of the two-way bidialectal programme involved skill building and was being pursued in lower grades where Aboriginal English literacy was used as the first step towards literacy in SAE. SAE learning resources were used selectively and were modified for advanced bidialectal learners (Malcolm and Truscott, 2012).

Such bidialectal programmes clearly introduce positive conceptualisations regarding non-standard varieties and their powerful use in education. Linguistic equality is definitely promoted while communication is motivated creating positive learning environment. Education should be sensitive to the bidialectal situation in countries around the world leading students to the acquisition of literacy skills in standard varieties through the medium of non-standard varieties.

- **United States**

In the USA research focused its attention on the use of African American Vernacular English (AAVE). AAVE is a stigmatised and marginalised variety which is considered as inappropriate for using it in the classroom and has been characterised as ‘bad English’ (Siegel, 2006; Howard, 1996). Efforts have been made to acknowledge AAVE and to teach it as a separate language. However such efforts resulted in great failure,

initiating the ‘Ebonics debate’ (Ball & Bernhardt, 2012). Siegel (2006) argued that the curriculum ignores the language known by students and does not follow the primary educational approach that is moving from the known to the unknown. Rickford (1999) refers to the failure of education to support the academic progress of African American learners since evidence supports those educational efforts that do not recognise AAVE have been unsuccessful as strategies for teaching standard English to AAVE- speaking children.

Rickford (1999) provided examples of a “linguistic informed” approach in which language arts programmes recognise and include the use of AAVE in the classroom. Teachers following such an approach were trained to identify between errors that are due to dialect interference or because of reading difficulties. Rickford (1999) sets examples of another beneficial approach called “using the vernacular to teach the standard” by which African-American students are taught to read and write in AAVE using dialect readers and then gradually transitioning to standard American English. Finally, it was argued that a contrastive analysis can be considered as another successful method focusing on raising students’ awareness of dialect differences and code-switching (Rickford, 1999).

Furthermore, Siegel (2010) argued that the proficiency in a second language or a second dialect is multidimensional. It partly depends upon conscious learning and partly through gradual progress through communicative use (Siegel, 2010). Siegel (2012) describes three approaches as to using pidgin and creoles in education. Firstly in accommodation approach pidgin/creole is not a medium of instruction but is accepted

in the classroom. Students are allowed to communicate using their non-standard variety and even to write in any variety (Siegel, 1999; Siegel, 2012). Studies of this approach were conducted in Hawai'i where Hawai'i creole was accepted as a valid linguistic variety (Siegel, 2012). Secondly in awareness approaches/ programmes the stigmatised variety is used as a resource that can be used for learning the standard. Such programs may utilise a contrastive approach trying to make students aware of the grammatical and pragmatic differences between their own varieties and the standard (Siegel, 1999; Siegel, 2012). Siegel (2012) argues that this approach is similar with 'language awareness' that is well known in Britain and also has a lot of common with 'dialect awareness' in the US although an awareness approach is more focused on acquisition. Finally the third suggested approach is the instrumental approach where the less powerful variety is used as a tool for teaching initial literacy and content subjects such as mathematics, science and health (Siegel, 1999).

- **Europe: The case of Cyprus**

In Cyprus the language issue has been in the centre of discussions both in the national press and in the international academic field (Papapavlou & Yiakoumetti, 2000). Literature around this issue has already been discussed and so now I will focus on studies that have been undertaken to explore the Greek-Cypriot bidialectal community of Cyprus. Yiakoumetti (2007) stated that efforts have been made to explore how having a regional dialect (CD) as a home variety influences the performance of students in the standard variety (SMG). SMG is treated as the native language while CD is considered to have less power in academic and administration contexts. A common concern was that dialect speakers underachieve at school, especially in the language

lesson, due to their bidialectism (Yiakoumetti, 2007). Yiakoumetti (2006; 2007) created a bidialectal programme which taught Cypriot students in rural and urban schools of Cyprus through their local dialect. Her study aimed to provide information regarding the relationship between use of CD in the classroom and school language achievement. This programme developed students' awareness of the differences between SMG and CD and benefited language performance primarily in productive skills. The study revealed that the use of CD alongside SMG does not result in dialectal interference but on the contrary dialectal interference is decreased enabling students to separate the two codes (Yiakoumetti, 2006; 2007). This occurred once children were made aware of the differences between CD and SMG and "applied their knowledge to increase the appropriateness of their usage" (Yiakoumetti, 2007, p.62). Furthermore, Yiakoumetti (2007) argued that the use of a bidialectal programme in formal education can only have positive results on all learners but especially to rural speakers.

More research about the phenomenon of bidialectism in Cyprus has shown that teaching students bidialectally enables them to perform as well as students who are taught in the standard variety only (Yiakoumetti, 2012). Dialectal interference can be considered as a negative feature for learning when students are not taught about the linguistic and sociolinguistic differences between the varieties used in their academic setting (Yiakoumetti, 2012).

A substantial amount of research is undertaken in Cyprus regarding bidialectism in education. Some of this research is discussed in the introductory section of chapter 1 of this thesis. In short, Cyprus' research has focused on describing the bidialectal

situation in classroom settings, the occasions of communication when CD and SMG are used (Ioannidou, 2009), examined the written performance of speakers of a non-standard variety in Cyprus' primary education bidialectal settings (Papapavlou & Yiakoumetti, 2000), discussed attitudes around bidialectism as well as the positive outcomes for learning native language when the two codes are used alongside each other (Papapavlou 2000; Pavlou & Papapavlou, 2004, Yiakoumetti et al., 2005), examined the performance of bidialectal speakers in a foreign language (Yiakoumetti & Mina, 2011) and also called for legitimacy for using Cypriot Greek (CD) in the Cypriot curriculum (Hadjioannou et al. 2011).

My research could be characterised as providing an example of how CD could be accommodated in Greek Cypriot bidialectal classrooms since CD is accepted in various ways as described in my data analysis chapters. To be more precise, using an ecological accommodation approach for learning, students were engaged in conversations around texts written in SMG. Students were able to use any linguistic variety available when negotiating meanings of the texts, and were constructing knowledge through types of talk such as the exploratory talk. Further, students' own interactional patterns and stories for teaching the standard were utilised. A long time involvement in such approaches may reveal interesting findings regarding students' performance in the language lesson in Cyprus educational context.

### 3.3 Language Practices and Linguaging

Language is a social concept which is constructed and defined within the context that is being used and with reference to its speakers (Heller, 2007). Languages are socially constructed but it has to be clarified that even though language is a psychological and structural notion yet each language's role is determined by the social context that is being used as well as the power of its speakers such as in educational settings (García, 2009). It is important to add that language is used as a medium for teaching subjects at school but it is also a priority curriculum subject studied in school. SMG language learning is the main priority subject in schools in Cyprus. This study used translanguaging practices as a medium for teaching subjects such as SMG language lesson- creative writing and Geography (See Appendix 2.12- Extract 12; Appendix 2.6- Extract 7)

In the study of learning, the notion of mediation is one of Vygotsky's primary concepts for explaining language development (Martin, 2009). Based on Vygotsky's ideas Martin (2009, p.147-148) defined mediation as "*the process by which external sociocultural knowledge is assimilated cognitively by individuals in order to (re)organise the increasingly complex relationship with the external through culturally constructed tools*". The idea of mediation is mentioned at this point because language is used for mediating meaning and learning and so is one of the most significant educational resources for internalising knowledge (Martin, 2009).

García (2009) visualises language as language practices where languaging is a resource and a tool for imagination and a means of developing meaning and learning by using it

in all forms and meanings in the current technological world. Language is used for many purposes such as for expression, interaction but language practices additionally enable emotional development through the expression of feelings and opinions of people and communities (Ager, 2001). Language practices are codified into languages while at the same time language practices can be of symbolic significance for some communities (García, 2009). For example, Urdu is the language of Pakistan which is an identity distinguisher after their independence. Other languages have sanctity significance and are used for religious purposes such as Biblical Hebrew, Latin, ancient Greek and other languages. García (2009) argues that language practices which are not recognised as language, including dialects, tribal languages and sign languages, are linguistic varieties which may become recognised as language as and when they develop political power.

Linguistic codes are characterised by constant change according to social practices (García, 2009). Language is not characterised by systematicity since interlocutors use linguistic elements from past communications in similar situations and on similar contents. Based on this theory García (2009) supported the existence of discourses and not of languages. Hence, it was stated that languaging is “social practices that are actions performed by our meaning- making selves” suggesting that any form of language such as creoles, pidgins, dialects or educational languages are specific moments of languaging that each individual chooses to use for social purposes (García, 2009). For example, languaging appears in conversations that use more than one language variety to acquire meaning and achieve communication. This study deals with languaging practices in student’s conversations within the classroom context. Students

use any form of language either their dialect (CD) or the educational language (SMG) to communicate, and achieve meaning-making. They also seem to express feelings, opinions and personal experiences through languaging practices that enable them to actively participate to conversations and construct knowledge.

### **3.4 Translanguaging**

The focus now is turned on the concept of using languaging to talk or else languaging bilingually which should be the most popular way of using language (García, 2009). Languaging bilingually introduces the notion of translanguaging which García (2009) stated to be bilingual or multiple discursive practices. The constraints of separate bilingualism has raised many educational issues and researchers such as Cummins highlighted the need for “two way cross language transfer” (Cummins, 2005). Cummins (2007) argued that languages had been considered in bilingual classrooms in Canada as “two solitudes” and called for bilingual instructional practices in the classroom so that students who come from socially marginalised contexts to be able to participate to academic work and engage actively in literacy in both languages. García et al. (2009) argued that these bilingual instructional practices are connected with translanguaging. Canagarajah (2011b) considers the term “translanguaging” as a neologism which is used to enhance the views around multilingual communication. The theoretical framework around translanguaging developed the assumption that languages are not separated and isolated; that languages are used for communication and local language practices are used while negotiating communication (Canagarajah, 2011b).

García (2009) argued that schools have to be transformative by using children's complex languaging to develop standard educational language such as using language practices of students to create linguistically meaningful and flexible schools. The term translanguaging was firstly introduced by Cen Williams who used it to describe a pedagogic practice which permits linguistic switching in bilingual classrooms. García (2009) has also chosen to use the term translanguaging for code-switching so that more emphasis could be given to the language practices of bilinguals and thus describe the use of the language from the part of the speakers and not just from the viewpoint of language itself (García, 2009; Creese & Blackledge, 2010). García et al. (2012, p.52) argued that translanguaging refers not just to a shift between languages as code-switching but to "*the use of complex discursive practices that cannot be easily assigned to one or another code*". Bilingual students use their complex discursive practices to acquire knowledge and therefore enhance their learning by drawing on all of their available linguistic repertoire (García et al. 2012).

Canagarajah (2011) stressed the need to adopt a positive attitude towards multilingualism and not to consider it as lack of monolingual acquisition. Multilinguals' linguistic differences are considered to be an obstacle which interferes with speakers' repertoire building and does not enable the successful acquisition of a second language. The separation of languages and the hierarchical perceptions to language have changed the united character of multilingual efficiency and communication (Canagarajah, 2011). However, translanguaging theories value multilingualism and 'appreciate their competence in their own terms' (Canagarajah, 2011).

Translanguaging is described as multiple linguistic practices which are used by bilingual speakers in order to enhance the meaning-making process (García, 2009). Baker (2011, p.288) added to this definition by characterising translanguaging as being “*the process of meaning-making, shaping experiences, gaining understanding and knowledge through the use of two languages*”. Bilinguals translanguage within their bilingual families or bilingual communities to construct meaning but also for including all members in occurring discussions (García, 2009). Hence, this discursive practice facilitates communication with others and serves as a mediator for the acquisition of meaning and understanding of their surrounding bilingual worlds. It was argued that translanguaging in the classroom enables students to draw on all of their linguistic resources to maximise their understanding and achieve educational progress (Lewis et al. 2012a). This cross linguistic transfer enables both languages to be used in a dynamic linguistic continuum enhancing the functionality of mental processing in meaning-making, speaking, reading and writing and finally learning (Lewis et al. 2012b).

The term “translanguaging” received great attention from scholars around the world and this justifies the fact that the term was given different names across various research fields. García (2009) introduced the notion of ‘dynamic bilingualism’ as a notion that considers translanguaging as a process. Similar to this, various terms were presented and categorized in four research disciplines. In the field of Composition, Canagarajah used the term “Codemeshing”, in New Literacy Studies Hornberger (2003) used the term “Continua of Biliteracy” and García (2009) referred to “plurilingualism”, in Applied Linguistics the Council of Europe also talked about “plurilingualism” and Pennycook (2010) about “metrolinguism”. Finally, in the field of sociolinguistics,

Blommaert (2008) used the term “hetero-graphy” and Bakhtin (1981) the notion of “heteroglossia” (Canagarajah,2011b). This short presentation of some of the research areas that were interested in translanguaging indicates the importance of researching such notions but it is also important to link the notion of translanguaging with its pedagogical potentials.

For García (2009) translanguaging accepts the idea of language as a medium of contact between bilinguals but does not just focus on language itself. Translanguaging moves beyond this notion and highlights that the languages of bilinguals work on a language continuum with no linguistic boundaries. For Li Wei (2010), translanguaging draws from the psycholinguistic notion of languaging which is related to the idea of using language to achieve understanding, to gain knowledge and to communicate. Further, Li Wei (2010) argued that during the ongoing psycholinguistic process, language is used as a verb that is “languaging”. It is important to add that languaging is a holistic process through which knowledge, meaning and communication is achieved and our language and experience is created through language (Lewis et al. 2012a).

It was also stated that translanguaging is a dynamic notion which is able to move across various linguistic contexts and systems including different modalities such as speaking, writing, signing, listening, reading and remembering. Li Wei (2010) also referred to translanguaging space. This space is created through multilingual speakers’ social context or environment where they draw on their personal experience, their beliefs, history as well as on their individual cognitive skills to create a meaningful living.

Translanguaging space is created by multilingual speakers through the use of all linguistic resources and by creating multilingual practices to acquire meaning and thus transform their multilinguals' lives. Translanguaging space has no boundaries since new identities, beliefs and linguistic practices are constantly combined and new ones are produced (Li Wei, 2010). Hence, it can be characterised by creativity since it enables the individual to choose between the official standard uses of language and create a linguistic mode which is expanded outside the boundaries of the conventional and appropriate. Li Wei (2011) also stated that translanguaging space enhances the ability of criticality since it maximises the possibility of considering opinions driven from educational, social or linguistic situations, questioning them by using available facts suitably and decisively.

Similarly, in Cyprus' context, speakers socialise across different linguistic contexts by creating translanguaging spaces using their dialect, their history and personal views to communicate and acquire meaning. Greek Cypriot students move across various modalities such as speaking in SMG or CD or sometimes even English, listening to SMG and CD, writing in SMG, reading in SMG and remembering personal experiences and historical events by using SMG and CD. As Li Wei (2001) argued, the combination of such linguistic practices within the translanguaging space can be creative and critical and thus enables the development of learning.

Blackledge and Creese (2010) consider translanguaging as sociolinguistic and ecological and it can be understood as a language practice that is interactional and negotiated, transformative, contextualised and situated with ideological elements, all of

which are performed within the classroom. An ecological approach is used to describe the interactional affordances that are offered in linguistically varied classrooms and supports the need of developing new languages together with the old languages and not separate them in the learning and teaching process (Creese & Blackledge, 2010; Van Lier, 2008). Creese and Martin (2003) referred to language ecology as a study of language in its natural environment such as the society that each language is spoken. An ecological approach studies language in society so it requires examining the relationship between languages and the society in which they are performed (Creese & Martin, 2003). Creese & Blackledge (2010) added that the use of the term ‘language ecology’ can be used to investigate the way social perspectives of multilingual interactions are created within socio-political settings. They described classrooms as “ecological microsystems” and focused their attention on the investigation of language practices in classrooms so that language policy can be informed and conceptions around language choice can be developed ( Creese & Blackledge, 2010).

The ecological approach of translanguaging challenges the notion of “diglossia” where it is argued that the two linguistic varieties of a bilingual are used for different purposes such as using one language in the classroom but a different language at home and for religion (Lewis et al. 2012b). García (2009) argued that the meaning of the Greek roots of the word di-glossia is related to the meaning of the Latin rooted word bi-lingual and it is mostly used for the studies of social bilingualism rather than individual bilingualism.

Diglossia refers to the existence of two forms of languages within a society where the one language is the prestigious linguistic variety used for official purposes and the second language has less power than the high variety and it is used for unofficial, everyday purposes at home or informal work conversations (García, 2009). However, the introduction of the concept of translanguaging has questioned the notion of ‘diglossia’ which accepts the existence of linguistic hierarchies (García, 2009). The Language Policy Division of the Council of Europe uses the term ‘multilingualism’ rather than diglossia (García, 2009). The term “multilingualism” is used to present the existence of various languages within a context independently of how speakers use them. García, (2009) argued that the difference between diglossia and multilingualism is that they adopt the ideology of language separation and language hierarchy. Also it promotes the functional separation of each language and sets linguistic boundaries. However, these ideas are challenged because the co-existence of powerful languages with regional languages, official and national languages with local vernaculars is now maintained (García, 2009). Linguistic divisions between languages are not adopted by ethnolinguistic groups as they translanguage when meeting with other bilinguals without considering that each language serves a different communicative function (García, 2009). In addition, Blommaert (2010) introduced a new term- “critical sociolinguistics of globalisation”- which focuses on language in motion rather than language-in-place. The recognition of the mobility of the different linguistic and communicative resources enables the examination of language within the sociocultural, political and historical contexts they belong (Blommaert, 2010).

Educators and students draw on all of their available linguistic resources or literacies but also use multiple and dynamic types of these various languages and literacies they utilise such as vernacular, formal, academic as well as those that are based on race and ethnicity, for different functions in various social contexts (Hornberger & Link, 2012). Hornberger & Link (2012) proposed that by developing awareness, as well as by using translanguaging practices in classrooms consisting of students with various linguistics and educational needs, educators, researchers and practitioners will be equipped with greater understanding of the resources that students bring to school and then be able to perform in ways that respect the bilingual individuals and draw on the available resources to achieve successful educational experiences (Hornberger & Link, 2012).

My study examines translanguaging practices in the classroom and presents the way students draw on personal and shared funds of knowledge to achieve the pedagogic task. Students' use of literacy practices through translanguaging served as a facilitator for communication, enhanced their creativity and interest for learning, enabled greater participation to the lesson and maximised understanding. This study shows the way students draw on all of their available resources to achieve learning and challenge the monolingual practices of Cyprus' official education by presenting the positive implications of translanguaging practices for learning development.

Furthermore, this study uses the notion of translanguaging to examine the bidialectal nature of students' interactions. However one could raise the question "What does translanguaging mean in the 'world' of bidialectism?" It was previously discussed that languaging bilingually introduces the notion of translanguaging which García (2009)

stated to be bilingual or multiple discursive practices. Though bilingualism is not the case in Cyprus, multiple discursive practices could be considered as suitable characterisation of the linguistic nature of Cyprus context. For the moment it is accepted that bidialectal Greek Cypriot students code-switch during interactions in and outside the classroom. Bidialectism is the preferred term while the notion of translanguaging is not discussed in research studies. However, the notion of translanguaging makes less distinct the differences between dialects. Translanguaging moves away from the notion of ‘bounded codes’ and views linguistic varieties in an unbounded way that enables flexibility in linguistic actions and turn the focus on the communicational context of the interaction and not the linguistic context per se. As an educator this is what initially interests me. Is students’ talk meaningful and enables him/her to achieve the pedagogic task? Does it show critical and exploratory thinking using either CD or SMG? As Blackledge & Creese (2010) advocated translanguaging can be understood as a linguistic practice that is interactional and negotiated, transformative, contextualised and situated with ideological elements, all of which are performed within the classroom. Therefore my study addresses a need for further research in Cyprus for establishing a new ideological framework for viewing students’ linguistic actions through a non-hierarchical, notion such as translanguaging.

### **3.5 Evidence in research**

#### **3.5.1 Translanguaging practices in dual- language class in New York**

Children usually use their entire linguistic repertoire flexibly without following specific structures even though teachers may have planned to do so (García, 2009). This flexible

use of languages enhances students' understanding and supports their conceptual and linguistic development (García, 2009). García (2009) presented translanguaging practices in a kindergarten dual-language class in New York where students were learning through the use of English and Spanish. Languages were separated by having an English-medium or Spanish-medium teacher next to students while they were also changing classrooms during the day in separated language groups according to their preferred language or as integrated language groups such as for playtime. This example is mentioned because despite the language separation practices promoted by school, children were on a translanguaging continuum to collaboratively construct meaning, mediate understanding and to communicate with others by accommodating both languages. García's data evidenced clearly that translanguaging is a strong method to develop understandings, to include others and to benefit understandings across language groups. Yet it is also common for teachers to hide their natural translanguaging practices from school administrators as well as colleagues since monolingual ways of talking are considered better and important (García, 2009). García (2009) argues that educators as well as students have to accept the importance of translanguaging practices in order to enable students to develop their bilingualism or bidialectism without feelings of linguistic shame. These feelings often appear because of the persistence of monoglossic ideologies within educational boundaries which favor monolingualism. However, if translanguaging is accepted, then the power of bilingualism and/or bidialectism will be possible to be used to support students' learning.

### **3.5.2 Translanguaging practices in Wales' educational context**

Another example for examining the use of translanguaging in education is the presentation of Wales' educational context. In the context of Wales, English has been the dominant language and Welsh the less prestigious local variety (Lewis, et al. 2012b). After the efforts to revitalise the Welsh language, both languages could be used in education and were considered as beneficial for bilingual education, for individuals and for society. Translanguaging at classroom level was gradually introduced by adopting ideological orientations which viewed the idea of Welsh and English as holistic, additive, and beneficial (Lewis et al. 2012b).

The Welsh educationalist Cen William –mentioned earlier- was one of the first who introduced the notion of translanguaging as a pedagogical practice which meant the reception of information through the medium of one language (e.g. English) and then use it through the medium of the other language (e.g. Welsh). The idea of William “before you can use information successfully, you must have fully understood it”, became the key global concept in bilingual classrooms and communities (Lewis et al. 2012b). The purposeful use of one language to support the other can maximise understanding and valorise the linguistic abilities of students in both languages. It was then suggested that translanguaging serves the purposes of a child-centred education and thus focuses on the child's use of two languages rather than the teacher's role within the classroom even though the bilingual pedagogy is led by the teacher (Lewis et al. 2012b).

### **3.6 Advantages of translanguaging**

Considering what was already discussed, it seems important to investigate information and present more clearly the potential advantages of translanguaging as an important concept for pedagogic practice. These advantages were introduced by Williams based on his theory of translanguaging and then discussed in depth by other academics such as Baker (2001) and García (2009). Cen William argued that translanguaging has four possible advantages; firstly, it may promote a greater and deeper understanding of the subject matter; secondly it may operate as a tool to assist development of competence in the weaker language; thirdly, it can facilitate home-school co-operation and relations, and fourthly, it may enable the communication between proficient speakers with early learners (Baker, 2001; García, 2009; Lewis et al. 2012a).

Baker (2001) analysed each potential advantage in depth and argued that the idea of translanguaging adopts the framework of sociocultural theory of learning. To begin with, Baker (2001) stated that the first advantage- that relates the attainment of deeper understanding of the subject matter to translanguaging- can be associated with Vygotsky's idea of 'zone of proximal development' where it is supported that learning development is based on pre-existing knowledge as well as Cummins' idea that interrelations between two languages enable cross-linguistic transfer. Based on these theoretical frameworks, Baker (2001) argued that the processing for meaning when students have to write an essay can be successful if the subject matter is fully understood. This can be achieved if students read and discuss a topic in one variety and then the writing part is produced in another as it will ensure that the topic has been practiced and internalised. The use of both linguistic varieties within classroom can be

permitted but in a structural and developmental way so that students value their linguistic and cognitive potential but also to understand that language is a tool that can connect the social and the cultural character of learning (Baker, 2001).

The second potential advantage considers translanguaging as an attempt to use both linguistic varieties when learning rather than use only the powerful language leading to greater bilingualism and biliteracy (Baker, 2001). Baker (2001) argued that translanguaging can help home-school links and co-operation if the student is learning in a language that is unfamiliar or not fully acquired by parents. Hence, the use of both linguistic varieties enables parents to be more active in and around their child's learning experience but more importantly it may enable the child to expand and maximise his/her knowledge that was acquired in one linguistic variety at school through the use of the other variety at home with parents.

García (2009) moved beyond William's ideas on translanguaging and argued that even if a structured course is planned by teachers, students use their linguistic repertoires flexibly and often secretly with their peers. Translanguaging can be considered as a successful method if heterogeneity in language is supported, if teachers and students collaborate, when learning is child-centred and uses students' prior experiences, if teaching incorporates language and content and finally if it includes plurilingual methods to learning (García, 2009). Similarly, in Cyprus' educational context even if teachers plan every day's lesson following a structural monolingual course for using only SMG, students use their linguistic resources flexibly and not even secretly as well as some of the teachers. This practice is unavoidable and even inconceivable especially in rural areas of Cyprus.

### 3.7 Translanguaging or code-switching?

García (2009) argued that bilingual contacts are distinguished by ‘borrowings’ or ‘loans’ of words along with their meaning from other languages. These borrowings are characterised by phonological and grammatical assimilations while at other times bilinguals borrow the meaning of a word but use the word in their home language (García, 2009). For example, bilinguals do not separate languages but move across languages while talking. This mobile linguistic approach was defined as “code-switching”. More precisely, code-switching can be defined as the combination of two “different grammatically” languages during discursive exchanges (García, 2009). Lin (1997, p. 273) referred to classroom code-switching as “*the alternating use of more than one linguistic code in the classroom by any of the classroom participants (e.g. Teachers, students)*”. Some researchers separate code-switching from code-mixing by advocating that code-switching is characterised as an ability to choose the language based on its linguistic characteristics and according to recognisable external cues while code-mixing refers to mixing elements of languages because the interlocutor is not aware of the way to distinguish between them (García, 2009).

Code-switching is used spontaneously among bilingual speakers and even though it is considered by some as an inadequate knowledge of both languages, it has been shown that code-switching is an advanced linguistic skill and characterises proficient bilinguals (García, 2009). Martin- Jones & Heller (1996) state that research has focused its attention mostly on the use of code-switching as a way of scaffolding the construction of knowledge by using both languages when learning. At the same time, researchers around the world questioned the boundaries set around languages and

presented the educational benefits behind “code-switching”. Lin and Arthur (2005) and Arthur and Martin (2006) supported the pedagogic potentials of code-switching maximising the inclusion, participation, and enhancing understandings of students in the learning processes.

Martin-Jones (1995; Martin-Jones & Heller, 1996) stated that code-switching is a popular way of describing and understanding classroom talk as it enables the use of local discursive practices such as distinguishing among various forms of talk, maximising participation during discussions, repeating a point and highlighting new information. Further, it was argued that teachers do not understand the pedagogic advantages of code-switching because of the educational constraints that create distance between students’ linguistic knowledge, the knowledge of the linguistic resources they bring to school and the type of knowledge promoted by educational settings (Martin-Jones & Heller, 1996).

Li Wei (1997) argued that there is an immediate need for broadened knowledge regarding code-switching in contexts such as the classroom. Arthur’s & Martin’s research (2006) showed that code-switching facilitated students’ understanding and allowed greater participation in the lesson offering the opportunities for ‘silent’ or passive students to become active to the process of learning as well as to interpret and access texts necessary for achieving the targets of a lesson. Lin (1997) suggested that code-switching can be considered as an additional resource for teachers’ linguistic repertoire that will facilitate teaching within the classroom by indicating and negotiating various frames (e.g formal, official, learning frames vs informal friendly frames) role- relationships, cultural values and identities. Also, Lin (1999) showed that

code-switching between English and Cantonese enhanced students' participation and understanding. However, Lin (1999) stated that the development of bilingual discursive practices where code-switching is used as a primary method can easily be transferred to other classrooms in other contexts where code-switching is not accepted but also considered as a learning difficulty.

Martin (2005) questioned whether bilingual pedagogies can facilitate learning by supporting communication such as the development of the exploratory talk which is necessary for constructive and creative discussions that will enable collaborative reasoning. Creese & Blackledge (2010) advocated that moving between two languages is a natural process and can be beneficial for learning. However, the development of such theory needs to take into account the socio-political and historical context where bilingual practices can be performed, teachers' pedagogic abilities as well as the local ecologies of schools and classrooms which have to be able to adopt the linguistic background of each student (Creese & Blackledge, 2010).

While research on code-switching focused on language interference, transfer, borrowing and loan, the concept of translanguaging expands its focus from cross-linguistic influence and highlights that bilinguals interrelate and mix the linguistic characteristics of a specific language variety which are institutionally and linguistically officialised (García, 2009; Hornberger & Link, 2012). Translanguaging focuses on the communicative mode of language and the way it is used by bilingual communities and not just on spoken language (Hornberger & Link, 2012).

Lewis et al. (2012a; 2012b) argued that translanguaging in the classroom is historically related to code-switching. Code-switching was once again defined as the combination of two languages in the same sentence in classroom discussions which was also characterised as a creative strategy by the language learner (Lewis et al. 2012a). Lewis et al's (2012a) research questioned the primary idea that translanguaging was related to intentional and planned use of two languages since data showed spontaneous use of translanguaging using both their languages to enhance their understanding and achieve progress (Lewis et al. 2012a).

Code-switching is considered to be part of the field of linguistics which examines the speech of bilinguals and translanguaging follows the theoretical framework of sociolinguistics as it is considered to be social, cultural, ecological and situated (Lewis et al. 2012a). Baker (2001) stated that translanguaging is not related to code-switching since it is a pedagogical practice that promotes the natural existence of bilingualism without "functional separation". Similarly, Lewis et al. (2012a) advocated that code-switching is conceptualising bilingualism as language separation while translanguaging's ideological framework supports the flexible and fluid character of linguistic resources as two or more languages or linguistic varieties for learning. My research focuses on the way students' translanguage by using both CD and SMG in discussions within the classroom. Emphasis is given to translanguaging as a way of examining students' bidialectism without separating the functions of CD and SMG as well as highlighting the social, cultural and situated character of learning.

Further arguments are that code-switching can be characterised as social and not just linguistic since its process is affected by the philosophical orientations of the context

that occurs, from familiarity, power relationships and the linguistic skills of the listeners (Martin Jones, 2000; Baker 2008). Therefore, code-switching can be considered as a powerful scaffolding strategy within bilingual classrooms as well as a method of valorising the connections with the language used at home (García, 2009). This alternation between two linguistic codes can be a systematic, strategic and sense-making process. However, the notion of translanguaging can elevate a more dynamic bilingualism where the input and the output are on purpose in different languages by dual- languaging processing (García, 2009). The requirements for conceptualising translanguaging is that such a practice needs to have context and not just content as well as to be a cognitive and intellectual activity that operates inside as well as outside the context of the classroom and not just about linguistic code (Lewis et al. 2012b). Educators are challenged to change their conceptions regarding translanguaging in classrooms and give greater value to this inclusive pedagogical practice.

### **3.8 Positioning Theory**

A part of my data is analysed based on positioning theory as introduced by Davies & Harré (1990). Positioning is a theory of conversation that is used to define intentions of speech acts as they provide details of the joint action of participants while conversations occur (Davies & Harré, 1990). Davies & Harré (1990) argued that positioning occurs mostly within a conversation which is considered to be a type of social interaction that produces socially constructed interpersonal relations. According to positioning theory, social interactions are analysed based on the way people use discursive practices to actively produce social realities as well as according to the

context that conversations occur (Davies & Harré, 1990). Positioning is a discursive practice since it is something which occurs during an interaction (Harré et al. 2009).

Harré et al. (2009, p.5) argued that “positioning theory is a contribution to the cognitive psychology of social action” and that it focuses on explaining the implicit and explicit ways that people use to reason during interactions. Positioning theory draws on the notion of cognitive processes to explain the meanings that people distinguish in the actions of others. Positioning theory also tries to explain cognitive processes that have not been given much attention which are concepts that are driven from the local moral context such as beliefs and practices related to rights and duties (Harré et al. 2009). Further, positions are opinions or beliefs about how rights and duties are distributed in an interactional process as well as characteristics of the local context where people occupy certain practices or “positions” and change them according to the meanings of speech actions (Harré et al. 2009).

This study uses positioning theory to analyse and interpret the way social interactions occurred between students-students, or students-teacher as well as between parents and the teacher-researcher using multiple discursive practices. Further I use positioning theory (Davies & Harré, 1990) to examine the way participants positioned themselves or positioned me as a teacher according to the context of the conversation and the power relations that existed. As a teacher I was assigned by parents a role within the conversation which was a social role according to my rights and duties. This means that my role was determined by the views of the local people and my legal position in the academic context (Harré et al. 2009).

Positioning theory enabled me to show the way the individuals of this study actively understand their social world and locate themselves in jointly produced conversations (Davies & Harré, 1990). Parents and students positioned themselves as members of the local community while parents positioned CD in the less powerful end of biliteracy continuum even though it is the language of the members of the community. I was positioned as an authority figure that had to follow the official demands of the curriculum. Shifts of positions were manifested according to what parents wanted to be in solidarity with while students' conversations were relevant with their social and interpersonal relations and positions (Davies & Harré, 1990).

### **3.9 Research questions**

The review of literature related to translanguaging has been undertaken. It shows that there is a lack of research related to the notion of translanguaging within Cyprus' educational classroom context. Based on the literature review my main research questions are:

2. How do translanguaging and literacy practices enhance academic learning in the Greek- Cypriot classroom context?

2.1 To what extent does translanguaging enhances students' with learning difficulties academic learning?

2.2 How does the teacher incorporate translanguaging in the classroom?

3. To what extent do students with and without learning difficulties collaborate by drawing on all of their linguistic resources to understand, construct knowledge and achieve the pedagogic task?

3.1 Does translanguaging serve as a facilitator for communication as well as a mediator for acquiring or negotiating meaning and achieving deeper understandings for students with and without specific learning difficulties?

3.2 How does students' (with and without learning difficulties) engagement in translanguaging practices assist their learning?

### **3.10 Conclusion**

To conclude, it is important to consider the use of all available linguistic resources to enhance learning and understanding as well as to maximise participation and create meaningful classroom settings that respect the historical background of each student and promote learning. This review of research identifies the need of further research in multilingual settings where students with learning difficulties and dyslexia translanguage everyday and perhaps their translanguaging is considered as an additional negative characteristic. The pedagogic implications need to be considered further by educators and researchers and review old educational conceptions and create positive attitudes. Language is a valuable tool for learning so translanguaging could be a powerful tool for considering the social and the cultural character of the language context of Cyprus and the existence of CD and SMG in the classroom as well as its importance for learning in Cyprus' educational setting.

# CHAPTER 4: LANGUAGE AS A TOOL FOR THINKING AND LEARNING

## 4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter examined language according to the theoretical framework around bilingualism and translanguaging and the linguistic practices bilinguals use for communication. I will use the Vygotskian- sociocultural theoretical perspective to develop the main argument of this chapter that emphasises learning as being both a cognitive and a social process. More precisely this chapter will present the theory that supports that language can be a cognitive tool that enables students to acquire meaning and develop their thinking but also a social and cultural tool for sharing knowledge through all available linguistic resources and translanguaging.

The first part of this chapter discusses the Vygotskian approach and the views of sociocultural researchers as far as learning development and language learning are concerned. This chapter then describes Vygotsky's fundamental idea of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and the idea of scaffolding. Next, Mercer's ideas about language as a tool for learning are presented based on key concepts which forward language as a tool for collective learning and joint sense making. Then, the three types of talk namely, the disputational, the cumulative and the exploratory talk are examined as well as the three levels of analysis suggested by Mercer: the linguistic level, the

psychological and the cultural level. The last part of the chapter sets out the important role of educators in enhancing students' prior knowledge to build new understandings.

## **4.2 A Vygotskian- sociocultural perspective**

A Vygotskian perspective is a sociocultural and activity approach that examines the process of learning through the use of language which is considered as the basic tool for learning development and language learning (Martin, 2009). Language is a tool used by people in their everyday life for communicative as well as social, educational and psychological reasons (Martin, 2009). The basic concept of sociocultural theory is that the mind is mediated, that human actions are based on tools/ artefacts and actions transform the context people live in as well as the situations within this context (Lantolf, 2000). Symbolic tools or signs are also used to mediate and formulate human relationships but also physical and symbolic tools are used by human culture(s) which are often modified by current generations before passing them on to future generations to meet the needs of their communities. Likewise language is constantly changing by its users for their psychological and communicative purposes (Lantolf, 2000). Further, sociocultural theorists argue that learning is related to thinking and that these two processes are interrelated and both shape, and are shaped by, culture (Mercer, 2004).

Vygotsky described language as a communicative or cultural tool that is used for collective acquisition of knowledge and as a psychological tool that enables the individual to develop his/her thoughts and actions (Mercer, 2000). Vygotsky's primary view was that children's thoughts develop after regular social interactions (Martin,

2009). Thus, language is considered as a tool for thinking and exchanging ideas as well as for permitting the combination of information in a collective way so that understanding of the world is achieved (Mercer, 2000). What makes this theory interesting and related to this research, is that Vygotsky's perspective is related with the dualism of cognitive theories and social -cultural approaches (Martin, 2009). Martin (2009) stated that Vygotsky's approach of the dual relation enables further understanding and investigation of bilingual students with learning difficulties. Research around this theory has emphasised that learning and particularly language learning, is constructed both as cognitive effort (intramental) as well as a social and cultural activity (intermental) (Martin, 2009).

Moreover, Vygotsky's idea that language is a meaning- making tool was further developed by adding that "verbal thought" is what distinguishes people's intelligence from other animals (Mercer, 2000). Most importantly it was stated that language is both a psychological and a cultural tool which facilitates psychological development. Children's everyday social linguistic influences in their communities become their mental resources which finally enable them to acquire meaning and make the words they use into their own cognitive resource (Mercer, 2000). Furthermore, building on Vygotsky's work, language has three important operations: it can be considered as a cognitive tool which children utilise so that they can manipulate knowledge; as a social or cultural tool for sharing knowledge between individuals; and as a teaching tool with which a person can offer intellectual support to another (Mercer et al. 2004).

Vygotsky, (1978) argued that learning is achieved before children's academic schooling begins and that any learning that occurs at school for example arithmetic learning, has a past preschool history such as experience with quantity. Learning starts even when a child is learning the names of the objects that surround him/her even though it is not clear whether preschool learning enables later academic (scientific) learning (Vygotsky, 1978). Researchers in the past assumed that the difference between preschool learning and school learning is that the first is characterised by "non systematicness" while the second is characterised by systemic acquisition of knowledge (Vygotsky, 1978). However, school learning assists the development of a child in a different way; Vygotsky's fundamental idea of the Zone of Proximal Development was utilised by theorists to investigate in depth and offer detailed analysis of the way learning is achieved in school.

Sociocultural theory considers that learning is cultural and cognitive and that communication, thinking and learning are related practices which are developed within and through culture (Mercer, 2004; Martin, 2009). Sociocultural theorists are concerned with understanding the development of children's thinking when it is shaped by social contact between peers and adults (Mercer, 2004). García (2009) stated that sociocultural studies of literacy showed that literacy practices are influenced by social, cultural, political and economic situations. Furthermore, literacy learning cannot be considered as an 'autonomous' practice but as a process that changes according to each situation and includes various social interactions (García, 2009). Hence, meaning-making is not the same in different sociocultural contexts and that literacy practices are culturally determined and are used for specific cultural purposes (García, 2009).

