

## **South - North & Diasporas: Mother tongue educational policies for Greek pupils in Britain and their own ‘community paedia’ through a critical overview**

**Fokion Georgiadis, Apostolos Zisimos**

*University of London, UK, Aristotelian University, Thessaloniki, Greece*

### **Περίληψη**

Στη Βρετανία, όπως και στις περισσότερες «δυτικοευρωπαϊκές» χώρες, το ζήτημα της πολιτισμικής ετερότητας στην εκπαίδευση έχει προκύψει, στην πραγματικότητα, πρωτίστως και ουσιαστικά, σε απάντηση των εκπαιδευτικών αναγκών μετακινούμενων πληθυσμών (διασπορές). Μέσα από την ανάλυση της κατάστασης της πολιτισμικής ετερότητας στην εκπαίδευση στη Βρετανία (Βορράς), αυτή η παρουσίαση προσπαθεί να επισημάνει την εξαιρετικά μεγάλη σημασία των βρετανικών πολιτικών και παροχών στα ικανοποιητικά, σημαντικά επιτεύγματα στον τομέα της εκπαίδευσης σχετικά με τους Έλληνες και Ελληνοκύπριους (Νότος) μαθητές/τριες.

Ως εκ τούτου, στην παρούσα ανακοίνωση εξετάζονται οι γλωσσικές πολιτικές που υιοθετήθηκαν τόσο σε πολιτικό όσο και σε εκπαιδευτικό επίπεδο στη Βρετανία για να αντιμετωπιστούν οι ανάγκες παιδιών από ομάδες μειονοτήτων, ειδικότερα τους Έλληνες και Ελληνοκύπριους μαθητές/τριες, δίνοντας επιπρόσθετη έμφαση στο ζήτημα της διδασκαλίας της μητρικής γλώσσας (ελληνικά). Θεωρώντας ότι τα ελληνικά είναι μια μειονοτική γλώσσα στη Βρετανία, μια μορφή διγλωσσίας αναμένεται σε αυτά τα παιδιά. Πράγματι, για τα περισσότερα από αυτά τα ελληνικά έχουν γίνει δευτερή γλώσσα ενώ τα αγγλικά έχουν αναχθεί σε πρώτη.

Εν τω μεταξύ, η ελληνική Διασπορά στη Βρετανία προκειμένου να διατηρήσει την εθνική και πολιτιστική της ταυτότητα και να τη διαβιβάσει στις νεότερες γενιές ίδρυσε και καθιέρωσε τάξεις διδασκαλίας της μητρικής γλώσσας – γνωστές και ως κοινοτικά, παρειακά ή παραπληρωματικά σχολεία – και άλλες μορφές ελληνικής εκπαίδευσης για να καλύψουν τις ανάγκες αυτές.

### **Λέξεις-κλειδιά**

Πολυπολιτισμικότητα, Αγγλία και Ουαλία, Έλληνες/ Ελληνοκύπριοι, μητρική γλώσσα, εκπαιδευτική πολιτική κοινοτικά ή παραπληρωματικά σχολεία.

## **Introduction**

An increasing number of students from diverse cultural and ethnic minority backgrounds stand at the frontline of educational, social, and political policies worldwide (Banks and Banks 2003). Cultural diversity has long existed in society and education, but the accelerating pace of global movements and developments is reshaping the issues raised by the continuously increasing multiculturalism. Migrations are part and parcel with a long history of human mobility and cultural diversity formation in societies. Migrants, refugees and asylum seekers vacate their land, abandon property and very often lose their social status, language and culture. An individual's or group's migration from a country to another one causes transition from a known social, economic, political and cultural system to a less known one. This lack of knowledge undoubtedly creates 'border communities' (Giroux and McLaren 1994) between 'insiders' and 'outsiders' resulting first into 'othering' and then into stereotyping and/or xenophobia.

