LITERACY TEACHING IN THE L1 CURRICULUM OF GREEK SECONDARY EDUCATION

An Essay

ELENI KATSAROU

University of Crete – Greece

Abstract. This paper presents a study of the formal current L1 curriculum for lower secondary education in Greece. The aim of this study is to examine the ways literacy is defined and language is conceived by this curriculum. For this purpose Hasan's (1996) literacy classification/taxonomy (partitioning into recognition literacy, action literacy and reflection literacy) was used. Curriculum was chosen to be studied because it is a fundamental, formally established educational text, deeply political. The analysis shows many internal inconsistencies of the curriculum under study. Besides, the way action literacy is promoted (through its close connection to the recognition literacy) reveals a strong tendency of the curriculum for knowledge reproduction and social conformism. The paper concludes with a discussion of the findings and some thoughts not only about the said curriculum but also about the wider society whose product it is.

Key words: literacy education in Greece, L1 curriculum, functional literacy, action literacy, reflection literacy, critical literacy

Correspondence concerning this article should be directed to Eleni Katsarou, Department of Philosophy and Social Studies, University of Crete, Greece. Maxis Potamon 11, Rethymno 74110, Greece. Phone: 0030-28310-51983. Fax: 0030-28310-77222. e-mail address: katsarou@fks.uoc.gr

Chinese
[Translation Shek Kam Tse]
希腊中学教育母语课程中的语文教学

摘要：.本文陈述希腊中学低年级教育中正式现代母语课程的研究。研究目的在于调查该课程如何定义读写能力和构思语言。运用Hasan

(1996）年的读写能力分类/学（划分为认识性读写能力，行动性读写能力和反思性读写能力）。课程因为其根本性，确定教学语篇的正规性，以及深度的政治性而选为研究对象。研究分析显示接受研究的课程内部有着不一致性。另外，行动性读写能力的推广方式显示出该课程强烈的知识再现和社会顺从性。本文结论除讨论该课程本身所表述的内容外，还讨论课程作为产品的更广阔的社会的发现和思考。

关键词： 希腊语文教学， 母语课程， 功能性读写能力， 行动性读写能力， 反思性读写能力，批判性读写能力

Dutch
[Translation Tanja Janssen]
TITEL. Taalonderwijs in het L1 curriculum van het Griekse voortgezet onderwijs
SAMENVATTING. Deze bijdrage bevat een analyse van het huidige formele L1 curriculum voor de eerste leerjaren van het voortgezet onderwijs in Griekenland. Doel is na te gaan op welke wijzen geletterdheid en taal gedefinieerd en opgevat worden in dit curriculum. Voor dit doel werd gebruik gemaakt van Hasan's (1996) classificatie/taxonomie van geletterdheid (waarin geletterdheid onderverdeeld wordt in geletterdheid gericht op herkenning, actie/handeling en reflectie). Curriculum werd gekozen als object van studie, omdat het een fundamentele, formeel gegrondveste onderwijstekst is, die zeer politiek is. De analyse laat zien dat het betreffende curriculum veel interne tegenspraken bevat. Bovendien is er een sterke tendens naar kennisreproductie en sociaal conformisme, gezien de manier waarop geletterheid als actie/handeling gepromote wordt (door het sterk te verbinden met geletterdheid als herkenning). De bijdrage besluit met een kritische beschouwing van de bevindingen en enkele gedachten niet alleen over het betreffende curriculum maar ook over de maatschappij als geheel waarvan het een product is.
TREFWOORDEN: taalonderwijs in Griekenland, L1 curriculum, functionele geletterdheid, geletterdheid als handeling, geletterdheid als reflectie, kritische geletterdheid.

Finnish
[Translation Katri Sarmavuori]
TITTELI. LUKU- JA KIRJOITUSTAITO KREIKAN TOISEN ASTEEN L1:N OPETUSSUUNNI-TELMASSA
ABSTRAKTI. Tämä tutkimus suuntautuu Kreikan alemman toisen asteen L1:n nykyopetussuunnitel-maan. Tutkimuksen tarkoitus on selvittää, miten luku- ja kirjoitustaitoa sekä kieltä on määritelty opetus-suunnitelmassa. Käytössä oli Hasanin (1996) luku- ja kirjoitustaidon luokitus/taksonomia (jaettuna tun-nistavaan, toiminnalliseen ja reflektoivaan luku- ja kirjoitustaitoon). Opetussuunnitelma valittiin tutki-muskohteeksi, koska se on perustavanlaatuinen, muodollisesti luotu kasvatusta koskeva teksti, syvästi poliittinen. Analyysi paljastaa opetussuunnitelmasta monia sisäisiä epäsystemaattisuuksia. Tapa, jolla toiminnallista luku- ja kirjoitustaitoa edistetään (sen tiivis yhteys tunnistavaan luku- ja kirjoitustaitoon), paljastaa opetussuunnitelmasta vahvan tendenssin tiedon tuottamiseen ja sosiaaliseen konformismiin. Tutkimuksen lopussa on keskustelu ja ajatuksia ei vain opetussuunnitelmasta vaan myös laajemmin sen tuottamasta yhteiskunnasta.
AVAINSANAT: luku- ja kirjoitustaidon opetus Kreikassa, L1:n opetussuunnitelma, funktionaalinen luku- ja kirjoitustaito, toiminnallinen luku- ja kirjoitustaito, reflektoiva luku- ja kirjoitustaito, kriittinen luku- ja kirjoitustaito

French

[Translation Laurence Pasa]

TITRE. Enseignement de la litterature dans le programme de l1 de l'enseignement secondaire grec

RÉSUMÉ. Cet article présente une étude du programme officiel de L1 pour les débuts de l'enseignement secondaire en Grèce. Le but de cette étude est d'examiner la manière dont est définie la littérature et dont est conçu le langage dans ce programme d'enseignement. Pour cela, la classification/taxonomie de la littérature proposée par Hasan (1996) (distinguant la littérature d'identification, d'action et de réflexion) a été employée. Le programme d'enseignement est étudié dans la mesure où il s'agit d'un document fondamental, formellement établi et profondément politique. L'analyse révèle de nombreuses contradictions internes. En outre, la manière dont la littérature d'action est favorisée (à travers ses liens étroits avec la littérature d'identification) traduit une tendance à la reproduction de la connaissance et au conformisme social. L'article conclut par un examen des résultats et de quelques considérations relatives au programme d'enseignement concerné mais aussi, plus largement, au sujet de la société dont il est le produit.

