DEVELOPING YEAR ONE PUPILS’ LANGUAGE THROUGH CHILDREN’S LITERATURE AND THE LOCAL DIALECT IN THE REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS

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This research was conducted into the development of year one pupils’ literacy and language in Limassol in the Republic of Cyprus. Though predominantly Greek speaking, the island has a significant minority of non-Greek speaking inhabitants who learn using Greek as an additional language (GAL) alongside some use of their Cypriot dialect. The main aim of this study was to examine whether an early experience of studying quality children’s literature, including texts in the island’s dialect, supplementary to the main text-book, may enhance oral language development and promote literacy.

Research work was structured as a bounded case study; the classroom, teacher and texts with 6 individual pupils selected as the focus for the data collection. Children were observed whilst engaged in literature circle discussions, role-play activity, reading and writing. The tools that have been used in the analysis of data – observations, a daily journal, oral and written samples – have proved particularly useful in analysing the progress occurred in participants’ oral and written language.

Looking at the response of 6 six-year-old pupils to a variety of texts, such as a wordless picture book, a well-known fairy tale and a traditional folk tale from Cyprus, supplementary to the main text-book, findings highlight significant differences in students’ engagement and learning outcomes. Analysis of the discourse of circle discussions and group work shows that students were engaged in highly dialogic interactions with the texts and with one another, when being introduced to quality children’s literature. There was important development of their narrative speech, along with significant evidence of the students’ growing ability to speak in the target language with confidence, to structure their writing, to write for an audience and shape their texts more consciously. Findings also underline the importance of these literary texts for children who learn Greek as an additional language; increased motivation and learning opportunities being two such significant benefits.

This research makes a significant contribution to current debates in Cyprus about the direction and purpose of children’s literacy and language development. It calls for greater
use of the island’s dialect and the introduction and training in the use of a broader range of books in both Standard Modern Greek language and the Greek Cypriot dialect.
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DECLARATION

I declare that the research contained in this thesis, unless otherwise formally indicated within the text, is the original work of the author. The thesis has not been previously submitted to this or any other university for a degree, and does not incorporate any material already submitted for a degree.

Signed

[Signature]

Dated

January 2015
To my beloved son,

Markos.
INTRODUCTION

The research originated from both personal and professional interests. My interest in children’s literature, arising from my MA in children’s literature in the UK, triggered my thinking for this study. I was fascinated by the potential of research and the possibility of doing something that would benefit me as a teacher, my students and my school and in general primary education in the Republic of Cyprus. Working as a primary school teacher certainly defined the sector: education. Also, having taught first grade for many years, I came to see that the textbooks widely used in first grade classes in Cypriot state schools are lacking in interesting content and illustrations. I conducted a pilot study during May 2008, a few months before the present research began. Some interesting findings and conclusions came up from a short analysis of the data collected over a two-month period. This data was a great help in designing the present research, during which various research instruments were refined. Pupils’ engagement in oral and written activities, as well as their enthusiasm for a folk tale in the Greek Cypriot dialect, informed my decision to investigate the role of folk literature along with other supplementary texts such as a well-known European fairy tale and a wordless picture book might play in enhancing oral language development and promoting additional language learning of first grade pupils.

One of the clearest ways to identify and establish the theoretical framework of my qualitative research was to review the theoretical literature that was related to my topic of interest. This review, in combination with my teaching experiences, generated the ‘problem’ of the study, specific research questions, data collection and methods of analysis. Drawing from the literature, I was able to identify: what is known about my research inquiry and what is not; what aspect of the inquiry I was going to focus on; why it is important to know it; and the precise purpose of the study.

This qualitative case study took place in a natural classroom setting, at a primary state school in Limassol, Cyprus. The island’s long continuity of its historical tradition, the variety of external influences which have impinged upon it from the earliest of history times, the social problems arising from the existence of a minority community differing in a
cultural and religious background from the Greek-Christian majority and the attitudinal changes which have taken place in response to the consequences of the mainland Turkish invasion, has to present a unique educational system, especially for the elementary education. Schools, often characterised as society’s mirror, reflect these changes. As diversity grows within the Republic of Cyprus, the school population is likewise becoming more diverse, especially within the inner-city schools (Rousou & Hatzigianni-Yiangou, 2000). The island had become home to guest workers from Thailand, the Philippines and Sri Lanka as well as to a significant Kurdish minority and a large refugee population. The island of Cyprus has also seen a large arrival of population from Poland, Russia, Ukraine, Bulgaria and Romania, since its accession to European Union. This impact of immigration is becoming more and more obvious, according to Thomson (2006), influencing society. The purpose and content of education has been greatly challenged, too and nowadays there is a great concern for reorganisation.

Within this context, which will be explain in detail in the following chapter (Chapter 1) – this research set out to fill in gaps regarding the use of local literature and other kinds of books, such as wordless picture books and well-known fairy tales, supplementary to the main class text-book widely used in first year primary schools in the Republic of Cyprus. The research questions aimed to examine whether an early experience of studying such texts may enhance the language learning of both Greek mother-tongue speakers of Greek (GMT) and Greek Additional Language learners (GAL). The present study is also interested in investigating whether the traditional folk tale Spanos and the Forty Dragons: A Folk tale from Cyprus, utilised for the purpose of this research, with text in the island’s dialect is a better way to introduce literacy skills to a learner.

Three main research questions were chosen to guide my research:

1. How does motivation and the level of engagement change through first grade pupils’ interaction with a variety of children’s literature.

2. To what extent does such kind of texts enhance oral language development and promote additional language learning.
3. How far does the use of local literature, *Spanos and the Forty Dragons: A Folk Tale from Cyprus*, in the Cypriot dialect, support and influence the reading and writing development for mother tongue speakers of Greek and those who are learning Greek as an additional language.

Cyprus’s history had been investigated and studied in depth by many historians, sociologists, political scientists and educators of the island. As a result there are plenty of different versions and interpretations of the same historical events either by Greek Cypriots and Greek historians or by English historians. Hence, much of reading has been done in Greek and I was translating while at other times reading has been done in the English language. It is to be hoped that the following brief historical background of the island will help towards a better understanding of the island’s tribulations arising from its peculiar present constitutional status as well as from its geographical position. It should be noted however, that as such this account stems from the perspective of my culture which is also the same culture as the research setting: the Greek Cypriot speakers.

Cyprus, as will be discussed in chapter 1, has been a divided country since the Turkish invasion in 1974, with the Greek Cypriots inhabiting the south part of the island and the Turkish Cypriots inhibiting the north (Hadjioannou, Tsiplakou and Kappler, 2011). Due to this political situation in Cyprus, this research focuses on the southern part of the island, which is the area under control of the Republic of Cyprus. The research also acknowledges that there is also a Turkish-Cypriot perspective but that is not part of this research.

**Thesis Outline**

This thesis has 5 chapters. Following this introduction, Chapter 1 sets the general context of the study by introducing the context of Cyprus; the island in which the research took place. The first chapter begins by providing a brief historical background of the island and the cultural forces that have shaped its identity, the country’s population and the current situation on the island. The chapter makes reference to the changes occurred in the population of the island due to immigration and on the purpose and content of education. It
gives a review of the structure of elementary education in the area controlled by the Republic of Cyprus and presents the current situation between non-Greek speaking students and the National Literacy curriculum. Chapter 1 also presents briefly the Greek Cypriot linguistic landscape and underlines the role of the mother tongue in education by providing a review as to what extend language is a factor in the construction of the national identity on the island. The chapter concludes with a brief review of the origins and developments of Cypriot children’s literature, which is associated with the history and culture of the island.

The second chapter (Chapter 2) makes reference to the relevant literature on Greek as a second/foreign language offering also information regarding the Cypriot linguistic landscape. The chapter reviews several language development theories that offer explanations of how language, first and second, is learned and explores the social elements of learning as has been emphasised by Vygotsky. Chapter 2 also discusses the use of literature, including folk and fairy tales, as an educational tool in supporting language and literacy development and concludes by highlighting the significance of implementing literature circles in the context of additional language acquisition.

Chapter 3 presents the methodological aspects of this research. The chapter begins by presenting the aim of the study and the research questions. The chapter provides a detailed account of the methodology guided and underpinned this case study, the process of collecting, organising and analysing the data. It continues by presenting the school where the research took place including an outline of the case study pupils and of an overview of the research year. The chapter also explores the ethical issues emerging from the case study and the data analysis as well as my role as the teacher and the researcher and the role of the ‘critical friend’ throughout the research year.

Chapter 4 aims to describe the findings relevant to the three research questions which have been set at the beginning of the study. The chapter is divided in two parts. The first part begins with a brief analysis of the texts used along with an analysis of findings relevant to the first and second research questions. The second part of this chapter examines the relationship between children’s reading of literature, including local in the Cypriot dialect, and their writing development, analysing findings relevant to the third research question.
Thesis is completed by the discussion, in Chapter 5. The fifth chapter concludes the thesis by raising classroom and policy implications for primary and additional language learners in a mainstream classroom. The chapter also looks at the limitations of the research and concludes with a summary of the changes that took place in children’s oral and written language when studying quality children’s literature texts, supplementary to the existing textbook, and offers insights into how to use such texts.
CHAPTER 1 - CYPRUS: THE RESEARCH CONTEXT

The first chapter introduces the context of Cyprus; the island in which the current research took place. The chapter begins with pertinent historical information about the island and the cultural forces that have shaped its identity. Identity is and has been a complex problem in Cyprus and also one of the reasons that led to the war in 1974; and one of the reasons the problem remains unresolved ever since. The issue of national identity is considered essential for the formulation of educational policy in Cyprus (Persianis, 1994a; Koutsellini-Ioannidou, 1997). Thus, the chapter highlights the role of Greek Cypriot education in preserving and strengthening national identity on the island and provides a review as to what extent language is a factor in the construction of this identity. Further, the chapter discusses the fact that at present Cyprus has seen a large arrival of non-Greek language speakers in Greek-Cypriot primary schools which has challenged the purpose and content of education. It also presents briefly the Greek Cypriot linguistic landscape underlining the role of the mother tongue in education, where the official language and the language of instruction is Standard Modern Greek. The chapter concludes with a brief review of the origins and developments of Cypriot children’s literature; a development that is associated with the history and culture of the island.

Figure 1.1: A timeline of the history of Cyprus
1.1. Historical background

Cyprus is a small country with a long history and a rich culture. The island’s advantageous closeness to the three continents: Europe, Africa and Asia, helped the island’s development as an important cultural centre. However, the island’s geographic position and strategic location has since antiquity played also an important part in the island’s turbulent history (Panteli, 1984; Spyridakis, 1964; Eurydice, 2009). The first signs of civilization date from the 9th millennium BC, as evidenced by Neolithic settlements brought to light by excavations. Around 12 BC Mycenaean and Achaean Greeks settled on the island and established their civilization, thus permanently instilling the island’s Greek roots. Their arrival transformed the island’s civilization and changed the ethnological composition of its population while at the same time Cyprus entered into a period of wealth and contentment (Spyridakis, 1964). Greek Cypriots consider the arrival of the Greeks as a landmark utilising it as evidence of the island’s Hellenic heritage that extends up to the present (Hadjipavlou, 2007; Papadakis, 2005).

Since then, and before Cyprus became an independent state in 1960, many other cultures followed. Phoenicians, Assyrians, Franks, Venetians (later referred to as Latins), Ottomans and British passed through the island, all leaving behind visible traces of their passage (Cobham, 1908; Hitchens, 1997; Eurydice, 2009). The ones that have determined the island’s modern history though are the Ottoman (1571-1878) and British (1878-1959) Empires.

For three centuries, Cyprus was controlled by the Ottoman Empire (1571-1878). According to Antoniadou (2006) the takeover by the Ottomans was welcomed by the local population since positive social and economic growth took place in the inhabitants’ lives with the end of the feudal system established by Venetians, giving the freehold of the land to the peasant families who had worked it. The Ottomans also gave privileges to the Orthodox Church of Cyprus allowing the Church to run its own affairs (Spyridakis, 1964; Mallinson, 2011). By this way, the Church of Cyprus was in a stronger position than it had been for hundreds of years and played a leading role in the quest for independence from the new rulers and in the union movement with Greece (Panteli, 1984; Mallinson, 2011). However, the Ottoman rule
encouraged the settlement of thousands of Ottoman Turks on the island, who during the Ottoman period acquired a Cypriot identity.

The British took over in 1878. The island, though, remained formally part of the Ottoman Empire until the latter entered the First World War on the side of Germany, and Britain in consequence took control of Cyprus in 1914 (Mallinson, 2011). “The British colonial period, witnessed the rise of Greek and Turkish nationalism in Cyprus: Greek-Cypriots strove for enosis, the union of Cyprus with Greece; Turkish-Cypriots demanded taksim, partition of the island” (Solomonides, 2008: 62). This bi-communal character of the island had been formed when the Ottomans (Turks) ceded Cyprus to Britain (Kızılyürek, 2001). Both communities, Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot, were divided linguistically, religiously, ethnically and culturally. The Turkish-Cypriots identified with Turkey, the Ottoman Empire and the Muslim religion, embracing a Turkish identity (Bryant, 2004). The Greek-Cypriots identified with the Byzantine Empire, the Greek language, culture and the Orthodox religion.

British colonial rule lasted until 1960. After a four-year anti-colonial struggle (1955-59) lead by Greek Cypriots with the agreement of Greece, Turkey and Great Britain, the island became an independent state. The Republic of Cyprus “was created as a compromise solution reflecting the opposed interests of the two antagonistic ethnic groups” (Solomonides, 2008: 62). This independence, though, resulted in inter-ethnic conflicts between the years 1963 – 1974 resulting in a second invasion of the Turks in 1974 (Antoniadou, 2006; Mallinson, 2011). Since then, Cyprus has been a divided country. The war itself and the exchange of populations that followed the armed conflict has led to the geopolitical separation of Cyprus’ two major ethnic/linguistic communities, with the Greek Cypriots inhabiting the south part of the island and the Turkish Cypriots inhabiting the north (Hadjioannou, Tsiplakou and Kappler, 2011). The occupied area was declared the “Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus”; a state only recognised by Turkey since Greek Cypriots did not recognise this illegal state. Turkish Cypriots though refused to accept the use of the name “Republic of Cyprus” for the Greek Cypriot government, as they state that it gives the false impression of representing all Cypriot people (Streissguth, 1998).
The following figure contains two maps of Cyprus (Indiegogo, 2014). The first map shows the formation of the population of the island in 1960 and the second one shows the island of Cyprus as has been divided between the Greek-Cypriot side in the South and the Turkish-Cypriot side in the North. The two communities are separated by a physical barrier called the Green Line that is patrolled by UN troops.

![Figure 1.2: Cyprus: The island in 1960 and the divided island after the Turkish invasion in 1974.](image)

In effect of the division, “contact between the two groups, including language/communication” (Özerk, 2001: 260) has since been minimal. As Panayi (2009) points out the fact that Greek and Turkish Cypriots were living side by side on such a small island, but with no contact with one another, has had a great impact on the way they considered each other, and on the development of their identities. Both communities are engaged in propaganda, which impacts on people’s views and behaviours towards the other community (Stressguth, 1998). The consequences of this and its impact on Cyprus today is presented by Fergusson (2001: 218) when arguing that “this ethno-nationalist
indoctrination of the communities via media propaganda and biased curriculum material in segregated schools still fuels the fires, keeping the conflict alive in the minds of generations who live in isolation from their enemy”.

Acknowledging the political situation in Cyprus, this research focuses on the southern part of the island, which is the area under control of the Republic of Cyprus. Thus, all references henceforth to Cyprus will have this meaning.

1.2. National identity and Education in Cyprus

As has been argued above, independence in 1960 marked the birth of Cyprus as a bi-communal Republic intended to bring together people of different ethnic identities and different national orientations. Though, the concepts and contents of national narratives and frameworks imported from Greece and Turkey, instead of supporting the newly founded bi-communal Cypriot state, suggested the existence of two rival ethnic communities claiming to be part of the nations of the neighbouring states (Panayiotou, 2005).

Education in Cyprus reflects the turbulent history of the island and it has been widely researched, especially during the period of British Colonial Rule (1878-1960) (Persianis, 2003; Yiangou, 2004; Koutselini-Ioannidou, 1997; Panayiotou, 2005). Persianis (2003) states that the first fifty years of colonialism (1878-1931) saw a more liberal policy regarding the nationalist orientations of the education provided for Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots. Precisely, despite the attempts made by the colonial administration related “to the content of instruction in history and in adding English as a foreign language to the curriculum, the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities were, for the most part, allowed to manage their respective school systems, in virtue of the fact that they were treated as religious rather than ethnic communities by the colonial government” (Hadjioannou, Tsiplakou and Kappler, 2011: 529). However, after 1931, as Given (1998) states there was an effort from the British colonial rule to promote a sense of local identity in Cyprus. Whereas in most British colonies compulsory teaching of British history antagonised nationalist teaching of local history, in Cyprus rulers encouraged the teaching
of Cypriot history (Yiangou, 2004). With reference to the language policy in Cyprus during British rule, Persianis (1996: 46) claims, that it can be characterised as “an elusive ‘adapted education’ policy” which was significantly influenced by “local conditions”. Within this distinctive context, Greek-Cypriots expressed dissatisfaction at educational impositions aimed at fostering a Cypriot identity (Makriyianni and Psaltis, 2007).

The two major ethnic/religious communities of Cyprus, Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots developed separate education systems. The educational system emphasised a Turkish ethnic identity to the Turkish-Cypriots and a Greek ethnic identity to the Greek-Cypriots; an educational system controlled by their respective religious institutions (Özerk, 2001). The schools of the Cypriot-Greek community were connected to the Greek Orthodox Church of Cyprus. Consequently, the subject matter was mainly linked to the study of Christian religious texts. Likewise, the schools of the Cypriot-Turkish community were connected to the Mosque, and “courses were mainly based on rote learning of religious psalms and on training in reading and writing” in languages that differed greatly from the spoken variety (Özerk, 2001: 256).

The issue of national identity is considered very important for the development of educational policy in Cyprus (Persianis, 1994a; Koutsellini-Ioannidou, 1997). Despite the long occupation of the island by several conquerors, the survival of the Greek population in Cyprus is, according to Spyridakis (1964), due to the safeguarding of their national identity. The role of the church in preserving the national identity of the island during those turbulent years considered vital and one of the fundamental aims of public education in support of the struggle against the Turkish occupation of Cyprus (Church of Cyprus, 1987). Myrianthopoulos (1946) and Philippou (1930) claim that the church undertook the education of the Greek Cypriots and supported it with the teaching of the Greek language and the orthodox religion. Hence, the island’s ethno-religious community felt strongly the need to maintain its identity by providing to its children an education based on the tradition, religion, language and culture of their community (Persianis, 1994a; Koutsellini-Ioannidou, 1997).
In the years that followed, the Greek Cypriot education system continued to be very closely aligned to the one in Greece, mirroring not only the curricula but also the language textbooks. Papanastasiou and Koutselini-Ioannidou (1999: 170) mention that “up to 1980 the policy of the Ministry of Education of Cyprus concerning school textbooks has been to use textbooks that were published in Greece”. Karagiorges (1986) argues that full identification of the system with that of Greece blocked the way to an effective and constructive national policy; which would have met the needs of the island. Achlis (1983) states that in these textbooks exist a discrimination against our neighbouring countries with Greeks being presented as superior to them.

Additionally, as Koutselini and Papanastasiou (1998: 171-172) argue, even though the students needed to know the great variety which characterises the Cypriot community (Greeks, Turks, Maronites, Armenians) and to work towards the harmonious coexistence of all the inhabitants (MoEC, 1994), these goals are not realised at the teaching level since the topics are not included in the textbooks. Besides the minority groups that also constitute the population of the island, Cyprus, since its accession to European Union has seen a large arrival of population from several other countries. However, what is almost unique in European Cyprus, as Papanastasiou and Koutselini –Ioannidou (1999: 168) maintain, “is the complete lack of multi-cultural education or even the recognition of this concept and of the need for such education. Students of all grades never come to know about the life and the culture of the Turkish Cypriots or about the Maronites, the Armenians and the Latins who live among us”. And this raises the concern of how Greek-Cypriot education will strengthen and place a valid emphasis on national and cultural identity and be available on an equal basis to all children in the Greek schools of the Republic of Cyprus, without endangering harmonious living with minorities and immigrants.

With reference to the language of education, since, Standard Modern Greek became the official language of Greece in 1976, it has been the language of literacy in both the Greek and Cypriot Greek education systems (Hadjioannou, Tsiplakou and Kappler, 2011), even though most students’ mother tongue is the Greek-Cypriot dialect. The language
textbooks known as *My Language [Η Γλώσσα μου]*, which adopted as required textbooks in Cypriot Greek elementary education in 1986 and remained in use until 2006, “have been criticised for exhibiting disregard for language variation both in terms of geographic and social dialects and in terms of register/style” (Hadjioannou, Tsiplakou and Kappler, 2011: 514). In particular they have been described as using “a language of relative homogeneity, without any elements of dialect (regional and social)” (Anthogalidou, 1989 as cited in Leondaki 2008: 14; Kostouli, 2002).

Even though the last curriculum (MoEC, 2010) includes an explicit reference to the recognition of non-standard dialects and their study in education, still in the Greek Cypriot context the dialect is excluded from the learning process. In particular, pupils are encouraged to write and speak in Standard Modern Greek language and if they use words in the Cypriot idiom in their written drafts are being corrected and the words are being replaced by the ones in the Standard Modern Greek. Also, in oral conversation and in dialogues teachers usually correct pupils when they are using the Cypriot idiom. Although, according to the following extract, the language curriculum adopts an explicit stance with regard to standard language and dialect and geographical/socio-linguistic variation, there aren’t any texts or other material included in elementary classes to support this.

Students are expected to acquire a full overview of the structure of Standard Greek and of the Cypriot Greek variety (phonetics and phonology, inflectional and derivational morphology, syntax); [...] to realise that various aspects of grammar perform specific language functions, depending on genre and communicative situation [...] ; to know the basic structural similarities between Standard and Cypriot Greek and to be able to identify elements from other varieties/languages in hybrid, mixed or multilingual texts; to view the Cypriot dialect as a variety which displays systematicity in its phonology, syntax and vocabulary, to be able to analyse a range of hybrid texts produced through code-switching and language alternation in a multilingual and multicultural society such as that of Cyprus (published in English).

(MoEC, 2010: 2).
Pavlou and Papapavlou (2004: 246) supporting the use of dialect in education argue that “no matter which educational model is adopted, students should by no means be made to feel that their mother tongue is inferior and inadequate”. “The use of their mother tongue signals to children that their language and culture have value, and this exerts positive effect on their motivation, attitudes and ultimately on their achievement in school” (James, 1996: 249). Since, a key text in this case study is the traditional folk tale Spanos and the Forty Dragons: A folk tale from Cyprus (Hambis, 1986) with text in the dialect of the island, the use of the dialect in the classroom will be discussed later in this chapter in a separate section on children’s literature. Students’ exposure to the dialect of the island and encouragement to use this dialect in the classroom, by studying the selected traditional folk tale, offered ample evidence of pupils’ development of narrative speech and writing.

The overall aim of education in Cyprus at present, according to the Primary School Curriculum (MoEC, 2010) is to develop new teaching materials that enable teachers to individualise their teaching, and to help their students acquire basic skills of study and creative work. With reference to the teaching of language and literacy, the emphasis is to shift from the acquisition of important skills and knowledge to the development of understanding that all texts are products, and as such they carry an agenda and a specific message. Aims to equip each child with the know-how for decoding any text with analytical skill and to introduce a philosophy in which every ‘message’ is a basis for negotiation and constructive dialogue. Additionally, the new curriculum aims to cultivate awareness of the national, religious and cultural identity of Greek-Cypriots which remains one of the main objectives of education, in conjunction with respecting the differences of minorities and foreigners residing in the Greek Cypriot part of the island (MoEC, 2010).

Content analysis of the existing textbooks for Greek language learning led to improvements which are still being made. Selected group of teachers with the help of academics of the University of Cyprus began writing new teaching books in order to meet the needs of the pupils today on the basis of the new curriculum. Additionally, regarding the growing diversity within Greek Cypriot schools, further teaching material and methods are being considered for further integration of children from other countries and
cultures in the class. Even though this is a step forward, no sufficient teaching material has been prepared regarding the teaching of the Greek language, resulting in using the same textbooks that were being used prior to the reform. These are published in Greece and are distributed to all Greek Cypriot state elementary schools.

This case study was conducted before the official attempt of educational reform and was a pioneer in investigating the relationship between literature, particularly local literature, and the development of orality and literacy in first year primary school pupils in the area under the control of the Republic of Cyprus. Also, the results of this research offer evidence of the significance of using a variety of different kinds of texts, supplementary to the widely used text-book. It is also notable that the selected traditional folk tale *Spanos and the Forty Dragons* not only combines cultural heritage and contemporary reality, but also keeps the dialect of the island alive; a goal that the new curriculum wants to achieve.

Literature, and especially children’s literature, as a basis component and source of authentic texts, has been now gaining momentum in the state schools in Cyprus. The New Literacy Curriculum (MoEC, 201) aims to give learners the opportunity to experience as many literary texts as possible, in order to be equipped with the know-how for decoding any text with insight and analytical skills. This research has provided not only examples of how such texts might be introduced into the classroom but also the pedagogy, utilising literature circle discussions.

1.3. **Minorities in Cyprus and cultural diversity in education**

As it has been argued earlier, Cyprus has been religiously and culturally diverse since at least medieval times – multi-religious and even multi-cultural (Varnava, 2010). Currently the island’s population is composed of Greek Cypriots, Turkish Cypriots, Latins, Maronites and Armenians. Latins trace their origins to medieval period, when Franks and Venetians controlled the island. They do not have a distinct language and the basis of their identity revolves around their religion, Roman Catholicism (Panayi, 2009). The Latins of Cyprus form a compact but a steadily increasing community because of their mixed ethnic make-
up, which enables people of differing nationalities to join the community by virtue of belonging to the Roman Catholic confession. In recent decades, intermarriage between native Cypriots and Roman Catholics from Eastern Europe such as Poles and Czechs or even with Filipinos from the Far East, has added to this national heterogeneity (Latin Catholics of Cyprus, 2014).

Maronites, who migrated from Lebanon between 6th and 16th century, have a distinct language; Cypriot Arabic, which is a variety of Arabic. However, it is estimated that only a small number of Maronites currently speak this language (Karyolemou, 2009). Armenians have the longest history of the island’s minorities. They have developed a strong ethnic identity, which they maintain by forming their own educational institute and clubs (Panayi, 2009). Even though Armenians do not live in concentrated areas, unlike Maronites, they have strong community bonds that keep them together (Karyolemou, 2009). Several of these nationalities are educated jointly with Greek Cypriots but they also have their own schools where they give more emphasis on their own religion and tradition.

At present, immigration has increased rapidly due to the island’s accession to EU and to the fact that Cyprus has removed all restrictions on the free movement of other EU nationals into its territory (Thomson, 2006). The island also changed its labour immigration practices making them more flexible for foreign workers (Trimikliniotis, 2007). European immigrants arrive on the island with diverse residency intentions: young individuals, mostly from Bulgaria, Poland and Romania, come with the intention of working in Cyprus for a few years and then returning to their home countries; young families from the same countries come with the intention of long-term stays; and retirees, mostly from United Kingdom, use Cyprus as their retirement or winter residence (Hadjioannou, Tsiplakou and Kappler, 2011: 519). The island of Cyprus has also seen a large arrival of guest workers from countries such as Thailand, the Philippines and Sri Lanka, as well as major increases in the numbers of permanent British and Russian residents. The island is also home to a significant Kurdish minority, as well as a large refugee population consisting of people mainly from Serbia, Palestine, Lebanon and Syria.
According to Banks (2006a), cultural diversity enriches the nation, the schools and the classrooms whilst it creates great challenges in finding a balance between unity and diversity. Individuals and groups that differ from the majority or the dominant group and culture need to feel accepted and incorporated in the society, especially now that people demand the right to maintain their cultures and characteristics. In this sense, the concept of diversity leads to the awareness, acceptance and affirmation of cultural differences (Grant and Sachs, 1995). Wide research has been focused on the interrelation between cultural diversity and education. It is widely accepted that education and schools are among the main institutions transmitting culture to the younger generation through schools, creating individual identity and promoting national one (Gellner, 1983; Green, 1990). Banks (2006a) discussing the impact of cultural diversity in education, points out that the different experiences brought to school by the various cultural groups enrich the students’ knowledge and experiences.

