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GROWING UP BETWEEN CULTURES: LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL IDENTITY AMONG MALTESE YOUTH AND THEIR ETHNIC COUNTERPARTS IN AUSTRALIA

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Abstract – *The paper explores how young people's cultural identities are being increasingly redefined in complex linguistic and performative relation to trans-cultural experiences. It first considers the situation of young people of Maltese origin whose parents settled in Australia after the Second World War, and critiques the suggestion that these youths' educational performance and access to professional level employment may have been negatively affected by their alleged loss of 'mother tongue', ethnic identity and cultural heritage. The paper challenges this perception by outlining the complex ways in which young people growing up in Malta itself (the 'home' or 'mother' country) perceive, construct and perform their linguistic and cultural identities. It argues that young Maltese people's performative and linguistic constructions of their cultural identities provide a striking example of 'glocal' hybridity, and that, irrespective of whether they choose to claim Maltese or English or a combination of the two as the primary marker of their cultural identity, this hybridity is experienced as a positive performance and expression of selfhood.*

Educational performance and migrant cultural identity

The Maltese migrant community in Australia is a relatively small ethnic minority group, but it also constitutes a significant diasporic grouping, and is the largest Maltese community living outside of Malta. The number of people of Maltese ancestry living in Australia has been estimated at just over 152,000 (Australian Government [Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade], 2006). This is equivalent to almost 38% of the total population currently living in Malta itself (estimated at just over 404,000 in the 2005 Census [National Statistics Office, 2006, p. xviii]).

There is some evidence to suggest that the children of Maltese migrants in Australia tend to stop speaking Maltese at home and to even stop identifying themselves as 'Maltese' at a faster and earlier rate than appears to be the case among other (but by no means all) immigrant communities (see Borland, 2005; Klein 2005). This appears to have been particularly the case with the children of those who settled in Australia during the peak period of migration after the Second

World War. This phenomenon was at one stage identified as possibly leading to educational underperformance among second generation Maltese-Australians. According to Helen Borland, an academic researcher who was approached for advice on this matter by the elected representatives of the Maltese community in Victoria in the early 1990s, the community leaders were worried that 'in comparison with the Anglo-Australian majority and with most other minority groups of Australia's post-war mass migration, and indeed many more recent, but now established minority groups, such as those from south east Asia, young people from their community, the second generation, were "underperforming" ' (Borland, 2005, p. 110). The community leaders believed that a key factor contributing to this 'underperformance' was 'the lack of recognition and support for the Maltese language, culture and heritage both within the community itself and in the broader Australian society' (Borland, 2005, p. 110):

> 'Underperformance was defined according to specific educational attainment measures. School retention rates through the 1980s for second generation Maltese-background youth had been consistently below the state average. In the 1991 Census, approximately two-thirds of such youth in the 15-16 age group had already left school (Cauchi, 1990), well above the national average and higher than rates for most other ethnic minority groups. Concomitantly, a lower proportion of this group as compared to other ethnic minority groups had tertiary qualifications and, thus, fewer were gaining access to professional level employment.' (Borland, 2005, p. 110)

Borland (2005) acknowledges that 'success in schooling results from a complex coalescence of factors', but she insists that a key contributing factor in these young people's poor educational performance was the fact that they and their families felt alienated and unsupported in that 'their culture and language were not valued (in some cases not even recognised)' (p. 115). Citing findings from an extensive action-research project with Maltese background secondary school students and their parents which she and her colleagues conducted in Melbourne in the early 1990s (see Terry, Borland & Adams, 1993), Borland (2005) notes that a factor analysis of questionnaire responses 'revealed that by far the strongest factor to emerge was one associated with a sense of identity as Maltese' (p. 115), and that this was linked with attitudes to the use and understanding of the Maltese language. It is thus suggested that good educational performance among these young people was in some way dependent on their also 'having positive attitudes towards and enjoyment of using the Maltese language, ability to speak and understand Maltese and a preference to use Maltese at home' (Borland, 2005, p. 115). Among the reasons cited by Borland (2005) for making this connection

are the claims that 'identification with one's heritage language and culture has been shown to have benefits in terms of an individual's psychological wellbeing' (p. 120), and that 'there is a correlation between having a sense of ethnic identification, positive self-esteem and a lesser level of parent-child conflict in adolescence' (p. 115).

The extent to which the findings of the 1993 survey cited here by Borland can be seen as representative of the wider Maltese-Australian community (in other Australian states as well as in Victoria itself) has been questioned elsewhere because of their limited geographical focus (the survey focused on students and parents drawn from four schools within Melbourne's western region) (see Klein, 2005, p. 12). But perhaps more critically, there are a number of conceptual as well as empirical problems with this pattern of accounting for educational outcomes in terms ethnic identification. The logic here appears to at least partly derive from a conflation between concepts of psychological wellbeing, self-esteem and harmonious nuclear family relations on the one hand, with unexamined assumptions about the nature, patterns and trajectories of cultural, ethnic and diasporic identity on the other. The ascription of perceived educational underperformance among young Maltese-Australians to a loss of identification with ancestral ethnicity, especially as reflected in the loss of the 'mother tongue', thus appears to be based on a conviction that the loss of 'mother tongues' among emigrant cultures can 'signal the loss of some originary self' (Fortier, 2000; cited in Klein, 2005, p. 1). And the loss of this 'originary self' is in turn assumed to lead to ongoing identity confusion and failure to achieve educational potentials.

I want to argue that this concept of an 'originary self' essentialises identity formation and misrepresents the root causes of educational 'underperformance' because it fails to take account of the complex ways in which cultural identities are forged, particularly in increasingly globalised and hybrid contexts like those which prevail in Australia and in Malta. Indeed, the claim that educational underperformance is somehow linked to the abandoning of 'mother tongue' and a loss of affinity with the culture of the 'mother country' can be shown to be particularly problematic when one considers the complex and hybrid diversity of the cultural and linguistic situation in Malta itself. I shall be discussing that situation in some detail below, drawing on fieldwork which I conducted in Malta between 1998 and 2000, and again between 2002 and 2004. Before going there, however, I want first to briefly suggest alternative ways of approaching and contextualising the question of educational 'underperformance' among the Maltese-Australian youth referred to in Borland's study.

The patterns of educational and professional performance (or otherwise) among Maltese-Australian youth need to be understood in relation to the broader demographic and socio-economic contexts of the Maltese-Australian diasporic

experience. As was the case with migrants from other countries, there were significant differences between the educational backgrounds and career expectations of migrants who chose to settle in Australia during the period of peak migration between the late 1940s and early 1970s, and those who migrated there after the 1980s. These differences were a consequence of a complex mixture of forces, but were largely determined by ongoing changes in Australian migration policy to accommodate Australia's economic needs and development. The period of peak Maltese migration to Australia coincided with the Australian government's decision after the Second World War to institute a programme of mass migration to increase Australia's population in order to facilitate the post-war reconstruction of the economy, especially the development of manufacturing. Migration was to provide the workers and consumers underpinning the new economy (Collins, 1991; Inglis, 2004). These patterns changed significantly as a consequence of changes in Australian immigration policies in the 1980s, which led to a more systematic encouragement of skilled migration, and a consequent increase in the educational qualifications and professional expectations of most new migrants (see Colic-Peisker, 2002). Indeed, it can be argued that the changing patterns in the educational backgrounds of settling Maltese migrants are reflected in the educational performances of their children and grandchildren. Longitudinal studies of education and employment patterns among Maltese-Australians since the peak period of migration in the mid-1950s and 1960s indicate that, while first and second generation Maltese-Australians did indeed tend to drop out of school early, these patterns appeared to have started to change in the 1990s, when higher proportions of girls as well as boys of Maltese origin (third generation or children of more recent migrants) were choosing to stay on in school and pursuing tertiary studies (see Cauchi, 1999, pp. 36-41).

The argument that the loss of 'mother tongue' among Maltese migrants can be linked to educational underperformance becomes even more problematic when one considers the patterns of language use and language shift among a number other immigrant communities. Australian Census data (see Clyne & Kipp, 1997a) actually indicate that there are other ethnic groups with substantially *higher* rates of language shift (from mother tongue to English) than those of Maltese origin, and these are groups who do not seem to have experienced the same patterns of educational 'underperformance' after migration to Australia. In their demographic analysis of trends in home language use in Australia, although Clyne & Kipp (1997b, pp. 470-471) do indeed list Maltese migrants as having a 'higher language shift' than a number of other migrant groups (e.g., Greeks, Italians, Chinese), their figures also identify a number of other communities (Dutch, German, Austrian, French) for whom the shift to English is actually higher and faster. There is no suggestion that the shift experienced by these other groups is in any way linked

to poor self-esteem and educational underperformance, or indeed that the slower shift of other ethnic groups is directly linked to high levels of self-esteem and high educational achievement.

Interestingly, Clyne & Kipp (1997b) argue that it is 'cultural distance' which determines whether or not first and second generation migrants will keep speaking their 'mother tongue', so that members of ethnic groups coming from cultural contexts similar to those of the Anglo-Australian majority are argued to be likely to shift to using English in the home much earlier than those coming from other cultural contexts. According to Clyne & Kipp (1997b),

> 'those from predominantly Islamic or Eastern Orthodox cultures (Greek, Lebanese, Macedonian, Turkish) are likely to maintain their languages at home rather than other groups from Europe. Groups from northern, central and eastern Europe tend to shift to English the most. Those from Asian countries, especially Chinese-speaking ones, tend to display a low or fairly low language shift.' (p. 459)

The notions of 'cultural distance' or 'cultural affinity' are worth pausing over. One source of perceived 'affinity' with the Anglo-Australian cultural environment for Maltese migrants arriving after the Second World War presumably grew out of Malta's status as a British colony. But it can be as convincingly argued that there were also very strong affinities with other ethnic groupings, especially those with a Mediterranean background. It bears noting, for instance, that though Maltese patterns of language retention are similar to those of immigrants of northern European origin, studies like those of Borland (2005) (and the community leaders she quotes) choose to compare the Maltese community with southern European groups (especially Italians and Greeks) because of perceived cultural affinities with those Mediterranean background groups. There is in fact an inevitable element of ambivalence and ambiguity in the ways members of the Maltese diaspora in Australia understand and define their cultural identities and affinities. As I argue in the next section, these ambiguities have their sources in the very unique and hybridised nature of Maltese cultural and linguistic identity in the 'home country' itself.

Cultural and linguistic hybridity in Malta

The overwhelming majority of Malta's population speak Maltese as their first language – over 96% according to some estimates (Borg, Mifsud & Sciriha, 1992; Sciriha & Vassallo, 2001). Exact quantification is however problematic because of the variety of ways in which individual speakers will often interlace Maltese

with English, and because the use of either language is usually context-driven. Though the Maltese language 'has long been held to be the crux of Maltese identity and is often held to be the main differentiating mark of ethnic identity' (Cassar, 2001, p. 257), it has also had to survive centuries of colonial domination during which it was 'constrained to the "low" domains of the home and village life' (Borland, 2005, p. 113). As a spoken language, Maltese has a very long and complex history, but writing in Maltese only started to become relatively widespread in the 19th century, and it was only standardised and codified in the 1920s. It did not have any official status till 1934 (when it replaced Italian as the language of the courts), and was only officially identified as the country's national language after independence from Britain in 1964. Malta's Constitution now lists Maltese and English as the country's two official languages, and the government's policy is to make Malta truly bilingual – so that, for instance, all laws have to be framed in the two languages, though the Maltese text will prevail over the English in the case of conflict (see Article 5, *Constitution of Malta*[1]). Maltese is now widely used in most sectors of public life, including parliament, the church, radio and television, as well as in general conversation.

But though the Maltese language is now officially and firmly established as an essential marker of Maltese national identity, there is also widespread competition from English because of its importance as a language of wider communication. English language newspapers, books and magazines are sold everywhere, English language films dominate local cinemas, and local theatre productions in English are at least as frequent as those in Maltese. Most of the inhabitants are bilingual, but to varying degrees of competence, and many do not feel equally confident in both languages. Because of historical and geographic links with Italy, as well as access to Italian television transmissions since the late 1950s, Italian is also widely understood and (to varying degrees) spoken by large sections of the population.

English was introduced in Malta during the British colonial period (1800-1964), but it did not start to achieve the important position which it enjoys today until the second quarter of the 20th century. An 1879 British commission of enquiry into the position of the English language in Malta, for example, reported that though English was in growing demand because of commercial conditions, its teaching was 'given little or no attention' in primary schools, and 'its use was forbidden in 13 of 14 classes of the Lyceum (the only secondary school) and 17 of 18 classes in the university' (Camilleri, 1996, p. 86). One cause of this resistance to the introduction of English was the firmly established status of Italian as the language of the educated and professional classes. Throughout the 19th century and the early years of the twentieth, Italian remained the only formal language, while Maltese continued to be spoken by the local population. It was only after the Second World War (when the prestige of Italian was eroded because

it came to be seen as the language of the enemy) that English really began to play a major role in public institutional life and Maltese culture, coming to be seen by all echelons of Maltese society as the language of education and as a status symbol (Aquilina, 1978, p. 45). The emergence of English as a focal force in global communications and media technology during the late 20th century, coupled with the massive growth of the tourist industry as a main source of Malta's national income after independence in 1964, have further consolidated the position of English in Malta as the useful international language. But the standing of Maltese as national language has also been strengthened – as evidenced by its acceptance as an official language of the European Union in 2004. According to Brincat (2005), 'the vitality of the local language and political insistence on national identity have helped Maltese to encroach on areas where fifty years ago English dominated (even ATMs and Google offer an option)' (Bilingualism and Language Switching section, para. 1).

While the overwhelming majority of Maltese children acquire Maltese as their first language, there is also a small but influential number of people who prefer to use English as a first language with their children. Up to relatively recently, these latter groups were mostly concentrated in areas where many British people lived during the colonial era 'and probably served as models for local families aspiring to upward social mobility' (Camilleri, 1996, p. 89). Members of this group often use both Maltese and English interchangeably at home, but there are many for whom Maltese is only acquired through formal teaching at school and through contact with speakers of Maltese outside the home. This is in marked contrast to the majority, for whom it is English that is only acquired at school, and increasingly also through exposure to English language media and contact with tourists. These different patterns of language acquisition and use, and the different language environments in which Maltese children grow (with either Maltese or English or a hybrid mixture of the two serving as primary language) have a significant impact on the ways in which young Maltese people understand and define their national and cultural identities.

Glocality and diasporic hybridity among Maltese youth

The following discussion is based on fieldwork which I conducted in Malta in 1998-2000 and 2002-2004 as part of two qualitative research projects commissioned by the national Broadcasting Authority (see Grixti, 2000, 2004). The projects examined the significance of the media in the formation and enculturation of young Maltese consumers, and included a series of focus-group interviews with a total of 500 children and young adults aged between 5 and 25.

The interviewees came from different socio-economic and regional backgrounds, and the interviews were conducted in a variety of locations, including university, a range of schools, private homes, and different work places. The interviews were held either in Maltese or in English, depending on which language the participants were most comfortable with. In some cases, because of the mixed nature of the group, a mixture of both languages was used.

In the course of my research, I was frequently struck by young Maltese people's tendency to associate being young, forward-looking, modern, technologically advanced and enlightened with being in tune with what comes from overseas – or more specifically, with what comes from Western Europe, Britain and the United States, particularly through the media. Being 'old fashioned' and backward tended to be linked with an inability to move beyond the more obviously indigenous and traditional (especially as embodied in local party politics and religion). For those coming from the more upwardly mobile professional classes, the speaking of English often became an assertion of alignment with this wider global context. When asked about their television viewing preferences, for instance, interviewees from higher socio-economic backgrounds often insisted that they make a point of not watching local TV programmes, or that they only do so to laugh at their limitations and poor quality.

The fact that many of these teenagers spoke exclusively in English, and in some cases even proudly drew attention to the fact that they did not speak or understand Maltese, suggested that the attitude is primarily perceived as an assertion of superior social status. Speaking in English, one teenager told me that he intensely disliked Maltese soap operas '*because for me, in English a soap opera is OK, but Maltese is a rough language and I don't like it, on soap operas. I don't think it's right, **u**!*' ['***u***' at the end of a sentence is the Maltese equivalent of 'eh' or 'you know']. These attitudes are probably reinforced by the fact that, even though local soap operas are widely perceived as (at times 'embarrassingly') less professional and polished than their overseas counterparts, they are immensely popular with young people coming from lower educational and socio-economic backgrounds – primarily because they are in Maltese, are easily understood, and usually deal with local issues.

Malta's size and its geographical insularity have at various points in its history been seen as limiting and constricting. In some cases, faster and easier access to images and ideas from overseas have further accentuated young people's dissatisfaction with local limitations and nurtured a stronger longing for the foreign. But new technologies have also made it possible for many young people to also think of themselves as belonging to a larger global community, perceiving Malta's insularity as less constricting – or else as no longer being of relevance. The Internet plays a key role in this, in that it allows young people to actively

participate in global youth communities without leaving home. In this context, the advantages of easy communication on a global scale have made the embracing of English doubly attractive.

The implications of these developments to young people's understanding of their national and cultural identities were well captured for me when one young man told me that he considered himself '*more European than Maltese*' because his family always spoke English and because he has been '*influenced too much by foreign culture, foreign attitudes, foreign ways of life.*' Another young man described himself as '*Maltese by nationality, but not Maltese by culture*' because he speaks English whenever possible and does not indulge in '*traditional customs like going to village band clubs or dancing the traditional folk dance.*' These young men appear to be locating their own cultural identity on what they perceive as the enlightened end of a continuum between two essentialised positions. On the one extreme stands the indigenous past, associated in their minds with irrelevant local traditions and the Maltese language; on the other stands the future, accessed through English and vaguely epitomised as 'Western society', home of new technology and forward looking ideas. This is a 'society' which these young people have come to know primarily through the media of film, television, books, magazines and the Internet.

There is a curious process of self-identification and identity formation reflected in these attitudes. Drawing on Anderson's (1991) *Imagined Communities*, Hannerz (1996, p. 21) has noted how shared commonality within a nation is usually paralleled by a strong sense of cultural and linguistic discontinuity with respect to outsider-nations. All identity construction, as Kennedy & Danks (2001) put it, 'requires the summoning of difference, the relativization of the self as against the "other" imagined as separate, outside – and perhaps also as marginal, inferior and dangerous' (p. 3). These patterns certainly apply to the majority of young Maltese people who communicate primarily (and in some cases exclusively) in Maltese, and for whom the Maltese language is a key marker of their national identity. For this group, the use of Maltese is 'perhaps the ultimate marker of inclusion and exclusion' (Mitchell, 2002, p. 64) and an assertion of local and group cohesion. Interestingly, in some cases these essentialised distinctions between the local and the foreign have also become entangled with perceptions and performances of gender identity. Describing his research in a comprehensive boys' school in Malta, Portelli (2006) argues that 'underlying many boys' preferences for the national language rather than English, and their deriding their peers who speak English, is their investment in a version of masculinity which is aligned with an outward display of national pride' (p. 426).

But in the case of the smaller albeit significant number of young people for whom English is the first language, or who insist on identifying themselves as

primarily English-speaking, what seems to be happening is that it is the traditional and indigenous which have been designated as the 'other'. The choice of English as the main or only language of communication has become their means of distancing themselves from local limitations and insularity, and of embracing a more 'global' identity by aligning themselves with (and appropriating some of the attributes of) the 'outsider/foreigner'.