MOTS-CLÉS : enseignement de la littérature en Grèce ; programme de L1 ; littérature fonctionnelle ; littérature d'action ; littérature de réflexion ; littérature critique

Greek

[Translation by Panatoya Papoulia Tzelepi]

Τίτλος. Διδασκαλία του γραμματισμού στην μητρική γλώσσα στο ελληνικό δευτεροβάθμιο σχολείο

Περίληψη. Αυτό το άρθρο παρουσιάζει μια μελέτη του επίσημου Αναλυτικού Προγράμματος για το γυμνάσιο στην Ελλάδα. Ο στόχος είναι να εξετάσει τους τρόπους που ορίζεται ο γραμματισμός και πώς γίνεται αντιληπτή η γλώσσα στο Αναλυτικό Πρόγραμμα. Για το σκοπό αυτό χρησιμοποιήθηκε η ταξινόμηση Hasan (1996), δηλαδή ο χωρισμός σε γραμματισμό αναγνώρισης, γραμματισμό πράξης και γραμματισμό αναστοχασμού. Επιλέχθηκε να μελετηθεί το Αναλυτικό Πρόγραμμα επειδή είναι θεμελιώδες, επίσημα έγκυρο εκπαιδευτικό κείμενο και βαθειά πολιτικό. Η ανάλυση δείχνει πολλές εσωτερικές ασυνέπειες του Αν. Πρ.. Επιπλέον ο τρόπος προώθησης του γραμματισμού της πράξης (σε στενή σχέση με το γραμματισμό αναγνώρισης) αποκαλύπτει ισχυρή τάση του Αν. Πρ. για την αναπαραγωγή της γνώσης και την κοινωνική συμμόρφωση. Το άρθρο καταλήγει σε συζήτηση των ευρημάτων και σε κάποιες σκέψεις όχι μόνο για αυτό το Αναλυτικό Πρόγραμμα αλλά και για την ευρύτερη κοινωνία της οποίας είναι προϊόν.

Λέξεις κλειδιά: Εκπαίδευση γραμματισμού στην Ελλάδα, αναλυτικό πρόγραμμα, μητρική γλώσσας, λειτουργικός γραμματισμός, γραμματισμός πράξης, αναστοχαστικός γραμματισμός, κριτικός γραμματισμός

Italian

[Translation Manuela Delfino, Francesco Caviglia]

TITOLO. L'insegnamento della literacy nel curricolo della L1 nel sistema educativo di scuola secondaria in Grecia

SOMMARIO. Questo contributo presenta uno studio dell'attuale curricolo di L1 per la scuola secondaria di I grado in Grecia. L'obiettivo di questo studio è esaminare i modi in cui questo curricolo definisce il concetto di literacy e concepisce la lingua. Per questo obiettivo è stato usato il sistema di classificazione e la tassonomia elaborati da Hasan (1996), che propone una suddivisione in literacy finalizzata alla riproduzione, all'azione, alla riflessione (rispettivamente *recognition literacy*, *action literacy* e *reflection literacy*). Si è scelto di indagare il curricolo perché si tratta di un testo fondamentale, formalmente stabilizzato e profondamente politico. L'analisi mostra che nel curricolo preso in esame ci sono molte incoerenze interne. Inoltre, il modo in cui si promuove la "literacy d'azione" – vale a dire, in stretta connessione con la "literacy di riconoscimento" – rivela una forte tendenza del curricolo alla riproduzione della conoscenza e al conformismo sociale. Il contributo si conclude con una discussione sui risultati ottenuti e con alcune riflessioni non solo sul curricolo in oggetto, ma anche sulla società di cui è il prodotto.

PAROLE CHAIVE: insegnamento della literacy in Grecia, curricolo di L1, literacy finalizzata alla riproduzione, literacy finalizzata all'azione, literacy finalizzata alla riflessione, literacy critica

Polish
[Translation Elżbieta Awramiuk]

TITUŁ. Kształcenie umiejętności czytania i pisania W greckim programie nauczania języka ojczystego do gimnazjum

STRESZCZENIE. Niniejszy artykuł poświęcony jest oficjalnemu programowi nauczania języka ojczystego w niższej szkole średniej w Grecji. Celem badań była analiza sposobu definiowania umiejętności czytania i pisania oraz zastosowanego w programie języka. Wykorzystano klasyfikację Hasana (1996) (uwzględniającą podział na rozpoznawanie umiejętności czytania i pisania, jej kształcenie i refleksję nad nią). Przedmiotem badań uczyniono program, ponieważ jest to podstawowy, oficjalnie przyjęty tekst edukacyjny, głęboko uwarunkowany politycznie. Analiza pokazuje wiele wewnętrznych niekonsekwencji w badanym programie. Ponadto sposób, w jaki promowana jest czynna umiejętność czytania i pisania (z powodu jej bliskiego związku z rozpoznawaniem umiejętności czytania i pisania), ujawnia silną tendencję programu do reprodukowania wiedzy i społecznego konformizmu. Artykuł kończy dyskusja na temat uzyskanych wyników oraz kilka opinii nie tylko na temat samego programu, ale także – szerzej – na temat społeczeństwa, które ten program stworzyło.