Meaning- making is achieved by using cultural artifacts in literacy learning when children try to understand the structural characteristics of print or other forms of literacy (Martin, 2009). Thus, making sense when learning is a fundamental issue for children with difficulties learning literacy skills (dyslexia) because a lack of making sense or meaning- making of the printed word is a core reason for not achieving progress.

Moreover, Martin (2009) argued that for students with learning disabilities who were culturally and linguistically diverse, teaching and learning should be informed not only by psycholinguistic, linguistic and cognitive research but also by sociocultural studies to enhance learning development. Learning is a process by which a child transforms his/her views and relationships according to their social world. Learning uses tools and artifacts that have more to do with the cultural internalised objectives of the individual; for example pen and paper are cultural tools that are used for a certain purpose which is already internalised (Martin 2009). Language as a tool in this sense does not fit with the structuralist conceptualisations of grammar that exist in most of the work related to language disability and language teaching (Martin, 2009). Language and communication may be better analysed through the sociocultural and historical communicative practices in which children are involved and not just depend on a linguistic analysis (Martin, 2009).

In relation to this research, the study takes a Vygotskian approach that knowledge is acquired by interpersonal activities which precede intrapersonal learning (Martin,

2009). Language and social development are shaped by shared practices within a specific context, such as family or class group, based on the notion that learning and communication are situated. Children with language and literacy learning difficulties are likely to perform better when collective linguistic and communication activities are utilised rather than performing in situations that demand they rely on their individual cognitive and linguistic resources (Martin, 2009).

### **4.3 Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)**

The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is Vygotsky's concept that a child's intellectual abilities can be developed only through an interactional involvement where support and guidance are offered within the child's ZPD (Mercer & Littleton, 2007). Vygotsky's theory of ZPD is used as a tool for interpretation of a student's cognitive ability that is achieved over a period of time through support from an adult or a more capable peer targeting cognitive development (Mercer & Littleton, 2007; Mercer, 2008; Martin, 2009). Based on the idea of ZPD, teaching should be set within the child's ZPD and focus on the development of the child's abilities and potential for learning rather than focusing on what the child can already do (Martin, 2009). Vygotsky (1978) suggested that learning should be equivalent to the child's developmental level and that children of the same age do not necessarily have the same developmental age. Thus, Vygotsky (1978) defined ZPD as

*“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” (p.86).*

Vygotsky's definition argued that ZPD is the difference of what a person can achieve individually and what the same person can achieve with the support from someone else or from cultural tools (Lantolf, 2000). Lantolf defined ZPD as the context where social forms of mediation are developed (Lantolf, 2000, p. 16). The metaphor of the ZPD for teaching and learning is perhaps one of the most fundamental ideas of Vygotsky trying to show the process through which educational learning influences intelligence. ZPD is not a situated physical phenomenon but a metaphor for a concept that is used for understanding the way mediational tools are appropriated and internalised (Lantolf, 2000). Students, when learning, do not copy exactly teachers' capabilities but they usually reform what the expert is introducing to them and thus appropriate it by either imitating or collaborating in the ZPD (Vygotsky, 1987). Here, it must be noted that imitation in ZPD is an activity where the student is not considered as a repeater but as a communicative being. A repeater offers an exact copy of what the teacher says without recognising the goal directed action. This way repeating is not considered as effective or communicative (Vygotsky, 1987).

#### **4.4 'Scaffolding'**

Vygotsky's idea was that learning is a collaborative procedure which engages dialogue between a child and an adult where the child can acquire knowledge through "scaffolding", that is, offering gradual support to a learner from an important other such as the teacher (Martin, 2009; Mercer, 1996). The idea of scaffolding was first introduced by Wood et al. (1976) and it is related to concepts such as "guided participation", "the guided construction of knowledge" and dialogic teaching" (Mercer, 2004). Sociocultural theorists utilise Vygotsky's concept of the *Zone of Proximal*

*Development (ZPD)* to explain the way a child's thought is transformed into deeper understanding through dialogue or "scaffolding" (Mercer, 2008, Martin, 2009, Cole et al. 1978).

Researchers highlight that sociocultural theory underlines the important role of a teacher in assisting students to construct knowledge and develop ways of describing and understanding experience. Martin (2009) stated that the acquisition of knowledge can be achieved through communication and dialogue. Bruner (1990) argued that children's individual development is formed by their dialogues and conversations with adults as well as by the support from a "more competent learner" which can offer "scaffolding" to a student. As Vygotsky stated, the "intramental" (learning within individual) social actions will enhance and promote "intermental" (learning between individuals) cognitive development (Mercer, 2004, Vygotsky, 1978). Vygotsky (1978) argued that:

*"An interpersonal process is transformed into an intrapersonal one. Every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first between people (interpsychological) and then inside the child (intrapsychological). This applies equally to voluntary attention, to logical memory and to the formation of concepts. All the higher actions originate as actual relations between human individuals" (p.57).*

Sociocultural researchers found that the development of cognitive abilities are related to the "intramental" and the "intermental" mediated by language (Mercer et al. 1999). Moreover, Mercer's et al. (2004) findings support the idea that the introduction of children into educational language practices affects their use of language as a cognitive tool. Hence, their findings supported the statement that a sociocultural view can be the most appropriate theoretical foundation for the development of educational practice

(Mercer, 1995). Mercer (2008) introduced the concept of *Intermental Development Zone* (IDZ) where the teacher and the learner constantly negotiate knowledge and understanding through an activity they are both involved in. The idea of IDZ follows the Vygotsky's primary concept of the ZPD and still focuses on the way the learner develops his/her thinking after support in an activity but considers the potential contributions of both the teacher and the learner. Mercer (2008) added to Vygotsky's claim that suitable guidance can affect learning development by showing that learning can be a result of interthinking if the teacher's efforts are considered as determining what a learner is achieving and that this progress is jointly created.

Moreover, language is considered as an important tool for ensuring understanding. Talk allows individuals to be involved in a collaborative effort to acquire meaning or negotiate new understandings (Mercer, 2000). Language is created not just for transferring views but also for permitting the combination of thoughts and intelligence in a collective way which enhances people's understandings of the world (Mercer, 2000). Mercer (2000) stated that effective communication for children is a product of comprehending how language is used in their home community. Thus, greater conceptualisations of how individuals are related to their societies can be achieved through the study of collective ways of acquiring knowledge. Language equips individuals with a means of "thinking together" for the collective creation of knowledge and understanding (Mercer, 2000). Researchers in this field have provided evidence into how language, thought and social practices are interconnected; this is also what this study will try to prove in further chapters.

## **4.5 Language as a tool for learning**

Education should aim to seek ways of introducing and teaching children how to use language for investigating, sharing and creating knowledge (Mercer et al 1999). Researchers suggested that teachers should enable students to understand the talk that is used in the classroom context in any subject and then associate it with their existing knowledge and mode of thinking (Mercer et al. 1999). In sociocultural theory thinking and learning are associated practices which are developed through culture and cannot be understood without considering the social and communicative character of human activity (Mercer, 2004). Learning can be defined as “the activity of mediating social and cultural participation with individual cognitive sense making” (Martin, 2009, p. 20)

Recently research focused its attention on how talk is used in the context of the classroom and did not just examine the way talk is used as a tool for social communication (Mercer, 1996). Particularly, research highlighted the way talk functions as a medium for sharing knowledge as well as a tool which adults use to influence the conceptions of social reality and the interpretations of experiences which children finally adopt (Mercer, 1996). For Mercer (1996) talk between students is important for the beginning and the creation of learning. Collective practices in the classroom which enable learners to jointly construct their reasoning through language are crucial in comparison with teacher centred conversations. Mercer (1996) uses the term “collaborative activity” in the classroom in terms of group work which encourages talk among learners to ensure the development of understanding though it is not always successful if talk is characterised by low academic quality, e.g. social talk. In my study,

the research focuses on the way the classroom works as a group and how talk is used to develop knowledge collaboratively and by reasoning together.

Mercer, (2004) argues that learning progress or failure may not be a result of individual cognitive abilities or teacher's skills but a consequence of an educational dialogue characterised by low quality meaning using off target talk, and non academic talk. So, this is where further investigation is needed in terms of the way the intermental (social) activity promotes the intramental (individual) activity and how language is related to thinking (Mercer, 2004).

Human activity is characterised by communicative interactions for the purpose of sharing information and exchange ideas. Mercer (2000; 2004) stated that people not only interact but also 'interthink' when working together by combining their mental abilities to resolve a task. Conversations are usually based on common knowledge, move from past into future and negotiate meanings so that the creation of a common understanding of the topic of the discussion can be achieved (Mercer, 2004). This study is interested in the way joint learning is forwarded and produced in the interactions of the class's students.

Moreover, Mercer (2004; 2008) stated that talk is characterised by a contextualised and dynamic nature which is used for joint thinking. Mercer (2004; 2008) also claimed that communication between people has both a historical aspect and a dynamic aspect. Interaction is situated within a specific social and educational context supporting its historical characteristics. Additionally, knowledge can be developed by travelling from

the past to the future that is by recalling common past experiences (Mercer, 2004). The dynamic idea of collective thinking concerns the contextual foundation of knowledge based on shared understanding , which has a non -static character and thus is continually being developed (Mercer, 2004).

From a different perspective, Creese and Martin (2003; 2008) used the term ‘ecological microsystems’ to characterise classrooms and stressed the importance of investigating dialogic practices in the classroom but in relation to language choice and language policy. Through the use of the term “ecological microsystem” they highlighted the ecological function of the classroom that led to learning. The teacher and the learners have to use talk as the primary tool for establishing a shared structure of understanding from their prior common knowledge. Teachers use various teaching techniques to create a framework of shared understanding of the practices that students are engaged in (Mercer, 2004).

It is well supported by research that by sharing ideas, children can develop a more general way of understanding ensuring that this is achieved through active participation in the classroom (Mercer, 1996). Mercer (2004) argued that education is considered as a dialogic process in which students and teachers follow the principles and social practices of their schools as cultural institutions. Blackledge and Creese (2009) followed Bakhtin’s (1981) philosophical orientation arguing that discourse is dialogic meaning that is created and influenced by the voices of others reflecting the context that language is being used.

I wish to refer briefly to Bakhtin's notion of intertextuality, that is the linking of talk or written texts across contexts and people, as it applies to the children's talk data, in our class discussions. According to Maybin (2003), Bakhtin (1981) argues that,

*“Certain aspects of these other conversations and contexts are highlighted through the voice and brought into play in the current conversation. For example, we may report someone's voice in telling an anecdote to call up a particular scenario or repeat an authoritative voice to lend weight to our argument. The associations a voice brings with it and the authority it invokes become an essential part of the meaning-making in the reporting context.” (p.160)*

In my analysis and discussions of the children's talk data in chapter 10, I do not draw further on Bakhtin's ideas of intertextuality, as I prefer to use Mercer's ideas of disputational, cumulative and exploratory talk, which are closely linked to Bakhtin's notion of intertextuality, and are more pertinent to my main discussion of pedagogy and translanguaging.

#### **4.6 Ways of talking and thinking**

Mercer (1995; 1996) suggested three types of talk that can be utilised as models for understanding the “social modes of thinking” that is the way talk is used by people to reason collectively. However, it was argued that the following categories of talk are not developed as descriptive categories but as analytic categories for evaluating children’s talk in any collaborative activity. The three ways of talking that have been introduced are: Disputational talk, Cumulative and Exploratory talk.

#### **4.6.1 Disputational talk**

Disputational talk transforms collective activity into a competitive action rather than cooperative effort. It consists of unwillingness to adopt or accept the other person's opinions and embodies short exchanges such as "yes it is- no it isn't" (Mercer, 2000). This way of talking is "characterised by disagreement and individualised decision making." (Mercer, 1995, p.104; 1996, 2004, 2007). Positive feedback of the suggestions in a discussion occurs only in limited ways.

#### **3.6.2 Cumulative talk**

Cumulative talk is characterised by positive constructions of criticism of the other individuals' responses. Speakers use talk to mutually and supportively create shared knowledge by accumulation, that is adding information to and building on each other's contributions (Mercer, 1995; 1996; 2004; 2007). Cumulative conversation features are characterised by repetitions, confirmations and elaborations.

#### **4.6.3 Exploratory talk**

The third analytic category of talk is exploratory talk which can be defined as a critical but constructive engagement with each others' views during discourse (Mercer, 1995; 1996; 2004; 2007). Mercer (2000) stated that through exploratory talk,

*"Relevant information is offered for joint consideration. Proposals may be challenged and counter-challenged, but if so no reasons are given and alternatives are offered. Agreement is sought as a basis for joint progress. Knowledge is made publicly accountable and reasoning is visible in the talk" (p.98).*

Through this type of talk, children can reach an agreement before deciding to take joint action while their way of thinking is made explicit and their talk enables critical evaluations and collective conclusions (Mercer, 2000). Exploratory talk is a type of language that is important in the educational context (Mercer et al. 1999). It can be considered as an “educated” way of learning development through the medium of talk which is enhanced through school activities (Mercer et al. 1999).

Mercer (2010) note that by raising children’s awareness of the uses of spoken language as a means of thinking both together and individually, as well as enabling them to apply language successfully to their study of any subject, will enhance their learning development and way of thinking. Engaging exploratory talk is considered to be the most dynamic way of using language to foreground reasoning. More precisely, this talk enables relevant information to be shared, all members’ contributions are respected and all views and statements are carefully measured; any dispute is avoided and the group seeks mutual agreement before any decision is taken (Mercer, 2010). Critical and positive engagement with each other’s’ opinions, by offering their own reasons and views, can enable students to achieve a type of joint reasoning. Such an effective way of using language should be encouraged in education by educationists. The research presented here focuses on what occurs within the classrooms especially when children form a dialogic interaction to solve a pedagogic task. Exploratory talk enables creative contributions to the sense-making by each individual which can be synthesised through discussions and finally offer the most useful explanation and enhance understanding (Mercer, 2000).

## **4.7 Levels of Analysis**

Mercer (2004) stated that this categorisation of talk is a useful tool for analysing talk in learning contexts. Thus, to analyse talk which is used in any joint cultural activity it is essential to include the types of talk that have been mentioned by analysing them based in three levels: the linguistic level, the psychological and the cultural.

The linguistic level is used to study talk as spoken text and examine the content and function of talk as well as its structure. At this level disputational talk is typified by assertions, cumulative talk is characterised by repetitions and elaborations while the exploratory talk is expressed with questions for clarifications and answers which offer explanations (Mercer, 1995; 1996). The psychological level of talk is used for analysing talk as thought and action (Mercer, 1995; 1996). The way individuals cooperate, the relation of the topics chosen for conversations with their personal interests as well as to what extent thinking is developed through talk are the main analytical concerns at this level. At this level, disputational talk operates in a competitive level and no shared opinion is developed, while cumulative talk is characterised by solidarity and constant repetition of ground rules so that the different views of the speakers are confirmed and utilised. Cumulative, as well as exploratory talk, operate in a compromised dialogic context and aim to achieve common agreement. Moreover, at this level, the exploratory talk promotes reasoning through the consideration of the views of all speakers and the evaluation of all statements until explicit agreement is achieved before taking actions and decisions (Mercer, 1996).

The third level talk is the cultural level which examines the educational value of talk and it involves the close observation of the nature of talk that is used and also valued within the boundaries of school (Mercer, 1995; 1996). Exploratory talk is the most important analytic category at this level because of its accountability, clarity, constructive criticism and acceptance of arguments which are necessary and highly valued in the educational setting. This level is relevant and has analytic importance for this research and will be discussed in the data analysis chapter.

#### **4.8 Educational importance**

The role of teachers in fostering specific types of talk is important since they can support children and help them to utilise language for specific functions in certain ways so that they gain access to educated discourse (Mercer, 1995). It has been established that education should focus on introducing to students ways of using language as a means of exchanging, finding and constructing knowledge (Mercer et al. 1999). Van Lier (1988) stated that teachers, who aim for the development of cognitive language learning, use questions as a method of teaching, so that students do a lot of thinking, with the intention that this method will result in more language and learning development. However, some answers may be short and simple questions may offer long answers. Cognitive development cannot be measured in terms of the amount of language production (Van Lier, 1988). Teachers should introduce children into the ways language can be used for collective thinking in the educational context (Mercer, 2004). In relation to this, teachers have to offer explicit support to their students on how to use language for sharing and constructing knowledge by guiding them in

conversational interactions and explaining the purposes of certain activities. Teachers have the responsibility to create the foundations for new meaning based on prior learning through the use of the most important tool that is language (Mercer, 2000). Language as a cultural tool can only be applied after the teacher's appropriate guidance which will foster intellectual development.

#### **4.9 Research Questions**

My fourth main research question aroused from the literature is comprised by two subquestions. The main research is the following:

4. Does translanguaging support communication particularly “exploratory talk”?

4.1 What types of talk were evidenced in the classroom during discussions?

#### **4.10 Conclusion**

This chapter presents Vygotsky's sociocultural theory about language as a tool for learning and highlighted the important role that people play in helping children to learn. The Vygotskian approach is the key theoretical concept which will enable the interpretation of the data of this research by trying to examine whether the relationship between the social and the cultural meaning making can lead to individual understanding always through the use of language as a tool for learning and thinking. This chapter examined relevant literature about the ways students in mainstream classrooms use language to generate common understandings through guidance and support by a knowledgeable other or/and via collective work in the classroom.

## **CHAPTER 5: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter discusses the methodology which is used to explore and investigate the way 18 students in a primary school in Cyprus acquire literacy. Additionally, this study explores the bidialectal social context of Cyprus where Cypriot students with and without specific learning difficulties are integrated, socialised and educated, and where Cyprus dialect (CD) constitutes an essential part of their daily routine while Standard Modern Greek (SMG) is the official language of the island.

This study follows the methodological orientation of ethnography. The chapter begins with a detailed description of theory around ethnography, and then moves on to the exploration of classroom ethnography and linguistic ethnography and how these approaches and their methods have informed and shaped this research. Finally, the chapter describes the aims and the purposes of the study.

## **5.2 Methodology**

### **5.2.1 Ethnography - Classroom Ethnography**

Methodology is associated with the theoretical orientation which underpins the research as well as the methods related with it (Pole & Morrison, 2003). Brewer (2000) states that ethnography can be understood if it is regarded as a method as well as methodology. Methodology determines the use of the methods which define whether a method is ethnographic according to certain circumstances. Methodology is the architecture of the research endeavour and includes design and methods and therefore they cannot be analysed independently (Pole & Morrison, 2003). Blommaert (2006) argues that ethnography is often considered as a method for obtaining specific types of information. Additionally, he states that in the field of language, ethnography is considered as a methodology and a series of facts and experiences which can provide information about “context” (Blommaert, 2006).

This research’s methodological philosophy is based on ethnography and follows the principles of classroom ethnography. It is characterised by a strong empirical approach (Wiersma, 1995), since it involves the collection of firsthand information on literacy development of an identified group of 9 year old students. More precisely it is a fourth grade classroom of 18 students in a primary school in a rural area of Cyprus. The research is a linguistic ethnography of a primary classroom in a village in South East Cyprus. It is oriented around the philosophy of classroom ethnography since it examines students’ behavior, learning activities, social interactions and discourse in

formal and semi-formal educational setting mainly in their school classroom (Watson-Gegeo, 1997; Hornberger & Corson, 1997).

Classroom ethnography “highlights the sociocultural nature of teaching and learning processes, integrates participants’ viewpoints on their own behavior and examines holistically and with sensitivity the levels of social context where interactions in classrooms occur” (Watson- Gegeo, 1997 p.135). It is linked with the analysis of activities, behavior, communication and discourse in educational contexts such as, school classrooms and day-care centers through the use of ethnographic and sociolinguistic or discourse analysis research methods (Watson - Gegeo, 1997).

Pole & Morrisson (2003, p. 16) defined ethnography as:

*“An approach to social research based on the first- hand experience of social action within a discrete location, in which the objective is to collect data which will convey the subjective reality of the lived experience of those who inhabit that location.”*

Ethnography is characterised by a long-term, holistic and rigorous investigation of people’s attitudes in their natural social context; it tries to understand, analyse and explain social structures and cultural perceptions which guide people’s actions and create knowledge for certain social groups (Watson-Gegeo, 1988; 1997). Watson - Gegeo (1988) explained the reason why ethnography is holistic; that is because any action, behavior of a social group and any feature of a culture is primarily examined and explained in relation to the whole context to which it belongs. For example, classroom interactions of Greek – Cypriot students during a lesson can be analysed

moving from the micro context (such as, teacher- student interactions) to the macro context of such relations, examining the lesson from a broad perspective which involves school, community, educational officials, educational policy of Cyprus and society.

Classroom ethnography engages in detailed and systematic observation of a classroom in order to record a large amount of classroom activities on audio or video tape (Watson- Gegeo, 1997). At the end of each observation in this research study, a detailed report is provided including descriptions of the classroom context, patterns of students' behavior and educational performance, social rules and culture perspectives which shape participants' attitudes. Classroom ethnography's data analysis is mostly emic than etic (Watson- Gegeo, 1988; 1997). Emic research prioritises the perspective of the participants and refers to the way the group under study acquires knowledge which guides their behavior using their personal concepts, cultural viewpoints and understandings (Farah, 1997). In contrast, etic analyses impose an interpretation of the data based on existing notions and frameworks in the field of social sciences (Watson - Gegeo, 1988; 1997). They depend merely on the researcher's own cultural background and perspectives.

Classroom ethnographies have been used to study teaching methodologies, lesson structures, teaching of classroom subjects such as, reading and writing, teacher- student interactions in both first and second language teaching (Watson- Gegeo, 1997). In this study classroom ethnography investigates students' performances concerning literacy in the classroom, their learning behavior, choices of language within the classroom

setting, and examines the existing teaching methodologies of Cyprus' bidialectal educational context which favors the powerful and privileged language of SMG.

Ethnographers have to provide explanations about the social world they observe using qualitative descriptions of selected fieldnotes, vignettes and cases (Pole & Morrison, 2003). Ethnography offers teachers-researchers the opportunity to develop in -depth knowledge about the children they teach when insights can be gained for understanding teaching and learning processes (Aubrey et al., 2000). Ethnography is appropriate for investigating children's language use and development (Aubrey et al., 2000) and consequently it is a suitable approach for this research.

Ethnography is located within social research and has its roots in anthropology which is the study of societies (Hammerlsey & Atkinson, 2007; Scott, 1996; Burton & Bartlett, 2005). It provides opportunities for 'strong' descriptive accounts and interpretations of people or cultures free of imposed external concepts (Robson, 2002; Denscombe, 2003; Burton & Bartlett, 2005). Hitchcock and Hughes (1995) stated that ethnography provides everyday descriptions and gathers information from multiple sources in various ways. The widely used terms "thick" and "everyday" descriptions indicate that ethnography offers descriptions and interpretations of people's actions in a context such as a classroom, a community or a society through repeated daily and systematic observations and analysis over time (Toohey, 1997; Watson - Gegeo, 1988). Ethnographic studies can offer rich accounts regarding different layers of the social context such as culture, language, interactions and behaviors and systematically analyse and explain social contexts and the perspectives of various groups of people (Toohey, 1997). Ethnography aims to understand people's actions and behaviors involving the

researcher in a daily participation in people's lives for an extended period of time through systematic observation and collecting information available that may be related to the main research question (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; Aubrey et al., 2000). Pole & Morrison (2003) stated that ethnography deals with everyday situations and presents a distanced and objective analysis of everyday events of the social world by using insiders' accounts.

### **5.2.2 Methodological issues around ethnography**

Ethnography has received criticism from scholars' research areas claiming that "ethnography is loosely designed, opportunistically conducted, magically analysed and notoriously unreliable" (Eisenhart, 2001, p.19). Eisenhart argued that such negative judgments against ethnographic research are not substantiated. Issues of validity, rigor and reliability are interpreted and realized in ethnographic practice by the notion of 'trustworthiness' (Marshall and Rossman 1999). For example, they argue that the research methods should be linked epistemologically to the focus of the study and the research questions and the cyclical gathering of data in situ supports identification of patternings in analyses. They identify the challenge of bias in the study for the practitioner-researcher who brings deep knowledge of her setting and context, and the need for these researchers to develop sensitive critical awareness of their positioning.

Another concern related to ethnography is the tension that is created when ethnographic accounts have to provide and enhance deeper understandings of human life (Eisenhart, 2001). An ethnographer has to study and report descriptively details of human activities

and represent various opinions and different “voices”. Such concerns have changed the character of relationships from intimate to more collaborative type of relationships between the researcher and the participants as well as to various textual strategies that could represent multiple perspectives as well as the ethnographer’s voice (Eisenhart, 2001).

### **5.2.3 Issues of familiarity**

In recent times, ethnography has turned its attention to more routine aspects of life, such as life in classrooms (Denscombe, 2003). Likewise, this study is focused on 18 Greek- Cypriot students and the community where they are socialised as talkers, readers and writers. The group of students I am investigating is familiar to me and belongs to my own social environment. I am researching a familiar setting where I am a member of the particular society. As a participant observer, I needed to treat this setting as “anthropologically strange” so that assumptions taken for granted could be clarified (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Participant observation is discussed and explained further in this chapter.

The context of the research is very familiar to me. Farah (1997) stated that great familiarity with the culture and the participants may not permit to observe their characteristics and modify understanding. Therefore, familiarity can be an advantage and a disadvantage (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995). From a positive perspective, my familiarity with the research setting provides me with information of the organisation of the schooling environment, the teachers, the students, the headmaster and parents. This information is recorded and can provide supportive evidence for the research

(Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995; Blommaert, 2006). However, being too familiar with the setting can be a disadvantage since the rules of the setting do not have to be followed by the researcher to obtain useful data (Blommaert, 2006). Important patterns are sometimes difficult to distinguish in the familiar setting than in the unfamiliar; however, insider knowledge is essential during the research process (Miller, 2003).

A teacher- researcher investigating a familiar place can take for granted many aspects of the topic under examination (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995). The researcher has to tackle the problem of ‘making the familiar strange’ to avoid subjective opinions and taking for granted the familiar setting. An ethnographer who explores a social world and participates in a social action has to be sensitive to, and critically aware of, their influence or affect on the social setting with his/her actions and reactions. Most importantly, flexibility in actions is demanded so that he/she is accepted by the social actors (Pole & Morrison, 2003). I tried to be flexible in my teaching, letting students express themselves the way they felt more comfortable. In this way, I was able to develop communication with students who would otherwise remain silent.

After spending two years with the same students I have learned the way each student may react in certain situations in or out of the classroom in terms of behaviour and academic performance. However, I sometimes took for granted that my students were not so able to reproduce independently a story they had heard me reading. The real issue was that they were having difficulties reproducing orally the story in the way required in the formal educational context of the official Cyprus curriculum that is using SMG and words from the text in order to enrich their vocabulary. It took me

some time to realise that students needed to be able to understand the procedure of reproducing a story and acquiring narrative skills even those attained through their everyday experiences rather than just focusing to learn to use SMG.

Melzi & Caspe (1997) argued that “narrative is a long talk” which involves children in the construction of meaning only through language (Melzi & Caspe, 1997). Difficulties with storytelling may appear in classroom settings in terms of limited knowledge of the language and poorer cognitive skills. In relation to this research, narrative and literacy style that accompanies children when entering school has to be acknowledged by teachers in order for students to be able to achieve. This study investigates narrative skills, their language preferences in storytelling and the way they developed these skills influenced by the official educational demands.

The next issue I discuss in this chapter is linguistic ethnography as it is a methodology that this study uses to examine language, particularly SMG and CD, within the social context of Cyprus.

### **5.3 Linguistic Ethnography**

The term ‘linguistic ethnography’ was created by a group of English researchers (Rampton et al. 2004) who have developed a theorised position about methodology and methods which they argue is distinctive. I draw on their paper on linguistic ethnography in the following discussion of the methodology and methods in my research study.

Historically, linguistic ethnography has been greatly influenced by linguistic anthropology, ethnography of communication and interactional sociolinguistics (Creese, 2008; Blackledge & Creese, 2010). The well-known US anthropologist Dell Hymes, developed a methodology for studying language as a social phenomenon which underlined the relationship between language and culture. He was responding against linguistics ideas such as those of Chomsky who emphasised only a structural grammatical approach to linguistics (Tusting & Maybin, 2007). The concept of ‘ethnography of communication’ as developed by Hymes and others raised important questions about “what could be known about language as a social and cultural object or about knowledge of language necessarily being social and cultural knowledge” (Blommaert, 2007 p. 682). In the UK and Australia, Halliday’s ideas about the inter-association of language, social context and social order for meaning acquisition have been considered significantly in sociolinguistic research in education.

This research uses linguistic ethnography as a methodology since it studies language with culture to provide evidence that both are mutually shaping through the analysis of situated talk (Rampton et al., 2004). More precisely, this study examines discourse data for evidence to show children’s creative linguistic practices such as translanguaging practices, tensions in semantic availability as well as tensions of what is felt and what can be said and thus finds links between talk and reasoning. Such an examination enables the representation of the dynamic interaction between the institutionalised, social, conventional and the abilities and creative expression of individuals through the language and developing behavior of students (Rampton et al. 2004).

Blackledge & Creese (2010, p.61) argue that ‘linguistic ethnography takes a post-culturalist orientation by critiquing essential accounts of social life’. Linguistic ethnography is defined as the connection of the two terms “linguistic” and “ethnography” which examines language within the social context (Creese, 2008). Rampton (2007, p. 3) defined linguistic ethnography as “an umbrella term” that includes in its interactional space various research traditions such as interactional sociolinguistics, new literacy studies, neo Vygotskian research on language and cognitive development, specific types of critical discourse analysis and interpretive applied linguistics for language teaching. That is why this research can be examined under the wide spectrum of linguistic ethnography following the neo Vygotskian orientations on language and thinking. Despite the differences between these theoretical orientations, this research follows what linguistic ethnography concerns: the communicational context is examined in depth and not assumed while meaning is achieved through the ethnographic interpretation of social relations, educational commands and discursive practices (Rampton, 2007). The study analyses the internal structural character of verbal data in order to understand the way this data is positioned in the social context. Further, the study is concerned with the dynamic inter relation of persons, their encounters and the institutions of this relationship, where language is the primary connective tool. Language will be extensively studied as a psychological, interactional and a sociological phenomenon.

The combination of linguistic and ethnographic perspectives is used to provide an in-depth investigation of the interrelationship between language and social context (Tusting & Maybin, 2007). Linguistic ethnographers argue that language and social life

are linked and that talk is used for referential, evaluative, emotional and communication purposes while socialisation is a continuous process that uses talk and communication as primary tools (Tustin & Maybin, 2007). For example, children use talk extensively within the classroom context for negotiating their identities and that linguistic types are part of the educational context (Maybin, 2006). On the other hand, sociocultural researchers, such as Mercer, use Vygotskian concepts where language is a cultural tool as well as a psychological one. Language is the tool to develop intermental and intramental processes and to create knowledge collectively through talk (Mercer, 2010).

Both groups agree that talk is the primary tool for understanding education and that meanings within classroom are constantly negotiated via talk. It is accepted by both groups that teaching and learning depend on the local educational ideologies. Methods such as observations should be continuous and repeated over a series of lessons so that the analysis of data is not considered as simplistic and invalid (Mercer, 2010). This study shows that children's understanding is negotiated and constructed through their translanguaging practices indicating that cognitive, social and linguistic are relevant and thus linguistic ethnography and sociocultural theory are related.

Tusting & Maybin (2007) argued that the combination of linguistics with ethnography can be considered as a formal and well established method for analysing text together with the reflexive use of ethnographic methods which will provide an insight into social practices and the complexities of such social arrangements. Furthermore, Creese (2008) stated that ethnography enables linguistics to access the context through which language is being researched without having to use interactional analysis while linguistics offers an analysis of language without having to use ethnographic methods

such as fieldnotes or participant observation. Thus linguistic ethnography analysis uses the information and detail offered by local interactions as set within the wider social context (Creese, 2008).

Literacy studies that are based on the theoretical framework of linguistic ethnography, examine literacy by investigating the way people use literacy in their everyday life rather than on measurements of cognitive achievement that are related with educational success (Creese, 2008). This research is based on the premise that literacy practices are situated in context and are considered as social practices that can be studied by linguistic ethnography. The study has focused on the ways children learn literacy, without using assessments and tests, by examining in-depth each learner's background in order to understand their social world with their educational world through the use of both linguistic varieties, CD and SMG.

The differences between ethnography and linguistics are considered to be a matter of degree than of kind (Rampton et al., 2004). Research studies of language and culture use both fields in different ways and to different extents. For example, a linguistic analysis is used to describe the co-construction of culture and ethnographic concepts for the analysis of language/languageing. Traditionally, linguistics considers language as an independent decontextualised system, while ethnography studies culture as social behaviour which is a more general concept than language. The two approaches traditionally use different methods: linguistic studies may use standardised procedures-elicitation techniques, data-regularisation and rules of evidence- without considering the social and personal effects that lead the researcher to formulate his/her understandings. By contrast, ethnography does not use standardised procedures. It

adopts participant observations to capture the processes related with learning and considers the social contexts and cultural practices as informative and significant for analysis (Rampton et al. 2004). Another difference is that a linguistic approach seeks evidence related with language structure and use, and examines implied meanings only if they can be presupposed. Ethnography investigates naturally occurring contexts that provide evidence through rhetorical forms, vignettes and narratives so that the data can be fully understood by the reader and also to ensure the richness and full presence of the real “lived” evidence (Rampton et al., 2004).

#### **5.4 Challenges and limitations of linguistic ethnography**

The epistemological association of the two fields of “linguistics” and “ethnography” presents some contradictions, for example in defining the unit analysis (Creese, 2008). Hence, a challenge for linguistic ethnography is the methodological and epistemological issues related to the type of language that must be selected for analysis to serve both fields and enable the researcher to use both methodological frameworks and move between them. Creese (2008) argued that any research adopting linguistic ethnography has to define the object of the study and to use a common language to provide an insightful and dynamic description of the nature of social context and its discursive practices.

What is more, linguistic ethnography faces the challenge of differences between participants’ perspectives and the understanding of these perspectives from the researcher’s part (Tusting & Maybin, 2007). The researcher has to be able to analyse

the participants' views by also negotiating his/her personal perspectives so that reality is represented. Linguistic ethnography uses formal and structured tools for language description by which the researcher inevitably provides perspectives that are not situated closely to the participants' understandings of their social world or with their empirical linguistic experience. So that through their position as researchers, they can make statements that perhaps are not related to those of their research participants (Tusting & Maybin, 2007). An example of this perspective is indicated in the following extract drawn from a parent's interview:

#### 5.4 Extract 12: Parent Interview 12

- 111 T CD **What is your opinion about Cyprus Dialect?** Do you think it  
SMG has a positive or a negative influence at your child's learning?
- 112 M SMG What do you mean?
- 113 T CD **I mean.. do you believe that the dialect influences negatively  
with our language learning and so we cannot learn SMG  
very good?**
- 114 M CD **I do not understand your question. SMG and CD.. I mean  
we don't use the strong form of the dialect anymore. It is  
old fashioned, Very few people use it and still try to talk  
like that in the area here. You know like peasants..**
- 115 T CD **Well ok the dialect is not used just in this area**
- 116 M CD **Well I talk about this area. My daughter started using the  
strong dialect of the village and I try to make her stop  
because she does not realise that she is talking like that.. she  
listens to other children talking. I never liked these types of  
words and I always tried to learn my children not to use the  
strong dialect. For example my daughter may tell me "I  
want to eat that instead of "I want to eat it that" but I will  
correct her because I do not like that strong village accent..  
it is forgotten. The person who wants to use the strong  
dialect cannot realise that it has no value anymore. Well.. ok  
our SMG is not of the best quality but we cannot talk like  
Greek residents anyway**

**Phase 1 of analysis: transliteration of the data:** I ask the mother question seeking her views/opinion of CD influence child's learning. The mother seems not to understand the researcher's question which is related to the possible influence of CD in her child's learning. I provided the mother with a perspective that was not her understanding of language learning and so she provided me with a general answer regarding the use of CD and the mother's feelings about the inappropriateness of letting her children using the strong form of the CD variety.

**Phase 2: Analytic concepts:** Mother is attributing 'value' to CD and SMG, where CD has no value and speaking SMG has some value although not as much as the SMG spoken Greek residents. Here the mother has defined four ways of speaking across CD and SMG and attributed four distinct values to them. She has placed them on four different places on the continuum.

Moving on, another challenge of ethnography itself is the important role of the researchers' own political and general positioning for the shaping of the areas under study (Tusting & Maybin, 2007). Linguistic ethnography is informed by critical commitments associated with issues such as inequalities in education in multicultural, multilingual social contexts. Also, ethnographers studying their own community usually face the challenge of choosing a position or else selecting a side. However the combination of linguistics and ethnography sets its basis away from political views and critical positions and thus entails a more humanitarian and liberal character (Tusting & Maybin, 2007). Tusting & Maybin (2007) stated that this can be considered as strength of linguistic ethnography since it provides a wide space for answering a variety of questions and minimises the risk of bias that can be created. However, this can also be

considered as a weakness because it lacks the explicit expression of a political position and thus the answers to questions regarding social actions and structures can be assumed instead of examined.

This research faced exactly this challenge as an ethnographer researching in my own community. I faced the challenge of shaping my research interests contrary to the political positioning that was expressed by most of the local community, which included fellow teachers and parents such as the viewpoint that CD is an inferior linguistic variety that has a negative influence for learning. The challenge extended to the wider society's perspective of CD that was closely connected with feelings of nationalism and unity with Greece. That is why I have chosen this type of ethnography, to be based on an epistemological spectrum that combines both linguistic and ethnographic views and to be able to address and analyse issues such as linguistic inequalities and literacy development based on micro and macro levels of social structure.

#### **5.4.1 Reflexivity**

Ethnographers have to consider reflexivity and the way it influences their knowledge and opinions about the culture, the social world or events which will be described (Denscombe, 2003). Flexibility on the part of the researcher in the data collection and analysis is essential in an ethnographic study since it connects ethnographic analysis and the final account of an ethnographic text (Miller, 2003; Pole & Morrison, 2003).

Reflexivity is related to the impact that the researcher as an individual has on the research process (Robson, 2002). Being reflective is related to the ability of a researcher not to be influenced by his/ her personal feelings and opinions (Robson, 2002). Researchers are part of the social world they are investigating and already use conceptual tools based on their own cultural practices to comprehend the world (Denscombe, 2003). Rampton et al. (2004) argued that researchers following this post-structural orientation of linguistic turn in the humanities and social sciences have to be reflexive of their own intellectual assumptions and socio- historical positioning.

Furthermore, reflection of the reality of the situation under examination is an result of an ethnographic research written creatively in its own right (Denscombe, 2003). Researchers have to move beyond a simple reflection and provide their readers with insights of the possible influence of the researcher's self on representation of situations or social worlds (Denscombe, 2003). This research aims to represent the reality of the educational world of the primary classroom under study. Reflexive descriptions of the social context under investigation will be provided being aware of personal impact on the research.

Tusting and Maybin (2007) argued that the researcher in ethnographic research is also a participant and an observer and so becomes a member of the social context under study. This in depth involvement in social action raises implications as far as reflexivity in ethnography is concerned. The researcher becomes part of the social interpretive action and the created research and thus there is a danger of not being able to hold an objective position (Tustin and Maybin, 2007). This limitation is also relevant to linguistic ethnography where the active involvement of the researcher in social practice

influences the linguistic practices under investigation even if the participants are aware of the presence of recording equipment or through direct participation in language practices (Tustin & Maybin, 2007).

As a researcher I tried to hold an objective position in order to avoid influencing the interpretation of the language practices within the classroom. Children were aware of the recorder in the class but couldn't see it and this did not influence negatively the interpretation of the data but on the contrary it enabled the production of interesting data. As far as parents' interviews are concerned I faced issues such as trying to produce representations of the reality under study by negotiating my own analytical perspectives and the participants' perspectives.