It bears stressing that these young people's perceptions of the local and the foreign as essentialised and distinct entities are in reality quite different from the realities of their lived experiences. Malta's cultural history, the Maltese language and the Maltese media landscape have all been shaped by complex interminglings of local and foreign influences. In this context, young Maltese people's concern about being identified as predominantly 'European' rather than 'Maltese' (or vice-versa) amount to performative expressions of post-colonial hybridity. Thus, the English habitually spoken by those young people who want to align themselves with the non-indigenous is distinctive and unique to Malta, representing a striking example of how foreign influences are both incorporated and transformed in specific communities. English here has become indigenised, put to local use, and given a local accent, with many local variations and idiosyncrasies. This phenomenon is not unique to Malta, of course, in that the English spoken in Malta is one of the many local (or 'nativised') varieties of English which 'take place characteristically in ex-colonial territories where forms of the ex-colonial language have evolved and developed in their own right independently of their metropolitan sources' (Norrish, 1997, p. 1).

In this complex bilingual context, both Maltese and the English spoken in Malta have undergone significant changes. English loan-words in Maltese have become very widespread, language switching and mixing is very common, and there has also been a growing tendency for the use of hybrid forms of Maltese and English. English in Malta is often spoken with an intonation and accent which have evolved through contact and regular interaction with the patterns of spoken Maltese. It will tend to include transliterations of Maltese words and idiomatic expressions which only make sense if one knows the Maltese original – as in '*I'm going to cut now*' in a telephone conversation, meaning '*I'm going to hang up*' (Brincat, 2005). Maltese words or expressions often punctuate sentences in English, and vice versa. For example, in the course of a conversation in English: '*I don't think it's right,* ***u****!*' (cited above) or '*I love shopping, ji©ifieri*' ['I mean']; and, in the course of one in Maltese: '*mhux worth it li ti***Ω***wwe©*' ['it's not worth getting married'], or '*Round drinks ©ieli jqumli fourteen pounds*' ['a round of drinks sometimes costs me fourteen pounds'], or '*g˙andna s-satellite, ji©ifieri, g˙andna xi five hundred channels*' ['we have satellite, I mean, we have some five hundred channels'] (Grixti, 2000, p. 7; 2004, pp. 55, 28-29).

Whether they choose to claim Maltese or English or a combination of the two as the primary marker of their cultural identity, young Maltese people's performative and linguistic constructions of their own identities are in this sense always and inevitably hybridised. Because these identities, like the language(s) in which they are constructed and performed, draw on different cultural traditions at the same time, they have also become expressions of 'those complicated cross-overs and cultural mixes which are increasingly common in a globalised world' (Hall, 1992, p. 310). If 'diaspora' is understood metaphorically (see Spencer & Wollman, 2002, p. 165), then it is diasporic identities which these young people are embracing – identities which (to borrow Brah's definition) are 'networks of transactional identifications encompassing "imagined" and "encountered" communities' (1996, p. 196).

As we have seen, for Maltese youth, the imagined communities of 'the global' and 'the local' are often associated with essentialised perceptions of language – where English becomes the conduit to a technologically advanced and forward-looking world, while Maltese remains the language of tradition and the indigenous past. But these perceptions are in reality very different from young people's experiences of 'the global' and 'the local' as actually encountered and performed through the entwined varieties of Maltese and English spoken in Malta. In this sense, young Maltese people's attitudes to language are useful reminders of the fact that the imagined and encountered communities of 'the global' and 'the local' are also performative productions in their own right (see Hörschelmann & Schäfer, 2005, p. 224). They too are 'always in process' in that they are to varying degrees created or denied in social and linguistic performances of cultural identity.

Growing up between cultures

I started by referring to the concern expressed by Maltese community leaders in Australia that the loss of 'mother tongue' and of a sense of an 'originary self' by second generation Maltese-Australian youth may be responsible for what they perceive as identity confusion and a consequent tendency to underachieve in education. The evidence I have presented about the robustly hybrid ways in which these youths' ethnic counterparts in the 'home' country construct their cultural identities suggests that these concerns may be misplaced. Attitudes to language and cultural identity in the Maltese Islands have always been characterised by cultural hybridity, but this situation has certainly never been seriously identified as a cause of educational underperformance among youth there. In other words, the attitudes of young Maltese-Australians to their

‘mother tongue’ and ‘mother country’ are different from those of other migrant communities because the linguistic and cultural influences underscoring the formation of the Maltese ‘originary self’ were very different to start with. It is thus reasonable to argue (as Borland does) that there is a strong link between language and cultural identity. It is also reasonable to argue that a strong sense of cultural identity and high self-esteem are positively linked with good educational performance. But it does not follow that on this basis one can automatically make a link between loss of ‘mother tongue’ and educational underperformance. As I have shown in this paper, the multidimensional complexities of the relationship between language use and cultural identity (particularly in the Maltese experience) cannot be reduced to such straight forward equations.

In this perspective, identity needs to be understood as ‘a “production”, which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation’ (Hall, 1997, p. 51). It is (in Judith Butler’s terms) ‘performatively constituted by the very expressions that are said to be its results’ (Butler, 1990, p. 25). Children and young people with a migration background have frequently been described as ‘growing up between cultures’, or as ‘third culture kids’ (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001), constantly having to negotiate family norms and traditions with the surrounding society’s norms and values. What I have argued in this paper is that the experience of ‘growing up between cultures’ is as true of young people growing up in Malta itself as it is of those growing up as children of Maltese migrants in Australia. In this sense, it is in the interactions between cultures (rather than in their differences) that we should be locating the key influences on how young people construct their cultural identities and on how they choose to define and embrace different ethnic and cultural affiliations. In contemporary Malta as well as in Australia, the media play a crucial role in this, in that they have helped to bring about a situation where young people’s cultural experiences are constantly overlapping. In this sense, the local and the global have become deeply intertwined, paradoxically reinforcing as they symbiotically transform each other. In this ‘glocalised’ context, as Anthony Giddens has argued, life experiences are no longer exclusively defined and confined by once-powerful solidarities such as locality, class, church, family, gender and occupation. Rather, daily life has increasingly become reconstituted in terms of ‘the dialectical interplay of the local and the global’ (Giddens, 1991, p. 5), and individuals increasingly negotiate lifestyle choices among a diversity of options. It is in the light of this perspective that potential links between patterns of educational performance and cultural identity can be more profitably explored and understood.

Note

1. The English version of the Constitution can be viewed at http://docs.justice.gov.mt/lom/legislation/english/leg/vol_1/chapt0.pdf

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ATTITUDES TOWARD BILINGUALISM: THE CASE OF TWO GREEK ISLANDS

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Abstract – *Bilingualism, and more recently plurilingualism, is attracting considerable attention due to the increasing influx of people with different ethnolinguistic background to Western societies as well as the fact that we live in a globalised world. This study presents the results of a large-scale survey administered to 1,727 students enrolled in Greek schools in the islands of Rhodes and Symi during the scholastic year 2002-2003. Using an adapted version of Baker's questionnaire (see Baker, 2001), the study attempted to investigate students' attitudes toward bilingualism. The results indicate a general positive attitude toward bilingualism. Most of the students were aware of the fact that knowing more than one language would be useful in their adult life, particularly in view of the professional and economic rewards that this brings in an increasingly globalised world. It was however found that the subjects of the study were not so positively disposed toward bilingualism as a societal phenomenon. The study findings are discussed in relation to language education policy in Greece.*

Introduction

In view of the increasing influx of people with different ethnolinguistic background to European societies and the phenomenon of world globalisation, bilingualism and more recently plurilingualism are attracting considerable attention. It is estimated that about one-third of the European population under the age of 35 has an immigrant background (Gogolin, 2002). Greece is not an exception. Indeed, although traditionally assumed to be monolingual, Greece is registering today a steady increase in linguistic and cultural diversity. This diversity is evident in public schools where the number of school-aged children having a linguistic and cultural background other than Greek continues to grow. According to Gotovos & Markou (2004), during the 2002-2003 scholastic year, the number of children belonging to a different ethnolinguistic background was estimated at 98,241 pupils, representing 6.7% of the total school population. This diversity is also evident in Rhodes (see Filippardou, 1997; Vratsalis & Skourtou, 2000).

Moreover, an increasing number of children are learning one or more foreign languages. Greeks are aware of the fact that as their language is not widely spoken outside their country, they are obliged to learn foreign languages if they want to be competitive in a globalised world. The same applies to other small countries like, for example, Sweden (see Cabau-Lampa, 1999). It could therefore be expected that they hold a need-driven attitude toward foreign languages. This expectation needs to be verified through empirical data. The island of Rhodes, and to a lesser extent Symi, seemed to be interesting research locations due to their growing linguistic diversity. This study was designed to make up for the existing lack of research regarding students' attitudes toward bilingualism and plurilingualism.

Defining bilingualism and plurilingualism

More than half of the earth's population is bilingual and many people are multilingual. Although bilingualism, and even multilingualism, is the rule in most societies, in Western thinking it is approached with suspicion since it goes contrary to the ideal society that demands linguistic unity based on the tradition of 'one nation and one language ideology' (Thomas & Wareing, 1999; Kostoulas-Makrakis, 2001; Luchtenberg, 2002). Linguistic diversity, however, is becoming more accepted. Given that, in the last two decades, bilingualism has also become associated with cognitive, social and psychological advantages both at an individual and at a societal level, schools should therefore play an important role toward its development (Garcia, 1997; Miramontes, Nadeau & Commins, 1997; Cummins, 2003). Recently, the Council of Europe[1] has extended the notion of bilingualism by promoting the learning of several languages for all individuals in the course of their lives with the aim to encourage Europeans to become plurilingual and intercultural citizens (Beacco & Byram, 2003). In this sense, plurilingualism implies much more than just acquiring languages, as it is concerned with intercultural interaction and communication, the promotion of mutual understanding and the development of individual responsibility (Beacco & Byram, 2003).

On the other hand, bilingualism and multilingualism are often used interchangeably, referring to situations where speakers of different languages are in contact, without taking into account the intercultural aspect of being bilingual or multilingual. In some cases, multilingualism is assumed to include bilingualism (Clyne, 1997), whereas, in other cases, bilingualism is considered as a broader term which includes multilingualism (Baker, 2001). However, in the context of the Council of Europe, the term plurilingualism is used when referring to an

individual's ability to use several languages, whereas multilingualism or linguistic diversity is used for describing the co-existence of many languages in a society (Beacco & Byram, 2003).

For the purpose of this study, bilingualism is used as a generic term which includes multilingualism and which applies to all contexts, including Europe. In addition, the present study does not take into account the intercultural aspect of being bilingual or plurilingual. In general, definitions of bilingualism vary considerably with respect to competence and function ranging from native-like control of two or more languages to lesser ability in one of the languages (see Kostoulas-Makrakis, 1995). But although there are throughout the world many different forms of bilingualism, a main distinction is drawn between bilingualism as an individual phenomenon and as a societal one. Individual bilingualism refers to a person's capacity to use two or more languages, whereas societal bilingualism refers to a society in which two or more languages or varieties co-exist. According to Apeltauer (1993, p. 273), bilingualism can be the outcome of particular life circumstances (e.g., a bi-/multilingual environment) or of an individual's decisions and efforts. In the first case, we speak of 'socially conditioned bilingualism' whereas in the latter of 'individual bilingualism'.

Another distinction is often made between the natural bilingualism of ethnic minorities and migrants, and learned bilingualism through formal language learning at school, or, as it has been termed, between 'folk' bilingualism and 'elite' bilingualism (Mills, 2001). In the first case, people become bilingual involuntarily in order to work and integrate in the educational and social structure of a society, whereas the second case refers to educated middle class people who choose to become bilinguals. As Luchtenberg (2002) has pointed out, 'the latter is generally much more highly valued than the former, though in reality the two often overlap' (p. 50). There is an ambivalent attitude toward bilingual speakers and their languages are valued hierarchically (Thomas & Wareing, 1999). When, for example, a child is bilingual in the language of the dominant society and another prestigious language such as English, French or German, bilingualism is then considered an asset. However, in cases when the child is bilingual in the dominant language and a migrant language, bilingualism is then either ignored or undervalued (see Thomas & Wareing, 1999; Skourtou & Kourtis-Kazoullis, 2000). In other words, 'bilingualism is not envisaged the same way when it concerns migrant languages as opposed to foreign languages' (Hélot, 2003, p. 271). It is thus obvious that it has to do with the status of the languages involved and their value in the 'linguistic market' (Bourdieu, 1991). Generally speaking, different status or value is ascribed to particular languages/language varieties, which in many cases reflects the status accorded to the speakers of these languages.

In this study, the notion of bilingualism is understood as the capacity of using two or more languages, which are: (i) the first language(s) of the child in case of children whose one or both parents are foreigners living in Greece; and (ii) Greek, the language learned at school. We should mention here that the Greek education system and curriculum focus only on monolingual and monocultural children, even if there are some bilingual schools which cater primarily for the needs of repatriated children.

Foreign language teaching and learning

In the new Europe that expanded to 25 member states in 2004 and which aspires to political and economic integration, the need to know foreign languages is gaining importance as a prerequisite to participate in the European market without frontiers. Besides that, knowing foreign languages is considered an asset that facilitates free movement and the discovery of different cultures and mentalities. In this vein, the European Commission[2] pressures all member states to promote the learning of at least two foreign languages in addition to their mother tongue (see Mackiewicz, 2002). As clearly stated in the *White Paper Towards the Learning Society*, the European Union (EU) views plurilingualism as a necessity for professional and economic mobility (Krumm, 2004). On its part, the Council of Europe has for many years addressed language issues with the aim of promoting plurilingualism as a means of securing peace and stabilising the development of democracy.

While the traditional idea has been that foreign languages should be taught so that well-educated people could read classical literature in the original text, the main concern nowadays is to communicate, to learn about another culture, to travel and to be an attractive job candidate in our globalised world (McDonough, 2001). In the European context, competence in language(s) is considered a characteristic of democratic and active citizenship, both as a prerequisite to it and for its implementation (Breidbach, 2003). Today's societal demands have consequently shifted the direction of the focus of foreign language education. In this sense, the aims of the teaching of languages are now convergent with those of education for democratic citizenship: both are concerned with intercultural interaction and communication, the promotion of mutual understanding and the development of individual responsibility (Beacco & Byram, 2003). Language can thus be seen not only as a marker of national or ethnic identity, but also as a form of economic and social capital. Notwithstanding this, foreign language teaching as a school subject has been developed within a monolingual education framework, which implies that foreign languages do not have as much importance as other school subjects (Stern, 1992).

In Greece, foreign languages are among the least popular subjects at school. However, there is an increased interest in foreign language learning outside schools. This is evident from the large number of private foreign language centres in Greece which are attended by the great majority of school children. There are in fact more than 8,000 foreign language schools in the private sector spread all over the country. The majority of their students learn English, followed by those who learn German, French, Italian and Spanish. In a survey concerning citizens' views on lifelong learning among the residents of all 25 EU member states together with Iceland and Norway, it was found that at least half of the respondents from Greece were ready to consider contributing some money from their own pockets in order to learn a new language and obtain a certificate (European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training [CEDEPOF], 2003). Moreover, due to the ongoing developments in the EU and the opening of the labour market, the official Greek education policy concerning foreign language teaching has changed in recent years. More specifically, while English has become at primary level the compulsory foreign language from Grade 3 onwards, English, French and German are now being taught in secondary schools. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Education is planning to introduce a second foreign language (either French or German) from Grade 5 in primary schools. Apart from English being the compulsory foreign language in tertiary education, there are also at this level a variety of foreign languages (such as French, German, Italian, Spanish, Turkish, Arabic, etc.) according to the curriculum of each institution.

Attitudes toward bilingualism

Given that language attitudes affect the development of bilingualism, it is of utmost importance that these attitudes are taken into consideration when discussing bilingualism (Baker, 1992). In some cases, language attitudes seem to be limited to attitudes toward the language itself. However, the definition of language attitudes is most often broader, including all kinds of behaviour concerning the language in question (e.g., attitudes toward bilingualism) (Fasold, 1984). According to Baker (1992), attitudes toward bilingualism differ and are conceptually distinct from attitudes toward a specific language, in the sense that attitudes toward bilingualism are about two languages in contact. Language learning, and eventually bilingualism, is affected by attitudes toward specific languages. We should keep in mind that language attitudes reflect the psycho-social attitudes about the language, thus conveying the social, cultural and sentimental values of the speakers (see Kostoulas-Makrakis, 2001).

Language attitudes may have an instrumental/extrinsic and/or an integrative/ intrinsic orientation (Gardner & Lambert, 1972). Instrumentally motivated persons learn a foreign language mainly for its utilitarian value. This may be, for example, to qualify for a better job, to achieve personal success, to improve one's status, and so on. An integrative attitude, on the other hand, is defined as the person's desire to be an accepted member of the target language community, to come in contact with and to share the culture of that group. However, in the 1990s, researchers began to revise and extend this dichotomy because they found it too static and restricted (see Ho, 1998). The world itself has moreover changed greatly since Gardner & Lambert introduced this dichotomy in language learning (Lamb, 2004). These two orientations in language attitudes are not necessarily opposites: indeed, they can co-exist in an individual at the same time (Baker, 1992) and can also be indistinguishable (Lamb, 2004). Green (1999) in fact views motivational drives as dynamic and developmental, in a state of constant flux rather than as static binary opposites. According to Dörnyei (1990), another problem with the instrumental/ integrative dichotomy is that it is not directly applicable to foreign language learning since this kind of learning does not involve any interaction with the target language community. Research indicates the importance of the home background and socio-cultural milieu on attitudes toward language learning and bilingualism (Gardner, 1985; Kostoulas-Makrakis, 1995; Gardner, Masgoret & Tremblay, 1999).

This paper attempts to investigate students' attitudes toward bilingualism in the Greek islands of Rhodes and Symi. More specifically, the paper examines the possible attitudinal differences between monolinguals and bilinguals. In this context, the following hypotheses were formulated:

(i) In general, all subjects are expected to hold more positive attitudes toward bilingualism than monolingualism.

(ii) Monolingual subjects are expected to hold less positive attitudes toward bilingualism than bilingual subjects.

Methodology

Subjects

The sample consisted of 1,727 students from the Greek islands of Rhodes and Symi, 40% of whom attended primary schools, 36% lower secondary schools and 24% upper secondary schools. We chose to conduct our research in these two geographical areas in view of their high number of foreign residents, both as a result of mixed marriages and incoming foreign labour.

The demographics of the students in terms of their ethnolinguistic background varied widely. While 10% of the subjects' fathers and 16% of the mothers were identified as having another country of origin, 14% of the fathers and 18% of the mothers were identified as having another language background. The great majority of the students with non-Greek background were Albanians, Germans, Scandinavians, British and from Balkan countries. Most of the subjects' fathers belonged to middle class (49%), followed by lower class (37%) and upper class (14%). A similar trend was observed for the subjects' mothers, the difference being that 41% of these women were housewives. With respect to the gender composition of the sample, 51% of the subjects were boys and 49% were girls.

Instrumentation

The survey questionnaire contained 25 items divided into two parts. The 14 questions of the first part were designed to elicit demographic information (e.g., parents' origin and profession, students' gender, school level, area of residence, birthplace, mother tongue and the language spoken at home). The second part of the questionnaire, which contained 11 questions, sought to uncover students' perceptions and attitudes toward bilingualism. The questions concerning language attitudes were adapted from Baker (2001). More specifically, these were probes for positive (6 items) and negative bilingualism (5 items) which tried mainly to measure the students' instrumental orientation toward bilingualism. The purpose of these questions was to determine if bilinguals and monolinguals have different orientations toward bilingualism, both at individual and societal levels. Attitudinal responses were measured on a scale of four alternatives (1 – strongly agree; 2 – agree; 3 – disagree; and 4 – strongly disagree) which were reversed for consistency in the analysis. The questionnaire was administered to students inside classrooms by their teachers. A brief letter explaining the importance and the purpose of the study was distributed along with the questionnaire.