SLOWA-KLUCZE: nauka czytania i pisania w Grecji, program nauczania języka ojczystego, funkcjonalna / czynna / refleksyjna / krytyczna umiejętność czytania i pisania

Spanish
[Translation Ingrid Marquez]

TÍTULO. La enseñanza de lectoescritura en lengua materna en el currículo de la educación secundaria en grecia

RESUMEN. Este ensayo presenta los resultados de un estudio sobre el actual currículo formal para la educación secundaria griega en lengua materna. El propósito del estudio es examinar cómo este currículo define la lectoescritura y cómo se concibe el lenguaje. Para lograrlo, se aplicó la clasificación taxonómica de Hasan (1996), que divide el tema de la lectoescritura en el reconocimiento, la acción y la reflexion. Se escogió esta clasificación para la investigación porque es un texto educativo fundamental, formalmente establecido y profundamente politico. El análisis revela muchas contradicciones internas en el currículo. Además, la manera de promover la lectoescritura de acción (a través de su cercanía a la lectoescritura de reconocimiento) revela la fuerte tendencia del currículo a apoyar la reproducción del conocimiento y el conformismo social. El ensayo termina con una discusión sobre los resultados y algunas reflexiones no sólo sobre el currículo en cuestión sino sobre la sociedad que lo ha producido.

PALABRAS CLAVE: educación de lectoescritura en Grecia, currículo de lengua maternal, lectoescritura funcional, lectoescritura de acción, lectoescritura de reflexión, lectoescritura crítica

1. INTRODUCTION

This paper examines and discusses how literacy is defined in the current L1 curriculum (Official Government Gazette, 2003) for lower secondary education (grades 7-9) in Greece. Is language conceived as a means of expressing individual ideas or as a source of society-defined meanings? And is literacy defined as a set of decontextualised or mechanistic communicative skills, or as a socio-cultural practice? (Halliday, 1978; Lemke, 1989)

This issue is very important for contemporary Greek education, as L1 teaching in Greece is heavily burdened with tradition. Until 1976, except for very brief and isolated interludes, the language taught was *katharévousa* (literally: "pure" or "clean", i.e. "a learned, archaising form of Modern Greek"; Browning 1969) in primary education, and ancient Greek in secondary education (Charalampopoulos & Chatzis-avvides, 1997: 21). In both cases, instruction was delivered in the classical language method: teaching 'canonical' texts and grammar in a prescriptive and decontextualised way, focusing on the individual *word* (Mitsis, 2003: 79-81). In 1976, instruction of *Demotic Greek* (i.e. the vernacular) was formally established throughout education, yet the use of traditional teaching methods continued. In the 25 years since academic year 1982-83, efforts have been made to free language teaching from that tradition by the Government (at certain places in official texts such as curricula, school textbooks, teacher's supplements etc.), educationalists and some language educators working in the classroom. However, despite the long-standing debate, it appears that this tradition remains alive today, shapes tacit theory, distorts the official one and raises specific expectations in educators, students, parents and society, i.e. all curriculum stakeholders.

This paper examines the curriculum because it is a fundamental, deeply political official text, encompasses to some extent the national and global debate on selecting and distributing knowledge, and reflects the views of dominant social groups on what is considered to be legitimate knowledge (e.g. Young, 1971: 32; Apple 2000). The choice of specific content and teaching/assessment methods (effectively the bulk of choice possible in a curriculum) relates both to existing power relations and to the struggle for altering these relations (Apple, 1998:

157-160). The assumption that curricula are a field of ideological struggle can justify certain inconsistencies internal to a curriculum.

In the Greek educational context described above, the key issue is whether the current curriculum still defines literacy as the ability to read and write at an individual level or whether there has been a move towards more dynamic and broader socio-cultural conceptions of literacy. I endeavour to answer this question using the theoretical framework presented below.

2. TEACHING LITERACY: THREE KEY ALTERNATIVES

Literacy is an ambiguous concept approached in various ways in the literature. During the last three decades there has been a notable 'social turn' as regards approaches to literacy. Whereas previously interest had focused on individual behaviour, gradually and increasingly it has turned to social and cultural interaction (Gee, 2000: 180). Interest has moved from the individual realisation of language to *discourse*, that is language in its interaction with social processes, in the context of a socio-semiotic perspective (Halliday, 1989: 44). From the notion of language as a means of expressing individual ideas, we have moved to the notion of language as a source of socially defined meanings. Accordingly, literacy is treated as a social and cultural practice and not as a set of decontextualised skills that a person acquires (Maybin, 2000: 207).

Adopting this socio-cultural perspective on literacy, various approaches have been developed which can be divided in two clearly distinct groups. In group one there is the *functional approach* to literacy. The main objective here is to equip individuals with skills that will allow them to operate/function effectively within a given society (community or group), to participate and achieve their personal goals (Baynham, 2002: 20) and society's goals. In group two there is the *critical approach* to literacy. Critical thinking and social action are the two fundamental structural components here. Literacy is a social and cultural construction and its functions and uses are never neutral or innocuous. The meanings constructed in text are ideological and involved in producing, reproducing and maintaining arrangements of unequally distributed power (Blackledge, 2000: 18; Luke, 2000).

These two conceptualisations of literacy are translated into educational theory and practice in various and often conflicting ways. Thus, many models for teaching literacy have been developed. My study of the curriculum is based on Hasan's taxonomy (1996) which distinguishes between three different perspectives on literacy teaching.

The first is the traditional view, limited to teaching phonology, grammar and vocabulary. Language phenomena are taught in a fragmented and decontextualised way. Language is taught as a list of forms. Students are asked to rephrase active into passive voice, decline nouns and conjugate verbs. This is *recognition literacy* according to Hasan (1996). Under this approach, there is not the slightest view of language as a social practice. However, recognition literacy is useful because it sheds light on the relationships between language elements that are important means to making meaning. Yet, literacy teaching should not be limited to this alone.