This cultural diversity in the Cypriot society creates further challenges for the educational system, too. Even though, the languages of the European immigrants have had a moderate impact on the Cypriot linguistic landscape, the presence of immigrant children in the education system has increased the need for multicultural practices and second language acquisition support (Hadjioannou, 2006; Tsiplakou and Georgi, 2008). This immigration has also influenced the new generation of researchers who are now engaging with contemporary issues such as multiculturalism and emotional education.

The following table shows the composition of the school population in Cyprus primary schools for the school year 2010-2011 (MoEC, 2012: 357).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary Schools (%)</th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greek-Cypriots</td>
<td>86,05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkish-Cypriots</td>
<td>0,18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maronites</td>
<td>0,27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armenians</td>
<td>0,09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latins</td>
<td>0,00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreigners</td>
<td>13,41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>100,00</td>
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Table 1.1: The composition of the school population in Cyprus primary schools (2010 – 2011)
The first five countries where foreign pupils in primary schools come from are: Georgia, Bulgaria, Romania, Greece and the United Kingdom (MoEC, 2012: 357). The Ministry of Education and Culture with its educational policy regarding the education of foreign pupils is aiming at their smooth integration into the Cyprus educational system, by “promoting the implementation of educational measures and policies, which will help groups from different cultural identities to integrate themselves in a creative environment, regardless of background” (MoEC, 2012: 357). The model that is currently being used is the mainstreaming programme, in which foreign pupils who are not speaking the Greek language participate in the classrooms along with the native Greek Cypriot-speaking pupils. However, “a flexible system of intervention within the ordinary timetable also exists, which involves placing foreign pupils in a separate class for some hours of the week, for intensive learning of the Greek language and specialized assistance according to their specific needs” (MoEC, 2012: 357).

Even though the Department of Primary Education “provides all schools with educational material, which includes books for the teaching of the Greek language, activity and exercise books, as well as teachers’ books with methodological instructions and a variety of suggestions for activities” (MoEC, 2012: 357-358), this way of teaching has sometimes a negative effect on pupils’ socialization, as it distinguishes them from their classmates and stigmatizes them. During the last decade the Ministry of Education and Culture has been trying new policies and theories in Greek Cypriot state schools in order to meet the needs of those children who speak other languages than Greek. Yet, even though children not proficient in Greek are provided with additional time and specialised material for providing language learning and support, the majority of new ideas do not take into consideration the cultural needs of foreign children.

This research demonstrates the significance of using children’s literature texts for language and literacy development in an elementary classroom where first and additional language learners coexist and aims to contribute to the enrichment of research regarding the teaching of Greek as an additional language for year one pupils in state schools in Cyprus. Participating in discussions, group work and role-play, students had the opportunity to
engage in highly dialogic interactions with each other and the texts used and learn the target language through natural interaction. The research’s focus on the use of children’s literature, including local authored in the Greek Cypriot dialect, brings something new to this recently established field in the context of Cyprus.

1.4. The Greek Cypriot linguistic landscape

Contrary to linguistic evidence people still believe that some languages are more ‘precise’, ‘beautiful’, ‘attractive’ and expressive than other languages and that some dialects are ‘inferior’, inexpressive’ and ‘incomplete’ compared with the corresponding standard or official languages.

(Papapavlou, 1998: 15)

The Greek Cypriot linguistic landscape is characterised by two linguistic varieties used in the daily conversational interactions of Greek-Cypriots; Standard Modern Greek and the regional Cypriot dialect, a south-eastern dialect of Modern Greek (Newton, 1972). Standard Modern Greek is the linguistic variety used for educational purposes at Greek Cypriot schools and is not the one used at home. Browning (1983) accurately differentiates the Cypriot dialect from the Modern Greek dialects by pointing out that regional dialects are increasingly being replaced by Standard Modern Greek and that, therefore, local colouring and dialectal speech is now largely confined to villages. He mentions characteristically that “only in Cyprus is the local dialect (of which there are several regional varieties) the universal medium of informal communication” (Browning, 1983: 136). He also adds that many Greek-Cypriots do not feel entirely at home when using Standard Modern Greek and that Cyprus appears to provide the only region where a dialect is not being replaced by (dialect-coloured) Standard Modern Greek. However, both standard and non-standard language, are used alongside each other. Contossopoulos (1994), too, notes that Cypriot is the only Greek dialect truly surviving today.

According to Yiakoumetti (2007: 51), “the two varieties differ linguistically but are at the same time sufficiently related so as to overlap somewhat in pronunciation, grammar and lexicon”. Papapavlou (1994) argues that between the Cypriot dialect and its standard
counterpart there are differences mainly at the lexical level because the dialect includes many loanwords that the standard does not contain. “The two also differ very significantly at the phonological and morphological levels and, to a lesser degree, at the syntactic level (Yiakoumetti, 2007: 55).

With regard to education, the language of instruction in all Greek speaking schools in Cyprus is Standard Modern Greek. Opposed to the declared policy of UNESCO (1951), indicating that the most appropriate language for the educational development of a person is his/her mother tongue, the Greek Cypriot education system, following the educational model that exists in Greece, overlooks the fact that the students’ mother tongue is Greek Cypriot dialect, and as such the majority of the textbooks provided free of charge by the Greek state to the Cypriot state, are written in Standard Modern Greek. According to Pavlou and Papapavlou (2004: 249), “often these textbooks contain language and notions which are unfamiliar to Cypriots and which sometimes do not relate to Greek Cypriot culture”. They also acknowledge that the role of the mother tongue in education is undoubtedly an important one since “it is commonly accepted and supported by UNESCO that education is most successful, when conducted in the learners’ mother tongue” (Papapavlou and Pavlou, 2007: 101).

The issue of the use of non-standard dialects in education in various places in the world has attracted the attention of scholars for more than a century (Driessen and Withagen, 1999; James, 1996; Rickford, 1996; McKay and Hornberger, 1996). Some, however, prefer the use of the dialect (Stinjen and Vallen, 1989), while other researchers support the teaching of both the standard language and the local dialect simultaneously (Papapavlou, 2001b; Pavlou, 1999; Lind and Johnston, 1990; Gfeller and Robinson, 1998). In many cases, “the needs of non-standard speakers are not taken into account, since many governments decide to use only the standard language in education” (Pavlou and Papapavlou, 2004: 245).

According to James (1996: 249-250), by using the mother tongue in school “the culture shock is minimised since there is an intimate relationship between the native variety and an individual’s life”. Unfortunately in Cyprus “the lack of relevant research and the
unwillingness of the authorities to take action force teachers and children to be deprived of the opportunity to develop their full potential, which might be more easily achieved if their mother tongue were creatively used in educational setting” (Pavlou and Papapavlou, 2004: 254); especially first grade pupils who are close to their mother tongue on their first contact with the school environment. However this would be difficult, primarily for ideological reasons related to the ethnic identity of Greek Cypriots associated with Greece.

On the other hand, even though it is important for Greek Cypriot pupils to have access in school to their particular dialect and this will help GAL pupils as they hear the ambient language not only outside but also inside school. However, the issue remains that GAL pupils have needs in terms of their own Mother Tongue. In spite of the different approaches that our neighbours in Europe have introducing additional language learners to reading in the target language but also in their mother tongue, in Cyprus, additional language pupils do not have the opportunity to become literate in their mother tongue, which is mainly used in their families. For instance, in the UK, the status and development of EAL pupils’ Mother Tongue is different than in Cyprus; additional language children become literate in English and they often attend school where they can develop their Mother Tongue once a week.

In the context of Cyprus, primary school teachers have also noted that children face problems in oral and written production of Standard Modern Greek (Pavlou and Christodoulou, 2001). This is hardly surprising since pupils have to communicate in a code that is different from their own mother tongue. Results of this research, including local literature in the Greek Cypriot dialect, offer evidence of pupils’ oral and written engagement with the text, confidence of expression, as well as quality written language production, from both Greek mother tongue speakers and additional language learners. It’s worth mentioning, that immigrant pupils use the Greek-Cypriot dialect in their daily conversational interactions with Greek Cypriots. Findings from the analysis of participants’ written language indicate a number of educational advantages of making use
of the dialect in the classroom, showing the potential and richness of the dialect in local literary works.

1.5. The origins and developments of Greek-Cypriot children’s literature

The development of Greek-Cypriot children’s literature is associated with the history and culture of the island. As Ampatzopoulou (2000) states the literary texts constitute a type of representation of cultural reality, through which the individuals, process this reality and reveal the ideological and cultural space in which they are placed. Greek-Cypriot children’s literature did not have the chance to be as developed as in other European countries, due to the fact that the island has been under the rule of others – Romans, Arabs, Franks, Turks, British, for many years, as has been mentioned above. Children’s literature in Cyprus is mainly a creation of the twentieth-century and is still today in the early stages of development, though it now features considerable number of writers, who write and create contemporary books for children.

Cyprus has a rich source of oral tradition in terms of myths and legends from Ancient Greece which were eventually collected and written down, just as happened in Europe in the 19th century, and published in a form suitable for children. Since then, there are authors writing original work for children, which changes over the years as the country changes and develops. As Panaou and Michaelides (2011) state, Greek-Cypriot children’s literature constitutes a minority literature, which exists in the periphery of metropolitan Greek children’s literature, striving to establish its place within the European and international literature.

Though some children’s literature in Cyprus can be found by the end of the nineteenth century, it had strong connections with Greece and Greek children’s literature, and most of the earlier books for children’s came from there. Consequently, the origins of Cypriot children’s literature are directly associated with the origins of Greek children’s literature, which can be found in the depths of antiquity, in Homer’s epoch and in classical times, between the fourth and fifth century BC. During the ancient Greek, Roman and Byzantine
eras, and during the Turkish occupation of Greece (1453-1821), children’s literature existed mostly in the oral tradition, where we can find the popular Aesop’s fables, tales and children’s songs (Anagnostopoulos, 1996).

The early stages of children’s literature in Greece were in the nineteenth century. The production of books, short stories and poems for children is limited in relation to European literature, but must not be underestimated. By the end of the century, children’s literature was well established in Greece and paved the way for new authors to develop and enlarge upon it. After the liberation of Greece in 1821, the development of Greek children’s literature began. Katsiki-Givalou (1993) sets the year 1836 as the year of the birth of Greek children’s literature. The first magazine published was exclusively intended for children: Παιδική Αποθήκη [Children’s Storeroom]. The authors provided children with educational texts, which were characterised by patriotism, religiousness and didacticism. Despite the publication of this magazine, children in Greece had to wait a few more years in order to get an actual children’s book in their hands (Katsiki-Givalou, 1993).

During the last two decades of the nineteenth century the cultural and literary world in Greece showed great interest in the child and education. Therefore, literary themes changed; moving from the exaggerated themes of Romanticism to things that happen in everyday life. Patriotism still remained, but to a lower degree (Katsiki-Givalou, 1997: 18). According to Anagnostopoulos (1996: 762) works taken from international children’s literature were being translated and adapted, notably Verne, Dickens, and Twain and around the end of the nineteenth century, “Greek children’s literature began to be conscious of its beneficial role and a literary tradition was created”.

According to Kyriakides (2008: 163) “the first samples of children’s literature in Cyprus are dated towards the end of the 19th century when pioneering scholars of the time, being influenced from their experiences and readings from the Greek and wider European literary world, tried to create texts in order to educate and also cultivate the aesthetic and sentimental world of the children of the island”. Since then, the Greek-Cypriot children’s literature begun to take shape as a separate body of texts and has passed through many phases. These phases were determined by several historic events that, as has been
mentioned above, decided the subject-matter, the aims and the direction that children’s literature moved towards. Katsonis (2003) and Papantonakis (2007) roughly divide the historical progress of Greek-Cypriot children’s literature into three periods. The first period ranges from the end of the nineteenth century, 1894, until the end of the English colonialism, in 1960. The second period covers the years between 1960, the year Cyprus became an independent state, to 1974 (Turkish invasion), and the third period begins from the end of the war in 1974 until 2004. Due to the entrance of Cyprus in the EU in 2004, some scholars suggest that Cypriot literature has also entered a new, fourth period, from 2004 until today.

1.5.1. First Period (1894 – 1960)

This period begins with the publication of the first book addressed exclusively to young children in 1894 until the end of British colonial rule in 1960 (Kitromilidis, 1994). According to Panaou and Michaelides (2011) the belated and slow development of Greek-Cypriot literature was largely due to British colonial oppression and hostility towards Greek language and culture. Additionally, Maratheftis (1979: 40) claims that “the intense intellectual dependence of Cypriots on Greece caused the reaction of British colonialism that wanted to break this bond away”.

Essays written by Greek-Cypriots who study this literary area (Maratheftis, 1990; Kitromilidis, 1994) have been the main source of information for finding out about the first book addressed for children in Cyprus; an anthology of poems, Λευκάνθεμα [White Flowers] written in 1894 by Virginia Oikonomopoulou. The anthology consists of two volumes. The first one is addressed for boys and the second one for girls, since education in Cyprus during the nineteenth century was divided between male and female.

Throughout the first phase, children’s literature in Cyprus was connected with school, since many books were intended for school usage. Children’s literature of this period came about to play a significant role in children’s lives, if only we consider the fact that during this period children did not have television or other educational and recreational facilities
(Kitromilidis, 1994). Polikseni Loyzias, between the years 1903-1905, had published the first magazine for children Παιδική Ηχό [Children’s Echo]. She had also published elementary textbook’s for schools such as Πατριδογραφία (1890) [The history of my country] and Μαθητικός Κόσμος (1925) [School World]. John Perdios gave a fresh impulse to Cypriot children’s literature with the publication of his book Σχολική Μούσα (1907-1918) [The School Muse], a book with patriotic poems which was supposed to be one of the most important books in Cypriot children’s literature. Throughout this period until 1960, when the Republic of Cyprus became established, children were particularly likely to be introduced to literature through magazines, such as Κυπριώπουλο (1945-1952) [Cypriot Child] and Παιδική Χαρά (1950-1996) [Children’s Joy], in which almost all the works published were mainly dealing with religion, love, brotherhood and peace (Kitromilidis, 1994; Timotheou, 1998; Katsonis, 2008). These books were written in Katharevousa; a conservative form of Modern Greek language; a compromise between Ancient Greek and the Demotic Greek, which until 1976 was the official written language of Greece.

1.5.2. Second Period (1960-1974)

After the end of the Second World War, a new period begins for Cypriot children’s literature especially with the presence of Nearchos Clerides who published in 1950 the Κυπριακά Παραμύθια [Cypriot folktales] in three volumes, and two collections of short stories, Διγενής Ακρίτας [Digenis Akritas] (1961) and Οδύσσεια [The Odyssey] (1961) (Kitromilidis, 1994; Timotheou, 1998). Concerning the cultural roots of Cypriot children’s literature, Katsonis (2003: 72-73) points out that “as it happens with other peoples, in the case of Cyprus as well, the roots of its children’s literature can be found in the infinite and not fully explored – unfortunately even until this day – treasure of our folklore”.

The second period (1960-1974) of children’s literature in Cyprus, despite the political problems and instability of the years following 1960 was certainly more fruitful and productive. The area of children’s literature was enriched with many plays, poems, novels and fairy tales (Katsonis, 2003). Also, new authors appeared who enriched Greek-Cypriot
children’s literature production. The litterateurs of this period were inspired from Greek history, mythology and literature, from the Bible and the modern Cypriot history (Katsonis, 2003). It is worth mentioning, that authors during the second period of Greek-Cypriot children’s literature, were functioning as their own editors and no illustrations were included in the books, other than some black-and-white sketches by the authors or rarely by well-known illustrators. Panaou and Michaelides (2011), claim that Standard Greek dominated and the Greek-Cypriot dialect was not used. This fact, along with the marginal status of Greek-Cypriot culture within the boarder Greek culture, reinforced in the creators what we could call an ‘identity anxiety’, to some extend still felt by authors.

1.5.3. Third Period (1974 – 2004)

A remarkable increase in both the quality and quantity of books written for children occurred during the third period (1974-2004) of the development of children’s literature in Cyprus; mainly because adults felt the need to transfer to the younger the sadness, frustration and injustice of the Turkish invasion on the island. This invasion naturally influenced the developments in children’s literature in Cyprus. Most of the children’s books written during the third period of the development mirror the tragedy of 1974; dealing with the invasion, the execution of the missing persons and the uprooting of people. Ray (1996: 661) points out that this invasion “coincided with the introduction of a realistic note into the literature for children”.

The tragic experiences that wounded the island and its population influenced, as it is natural, the further development of Cypriot children’s literature. Greek-Cypriot writers were writing more pieces of prose addressed to children, dealing with the uprooting of Greek Cypriot people and their hope for return, and novels dealing with tragic events of the invasion (Maratheftis, 1989; Katsonis, 1998). According to Anagnostopoulous (1993) and Katsonis (2003) one of the main ideological tendencies presented in the Cypriot children’s literature, after the invasion, is the island’s national problem and the necessity for harmonious coexistence of Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots. Children are taught their
history through these stories and the messages of peace, unity, brotherhood, love and friendship between the two communities. In addition, Greek-Cypriot children’s literature deals with many other subjects such as social problems, science, history, adventures and small problems encountered by children in their everyday life. Alongside these stories there are folk-tales and fairy stories, stories about animals and adventure stories.

According to Katsonis (2008: 160) this period, and especially the decade of 1990, appears to be ‘fairy tale-time’. He states that the most important development of the last 20 years of children’s literature in Cyprus is writers’ turn towards fairy tales (Katsonis, 2008: 160). “Some writers draw inspiration from the endless source of folklore to create their own fairy tales whereas others adapt fairy tales from Cyprus into Modern Greek or use the original fairy tale in the true Cypriot dialect and produce carefully illustrated publications” (Katsonis, 2008: 160).

A significant moment in Cypriot folklore was the publication of two works of folklore by the well-known engraver Hambis Tsaggaris, namely Ο Σπανός τζαι οι σαράντα δράτζοι δράκοι: Ένα παραδοσιακό παραμύθι από την Κύπρο [Spanos and the Forty Dragons: A folk tale from Cyprus] in 1986, and Το βασιλόπουλο της Βενετίας [The Prince of Venice] in 1992, both with text in the Greek - Cypriot dialect, in Standard Modern Greek and the English language. The folk tale Spanos and the Forty Dragons has been the key text in this research. Hambis’ work reflects a man who loves life and his country. His work is directed by two fundamental principles: the need to seek inspiration from Cyprus and a determination to communicate with the Greek-Cypriot people (Hambis, 1995). Both principles are firmly embodied in his work Spanos and the Forty Dragons.

The Turkish invasion in Cyprus during 1974 and the conflict may not be part of Hambis as artist, but it certainly plays a significant role in a large section of his art. Hambis (1995: 214-215) characteristically states:

From 1970 to 1974, I was not interested in politics, my work was mostly erotic (eros in Greek = love). In 1974, with the invasion, for many years I could do little other than political work. I had so much to say. But after some years you realize that what you want to say you have already said. So I had to express myself in a new way.
According to Gillett (1989) his engraved illustrations for the story *Spanos and the Forty Dragons* are amongst the finest of his work (see Appendix). His book includes engravings of his village Kontea, a series on the Turkish invasion and the uprooting of half of the Greek-Cypriot population. Additionally, according to Hughes (1988) in the book – for which he made individual etchings for each page – Hambis merges the images of the story with the actual story itself. “Images float into the words and as the story progresses each page reveals something new both verbally and aesthetically” (Hughes, 1998: in Hambis 1995: 178).

*Spanos and the Forty Dragons* takes us many years back at Cypriot village were forty dragons were preventing the water for entering the village. All villagers stayed thirsty until a young man, Spanos, uses guile to kill the forty dragons and thus win back the water supply for his village. As Hambis (1995: 147) claims, “I saw in the tale a symbolism reflecting the present tragedy of Cyprus, where modern day ‘dragons’ stole from us, the Cypriots, our freedom”. As has been mentioned earlier we always had ‘dragons’ in Cyprus; and each and every one wanted the same thing: land and water. The issue addressed to children through this traditional folk tale is the fact that Cypriots want to see good to overcome the evil, with Spanos (the people) killing the dragons (the enemy) and thus restoring justice (so the water for the river flowed freely).

More than a political allegory and a children’s tale, Hambis’ *Spanos and the Forty Dragons* is a work of art into which the artist invested much time. He first drew a series of pictures in Indian ink and later on with coloured pencils drew the whole series again from the beginning in a complete order as they would appear in a published edition. But still Hambis was not satisfied. He points out that “the element of colour makes it easier, and far more accessible to children. But I felt that the quality would improve if they were in black and white”. This made the tale a much stronger one. What followed was 26 months of solid engraving. Hambis engraved the whole book – the illustrations, the Greek and English language translations, and the original tale in Greek - Cypriot dialect.

Much attention was paid to the dragons: “I looked at a great deal of dragons, at how the Byzantines had illustrated them; I looked up Chinese, Japanese ones and absorbed all the
influence to create my own. I wanted it to be a dragon that children would not be afraid of, but nevertheless, a dragon” (Hambis, 1995: 147). In producing the book Hambis combined myth with reality, using Cypriot scenes and mythological elements in his illustrations. The borders, too are variations of Greek-Cypriot embroidery, and relate to the content of each plate.

As has been mentioned earlier, another Greek-Cypriot traditional folk tale with text in the Cypriot idiom is Το βασιλόπουλο της Βενετίας [The Prince of Venice] (1992) with multicoloured engravings in the style of mediaeval manuscript by Hambis Tsaggaris. Many passages of the text are engraved in flowing coloured lettering crafted by Hambis in the style used in Venice during the 15th and 16th centuries, the period of the tale itself; revealing influences of Venetians on the island.

During this time, Cypriot children’s literature was enriched with the publication of many books with authentic Cypriot fairy tales. Costa Papageorgiou, in the 1990s published three collections of illustrated Cypriot fairy tales written in Modern Greek and later in 1996 published his first tome of the Εγκυκλοπαίδεια Κυπριακών Παραμυθιών [Encyclopaedia of Cypriot Fairytales], which contains tales in their authentic Cypriot dialect (Katsonis, 2008).

1.5.4. Fourth Period (2004 – until now)

With the entrance of the Republic of Cyprus into the European Union in 2004, some scholars contend that Greek-Cypriot literature has entered a new, fourth period. Even though it is still too early to draw any safe conclusions regarding the effects of this fact on Greek-Cypriot literary production, Panaou and Michaelides (2011) identify a second booming in children’s publishing. To be more specific, they claim that the number of books published during the past 6 years (2004-2010) is almost equivalent to the number of books published during the preceding 30 years (1974-2004). This new generation of authors engages contemporary issues such as ecology, multiculturalism, and emotional education, and writes in styles that are similar to those found in other European literatures. In addition,
several children’s books are published regarding the efforts of unification of Cyprus. Many authors are engaged with this rapprochement and the aspect of friendship between the two communities, Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots.

Children’s literature in the Republic of Cyprus is now a fact. As Panaou and Michaelides (2011) point out children’s literature managed to develop and progress through and despite of illiteracy, colonialism, war, identity crisis, language confusion, and marginal cultural status. Further, in a society as Cypriot, which apart from the development of mutual understanding and harmonious coexistence of Greek and Turkish Cypriots, has nowadays to deal with the arrival of immigrants in the island, the development of mutual understanding and respect among the various cultures and the construction of identity constitute significant factor for the island. In this effort the contribution of Cypriot children’s literature can be proved particularly important. Since there is now more local literature for children to read, it’s time for them to be introduced into the classroom. This is the reason I have included children’s literature into my classroom and researched how it influenced my pupils’ language development.

Conclusion

This chapter provided a brief description of the historical background of the island where this research took place. Describing the current situation on the island, the chapter makes reference to the changes occurred in the population due to immigration and on the purpose and content of education which has also been challenged due to the increased number of language minority students enrolling in primary school in Cyprus. Having offered a review of the structure of elementary education in the area controlled by the Republic of Cyprus and presented the current situation between non-Greek speaking students and the National Literacy curriculum, this chapter emphasised that there is a greater need for multicultural practices and additional language acquisition support than before. One of the main aims of the current study, which will be discussed in the following chapters, is to examine whether an early experience of studying children’s literature, supplementary to the main text book,
may enhance oral language development and promote additional language learning. In addition, taking into consideration the sociolinguistic landscape on the island, the chapter has to cast light on the relationship between the use of local literature in the Greek Cypriot dialect in the classroom and school language production. The chapter concluded with a review of the origins and developments of Cypriot children’s literature, since this development is closely associated with the history and culture of the island and is a significant part of the research.
CHAPTER 2 - LITERATURE REVIEW

Chapter 2 reviews important theoretical and empirical literature related to the main issue of the present study: how reading and discussing children’s literature through social interaction supports language development in a natural classroom setting in a state school in Cyprus. The chapter begins by making reference to the relevant literature on Greek as a second/foreign language offering also information regarding the Cypriot linguistic landscape. The chapter continues by shedding light on traditional approaches to language learning by exploring the constructivist theory. Particular emphasis is given to social constructivist theory by Vygotsky (1978), whose theory has partly influenced the philosophical underpinnings of this case study since the research involves social and dialogic interactions with each other and the texts selected. In addition, the chapter reviews several language development theories that offer explanations of how language, first or second, is learned. Further, three main theoretical positions are presented to explain the language development through the early school years: Behaviourist, Innatist and Interactionist. Finally, the chapter discusses the use of literature, advocating the use of wordless picture books and fairy tales as educational tools in supporting the development of basic literacy skills; and the role of folk and fairy tales in language teaching and literacy development. The chapter concludes with a brief reference to dialogic interaction through literature circles.

2.1. Standard Modern Greek as an additional language and the regional Greek-Cypriot Dialect

There has been a great deal of research into first and second language acquisition of English and English as a second/additional language (ESL/EAL) is an established discipline internationally. Greek as a second or additional language is a newly-established field in Greece, and subsequently, has a very marginal status as a subject discipline within the National Curriculum of Cyprus as well. Moreover, research about Greek as a second or a foreign language is limited.
Spinthourakis, Papoulia-Tzelepi and Markopoulou (2003) observe that the origin of teaching Greek as a second language is a relatively recent phenomenon and represents a teaching methodology that has rarely been systematically taught. Greek has essentially been taught as a mother tongue or first language. However, the changes in society and the presence of immigrant children in the educational system have resulted in an urgent need to introduce pedagogically appropriate curricula for the teaching of Greek as a second and/or additional language (Hadjioannou, 2006; Tsiplakou and Georgi, 2008), and to train both newly qualified and experienced elementary school teachers.

As has been argued, the literature referring to Greek as a second/foreign language is limited. There are some articles about general teaching methods, which do not focus on the way of teaching specific educational material or linguistic phenomena. There are no theoretical books devoted to teaching Greek as a foreign language, while on the other hand the available textbooks for teaching Greek do not have units referring to the teaching of Greek to people with a foreign language (Mitsi, 1998; Tokatlidou, 1986, 2003; Charalamboboulos and Chatzisavvides, 1997). Additionally, in Greek literature there are only few references regarding the particularities of the ‘learning’ procedure or the ‘difficulties’ that people learning Greek as a foreign language might encounter (Moschonas, 2003).

Lack of formal support has also meant lack of materials and syllabuses, both in Greece and Cyprus. It’s only after the early ‘90s that some relevant educational material begins to be provided to educators (Partasi, 2011). In the National Curriculum of Cyprus (2006b) there is a paragraph that encourages teachers to plan for the diverse learning and needs of pupils from all social and cultural backgrounds. But, in the absence of sufficient literature, support and guidance, teachers of Greek as an additional language mainly use approaches developed for the English language, adopting them to the teaching and learning of Greek. Thus, there is a great need for multicultural practices and additional language acquisition support; especially now that the number of language minority students enrolling in primary schools in Cyprus has increased and influenced the education system. The main aim of the current study is to examine whether an early experience of studying children’s literature,
supplementary to the main textbook, may enhance oral language development and promote additional language learning. The significance of this case study is the fact that it offers a detailed analysis of a classroom pedagogy which supports Greek additional language learners.

As has been mentioned in the previous chapter, the Cypriot linguistic landscape is also characterised by the regional Cypriot Dialect, a south-eastern dialect of Modern Greek (Newton, 1972) used in the daily conversational interactions of Greek-Cypriots. However, the language of instruction in all Greek speaking schools in Cyprus is Standard Modern Greek, since the majority of the textbooks provided by the Greek state to the Cypriot state, are written in Standard Modern Greek. The existing textbooks contain also language and notions which do not relate to Greek Cypriot culture; which will be discussed in a following chapter where analysis of texts and the class textbook is provided.