Analysis

Using the non-parametric Mann-Whitney test, the independent variable 'mother tongue' was examined separately with each of the items that measure positive and negative bilingualism. The objective was to search for significant differences between monolinguals and bilinguals. According to the notion of bilingualism as defined in the present study, subjects who might have learned other languages at school or at private institutions were not classified as 'bilinguals'. Thus, the two groups of subjects in the study were: monolinguals

(who have Greek as their mother tongue) and bilinguals (who speak Greek besides their mother tongue[3]).

Classification of the other independent factors (such as, parents' origin and subjects' birthplace) was established on the basis of 'Greeks' (i.e., monolinguals) and 'non-Greeks' (i.e., bilinguals). Again using the Mann-Whitney test, these other independent variables were also examined separately with each of the 11 items that measure attitudes toward bilingualism in order to identify possible significant differences.

Results

In general, as Table 1 indicates, the subjects of this study, both monolinguals and bilinguals, expressed positive attitudes toward bilingualism. The most strongly agreed with statements denoting positive bilingualism were: (i) 'It is important to be able to speak more than one language' with 80% of the monolinguals and 83% of the bilinguals indicating strong agreement; (ii) 'Speaking both Greek and another language helps to get a job' with 81% of the monolinguals and 77% of the bilinguals indicating strong agreement; and (iii) 'Being able to write both in Greek and another language is important' with 70% of the monolinguals and 72% of the bilinguals indicating strong agreement. In line with this, according to a Eurobarometer[4] survey (see European Commission, 2006), while 75% of Greek respondents believe that knowing other languages besides their mother tongue is or could be very useful, 74% of them support the idea that everyone should speak two languages in addition to their mother tongue.

While no statistically significant differences were noted between monolinguals and bilinguals in any of the statements denoting positive bilingualism, it was found that these two groups differ significantly in all of the statements denoting negative bilingualism. The strongest difference between the two groups occurred in the statement 'I would like Greek to be the only language spoken in the area' where, as expected, bilinguals expressed higher disagreement (z = -7.8, $p < .001$). Bilinguals again expressed significantly higher disagreement with the statements 'Speaking two or more languages is difficult' (z = -4.1, $p < .001$) and 'Children get confused when learning more than one language' (z = -3.2, $p < .001$). The same trend was noted from the remaining two statements denoting negative bilingualism, namely, 'To speak Greek in Greece is all that is needed' (z = -2.6, $p < .01$) and 'People only need to know one language' (z = -2.9, $p < .01$). These findings may reflect the monolingual socio-cultural context of Greece which presents limited opportunities for interaction in other languages unless individuals make a conscious effort to seek opportunities for using another

TABLE 1: Attitudes of monolinguals (M) and bilinguals (B) toward bilingualism

Attitudes toward Bilingualism	**Strongly Disagree**		**Disagree**		**Agree**		**Strongly Agree**		z-score
	M	B	M	B	M	B	M	B	
	0	1	4	4	16	12	80	83	-0.95
	2	1	40	48	28	28	30	23	-2.6**
	2	2	20	21	33	35	45	42	-1.1
	1	2	41	52	37	30	21	16	-3.2***
	1	1	43	58	33	26	22	15	-4.1***
	0	1	4	5	15	17	81	77	-1.3
	1	2	5	4	24	22	70	72	-0.6
	0	2	12	19	29	27	59	52	-1.0
	1	2	26	27	32	25	41	46	-0.5
	1	2	81	87	13	7	5	4	-2.9**
	0	1	34	61	28	19	38	19	-7.8***

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

language (see Green, 1999). According to a Eurobarometer survey (see European Commission, 2006), 89% of Greeks do not use a foreign language on a daily basis. And negative perceptions of bilingualism come from a monolingual perspective of what it is to function in two or more languages (Cummins, 2003).

Although the subjects of the study generally showed positive attitudes toward bilingualism, it should be noted that most of them were not so positively disposed toward bilingualism in two out of the three statements concerning bilingualism at a societal level. In particular, 66% (38% 'strongly agree' and 28% 'agree') of the monolinguals would like 'Greek to be the only language spoken in the area', while the corresponding figure for the bilinguals is only 38% (19% 'strongly agree' and 19% 'agree'). Whereas practically half of the bilinguals (23% 'strongly agree' and 28% 'agree') believe that 'To speak Greek in Greece is all that is needed', the corresponding figure for the monolinguals is 58% (30% 'strongly agree' and 28% 'agree'). It is pertinent here to point out that the mastery of the Greek language – which is considered as the main factor of social, cultural and economic integration – remains the main priority of the Greek education system. Not surprisingly, a Eurobarometer survey (see European Commission, 2001) revealed that 90% of Greeks agreed with the statement that 'Enlargement of the EU to include new member countries means that we must protect our language more'.

Table 2 indicates that subjects whose parents had Greek background (father: $p < .05$; mother: $p < .001$) and those who were born in Greece ($p < .01$) were significantly more likely to agree with the statement 'Speaking two or more languages is difficult'. A similar trend was noted for the statement 'I would like Greek to be the only language spoken in the area' (all three at $p < .001$). It was further found that male subjects agreed more than female subjects with these two statements ($p < .05$ and $p < .001$ respectively). Subjects whose mother's origin was Greek and those who were born in Greece again scored significantly higher on the statement 'Children get confused when learning more than one language' ($p < .01$ and $p < .05$ respectively). On the other hand, subjects born outside Greece were found to believe more strongly than those born in Greece that 'People can earn more money if they speak other languages besides Greek' ($p < .05$). In line with this, subjects born in Greece believed more strongly than those born elsewhere that 'People only need to know one language' ($p < .05$). Besides adhering more strongly than females to the underlying beliefs that knowledge of languages translates itself into financial gains ($p < .01$) and that people just require one language ($p < .05$), male subjects were again more strongly of the opinion than females that 'To speak Greek in Greece is all that is needed' ($p < .01$). Female subjects, on the other hand, were more inclined than male subjects to accept the statement 'Speaking both Greek and another language helps to get a job' ($p < .05$).

TABLE 2: Attitudes toward bilingualism by students' gender and birthplace, and parents' origins

Attitudes toward Bilingualism	**Student's Gender**	z-score	**Father's Origin**	z-score	**Mother's Origin**	z-score	**Student's birthplace**	z-score
	Male Female	-0.3	Greek Other	-0.6	Greek Other	-1.6	Greek Other	-1.70
	Male Female	-3.2**	Greek Other	-0.5	Greek Other	-0.8	Greek Other	-0.51
	Male Female	-0.6	Greek Other	-0.1	Greek Other	-0.8	Greek Other	-1.32
	Male Female	-0.8	Greek Other	-1.8	Greek Other	-2.8**	Greek Other	-2.2*
	Male Female	-2.1*	Greek Other	-2.2*	Greek Other	-3.5***	Greek Other	-2.8**
	Male Female	-2.2*	Greek Other	-0.3	Greek Other	-0.9	Greek Other	-0.58
	Male Female	-0.1	Greek Other	-0.9	Greek Other	-1.4	Greek Other	-1.26
	Male Female	-2.6**	Greek Other	-0.9	Greek Other	-0.6	Greek Other	-1.9*
	Male Female	-0.98	Greek Other	-0.5	Greek Other	-0.5	Greek Other	-0.27
	Male Female	-2.3*	Greek Other	-0.7	Greek Other	-1.7	Greek Other	-2.0*
	Male Female	-4.7***	Greek Other	-5.2***	Greek Other	-7.1***	Greek Other	-4.7***

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

In our opinion, these results can be explained by the fact that, despite the increasing linguistic and cultural diversity, Greece has operated under monolingual and monocultural assumptions for a long time. While in most of the statements the independent factors of parents' origin and students' birthplace did not exert any statistically significant effect, the gender factor on the contrary produced statistically significant differences in six out of the 11 statements.

Discussion

The starting point of this paper has been that the on-going European integration – which is characterised by the opening of the labour markets, the elimination of frontiers and globalisation – will have an impact on people's attitudes toward foreign language learning and eventually bilingualism, both at individual and societal levels. Taking into account the increasing number of students in Greek schools with non-Greek background and the fact that we live in an increasingly globalised world, this study used an adapted version of Baker's (2001) language attitudes questionnaire in order to examine students' attitudes toward bilingualism in the Greek islands of Rhodes and Symi. After identifying monolinguals and bilinguals as two distinct groups, the following two hypotheses were investigated:

(i) In general, all subjects are expected to hold more positive attitudes toward bilingualism than monolingualism.

(ii) Monolingual subjects are expected to hold less positive attitudes toward bilingualism than bilingual subjects.

The results of this study show clearly that all subjects, whether bilingual or monolingual, hold positive attitudes toward bilingualism. Being bilingual is generally regarded as positive or even advantageous. This constitutes an important consideration related to foreign language education in Greece and the declared aim of the Council of Europe to promote plurilingualism. The great majority of the 1,727 student participants in this study appear to have understood that speaking two or more languages gives you an advantage – which they see more in terms of job opportunities and economic rewards – over monolingual people. It seems that they realise that, especially in tourist places such as the Greek islands of Rhodes and Symi, 'bilingualism can lead to practical, career-related advantages' (Shin, 2000, p. 97). The hypothesis that 'In general, all subjects are expected to hold more positive attitudes toward bilingualism than monolingualism' can consequently be considered as verified.

This finding is substantiated by data of a Eurobarometer survey (see European Commission, 2006) which established that the great majority of Greeks (92%) think that young people should learn languages in order to improve their job opportunities. In our study, we found that the most preferred languages are English and German. This seems to reflect the international status of the first and the increasing inflow of German-speaking tourists in the area where we conducted the study. Indications are that the large number of German tourists visiting Rhodes and Symi every year has led to an awareness among the students that expertise in German is a key for finding a job, at least in the tourist business. German is also considered the language of technology and trade (see Cabau-Lampa, 1999). A Eurobarometer survey concerning Europeans and their languages found that 30% of Greek respondents assessed German as the second most useful language (see European Commission, 2006). This survey found that while 50% of Greek parents believe that their children should learn German, 96% chose English. As far as English is concerned, it is now acknowledged as a global language, being the first, second or the foreign language of a population estimated at 1.5 billion people (Crystal, 1997). It has been found that there is a strong desire among Europeans, especially within the young generations, to learn English which has established itself as the first or the most widely taught foreign language in the EU (Labrie & Quell, 1997). The same applies for English in the Asian context where this language has been identified as an integral part of the globalisation processes (Lamb, 2004).

A survey about citizens' views on lifelong learning among the residents of all EU member states as well as Iceland and Norway (see CEDEPOF, 2003) found that Greek respondents rated their knowledge and skills of using foreign languages around 15% above average. In Greece, the students' instrumental orientation toward the learning of foreign languages is highly influenced by socio-cultural factors. As already pointed out, Greek children instrumentally seek foreign languages which are viewed as economic assets in order to compensate for the fact that Greek is a 'small' language that is hardly spoken outside their country.

As expected, the study's comparisons between monolinguals and bilinguals revealed that monolinguals hold less positive attitudes toward bilingualism than bilinguals. This emerged clearly from two out of the three statements dealing with bilingualism at societal level: while 66% of the monolinguals agreed with the statement 'I would like Greek to be the only language spoken in the area', 58% of the monolinguals also agreed with the statement 'To speak Greek in Greece is all that is needed'. These results reflect how many people in Greece still believe that their country is linguistically homogeneous. Present results also corroborate other studies which show that the majority language is a strong means of binding together all members of a state, while at the same time excluding those who do not speak it (see Luchtenberg, 2002). Most appropriately, there is today in Europe an ongoing discourse

about the value of linguistic and cultural diversity, how this diversity should be handled and what should be the role of language education (see Gogolin, 2002; Beacco & Byram, 2003). But Europeans still do not always accept diversity due to the fact that monolingualism is considered as the norm and bilingualism as a 'problem' associated with the great influx of immigrants in their countries. In this sense, the increased linguistic and cultural diversity is viewed as divisive and 'bilingual and multilingual individuals may appear unusual' (Wardhaugh, 1994, p. 98). In Greece, as in many other European countries, we expect in fact all members of a nation to share a common language besides learning foreign languages at school.

Gender emerged from this study as exerting a significant influence on subjects' responses to most of the attitudinal statements, irrespective of whether these denote positive or negative bilingualism. Females were generally found to be more positively disposed toward bilingualism than males. In particular, males surpassed females in only three out of the 11 statements dealing with bilingualism. This finding is in line with other studies in which females were found to hold more positive attitudes than males toward foreign or second language learning (see Ellis, 1994; Kobayashi, 2002).

Generally speaking, our study has revealed that knowing many languages is considered an asset and that bilingualism, in view of its practical and economic rewards, is becoming very important in today's world. However, the results also show that the subjects of our study were not so positively disposed toward bilingualism as a societal phenomenon. The education system has consequently to cope with this apparent reluctance to accept linguistic diversity. The present findings suggest that we need to persuade people in Greece not only about the value of bilingualism, both for individuals and society at large, but also about the naturalness and widespread occurrence of being bilingual or plurilingual. The whole point is that 'plurilingualism is not only a matter of competence but also an attitude of interest in and openness about languages and language varieties of all kinds' (Beacco & Byram, 2003, p. 10).

The major implication of this study relates to the question of 'How to change our mental representations of societal bilingualism so that linguistic and cultural diversity are seen as a source of enrichment'. As the Single Market in Europe further increases people's mobility, the incentive to learn foreign languages will also receive a boost, thereby augmenting the proportion of bilingual individuals (Apeltauer, 1993). It follows that schools must provide 'all students with the opportunities to acquire cultural and linguistic proficiencies and modes of behaviour that will allow them to participate as citizens in a changing world' (Allemann-Ghionda, 2001, p. 30). Hélot & Young (2002) consequently suggest that language awareness activities should be integrated within school programmes in order to help children and teachers appreciate language and cultural diversity in our increasingly globalised world.

The results of our study can be used as a starting point to examine how Greece handles the phenomenon of bilingualism and plurilingualism, and how this is being tackled in the curriculum. This leads us to investigate a number of interesting questions, such as, 'Is there any reference to the educational value of linguistic and cultural diversity that is brought to schools by the various languages and cultures?', 'Are there explicit references to the languages of immigrants living in Greece?' and 'Are languages seen as resources or as problems?'. Given these possibilities, we are of the opinion that the findings of this study merit close consideration when discussing and implementing language and education policies aimed at promoting the Council of Europe's plans in favour of plurilingualism.

Notes

1. The Council of Europe (which is not part of the European Union) is an international organisation of 46 member states in the European region. Its main success was the European Convention on Human Rights in 1950, which serves as the basis for the European Court of Human Rights. Membership is open to all European democracies which accept the principle of the rule of law and guarantee fundamental human rights and freedoms to their citizens.
2. The European Commission (formally the Commission of the European Communities) is the executive body of the European Union. Alongside the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union, it is one of the three main institutions governing the Union.
3. It was assumed that subjects who have a language other than Greek as their mother tongue are also fluent in Greek, as they attended public schools in which fluency in Greek is required.
4. Eurobarometer is a series of surveys regularly performed on behalf of the European Commission. It produces reports regarding public opinion on certain issues relating to the European Union across the member states.

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FACE TO FACE WITH EMMANUELA: REFLECTIONS ON THE USES OF THE MEMOIR IN EXPLORING THE LIFE STORY OF A NINETEENTH CENTURY WOMAN TEACHER

SIMONE GALEA

Abstract – *This paper is concerned with 'A little Memoir of a Good and Pious Woman Educator', namely Emmanuela Azzopardi, a headteacher living in the second half of nineteenth century Malta. The memoir – written by Canon Paolo Pullicino, the Director of Education at that time – is a very important one as it uniquely tells the story of a woman's life, outlining the official duties of the teacher and defining her ideal characteristics. My interests in this particular archive do not only lie in examining the virtues expected of the woman teacher; a reading which is very useful in tracing the formation of the teacher as we know it today. Feminist poststructuralist theories lead me to question the uses of the memoir itself, its politics of representation and the spaces it opens for the theoretical considerations of the portrayal of this teacher. As a feminist exploring knowledge/power and gender relations, I will be discussing issues of women's voice and representations, particularly the possible uses of the space created by the memoir for subversive purposes.*

Introduction

What follows is a description of Emmanuela Azzopardi, a Maltese headteacher of the primary school in Valletta in the second half of the nineteenth century, found in a memoir[1] written by Canon Paolo Pullicino, the Director of Education, in 1871:

> 'A Little Memoir of the Life of a Good and Pious Woman Educator
>
> Retaining her confidence in God, she modestly took up (1st November 1857) the new and delicate position, which she retained until her death. She always remained faithful and careful to promptly follow the directions of her superiors. She was careful not to betray her conscience that obliged her to promote the material as well as the spiritual needs of her female students; making use of her own position not so much for personal gain but more as a means by which she could do good to others.
>
> And she managed to do this in a marvellous way. A proof of this is the constant excellent results of her labours. And this could clearly be observed

> mostly in the annual examinations. These always satisfied the requirements set down by the regulations. Her classes were many times greatly admired by various famous people that visited the school in different times, and they always remained impressed by the effortless (easy) and quick way through which the students of her classes were especially prompt to resolve extremely difficult arithmetic problems. There were a lot of these famous people, of whom I only dare mention Mr Tuffnell, Archbishop Errington, Rev Wenham, Col Lefroy, Lord Harrowby, Lord Carlile, Lord Carnavaron, Lord Sandon, Earl Fortescue and Lord Ducie.
>
> Whenever the school was visited, at the times of Governor[2] Sir W. Reid and of his successor Sir Gaspard Le Marchant, by men as distinct as the famous persons mentioned above, the headteacher was highly praised for her ability in directing the school even though she did not boast of this.
>
> Maybe others would have greatly glorified themselves. She was completely against such vanity. She took pleasure only in the good things that her classes obtained; but she did not boast of this. She kept herself humble and modest; devoid of any artificiality. She only praised God and made use of the good that she produced to encourage herself to find ways to double her efforts and obtain better results.' (Pullicino, 1871a, pp. 5-7)

This memoir is important in that it uniquely tells the life story of a Maltese woman teacher in those times and in outlining the official duties of the teacher as well as defining the characteristics of the teacher of that day. The historical and political uses of the memoir are various. A women's history of education would seek to use it to highlight women's participation as educators and to examine the virtues of the nineteenth century woman teacher, a feminist analysis of the memoir would make a critique of women's positions within educational institutions, while a reading of the memoir in a genealogical fashion would critically analyse the formation of the nineteenth century teacher to trace the legacies of the woman teacher as we know her today (Galea, 2002). This paper reflects the interests outlined above in discussing the characteristics of 'a good and pious woman educator' and the ideologies of womanhood at the time the memoir was written. In analysing the spaces conceded to women within educational institutions this paper shall also raise questions related to the spaces created by the publication of the memoir itself, its politics of representation and the possible uses of the space for subversive purposes. In exploring these different spaces I shall be dealing with the actual portrait of the lady as depicted by Pullicino, the feminist places from which it can be interpreted to the imaginary spaces through which the memoir and the legendary Emmanuela can be recreated. I shall take a feminist poststructuralist perspective to explore power, knowledge and gender relations, issues of women's voice and representation to raise and answer questions such as: How are women and

particularly women teachers portrayed in this memoir? What are the roles ascribed to them? What is the political function of the memoir? In whose interest was it published and whose interests does it serve? How can the memoir be used to subvert the colonial and patriarchal interests in portraying women and women teachers as such? Can Emmanuela speak for herself? How?