The second view of literacy teaching emphasises the use of language and so focuses onto contextualised language. Its goal is to develop the ability to use language for the exchange of meaning in specific communication circumstances. This is *action literacy* (Hasan 1996) and is closely related to functional literacy. Action literacy has been the starting point for communicative approaches in language teaching, as well as for genre-based pedagogy. Students must learn how texts in specific genres are structured, what lexical and grammatical structures are typically found in these genres, how description differs from narration etc. Students are taught the fixed attributes of selected genres and produce texts whose key features match those of the model texts they have been taught, in order to be effective in the social sphere. If, however, literacy teaching does not go beyond action literacy, there is a risk of language teaching being limited to reproduction of selected text forms (effectively the reproduction of existing social relations by following currently acceptable model texts). Yet, action literacy is successful because it has incorporated the elements of recognition literacy by linking them to use of language in social contexts.

The third view of literacy teaching – according to the same theoretical framework – assigns a higher priority to critical reflection and to knowledge production in the classroom. I use Hasan's (1996) term for this view of literacy, calling it *reflection literacy*. If education's

goal is to make it possible to participate in knowledge production (and not merely its reproduction), then it follows that all students must develop the ability to reflect, investigate, analyse and question. Reflection literacy is very close to critical literacy, all of whose variants share a keen interest in the contextual, social and ideological dimensions of language and literacy (Kress, 1988; Freebody & Luke, 1990; Wells, 1991; Comber & Kamler, 1997). Students not only learn how texts in certain genres are structured, but also reflect on why they are structured this way, what might change if their structure changed, what voices are represented in said structures (i.e. what their underlying ideology is), what voices are absent – and why. Students learn to distrust knowledge whose sole authority is the authority of someone in authority (Hasan, 1996: 412); to question the routinely accepted modes of action; and to look critically at language and knowledge norms. In the context of reflection literacy, the discourses structured in society are deconstructed to reveal power relations, ideological positions and functions of institutions. Reflection presupposes understanding, and understanding of text presupposes an understanding of the discourses co-existing in it, namely an understanding of how language works to establish and maintain social practices and to articulate different ideological positions (Fairclough, 1992).

Using Hasan's taxonomy, I attempt to examine how literacy is defined in the curriculum under study and how this definition is translated into educational theory and practice by this curriculum.

3.   THE CURRICULUM

This curriculum was drafted in 2001, although finalised and published in 2003 (Official Government Gazette, 2003). It was touted by the Ministry for National Education and Religious Affairs as an innovation based on the cross-thematic approach it claimed to implement in some way. The L1 Curriculum for lower secondary education is part of the wider Cross Thematic Curriculum Framework for Compulsory Education (for grades 1-9). This framework is homogenised and common to all schools in Greece, reaching them in a ready-to-apply form. It was created by the Pedagogical Institute (a body reporting to the Ministry for Education). It was financed jointly by the European

Union (75%) and Greek funds (25%). No classroom educators contributed to its drafting, just Pedagogical Institute consultants.

The curriculum consists of two parts. The first part (pp. 3778-3779) deals with literacy teaching in the wider Cross Thematic Curriculum Framework. It includes "General Goals", "General Objectives (knowledge, skills, standpoints and values)" and "Illustrative fundamental concepts of the cross-thematic approach" (a list of decontextualised concepts like system, time, place, communication etc.). The second part (pp. 3779-3793) comprises four subsections, aligned with the four-way curriculum split introduced by Tyler (1949) into objectives, educational experiences, methods for effective instruction, and evaluation. The first subsection (pp. 3779-3780) presents the course's specific objectives. The second subsection (pp. 3780-3791) provides a tri-column table: The first column for goals, the second one for content (material to teach) and the third one for sample teaching activities. Each table row corresponds to one unit to be taught. Approximately 120 goals and as many content items and teaching activities make up the 27 units intended for all three grades of lower secondary education. The table's division into rows and not just columns shows that the intention is to maintain cohesion among goals, phenomena to be taught and teaching activities. This tri-column structure and its contents give the impression of a rather goal-centred and closed curriculum, since specific goals dictate specific content to be taught, and teaching activities are recommended to ease the task. The third subsection (pp. 3791-3792) is headed "Teaching Methodology" and presents the proposed teaching principles. The fourth subsection (pp. 3792-3793) refers to student assessment procedures. It starts with basic assessment principles and later provides general criteria for assessing students in this particular course.

4. LITERACY TEACHING IN THE L1 CURRICULUM

4.1 Analysis of the curriculum

To analyse the curriculum data, I formed the following detailed taxonomy in a deductive/inductive fashion (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993; Strauss & Corbin, 1998: 101-161):

1.0. Recognition literacy
1.1.   Phonology (e.g. phones, sounds, intonation/pitch, spelling).
1.2.   Vocabulary (e.g. synonyms, antonyms, word production and synthesis).
1.3.   Morphology (grammatical phenomena, e.g. adjective declensions).
1.4.   Syntax (relationships between words in a sentence).
1.5.   Text (composition of text from words or sentences linked together with relation-
            ships permitted by the given language's system).
2.0. Action literacy
2.1.   Communication circumstances (who is addressing whom, what for), the role of
            context in communication, and communication skill development.
2.2.   Genre-based approaches (references to specific genres).
2.3.   Text organisation in particular genres.
2.3.1.   Techniques for ensuring text cohesion.
2.3.2.   The structure of particular genres (e.g. the structure of a food recipe).
2.3.3.   Lexical/grammatical choices customary in particular genres.
2.3.4.   Typographical elements or page layout customary in particular genres.
2.4.   Combining text with its context.
2.5.   Multimodality (references that exploit the written language's relationship with other
            semiotic modes).
2.6.   Text reception (reading and listening for meaning).
2.7.   Text production (an active process that incorporates social knowledge and is real-
            ised interactively in a given set of social circumstances).
3.0. Reflection literacy
3.1.   Ways in which language as a social practice encompasses ideologies and institu-
            tional discourses.
3.2.   Rules that shape action and language in the context of a given institution (e.g. in-
            visible participants in the text, terminology used by specific social groups).
3.3.   References to the literacy practices' social space within which the text is con-
            structed.
3.4.   Adopting a critical stance and learning to question what is expressed via language
            and is considered the norm in a society.
3.5.   Discourse reception: Emphasis on the existence of a multitude of readings originat-
            ing in the readers' different viewpoints and ideological positions.
3.6.   Discourse production: Emphasis on writing as a process (how text gets written), text
            transformations).