The results of this current research can be supported by the ‘Kerkrade Project’, which was carried out in the Netherlands to measure changes after the dialect was introduced in schools alongside the standard. This was done with reference to standard Dutch and the Kerkrade dialect (Stijnen and Vallen, 1989; Van den Hoogen and Kuijper, 1989). The findings of the project supported the researchers’ initial hypothesis that the use of dialect in the classroom would increase the rate of participation of dialect-speaking children. Moreover, analysis showed that encouraging the use of dialect in the classroom, improved language quality and confidence of expression. This case study exposes students to the dialect of the island and encourages the use of dialect in the classroom by utilising the traditional folk tale *Spanos and the Forty Dragons: A Folk Tale from Cyprus*, in which there is an inherent relationship with language and culture. Looking at the response of six first year pupils to the traditional folk tale, evidence came out answering one of my initial questions regarding the relationship between children’s studying of local literature in the dialect of the island and their reading and writing development throughout the research year. Also, findings of this study underline that the use of dialect in the classroom increased the rate of participation and confidence of expression of the Greek additional language speaker.
Additionally, with reference to Greek mother tongue speakers, who are also part of this bounded case study, James (1996) reviews a number of studies (Garrett et al., 1994; Swain, 1996; Ramirez and Yuen, 1991; Kharma and Hajjaj, 1989) which provide evidence that the use of the mother tongue – in this case the Greek-Cypriot dialect - can play a significant and positive role in the development of a child’s literacy and cognitive skills. Based on the results of these studies and on relevant theoretical findings, the arguments for the use of the mother tongue in school, according to James (1996: 249) can be summarised as follows: it is believed that the mother tongue is the best way a) to introduce literacy skills to a learner; b) to aid continuous cognitive development; c) to facilitate classroom learning of the first or second language; and d) to promote a positive self-image. Use of the mother tongue signals to children that their language and culture have value and this exerts a positive effect on their motivation, attitudes and ultimately on their academic achievement.

Nowadays, the Cypriot dialect is restricted mainly to oral language and to daily interactions between Greek Cypriots. Yet, there are many literary works written in Cypriot dialect; poems, songs, myths and traditional folk tales. It is however believed that they reflect a rather long period of Cypriot history, which begins from the middle of the Byzantine period until the end of Venetian rule (see chapter 1). This case study offers ample evidence that the use of the dialect through the traditional folk tale Spanos and the Forty Dragons has influenced and developed students’ narrative speech and writing.

### 2.2. First Language Acquisition

The following part briefly discusses three main language development theories that have been offering explanations of how language, first or second, is learned. Introducing the reader to some of the language acquisition research will help evaluate later the main class textbooks and materials being used in a first grade classroom in state schools in Cyprus. This section aims to describe briefly the three main theories for first language acquisition and development through the early school years.
According to Lightbown and Spada (2006) children learn their first language and other additional languages spoken in the home in an incremental manner. Children interact with others in their immediate environment and over time they develop an understanding of the ways in which language is used in different contexts. The child’s literacy is developed as they learn about the interrelationships that exist between letters, sounds and words. Lightbown and Spada (2006: 1), also argue that “one remarkable thing about first language acquisition is the high degree of similarity in the early language of children all over the world”. Until the 1960s, the study of child language was dominated by the behaviourist approach to language and learning. The Behaviourist theory, advocated by Skinner (1957), proposes that language is not a mental phenomenon but a learned behaviour; children acquire language through the process of imitating what they hear and through discriminating support offered by others in the environment.

The Behaviourist view of first language acquisition was challenged by Noam Chomsky (1959), who was arguing that children are biologically programmed for language and that language develops in the children in just the same way that other biological functions develop (Lightbown and Spada, 2006: 15). According to Chomsky, this mechanism, which he calls the ‘Language Acquisition Device’ (LAD), ‘governs all human languages, and determines what possible form human may take’ (Dulay, Burt and Krashen, 1982: 6). A central part of his thinking is that all human languages are fundamentally innate and that the same universal principles underlie all of them (Lightbown and Spada, 2006: 15).

Thus, the Innatist theory of language acquisition suggests that children are born knowing the structure of language, underlining that language is not only ‘verbal behaviour’, but there is a complex system of rules, which enable speakers to create and understand an infinite number of sentences (Chomsky, 1959); they are born with a certain system of language that they can call on later. He refers to those rules as the ‘Universal Grammar’, which, as he claims, is the basis upon which all human languages build, due to the ease with which children acquire their mother tongue. He also argues that children presume rules from the language they hear around them. Hence, a child’s language “is being creatively constructed by the child as he interacts with those around him” (Littlewood, 1986: 6). The innatist
perspective emphasises that “even children with very limited cognitive ability develop quite complex language systems if they are brought up in environments in which people interact with them” (Lightbown and Spada, 2006: 17).

Chomsky actually sees the child autonomous in the creation of language. He claims that children only hear partial and ungrammatical input since they are exposed to very little correctly formed language. He was arguing against the notion that children learn language by copying what they hear around them. Even though parents might speak carefully to their children, it is not necessarily a model for later speech. Chomsky argues there is something happening in the brain that can make sense of grammar and then produce it.

Cognitive and developmental psychologists criticise the Innatists for not placing enough emphasis on the developmental aspects of language acquisition and they underline the role of the environment, even though they recognize a powerful learning mechanism in the human brain. They see language acquisition as similar to the acquisition of other kinds of skills and knowledge, rather than something that is largely independent of the child’s experience and cognitive development (Lightbown and Spada, 2006: 19). Researchers such as Dan Slobin (1973) have long emphasized the close relationship between children’s cognitive development and their acquisition of language.

Psychologist, Jerome Bruner (1983), suggested that Chomsky’s notion of the innate ‘Language Acquisition Device’ (LAD), the set of language learning tools provided at birth (Chomsky, 1959: 70), was “entirely syntactical and had nothing to do with “meaning” or the actual use of language”. Bruner offers an additional social perspective on language, by proposing his own ‘Language Acquisition Support System’ (LASS). Within this system, he describes the interaction between family and child, where it is within clear and emotional contexts that the child first becomes aware of the way in which language is used. In Bruner’s version, the social conditions are more important; the child is an active participant, essentially creative in her/his approach to language acquisition. John Macnamara (1972) argues that children have an innate capacity to read meaning into social situations, rather than having an in-built language device. He sees language learning as being subordinate to and dependent upon the capacity to understand and participate in
social activities. This interaction is central to the Interactionist theory of language acquisition, which advocates that language is developed through interaction with others. According to Lightbown and Spada (2006: 23), interactionists “argue that what children need to know is essentially available to them in the language they are exposed to”. This study takes into account the importance to young learners’ innate capacity for language acquisition by providing opportunities of active social interactions through implementing literature circle discussions in the literacy sessions occurred.

Piaget was one of the earliest psychologists who saw language as a symbolic system that can be used to express knowledge acquired through interaction with the physical world (Lightbown and Spada, 2006: 20). Vygotsky (1978) also argues that language develops primarily through social interaction underlining that in a supportive interactive environment, children are able to reach a higher level of knowledge. He observes “the importance of conversations and interaction that children have with adults and with other children and sees in this active engagement the origins of both language and thought” (Lightbown and Spada, 2006: 20). Interactionist theories and the importance of a supportive interactive environment enlighten directly the premises on which the present research has been built; its main hypothesis being that social interaction through and about literature can play an essential role in language acquisition.

2.3. Second and/or Additional Language Acquisition

The following part discusses the theoretical perspectives that have been proposed to explain second language acquisition since one of the six case study participants is a Kurdish speaker. The main focus will be on theories of how young learners acquire their knowledge of the language and on the conditions which will promote successful language learning. Some second language acquisition theories emphasise the significance to learners’ innate capability for language learning, whereas others draw attention to the environment and the learners’ engagement with the social context (Lightbown and Spada, 2006: 29).
Behaviourism had a powerful influence on second and foreign language teaching between the 1940s and the 1970s, where classroom activities emphasized mimicry and memorization, and students learned dialogues and sentence patterns by heart (Lightbown and Spada, 2006: 34). Further, behaviourism was often linked to the ‘Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis’ (CAH), which was declaring that where the first language and the target language are similar, learners should acquire Target Language structures with ease; while where there are differences learners would have difficulty (Lightbown and Spada, 2006: 34). By the 1970s, however, many researchers were convinced that behaviourism and the contrastive analysis hypothesis explanations for second language acquisition were insufficient, especially, due to the growing influence of innatist views of language acquisition (Lightbown and Spada, 2006: 35).

In this case study the first language and the target language were not similar for the additional language participant. The Kurdish speaker participant, even though not literate in her first language, was using the Arabic system. At the beginning of the school year when the GAL pupil was asked to write short sentences she was writing from right to left instead of left to right, as the Latin system that we use requires. Under these conditions, the GAL student was facing more difficulties than the GMT students in learning the target language. Escamilla and Grassi (2000) maintain that when the target language is so different from the learner’s own language, then the learner passes through a ‘shock’ period very similar to that of culture shock. Thus, the additional language learner needs encouragement and support to successfully overcome language shock and continue acquiring the target language. Since there are no particular materials in Greek language to support additional language learners, my research was mainly based on theories of English second language acquisition. Supplementary texts with universal themes and written within a cultural context, were also selected in order to motivate pupils and enhance language development.

As has been already mentioned, in relation to first language acquisition, “Chomsky argued that innate knowledge of principles of Universal Grammar permits all children to acquire the language of their environment, during the critical period of their development’...’but did not make any specific claims about the implications of this theory for second language
learning” (Lightbown and Spada, 2006: 35). Lydia White (2003a) and other linguists have argued that Universal Grammar offers the best perspective from which to understand second language acquisition, since is altered by the acquisition of the first language. However, there are others who argue that, although Universal Grammar is a good framework for understanding first language acquisition, it is not a good explanation of the acquisition of a second language, especially by learners who have passed the critical period (Bley-Vroman, 1983; Schachter, 1990).

Other interactionist theorists apply Vygotsky’s socio-cultural theory of human mental processing to define the role of interaction in second language acquisition (Lightbown and Spada, 1999), and hypothesise that second language learners gain proficiency when they interact with more advanced speakers of the language such as their teachers and their classmates. Scaffolding structures, such as modelling, repetition, and linguistic simplification used by more proficient speakers are believed to provide support to learners, thus enabling them to function within their zones of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978). Hatch (1978), Long (1996), Pica (1994) and Gass (1997), among others, argue that conversational interaction play vital role for second language acquisition.

It may be considerable interest to look closer into a model of second language acquisition that is similar to first language acquisition; Stephen Krashen’s (1982) ‘Monitor Model’, which has been developed based on Chomsky’s concept of LAD. Krashen described his ‘Monitor Theory’ in terms of five hypotheses that provide a framework for teaching a second language. These are:

1. the acquisition-learning distinction;
2. the natural order hypothesis;
3. the monitor hypothesis;
4. the input hypothesis;
5. and the affective filter, a hypothesis as to how affective variables relate to the process of second language acquisition.
The ‘acquisition-learning distinction’ is perhaps the most fundamental of all of Krashen’s hypotheses. He states that there are two distinct and independent ways of developing competence in a second language. The first way is language acquisition; a process similar to the way children learn their first language, and the second way is language learning, which is the procedure employed in most traditional classrooms. According to Krashen (1987) language acquisition is a subconscious process, during which language learners hear language all around them, and unconsciously work out the grammar. They are not usually aware of the fact that they are acquiring language; they are only aware of the fact that they are using the language for communication. Thus, as Krashen (1987) suggests, providing students with meaningful comprehensible input that contains grammar, but focuses on communication, will enable students to naturally acquire the necessary grammar. This research demonstrates the significance of implementing quality children’s literature texts in supporting first and second or additional language development. According to Gromann (2003: 42) “foreign language learning with literary texts means learning in a context of meaning”. Due to their authentic character, literary texts offered meaningful comprehensible input and consequently output through pupils dialogic interaction with texts and with one another.

Krashen distinguishes between subconscious acquisition of fluency and conscious learning of rules and structures (Dulay, Burt and Krashen, 1982: 11). He claims that there are three internal processors that operate when students learn or acquire a second language: the subconscious ‘filter’ and the ‘organiser’ as well as the conscious ‘monitor’ (Dulay, Burt and Krashen, 1982: 11-45).

The ‘organiser’ determines the organisation of the learner’s language system, the usage of incorrect grammatical constructions and the systematic occurrence of errors in the learner’s utterances. The ‘filter’ is responsible for the extent to which the learner’s acquisition is influenced by social circumstances such as motivation and affective factors such as anger or anxiety. The ‘monitor’ is responsible for conscious learning. The learners correct mistakes in their speech according to their age and self-consciousness.

(Dulay, Burt and Krashen, 1982: 45)
Brown (2002: 281) has criticised Krashen’s distinction between subconscious (acquisition) and conscious (learning) processes by arguing that “second language learning is a process in which varying degrees of learning and of acquisition can both be beneficial, depending upon the learner’s own styles and strategies”. Van Lier (1996: 41) also contrasting Krashen’s model “defines the starting point as well as the preconditions of the learning process and takes into account the individual learners’ cognitive aspects such as learning styles and strategies”.

Krashen (1982) also refers to the ‘natural order hypothesis’, according to which the learners make mistakes. These mistakes are not random, but are very similar to the errors that children make when learning their first language. Krashen supports that there is a natural order in which learners pick up a language, and that this order is roughly the same for all learners, no matter their linguistic background. Moreover, according to his ‘monitor hypothesis’ formal grammar teaching is not entirely meaningless. The rules that children learn formally are embodied in the monitor.

The fact that a language learner needs to hear a lot of language from native speakers, leads us to the next hypothesis, the ‘input hypothesis’, which is “one of the most controversial theoretical perspectives in Second Language Acquisition” (Altenaichinger, 2003: 8). Krashen (1985) supports that it is mostly through input (what they hear and what they read) that language learners make progress in a foreign language, and not so much through output (speaking and writing). Evidence from the research supports Krashen’s input hypothesis because the GAL pupil was stimulated by the input offered in the additional texts used. The books used supplementary to the main textbook being open to interpretation and therefore able to invite discussion, motivated both GAL and GMT pupils to actively engage, use language and construct their own knowledge on the basis of interaction and collaboration with the images, texts and the other learners.

Also, Krashen, talks about ‘comprehensible input’. He claims “that exposure to comprehensible input is both necessary and sufficient for second language learning to take place” (Mitchell and Myles, 1998: 126), where the input should be written or spoken in such a way that the language itself is comprehensible to the student. Also, the language
used can be supported by several environmental clues, such as pictures, gestures, objects and so on, which make the meaning clear. Krashen indicates that learning a second language is very much like learning a first language; no conscious effort needs to be made to focus on the language as such. He also states that the only way for a learner to make progress in a first language is for her/him to be exposed to a sufficient amount of comprehensible input and “the classroom is the source of input for the language students, where they can obtain the comprehensible input necessary for language acquisition” (Krashen, 1985). To benefit the most from the acquisition phase potential, it is necessary to immerse children in an environment that is rich in written and oral texts and messages in the target language; texts that would be meaningful and understandable to children. Language learning would be a subconscious process and grammar would no longer have to be taught separately, but would be acquired automatically by listening and reading in the foreign language. Language immersion through the use of original narrative texts was the approach employed in the present case study.

Swain (2000), also, argues for the importance of the productive output. Students can gain knowledge of the aspect if they are exposed to varied linguistic input and there are many opportunities to produce some kind of (written or spoken) output. Swain (1985) first proposed the ‘Comprehensible Output Hypothesis’ in response to Krashen’s ‘Comprehensible Input Hypothesis’, based on the observation that French immersion students were considerably weaker in their spoken and written production than in their reading and listening comprehension. Hence, she supported the view of offering more opportunities to learners to engage in verbal production (Lightbown and Spada, 2006: 48). Swain (2000) then has been motivated by sociocultural theory. Swain and Lapkin (1998) also use the term ‘collaborative dialogue’ in order to draw attention to the role of interaction in second language acquisition.

Second language acquisition theorists agree that comprehensible input and real communication can bring about successful additional language acquisition, as long as there is high exposure to the target language both inside and outside the language classroom. Psychologists and linguists, however, have challenged Krashen’s model, by arguing that
output is also necessary as it is the only way that a teacher can recognise the pupils’ needs and progress and adapt to them (Swain, 1985; Long, 1998; McLaughlin, 1987). Swain (1985) argues that learners need the opportunity to use the second language meaningfully, because when they are faced with communication failure, they are forced to make their output more precise, coherent and appropriate.

The fifth Krashen hypothesis, which he calls ‘the affective filter hypothesis’, suggests that the input must be experienced under conditions which minimise anxiety and enhances learners’ motivation and self-image. The teacher should make language learning as stress-free and enjoyable experience as possible. During my fourteen-year of teaching experience, I have observed that traditional language classrooms are often highly stressful places. Pupils are usually under pressure to produce language even when they do not feel ready to do so or they often experience the feeling that all language production will be graded and used as evidence of failure. As I explain later in the methodology chapter, in my classroom, it was particularly noticeable that pupils highly enjoyed relaxing at the book corner browsing or reading books and listening to stories either being read to them aloud or played on a CD-player. They also enjoyed retelling stories and writing in particular styles, sometimes imitating texts they had read or heard. As they stated, this made them feel more secure about what they were telling or writing (especially the GAL pupil).

Additionally, learners’ participation in literature circles and group activity, encouraged them to feel more comfortable to bring their own experiences to a story being read, to compare events and characters with those in other stories, to become critical readers, and become more involved in a text. Discussions of this kind are significant for clarifying problems of perception and interpretation (Harding, 1963) for inexperienced readers. According to Barrs and Cork’s (2001: 41) research about the link between reading and writing, in discussions of texts “children made links between the text and their own experiences”. By sharing and discussing responses in literature circles “children begin to appreciate that other readers might read the same text somewhat differently and to search for evidence of how their own interpretation is supported by the text” (Barrs and Cork, 2001: 41).
Krashen (1982: 33) believes that “comprehensible input and the strength of the filter are the true causes of second language acquisition”. Similarly, other researchers also support that affective factors may be responsible for failure to acquire some aspects of language. Dulay and Burt (1977), for instance, have suggested that for language acquisition to occur, language acquirers need to be ‘open’ to the input or have a low ‘Affective Filter’. When language acquirers are anxious, or put on the defensive, the input may be understood, but it will not reach those parts of the brain that are responsible for language acquisition; what Chomsky (1965) has called the ‘Language Acquisition Device’ (LAD). The ‘Affective Filter’ will keep the input out. To ensure then acquisition of the second language, it is important that the teacher maintain a relaxed and enjoyable learning environment.

Pointing to the importance of motivation, self-confidence and anxiety, Krashen (1987: 31), writes:

The Affective Filter Hypothesis captures the relationship between affective variables and the process of second language acquisition by positing that acquirers vary with respect to the strength or level of their Affective Filters. Those whose attitudes are not optimal for second language acquisition will not only tend to seek less input, but they will also have a high or strong Affective Filter – even if they understand the message, the input will not reach that part of the brain responsible for language acquisition, or the language acquisition device. Those with attitudes more conductive to second language acquisition will not only seek and obtain more input, they will also have a lower or weaker filter. They will be more open to the input, and it will strike ‘deeper’.

According to Jungwirth (2003: 14) “influence by social circumstances such as motivation but also by affective factors such as relaxation or anxiety, the filter is the main hurdle of incoming language”.

A very significant factor in language learning is motivation. Basically, as Escamilla and Grassi (2000) argue, motivation is psychologically essential to acquiring a second language; if the learner is involuntarily in the target culture and has no motivation to learn the target language, proficiency is unlikely. The classroom activity should be focused on
this and learners should be well-motivated to ensure effective learning through a natural urge to communicate. According to Littlewood (1986: 53) “motivation in second language learning as in every field of human learning, is the crucial force which determines whether a learner embarks on a task at all, how much energy he devotes to it, and how long he perseveres”. Also, motivation plays an important role in successful second language reading. Day and Bamford (1998: 27) defined motivation as “what makes people do (or not do) something”. Their model consists of four major variables: reading materials, reading ability, attitudes, and the sociocultural environment. The two researchers claim that materials and attitudes are the critical variables determining motivation to read in the second language. However, if students do not have a pre-existing interest in reading in a second language, it may be difficult for them to develop intrinsic motivation. In such instances, situational interest plays an important part in enhancing intrinsic motivation (Hidi and Harackiewics, 2000). I believe that even though additional language learners have a language to communicate with their family, they will also be motivated to learn the additional language because they will want to communicate with their classmates and the people around, too.

Researchers argue that reading materials influence reading motivation, and therefore is an important issue to consider when designing an extensive reading course. With respect to motivation in general, Dornyei and Skehan (2005: 240) claimed that “motivation does not remain constant, but is associated with a dynamically changing and evolving mental process”. Likewise, second language reading motivation might change as learners continue to read extensively. August and Hakuta (in Ortner, 2003: 21) emphasize the importance of providing students ‘intellectual challenging’ and ‘active and meaningful’ lessons. Clearly defined tasks and opportunities for meaningful communication, both interesting and sufficiently challenging are important and necessary because they can give to the child the feeling that he/she is making progress. My experience as a teacher has revealed to me that is important to give young learners the responsibility of their own learning. Analysis of discourse of literature circle discussions and role-play highlight the value of the texts used supplementary to the class textbook, in motivating and engaging students in highly dialogic interactions with each other and the texts used.
The following section refers to some key concepts in Vygotsky’s educational philosophy and argues that the philosophy underlying his writings is close to the pedagogy used for this research.

2.4. The pedagogy involved: A constructivist view of language learning

Every function in the child’s cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level and, later on, on the individual level; first between people (interpsychological) and then inside the child (intrapsychological). This applies equally to voluntary attention, to logical memory, and to the formation of concepts. All the higher functions originate as actual relationships between individuals.

(Vygotsky 1978: 57)

Constructivism’s emphasis on the role of language in learning, in contrast to behaviourism’s focus on language as a stimulus, has shifted educators’ teaching strategies toward the use of language as a tool in students’ meaning-making processes (Jones and Brader-Araje, 2002). Vygotsky’s work has formed the foundation of social constructivism in educational settings; his emphasis on the role of others, or the social context, in learning. Vygotsky’s theories emphasise the role of the greater community and the role of significant others in learning (Jones and Brader-Araje, 2002). The current research involves social and dialogic interactions both amongst young learners and with the texts selected in investigating the influence of literature in children’s language learning and literacy development. An inquiry which to some extent is new ground in the context of Cyprus. The philosophical underpinnings of this case study have been partly influenced by social constructivist theory of language learning.

In the past, teachers were trying to transmit knowledge to the learners by asking students to recall the facts they had been taught. A way of learning that has been characterised as passive and has been “the staple diet for many learners” in a number of school classrooms (Watts and Bentley, 1989: 3). Education in the island of Cyprus gradually passed from the traditional model to a more progressive one. In the past, children’s first task was to learn
the names and forms of letters, and then to learn syllables, simple combinations of vowels and consonants (part-to-whole methods). When all these were thoroughly mastered children were expected to read whole words – monosyllabic first – and then whole passages. But there was dissatisfaction with this method and then more recently children were encouraged to focus first on whole words and then on their constituent parts (whole-to-part method).

In contrast to the traditional view of learning, where the learner was isolated from all social interaction (Dewey, 1938), progressive education recognises the social aspect of language learning and uses conversation, interaction with others, and the application of knowledge as an integral aspect of learning. Piaget was the first to state that learning is a developmental cognitive process; students create knowledge rather than receive knowledge from the teacher. He recognised that students construct knowledge based on their experiences, and that how they do so is related to their biological, physical, and mental stage of development (Hammond et al, 2001). However, Vygotsky’s theory “includes the notion of social-cultural cognition”; “all learning occurs in a cultural context and involves social interactions” (Hammond et al, 2001: 7). He also emphasised “the role that culture and language play in developing student’s thinking and the ways in which teachers and peers assist learners in developing new ideas and skills” (Hammond et al, 2001: 7). The pedagogy used in this case study adopts the above views. Pupils throughout the research year were working with ‘real’ children’s books. In literature circle discussions and group work they were actively participating and interacting with each other and the texts selected. In this way learning becomes meaningful, since learners interact with what is already known to generate new meanings and not simply acquire the new knowledge by verbatim memorisation (Novak and Gowin, 1984), as occurred with the class textbook.

Language learning should be seen as “a process of active engagement with experience” (RSA, 1998: 132). Learners should not be “passive recipients of knowledge”, but “active constructors and re-constructors’ of their own understanding” (Hodson, 1998: 32). These elements of cognitive learning, which describe it as an active and constructive process can be gathered under the term “constructivist views of learning” (Hodson, 1998) and encompasses a range of theories and theorists sharing common points of view (Watts and
Pope, 1989: 327). This research study has been influenced by constructivism and what is presented below is a brief summary of a constructivist view of learning followed by an introduction to Vygotsky’s social constructivism.

Constructivism origins can be traced back to Socrates and Plato, who were asking directed questions in their dialogues with their followers in order to let their students discover the knowledge by themselves; to Rousseau, who emphasised learning from actual experience rather than through verbal instruction, and to Dewey, whose view was the education should be learner-centred and that knowledge was something people constructed (Taber, 1997: 30). Constructivism is defined as “a process of constructing meaning; it is how people make sense of their experience” (Merriam, Caffarella and Baumgartner, 2007: 291).

Likewise, Contento (1981: 86) argues that knowledge is “constructed actively through the process of thinking and reasoning about experience”. Constructivism is a theory of learning and not of teaching (Proulx, 2006). In more recent times the basic principles of constructivism have appeared mostly in the work of psychologists such as Piaget (1970), Vygotsky (1978) (social constructivism), Kelly (1969) (personal construct psychology approach), Bruner and Ausubel (Gilbert and Watts, 1983).

The term constructivism is used in different fields and with many different meanings. It is currently used in educational literature, in academic papers and in books used for teaching training, curriculum development and assessment. For the purpose of this research, my concern here is with constructivism in education, and particularly in language learning and literacy development.

John Dewey (1938) is often cited as the philosophical founder of this approach. Bruner (1990) and Piaget (1970) are considered the chief theorists among the cognitive constructivists, while Vygotsky (1978) is the major theorist among the social constructivists. According to Dewey students should be provided with opportunities to think from themselves and articulate their thoughts. Likewise they need texts in real contexts that will be addressing their needs. Although Piaget’s theories tended to focus primarily on the development of the individual while ignoring the greater social-cultural context, the roots of constructivism are clearly present in Piaget’s focus on the active role
of the individual in learning: “... all knowledge is tied to action, and knowing an object or an event is to use it by assimilating it to an action scheme ...” (Piaget, 1967: 14-15). He has regarded children’s learning as “a process of personal, individual, intellectual construction arising from their activity in the world” (Sormunen, 1999: 40). Then again, Bell and Gilbert (1996), state that there are a number of problems with Piaget’s approach with constructivism. Piaget’s thesis that “an individual comes to understand the world as it is” is regarded as conservative and unrealistic, since in this way it is claimed that construction is the process of interpreting conceptual and content-free representations (Bell and Gilbert, 1996: 45). The social and historical construction of knowledge is ignored.

Social constructivism suggests that the learner is much more actively involved in a joint enterprise with the teacher ‘constructing’ new meanings, emphasising how meanings and understandings grow out of social encounters (Vygotsky 1962). Bruner, influenced by Vygotsky emphasises the role of the teacher, language and instruction. He emphasised the social nature of learning citing that other people should help a child develop skills through the process of scaffolding (Bruner, 1978: 19). The concept of scaffolding is very similar to Vygotsky’s notion of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD): “... the distance between the actual development of a child as determined by the independent problem solving, and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more peers” (Vygotsky, 1978). Bruner also builds on the Socratic tradition of learning through dialogue, encouraging the learner to come to enlighten themselves through reflection. Since the classroom pedagogy adopted for this research study has partly been influenced by the constructivist views, and especially by Vygotsky’s theory of social constructivism, a brief reference to Vygotsky’s social constructivism, will be made to elucidate further into social constructivist philosophy.

Being more interested in understanding the social and cultural conditions for human learning, Vygotsky states that “social interaction is a central part of learning” (Taber, 1997: 32). He believes that learning and development is a collaborative activity and that children are cognitively developed in the context of socialization and education, where language and culture play essential role. The learner brings prior knowledge and combines it with new
knowledge through his or her interaction with others (Brooks, 2002). Knowledge is not simply constructed, it is co-constructed. Reiner (2001: 551) states that a large amount of research shows that “learning emerges through social interactions, clarifications, conceptual adaptation, generation of communication channels and interpretation routines”. Children acquire a rich body of knowledge gathered by their culture which, in turn, influences their knowledge and thought processes.

For Vygotsky, the social and cultural context was of primary concern and it determined the type of cognitive processes that emerged. Even when a child is reading a book, is using the social and cultural tools of language. Books are themselves social, cultural, and historical artefacts. According to Wink and Putney (2002) when reading a book we are constructing our interpretation of the text from our own experiential base that is itself determined by the cultural, social and historical context.