The feminist poststructuralist perspective taken here will draw on Foucault's reflections on and his uses of the memoir and Spivak's feminist concerns with dominant historical representation of disempowered groups, particularly women, to explore the power positions of women teachers as elite career women and guardians of knowledge; as talking objects and subjects of patriarchal and colonial power and as agents of knowledge. My aim in exploring the theoretical ramifications in coming face to face with Emmanuela echoes Spivak's concern in analysing 'the fabrication of repression, a constructed counter narrative of woman's consciousness, thus woman's being, thus woman's being good, thus the good woman's desire thus the woman's desire' (Spivak, 1988, pp. 304-305).

This paper will give an overview of the historical colonial backgrounds of educational contexts from which the memoir emerges. After analysing the contents of the memoir to present a feminist analysis of Emmanuela's power positions as a woman teacher, I shall move on to a critical analysis of the uses of the memoir itself and its possible uses in culturally representing Emmanuela as a woman teacher.

Maltese historical and educational contexts

Malta became a British colony in the year 1800 and remained so until the 1964. The analysis of Emmanuela's memoir and its manifestations of relations of power, knowledge and gender have to be read within the context of colonial influences, especially those concerning education provision. The British considered Malta an important fortress colony and the Maltese were treated 'not as people but as native inhabitants of the fortress' (Frendo, 1991, p. 5), that is, an Englishman's inferior. Their various ways of controlling the Maltese were authoritarian and intrusive, including forced mass emigration to control the increasing population. Education undoubtedly was one of the important mechanisms deployed by the British to control the Maltese, especially the lower class. Up to this day, our educational system is very much influenced by British educational practices. In the beginning of the nineteenth century, the organisation of schooling and the discourses pertaining to education in the UK infiltrated in Malta. What is particular to the analysis of the characteristics of the teacher in Pullicino's memoir is that in the UK, at that time, there was a growing concern about the intellectual and moral

condition of the urban poor and the idea that cheap education could solve the problem. As Jones explains 'it is this concern that mobilises a strategy of schooling to regulate the nomadic, dissolute degenerate and marginal population of the urban slum' (Jones, 1990, pp. 57-58).

Philip Altbach (1971) observes that the educational facilities in the colonies were generally neglected. The same can be said about colonial Malta. An uneducated Maltese population served the British interests in keeping power over them. Yet, at the same time, the British in Malta had to control the professional classes and the clergy who might have harboured ideas of unifying Malta and Italy. The introduction of education of the masses in Malta therefore has to be understood within the context of regulating the lower classes, encouraging them to learn to read and write in their native tongue and the control of the population through emigration. Considering such political tactics it made more sense that those who were in charge of education – the teachers, headteachers and directors – were of low class origins mobilised to form 'a new middle class of educated Maltese acclimatized to the British style [who] came to accept British rule and developed pronounced British loyalties' (Cassar, 1988, p. 121).

This historical background provides an interesting backdrop for exploring Pullicino's need of the memoir to represent a woman teacher. As explained earlier, Pullicino was elevated to high positions in educational hierarchies due to his clear alliances with British control and therefore his position can be described as colonial. In the nineteenth century, political memoirs were quite common and widely circulated. Diaries and memoirs of minor statesmen – such as those of Sir Charles Grenenville, a clerk to the Privy Council[3] (1821-1851) – have cast important light on the politics of that particular time. One can only imagine that Pullicino was inspired to use the memoir through his contacts with the Privy Council and must have been particularly impressed by the popularity of the memoir in effectively reaching a large number of readers. However, Pullicino did not write his own memoirs, he did not publish his own life story. Neither did he urge Emmanuela to write out her own memoir. He chose to tell the life story of Emmanuela Azzopardi after her death to enlarge her good and pious qualities and immortalise her saintly nature as an exemplary educator.

In the UK and elsewhere it is highly probable to find documents, diaries and journals or letters written by nineteenth century women teachers themselves. Although one has to be careful not to read to close to these texts in that what is said by these women is sometimes a playful representation of what is acceptable of them, the very presence of these texts show that these texts were given the space to be created and the importance to be preserved. In Malta, up to this day, writings by Maltese women teachers are difficult to find. It is clear that Maltese women teachers,

as Emmanuela, have either not found the space or the political/personal motivations to articulate their visions of education and to represent themselves and their lives as women teachers.

Within such contexts, the political motives of publishing Emmanuela's memoir can be understood more clearly. The voice of Pullicino, a clergy who supports the British colonial cause, is crucial in defining the characteristics of the nineteenth century woman teacher. His social class, religious and gendered positions are well suited to the interests and workings of colonial power that seeks to establish 'consensual' control of the population. The fact that this memoir was written by a man who was picked in 1849 by the Governor and who was a priest directs one's attention to the way various discourses, governmental and religious, worked together to produce the morally good teacher. Above all, it sheds light on the Maltese socio-cultural context and the way certain men were chosen by colonial regimes to dominate the public domain. Such power networks are reflected in the kind of sources, official documents, pamphlets, memoirs, etc. available for historical accounts. Ronald Sultana (2001), in researching technical education in Malta, observes that generally these sources are written by those who see, analyse and interpret events 'from the top'. As he argues,

> 'In the 19th century, seeing events 'from the top', also meant privileging the male voice, so that history of technical education is predominantly a history of male education. As in many areas of life, women remain hidden from 'his/tory' either because the home was considered to be their proper place … ' (Sultana, 2001, pp. 67-68)

There are other power networks that ensured that men remained at the top controlling the administration of education on the islands. One has to mention that it was in the interest of the British not to oppose Maltese people where religion was concerned. The choice of a priest to formalise, manage and reform primary education was a tactful attempt to employ educational changes in line with the UK without any cause for concern that the public and especially the clergy would object to possible Protestant roots. Paolo Pullicino was the embodiment of the alliances of the two powers and his educational thought and practices brought together these discourses in the game of population control. He also marks the way governmental and religious discourses influence the educational sphere in Malta up to this day. As Joseph Zammit Mangion comments, Pullicino 'must be credited with the foundation of a truly "national system of [popular] education" on modern lines' and 'the Education Department as we know it today' as well as bringing 'to education in Malta an uncommon body of educational theory and lore … ' (Zammit Mangion, 1992, p. 21)

The making of the woman teacher

Pullicino made use of different strategies to regularise and manage schools. He chose the physical settings of the schools, organised pupils into classes, and issued detailed timetables for every class, including specifications of content, exercises and books to be used during the lessons (see Pullicino 1871b). Order in primary schools was his prime motive. Even the word 'method' to him was synonymous with order.

> '1. The word method, Greek in origin, generally means direction and order: applicable and indeed greatly necessary to everything.
> 2. When used in teaching it signifies order of ideas and words: as well as control of behaviour and work as desirable in school.' (Pullicino, 1858, p. 1; translated from the original Italian by myself)

Teachers were very much the product of this disciplinary mechanism just as their pupils were. They were controlled through the timetabled efficient use of time and through prescribed teaching methods. Such measures, as Foucault observes, induced teaching with an 'obligatory rhythm, imposed from the outside, it is a "programme" it assures the elaboration of the act itself; it controls its development and is staged from the inside' (Foucault, 1991a, p. 152).

Pullicino regularly issued rules of conduct. As an inspector he had the power to observe and control teachers through inspections and pupil examinations. But maybe the most influential way in which Pullicino ensured that his ideas were adhered to and made functional was through his appointment as a professor of primary school pedagogy and the opening of a Training School for assistant teachers. Pullicino's establishment of training schools was done on the lines of Sir James Kay Shuttleworth in the UK, of whom Pullicino was great a follower (Zammit Mangion, 1992, p. 21).

Shuttleworth was the secretary to the Privy Council that, through the establishment of specific training schools in the 1840s, contributed to the formation of the teacher as an ethical model to the urban classes. As Jones (1990, pp. 62-63) remarks, the training consisted in technologies of the transformation of the teachers' selves, men's or women's, into modest, humble persons who forget themselves in the service of others.

Pullicino's memoir shows an enactment of Shuttleworth's ideal teacher who is moral, virtuous, humble, modest and tame. This dedication to one particular woman teacher is clearly directed to set an exemplary behaviour for other women teachers. Pullicino's description of the ideal woman teacher, in fact, emphasises her subordination to her superiors, praising her for the reproduction of instructions and regulations set by Pullicino himself. However, such qualities and attitudes, as

I will argue again later on, were not only expected of women. The teacher's readiness to obey, which is mentioned in Pullicino's memoir, also features as one of Shuttleworth's general prerogatives in teachers' training and self-formation. Furthermore, the importance given to teachers' obedience and compliance to established rules and methods of teaching rather than their knowledge of subjects is common to both Pullicino's as well as Shuttleworth's ideal of the teacher. In the next section, I shall explain how women become the prime vehicles of pastoral power and how they gradually substituted the predominantly masculine authoritarian teaching styles when they increasingly took up men's places in schools.

The woman teacher as the pastoral carer

It is very clear that such maternal characteristics are particularly expected of women teachers. Emmanuela Azzopardi did not only epitomise Pullicino's vision of the perfect teacher but also that of the perfect woman and mother. The hierarchical arrangement of the relationship between Pullicino the director and inspector, Azzopardi the teacher and her pupils is parallel to the familial relations between father, mother and children. This, once again, recalls the image of the Victorian[4] family and that of the mother as the teacher of virtue of her children.

Moreover, Pullicino's processes of making and regulating the teacher in the nineteenth century functioned as a way to normalise family life, especially that of the lower classes. The teacher, at this point, comes to be perceived as a model substitute parent. It is here that the maternal characteristics of the woman teacher are exploited and that the link between the mother and teacher is mostly evident. Her subtle gentleness, love and caring together with her moral excellence, virtuosity and asexuality, which are also the qualities that this memoir highlights, are actually the prevalent qualities of the mother in the Victorian era (Thurer, 1994, pp. 182-287). These maternal characteristics were gradually transferred to the woman teacher when the socialisation of children was taken over by public institutions.

The description of Emmanuela Azzopardi as the mother and the teacher of virtue stems from Pullicino's religious background. But the description was particularly acceptable because, as Thurer explains, in the late nineteenth century the mother was the secular version of the Virgin Mary. She was put on a pedestal, considered the angel of the house because of her important social role of teaching virtue to her children. Emmanuela Azzopardi's characteristics, at least those mentioned by Pullicino, and the general image of the good teacher promoted by discourses of teacher training are remarkably close to the ideal Victorian mother.

Emmanuela's role as a teacher overlapped with the duties of the mother to compensate for the lack of moral education of children by their parents. Pullicino's description of Azzopardi shows that teaching gradually diffused into the territory of parenting, especially where working class 'wild' children were concerned.

> 'She gave a lot of thought to moral education. She used to try and educate her students in religious practices. These should not only be studied in School during Catechism but also practised by doing religious duties. And she attended to this in a serious manner and made her students account for their religious practices. Teachers who wish that their School is not only a means of instruction but a strong foundation for the best moral education should do the same thing. She did not say that parents should provide for this. In the case of public elementary schools, mostly attended by daughters of working class persons, they should provide for all the needs of these girls; whose religious education is greatly neglected if not opposed by the parents themselves. The School therefore should compensate for this lack. Otherwise those instructresses who do not provide for this produce badly and half educated students from their schools.' (Pullicino, 1871a, p. 11)

Investigating the memoir

The memoir is a useful source for an analysis of the way women teachers are constructed as subjects and objects of knowledge and the powerful/powerless positions they hold as women and teachers in the dissemination of patriarchal and colonial ideologies through the teaching of the young. It features as one of the important sources for an analysis of the power relations through which persons are constructed within particular historical socio-cultural contexts. The memoir as a historical document outlines the discourses and knowledges formed at particular times and places, and especially how these define individuals, prescribe and ascribe their roles.

Michel Foucault is especially known for using memoirs to show how power structures and institutional discourses are used and reformed to create subjectivities. My search in historical documents and finding Pullicino's *A Little Memoir of the Life of a Good and Pious Woman Educator* has been inspired by a similar Foucaultian quest to trace the formation of discourses about women, and teachers in particular, and the social uses of their particular roles as carers of the young. This methodology, which is termed genealogy, is different from the usual ways of doing history. Genealogy relies on historical data and facts in the archive, but the aim is not that of a conventional history which aims to give a story of progress and development of some idea or practice. It hints at the possible spaces that created certain discourses which formed certain subjects (Foucault, 1984).

This interest in genealogy, as Foucault himself describes it, is a critical concern with the history of the present in that it seeks to trace the conditions, the spaces out of which discourses and persons with particular characteristics could be created.

> 'Here too the investigation makes use of "true" documents, but in such a way as to furnish not just the evidence of truth but also an experience that might permit an alteration, a transformation, of the relationship we have with ourselves, our cultural universe: in a word with our knowledge (savoir).' (Foucault, 1991b, p. 37)

Foucault as a genealogist makes an archaeological use of the same raw materials of the historian – archives, chronicles, memoirs, dairies, journals and official records. However, he makes different use of them when he seeks to trace the way discourses have been shaped to affect our present lives. As a genealogist, he presents an interpretation of why certain things take the shape they have. But what is of particular interest to this paper is his use of memoirs and his reflections and deliberations on the way they could be presented to the reader. It is clear that his use of the memoirs of Pierre Rivière (see Foucault, 1975) and Herculine Barbin (see Foucault, 1980a) is guided by his broader genealogical interests in tracing the formations of subjectivities; abnormalised and normalised ones.

Foucault's particular focus on the lives of persons considered to deviate from the norm – Pierre Rivière, a 16 year-old boy who killed his mother, brother and sister and Herculine Barbin, a hermaphrodite – is not driven by a curiosity of how these persons lived but by how their lives were judged through their very representations. Foucault's use of memoirs and documents are not aimed to monumentalise the persons and their lives, but to analyse the documents in a way to shed light on the way persons were conveyed through these writings. A genealogical interest in these texts demands an active reading of the texts; one which is open to interpretation of the readers. In fact, Foucault struggled with how these texts could be presented to the reader and with the question of how Pierre Rivière or Herculine Barbin would be allowed to speak, and how readers could come up with their own readings of the memoir. Foucault, in his introduction to Pierre Rivière, explains that documents and memoirs are to be analysed because 'they give us a key to the relations of power, domination and conflict within which discourses emerge and function and hence provide material for a potential analysis of discourse which may be both tactical and political and therefore strategic' (Foucault, 1975, pp. xi-xii).

Surprisingly, Foucault does not analyse or interpret the document. Foucault himself admits that the memoir could have been used to bring out the discourses that have lead to a definition of madness or to consider Barbin or Rivière as examples of their own kind. In 'Lives of Infamous Men', Foucault (2001) writes of his

indecisions regarding the use of the documents he came across. Clearly he considered these archives too important not to get them published, but in this introduction he again expresses his concern about whether to actually reproduce them as they appear originally or include an accompanying analysis. Nevertheless, Foucault's writings about his own investigations of these documents are significant to the discussion related to an analysis of Emmanuela's memoir and the use of this memoir. Foucault's documents are different from Pullicino's memoir of Emmanuela in that they are not used to represent exemplary lives. On the contrary, if any lesson is to be learnt this is that the bad, scandalous and impious are to be restrained and that they are to remain infamous. Nevertheless, Emmanuela and the persons in Foucault's documents have had a similar fate; it is their relations with power that ensured our knowledge of their existence today. As Foucault explains

> 'But in order for some part to reach us, a beam of light had to illuminate them, for a moment at least. A light coming from elsewhere. What snatched them from the darkness in which they could, perhaps should have remained was the encounter with power, without that collision, its very unlikely that any word would be there to recall their fleeting trajectory … All those lives destined to pass beneath any discourse and disappear without ever having been told were able to leave traces – brief incisive, often enigmatic – only at the point of their instantaneous contact with power. So that it is doubtless impossible ever to grasp them again in themselves, as they might have been "in a free state", they can no longer be separated out from the declamations, the tactical biases, the obligatory lies that power relations and power games presuppose.' (Foucault, 2001, p. 161)

The two faces of the memoir

The memoir is an ambiguous piece of writing considered from a feminist perspective. This is because the memoir seeks to place the woman teacher within the public sphere in a different way from statistics, registries and records. The memoir which is more of the biographical type taking the form of a life history delves into the personal realm – something which is all the more relevant to a feminist that reads the personal as political. The memoir places Emmanuela within the public sphere, it symbolises the particular work of women within socio-cultural domain; a task that feminists today are very much concerned with. Furthermore, the memoir is the first we know that seeks to describe a Maltese teacher and her life in such detail. Stories of Maltese teachers have largely been ignored and are still very much unknown. The memoir therefore is a witness of her existence. It is through this writing that we get to know of Emmanuel Azzopardi.

The problem with the memoir is that we never get to know her in her own terms. Foucault's considerations in using the memoir are inspired by his aim to insurrect subjugated knowledges, that is, 'a whole set of knowledges that have been disqualified as inadequate to their own task or insufficiently elaborated; naïve knowledges located down on the hierarchy, beneath the required level of cognition or scientificity' (Foucault, 1980b, p. 82). Emmanuela's memoir remains subjugated. She is never allowed to paint her own self-portrait; she is never allowed to be presented in a 'free state' as Foucault would have it. In this respect, Emmanuela's memoir is different from that of Pierre Rivière and Herculine Barbin in that the latter are written by the authors themselves and get the space to be able to articulate their own versions of the events, their own interpretations of their lives. This does not mean that Pierre Rivière's interpretations of his own story are not subjected to the discourses that construct him as a murderer. Foucault (1975) himself uses their memoirs to explain the way discourses create a typical portrait of the murderer.

Nevertheless, one can say that Emmanuela's memoir undercuts the democratic attempts at making the unknown known because Emmanuela never gets to speak. We never hear her voice. We formulate our own visions of her through the gaze of a colonised elite whose interpretive techniques were informed by patriarchal, religious and imperial thinking.

The ambiguous and contradictory political functions of the memoir can be understood if compared to ambivalent uses of a veil. The memoir can be considered a veil that hides 'the real woman' underneath, but it is through the veil itself that the woman is made and can make herself an active subject. The woman is conspicuous and invisible both at the same time. The veil is preoccupying for those who see it as annihilating women's possibilities of representing their selves just as the difficulties in finding texts written by women and women teachers themselves make one concerned with the oppressive and silencing characteristics of the memoir. Nevertheless, this invisibility of the woman is what ironically marks her existence and raises, as has been done in earlier sections, the feminist political interest in analysing the way she is portrayed.

Through Western eyes the veil is oppressively hiding the woman just as the memoir does, but through the veil the woman can still observe the world without being observed. The memoir is the way through which Emmanuela 'sees' the world, allowing us only to guess what she looked like, making us struggle to imagine who she is beyond the veiling memoir. Pullicino's memoir, in a similar fashion, instigates the reversal of the power of the patriarchal gaze and the political enterprise of possibly reinventing the woman that Pullicino has created and imaging the world as observed by her.