Countries in Europe, Britain included, are infatuated with the 'integration' of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers - or in other words 'ethnic minorities' to use a term widely used in Britain. But is what they really mean 'integration' or 'assimilation' within this obvious multiculturalism? Assimilation was something that Britain consciously rejected in favour of integration since one-time Labour Home Secretary's classic definition of integration refers to as "not a flattening process of assimilation but equal opportunity accompanied by cultural diversity in an atmosphere of mutual tolerance" (Jenkins cited in Sivanandan 2006). It was that facet of 'multiculturalism' that persuaded schools in England and Wales to teach children to respect each other's cultures and religions.

The challenges accompanying the education of diverse groups and ways to provide worthwhile, socially responsible, and equitable education are both exhilarating and alarming. They are exhilarating in that they have the potential to add vibrancy and richness to schools and reinforce the need for a more equitable society. The challenges are also alarming because despite ongoing efforts, change agents continue to confront prejudice, injustice, and historical misconceptions that are so profoundly entrenched in the fabric of societies and systems that they often appear overwhelming (Walker and Dimmock 2005).

Within this line of thoughts how to most effectively meet the needs (cultural, linguistic, social) of such diverse school population is still among the most difficult and imperative issues facing educators across many societies. British society is surely among them. The reactions within the education system in England and Wales have varied across a wide range from rejection, through assimilationism, integrationism and multiculturalism to antiracism. It is also within this framework of cultural diversity policies in Britain that Greek Diaspora in order to preserve their national and cultural identity and to transmit it to younger generations established some mother tongue classes –known also as community (paroikia) or 'supplementary' schools.

Supplementary and mother-tongue schools in Britain broadly refer to extra schooling organised by and for diverse ethnic groups outside of mainstream provision (Rutter 1978, Mathieson 1995, Richards 1995, QCA 2000). The Supplementary School

Resource Unit estimate that there are about 5,000 supplementary and mother-tongue schools in the UK (QCA *op cit.*) but other estimations refer to 3,000 such schools (Suffolk County Council 2009). Most of them operate in the evenings and at weekends for three to four hours a week in youth clubs, community centres, places of worship (mosques, churches, temples, *gurdwaras*<sup>1</sup>) and state-maintained schools (QCA *op cit.*, Strand 2007). They are similar to their basic aims: (i) developing the minority ethnic child's cultural identity, self-esteem and confidence; (ii) promoting the achievement of minority ethnic children in state-maintained schools (Abdelrazak 2000). There is little published research on supplementary education in England and Wales (Bastiani 2000). Regarding the Greek-Cypriot community, the first school was opened in Kentish Town in London in 1950 (Ross *et al.* 2008) while many other similar 'Greek schools' followed. Additionally, new forms of 'Greek-language-and-culture-oriented' education were developed (e.g. Greek-Orthodox faith school) to fulfil those cultural needs expanding the previously existed 'paedia' of the Greek Diaspora.

### 1. Multicultural and Multilingual Britain

Britain is a multicultural country with different religions, languages and ethnicities. Most of the 'minority ethnic population' is found today in England and Wales. Nevertheless, Britain has never been ethnically homogeneous. Her history is impossible to be understood without recognising the importance of invasion and migration. Romans, Anglo-Saxons, Vikings and Normans have conquered the land. Groups such as the French Huguenots, Jews and the Irish settled pacifically. Similarly, Celts' advent since the 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C., 500 years of Latin domination under the Romans, 1000 years of contact with the Vikings, the French language, which was spoken among the 'official circles' for 400 years and the Flemish, which was spoken in some parts of Britain until 1600, have been the linguistic influences on what we call 'English' today (Price 1984). It has also been argued that British nationalism's strength was derived from a significant period without revolution, combined with a lack of devastating defeat in war or national humiliation. Despite the 'internal colonialism' of the English over the Welsh, Irish and Scottish (Gundara and Jones 1994), there has been a sense of insular [British national] identity and common fate, which both recognised and yet easily transcended marked class and regional divisions (Watson 2000: 43).