This social and historical construction of knowledge is not ignored either in this study. This research takes into account social construction of knowledge by utilising student-centred discussion groups to develop pupils’ communicative competency and practice the target language by way of active social interactions. The research occurred in a primary classroom where children were asking each other questions, were listening to each other and hence interacting with one another and the selected texts in the social context of the class. Structurally the classroom is within a school, which itself is situated within the wider community surrounding it.

2.5. The role of the text in language and literacy development

The present study, among others, contributes to the enrichment of research production regarding the teaching of Greek as an additional language in first grade classrooms. Its focus on the use of children’s literature (including local literature authored in the Greek-Cypriot dialect) is bringing something new to this recently established field in the context of Cyprus. As with many researchers who have been repeatedly supporting the use of children’s literature, many teachers consider the use of literature in language teaching as an
interesting and worthwhile endeavour, too (Sage, 1987: 1). According to Collie and Slater (1990: 3), there are four main reasons which lead a language teacher to use literature in the classroom. These are: valuable authentic material; cultural enrichment; language enrichment; and personal involvement. Employing literary texts to develop language and literacy skills it is not a new approach for state schools in Cyprus, but is being used rarely. At present, this approach is becoming more important, due to the increasingly multiethnic reality of the classrooms.

Reading literature is described as a dynamic process in the publication, as language itself is dynamic (Gromann, 2003). Agreeing on Iser’s (1991) idea that literary texts have so called ‘gaps’ that need to be filled by the reading, reading is an enquiry of meaning where the reader applies his prior knowledge to fill the ‘gaps’. According to Fenner (2001: 17) “literature leaves room for personal interpretation and opinion forming, and thus provides more interesting open spaces than most of the information gap exercises produce by textbook writers within the communicative teaching tradition”. She also argues that “literary language, more than everyday language, provides the ‘space’ where the learners can experience the multiplicity of meaning” (Fenner, 2001: 16). Discovering and interpreting the gaps constitute an active dialogue with the text. For the young learners, either GMT or GAL, “this discovery process (offered by the literary text) is an active and creative part of language learning” (Fenner, 2001: 17).

Hişmanoğlu also claims that “literature adds a lot to the cultural grammar of the learners” (2005: 54-55). Literature provides opportunities for learners to become familiar with many features of the written language, when they read a substantial and contextualized body of text. As he purports, pupils

learn about the syntax and discourse functions of sentences, the variety of possible structures, and the different ways of connecting ideas, which develop and enrich their own writing skills… become more productive and adventurous when they begin to perceive the richness and diversity of the language they are trying to learn and begin to make use of some of that potential themselves.

(Hişmanoğlu, 2005: 55).
Literary texts provide students with an incomparably rich source of authentic material, over a wide range of subjects. If students can gain access to this material by developing literary competence, then they can effectively internalize the language at a high level (Elliot, 1990: 198). Due to their authentic character, literary texts work as a model for learners, linguistically, structurally and in terms of content. The acquisition of basics of a language is best accomplished in contexts where the learner is focused on understanding or expressing an idea, message, or other thought in the new language (Dulay, Burt and Krashen, 1982). Young reader’s confidence and participation is increased when he/she is able to express an idea in the new language. Especially, for pupils with verbal/linguistic intelligence, using literary texts in an additional language class serves for creating a highly motivating, enjoyable and lively lesson.

Literature provides a rich context in which individual lexical or syntactical phrases, idioms and styles are made more memorable in association with meaning (Gromann, 2003). “Using context is an effective way of teaching vocabulary, due to the fact that context will help students retain the words and use them more frequently” (Sternberg, 1987: 89). Short-term studies have also shown that children make significant increases in vocabulary knowledge after just a few hearings of stories containing unfamiliar words (Eller, Pappas and Brown, 1988; Elley, 1989). Krashen (1989) has emphasised that the best source of vocabulary growth is reading for pleasure as well as reading a variety of text types, as Gardner (2004) maintains. Barr’s (1992) suggests that “written language is stored in the ear”, when children hear stories, they do not simply listen to what happens, but store up the rhythms and cadence of the language, which they draw on their own stories (in Barrs and Cork, 2001: 173). This research’s results offer evidence of the significance of stories in an elementary classroom where first and additional language learners coexist. Students, participating in this case study engaged in highly dialogic interactions with each other, adopting and utilising words and phrases from a meaningful and structured context offered by the supplementary stories used and not isolated as in the class textbook.

The existing class textbook is lacking stimulating material for language development; vocabulary is restricted and the literary texts provided are intended to be used on a
structured approach within the reading curriculum. The texts and illustrations of the textbook mainly attempt to help pupils learn the Greek alphabet and provide practice in new vocabulary and grammar. In contrast, challenging children’s literature can accommodate different objectives than merely helping pupils learn the alphabet, or grammar and vocabulary. Williams (2001: 22) states that

such literary texts employ cohesive devices, the third person has a sense of telling with echoes of the oral tradition while those in first person offer a sense of a teller close to the reader. Direct speech is used, which acts as a bridge from the oral to the literary world. The reader is being guided and helped and not left to struggle.

Through quality children’s literature “an active reader is constructed who is bringing knowledge of other texts to their reading” (Williams, 2001: 22).

As has been argued, literature as the focus of literacy development has been advocated for years (Holdaway, 1979; Chambers, 1985; Meek, 1988). Margaret Meek (1988) has described certain texts as ‘texts that teach’, and has looked at many ‘untaught lessons’ that children learn from the texts themselves. Collie and Slater (1987: 5) also argues that “a literary text can serve as an excellent prompt for oral work” and also “can be helpful in the language learning process because of the personal involvement it fosters in readers”. Literary texts “function as models for the learner’s own text production”, too (Fenner, 2001: 17). As has been mentioned earlier, reading a substantial and contextualized body of texts, language learners gain familiarity with many features of the written language, which broaden and enrich their own writing skills (Hişmanoğlu, 2005). Analysis of discourse and writing samples of the six case study participants underline their growing ability to speak in the target language with confidence, to structure their writing and shape their texts more consciously using many features of the written language of the texts utilised.

Reading good literature can inspire children to write, and creative writing can in turn inspire them to read. Margaret Meek (1988) suggests that if we want to see what lessons have been learned from the texts that children read we have to look for them in what they write. An effective literacy teacher is one that creates opportunities for children not only to
focus on reading, but also to become tellers and writers of their own stories, “for it needs to interact with talking and writing for the meanings taken from reading to be actively expressed” as Fox claims (1992: 142). “Reading is not passive. Children actively seek out meanings and struggle for the words and structures to express them if we also allow them to talk about books, retell stories, make up oral stories, and write stories down” (Fox, 1992: 142). Additionally, children should be encouraged to borrow ideas and even words from the stories they have read and make their own stories. “By telling ourselves what happened, to whom, and why, we not only discover ourselves and the world, but we change and create ourselves and the world too” (Chambers, 1983: 3).

The fact that literature is concerned with identity and self-awareness is another important aspect (Fenner, 2001: 19) especially for the purpose of this research. Hişmanoğlu (2005: 65) asserts that “literature is not only a tool for developing the written and oral skills of the students in the target language but is also a window opening into the culture of the target language, building up a cultural competence in students”. Kostelníková (2001) adds to this statement by claiming that literary texts are also the perfect complementary material for reading because they broaden the learner’s perspectives not only linguistically but also culturally. According to Fenner (2001: 19) “young learners in particular are in the middle of a process of establishing their own identity”. Hence, Fenner and Newby (2000: 146) strongly propose the use of literary texts which according to them represent a “personal voice of culture” and “a voice that young people can easily identify with”.

This approach of employing authentic literary texts to enhance language acquisition and cultural awareness is quite new in the context of Cyprus. For the purpose of this case study students were introduced to one of the most characteristic Cypriot folktales in the island’s dialect: Spanos and the Forty Dragons with an attempt to “perceive the richness and diversity of the language they are trying to learn” (Hişmanoğlu, 2005: 55).

The existing class textbook, with which first grade pupils in state schools in the Cyprus work with, places more emphasis on children’s language and reading development. Writing, at this level, is being insignificant. Among other things, this also lessens the teacher’s capability to evaluate children’s progress. Barrs and Cork’s (2001) small-scale
research study into the relationship between children’s reading of literature and their writing development at Key Stage 2 highlight the progress of all six case study participants and especially of the two bilingual pupils of the research. Findings of their case study underline the particular value of literary texts used in promoting language development for those children for whom English is an additional language (Barrs and Cork, 2001).

Finding appropriate literature to teach in an additional language classroom has always been a major challenge. Gray (2005) argues that selected texts should not be too long, not too linguistically and conceptually complex, not too distant from the world knowledge of the student, and should create student interest. Due to these stringent requirements, I have noticed that few teachers, from those that I have worked with in state schools in Cyprus during the last 14 years, use literature and literary texts regularly in their language classrooms. This needs to change. Evidence from this case study highlights that even though young learners had to cope with a difficult local text Spanos and the Forty Dragons as regards length and language (written in the Cypriot dialect), all students have shown great interest in both text and illustrations of the book.

According to the Primary National Strategy, published in the UK, Supporting children learning English as an additional language (2007: 17),

the well-planned use of stories, read and told, traditional and new, contributes greatly to children’s understanding and developing use of language… Story sessions bring pleasure and enjoyment, develop the imagination and help children to explore a range of ideas and feelings; they help organize their thoughts and link ideas to knowledge.

From Machura’s research (1991) at a Polish school where she was using children’s stories, children were growing more confident about reading and writing in Polish and were keen to do the same in English. Barrs and Cork’s (2001) research in writing development highlight that such readings help children by enabling them to attend more closely to the language of the text.
Scott (1986: 5) claims that “in education there is increasing awareness that, if we want children to find reading, writing and learning as fascinating and exciting as some of us believe they can be, then we should ensure that they hear a wide range of stories”. For young learners, stories can offer a valuable way of contextualizing and introducing new language, making it comprehensible and memorable (Wasik and Bond, 2001; Wright, 2000). Frequently, stories are associated to daily life experiences children’s feelings and memories, and to cultural and intercultural values which enrich and expand the classroom world. Linguistically, stories present grammar, vocabulary, and formulaic speech within a meaningful and structured context that supports comprehension of the narrative world and the content the story is related to (Glazer and Burke, 1994; Jennings, 1991; Koisawalia, 2005). Stories often involve multimodality, since the linguistic and thematic information is commonly complemented with pictures and, in some cases, with sounds, which help children reconstruct the storyline (Kellerman, 1992; Meyer, 1990). Stories involve predicting, guessing or searching for meaning and linking it to prior knowledge on a topic. In this sense, stories become scaffolding tools for the learning process which, first, help children feel supported by listening to or reading about a topic from a partly familiar framework, that is, a story or a tale. Finally, stories allow learners to progress step by step in their own construction and reconstruction of knowledge (Gibbons, 2002).

2.5.1. Wordless picture books as an educational tool

According to Whalen (1994) wordless picture books are often used in the planning and developing of beginner reading experiences in classrooms, due to the fact that they are able to encourage oral and written language use and creative thought. Stewig (in Dowhower, 1997: 65) also argues that “the wordless genre can serve as a motivating factor for readers, due to the visually oriented nature of children today”. The fact that “the wordless picture book as a genre supports learners who are not yet decoding print, and can build their confidence as readers and writers” (Jalongo et al., 2002: 168), is significant, and as such can be also seen as more accessible to readers with low literacy level, too. Goldsmith (1986: 111) asserts that “in communicating in print with people who cannot read, pictures
are essential” and “can have a levelling effect, helping slower learners”. Adding to this statement, Norton (1983: 153) notes “the value of wordless picture books when used with children from different backgrounds, as they allow for a variety of cultures to enjoy the same book”. With reference to this, Nodelman (1988: 186) also argues that the stories in wordless picture books “can be told by many different children in many different ways” allowing for multiple and unique narratives, without indicating a correct or wrong interpretation.

Numerous studies advocate the use of wordless picture books in classroom situations as well as in literacy programmes over the last decades. Reese (1996) for instance, promotes the use of wordless picture books in the classroom situation; detailing the benefits they provide to develop reading and language competence. By ‘reading’ a wordless picture book children get a sense of the sequence of events in illustrations and of the fact that all the elements in the book are signs, which serve as an invitation to the reader to interact with gestures, images, patterns and events of the text in order to create a narrative. Mitchell, Waterbury and Casement (2003: 79-81) state that the purpose of wordless books is to “encourage observation and a closer look at the world”, “encourage the creation of words” and to “immerse the reader in fantastical elements”. Also Read and Smith (in Whalen 1994) recognise reading skills inherent to wordless picture books include sequencing, noting details, determining main ideas, making assumptions, drawing conclusions, noting cause and effect and making judgements.

One of the areas that this research deals with is to examine the effect of using wordless picture books in a literature circle discussion for Greek mother tongue speakers and for those children who are learning Greek as an additional language. The selected book considered applicable for this research to be studied at the beginning of the research, since is not limited to a particular language, and consequently could be also enjoyed by the additional language participant who was coming from a different linguistic and cultural background. Further, the selected book gave pupils the opportunity to discover the relationship between thinking and seeing, as well as the role of the picture in narrative speech; and to me to observe students’ interaction with one another and the ‘text’; it’s
influence in constructing confidence and enhancing language and literacy skills. Such books, which can function across a variety of developmental levels, could be viewed as stimulating pedagogic material more appropriate than the existing textbooks already used in first grade classrooms in state schools in Cyprus. The absence of words will allow students, and especially additional language learners to interact with the book without being intimidated by words that they might not be able to read.

2.5.2. Folk and fairy tales as an educational tool for first and additional language learning

Gradually folk and fairy tales were used in education as a central object for educational improvement dealing with the role of creativity and imagination in the learning process, and more recently, were put in the service of multicultural education and the acquisition of language skills by second or additional language learners. Researchers have documented the multiple benefits of using folk and fairy tales with children in classrooms to support the learning process (Machura, 1991; Meek, 1988, Cameron, 2001; Barrs and Cork, 2001; Harmer, 2007). Fairy tales are fun and short, rich in terms of language yet less grammatically complex and syntactically speaking than many other forms of literature. Evidence from this research showed that folk and fairy tales are also a great source of vocabulary, grammar structures and syntax, with simple and understandable composition of sentences and plot. Such ‘real texts’ with ‘real language’ and continuous meanings are more authentic than the connected sentences which are often used as examples in class textbooks. Jones and Allen (1996) state that fairy tales interest pupils and bring them into a natural rhythm, flow and picturesque language of the text.

As has been argued earlier, folk and fairy tales give the opportunity to beginner learners to become familiar with many features of the written language, which broaden and enrich their own writing skills. Findings from Barrs and Cork’s (2001) case study highlight that texts with strong clear narrative structures, such as traditional or folk tales, were helpful to all children, and especially to children for whom English was an additional language.
Further, evidence from this case study emphasise the value of folk and fairy tales, in particular, in learning written language. Barrs and Cork (2001: 215) claim that “stories like these demonstrate particularly clearly the patterns and structures of narrative”. They found that children were remembering and using these patterns in their own writing.

As has been mentioned in the previous section, Machura (1991), at the beginning of her research at a Polish school, used children’s stories, in order to help children become more confident about reading and writing in Polish, whereas at a later stage she sought rescue mainly in the fairy tales. Fox (1993) suggests that folktales, and stories that use folktale traditions in their writing, provide “a perfect bridge from oracy to literacy” for children, because of the way in which they demonstrate the tunes and patterns of this kind of memorable language. Barrs and Cork (2001: 37) claim that “one of the major tasks for early year’s educators is to help children to cross the oracy-literacy bridge and to recognize that written language has, hidden within its dense rows of print, familiar stories, pleasurable rhythms and expressive voices”. Pisanty (1993: 27-31) argues that fairy tales “are a well-established, typical text, with distinctive thematic and formal features”, which “make extensive use of repetitions of both expressions and events - stereotypical numbers, binary or ternary rhythm”. This cohesive device does not only make the text easier for the audience to understand, but is also a source of information about culture and history of the target language. Reading a literary text – and especially a folk tale in the local dialect – “the reader also encounters a foreign culture, expressed through the language” and knowledge is constructed, “not only between reader and text, but also between two cultures” (Fenner, 2001: 24-25).

The current research underlines the use of folk and fairy tales in the classroom and their role in first and additional language acquisition. Evidence indicates that folk and fairy tales might be considered one of the possible supplementary teaching materials not only for GMT speakers but mainly for GAL learners. Precisely, for the GAL learner of this research learning the target language was significant to be socialised into the new culture through interaction with GMT speakers and the folk tale used that represents the voice of that culture. In the existing textbook widely used in first grade state schools in Cyprus, teachers
hardly find the elements treating fairy tales. A lot of texts can be found in class textbooks are often created for pedagogical reasons and lack the personal addressing to young learners. I personally think that implementing these literary texts in language lessons is an interesting and engaging approach and that these kind of texts are likely to be a stimulating way of discovering certain cultural conventions, too. According to Lutz (1986) using folktales in teaching reading helps students to feel more connected to their own cultural heritage and the heritage of others while developing their reading interests. Collie and Slater (1987) claim that fairy tales spark children’s curiosity, increase interest and create wonder; this may reveal a powerful emotional response and personal involvement of students. In order to fill in this gap the current research investigates the role of folk and fairy tale in language teaching and literacy development and introduces ways that might motivate students read and discuss the literature of the target language.

2.6. Literature circles in the context of first and additional language instruction

According to Vygotsky, learning takes place in social interaction. Thought is developed through language, and by expressing themselves through speech or writing the learners develop their thinking as well as their speaking (Vygotsky, 1991). In view of that the literature circle model, has been implemented as a mean to promote the acquisition and practice of language and literacy skills; to enable students develop personal responses to literary texts and bring to the discussions feelings and thoughts, developed from their personal experience. Harste, Short and Burke (1989) first thought up the term ‘literature circle’ which now described as a successful way of encouraging children to read and enjoy talking about books (King and Briggs, 2005). Literature circles encompass what Daniels (1994) says are the two most important ideas in education: collaborative learning and independent reading. By combining these two ideas, literature circles provide rich support to children during their reading process, offering opportunities for reading and talking in meaningful ways. Because of their collaborative and dialogic nature, literature circles enable students to learn and interact with one another in a non-threatening, community-like
setting through sharing ideas, opinions and personal experiences and responses to literature (Martinez-Roldán and López-Robertson, 1999/2000; Short and Klassen, 1993).

For students involved in literature circles literature becomes ‘lived through’ as they actively engage with the text and with one another (Rosenblatt, 1996: 38). Further, literature circles provides students with less language experience with many different models for sharing, talking about, and interpreting literature (Kasten, 1995; Short and Klassen, 1993; Martinez, 2000). With reference to this, Krashen (1993: 71) points out the importance of a lower affective filter in students learning to read. He argues that much learning occurs ‘effortlessly’ when the learners feel they are members of a group and that this in turn leads to a lower affective filter thereby resulting in more language learning. The current research shows that literature circles provide a range of opportunities for additional language learners, too. Scarcella (1990: 71) argues that there is “increasing evidence that active engagement in real communication facilitates second language development”.

According to Jewell and Pratt (1999), students in literature discussions actively share their opinions, provide evidence for them, and raise inferential and literal questions. This offers children more perspectives for understanding the text than reading alone does (Lehman and Scharer, 1996). First language acquisition researchers have claimed a variety of benefits for encouraging responses to literature and having literature discussions, such as enhanced comprehension, enjoyment, cognitive development (Farnan, 1986), an overall increase in student motivation for reading (Jewell and Pratt, 1999), active emotional involvement (Monson, 1986), and appreciation of literature (Dugan, 1997; Lehman and Sharer, 1996). Eeds and Wells (1989) also add that literature discussions offered students chances to articulate their own interpretations and ideas without any constraints on a single, correct answer.

Both first and second language researchers claim that through literature circle discussions, literature can generate quality talk engaging young learners in highly dialogic interactions and increase participation by introducing substantive issues and encouraging them to discuss meanings (Boyd and Maloof, 2000; Gambrell and Almassi, 1996). According to Bakhtim (1991) all language is in a sense dialogue. Fenner (2001) argues that the language
that is prompted from dialogic interaction is spontaneous since the learner is focusing on the content and not on formal speech. Fenner (2001: 17) also underlines the importance of the dialogue between the reader and the text and the resulting learning process from it by stating that “... the literary text offers a cultural meeting point”, too. As Gromann (2003: 46) claims “our identity is to a certain extend created through language. Thus an awareness of one’s own identity and the identity of other people can be gained through language”.

Dialogic interaction can take place between reader and text through discussions in literature circles in the context of first and additional language instruction. Especially for second language learners, quality talk is believed to be of great value in their language development in that they acquire a second language through the process of communicating in it (Lantolf, 1994; Pica, 1987; Porter, 1986; Swain, 1985). For that reason, the selection of appropriate and interesting stories within a meaningful and structured context may enhance comprehension and increase motivation, as evidence from the present study, reveal.

The present study was influenced by Myonghee’s research (2004) about literature circles in the context of second language instruction; a significant research work which takes second language learners into account, regarding the literature circle. She suggests that literature discussions help students to emotionally and intellectually participate in the literary text, generating opportunities for enjoyable second language reading experiences. Her findings also suggest that literature discussions contribute to the development of students’ second language communicative competence, by offering chances to produce extended output. This research shows that this dialogic interaction with the texts and with one another “can hardly be achieved when learners work with constructed dialogues in textbooks, even when they are used only as a starting point” (Fenner, 2001:23). Texts in class textbooks are often devoid of meaning; “there is hardly any topic on which to focus attention and make sense of” (Fenner, 2001: 23).

At the beginning of the research I had my doubts whether the additional language learner in my class could effectively participate in mainstream literature circle discussions, due to the student’s lack of reading skills, reading comprehension, vocabulary; and lack of confidence to engage verbally with others. However, analysis of classroom discourse from the current
research provides evidence that literature discussions have the potential to involve both GMT and GAL learners in an enjoyable reading experience; to develop their communicative competency and practice the target language by way of active social interactions in a stress-free and enjoyable setting, in which, according to Krashen’s (1987) ‘affective filter hypothesis’ the input must be experienced under conditions which minimise anxiety and enhances learners’ motivation and self-image.

Conclusion

Smith (1994), states that our problem in language education is that we have confused cause and effect; we have assumed that we first master skills and then apply these skills to reading and writing. Reading for meaning, reading about things that matter to use, is the cause of literate language development. Learning, however, occurs in a cultural context and involves social interactions. “By listening to and discussing what other learners and the teacher express about their individual interpretations and understanding of the text, the learner will discover new aspects of the text, as well as personal reactions to it, which will, through further dialogue, expand their own scope and enhance their learning” (Fenner, 2001: 25). In this way young learners have the opportunity to articulate their thoughts and thus learning becomes meaningful. The main hypothesis on which this research has been built is that social interaction through and about children’s literature may enhance language development and promote additional language acquisition. There are numerous approaches and theories which have a huge impact on language learning. This chapter reviewed a number of theories of first and second language acquisition, providing mainly information about how young learners acquire a language and about the conditions which will promote successful language development. I found the approach of developing language and literacy through studying literature particularly interesting. Literary texts’ authentic character, their rich semiotics and their openness function as a model for first and additional language learners and acquiring a language is more efficient in a context of meaning.
I paid a lot of attention to significant language development theories in the literature review, that offer explanations of how language, first or additional, is learned, because the group under study was consisted of both first grade mother tongue speakers and additional language learners. Hence, language acquisition, both first and additional, was significant for my context and age of pupils; the way that language develops either orally or written is essential for first grade learners. The chapter discusses first language development and how this relates to second language acquisition, because this is something new for teachers in Cyprus. In addition, it underlines the significance of the text in supporting meaningful interaction. Theories concerning developing reading and writing have not been discussed in detail because there is less controversy about how children learn to read and write in the Greek language compared to the English language.
CHAPTER 3 - METHODOLOGY

This chapter deals with the methodological considerations underpinning this research. It seeks to clarify the research design, justify the methods selected for data collections and describe the way in which data was analysed. Employing qualitative case study methods, this study investigated the relationship of the text in the development of orality and literacy in first year primary school pupils in the Republic of Cyprus; both mother tongue speakers of Greek (GMT) and those who are learning Greek as an additional language (GAL). A further aim was to identify changes in children’s engagement and participation in group and circle discussions while studying a selection of children’s literature. Data was collected from a first grade classroom at a state primary school in Limassol, Cyprus. The chapter begins by presenting the aim of the study and the research questions. Then, the chapter clarifies the methodology that guided and underpinned this bounded case study. The chapter provides an overview of the stages of the research, the instruments for data collection and how the data was analysed. It continues by presenting the school and context of the research including an outline of the case study pupils and of an overview of the research year. A description of the methods I employed to ensure validity and reliability of the study and a section clarifying my role as a teacher and researcher is provided, as well as the role of the ‘critical friend’ and the role of the external supervisor throughout the research year.

3.1. Aim of the study

This research set out to fill in gaps regarding the use of children’s literature texts, including those in the local dialect, in primary education in the context of Cyprus. The research also explores the effectiveness of using literature circles in first grade classrooms for increasing young learners’ participation and enhancing their language and literacy skills. This has not been researched in Cyprus up to this point. In the context of Cyprus, there is no empirical research about using local literature, written in the dialect of the island. The overwhelming majority of texts used in primary classrooms are written in Standard Modern Greek. As has
been mentioned earlier in Chapter 1, only recently, a paragraph has been included in the new Literacy Curriculum (MoEC, 2010) which mentions the importance of the dialect in education. Pavlou and Papapavlou (2004: 254) state that “is regrettable the fact that very little research has been carried out yet in the area of bidialectal education in Cyprus”.

Additionally, my fourteen-year experience of teaching first grade has revealed to me an imbalance between children’s reading and writing. I believe that there has not been enough attention to writing. In a first grade class, children often do not reach their full potential in writing; especially in organizing their writing, revising it, and finally proofreading. Thus, the present study aims to examine any changes might take place between children’s reading of literature and their writing development.

3.2. The Research Questions

The following research questions were my main focus throughout this research, in an attempt to track the way in which children experience and respond to texts, supplementary to the class text book:

1. How does motivation and the level of engagement change through first grade pupils’ interaction with a variety of children’s literature.

2. To what extent does such kind of texts enhance oral language development and promote additional language learning.

3. How far does the use of local literature, Spanos and the Forty Dragons: A Folk Tale from Cyprus, in the Cypriot dialect, support and influence the reading and writing development for mother tongue speakers of Greek and those who are learning Greek as an additional language.
3.3. Methodological Approach

According to Cohen and Manion (2000: 82), when planning their research, researchers, should address multiple questions that concern mainly the following subjects: “What is the orientation of the research? Which methods of data collection and analysis will be used? How will the presentation of results and conclusions of the research be formed?” These questions guided my methodological choices for the investigation of the inquired problem, too.

Qualitative research was judged as the most suitable methodological choice appropriate to my research questions and epistemological stance taken for the study and evaluation of the problem, since “qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005: 3). Merriam (2009: 14) claims that “the overall purposes of qualitative research are to achieve an understanding of how people make sense out of their lives, explain the process of meaning-making, and describe how people interpret what they experience”. Drawing also from “the philosophies of constructionism, qualitative researchers are interested in how people construct their worlds and what meaning they attribute to their experiences” (Merriam, 2009: 14). Stake (1995) and Yin (2003) also base their approach to case study on a constructivist paradigm; constructivism is built upon the premise of a social construction of reality (Searle, 1995). One of the advantages of this approach is the close collaboration between the researcher and the participant, while enabling participants to tell their stories (Crabtree and Miller, 1999). Through these stories the participants are able to describe their views of reality and this enables the researcher to better understand the participants’ actions (Lather, 1992). In this regards, qualitative research involves the collection, analysis, and interpretation of data that are not easily abridged to numbers. These data relate to the social world, the ideas and behaviours of people within it (Anderson, 2010).

The current case study investigates young learners’ language and literacy development in a natural setting; a classroom, an educational and social place where pupils interact with one another and share ideas. In the view of that, the classroom pedagogy adopted for this
research study has partly been influenced by social constructivists’ views of learning (see chapter 2). Likewise, since qualitative research, is basically interested in investigating and understanding the meaning humans actively construct through social situations in a natural setting where research takes place, this methodological choice was considered as the most appropriate one for this study. Social reality and experiences coming up from this research design are capable of multiple interpretations and are available to us though social interaction (Boas, 1943; Blumer, 1969; Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Woods, 1992; LeCompte and Preissle, 1993).