Speaking for Emmanuela

The contents of the memoir itself illustrate the social expectations from women and their domestication in these roles. But they also illustrate the need of the colonial elite to make them public and accessible to a particular kind of audience which understands Italian and curious enough to know details of her life and character. Obviously, Emmanuela Azzopardi had no say in what was written about her life at home and at school since this memoir was in fact written a few months after she died. But it is easy for one to assume, considering the type of discipline she was subjected to and the particular life contexts, that she would not have objected, at least publicly, to what was written about her. This memoir shows a mode of disciplining women teachers which is not coercive. It is more a technology of the self where women teachers are expected 'to perfect themselves and make themselves of more value to the noble mission that they have consecrated themselves to' (Pullicino, 1871a, p. 1).

The power relations of not letting women speak on their own behalf portray the gendered relations between the powerful Director of Education and the obedient woman teacher; the speaking knowledgeable creating subject and the spoken created agent of the reproduction of knowledge. The simple social equation between the powerful man and the woman – a male priest director and a woman teacher – becomes more complicated if one brings in the scenes of colonial discourses and educational machines to foreground the equation.

Postcolonial texts such as Spivak's have critically analysed the complex patriarchal relations between coloniser, colonised men and women, pinpointing at how colonisers see themselves as saving indigenous women from the misery of remaining oppressively silenced. Colonisers do this by allowing them spaces not conceded to them by their native husbands. The memoir can be also read within this spirit. Pullicino is the native man, both colonised and coloniser, who uses the gendered spaces allowed to him by a combination of native and colonial discourses to define or redefine women in education. Pullicino saves Emmanuela from remaining nameless, but he benevolently names her through colonial languages that are conceded to him to construct her feminine identity as a women and educator.

Spivak (1988, 1999) explains, in her analysis of the appearance of colonised women in the archive, that woman emerges only when she is needed in the space of imperial production. In other words, the values given to her are colonial and patriarchal ones. Spivak makes this comment when she describes the ways by which colonisers go against the traditional patriarchal to appear the benevolent saviours of women accustomed to commit sati.[5]

When one reads the memoir in the light of Spivak's account of the power relations of the practices of sati, one immediately realises that it is the space created through the colonial needs of the memoir that saves Emmanuela from her eternal death. On the other hand, just as women commit sati to be remembered as honourable women, here again, ironically, it is her death that ensures her living memory. One would argue that she would rather be dead than living a dead life. But that would be the perspective of a Western feminist reader who is interested in the task of reviving the dead woman through the subversive and imaginative reading of the memoir – a recreation of a life that could have been.

Speaking as Emmanuela

Would Emmanuela have described her mission in the same ways as Pullicino does? What would she have said about herself and about Pullicino? What if one managed to peep into her very secret diaries? What portraits would emerge from the meanings she gave to her life as a woman and teacher? What subjugated knowledges would have been unveiled?

Feminists, such as Donna Haraway (1988), would raise the question of what representing herself in her own terms means; noting that even if she were allowed to paint her own portrait, she might have used the techniques of representation and the images that would have made her acceptable.

This echoes Spivak's critique of the Subaltern Studies historians group whose aim was to recuperate the political voice, will and agency of the subaltern. Spivak (1988) objects to the idea that the subaltern is a free being in full control of her own destiny and that even their subjugated knowledges are tainted by dominant discourses. Sovereign subaltern subject is an effect of the dominant discourse of the elite.

In this sense, any knowledge derived from a self-portrait would need to be read within the situations and contextual positions – that is, patriarchal and colonial – in which Emmanuela would have described herself as a woman and a teacher. As Scott (1992, p. 37) points out, the simple reproduction of women's experience has little value if it does not explore the historical and social contexts in which it is produced. And this marks another aspect in analysing the power/knowledge networks of representing Emmanuela; the presence of the theorist and her unavoidable need of her analysing and scrutinising gaze.

Subjugated knowledges are involved in processes of interpretations and these interpretations, as Haraway (1988) explains, are always partial and limited.

The very standpoints of the subjugated (Harstock, 1990) cannot be understood as having a direct relation to the truth. They are situated knowledges – localised and contextualised.

Face to face with Emmanuela?

This paper is concerned with the possibilities of unveiling Emmanuela, a process which is undoubtedly inspired by Western feminist emancipatory methodological principles of giving voice to women and of reading their experiences as products of their particular contexts; of coming face to face with them. In pondering on the possibilities of reviving the lady, on considering the uses of imagination and fiction in creating a portrait, one important question remains.

Can we have a subaltern reading of Emmanuela's life? Is it possible to have a reading and a reinvention of her life which subverts the patriarchal, colonial definitions that have represented her in the first place?

A fictional subversive reading of her life would satisfy the desires of coming face to face with someone, an unknown and hidden other. But, yet again, feminist desires of such political strategies themselves continue to be part of an entangled web of power and knowledge that involved women's relations among themselves. And with contexts, however adverse, that make their representation possible.

Spivak's (1993) work can again throw some light on this debate. Her criticism of the French feminist Kristeva's ways of presenting Chinese women makes one reflect on the unexpected and politically incorrect outcomes of such endeavours. Spivak (1993) argues that Kristeva, in her book *About Chinese Women*, rather than representing Chinese women with their particular diverse culture, ends up explaining them though her own frames of thought grounded in her French feminist theoretical baggage.

Spivak critiques Kristeva for being self-centred and for her inability to let the subaltern speak. Spivak argues that Western feminist attempts to describe the other always include a reading of their own selves and a projection of their own selves and their own history and cultures on to others. The theorist that seeks to revive Emmanuela runs a similar risk of creating a portrait of their own selves as women and teachers. Nevertheless, the risk can be taken consciously as one cannot step out of those discourses which make her who she is in the first place. Kristeva may be wrong in reading Chinese women's lives without seriously taking their cultural contexts and their history in consideration. But, as Spivak herself has argued, neither can Chinese women's speech as that of a subaltern group be considered as untainted from powerful dominant discourses. In such instances, the reading of the lives of others can never escape a reading of our own lives. Coming face to face with the

other necessitates coming face to face with ourselves and reading ourselves in a critical manner – as if we are outsiders to ourselves. A critical reading of history, which involves reading and interpreting stories about others, helps us understand ourselves as we have become today, opening possibilities of creating ourselves differently.

The memoir is a dangerous terrain to tread on. It is a labyrinth of power networks in which one finds oneself easily captured. Yet, it can be read as a space from which one can emerge differently. It is the experience itself of being in the labyrinth that makes it possible to emerge, and therefore the emergence has to be read and invented within readings of various contexts; theoretical, social cultural, political and historical.

There can be imaginative attempts to vindicate the silenced voice of Emmanuela. A feminist has to be inspired by the memoir – and see it as an ambivalent space from which women educators can possibly emerge. She can paint the portrait as Emmanuela, but as she does so she would also paint her own portrait; who she is, who she has become. Coming face to face with Emmanuela necessitates coming face to face with oneself.

Notes

1. Pullicino wrote the memoir in Italian. I translated into English the excerpts that appear in the paper.
2. In the British Empire, the Governor was an official appointed by the British Monarch (or, in fact, the cabinet) to oversee the running of a particular colony. As such, he was the head of the local colonial administration.
3. The Privy Council was originally a committee of the closest advisors of the British Monarch who could give him or her advice on affairs of state.
4. The Victorian era, which refers to the period of Queen Victoria's rule between 1837 and 1901, marks the height of the British industrial revolution and the apex of the British Empire. This period has been defined by a variety of sensibilities and political concerns that have come to be associated with the Victorians.
5. Sati is a Hindu funeral custom, now very rare, in which the dead man's widow commits suicide by throwing herself on her husband's burning funeral pyre.

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LEARNING STYLES AND THE SELECTION OF MAJORS AMONG LEBANESE YOUTH

RAMZI N. NASSER
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Abstract – *Learning style preferences and selection of university major data were obtained from a sample of 199 Lebanese high school graduates. These measures and gender were used to assess the relation between the selection of major and learning style preferences. The main assumption was that students who believe they have competencies or ability in a certain area would make choices to pursue activities in these areas in order to develop further these competencies (Holland, 1973). The perceptual and biological development of students' auditory, visual, tactual and kinesthetic senses appeared to be a key factor in their way of acquiring information. Thus, fitting learning preferences to the specific content knowledge required is with little doubt a very important issue that needs to be addressed by research. This study found that learning style preferences were not homogeneous and were not homogenously distributed across majors. Overall, students indicated a preference for the visual and active learning styles. Females, however, were higher than males on both reflective and verbal styles. Chi-square analyses indicated that each of the six general major areas had distinct learning style attribute profiles that distinguished them from the others. Learning style profiles, therefore, may contribute positively to student selection processes for different majors.*

Introduction

Most educators are receptive to the idea that students are not alike and consequently do not learn in the same way. When students approach a learning task or situation, they do not all use the same approach, and not all of them perform in the same way in the same setting. A differentiated conception of learning-centred learning styles has been formulated by educational researchers (e.g., Renzulli & Dai, 2001) and many dimensions have been identified (see William, 2000). Among the learning style dimensions that have gained prominence in the field of education and cognitive psychology, there are abstract versus concrete (Kolb, 1976), sensing modality (Renzulli & Smith, 1978), visual versus auditory learning preferences (Barbe & Swassing, 1979), the physical and social characteristics of the learning environment (Dunn, Dunn & Price, 1975) and the kind and amount of formal content structure there is in the degree discipline and learning process (Hunt, 1975).

Although a number of learning style models have been developed, it is Kolb's (1984) model which is the most popular and widely used among adolescents in schools (Sternberg & Grigorenko, 2001). Basing himself on Carl Jung's (1971) theories discussed in *Psychological Types*, Kolb conceptualised learning style as the personality style. Kolb's work was later modified by Myers (1978) into what is now known as the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI). The MBTI instrument assesses personality types with application to learning, but is viewed by many as somewhat limited and flawed in several ways (see Pittenger, 1993). More recently, however, Richard Felder and Linda Silverman have proposed a learning style model which comprehensively captures and integrates many of the different views and learning style dimensions currently found in the literature. These two theorists classify students as having preferences for one category or the other along the following four dimensions: (i) Active/Reflective; (ii) Sensing/Intuitive; (iii) Visual/Verbal; and (iv) Sequential/Global (see Felder & Silverman, 1988; Felder, Felder & Dietz, 2002; Felder & Spurlin, 2005). A detailed description of these dimensions is given in the Methods section of this paper and can be found in even greater detail in Felder & Silverman (1988) and Felder (1993). Learning style preferences (through re-scoring the same items) can also be organised into another frame of reference (or lens) which has three dimensions: cognitive, affective and psychological behaviours that serve as relatively stable indicators of how students interact with, perceive and respond to a given learning environment (DeBello, 1989). The identification of any learning style and personality trait associated with student choice of major (and later completion of a major) could serve as a valuable guide and additional formal screening tool for admissions to a university.

Learning styles and choice of major

In recent years, considerable attention has been paid to new pedagogies and the non-traditional learning paradigm. This new focus has prompted a fundamental shift in classroom pedagogy from one that is centred on providing instruction to one that focuses on active, collaborative and cooperative tasks which seek to engage students in their own education (Barr & Tagg, 1995). Given the now prevailing view that certain fields of study accommodate certain learning styles and the 'new pedagogies' better than other learning styles and pedagogies, it is somewhat surprising that little research has been done on this potential interaction. Thus, an attempt at identifying and clarifying the relationships between individual learning style preferences and choice of major is certainly a step in the right direction. Unfortunately (to those of us in the rest of the world), the available

studies have primarily had a North American focus (Worthington & Higgs, 2004) and their ecological validity is doubtful if not unknown. As far as the present authors are aware, with the exception of the studies by Nasser & Abouchedid (2006) and Abouchedid & Nasser (2000), little research has been done on how students select their majors in the Middle East and in Lebanon in particular. Even with the glut of studies on learning style preferences in relation to scholastic majors, studies have been limited to 'within' studies that investigate learning styles of students within a specific major. These include education (Mathews, 1994; Braio, 2000), nursing (Laschinger & Boss, 1984; Underwood, 1987; Duff, Johnston & Laschinger, 1992), food sciences (Palou, 2006), engineering (Felder & Silverman, 1988; Ingham, 2000), geography (Healey, Kneale & Bradbeer, 2005), business (Loo, 2002), marketing (Brown & Burke, 1987; Stewart & Felicetti, 1992; Davis, Misra & Van Auken, 2000), accounting (Baker, Simon & Bazeli, 1986; Brown & Burke, 1987; Hoiley & Jenkins, 1993), finance (Brown & Burke, 1987) and various other disciplines (Mathews, 1994). This study, on the other hand, investigates the relations between learning styles and choice of major (i.e., comparatively) among students who are about to enter a private Catholic university in Lebanon.

The theoretical view used in this study to model the selection of majors is derived from Holland's (1973) work *Making Vocational Choices*. According to this view,

> 'people who believe they lack competencies or ability in some areas will make choices that avoid activities in those areas and thus do not develop further competencies in those areas. In contrast, people who believe they have competencies or ability in certain areas will make choices to pursue activities in those areas and thus further develop their competencies.' (Gottfredson, 2002, p. 202)

Although Holland emphasised that learning is an important component of the process of making vocational choices, he did not integrate learning style preferences into his model. His helical view of vocational selection, where activities lead to interests and thus to competencies, suggests that learning is at the front-end and parallel to performance. A career seeker may gain these interests (as well as satisfactions) from others who provide encouragement to pursue these interests later (Holland, 1985). In this way, then, students may choose certain majors because they use pedagogies that match their individual learning preferences. For instance, students may choose a business major because it lends to social/conceptual-based pedagogies (Mathews, 1994), or they may choose architecture because it lends to visual competencies not found in the business field. The current study, therefore, extends and clarifies this view

and the understanding of students' selection of their major by explicitly rather than implicitly measuring and including learning style in this model and theoretical view.

Educational and scientific importance of the study

This investigation is unique because it is an *a priori* study were measures of learning styles were taken prior to the enrolment in an academic program. Previous studies on the selection of majors (see Underwood, 1987; Melear, 1989; Stewart & Felicetti, 1992; Mathews, 1994; Braio, 2000; Ingham, 2000; Loo, 2002; Davis, Misra & Van Auken, 2000) measured learning styles after enrolment into a scholastic major, which confounds a clear examination of this relationship in several different ways. The current study also extends the work on learning style as a possible guide for career counsellors. By utilising documented learning style profiles for each scholastic major, academic counsellors can use students' learning style profiles to provide guidance to students applying to join university along with other pre-admission screening criteria. With the rising popularity of certain academic majors at university, such as the business administration (Davis, Misra & Van Auken, 2000), there is also a need to understand how students prefer to learn in these courses. This would help to design these courses along the lines indicated by their learning-teaching style profiles. The pedagogical approaches that facilitate learning can do much to foster students' positive attitude toward learning and the quality of outcomes. Research reveals in fact a positive relationship between attitude and learning (see Johnson, 1996; Kuhlemeier, van den Bergh & Melse, 1996). Thus, the need to assimilate learning styles within student-centred pedagogical approaches as a basis for good teaching is, with little doubt, an important goal toward the development of highly successful pedagogies in higher education.

Higher education faculty often wonder if college students are really interested in their major. One could argue that students probably choose college majors for reasons other than interest in the subject area (e.g., financial returns). A great deal of the literature, however, indicates that although interest is one of, if not, the dominant factor in career choice (see Carifio, 1992), students have difficulties making decisions about careers and majors at the beginning of their higher education careers. Thus, the present study examined learning style preferences of entry level students to a Lebanese university in relation to their selection of majors to see if student choice might be better understood and predicted by this important variable, which is related to personality as are career interests and choices in adulthood.

The current policy in international higher education is that students have to choose their majors prior to admission to a university (Chitnis, 1999; Darvas, 1999; Sporn, 1999). Therefore, the possibility of using learning style preferences as one criterion for admission to a scholastic major is a viable and psychometrically sound (personality self-assessment) approach and construct to career aspirations and choices. Further, it has been suggested by Renzulli & Dai (2001) that once an area of study (scholastic major) is identified, learning style could be used along with other combinations of aptitude measures as criteria for admission, hence providing a fuller picture of prospective university student admission profile and perhaps better prediction of outcomes.

Methods

Procedure

Students were asked to fill the Learning Style Index questionnaire during the pre-admission examinations. The questionnaire was included in fact with their examination package for a private university in Lebanon. All students were told that filling out the questionnaire was a voluntary initiative and that complete response confidentiality would be maintained. Prospective students were also told that if they wished, they could just finish their admission examinations and leave. The learning styles inventory (Felder & Spurin, 2005) had a 98% completion rate for these students.

The sample of respondents in this study consisted of high school graduates who were seeking admission to a Lebanese private university. Most students came from schools in which English was the medium of instruction. A probabilistic sampling technique was employed by one of the researchers in this study. Students who were applying for admission and taking the entrance examination were asked to fill the Learning Style Index. Their age range spread from 17 to 43, averaging 19.69 years. There were 90 females and 109 males. Out of the prospective applicants, 82 were for the business school, 61 for engineering, 4 for the sciences, 13 for communication studies, 13 for architecture and graphic design, and 8 for the humanities and social sciences. The rest did not respond.

The constructs of the Learning Style Index

The Learning Style Index questionnaire has four dimensions, which are supported by well-established theories in education and cognitive psychology (Felder & Silverman, 1988). The four dimensions included in the instrument are:

(i) Active/Reflective; (ii) Sensing/Intuitive; (iii) Visual/Verbal; and (iv) Sequential/ Global.

- The first dimension is part of the activity or learning-centred approach (Rayner & Riding, 1997) and is based on Kolb's (1984) learning styles model. **Active** learners are those who prefer group work and physical activity, whereas **Reflective** learners prefer to work alone and are introspective learners.

- The second dimension is a personality trait measure which is measured by the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (Myers, 1978). While **Sensing** learners prefer to use external cues such as sounds and physical sensations, **Intuitive** learners try to discover possibilities, hunches and relationships.

- The third dimension is based on Paivio's (1971) dual coding theory which suggests that visual and verbal information are processed by different cognitive sub-systems. While **Visual** learners prefer pictures, diagrams, graphs and flowcharts, **Verbal** learners are more attuned for auditory sounds and words.

- The fourth and final dimension is based on work on individual differences (Witkin et al., 1962; Dyk & Witkin, 1965) which is specifically driven by cognitively based styles. This dimension defines whether one is a sequential or a global learner. Whereas a **Sequential** learner accommodates and understands material in small, connected chunks, a **Global** learner tends to absorb information in seemingly unconnected chunks.

Needs to be said however that other sub-dimensions of these four major dimensions also play important roles in determining how a student receives and processes information.

The overall research question for this study explores whether a specific type of learning style (i.e., Active/Reflective; Sensing/Intuitive; Visual/Verbal; and Sequential/Global) can be identified by the type of scholastic major that students choose, in the knowledge that students' learning styles worldwide are active, sensing, visual and global (Felder & Spurlin, 2005).

Instruments

The Index of Learning Styles is a 44-item questionnaire designed to assess learning style preferences along four dimensions (Felder & Spurlin, 2005). Each learning dimension has 11 items. Each item has a forced response choice format (either 'a' or 'b') which characterises if one has a specific attribute for that

dimension. For instance, on the Active/Reflective dimension, the active and reflective characteristics can have an overall score from 0 to 11. While the 'a' responses for the 11 items of this dimension represent the active learner preferences, the 'b' responses for the same 11 items represent the reflective learner preferences. Preferences can be thought of in degrees. Thus, if a respondent makes 6 to 8 'a' responses on the Active/Reflective dimension, he or she is then an above average active learner. Should, however, the respondent make 8 to 10 'a' responses on the same dimension, the respondent would be then a highly active learner. For each dimension, the two attributes are inversely related to each other. In practice, taking once again the Active/Reflective dimension as a case in point, the higher the active learning style score for the respondent, the lower is his or her reflective learning style score. A number of parametric tests (including correlations, *t*-tests and ANOVAs) were performed to examine if there is a relation between the learning preferences expressed within each dimension and the selection of majors.