Thus, Britain has always been a multicultural and multilingual society marked by many waves of migrants. World War I and II saw people from all over the British Empire rally to the cause of the 'mother-country'. After the World War II, migrants from the states of the Commonwealth settled in Britain bringing about a lot of problems to the post-war British governments as they had to find ways so as to smoothly integrate those diverse cultures into British society. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century England and Wales accepted a sizable number of migrants in order to cope with the lack of labour force due to galloping industrial progress and considerable immigration of a large number of British citizens to the U.S.A., Canada and Australia (Castles 1987). In fact it was not until the Aliens Act of 1905 that any

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<sup>1</sup> *Gurdwara*, meaning 'the doorway to the Guru', is the Sikh place of worship, a 'Sikh temple'.

legal distinction was made between residents of England and Wales “who did, or did not, belong” (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1992: 48). In 1995, about half of the minority ethnic population in England and Wales was migrants (Office of National Statistics 1996). Since their arrival the Greeks in England and Wales and especially the Greek-Cypriots have been an integral part of British history, society and education contributing a lot to the cultural diversity and prosperity of the regions they settled.

## **2. Linguistic diversity within British educational policy**

The issues concerning migrants', refugees', asylum seekers' and minority students' education in Britain have been hard to be handled. Educational policy passed through various phases that configured current reality.

Educational responses to the needs of cultural and language minority children in Britain had began to evolve with the immigration of many people from former British colonies in the 1950's. Education policy has played an important role in determining the attitude towards the language. In the past, teachers in England and Wales – and other countries – resorted to physical punishment in order to discourage children from using other languages (Edwards 1983b), namely their various 'mother tongues'. Until the 50's it was strongly believed that teaching mother tongues would cause problems to the national unity of the countries that received the migrants (Fris 1982). According to Stubbs (1994: 207) “schools had always been the most powerful mechanism in assimilating minority children into mainstream cultures”. The plurality of British society and the needs of migrant children were completely ignored by various Local Educational Authorities (LEAs) (Edwards 1983a). Britain clung to the tradition of cultural hegemony and put its trust in the ideology of the melting pot. The British education system had to assimilate the 'diverse' (Troyna and Williams 1986). The concept of equality before the law, which forbids all discrimination in terms of colour, prevented the enforcement of special measures against the migrants. But in the name of equality there followed complete indifference to the problems being faced by migrant children (Figueroa 1995). Therefore, teaching the English language continued playing a major role in the 60's and 70's aiming at assimilation of migrant children through special English language teaching programmes.

According to Donald and Rattansi (1992) the issue of language came first into focus in the evolving multicultural society of Britain, with the publication of English for Immigrants (DES 1963), an official paper about teaching children whose first language was not English. The underachievement of 'ethnic minority children' was a reality that had to be dealt with, as there was a growing concern for this new situation. Language Centres were founded in which migrant children remained for up to two years studying the English language. In this way a kind of 'education apartheid' satisfied the majority of English parents who believed that migrant students should be in different classes, so that their own children's progress would not be stunted (Reid 1988, Bourne 1989). The ideology that prevailed was that the education of 'white monolingual majority pupils' should not be disrupted by the presence of the newly arrived migrant population.

This assimilative approach was succeeded by the 'integration model' according to which special emphasis should be laid on pupils' place of origin and on other folklore and cultural elements (Gardner 2001). No action was taken in order for

mother tongues to be incorporated in the syllabus (Reid 1988). Research which was then conducted in England and Wales indicated that the mother tongue plays an important role in helping the individual's personality to be completed (Fris 1982). Migrant children were provided with special instruction in English language while the government funded a considerable number of programmes concerning 'English as a Second Language' as well as special teachers and multicultural education advisors whose work was peripatetic in various schools within the competence of the Local Educational Authority that hired them or even permanent in certain schools (Bourne 1989, Bourne and Reid 2003).

The prevalent idea was: quick learning of English with the least possible disorder in the syllabus. As for instruction of the mother tongue, it was conducted voluntarily during the long break or after class by bilingual instructors or members of the ethnic minorities (Reid 1988). But those educational responses also ignored the children's first language and failed to meet their needs.