Patton (1985: 1) in an attempt to give an explanation of qualitative research argues that qualitative research:

is an effort to understand situations in their uniqueness as part of a particular context and the interactions there. This understanding is an end in itself, so that it is not attempting to predict what may happen in the future necessarily, but to understand the nature of that setting – what it means for participants to be in that setting, what their lives are like, what going on for them, what their meanings are, what the world looks like in that particular setting – and in the analysis to be able to communicate that faithfully to others who are interested in that setting ... The analysis strives for depth of understanding.

This research took place in an “ordinary natural environment” (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995: 296) i.e. an educational context: a state primary school in Cyprus. Applying qualitative research enabled me to learn from first-hand about the social world I was investigating, the 6 six-year-old participants, by means of involvement and participation in that world through teaching, keeping a daily diary and observing. As the teacher and researcher, I was constantly reflecting on my teaching and developing both research and teaching strategies throughout the year. Hitchcock and Hughes (1995: 12) argue that qualitative research is more “amenable and accessible to teachers and has the considerable advantage of drawing both the researcher and the subjects of the research closer together”. While studying literature on the topic of my research, I came across an amount of literature on case studies in educational research as well as in second language learning and teaching
(Simons, 1980; Ellis, 1997). This literature included a series of case studies of individuals learning a second language in natural settings (Newmark, 1966; Raven, 1968).

The product of a qualitative inquiry is “richly descriptive” (Merriam, 2009: 16). Researchers use words and pictures rather than numbers to convey the new knowledge they have gained from the phenomenon they were investigating. Likewise, the current study, in a following section offers descriptions of the context and the setting of the school where the research took place, the participants involved, and the most significant activities. Merriam (2009: 16-17) also claims that “the design of a qualitative study is emergent and flexible, responsive to changing conditions of the study in progress”, concluding by stating that “the investigator often spends a substantial amount of time in the natural setting of the study, often in intense contact with participants”. Since the current research involves the collection and recording of data about a number of cases (six 6-year-old pupils) case study design using qualitative approaches has been adopted.

Yin (2008: 18) defines case study in terms of the research process claiming that “a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident”. Hitchcock and Hughes (1995: 319) consider it as a study of the “key players, key situations and critical incidents in life”, whereas Smith (1978) sees it as a “bounded system”, in which behaviour is systematically patterned and certain characteristics can be consistently documented. Stake (1995: xi) defines case study as “the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances”. The current case study investigates young pupils’ language and literacy development in a real-life context.

Many of the early case study researchers were teachers, and much of the work was pedagogically motivated (Ellis, 1997). Easy access to data and various research components such as timing, resources and purposes were among the main reasons that teachers chose to apply case study research (Adelman, Jenkins and Kemmis, 1983; McDonough and McDonough, 1997); they can select a topic and decide the boundaries of the topic, too (Robson, 1993; Miles and Huberman, 1994). The methods and the procedure
of data collection are also flexible because there is no fixed end point in data collection (Hopkins, 1993; Robson, 1993; Simons, 1996).

Yet, criticism of the design of case study research has not been subsiding. Besides the issues of closeness to the data, which has been one of the big concerns raised by qualitative case study researchers over the years, case study research has also been criticised for lacking generalisability as well as for generating immense information about a small number of research settings (Merriam, 2009; Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011). Even though, the data collected from a few cases or individuals might be unique and significant, and sometimes more compelling than quantitative data, findings cannot be generalised to a larger population. Nonetheless, knowledge produced might be transferable to another setting. According to Merriam (2009: 51) much can be learned from a single instance than with other types of qualitative research. Flyvbjerg (2006: 244), in a discussion of the value of case study research sets up five ‘misunderstandings’. Focusing on the second misunderstanding “that one cannot generalise on the basis of a single case is usually considered to be devastating to the case study as a scientific method”, Flyvbjerg, by citing single cases and experiments of Galileo, Newton, Einstein, Darwin, Marx, and Freud, makes the point that both human and natural sciences can be advanced by a single case (in Merriam, 2009: 54).

The special features of case study research that offered the basis for its selection also present further limitations in its usage. Nisbet and Watt (1984) argue that the results are not easily open to cross-checking; hence they are more easily influenced by the observer’s personal biases. Although bias can also appear in the conduct of other research strategies such as experiments and surveys (Rosenthal, 1991; Sudman and Bradburn, 1982), it is more frequently met in case study research. The researcher’s presence during data gathering, which is often unavoidable in qualitative research, can affect participant’s responses (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995; Nisbet and Watt, 1984). Dyer (1995) comments that reading a case study, one has to be aware that a process of selection has already taken place, and only the author knows what has been selected in or out, and on what criteria has taken place.
Patton (2002: 447) points out the importance of case study in the investigation of phenomena reporting that “the case study approach to qualitative analysis constitutes a specific way of collecting, organizing, and analysing data”. Cresswell’s detailed definition of case study was helpful in defining the type of this case study and in choosing this methodological option for conducting the research. He states:

case study research is a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (e.g., observations, interviews, audiovisual material, and documents and reports), and reports a case description.

(Cresswell, 2007: 73, emphasis in original)

The case in a case study should be viewed as a ‘bounded system’ (Smith 1978), a single coherent entity. The bounded system can also include the broader context in which the system is situated. This case study is a bounded system; bounded social systems where an assemblage of interacting things, human functions and purposes are working together as a whole.

The bounded system, or case, has been selected because “it is an instance of some process, issue or concern” (Merriam, 2009: 41). It would be, in Adelman, Jenkins and Kemmis’s (1983: 3) words, “an instance drawn from a class”. The present case study is interested in offering an additional way of enhancing oral development and promoting additional language learning in the context of Cyprus, by considering the use of children’s literature, including local authored in the Greek-Cypriot dialect, in first grade classrooms. Thus, the current case has also been selected because it was intrinsically interesting. I was interested in studying this area in order to achieve as full an understanding of the phenomenon as possible.

This bounded system/case study of the present research is the whole class where the research took place, the texts and the teacher/researcher. The class had a total of 18 pupils, all taking part in the teaching/learning process. There were 3 groups of 6 pupils, studying both texts from the text-book as well as other supplementary texts. The texts used are:
1. the class textbook,
2. the wordless picture book *Up and Up* (Hughes, 1991)
3. the well-known fairy tale *Little Red Riding Hood* (Faundez, 2004)
4. and a traditional folk tale *Spanos and the Forty Dragons: A folk tale from Cyprus* (Hambis, 1986).

The following diagram offers a quick and overall grasp of my research:

Bounded case study:

- Teacher/Researcher
- Texts
- School and community context
- Class of 18 children (6 individual cases were selected from which data is collected)
- Took place over one school year during a normal school day

This case study is bounded (Stake, 1995) by its specificity to pupils and focuses particular attention on how participants – six 6-year-old pupils – engage and interact with children’s literature in a natural classroom setting.
As has been mentioned earlier the current bounded case study is also an intrinsic case study, since I as teacher and researcher was interested in learning about the particular case, not because by studying it I would learn about other cases or about some general problem, as Stake (1995) points out, but because I needed to learn about this particular case. According to Merriam (1998: 19), case studies involving the study of a process have significant value for research and “insights gleaned from case studies can directly influence policy, practice and future research”. Even though, I realise that the inquiry of this bounded case study cannot draw any generalisations, I thus believe that the results may have important implications for policy and practice.

Within this study there is also a sense of action research as I was trying out new methods, texts and reflecting on their impact. Case study and action research strategies are investigating holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events, make the research practical and ensure that the developed methods and processes are useable in practice. However, while there are elements of action research, the close focus on the pupils’ response both orally and in writing requires the critical detail of a case study approach, which gives a rich familiarity with each case. Additionally, a case study provides a systematic way of looking at events, collecting and analysing data and reporting the results. There is a linear push through the project. It therefore allows us to understand why things happened the way they did, and make changes based on past examples, rather than our own actions. Action research though is collaborative and uses feedback from data in an ongoing cyclical process (McKernan, 1991: 32-33), followed by new actions that then themselves become the subject of reflection. Additionally, according to Tuomi and Sarajärvi, (2002) sometimes the goals and methods of action research can be unclear, the sample might not be representative and the dialogue between the researcher and the object might not be equal, too. In action research researchers may search solutions to their own problems in which practitioners might not be interested in.

The group under study was a balanced sample of three boys and three girls; four Greek Mother Tongue (GMT) learners and two Greek Additional Language (GAL) learners. Throughout the research year (early November) one GAL learner moved to a different
School, so eventually only one GAL learner was left in the group. Due to this unexpected change, I decided to additionally include in the study a girl from the Greek mainland, who wasn’t particularly familiar with the Greek-Cypriot dialect, but could speak and understand the target language. The six pupils have been selected to reflect the range of abilities that are found in a primary Cypriot classroom, including a GAL learner, which is a relatively new phenomenon for the Greek – Cypriot education system. As has been mentioned in the first chapter, the island has seen a large arrival of population from several countries. This emigration has also influenced the Greek-Cypriot education system which has not been prepared to meet the number of language minority students enrolling in Cypriot state schools. Hence, the purpose and content of education has been challenged and the need for supporting additional language learners has increased.

Usually, in a first grade there are three categories of pupils. There are pupils who are familiar with the sounds of the letters of the alphabet, they are able to read small sentences and have a good vocabulary. There are also pupils with poor vocabulary, who are familiar with the letters of the alphabet and their sounds, but are facing some difficulties in reading sentences. And finally, there are pupils who are struggling with the language, having poor vocabulary and facing reading and writing difficulties. In the group of the case study, two pupils from each category were selected. All 18 pupils of the classroom were participating in the lessons. Equal teaching effort and time was allocated to all groups of pupils, with the research. As teacher of the class I was observing the progress of all my pupils but the focus was on the 6 participants for whom data was collected over one school year during a normal school day. The oral and literacy development of these six pupils was analysed in detail. A critical friend, a teacher working at the same school, being present during several sessions and observing with me, I was able to collect as much data as possible. Her notes and reactions not only served to support or undercut the original interpretation, but also provided additional data for the case study.
3.4. The participants

Each child participating in this case study has grown up in a particular family and linguistic context, and developed their own personality, learning style and level of confidence. Every child has different experiences of books and reading. However, despite their differences, the 6 participants share an important task during the first year of primary school; learning how to read and write in the Greek language. In the space available here, I am introducing the group under study, which as have been mention earlier, is a balance of three boys and three girls; four Greek mother tongue pupils and two Greek additional language learners.

Fatima, the additional language Kurdish girl from Syria, is the first generation in their family to receive formal schooling in the new country. She does not speak the language of the host country at home and consequently is at the early stages of learning the additional language. Coming from a very different linguistic and cultural background, she entered school and had to learn to read in a language, she could not yet speak. From the beginning of the school year I have noticed that she was very shy and not confident at all. Most of the time she was looking sad and when she was feeling very frustrated she was crying. During the lesson she was very quiet and she was not participating in oral discussions. She was speaking a little bit of Kurdish but she was not literate in her first language. She was the only non-native speaker in the class. At the beginning of the school year, she could not mix with her classmates. Being unable to communicate in the target language, at the playground she was mainly spending time with her brother. During the literacy hour, she was memorizing sentences and whole passages as whole utterances without a real understanding of their components. She was relying mainly on words’ visual impression.

Andreas is a six year old Greek-Cypriot boy; the second child of a four-member family, who had shown his dynamic personality from the beginning of the school year. Entering school in September, his language and vocabulary was well-developed. He was very confident and he was participating in all oral and written activities with enthusiasm.

Chloe is a six year old Greek girl from Thessaloniki, the second biggest town of Greece. Though, she is not coming from a very different linguistic and cultural background, she
faced some difficulties in dealing with the other pupils in the class due to the dialect which was widely used by the rest of pupils in their everyday activity. The year 2008-2009, was the second year that Chloe was in Cyprus. Beside her dynamic personality, she was sometimes feeling very distressed and rarely was mixing easily with the other pupils of the class, especially in the playground. Then again, in the class she was very confident and was participating in all oral and written activities.

Vasilis is a six year old Greek-Cypriot boy; the third child of five-member family. He is a very friendly and a very gregarious character, with vivid imagination. From the very beginning I have noticed that it was difficult for him to hold the pencil properly and write. This problem with writing he was facing got him into learning and emotional difficulties. However, he was feeling really confident while talking about stories and he was participating in almost all the oral activities.

Philippos is a six year old Greek-Cypriot boy; the first of a four-member family. He is an active and a very lively and friendly child. However, in the classroom he could not be quiet for a long time in order to be attentive and occupied. He was working really slowly, either while reading or writing. Most of the times he was getting tired in a short time; he could not be seated for a long time.

Sophia is a six year old Greek-Cypriot girl; the first of a three member family. She is an introverted girl with low confidence and poor vocabulary. During the literacy hour, she was relying mainly on words’ visual impression. Her reading was unhurried, low-voiced and with many pauses.

3.5. Data collection

Qualitative researchers recommend the use of multiple data sources and research techniques (Pyke and Agnew, 1991). Case studies allow researchers to use a variety of methods to collect data. Van Lier (1988: 57) considers case study as more of ‘watching’ (observation) type of research. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) see observation “at the
heart of every case study”. According to Stake (1995: 64) “interview is the main road to multiple realities”. Having a variety of methods available would seem to be an advantage. Hence, in order to address the research questions of this case study, multiple gathering methods were utilized, including:

(a) Observation from which field notes were written during and immediately following the class in order to monitor behaviour and activities related to the research questions. The indicators measured on a rating scale were competence in the target language and vocabulary used, motivation, the level of engagement and of active participation in literature circle/group discussions.

(b) A reflective daily journal, in which I as teacher and researcher was writing daily, during lessons, in recess or immediately after the end of the school day. In the journal I documented the difficulties I met during teaching and researching, an account of events and experiences, as well as useful information about the culture of the school and participants involved in the research.

(c) Analysis of oral and written work produced by the participants.

(d) Analysis of the main class textbook compared to the traditional folk tale Spanos and the Forty Dragons: A folk tale from Cyprus (Hambis, 1986), focusing on language and cultural representation. Also analysis of the other two main texts used: the wordless picture book Up and Up (Hughes, 1991) and the well-known fairy tale Little Red Riding Hood (Faundez, 2004). The use of observation in data collection was based on the several advantages of this method. It’s most important feature is that it provides ‘authentic’ data from naturally occurring situations (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011). There are several stances an investigator can assume conducting observations, as Merriam (2009: 136) points out, “from being a member of the group and a complete participant – an insider – to being a complete observer, unknown to those being observed”. Throughout this inquiry I as the teacher of the class I was always present, being able to gather first-hand data. Observing directly all sessions and activities occurred during the research year, I was able to collect data on a
wide range of behaviours, to capture a great variety of interactions between pupils, and to openly explore the research questions. Making direct observations also enabled me to develop a holistic perspective of the context of my class in general and of the 6 individual pupils for whom data was collected. Moreover, as Robson (2002) claims, observation eliminates the possibility of being misled by participants’ claims, as the researcher is able to experience the events for themselves. As mentioned earlier, data collection interpretations were discussed with the help of a critical friend.

In spite of its advantages, observation also presents several limitations, which were also taken into consideration. Observational data are highly influenced by the observer’s interests and experiences and the attention she plays to the process at each moment (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007). As has been discussed above, a question of validity arises as the researcher – who is also and a teacher at this case study - is too close to the content to be objective. One solution proposed by Gall, Borg, and Gall (1996), is a subjectivity audit. In order to ensure validity and reliability, several observations were also conducted by the critical friend following the indicators of the observational list mentioned above. Afterwards, my colleague and I had a conversation, discussing what each of us had observed. I must admit that while there were times that her observations were meeting mine there were also times that I was at odds with her on several points, especially regarding the level of pupils’ motivation and engagement in a particular text. This different perception stemmed from the fact that I was the students’ teacher, and was constantly comparing their behaviour to how they had behaved in previous lessons.

The reflective journal complemented the observing of participants’ behaviour and activities. Every day, after each lesson I was spending time thinking about the events of the day, i.e. pupils’ participation during the lesson, their expressed feelings, pupils’ interactions with each other, reactions, motivation, any surprising moments. I was writing up thoughts, comments and interpretations. This process allowed me to reflect on my experience, position myself within this inquiry and create my own personal story as a researcher as well as to deepen my understanding of the research processes (Janesick, 1998). Though, the journal was not just a place where I recorded events or documented thoughts and feelings,
but more importantly, as Maxwell (2005) advocates, an opportunity for reflection where ideas were generated and explored and discoveries made in and through writing. By reflecting and documenting my experience, I invited an enhanced awareness of myself as a person and made for more informed decision making during the research experience (Holly, 1989a). As the research progressed, the value of keeping a reflective journal became evident, realising that it was in fact another source of data about my research (Thomas, 1995b). The research journal helped in addressing both issues of reliability and responding to the research questions, too. According to Thomas (1995b: 5) the reflective journal can be viewed as an ‘evidential store’, or as Holly (1989a: 7) states, an ‘educational archive’, which provides a record of the researcher’s experiences during a case under study and which can be retrospectively analysed.

Moreover, oral data regarding pupils’ oral development were collected during the research year, based on themes raised from the texts used. During several observations I used audiotape to capture data, which later on I transcribed following Riessman’s (1993) suggestions of producing at first an initial rough draft, which at a later stage was re-transcribed.

Samples of written work based on themes raised from the textbook, the European fairy tale and the traditional folk tale from Cyprus, were also collected from the 6 participants. A pro forma developed to help me describe those features of their writing which seemed to reflect definite influences from their experience with different kinds of texts, and especially with the traditional folk. In order to be able to look at some data from the research in more detail, I made a selection of five pieces from case study pupils’ writing:

- an early piece of narrative based on a theme from the textbook;
- an early piece of narrative based on the well-known European fairy tale Little Red Riding Hood;
- a third piece of narrative from the spring term based on a theme from the textbook;
- a narrative from the summer term, based on a theme from the textbook;
- and another narrative from the summer term on the traditional folk tale Spanos and the Forty Dragons: A folk tale from Cyprus.
Pupils’ writing samples were analysed mainly based on Barrs and Cork (2001) analysis of the texts used for their small-scale research study into the relationship between children’s reading of literature and their writing development at Key Stage 2. The main focus of my analysis was on the development of pupils’ narrative speech in the target language, their ability to structure their writing and shape their texts more consciously.

3.6. Data analysis

A qualitative approach was taken to analyse and interpret the data. The choice of the method depends on the research questions and the context of the inquiry. Miles and Huberman (1984) described qualitative analysis as the process of systematically searching and arranging transcripts from observation, field notes, and the other materials so that the researcher is able to obtain an understanding of the data and then present what is discovered to others. Yin (1994a: 102) regards analysis as “one of the least developed and the most difficult aspects of doing case studies”.

The current research collected and analysed data over a long duration and allowed many variables to occur. In order to have a full understanding of the ‘truth’, I entered the research environment both as the teacher and researcher and acquired knowledge from personal experience. The collected data included filed notes from observation, oral and written documents produced by the participants, and a reflective journal. Observation carried out using a carefully developed set of steps in order to monitor behaviours and activities that address the evaluation question of interest: motivation and active participation in group and/or circle discussions (the level of engagement), interaction with the text, development and improvement of students’ narrative speech (in the target language), enrichment of students’ vocabulary (oral and in written documents). These criteria came up from the relevant theory I had studied (Barrs and Cork, 2001; Cameron and Besser, 2004; Hudelson, 1989; etc) as well as from my own experience as a teacher. The criteria were also adjusted to the Greek-Cypriot educational context. Since the indicators mentioned above are not
easily countable, they were scored on a scale of 1 to 5 (5 high). This helped ensure that I and my critical friend were gathering relevant information.

The following observation chart shows the sub-categories developed for each of the five indicators mentioned above:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monitoring Oral Development During Literary Sessions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name of the pupil:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listen with a response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concentration (Being focused when reading and/or listening)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active participation in group/circle discussions:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[\text{Initiates conversation}]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflective talk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction with others in the circle (accept other students’ ideas and interpretations)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share their opinions and provide evidence for them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of participation in role-play and drama activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction with the text:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal responses to the text and share them in discussions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bring feelings and thoughts developed from their personal experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development and Improvement of narrative speech (in the target language)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presents ideas clearly and coherently.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of grammatically complete speech.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Become aware of the general “feel” and sound of the additional language (for GAL pupils).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using his/her mother tongue with teacher/peers despite their inability to understand (for GAL pupils).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of repeating words and phrases of others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can tell and retell stories orally with consistency.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respond to questions with yes/no answer.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enrichment of oral vocabulary</th>
<th>Understands general vocabulary used by the teacher.</th>
<th>1 2 3 4 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understands the vocabulary of a story being read.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimenting with new words from the stories that have been read, using them in his/her narration.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The numbers 1-5 indicate the rate of recurrence of the indicators during a literacy session.

5= constantly (engaged in all the discussion throughout the research either by initiating conversation or engaged in a reflective talk)

4= frequently (5-6 times throughout the literacy session)

3= occasionally (3-4 times throughout the literacy session)

2= rarely (once in a while throughout the literacy session)

1=never
Additionally, audio-taped group discussions were transcribed and then coded for recurrent, relevant themes associated with text, active participation, confidence in speaking in the target language and engagement with the text.

Regarding interaction with the text, I was interested in signs indicating students’ emotional and intellectual engagement with the text they were studying. It was difficult to directly probe into the state of engagement, because engagement is a cognitive phenomenon in which students are mentally functioning (Nystrand and Gamoran, 1991). Such mental states cannot be accessed by direct methods. To cope with the problem, I chose to use literature circle discussions as a source of data on pupil engagement with a text, a method discussed in Chapter 2; as discussions either between children or between the teacher and a student can become a way of expressing what is going on in the students’ minds.

Based on my records kept in my daily journal I could notice pupils’ participation and engagement during a literacy session, their expressed feelings and reactions, as well as their interactions with each other in literature circle discussions, motivation and any surprising moments. Judgments about their engagement were made based on their frequency of participation in several activities, group and whole class discussions. I used the monitoring oral development observation list during each literary session. More details can be found in Appendix 1, where completed monitoring sheets for two literary sessions are included; one based on a text from the class textbook and another one based on an observation referring to the wordless picture book *Up and Up*. Appendix 1 also includes parts from my daily journal in its original form with the translation. In the transcribed version of session 1 and session 2, cited in the Appendix, the points that are in bold helped me to come up with the conclusion that pupils were engaged and motivated.

Based on Myonghee’s (2004) research on the characteristics of student interactions with the literary text and with other group members, I focused on how these interactions related to the learners’ second language learning experiences and language development. Myonghee’s research occurred in an adult ESL class; hence my research had to be adjusted to the context of primary education in Cyprus. My first-graders were meeting in literature circles twice a week, spending the first 40 minutes discussing either a general issue raised by the
teacher or a text being read by the teacher/researcher. Following an open discussion, pupils participated in several other activities, such as role-play, mime, drawing, writing, etc. Both small group discussions and whole class discussions were audio-taped and transcribed, as mentioned earlier. The reflective journal as well as all oral and written documents was in Greek. However, several personal thoughts, comments and interpretations were written in English as well.

Through the analysis of the transcripts, features of the discourse were identified and interpretative categories emerged. Oral work was transcribed in Greek and the transcripts were partially translated. The analysis was conducted from the original Greek text, and the outcomes were reported in English. This decision was made in order to eliminate any information being lost or misinterpreted during transcription, i.e. spelling patterns and word structures, grammar, words written in the dialect and on in Standard Modern Greek. The only parts translated in English were the quotations included in the thesis.

In this study I also engaged in reflective writing by presenting and analysing extracts from a daily research journal. As I explained earlier my focus was on providing an account of my personal experiences of the research process as well as useful information regarding the participants involved in this case study. I applied content analysis (Glesne, 2006) to the research journal as an analytic method that is commonly applied to narrative data (Miles and Huberman, 1994: 9). The analytical process involved reading the journal, identifying and labelling reflective processes occurring in the data, identifying relationships between these processes, and searching for common progressions amongst them. I used Borg’s (2001) ‘product benefits’ to analyse the reflective journal. According to Borg (2001: 172) “the journal provides a permanent account of all aspects of the research process which can be returned to at any time”. The journal did serve as a record of specific information about events and procedures during the fieldwork which allowed a more detailed write up of the thesis. Particularly, it enabled me to fill in what would have otherwise been gaps in my description of the events and of participants’ involvement in this case study.

As has been mentioned earlier, participants also produced several pieces of writing throughout the research year, based on the selected texts. In order to assess the progress that
individual pupils made during the year, I needed measures which could enable me to analyse the growing strengths of their writing in detail and explore evidence of influences from the supplementary texts. I used an example from the work of Barrs and Cork (2001) research report regarding reading and writing and the links between the study of literature and writing development at Key Stage 2. Barrs and Cork (2001) analysed their sample pieces of writing against a group of eight indicators, which were selected in the course of their project. Several of those indicators were adopted and adjusted to my own context of research. Although, the data analysis of the case study pupils’ writing was mainly focused on the quality of their writing and on the changes in their writing throughout the research year. This analysis included an examination of how their writing was influenced by the use of children’s literature, including local, opposed to the standard texts of the existing class textbook.

The main focus, though, of the analysis of the written pieces produced by the 6 participants of this research was the story produced. This analysis includes indicators from Cameron and Besser’s (2004) research into the writing of pupils at Key Stage 2 who use English as an additional language, which were adopted and adjusted to my own context of research. To be more specific, at a first level I focused on the text produced as a whole. At this general level, I looked in detail at how the narrative was developed, paying attention to each of the following four components of the narrative: setting, characters, problem and resolution. In addition, I focused on indicators such as the strategies used to develop the story (description, figurative language, and direct speech), pupils’ creativity in constructing the story as well as the resolution provided in the story by the pupils (complete, creative, interesting or original, included a moral) and the length of the story produced. Moreover, looking at the language of the story, I was interested in examining how writers used grammar and vocabulary of the target language (Greek) in their writing.
3.7. School and community context

The research took place in an elementary state school in Limassol, the island’s largest seaside resort at the south coast. This second largest city of Cyprus is an important commercial and tourist centre. The school were research took place is situated in a developed neighbourhood and is consists of approximately 260 students of age 6-12 years and 22 teachers. The school is fully equipped with various educational tools and the training of its teachers inside and outside the school unit has been a continuous process. Ten years ago, the student body of almost any public school in Cyprus was almost completely homogeneous: Greek-Cypriot speaking and Christian Orthodox. Recently the student body for many schools have changed. Hence, schools have to deal with the induction of non-Greek-speaking students, as well as with the creation of an environment of cooperation, mutual understanding and respect between students and parents of different ethnic origin. The student body of the school were the research was conducted was not as multi-ethnic as with other schools in Limassol at that moment. This is mainly due to the area where the school is situated; an economically residential setting in west Limassol. The few pupils who were studying there were mainly from Russia, Bulgaria, Syria and Philippines.

3.8. The research year

The research began in October 2008 and was carried out within a single school year; from September until mid of June. Research work was mostly structured as a bounded case study of 6 first grade pupils, looking at their engagement and response to a variety of texts supplementary to the main textbook. The focus on the links between the study of European fairy tales, wordless picture books and of the Greek-Cypriot folktale Spanos and the Forty Dragons allowed detailed empirical observations of classroom contexts and project activities. Further, participants’ engagement in dialogic interactions with each other and the texts used, their participation in role-play and the writing samples they produced, serve as evidence for this case study.
The research was completed in 3 sessions. During the first term, which lasted three months, from October to December 2008, I was using the main class textbook. At the beginning of the research, during this first term, along with the textbook, I used three stories about travelling and multiculturalism as well as an Arabic folk tale in order to increase my additional language student’s self-esteem and make her feel accepted and comfortable to share culture with the rest of the class but also to enhance my mother tongue speakers’ knowledge about other cultures. Specifically, a month after using the main textbook, approximately during the last week of October, three books were read; *We look different, but we are the same* (2005) by Jennifer Moore-Mallinos, *It’s okay to be different* (2001) by Todd Parr and *Elmer* (2008) by David McKee. By the end of the first term the book *An Arabic Tale* (2005) translated by Irene Gou was also introduced and discussed. The illustration of the book served as an excellent prompt for oral engagement in literature circle discussions. These books are not part of the case study. However, their implementation supported a later discussion about the traditional folk tale from Cyprus by allowing exchanges of cross-cultural knowledge.