## **5.5 Research Questions**

Using classroom ethnography I examine how students in a Cypriot classroom construct knowledge as they participate in academic activities in a social context which is characterised by the existence of two forms of linguistic varieties. This research uses Hornberger's model of the biliteracy continuum as the theoretical framework for examining bidialectal literacy landscape both in Cyprus (i.e. the wider context) and the particular way in which the literacy learning of students (with and without dyslexia-type literacy difficulties) is constructed in the classroom context. Using linguistic ethnography the two forms of language, SMG and CD, are explored by being placed on a biliteracy continuum with SMG being the language of power placed on the macro level of the continuum and CD the less privileged, placed on the micro level.

This research is based on the children in my classroom and I use linguistic ethnography methods to investigate and interpret the development of children's learning through the use of the two existing linguistic varieties -SMG and CD-. In addition the use of children's translanguaging and literacy practices during classroom conversations is closely examined. This study also supports that students should have the opportunity to develop literacy practices that match to standard language -that is SMG- so that they can engage in the full process of reading and writing the standard language. Further, this study aims to show how language development and learning must be seen as cultural as well as cognitive (Conteh et al, 2005).

The research questions which drive the investigation are:

1. How are CD and SMG considered in the Greek Cypriot social and academic context according to the biliteracy continuum relations?
  - 1.1 Where are CD and SMG situated according to the biliteracy continuum relations?
  - 1.2 What are the local perceptions of CD and SMG regarding their educational, social and historical value?
2. How do translanguaging and literacy practices enhance academic learning in the Greek- Cypriot classroom context?
  - 2.1 To what extent does translanguaging enhance students' with learning difficulties academic learning?
  - 2.2 How does the teacher incorporate translanguaging in the classroom?
3. To what extent do students with and without learning difficulties collaborate by drawing on all of their linguistic resources to understand, construct knowledge and achieve the pedagogic task?

3.1 Does translanguaging serve as a facilitator for communication as well as a mediator for acquiring or negotiating meaning and achieving deeper understandings for students with and without specific learning difficulties?

3.2 How does students' (with and without learning difficulties) engagement in translanguaging practices assist their learning?

3.3 How does the teacher incorporate translanguaging in the whole classroom?

4. Does translanguaging support communication particularly "exploratory talk"?

4.1 What types of talk were evidenced in the classroom during discussions?

## **5.6 Research Design**

Obtaining information from multiple sources and reflecting on various perspectives can provide great understanding about aspects of students' daily learning and literacy development. The following table<sup>1</sup> presents this research's design which includes the data sources used according with the purpose for this study and methods of data collection and data analysis.

TABLE 1: Research design

Data Sources	Data Collection	Data Analysis	The purpose of analysis
<b>National</b>	Curriculum Policy Documents	Collection of documents	Data are analysed based on Hornberger's continuum model. Hornberger's model of biliteracy is the theoretical framework which informs the analysis of these data.
<b>School</b>	School's headmaster Teaching staff School policy Teaching methods Staff meetings	Interview Audio recording Fieldnotes Observations	Data are transcribed and coded and analytic patterns are discussed. Hornberger's model of biliteracy is the theoretical framework which informs the analysis of these data.
<b>Parents</b>	- Attitudes - Opinions regarding CD	Interview	Interview data are transcribed. The parents' responses are analysed and categorised and analytic patterns are identified.  1. To offer the parents' perceptions of CD and SMG in education. 2. To examine the parents' perceptions of the language of home and language of school in order to reveal the etic perspective of the local community concerning learning. 3. To provide a further data source about CD and SMG in education.
<b>Classroom (Literacy)</b>	Children's perspectives Activities Textbooks Spoken interactions Pedagogy	Audio recording Children's textbooks	Interactions in class group are recorded, transcribed and analysed. Patterns of analytic concepts are revealed through the observation data and audio recordings.  To investigate the emic perspective of the class group, how knowledge is structured by the class group and to show the influence of CD, which lies at the less powerful end of the biliteracy continuum.

## **5.7 Participants**

Choosing the sample of a study (from whom the data will be obtained) is an essential first stage which a researcher must consider. A representative sample will ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings of the study (Marshall and Rossman, 2011). Participants were chosen from my class since I am the classroom teacher and I am already familiar with the classroom as well as the school population. The sample is also representative of the situation under study and since access to the school and permission from the headmaster has been gained, this study can go forward (Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Fraenkel and Wallen, 2006). In addition, the choice of class group was circumstantial as it was not feasible for me to choose a different class group for my research. However, I negotiated with the head teacher to continue teaching the same class group for another year, which was an exceptional practice. Therefore, the selection of this group of students the next year was purposive and had been chosen because it served the purposes of the investigation (Wellington, 1996; Fraenkel and Wallen, 2006; Cohen et al., 2007).

This study was conducted in a primary school in a village in South Eastern Cyprus in the non-occupied area of Famagusta. Specifically, it examines one of the two Year 4 classrooms which consist of 18 students, 9 girls and 9 boys, aged 9. 17 out of 18 parents agreed to be interviewed; parents also agreed for their children to be observed after personal communication with them and assuring anonymity, confidentiality and the right to withdraw. In addition, I gave each parent a written report which included the purpose of the research, the conditions of the research and the possible duration of the interviews and after discussing the issue with the school's headmaster.

## **5.8 Conclusion**

Over the years, ethnographies in education have had practical and political importance since they provided insights and discontinuities between home and educational contexts such as the curricular and instructional changes that focused on the improvement of minority children's academic progress. This chapter provided a detailed discussion of ethnography and specifically linguistic ethnography, which is used in this study. An in depth exploration of the cultural and social context of the micro context of the bidialectal classroom and the macro context of the community can be a pioneering effort for education in Cyprus.

## CHAPTER 6: RESEARCH METHODS

### 6.1 Introduction

Methodology is the theoretical approach of a research study while methods are the tools for data collection and analysis (Pole & Morrison, 2003). Brewer (2000) stated that ‘method’ refers to the tools which are utilised in the research process, such as interviews, questionnaires, participant observation, and other techniques with which information is collected and analysed.

This ethnographic study uses a variety of research methods. Ethnographic methods include, participant observation, in depth and face-to face interviews, analysing documents, fieldnotes and researcher reflection/ journaling (Eisenhart, 2001). These are the basic ethnographic methods and are characterised by first hand involvement in the context of the people who are being studied. Participant observations and ethnographic interviews are the main methods of ethnographic studies around the world. Being involved in people’s activities by observing carefully and becoming a part of their group, conversations and connections, are the best methods of learning and understanding the meaning of their actions but also to understand what is meaningful to them (Eisenhart 2001).

The research methods which are used in this study will be presented beginning with observation, field notes, then documents and finally in-depth interviews. Collecting data with more than one method enhanced the process of triangulation and in this study most suitable is the triangulation between methods (Delamont, 2002). Methods of data analysis will be shortly presented in table 2.

This chapter presents the research methods as well as the ethical considerations associated with this study as follows: participant observation, fieldnotes and in-depth interview. Finally, issues such as, trustworthiness and triangulation are discussed and related with this study.

TABLE 2: Summary of data sources and methods of data collection

Data Sources		Data Collection
<b>National</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National curriculum of primary education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collection of documents</li> </ul>
<b>School</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School's headmaster</li> <li>• Teaching staff</li> <li>• School's policy</li> <li>• Staff meetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tape recording</li> <li>• Fieldnotes</li> <li>• Observations</li> </ul>
<b>Parents</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attitudes</li> <li>• Opinions regarding CD</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviews</li> </ul>
<b>Classroom</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Material- textbooks</li> <li>• Pedagogy</li> <li>• Learning activities</li> <li>• Interactions (around learning and socialising)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Audio recording</li> <li>• Observation</li> <li>• Fieldnotes</li> <li>• Collecting copies of student's coursework and tests</li> </ul>

## 6.2 Observation

A primary method used in this study is systematic and participatory classroom observation. Observation is demanding and time- consuming; however participant observation is an essential and well established method in ethnographic studies (Robson, 2002). In this study,

I observed students in my classroom daily and audio recorded them at least three times per week for a school year. During this period I was also observing and taking fieldnotes, gathering students' written work and any other documents which would serve the purpose of my study. It was time-consuming because after audio recording a 45 minutes lesson I had to listen and transcribe the whole recording which sometimes was not easy to understand because of the various noises in the classroom. Also, due to the fact that I was the teacher of the classroom and could not write any notes while I was teaching, I had to write everything as soon as the bell rang for break.

Observation as a method provides rich, contextual data and can take various forms. It can be formal and overt or formal and covert with those being observed being unaware of the observer (Robson, 2002; Aubrey et al. 2000). This study used participant observation since students in my classroom were observed daily overtly in my role as the teacher of the classroom. Behaviours that occurred in the classroom and school, such as language forms, relationships and discourses were observed. The school's staff attitudes regarding CD and their general concerns about their students' achievement were written in my fieldnotes since this evidence is related to the context of the school, the existing perceptions and the research as a whole.

Active participation and first hand involvement in the social world under investigation is essential for successful participant observation (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Hitchcock & Hughes (1995; Pole & Morrison, 2003) stated that teacher- ethnographers observe, participate, talk, listen, form relationships, socialise, learn and record any new language or dialect and experience reality as the participants do (Pole & Morrison 2003; Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Observation is an important method used in qualitative research. It is used to uncover and highlight complex relations in natural social contexts. A participant observer

can provide insider accounts “through the eyes of the informants” (Pole & Morrison, 2003, p. 20).

Participant observation is the most suitable type of observation for this research since a key characteristic is that the observer tries to become a member of the group under investigation and provide inside information (Wei & Moyer, 2008). As I was the class teacher I was physically present in their daily school life, with access to their social world, habits, their use of language and non-verbal communication and thus a member of the group under study. This research involved intensive, detailed observation of a classroom over a period of one year and observations were supplemented by other methods, such as fieldnotes, interviews with parents, use of documents such as students’ coursework, Ministry’s of Education curriculum and school’s policy.

Observations were undertaken daily during language lesson or other lessons and sometimes during breaks. I chose to observe students’ participation and language choice when discussions were conducted in the classroom and this information was audio recorded or written in my fieldnotes. Students’ literacy and translanguaging practices, reading comprehension ability and their writing skills were observed. More importantly I recorded conversations between particular children when they were involved in collaborative co-construction of knowledge based on talk with other students. This data will be presented further in the analysis chapter. During break-time I focused my attention on children who were silent in the classroom but during break-time especially when playing in the playground, they were thriving of participation when playing with other children and they were actively exchanging their views in CD. The audio recordings were transcribed in the language used by the students, which were CD as well as SMG, without any changes so that the materiality of students talk was maintained.

### **6.3 Limitations of observations**

Since I was the teacher of the Greek- Cypriot class in my study, this observation method had advantages and disadvantages. Reflexivity was an issue since I was a researcher who already knew the group extensively and similarly, the problem of subjectivity had to be approached through sensitivity if credible and trustworthy outcomes were to be achieved (Robson, 2002). Further, it is well known that ethnographers solve the problem of subjectivity by using various methods for obtaining and comparing data, referred to as triangulation, to ensure that what the researcher interprets reflects the understandings of the participants (Hammersley, 1990). Being an insider in the school community was an advantage since it enabled me to become a participant observer and also participants' behaviour was natural since they knew me very well. However a disadvantage was that it took a lot of energy while I was being both a teacher and a researcher. As the class teacher I had to meet my curriculum teaching responsibilities to the pupils, while at the same time I was a participant observer researcher who had to record all the details that I possibly could for my research purposes.

### **6.4 Fieldnotes**

Observation generates fieldnotes, that is systematic noting and recording of issues related to the social context under investigation (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Documentation of the data obtained from participant observation consists of field notes and recorded in field note books. Fieldnotes is a research activity and note taking of good quality and detail can provide useful information. It is a detailed and non-judgmental description of observed events, behavior and complex actions which must be characterised by conscious awareness by the researcher (Hammersley & Atkinson 2007). Fieldnotes are selective since it is not

possible to note everything that occurs in the research context under investigation and my selection of scenarios to take notes on is informed by my research questions.

Notes were written up soon after the lesson finished in my field notebook so that information could be recalled and not be forgotten. This task was difficult in this research since sometimes notes were taken while teaching because of the rich and continuous input I was receiving from the students. However, opportunities for this were limited and once they appeared notes were carefully written so that natural participation was not prevented (Hammersley & Atkinson 2007).

For one year, research fieldnotes of observation data as well as records of professional activities and conversations were maintained. I collected a great deal of data reflecting information and emerging patterns across my work: teaching, other activities and relationships. I include below two extracts that illustrate the range of my fieldnotes. Example 1, shows how students' participation was increased when they started discussing using their local language variety; example 2 indicates the language ideology which exists in the school, generated through observation of school staff meetings.

### **Example 1: 1<sup>st</sup> week of academic year 2009- 2010**

**23/09/2009**

During a lengthy discussion in language lesson, I noticed that students felt tired using SMG continuously. In the middle of the discussion, some of the students who were quiet, started to participate using the dialect to share their opinion, usually remembering an event from their personal experience. Once this happened, the whole classroom switched linguistic codes and used CD. The scene changed completely and the classroom was now very loud! I tried to reframe their sentences using dialogue but without asking them to repeat them using SMG. Repetition was not my goal but association of the two forms of language and possible creation of awareness of the differences. Some students understood what I was trying to do and managed to use SMG when it was their turn to talk with some dialectical occurrences. Once writing was next, most students found it difficult to structure their ideas and use appropriate vocabulary.

## Example 2: 2<sup>nd</sup> week of academic year 2009- 2010

**28/09/2009**

During a staff meeting, teachers under the supervision of the headmaster formulated two specified goals for this academic year:

1. The development of oral and written speech in SMG.
2. The development of reading comprehension in SMG.

Teachers stated that in the area of "A" children have limited abilities of expressing themselves fluently in Modern Greek language mainly because of their poor vocabulary as well as of the intensive use of CD in the particular area. In addition, the limited opportunities that children have for attending social and cultural events such as the theatre, festivals, visits to museums, reading books influence their language development. Teachers seemed to refer to it as a negative characteristic of children's speech affecting their literacy achievement. The school management after discussions with the school's teachers presented some ways of confronting the problem. No one has thought of the possible positive influence L1 (CD) has on L2 (SMG). The following suggestions were made:

- Narration of story
- Giving a variety of themes for developing their written speech based on their everyday experiences.
- Creating their own story with a vocabulary given by the teacher.
- Dramatising dialogues, theatrical presentation in class.

The above goals indicated that the schools of the area recognise the existence of CD; however, it was considered that CD influences negatively language learning. The two main

goals do not specify how they will assist students with specific learning difficulties; they refer only to students with 'common or garden difficulties' (Gough and Tunmer 1986) but with only limited knowledge and difficulties in applying SMG in their general educational development.

Mercer (2010) stated that some researchers used only field notes for studying the context of a school, a classroom or members of a community by noting the discussions and actions of the participants. However, nowadays audio recordings are used for capturing talk and then an analysis of the most descriptive extracts from transcriptions is provided. Recordings are safer since it enables the researcher to capture every conversation within a certain context. Creese & Copland (2015) argued that by writing field notes we keep observation open, choosing to describe what seems to be important for our participants but also enables the researcher to record our emotions, feelings, values and opinions. Field notes in my note book helped me to write the most important issues that I observed during the lesson and thus focus more when I transcribed them into my computer. This method also enabled me to keep notes of any issue that was raised without having to take out my recorder and then change the discursive environment by making perhaps some children feel uncomfortable (Aubrey et al. 2000). I provide the following example from my field notes here I focused on S18's translanguaging and where body language could also be illustrated.

### **Example 3: Week 10 /Fieldnotes**

Reading a new text- Questions for comprehension- discussion: The text was analysed through conversations and answering questions.

**Student 18:** This student answered using only the Cypriot dialect. He started talking using his hands to show me how the man would be built and got right into the point without introduction: “**I get the iron; I take small pieces of iron and connect them**”. He was understandable but if it was to write it down then it would be wrong according to the language policy of Cyprus education.

As far as recording is concerned it was an important method in this study. Recording talk enabled me to capture phenomena such as students’ translanguaging, as well as literacy practices. Recording interviews and naturally occurring talk afforded for a more accurate and trustworthy analysis. Unlike ethnographic field notes- which are more personal and selective- recordings provide other researchers the opportunity to analyse and interrogate observe the data independently and draw their own theorisations (Clemente 2008). This study is more interested in naturally occurring phenomena so recording was considered an important method for capturing the realities of the classroom context and for repeated observation of the data to support analysis.

## **6.5 Documents**

As part of the analysis I used policy documents from the Ministry of Education, documents from in-service teachers’ education regarding the new curriculum that was implemented in

the academic year of 2011-2012 to reveal the complexities of Cyprus' language education. Particularly I refer to the analytic curriculum for Standard Modern Greek (2011) as well as to the most recent announcement of the MOEC (2013) about the aims of Cypriot education and the theoretical framework that underpins language education in Cyprus. These documents were used to show the challenges of education in Cyprus. CD and its use in education is not mentioned in the most recent announcement of MOEC (2013) but refers to the excellent construction, use and understanding of SMG through child-centered approaches and using multimodal material according to students' age, interests and experiences. The use of official documents and transcripts enabled triangulation (Delamont, 2002) but also more detailed accounts of data that enhanced the analytic patterns that emerged.

## **6.6 In-depth interviews**

'Interview' is defined as a speech event which uses at least two linguistic varieties, the language used by the researcher and the one spoken by the interviewee (Rubio, 1997). This study uses in-depth interviews as one of its research methods with some ethnographic aspects such as that they investigate and explore the beliefs of people involved in the research (Hammersley, 1999) and that the interviewee is encouraged to answer questions in their own way and exchange questions with the interviewer (Pole & Morrison, 2003).

In- depth interviewing is a research method used in qualitative research and is described as a form of conversation with purpose that enables the construction of knowledge through social interaction (Legard et al., 2003). Boyce & Neale (2006) noted that in-depth interviews involve conducting interviews with a small group of participants to elicit, and

investigate, their ideas and opinions about a matter. Holstein & Gubrium (1997) argued that the researcher doing in-depth interviews does not just transmit knowledge acquired by the participant but knowledge is created through a collaborative relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee. Interviews in this study were characterized by such a collaborative relationship since the researcher was participating and offering her views regarding issues the participants were raising and did not focus just on transferring the opinions of the participants.

Specific characteristics of in-depth interviews remained consistent through the years. An important characteristic is that in-depth interviews combine structure with flexibility (Legard et al., 2003). The researcher has in mind certain topics that will be explored during the interview but these themes can be covered according to the interviewee's most suited purpose, and in this way realising the in-depth interview's flexible structure (Legard et al. 2003). Similarly interviews in this study interrogated specific topics that addressed the research questions but were introduced in line with the nature of each interview.

A second important feature of in-depth interviewing is its interactive nature. The interaction starts with an initial question from the researcher which is performed in such a way that encourages the participant not only to provide the necessary information but also to feel sufficiently comfortable and free to provide more than a 'yes/no' answer (Legard et al. 2003). Thirdly, the interviewer uses different techniques to encourage the participant to offer in-depth information. For example, the interviewer may seek more explanation of specific issues or explore further some responses as well as the reasons, feelings, opinions and beliefs behind a participant's specific answer. Fourthly, participants may be asked to give their own opinions, ideas or suggestions about a specific topic or by suggesting solutions or changes about a matter (Legard, et al. 2003). Parents in this study were asked

to provide their suggestions and views about the educational system of Cyprus mostly related with linguistic issues and teaching methods.

Semi-structured in-depth interviews used in qualitative research can be conducted either individually or in groups. Interviews in this study are considered as semi-structured since predetermined questions according to the topics I wanted to investigate were used together with questions that emerged from the dialogue between me and the participants (DiCicco Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). Semi-structured interviews can be like everyday conversations and are regarded as an independent research method that can provide information about participants' everyday social interaction (Blommaert, 2006). Blommaert (2006) argued that interviews are a particular type of conversation such as an ordered conversation formed by questions that the researcher wishes to address to the individuals and discuss. Conversation is talk between individuals where natural conversational engagement is expected and not an interrogation (Blommaert, 2006). In this study I tried to create a friendly environment during the interview so that parents would not feel that they were being interrogated about their child. Fortunately, due to my in-depth involvement with students and my daily contacts with parents most of them felt that we were having a friendly but purposeful conversation.

Boyce and Neale (2006) argue that in-depth interviews are appropriate when a researcher wants to examine in detail an individual's thoughts and behaviours. Individual in-depth interviews enable the researcher to explore deeply specific social and personal matters (DiCicco Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). This research uses in-depth individual interviews, since expanded and more in-depth information can be obtained about perspectives and attitudes of parents regarding students' learning and development, especially in combination with observational data. Observations along with interviews increased the

depth and detail of the data of this study. In addition, informal discussions and phone conversations were conducted frequently, at least twice a week, with parents on their child's progress in school, behavioural problems they or I encountered and other issues that were important. These informal discussions were part of the research as well as part of my teacher duties, as teacher in Cyprus have one hour per week for meeting parents. The information obtained was informally written in my diary and then rewritten on the computer together with observational data.

The main issues of the interview were oriented by the research questions. Questions were designed having in mind the topics that I wanted to address with parents and I tried to be flexible as well as to provide questions which could be explained in order to avoid misunderstandings (Wellington, 1996; Denscombe, 2003). An in-depth interview is conducted face to face aiming to capture comprehensive understandings and meanings and where the data are obtained in a natural way by audio-recording (Legard, et al. 2003). Interviews took place privately in a quiet room of the school where the parent-participants felt comfortable and focused, and were aware that their responses were recorded. The interviews took four weeks and were conducted at school and not in the natural environment of the participants because some parents worked in the fields, and in factories, hotels, and tourist shops, and very few in the government. Their work meant that they had a difficult daily schedule and preferred to arrange a time in the morning to come to the school for about 45 minutes either before going to work or taking a 45 minutes break from work.

Recording has to include the participants' answers as well as the researcher's contributions (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995). My contributions were recorded since during the interview I clarified questions that the participants could not understand or added more comments so

that they could expand their views and also changed my position from researcher to teacher or vice-versa so that I could interrogate more thoroughly as ethnographic research demands.

Permission from the parents was obtained to audio-record the interviews and conversations with them as well as with the children. Parents were interviewed regarding their child's educational performance, the difficulties the child encountered with homework, and their own opinion regarding the use of CD in the classroom. Their opinion was also asked regarding the language differences that children in Cyprus confront when entering school and what they thought were the main difficulties they observed concerning their child's literacy development. From some informal talks I had with some parents I noticed that they believed that CD was affecting their children's literacy achievement and that children write the way they speak. Mostly, CD was considered as a barrier for learning and as a language used by 'peasants'. This evidence will be discussed in chapter 7 of my data analysis.

Parents in this study were free to use their familiar language in order to provide responses that were not irrelevant to the question justifying the interactive nature of in-depth interviews (Legard, et al. 2003). Questions were addressed by using SMG as well as CD. Most of the questions were open-ended questions so that the participants could express their views which could explore more deeply relevant social and personal issues. Also I avoided using SMG extensively so that the interview would not become formal as SMG is the official language used in formal occasions. I thought of ways to make the interviewees feel comfortable especially during the first few minutes of the interviews. It seems that the degree to which participants feel at ease during this early period is what ensures the quality of in-depth interviews (Legard et al., 2003).

The success of in-depth interviews is based on the ability of the researcher to create a good relationship with the interviewee and the creation of a trusting climate where the interviewer accepts the participants' opinions and shows understanding and respect towards the individuality of each participant (Legard et al. 2003). For example, some parents were defensive when certain topics were discussed while others expressed their views without any hesitation asking my opinion at the same time. I suggest that parents' defensiveness was driven by the fact that they were positioning me as an authority figure. Nevertheless, I accepted their opinions and was respectful towards their views by listening and responding to them appropriately. Their opposition to the use of CD was usually presented in questions related to language such as the use of CD in the classroom. Below, I give one example of these data from interview 5.

#### **Data excerpt 6.6 Parent Interview 5**

- |        |                   |  |
|--------|-------------------|--|
| 205. T | SMG<br><b>CD</b>  | ..Do you think that CD should be more obvious <b>in the classroom.. do you think that the teacher could use CD in the classroom or just use it at certain points?</b>  |
| 206. F | SMG               | Our Cyprus dialect?  |
| 207. T | SMG               | Yes  |
| 208. F | <b>CD</b>         | <b>I believe that it shouldn't be used in the classroom at all.</b>  |
| 209. T | <b>CD</b>         | <b>At all, never?</b>  |
| 210.F  | <b>CD</b>         | <b>Well, SMG must be the language that they use in the classroom. CD is used every day and they learn it from us and their everyday interactions anyway</b>  |
| 211. T | SMG               | That's right. Perhaps we could use CD to <b>provide further explanations in simpler words for some points that they didn't understand. What do you think about this?</b>   |
| 212. F | SMG               | Yes, absolutely  |
| 213. T | <b>CD</b>         | OK. <b>So you think that CD..</b>  |
| 214. F | SMG/<br><b>CD</b> | For me, it's unacceptable- <b>not that it's..well..</b> - it's unacceptable for <b>the teacher to speak CD in the classroom. She/ he has to talk to them in SMG. It's unacceptable to talk CD. I am telling you this regardless of my political beliefs or other</b> |

In the second interview the father feels strongly that SMG should be the language of learning in school, and gives several examples of why CD should not be used at school. The parental interviews offered richly varying data about the use of CD in schooling.

## **6.7 Limitations of interviews**

The three main limitations of collecting interview data are: i) limited data collected ii) long term engagement with a community and iii) issues with ‘truth’ of views. Firstly, interviews can limit the amount and the types of specific topics and details that a researcher is able to gather (Codó, 2008). Secondly, long time engagement within a community is needed in order to produce interviews that will offer rich information and enable the participants to open up. However, this type of engagement is time consuming and requires intensive fieldwork as well as extra time to transcribe and analyse the results (Boyce and Neale, 2006). The third limitation is the issue of truth. Participants’ responses may not reflect the truth and their real self either because they feel constrained by the interview or because they want to please the researcher (Boyce & Neale, 2006). Such untrue responses can lead to the production of inaccurate conclusions. What I tried to do in order to overcome this drawback was to enhance the friendliness between me and the speakers, make them feel that I am part of their community, use the local dialect and not be so formal and thus modify my interview style.

## **6.8 Other ethnographic studies**

Four other studies used similar research methods for examining the linguistic and communicative practices in school settings. Two of these studies included bilingual

learners. Maybin (2006) used observation and recordings of students' school day which later influenced the shaping of the conceptual framework for the analysis of children's communicative practices. The focus of my study was the investigation of children's involvement in the collaborative use of language in daily life and the way this involvement affects their knowledge and enhances joint construction of meaning. The observations of this study emerged partly through my participation, as teacher-researcher, in classroom activities and through relationship building with students, school staff and parents. Ethnographic interviews with students were also conducted in a friendly and trusting environment that was achieved by gaining close relations with children. By contrast, Maybin (2006) had to gain permission to enter the school context under study as well as to create strong relationships with the participants. Her research did not focus on translanguaging practices or the way students with learning difficulties construct knowledge in the classroom setting.

Creese and Blackledge (2010) studied examples of flexible bilingualism in complementary schools and focused on the bilingual strategies used in complementary classrooms. Methods such as observation, audio recordings and interviewing were used for the purpose of their ethnographic case studies. Audio recordings were transcribed and extracts of conversation data were analysed. There are several differences between this project and my own. First, is that it was undertaken in four different schools and observations in classrooms used team ethnographic approach for identifying the key participants of each school. Further, the schools were 'complementary' to the mainstream schools, and did not need to follow the full national curriculum of subject areas. Another difference was that interviews involved not only parents but also teachers, administrators and the key participant children. In addition, this research project used photographs and important

documents to enrich their evidence. Both in school assembly and within the context of the classroom, students and teachers used both of their linguistic varieties to negotiate meanings and maximise the participation of more individuals. In class the teacher adopted a translanguaging approach to establish and clarify the pedagogic task. Participants engaged in flexible bilingualism where languages are considered to connect and interrelated without setting linguistic boundaries.

Similarly, my research uses participant observation to investigate the dialogic discourses between students and the teacher-researcher. Students draw on all of their linguistic resources to acquire meaning while, I, as the teacher-researcher, use both linguistic varieties for making the meaning accessible to students. The difference is that my research uses classroom ethnography to provide an ecological perspective of the way students with and without learning difficulties construct meaning and knowledge in a diverse sociolinguistic educational formal setting and not a complementary one.

Yiakoumetti (2006) studied bidialectism by examining the linguistic landscape of Cyprus. There are several differences with my study. In this study the researcher, Yiakoumetti, implemented a language program which was designed to teach SMG by using CD as mediating tool for learning. It was an intervention program which allowed students to use their dialect when learning the official language to provide empirical evidence to prove that the use of dialect along with the standard variety can enhance the development of the standard that is SMG. The study used the proposed bidialectal language model based on Language Awareness as the approach to teaching the non -standard variety, CD, as a second or foreign language based on inclusive language education which uses similar and divergent linguistic features (Yiakoumetti, 2006). Further it used a quasi-experimental design involving two groups of students in primary education- an experimental group and

a control group. The program used textbooks with activities in both linguistic varieties while students' performances were compared after oral interviews and essay writing in language and geography. The results showed that the experimental group was able to consciously identify the differences between the two varieties and enhance their performance in SMG.

Singleton & Avonin (2007) stated that such studies as Yiakoumetti's showed that students can manage difficult aspects of a language if their consciousness is enhanced about the relationships between different features of the L1 and L2. The difference between this study and mine is that it did not adopt an ethnographic methodology. Nevertheless it opens up opportunities for further research in Cyprus educational system. For example, what has not yet been studied in Cyprus is the perspective that bidialectal classrooms consist of students with different cognitive abilities, such as students with specific learning difficulties. It is essential that research also examines the way all students construct knowledge through an ecological perspective and assess the way students use language to solve pedagogic tasks and thus enhance their meaning making process.

Mercer (2000) focused on understanding how talk is used between students during teaching and learning rather than on the assessment of talk. He also focused on conceptualising the shared communicative space that is created through joint activity and leads to the construction of meaning. Mercer et al. (2004) implemented a program called TRCA (Talk- Reasoning and Computers-programme) for students aged 9-10 to examine their quality of talk and problem solving through collaborative activities. Children in four target groups and four matching control groups were also observed, video recorded and tested in the same way for validation purposes.

Mercer et al. (2004) stated that they used observational data that could provide detailed descriptions of the dialogues between students which enabled them to recognise any changes in the quality of talk. In this programme, Mercer was more interested in the type of talk that is used, especially exploratory talk that assists in the development of children's individual reasoning skills. He interrogated Vygotsky's idea regarding the development of mental abilities through intermental and the intramental thinking mediated by language. His study explored how children's used language as a cognitive tool when cultural language practices were introduced in the classroom (Mercer et al. 2004). However, Mercer analysed the content of the talk but did not explore the way children with different linguistic backgrounds enhance their reasoning and whether exploratory talk was achieved through translanguaging which my study aims to do.

## **6.9 Data Collection**

Before data collection I had negotiated with the headteacher to teach the same students for a second year and this gave me the opportunity to create a trusting relationship with the students as well as with their parents. As the school was my workplace I had professional access to the school facilities as well as to the national and school curriculum documents, children's textbooks and I could participate with my colleagues in staff meetings.

During these years I formulated some research questions to guide my observations and fieldnotes and wrote vignettes in relation to daily observations always based on my questions. Questions were related to language, literacy, behavior and general academic performance and were drawn by relevant literature (Hornberger, 1989; 2000; 2003; Yiakoumetti, 2006). The second year I started my official data collection by recording

classroom conversations that were of interest for my study, by keeping fieldnotes with conversations I had with students, parents and teachers, gathering some children's writing samples and by interviewing 17 parents. I planned to interview teachers but due to lack of time I only kept fieldnotes from conversations that occurred regarding students' literacy development and learning difficulties as well as their attitudes towards CD.

## **6.10 Data Analysis**

This section will present the way I analysed the data I collected from classroom recordings and parents' interviews to respond to my research questions. Data analysis focuses on the detection of regular patterns of action and talk that characterise a group of people (Eisenhart, 2001). The difficulty of identifying such patterns is the limit of the researcher's ability to participate in multiple settings as well as the amount of time that the researcher has available to investigate further and most importantly the researcher's personal interests and skills (Eisenhart, 2001). For this study I gathered data within the school context where I worked and identified specific patterns related to learning development through classroom observations and parents' interviews. I was present in multiple settings such as the classroom, the school playground. However, I did not have the opportunity to be present in the students' homes in terms of matching my own availability with that of the parents.

The data analysis uses sociocultural discourse analysis informed by Mercer (2004) to provide a unique description and explanation of the way language functions within the context of the classroom, within the context of the family and the community, as well as the way thinking and social interactions operate between students and among students and

the teacher (Mercer, 2004). The analysis of my data drew on sociocultural discourse analysis offering extracts of transcribed talk and to which I provide commentaries for further explanations. The use of this type of analysis enabled me to provide a more comprehensive analysis of the reality of the classroom context during the learning process, including students' translanguaging practices, and the social, cultural and cognitive context of talk in relation to learning and learning difficulties.

Language in this study is considered to include any code that students use to communicate and to enhance their understandings through either the official SMG or the local dialect CD. Translanguaging is analysed through its cultural and social perspectives. Sociocultural discourse analysis has been used for the purposes of teacher- student interactions as well as student- student communication (Mercer, 2004). This type of analysis is closely related to the data of this study through its theoretical foundations, that knowledge is shared and students collectively construct their understandings through shared educational and social experience (Mercer, 2004). Finally, translanguaging is studied within the formal educational context revealing how it is used in the context of the classroom to disrupt the position of the official language within the curriculum (Li Wei, 2010). The analysis was conducted on a range of data-types that I had gathered through fieldnotes, diary notes and observations, as well as the interviews with parents.

### **First stage of analysis: Transcription Protocol**

The first stage of my analysis involved the transcription of the data I collected from classroom recordings and parents' interviews. Transcription is recognised as the first stage of analysis (Turell & Moyer, 2008). Transcription is selective and interpretative depending on the researcher's knowledge and experience of transcription, and the aims of the research study (Gumperz and Berenz 1993/2014). The transcriber has to produce

transcriptions that are accurate and clear and s/he also has to decide the amount of detail related to the interpretation which may affect the data analysis (Li Wei and Moyer, 2008).

Further Li Wei and Moyer (2008, p.195) argued that “the transcription of bilingual data requires distinguishing 1) the languages involved in the interactions, 2) the types of language interaction phenomena (i.e. borrowings), 3) the structural context, and 4) the functional or contextual meaning”. I will distinguish examples of these four types of data in my transcription. The following examples are used to present how I transcribed my data and are not for analysis. The examples are used to show the suggested requirements a researcher has to distinguish when transcribing bilingual data (Li Wei & Moyer, 2008).

### 1) Linguistic varieties involved in the interaction

The linguistic varieties involved in the interactions during classroom conversations but also in parents’ interviews were SMG and CD. In my transcription the convention for transcribing two linguistic varieties is CD in bold and SMG in non-bold. I provide the following segment of a discussion as an example for illustrating this category:

#### 6.10.1 Extract 9: The Internet/ part 2/ 25.5.2011

- |     |     |     |  |
|-----|-----|-----|--|
| 37. | T   | SMG | This is interesting information. Very good that you got into the internet and read about it  |
| 38. | S7  | CD  | <b>Miss a friend of mine goes with me to this afternoon kids club where there is a computer where we play games and when he finishes his studying he sits lots of hours and plays even when we leave the club to go home</b> |
| 39. | S10 | CD  | <b>(0)Miss can’t someone steals all of our passwords and get into all of our accounts?</b>   |
| 40. | S1  | CD  | <b>(0)They can’t find the password quickly enough..</b>  |
| 41. | S15 | CD  | <b>(0)Yes but there are some programs which don’t allow them to break the password</b>   |

It has to be noted that this way of transcribing perhaps creates a sense of separation between the two linguistic varieties and does not illustrate the fluidity between the two varieties. However this presentation was considered as a way to show how children were moving between the two linguistic varieties in a communicative way and not in a structural format.

## 2) The types of bilingual phenomena

My transcription distinguishes the phenomenon of translanguaging when children and parents used both linguistic varieties during conversations. In 6.10.1 Extract 9, which was presented previously, the words ‘password’ and ‘program’ are borrowed words from SMG -used in the middle of the sentence- because they are located in computer language. The word “woollen socks” (see 6.10.2 Extract 1) could be considered as a CD term and could be characterised as translanguaging but it is less obvious as it would be if it was an English loanword. For that reason I use translanguaging to show this type of phenomenon. The following example illustrates this feature:

6.10.2 Extract 1: Santa Claus Laundry /10.12.2010 /9:45p.m

55	S3	SMG- CD	The children from Africa will send him a shirt, the children of Asia <b>woollen socks</b> , from America children will send him a jacket with warm fur, from Australia a long trouser and from Europe a hat
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Extract 6.10.2 presents the way S3 contributed to the discussion about what presents children around the world can send to Santa Claus by translanguaging to insert one word to complete the meaning of his sentence.

### 3) The structural context: Transcription conventions

The structure of an utterance often does not coincide with fully structured written sentences (Turrel & Moyer, 2008, p.195). In my transcription of the data I used transcription conventions for pauses and paralinguistic clues so that I could shape the meaning of the transcribed word in the interviews as well as classroom conversations (Marshall and Rossman, 2011). I used bold characters for Cypriot dialect variants, non bold characters words in SMG, “T” for Teacher, “S1, S2...” for individual students, underline for emphatic stress (Bucholtz, 2007), two dots (..) for pauses of less than 5 seconds, NR for No Response, (\*) for inaudible word (Edwards and Westgate, 1987), ( ) for paralinguistic phenomena (Gumperz and Berenz, 1993/2014), < > for transcriber’s comments (Ioannidou, 2009) and (0) for indicating no pause and continuative responses between the speakers (Edwards, 1993/2014). The following extract presents some of the transcription conventions. More transcription conventions are presented within different extracts.

#### 6.10.3 Extract 1 : Santa Claus Laundry /10.12.2010 /9:45p.m

3	T	CD	<b>Ok let me rephrase my question and then tell me if you understood me</b>
		SMG	<u>How did you feel..</u> reading this story, either about the beginning or at the end of the story? How did you feel?
4	S4	SMG-	At the end I felt happy because Santa Claus received (*) first time
5	T	SMG	First time what? Can you repeat?
6	S4	SMG	He got presents for the first time
7	T	SMG	So you felt happy. Very nice
8	S13	CD	At the middle of the story I felt that Santa Claus <b>won’t come this year but then</b> , when I heard that <b>he had some problems I told to myself that it doesn’t matter and that’s ok..</b> well ok after I felt happy

I did not emphasise in pauses because it did not change the meaning of the sentence. The only feature I transcribed for pauses was when I expected for the student to respond but did not and so I wrote NR (No Response). An example illustrating this issue in my transcription is the following:

6.10.4 Extract 7: Geography lesson/ 10.3.12

22	S4	SMG	The traditional festive dinners
23	T	SMG	This is great! What do you mean by this?
24	S4		NR
25	T	SMG	Does anyone know?
26	S17	SMG	Something else is our traditional clothes
27	T	SMG/CD	Yes this is true, when men wear the traditional black knickers and women their traditional dresses. <b>How about the festive dinners that S4 mentioned before?</b>

**4) The functional or contextual meaning**

The transcription of bilingual data needs to distinguish the functional or the contextual meaning of interactions. The following example illustrates the way students' contextual meaning is enhanced by representing the translanguaging visually. That is in this example the child moves in CD to tell his own personal story about his visit to Rhodes.