On the 'selection of major' questionnaire, students are asked to indicate their selected (i.e., desired) major. The students in this study were however also asked to indicate their selected major on the 'learning style preferences' questionnaire. In addition, these students were further asked to place their candidate number on the 'learning style preferences' questionnaire to crosscheck their selection of major on the questionnaire to their application form. The principal investigator administered the instruments and offered feedback to interested subjects at the end of the sessions. Subjects were assured that the data would only be used for research and that the exercise was voluntary.

Results

The first analysis focused on the score on each of the four dimensions of the learning style preferences questions for this sample of students. Recalculating a count score for the 11 items of each dimension by multiplying the first of the couplet (i.e., active, sensing, visual and sequential) by '-1' creates positive and negative deviation scores for each dimension that should average to zero if there were no imbalances in the sample relative to the attributes of the couplet for that dimension. Thus, a mean of 0 for a given dimension would indicate a 'no preference condition' for either of the learning styles in the couplet and an equal distribution for each attribute pair that made up the dimension. A *z*-test of the difference between the dimensional mean and the theoretical mean of 0 was calculated for each of the couplets. The results were: (i) Active(-ve)/Reflective dimension (M = -4.06, SD = 3.62, $p > .05$); (ii) Sensing(-ve)/Intuitive dimension (M = -1.63, SD = 4.48, $p > .05$); (iii) Visual(-ve)/Verbal dimension (M = -4.31,

SD = 4.32, $p > .05$); and (iv) Sequential(-ve)/Global dimension (M = -0.25, *SD* = 4.08, $p > .05$). These results indicate no significant differences between the ideal mean of 0 and the mean of each dimension. The learning preferences for students in this sample were found to be 'balanced' and representative in theory of the population of students who take this questionnaire.

The second analysis involved obtaining a count for each of the responses and then a mean and standard deviation of these counts for the whole sample. Table 1 reports these means and standard deviations. As can be seen from Table 1, the highest mean in the sample was for visual learning styles, followed by those who prefer active learning styles.

Comparisons of mean learning styles by gender were also carried out (see Table 2). As can be seen from Table 2, the only two differences found were that while males were significantly higher than females on active learning style preferences ($p < .05$), females were significantly higher than males on reflective learning style preferences ($p < .05$). Given that these were only 2 of the 8 attributes measured by the scale, one may conclude that the females and males in this sample were more alike than they were different in terms of their learning style preferences. This is particularly so since the differences found could be due, in part, to cultural conditioning.

TABLE 1: Overall means (M) and standard deviations (SD) for each couplet attribute of the four learning styles measured

Learning Styles	*N*	*M*	*SD*
Active	199	7.43	1.88
Reflective	199	3.37	1.83
Sensing	199	6.21	2.30
Intuitive	199	4.57	2.26
Visual	199	7.56	2.21
Verbal	199	3.25	2.19
Sequential	199	5.48	2.09
Global	199	5.23	2.11

TABLE 2: Comparisons of mean learning style preferences by gender

Learning Styles	Gender	*N*	*M*	*SD*	*t*-value
Active	Female Male	90 109	7.1333 7.6789	1.8914 1.8453	-2.05*
Reflective	Female Male	90 109	3.7111 3.0917	1.8618 1.7667	2.40*
Sensing	Female Male	90 109	6.1667 6.2385	2.3619 2.2645	-0.22
Intuitive	Female Male	90 109	4.6444 4.5138	2.3431 2.2011	0.41
Visual	Female Male	90 109	7.5111 7.5963	2.0731 2.3259	-0.27
Verbal	Female Male	90 109	3.3000 3.2110	2.0904 2.2774	0.29
Sequential	Female Male	90 109	5.5556 5.4220	2.1832 2.0244	0.45
Global	Female Male	90 109	5.1778 5.2844	2.1650 2.0687	-0.35

* $p < .05$

A two-way ANOVA was done to determine whether there were any differences between the selection of major and gender. A main effect (see Table 3) was found for major (using the couplet score) on the Sensing/Intuitive dimension ($F(5,169) = 2.67$, $p < .05$). In identifying the differences within the selection of major variable, Scheffe's post-hoc analyses revealed differences between those who selected sciences and architecture, and between those who selected sciences and social sciences/humanities, with science majors being consistently more sensing than intuitive. Thus, when comparing the differences in the selected majors on each learning style uniquely, it was found that only the sensing and

intuitive dimensions of learning style were different between the six majors. The science students were more sensing in their learning styles than the students in other majors. In addition, those who were in the humanities and social sciences were more intuitive than those in other types of major.

A significant main effect was also found for gender ($F(1,169) = 4.71, p < .05$), with females being more reflective than active (which is practically the same difference found and reported in Table 1).

TABLE 3: Mean and F-ratio differences between majors for each learning style dimension

Selection of Major							
Active	7.74	7.03	6.50	7.62	7.62	7.75	1.37
Reflective	3.16	3.59	4.50	3.38	3.31	3.25	0.73
Sensing	6.55	6.13	8.75	6.54	5.00	4.50	3.22*
Intuitive	4.29	4.51	2.25	4.46	5.85	6.50	3.37*
Visual	7.74	7.52	7.75	6.54	7.92	7.25	0.79
Verbal	3.13	3.13	3.25	4.46	3.00	3.75	1.03
Sequential	5.60	5.28	7.75	6.00	4.92	4.63	1.74
Global	5.20	5.26	3.25	4.85	5.85	6.38	1.47

* $p < .05$

The final analysis attempted to understand the relationship between each of the leaning styles and the different majors. This was done by comparing the frequency of each learning style attribute by a selected major. As can be seen from Table 4, significant differences were found between each of the styles. Students choosing business and economics majors tended to be active rather than reflective learners, and also visual rather than verbal learners. Engineering majors tended to be more active than reflective and more visual than verbal. Science majors tended to be sensing rather than intuitive, sequential rather than global, and visual rather than

verbal. Those who selected communication studies had a higher mean on active learning style, followed by sensing and then intuitive. Students who selected architecture tended to be more visual than active. Finally, in comparison to the other selected majors, those who selected the humanities and social sciences were more active than reflective and more visual than verbal.

TABLE 4: Frequencies and percentages for each major selection by each learning style

Selection of Major						
	Number of Responses by Learning Style (Column Percentages)					
Active	635 (17.84)	429 (16.56)	26 (14.77)	99 (17.37)	99 (17.52)	62 (17.61)
Reflective	259 (7.28)	219 (8.46)	18 (10.23)	44 (7.72)	43 (7.61)	26 (7.39)
Sensing	537 (15.08)	374 (14.44)	35 (19.89)	85 (14.91)	65 (11.50)	36 (10.23)
Intuitive	352 (9.89)	275 (10.62)	9 (5.11)	58 (10.18)	76 (13.45)	52 (14.77)
Visual	635 (17.84)	459 (17.72)	31 (17.61)	85 (14.91)	103 (18.23)	58 (16.48)
Verbal	257 (7.22)	191 (7.37)	13 (7.39)	58 (10.18)	39 (6.90)	30 (8.52)
Sequential	459 (12.89)	322 (12.43)	31 (17.61)	78 (13.68)	64 (11.33)	37 (10.51)
Global	426 (11.97)	321 (12.39)	13 (7.39)	63 (11.05)	76 (13.45)	51 (14.49)
χ^2	566.01**	361.50**	38.33**	72.29**	86.91**	50.91**

** $p < .001$

The study found that learning style preferences were not homogeneous and were not homogenously distributed across majors. Overall, students indicated a preference for the visual ($M = 7.56$, $SD = 2.21$) and active ($M = 7.43$, $SD = 1.88$) learning styles (see Table 1). Using each major as a cohort group, chi-square analyses indicated that each of the six general major areas had distinct learning style attribute profiles that distinguished them from the others (see Table 4). In general, pre-admission students showed a significantly high percentage of active styles compared to other styles.

Discussion and conclusion

Students in different areas of studies in college and universities have different learning styles. Similar to the students in the studies by Palou (2006), Zualkernan, Allert & Qadah (2006) and Felder & Silverman (1988), the students in this study favoured active, sensing, visual and sequential learning styles. It was also found in this study that active and visual styles dominate students' learning approaches. But, on the other hand, university teaching at undergraduate level is predominately verbal, thus requiring a reflective and in some cases abstract involvement in the learning process. We found Lebanese students to be more active than reflective. These students, therefore, may get discouraged and may do poorly, or drop out altogether, because of the various mismatches between the learning and teaching styles. Differences between majors and learning styles were significant on the Sensing/Intuitive dimension. It was shown that engineering and science students were more sensing than the liberal arts students. This finding concurs with that of Litzinger et al. (2005) who found that engineering students were less intuitive than those in the liberal arts. The other results of Litzinger et al. (2005), on the other hand, were not confirmed in this study. In fact, the highest sequential individuals were those who applied for communication studies majors such as journalism, radio and TV programmes. It is possible that these majors require individuals to be process oriented and self-organised in order to get various tasks done over time.

In the present study, the pre-admission students were, in general, more active than reflective in their learning styles. In a university setting, students with this style could bring a certain level of preconceptions about learning that could be a detrimental to their performance. In one of the more comprehensive studies relating selection of majors and learning styles, Healey, Kneale & Bradbeer (2005), using Kolb's (1984) measures, found a predominance of the active learning style in the students they surveyed. In particular, they found that business and engineering students were more active-abstract and that these students fell in the convergence type quadrant. On the other hand, liberal arts and social sciences

students were higher on the reflective-concrete[1] dimension and fell in the divergent quadrant. Education students were higher on the active-concrete dimension and were more accommodators. Science majors were higher on the reflective-abstract dimension and were more assimilators. Healy, Kneale & Bradbeer (2005), therefore, found that learning styles were not homogeneous, but differentiated by majors, as also found in this study.

In their review of the research on the learning styles of engineering students, Felder & Spurlin (2005) found that engineering students tend to be more active than reflective, more sensing than intuitive, more visual than verbal and more sequential than global. But in this study, engineering students were found to be as global as they were sequential. Students in the present study were therefore not similar to typical engineering students found in academic settings. This difference may be due to the fact that the students in this study were university applicants not yet admitted or enrolled in engineering programmes. It may be that the students in other studies, who were or had been in engineering programmes, had already underwent their change in learning styles from the Sequential/Global 'balance' noted in the present study to the predominantly sequential style that is typical of students who are or have studied engineering. The difference, therefore, may reflect style accommodations to the effects of the engineering education experience.

In this study, gender differences were only found in pre-engineering students, precisely on the Visual/Verbal dimension with males emerging as being more visual than females. This finding cross-validated the finding of Litzinger et al. (2005) who reported that males who had selected engineering as major were more visual than females. Male preference for the visual and higher self-rating in spatial activities has also been reported by Furnham (2001). This result for engineering students is not surprising as it is similar to other types of self-rated abilities that tend to be attributable to the masculine gender type.

Final caveat

When pedagogical trends moved toward more student-centred approaches, the function of matching student learning style preferences to the instructional approaches used in courses began being viewed as a strategy that can be used to enhance student performance (Nelson et al., 1993). Matching students' learning styles with the teaching styles used in courses is indeed one factor that enhances the success of students in courses, and consequently, over time, of the course programme and the major itself. As such, students should be able to select a major where they can expect the teaching styles to approximate or accommodate their learning style. This signals the importance of using the learning style

questionnaire as part of the admission and selection process. The verbal dimension in learning is understandably quite dominant, as class lectures and reading are a must in higher education. Therefore, the finding that students prefer more visual approaches would certainly seem to put them at odds with current higher education modes of instruction. The sequential presentation of material in textbooks and lectures could also be seen as a point of concern and in need of closer scrutiny because students were equally sequential and global across all majors in this study.

Needs to be said that when teaching and learning styles do not match, students may feel anxious, frustrated, angry and consequently alienated, resulting in turn in lower achievement and leaving school altogether, which would then lead to loss of investment and skilled worker short falls (Gregore & Butler, 1984). On the other hand, student attitudes and dispositions play an important role in learning, as doing what one likes and finds enjoyable, and working in an area in which one is making reasonable progress all tend to enhance learning (Glazer, Steckel & Winer, 1987). The point is that all things that help to produce positive rather than negative affective states in learners while learning lead to improved outcomes, including retention, graduation, and continued work in the careers for which they were educated. Knowing precisely the relationships between learning preferences, major selection, and eventually achievement, graduation and career retention are very important issues on which further research needs to be done, even if only in terms of cost-benefits considerations.

Recommendations

Further studies are needed to assess whether learning styles predict graduation from a given major, as well as to assess whether learning styles change over the course of pursuing a given major, and also to examine if one of the problems with dropouts from a major is that their 'major incompatible' learning style does not change. Laschinger & Boss (1984) found a difference in the learning styles of pre-admission nursing majors and nursing majors close to graduation. Using Kolb's (1976) learning style instrument, they found that nursing students were more concrete learners in the later phases of their academic careers. This study and future studies would be greatly enhanced if we could understand better any changes in learning styles that occur during the course of pursuing a major, and the subsequent influence that these changes (or lack of) have on student performance. Again, a better understanding of the relationships between student learning preferences and the selection of and success in a given major may help to improve course instruction. It may be that a more diversified approach to instruction in majors, which both reflects the different learning styles of students

and the particular instructional requirements of the non-traditional majors, may lead to higher graduation rates and a better retention of students in these majors. This particular outcome from this line of research would be particularly helpful in meeting increased graduate needs in various majors that are critical to the needs of a given economy or society. The whole issue is to better manage the supply-demand dynamics associated with in-and-out migration problems that are very costly and very disruptive to the development of a given culture and society.

Note

1. Sensing/Intuitive being analogous to Kolb's Concrete/Abstract dimensions.

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MAKING INROADS IN EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP WITHIN THE EURO-MEDITERRANEAN CONTEXT: A COLLABORATIVE INITIATIVE BETWEEN ITALY AND MALTA

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Abstract – *A sense of urgency shapes our national discourse on state education. Students strive to meet new academic standards while their teachers work to improve the quality and equity of education opportunities. Yet achievement gaps persist, particularly in urban and rural schools. The demand for effective leadership is clear. We need school leaders who visualise successful student learning, understand the work necessary to achieve it, and have the skills to engage with others to make it happen. How can we prepare more individuals to meet these challenges? This paper explores what three universities – two in Italy and one in Malta – are doing to establish a programme that offers an innovative pathway to school leadership. It presents the inception of this partnership, the rationale behind the discourse that has evolved over the years, and the establishment of links between the universities and other bodies within the Mediterranean and Commonwealth contexts with the aim of preparing the next generation of school leaders needed within the Euro-Mediterranean region. The concluding part presents a number of opportunities that lie ahead and highlights the various challenges that await us as we embark on this journey.*

Introduction

Effective or purposeful leadership is generally accepted as a central component in implementing and sustaining school improvement. Evidence from school improvement literature, starting with seminal studies in the United States (Brookover et al., 1979; Edmonds, 1982) and the United Kingdom (Rutter et al., 1979), consistently highlight that effective leaders exercise a direct or indirect but powerful influence on the school's capacity to implement reforms and improve students' levels of achievement. Although quality of teaching strongly influences and determines the level of student motivation and achievement, quality of leadership matters in determining the motivation of teachers and the quality of their teaching (Fullan, 2001; Sergiovanni, 2001).

In Italy and Malta, the principal is also becoming the centre of concern in educational reform (Ministry of Education, Youth and Employment [MEYE], 2005). The interest in the principalship and the role principals play within a school context is growing because of the drive to decentralise ever more responsibilities to the school site, and as a result to make schools more accountable for decision-making and results. This paper presents some of the measures that are being taken in Italy and Malta to address the management development of educational leaders in general and of school leaders in particular.

The paper points out that while education authorities are devolving particular responsibilities to schools, the main form of preparation of school personnel is through short seminars and training sessions. Education institutions often react to changes around them by providing their own courses, often leading to graduate and post-graduate academic qualifications. Although the drive to increase the level of responsibility and decision-making powers at school level is indeed laudable, improvement cannot be brought about unless there is a clear understanding of the cultural context in which developments are taking place. As argued elsewhere (see Bezzina, 1999), this will help us to identify the conditions and needs that management development has to address for such initiatives to succeed. Accordingly, it presents an analytic and semi-historical account of developments in theory, research, policy and practice in school management training in Malta and Italy.

The Maltese context

Various initiatives undertaken over the past few years express a move by the education authorities to bestow greater responsibilities and authority to schools. All state primary and secondary schools have been entrusted with the responsibility of drafting their own school development plans. Such a move recognises that school improvement can be brought about by concentrating development efforts on the school, and seeing it as the major agent of change within the education system. This conceptualisation provides an alternative view to the centralised, prescriptive model of school improvement that state schools have been used to. State schools in Malta have been used to working within a system which is hierarchical, centralised and bureaucratic. As a result, teachers have grown weary through disillusionment and stress (National Curriculum Council [NCC], 2004). Teachers continuously find themselves sandwiched between a belief in democracy and participation on the one hand, and, on the other, the daily experience of a lack of structures to function as decision-makers. Over the years, schools have never been given the opportunity to develop into

vital places of learning, or sites of professional inquiry and reflective practice (Bezzina, Bezzina & Stanyer, 2004).

Moving from the shackles of dependency to one of autonomy will not be easy. One cannot talk of such moves without really understanding the culture and climate that have evolved over the years and which have led to the current situation, and which in actual fact determine to a large extent how people think and act. Present conditions and circumstances of schools could not have been planned to be more antithetical to becoming centres of inquiry and change. Among the worst of these conditions are: (i) isolation of educators (both teachers and school administrators) from one another; (ii) the fragmentation of the school day into separate subject matters; (iii) the apportionment of specific teaching time to a subject; (iv) the untenable ratio of students to teachers; and (v) the lack of time for genuine reflection, sharing and critical inquiry among teachers.

Any effort to improve the effectiveness of schools depends on an understanding of the dynamics of schools. This implies exploring the actions and influences of teachers, students, education officials, parents, community members, the curriculum, and the ways in which these influences operate. These initiatives, although being undertaken by central authorities, lack the necessary ethical framework, values, features and indeed the sense of mission which brings with it that burning desire to achieve stated goals. We are witnessing a wave of reforms which require a careful re-examination of the concepts of power and authority. Leadership and management need to be re-defined and a clear shift away from the traditional hierarchical control mechanisms made manifest. We need to challenge the 'boundaries of sameness', to use Walker & Walker's (1998) term, and to celebrate and value differences. As Senge (1990) points out:

> 'If any one idea about leadership has inspired organisations for thousands of years, it is the capacity to hold a shared picture of the future we seek to create. One is hard-pressed to think of any organisation that has sustained some measure of greatness in the absence of goals, values, and missions that become deeply shared throughout the organisation.' (p. 9)

Recent initiatives have placed leadership, its basis and function, under close scrutiny. Whereas Bhindi & Duignan (1997, p. 118) speak of 'environmental complexities and turbulence' as the main reasons behind the need to review areas like leadership, organisational structures, culture and management practices, in Malta we are experiencing the same very much due to the varied initiatives being introduced by the education authorities.