More emphasis was placed on the wordless picture book *Up and Up* (1991) by Shirley Hughes, and the internationally well-known fairy tale *Little Red Riding Hood* from which data were collected for analysis. Observations occurred, focused on building a rich picture of the selected group of pupils. During the second session, which lasted two months, January and February, I introduced pupils to the folk tale *Spanos and the Forty Dragons*. During the third session, which lasted three months, from March to May, the research focused mainly on participants’ writing development. Twice a week students were engaged in reading and writing sessions based on themes from the class textbook as well as on folk and fairy tales and other stories from different books, lasting approximately one hour. Pupils were given 20 minutes for reading, 10 minutes for discussion, 10 minutes for planning and 40 minutes as writing time. They also had time for careful proofreading and redrafting. Afterwards, they were able to share their revised narrative pieces with both researcher/teacher and the rest of the class. Attention was paid on how participants put together their story as a whole and on how they used language resources and other
resources, such as illustrations, to select words and compose sentences, combining them into a whole.

My decision to use first the wordless picture book was based on the fact that children who could not read yet, such as the GAL girl, as well as few slower readers from the class could be benefited in developing oral language before reading. Thus, the selected book considered applicable for this research to be studied at the beginning of the research, since is not limited to a particular language, and consequently could be also enjoyed by the additional language participant who was coming from a different linguistic and cultural background. The absence of words allowed all students to interact with the book without being intimidated by words that they might not be able to read. The fairy tale was used after the wordless picture book because it has a strong structure with language they could use; is a great source of vocabulary, grammar structures and syntax, with simple and understandable composition of sentences and plot which could give the opportunity to beginner learners to become familiar with many features of the written language. The traditional folk tale from Cyprus Spanos and the Forty Dragons was introduced toward the end of the school year because it was more advanced and also written in the dialect of the island, which was not easy to read.

Bounded by my experience as a teacher, who over time adopted constructivist teaching methods, and as a researcher using qualitative emphasis in this research study, the current study also takes into account social construction of knowledge by utilising student-centred discussion groups. Students were observed while engaging in dialogues practicing the target language and constructing ideas and meaning by way of active social interactions both with the texts used and the others in a natural classroom setting. In this study pupils did not construct their interpretations in isolation but against an environment of shared ideas, practises and language (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005).
3.9. Ethics

“Ensuring validity and reliability in qualitative research involves conducting the investigation in an ethical manner” (Merriam, 2009: 209). Being able to trust research results is important, mainly when the type of research involves human participants. The researcher plays a dual role, as he/she develops close relationships with the participants, while trying to act professionally when reporting the findings in the scholarly community (Josselson, 2007). For this case study, I adhered to all the formal procedures required both by the University of Brighton and the state primary school in Cyprus. Informed consent forms were provided to the school’s head teacher and parents in order to get written permission for conducting the research in the school and the class selected. Obtaining informed consent from the research participants is the first and main ethical concern in the literature (Bryman, 2008; Cohen and Manion, 2000) and is taken as granted and essential within social science research (David Edwards and Alldred, 2001). The notion of ‘informed consent’ refers to the fact that prospective research participants should be informed about the research to the degree necessary to enable them make an informed decision whether or not to participate in the research (Bryman, 2008).

Hence, the head teacher had to agree and children and their parents should be informed for the study and give their written consent for participation. Taking this into consideration I arranged a meeting with the head teacher and children’s parents and informed them of the research and what I would entail. As they felt there would be no physical or emotional danger to the children they provided me with the consent of behalf of the children. I also assured them that they had the right to withdraw from the research at any time. Likewise, from the very beginning I informed pupils about my research, clarifying that whenever they might feel frustrated they would have the right to withdraw or do not participate in a specific activity.

Further, the issue of anonymity became crucial since the research involved children (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000), protecting participants from harm (Nespor, 2000). Nonetheless, it is clear that there is always a possibility that the participants may be recognised (Lieblich, 1996), especially in qualitative research (Bryman, 2008). One way by
which the participants’ identity could be concealed is with pseudonyms (Bryman, 2008). During the data collection – in the observational lists and in my journal – I used the participants’ real names, which I changed into pseudonyms for that data storage and data analysis stages, and in all the written material deriving from the research (Josselson, 2007).

As has been stated earlier, all 18 pupils of the classroom were participating. Equal teaching effort and time was given to all groups of pupils. As teacher of the class I was observing the progress of all my pupils but the focus was on the 6 participants for whom data was collected over one school year and analysed in detail.

Regardless the type of this research, validity and reliability are concerns that can be approached through careful attention. Likewise, the way in which the data are collected, analysed, and interpreted and consequently the way in which the findings are presented. Reliability and validity are often mentioned together, for they are closely related issues in terms of research credibility (Hammersley, 1990, 1992; Yin, 1984; Stenhouse, 1978). Qualitative researchers recommend the use of multiple data sources and research techniques (Pyke and Agnew, 1991) in strengthening a study. Because human beings are the primary instrument of data collection and analysis in this case study, interpretations of reality are accessed directly through their observations. Hence, being closer to reality than if a data collection instrument had been interjected between me and the participants of this case study, a number of strategies had been used to increase the ‘credibility’ (Merriam, 2009: 215) of my findings or as Wolcott (2005: 160) writes, increase ‘the correspondence between research and the real world’. Probably the most well-known strategy to support validity and reliability of a study is the one comes under the name ‘triangulation’. This method of ‘triangulation’ data sources is used to minimize the amount and quality of data gathered (Westbrook, 1989). Certainly, one important strategy for inquiry is to employ multiple methods, measures, researchers, and perspectives.

This case study employed three methods of data collection to investigate the relationship of text in the development of orality and literacy in first year primary school pupils in the Republic of Cyprus. In particular, it has used multiple sources of data comparing and cross-checking data collected through observations at different times using different kinds of
texts. Also the teacher/researcher was keeping a daily reflective journal and written
documents were collected for analysis. Also, on important occasions of observation, I had a
critical friend along to observe. Her reactions and comments concerning the observations
occurred, not only served to support the original interpretation but also provided additional
data for the case study. By choosing a co-observer, I approached what Denzin (1989) called
‘theory triangulation’. Since no two observers observe or interpret things entirely the same,
whenever they compare their data, there is some theory triangulation (Stake, 1995: 113).

At this part, I believe is important to draw attention to my role as a teacher and a researcher,
interpreter and evaluator of my case study. At the beginning it was very difficult and crucial
for me as a researcher to clarify my role especially when utilizing qualitative methodology
to make my research credible. According to Alder and Alder (1994), the researchers that
undertake qualitative studies take on a variety of member roles when they are in the
research setting. These roles can range from complete membership of the group being
studied (an insider) to complete stranger (an outsider). The term ‘insider research’ is used
to describe projects where the researcher has a direct involvement or connection with the
research setting (Robson, 2002).

Being in the insider position when collecting the data, the concept of validity becomes
increasingly problematic because of the researcher’s involvement with the subject of study
(Hermann, 1989; Rooney, 2005; Sikes and Potts, 2008; Smyth and Holian, 2008). Unconsciously making wrong assumptions about the research process based on the
researcher’s prior knowledge can be considered a bias (DeLyser, 2001; Hewitt-Taylor,
2002) on data collection and analysis. Educational research is concerned with human
beings and their behaviour, where each of the participants brings to the research process a
wide range of perspectives, including the researcher’s own perspective. Hence, being the
teacher and the researcher, I was also confronted with role duality, struggling to balance my
teacher role and the researcher role (DeLyser, 2001; Gerrish, 1997).

Being an insider-researcher for this case study, I was also able to collect the data as an
insider participant observer. Insider participant observation is considered the most
important and challenging instrument in qualitative studies (Hermann, 1989). Many
advantages came from the fact that I was already the teacher of the class. Being known, allowed more rapid and more complete acceptance by the pupils. And being accepted meant that I had more close social contact with them. I could also collect the research data every day of the week at any time of the day. This provided continuity for the collection of the research data. The continuity of data collection made it possible to collect more detailed, resourceful, and thus more trustworthy, research data. In addition, I could easily complete any missing data by having unprompted conversations with pupils, which enrich the data. Knowing the personality of participants facilitated the interactions between us. During the whole process, thus, as I have mentioned earlier in this chapter, I was constantly writing my feelings, impressions and thoughts in my research journal. This ensured that I did not lose any valuable qualitative data. Hence, I realised that being a member – the teacher and the researcher – of the group under study did not influence the process in a negative way.

My dual role as a teacher and a researcher of this study, even though is considered challenging, seemed to be a worthwhile activity since I was able to observe what actually was going on in my classroom, to analyse it, and to reflect in order to improve my professional practice. However, this has also generated more difficulties and created tensions which could have affected participants’ responses. Atkinson (1994: 386) argues that ‘classroom teaching has its own tensions, conflicts, problems and complexities, so when the two roles of teacher and researcher are attempted by the teacher-researcher, not unexpectedly, considerable tensions may well arise’.

In addition, according to Atkinson (1994:387), ‘research deliberately sets out to analyse, to pull things apart, to separate the different strands, and to pursue these strands in great detail. Teaching is quite different. There is a sense of synthesizing, of focusing all that we know into the needs of the individual child’. From my experience I realized that being both teacher and researcher is sometimes frustrating. As a researcher I had to question everything and get on with it and do it in order to learn something. On the other hand, as a teacher I had to act; to make rapid decisions to find a solution to several situations. As a
teacher there were also times that I needed to do more than one thing at once; keep all pupils focused and engaged in class, eager and on task.

Since this case study involves pupils, the research data were collected by using different data collection techniques (Merriam, 1998) in order to increase validity of the case study, such as triangulation in the methods of gathering data, including written documents, reflective journal and observation (Stake, 2005; Yin, 2003) and initial evaluation of data. Also according to Bassey (1999) invaluable in strengthening a research project is a critical friend. Hence, in an attempt to overcome some of the disadvantages of being the teacher and the researcher of this case study I enlisted the help of a colleague (a ‘critical friend’) who was working with me at the same state school, to observe several sessions with me. The idea of a ‘critical friend’ or a ‘critical colleague’ was first recommended by Stenhouse (1975) as a ‘partner’ who can give advice and is working with the teacher–researcher in the action research. Elliot (1991) sharing Stenhouse’s (1975) belief, suggests that the ‘critical friend’ should help maintain teachers’ autonomy in constructing knowledge related to their practice, and also help teachers to acquire influence in the development of educational policy.

Usually, it is not possible to have other researchers to observe, but fortunately this case study had the opportunity to have a critical friend observing and taking notes during 4 sessions, especially during literature circle discussions where I was participating too and was not easy to observe every detail. The critical friend’s appearance in the class during the research was valuable. As I have seen it throughout my research, critical friend’s role was distinct since it gave me the opportunity to discuss alternative interpretations. My critical friend has been extremely supportive and has acted as a very useful sounding board at several critical stages of the research; especially in helping me to take a broader perspective at times where I was too focused on the detail. Her reactions not only served to support or undercut the original interpretation but to provide additional data for the case study.

At this point, I would also like to highlight the help provided by my Greek – Cypriot speaking external academic advisor, Dr Petros Panaou. Since my research was conducted in
a Greek - Cypriot speaking environment the data collected were in Standard Modern Greek language and in Cypriot dialect of the island. Hence, an external advisor was engaged to observe how my data was translated into English, especially while presenting and analysing extracts from my research journal as well as while translating pupils’ written documents for data analysis.

**Conclusion**

Employing qualitative case study methods, the current research attempts to investigate the significance of the use of literature, including local, in the development of orality and literacy of mother tongue speakers of Greek and those who are learning Greek as an additional language. The chapter has presented the methodological approach adopted for this study explaining why qualitative case study approach was judged as the most suitable one by highlighting also the importance of case study in the investigation of the current inquiry. Utilising qualitative case study, I tried to examine my investigation from a holistic viewpoint in order to gain an in-depth understanding of the situation and its significance for young learners involved. The analysis, organizing, and arranging of the data was a continuous process. Occasionally, though, I was summarizing some of the findings; a technique recommended by Bogdan and Biklen (1998). The following chapter presents a rich description of the findings, showing instances of the social, oral and written production of all six case study participants.
CHAPTER 4 - DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The main focus of this chapter is to describe the findings relevant to the three research questions which have been set at the beginning of the study. As has been discussed in the methodology chapter, the research questions aim to examine the way in which children experience and respond to children’s literature texts supplementary to the main textbook, when using literature circles in a first grade classroom. Additionally, the research questions aim to investigate the contribution of local literature to the development of orality and literacy in first year primary school pupils in Cyprus; both mother tongue speakers of Greek (GMT) and those who are learning Greek as an additional language (GAL). Also, looking at the response of 6 six-year-old pupils to a variety of texts, this research looks at the relationship between children’s reading of literature and their writing development.

The chapter is divided in two parts. The first part begins with a brief analysis of the texts used along with an analysis of findings relevant to the first and second research questions:

1. How does motivation and the level of engagement change through first grade pupils’ interaction with a variety of children’s literature?

2. To what extent does such kind of texts enhance oral language development and promote additional language learning?

The second part of this chapter examines the relationship between children’s reading of literature, including local in the Cypriot dialect, and their writing development, analysing findings relevant to the third research question:

3. How far does the use of local literature, Spanos and the Forty Dragons: A Folk Tale from Cyprus, in the Cypriot dialect, support and influence the reading and writing development for mother tongue speakers of Greek and those who are learning Greek as an additional language.
4.1. Part One: Young learners responding to the texts used

The selection of the books being implemented in this research was a significant aspect for consideration. The reading of books carries with it the potential for increasing awareness of other places, people and cultures (Klassen, 1993; Rosenblatt, 1996; Samway and Whang, 1996) and the opportunity for students to see themselves in the literature. For the purpose of this research a wordless picture book, a well-known European fairy tale and a local folk tale were chosen. The selected books were chosen primarily for their rich language and text quality, their interesting plots and strong characters. The selected books also deal with a conflict which arouses curiosity. The story is not merely a simple, straight-forward narrative, but works on different levels and opens up for the individual’s personal interpretation. In particular, the selected fairy tale ‘Little Red Riding Hood’ represents something that is familiar to children of many cultures, and among the other books appeal to a wide range of students both mother tongue speakers and additional language learners. Additionally, the selected books provide high quality illustrations and simple structure, continuity and enhance prediction, which allowed comparisons and in-depth discussions.

Frequently, stories are associated to daily life experiences children’s feelings and memories, and to cultural and intercultural values which enrich and expand the classroom world. The selected wordless picture book *Up and Up* is a rich text that has English cultural signifiers. It’s a book with a cultural specific framework which refers to an English tradition. From the first double spread page the reader gets a sense of the town where the story takes place. The way the houses are arranged in this double spread page and the houses’ architecture refer to an English context; brick built houses, chimneys, a golf set in a couple of pictures, a church. There was not a wordless picture book with a Greek Cypriot setting to use, nor a Greek Cypriot folk tale available written for the age group of the children.

The version of the tale *Little Red Riding Hood* used is a contemporary one with a more modern setting indicating a Western European location; with rich illustrations with vivid colours. The selected book is a translated version from the English language. This tale is an internationally well-known fairy tale, heard around the world in many versions and
therefore almost familiar to every child. In spite of significant differences in language and tone of the contemporary version used, all the versions of the tale share some dominant themes. This tale was selected due to the fact that were no books with local fairy tales available written that could be read to first grade pupils. This version of *Little Red Riding Hood* shows at the beginning of the story the mother and the LRRH preparing the cake, having all the ingredients on the table. The woods are presented with vivid colours, illustrating birds and rabbits, lots of flowers and bushes, blue sky and sunshine. Additionally, since the book belongs to a series of books adopted for beginner readers, at the end the woodcutter just runs after the wolf and the wolf disappears into the woods. In the selected book the wolf does not meet a violent end which might have been frightening for young children.

On the other hand, the traditional folk tale from Cyprus, offers the reader a recognisable Cypriot rural setting, filled with places, clothes and objects from the tradition of Cyprus, presenting the islanders’ way of life during the past century. Also the use of the dialect signaled to children that their language and culture have value. What is significant for this research is that even though two of the selected texts are not local they have rich texts in comparison to the bland textbook.

4.1.1. The main class textbook *Γλώσσα Α’ Δημοτικού: Γράμματα, Λέξεις, Ιστορίες* [Language Grade A’: Letters, Words, Stories]

The existing class textbook *Γλώσσα Α’ Δημοτικού: Γράμματα, Λέξεις, Ιστορίες* [Language Grade A’: Letters, Words, Stories] is imported from Greece since 2006. As has been discussed in chapter 1, the Greek Cypriot education system was and is mirroring not only the curricula of the education in Greece but also the language textbooks. The existing language textbooks do not address the actual needs of Cypriot students; they are mainly based on the Greek context where is published, referring to places, addresses and everyday life in Greece. However, the characters of the book do not look like Greek people. Such textbooks link to many reading scheme books which are designed for a universal market
and are aimed to be culturally neutral. Cypriot pupils, living in an area where conquest and occupation of lands was usually followed by attempts to impose foreign religion and culture, need books which will help them to keep their own distinct culture and identity (see Chapter 1).

Working with the existing textbook the last six years, I have noticed that the book is not supportive and challenging enough and its texts do not address the actual needs of Cypriot pupils. The existing textbook also, underestimates the power of the picture “to give rise to a variety of intellectual and emotional responses” (Kiefer, 1995: 10). However, the Ministry of Culture and Education provide it free of charge to all state schools in Cyprus and is widely used for teaching in first grade primary classrooms. Texts and illustrations of the textbook mainly attempt to help pupils learn the Greek alphabet; provide practice in new vocabulary and grammar. Passages from the textbook give emphasis to teaching from text to sentence to word (from whole-to part). Further, the class textbook puts more emphasis on children’s oral and reading development, rather than writing.

The first part of the textbook consists of small conversations with short simple sentences. No literary pattern is being developed and each new reading passage has a predictable plot. Each text focuses on a new letter and key words such as nouns and verbs. There is much repetition, sometimes unnecessary, whereas little attention is paid to rhythm. Even though the first-person narration and direct speech at the first part of the book give a sense of oral language, the repetitiveness of the text is not challenging enough to motivate the beginner reader. The lack of cohesive devices and the monotonous plot are unable to give the beginner reader the opportunity to bring his/her knowledge to the text. The language used does not in fact reflect Greek Cypriot students’ everyday language.

The textbook begins with the acquaintance with the main characters of the book and their names as the first whole text that the child will ‘learn’. The textbook begins with pages of lists of syllables, often with no sense, followed by pages of texts composed entirely of monosyllabic words and then with simple dialogues (simple combinations of vowels and consonants). Among the main characters is a boy from India, an indication that the book has also a multicultural point of reference. Unfortunately, this respect to differentiation give
up very soon and only in two more texts come up again at the end of the book where the boy from India narrate a tale from his country.

Further, the way the educational material in the textbook is constructed, does not favour the differentiation of teaching for children with a different linguistic background or with learning difficulties. There is no variety of the texts, too. Both textbooks (first and second part) have only dialogues taking place between the main characters which they are developed throughout the school year. In order to serve the plot of the dialogues, there are restrictions regarding the basic vocabulary existing in each text. Also, the dialogues do not talk to children. Pupils are just watching the characters talking with each other without talking to them. So the child cannot perceive that language is a code of communication between him and the book.

The existing textbook is also lacking in stimulating material for language development. There is no consistency in the dialogues used from one passage to the other. There is also no plot and conflict which could have stimulated curiosity, generated tension and created interest for further discussion. The dull repetition in the texts offered does not help the reader decode and experience the language. Findings from the current research reveal that since there is no conflict in the texts provided, no progress was observed in young learners’ oral language and reading.

The following figure (figure 4.1) is the second text provided by the textbook for students to learn the letter Tt.
Τιτίνα, η κότα [Titina, the hen]

- Τιτίνα! Τιτίνα, έλα, πίτα! [Titina! Titina, come, pie!]

- Ορφέα, Ορφέα! [Orphea, Orphea!]

- Τι είναι, μαμά; [What is it, mum?]

- Άσε πια την κότα. [Leave the hen] Το τρένο θα φύγει. Πάμε. [The train will leave. Come.]

Figure 4.1: Text and picture from the first part of the class textbook

The text above highlights that the vocabulary used is also limited; two of the sentences used: Άσε πια την κότα. Το τρένο θα φύγει. Πάμε. [Leave the hen. The train will leave. Come.] are quite difficult to be read by the beginner reader early in September, when first grade pupils enter school. The extract offered also shows that there is no variety of sentence structure. Children need to be exposed to vocabulary from a wide variety of genres and not just isolated passages culturally ‘bland’. Additionally, it seems that the picture accompanies the passage, provides only the necessary information, being merely decorative. The picture does not look local either and thus is not challenging enough to support the beginner reader. Young pupils working with the existing text book will not have the opportunity to explore complex interaction between written text and image.

The second part of the textbook deals with a large amount of grammar through a series of exercises where pupils spend much time completing gaps in given passages instead of having opportunities for creative writing. After six years working with the existing textbook I think the disadvantages of the book are more than its advantages. I observed that pupils are having the opportunity to work with a variety of exercises, to learn the grammar,
but are not able to compose a text. The book gives few opportunities for writing which most of the time are so guided that do not even inspire pupils. From a literary perspective, it is argued that such texts covertly construct a passive reader. According to reader response theories, the most significant part of the reading process is what the reader brings to the text and the meaning that is negotiated (see Chapter 2). Iser (1991) asserts that the primary function of text is to provoke readers to create for themselves the meaning and the ‘reality’ offered by the text.

The dullness of the existing class textbook did not inspire me either as a teacher when planning the lessons. The textbook could not provide range of opportunities for more creative pedagogy. Hence, the absence of stimulating educational material and the fact that I could not give up completely the existing textbook, led me in utilising additional children’s literature, for oral and written language development.

During October 2008 when pupils were learning the Greek alphabet, they were not showing any particular interest. Their engagement and participation in a literature circle discussion based on the text – dialogue offered by the textbook was limited and without any surprises. The following extract (extract 4.1) from my daily journal and the figure (figure 4.2) from the textbook support this statement:

**Extract 4.1:**

It was beginning of October and pupils were learning the letter Kk from a short passage from the class text-book. Firstly, pupils were asked to discuss the picture accompanying the passage. It seems that the picture motivated those pupils who were not confident enough and those who were struggling with the language, and especially the GAL girl. Pupils were just mentioning and naming what they were seeing at the picture and they were just making simple sentences using the vocabulary that came up based on the picture. It seems that they did not feel that they had something else to tell from the picture. On the contrary, during the same period we were also working through several other children’s books and they seemed to be more focused and excited. We were mainly focused though at the wordless picture book *Up and Up*, where pupils were sitting on a circle and they were turning the pages of the book and a look of pleasure came to their face, according to the observation occurred while ‘reading’ the pictures of the book.
Ο κύριος με το καπέλο [A man with the hat]

- Ένας κύριος στον κήπο! [A man in the garden!]
- Κοίτα τι φοράει! [Look what he is wearing!]
- Ένα καπέλο και ένα κόκκινο σακάκι. [A hat and a red coat.]
- Έχει ένα σάκο και ένα πακέτο. [He has a bag and a parcel.]
- Τι να έχει ο σάκος; [What does the bag have?]
- Α! Έχει μια κότα! [A! It has a hen!]

Figure 4.2: Text and picture from the first part of the class textbook
Based on observation occurred during mid of November 2008, data collected was organised in tables and presented in graphs. Bar graph 1 below presents visually the information collected in reference to pupils’ level of engagement when using the textbook. Even though young learners were provided with the opportunity to interact with each other and the text, productive language learning did not take place for all pupils.

Graph 4.1: The level of engagement with the main textbook during November 2008

Using a 5-point scoring scale (5 meaning ‘high’) graph 1 highlights the gap between the girl from the Greek mainland, Chloe and the additional language learner, Fatima. The graph shows that Fatima did not participate as energetically as Chloe. Chloe scored the highest level in active participation and engagement with the text provided by the main textbook while the student for whom Greek is an additional language scored the lowest level of participation and interaction with the text. Chloe, highly focused during reading and listening activities, became involved by initiating a conversation, interacting with her classmates and sharing her thoughts in circle and group discussion. On the other hand, the main textbook could not meet with my expectations to motivate Fatima. Fatima had the opportunity to interact with her classmates by listening and rarely be engaged in the conversation occurred in the circle using the target language. However, the text itself
offered for discussion from the textbook did not encourage her in further discussions and interpretation of the material.

Undoubtedly, Chloe has many advantages from which Fatima cannot possibly benefit. First of all, finds it easier to ‘situate’ herself in the social context of reading in a first grade class in Cyprus since she is coming from a neighbouring country where both language and culture share much in common. Also, the textbook which is published and imported from Greece based on the Greek context does not seem to be so culturally arid for her than is for Fatima. Also, texts and pictures from the textbook did not motivate the Greek mother tongue students, Sophia and Philippos, to engage and actively participate in the circle discussion. They have not been as focused as expected and they were not interacting with others in the circle either by initiating or responding in a discussion.

The following figure (figure 4.3) from an early interaction with the class textbook illustrate both GMT and GAL pupils’ low level of engagement and interaction with the text and the picture provided. Once again, students gathered in a circle to discuss the picture and the text. In the circle, pupils had also the opportunity to work in pairs for 5 minutes, to discuss the picture and read the dialogue offered by the textbook. Afterwards, they were asked to discuss the picture and the text in the circle. The picture presents a grocery selling watermelons and melons, a parrot on a bicycle, a car carrying boxes and a hat, an old man with a watermelon in his hands and finally a girl with an ice-cream.
Figure 4.3: Text and picture from the first part of the class textbook

The picture above provides mainly the necessary information needed for the supplementary text. It does not look local either and could not create a greater motivation in further intellectual and emotional responses. The following extracts (extracts 4.2 and 4.3) highlight the fact that neither the picture nor the text encouraged discussion and additional interpretations.
Extract 4.2:

**Sophia (GMT girl):** I see a parrot and a bicycle and a car.

**Teacher:** Very good. What else do you see?

**Sophia:** I see a girl. She is eating an ice-cream ... (pause) and a car. ... (pause). She is with her grandfather.

**Teacher:** Great. What else?

**Sophia:** I see this man and a watermelon.

**Teacher:** What’s this man’s job?

**Sophia:** ... (pause) mmm ... (pause)... I do not know.

According to the extract 4.2 above, responding to my questions, Sophia’s sentences are logically sequenced using simple, ordinary words. There were a few pauses in Sophia’s narration, too. In general even though she was familiar with the language and she could have use more narration, she seemed not be motivated by the picture in order to actively engage in describing in detail, giving names to the characters etc.

Extract 4.3:

**Fatima (GAL girl):** I see bird ... man ... girl ... (pause).

**Teacher:** That’s great. What does the girl eat?

**Fatima:** Ice-cream.

**Teacher:** Yes. What else do you see in this picture?

**Fatima:** ... (pause) car?

(She is asking, since she is not sure if is the correct Greek word)

**Teacher:** Yes, this is a car. What colour is the car?

**Fatima:** Green.

**Teacher:** Good. Who is this man and what is he selling?

**Fatima:** ...

(Sh e was not able to answer the question.)
**Teacher:** Is there anything else you would like to tell me about this picture?

**Fatima:** Mmm ... (She is saying no by moving her head negatively).

According to extract 4.3 above, Fatima responding to my questions was giving one word answer. She preferred to use words she knew and there were long pauses. She was not feeling confident enough when talking. For that reason, she remained silent for long periods during each session. In this case, the text and the picture above could not increase Fatima’s motivation and confidence to engage verbally with others. However, the decision to discuss the picture and the text in a circle gave her the opportunity to become a little bit more outspoken. Notes from my daily journal (extract 4.4) confirm that Fatima was very quiet during classroom activities and often apprehensive to participate verbally when working with the textbook.

**Extract 4.4:**

Fatima is the quietest girl in the class. She occasionally raises her hand to contribute in class when working with the class textbook. In fact, during the first few weeks she had not spoken in front of the whole class. She feels more comfortable when the literature groups set up. She participates more often in circle discussion.

(For the original page from the journal see Appendix 5)

The only session that created greater interest and increased participation was Unit 3, based on *Karagiozis*; a well-known Greek shadow theatre character. This unit consists of several small texts based on passages from shadow theatre performances. The passages are small dialogues between the main protagonist, *Karagiozis* and several other figures of the shadow theatre. The passages of this unit provided, both with their illustrations and dialogue, continuity and humour. Short, simple sentences in first person, offering a sense of a teller close to the reader, motivated all six case study pupils participate in drama sessions based on the extracts from *Karagiozis*. 
By taking on a role, children successfully created the characters drawing on information provided by the text and the picture. They were able to ‘speak’ as if they were ‘other’ and ascribe feelings, emotions, motives and actions to the imagined ‘other’ and express that in language. Their ability to work with such different conceptions shows them working at a high conceptual level, considering the different concepts of time and space they have to deal with. The ‘standard’ texts included in the textbook might not be able to offer young readers all the satisfaction of a story but has allowed them to experience different ways of telling a story. However, the passages included in this third unit of the textbook, could evoke more enthusiasm if they could provide pupils with the whole story of a performance of *Karagiozis* and not with merely an extract.