6.10.6 Extract 12: Rhodes Island /June /2011

29.	S8	CD	<b>Miss, I didn't want to leave Rhodes when I visited the island</b>
30.	T	SMG	This is nice. Why?
31.	S8	CD	<b>Because Miss we always went at the same restaurant to have dinner and I always wanted to eat pasta. The next time the owner knew what I wanted to eat and another day he offered me an ice-cream for free because we were going there every day</b>
32.	S6	CD	<b>I was bored Miss, because I had to get a present so I got into a shop and bought a ball and left</b>
33.	S8	CD	<b>Oh come on..</b>
34.	T	SMG	Very nice! That's What did I write on the board S2?
35.	S1	CD	<b>Read it</b>

This extract presents how students construct meaning through the use of translanguaging practices by contributing to the pedagogic task their personal experiences. More detailed analysis is undertaken in data analysis chapters.

### **5) Further considerations regarding transcription**

During the transcription of the data that I collected from classroom recordings and parents' interviews, I had to consider issues such as the dialect used in the interactions, the translanguaging practices of students and parents and their understandings of the topic that was discussed. Transcription involves many decisions about which a researcher has to be aware in order to render an accurate written transcription of what the participants and I said (Turell & Moyer, 2008). I decided to ask two of my colleagues to read some of my transcriptions while listening to my audio recordings to ensure that my transcriptions are accurate.

According to Bucholtz (2007), the format I used to transcribed my interactional data is carried out for the purpose not for analysing discourse structure but of examining discourse content and language and literacy use through translanguaging. However, Bucholtz (2007, p.788) argues that *“transcription focuses primarily on interactional structure. Sometimes a simplified transcript can make a point more concisely and clearly than a detailed transcript.”*

At this point I have to show how CD and SMG are presented in the literature and more precisely in research undertaken in Cypriot classrooms. I use two examples from Ioannidou's (2009) transcriptions in comparing them with the way I presented my data (see Table 3). Ioannidou (2009, p.268-269) used underlining for CD features, bold

characters for SMG and italics in parenthesis for the translation from Greek to English. Further, in her transcription non- marked characters represent shared features between SMG and CD. Ioannidou (2009, p.269) also “shaded” (highlighted) ‘accepted’ dialect features (Table 3, extract 7) arguing that a ‘legitimate middle’ variety in classroom talk was established “where certain features of the dialect were accepted by the teacher and the students”.

Table 3: Comparisons between data transcription

Extract 7 from Ioannidou (2009, p.269)	Extract 4 from Ioannidou (2009, p.268)
<p><i>Extract 7. Greek</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. T: εσείς, εσείς αν <u>είχετε τούτον</u> το πρόβλημα <u>πώς</u> θα το <u>ελύετε</u>; (you, you, if you had this problem <b>how will</b> &lt;would&gt; you solve it?)</li> <li>2. Ahilleas: εγώ θα <u>έβαλα</u> εμ, <u>χάρτινους</u> τοίχους ή <u>ξύλενους</u> και για την πόρτα με / (I <b>would have put paper</b> walls or <b>wooden and</b> for the door with I)</li> <li>3. Giannos: και να το βάλει <u>τζ'</u> άσπρο κυρία (<b>and to paint it and white miss</b>)</li> <li>4. T: μπορούσαν να βάλουν ένα σεντόνι (they could have put a sheet)</li> <li>5. Dafni: ε κυρία πού θα <u>εβρίσκαν</u> να το στερεώσουν; (em miss where <b>they will</b> &lt;would&gt; <b>find</b> to attach it?)</li> </ol>	<p><i>Extract 4. Greek - 'informal comments'</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. T: κάθοντα θωρείς, 'Ισσο,α να μεν γόργουγ (can you see sitting like that? <b>Straight, not to bend</b> &lt;comments about his writing&gt;</li> <li>2. S1: εν ιμπόρω (I <b>can't</b>)</li> <li>3. T: <u>μπόρεις</u>, εννά μάθεις (you <b>can</b>, you will learn)</li> </ol>

**From this study:**

**Extract 3: The story of Deamonte Lov / 26.1.2011**

52.	S13	CD	<b>Miss, one day, my neighbours left their dog outside and their gate was opened and came at my house, it came at my house and I run but it came after me and from that day I am afraid of dogs Miss. (LAUGHS)</b>
53.	T	SMG	If you had to write this experience would you say “ <b>and I run but it came after me</b> ”? How would you describe it?
54.	S13	SMG	It was after me.

In my transcription I used bold characters for CD and non- bold for SMG and -as mentioned before- underlining was used for emphasis. In the above example I used italics to present shared words between CD and SMG. However I have chosen not to do that in every transcription because my focus was to show when students (and parents) were translanguaging not just grammatically but in their whole communicative position during discussions. Also I wanted to use a simplified script to enable me to examine language, literacy practices in translanguaging using the discourse content. In extract 3 (Table 3), S13 in line 52 narrates a frightening incident she has experienced. She started in CD which I bolded all the words except the second time the word “house” appeared which was mentioned in SMG while the first time was used in CD. Then, in line 53 the teacher asked the student if she would describe the same incident in writing using CD. The teacher used the exact words of the student “*and I run but it came after me*”. In line 54 the student translanguaged to SMG to offer the teacher the answer to her question.

### **Second stage of analysis**

When year 2 of my data collection ended I started analysing my data. I first transcribed all the interviews using a digital recorder and organised them in a coherent form so that it was easier for me to find the data I wanted for analysis (See Table 4). Therefore I created a database so that I was able to compare the data collected from various classroom conversations and different interviews. I transcribed classroom conversations and parents’ interviews into CD / SMG and then translated them to English. Translation was even more difficult since I needed to transfer the meanings efficiently. However I aimed for a logical approximation of the participants’ words and meanings (Marshall and Rossman, 2011). Second, I coded students and parents by using letters and numbers. For example I used codes such as S1, S2 for students. For parents I numbered each interview (e.g Interview 1,

Interview 2) and used just “M” for mother or “F” for father. Third, I started reading through each interview looking for recurring features that could become main themes. Then, I moved to the analysis of the interviews trying to apply these main themes I had constructed as emerging in the data. Thus, when I moved to the fifth interview common patterns started to emerge highlighting issues that concerned most of the parents and had to be further analysed and discussed.

As I was reading my data I generated themes and categories (Delamont, 2002) but also colour- marked common features in the data across the interviews such as the negative and positive constructions of CD, the situatedness of CD, meaning the context where CD was used, the difficulties that parents observed for their children, and parents’ opinions related to literacy learning and language learning. This analytic process gave me the opportunity to start also analysing some of the classroom recordings to investigate common patterns in relation to literacy learning and language and how students with learning difficulties constructed knowledge.

The transcription of classroom recording seemed very time consuming so I decided to transcribe and analyse the recordings that served the purposes of my study. I was recording for six months and manage to gather 22 recordings of classroom conversations (Appendix 1.6, Table 5). I choose 15 recordings for data analysis based on topic/subject, classroom participation and interest shown through talk from students that served my purposes. In all I collected 26 hours of interactional data (classroom conversations and interviews) and wrote 50 pages of fieldnotes. The texts and the themes of the lessons all followed the curriculum of the Ministry of Education.

Table 4: Analytical table of data

Type of data	Participants and Sources	Quantity of data	
		Number	Hours
Lessons	Students	22	7
Interviews	Parents	17	12
Documents	School policy for literacy learning	1	2 pages
	MOEC guidelines for teaching SMG	1	3 pages
	Analytical curriculum for primary education	1	62 pages
Fieldnotes	-Lessons	18	60 pages of fieldnotes
	-Staff meetings	2	2 pages of fieldnotes

The patterns of the analysis were informed by related studies in the research literature. As Delamont (2002) stated, researchers have to repeatedly read their data and draw on recurrent patterns which will enable them to extract themes and categorisations. The first analytic pattern that was extracted from the interviews from parents and classroom recordings in this study was the theme of negative or positive construction of CD or SMG drawn by Nancy Hornberger's biliteracy continuum (Hornberger, 1989). At this point CD was positioned by most rents at the less powerful end of the continuum while the official language, SMG, was positioned at the powerful end. Constructions of CD and SMG were related not only to the educational context but also to the social everyday setting of students and parents.

The second analytic pattern of translanguaging (García, 2009; Creese & Blackledge, 2010) within the classroom was emerged from evidence of data from classroom recordings, field notes and association with related bibliography. The data showed that children used all of their linguistic resources to acquire meaning by moving across CD and SMG while they were engaged in collaborative interactions facilitating joint reasoning. The analysis of this theme is evidenced in chapter 8.

The third analytic pattern of students' collaborative efforts arose from classroom conversations and related bibliography (Mercer, 2000; 2004). The data revealed students' collaborative efforts to make meaning in their talk, and to give opportunities to students with learning difficulties to construct knowledge. Children's contributions in discussions offered the possibility of further analysis since evidence revealed that some children are discursively constructed as having additional needs.

The fourth pattern of translanguaging as an act of solidarity, is interpreted by the theory of positioning (Davie & Harre, 2001) and related literature. The data are the interviews of parents and classroom recordings. This category was considered as an important part of the analysis since the discursive process could be analysed from different perspectives to reveal actions of solidarity and levels of friendship when the children were translanguaging, as well as the roles and the positions I was taking within each interview, and the roles and positions I was given by parents, thus creating perspectives for further analysis.

## **6.11 Ethical considerations**

Ethical considerations regarding the conduct of a research study have to be examined before research begins (Burton & Bartlett, 2005). The true nature of the study has to be clarified and not mislead participants (Robson, 2002). It was argued that ethics refers to set of rules and codes that a researcher has to follow when conducting a study (Robson, 2002, p.65). The ethics of this study need to show awareness of the multifaceted nature of ethical matters and to demonstrate that the research is feasible, ethical, not untrustworthy or harmful since children, parents and my professional colleagues are involved in it (Delamont, 2002). In ethnographic research, the researcher has to explore and describe a culture's values and system and aim to be free from personal opinions based on familiar social context (Delamont, 2002). An ethical dilemma which is related to this study is when the researcher examines his/her own social context where judgments based on personal experiences are hard to defer (Delamont, 2002).

For the current research I had to gain permission for conducting the research from the headmaster of the school and the Ministry of Education of Cyprus. The headmaster permitted me to conduct my research after informing him about my study and completing a consent form (Appendix 1.1) Access at the school was already gained since it was my third year as a teacher in the particular primary school. My colleagues did not have to give me their ethical consent since I was conducting my research in my own classroom and did not affect anyone's work.

Observations and interviews were carried out at a primary school in Northern –Eastern Cyprus taking into consideration not to harm or underestimate and insult students' or parents' views and beliefs and to protect them from any physical or psychological damage

(Cohen et al., 2006; Cohen et al. 2006). An important ethical issue that I had to arrange was to ensure privacy, anonymity and confidentiality with parents regarding their interviewing. Therefore I arranged to conduct the interviews in a quiet and private room at school. Names were not mentioned during the interviews ensuring anonymity. I also ensured that the pupils were identified anonymously, e.g. S1, S2. As for students' observations, I firstly ensured informed consent, protection of physical and psychological health, confidentiality and anonymity (Cohen et al., 2006). Students were carrying their lesson naturally without imposing them what to say or do and without making them feel uncomfortable during the lesson ensuring their psychological health. They were in their classroom and did not have to undertake the research anywhere else ensuring their physical health.

This research entails working with vulnerable groups of people such as 9 year old children who are not in position to understand completely and for this reason, the parents were asked for their consent (Robson, 2002). This research also entailed a vulnerable group of parents who had limited literacy skills. The parents of the participants were verbally reassured that all the data which would be collected and written in this study would be treated confidentially and anonymised so it would not be identified with their child/children (see Appendix 1.3, Appendix 1.4). In addition, they were notified about the purpose of the study reassuring them about the safety of their children (Cohen et al, 2007). They were also provided with information about my identity, where I study and about the task (Denscombe, 2003; Darlington and Scott, 2002). I had a meeting with each parent who wanted me to explain them further about my research. Parents completed a consent letter giving them the opportunity to indicate yes or no, about participating. One of the parents did not participate as he did not wish to be interviewed but he allowed his child to participate in the study.

It must be noted that the consent was problematic at first due to parent's limited literacy practices. I received a lot of questions regarding the nature of the research and asking me to explain them what the letter meant. I reassured them that their children's learning would not be affected in any way and that schooling will continue as normal. Two of the parents with whom I did not talk personally did not accept after reading the letter and thinking that they may be interviewed. One of the two mothers -which I was able to contact after some time- accepted to participate after discussing the philosophy and the methodology of the research and explaining its aims to her (Appendix 1.4: Consent form for parents).

## **6.12 Conclusion**

This chapter presented the methods that this study used to investigate and analyse the key evidence that emerged from the data. Methods such as participant observation, ethnographic interviews and field notes have been used. The biliteracy continuum is a theoretical model which serves the purposes of the data analysis. A Vygotskian perspective is used for analysing the way children co-reason through translanguaging practices. The findings of the study will be discussed in the following chapters.

## **CHAPTER 7: PARENTS' PERSPECTIVES OF**

### **SMG AND CD**

#### **7.1 Introduction**

This chapter deals with my first research question by applying the theoretical framework of the biliteracy continuum to the data to offer a critical perspective on the way linguistic varieties, and in this case CD and SMG, are situated and considered within a Greek Cypriot local community and its academic context (Hornberger, 1989). The model of the biliteracy continuum will be used as a tool to analyse the main concepts such as the unequal power relations in language use (monolingual vs bilingual) that exist within the local context. Such unequal relations favour the official dominant language variety that is SMG. Educational officials do not give attention to all points of the continua such as the traditionally less powerful domains, which include the use of linguistic varieties such as CD and its possible appropriateness for learning development. On the contrary, power relations move towards and privilege the powerful end of the continua while official education promote monolingual use without negotiating power (Skilton- Sylvester, 2000). Additional concepts included in the model of biliteracy, such as the oral versus literate development and vernacular over literary contents, will also be examined. The situatedness of the two linguistic varieties or linguistic repertoires, depending on the context of use as well as the communicative purposes of parents or children for which individuals use different spoken, or written language, will also be investigated to focus on the multiple

purposes for which Greek Cypriots use CD (or SMG) in their communication (Martin-Jones & Jones, 2000).

Research has shown that all points of the continua are interrelated, supporting possible transfer across literacies and enabling full biliterate development (Hornberger, 1989; Hornberger & Skilton-Sylvester, 2000; García, 2009). This chapter will use the theoretical concept of biliteracy continuum -which includes the oral bidialectal continuum- through the use of its continua points to examine and to interpret the way active members of the community such as parents consider the linguistic variety of CD for their children's learning development as well as present parents' attitudes towards the dialect.

## **7.2 Perceptions of CD in the local context**

This section discusses the way the dialect, CD, is considered in the local social context within the context of biliteracy. CD is constructed as the language of the "peasants", meaning uneducated people or people who live in rural areas, and it is being positioned in the past with no current educational value. As Papapavlou (2001) argued, Greek Cypriots are sometimes proud of their Homeric origins and thus their ancient Greek language, while other times they have feelings of embarrassment and inferiority and are characterised as heavily accented village speakers or peasants. The following extracts support such views and find almost all parents agree that CD is the language of the peasants as they position CD in the past as a historical language and as the language that their grandfathers used to talk.

7.2: Parent 1 interview

- 139 CD **So does he tell you these stories in Cyprus dialect?**
- 140 SMG/CD His speaking **also worries me a lot**
- 141 Why?
- 142 CD **It's that "peasant" talking that our grandfathers use to talk; I think you have noticed this**
- 143 SMG/CD Well yes but he is very expressive. **For example when he tells you about the church..**
- 144 CD **It's the way he tells the things he wants to tell me. A grown up can't talk the way he talks. Lately I went to a Bingo night with some friends and S4 wanted to come with us. At the beginning I thought ok I will take him with me. Then I told my husband "I am not taking him with me, just because he may start talking the way he does.. I won't take my chances so I am not taking him"** <Bingo is in English language>
- 145 SMG/CD Well now that we discuss this language issue, what language do you use at home? **I mean we all speak the Cyprus dialect daily but do you happen to speak a stronger Cyprus dialect?**
- 146 CD **We do not talk like S4. Not me nor his father, nor his brother S5. S4 and my daughter talk the same way**
- 147 SMG/CD Why do they talk differently?
- 148 CD **I believe it is because they had regular contacts with their grandmother who used Cyprus dialect greatly and so they have learned to talk the same**
- 149 CD **So their grandmother had an influence on their talking..**

This interview was undertaken mostly in CD with the teacher- researcher translanguaging to change the subject of the conversation (line 145), to draw conclusions such as in line 149 or to re-assure her about her son's way of talking (line143).

Previously I had asked the mother if her two boys read books. She told me that they have a library full of books but they never read them. Then, the mother said that her son visits church regularly and participates in the Sunday Ceremony. She also revealed that he starts describing the chancel and what happens during the ceremony, what the church priest does during the communion because he knows that his mother as a woman is not allowed to

enter the chancel. As we can see in line 139, I asked the mother what language her son used when he described all these things and she told me that he uses CD and that his speaking worries her because he uses the language that their grandfathers used to talk (line 142). In line 143, I told her that this doesn't worry me because he is very expressive when talking in this way, wanting to re-assure her that this is not the main problem with her son's learning difficulties. However, in line 144 the mother continued expressing her concern about the way he talks and that he uses a stronger dialect than an older dialect speaker. She then set an example showing how embarrassed she feels about her son's talking. She told me that she had arranged a Bingo night out with some friends and that her son wanted to go with her. At first she told her husband that she would take her son out with her but then she reconsidered because he would not talk politely in front of people. At this point the mother is positioning CD at the less powerful end of oral bidialectal continuum as opposed to the powerful end of monolingual continuum and considered that the dialect affects the performance in SMG (Yiakoumetti, Evans & Esch, 2006) and is inappropriate for social gatherings.

In line 145, I asked the mother what language they use at home and she answered that the rest of the members of family do not talk like her son or her daughter meaning that they do not use a strong dialect. In line 147 I wanted to know the reason they use a stronger dialect and she told me that she believes that their talking was in fact influenced by their grandmother who speaks CD only (line 148). The mother situates her family in the middle of the continuum stating that even if they do speak CD, it is not as strong as the dialect her son and daughter use. The mother stated that her children's oral production is influenced by their grandmother who used CD extensively, indicating that CD is an old fashioned language spoken by elders. However, almost all of our conversation was undertaken in CD while the mother kept a negative attitude towards the dialect and perhaps not considering

herself as a strong user. The mother is expressing feelings of inferiority believing that the native code should be used or is only used by elderly Cypriots living in rural areas, a view that is identified in other studies (Papapavlou, 2004). Such views are obvious in almost all interviews. Another example where CD is considered as a historical language used by elders and “peasants” can be found in the following extract.

7.2: Parent 2 interview

- |     |        |   |
|-----|--------|---|
| 37. | SMG/CD | Do you think teachers should use CD more in the classroom than SMG? <b>Would you like this?</b>   |
| 38. | CD     | <b>I prefer they speak Greek like you do</b>  |
| 39. | CD     | <b>Sometimes we use CD to explain some things</b>   |
| 40. | CD     | <b>Yes, especially in the village. They talk CD</b>   |
| 41. | CD     | <b>Would you like the idea of having books written in CD</b> which we could use sometimes in the language lesson?   |
| 42. | SMG/CD | <b>Will you</b> explain them? Then yes  |
| 43. | CD     | <b>Why would you like it?</b>   |
| 44. | CD     | Because it <b>is</b> the language <b>that our great grandfathers used, you know. So the children will understand the differences between the language they used in the past and the language we use now</b> |
| 45. | CD     | They will <b>understand the difference.</b>   |
| 46. |        | Yes   |

The conversation was undertaken in CD mostly and was related with the dialect and its possible use within the classroom. In line 238, the mother stated that she would prefer to use SMG in the classroom citing me, the teacher, as an example of a standard language user and proficient speaker of SMG. Hence, the mother automatically positioned me as an authority and an institutional figure that uses SMG with respect to my duties as a teacher (Harré et al., 2009). In line 240, the mother mentioned that CD is the language that is mostly used in the village showing once again that the dialect is considered as a linguistic code used mostly and strongly in rural areas. In line 241, I mentioned the idea of having local resources such as books written in CD or having texts written in CD to use in the

context of the classroom. This question can be positioned within the content of biliteracy continuum where vernacular and minority content is excluded from teaching (Hornberger, 2004; Hornberger & Skilton- Sylvester, 2000). Then, in line 242 the mother negotiates this issue by asking the teacher to reassure her that sufficient explanations to students would be provided (if texts in CD were to be used). Moving on, in line 244 the parent explains the reason she would like CD to be present in the classroom mentioning that this would help the students to understand the difference between CD as a language that belongs to the past and SMG as the current educational language. Once again CD is considered as the language of the past, which could be used in the classroom but only as a way of learning the island's linguistic history. CD is positioned at the less powerful end of the bidialectal oracy where local materials and local language should not be used in the formal schooling context excluding the real voices of students (Hornberger & Skilton- Sylvester, 2000).

At the macro level of Cyprus' social context, biliteracy exists in a context of unequal power relations. CD becomes marginalised and considered by parents as a language variety that cannot serve any pedagogical purpose and they prefer SMG monolingual schools. CD is associated with informal communication and is positioned in the past as a language that is mostly used by elder people or peasants while parents focus on the literate part of their children's learning and avoid using a language that is different from the language of texts (Hornberger, 1989; García, 2009).

### **7.3 Perceptions for both linguistic codes, SMG vs CD.**

The following data analysis will present negative and positive perceptions that were revealed in the conversations regarding one or other language variety. This examination will bring together evidence to show that SMG is the language that has more power within

the Greek Cypriot sociocultural and socioeconomical context and is clearly positioned at the prestigious and privileged end of the macro- micro level of the bidialectal oracy and biliteracy continua where SMG or CD is examined in the context of the general society (Hornberger, 1989). Hornberger (1989) argued that orality and literacy are related and their characteristics are based on the social context and culture in which language is used. Each linguistic variety, according to the participants, seems to have specific functions and operates within different domains for different purposes. However data reveal opinions that are analysed based on the oral- literate or vernacular- literate continuum where CD is considered as the language that has no practical use in society and the possibility of expressing CD in writing is considered inappropriate or as a writing difficulty (Hornberger, 1989).

### **7.3.1 SMG for social mobility**

The following extract (interview 4) shows the way a mother considers CD and SMG within a strict setting of unequal relations. In line 92 she states clearly that she prefers her daughter not to use words in CD when writing but to use only SMG. In line 94 the mother tries to excuse the way her daughter writes sometimes to the teacher by saying that she presents herself as an example to her daughter since she does not use CD. The mother situates her family at the powerful end of the biliteracy continuum considering the dialect as a language that is used only by elders such as their grandparents and should not be used by the new generation. Tensions are obvious within the family context with the mother trying to make her daughter talk SMG at home after school (line 96).

### 7.3.1: Parent 4 interview

91. SMG How about the way she express her thoughts in writing?
92. SMG Ok sometimes she uses words that I wish she didn't. I would prefer she used the Greek dialect
93. CD **Yes, I noticed that she uses CD words sometimes**
94. CD **I talk Greek at home all the time. My sister in law tells her "Your mother doesn't talk like this"**
95. CD **You mean that you don't use CD so intensively at home?**
96. SMG My husband and I, no. But older people like her grandparents from both sides will use some words in CD. I try and tell her "Honey it's not right to use this word. **Tell your grandmother that this word is not used this way and say it differently**"
97. Yes
98. SMG Elder people learned to talk that way
99. CD **Ok but it's not bad**
100. SMG Yes it's not bad, but I would prefer my child uses SMG.
101. SMG Why would you prefer that?
102. SMG So that she can go out to the world and be able to talk and socialise without being embarrassed
103. SMG So is SMG a more civilised and high status language?
104. SMG/CD Yes, because when she will be looking for a job she has to talk nicely. How will she find a job if she speaks CD? They will tell you that you are a **"peasant"**

In line 99 I re-assure her that using CD is "not bad" even if the speaker is an old man or a child. I translanguage in CD to offer my justification in order to make her feel more comfortable using the dialect even if she is opposed to it. In line 100 the mother does not follow my linguistic code that is CD and continues to argue that she prefers her child to use SMG only. After asking her why she would prefer to use only SMG (line 101), she argues that she does not want her child to feel inferior and embarrassed in the future because she may not be able to use SMG competently. In line 103, I encouraged her to extend her thought and to substantiate further her explanation by asking her if the reason is that she considers SMG as a superior language and more "civilised" (a characterisation that was also mentioned by parents in other interviews). Thus, in line 104 the mother explained that SMG will benefit her child's future employment opportunities since SMG is the language

that is accepted in the wider social context and that if she uses CD she will not be able to find a job since CD has limited usefulness in the wider world. In addition, the word “peasant” that the mother chooses to translanguage and uses it in CD was to emphasise her perception of the relationship between speakers of CD and the dialect.

Street (1989) argued that even though multiple literacies exist in one society and in this case CD and SMG, which are used for various functional purposes at home, at school and for personal exploration such as writing notes in diaries or writing personal notes to the teacher in CD (see Appendix 3.3, Appendix 5.2), yet all literacies are not equally powerful in a social context such as the Greek Cypriot context. Moreover, SMG is considered as the language that offers social mobility and maximises the opportunity for successful university studies. However a short cross-examination of my classroom data showed that this mother’s child (S11) remained silent in classroom conversations and spoke only after the teacher urged her to participate. A small extract from interview 7 also shows evidence that SMG can offer opportunity for entering higher education. I chose a short extract as an illustration.

#### 7.3.1: Parent 7 interview

232. M CD **Yes, you have to know the one and the other. It’s good to know both**
233. T CD **What I see is that we have linguistic inequalities and SMG is “higher” than CD which could also help the child to learn**
234. M CD **The “higher” language, as you say, will be necessary when the child grows up, if he becomes a university student, but for example now that they are little, it is what you said..**

After asking the mother if she believed that CD might have a negative influence in children’s learning, she argued that she does not think that it can affect them to a great extent and continued to say that it is good to know both linguistic varieties (line 232) as both are useful

depending on their function (Street,1989; Hornberger, 1989). Then the teacher in line 233 spoke in CD using evidence from literature and added that unequal power relations regarding linguistic varieties exist within the Greek Cypriot context since the population considers SMG as the more powerful language and the CD as the less powerful, even though CD can be useful tool for learning. In line 234 the mother used the teacher-researcher’s ideas to provide further explanations regarding the specific functions of each language. The parent said that SMG is a linguistic variety which will be essential for university studies while CD can easily be used by small children who try to communicate with their teacher and their classmates and construct their knowledge through their most intimate linguistic tool that is CD.

### 7.3.2 Negative influence of CD for learning

The following extracts present the way parents consider CD for learning development. Most of them believed that CD is a barrier for learning since they believed that students are not proficient speakers of SMG due to the dialect’s interference and so they write the way they talk in everyday interactions.

#### 7.3.2: Parent 1 Interview

- |     |    |  |
|-----|----|--|
| 149 | CD | So <b>their grandmother</b> had an influence on <b>their talking</b> .. What is your opinion about the Cyprus Dialect? <b>Do you think that it influences</b> negatively or positively <b>your child’s learning?</b>                               |
| 150 | CD | <b>I think it has a negative influence</b>   |
| 151 |    | Why?   |
| 152 | CD | Because S4 writes <b>the way he talks;</b> my daughter <b>does the same</b> . Lately <b>I had a phone call from elementary school and they told me that she</b> writes the way she talks <b>and she is in the second year of elementary school</b> |
| 153 | CD | <b>Really? S5 used to do this also but now not so much</b>   |
| 154 | CD | S5 learned <b>how to talk politely</b> .. <b>he will say thank you and so on</b> .. but S4.. <b>his talking worries me as well as his behavior</b> in general  |

- 155 CD Ok look, it might **not be so bad, he expresses himself the way he can and knows best; you cannot stop that** because then he might **not be able to learn or participate in conversations**
- 156 CD Yes but they write **the way they talk..**

In 7.3.2 Parent 1 interview the teacher asked the mother about CD and the way it affects her child's learning. Her son attends special education. In line 150 the mother argued that CD influences children's progress in a negative way because her son and her oldest daughter write the way they talk meaning that they both use CD when writing. The fact that CD is applied in writing by some students is not accepted in formal schooling, as she argued in line 152. In fact, she had received a phone call from the elementary school concerning a complaint that her daughter was having writing difficulties since she used the dialect when writing. In line 153, the researcher changes her position to "teacher" to mention that the mother's other twin son was manifesting such characteristics but he has shown a lot of progress. In line 154, the mother associated SMG with politeness while CD is considered as a linguistic feature of impoliteness and is used by people who live in rural areas. Then in line 155, the researcher tries to re-assure her that the fact that S4 uses CD extensively might be a positive resource and not negative since this enables him to gain access to the curriculum and participate in classroom conversations. However, the mother insisted that this affects their writing performance (line 156) focusing her interest more on writing and placing their oral production in CD at the less powerful end and the ability to write proficiently in SMG at the more powerful end according to the theoretical framework of biliteracy continuum.

The dialect's transfer in oral production is considered to be negative for students' performance in SMG in the classroom (Iordanidou, 1991; Yiakoumetti, Evans & Esch,

2005). However, teachers and policy makers within the Greek- Cypriot social and academic context do not consider that literacy could be seen as an independent skill- as Street (1984) argued- characterised by a set of literacy practices that are indeed used within the Greek Cypriot classroom and create possibilities for learning progress. Such practices would enable students to develop the ability to use both linguistic varieties in both an integrated and separate way based on the sociocultural context they socialize within (García, 2009). Thus, the acceptance of using any linguistic variety, CD or SMG, or modes of meaning to make sense of texts can facilitate the movement from the one end of the bidialectal oracy (in the case of Cyprus) and biliteracy continuum to the other achieving meaning-making and enabling students to enhance their own learning (Hornberger, 2006).

The following extracts from two different interviews show once again opinions regarding CD and the way it influences children’s learning.

7.3.2: Parent 3 interview

- |       |         |   |
|-------|---------|---|
| 183 T | CD/ SMG | Yes. Do you think <b>that the fact that the children use CD, which is our everyday language</b> , may have a negative or a positive influence on their learning?  |
| 184 M | CD      | <b>Ok, a negative as well</b>   |
| 185 T |         | Why?  |
| 186 M | CD      | <b>Because they imitate the way they talk, so they write as they talk</b>   |
| 187 T | CD      | In writing?   |
| 188 M | CD      | Yes. The student <b>I was referring to before</b> , wrote phrases <b>in CD but with a very strong dialect</b> which <b>you may not understand. So this is negative because the way he writes caused him problems with his teacher</b> |

Once again the reason why parents consider CD as a negative linguistic feature for their children’s learning development is the fact that they use the dialect within their writing which has a strong impact on their success in learning the standard variety (Yiakoumetti, 2006).The non-literate CD affects the literate form of SMG as well as the oral language skills influence the written skills of students. Previously this mother mentioned that she

supports CD and even though she is a teacher she uses CD at home and during lessons critiquing at the same time other teachers who do not accept the dialect in the classroom and make insulting comments to students when they use CD (Appendix 4.3, see line 180). Then, in line 184 she argued that even if she is in favour of the dialect she believes that CD can also negatively influence students. In line 186, the mother argued that children in Cyprus “imitate” the way they talk and thus write as they talk. In line 188, this mother describes the reason that the dialect is considered as a negative influence in students’ writing and due to this fact the educational system does not accept the dialect in schooling. Another extract (interview 8) shows again the way CD is considered by parents and the role it plays in children’s learning.

#### 7.3.2:Parent 8 interview

- 131 T SMG Let’s talk about another issue regarding our dialect. Do you think it has a positive or a negative influence on your child’s learning?
- 132 M SMG/ CD Em.. sometimes it plays a negative role because words in CD have a different meaning and words are also said differently. For example, I may say a word using **a strong dialect and children may not understand and then they will come to school where they will be taught differently. This is very difficult for them and it confuses them** because when they **are about to write an essay the child will remember the word she/he uses when talking outside the classroom and the words she/he listens to everyday and** it should not be like this. **This confuses them a lot**
- 133 T SMG/ CD Do you think that the fact **that a different language is used at home like CD collides with the different language** that is demanded at school **that is SMG and creates confusions?**
- 134 M CD **Yes this happens**
- 135 T CD/ SMG **And do you think that this causes problems with their learning?**
- 136 M SMG/ CD No it does not create a problem.. **ok it confuses children because they wonder why this word is written like this since we say it differently. This is confusing** but as they grow up **they realise that this is how we talk and this is how we write**

In line 132, the mother believes that CD interferes negatively in students' learning because of the different lexical meanings between the two varieties, but also because of the fact that students talk differently at home. On entering school they are taught a language they are not proficient in and when they are asked to produce written assignments in SMG they use their most proficient and familiar language, that is CD, because of their everyday social interactions in CD. The mother added that this is not something that should happen, since it creates a lot of confusions with their learning. In line 135, the teacher asked the parent if the two different linguistic contexts, in which the children live, socialize and learn, creates further problems with their learning. In line 136, the mother did not agree that the existence of two linguistic varieties is a problematic situation since once they grow up they become aware of the functions of each language.

### **7.3.3 NO to CD in the classroom – YES to SMG only in the classroom**

The following analysis of data provides further evidence of the unequal power relations within the sociolinguistic context of Cyprus, from the parents' point of view. What makes this data more significant is the fact that parents' views collide with the reality of the classroom where students – as previously analysed- utilize their literacy practices using home experiences and their home language -that is CD- to get access to the context and the meanings of the lesson through collaborative efforts and by co-constructing each other's thoughts. Furthermore, data show the way the teacher is positioned by parents as the official person who has the right and duty to teach SMG as it is the official language of the nation and the language that is used by educated people (Harré et al. 2009; Iordanidou, 2009; Papapavlou, 2004).

### 7.3.3: Parent 5 interview

- 205.T SMG ..Do you think that CD should be more obvious **in the classroom...do you think that the teacher could use CD in the classroom or just use it at certain points?**  
CD
- 206.F SMG Our Cyprus dialect?
- 207.T SMG Yes
- 208.F CD **I believe that it shouldn't be used in the classroom at all.**
- 209.T SMG At all, never?
- 210.F CD **Well, SMG must be the language that they use in the classroom. CD is used every day and they learn it from us and their everyday interactions anyway**
- 211.T SMG That's right. Perhaps we could use CD to **provide further explanations in simpler words for some points that they didn't understand. What do you think about this?**
- 212.F SMG Yes, absolutely
- 213.T CD OK. **So you think that CD..**
- 214.F SMG/CD For me, it's unacceptable- **not that it's.. well... it's unacceptable for the teacher to speak CD in the classroom. She/ he has to talk to them in SMG. It's unacceptable to talk CD. I am telling you this regardless of my political beliefs or other**
- 215.T CD **Yes, we should not turn the discussion to politics**
- 216.F CD **No, I agree. But talking SMG helps the children to learn the language more. It's just that this helps children; you offer them a great resource**

In line 205 of this conversation, the teacher used both SMG to start her question and translanguaging to CD to clarify her question and to offer more detail. The teacher asked the parent's opinion regarding the possible use of CD in the classroom by the teacher. In line 206, the father asked for clarification wanting to make sure that the question was not concerning the use of SMG in the classroom, which perhaps was the most expected question. In line 208, the parent expressed his negative opinion and attitude towards the dialect by saying that he thinks that CD should not be used in the context of the classroom in any way. The teacher in line 209 was surprised by the fact that the parent added the words "*at all*" in his sentence manifesting feelings of total exclusion of CD in the academic context. Then, in line 210 the father used CD to clarify his opinion and said that SMG is the official language of the classroom while CD is the language used in their everyday informal interactions, which they are familiar with and proficient in.

The teacher- researcher wanted to find out if the father thought that there was a possibility of using CD in the classroom as a way of providing explanations in the students' home language so that they can access the meanings of the curriculum more easily. In the subsequent exchange (212-214) the father hesitates and shows some confusion. In line 212 he agreed with such a teaching approach and later in line 214 he seems to want to add more to this opinion. However he retracts his position, contradicting what he agreed in line 212 by stating that it is unacceptable for teachers, who are educated individuals and serve the ministry of education and its formal curriculum, to use CD in the classroom. He uses SMG to affirm his position that SMG is the official language of Greek- Cypriot education and the one that should be used in education. At the end of this turn, he uses CD to distinguish his support for the official role of SMG from his political position which he regards as personal and unofficial. His use of the phrase *"I am telling you this regardless my political beliefs"* highlights a sensitive issue where the promotion of one unified language by the Ministry of Education served the purposes of "national unity" and the use of one national language means protecting the nation and strengthening the bonds of Cyprus with Greece as an argument that has predominated in periods of ethnic rival in the island (Iordanidou, 2009). In line 215, the teacher steered the exchange away from politics and the parent respected it and so in line 216 the parent reinforced his support for the use of official SMG in education by adding that by maximising the use of SMG, students will become more proficient speakers of the variety especially through the available resources offered by official schooling.

This part of conversation provides strong arguments that are in favour of SMG and promote the linguistic separation of CD and SMG. The parent supports that SMG is the official language of our nation and the official academic language which should only be used while CD is the unofficial everyday language which children already know or learn through their

everyday interactions with their family and friends. According to this parent, CD and SMG are not mutually supportive and interrelated, as García (2009) argued, and furthermore both speaking the language that has literacy and having schools that teach the powerful language, offer to students possibilities for learning success. CD could be accepted in the classroom as a tool for explaining or making sense of a text that is written in the powerful language that is SMG, though this issue was not further discussed since the parent wanted to express his view regarding SMG and the teacher's position. In the following extract, the father (Parent 9 Interview) presents the prevailing opinion that CD should not be used in the classroom but if necessary then students and teachers should use the dialect limitedly.

### 7.3.3: Parent 9 interview

207. T CD **Do you think that CD should be more apparent and used in the classroom?**
208. F CD **No not at all**
209. T Why?
210. F CD/SMG Because **this is our language**. We have to learn to write correctly, we have to teach our children what is correct. If the teacher teaches his/her lesson in **CD then I think this will be wrong**
211. T SMG You think that the teacher will influence them to..
212. F CD The teacher **has to show them the difference between this word and the word that my daughter may use or someone else in the classroom**
213. T CD/SMG **So you believe that we should use CD** only for providing explanations?
214. F SMG Yes only for explaining
215. T CD **So this way CD will work as a tool. It's a tool that will help them**
216. F SMG/CD Only as a teaching approach **and nothing more. I believe that they have to talk correct SMG**. Because we may use 5-10 words **in CD in our everyday life and it's not wrong, either illogical** or bad. But when you try to write an essay of 500-600 words, **then things work differently. You will not be able to write or to think of writing a word**. Or in a composition, **you have to learn how to start writing from this age**. Because a composition of one page **has to be written correctly so** that you will be able **in the future to write a longer essay, which is something different from a simple composition**

To begin with, in line 208 the father did not agree with the possibility of using CD along with SMG in the classroom. In line 210, he justifies his opinion by saying that SMG is our official language and teachers have to teach the correct language so that students can become competent writers. The use of CD in the classroom was considered wrong by the parent positioning SMG as the powerful official language of the island and being in favour of monolingual schools as well as talking only about the written skills and not oral, not recognising the interdependence of oral-written language use which are both placed in an interrelated continuum (Hornberger, 1989).