Over the years, various studies (Xerri, 2000; Bezzina, 2002; NCC, 2004) have highlighted the concerns – especially of those in the schools – that school administrators still have to follow the dictates of central authorities, thus ignoring

the unique position of the school as an agent of reform. They argue that schools lack the necessary support from the centre. They feel that school management teams and the Education Division[1] were not adequately prepared for their change in roles. It is important that the role of the Division complements the changes occurring in school management. In order to meet the challenges involved in such a complex undertaking, the Division needs highly developed management and administration skills. Current initiatives to develop central authorities into two directorates (see MEYE, 2005) are aimed at addressing these current lacunae. More importantly, what is essential is that the reforms help to nurture a new way of thinking and of doing things. The Ministry of Education, Youth and Employment (MEYE) sees networks as the way forward to provide a quality education for all children.

The Ministry acknowledges that the proposed re-structuring aims to 'reform the whole system of lifelong learning into one which is smoother and seamless' (MEYE, 2005, p. xix). To achieve this goal, it proposes networks as 'the main organizational form which can give depth and scale to the process of transformation' (MEYE, 2005, p. xix). Furthermore, networks will empower schools further in that they will be able to take decisions based on the needs of their students, teachers and the community.

The education authorities, as is clearly spelt out in the document *For All Children to Succeed* (MEYE, 2005), do acknowledge the demands that the proposed changes call for both at the individual level and the institutional level. At the same time, we have to acknowledge that the challenges call for a different way of thinking, reflecting and doing things. It is within this context that research is invaluable and helps to contextualise what can easily be seen as mere political rhetoric.

On the one hand, the *Strategic Plan* (Ministry of Education, 2001) sees the school principal as the 'linchpin for successful school-based management':

> 'She/he must be able to forge the school's stakeholders into a community driven by a core ideal. The whole decentralization process must be underscored by the values of: authenticity; collegiality; leadership, interest, belonging; trust, empowerment; participation, risk taking, pride, sharing and respect.
>
> A consultative style of management should be cultivated to ensure the nurturing of decentralization. Decision-making processes have to ensure whole staff involvement based on effective top-down and bottom-up lines of communication. Within the school community a culture of self-assessment has to be cultivated and developed to ensure continuous improvement. The Head of School will be required to share responsibilities through real delegation. This will involve the passing on to the management

> team and other ranks key tasks that many heads are reluctant to let go. A management approach with these characteristics would ensure ownership of decision-making and enhance levels of staff motivation.' (pp. 114-115)

This is quite a tall order, especially given the studies into leadership in general and principalship in particular. Various studies have aimed to explore, among other things, the training needs of school administrators, their perceptions of autonomy and their leadership styles. These studies, to some extent, all highlight a definite departure from their traditional role, which portrayed them merely as administrators and a channel for directives by central education authorities. Recent findings show that principals are high on both the *initiating structure* and *consideration* dimensions of leadership (Behling & Schreisham, 1976), and even more so on the latter. In a study involving secondary school principals, the respondents scored highest on 'encouraging staff to be more innovative' and 'being clear about teacher direction' in the initiating structure dimension and 'taking personal interest in their staff', 'positively responding to laments' and 'embellishing the school environment' in the consideration dimension. It may be noticed that these are the items in which the personal relations of the principal with the staff could be viewed as determining in enhancing curricular effectiveness and in providing environmental or school culture development (Quintano, 1999). These findings are similar to those of another study involving principals and deputy principals in the primary and secondary sector (Abdilla & Spiteri, 1999).

In the Abdilla & Spiteri (1999) study, the majority of school administrators want to take a more professional leadership role, with the majority of respondents wanting to support the teachers' professional development, to help teachers develop the curriculum, and to involve them in whole school development planning. A study on primary school principals conducted in the early 1990s (i.e., prior to the introduction of current initiatives) explored, among other things, the training needs principals felt they ought to receive (see Bezzina, 1995). The following were the main ones highlighted: (i) staff appraisal and professional development; (ii) personal professional development; (iii) evaluation; (iv) relationships; and (v) leadership. In another study, secondary school principals identified the following areas which they felt need to be addressed: (i) staff development of teachers, including induction, motivating, supporting and evaluating; (ii) professional team building; (iii) enhancing an efficient communications system with all stakeholders; and (iv) monitoring and supervision of the quality of teaching and learning (Quintano, 1999, p. 56). It is noteworthy that the list is highest on the *leadership and human relations* category of tasks as identified by Goodwin (1968) and Morgan, Hall & Mackey (1983). This is exactly the contrary to what has been found in England (Evans, 1986), but

coincides with the staff development issues which New Zealand principals of secondary schools identified as being their weak areas (Wadsworth, 1988). These results show that while principals are slowly becoming more task-centred, due to the fact that schools are being given more responsibilities and are being held accountable for what happens at the school site, they are also having to spend more time working with and through people.

The proposed networking system aims to strengthen these aspects. Hopkins (2005; cited in MEYE, 2005) describes networks as:

> 'Purposeful social entities characterised by a commitment to quality, rigour, and a focus on standards and student learning. They are also an effective means of supporting innovation in times of change. In education, networks promote the dissemination and development of teachers, support capacity building in schools, mediate between centralised and decentralised structures, and assist in the process of re-structuring and re-culturing educational organisations and systems.' (p. 37)

Networks aim to bring people together, allowing members in the same school, between schools, across boundaries, to come together. Within this context the challenge is that of creating an 'intentional learning community' (Lieberman, 1996) in which educators discuss their work and tackle issues in an atmosphere of trust and support.

This implies that the way we view leadership, power and governance is challenged. The hierarchical system we have been used to in the Maltese islands has helped develop various cultural tensions that cannot be ignored or eliminated through centralist policy initiatives alone (Bezzina, 2005). The process of networking has to be explored as a means to address such tensions which have determined the way we view things, our thoughts and practices.

Within such a context the importance and relevance of the professional development of school leaders takes on added significance. These developments and their implications on leadership development spearheaded this move to work with a neighbouring country.

Before exploring this initiative, we will now move into a review of the Italian context.

The Italian context

The Italian and the Maltese experiences are in many ways similar. Starting from a hierarchical, centralised and highly bureaucratic system, both countries have experienced a move toward decentralisation, resulting in the transfer of more

responsibility and authority to schools, which have thus become the major unit of change in the education system.

In the specific case of Italy, school management is the most wide-ranging profession comprising management qualifications in the country's public administration sector. In 2006, it has been calculated that the profession includes 10,517 principals who, on average, are over 62 years of age. This high average age has lead to inherent problems of generational turnover. Their management training has become a critical issue because of the elevated number of people involved and, above all, because of the cultural background of principals, whose skills are rooted mainly in the teaching profession (Paletta & Vidoni, 2006). Ten years after the introduction of management in schools, the acquisition of managerial skills is still looked upon with suspicion (Romani & Serpieri, 2004), not only due to history and ideology, but also due to the uncertainty surrounding autonomous schools.

From a legal and organisational perspective, schools are formally autonomous, but if a school does not ably manage its chief resources – human, financial and material – its autonomy becomes a blunt weapon, and is in fact often used by principals as a justification for a lack of interest in investing in managerial skills development (Paletta, 2004).

Principals need in-depth knowledge of the cultural organisation of their school, and hence, need to have been a part of the teaching profession for a sufficient period of time. However, seniority and being a good teacher do not suffice for someone wishing to become a principal. Principals who bring about change within a school and have a clear vision for development need to capably combine three diverse types of skills: professional, leadership and managerial (Paletta, 2005).

The following sections focus on the legal and historical developments that have led to the current legal structure and to the training methods used for principals in the acquisition of general management skills, with particular focus on strategic management.

The legal set-up

Traditionally, the rationale behind the state's massive involvement in education has been the need '… to remove all economic and social obstacles which, by limiting the freedom and equality of citizens, prevent the full development of the individual and the participation of all workers in the political, economic, and social organisation of the country' (Article 3[2], *Constitution of the Italian Republic*[2]). The Constitution states further that 'The Republic lays down general rules for education and establishes State schools for all kinds and grades'

(Article 33[2]). The legislator interpreted the disposition in a strictly bureaucratic fashion, so that the Ministry of Education defines at the national level the rules for most of the aspects of school life, such as on recruitment, career development, salaries, definition of the school curriculum, school accountability, financial management, administrative procedures, strategic planning and school development. In this situation, the role of the principal is residual to the competences exclusive to the minister, having to make sure that the school operators apply correctly the laws and the strict administrative procedures.

As a direct provider of education, the state has obtained basic results such as universal literacy. However, the strict focus of the state on bureaucratic procedures is responsible for the system's inherent weaknesses. In fact, in the past 50 years, industrialisation, population growth, and the subsequent diversification of the individual's needs have led to a situation where a unique national provider cannot give an effective answer to such needs. Such an outcome was not confined to education; rather, it was general and – most of all – was common to most of Europe. The result led to a re-evaluation of the welfare state paradigm that shaped the constitutions of most European nations, and required an alternative approach to the role of the state in providing public services. The subsidiarity principle was the solution. The principle – embedded in Article A(2) of the *Treaty on European Union*, signed in Maastricht, 7 February 1992 – presents a discretional role of the individual as a decision-maker. It intends to ensure that decisions are taken as closely as possible to the citizen and that constant checks are made as to whether action at community level is justified in the light of the possibilities available at national, regional or local level[3].

The Bassanini reform (Law 59/1997), which tried to work the subsidiarity principle into Italian legislation, asserts the need to simplify the public administration by giving specific functions and duties to the regions and the provinces. The reform consists of a number of laws regarding the provision of all public services. With regard to school education, Law 59/1997 was the first step toward a system that provides the individual school with a legal personality and gives the school manager actual influence in tracing the route the school is to follow to achieve excellence and equity. Specifically, Article 21(1) of this law indicates that 'the functions of the central and the peripheral administration of public education […], granted the uniform national fruition of the right to education and the elements common to the entire public school system that the state defines with regard to management and planning, are progressively given out to the educational institutions, giving them juridical personality'[4]. The Article foresees a new set-up in which the school staff, rather than being a simple executive, has the possibility – and the responsibility – of intervening directly in the management and planning of the school and of the 'educational offer'.

Article 1(2) of the Legislative Decree 59/1998 specifies the primary role of the school manager as someone who '… organises the activity of the school on the basis of formative efficiency and effectiveness criteria, and is the reference for the relationships with the labour unions'[5]. The constitutional reform of 2001 secured these concepts in the amendments to Article 117, which indicates that the individual school – and not, as it was before, the central government – is the unit of reference of the Italian school system. Sentence 13/2004 of the Italian Constitutional Court further specifies this vision, and affirms that 'in relation to school planning and administrative management of the service, the state only decides on the fundamental principles'[6]. The Moratti reform (Law 53/2003) foresees a system in which the government sets the rules, controls the quality of the services offered, and funds the demand for services. Providers are accountable for the actual quality of the services they provide, and individual citizens can choose among different options and are responsible for their decisions.

These legal principles produce a system in which school leaders have increasing freedom of action, and therefore need to develop their professional skills in order to obtain better results than leaders who strictly follow strategies planned at national level.

The new structural set-up of the Italian school system designed by the Moratti reform is undoubtedly ambitious. However, in these first three years of implementation, the reform has not brought about the aimed-for changes, especially because the devolution of responsibility to individual schools has not been followed up by adequate training of the school managers in terms of their new roles and assigned responsibilities. The following two sections show how Italian school managers are, *de facto*, being overtly prudent in relation to innovative practices in their institutions.

Strategic management in Italian schools

An action research project, which was carried out in the Italian region of Emilia Romagna in collaboration with the Regional Education Office, sought to determine the training requirements of schools for strategic management. Following an initial selection process, the project concentrated on eleven schools (differing in type) to develop carefully a strategic management training model.

The study aimed to identify whether the *Piano dell'Offerta Formativa* (POF) (i.e., the Training Offer Plan), was helping schools to strategically plan the way forward for themselves. According to Italian law, the plan was to serve as a guideline for the school and its members. Each plan would identify the area to be tackled, the aims and outcomes, the implementation process, the resources needed, the time frame, and the evaluation/review processes.

The study helped to highlight that, in its present format, the POF was described as a list of services offered. It describes the courses offered, the timetable and other aspects related to the organisation of the school services. It often also included the objectives it aimed to reach. When the objectives were included, they were merely presented as a list covering all the possible areas of intervention. In some cases, they were simply copied from the POF of the preceding year.

The objectives of the POF, when present, did not focus on the critical areas of school development. Schools were merely focusing on the administrative and logistical aspects of school life rather than on the substantive matters behind school improvement. In fact, there was limited attention to strategic planning and the implementation and review of the identified objectives.

Evidence from the Sivadis Project[7]

Another study, the Sivadis Project, which was carried out by the Istituto Nazionale per la Valutazione del Sistema di Istruzione (2005) (i.e., the National Institute for the Evaluation of the Education System), provided additional empirical information on the development of strategic management. The study focussed on 176 'self-evaluation files' in which school principals outlined an assessment guide comprising context, objectives, actions and indicators. Despite the evaluation showing that there was a general improvement compared with the review conducted in the first year, there are still a number of critical points that need to be addressed. The following are the three main ones:

1. The objectives are defined in a vague manner. As a result, it was difficult to appreciate the responses given and how these objectives were related to the strategic plan.

2. The schools were still focusing on administrative matters rather than on matters related to quality education (e.g., curriculum design, development and implementation, teaching and learning, and evaluation).

3. The principals' work was still not aligned with the school objectives.

In brief, the action research project carried out in the selected schools of Emilia Romagna and the evaluation of the Sivadis Project gave rise to cogent empirical evidence. Generally speaking, the weakness of school management in Italy seems to lie in the missing alignment between strategy, organisation and performance. The POF consists of a long list of projects. However, it cannot be considered as the framework holding the initiatives together. For external parties and collegial

bodies within a school (i.e., the school board and the teachers' association), it is at times impossible to comprehend the strategy behind the decisions taken. This does not help to create a cooperative organisation of social actors. Without strong leadership, a school can be sidetracked by individual initiatives, resulting in a loss of resources and human energy. Performance evaluation ought to jumpstart the strategic management of a school, but the lack of clearly defined objectives and of improved services hinders the creation of an organisational learning process.

Critical questions still need to be raised and answered. These include: How can principals alter the current situation and launch an effective process of organisational change? Is change possible without an adequate model of incentives and without the support of stakeholders?

Facing up to the challenge – a joint effort

The authors are of the opinion that a concerted effort to institutionalise the professional development of principals would serve to provide the appropriate skills and competences necessary for them to take the schools forward. One way of aligning the changes being mandated by law in both Malta and Italy so that they can have maximum effect on schools and the quality of education provided is through training programmes for school leaders and aspiring leaders. The authors are of the opinion that educational leaders in general and principals in particular can benefit through a specialised programme that can help them address their needs. For this reason, the authors have come together to discuss the possibilities that exist or may develop as we tackle these issues.

The various studies surveyed have highlighted the needs of school principals. Leaders need to acquire traditional management skills in resource allocation, finance, cost control, planning and other areas, and they should be proficient in methodological tools, which may help them improve their effectiveness. Moreover, we also expect them to demonstrate the qualities that define leadership, integrity and character – areas such as vision, passion, sensitivity, insight, understanding, commitment, charisma, courage, humility and intelligence. We also expect them to be friends, mentors and/or guardians. Yet, what stands out is that we need leaders who are, as Duignan (1998) puts it, 'full-blooded creatures who are politically and spiritually aware, credible, earthly and practical' (pp. 21-22). Although people may be trained to become effective leaders, most leaders, unfortunately, find themselves in leadership positions without being adequately trained or prepared. Leadership also requires a practical component which leadership courses often tend to neglect. A lot of work can and needs to be done

at this level. In many countries training is not a requirement for appointment as a principal. However, various initiatives have been identified providing programmes for aspiring principals. While some systems operate mandatory courses, others are available but not compulsory (see Table 1). At the same time, various post-graduate courses are run mainly by universities (see Bezzina, 2001; Tomlinson, 2001).

While the programmes reviewed have their own particular slant and bias, one can identify similar trends and initiatives. The main aim behind the programmes is that of improving the quality of school leadership and management. They are rooted in school improvement, are based on national standards, take account of a candidate's previous achievements and experiences, and are rigorous in nature.

The programme-designs reviewed tend to focus on:

- a move away from purely academic programmes to more professional ones;
- a greater focus on relevance and applicability;
- a greater involvement of participants;
- exposure to a variety of learning opportunities (e.g., case studies, individual/pair/group work);
- a hands-on approach, reflection and action;
- mentoring and coaching.

Most initiatives pertain to the Anglo-Saxon world, but – on the basis of the recent reforms that have led to the legal frameworks outlined in previous paragraphs – Malta and Italy are also focusing more and more on the issues of autonomy and leadership. Moreover, both countries share the same Mediterranean culture and institutional evolution characterised by the tendency to decentralise more responsibilities to the school site and, as a result, to make schools more accountable for decision-making and the results achieved.

Bringing these activities together so as to favour staff and student mobility, as well as the sharing of technological expertise, is the challenge for the future and for the practical settlement of a real culture of leadership. The programmes aim to challenge course participants to address theory and praxis within the contexts they work in, thus allowing us to review how such professional development courses can influence, and be influenced, by national mandates such as the one on networks in Malta and decentralised practices in Italy.

TABLE 1: School leadership and management programmes

Provision for Aspiring Principals		
International Centre	**Mandatory**	**Optional**
Australia (Victoria)		√
Australia (NSW)		√
Canada (Ontario)	√	
Cyprus	√ Short Course	√ Master's course
Greece		√
Hong Kong	√ Course (30 hours)	√ Master's course
New Zealand		√
Israel	√	
Italy		√
Singapore	√	
Spain	√	
Sweden		√
Turkey	√	
USA (Chicago)	√ Master's course	√
USA (North Carolina)	√	√
USA (Ohio)	√	√
USA (Pittsburgh)	√	√
Malta	√	√ Master's course
England & Wales	√	
Scotland	√	

√ The country either has one programme which is mandatory or else optional or both

Notes

1. The Education Division represents the administrative arm of the Maltese government in educational matters concerning curriculum development, examinations, planning and infrastructural development, operations, further studies and adult education, and student services and international relations.
2. The Constitution can be viewed at http://www.stranieriinitalia.it/leggi/costituing.html
3. Specifically, the Article reads: 'This Treaty marks a new stage in the process of creating an ever closer union among the peoples of Europe, in which decisions are taken as closely as possible to the citizen' (for full text of Treaty see http://www.eurotreaties.com/maastrichteu.pdf).
4. Law 59/1997 can be viewed at http://www.parlamento.it/parlam/leggi/97059l.htm (text in Italian).
5. Legislative Decree 59/1998 can be viewed at http://www.cgilscuola.it/leggi/DM59-98.htm (text in Italian).
6. Sentence 13/2004 of the Italian Constitutional Court can be viewed at http://www.istruzioneer.it/allegato.asp?ID=159527 (text in Italian).
7. The Sivadis Project (SI.VA.DI.S – *Sistema di Valutazione dei Dirigenti Scolastici*) is a system for evaluating headteachers.

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CONFERENCE REPORT

HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE EMPLOYMENT MARKET IN THE ARAB WORLD

Reflections on an International Discussion held in Rabat, Morocco, 2-3 November 2006

MELITA CRISTALDI

The international discussion on *Enseignement Supérieur et Marché de l'Emploi dans le Monde Arabe* was organised by the *Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches en Politiques d'Education et Formation* in Rabat, together with the *Centre Jacques Berque* (represented by its director, Michel Péraldi) and the *Institut Français pour le Proche-Orient* in Rabat (an institute linked to the French embassy in Morocco).