To examine how literacy is defined by the curriculum, I correlated the data by performing comparisons between the curriculum's different sections. I also focused on the way the curriculum incorporates items from the recognition, action and reflection literacies in order to establish how it puts adopted literacy definitions into educational theory and practice. Finally, in order to suggest possible explanations for these choices, having in mind Bernstein's view that there exists a close relationship between education institutions in a society and the principles underlying that society's structure (Bernstein 1973), I took into account the context (educational and socio-cultural) in which the curriculum was designed.

4.2 Findings concerning the first part of the curriculum

Among the 6 general goals for the course, the dominant references belong to reflection literacy (category 3.0) and, more specifically, subcategory 3.1.: *"Students should become aware of the significance of language for participating in social life, so that, whether as language transmitters or receivers, they partake of social life as free democratic citizens with a critical and responsible stance"* (p. 3778). There follow action literacy references (category 2.0), particularly subcategory 2.1.: *"The objective of language teaching is to help students master the fundamental instrument of their language community"* (p. 3778). There is only one reference (part of an objective) which falls under recognition literacy (category 1.0), yet it is also related to action literacy: *"Ought to be capable of recognizing the structural and grammatical elements of Modern Greek at the sentence and text levels, in order to appreciate and justify any departures from or contraventions of these elements"* (p. 3778).

Of the 18 general objectives set by the curriculum, the large majority (17) falls under category 2.0, whereas the remaining one under category 3.0, subcategory 3.4.: *"Students should subject their argumentation to critical questioning"* (p. 3778). Therefore, in the general objectives' part of the course, the curriculum obviously opts for developing action literacy in students. Also worth noting is that one third of the category 2.0 goals fall under subcategory 2.3.: E.g. *"students should recognise the differences between various genres as regards how they are organised and their style, and evaluate their effectiveness depending on communication conditions"* (p. 3779). This finding leads to the observation that the curriculum attaches great significance to the structure and text organisation attributes of certain genres and on making use of lexical/grammatical elements for highlighting such attributes: E.g. *"students should adapt their language to different genres, making use of the corresponding morphological/syntactical and vocabulary elements"* (p. 3779). The remaining action literacy references are shared amongst most of the remaining subcategories, e.g. subcategory 2.1.: *"to recognise the differences between different genres of spoken language and notice the participants' intentions"* (p. 3778); subcategory 2.2.: *"to recognise the differences between genres, to identify how they are organised and their style"* (p. 3779), etc.

Finally, the total absence of category 1.0 references (i.e. recognition literacy) in this part of the curriculum is significant.

4.3 Findings concerning the second part of the curriculum

4.3.1   Specific course objectives

Twelve new "specific objectives" are presented. Again, it is telling that category 2.0 references are superior in number: E.g. "to be trained in selecting and using successfully the appropriate level of language in each communication situation, to recognise different genres, e.g. diary, CV, letter etc. and use them" (p. 3780). There follow reflection literacy objectives, fewer of them yet still numerous (e.g. "to recognise and justify the influences of other languages on Modern Greek, to appreciate the value of dialogue and to get trained in this type of discourse ([it being] a fundamental element of democracy), as well as in critically questioning different opinions", p. 3780). Again, the very limited inclusion of recognition literacy objectives is worth noting.

4.3.2   Goals – Content – Teaching activities by unit to be taught

The tri-column table occupies most of the curriculum and has a very important role, since it defines what is taught in each unit at each grade, to what aim or aims, and in what way or ways. This is the most practical part of the curriculum.

A first observation to be made about this part is that it contains scant reflection literacy references: Just 9 out of 360, most of them falling under subcategory 3.4. (e.g. *"gathers summaries from book jackets, from user instructions for toys and medicine, and [summaries] of texts on the Internet, and comments on their adequacy and autonomy"*, p. 3781).

The remaining references, 350 or so, are divided almost equally between action and recognition literacy (approximately 175 each). Most action literacy references fall under subcategory 2.3, as they are concerned with making use of (usually lexical/grammatical) language elements in organising texts belonging to specific genres: E.g. *"[the student should] discern the adjective's role in descriptions, the verb's role in narration, to pick and use words that suit the style of the text he/she is writing"* (p. 3782). Additionally, there are references for all

action literacy subcategories, e.g. 2.1.: *"the student listens to / reads a variety of texts from all disciplines and other sources, and identifies the communication parameters"* (p. 3780); 2.2.: *"to understand the variety of genre forms in combination with the communication objectives they serve"* (p. 3781); 2.5.: *"to appreciate the significance of the various codes for communication and the special role of the language code"* (p. 3780); 2.6.: *"discovers the meaning of concession/contrast in various texts containing clauses of concession (contrast)"*(p. 3790); 2.7.: *"[when working] on a familiar topic, [the student] modifies the parameters of communication, so that the end result is a different genre, although the topic remains unchanged"* (p. 3784).

The recognition literacy references are mainly divided between subcategory 1.2 (vocabulary): e.g. *"to become aware of the differences between types of compounds (coordinative, subordinative, possessive etc.)* (p. 3785); 1.3 (grammar): e.g. *"to distinguish between the different declensions of nouns"* (p. 3781); and 1.4 (syntax): e.g. *"to realise that verbs are divided into two large syntactic classes (transitive and intransitive), depending on whether they are complemented by an object or not"* (pp. 3785-3786). Additionally, the material recommended as teaching content is strongly reminiscent of traditional Grammar book headings, e.g. "active and passive voice", "1st and 2nd conjugations" (p. 3785) and tint the curriculum with undertones befitting prescriptive grammar.