In the late 70's official education policy for migrants changed dramatically. While it had used to be assimilative in the hope that the education system could assimilate foreign ethnicities and integrate them into the whole British body, it was now compelled to become adaptive. This happened because ethnic minorities exerted pressure concerning preservation of their traditions. The coup de grace was first given by Bullock's Report and then by the Community Relations Act which says that racial discriminations are illegal. The then director of the Schools council issued directions entitled 'In support of children bilingualism'. Those directions were based on the conclusions of a common seminar between teachers and students. Among others it is mentioned that teaching the mother tongue should not be considered to be a special prerogative offered to minorities as a gift but a natural right within the framework of asserting equal treatment with British children (Sen 2000).

Therefore, some schools began to introduce tuition of mother tongues, Greek as well, in the official syllabus, while students had the right to choose subjects. Where such possibilities were not given, Greek was taught right after class had ended. The same report suggested that further research should be carried out regarding tuition of the mother tongue. Bilingual education did not develop within state education, nevertheless. Hence, many of the migrant communities themselves such as the Greek-Cypriot community organised language education for their members. Greek-Orthodox church organised Greek lessons in the weekdays afternoons or in Saturday mornings in church halls while parents associations in hired places. However, there is not much information as to how many children attended those classes, the content and quality of which differed among the various communities (Fris 1982).

From 1980's onwards, the approach that has been adopted is to teach the English language to foreign children in the context of other learning within the mainstream classroom. The School Council took a very positive and encouraging step with the financial aid of the European Community, which then issued the historic document of the EEC directive (EEC 1997: 10). According to this document, as far as education for migrant children is concerned, the country members of the E.U. were requested to consider maintaining and developing the language and culture of the country the migrants came from. Arnberg (1981) mentions that teachers expressed their disbelief regarding the idea of integrating Mother Tongue tuition into the syllabus. This disbelief originated partly from the then education system which

promoted the '*only prevalent language*' until then, but it was also based on the notion that bilingualism entails spiritual inferiority.

In 1981 the School Council undertook the three-year School Council Mother Tongue Project with a view to elaborating, preparing and publishing companions that would assist in teaching two mother tongues, Greek and Bengali, to primary school students under the Inner London Education Authority, that is the Local Education Authority of Central London. In 1984 a European Community report was published. It concerned the Directive issued in 1977. That report demonstrated that England and Wales had hardly conformed to the clauses regarding instruction of the mother tongue (Bourne 1989). In 1985 England and Wales's language policy changed with reference to bilingualism and minorities. Swann's Report or 'Education for All' (DES 1985), the research Committee's report on education of children belonging to 'ethnic minorities' was the last important government report concerning linguistic and ethnic multiplicity in education. This report provided a useful depiction of political regulations central to England and Wales's education policy. Power to plan education policy used to be apportioned quite differently in comparison with how it is today. The central government had no immediate power to influence the syllabus, while decisions about it were made by teachers and some schools. Those were usually under the dominating guidance of their Local Education Authorities (LEAs) (ibid: 221 and 334). Swann's Report discredited the idea that instruction of the mother tongue occurred at the expense of English and advocated in favor of bilingualism. This report gave a picture of 'nesting' communities within the framework of the English state. For the first time, it was officially recognised that there were social inequalities and discriminations against foreign students in the English School (ibid). Hence, there rose a great need for equal opportunities by means of a common syllabus. The report also proposed that we should remove every instance of racist characterisation with respect to various units which had usually caused racial conflicts in schools (Bourne 1989). Education circles evinced great interest and special seminars about the subject were organised. However, interest was limited to an academic level with the exception of some Local Education Authorities, such as Harringey's, Islington's and Hackney's that appointed some teachers and Greeks in order to teach mother tongues. Harringey's Local Education Authority, in particular, established the Centre of Bilingualism in which it appointed 18 teachers of the most important ethnic languages. Unfortunately, the Centre "suffered severe financial blows" (Christodoulidis 1995: 84) and the project was abandoned.