In line 212, the parent highlights the duty of the teacher to use SMG in the classroom and to correct or to explain the difference of a word in CD from a word in SMG. So the parent is focusing on spoken language and students' reliance on CD in the classroom which is not proper and does not help their learning. The teacher in line 213 points out that CD should be used only for explaining to students as discussed in the previous interview (interview 5). The father agreed with such a possible teaching approach, providing there was no other possibilities of using CD in the classroom. In line 216, the parent argued that using CD in our everyday interactions, and a pedagogic tool, is not wrong but when it comes to writing in formal education, then things work differently. His statement in line 216 indicated that the relation between spoken (CD) and written (SMG) language as well as the relation between listening(SMG) and speaking (CD) -which both occur along a continuum- may interfere with the knowledge of SMG and impede learning and the ability to write according to the formal educational curriculum (Hornberger, 1989). Furthermore, he argued that the possible interference of CD in the development of students' writing will hinder their future literacy abilities in higher education. In this way he expressed his belief that CD is a linguistic variety which should be excluded from the classroom, except for clarification tool, since it will interfere negatively with students' learning through literacy. Hence, the

teacher has to use SMG in the classroom as he/she is the individual who represents official education. As the teacher I was assigned a dual role within the interview-conversation by the father: one which was a social role and the other accorded to my rights and duties as a teacher. That is, my role was determined by the views of the local people and my legal position in the academic context (Harrè et al. 2009).

Parents situate CD outside the official boundaries of the classroom so that students' experiences through CD are neglected and not accepted. According to the theoretical framework of Hornberger's continuum, there is a complex sociolinguistic context in Cyprus where children have to learn a language for their education which they do not grow up with but are expected to become proficient in speaking, reading and writing, while at the same time excluding their oral proficiency in CD. Social and educational structures privilege the dominant language and literacy in SMG. Utilising prior knowledge in the home language and literacy practices promotes learning progress (Martin, 2009). However, the interviews evidence parents being negative towards using home literacy knowledge and practices at school. Furthermore the distribution of power is uneven between oracy and literacy practices so the oral end of the continuum is less privileged than the literate end of the continuum (Hornberger, 1989; Hornberger & Skilton- Sylvester, 2000).

#### **7.4 Situatedness of CD and SMG**

Literacy is not just about reading and writing skills but also being able to apply this knowledge to specific contexts of use and for particular purposes (Hornberger, 1989). Literacy has been characterised as situational, that is viewing literacy in context and influenced by the sociocultural context it is surrounded by (Street, 1984). Acquiring the

ability to engage in everyday situations in two linguistic varieties according to their corresponding functions and in the related context offers a broader spectrum for examining biliteracy (García, 2009). The term multilingual literacies, as proposed by Martin- Jones & Jones (2000), refers to the various linguistic repertoires and the different communicative purposes for which individuals use different spoken, written or signed languages. Drawing on this concept, this part of the analysis will deal with the context where CD is situated according to parents' views, enabling this study to focus on the multiple purposes for which Greek Cypriots use CD (and/or SMG) in their communication, selecting a contextualised view of CD and its appropriate uses in society.

Evidence that shows that SMG is situated in formal schooling and within the context of the classroom as well as in the workplace and in higher education has been presented up to now. The richness of bidialectal, oral discourse, vernacular writing and literary texts from the Cypriot minority culture, while excluded from the school context, (Hornberger & Skilton- Sylvester, 2000) is discussed now.

#### **7.4.1 CD situated in stories and everyday experiences**

Parents situated CD in different sociocultural contexts with some arguing that CD is not apparent inside their home. In the following extract the mother said how her son describes to her every Sunday what he saw in the chancel of the church as well as the priest's actions and people's behaviour during the Sunday liturgy. These stories are narrated in CD and after asking her what language her son uses to narrate his stories, she expressed her worries regarding his way of talking (line 140).

#### 7.4.1: Parent 1 interview

- 137 CD Well ok, my opinion is that **it's nice to read** books but S4's and S5's experiences **are not common and not many children** have the opportunity to know **all the things they know** about **nature and so on**. So, if you ask a class to describe something relevant they may **be the only ones who know what to tell me**
- 138 CD Yes. S4 **comes home and he starts** telling me **what he saw in the chancel and what is in there** because **I told him that women are not allowed to go in there but only men. So he comes and tells me** what the church father **does and** that the church father **drinks the wine that is left from the communion**. He observes **such things**
- 139 CD **So does he tell you these stories in Cyprus dialect?**
- 140 SMG His speaking also **worries me a lot**
- CD
- 141 Why?
- 142 CD **It's that peasant's talking that our grandfathers use to talk; I think you have noticed this**

The teacher created a positive conversational environment regarding the twin sons' knowledge and the way they cope with the national curriculum (line 137). This approach encouraged the mother to say how one of her twin sons knows about religious issues and the way the church ceremony functions every Sunday (line 138). Even if his way of speaking worries her, CD seems appropriate within their home and in relation with religious issues, since the mother has described with positive feelings the way her son (S4) observes and talks about the things he sees in church.

#### 7.4.2 SMG situated at home and CD situated in interactions during playtime.

The following extract is from another parent's interview and shows that CD is situated during play time however it has no place at home.

#### 7.4.2: Parent 12 interview

- 117 T CD **Do you use the dialect at home?**
- 118 M SMG No we talk normally

- 119 T CD Normally **meaning as we talk every day?**
- 120 M SMG  
CD Normally. **If they dare in any moment to say.. at home we do not use the strong variety of CD but they might go to football and listen to another child talking the strong dialect and then come home and talk the same. So we forbid them to talk like this because the world is developing and you know.. you don't want them to stay there and not to progress**
- 121 T SMG You believe that they have to learn to talk nice for social reasons
- 122 M SMG Yes, they have to learn how to talk

In this extract, the parent presents a contradictory view of the family's use of CD. She reports that a strong variety of CD is used by her children when meeting with friends in the village during play time, outside the school but not at home. CD is spoken at home but not at its strong form. Her claim that CD is not spoken at home is unusual and contrary to research evidence, since CD is the everyday language used at home, with friends and family in informal occasions (Papapavlou, 2004). Tensions around CD are also revealed within the context of the family since the mother does not permit her children to use the heavily accented form of the dialect that is used in the village. The mother justifies her censorship of CD by emphasising that SMG is the language that is generally and officially accepted and learning to talk in SMG will enable them to gain access to broader social contexts. The following extract with the same mother shows evidence of contextualising CD and situating the dialect in an unofficial societal context.

#### 7.4.2: Parent 12 interview

- 123 T CD ... **So you believe** that the existence of two linguistic varieties **creates confusion.**
- 124 M CD Yes but not in **my house.**
- 125 T SMG/CD **Not** in your house but at school?
- 126 M CD Yes, in general **because I** notice that when **my daughter comes home sometimes after socializing with other girls she behaves like an uneducated "peasant". She also changes her behavior and gets carried away. However I bring her back**

In line 124, the mother agrees with the suggestion put by the teacher-researcher that bidialectal context creates confusion regarding learning. She goes on to assert that this confusion is not permitted in talk within her family. The mother has positioned herself and her family contrary to usual family language practices in this region of Cyprus. For her children, according to the mother, CD is not situated within the home environment but outside and mostly in unofficial communicative interactions with friends. The mother characterises the use of CD is - as uneducated behaviour placed in the context of the village. Parents' position could be interpreted as a defence position, when talking about CD and its use by their children, as well as its position in the family context.

### 7.4.3 CD in cultural literacy practices

I have chosen an extract, once again from Interview 1, where the mother presents in detail the way CD is situated in cultural practices in her family context. She refers to the traditional poems written by her two sons who both have difficulties with literacy skills, or other difficulties, in following the official curriculum.

#### 7.4.3: Parent 1 Interview

- |     |   |           |  |
|-----|---|-----------|--|
| 71. | T | SMG/CD    | Did you see the poems <b>they wrote</b> for mother's day?  |
| 72. | M |           | Yes  |
| 73. | T | CD        | Which one did you like? <b>Both were great weren't they?</b>   |
| 74. | M | CD<br>SMG | <b>Yes, both.</b> The funny <b>thing was that I finished work at nine on that Friday night and they had put the cards on my night table with a candle beside each card. My husband came to get me from work at nine clock and they had fallen asleep. My husband told me not to tell them that he blew out the candles. The next day, at six o clock in the morning they came and started asking me "Mum did you see our cards?" "Yes I did" I told them</b> |
| 74. | T | CD        | Well, <b>I liked their poems very much and I really liked S4's poem because he surprised me for the second time. Last time he told me a "tsiatisto"</b>  |

75. M CD To tell you the **truth I believe this is a family characteristic.. their great- grandfather and grandfather- my father- were poets of Cypriot poems [pietarie] and they were in the traditional gatherings, festivals etc. So is my brother, so I believe it's in their genes**  
 <Tsiatisto is a form of traditional poems in CD which talk about everyday life using rhymes>

The teacher asked the mother if she liked the poems her sons wrote for her on Mother's Day. In line 74, the mother, using CD, described how her sons prepared her room for that special day. The teacher in line 75 underlined S4's skills in thinking and writing poems in CD. She noted that he had written a particular type of traditional poems with rhymes written in CD which are called "tsiatista". Then the mother confessed that they came from a family that used to be traditional poets, creating rhymes in CD and improvising at the same time. She believed that her son might have inherited that particular skill from his grandfathers. This extract shows not only that CD is situated as a traditional language used in poems that are a valued cultural literacy practice, It also presents evidence of students' literacy practices within the context of the family as well as the context of the classroom where they performed successfully, while having noticeable difficulties in curriculum literacy skills.

#### **7.4.4 CD situated in traditional and modern cultural practices**

During the interview-conversations, parents described their children's various afternoon activities as well as their hobbies and general home activities. In the following extract, the mother is talking to the teacher-researcher about her children's favourite songs and she reported that they also listen to songs in CD, which are usually considered as traditional songs that are played in, for example, festivals, schools or family celebrations, traditional days.

#### 7.4.4: Parent 13 interview

125 T	CD/SMG	Do they <b>listen</b> to Cypriot songs?
126 M	CD	Yes <b>a lot</b>
127 T	CD	<b>Really?</b>
128 M	CD	<b>Ok, not so much but they like it when they happen to listen to them, If they happen to listen to something in the dialect on television, they will prefer to watch that instead of something else</b>
129 T		Yes? Why?
130 M	CD	Why? Em.. <b>they like it. I also like songs in the Cyprus dialect. If I listen to something that I like I will start singing it</b>
131 T	CD	<b>Why do you think you do that? Is it</b> because you feel <b>closer with these songs or is it because you understand them better?</b>
132 M	SMG	No, I think <b>it is</b> instinct

The mother replies (line126) to the teacher-researcher that her children listen a great deal to traditional Cypriot songs. In line 127, the teacher expresses surprise because the reality is that it is rare to find children who listen to traditional music since they are mostly in contexts with current popular songs from famous Greek or English singers. In line 128, the mother modifies her position, perhaps due to the teacher's reaction in line 127. However she maintains that her children prefer to watch TV programmes in CD than any other shows, indicating fluency and familiarity with the language. The mother said that they seem to like CD songs as she herself does, and she also likes to sing songs in CD. The researcher prompts the mother for her motivation to sing CD songs, such as 'feeling closer to' - identifying more with CD or understanding better these songs. The mother rejects these possible motivations. . She attributes her motivation to "instinct" as she stated in line 132.

The instinct that the mother suggested as the reason she and her children are driven towards the dialect could be interpreted as an expression of identity and belonging to a social context where CD has always been used, but also indicating that CD is part of her everyday life and everyday interactions.

## 7.5 Conclusion

This chapter has provided an analysis of evidence from the local social context by the parents of students in the study so that a wider picture of the linguistic hierarchies and parents' attitudes regarding language could be gained. The complex sociolinguistic context of Cyprus is revealed through parents' interviews, where their opinions show an unequal distribution of power across the two linguistic varieties that exist in the island. CD is considered as the less powerful language while SMG is the more powerful and privileged language positioned at the powerful end of biliteracy continuum (Hornberger, 1989).

Parents do not accept the use of CD in the academic context and there are some who do not wish its use within their home. Curriculum oracy practices versus literacy practices are also positioned on a continuum of power relations since written production in SMG is the powerful goal of educators and parents while curriculum oracy production in CD and its possibilities for learning are not recognised and sometimes rejected. According to parents' views classroom curriculum oracy practices should be undertaken only in SMG since it is the language that will offer children possibilities for learning development and social mobility.

This chapter also scrutinised the situatedness of CD in educational contexts, to determine where CD is accepted according to parents' views and to investigate the multiple communicative purposes of CD outside the educational context. CD was situated depending on the context, such as in peers interactions and playtime, in traditional poems and songs, in TV programmes, or even at home, although some parents denied the use of CD in their home, even displaying constructions of fear of CD and its influence on impeding learning and in social interactions.

# **CHAPTER 8: TRANSLANGUAGING AND LITERACY PRACTICES IN THE ACADEMIC CONTEXT**

## **8.1 Introduction**

This chapter focuses on the second research question and analyses the way translanguaging is used together with students' literacy practices in the context of the classroom in order to acquire access to the content of the discussion. Students share collaboratively their literacy practices in order to develop their ideas and actions (García, 2009). Thus, in this chapter I examine the way students relate the curriculum content to their individual and collective experiences in order to analyse the subject of discussion and construct new meanings (Cummins, 2000). I examine the way students' learning acquires a social character through the notion of literacy practices which are social, culturally and politically contextualised practices that reflect the diversity of student's home, academic and community experiences (Conteh, 2013). In this way they are not 'useless' for pedagogic purposes but on the contrary they enable learning development through sense making.

Subsequently, I investigate the way translanguaging enables the regulation of knowledge through classroom interactions that allow students to use their prior individual experience to access the curriculum (Cummins, 2000) and enable control of their own learning. The concept of translanguaging is discussed and the way patterns showed that it enhances students' criticality. This chapter also analyses the extent to which translanguaging is the use of both language varieties, SMG and CD, to maximise participation, in order to support

their understanding of the subject matter and to facilitate joint reasoning (García, 2009; García & Li Wei 2014; Mercer, 2004).

I present how students with learning difficulties engaged in the learning process while recurring patterns showed that these students participated on most occasions for socialisation reasons. Finally, I present patterns that show the way the teacher incorporates translanguaging in pedagogy, by accepting how students' use their linguistic resources, as well as the ways in which CD is appropriated and used as a meaning-making resource.

## **8.2 Translanguaging and literacy practices: relating individual experience to curriculum content.**

Moll (1992) argued that by integrating “funds of knowledge” into the classroom the pedagogy becomes highly relevant to students' social context. I applied Moll's (1992) idea to my research practice, so that students drew on their own ‘funds of knowledge’ through meaningful interactions in CD and shared their ideas with the rest of the classroom. Recurring patterns showed that students use CD when they want to talk about a personal experience which can contribute to the pedagogic task by using all of their available resources for learning.

The following extract is part of a conversation after the teacher-researcher read aloud an informative text from a book about the island of Rhodes in Greece.

8.2 (i) Extract 12: Rhodes/June /2011

17. SMG-CD And mostly, **something that is related with this**, what is it that the foreigner would like to know when visiting the island or a country? What do tourists usually want to find out? The..
18. SMG The beautiful island of Rhodes
19. SMG Their language
20. SMG-CD Yes sure, language is important, **but I won't travel to a country to learn their language**. I will go to Rhodes for example to learn its..
21. SMG Its natural beauty..
22. SMG Well, yes this is something I should write on the white board because Rhodes is indeed beautiful.
23. SMG The sightseeings..
24. SMG Yes what is this? What do the castles, the museums, the monuments present?
25. SMG The ancient monuments..
26. SMG Yes but what is this? What do they present? What do we learn from them? The?
27. SMG The history
28. SMG Yes. Exactly. I want to learn about the history of the place
29. CD **Miss, I didn't want to leave Rhodes when I visited the island**
30. SMG This is nice. Why?
31. CD **Because Miss we always went to the same restaurant to have dinner and I always wanted to eat pasta. The next time the owner knew what I wanted to eat and another day he offered me an ice cream for free because we were going there every day**
32. CD **I was bored Miss because I had to get a present so I went into a shop and bought a ball and left**
33. CD **Oh come on**

The teacher asked the students what tourists would like to learn about the island and started writing bullet points on the whiteboard as the students gave their ideas. Some of the information was included in the text and the teacher wanted them to retrieve the information from the text, aiming to enhance their comprehension and to develop their vocabulary. This activity would assist the written task they had to do after the discussion, which was to write a short text on a postcard from Rhodes to a friend.

While students were referring to various things that a tourist would like to know about Rhodes, such as its history, its sights and its natural beauty, S8 in line 29 referred to his personal experience when he visited the island with his family also as a tourist. S8 translanguaged to CD to provide additional information about the island that was not related with what S1 in line 27 had just mentioned using SMG. His participation seemed not to assist the collaborative effort of the rest of the class which was trying to resolve the pedagogic task. S8 translanguaged to offer his personal experience via his home language even if it did not follow the official line the teacher had set, which was to follow the book and provide information. The teacher accepted his spontaneous utterance at line 30 and enabled the student to continue explaining. The student participated for social reasons and at line 31 he continued using CD to explain that when he was a tourist in Rhodes he visited a specific restaurant where he always ate pasta and the owner was so friendly that he offered him an ice-cream for free. The teacher let the conversation continue until S6 at line 32 voiced a different opinion about Rhodes. He also continued using CD and mentioned that he was bored when he visited the island and that he had had to find a present for himself and just bought a ball. S8 at line 33 did not agree with him.

S8 and S6 translanguaged to CD relating their available social experiences with the content of the lesson. Their literacy practices such as narrating a story in CD could be related with

the text and enabled the creation of additional personal narratives. The shared communication context was the two students' personal experiences from their holidays in Rhodes. Their socially situated interaction moved away from the official literacy education policy and curriculum. These children were trying to make sense of the text based on their personal sociocultural context (Hornberger, 1989; Martin- Jones & Jones, 2000; García, 2009). Students actively synthesised their understandings of literacy through the use of their home language, CD, and provided additional information to the classroom (line 31-32).

In the next extract which is taken from the same conversation a couple of minutes later, S8's participation was again for social participatory reasons and used CD extensively to provide the class with lots of details about his historical relationship with Rhodes.

8.2 (ii) Extract 12: Rhodes /June /2011

- |     |     |     |   |
|-----|-----|-----|---|
| 40. | T   | SMG | Ok instead of charming. What do we mean when we say "natural beauty"? S12?  |
| 41. | S12 |     | NR  |
| 42. | T   | SMG | When we don't participate then we won't be able to answer these questions. So what do we mean when we say "natural beauty"? How do you understand it?   |
| 43. | S3  | SMG | It's when nature is beautiful   |
| 44. | T   | SMG | Yes, if you think about it in this way, then it's true.   |
| 45. | S18 | SMG | It has its own beauty   |
| 46. | T   | SMG | Yes great. It means that the island has its own beauty, it wasn't made from humans  |
| 47. | S8  | CD  | <b>Miss my grandparents are from Rhodes. My grandfather was a ship engineer, he was like a sailor and he fixed ships for the enemy. Then my grandfather quitted but one day a bomb crashed their house and was destroyed and then they decided to go to Cyprus so that they wouldn't be captured and left Rhodes. After some time when they heard that Rhodes was free they went back to Rhodes for a while to see what happened there.</b> |
| 48. | T   | SMG | Who conquered the island?   |
| 49. | S8  | CD  | <b>I don't... English I think?</b>  |
| 50. | T   | SMG | Was it Italians?  |
| 51. | S8  | CD  | <b>I don't know Miss. Then they came back to</b>  |

			<b>Cyprus to check and my grandmother R wanted to build a house in our village</b>
52.	T	SMG	Who tells you these stories?
53.	S8	CD	<b>My grandfather, one day we were alone and I asked him how he met my grandmother and then he told me this story</b>
54.	T	SMG	Very nice story S8

The teacher-researcher continued following the initial structure of the lesson, using SMG to ask the students to describe what Rhodes has to offer to foreigners. The teacher used a lot of SMG vocabulary and expressions in SMG that were perhaps difficult for some students. While students were trying to collectively construct new meanings and provide explanations that would serve the pedagogic task (talking about Rhodes' beauty) S8 at line 47 translanguaged once again to offer historical information related to his grandparents who used to live in Rhodes. This information was not related to the basic lesson and thus his participation could not be considered as constructive. It was not related to the pedagogic task with information as to what a visitor could see on the island, although it reflected some points in the general theme of the lesson concerning the valuable history of the island.

S8, in line 51, continued using CD and participated to the lesson using literacy practices that were influenced by his social context. However, he did not link his ideas with the subject the whole class was trying to solve but instead narrated a story which was indeed very interesting and enabled knowing the island from a historical perspective. His intergenerational story can be considered as a literacy practice (Hornberger & Link, 2012) which through the use of CD, and influenced by his sociocultural and sociohistorical context, he tried to participate in the lesson offering his personal knowledge about the issue. If literacy is not seen as an autonomous skill that includes a specific set of skills that are necessary for reading and writing but is considered as a set of literacy practices that enable students to draw on all of their available linguistic resources and offer their different

learning experiences from home, school and community (Street, 1984) then this social participation, evidenced in the data extract, can be considered as something positive to learning development and as an expansion of the resources that students have available for literacy learning.

### **8.2.1 Translanguaging and literacy practices: Social experiences as a resource for sense- making.**

Students' translanguaging creates opportunities for the development of literacy practices which can be characterised as a combination of socially, culturally and politically contextualised practices and are created through specific social contexts and personal experiences in home school and community (Conteh, 2013). Literacy learning is independent from the structural notion of literacy as a set of technical skills in reading and writing and literacy events which are specific instances where students communicate around print, such as the reading and comprehension of a story (Martin, 2013; Goldfus, 2013).

This part of my analysis supports García's (2009, p.353) argument that "if one of the functions of education is to develop literacy practices that conform to standard language use, then students will be have the opportunities to engage in the full processes of reading and writing the standard language according to sociocultural norms and to study parts of reading and writing in the standard language." The data analysis in this section is an attempt both to go into more analytic detail and to continue presenting patterns that show the way students' literacy practices support their active engagement and participation in literacy events in the classroom and enhance their meaning-making of the text through the use of all their available linguistic resources.

**i. Extract 3: The story of Demaonte Lov.**

The next extract shows the way students translanguage when participating in the lesson, using CD to offer information that would assist the joint construction of meaning. The information provided is driven from personal experiences and culture- based knowledge.

8.2.1 (i) Extract 3: The story of Deamonte Lov / 26.1.2011

41. T SMG Children, Deamonte gathered all the children close to him; he obtained food like an adult would do from the rescue teams and waited in the queue as a grownup until he and the children found their mothers. Did you ever happen to face such a difficult situation and had to solve it by yourself? If yes, I want you to narrate it to me
42. S16 SMG No, I never happened to face a great difficulty because always.. It's..
43. T SMG Who happened to be in such a difficult situation?
44. S7 CD **I happened to be in a difficult situation but I don't want to tell**
45. S18 SMG One day my mother left me responsible to watch over my brother and my two cousins when they went to work. I took care of them all day and feed them
46. T SMG Did something happen that made you feel responsible for them?
47. S18 CD **I had to cook for them Miss**
48. S15 CD **One day some friends came to my place as well as my cousins for my birthday and my parents went to buy a cake and the grownups left and they told us to lock the door and stay in the house. And a baby went up the stairs and I didn't notice it and so he slipped and fell down. Thank God I caught him because he would hit his head. Then we took the little child to the hospital to see if he was injured and when we came back we ate our cake**
49. T SMG OK, now can you repeat what you just narrated to me but differently? Like the way you would write
50. S15 SMG-CD On my birthday day, my friends, my cousins and my brothers came to my house to play. My parents **left to go and get a cake to eat and so I was left alone at home with my friends.** A small child **tried** to climb the stairs and **slipped** and when my mother came home we went to the hospital to check if he was injured. But nothing happened to him and when we came back we ate cake
51. T SMG Ok thank you
52. S13 CD **Miss, one day, my neighbours left their dog outside and their gate was opened and came to my house, it came to my house and I run but it came after me and from that day I am afraid of dogs Miss**

The students read the story of Deamonte Lov and after a long discussion about the text the teacher, using SMG, asked the students if they ever happened to face a difficult situation like Deamonte who had to find a solution by himself (line 41). In line 42, S6 tried to answer by using SMG but he seemed not to have such a personal experience. Then, S7 in line 44, translanguaged to CD but did not offer any further information about sharing his experience but participated just for socialisation purposes. S18 in line 45 used SMG to narrate her personal story and when the teacher asked her about the real importance of her story that made her feel responsible for the children she had to protect, she translanguaged to CD to offer her explanation. Once again CD is used for clarifications and further explanations by the child while it can be assumed that by translanguaging she made clear to the rest of the class the reason why she told that story.

S15, in line 48, also chose to use CD to tell her own story. She offered great detail in her story but also offered information to the rest of the class using her home language, CD. S15's literacy practice was influenced by her home environment and by drawing on her available linguistic resources she seems to make sense of the text in terms of the danger she faced like Deamonte did. Her participation offered ideas influenced by her social context and by choosing to use CD she narrated a story related to the ideas investigated in the lesson.

The teacher in line 49 asked the student to repeat what she had just narrated but differently, by which the teacher implied, and the child understood, using SMG. The language imposed by the national curriculum seemed to be the one that the teacher would use to evaluate the child's performance especially afterwards when writing. The child tried to synthesise her story and knowledge once again translanguaging from SMG to CD and then again to SMG. Her second narration did not have the level of detail and descriptive characteristics as the

first one while translanguaging supported her narration in moments when she could not retrieve the exact words in SMG. An alternative explanation could be that as this part of the story involved 'home' it could have been an emotional prompt to translanguage from SMG to CD.

The students chose to use CD to tell their personal experience since their stories were drawn from their sociocultural context. Their participation has got a social character and their literacy practices are socially constructed facilitating meaning making and the collaborative construction of knowledge. What I mean here by 'socially constructed' is that their linguistic practices in and around the text are based on and influenced by their social environment (García, 2009; García & Flores, 2013). The engagement of students in literacy practices that enable them to access information and correspond to learning demands can be seen as a varied communicative process that facilitates learning and making sense of academic context through social contexts.

The recurring patterns show that when children want to participate in offering their personal experience that could be related with the analysis of the text as well as the facilitation of meaning making. They translanguage to CD ensuring that their literacy practices are socially situated and culturally constructed as well as in solidarity with the specific group they are talking to and to the social setting they are talking about.

**ii. Extract 9: Internet**

The next extract also shows interesting evidence in relation to the ways students translanguage to engage fully in the conversation and the joint construction of meaning through literacy practices that perhaps do not conform to the official pedagogy of

education. After reading a text that was talking about the dangers of the internet, the teacher asked the students to tell her what are the advantages and disadvantages of internet based on the text.

8.2.1(ii) Extract 9: The Internet/ part 2/ 25.5.2011

- |     |     |            |  |
|-----|-----|------------|--|
| 25. | S13 | SMG        | The internet's disadvantages are that someone might get into your website and steal your photograph  |
| 26. | T   | SMG        | So this is dangerous because someone might..   |
| 27. | S8  | SMG        | This is dangerous because someone might try to destroy us?   |
| 28. | T   | SMG        | Perhaps.. try to destroy us  |
| 29. | S17 | SMG        | To spy on us   |
| 30. | T   | SMG        | Yes  |
| 31. | S8  | CD         | <b>To .. (*)</b>   |
| 32. | T   | SMG        | OK, let me tell you something else. There is a danger we may be fooled   |
| 33. | S13 | SMG        | And to trick us  |
| 34. | T   | SMG/<br>CD | And to find out our personal information. <b>Someone also mentioned something about being all day in his room</b> in front of the computer and so there is the possibility of being alienated from the rest of the family    |
| 35. | S2  | CD         | <b>Miss, there is also something else we didn't say! It is important!</b>  |
| 36. | S15 | CD/S<br>MG | (0) <b>Miss one day I got in the internet and somewhere it said the disadvantages of the internet and it said that we may loss our sight or our memory.. This kind of stuff</b>  |
| 37. | T   | SMG        | This is interesting information. Very good that you got into the internet and read about it  |
| 38. | S7  | CD         | <b>Miss a friend of mine goes with me to this afternoon kids club where there is a computer where we play games and when he finishes his studying he sits lots of hours and plays even when we leave the club to go home</b> |
| 39. | S10 | CD         | (0) <b>Miss can someone steals all of our passwords and get into all of our accounts?</b>  |
| 40. | S1  | CD         | (0) <b>They can't find the password quickly enough..</b>   |
| 41. | S15 | CD         | (0) <b>Yes but there are some programs which don't allow them to break the passwords</b>   |
| 42. | T   | CD         | <b>You talked while I was writing on the whiteboard and didn't wait for me to finish so that we could have this conversation together.</b> Yes S2  |
| 43. | S2  | CD         | <b>Miss someone might ask to meet a girl when chatting with her and then tell her to rape her</b>  |
| 44. | T   | CD         | <b>Yes, you continued what S11 told us before.</b> Yes S16.  |
| 45. | S16 | CD         | <b>Miss when you get into facebook and write your password then someone can easily break it</b>  |
| 46. | T   | CD         | <b>Yes indeed I know this.</b> Well done   |

- |     |    |     |   |
|-----|----|-----|---|
| 47. | S8 | CD  | <b>Miss, a long time ago Miss, my cousin Miss, found a game in the computer and.. and you photographed yourself and entered the photo in the computer and then made yourself look more strong, taller and.. and supposedly they sent you a letter and you could made lots of “friends” and you stayed forever in your room; and my cousin Miss, told this to the headmaster and he was for a week in his room because of this</b> |
| 48. | T  | SMG | Great. This is what we wrote on the whiteboard, that we lose communication with our family and our real friends. Don't we?  |

The conversation started by looking at the text and identifying the advantages of using the internet. Children were using SMG to formally present the information they found. The teacher used both CD and SMG early in the conversation permitting the use of both linguistic varieties (also see appendices). However the students in the middle of the conversation started talking about the dangers they personally knew without using information from the text. S13 in line 25, started the conversation about the disadvantages of the internet by using SMG and offering information that could benefit the collective construction of knowledge (Mercer, 2004) around the uses of the internet. The teacher was asking students to justify their answers in order to expand their thinking such as in line 26 while students were offering information in SMG. Once the teacher used CD in her sentence in line 34 then students began using CD only. Their translanguaging was assisting the collaborative effort for solving the pedagogic task and giving the teacher information she could write on the whiteboard in SMG.

Children started to draw on information they knew from their social/home environment. In line 35, S2 seeks for permission from the teacher by shouting out that he thought of something important related to the lesson. His participation seems to try to be in solidarity with the rest of the class and with his teacher who already used CD so that the teacher would let him speak. In line 36, S15 referred to what she read at home related to the

disadvantages of the internet and provided explanations in CD. The teacher then in line 37 used SMG to position herself as an authoritative speaker who rewards the student's effort.

Then the conversation becomes very interesting and animated where students negotiate the issue of the dangers of the internet, using one linguistic resource that is CD and integrate all their available language practices to make contextual connections and construct meanings and knowledge. Utterances from line 38-41 show a cognitive engagement in the lesson through not only specific language practices but also socially relevant practices, which, although they do not include the standard language practices for academic purposes, they do assist the negotiation of the theme around the text that was written in standard language, SMG. In line 42 the teacher also uses CD for classroom management purposes and again the conversation continues animatedly in CD from line 43-47 facilitating the solution of the pedagogic task via a successful elaboration of ideas. Students engage both their linguistic repertoires to make meaning and create a communicative space in relation to text and the collaborative contributions of the whole class (García & Li Wei, 2014). The data extract indicates that students seem to self-regulate their own learning since they monitor each other's responses and add experiences related with the discussion through the use of CD (García & Li Wei, 2014).

The appropriateness of social practices via translanguaging enabled a meaningful interaction and internalisation of knowledge. Knowledge seems to have been "digested" as Colin Baker (2003) argued when he provided explanations regarding the reading and the discussion of a topic in one language and then the writing in another. The data extract here shows how the content has been understood and developed in the less powerful language that is CD. This literacy event included literacy practices that enabled the use of social funds of knowledge which in turn enhanced the process of meaning-making. Thus the

sociocultural facilitated the sociocognitive. Students were encouraged to use their home and community knowledge in relation to the advantages and disadvantages of the internet to make sense of the school text (García & Flores, 2013).

### **8.3 Translanguaging, social practices and regulation of knowledge**

A pattern that will be discussed in this section is how students seem to be regulating their knowledge as their translanguaging enables flexibility in control of their own learning while they also use social practices which constitute the ability to socially and collaboratively construct their learning through the use of an additional linguistic variety that is CD (García, 2009; García & Li Wei, 2014). Even if the context in which they are is considered as a place where the official language should be used, yet they use both of their linguistic resources to make sense of the content of the subject matter and to direct their own learning.

As García & Li Wei (2014) argued, bilingual students direct their translanguaging and use meaning making resources that are not found in the classroom, when they have to find new information by reading or speaking to others. For example, in extract 9 students had to distinguish the disadvantages of the internet from the text they had just read. Students had chosen to translanguage to CD to offer information to the rest of the class as well as to the teacher who was not aware that students had this kind of knowledge. Students in extract 9, built knowledge in relationship with others through collective and meaningful contributions. Throughout the discussion they seemed to be independent and autonomous in driving their talk. Even though the teacher tried to guide their discussion it was in terms of managing the class or rewarding them and not stopping them (line 37, 42, 48). The

students seemed to have developed a joint understanding of the subject under investigation after the knowledge they had provided and expanded (lines 36, 38, 43, 47).

The following part of conversation is undertaken around the text titled “An intercultural school” which has students from different countries with different languages. The students again seem to be actively joining in the conversation and trying to regulate their own learning by questioning and expressing views through reasoned responses (García & Li Wei, 2014).

### 8.3 Extract 11: An intercultural school: 4.5.2011

- |     |     |            |  |
|-----|-----|------------|--|
| 17. | T   | SMG        | Great so this is a difference. How about a similarity?   |
| 18. | S13 | SMG/<br>CD | The students in our school have..almost all have the same hair colour but the others have.. <b>the others have let’s say blond hair</b>  |
| 19. | S1  | SMG        | Miss I know. They have a language teacher like we do. Also they have a teacher for gymnastic and so do we  |
| 20. | T   | SMG        | Yes this is the most important commonality. Another difference is that.. What is it S6?  |
| 21. | S6  | CD         | <b>They do the same job. Don’t they teach them like you do?</b>  |
| 22. | T   | CD         | <b>Yes but all schools do this</b>   |
| 23. | S4  | SMG        | There are children who have round eyes and other children have eyes  |
| 24. | T   | CD/<br>SMG | <b>Yes but is this related with what we are discussing? However, it is a nice thought.</b> So a big difference is that in Cyprus we only have one teacher for teaching language but in other countries they have a teacher for teaching in each language. <b>For example if they have let’s say children from Bulgaria then they would have a teacher that speaks Bulgarian.</b> This is something that doesn’t happen in Cyprus or Greece |
| 25. | S1  | CD         | Yes but where do they find these teachers that speak Bulgarian or Romanian?  |
| 26. | T   | CD         | <b>Surely there is a teacher that speaks the language like it happens abroad.</b>  |
| 27. | S6  | CD         | <b>And how will they communicate Miss? They will speak to them Chinese?</b>  |
| 28. | T   | CD/<br>SMG | <b>Well what did I just tell you?</b> They will appoint a teacher specialised in each language   |
| 29. | S6  |            | <b>Oh ok</b>   |
| 30. | S8  | CD         | <b>So Miss if we had such students in our school how</b>   |

			<b>would we talk to them? How should we play with them and talk with them?</b>
31.	T	SMG/ CD	I am sure that children always find the way to <b>communicate</b>
32.	S3	CD	<b>Miss me and S8 have a friend from Bulgaria.</b>
33.	S8	CD	<b>No he is from</b> Romania
34.	S3	CD	<b>No</b> Bulgaria
35.	S1	CD	<b>Come on, don't start fighting now</b>
36.	T	SMG	Yes now stop
37.	S4	CD	<b>Miss we had a student from Bulgaria who was poor and spoke only Bulgarian and someone taught him to speak Greek</b>

The teacher asked students to identify differences or similarities of the school in the text in relation to their own school. The teacher aimed to highlight differences related to social, cultural and linguistic characteristics and not to external individual characteristics such as having blond hair like S13 in line 18 suggested or having round eyes like S4 in line 23 mentioned. In line 19, S1 realised that the intercultural school was operating like their school for example they had a teacher for language lesson and a different teacher for gymnastic. Then when the teacher asked S6 in line 20 to tell her about a difference between the two schools he translanguaged to CD and without referring to the text offered his personal opinion. In line 24 the teacher started giving hints about what the text was talking about and mentioned a real difference between the school in the text and their own school such as having a different teacher for each language group.

Then S1 in line 25 used CD to question what the teacher said since such a situation perhaps did not match with his own cultural reality. His participation could have been for social reasons to ensure that what the teacher had just said matched with his personal experiences. At the same time S1's participation could also be considered as pedagogically constructive since he is ensuring understandings not only for himself but also for the whole classroom. Then in line 26 the teacher offers an explanation to S1 by using CD. In line 27, S6 questions once again the teacher by using CD, indicating a breakdown in understanding the

text. This breakdown is perhaps due to the fact that such situations are not reflected in the culture of the students' lives. So S6 uses CD to make sense of the text and manipulate knowledge through his personal learning experiences. In line 28 the teacher also switches to CD to provide further explanations and to facilitate the student's understanding. S6 in line 29 seemed to comprehend while S8 in line 30 insisted on explaining the way students from other countries would communicate with the rest of the students.

#### **8.4 Translanguaging and criticality**

García & Li Wei (2014) argued that,

*“criticality refers to the ability to use available evidence appropriately, systematically and insightfully to inform considered views of cultural, social, political and linguistic phenomena, to question and problematise received wisdom and to express views adequately through reasoned responses to situations”.* (García & Li Wei, 2014, p.67)

What occurred from line 25 to 30 in 8.3 Extract 11, was a continuous questioning through CD where students were processing the text from a more social perspective through the mediation of their home language. The diversity of learners' experiences was manifested through their literacy practices within the classroom context. The students created collectively a communicative context that enabled them to understand, by using available meanings appropriately. Their literacy practices manifested a different way of thinking within the cultural context that was perhaps the reason for not comprehending the text initially. Their questioning can also be considered as a form of criticality by expressing views and problematisations through reasoned responses in CD (8.3: Extract 11 lines 21, 25, 27, 30). Further, their continuous questioning through the use of CD can be considered as an extension of their inner speech and thus the social can become cognitive (García & Li Wei, 2014).

The conversation included both linguistic varieties; however there was a sudden turn to CD from lines 25 to 37 when the children seemed to be discussing the subject and negotiating meanings by using CD. Their translanguaging seems to assist the collective creation of understandings and sense-making of the text. Their participation included language practices for the purpose of the lesson and their translanguaging enabled them to reflect and internalise knowledge that was new to them.

Translanguaging enabled them to be critical by using evidence given from the text appropriately to compare with their own experience and by questioning and problematising the received knowledge to express their views reasonably (García & Li Wei, 2014). Students' participation, such as in lines 25 to 27, can be considered as critical since the students questioned and perhaps made fun of the text. However their translanguaging enabled them to use their full linguistic repertoire to construct knowledge and make sense of what the text was referring to. Children engaged in literacy practices that enabled them to use their available experiences in school to reflect and construct meanings through socially and culturally contextualised dialogues.