Observation has shown that this kind of dialogic engagement through role-play could help children explore the texts provided in an active way, providing also a setting for children’s social, cognitive and linguistic development. Through dialogue, participants, both Greek mother tongue speakers and Greek additional language learners, were encouraged to explore and use the target language to tell a story and express meanings. It also provides support for the ideas that language is a social phenomenon composed of words which can be presented and interpreted in different ways (Vygotsky, 1978). Vygotsky’s view that all
learning takes place in a social, cultural and historical context can help explain how the children were able to engage in the role-play (see Chapter 2).

The following extracts (extracts 4.5, 4.6, and 4.7) from my daily journal support this statement (For the original page from the journal see Appendix 5 – November 10th 2008):

Extract 4.5:

Fatima was excited by the shadow theatre. She volunteered to participate in the drama session. She was interested in being the main protagonist. Even though she could not read the dialogue from the class text-book she did not stop. She continued by making her own dialogue mainly based on the picture provided. She was speaking more clearly and with confidence. She was looking at her audience – her classmates – with enthusiasm.

Extract 4.6:

Sophia who usually is very quiet during a lesson and she is feeling unsecure in expressing feelings and ideas, in the case of the drama session was willing to participate. In her dialogue she mainly used the sentences provided by the class textbook, but she expressed them with more confidence. By taking on a role, she successfully created the character she was presenting.

Extract 4.7:

Vasilis and Philippos were mainly bored and inattentive during a regular literacy session with the class textbook. When they were asked to participate in the drama session were both very excited by taking on a role that for a first time was expressed with continuity and humour. They were also capable enough to ascribe feelings and emotions through their dialogue. Even though they could use only the sentences provided by the passage in the class textbook they went a step forward enriching their dialogue making it more interesting than the one provided by the class textbook.

Below I am citing the passage included in the textbook referring to the shadow theatre and then the conversation that Vasilis and Philippos created based on the text and picture provided. The translation from Greek to English does not give us the opportunity to see the rhyme between the sentences which makes the dialogue of Karagiozi and Morphonio, funny. For that reason I am also citing the Greek-English version of the text.
| The passage from the class text book | Pupils’ dialogue: Vasilis is Karagiozis  
Philippos is Morphonios |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| **Karagiozis:** Today pasha came from the island.  
[Simera o pasas irthe apo to nisi.] | **Karagiozis:** Hello, Morphonie. How are you?  
[Geia sou Morphonie. Pos ise?] |
| **Morphonios:** What? He drank all the wine?  
[Ti? Ipie olo to krasi?] | **Morphonios:** I’m fine Karagiozi. How are you?  
[Ime kala Karagiozi. Esy pos ise?] |
| **Karagiozis:** He also offered me three apples.  
[Me kerase kai tria mila.] | **Karagiozis:** I am hungry. Do you have something to give me to eat?  
[Pinao. Exis kati na mou dosis na fao?] |
| **Morphonios:** What? He fall down from the camel?  
[Ti? Epese kato apo tin kamila?] | **Morphonios:** No, I don’t have. Go to the palace and ask from pasha.  
[Oxi, den exo. Pigene sto palati kai rotise ton pasa.] |
| **Karagiozis:** Today pasha came from the island.  
[Simera o pasas irthe apo to nisi.] | **Karagiozis:** No. I said he came from the island. And he gave me a sausage.  
[Oxi. Ipa irthe apo to nisi. Kai mou edose ena loukaniko.] |
| **Morphonios:** What? He drank all the wine?  
[Ti? Ipie olo to krasi?] | **Morphonios:** What? He killed a wolf?  
[Ti? Skotose ena liko?] |
| **Karagiozis:** No. I said he came from the island. And he gave me a sausage.  
[Oxi. Ipa irthe apo to nisi. Kai mou edose ena loukaniko.] | **Karagiozis:** Oooo. Go away or I will eat your nose.  
She looks like salami and I am very hungry.  
[Oooo. Fyge apo edo allios tha] |
Vasilis and Philippos included details from the text read in the textbook but they also developed the dialogue between the two characters by including more events. They conveyed the relationship between the two shadow characters and caught the teasing tone in the jokes they were sharing. This dialogue shows both pupils’ ability to take on the style and the tune of the text, which also enabled them to respond to each other’s role and develop it. One of the most interesting outcomes of Barrs and Cork’s (2001) writing at KS2 research project was that working and then writing in role, as one of the characters in the story, enable children get inside the character and his situation, reporting not only on events but also on the character’s response to events (see Chapter 2).

The dialogues and texts in the main textbook were not able to increase the level of engagement of pupils and inspire further interpretations and discussions, as well as to give the opportunity to young learners to make more personal connections, and critical thinking. Still the specific text with Karagiozis imply a reader but with little imagination. The dialogue is funny and the reader can enjoy the language play at the specific extract, but still is isolated from the whole context and it does not bring any knowledge. The format and the simple structure within this dialogue did not contributed in order to provoke more discussion. Pupils’ enthusiasm regarding the ‘shadow theatre’ afforded a more active involvement, than the text itself; the only four sentences provided did not give the opportunity to pupils, and especially to additional language learners and to those pupils with restricted vocabulary, to produce the level of oral language being expected.
4.1.2. The wordless picture book *Up and Up*

Exploring wordless picture book reading, I intend to examine the narrative produced orally by the six case study participants, and whether such books enhance pupils’ motivation and encourage engagement, develop oral language and additional language learning. Wordless picture book reading has been a new experience for my students. Looking for an intriguing wordless picture book I came up with Hughes (1991) book *Up and Up* which I felt students could follow the plot. In general, from my teaching experience, I have noticed that children enjoy playing with words and pictures and gain a sense of pleasure, amusement and satisfaction from reading pictures and words. In order to point out the quality of wordlessness, I asked pupils if they have noticed anything unusual about the book. What is following are a few of my students’ comments when they first came across the wordless picture book:

*Andreas:* I like this book. It has only pictures.

*Vasilis:* It’s better than the other book we have. It has many pictures and you do not have to know to read.

*Philippos:* It’s not like the other books we have. It’s different.

*Chloe:* Mrs Christina, I have a question. How are you going to read this book? There are not any sentences.

This particular story was chosen for its clear and simple structure; its strong narrative and its potential, in retelling and interpretation. The book is attractively presented and provides high quality illustrations. Even though at the front and back cover of the book there are plenty of colours, inside the book the illustrations are in black and orange, with much attention to detail. The fact that the size of each picture varies and sometimes birds, balloons or even the protagonist escape from the picture’s frame, makes the story an exciting experience for children. This particular wordless picture book with a cultural specific framework which refers to the English tradition, describes through a series of illustrations, the magical story of a little girl whose wish to fly finally comes true, much to the grown-ups’ alarm.
The selected wordless picture book has consistency, and the plot and conflict that the illustrations present arouse curiosity and create interest for further discussion. The setting also helps in creating an atmosphere. The illustrations have much to bring to the story, even though there are no words. Participants of the current research enjoyed ‘reading’ and talking about them. Findings from this research highlight that the illustrations of the specific wordless picture book are challenging enough to support the beginner reader; to create a greater motivation and engagement with the text and with one another, and encourage discussion in the target language.

The fact that the main protagonist is a young girl, at the age of the children they are ‘reading’ the story, gave the opportunity to pupils to put themselves in the position of the heroine and imagine themselves as part of the story. This wordless picture book gave the opportunity to pupils to discover the relationship between thinking and seeing, as well as the role of the picture in narrative speech. Talking about the book in literature circle and group discussions and ‘reading’ the illustrations, the book managed to motivate them and evoke their responses. Evidence emerged from data analysis demonstrate that the wordless picture book enabled students to participate and interact with one another and the illustrated text; to share ideas and personal experiences, and response to literature. The wordless picture book increased motivation, a significant element for promoting and supporting language development (see Chapter 2). It also provided opportunities for the additional language learner to practice in the target language. As Krashen (1985) argues a language learner needs to hear a lot of language from native speakers. He supports that it is mostly through input – what they hear and what they read – that language learners make progress in an additional language. Evidence from the research supports Krashen’s input hypothesis whereas the additional text gave the opportunity to all participants to engage in highly dialogic interactions and provide the comprehensible input for each other.

Prior to pupils beginning the book, I read the title since it was in English and the phrase *Up and Up* was just translated in Greek. Pupils were then invited to form their own story. No other introductory information about the story was provided, so that construction of narrative would come exclusively from participants’ reading of the illustrations offered.
Two tutoring sessions were designed for this wordless picture book. Each tutoring session was based on developing and sharing a literature circle conversation around the chosen book and connecting that conversation to pupils’ oral development in the target language. The sessions were audio-taped and later transcribed verbatim.

During session 1 (40 minutes) the main focus of the group discussion was on the illustrations and the story they communicate to young readers. Each pair of case study participants had their own copy of the book. As a start point pupils were encouraged to enjoy the illustrations of the book and get a sense of what the book is about. They spent approximately 15 minutes looking at the cover of the book, talking about the book’s title and exploring the illustrations. Looking carefully at the expressions of the characters’ faces and actions, the setting and the use of colour, pupils were invited in a group discussion to form their own story idea. During session 2 (80 minutes) the main focus was on encouraging pupils to take another ‘picture walk’ and look for the meaning of the story through the illustrations. Conversations between pupils and the teacher, along with the group discussion during session 1, encouraged the development of language learning skills, grammar, word building and other important parts of language development. Group discussions and the interaction with each other helped pupils expand their sentences and develop their thoughts. Evidence emerged from the current research shows that the book gave the opportunity to pupils to speak in such a way that the language used was comprehensible to the students (Krashen, 1985, see Chapter 2).

Each visual image from the book provided distinct opportunities for language use. The following extracts imply that the format and structure inherent within this wordless picture book contributed to the children’s responses. Also, this kind of book afforded a more active involvement provoking more discussion around the illustrations and increased opportunities for the children’s first and additional language development. The narrative speech produced by children offers evidence of that meaning making and development of orality in contrast to the stories pupils produced while studying texts from the main textbook.

The child who first offered to start narrating his story was Andreas; a confident boy with good vocabulary and average knowledge of the Standard Greek language. He followed well
the pictures of the story, making also references to small details, putting words in the heroes’ mouth and coming up with conversations. He narrated his story with consistency and relevant ease, using grammatically correct sentences and good vocabulary. The transcript is presented in full in the Appendix 2. Here I cite part of his narration (translated in English):

**Extract 4.8:**

**Andreas:** ‘Once upon a time was a girl who did many activities. Suddenly she did not see the rock and she stumbled and ...and then she turned a somersault and she hurt her head. Then she took a piece of paper and she wanted to make a wing. She pencilled in the wing, then she took a pair of scissors and she was cutting and then she made another one. She cut it, she put them on her and she was ready to fly. She went on the stairs and she was ready. She did it. She could not fly and she fell down. Then she thought something else. She took balloons, she inflated them and then she was flying up and up until the balloons reached the tree and then they deflated...’

Likewise, Chloe, a very fluent, enthusiastic and creative story-teller form the Greek mainland was also fascinated by the wordless picture book. She was actually ‘staring’ at the illustrations of the book for a long time, going back and forth. Chloe narrated her story with consistency and relevant ease, using grammatically correct sentences and good vocabulary. She gave a name to her heroine. She named her ‘Lily’. I am citing part of her narration, while the transcript is presented in full in the Appendix 2:

**Extract 4.9:**

**Chloe:** ‘Once upon a time, was a girl named Lily and she was walking towards to see the birds. The bird was flying up and up and she was dancing to catch the bird. Then she stumbled and she felt down and she felt dizzy and she was crying. Then she put some wings on her. She wanted to fly. She put both wings on her, she stood up and she began to fly, she fell down and then again. Here the girl is inflating a balloon and one more and one more and she is trying to take all the balloons from the rope to fly up and up. She is flying up and up and up and ...up and then the balloons deflated and she fell down again...’
Students developed a special feeling for this wordless picture book. The fact that there was no written text, within this book let children felt more active and powerful in their role of finding words to shape the story. According to the extract above and the one following, participants began narrating their story by giving a name to the girl protagonist and coming up with several different interpretations. All children narrated the illustrated story in chronological order, describing important events and characters.

Vasilis was fascinated by the wordless picture book, pointing out that he has “lots of books at home but never came across such a book before. A book without words; it’s different. There are many small pictures in one page”. He named the heroine of the story and then begun narrating his story by using small and simple sentences in the Cypriot dialect.

**Extract 4.10:**

**Vasilis:** I like this book very much. I will give a name to the girl.

‘Once upon a time Anna was sitting on the grass outside her house and she saw a bird and then the bird flew away and she saw it. And when the bird flown away Anna thought if she could fly too. And then Anna started to run but she stumbled on a rock. She hurt her head and then she felt down. Then she pencilled in wings to fly. She worn them and then she was ready. She went to the stairs, she flew but she felt down again...

Anna climbed a tree, then she flown away, then she was flying over the city. She was flying and people were running. And at the front was her mother and from the other side was a man with a net. Afterwards, she entered the window of the school flying and she did this (he is showing with his hands and a facial expression the girls’ grimaces). She made a grimace like this (he is showing again with his hands and face) and she looked at them. And then she passed through the window’.

(The transcript is presented in full in Appendix 2.)

Vasilis’s story is much more extended than the one produced when studying texts from the class textbook. He provided language with confidence and shaped his narration consciously. His story has cohesion and is enriched with a wide range of vocabulary. The wordless picture book aroused such a curiosity and interest that he was also making several facial expressions in order to give a more vivid account of the protagonists’ adventures.
The following example highlights Philippos’s greater engagement with the wordless picture book than with the class textbook. While ‘reading’ the illustrations, he was pointing at almost every picture and his narration was the most detailed and organised. He followed well all the illustrations of the book, making also references to small details and coming up with small dialogues. His story did not begin with the fixed phrases of opening and closing ‘Once upon a time’ and ‘lived happily ever after’. He begun by pointing out that ‘We are at the town and the little girl is playing with her skipping-robe’. He narrated his story with consistency and relevant ease, using grammatically correct sentences and good vocabulary. Here I cite part of his narration:

**Extract 4.11:**

**Philippos:** ‘We are at the town and the little girl is playing with her skipping-robe. This girl thought something. She saw a bird and ran after the bird to catch it and she tried to fly away. She did not see the rock and she stumbled and she hurt her head and she was crying. Now the girl is drawing and then she is painting. She painted them and now she is cutting them. She made two wings. She worn the wings and went to the stairs. She tried to fly. She flew for a moment and then she felt down. Now she is inflating balloons making them bigger and bigger and ... and then she roped them and she was holding them and she was flying away and the door knocked and was the postman and he brought them a giant egg and the girl got it and opened it. Suddenly the balloons deflated and she felt down. She felt down and she was angry...’

(The transcript is presented in full in Appendix 2)

Sophia and Fatima showed greater engagement in discussing the illustrated story within the wordless picture book and participated more often than when discussing texts from the class textbook. Being involved in the literature circle discussion, both students engaged actively with the text and with one another and showed surprising improvement in oral communication as the extracts from their narrations above highlight. It’s important to note that within the literature circle discussion the GAL pupils and all GMT pupils, except Chloe who is from the Greek mainland, were mainly speaking in both Greek Cypriot dialect and Standard Modern Greek.
Precisely, Sophia ‘read’ carefully almost every picture of the story. Her story was much more extended than any other narration based on texts or pictures provided by the class textbook. As the extract below (extract 4.12) shows, her narration followed a correct chronological order and described the most important events and actions of the characters. She also used simple words and phrases, well-structured sentences and a wide range of vocabulary.

**Extract 4.12:**

Sophia: Once upon a time was a girl who was watching a bird and ... and she ran after it. She was running and she did not see the rock and felt down and she was crying. And then she was drawing wings to wear them to fly and ... and ... from the stairs she tried to fly and she felt down. And she found balloons (she used a Cypriot word – fouskes instead of balonia, the Greek word) and she was inflating them and inflating them and she was holding them and she was going up and up.

... (big pause)

The balloons pricked ... (pause), she felt down and she was very angry. The door bell rung and they brought her a very big egg and she opened it and got into it and then she started eating it.

(The transcript is presented in full in Appendix 2)

Fatima, the GAL pupil with limited experience of Greek and schooled literacy, could have taken a more passive role; as studying texts from the class textbook. However, the extract below (extract 4.13) tells a different story. Fatima was actively engaged in using the target language for sharing her story with her classmates. Despite the fact she was lacking in reading and comprehension skills, and in vocabulary to express her thoughts, she simplified the language of the story she was telling. She was also skipping pictures and there were many pauses when she was not aware of some Greek words such as ‘postman’ and ‘parcel’.
Extract 4.13:

Fatima: Here is a town (pause) … a bird that the girl saw (pause) … and (pause) … houses (pause) … trees. The girl was watching the bird and she wanted to (pause) … to … fly. And she did this (showing with her hands because she did not know the most suitable Greek word) in order to jump (pause) … she thought that she could jump (pause) … to fly (pause) … she felt down and she hurt her head. She is doing wings to jump. Then she felt down again. Then she inflated the balloons and then she took them and she went up and … and she felt down... (pause).

Teacher: What is happening here?

Fatima: Came in a house. Knocked the door and opened a... (pause).

Teacher: What is this (he is holding)?

Fatima: ......

Teacher: What’s his job?

Fatima: ......

(She was not familiar with the work “postman” and “parcel” in Greek language.)

Teacher: Did he bring a letter?

Fatima: No, something else. He brought her an egg and he put it there. The girl opened it and she saw an egg … black and she opened it and got into the egg and she ate it. (pause)

Teacher: What happened next?

Fatima: She became angry and she started flying … and walking on the walls.

(The transcript is presented in full in Appendix 2)

The meaning of the story has been understood, but the additional language learner could not produce grammatically correct sentences. Such sentences were either missed out or wrongly expressed. The extract above (extract 4.13) indicates that the additional language pupil also had problem with subordination; she was using strings of simple sentences connected loosely together. She also made more errors than the other participants due to
unfamiliarity with the gender of infrequently encountered words. Though her story follows the correct chronological order and describes the most important events and characters, she has fallen into the ‘and then ... and then ...’ pattern that is common in young or inexperienced story-tellers. The vocabulary used is simple and ordinary. Her narration was in the Cypriot idiom: the ambient language she hears around her.

Both extracts cited above (extracts 4.12 and 4.13), show the influence of the wordless picture book in increasing participants’ engagement in a discussion and the surprising improvement of their oral communication. In discussing and telling their stories children shared ideas and opinions, made personal connections and critical thinking, developed language skills. They also got a sense of the sequence of events in illustrations. Mitchell, Waterbury and Casement (2003: 79-81) stated the purpose of wordless books is to “encourage observation and a closer look at the world, encourage the creation of words and to immerse the reader in fantastical elements” (see Chapter 2).

This study has shown that reading does not start with words only. For a book with no words, I was surprised at all the talking they have done. The wordless picture book also gave me the opportunity to witness participants’ initial engagement with the images of the story and their movement through a zone of proximal development from ‘seeing’ to ‘thinking’. A child, who is termed as non-reader such as the additional language learner participating in this case study, has managed to comprehend stories without decoding texts. Although her narrative may not be considered grammatically sound, was rich with references to the visual images of the book and her other experiences that make up her everyday life.

Using a wordless picture book was definitely a new concept for my students and me as a teacher. Findings underline the importance of such books as another tool for enhancing oral language development and promoting additional language learning. The visual support provided by the illustrations of the book helped both struggling readers of this case study and the additional language learner pupil to decode and understand the story. The high-quality illustrations strengthen the verbal description of a character and setting, and help teach follow-up sentences and sequencing. The language children used is far more
advanced than the language provided by the class textbook. The short dialogues in the
textbook were not able to increase the significance of the narrative and were unproductive
in terms of student learning. Findings revealed all case study participants had a higher mean
of length of utterance, a higher frequency of phrases and a lower frequency of single words
in their storytelling from the wordless picture book.

In addition, circle and small discussion groups gave pupils the opportunity to come together
and interact with each other sharing interpretations, ideas and feelings. This way seemed
more likely to have been resulted in a more enjoyable way of word acquisition through
listening to each other and experimenting with the language, providing comprehensible
input through interaction within the discussions developed. In a discussion occurred in a
circle or a group, the most confident and advanced students such as Andreas, Chloe, Vasilis
and Philippos were providing assistance and help to the lower advanced students such as
Sophia and Fatima. This supports Piaget, Vygotsky and Bruner’s theory regarding the
social aspect of learning and the use of conversation, interaction with others, and the
application of knowledge as an integral aspect of learning (see Chapter 2). In fact in his
theory of development Vygotsky (1978) hypothesized that learning derives from social
dialogue children have with other people.

According to Vygotsky (1978) learning and development is a collaborative activity and
children construct their understanding and knowledge in dialogic ways with others. Brooks
(2002) supports this statement by arguing that learner brings prior knowledge and combines
it with new knowledge through his or her interaction with others. Hence knowledge is not
simply constructed, it is co-constructed. As has been argued earlier in chapter 2, this social
way of language learning makes pupils feel more comfortable. Having an in formal
discussion with one of my lower advance students, Fatima, regarding her feelings of
working in small groups and her confidence in using the target language, offered me this
insightful comment:

I think Greek is not so difficult than I thought. And I like this lesson with
this book. It has no words and I like it because I cannot read with words. I
can read this book because it has only pictures and I can talk. I feel better
Talking now and I like that my friends help me. I like listening their stories. I hear words and I can tell my story. (Fatima)

Traditional structurally-based texts, such as those provided by the main textbook, seemed to be not sufficient for the demands of first grade pupils, both GMT speakers and GAL learners. However, books that draw heavily on authentic children’s stories, either visually or verbally provide a motivating medium for language learning while fostering the development of the thinking skills that are needed for first grade pupils. With their built-in story structure, their beautiful illustrations and their clever tales, these books motivate learners, hold their interest and encourage them to produce longer, more detailed, coherent and cohesive texts. Evidence revealed from the current research show that such materials are accessible for students at all levels and have great potential for language development. Since the illustrations in the books are generally beautifully detailed, they can be used to develop the language of description as well as the language of prediction, hypothesis and cause/effect.

4.1.3. The European fairy tale Little Red Riding Hood

One of my main concerns throughout the research was to increase students’ motivation and participation towards reading by making reading interesting. Besides the wordless picture book, fairy tales were considered to be one of the possible supplementary teaching materials for this purpose. As has been argued in the Literature review, fairy tales invite children’s curiosity, may increase interest and create wonder and in addition they may elicit a powerful emotional response and personal involvement of students (Collie and Slater, 1987). In the existing class textbook was hard to find the materials treating fairy tales. Hence, in order to fill in this gap the present study considered the internationally well-known fairy tale Little Red Riding Hood to be studied supplementary to the widely used textbook.
It is a tale that is heard around the world and therefore it was almost familiar to every child. In spite of significant differences in language and tone, all the versions of the tale share some dominant themes. This may explain why the story of *Little Red Riding Hood* is so widespread around the world. Such stories can be read at many different levels, and so they open many stimulating topics to discussion, as opposed to the textbook. The tale of *Little Red Riding Hood* was chosen for its clear and simple structure; for its strong narrative which allowed more capacity for creativity and engagement with the text than other text-types. This fairy tale makes “extensive use of repetitions of both expressions and events” (Pisanty, 1993: 31). This cohesive device is helpful in making the text easier for beginner readers to understand, but is combined with the tale’s strong literary devices, the tunes, patterns and rhythms, which make the language and the structure of the story interesting, comprehensible and memorable. Linguistically, this tale presents grammar, vocabulary and formulaic speech within a meaningful and structured context, as opposed to the textbook.

The version of *Little Red Riding Hood* that was chosen for this case study is one written by Anne Faundez (2004) and illustrated by Elisa Squillace. The book belongs to a series of books called *Begin to read*, books adopted for beginner readers. Front and back cover, as well as the title page create expectation and enhance prediction. The reader will meet the main protagonist immediately at the front cover and the wolf at the back cover. As such there is a clue to whom the beginner reader will meet inside the book and what the main structure of the story will be. The colourful illustrations of the book serve to expand and explain the written text. The illustrations of the specific version of *Little Red Riding Hood* (2004), offer a ‘text’ themselves, which allowed participants to tell a slightly different story based on the pictures. Each page of the book has an illustration, which is sometimes larger than the accompanying text, covering the whole page. The pictures of the book add important facts, feelings and facial expressions of the characters. The written text gives emphasis on certain words, using capital letters in order to add to the picture and express the fear that Little Red Riding Hood feels when she finds the wolf in her grandmother’s bed.
Three tutoring sessions were designed for this fairy tale. Each session was based on developing and sharing a literature circle conversation around the chosen book and connecting that conversation to pupils’ oral development. I also wanted to see what effects this fairy tale might have on the writing process of first grade students, which will be analysed in the second part of this chapter.

During session 1 (60 minutes) a literature circle was set up. Students gathered on the carpet ready to hear the story read aloud by the teacher/researcher and then engaged in a discussion. As a start point pupils were encouraged to enjoy the pictures of the book and get a sense of what the book is about. In the literature circle they discussed the front and back cover of the book, they read the title and made a reference to the main characters, Little Red Riding Hood and the wolf. Then the teacher read the story aloud and afterwards a discussion followed.

Some students were sharing feelings regarding the story and some others were describing the characters and their actions.

‘I like reading stories but when others read to me I like it more because I can understand it better’. (Chloe)

‘I prefer listening to the story first because I can understand the story before reading’. (Philippos)

‘I like listening because many words are difficult to read and pronounce’. (Fatima)

During session 2 (80 minutes) pupils were arranged into 3 groups of six. One of the three groups was the group with the six case study participants whom observation occurred. Students were given 10 minutes to skim the fairy tale one more time and ask further questions. Then they were encouraged to retell the story from the beginning. In groups they had the opportunity to correct each other, arrange the sentences in the correct order according to the order the events happened in the story and come up with the moral of the story. It’s worth mentioning, that the pupil who first pointed out the moral was Fatima, by saying:

‘Little Red Riding Hood’s mother told her: do not talk to anybody’. (Fatima)
This discussion lasted approximately 20 minutes. Afterwards, pupils were given a piece of paper where they were asked to collect as many words as possible referring to the story and to the discussion they had with each other. They, then, made a list of words which they read to the group. Those were the words which they will help them later to compose their story regarding the tale they had read.

Literature circle and small group discussions, during the first and second session, invited high dialogic interactions with each other and the tale used. They asked questions, responded to comments from their classmates, and intellectually challenged one another. Evidence revealed from the current research indicates that the fairy tale was meaningful and understandable to children that through their interaction and collaboration with the images, the text and with each other stimulated input language (Krashen, 1985) in the target language (see Chapter 2).

The bar graph below highlights fairy tale’s particular value in motivating and increasing the level of engagement of all six case study participants. The additional material was particular supportive for the additional language learner, Fatima, and for the girl who was struggling with the language, Sophia. There were, however, pupils who retained interest in both texts, like Chloe.

Bar graph: Active participation in group and literature circle discussions
During session 3 (80 minutes) pupils gathered again into 3 groups of six. They were invited to read the words they had collected during the previous session and then narrate their story. Pupils’ narration were audio-taped and transcript. Afterwards, pupils wrote a summary of the tale. Their summary could include the words they had noted but also add any other details they wanted to the events. All case study participants’ writing samples will be analysed and discussed in the second part of this chapter.

Parallel to the fairy tale pupils were also studying texts from the textbook. By that time they have already been well into the textbook. However, the texts that pupils have to deal with are still simple dialogues with no plot, just accompanied by a single picture. Here is an example:

- Βρήκαμε τον παπαγάλο, αλλά χάσαμε τη γάτα.  
  [We found the parrot, but we lost the cat.]

- Να τη στο δρόμο.  
  [There she is in the road.]

- Αχ! Ένα μηχανάκι! Γάτα, πρόσεχε! Τρέχα γρήγορα!  
  [Oh! A motorbike! Cat, watch out! Run quickly!]

- Χώθηκε στη χαρτοσακούλα! Σκόρπισε και τα λάχανα. Πάλι θάλασσα τα έκανε!  
  [She got into the paper bag! She dispersed the cabbages, too. She made a mess again!]