Although this new multicultural model ensured that bilingual children were taught their culture, religion and language within school, the English language was always the vehicle for tuition, communication and school success. In most schools bilingual students' performance ameliorated and thus directions given by Swann's report were fulfilled in a way (Herriman and Burnaby 1996) but this policy was accused of being a kind of 'refined' assimilative policy (Arnberg 1981). While teaching students in separate Language Centres was drastically limited in the late 1980s (Bourne 1989), the number of students attending their mother language was small. This meant that assimilative tendencies still existed and bilingualism was not duly supported in public schools.

The National Curriculum, which the Education Reform Act 1988 introduced, identified in its guidance to schools, a multicultural cross-curricular '*dimension*' and included some relevant issues in its proposed cross-curricular '*theme*' of citizenship. The National Curriculum Council also established a special Multicultural Task Group (Figueroa 1995, Tomlinson 1993). However, the Education Reform Act 1988 also in crucial ways represents a threat to multicultural, antiracist, and equal opportunities education. It represents a step backwards from previous relevant issues and in particular from the Swann Report, which it ignored. The Education Reform Act 1988 was mainly inspired by the two main tendencies, neoliberal and neoconservative, within the New Right ideology, which was dominant under unbroken Conservative rule between 1979 and 1997 (Whitty 1990).

In 1990 the National Curriculum Council stated that all students within a multicultural society must have equal opportunities. This idea must be diffused throughout the overall syllabus. Linguistic support to 'ethnic minorities' students took place in mainstream school classrooms. As Kearney (1990) also mentions Greek students' linguistic and cultural involvement in the normal education flow was negligible. In 1991, as Roussou and Papadaki d' Onofrio stress (1991: 199), "over twenty Greek mother tongue classes were created in ILEA within mainstream schools whereas in Haringey's area the number of such classes amounted to thirty five".

After a period of '*hibernation*' during which matters of multicultural education as well as of 'race and equal opportunities' escaped the political agenda (Gillborn and Gipps 1996), in the second half of the '90s Britain's education policy was attentively concerned with the progress of students belonging to ethnic minorities and it laid emphasis on matters of racism (Mcpherson 1999). British schools hired (Section 11 projects) a considerable number of teachers from ethnic minorities – there are enough Greeks among them – but "they were not occupied with mother tongue instruction" (Collings 1999: 67). Through their very presence those teachers "would impart a positive sense of identity to students coming from ethnic minorities, they would give them an opportunity for conversation in their own mother tongues and they would support and encourage those students" (Blair et al. 1998: 162).

In 1997, the Resource Unit for Supplementary and Mother Tongue Schools was organised in order to bridge the gap between the dominant tendency and the sector concerning voluntary schools. The Resource Unit for Supplementary and Mother Tongue Schools was partly financed by the Department of Education and Employment (DfEE) and offered help in issues regarding personnel, teaching material and evaluation. While some language groups satisfy the needs of some communities on Saturday or on Sunday morning, other communities, such as the Greeks, have come to more dynamic solutions. Through an extended network of schools functioning on a part time work basis, the Greek community of London – which amounts to over 250,000 people – has managed to preserve its cultural and linguistic identity. This target, though, becomes more and more difficult as generations proceed.

A review of research into the achievements of ethnic minority children in England and Wales in the ten years following the Swann Report (DES 1985) was conducted by Gillborn and Gipps (1996). One of their most important findings was that language problems many times were misinterpreted or related to learning

difficulties. For that reason, these children were either inappropriately assessed or excluded from classroom life. New Labour won a landslide electoral victory in 1997. The New Labour Government has expressed a strong commitment to education, and has started to introduce some initiatives relevant to multicultural antiracist education. 'Excellence in Schools' (DfEE 1997: 24) indicates that its "top priority" is 'raising standards' and 'being effective in raising minority pupils' achievement".

In this line of official policy discourse and various deficits of interculturalism and multilingual education, especially for the Greeks, the responsibility for maintenance and preservation of cultural diversity in England and Wales relied and probably still relies on the Greek communities themselves to provide education to their children from nursery school level to GCSE and A Level through the already established community (supplementary) and mother tongue schools.