4.3.3   Teaching methodology

Characteristically, every paragraph in this part is laden with references to action literacy. There are repeated references to terms such as "communication context", "communication approach to language teaching", "use of language", "production of effective texts", and "text-centred dimension to language teaching" (p. 3792).

This part contains no explicit references to recognition or reflection literacy. Only references to cross-thematic language teaching may be considered to hint at the potential for promoting reflection literacy in the classroom. It is when they study the discourse of the various disciplines, make comparisons and draw conclusions regarding the particularities of each discourse that the students' reflection literacy develops. However, no such processes are explicitly proposed by the cur-

riculum, the latter limiting itself to vague clarifications as to what constitutes a cross-thematic approach: *"Cross-thematic approaches are concerned with the horizontal consistency of individual thematic fields […]. In all units of language teaching, special weight is given to research work by groups of students that combines communication context with the cross-thematic framework (social, historical, scientific etc.)"* (p. 3792). And how is this to be achieved? Instead of making a clear and substantiated proposal for the implementation of this very interesting synthesis, the curriculum goes no further than the extract quoted above.

4.3.4   Student assessment

Here, too, action literacy is very prominent. Of course, reference is made to assessing *"his/her ability to use language correctly (morpho-syntactical forms, vocabulary etc.)"* (p. 3793), but the emphasis is on assessing a student's ability to comprehend oral and written texts produced in specific communication circumstances and produce texts tailored to those. Even the guidelines for evaluating students' texts reflect action literacy: *"Every text, oral or written, produced by students ought to correspond to specific communication situations and fulfil a specific purpose"* (p. 3792). No references to reflection literacy can be found in the evaluation subsection.

4.4 Conclusions

On the whole, the curriculum broadly seems to focus on developing action literacy. Its functional orientation is highlighted and evident in all its theoretical sections (objectives, teaching methodology, student assessment). The curriculum's intention is that language teaching be influenced by the communicative approach (Papoulia-Tzelepi, 2001). However, as became apparent from our findings above, its practical part (see 4.3.2.), which is concerned with what gets taught in the classroom and how, almost suddenly reveals a strong inclination to develop recognition literacy. Thus, the take on action literacy proposed by this curriculum assumes a reproductive character, since it is based directly on recognition literacy (which is why a lot of references were assigned to subcategory 2.3 and, particularly, 2.3.3).

Although there is a real intention to develop recognition literacy (and not just action literacy), this choice not only remains unstated, but there is an effort to conceal it, as well. So, in the first part there are next to no references to recognition literacy and it is only fleetingly present in the specific course objectives, teaching methodology and student assessment sections. However, in the specific objectives section for each unit, and in the content to be taught, it has a very noticeable presence, so much so that it ends up as prominent as action literacy. Its omission from the statement of intent section and its strong presence in the suggested educational practice section show that the intention to develop it was there, yet it has been concealed.

Reflection literacy in the curriculum traverses a steadily downward trajectory: Although not intensely but clearly present in the initial general teaching objectives for the course (first part), as well as in the specific objectives (early second part), it later begins to diminish gradually, until it finally disappears in the last subsection of the second part.

5. DISCUSSION

5.1 The emphasis on action literacy

The emphasis on developing action literacy is very important for L1 teaching, particularly in a country like Greece with its long and powerful tradition of emphasis on recognition literacy. Equipping students with the abilities to adapt and succeed in the social sphere is a significant educational goal. Of course, this emphasis does not merely concern the curriculum in a narrow sense, but also reflects a corresponding strong social orientation. The 2001 curricula design project was financed by the EU and it was keenly intended that they would appear in alignment with European education directions, as the Introduction of the Cross Thematic Curriculum Framework for Compulsory Education admits (2003: 3734). Literacy is mentioned among the key competencies that everyone ought to acquire while in compulsory education, according to the EU, OECD, PISA etc., and it is defined as the ability to express and interpret thoughts, feelings and facts in both oral and written form in the full range of societal and cultural contexts: work, home and leisure (Eurydice, 2002; European Commission, 2004). Besides, around the year 2000 the Greek political discourse

was strongly influenced by the language used by those organisations, and the intention for the future student is that he/she be able to function in a competitive environment using operational knowledge (Zambeta, 2000).

This significant development (namely the turn to action literacy) has both positive and negative consequences as will be explained below, perhaps because it has been implemented with quite a high degree of clinging to recognition literacy. Since the concept of literacy adopted by a curriculum may be translated into educational theory and practice in various ways, the form that action literacy has taken in the curriculum under study is important. The emphasis on communication circumstances and genre teaching, heavily combined with a multitude of factors that pertain to recognition literacy, and without a sincere analogous intention to grow reflection literacy, make for a curriculum that promotes a functional and utilitarian view of language; this is a negative consequence of promoting action literacy in this curriculum. Essentially, language is relegated to the status of a mere instrument or tool for communication, and it is considered essential that a student be able to use this tool effectively, in order to continue to live in his/her society and make personal progress. Thus, the dimensions of language as social practice and of literacy as a reflection practice are absent. However, language is the way in which each society looks at, organises, classifies and expresses the world, a historical, cultural and value-related event, it is a condition for identity (national and personal) and quality of thinking. The linguistic monism of the utilitarian view dramatically reduces the significance of language.

Also related is the broader criticism directed at action literacy, namely that with action literacy students are trained at school to reproduce socially accepted patterns of speaking and writing. According to this criticism, students are taught to continue to do exactly what others have done before them in their society, reproducing social relationships in this way (Luke, 1988). Moreover, in any educational situation that promotes knowledge reproduction, the margins for knowledge *production* by the students decrease.