In the same extract (8.3: Extract 11) in line 32, S3 used CD to mention that he and his friend S8 had a friend from Bulgaria. Then a dispute started between S8 and S3, using CD, regarding the nationality of their friend (lines 33-34) while their classmate S1 urged them not to start fighting over such nonsense matter. In line 37, S4 mentioned that he also had a friend from Bulgaria who was not only poor but he did not know Greek until someone taught him the language.

## 8.5 Expansion of thinking through translanguaging

Three examples from different places in the data are presented to show the detail and depth of children's learning and understanding through their translanguaging talk. The first example in the following extract shows how children in the classroom use language as a tool for thinking, expanding their opinions by offering a level of detail and further explanations. Most importantly this extract shows evidence of students' joint construction of knowledge by building on each other's thoughts, enhancing them with any linguistic tool available.

### 8.5: Extract 1: Santa Claus's Laundry /10.12.2010

45	T	SMG	Let's see if it is in the third paragraph... ( <i>I am pointing in her book and counting, 1,2,3</i> ). Well done you are correct! So how did Santa felt? Did S14 read it correctly?
46	S18	SMG	He felt desperate
47	T	SMG	Do you know what desperate means?
48	S3	SMG	Does it mean that he is sad?
49	T	SMG	Xmmm... Kind of..
50	S6	CD	<b>He doesn't know what to do!</b>
51	T	SMG	Well done. He doesn't know what to do. He is desperate. He tries to find a solution to his problem, he feels lost. So what did he do to solve his problem?
52	S7	SMG CD	He sends messages to bring him <b>new clothes and socks and hat.</b>
53	T	SMG	Very nice
54	S4	SMG	To bring to him... he has to send messages so that children will help him to find some clothes.
55	S3	SMG- CD	The children from Africa will send him a shirt, the children of Asia <b>woolen socks</b> , from America children will send him a jacket with warm fur, from Australia a long trouser and from Europe a hat.
56	T	SMG	Well done. You answered very nicely the question. So... we discussed before that at the end of the story Santa started crying and we know why. Who will remind me again? How about you S5?
57	S5	SMG	Because he was happy that they brought him presents.

The target question at this point was “*How do you think that Santa felt when he saw that his uniform shrank?*” Children shared their ideas and developed their understanding by actively participating in the lesson. S18 answered the teacher’s question by saying that he felt desperate and at the same time S3 tries to provide an explanation of the word with a little uncertainty. S6, in line 50, explains the SMG word in CD offering a successful interpretation of the word “desperate”. S6 used CD which supported his participation in the class and achieved a level of progress which at the same time worked as a learning tool for the whole classroom. S7, in line 52, continued the use of CD for participating in the lesson after ensuring his understanding from the prior answer of his classmate. CD was used as a medium for sharing knowledge, so that students understood the language that was used in the class and the meanings around the topic and so enabled them to achieve the pedagogic task. The use of both linguistic varieties while learning seemed to enable the children to be more active in their learning and to internalise knowledge by understanding in-depth the text and the feelings of the characters.

A second example from a different part of the data shows a more emotionally expressive and detailed opinion once the student translanguages:

8.5: Extract 3: The story of Deamonte Lov / 26.1.2011

- |     |     |     |  |
|-----|-----|-----|--|
| 12. | T   | SMG | Surely you must have felt something, didn’t you?   |
| 13. | S12 |     | NR   |
| 14. | S2  | SMG | I felt like I was dreaming. <b>No child can take care of seven babies, all of them, and be able to find food for them but also to save his life and be able to find lakes</b> so that they will be able to survive |
|     |     | CD  |  |

S2 started by using an expression in SMG by telling us that what the hero of the story has done seemed unreal to him. Then he moves into CD to offer us an explanation according to

his own reality by using the language that he speaks in his everyday life and thus offers a level of detail in his justification as well as new information that serves the pedagogic task. The third extract is taken from the data of S8 when he was asked to discuss the context of the picture and to try to guess what would happen in the story that we were about to read. The question was “Could you tell me what do you think the story will talk about according to the title and the picture of the story?”

8.5: Extract 4: The big secret 19.1.2011 / Wednesday /9.30- 10.45 p.m

5. S8 SMG/CD I think that according to the picture and the title, that the children found... **saw a shadow at the beach while they were playing** and got scared

The student’s response started by mirroring the way I had asked the question in SMG. However, when he reached the central and important part of his answer he translanguaged to CD to offer the detail he wanted and ended his sentence/response expressing the protagonists’ feelings in SMG.

## **8.6 Translanguaging and Students with Learning Difficulties**

Four students in the class had identified learning difficulties: S2, S4, S5 and S14. However, only two of them attend special education: S4 and S14. S4’s translanguaging data is analysed and discussed here with the data from his colleagues who contributed to Extract 11. S4 contributes twice, in lines 23 and 37, and S6 contributes three times, on lines 21, 27 and 29. Comparisons are drawn between the translanguaging talk of S4 and S6 and their classmates through the prism of ‘language for thinking’ drawing on Mercer’s (2000) analytic concepts: disputational talk, cumulative talk, and exploratory talk. They use their community experiences through their home language to participate in two ways. The

collaborative dialogic effort of the rest of the classroom, in order to comprehend the text and solve the pedagogic task.

8.6: Extract 11: An intercultural school: 4.5.2011

- |     |     |            |   |
|-----|-----|------------|---|
| 17. | T   | SMG        | Great so this is a difference. How about a similarity?  |
| 18. | S13 | SMG/<br>CD | The students in our school have..almost all have the same hair colour but the others have.. <b>the others have let's say blond hair</b>   |
| 19. | S1  | SMG        | Miss I know. They have a language teacher like we do. Also they have a teacher for gymnastic and so do we   |
| 20. | T   | SMG        | Yes this is the most important commonality. Another difference is that..What is it S6?  |
| 21. | S6  | CD         | <b>They do the same job. Don't they teach them like you do?</b>   |
| 22. | T   | CD         | <b>Yes but all schools do this</b>  |
| 23. | S4  | SMG        | There are children who have round eyes and other children have eyes   |
| 24. | T   | CD/<br>SMG | <b>Yes but is this related with what we are discussing? However, it is a nice thought.</b> So a big difference is that in Cyprus we only have one teacher for teaching language but in other countries they have a teacher for teaching in each language. For example <b>if they have let's say children from Bulgaria then they would have a teacher that speaks Bulgarian.</b> This is something that doesn't happen in Cyprus or Greece. |
| 25. | S1  | CD         | Yes <b>but where do they find these teachers that speak Bulgarian or Romanian?</b>  |
| 26. | T   | CD         | <b>Surely there is a teacher that speaks the language like it happens abroad</b>  |
| 27. | S6  | CD         | <b>And how will they communicate Miss? They will speak to them in Chinese?</b>  |
| 28. | T   | CD/<br>SMG | <b>Well what did I just tell you?</b> They will appoint a teacher specialised in each language  |
| 29. | S6  | SMG        | Oh ok   |
| 30. | S8  | CD         | <b>(0) So Miss, If we had such students in our school how would we talk to them? How should we play with them and talk with them?</b>   |
| 31. | T   | SMG/CD     | I am sure that children always find the way to <b>communicate</b>   |
| 32. | S3  | CD         | <b>(0) Miss me and S8 have a friend from Bulgaria.</b>  |
| 33. | S8  | CD         | <b>(0) No he is from Romania</b>  |
| 34. | S3  | CD/SMG     | <b>(0) No Bulgaria</b>  |
| 35. | S1  | CD         | <b>(0) Come on, don't start fighting now.</b>   |
| 36. | T   | SMG        | Yes now stop  |
| 37. | S4  | CD         | <b>Miss we had a student from Bulgaria who was poor and spoke only Bulgarian and someone taught him to speak Greek</b>  |

S4's two contributions demonstrate his learning through cumulative talk. In line 23, S4 builds on S13's contribution (line 18) five turns earlier, where S13 has interpreted the teacher's request to identify cultural similarities, to offer similar physical characteristics of students from other countries. S4 continues in the same vein, with an observation about more physical characteristics. The teacher tactfully closes down this line of thought, and re-directs the focus of discussion. S4's second contribution again builds on earlier talk by classmates, S3 and S8.

In extract 11, the utterances from line 32 to 37 have a more social, experiential learning character the students, S3 and S8 translanguaged to offer personal information about a mutual friend from Bulgaria or Romania and demonstrate the two other forms of Mercer's 'talk for learning', cumulative and disputational. S3 builds on the contribution by S8 (line30) concerning their perceived predicament of children who do not speak SMG or CD in Cyprus' schools, S3's contribution builds his thinking on this issue through cumulative talk by referring to his and S8's personal experience of a student who did not speak SMG or CD. S8 departs from the main issue of their cumulative talk, to engage in disputational talk to contradict the accuracy of an aspect of S3's example. In these turn-takes (30-34) the students demonstrate the analytic concepts of 'talk for learning' moving from exploratory, through cumulative to disputational talk. The disputational exchange is finally barred by a third student, S1, and the teacher (lines 35-36). S4 then takes the floor (line 37), retrieving the issue raised by S3 and S8, and developing it with his own experiential knowledge of how language differences can be overcome: a foreign student he knew was taught Greek. This example is a further illustration of S4's contribution to learning through cumulative talk, through his participation in class discussion.

Another example of S4's contribution to the pedagogic task is presented in extract 5. Comparisons are drawn between the translanguaging practices of S4 and the rest of the students who participate in the conversation informed by the Vygotskian sociocultural framework indicating that individual cognitions and socially distributed cognition is rooted in meaningful social and cultural literacy practices (Martin, 2009).

8.6 Extract 5: 17.3.2011/ 8.30/ Thursday

32	T	SMG	Ok. When you started learning to talk what language did you hear around you?
33	S7	SMG	Cyprus' language
34	T	SMG	Any other language that someone heard that maybe sounded funny or confused him/her?
35	S1	CD	<b>Peasants' language</b>
36	T	SMG CD	What do you mean? Which is <b>peasants' language?</b> <meaning the language that is talked in the rural areas of Cyprus>
37	S1	SMG	Cypriot language
38	S4	CD	<b>(0) calamaristika</b> < calamaristika is a characterisation of SMG as it is used in mainland Greece>
39	T	SMG	Standard Modern Greek
40	S16	SMG	English
41	T	SMG	Did it confuse you?
42	S16	SMG	A little
43	S8	CD	<b>(0)The language that people in Rhodes speak. I went there when I was little and they talked funny and I started laughing</b>
44	S1	CD	<b>(0)The language of Crete</b>
45	T	SMG CD	When you started talking you were listening to Cyprus dialect. You were also listening to <b>calamaristika</b> (Greek) as student 4 told us. What language is <b>calamaristika</b> ?
46	S13	CD SMG	<b>It's the one that "calamaraes" speak such as:</b> ( LAUGH) "Hello how are you?" (MOCK) < Calamaraes are the Greek residents>
47	T	SMG	What is this language?
48	S6	SMG	Greek language
49	T	SMG CD	Why does it make you laugh? <b>I don't laugh with SMG</b>
50	S4	CD	Miss.. <b>the first time I heard my cousin speaking Greek, when she went to study in UK, it made me laugh.</b> (LAUGH)
51	S1	CD	<b>(0)They speak in singular and..</b>
52	T		In what?

53	S1	CD	In singular <b>and they speak very nice and..</b>
54	S4	CD	<b>(0)They talk very clear</b>
55	T	SMG	Why does this make you laugh? Do you feel uncomfortably?
56	S1	CD	<b>Yes they speak very clear but I never laughed with Greek</b>

S4 contributes three times in the discussion which is related with language attitudes as well as linguistic awareness. In line 43, S8 added a comment to his response which offered a social dimension to the matter contributing to the pedagogic task using a socially contextualised knowledge. Then S4 in line 50, made a comment using a personal experience to contribute to the pedagogic task and to participate to the process of joint thinking of the class. Then in line 51, S1 returned to what the teacher asked using CD while S4 in line 54 also translanguaged to contribute to his classmate's effort to construct meaning and complete his thought. The data show that S4's is active in the lesson and tries to participate using both linguistic codes accordingly for the negotiation of meanings and the manipulation of knowledge. The use of both CD and SMG served as mediating tools for enhancing understanding. Despite his learning difficulties, he contributes to the pedagogic task by offering his own conceptual dimension to the matter under discussion. The use of translanguaging could be characterised as an inclusive practice that enables children with specific learning difficulties to participate to the lesson and to follow the main point of the topic of the classroom conversations.

## **8.7 Teacher's incorporation of translanguaging in the classroom**

In my analysis and discussion of the data on the teacher-researcher's translanguaging behaviour I draw on selected data from extract 12, extract 11, extract 9 and extract 5. A case is made that the data supports García's (2009) argument, that translanguaging can be

considered as a successful pedagogic method when (i) teachers and students collaborate for learning that is child-centred and uses students' prior experiences, (ii) when teaching incorporates language and content and finally (iii) when it includes plurilingual methods to learning.

### **8.7.1 Translanguaging as pedagogy for clarifying, reinforcing and extending thoughts**

This point follows work from García and Li Wei, concerning pedagogy. García & Li Wei (2014) argued that teachers use translanguaging in pedagogic methods to give voice and involve students in the lesson, to offer clarifications, to reinforce, manage, extend and ask questions. Also teachers translanguage to negotiate meanings in the classroom (García & Li Wei, 2014), to facilitate understandings and to keep the pedagogic task moving (Hornberger & Link, 2012).

The data analyses in this study show that the teacher incorporates translanguaging in pedagogic practices that manifest the biliterate context of the classroom and the acceptance of students' communicative practices. Communication occurs in more than one language during discussions around written texts to ensure understandings and enable successful written production in the official academic language, SMG. Talk patterns also show that the teacher-researcher in this study is using translanguaging for reinforcing, clarifying involving and extending thoughts, negotiating meanings, keeping the pedagogic task moving and managing the class. Most importantly, patterns show that the students drew on their lived experiences in their home and social environments to apply them to understand the text-based literacy practices in school.

### 8.7.2 Translanguaging for teacher-student collaboration

Next, I present three examples of data illustrating how translanguaging supported teacher-student collaboration for curriculum learning, drawing on the children's lived experiences. I firstly identify the data example, then I describe the translanguaging behaviour by the teacher, and third, I give an analysis of the purpose of the translanguaging in the context of the classroom.

#### 8.7.2 Extract 12: Rhodes/June /2011

- |     |     |            |   |
|-----|-----|------------|---|
| 17. | T   | SMG-<br>CD | And mostly, <b>something that is related with this</b> , what is it that the foreigner would like to know when visiting the island or a country? What do tourists usually want to find out? The.. |
| 18. | S11 | SMG        | The beautiful island of Rhodes  |
| 19. | S6  | SMG        | Their language  |
| 20. | T   | SMG-<br>CD | Yes sure, language is important, <b>but I won't travel to a country to learn their language</b> . I will go to Rhodes for example to learn its..  |
| 21. | S15 | SMG        | Its natural beauty..  |
| 22. | T   | SMG        | Well, yes this is something I should write on the white board because Rhodes is indeed beautiful.   |

In Extract 12, line 17, the teacher involves the students in the discussion by saying in CD “something that is related with this” and in line 20 she offers a personal voice which can be considered as way of clarifying what she means as well as a way of extending students’ thought and involving them to the interaction by turning to CD to say “...but I won’t travel to a country to learn their language.” In this pedagogic method, I draw on shared cultural knowledge about the dangers of the internet.

8.7.2 Extract 11: An intercultural school: 4.5.2011

- |     |    |        |  |
|-----|----|--------|--|
| 24. | T  | CD/SMG | <b>Yes but is this related with what we are discussing? However, it is a nice thought.</b> So a big difference is that in Cyprus we only have one teacher for teaching language but in other countries they have a teacher for teaching in each language. <b>For example if they have let's say children from Bulgaria then they would have a teacher that speaks Bulgarian.</b> This is something that doesn't happen in Cyprus or Greece |
| 25. | S1 | CD     | Yes but where do they find these teachers that speak Bulgarian or Romanian?  |
| 26. | T  | CD     | <b>Surely there is a teacher that speaks the language like it happens abroad.</b>  |
| 27. | S6 | CD     | <b>And how will they communicate Miss? They will speak to them Chinese?</b>  |
| 28. | T  | CD/SMG | <b>Well what did I just tell you?</b> They will appoint a teacher specialised in each language   |

In Extract 11, (line 26- 28), the teacher engaged in students' discursive practices that included all of their available linguistic resources and practices in order to communicate, facilitate understanding, give voice to her students who were so problematised with the issue of bidialectal education. However, to be more precise, the teacher used CD in extract 11 in line 22 to negotiate meanings with the student who was asking for clarifications by saying "Yes but all schools do this." In line 24 the teacher translanguages to negotiate the meaning of what S4 had just said by saying "Yes but is this related with what we discuss?" and she continues offering reinforcement by telling her student in CD: "However, it is a nice thought". In the same sentence the teacher translanguages to SMG to continue the discussion of the main subject and then translanguages again to CD to clarify and to facilitate understandings by saying: "For example if they have let's say children from Bulgaria then they would have a teacher that speaks Bulgarian." At the same extract, in line 24, the teacher uses CD to answer a question to reinforce and extend the student's thinking by telling him "Surely there is a teacher that speaks the language like it happens abroad." Moreover, in line 28 the teacher translanguages to offer clarifications and explanations once

again but also to keep the task moving so that the conversation would not repeat the same concepts by saying in CD “Well what did I just tell you? They will appoint a teacher specialized in each language.”

8.7.2: Extract 9: The Internet/ part 2/ 25.5.2011

- |     |     |    |   |
|-----|-----|----|---|
| 39. | S10 | CD | <b>(0)Miss can someone steals all of our passwords and get into all of our accounts?</b>  |
| 40. | S1  | CD | <b>(0)They can't find the password quickly enough..</b>   |
| 41. | S15 | CD | <b>(0)Yes but there are some programs which don't allow them to break the passwords</b>   |
| 42. | T   | CD | <b>You talked while I was writing on the whiteboard and didn't wait for me to finish so that we could have this conversation together.</b> Yes S2 |
| 43. | S2  | CD | <b>Miss someone might ask to meet a girl when chatting with her and then tell her to rape her</b>   |
| 44. | T   | CD | <b>Yes, you continued what S11 told us before.</b> Yes S16.   |
| 45. | S16 | CD | <b>Miss when you get into facebook and write your password then someone can easily break it</b>   |
| 46. | T   | CD | <b>Yes indeed I know this.</b> Well done  |

In extract 9, in line 42, the teacher translanguages from SMG to CD for classroom management purposes. For example she tells the students not to talk while she writes on the whiteboard by saying “*You talked while I was writing on the whiteboard and didn't wait for me to finish so that we could have this conversation together.*” Similarly in extract 5, in line 49 the teacher used CD at the end of the sentence to offer her personal opinion as well as to involve them more to the matter by saying “*I don't laugh with SMG.*”

8.7.2 Extract 5: 17.3.2011/ 8.30/ Thursday

- |    |    |            |   |
|----|----|------------|---|
| 47 | T  | SMG        | What is this language?                                    |
| 48 | S6 | SMG        | Greek language  |
| 49 | T  | SMG/<br>CD | Why does it make you laugh? <b>I don't laugh with SMG</b> |

In extract 9, in line 46 (part of extract is indicated above) when the student mentioned the danger of having your facebook code stolen by someone, the teacher once again translanguages to reinforce in CD by telling her student *“Yes indeed I know this”* (García & Li Wei, 2014). This extract shows that translanguaging assisted the collaborative effort for solving the pedagogic task and gave the teacher information she could write on the whiteboard in SMG. So the biliterate context of the classroom is clearly evident in this interaction since the teacher listens to what students say in CD and she writes them in the official language, SMG such as in line 48 in extract 9 where she says in SMG: *“Great. This is what we wrote on the whiteboard, that we lose communication with our family and our real friends. Don’t we?”*

Another evidence of biliterate practices is in extract 12, in line 22, when students tell the teacher that they would visit the island of Rhodes for its natural beauty and the teacher uses SMG to say: *“Well, yes this is something I should write on the whiteboard because Rhodes is indeed beautiful.”* The whiteboard is once again the means to present the official language in writing indicating the incorporation of translanguaging practices in the classroom that have the potential of enhancing all points of the biliteracy continuum offering both students and the teacher the possibility of accessing the academic curriculum not just through all available communicative repertoires that they bring to the classroom but also via all available experiences that students bring from home.

The teacher incorporated household ‘funds of knowledge’ (Moll, 1990) into the official academic curriculum via dialogic teaching to achieve the pedagogic task and to create a sense of liberation in linguistic choices as well as an awareness of what the lesson was related with. This part of analysis also draws on Conteh’s (2013) argument that the collaborative creation of power between the teacher and the students may enhance

academic progress and change pedagogic practice. Parts of conversation such as in extract 11, lines 17-33 (see 8.6: Extract 11: An intercultural school: 4/5/2011) evidence the collaboration between the teacher and the students.

García (2009) argued that translanguaging can be considered as a successful pedagogic method if/when teachers and students collaborate for learning that is child-centred and uses students' prior experiences when teaching incorporates language and content and finally when it includes plurilingual methods to learning. Similarly in various conversations exemplified in this section,, such as in extract 9 when students discuss the negative impact of internet on human life or in extract 11 where students are problematised by the context of the text and try to comprehend it by being critical and asking questions in CD, the teacher allows the children to carry on the discussion and offers clarifications and explanations when needed.

### **8.7.3 Teacher's translanguaging to afford academic learning.**

This part of the analysis draws on García and Li Wei's (2014) theoretical framework about translanguaging as pedagogy to show that teachers use translanguaging to enable students to construct meaning and acquire knowledge. Recurring patterns showed that translanguaging operated as a pedagogic tool which afforded the students' learning. Extract 1, in line 81, shows how the teacher afforded the student's learning by translanguaging intentionally, not only to mediate understanding but also to include and encourage the other students to participate in this effort to work collaboratively to find the meaning of the word "material".

### 8.7.3 Extract 1: Santa Claus's Laundry /9.12.2010

63	T	SMG	What would you do? Would you make him a pair of socks or would you sew him a pair?
64	S4	SMG	I would sew him
65	T	SMG	How about you S1?
66	S1		NR
67	T	SMG	S9?
68	S9		NR
69	T	SMG	What gift would you make him?
70	S17	SMG	I would send him a deer
71	T	SMG	That's interesting
72	S2	SMG	I would send him a new pair of glasses.
73	T	SMG	How about you S12?
74	S12		NR
75	S1	SMG	long trousers
76	T	SMG	Made of what?
77	S1	SMG	Made of red
78	T	SMG	What color? You want it to be red? So the trousers will be made of what material?
79	S1	SMG	From red
80	S4	SMG	(0)From a twist (of thread)
81	T	SMG/ CD	Yes but made of what material? <b>What fabric?</b>
82	S1	SMG	RED
83	T	CD	<b>Red is the colour. What will the fabric then be?</b>
84	S3	SMG	The teacher means..
85	S7	SMG	(0)It will be soft
86	S4	SMG	(0)Cotton

Most of this extract is spoken in SMG by the teacher and the students. According to my fieldnotes, this happened because the students were preparing for writing a short essay which should be written in SMG. Translanguaging is triggered by the teacher's desire that the children understand and generate the category word "fabric" and give a word that names a type of fabric. In line 81, the teacher used CD to offer intellectual support to students and mediate understanding. Then students collectively tried to solve this problem and offered him some clues such as made of thread, cotton and wool. However, the student's difficulty could be related to the fact that the activity or the resources (such as the textbook) did not offer affordances that would enable the child to understand the meaning

of word and thus engage successfully in the conversation (Martin, 2009). Students' breakdowns in understanding could be related to the fact that the cultural affordances offered within the classroom were not successful or the linguistically related affordances were not comprehensible and so could not support learning. Furthermore, the teacher's motivation to translanguage here is due to the official demands of the curriculum and the general expectations of the Cypriot educational system. That is, specific vocabulary in SMG is required to be taught to, and understood by, students. MOEC (2011, p.11) stated that

*“Students must expand their vocabulary in different subjects. They must also understand that the meaning of the words are may change according to the situation and the meaning of the sentence” MOEC (2011, p.11)*

Translanguaging is constantly present from the part of the students in this study as well as in other research studies, allowing the teacher to use their manifested linguistic tools to develop children's meaning-making when difficulties are present (García, 2009). The next example of translanguaging to afford academic learning, the teacher is led by the student. That is, the teacher-researcher translanguaged following the linguistic code, (CD), that the student had already chosen to use. The extract shows how the teacher's choice to translanguage enabled the student to render an effective explanation of the feelings of the character in the story, and thereby develop the student's emotional thinking. The student's choice of CD to continue explaining her answer afforded her both a meaningful interaction with her teacher as well as achieving the conceptual pedagogic target.

8.7.3 Extract 1: Santa Claus's Laundry /9.12.2010

20	T	SMG	How did you feel? In the text it says: "Because the poor Santa got presents for the first time he cries from joy"
21	S11	CD	<b>I felt both sadness and joy</b>
22	T	CD	<b>Sadness and joy. Why?</b>
23	S11	CD	<b>Because he was sad and he should be sad.. because he was waiting so many days and after he got the presents he started crying because for the first time he received presents</b>

Extract 3 presents the way the teacher translanguaged in line 8 not just to afford the student's learning but also to use "a familiar voice" through the everyday CD language that could possibly potentialise and expand student's expression as well as his thinking.

8.7.3 Extract 3: The story of Deamonte Lov / 26.1.2011

5.	S6	SMG	Adventurous..
6.	T	SMG	How did you feel?
7.	S6	SMG	Adventurous
8.	T	SMG- CD	You felt adventurous.. <b>think about what you said a little more..</b>
9.	S11	SMG- CD	I was impressed because he was only six years old and <i>hold</i> seven children and took care of them...
10.	T $\alpha$	SMG	Well done. How about you S12? How did you feel?
11.	S12		NR
12.	T	SMG	Surely you must have felt something, didn't you?
13.	S12		NR
14.	S2	SMG- CD	(0)I felt like I was dreaming. <b>No child can take care of seven babies, all of them, and be able to find food for them but also to save his life and be able to find lakes</b> so that they will be able to survive

What can really be observed through the data was that the teacher's translanguaging was unsystematic and that teaching was undertaken concurrently with shifting back and forth within both linguistic varieties in the lesson (García, 2009). The teacher used CD to afford students' learning and understanding. Singleton & Avonin (2007) argued that affordances

operate in many areas of human knowledge such as learning and language communication. If an individual is able to understand the affordances offered by others then the individual will be able to engage with intellectual difficulties within his/her environment successfully (Singleton & Avonin, 2007). Providing linguistic as well as communicative affordances through CD, which is the everyday shared language of students, the teacher creates possibilities for further intellectual activity without setting limits to access knowledge that is beyond the available perceptual scope of the students.

## **8.8 Conclusion**

In this chapter I aimed to show that the students' translinguaging data has a pedagogic purpose which is to engage with literacy texts and literacy practices in academic contexts. This chapter analysed selected translinguaging data that reflected the students' social, cultural and historical knowledge of their Cypriot context. I investigated the way translinguaging in CD was used by students to contribute to story-telling activity, which was both a pedagogic task and a literacy practice.

I argue that the students used CD as a pedagogic tool in story-telling literacy practices in two ways and for two reasons. Students used CD as a tool to draw on their knowledge of their Cypriot social, cultural and historical context to understand and contribute to the narratives. Students used their prior experiences to contextualise the stories, drawing on their knowledge of their sociocultural context to narrate and extend the stories. Children used CD in the story telling activities to make sense of the text. First, socially, by relating the texts to the cultural and historical knowledge that they have been socialised by and within, and secondly, individually, by relating the text to themselves and their own lived experiences.

Translanguaging for social participatory reasons is a pattern that is evidenced in a variety of students. However the difference manifested between students without learning difficulties and students with learning difficulties is that, in the second case, when they participate for socialisation purposes they repeat previous students' words, phrases and ideas, indicating that their talk, including translanguaging, operates at the cumulative level, using their classmates talk to scaffold their ideas. It is important to note that there was no evidence in their spoken language data, including translanguaging, of the exploratory level of talk.

This analysis also showed that students regulate their knowledge through translanguaging enabling them to attain control of their own learning and to construct knowledge through collective literacy practices and meaningful contributions related to the text. Also data in this chapter revealed that translanguaging enhances students' criticality by using all of their available home experiences to question as well as to construct meanings that perhaps were not reflected in their social context. The students drew on their lived experiences in their home and social environments to apply them to understand the text-based literacy practices in school.

Finally, this chapter examined the way the teacher uses translanguaging to support academic learning. Patterns showed that the teacher uses translanguaging in situations to reinforce, facilitate understandings and extend students' thinking, as well as to manage the classroom, and to provide examples that can keep the pedagogic task moving (García & Li Wei, 2014).

# **CHAPTER 9: TRANSLANGUAGING IN ACADEMIC LEARNING: LANGUAGE AS A TOOL FOR THINKING**

## **9.1 Introduction**

In this chapter I deal with research question no.3 and no. 4 and analyse the way students with and without learning difficulties within the context of the classroom draw on all of their linguistic resources to acquire knowledge and enhance their understandings. More precisely I provide an analysis of the way translanguaging appears in classroom talk and the extent to which it supports communication especially through exploratory talk (Mercer, 2004) as an element for curriculum teaching and learning. According to Vygotsky's work, language can be considered as a cognitive tool which children utilise so that they can manipulate knowledge; as a social and cultural tool for sharing knowledge between individuals and as a teaching tool through which a person can offer intellectual support to another (Mercer et al. 2004). This analysis also follows what Mercer (1996) supported that talk between students is important for the creation of learning. Collective practices in the classroom which enable learners to jointly construct their reasoning through language are crucial in comparison with teacher centred conversations. The evidence of students' collective efforts and sharing knowledge are included in this part of the analysis since it involves the way learning occurs in relation to the use of both linguistic codes, SMG and CD as well as the way students make sense through language. A discussion about students with learning difficulties is then introduced and analysed through their participation in the classroom. Finally the three types of talk - disputational, cumulative and exploratory - are

presented. The data used for this analysis are from recorded observations which were undertaken within the classroom and during lessons.

## 9.2 Translanguaging in classroom talk

### 9.2.1 Students draw on all of their linguistic resources by translanguaging to participate and engage in learning.

The use of both linguistic varieties in classroom conversations is evidenced in almost all of the recordings. The following examples reveal a recurring pattern where students use both SMG and CD to produce better communication and achieve the pedagogic task by using talk as a tool for thinking and sharing ideas (Vygotsky, 1987; Mercer, 2000).

#### 9.2.1 Extract 1: Santa Claus Laundry /10.12.2010 /9:45a.m

- |   |     |           |   |
|---|-----|-----------|---|
| 1 | T   | SMG       | How did you feel when you listened to this story? Especially at the end of the story. How did you feel especially at the <u>end</u> of the story?   |
| 2 | S8  | SMG       | I think that that everything were done the opposite way because Santa Claus had to send the gifts while here the children sent him the gifts because he needed them, because there wouldn't be.. New Year's Eve would happen without Santa Claus's presents.<br><In Cyprus Santa Claus comes on 31 of December> |
| 3 | T   | CD<br>SMG | <b>Ok let me rephrase my question and then tell me if you understood me</b><br><u>How did you feel...</u> reading this story, either about the beginning or at the end of the story? How did you feel?  |
| 4 | S4  | SMG       | At the end I felt happy because Santa Claus received (*) first time.  |
| 5 | T   | SMG       | First time what? Can you repeat?  |
| 6 | S4  | SMG       | He got presents for the first time  |
| 7 | T   | SMG       | So you felt happy. Very nice.   |
| 8 | S13 | CD        | <b>At the middle of the story I felt that Santa Claus won't come this year but then, when I heard that he had some problems I told to myself that it doesn't matter and that's ok.. well ok after I felt happy.</b>   |

9	S17	SMG	At the end where Santa Claus.. I felt.. at the last paragraph I felt sad.
10	T	SMG	Ok, now you stressed an important point. Who else wants to tell me how he/she felt? How about you S2?
11	S2	SMG	It made a great impression to me when he started crying in front of the children.
12	T	SMG	It impressed you ok. And how did it make you feel?
13	S2	SMG	Happy
14	T	SMG	Happy.. Well I felt something else. How about you S18?
15	S18		NR
16	T		S5?
17	S5		NR
18	T	SMG	S14?
19	S14		NR
20	T	SMG	How did you feel? In the text it says: "Because the poor Santa got presents for the first time he cries from joy"
21	S11	CD	<b>I felt both sadness and joy</b>
22	T	CD	<b>Sadness and joy. Why?</b>
23	S11	CD	<b>Because he was sad and he should be sad.. because he was waiting so many days and after he got the presents he started crying because for the first time he received presents.</b>
24	T		Very nice, there is a word that describes this feeling. Do you know this word? Its feeling that starts from "t.."
25	S6	SMG	He was touched!
26	T	SMG	That right. Well done S6. It is very touching the fact that Santa starts crying because he was never give a present before.
27	S8	SMG	Wasn't there a different Santa Claus at old times?
28	T	SMG	Maybe. Why?
29	S8	CD	<b>So that we can see if he is the same</b>
30	T	SMG	Well Santa Claus is one and only
31	S13	SMG	For example Miss, was he the real Santa?
32	T	SMG	Yes but it seems that no one gave him a present. Now, tell me why did he wake up very early in the morning?
33	S3	SMG	Because he has to get ready for New Year's Eve
34	S10	SMG- CD	Because he has got a lot of work to do in his factory, he has to help the elves to <b>repair</b> his sled, clean the presents so that they are on time. That's why he had to wake up very early
35	S13	SMG- CD	Santa Claus is a little nervous because he has only 6 days left to prepare his <b>sled</b> , wrap the presents, the few last little packages and then do his laundry.. he has got a lot of things to do

The language that is mostly used in this part of the conversation is SMG while a couple of children use CD to express their ideas. What is interesting is the fact that children who use CD (line 8 and line 21-23) expand their ideas and feelings without just providing the teacher with emotion words. In line 4 S4 sets the beginning for the conversation. S4 is a student who has been referred to special education as having cognitive difficulties. He contextualised the notion of time telling me that “At the end...” Then S13 in line 8 shares the same meaning with S4 but uses CD. Also S13 in line 8 adds to her answer a different notion of time such as “In the middle...” but she also felt happy “at the end.” Moving on, the ideas are similar with S17 in line 9 saying “*at the last paragraph I felt sad*” while others felt sad and joy or were touched. So the meaning is being bounced around independently of the language that it is being used, using all of their linguistic resources to solve the problem and at the same time collaborating to respond to what the teacher asked them.

In lines 34 and 35 students shared the same question and tried to resolve it by using all of their bidialectal resources. They translanguage once they don't know a word in SMG possibly feeling “safer” with the CD word, enabling them to continue composing their thought and achieve the pedagogic task. This example illustrated what Vygotsky (1987) argued that language is a cognitive tool that children use to manipulate knowledge, a social tool for sharing ideas between individuals and a teaching tool with which a person can offer intellectual support to another. Children try to use the official language that is SMG following the demands of the curriculum while they translanguage creatively so that they continue their thinking and participation during the discussion as well as to enhance their communication. It is evidenced that the use of both linguistic varieties enhances and maximises students' participation within the context of the classroom and thus achieve learning in relation to the content of the subject matter. This translanguaging cannot be

considered as lack of knowledge of the SMG but as a spontaneous and creative use of both linguistic varieties facilitating their learning and developing a process of thinking. Most importantly, children seem to use their everyday linguistic variety, that is CD, to acquire meaning and to make the words they use into their own cognitive resource (Mercer, 2001).

### 9.2.2 Children's collective practices in the classroom and joint construction of reasoning through the use of one or more linguistic codes, SMG and CD.

The following extract of classroom conversation is related to a story of a boy named Deamonte who survived after a disaster in his country. After reading the text, the children had to discuss the question: *How did you feel when you finished reading about Deamonte Lov's adventure?* Children had to identify words for emotions and at the same time explain their answer. This task enabled them to expand their knowledge and enhance their comprehension of the text.

#### 9.2.2 Extract 3: The story of Deamonte Lov / 26.1.2011

1.	S18	SMG	I felt proud that Deamonte took care of his brothers and sisters
2.	T	SMG	Very good
3.	S10	SMG	On the one hand I felt sad on the other I felt happy because no other child at his age would take such a big responsibility
4.	T	SMG	Very nice
5.	S6	SMG	I felt adventurous..
6.	T	SMG	What did you feel?
7.	S6	SMG	Adventurous
8.	T	SMG	You felt adventurous.. mmm.. think about what you said a little more..
9.	S11	SMG/CD	I was impressed because he was only six years old and <b>hold</b> seven children and took care of them..
10.	T	SMG	Well done. How about you S12? What did you feel?
11.	S12		NR
12.	T	SMG	Surely you must have felt something, didn't you?
13.	S12		NR

- |     |     |        |  |
|-----|-----|--------|--|
| 14. | S2  | SMG/CD | I felt like I was dreaming. <b>No child can take care of seven babies, all of them, and be able to find food for them but also to save his life and be able to find lakes</b> so that they will be able to survive |
| 15. | T   | SMG    | S12, have you thought of something to share with us?   |
| 16. | S12 |        | NR   |
| 17. | T   | SMG    | Ok, I will come back to you in a while. Think about how you felt ok?   |
| 18. | S3  | SMG    | I was surprised because a child like Deamonte, six years old protected seven little children and gave them food to eat   |
| 19. | S15 | SMG    | I felt happy when I read Deamonte's adventure and.. and.. I could never do something like this   |
| 20. | S13 | SMG/CD | I felt happy that Deamonte protected and gave food to seven children because <b>no child is able</b> to take care of seven children  |
| 21. | T   | SMG    | Great  |
| 22. | S17 | SMG    | I felt a great excitement because a six year old took care and protected seven children like an adult  |
| 23. | T   | SMG    | Excellent! Yes S12   |
| 24. | S12 | SMG    | I felt sad that the seven children did not have their mother near or food to eat and so Deamonte had to save them  |

Students make an effort to answer the question using all of their linguistic resources. The translanguaging that occurred allowed a meaningful interaction between student-teacher and between student-student. The part of conversations lines 1- 8 and lines 20 - 28 show a joint construction of knowledge which is structured in terms of time (at the end, in the middle) and where students repeat the same ideas but each time offering a level of detail. The classroom context accommodates both linguistic varieties offering students a mechanism to construct understandings, to include others and for students themselves to arrange their linguistic repertoire and linguistic choices. Children collaborate to interrogate the task by using two linguistic tools, SMG and CD. Children seem to repeat the same information after they express their feelings by building on each other's response and then try to differentiate their own answer by offering new information. This way it seems that they support their communication with others and enhance the exploratory talk by offering explanations and justifications in a dialogic manner.

It is obvious that their conversation is related with the teacher's main question and thus they are making sense together of the pedagogic task. They seem to work together in a collaborative manner without disputes, combining their cognitive abilities to resolve the task. Students negotiate the way they felt by creating a common understanding which was that, despite his age, Deamonte managed to save seven children. Their understanding was achieved through the conversation which was constructed collectively using all of their available linguistic resources to interact as well as to interthink (Vygotsky, 1987; Mercer, 2000).

Another extended example which presents evidence of collective thinking and learning is the following. The children discuss the context of a picture and try to guess what would happen in the story that they were going to read. The pedagogic goal was to enhance their creativity and assist their comprehension after reading the text.