### **3. Greek community educational provisions for its students**

Since ancient times emigration has been a dominant phenomenon in the history of the Greek nation. During antiquity, by reason of their cultural dynamic, Greek colonies were in a position to maintain their language and culture but also to transmit it to neighboring peoples. Today the Greeks of the Diaspora strive to maintain such elements within the narrow boundaries of the Greek community. These communities are an extension of the Greek nation far beyond the designated frontiers of the Greek state. After World War II Europe has been one of the biggest recipients of Greeks. In this way, the latter found themselves in Great Britain whose intensely assimilative policy and lack of systematic education for Greek migrant children on the metropolis' part along with life in a multicultural environment prompted the Greeks to strive to preserve their national and cultural identity and to transmit it to younger generations. Thus, through initiative taken by the Greek community, mother tongue classes – also known as community schools – were created in order to cover relative needs (Zisimos 2005).

The majority of Britain's Greeks come from Cyprus and are first, second or even third generation migrants. It is often said that the biggest city of Cyprus is London. The language spoken by a lot of them is noteworthy as well: a Cypriot dialect of past decades enriched with several hellenized English words, such as *fisha'thiko* (fishmonger's), *fishiu'thikia* (little fish), *marke'ta* (market), *bo'xi* (box), *du's'bi'* (dustbin), *kitchu'i* (kitchen), *coo'ka* (cooker) (Georgiadis, Douvli and Zisimos 2002, authors' personal and professional experience).

But do Britain's Greeks need and desire to preserve the Greek language and culture? Everyday experience indicates that, in many cases, communication among the Greek community members is bilingual. However, the extent to which Greek prevails in everyday communication among family members depends on various factors, such as whether they belong to a first, second or third generation family which may or may not participate in community life, whether the one parent is monolingual and belongs to the linguistic majority or to some other linguistic minority and whether the Greek language is held in high esteem by the individuals themselves.

Today in Britain the Greek language is taught: i) in the unmixed Greek nursery, primary, lower secondary and upper secondary schools which operate in accordance

with Greece's curriculum, ii) in Saint Cyprian's Greek-orthodox primary school which operates in accordance with the English curriculum enriched with the instruction of Greek – approximately 20% of classes are conducted in Greek (St. Cyprian's Primary School 2000) – and iii) in about 110 mother tongue classes called community or supplementary schools. Supplementary and mother-tongue schools in Britain go as far back as the mid-1800s when Italian community and Chinese (Issa 2002) schools were established in London. The first Turkish school was set up in 1959 while the first Ukrainian mother tongue school was established by the 1960s (Issa and Williams 2008). A number of Black supplementary schools were set up as a response to Government policies and so called '*compensatory initiatives*' to tackle Black underachievement (Central Advisory Council for Education 1967). Other communities followed: Bangladeshi and Vietnamese communities during the 1970s are of the more recent examples while the first Greek-Cypriot School was opened in 1950 (Ross *et al.* 2008) and many other followed.

Those classes are organized by three educational institutions: the Central Education Council (KES/KEΣ) that represents Church schools, the Federation of Greek-Cypriot education associations of England (OESEKA/OEZEKA), the Independent Greek Schools of England (AESΑ/AEΣA) and the Independent Greek Schools of London (AEΣA). Community education began to unify through cooperation between the Greek and Cypriot Ministries of Education and the three community education institutions (apart from the Independent Greek Schools of London). Thus, there emerged the Unified Institution for the Greek Community Education (EFEPE/ΕΦΕΠΕ), in which all mother tongue classes have been integrated (Georgiadis, Douvli and Zisimos 2002, authors' personal and professional experience).

It is noteworthy that in 1988 the heads of the education missions issued a report which characteristically mentions that community schools are attended by only 1/3 of the children of Greek origin. Concern may also arise by yet another research published in the Evening Standard (2000). According to the research, it seems that only a minimal number of students mentioned Greek as their mother tongue. The possible reasons held responsible for continual decrease in student population are: inappropriate time or place for school operation as well as long distances along with parents' difficulty of undertaking to transfer their children to and from community schools.