This discussion – conceived as an intensive workshop for economists, educationalists and administrators from the various Arab capitals – is the second in a series that aims at encouraging comparative communication and research regarding this theme in the Arab world. It built on the collaboration that was set up in Beirut before the conflict of this summer. Academics from Lebanon, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Jordan and, naturally, Morocco were present. The presentations that should have been made by the Algerian, Syrian and another Lebanese representative, who were absent for reasons beyond their control, were made on their behalf by colleagues. The languages used were French and Arabic; a simultaneous translation from French to Arabic and vice-versa helped all the participants to take part.

The theme of the relationship between higher education and the employment market, which constitutes a 'classic' chapter in the literature of this field, was tackled with regard to the specific situations in the Arab world. Here too, as in developed and some developing countries, it has been possible in recent years to see a continuous standardisation of higher education, a considerable increase in the number of students taking advantage of it and, at the same time, a decrease in the financial, material and human resources available. Moreover, the connections between school and training on one hand, and the job market on the other, have felt the effects of a lack of co-ordination, which in the end has penalised students who often risk seeing their expectations disappointed. Furthermore, even if in the majority of Arab countries the change from an elite to a standard higher education system has responded, albeit sometimes chaotically, to the need expressed by

students and their families for greater social mobility, this change has not been backed up by similar, necessary changes in the social and economic fields. In other words, the increase in the number of graduates has not been accompanied by an increase in job opportunities. One of the consequences of this situation, already noted in other more developed parts of the world and to which attention was rightly drawn at the Moroccan workshop, has been a depreciation in the value of academic degrees and the consequent effect of this on young graduates who, as to this today, find themselves forced to accept jobs which very often do not correspond to their qualifications.

The presentations at the workshop made reference to quantitative data. In his introduction to the work of the Rabat workshop, Professor Mohammed Souali from Mohammed V University of Rabat underlined the facts that have determined the present state of the education-employment relationship both in Morocco and in the Arab world in general, and the analytical and diagnostic aspects of the factors influencing this relationship.

The presentation of Professor Suzanne Abdul-Reda Abourjeili (unfortunately absent) of Saint Joseph University in Beirut analysed the Lebanese higher education and job market situation. The analysis she proposed looked at a historical section, spanning way back to the situation existing at the time when the country gained its independence in 1943. She presented a graph showing the quantitative growth in the numbers of university students in Lebanon over the years right up to the present day situation of standardised higher education. She pointed out that, from a qualitative point of view, the peculiarity of the Lebanese situation is that there is only one state university in comparison to about 40 private universities belonging and/or responding to the cultural needs of the different ideological-religious affiliations.

The research carried out by Professor Saïd Ben Sédrine of the University of Tunis analysed the structure of the education and further education system in Tunisia and compared the results of economic and social developments in Tunisia and Morocco. Particular attention was given to the general incoherence of the development models used, pointing out that the expectations of the poorer sections of the populations are often deluded by the powerful elites who, in turn, are incapable of guaranteeing a general, social cohesion by means of control of the educational and employment systems of the country.

Professor Djemel Ferroukhi of the University of Algeri (unfortunately, also absent) analysed the relationship between higher education and economic and social development which has determined the present delusion experienced by graduates in Algeria.

Professor Mundur Shara, an economist from Jordan, presented a global picture of the historical evolution of three Jordanian universities. The analysis dealt with

the number of faculties and student enrolments from the 1950s to the present day, placing particular emphasis on faculties of economics and on the problem of maintaining a coherent general plan of the education offered by the university system, especially with reference to Islamic, humanistic ideals.

Professor Bakkalia El-Ikhtissad, from Egypt, presented a detailed analysis of the contradictions in the university and professional training systems in Egypt, trapped as they are between some attempts at modernisation and the structural limits of the country's economic, political and social development.

The complex Lebanese situation – which is caught between strong, internal independence movements and external controls (mostly Syrian, but also from other states interested in hegemony in the Middle East) – was illustrated by Boutros Labaki, an economist from Saint Joseph University in Beirut.

In conclusion, the co-ordinator Professor Souali began by expressing his hopes that the activity of the workshop will be continued at the next session which is to be organised either in Lebanon or in Egypt at the end of 2007. He then went on to deal with some elements of great interest to the comparative education field which could be drawn from the presentations at the meeting. In particular, he defined a situation that is worthy of greater attention on the part of those Arab governments whose policies have been the subject of detailed, scientific study by the various authors present at the workshop, and stressed the need for scholars to participate more actively in advising those responsible for the policy reforms which are generally felt to be necessary. Underlining the importance of these conclusions, Professor Giovanni Pampanini, Vice-President of the World Council of Comparative Education Associations, invited all those present to take part in the next Comparative Education World Congress in Sarajevo, from 3-7 September 2007, in order to examine the results obtained to date by this Arab group and to continue the work of research in the world's most accredited comparative education scientific arena.

BOOK REVIEWS

Grace Grima and Josette Farrugia (2006) *Transition from Primary to Secondary in Malta: Time to Break the Mould?* (Series: Families and Schools), Malta, Allied Publications, xiv + 129 pp., ISBN: 9990931011.

This book is the first in a series of publications entitled *Families and Schools* by the Foundation for Educational Services (FES) which works hand-in-hand with the Education Division at the Ministry of Education in Malta to provide a range of innovative educational initiatives. With Malta striving to improve its assessment practices – at classroom, school and certification levels – in line with current educational philosophies, it is not surprising that FES chose to focus on the Education Division's 11+ examination which is taken by most Maltese students at the end of their primary schooling. This high stakes examination in five school subjects – namely, English, Maltese, Mathematics, Religion and Social Studies – marks the transition from primary to secondary education in the state system. Indeed, students can only join the more academically oriented state secondary schools (called *Junior Lyceums*) if they obtain at least a pass in all five subjects (students may however ask to be exempted from Religion and, in some cases, even from Maltese). Those who fail to obtain the necessary passes, unless they otherwise join a private (church or independent) secondary school, are likely to find themselves in one of the state's less academically oriented secondary schools (called *Area Secondaries*). Statistics show that increasingly more and more students are passing this examination. (see Ministry of Education, Youth and Employment [MEYE], 2006b). But even though pass rates have consistently improved from the initial 16% in 1982, when this 11+ examination was launched, to reach 60% in 2006, the fact remains that each year thousands of young Maltese students (including those who do not even bother to sit for the examination) are experiencing failure and exclusion in their transition from primary to secondary education.

The authors, Grace Grima and Josette Farrugia, are both educational assessment experts working with the Matriculation and Secondary Education Certificate Examinations Board (MATSEC) of the University of Malta. Their book comes at a time when the Ministry of Education has set up a committee, chaired by Grima herself, to review and make recommendations on the local examination system at the end of the primary school years (see MEYE, 2006a). It was clearly intended that this book, which basically presents a collation of existing relevant information, 'creates a good basis, a background of information, including well-researched comparative material, for the [ensuing] debate' (p. vi). In 2005, the 11+ examination debate assumed a new dimension when the Ministry

of Education began piloting a new secondary school set-up based on networking by region which, among other things, provides for all students (i.e., those who pass as well as those who fail the 11+ examination) to attend the same school (see MEYE, 2005; Bezzina, 2006; Bezzina, Paletta & Vidoni, 2006).

Grima & Farrugia's book, which is written in a flowing yet engaging style, is interspersed with catchy, thought provoking cartoons and quotations related to assessment and education. The publication is divided in three parts. The first part, after providing an overview of local educational developments related to the transition from primary to secondary, takes a thorough look at what local research is saying about this transition and related issues, such as, streaming. This reporting is judiciously embedded within international educational debates and findings. The second part of the book analyses the primary to secondary transition systems in 27 European countries and five non-European countries (the Appendix provides easy reference 'snapshots' of 'primary education', 'assessment', 'transition to secondary school' and 'admission requirements' in these 32 countries). Special attention is given to Northern Ireland, the only European country included in the analysis that has, similar to Malta, high stakes selective examinations at the end of primary school that are meant to channel students into different secondary schools. The third and final part of the book explores the available options as Malta seeks to move ahead. The authors come up with three alternatives, namely: (i) keeping the current system; (ii) retaining the 11+ examination and extending the new network-based secondary set-up to all schools; and (iii) doing away with the 11+ examination and moving towards a system of mixed-ability secondary schools.

The authors' declared intention was that the material they present helps in creating an informed debate aimed at answering the question: Is it time to break the mould? Although they have undoubtedly produced an excellent collation of the available information, I was somewhat disappointed that they remained uncommitted, at least within the confines of this book, as to the outcome of this crucial question. They give no indication if this was their decision, or if it had to do with Grima also being the chairperson of the review committee, or still if this was requested by FES which commissioned their work. Irrespectively, I would have preferred Grima & Farrugia to go beyond the presentation of facts, which admittedly was the main objective of this publication, and get personally involved in the debate. Their professional insights, based on their assessment expertise and daily dealings with assessment matters, would have undoubtedly helped the reader, who may not necessarily be well acquainted with current assessment discourses, to better interpret the detailed information presented here within the latest developments in assessment theories and practices. Any debate related to the transition from primary to secondary school, as with all educational debates,

needs to be based not only on research findings and ensuing ramifications, but also on a forward-looking understanding of what type of education the country is trying to achieve. As education may mean different things to different people, it is only after the different perspectives are declared and adequately debated that one can possibly start to examine the role of assessment within the system and the subsequent assessment practices to be put in place.

As someone who believes in social justice and quality education for all, I am committed toward equity, inclusion and lifelong learning as opposed to injustice, segregation and continued learning for only the selected few. I therefore find the research findings reported by Grima & Farrugia good enough reason not to even consider continuing with the present transition system. Their publication is indeed an eye-opener on the discriminations, sufferings and traumas that the 11+ examination brings along, not just for the students themselves but also for their families and teachers, and the eventual humiliation, labelling and uncertain future faced by the unsuccessful students. To keep the current system is to keep telling so many Maltese students each year that they are failures, that there is no future for them in the educational stream that really 'matters'. Made to feel from such a young age that they deserve to be treated as inferiors, students quickly learn not to expect the economic and social rewards awaiting their more 'successful' peers. The fact that many parents, especially those of the better performing students, and most teachers are in favour of retaining the present set-up goes only to show the complexity involved in bringing about real as opposed to cosmetic change. The many manifestations highlighted in Grima & Farrugia's book of misinformed people and displays of downright egoisms paraded as educational arguments signal that educating about education remains in Malta an indispensable strategy toward affecting change. For sure, one cannot expect change efforts to come from people who are either advantaged in the present system (or so they think) or who are afraid of what may possibly lie ahead.

The third option mentioned by Grima & Farrugia refers specifically to comprehensive schooling, which is the norm rather than the exception in most educationally evolved countries. I consequently fail to understand why the authors did not explore the local comprehensive experimentation in state schools during the 1970s (see Zammit Marmarà, 2001). The brief reference to this episode on page 2 of the book does not do justice to the 'psychological turmoil' that this certainly mishandled innovation probably still conjures in the minds of teachers and parents alike. I fear that the lingering perceptions that this possibly most socially just educational system does not work in Malta (even if some local private schools, both church and independent, are now practically comprehensive) may work against comprehensive schooling being reintroduced in the state system, at least in the foreseeable future. The residue fear of the comprehensive experience

in Malta probably places the second option put forward by Grima & Farrugia (i.e., extending the new network-based secondary set-up to all regions) as the most viable one in the present circumstances. The main problem here is that all 'evaluations' so far of this new set-up are, to my knowledge, coming from the very same persons who are behind and responsible for this innovation. While independent research is certainly needed, I must however add that from my informal interactions with teachers and counsellors working within the selected networked schools, the positive official comments being fed to the general public appear to be largely justified.

One can now only augur that this book is used constructively in the reflective process leading toward the decision about what type of transition process from primary to secondary schooling we would like to have in Malta. The hope is that the wiser and fairer decision prevails over the less painful ones. The stakes are certainly high, especially for the upcoming generations of Maltese students who will be facing this transition at some point in the future. It would however be a mistake to think that this book is of no interest beyond this specific issue and beyond Malta's shores. For Grima & Farrugia's book evidences that Malta, is spite of its diminutive size, possesses a wealth of valid educational research (much of which remains unpublished) that deserves to be made accessible to the widest possible audience. The commissioning of the book by FES is in itself an indication that decision-making in Malta is finally maturing. By giving due attention to Maltese research, and subsequently to localising decision-making, it becomes unlikely that important decisions are made either at someone's whim or by adopting the neo-colonial stance of following blindly the policies and practices of leading educational countries.

Although primarily written for local consumption, I would still recommend this book to anyone interested in either comparative education or educational assessment. In particular, the international reader who is specifically interested in the transition from primary to secondary schooling is likely to find this book appealing in relation to three different scenarios:

(i) By exposing the grim realities of practising selection through an 11+ examination, countries that have moved away from such practices have here a vivid reminder of what probably propelled them to seek change in the first place. This may serve in turn as a timely warning to those who are now thinking of turning back the clock.

(ii) Countries that still practise selection through an 11+ examination can compare notes with what is happening in Malta. Malta's and North Ireland's (see Chapter 6) efforts to redress such a situation may inspire others to find the courage to move ahead.

(iii) Countries that are in the process of developing their secondary education (as is the case with a number of Eastern and Southern Mediterranean countries – see Bardak, 2006) have something here on which to reflect as they go about deciding which type of transition from primary to secondary school to put in place. The Maltese experience may serve to help them decide in favour of social justice as opposed to the illusive concept of meritocracy that much relies on the perpetuation of the psychometric myth.

At this point, I can only invite the reader to read the book *Transition from Primary to Secondary in Malta: Time to Break the Mould?* Having made, I think, my position crystal clear, the reader can then decide if he or she shares my opinion that it is definitely the time to break the mould. The question remains, however, of implementing well whichever new mould we may choose to put instead.

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Hans A. Andrews (2006) ***Awards and Recognition for Exceptional Teachers: K-12 and Community College Programs in the USA, Canada and Other Countries*****, Ottawa, Matilda Press, vi + 386 pp., ISBN: 0978715802.**

The purposes of schools adopting a teacher award and recognition structure are multiple. The structure can serve as a type of portfolio assessment that helps teachers attain important teaching abilities. It can create a setting in which serious discourse about teaching can occur – teaching is made public in a way that the outcomes of practice can be developed into shared norms of practice across the profession. More teachers are encouraged and challenged to achieve excellence, and highly qualified and motivated people are attracted to the teaching profession.

Andrews is a major advocate of award structures and his work brings a wealth of knowledge and research to bear on this topic. Andrews' book (see http://www.matildapress.com) is organised around three major foci: (i) it gives educational practitioners a guide for the successful implementation of a recognition programme; (ii) it encourages more governing boards to understand the need for recognition and award programmes for their teachers; and (iii) it exhibits best practices of awards and recognition from across the USA, Canada and elsewhere.

On reading this book, those not familiar with this practice become more aware that recognition for achievement is one of the factors that can motivate teachers to produce excellence in teaching. Teachers thrive on recognition. Being nominated is a memorable experience – it boosts the teacher's morale, is valuable for the student, significant for the school, important for the profession and good for the community. It also emerges from this volume that recognition programmes generate a positive growth impact. Studies have found that when there are incentives to improve, additional resources are directed at maximising student output and there are more gains in student learning. Additionally, recognition and support provide and develop a strong teaching and learning environment for teachers. Teachers feel a sense of efficacy when they believe and have confidence in their ability to reach teaching goals.

Recognition programmes, according to Andrews, can also address the current challenges that US institutions are facing, namely, teacher shortage and the lack of financial resources being allocated to teacher recruitment and salaries. In the US, about one-third of beginning teachers leave within five years. This phenomenon, which drains the school's financial and human resources, can be managed if good teachers are given high visibility and more excellent candidates are attracted to the profession by motivational stimulants that nurture adult growth

and sustain the school as an attractive workplace. What Andrews fails to elaborate upon are other incentives that should be vigorously pursued alongside award structures. Among these, one could mention: (i) strong induction programmes; (ii) expert mentors made available for in-classroom support; (iii) improved working conditions; and (iv) a reduced class size. Another shortcoming in this regard is the lack of research that shows how these structures are effective as incentives to attract and retain good teachers. We need to know more about job satisfaction and motivational factors for teachers. What is certain is that teachers' motivators are complex and not exclusively award/money centred.

A question that springs to mind while reading this book is: How does one define quality teaching? Andrews acknowledges the difficulty of recognising good teaching and provides sound advice on how to devise a process to reward excellent performance. He particularly focuses on constructing significant teacher evaluation systems, ensuring that evaluation is fair, objective and comprehensive. As one can realise while reading through the numerous programmes presented in the book, evaluation systems can often be vague and performance criteria not well defined. Hence, the selection committee may have some problems in deciding who best 'inspires students to strive to reach their full potential' or who 'inspires and promotes the value of teaching among his/her colleagues'. There is also great discrepancy in the way exceptional and outstanding teaching is understood by different schools and colleges. While some awards place more emphasis on intrinsic motivation, respect by students and peers, and nurturing hidden talents and abilities, others (like the federal programme administered by the US Department of Education) award teachers who show talent in successfully raising student academic achievement.

The number of outside agencies, businesses and corporate industries funding these awards can be of particular concern. For instance, weeklong trips to Disneyland facilities and Wal-Mart greeter's vests make one question the real objective of these recognition programmes. Other more laudable awards give teachers, for instance, opportunities for speaking appearances with professional, civic, educational, parent and student groups. Such awards also offer enhanced professional responsibilities (like teachers serving as mentors or work on special projects) and encourage teachers to attend professional meetings, conferences and specialised training. An overview of the listed programmes evidences that not all schools have managed to create a consistent connection and correlation between the recognition of teachers' expertise and the requirement that they should assume greater responsibility in contributing to school activities. As Andrews stresses, there must be a clear philosophical commitment underlying every recognition system – it must be part of an overall plan of value development, guaranteeing that quality instruction exists in every classroom.

The major flaw that I find with this book is the persisting manner in which Andrews promotes award and recognition structures without delving into the issues that could emerge on the adoption of these structures. Recognition granted to teachers is, by its very nature, a controversial subject. Appreciation and esteem can be largely subjective and performance-related incentives are generally based on an evaluation of the teacher as an individual. The focus on individual performance inherent in such award structures does not sit easily with the strong emphasis on teacher teamwork. These schemes risk heightened competitiveness between teachers and fail to take adequately into account the merits of group performance and the essentially collegial nature of teaching. This criticism by no means denies that teachers should be provided with positive feedback about their accomplishments. However, more efforts should be directed at developing a school culture that supports positive teacher growth opportunities of a more collegial kind.

The outline of the existing national, state and local programmes, albeit comprehensive, also tends to become laborious to read. An overwhelming amount of repetitive details, like who received the award, who was eligible, how much money was received, and the like, stretches over seven chapters. This compels the reader to question whether the primary objective of this book is precisely to showcase the good practices of recognition structures.

Nevertheless, one needs to acknowledge that Andrews' appealing writing style – each chapter is carefully researched, well organised and ends with a summary – renders this book a useful resource for practitioners, administrators, school boards and parents wanting to learn how recognition for excellent teachers helps improve student learning outcomes and leads to quality instruction.

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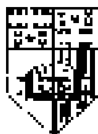

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