9.2.2 Extract 4: The big secret 19.1.2011 / Wednesday /9.30- 10.45 p.m

- |    |     |            |  |
|----|-----|------------|--|
| 1. | T   | SMG        | Could you tell me what do you think that the story will talk about according to the title and the picture of the story?  |
| 2. | S3  | SMG        | That the children went to the lake and found a cave and inside they will find the pirates' treasure  |
| 3. | S10 | SMG        | According to the title the story might be about.. according to the title and the picture I understand that the children played at a beach and found a cave. Inside the cave may be hidden objects from old times |
| 4. | S8  | SMG/ CD    | I think that according to the picture and the title, that the children found.. <b>saw a shadow at the beach while they were playing</b> and got scared   |
| 5. | T   | CD         | <b>Great. Who else can tell me?</b>  |
| 6. | S13 | SMG/<br>CD | I think that according to the picture we see that the children were in front of the cave and stayed there because it might was a secret place <b>where they stayed to do</b>                                     |
| 7. | T   | SMG        | The big secret.. to do what?   |
| 8. | S13 | CD         | <b>To do something</b>   |

The teacher initiated the discussion by asking students for their opinion using SMG. The students followed the teacher's linguistic choice and S3 in line 2 used SMG to describe what he saw in the picture. S10 in line 3 repeated the teacher's phrase "*According to the title and the picture...*" with some hesitation but offering new information such as that the children went to the beach and found a cave and not to a lake like S3 mentioned. Also instead of pirates' treasure S10's view in line 3 was that they found objects from olden times. Then S8 in line 4 began constructing his thoughts starting the way previous students did so that they followed the teacher's guidelines. However S8 translanguages using CD to offer his opinion of what the text would be about but also offering a sense of movement and detail. Then S8 switched to SMG to finish his sentence. The teacher then in line 5 used CD to invite other students also express their opinion by unobtrusively making them aware that they could use any linguistic code they wished especially after S8 used CD. S13 tried to express her opinion by participating in this collective effort of analysing the picture and the title of the text by adding that "*it might was a secret place..*" but couldn't finish her thought in SMG and used CD perhaps to show that she couldn't think of something else to say by using the official language in the classroom context.

Students were given the opportunity to share this discussion by using both of their linguistic codes, in a collaborative dialogue. This dialogue provided them with the opportunity to offer a hypothesis about the text, add details to what others had previously said or else "fill in" what the first student had already supplied in the conversation. Vygotsky's concept of the *zone of proximal development* (ZPD) explains the way that children's thought is transformed into deeper understanding through dialogue which is a "scaffolding" that is offered either by the teacher or by the conceptualisations offered by other students (Mercer, 2008, Martin, 2009, Cole et al. 1978).

In the two conversation extracts indicated above, both linguistic codes were used for communicative and educational reasons. Students' opinions were constructed and transformed through and within the context of the lessons in the classroom setting and knowledge was acquired via collective practices that also enhanced the development of thinking and sense-making. As Mercer (2000) argued, language equips individuals with a means of "thinking together" for the collective creation of knowledge and understanding.

### **9.2.3 Students with learning difficulties and their contribution to the collaborative effort for achieving the pedagogic task.**

The patterns that occurred at this point of the analysis were that students with learning difficulties seem to have different participation characteristics. The following discussion focuses on four students with additional learning needs: S2, S4, S5, S14. S4 and S2 contributed to the collaborative effort by adding new information in their answers. Also most of them tried to use SMG and S4 showed hesitations when talking by trying to use SMG as a tool for constructing his thinking.

The student who was diagnosed as having dyslexia was S14 while S2 had the profile a student with dyslexia without being diagnosed through official assessment by the educational psychologist because the student's family's did not want their child to be assessed. In addition, S4 was a student who attended special education support for general learning difficulties while his twin brother S5 who was also under the scope of this study. Even though he was not proposed for assessment he presented specific learning difficulties (literacy and maths). The class had a variety of students with different learning difficulties. However, this part of the analysis will focus only on four students.

## Student: S2

The following examples show how S2 was involved in this collaborative effort assisting the whole classroom by offering new information which was then repeated by others.

### 9.2.3 Extract 3: The story of Deamonte Lov / 26.1.2011

- |     |     |        |  |
|-----|-----|--------|--|
| 9.  | S11 | SMG/CD | I was impressed because he was only six years old and <b>hold</b> seven children and took care of them..   |
| 10. | T   | SMG    | Well done. How about you S12? What did you feel?   |
| 11. | S12 |        | NR   |
| 12. | T   | SMG    | Surely you must have felt something, didn't you?   |
| 13. | S12 |        | NR   |
| 14. | S2  | SMG/CD | I felt like I was dreaming. <b>No child can take care of seven babies, all of them, and be able to find food for them but also to save his life and be able to find lakes</b> so that they will be able to survive |

He started with a great expression in SMG that no other student had already mentioned indicating a level of oral proficiency in SMG. Then he translanguaged to CD and offered an expanded and detailed opinion with successful justifications. His opinion was conceptually correct and on task. This is what differentiated this student from the rest of his classmates. He used the language at his disposal that was CD and continued what a previous student had mentioned by providing rich information but with some misunderstandings even in CD such as..."*to find lakes*" in line 14 where he might meant "to find water".

Another extract showing S2's participation in classroom conversation and contribution to the pedagogic task is the following:

### 9.2.3 Extract 2: Santa Claus's Laundry / 9.12.2010

- 1 T SMG What do you think the text might be talking about based on the title?
- 2 S8 SMG Em.. I think that Santa Claus.. Many  
CD clothes are piled up and **takes out** the laundry?
- 3 T SMG Yes, someone else?
- 4 S13 SMG I think that Santa has many jobs now  
CD that is nearly Christmas and his wife irons.. his wife irons his formal clothes to go.. the red clothes, and his hat and.. **he goes to see if the Elf prepared the gifts and also to prepare the sleigh** <mispronounced the word "sleigh"-*ekkithro* instead of *elkithro*>
- 5 T SMG The sleigh
- 6 S2 SMG Maybe when Santa Claus flies on the sleigh.. maybe he will fall on a snowman

The students had to guess what the story would be about based on what they read in the title. This was an activity often used by the teacher for the purposes of enhancing their creativity and criticality but also for keeping their interest in the lesson. The title was "Santa Claus' laundry". While students connected the word "laundry" with clothes, iron and other relevant issues, S2 seemed to differentiate his opinion by offering, as it seems, an irrelevant answer. He mentioned that Santa Claus may have had an accident indicating that either he did not read the title correctly due to his reading difficulties, or because of lack of attention. The other possibility was that perhaps he really wanted to differ from the rest of the class and offered a more creative answer for social participation reasons and did not contribute to the joint the construction of the meaning of the title. The following extract presents another example of S2's contribution to the lesson.

9.2.3 Extract 1: Santa Claus's Laundry / 9.12.2010

8	S13	CD	<b>At the middle of the story I felt that Santa Claus won't come this year but then, when I heard that he had some problems I told to myself that it doesn't matter and that's ok.. well ok after I felt happy</b>
9	S17	SMG	At the end where Santa Claus.. I felt.. at the last paragraph I felt sad
10	T	SMG	Ok, now you stressed an important point. Who else wants to tell me how he/she felt? How about you S2?
11	S2	SMG	It made a great impression to me when he started crying in front of the children
12	T	SMG	It impressed you ok. And how did it make you feel?
13	S2	SMG	Happy
14	T	SMG	Happy.. Well I felt something else. How about you S18?

In line 10 of 9.2.3 extract 1, children were asked to say how they felt after reading the text. S2 once again differentiated the beginning of his answer by using the expression in SMG “it made a great impression to me” which, according to the curriculum targets that require children to be able to express their opinion using SMG successfully, S2 seems to manage SMG very well. Once again he doesn't answer directly but adds detail to his opinion and when the teacher asked him to tell her what he really felt he repeated what others already mentioned that was “happy”. S2 offered a detail that other students did not, that is that “Santa Claus was crying *in front of the children* and not just crying. He presented the class with an indirect feeling of sadness which enabled other students to use it and collectively achieve the pedagogic target.

The next extract (9.2.3 Extract 10) is driven from a lesson in language learning, titled “The invention of machines”. The teacher asked a question which can be considered as having a level of cognitive difficulty where a critical perspective is needed for providing the answer. S2 did not consult the book to find the answer since he never used to do this because

reading and finding information in print is difficult for him. He used the word “clever” which he understood from the text and he provided me with an answer which, while it did not contribute directly to the class effort of trying to find the answer, it offered a lot of detail that came from his personal knowledge and enriched the discussion which was, indirectly, related to the story. By contrast, S6 traced the correct answer in the text (line 4) but did not justify it.

### 9.2.3 Extract 10: The invention of machines /May 2011

- |    |     |     |  |
|----|-----|-----|--|
| 1. | T   | SMG | So, what does Sophocles consider as the most admirable thing in the world  |
| 2. | S18 | SMG | Sophocles considers man as the most admirable thing in the world   |
| 3. | T   | SMG | Great. Who else? Am I going to have a lesson with only two children? Sophocles considers man as the most admirable thing in the world said S18. Why? |
| 4. | S6  | SMG | “Because he can cross over the steep white sea along with the north wind’s storms.”  |
| 5. | T   | SMG | Very good  |
| 6. | S2  | SMG | Because man is not like animals, he doesn’t have fur. He can stand on his two feet and because he is clever <b>he can make a lot of artefacts</b>    |
| 7. | T   | SMG | Excellent  |

S2 uses both CD and SMG to express his views about the discussion matter in an adequate way. His oral proficiency is higher than his writing skills where he has difficulty. He builds on previous dialogic exchanges and shares knowledge by adding new information to the conversation. As Vygotsky (1987; Martin, 2009) maintained, the knowledge that is learnt from joint activities precede the individual cognitive learning and so collective learning activities, using all available linguistic resources, enhance learning and sense making.

## Student: S4

The following student, S4, is participating adequately in the general class dialogic process. He is not passive and tries to construct meanings along with the rest of the classroom. Both CD and SMG are used trying to explain the meaning of an SMG word (“desperate”). In line 50, S6 uses CD to explain the word. The teacher in line 51 accepted his explanation and continued to explain further the word in SMG. In the same line the teacher asked to say to her the solution to the problem of Santa Claus. In line 52, S7 translanguaged to complete his sentence and to facilitate communication (García, 2009).

### 9.2.3 Extract 1 (i): Santa Claus’ Laundry /10.12.2010 /9:45p.m

47	T	SMG	Do you know what desperate means?
48	S3	SMG	Does it mean that he is sad?
49	T	SMG	Em.. Kind of
50	S6	CD	<b>He doesn’t know what to do!</b>
51	T	SMG	Well done. He doesn’t know what to do. He is desperate. He tries to find a solution to his problem, he feels lost. So what did he do to solve his problem?
52	S7	SMG CD	He sends messages to bring him <b>new clothes and socks and hat</b>
53	T	SMG	Very nice
54	S4	SMG	To bring to him.. he has to send messages so that children will help him to find some clothes
55	S3	SMG- CD	The children from Africa will send him a shirt, the children of Asia <b>woollen socks</b> , from America children will send him a jacket with warm fur, from Australia long trousers and from Europe a hat

In line 54, S4 uses SMG to contribute to the pedagogic task. At the beginning of his sentence he hesitates and then he repeats in SMG what S7 mentioned in line 52. In line 55, S3 provides an extensive answer using his available SMG linguistic resources so that he communicates the meaning of his sentence as well as contributing to the joint effort of achieving the pedagogic task. What makes S4’s contribution different from the rest of his

class is the type of talk he used to answer the teacher’s question. His talk can be characterised as at the ‘cumulative’ level, based on Mercer’s analytic categories of talk (Mercer, 1995; 1996; 2004; 2007), since he repeats what S7 in line 52 said and additionally includes what other students have mentioned. However another difference is that S4 does not use CD, and applies his talk successfully in SMG to pull together the ideas expressed by his class fellows. His contribution is not offering something new to the pedagogic task but shows a level of sense making which was achieved via the joint effort of students to answer the teacher’s question.

### **Students: S14 and S5**

S14 and S5 are both students who are silenced most of the times and passive observers in classroom conversations. The following extract provides an example of S5’s and S14’s participation to the lesson.

#### 9.2.3 Extract 1(ii): Santa Claus’ Laundry /10.12.2010 /9:45p.m

<b>12</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>SMG</b>	It impressed you ok. And how did it make you feel?
<b>13</b>	<b>S2</b>	<b>SMG</b>	Happy
<b>14</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>SMG</b>	Happy.. Well I felt something else. How about you S18?
<b>15</b>	<b>S18</b>		NR
<b>16</b>	<b>T</b>		S5?
<b>17</b>	<b>S5</b>		NR
<b>18</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>SMG</b>	S14?
<b>19</b>	<b>S14</b>		NR

When the teacher asked them what they felt after reading the story they did not respond and thus did not contribute to the collaborative effort of joint construction of understanding. It

must be noted that S18 in line 15 did not respond, not because it was a difficult question for her but because she was talking with her classmate during the class discussion.

The next extract presents a part of the same conversation. I returned to S14 wanting to urge her to participate to the lesson. She offered a successful answer taken from the text (line 42). Her difficulty was the fact that she read the word slowly, syllable by syllable, and replaced the first phoneme (*epelpismenos* instead of *apelpismenos*) possibly due to her reading and writing difficulties (dyslexia).

### 9.2.3 Extract 1: Santa Claus' Laundry /10.12.2010 /9:45p.m

- |    |     |     |  |  |
|----|-----|-----|--|--|
| 36 | T   | SMG | Very nice! You got many ideas from the text and answered correctly and complete. Now I want you to tell me what do you think that Santa felt when he saw that his uniform shrinks? |  |
| 37 | S2  | SMG | It was a disaster!   |  |
| 38 | T   | SMG | He felt disaster?  |  |
| 39 | S2  | SMG | Well of course!  |  |
| 40 | T   | SMG | Do you mean that he felt that it was a disaster?   |  |
| 41 | S2  | SMG | Yes  | <I looked at S14 to give her permission to talk> |
| 42 | S14 | SMG | (0) He was feeling des-pe-ra-te  |  |
| 43 | T   | SMG | Very nice! Who can tell me again what S14 told us which is so correct? Where did she found it? In what paragraph?  |  |
| 44 | S14 | SMG | In the third paragraph.  |  |
| 45 | T   | SMG | Let's see if it is in the third paragraph.. <I am pointing in her book and counting, 1,2,3>. Well done you are correct! So how did Santa felt? Did S14 read it correctly?          |  |

S14 found the word within the text, in the third paragraph, surprising me with her word identification skills despite her learning literacy difficulties. She contributed to the

discussion and indicated to other students that the information was taken from the text. Then S14 again was on task initiating the conversation, and provided me successfully with information contributing to the collaborative effort to achieve the pedagogic task. Her performance differed from the rest of the class when she did not articulate successfully the word she wanted to say as well as her obvious reading difficulties. S5 did not offer a large amount of evidence. Data for analysing his performance are mostly taken from his written work and my fieldnotes.

### **Student: S5**

At this point I will discuss data pertaining to S5. S5 is one of the four students in the classroom who presents specific learning difficulties. At the next extract (9.2.3 Extract 8), S5 in line 33 builds on what previous students said about what is the internet and adds new information.

#### 9.2.3 Extract 8: The internet / 25.5.2011

24	T	SMG	Ok who else and we will move on.. I want S12 to tell me. Come on, what is the internet?
25	S12		NR
26	T	SMG	Ok, who else?
27	S2	SMG	The internet is a website which helps us to find important people who wrote great and important historic books
28	T	SMG	Excellent information. How about S9?
29	S9		NR
30	T	SMG	S7?
31	S7		NR
32	T	SMG	You don't know? How about you S5?
33	S5	SMG	The internet is when someone is far away and wants help then we can send him a message
34	T	SMG	A message.. very good. So how is the internet also dangerous?

In this extract, Extract 8 line 33, S5 builds on what previous students said about what the internet is, and contributing new information. His response can be considered as a

constructive discursive practice that contributes to the pedagogic task. The teacher's question was jointly analysed by the students.

These data and analyses indicate that the four students with learning difficulties could contribute to the collaborative effort of the class to solve pedagogic tasks and achieve the learning goals set by the teacher and the curriculum. The four students also showed instances of passiveness, hesitation and repetition when trying to construct their thoughts through SMG. Nevertheless their participation in the lessons showed a level of interest and effort to achieve progress and be on task.

### **9.3 Evidence of types of talk within the bidialectal classroom**

The following section presents an analysis of the types of talk that exist within the bidialectal classroom, where children use their available linguistic varieties. The analysis seeks to show how children use language as tool for reasoning (Mercer. 1996; Mercer et al. 2004).

#### **9.3.1 Evidence of translanguaging and cumulative talk**

An important amount of data indicated that students seemed repetitive by offering the same wording in their opinions and answers while at the same time offering new information which differentiated their answer from the previous student's. Both linguistic varieties were also obvious in various communicative activities.

9.3.1 (1) Extract 1: Santa Claus' Laundry /10.12.2010 /9:45p.m

- 51 T SMG Well done. He doesn't know what to do. He is desperate. He tries to find a solution to his problem, he feels lost. So what did he do to solve his problem?
- 52 S7 SMG/CD He sends messages to bring him **new clothes and socks and hat.**
- 53 T SMG Very nice
- 54 S4 SMG To bring to him.. he has to send messages so that children will help him to find some clothes.

In this data extract, S7 responds appropriately and fully in CD, followed by the teacher's move to SMG, which in turn is taken up by S4 who, using SMG, repeats S7's ideas, and offers a further perspective.

The following analysis of extracts from students' data also reveals that while there was an echoing in each student's answer, each one was adding something different and offering a new aspect of knowledge, enabling them to build broader sense making. The phrase repeated was "...*he was only six years old and **hold** seven children and took care of them...*" in line 9.

9.3.1 (2) Extract 3: The story of Deamonte Lov / 26.1.2011

9. S11 SMG/CD I was impressed because he was only six years old and **hold** seven children and took care of them..

Then S2 repeats "No child can take care of seven babies, all of them..".

9.3.1 (3) Extract 3: The story of Deamonte Lov / 26.1.2011

14. S2 SMG/CD I felt like I was dreaming. **No child can take care of seven babies, all of them, and be able to find food for them but also to save his life and be able to find lakes** so that they will be able to survive

S3, line 18, said that “...six years old protected seven little children and gave them food to eat.”

9.3.1 (4) Extract 3: The story of Deamonte Lov / 26.1.2011

18. S3 SMG I was surprised because a child like Deamonte, six years old protected seven little children and gave them food to eat

In line 20, S13 repeated “...and gave food to seven children because **no child is able** to take care of seven children.

9.3.1(5) Extract 3: The story of Deamonte Lov / 26.1.2011

20. S13 SMG/CD I felt happy that Deamonte protected and gave food to seven children because **no child is able** to take care of seven children.

In line 22, S17 said that “...a six year old took care and protected seven children like an adult.”

9.3.1 (5) Extract 3: The story of Deamonte Lov / 26.1.2011

22. S17 SMG I felt a great excitement because a six year old took care and protected seven children like an adult

In line 24, S12 repeated the same ideas such as:

9.3.1 (6) Extract 3: The story of Deamonte Lov / 26.1.2011

24. S12 SMG I felt sad that the seven children did not have their mother near or food to eat and so Deamonte had to save them

Moving on, repetition was also obvious at the following part of conversations. The linguistic code that was used at this point was only SMG. The teacher asked “*What would you feel if you were in the same place as Deamonte?*” S3 starts the conversation by using SMG like the teacher and offering a general idea of what he would do if he was in Deamonte’s place.

9.3.1 (7) Extract 3: The story of Deamonte Lov / 26.1.2011

26. S3 SMG I would protect the little children so that no one would hurt them but only their mother and I would give them food to eat

S10 added new information by mentioning the idea of self -protection and ways of finding food such as hunting and fishing.

9.3.1(8) Extract 3: The story of Deamonte Lov / 26.1.2011

28. S10 SMG If I was in Deamonte’s place I would teach them a lot of things like hunting, fishing so that they be able to find their food by themselves when they grow up and to.. so that I help.. and so that they can help the little children

S18 repeated with hesitations the same ideas but offering a new element that is love.

9.3.1(9) Extract 3: The story of Deamonte Lov / 26.1.2011

30. S18 SMG If I were in Deamonte’s place I would find food for the children, I would.. I would teach them.. I would teach them hunting and fish.. and.. (long pause) and I would give them my love

S8 introduces a new idea of building a shelter for protection from the rain while S11 repeated the same notions but in a different way.

9.3.1 (10) Extract 3: The story of Deamonte Lov / 26.1.2011

- |     |     |     |   |
|-----|-----|-----|---|
| 32. | S8  | SMG | If I was in Deamonte's place I would build a shelter so that we can be protected by the rain, I would gather food so that we won't starve and I would offer them all of my love for what they did |
| 33. | T   | SMG | How about you S7? What would you do?  |
| 34. | S7  | SMG | I would..   |
| 35. | S16 | SMG | You would?  |
| 36. | T   | SMG | Think about it and I will get back to you   |
| 37. | S11 | SMG | If I was in Deamonte's place I would take all the little children and we would build a shelter made of wood so that we won't get wet when it rains  |

Children seemed to repeat almost the same words but actually they tried to differentiate their sentence structure and wording using all of their available linguistic resources to achieve the pedagogic goal and participate successfully at the conversation. They offered a variety of feelings which was the target question while they tried to offer appropriate justifications for the reasons they felt the way they did ensuring that even if repetitive in some points they used language to manipulate and share knowledge in a cooperative level. Also, all contributions were accepted and expanded by each other.

Based on Vygotsky's ideas (1978) repetitions could be considered as social actions and also as negotiations of understandings that enhance individual and cognitive development mediated and transformed by language. According to Mercer's analysis of talk, children's repetitions and echoing seem to support each other's responses and to share knowledge by accumulation, that is adding information and collectively constructing on each other's contributions. Thus this type of students' talk could be described as cumulative talk which

is characterised by features such as repetitions, confirmations and elaborations (Mercer, 1995; 1996; 2004; 2007).

### 9.3.2 Evidence of translanguaging and exploratory talk

The following extracts provide evidence of the way students use language to communicate, socialise and construct meaning making by using all available linguistic resources to achieve the pedagogic task.

#### 9.3.2 Extract 8: The internet / 25.5.2011

- |    |     |            |   |
|----|-----|------------|---|
| 33 | S5  | SMG        | The internet is when someone is far away and wants help then we can send him a message  |
| 34 | T   | SMG        | A message.. very good. So how is the internet also dangerous?   |
| 35 | S8  | SMG-<br>CD | Perhaps someone might send you.. Perhaps someone may send you a message to chat with you <b>and then you might give</b> him your photo or your telephone number and then he will get into the internet and start to embarrass you   |
| 36 | T   | SMG        | Great   |
| 37 | S18 | SMG        | Someone might steal a photo of another person from facebook and then write about it and send it to your facebook account  |
| 38 | T   | SMG        | Wonderful   |
| 39 | S13 | SMG        | The dangers that are hidden in the internet are that you might write a secret and another person may get into <b>your personal account in “faxebook”</b> and start to embarrass him/her <pronounces facebook  |
| 40 | T   | CD-<br>SMG | [class laughs] <b>That’s ok. Well done!</b>   |
| 41 | S15 | SMG        | Maybe, if you don’t have a security program in your laptop then one may get into your computer and break your code and see things that you don’t want people to see   |
| 42 | T   | SMG        | Great!  |
| 43 | S1  | SMG-<br>CD | <b>.. I can’t remember how I will say it..</b> Ok. The dangers we may have when using the internet is like when someone has got a facebook account then another person may ask you to be his facebook friend and when you don’t know what is hidden, if he is good or bad, then he might find where you live and hurt you |
| 44 | T   | SMG        | Yes indeed this is very dangerous   |
| 45 | S2  | SMG-       | Someone might get into a website and get a picture of a   |

		CD	friend of yours <b>and then lie to you</b> by telling you that he bought a car <b>supposedly that is his friend</b> and <b>tell her to meet</b> and arrange a date with her <b>and then hurt and steal her</b>
46	T	SMG	Why did you change your language at the end of your sentence?
47	S13	CD	<b>Oh my God</b>
48	T	SMG	Come on tell me
49	S10	CD	<b>This is how he is used to talk Miss and he confuses the two linguistic varieties.</b>
50	T	CD	<b>Ok perhaps, Yes S6</b>
51	S6	SMG- CD	You might send your personal information to someone <b>thinking that he is good and then he may go to the bank and get your money</b>
52	T	SMG	Yes someone might steal your personal 4 digit code, the password of your email, your photograph, your personal information and really cause you a lot of problems without noticing
53	S11	SMG- CD	Miss, when a stranger sends you a message on facebook, who you don't know, and asks you to have a relationship with him you might answer back and tell him ok; then he might take you to an unknown place <b>and leave you there</b> without knowing how to get home.
54	T	SMG	Great information. This is so true. Ok now, let's read our text now

Extract 8 is a substantial piece of data which demonstrates a sustained focus through shared talk on a specific topic. It shows the way students share their knowledge regarding the dangers of the internet in a respectful way and how they manipulate knowledge successfully. Students' collective thinking is constantly developing by sharing understandings related with the topic of the conversation (Mercer, 2004) using both CD and SMG. Students use language practices that they are familiar with, and they appropriate new languaging to make their unique repertoire and to transfer their knowledge to the rest of their classmates (García & Li Wei, 2014).

The students seemed to have a prior knowledge about the issue which enabled them to develop a substantial dialogue. Their social and cultural practices enabled them to use

“household funds of knowledge” (Moll, 1992) and expand their thinking using language as tool for thinking while socially constructing their learning (Vygotsky, 1987). The use of any linguistic variety to express their opinion maximised their participation to the lesson since a variety of views about the matter were expressed from different students. The dialogue has highly focused on the subject matter supporting their understanding (García, 2009).

According to Mercer’s research around talk (1995; 1996), evidence shows that children’s talk could be characterised as exploratory since they use language in an “educated” way to foster knowledge and participate successfully to the lesson. In Extract 8, the children offered their suggestions regarding the possible dangers when using the internet by engaging critically with the matter but also constructing on what the rest of the students said, making reasoning visible in their talk even if using SMG or CD (Mercer et al. 2004). In line 45 and in line 51 students translanguaged to generate their knowledge and make meaning by engaging their entire linguistic repertoire (García & Li Wei, 2014). Further, children generated the most dynamic way of using language and engaged positively and critically in the conversation, respecting all contributions to the conversation. This is evidence of the construction of exploratory talk in the bidialectal classroom, though it has not been taught, nor has developed any ground rules before the conversation, as Mercer suggested (Mercer, 1996). Indeed, the focus of this study is ‘talk in the classroom’ rather than ‘talk among groups of students’. Furthermore, this study focuses on the way that languaging and translanguaging is a tool for joint reasoning.

### 9.3.3 Evidence of translanguaging, exploratory and disputational talk

Disputational talk was not so evident in classroom conversations indicating that the class even if using both CD and SMG had reached a different level of talk such as the cumulative and the exploratory talk. The analysis of the next extract (Extract 11) shows the way students try to acquire meaning from the text that the teacher had just read to them, and thus elicit joint understanding.

#### 9.3.3 Extract 11: An intercultural school, 4.5.2011

- |     |    |            |   |
|-----|----|------------|---|
| 24. | T  | CD-<br>SMG | <b>Yes but is this related to what we discuss? However, it is a nice thought.</b> So a big difference is that in Cyprus we only have one teacher for teaching language but in other countries they have a teacher for teaching each language. For example if they have let's say children from Bulgaria then they would have a teacher who speaks Bulgarian. This is something that does not happen in Cyprus or Greece |
| 25. | S1 | CD         | <b>Yes but where do they find these teachers that speak Bulgarian or Romanian?</b>  |
| 26. | T  | CD         | <b>Surely there is a teacher that speaks the language like what happens abroad?</b>   |
| 27. | S6 | CD         | <b>And how will they communicate Miss? They will speak to them in Chinese?</b>  |
| 28. | T  | CD         | <b>Oh what did I just tell you?</b> They will appoint a teacher specializing in each language   |
| 29. | S6 |            | Oh ok   |
| 30. | S8 | CD         | <b>So Miss if we had such students in our school how would we talk to them? We should play with them and talk with them, shouldn't we?</b>  |
| 31. | T  | SMG/CD     | I am sure children always find the way to <b>communicate</b>  |
| 32. | S3 | CD         | <b>Miss me and S8 have a friend from Bulgaria</b>   |
| 33. | S8 | CD         | <b>No he is from Romania</b>  |
| 34. | S3 | CD         | <b>No Bulgaria</b>  |
| 35. | S1 | CD         | <b>Come on, don't start fighting now</b>  |
| 36. | T  | SMG        | Yes now stop  |
| 37. | S4 | CD         | <b>Miss we had a student from Bulgaria who was poor and talked only Bulgarian and someone taught him to talk Greek</b>  |

In line 24 the teacher tried to explain in SMG the way intercultural schools operate in other countries according to the text they have just read. In line 24 the teacher used SMG to explain the official way that bidialectal education operates. Then students in lines 25- 30 started a critical and positive engagement with the teacher by offering their own reasons, views and questions which enabled joint reasoning. This challenge to what the teacher had proposed was undertaken in CD, and moved towards a common agreement, such as in line 29 where the student agreed with the teacher. The type of talk that the students used in this extract can be analysed as exploratory since they offered critical evaluations and contributions to the conversation applying drawing on both CD and SMG successfully to develop joint reasoning.

Evidence of disputational talk through translanguaging is presented in line 33-35 where S3 and S5 started arguing regarding the nationality of a common friend. Their participation was transformed into a competitive action instead of a collective and cooperative effort to reach to an agreement. However, S4 in line 37 used CD by using their ideas to say that he also had a friend from Bulgaria who was taught Greek. The student used knowledge that emerged from his social context to contribute to the pedagogic task and to the negotiation of meanings that occurred in the conversation.

## **9. 4 Conclusion**

In this chapter I have analysed data that are related with translanguaging and the ways students with and without learning difficulties use all of their linguistic resources for acquiring knowledge and achieving sense making. I investigated moments of students' learning and uncovered patterns such as repetitions of opinions but each time with evidence

of differentiation. The analysis showed that students' translanguaging is present within the context of the classroom and occurs in way that enables access to the curriculum and to the literacy event. Translanguaging revealed a level of detail in students' opinions and thus an enhancement of understanding and participation. Based on Vygotsky's ideas, the data analysis indicated that the translanguaging used within the classroom served as a communicative and cultural tool and it is used not only for collective acquisition of knowledge but also as a psychological tool that enabled students to develop their thinking, and their thoughts and actions. Further, the three types of talk, disputational, cumulative and exploratory, were enacted through translanguaging practices. Students with learning difficulties participated to the lesson through the use of both linguistic varieties (S2, S4) while others remained silenced (S5, S14). Students with learning difficulties contributed to the collaborative effort by adding new information in their answers but they seemed to have different participation characteristics such as hesitations and repetitions especially when using SMG as a tool for constructing their thinking and expressing their opinion.

Finally, evidence showed that learning can be both cognitive, such as understanding the pedagogic task, as well as social and cultural, based on, and embedded in, the way students shared their ideas and reasoned together.

## **CHAPTER 10: DISCUSSION**

### **10.1 Introduction**

This concluding chapter will examine how the data analyses of my study respond to my research questions by drawing on Hornberger's analytical framework of the bilingual continua to the hierarchical views of CD which is situated towards the less powerful end of biliteracy continuum and SMG placed towards the more powerful end. First, I introduce my research questions and then I present the main findings of this research in relation to and in comparison with other studies in the field of linguistic and sociocultural studies. Each research question is explored in relation to the patterns that were presented in the data analysis chapters. The final reflections on my study focus on the methodology discussing how appropriate it was for the purposes of my research. I discuss the possible limitations as well as the challenges of my study by highlighting the way I in my pedagogy challenged prevailing views of CD, articulated by the parents in the interviews. Finally, I discuss the implications of this research study and then present how this study makes an original contribution to research.

## 10.2 Research Questions

The research questions which drive my investigation are:

1. How are CD and SMG considered in the Greek Cypriot social and academic context according to the biliteracy continuum relations?

1.1 Where are CD and SMG situated according to the biliteracy continuum relations?

1.2 What are the local perceptions of CD and SMG regarding their educational, social and historical value?

2. How do translanguaging and literacy practices enhance academic learning in the Greek-Cypriot classroom context?

2.1 To what extent does translanguaging enhance students' with learning difficulties academic learning?

2.2 How does the teacher incorporate translanguaging in the classroom?

3. To what extent do students with and without learning difficulties collaborate by drawing on all of their linguistic resources to understand, construct knowledge and achieve the pedagogic task?

3.1 Does translanguaging serve as a facilitator for communication as well as a mediator for acquiring or negotiating meaning and achieving deeper understandings for students with and without specific learning difficulties?

3.2 How does students' (with and without learning difficulties) engagement in translanguaging practices assist their learning?

4. Does translanguaging support communication particularly "exploratory talk"?

4.1 What types of talk were evidenced in the classroom during discussions?

In my discussion I address further issues that arise in my data about the research questions.

### **10.3 Research Purpose and Aim**

This study investigated the bidialectal social and educational context of Cyprus where Greek-Cypriot students with and without specific learning difficulties are integrated, socialised and acquire knowledge, and where Cypriot Dialect (CD) is part of their daily routine while Standard Modern Greek (SMG) is the official language of the island. The aim of this study was to investigate the way children in the Greek-Cypriot educational context acquire knowledge by co-reasoning through translanguaging and literacy practices. Further, this research aimed to provide an insight into the Cypriot educational system and educational environment to show how the two linguistic varieties can be positioned more and less powerfully within the formal educational context. The study has provided great insights and information regarding language practices and their interrelationship with literacy, culture, learning and learning difficulties.

The purpose of this study was to examine the way students used all of their available linguistic resources, CD and SMG, to construct knowledge, to acquire meaning and to enhance their understandings collaboratively as well as individually within the context of the classroom. The study also investigated the translanguaging practices of children and offered a natural representation of the Greek-Cypriot classroom where children used both of their linguistic varieties to gain knowledge. Most importantly the study challenged the notions of the local social context which considered CD as inappropriate for teaching and presented evidence on the way each language was used for different purposes.

## **10.4 Findings of the study**

### **RQ.1: How are CD and SMG considered in the Greek Cypriot social and academic context according to the biliteracy continuum relations?**

#### **Subquestions:**

1.1 Where CD and SMG are situated according to the biliteracy continuum relations?

1.2 What are the local perceptions of CD and SMG regarding their educational, social and historical value?

The main findings of this study draw on Hornberger's notion of bilingual continua to show that hierarchically and ideologically CD is situated towards the less powerful end of biliteracy continuum. Parents consider that CD is a barrier for learning and should be excluded from the context of the classroom, highlighting its inappropriateness for achieving learning development, for obtaining social mobility and employment opportunities and for entering higher education. Consequently, the possible effective outcomes of using both linguistic resources in the classroom by students and the teacher were not recognised.

#### ***Parents' considerations regarding CD: The language of peasants and elderly people***

Data analysis in chapter 7 showed that the members of the local community such as parents considered that CD is used by 'peasants' in rural areas of the island and from heavily accented village speakers. Another construction of CD was that it has no current value and has been positioned in the past as a historical language since parents hold that CD is the language that their grandfathers used. So according to evidence, CD is considered as a

linguistic variety that is used only by elderly people and which does not offer possibilities for individual development in the current modern social context.

Parents held that SMG is the language that is accepted in the wider social context and thus will benefit their children's future employment opportunities while CD has limited usefulness in the wider world. Others argued that SMG enables social mobility and maximises opportunities for entering higher education. Such opinions confirm Street's (1989) argument that the existence of multiple literacies is not valued within societies and so are not equally powerful.

Parents situated CD at the less powerful end of the biliteracy continuum, preferring SMG for their children's interactions especially in the classroom. Feelings of inferiority and embarrassment when their child uses CD were expressed. These findings agree with Papapavlou's (2001) research that argued that people in Cyprus consider CD as having lower prestige, and devalued this linguistic variety used in rural areas or in informal interactions. However, Papapavlou (2001) was interested mostly in the social dimensions of certain phonological forms of the dialect. By contrast, chapter 7 of this research focused on the way parents consider CD and SMG in relation to social and educational factors (e.g. employment, learning development) interpreting them within the theoretical framework of the biliteracy continuum (Hornberger, 1989). In my study, I challenged, through my pedagogy, the prevailing linguistic ideologies regarding CD that considered SMG as the most appropriate and beneficial language for learning. I subverted the dominant views that CD is for peasants or elder people, with no educational value, by showing how students used CD to achieve reasoning in verbal form.

## ***SMG vs CD***

### ***CD as a barrier for learning***

The findings of this study presented the way CD is considered for educational purposes. Parents considered CD as a barrier for learning since it influences the way students write and thus interferes negatively in children's learning. The data showed that parents focus in writing production while spoken (oral) production in CD is positioned at the less powerful end of biliteracy continuum. Data also presented that parents considered that the non-literate CD affects the literate form of SMG as well as students' oral language skills influence their written skills.

It is clear that attention is not given to all points of the biliteracy continuum since parents support one end over the other. Students' literacy practices that enable the use of all available linguistic resources within the context where individuals socialise are not recognised while parents consider literacy as an autonomous skill. Hornberger (2006) argued that the acceptance of all linguistic varieties or all available ways of constructing meanings can facilitate the move from one end of the biliteracy continuum to the other and thus can enhance meaning-making, enable control of their own learning and most importantly can create possibilities for full biliterate development.

### ***Exclusion of CD in the classroom***

Recurring patterns showed that parents do not accept the use of CD in the classroom and wish its exclusion from the academic context. The promotion of linguistic separation was clearly evidenced while it was argued that SMG is the official language of the nation and the official academic language and thus the only one that should be used within the classroom context. SMG was considered as the "correct" language as well as the language

that will enable students to become competent writers. CD should be used only in informal situations outside the academic context. Parents worried that the possible use of CD in the classroom would impede learning and interfere with the knowledge of SMG focusing once again on the written, productive and literate ends of power relations.

Ioannidou (2009) investigated the general conceptualisations of CD as an improper language in the classroom and she argued that in her data there was a strong presence of CD in the actual lesson. The findings of this study agree with Ioannidou (2009) who argued that CD is a reality in the classroom and it is used for various communication occasions. However I also used parents' ethnographic interviews to provide insights into the way CD is considered in the wider social context in contradiction with the classroom's reality and analysed these constructions under the spectrum of power relations to examine the way learning is achieved in the classroom context. Further this study provides strong evidence from the perspective of the teacher as a researcher who challenges the local conceptualisations regarding CD by using the dialect in her teaching.

### ***Situatedness of CD and SMG***

Recurring patterns showed that CD and SMG are situated in specific contexts serving specific communicative functions. As research suggested, language and literacy practices are situated and are influenced by the context it is surrounded by (Street, 1984). The findings showed that CD is used every day for different communicative purposes and children are able to apply their knowledge to specific contexts. To be more precise, data analysis in chapter 7 showed that CD is situated in stories and everyday experiences (e.g. chapter 7, 7.2 Parent 1 Interview). Children narrated their experiences of what they saw or had done in their social setting such as at church, at school or in the playground using CD.

CD was contextualised by parents in unofficial social contexts outside the school boundaries and mostly in unofficial communicative interactions with friends.

Hence, CD was situated depending on the context, such as in peers' interactions and playtime, in traditional poems and songs, in TV series/shows, or even at home, although some parents denied the use of CD inside their home showing constructions of fear of CD and its influence on learning and in social interactions. Moreover, the families that seemed to live with this contradiction could be placed at both ends of the continuum indicating a level of complexity in their everyday life. Other parents situated their family at one end of the continuum, stating that they use CD while other families could be situated at the other end of the continuum where SMG is the only language permitted while CD is excluded from their interactions.