Representatives working in mother tongue classes are confronted with the following situation: Schools operate just twice or once a week. Now, in schools operating for 3-4 hours once a week a lot of time elapses between two classes and consequently children lose contact with the Greek language. On workdays Greek classes take place in the afternoon (6-8 p.m.) and also on Saturday morning or afternoon. As children come to the Greek school right after the English all-day school, they are obviously tired. Mother tongue classes are conducted chiefly in English property and are subject to strict regulations that do not allow free use of the premises except for the blackboard. Educators cannot place or change any object whatsoever. This means that class environment has nothing to do with the Greek language or the Greek culture. Of course there are classrooms owned by the Church, although, in terms of educational practice, they are often of little use (Georgiadis, Douvli and Zisimos *op cit.*).

A lot of those classes function with exceptionally small numbers of students, which poses serious problems for teaching work. Educators are always on the move from school to school and may be responsible for three or even four different classes and for students, boys and girls, of different language level within the same class. In addition, teachers in these classes have also to deal with students with learning problems or special learning needs. Every school has its own regulations and way of function with which teachers have to comply. There is also lack of an appropriate curriculum being based on the principles of intercultural education and the methodology of teaching Greek as a second language. Students do not attend classes regularly. Parents and students do not attach the necessary importance to the instruction of Greek and thus they cannot respond to the Greek school's demands. A sizable number – perhaps over 1/3 – of the teaching hours is dedicated to preparing various celebrations (national or not). A lot of the existent teaching books are not analogous to children's interests. Students were born in Great Britain even by parents of second and in some cases third generation. The majority of these parents knows the English language better than their mother tongue and prefers to speak English with their children. Almost all students come into little or no contact with the Greek language outside school. Their attitude towards the Greek school varies and most students enjoy meeting their friends there as well as learning Greek dances and songs. Yet, roughly speaking, all children come to learn Greek not of their own volition but just because their parents, their grandmother or grandfather wants it. Moreover, the Greek language is characteristically used during holidays in Cyprus or Greece where children come in touch with Greek-speaking relatives, while it is used less back home. Greek is the language for communication principally with the grandmother or grandfather, but when it comes to communication with the mother and father or their friends it is used less or not at all. Parents often motivate their children to obtain a GCSE and A' Level in Greek in order that they can use it for entrance into universities (authors' personal and professional experience).

#### **4. A last comment**

Britain, today, as a plural, multiethnic society requires a pluralist approach that enables minority and majority ethnic groups to participate fully in shaping the society. British education policy had moved broadly from assimilationism, through integrationism, to multiculturalism. However, the multicultural approach was confused and had impinged only on schools in multiethnic areas. In England and Wales the development of multiculturalism has been towards assimilation, or weak forms of cultural pluralism. As aforementioned the kind of multicultural education advocated in the Swann Report aimed to achieve a balance between maintenance and support of the essential elements of the cultures and lifestyles of all the ethnic groups, and acceptance by all groups of the set of shared values of the society as a whole. It was supposed to bolster minority students' sense of pride in their cultures, but also to facilitate validation of those cultures at a society-wide level.

Within this framework the Greek/Greek-Cypriot communities in Britain saw some signs that children born in this country were breaking away from the values and cultural practices of the first or second generation of their migrant parents. Anxiety also emerged from social distance between migrant children and their peers and this

exclusion plays the most crucial role in relation to education for the Greek children. Additionally, motivation, positive attitudes and self-confidence developed as results of positive experiences to Greek Diaspora in Britain, thus motivating students to learn Greek, since the official policy was and still is heading towards 'quasi-assimilative strands'. The created gap is then to be filled by local Greek communities' (church's and parents') initiatives and their mother tongue and 'supplementary' schools.

Thus, combining 'intercultural dimension' (Gundara, 2001) in mainstream education in Britain and embracing and enhancing supplementary/ community and mother tongue schools might help to increase social justice and diversity within this *de facto* multicultural terrain.

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