Yet, although there exists a strong element of reproduction in all varieties of action literacy, and even though it appears to be bordering on recognition literacy from this viewpoint since they both encourage conformism (Hasan, 1996: 404-405), it cannot be denied that develop-

ing action literacy has positive outcomes, too. Only when school introduces students to common cultural contents, social experience and dominant discourses, can students have access to and appraise the dominant society structures (Cope & Kalantzis, 1993: 77-84). Students who engage with genres take substantial steps towards a deeper understanding of language as a social semiotic. According to Fairclough (1992), a genre is a relatively stable body of conventions which is related to a socially validated type of activity. Those operating within a genre have access to the corresponding area of social action. The student therefore, by getting familiar with new genres, acquires the capacity to be included linguistically in new areas of social action. The school has the power to introduce students to a variety of discourses, hence of social actions, so as to empower them not just linguistically but socially, too. The combination of action and reflection literacy in the curriculum could lead to knowledge production as regards genres, the reasons for their structure, form and many of their content attributes. Such a take on applying action literacy would reinforce the analytical and social orientation of language teaching.

5.2 The presence of recognition literacy

Despite the emphasis placed on action literacy, there are many elements of recognition literacy in the curriculum. It seems therefore that the strong tradition ultimately came to the fore, a tradition that the curriculum found impossible to shake off. The significant presence of recognition literacy in the practical part of the curriculum – particularly so in the content to be taught–, to an extent equivalent to action literacy, gives the impression that content has doubled; that is, according to the curriculum, on top of traditional grammar (word and sentence grammar), "text grammar", i.e. elements of action literacy, must be taught, too. The impression thus given is that the problem of selecting and organising content is addressed by accumulation.

The situation is not improved by the fact that the relationship between grammar and language use in texts was not specified in the curriculum. Statements like: *"The teaching content covers all levels of language (language system - phonology, morphology, syntax, vocabulary, structure – in communication situations)"* (p. 3792) do not offer much help. No suggestions were made concerning procedures that

could have outlined the functional underpinnings of the lexicogrammar. Instead, a compartmentalised perspective was proposed suggesting that the various grammatical forms could be presented and taught separately from spoken and written discourse (Kostouli, 2002: 11). The same direction for language teaching was evident from the descriptive categories used in the curriculum, drawn from traditional grammars written 70 or 80 years ago (Triantafyllidis, 1941; Tzarzanos, 1928).

Yet, knowledge of the language system did not have to be presented in a decontextualised manner (e.g. goal for grade 9*: "the student should become familiar with temporal connectives and the concepts of [temporal] priority, simultaneity and posteriority expressed by these [connectives]" – Content, teaching material: temporal clauses*, p. 3790). Rather, it could have been described by the functions it performs in a text and organised in a different way, more organically fused with the knowledge required to develop action literacy (e.g. goal*: "students should grasp how temporal sentences function as elements that ensure text cohesion"*). Such choices could have created an explicit and dynamic interplay between grammatical forms and contextual parameters. It is insufficient to offer such context only (and even that on some occasions only) to the sample teaching activities that accompany each unit's goals and content. More attention should have been given to how to organise what should be taught. The curriculum appears to have been limited to what counts as legitimate knowledge, in contrast to the increased international interest for the processes of structuring selected knowledge (Beyer & Apple, 1998: 3).

5.3 The reflection literacy rhetoric

The curriculum is strong on rhetoric, as proved by numerous findings. Firstly, it highlights elements of reflection literacy essentially wherever *general* objectives are stated, in contrast with its very limited presence wherever *concrete* educational process specifications are presented. Secondly, there is an attempt to conceal recognition literacy (essentially, it only appears in the "practical part of the curriculum", where implementation in the classroom is specified), and recognition is kept apart from action and reflection literacy. Thirdly, the listing of

cross-thematic concepts (in the first part) that could have offered opportunities for developing reflection literacy, a listing without any details as to how such concepts could be tapped into, also demonstrates the existence of empty rhetoric in the curriculum. Finally, the way reflection literacy is introduced by the curriculum (only hinting at the critical thinking that ought to be developed, with no guidance on how this could be achieved) essentially cancels out any critical perspective. If there was a real concern for fostering reflection literacy, the curriculum could have focused on the contextual parameters of genre, to give but an example (e.g. Swales, 1990; Bhatia, 2004).

This curriculum rhetoric creates a gap between theory and practice within the same text, as well as internal contradictions which could lead to negative consequences (primarily cause confusion) when in classroom application. Under these conditions, it is unclear what classroom application should aim for: alignment with the curriculum's theoretical principles or with its practical guidance?

By examining the null curriculum (i.e. with all learning and teaching parameters left unstated or out of the official educational process intentionally or unintentionally, Eisner, 2002: 87-107) in addition to the explicit one, we notice the effective lack of interest in developing reflection literacy. Its restriction to general and specific course objectives, that is to the level of intentions only, and its absence from the fundamental parts concerned with implementing the curriculum show that the goals for the students' social and political development remain unfulfilled to a large extent by the very curriculum that pledged them. In essence, it ignores the fact that language is a social practice incorporating ideologies and institutional discourses, and shaping culture in a society.

However, if students do not study this dimension through appropriate texts, they will not learn to look for ideology and power relations in them; they will not be able to think via language. Therefore, they will miss the opportunities for reflection that language offers when it functions as a meta-discourse analysing the nature of expression as well as content. Equally characteristic of the lack of interest in developing reflection literacy is the absence of any reference to the ideological weight carried by texts for classroom study. No reference was found to fall under subcategories 3.2 or 3.5. Although the curriculum persistently recommends the use of various genres obtained from

various sources (web pages, scientific books, newspaper articles etc.), it makes no mention at all of the ideologies and institutions expressed through these texts, as if texts were apolitical. Since such texts do not exist in society, an apolitical view of them in the curriculum can easily distort language teaching and lead it astray as regards its core goals. Reflection literacy is explicitly political. Language as a social practice possesses profoundly political functions. Students must be ethically and morally aware of their actions. They must learn enough, politically and personally, to help their communities do better (Lemke, 2002). So, if we think of students as tomorrow's active, productive, critical and democratic citizens, and not as adults conforming to their society's discourses, the fundamental and ultimate aim of language teaching can only be reflection literacy.