These findings support Papapavlou (2001) who argued that CD is the everyday language used at home, with friends and family in informal occasions. What differs is that I investigated parents' perspectives on the matter of, and in relation to, education. My findings take this area of research a step further by presenting evidence of students' literacy practices within the context of the family as well as the context of the classroom where they performed successfully.

## **RQ.2: How do translanguaging and literacy practices enhance academic learning in the Greek- Cypriot classroom setting?**

### **Subquestions:**

2.1 To what extent does translanguaging enhances students' with learning difficulties academic learning?

2.2 How does the teacher incorporate translanguaging in the whole classroom?

The findings of this study show that translanguaging and the use of literacy practices enhance thinking within the academic context. Students used culturally based knowledge to expand their ideas and participate successfully in the lesson. They used both CD and SMG flexibly by moving from the one variety to the other and by introducing relevant knowledge to the conversations.

Findings in chapter 8 show that translanguaging and the use of literacy practices enabled students to relate the curriculum content to their personal experiences and use them as a resource for negotiating the meanings of the text, to provide constructive and critical opinions in the discussions in the classroom and thus enable the students to control their own learning which became pupil- directed.

Translanguaging enhanced understandings of students with learning difficulties since they felt "safe" to participate and to offer their personal views on the topic of the conversations while at the same time helping the collective acquisition of meaning. The study focused more on acquiring knowledge through interactional processes rather than focusing on their core reading and writing difficulties.

Findings also provide evidence of the affordance that the teacher incorporated by using CD along with SMG within the class context. Translanguaging operated as a pedagogic tool that enabled the integration of personal knowledge within the context of class discussion and the use of both linguistic varieties as a tool for enhancing and affording learning.

***Translanguaging and literacy practices: relating individual experience to curriculum content.***

The findings in chapter 8 respond to the main research question related to students' translanguaging in the class discussions and the possibilities for facilitating learning development. The findings showed that children use literacy practices to develop their ideas and relate them to the context of the conversation. Students tried to make sense of the text by relating their personal experiences with academic information. Thus they integrated "household funds of knowledge" (Moll, 1992) into learning activities to access the curriculum by using all of their available linguistic resources. These findings support what Street (1984) argued that literacy is more than an autonomous skills set that are essential for reading and writing. Rather, students draw on all of their literacy practices and linguistic resources from their various learning experiences from their home, school and community.

Creese & Blackledge (2010) examined the way language instruction is undertaken in several community language schools in the United Kingdom (Gujarati, Chinese and Turkish) and showed that bilingual teaching approaches were used by adopting an ecological approach for teaching the use of two or more languages alongside each other. My study uses the same ecological approach to describe the translanguaging and interactional actions in the bidialectal classroom and supports findings such as that flexible bilingualism can be used as a strategy to associate knowledge with social, cultural and

linguistic domains and thus stresses how significant is the use of literacy practices for learning. The difference in my study is that I also bring the strength of evidence as the teacher-researcher which brings with it a heightened insightful interpretation of what happens in the bidialectal classroom that is not available to the observer- ethnographer.

***Translanguaging and literacy practices: Social experiences as a resource for sense-making.***

Data showed that students negotiate the meaning of the text using CD to make contextual connections and construct meanings and knowledge (See 8.2.1 (i) Extract 3: The story of Deamonte Lov / 26.1.2011; 8.2.1 (ii) Extract 9: The Internet/ part 2/ 25.5.2011). Students socially and cognitively engaged with their learning by using all their literacy practices. Even though these practices did not include the use of standard language for academic purposes, they were resources which the children used to help to negotiate the topic of the text that was written in the standard language variety, SMG. Furthermore, children transformed their everyday literacy practices and socially based experiences as a way of scaffolding their learning and sense making into academic learning.

Translanguaging instances revealed a level of detail in students' opinions and thus an enhancement of understanding and participation. Data in chapter 8 show how students translanguage to offer further explanations or clarifications to their opinions which were related to their social experiences. The appropriateness of social practices via translanguaging enabled a meaningful interaction and internalisation of knowledge.

### ***Translanguaging, social practices, and regulation of knowledge***

In chapter 8 my analysis shows that by using translanguaging and collaborative social practices students construct knowledge socially by sharing their ideas and actions; this collective practice enables flexibility in controlling or regulating their own learning. Students, via translanguaging and collective contributions, developed a shared understanding of the topic they were negotiating, such as in 8.2.1 (ii) extract 9 (lines 36, 38, 43, 47). Evidence where students seem to be regulating their own learning is shown in extract 11 (8.3 Extract 11: An intercultural school: 4.5.2011) where students are active learners by questioning and expressing their views in a way that they seem not only to be sharing their ideas but also providing reasoned responses. These findings support García's & Li Wei's, (2014) claim when they argue that translanguaging refers to the flexibility of bidialectal learners to control their learning. They agree with what Lewis et al. (2012a, p. 665) called 'pupil-directed translanguaging' meaning that students use 'translanguaging' language practices and ways of thinking that teachers may not control.

### ***Offering a level of detail when translanguaging***

Patterns of talk showed that students translanguaged when they wanted to offer a more detailed opinion regarding the topic under investigation. For example, evidence in chapter 8 (e.g. 8.4 Extract 3: The story of Deamonte Lov / 26.1.2011) showed that translanguaging was used as a tool for expanding their thoughts and providing further explanations that enabled the integration of new information that served the pedagogic purpose.

### ***Translanguaging and students with learning difficulties***

This study also focused on the way students with learning difficulties translanguaged as a meaning making resource, as a tool for negotiating meanings and for developing

understandings of the theme of each discussion and thus enhancing their learning. Evidence supported what García & Li Wei (2014, p. 81) argued that “learning is not product but a process” and in this process students engage in discursive practices that include all their available linguistic resources to enable them to communicate while appropriating socially constructed knowledge. S4, who is one of the students with identified learning needs, contributed to the pedagogic task and participated in the process of joint thinking in the class (8.5 Extract 5: 17.3.2011/ 8.30/ Thursday). Translanguaging offered him the opportunity to participate, by feeling “safe” to express his views and enabling him to acquire knowledge through interpersonal learning.

This study takes a sociocultural approach, situating learning in societal relations to create an alternative way of examining literacy learning and learning difficulties in complex educational settings such as the Greek-Cypriot school class context. Orality is given less power than literacy according to the biliteracy continuum (Hornberger, 1989). Promoting literary content does not allow teachers to focus on the way students acquire knowledge through interactional processes. Hence, using literacy practices and all available linguistic resources can enhance meaning making and academic achievement. Many studies about specific learning difficulties focus their attention on individuals’ core difficulties in literacy skills and do not view the way students with learning difficulties can develop literacy within their linguistically diverse context. Studies in educational context consider ‘thinking’ only as a cognitive feature and so proceed to test for measuring intelligence. Yet ‘thinking’ from a Vygotskian perspective is mediated by the individual’s cultural worlds, cultural artefacts and literacy practices (Martin, 2009).

García (2009) found that deaf children also translanguage especially when they use spoken language (oracy), literacy and/or sign language. She argued that translanguaging can be supportive for deaf children but did not deal with students with learning difficulties. My study shows that children with learning difficulties, such as dyslexia-type difficulties, also translanguage enabling them to participate in the lesson as well as to use household funds of knowledge which can transform educational learning according to students' social reality so that they are included in the process of learning and not excluded. Furthermore, translanguaging practices in the classroom create potential to use all points on the biliteracy continuum, offering all students the possibility of accessing the curriculum through the use of their available communicative repertoire as well as through the use of their home experiences.

### ***Teacher's incorporation of translanguaging in the whole classroom***

García and Li Wei (2014) found that teachers use translanguaging to give voice and involve students in the lesson; to clarify, to reinforce, manage, extend and ask questions. The findings of my study show similar ways that translanguaging is used by the teacher of the class, in collaboration with the students, not only as a way of reinforcing, clarifying and extending students' thoughts for managing the class, but also as a way for negotiating meanings and facilitating understandings to keep the pedagogic task moving. The way the teacher uses both linguistic varieties to engage students in the conversation (lines 26-28), to negotiate meanings (line 24) and to offer clarifications is showed in 8.6.2 Extract 11. Extract 9 (8.6.2 Extract 9: The Internet/ part 2/ 22.5.2011), line 46 also provides an example of the way translanguaging across SMG and CD is used by the teacher to support students.

Data analysis also showed that the teacher incorporated household ‘funds of knowledge’ (Moll, 1990) into the official academic curriculum via dialogic teaching to achieve the pedagogic task. This approach served as a successful pedagogic method since it maximised student participation, developed awareness of the topic of the lesson, and learning became child-centred creating a sense of liberation about linguistic choices.

Another finding that could be derived from data in chapter 8 is that the teacher’s translanguaging operated as a pedagogic tool and afforded academic learning. In 8.6.3 Extract 1 in line 81, the way the teacher offered intellectual support to S1 by using CD is presented. Linguistic and communicative affordances in CD exploited by the teacher enabled expansion of intellectual action without setting limits with information that were outside the available perceptual scope of the individual. Further, findings show that students’ breakdowns in understanding could be related to the cultural affordances offered within the classroom being inappropriate or that the linguistically related affordances were not comprehensible and so could not support learning.

An interesting finding is that the teacher uses translanguaging to valorise all points of the biliteracy continuum through dialogic teaching which utilises all available linguistic resources as well as socially constructed experiences and transforms them according to the official curriculum demands, such as the example of using SMG on the whiteboard after listening to students’ opinions in CD (8.6.2 Extract 9: The Internet/ part 2/ 25.5.2011).

In Cyprus limited studies have been conducted regarding the use of translanguaging from the perspective of the teachers and the possible pedagogic outcomes for the students. Yiakoumetti (2006; 2007) designed a bidialectal programme which taught Cypriot students

through their local dialect trying to provide information regarding the relationship between use of CD in the classroom and school language achievement. This programme developed students' awareness of the differences between SMG and CD and benefited language performance primarily in productive skills. My research follows a more interpretive approach for presenting the way that the use of both CD and SMG can facilitate learning as well as the way students with and without learning difficulties engage in classroom conversations and enhance their learning through interactional collaborative, joint reasoning.

**RQ.3: To what extent do students with and without specific learning difficulties collaborate by drawing on all of their linguistic resources to understand, construct knowledge and achieve the pedagogic task?**

**Subquestions:**

3.1 Does translanguaging serve as a facilitator for communication as well as a mediator for acquiring or negotiating meaning and achieving deeper understandings for students with and without specific learning difficulties?

3.2 How does students' (with and without learning difficulties) engagement in translanguaging practices assist their learning?

The main finding is that the use of all available linguistic resources by translanguaging during learning is evidenced in almost all chapters of data analysis. In chapter 9 students use both SMG and CD to access the curriculum and participate in the classroom's conversation and thus achieve the pedagogic task. Sense making was achieved through the

use of both varieties which were used for communicative and educational reasons. Students' opinions were constructed and transformed through and within the context of the classroom, and knowledge was acquired via collective practices that also seemed to enhance the development of thinking and sense-making. As a teacher of a bidialectal classroom I was also drawing on language resources to afford learning, enhance understandings and keep the pedagogic task moving according to students' linguistic choices.

***Children's collective practices in the classroom and joint construction of reasoning through the use of one or more linguistic codes, SMG and CD.***

The findings of this study show moments of students' learning where translanguaging is present within the context of the class and which occurred unstructured and unsystematically. Students were collectively trying to achieve knowledge and participate in the lesson by co-constructing opinions with each other using both CD and SMG. Interpreted by Vygotsky's ideas (1987), the data indicated that the language used within the classroom served as a communicative and cultural tool and it is used for collective acquisition of knowledge but also as a psychological tool that enabled students to develop their thinking and actions

Mercer (2000) investigated the collective ways of acquiring knowledge from children talking to each other in groups. My study examined the way translanguaging served as means of "thinking together" for the collective creation of knowledge and understanding, not in the sense of groups of students, or students talking to each other, but in the sense of the class group, which could be characterised as a mirror of the social language experiences of almost all the students in the wider community.

***Students with learning difficulties and their contribution to the collaborative effort to achieve the pedagogic task.***

The students with learning difficulties who participated in this research were S2, S4, S5 and S14 who were discussed in chapter 9. The last two students (S5 and S14) showed minimum contribution to the lesson since their participation was limited. S2 and S4 were more active and contributed to the pedagogic task using the linguistic variety that afforded their learning each time. S2 used both SMG and CD in a way that allowed him to participate in the lesson using language in a social and cultural way. This enabled S2 to negotiate the meanings of the texts and assist the collective construction of knowledge. S4 tried to participate in the lesson using the official language, SMG. There were moments of hesitations and repetitions when constructing his thoughts using SMG. However, he was expressing his ideas successfully, showing a level of sense making that was achieved via the collective construction of knowledge of the class.

Mercer (1995; 1996; 2000; 2004; Mercer et al. 2004) investigated students' use of language when sharing and negotiating existing knowledge in small groups of students, as well as ways of teaching how to use language to access the subject matter. This study investigated the way students use their linguistic resources to access the curriculum not only in small groups but also examined the way students with learning difficulties respond to the collaborative efforts of the class to achieve the pedagogic task and who also live in a wider bidialectal social and cultural context.

## **RQ.4: Does translanguaging support communication particularly exploratory talk?**

### **Subquestion:**

4.1 What types of talk were evidenced in the classroom during discussions?

The data in chapter 9 (e.g. 9.3.2 Extract 8; 9.3.3 Extract 11) presented evidence of the three types of talk, disputational, cumulative and exploratory talk (Mercer, 1995; 1996) when using both SMG and CD, not for measuring the quality of students' talk but as a way of interpreting the quality of their talk and the way translanguaging supports access to knowledge. Disputational talk was not so evidenced in the data while cumulative and exploratory talk could be distinguished in the conversations.

Children were using language to support their communication purposes according to the context of the conversation. The findings of this study indicate that translanguaging can support communication especially the exploratory talk which, according to the psychological level of analysis, promotes thinking and learning while according to the cultural level of talk it involves clarity, accountability, constructive criticism and acceptance of arguments (Mercer, 1995; 1996). Students offered their suggestions and opinions through the use of both linguistic varieties engaging sometimes critically and positively to the conversation achieving the pedagogic task. They synthesised their opinions and constructed their thoughts by using each other's ideas respectively (see 9.3.2 extract 8). Cumulative talk was also present since students' "echoing" or repetitions of each other's views - but in a different synthesis - enabled them to negotiate meanings and capture knowledge (see extract 3). Though teachers could consider this analysis as a negative

feature for classroom talk, a positive consideration of evidence of repetitions will enable us to interpret it as a supportive creation of shared knowledge through the use any and all available repertoires for enhancing reasoning.

Canagarajah (2011) investigated the development of teachable strategies for the co-construction of meaning and theoretical frameworks to assess translanguaging practices especially in writing. Martin (2005) also researched the potentials of code-switching in the learning process and described the tensions that are created in the educational context. Martin (2005, p.90) set a similar question to the research question of this study by asking *“Can classroom code-switching support communication, particularly the exploratory talk which is such an essential part of the learning process?”* since his research focused on the teaching of language, focusing on the function of words. My study used the term translanguaging instead of code-switching to describe the multiple discursive practices in which students in the Greek-Cypriot context engage in and does not deal with diglossic functional separation as code-switching theory does (García, 2009). This study focused on CD and SMG which were used in the classroom not just to highlight words and statements that appeared in conversations - as Martin’s (2005) research showed- but to interpret interactions in a communicative and exploratory way. Students were active and explored the meanings of the texts through constructive discussions.

## **10.5 Discussion of the biliteracy continuum**

The notion of the biliteracy continuum as proposed by Hornberger (1989; Hornberger & Sylvester, 2000) suggests that all points on a specific continuum are interrelated and that this intersecting and nested relationship between the continua also conveys that all points

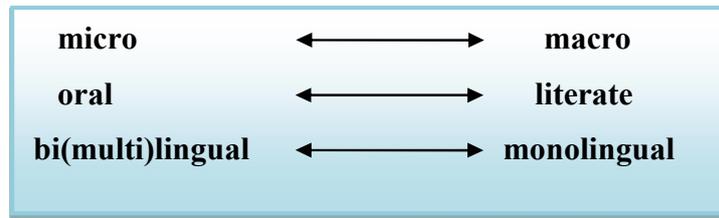
across the continua are interrelated. The creation of possibilities that allow moving across each and every continuum can enhance students' learning and enable their full biliterate development and expression (Hornberger, 2004). Furthermore, it is worth repeating that biliteracy is defined by sociocultural theorists such as García (2006), as the successful acquisition of reading and writing in two languages. Some researchers considered literacy as an independent notion and referred to "literacy and bilingualism or literacy across languages and cultures" (García et al., 2006, p.3). In the case of Cyprus, I suggest that students' bidialectism is investigated under the notion of continua of relations for examining learning across the two language varieties.

In this part of the discussion I apply the continua of biliteracy to the evidence in my data. I aim to show how this model can be used as a lens to investigate the perspective that the equal distribution of power across all points of the biliteracy continuum –related to the educational context of Cyprus- can enhance students' academic performance. A critical perspective on the way this Greek Cypriot community reflects hierarchical views of CD and SMG in academic contexts involving both linguistic varieties, can be provided through the application of the continua to my data. In addition it also reveals interrelations between ends of the continua that were not considered as a way of analysing. The analysis thus focuses in more depth on the possibilities for learning in both varieties by Cyprus' students.

In educational practice in Cyprus there seems to be a tendency of privileging one end of the continua over the other such as that one end of each continuum is associated with more power than the other. Educational policy tried to initiate pedagogic actions that recognise language and diversity but still one end remains more privileged than the other in current educational settings in Cyprus. I will discuss power distribution across the continua below.

## Contexts of biliteracy

Hornberger & Sylvester (2000) argued that in contexts of biliteracy there is a tendency to give power towards the macro, literate and monolingual ends of the continua.



Macro level monolingual literacy practices are given more attention in Cyprus' educational context as well as in the local community as manifested through parents' interviews. National policy tried to create possibilities of using CD in a contrastive way giving more acknowledgment to CD. However, no more power is given to CD since educational contexts still favour the powerful macro, literate monolingual end of the continuum

- **Micro- Macro Continuum**

Data showed that micro literacy practices that involve the use of non-standard or non-dominant language practices in education were used alongside macro language practices in the classroom. Macro language practices are related with the use of standard dominant discourse practices in SMG which favour monolingualism and exclude students' local non standard language practices in school contexts (Hornberger, 1989; Hornberger and Skilton-Sylvester, 2000). Students with and without specific learning difficulties seemed to make use of language content that used to be excluded from school and were engaged in micro literacy practices in the classroom challenging the use of macro language practices that exist in the official education context. The use of both micro and macro levels enabled student's active engagement in the classroom and created possibilities of expanding their

knowledge. As a teacher-researcher I used micro levels of language practices to help students acquire meanings and knowledge demanded at the macro level of educational practices (SMG).

- **Oral- literate continuum**

Evidence showed that by limiting the discourse in the official monolingual written literary texts from the majority Greek Cypriot society then the richness of bidialectal oral discourse, vernacular writing and literary texts from the minority Greek Cypriot culture is not recognised and it is left outside the classroom. Oral interaction at the micro level enabled me as a researcher to examine the way students can achieve learning and progress through ways of talking and knowing that have not been valued inside of school contexts.

Oral expression in CD is not valued as oral expression in SMG and a potential use of CD in writing is considered inappropriate and an obstacle for achieving proficiency in SMG. Heath (1982) revealed that speech and literacy are interrelated and thus equal power should be distributed at both oral (bidialectal)- literacy continuum so that schools can move away from a single standardised literacy. Emphasis should be given in the context where language varieties are used and how they serve the educational purpose. In my classroom students with and without learning difficulties used CD when talking around a text that was written in SMG and then had to write in SMG. They were also using CD in personal notes, in poems/songs and during break time. Hornberger (1989) argued that orality and literacy are related and their characteristics are based on the social context and culture in which language and language varieties are used rather than with oral versus literate use. However, the power of these literacies is not equally distributed in each social context (Hornberger, 1989).

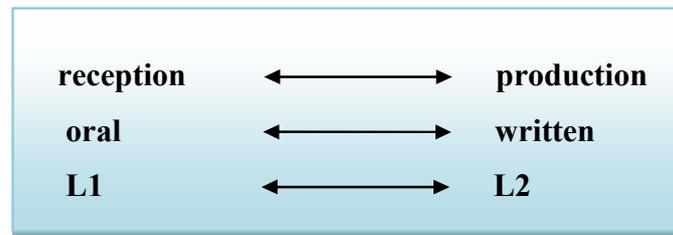
Bidialectal orality was a way of describing the context of written literacy in SMG. Students' engagement in literacy events showed that their literacy practices were embedded in varied oral uses and an ambiguous view of orality and literacy will not enable educators to conceptualise students' oral uses in CD as a way of expanding their thinking of literacy in SMG.

- **Bi(multi)lingual – Monolingual continuum**

Hymes (1986, p. 38) stated that “no normal person and no normal community is limited to a single way of speaking”. In Cyprus education promotes monolingualism instead of focusing on the possible advantages of bidialectism. It is recognised by scholars that both linguistic varieties exist in a dialectal continuum where one variety is used alongside each other. In the case of Cyprus we talk about bidialectal- monodialectal (monolingual) continuum where monolingual practices are favoured over bidialectal practices which are considered as less powerful and that reflect students' lack of knowledge of SMG (Yiakoumetti, 2007). Evidence showed that CD is positioned at the less powerful end of the continuum while SMG is considered as the powerful official language of education. Parents considered that either students or the teacher should use the dialect in the classroom arguing for the need of intense monolingual oral and written use of SMG. The school also seemed to favour monolingual practices since one of the school's aims of the academic year 2009- 2010 was the development of oral speech and written production in SMG. Due to my long term stay at the same school I can confirm that the school's policy did not seem to change in any way that would also include CD.

## Development of Biliteracy

Hornberger (1989, p. 281) clarified that the notion of continuum in development argues that development draws on features from all dimensions of the continuum. Also the notion of continuum does not suggest that the development occurs only continuously or gradually rather that it may occur in spurts and in some backtracking.



School curricula focus primarily on L2 (SMG) literacy development as evidenced in school performance, such as standardised tests in Greek language lesson, even in the face of other language varieties such as CD and literacy resources drawn by the local context. L2 (SMG) literacy development is seen through a skill-based view of literacy which does not recognise possible effects of sociocultural pedagogic uses in education.

- **Reception- production continuum**

This research did not focus on written production in SMG; however data analysis provides evidence of unequal power distribution between the two ends that may affect the development of students' learning. Studies undertaken in Cyprus' educational context suggested the implementation of bidialectal programmes that recognise the use of both varieties and enable students to become aware of the differences between the two varieties. Studies suggest that after the implementation of such programmes students showed progress in the written production of SMG which is a problematic area for Greek- Cypriot students (Yiakoumetti et al. 2005; 2007). Bidialectal programmes surely move from one end of the continuum to the other giving emphasis in both language varieties. However, in

the case of this research, data showed that a possible interconnection of the receptive and productive ends can create a lively classroom context characterised by active learners who engage in reading, listening, talking and writing feeling more confident about themselves and their cultural background. If such methodological and pedagogical stance were to be continued throughout the academic years of students then educational results could be surprising.

Long bidialectal discussions enabled them to explore the meanings of the texts and argue about various issues in the classroom and mostly to become active participants who develop their reasoning through collective efforts. Students were reading texts in SMG and discussing them in CD while listening to the whole class contributing information through both varieties and, at the end, writing scripts in SMG where features of CD were not considered as errors but as a tool for continuing or even expanding their thoughts.

- **Oral – Written continuum**

Oral and written development also occurs along a continuum since a lot of literacy events in the classroom occurred embedded in oral language use. Students were reading texts in SMG but analysed their content in CD. The content of the texts sometimes was conceptually difficult or not contextually related to their own household funds of knowledge and experiences. Therefore, students with and without learning difficulties used (or applied) literacy practices enacted through translanguaging to access the curriculum and actually ‘read’ the texts through contextually rich conversations. This experience was beneficial especially for students with learning difficulties since they could achieve reasoning through oral collaborative efforts and thus access the curriculum. The process of

writing, reading, and listening are interrelated and interconnected in the bidialectal context of Cyprus and impossible to separate both language varieties from teaching.

- **L1 – L2 continuum**

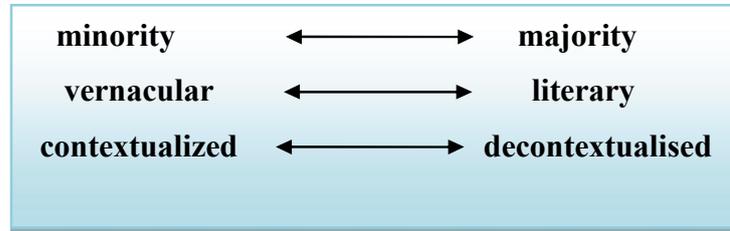
The continua of biliterate development was put in to practice by assisting students to claim the ‘right to speak’ using their L1 (CD) oral and receptive skills as well as the L2 (SMG) written productive ones. Students developed their thinking through translanguaging practices by co-constructing each other’s ideas and using literacy practices that emerged through their own community worldview.

Students were prompt to collaborate and use CD to answer questions, discuss and explore issues aroused from the texts as well as to write notes. Notes were mostly related with writing their complaints so that they did not interrupt the lesson. Most complaints were written in CD. Students felt more comfortable in conversations in the classroom and were constructively repeating or else echoing each other’s opinions, reading aloud activities, copying from the whiteboard using both receptive (oral) and productive (written) skills. Finally, what might have been interpreted as a negative effect, so-called ‘interference’ from L1 to L2, was considered as evidence of a creative application of L1 knowledge to L2 learning.

### **Content of Biliteracy**

Officially, vernacular minority content is excluded from teaching. Local resources, stories written in CD, poems are usually not used in education. Official school contexts often excluded the histories and voices of dialect speakers utilising only literary majority content.

I will provide a short discussion of the levels of the content continuum indicating which are relevant to my research.



- **Minority- Majority continuum**

Evidence showed that school knowledge associated and intersected with personal knowledge. This means that attention was given to the minority end of the content continua rather than the majority end. However this served the purposes of comprehending the majority content that is knowledge driven from literacy textbooks.

- **Vernacular- Literary continuum**

The vernacular end of the literary-vernacular content continuum is absent from school discourse. Evidence showed that parents situated vernacular writing at the less powerful end considering such practices as traditional and historical. Vernacular writing is mostly associated with traditional poems (t[fiatista- τσιατιστά). It is also evidenced in anthologies of Cypriot poetry which teachers are recommended to use when there is a poem that is related to the specific thematic unit of the Greek language lesson. This continuum is not related to my study since I focused mostly on oral interactions in the classroom. However I have evidence that could be examined in further research. Some of my data showed that students who were considered as “non-writers” in SMG, were proficient writers in CD. According to my fieldnotes, a student who attended special education once wrote a traditional poem to

me and recited it in front of the whole class. However, the performance in vernacular writing is not evident in Cyprus' school contexts.

- **Contextualised – Decontextualised continuum**

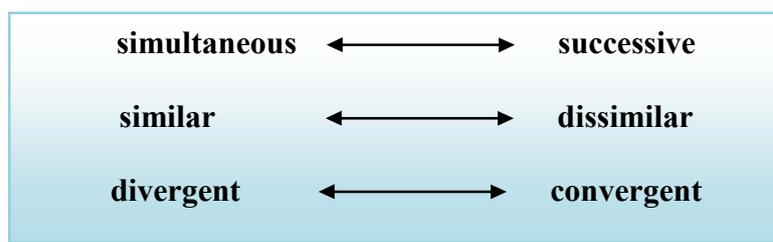
This continuum is related with this study in terms of contextualised talk over decontextualised talk since my focus was on oral language use. Students were using contextualised talk by speaking the language variety of their community to access the decontextualised meanings of the texts. Decontextualised meanings are the meanings that count in formal education (Hornberger, 1989). Hornberger & Sylvester (2000, p. 110) argued that “*an exclusive emphasis on decontextualised parts of language makes it so that students do not learn how to construct whole with academically appropriate parts*”. The focus of Greek Cypriot education is on decontextualised parts and thus limits students' possibilities of using the language of power correctly since they are not taught how to use pieces of language to construct meaningful and articulate whole texts.

The use of contextualised texts that have meaning for every individual student by emphasising particular knowledge could benefit learning. Once meanings are ensured then students could become aware of the links between contextualised and decontextualised texts. My data showed that the use of the less powerful contextualised talk enabled students to explore, argue and negotiate meanings of decontextualised texts. Content was given emphasis during discussions while students were using literacy practices through translanguaging distributing equal power between the contextualised oral over the decontextualised written and managing language learning by specifying knowledge.

## **Media of Biliteracy**

The continua model includes the media of biliteracy in terms of the language and literacy varieties involved, specifically the correlations between language structures, literacy scripts and practices and the sequence of the mix of varieties (Hornberger, 2004). The media of biliteracy benefits from the implementation of biliteracy programme structures and instructional approaches. They are considered to be a positive feature rather than a negative one as students learn simultaneous literacy knowledge through ‘criss-crossed’ performances (Hornberger & Sylvester, 2000). It deals with the coexistence of various standard and non-standard varieties in the learner’s communicative repertoire. This framework was developed to show that not only multilingual but also multidialectal settings provide contexts for the study of biliteracy (Hornberger, 1989).

This study focused on the traditionally less powerful ends of the continua such as the dissimilar, divergent, non-standard variety (CD) and to translanguaging practices, as students were drawing on all of their available linguistic resources to achieve learning. However, this study did not focus on writing practices that could provide a full description of the way students can develop biliteracy. This level of continuum relations is not relevant to my study except for the simultaneous –successive continuum. Similar and dissimilar language structures as well as power distribution between divergent and convergent scripts were not the focus of my study. However I will proceed to a short exploration of the continua and possible use as a theoretical framework for future studies.



- **Simultaneous exposure- Successive exposure**

Simultaneous rather than successive exposure to both the standard SMG, and non- standard variety, CD, was evident in my study. I ‘allowed’ students to interact in discussions spontaneously as a natural product of shared knowledge and cultural values. Students used their prior existing knowledge and through culturally and socially contextualised practices enacted through translanguaging I helped them through my pedagogy to transfer their ideas in both language varieties and achieve sense-making through discussions and questioning in both varieties; such a strategy would assist their creative writing at a later point.

- **Dissimilar structures- similar structures**

The focus of the continua of biliteracy media has been more on the similarities and convergences between two languages or language varieties and their writing systems as a possible way of transferring literacy from one end to the other rather than focusing on dissimilarities and divergences across varieties within the two language varieties that may be an obstacle for literacy development even in one. This study did not focus at this point of the continuum. However studies that examined the implementation of bidialectal programmes following a language awareness approach can be associated with the media of biliteracy continuum.

- **Divergent scripts- Convergent scripts**

Differences between CD and SMG exist at lexical level because the dialect includes many ‘loan’ words while SMG does not. Differences are also evidenced at the phonological and morphological levels and to a lesser extent at the syntactic level (Yiakoumetti, 2007). This continuum is not relevant to my study since I did not focus on writing scripts and the potential for transfer of reading skills and strategies.

## **10.6 Final Reflections**

### **10.6.1 Research Methodology effectiveness**

In this study I used linguistic classroom ethnography to explore and answer my research questions in relation to the bidialectal context of Greek-Cypriot classrooms. This methodology enabled me to conduct an in-depth investigation of the way that a class of 18 students in a primary school in a rural area of Cyprus acquire literacy skills and practices, and to examine their performance with literacy in the classroom, their learning behaviour, their choices of language within the classroom setting, their learning activities as well as their social interactions within the formal academic setting as well as within informal settings such as their family.

Ethnography enabled me to investigate students' learning holistically and on a long term basis moving from the micro context (such as, teacher- student interactions) to the macro context of such relations examining learning from a holistic perspective which involves school, community, educational officials, the educational policy of Cyprus, and the wider society. It also enabled me to be involved in student's lives as a researcher and as a teacher through daily observations and in- depth interviews with their parents.

I was well positioned in the same school for six years and my role as a teacher supported the conduct of this ethnography though I had to treat the school's familiar setting as unfamiliar so that I could obtain useful data that were not derived from my subjective opinion. I had no problems gaining access to do research in the school since I was aware of the organization of the schooling environment, the teachers, the students, the headmaster and others and I had their permission for conducting my research.

As the teacher of the same class for two years I was able to gain parents' consent to conduct the research and to easily invite them to interviews, to which 17 out of 18 responded positively. I was well positioned as a teacher and as an ethnographer at the same school although it was exceptional to have permission to stay at the same school for some years which is not always feasible in Cyprus. Further, I had systemic support from both the headmaster of the school and the Ministry of Education who allowed me to conduct my research and to stay at the same school with the same class for two years, as well as approving my absence from school when visiting the University of Birmingham, UK, during my study.

#### **10.6.2 Possible Limitations and challenges of the study**

This section examines possible limitations which may influence the outcome of the study. A limitation, or perhaps I should call it a need for further study, is that I did not interview the teachers of the school since there was limited time for each teacher to be able to participate in an interview. So I preferred to use fieldnotes and to keep records of conversations in teachers' meetings, with their permission. Teacher's interviews could add further information on the way they use language in their classroom and where they as educationists situate CD. Also, interviews with teachers could provide me with a more general picture of the way translanguaging is used or is considered in other classrooms in the school. This is an area that could be explored in the future.

Secondly, the fact that I worked alone and not with a team entailed more demanding work from my part not being able to share opinions for specific parts of the research. A second limitation is that I am no longer teaching the children who participate in the research and for this reason the data had to be collected by the end of the academic year 2010- 2011.

A strong benefit was that I was already known by staff, parents and children as a professional teacher in the school where I wished to research.

The way students managed to co-existence of the linguistic varieties, SMG and CD, was a significant issue of my research since I was challenging the notion that CD is used only by elderly people being positioned in the past or by uneducated people or “peasants”. The challenge was even greater when I used CD in my pedagogy showing how children were using both linguistic varieties to think, and not just by using SMG. I challenged parents’ view using the theory of a biliteracy continuum (Hornberger 1989) to show two things:

- a) that if the oral continuum is given equal power with the literate continuum of biliteracy relations, then learning can be enhanced;
- b) that if the two linguistic varieties, CD and SMG, are used in the class pedagogy, then children will use both as social and cognitive tools to learn with.

Parents’ views that students’ oral language skills influence their writing skills could be examined from a positive perspective as it enables them to construct meanings and negotiate meanings through linguistic tools and literacy practices that enhance their cognitive development.

### **10.6.3 Implications of the study**

Considering the conclusions of this research study, several implications and recommendations for improvement are suggested which could prove beneficial for education in Cyprus taking into account the recent progressive language planning and policy changes.

According to new literacy theory, giving voice to those who have historically been powerless will promote transformation and may lead to learning development (Street, 1984). Cyprus' educational system demands that students produce essays by making use of dominant discourses (SMG) that are not part of their experiences, prioritising only literary content. Inadequate teaching material, teachers poorly trained in linguistic matters, and a lack of socialisation practices that could mediate students' thinking are perhaps some of the reasons that students seem to fail, especially when entering elementary school. As Hornberger & Skilton- Sylvester (2000) argued, if policy makers, educators, researchers and community members reflect critically on the power that a language carries inside and outside the classroom it will allow speakers, readers and writers to understand that each language is situated and valued according to social and cultural contexts.

My findings can affect classroom pedagogy by highlighting that the creation and adoption of unequal linguistic power relations can limit students' possibilities of learning enhancement and achievement. I suggest that oral content should be given equal attention as literary content making use/and including their personal experiences and linguistic choices when negotiating knowledge. My study aims to influence the wider context of education in Cyprus by informing pedagogy with conceptualisations favouring the creation of L1 (CD) friendly environment for the beneficial development of L2 (SMG) including students with learning difficulties.

The implications of my findings regarding education policy in Cyprus is that they could influence teaching methods in the classroom as well as teaching ideologies which promote monolingual pedagogies. Educational policy could draw attention to the need for further research to bidialectal learning in Greek-Cypriot classrooms. Language and pedagogic

practices in the classroom need to be reconsidered so that students can use all available linguistic resources to learn, participate, construct meanings, argue, discuss, critique and explore issues that are generated through classroom discussions.

My study also suggests that even though the new educational policy has progressively acknowledged the use of CD in the classroom and offered a few suggestions regarding a possible accommodation of the dialect in SMG lesson, it still needs to create clear-cut strategies so that teachers can be able to deal with students' bidialectism. However, except from teaching strategies, this study implies that the new curriculum has space of adding more into bidialectal education. To be more precise I suggest that both pre-service and in-service educators should be trained in language and diversity issues, learn about language awareness programmes and thus create possibilities of applying knowledge into practice. I stress the need for constant generation of knowledge through training and application of knowledge into teaching. I call for the "knowledge-of-practice" conception that Hornberger (2004) suggested. Such a conception assumes that teachers need to use their own classrooms as sites where they use theory produced by others as generative material for examination and interpretation (Hornberger, 2004). However this stresses the need for the creation of teacher training courses and seminars throughout the academic year. Such courses/ seminars can inform teachers about bidialectal education, help to develop an inclusive and friendly dialectal ecological context, recognise the benefits of including and not excluding the dialect, inform about research undertaken in Cyprus and internationally regarding bidialectism (and bilingualism in the sense of a broader knowledge of linguistic issues) and bidialectal programmes. However, I suggest that teachers' training should first of all include the framework around sociocultural theory as way of obtaining more into

depth conceptualisations regarding language and its use a tool for thinking, sharing knowledge and learning.

Furthermore, I suggest that active and true engagement in learning necessitates a curriculum that is relevant and personally meaningful so that it confirms students' identity and experiences. This study also suggests the use of a participatory approach as an approach which will accommodate students' local knowledge and standard and non-standard varieties as a way of applying personal knowledge to the official curriculum. In this study bidialectal discussions enabled to become active participants who develop their reasoning through collective efforts. Each student was able to integrate and reconstruct personal perspectives through the use of both varieties in order to comprehend the written text in SMG.

Regarding the need of new approaches in education I suggest that students with specific learning difficulties in bidialectal classrooms should be included in the new curriculum more specifically. This study stresses the need for further research in this area. Hence, I suggest the cultivation of cultural sensitive programmes for educators in order to develop a new ideology regarding approaches to students' oral speech production and the recognition of their own possibly educational prejudice which makes them use an obviously rigid, monolingual approach for learning.

Finally, this study offers an original contribution to research since no other research within the Greek- Cypriot academic context has yet focused on the way students with and without learning difficulties use both CD and SMG in a collaborative way for achieving joined reasoning or examined the way translanguaging and literacy practices facilitate learning

development. My research shows the way students can use all available linguistic resources in primary school as a tool for mediating their learning, maximising their participation, contribute to the pedagogic task by co-constructing each other's views and opinions and most importantly using CD along with SMG as tools for enhancing their thinking and thus achieve understanding.

## **10.7 Conclusion**

In this final chapter I presented the primary research questions that drove my study as well as the purpose and the aims of the research. The main findings of this study were discussed by responding to the main research questions with a discussion of pertinent findings. In the final part of this chapter I wrote some final reflections regarding how my methodology was effective and how it suited the purposes of my study. In the end I presented the limitations and challenges that surrounded my study and then discussed my contribution to the research field of language and pedagogy in educational contexts. The findings of this ethnographic research may challenge governmental actions for favouring monolingual educational settings as well as those views that consider Cyprus' bidialectal educational context as a barrier for learning. CD is used as a learning resource in the classroom while students negotiate meanings of the texts through both linguistic varieties. Hence, the creation of a positive ecological framework that positions CD and SMG in an equal continuum of power relations can benefit the acquisition of knowledge and thus academic achievement.