In summary, it could be said that in the curriculum under study there is not one clear definition of literacy that could offer cohesion and consistency to the concept. Different definitions (some from the past, others from the EU, from the dominant literature and the ideology of certain groups) are translated into educational theory and practice in various ways (some rhetoric, others more tangible) making the educational landscape vague. If the curriculum does not offer a clear orientation, what happens in the classroom? How do teachers conceive and teach literacy? Perhaps the classroom practice sways precariously between traditional structures and bold experimentation, in a system that has not created the supporting structure for innovations. This could be the subject of future research.

REFERENCES

Apple, M. (2000). *Official knowledge*. New York: Routledge.

Apple, M. (1998). The culture and commerce of the textbook. In L. Beyer & M. Apple (eds), *The Curriculum: Problems, Politics and Possibilities* (pp. 157-176). Albany: State University of New York Press.

Bernstein, B. (1973). On the classification and framing of educational knowledge. In R. Brown (ed.), *Knowledge, Education and Cultural Change* (pp. 363-392). London: Tavistock Publications.

Bhatia, V. (2004). *Words of written discourse: A genre-based view*. London: Continuum.

Blackledge, A. (2000). *Literacy, power and social justice*. Staffordshire, England: Trentham Books.

Browning, R. (1969). *Medieval and Modern Greek*. London: Hutchinson.

Comber, B. & Kamler, B. (1997). Critical literacies: Politicising the language classroom. *Interpretations* 30, 30 – 53.

Cope, B. & Kalantzis M. (1993). The power of literacy and the literacy of power. In B. Cope & M. Kalantzis (eds), *The Powers of Literacy* (pp. 63-89). London: Falmer Press.

Eisner, E. (2002). *The educational imagination: on the design and evaluation of school programs.* New Jersey: Upper Saddle River.

European Commission (2004). Key competencies for lifelong learning. A European Reference Framework. Available on line: http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/basicframe.pdf   (access 05/02/09).

Eurydice (2002). Key competencies: A developing concept in general compulsory education. Available on line: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu (access 05/02/09).

Fairclough, N. (1992). *Critical language awareness.* London: Longman.

Freebody, P., & Luke, A. (1990). "Literacies" programs: debates and demands in cultural context. *Prospect: Australian Journal of TESOL* 5(3), 7-16.

Gee, J. P. (2000). The New Literacy Studies: From socially situated to the work of the social. In D. Barton, M. Hamilton, & R. Ivanic (eds), *Situated Literacies. Reading and Writing in Context* (pp. 180-196). London: Routledge.

Halliday, M.A.K. (1978). *Language as social semiotic.* London: Edward Arnold.

Halliday, M.A.K. (1989). *Spoken and Written Language.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hasan, R. (1996). Literacy, everyday talk and society. In R. Hasan & G. Williams (eds), *Literacy in Society* (pp. 377-424). London: Longman.

Kostouli, T. (2002). Teaching Greek as L1: Curriculum and textbooks in Greek elementary education, *L1-Educational Studies in Language and Literature, 2*(1), 5-23.

Kress, G. (1988). Language as social practice. In G. Kress (ed.), *Communication and Culture* (pp. 79-129). Kensington: University of NSW Press.

LeCompte, M. D. & Preissle, J. (1993). *Ethnography and qualitative design in educational research*. San Diego: Academic Press, Inc.

Lemke, J. (1989). Social semiotics: A new model for literacy education. In D. Bloome (ed.), *Classrooms and literacy* (pp. 289-309). Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Lemke, J. (2002). Multimedia semiotics. Genres for science education and scientific literacy. In M. Schleppegrell & C. Colombi (eds), *Developing Advanced Literacy in First and Second Languages* (pp. 21-44). London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Luke, A. (1988). *Literacy, Textbooks and Ideology.* London: Falmer Press.

Luke, A. (2000). Critical literacy in Australia: A matter of context and standpoint, *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy, 43*(5), 448-61.

Maybin, J. (2000). The New Literacy Studies: Context, intertextuality and discourse. In D. Barton, M. Hamilton & R. Ivanic (eds), *Situated Literacies. Reading and Writing in Context* (pp. 197-209). London & New York: Routledge.

Papoulia-Tzelepi, P. (2001). Continuity and change in language arts textbooks in Greek primary schools, *L1-Educational Studies in Language and Literature*, *1*(3), 195-207.

Posner, G. (1998). Models of curriculum planning. In L. Beyer & M. Apple (eds), *The Curriculum: Problems, Politics and Possibilities* (pp. 79-100). Albany: State University of New York Press.

Strauss, A. & Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research. Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory.* London: SAGE Publications.

Swales, J.M. (1990). *Genre analysis. English in academic and research settings.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Tyler, R. (1949). *Basic principles of curriculum and instruction.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Wells, G. (1991). Apprenticeship in literacy. In C. Walsh (ed.), *Literacy as Praxis*. Norwood N.J.: Ablex.

Young, M. (1971). Curricula as socially organized knowledge. In M. Young (ed.), *Knowledge and Control: New Directions for the Sociology of Education* (pp. 19-46). London: Collier MacMillan.

Zambeta, E. (2000). Modernisation and the would be Entrepreneurial Culture in Greek Education. Paper presented at the International Conference *Education for Social Democracies: changing forms and sites*, 5-7 July, University of London. Available on line: www.ioe.ac.uk/ccs/conference2000/papers/pc/papers/zambeta.html (access: 05-02-09)

Texts in Greek

Baynham, M. (2002). *Literacy Practices,* translated in Greek by M. Arapopoulou. Athens: Metaixmio.

Charalampopoulos, A. & Chatzisavvides, S. (1997). *Teaching of functional use of language:Ttheory and application.* Thessaloniki: Kodikas.

Mitsis, N. (2003). *Fundamental principles and methods of Applied Linguistics.* Athens: Gutenberg.
Official Government Gazette issue dated 13 March 2003.
Triantafyllidis, M. (1941). *Modern Greek Grammar.* Athens: OESB.
Tzartzanos, A. (1928). *Modern Greek Syntax.* Athens: Estia.