**Figure 4.5: Text and picture from the first part of the class textbook**
The extended examples of short dialogues offered by the class textbook and the restricted vocabulary used; the absence of “book language” (Williams, 2001: 17) such as cohesive devices, (characters, plot, structure, theme, setting, symbolism, style, point of view, tone, irony) could not inspire students in extended discussion and participation. The fairy tale used and the richness found in its literary language work, though, became an excellent tool for providing both entertainment and further topics for discussion. My teaching experience has shown that getting students to speak in the class can sometimes be extremely difficult. Thus, students will participate freely and enthusiastically if we give them a suitable topic or a task (Harmer, 2007). Fairy tales include unusual words, or words that have a strong phonological content, with interesting rhymes or sound. Analysis of discourse of circle discussions shows that students were engaged in highly dialogic interactions with each other and the chosen fairy tale. The tale provided a good topic for discussion and created greater motivation in students to participate in several oral and written activities. The vocabulary and the built-up repetition of the words and phrases in the chosen fairy tale seemed to be one of the features that supported first grade pupils’ language learning, both GMT and GAL learners.

Both the fairy tale and the discussion in a circle provided a wide array of opportunities for both first and additional language learners to practice the Greek language, increase their motivation to read and speak, and mainly strengthen their literacy skills, which will be more obvious later in this chapter when findings regarding pupils’ writing will be analysed and discussed. The fairy tale gave all participants the opportunity to actively engage with the text and with one another, and especially provided students with less language experience with opportunities to talk and share ideas in order to comprehend the text.

When asked to retell the story of Little Red Riding Hood, all participants began with the phrase ‘Once upon a time’ and almost everyone ended his/her story with the fixed phrase ‘They lived happily ever after’.

Andreas, a GMT boy with an average knowledge of the Greek language and Chloe, the girl from the Greek mainland enjoyed the selected fairy tale. They were both really enthusiastic participating actively in all circle and group discussions. Andreas was so anxious to retell
the story that in his narration added some other details to the events such as replacing the word ‘cake’ with the word ‘soup’. Both Andreas and Chloe were using syntactically and chronically correct sentences as well as other temporal conjunctions. They also borrowed phrases and words from the tale and they had for the opening and closing the fixed phrases ‘Once upon a time’ and ‘Lived happily ever after’. What was really notable for those two children was that when Andreas was retelling the story he was changing the tone of his voice where necessary and was very expressive in contrast to sessions using the class textbook, where he was more guarded. Also, Chloe was the only child that gave emphasis to the description of the wolf using the adjectives ‘grey’ and ‘bad’. Chloe’s narration was mainly based on the illustrations of the book.

Vasilis and Philippos, also showed great interest in the tale. They both showed willingness in participating in group and circle discussions and in retelling the tale. Their stories were syntactically and chronically correct. Vasilis was making several facial expressions during his storytelling. Those expressions were changing following his words, especially when he was focusing on Little Red Riding Hood’s words: ‘Why do you have so BIG eyes?’ , ‘Why do you have so BIG ears?’ and ‘Why do you have so BIG mouth?’ giving emphasis on the word ‘BIG’. Likewise, Philippos, used several phrases and words from the tale, giving emphasis to the word ‘BIG’. However, he missed mentioning that Little Red Riding Hood’s grandmother was sick and that her mother asked her to take the cake; he moved directly to the scene with the wolf in the forest. Both GMT boys used dialogue in their retelling where the tone of their voice was changing accordingly to the situation. Lastly, they both used for the opening and closing the fixed phrases ‘Once upon a time’ and ‘Lived happily ever after’.

Sophia was also focused and showed great interest in the fairy tale. Her story consisted of simple words and phrases mainly borrowed from the tale whereas her narration was not following the correct order in which the events occurred in the tale. She was skipping scenes and that made her feel uncomfortable. She was also using a lot the conjunctive word ‘and’, leaving out any temporal or other conjunctions to connect her sentences. She seemed to be impressed by the dialogue between Little Red Riding Hood and the wolf lying in
Little Red Riding Hood’s grandmother’s bed. At that point her voice was louder and she remembered almost perfectly the dialogue. Finally, she ended her story with the fixed phrase ‘They lived happily ever after’.

Fatima’s story consisted of simple words and sentences. She borrowed from the story the dialogue between the Little Red Riding Hood and her grandmother. As has been said earlier, the GAL pupil was the only one who mentioned the moral of the story in her narration. Saying this and noticing that was the only one pointing this out, she felt so confident that she faced all other classmates and smiled.

4.1.4. The traditional folk tale Spanos and the Forty Dragons: A Folk Tale from Cyprus

The folktale Spanos and the Forty Dragons, which is a key text in this research, offers the reader a recognisable Cypriot rural setting, filled with places, clothes and objects from the tradition of Cyprus, presenting the islanders’ way of life during the past century. The front cover of the book as well as the back page, the inside page, the title page and the engravings of the book, all create expectation and enhance prediction in contrast to the existing class textbook. The title of the story, written in the Greek Cypriot dialect, and the engraving of the island surrounded by the dragons immediately introduces the reader to the culture and spirit of Cyprus. Clues are provided about whom the reader will meet inside the book and what the main structure of the story will be. The story combines myth with reality, using Cypriot scenes and mythological elements that support the reader. The fact that the story is written in the Greek Cypriot dialect also offers “a sense of an oral retelling of an experience” (Williams, 2001: 18).

The black and white engravings in the book are quite powerful and challenging for the reader, providing continuity and enhancing prediction. The relationship between word and image in this book is interesting. From the beginning, the images of the story are combined with the actual story itself. Words float into the images and each page reveals something new, both verbally and aesthetically.
The traditional folk tale *Spanos and the Forty Dragons* was first introduced to the class at the beginning of March 2009. A significant part of this case study is the use of the local literature in a first grade classroom in order to observe whether such folktales can support oral language development and promote additional language learning. A series of lesson plans was developed and pupils were able to study this book for 7 literacy hours, along with texts from the main class text book. Through these literacy hours I have been exploring the use of drama into text and have discovered that drama and visual literacy worked perfectly together in engaging and motivating pupils to explore the text and its underlying themes. Drama and visual literacy have been important scaffolding devices for exploring the traditional folk tale. They removed the difficulties of the written word for less experienced readers and provided everyone with ways of drawing on personal experience to understand and engage with the important themes in the book.

The literacy hours that were planned and developed throughout this research are presented in brief on the following table. Data collected from these 7 literacy hours was analysed and presented in detail in both part one and two of this chapter. Findings occurred from the first four literacy hours will be presented and discussed in the first part of the chapter since they provide valuable information on how motivation and the level of engagement changed through the introduction of the folk tale.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Literacy Hour 1:</th>
<th>Literacy Hour 2:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>b. Read the story aloud</td>
<td>b. Create and share web of words and phrases in order to write a character description.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Work in group (Place the figure of the dragon and a picture of Spanos in the centre of a paper. Brainstorm responses to the pictures of the pupils. Words around the pictures)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explore the author/illustrator’s voice and viewpoint. Discuss the title. Discuss the front and back cover of the book. Discuss the languages in which the book is written. Discuss the use of the Cypriot dialect in the story.</td>
<td>Use text and illustrations to infer information about key characters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy Hour 3:</td>
<td>Recognise the significance of images and become more effective at reading a visual text in order to understand the author/illustrator’s messages. Understand that in this traditional tale word and image play the same significant role. Every image has meaning in relation to other images on the page and images in other parts of the book.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Understanding the author/illustrator’s message.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy Hour 4 and 5:</td>
<td>Pupils examine different point of views. Create the characters drawing on information provided by the text and images. Pupils together construct a narrative – a dialogue orally. Pupils record their dialogue independently.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Role-play (small group work)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Exploration of words and language</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Pupils together they construct a narrative – a dialogue orally.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy Hour 6:</td>
<td>Explore why the author/illustrator used dragons in his story. Explore the symbolism of the dragons on the story (Turkish invasion on the island – history, culture and identity). Explore the differences between the way in which the dragons and Spanos are presented (dragons/fearful – Spanos/confident, calm).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Develop greater understanding of the story by analysing powerful images of the story: dragons, pigeons, Spanos and water.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy Hour 7:</td>
<td>Pupils produce independently a draft based on the traditional folk tale (retelling, thoughts and ideas regarding the story). They can use either the Cypriot dialect or Standard Modern Greek.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Writing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.1: The literacy hours which were developed for *Spanos and the Forty Dragons: A Folk Tale from Cyprus.*

The traditional folk tale inspired participants to become involved in lively social interactions with each other, to engage actively in several activities and to see reading of both text and illustrations as an essentially meaningful and enjoyable activity. Also, the use of the island’s dialect in the folk tale signals to the children that the language of their island
has value. I believe this exerts a positive effect on their motivation and engagement with the text and engravings of the book. The dialect reflects the language they use in their everyday communication within the home. Hence they find the use of the dialect more natural and easy to express ideas and feelings when discussing the story, especially the GAL pupil, Fatima. Pupils’ active participation and engagement with text and illustrations was also encouraged by the tale’s strong narrative and potential in retelling and interpretation. The book is attractively presented and provides high quality illustrations, which influenced pupils’ retellings in group discussion.

Fatima was using every resource available in order to make herself understood in a language that is not her own. Visual images, gesture, mime and facial expression were as valuable as words. Both the traditional folk tale and the dialect the author was using to tell the story motivated her at such level that she was taking enormous risks trying to communicate meaning using the Greek language. The powerful engravings of this book enabled all six case study participants to make meaning from the visual images and participate actively into a conversation about this book.

The group discussion which followed the reading of the story by the teacher/researcher was audio taped and transcript. The following extract from this discussion highlights the special feeling that case study participants developed for Spanos and the Forty Dragons.

**Extract 4.14:**

The teacher/researcher read the story aloud to the children in both Standard Modern Greek and in the Cypriot dialect. When the story finished she asked pupils which of the two versions they like most:

**Philippos:** I liked the story because it was in the Cypriot dialect. It was much better.

**Vasilis:** In the Cypriot dialect.

**Andreas:** We have heard many stories in the Greek language, but in the Cypriot dialect only this time.
Sophia: I prefer the Standard Modern Greek. I did not understand all the words.

Fatima: ... Cypriot dialect.

Chloe: In the Cypriot dialect because I have never heard a story in the dialect. I heard this one and I liked it. ... With the Standard Modern Greek I understood the story better. With the dialect I understood some words, but I liked it most.

It is worth mentioning that Chloe, the girl from the Greek mainland, where they use only the Standard Modern Greek in their everyday communication, followed well the story and she was feeling confident enough to participate in the discussion trying to use words from the story in the Greek Cypriot dialect.

Also, the following extract (extract 4.15) from my daily journal illustrates pupils’ interest in listening of the tale:

Extract 4.15:

While I was reading the story aloud all pupils of the class were focused and they were listening carefully. They were all very quiet and focused. They seemed to be really fascinated listening to the story in the dialect of the island. It is worth mentioning that they were excited every time they were listening of a word in the dialect which they have heard in another situation either from their parents or their grandparents, such as the word “tsaera” (chair). The GAL girl was really interested in listening of the story; she could recognise many of the Cypriot words that she and her parents use when outside.

(For the original page from the research journal see Appendix 5)

The particular book was also chosen for its high quality engravings. The black and white engravings of the book invited discussion between pupils and gave them the opportunity to read not only the text but the images as well. As has been mentioned earlier, the front cover of the book, the back page, the inside page, the title page and the engravings of the book, all create expectation and enhance prediction in contrast to the existing textbook. The
extracts below highlight few of the interesting conclusions in which pupils came up by ‘reading’ the engravings.

Figure 4.6: The first double spread page of the book *Spanos and the Forty Dragons: A Folk Tale from Cyprus.*

What is following is an extract from group discussion of the engravings of the book based on the first double spread page presented above. Pupils are using a combination of Standard Modern Greek and Greek Cypriot dialect while speaking.
Extract 4.16:

Chloe: There is a sun on the top of the page. It’s because Spanos won the dragons?

Andreas: it’s for the freedom and peace.

Chloe: And joy.

Sophia: Light.

Teacher/Researcher: What do you mean by light?

Chloe: Maybe it was very dark and after Spanos killed the forty dragons ... the light came again.

Teacher/Researcher: What you are saying is really interesting. What else can you tell me about this picture?

Fatima: It is Cyprus.

Chloe: Yes. It shows Cyprus ... that Cyprus ... that ... the dragons surrounded the Cypriots and ... and ... this pigeon brings peace.

Philipppos: The pigeon is upside down.

Andreas: And there many dragons around Cyprus.

Vasilis: I think that ... the dragons are like the Turks. That’s why he put black clouds.

Teacher/Researcher: That’s really interesting. Why do you think the dragons are like the Turks?

Vasilis: The Turks brought dragons.

Andreas: Bad dragons to take Cyprus.

Chloe: And here around Cyprus is black. There is no joy here. The clouds are black and the sun is not here. The tale is strange.

Fatima: They are all black here.

Sophia: Only the pigeon is white here.
What is following is an extract from group discussion for the engravings based on the last double spread page of the book:

**Extract 4.17:**

**Andreas:** This last page is the best.

**Chloe:** It shows the rainbow and the pigeon hanging each other because it’s raining. It’s raining and then after the rain there is a rainbow and the rainbow brings joy.

**Andreas:** At the front page there were the dragons surrounding Cyprus but Spanos won and now pigeons surrounded Cyprus bringing joy and freedom.

**Vasilis:** The pigeons are white and happy ... very happy ... because they won the Turks.

**Fatima:** And the dragons.
The data presented in the following pages deals with 6 case study participants’ engagement in role-play regarding the folk tale and the problem that Spanos had to face with the water. Pupils worked in groups of three. They were given the picture of the book with empty speech bubbles to work out their conversation first written and then orally. I present the complete conversation rather than selected portions of each group of pupils to enable the reader to follow the complex process of meaning-building which the children engaged in. The presentation of the transcript thus reflects a desire to offer an objective account of the children’s conversation and argue for a link between discourse and learning. The following conversations that have been developed are based on a double spread page picture as is shown below. Pupils’ samples of writing while working in groups preparing their dialogue are presented in the Appendix 4 Both in writing and speaking almost all pupils, except for Chloe, the GMT girl from the Greek mainland, were combining Standard Modern Greek and Greek Cypriot dialect.

Figure 4.8: The first double spread page of the tale in the book Spanos and the Forty Dragons: A folk tale from Cyprus.
Conversation 1:

Group 1: (Andreas, Vasilis and Fatima)

The roles they decided to have are: Spanos and two village dwellers (male and female).

Andreas was Spanos. Vasilis was the male village dweller and the GAL girl Fatima was the female village dweller.

Male village dweller: Spane, I am thirsty. I want some water.

Female village dweller: The dragons took the water. My baby is thirsty.

Spanos: Do not be afraid my villagers. I will go to kill the dragons.

Male village dweller: Go now.

Female village dweller: Yes go. My baby is thirsty and I do not have water to give him.

Spanos: I will go to kill the forty dragons. Do not be afraid. I will kill them and I will bring you the water.

Both male and female villagers: Well done, Spane.

Conversation 2:

Group 2: (Chloe, Philippos and Sophia)

The roles they decided to have are: Spanos, a female village dweller and a baby.

Chloe - the girl from the Greek mainland - was the female village dweller. Philippos was Spanos and Sophia (the girl who was struggling with the language) was the baby.

Female village dweller: I want water for my baby. His is thirsty, Spane.

Baby: I am thirsty. I want water.

Spanos: I am going to kill the forty dragons and I will bring water.

Female village dweller: Spane go to bring the water. We are thirsty. Go and kill the forty dragons. We do not have water to fill our pitcher (she used the Cypriot word ‘kouza’ for the pitcher) and my baby is thirsty.

Spanos: I will go to kill the forty dragons and I will bring you the freedom and the water.
The children’s interest in the story and emotional involvement is revealed in the lively dialogue. By taking on a role participants were expected to speak from a given perspective as well to listen respectfully to each other’s ‘views’ and ‘opinions’, and to engage in the dialogue. The children successfully create the characters drawing on information provided by the tale and their understanding of the issues developed in the story. This traditional folk tale and its engravings gave pupils the opportunity to express different understandings of time and place; offering the reader a recognisable Cypriot rural setting, filled with places, clothes and objects from the tradition of Cyprus, presenting the islanders’ way of life during the past century. Firstly, they are stimulating an event which took place in a very different place and time than the one they are living now. Secondly, they are re-enacting this event in a different place and time. However, I noticed that pupils were able to ‘become’ the character of the tale and take on the time and place of Spanos. They were able to do that because they understand the social, cultural and historical context of the characters of the story as they are presented through the interaction between words and image.

At the beginning of this research I had my doubts that the making up of the selected group (one GAL learner along with five GMT speakers) might inhibit GAL’s learning and prevent her Greek language needs being prioritised. Yet, even though the GAL pupil was not feeling confident enough in group discussions, surrounded by her classmates and with the emphasis on enquiry, she started feeling safe enough to speak out. After a ‘silent period’ she became engaged and language arose naturally from the interactions within the group. Her syntax and pronunciation might not always being correct but the meaning of what she wanted to say was explicit. Fatima was so clearly involved in the verbal and visual world of the traditional folk tale and she was feeling so comfortable in the collaborative exploration that sometimes was easy to forget she was learning a new language. In my experience as a teacher this happens naturally when the text and context are challenging and supportive.

It is important though to mention that some of the pedagogy implemented in this research, such as literature circles were not always smooth and effective. At the beginning they were
not providing an advantage in the early stages of reading. Later on though, data from this research suggest that such activities proved to be motivating and important in enhancing and developing children’s oral and written language. At the beginning there were students who were facing a hard time contributing to the conversation (Fatima, Sophia, Vasilis and Philippos) while other students were struggling not to dominate the talk (Andreas and Chloe). There were also times that a number of students (Vasilis, Philippos and Sophia) were inattentive and they constantly were moving off-topic. On the other hand there were students who were mentioning their enjoyment of the variety of the texts used and the conversations followed in the literature circles (Andreas, Chloe and Fatima). Through discussion and retellings of the stories being studied, children were able to draw on ideas and language from the text as starting points for their writing. This particular teaching practice of reading and talking about a story enhance and enrich students’ vocabulary and facilitate reading comprehension, too. Children also learned to pay attention to talk and on their own engagement in it, in a better learning atmosphere.

At the end, despite the differences in language, literacy and culture between the six case study participants, findings of the current study have shown that the selected group is an effective group where every member has collaborated in making sense of the text and in constructing a shared meaning. This supports Vygotsky’s (1978) view that language and thought develop primarily through conversations and social interaction with each other especially when this happens in a supportive interactive environment (in Lightbown and Spada, 2006). Interactionists’ theory also highlights the importance of a supportive interactive environment, the social interaction through and about literature in enhancing language acquisition, as has been discussed in the Literature review chapter.

Further, if we want pupils to feel confident in their identities as learners, we must pay as much attention to content and context as we do to objectives. This is of course true for all pupils but especially those whose communities are viewed as inferior in mainstream society. The GAL girl is potentially the most vulnerable in this group in terms of access to content and context, having had less than a year experience of spoken and written Greek.
4.2. Part Two: Children’s Writing

The second part of this chapter deals with children’s writing and the findings relevant to the third research question:

How far does the use of local literature, *Spanos and the Forty Dragons: A Folk Tale from Cyprus*, in the Cypriot dialect, support and influence the reading and writing development for mother tongue speakers of Greek and those who are learning Greek as an additional language?

Samples of written work were also inspired by the textbook and the European fairy tale *Little Red Riding Hood*. The current study aimed to investigate the influence of text on students’ writing development.

My experience as a teacher has shown me that writing isn’t taught by just saying to pupils ‘write’. According to Frank (1995), writing is taught by offering challenging directions, presenting patterns, and providing endless examples that open doors to original expression. Evidence revealed from this research highlight that within the first stage of writing pupils need good literature books and opportunities for discussion to help them form their ideas for writing. They need to ask questions, find answers and look closely at how the authors are using descriptive language to convey a message, without worrying too much about spelling and punctuation; especially at this first stage of their writing. Throughout the research, I have been reminding children to focus on composition rather than in spelling words they do not know correctly. Once I have pointed out to just focus on writing, I have watched them writing with confidence and their engagement increased. Thus, my analysis is not focused on pupils’ secretarial skills. The analysis explores the quality of participants’ composition and focuses on the changes occurred on their writing throughout the research year. The main focus of the analysis of their compositions is on the way the story formed.

At a first level I focused on the text produced as a whole. I looked in detail at how the narrative was developed, considering mainly the following four components of the narrative: setting, characters, problem and resolution. In addition, I focused on indicators such as the strategies used to develop the story (description, figurative language, and direct
speech), pupils’ creativity in constructing the story as well as the resolution provided in the story by the pupils (complete, creative and interesting) and the length of the story produced. Moreover, looking at the language of the story, I was interested in examining how students used grammar and vocabulary of the target language (Greek) in their compositions.

At the beginning of each writing session the children were asked what kinds of topics they like to write about. Many said they like to write about animals. Some liked to write about their friends and the games they play together. Some of the children liked retelling stories that they knew, such as the European fairy tales *Little Red Riding Hood, The Three Pigs* etc. Few of the children, mainly the boys, mentioned topics such as dragons, space, boats and pirates. Taking into consideration, children’s interests I decided to raise several themes for writing both from the main textbook and other supplementary texts. Hence, the first piece of writing is based on an illustrated story, a sequence of events occur by a bear called Zacharias, *Ένα πρωινό με τον αρκούδο Ζαχαρία* [A morning with Bear Zacharia]. The second piece of writing is a retelling of the European fairy tale *Little Red Riding Hood*. The third and fourth pieces of writing are based on themes raised from the class textbook *Το άρρωστο πουλάκι* [The sick bird] and *Το καράβι που θα ήθελα να έχω* [The boat I would like to have]. The final writing piece is based on the traditional folk tale from Cyprus *Ο Σπανός τζαι οι σαράντα δράτζοι: Κυπριακό παραμύθι* [Spanos and the Forty Dragons: A Tale from Cyprus].

The first sample of writing (end of October 2008) was based on an illustrated story *Ένα πρωινό με τον αρκούδο Ζαχαρία* [A morning with Bear Zacharia], raised after a discussion of what the main characters of the textbook did during summer. When the dialogues and the pictures offered by the textbook are not offering the opportunity for pupils to write, teachers usually use extra activities to enhance pupils’ oral and written language. For that reason, I found this additional illustrated activity to be more structured and consequently more inspired in order to engage students in a discussion and later in producing their compositions. Even though there are plenty of picture books with sequential illustrations that might help for this purpose, they are almost all in English and our state schools in
Cyprus are lacking in such material for language lessons. As for the wordless picture books are not easily available.

The prompt was to encourage pupils to talk about their ordinary day and then based on the series of illustrations given, to write about Bear Zacharia’s day. Early enough I observed the difficulty students had describing orally the actions illustrated in the pictures. None of them mentioned the setting where the story was taking place. Four of them, Andreas, Chloe, Vasilis and Philippos introduced us to all the characters of the story: Bear Zacharias, Zacharias’s mother, his cat, and his friends: the monkey and the rabbit, within one sentence. In their effort to narrate Bear Zacharia’s actions orally all participants used descriptive language within short sentences succeeding consistency in their story. They used good vocabulary with mainly common and standard spelled words. Though, if we look back at participants’ interaction with the wordless picture book, also presenting a sequence of events, contributed to all case study participants’ responses. The narrative speech produced by children offers evidence of oral development and additional language learning. Wordless picture book’s format, simple structure and strong narrative; its high quality illustrations and the context within which the story is presented stimulated discussion around the illustrations and supported oral language development.

When pupils were asked to write their story based on the illustrated story given, they were only describing the character’s actions without adding any other details. However, the compositions of four of the participants – Andreas, Chloe, Vasilis and Philippos – show that they gained confidence and were enthusiastic in writing. Vasilis’s piece of writing seemed to be a little bit weak compared to the writing samples of the others. As the following samples of writing show, pupils were also overusing the same connectives (‘then’, ‘and’) to carry the narrative on.
Andrea’s first writing sample:

Every morning Bear Zacharias wakes up. Then he eats cornflakes then he feeds his cat. Afterwards he is having a shower then he gets dressed. He dressed and he said goodbye to his mother. Then he goes at his monkey friend’s house and then he goes to his rabbit friend’s house. They went to the confectionery. Then they went to the toy-bookshop (paixnidio vivliopolio – he created his own word). Toys and then they went to school.

Chloe’s first writing sample:

Every morning Bear Zacharias wakes up and stretches himself. Then he eats his breakfast, he eats cereals with milk. He gives milk to his cat. Then he does to the bathroom and he brushes his teeth then he washes his face. Then he gets dressed. And then he goes at the monkey’s house and he goes to the rabbit’s house. And then they go to the confectionery. Then they go to the bookshop. And then they go to school.
Vasilis’s first writing sample:

Every morning Bear Zacharias. Then he eats honey and drinks milk and he feeds his cat. Then he goes to the bathroom and he gets wiped. He goes to the room he goes at his friend’s house then he goes at his friend’s house the rabbit. All together they go to buy candies. Then they go to buy toys and books. Then they go to school.

Philippos’s first writing sample:

Every morning Bear Zacharias wakes up, he eats cornflakes. He feeds his cat with milk. He brushes his teeth, wears his cloths and says goodbye to his mother and he goes to the monkey’s house and then to the rabbit’s house. Then they go all together to buy sweets and chocolates. Then they go to school.
Throughout this first session, Sophia and Fatima were not having a positive view of themselves as readers and writers. Their experiences of language and story seemed to be limited. They were merely reporting the actions of the bear, based on the pictures provided. They did not seem to have a strong sense of a reader. Their story is a straightforward report of what happens in the pictures with limited vocabulary. They mainly used common and standard spelled words. Their first sample also highlights their difficulty in coping with several linguistic features of the Greek language such as word spelling, grammar and syntax. Sophia leaves the first sentence of her story unfinished while she moves on to the next picture. In addition, they were also overusing the same connectives (‘then’, ‘and’) to carry the narrative on.

Sophia’s first writing sample:

Every morning Bear Zacharias  
... Then he eats his breakfast with cereals with milk he gives to his cat. He washes his face and he brushes ... puts his uniform says goodbye to his mother goes to his friend house leaves with his friend. The rabbit went with his friend ... and the cat and he bought a book and they went to school.
Fatima’s first writing sample:

Every morning the bear wakes up. Then he drinks milk. He eats honey eats chocolate. He washes his face. He wears his clothes. He says goodbye to his mother. Then they go to buy pencils. Then they go to school.

In general, all six case study participants’ compositions mainly report the actions of the bear completely based on the pictures offered. Their narrative is not enriched with new ideas or personal experiences. The beginning of their stories is short and simple and the plot elements are not fully developed. None of the pupils commented on the events or included a more detailed description of the bear’s actions; they were merely recording them. In addition, none of the children included a character’s physical description, even though they were encouraged by the teacher to do this to enrich their story.

The second sample of writing was based on the European fairy tale Little Red Riding Hood, carried out early in February 2009. The story was read aloud and discussed first in a circle and then in smaller groups; a procedure utilised for all texts to encourage participation. First, students were encouraged to retell the story orally. Then they collected words from the fairy tale which later they used to write a summary. The following extracts from pupils’ compositions highlight pupils’ writing development; examining whether this development is related to the opportunities offered for discussion by the text used and pupils’ social interaction with one another.
All six pieces of writing include both the traditional opening ‘Once upon a time there was …’ and ending ‘They lived happily ever after.’, establishing a strong storytelling voice in the manner of tales. By reading the familiar opening of almost any fairy tale, I noticed clear influence from the tale. Participants’ second writing sample has a strong narrative structure and a satisfying content. As the following extracts reveal, children’s compositions include descriptions of the events and details of characters’ physical description and situations. An improved and detailed writing influenced by the tale read aloud, the increased level of engagement and interaction of pupils with each other and the text. Philippos, Sophia and Fatima integrated dialogue (direct speech) within their narrative skilfully. Even though, they did not use the appropriate marks to separate it from the rest of the description, they managed to weave dialogue into narrative:

**Philippos’s second writing sample:**

Once upon a time there was a little girl named Little Red Riding Hood. One day her grandmother got sick and her mother made her a cake for the grandmother of Little Red Riding Hood. Then Little Red Riding Hood was late. On her way there she met a wolf. And the wolf says to Little Red Riding Hood: Little Red Riding Hood why don’t you go that way and I go this way? The wolf went first at grandmother’s house and the wolf knocked the door and grandmother said to the wolf: come on in. The wolf came in and the wolf put her in the wardrobe. Then Little Red Riding Hood came and knocked the door and the wolf said:

- Come on in Little Red Riding Hood
- Grandmother why do you have such a BIG mouth?
- To better eat you with.

And Little Red Riding Hood shouted the woodcutter and the woodcutter came immediately. And they lived happily ever after.
Η Κόκκινοσκούφητσα

Μια μαμάς σάλει το λευκό της εκριζώνα.
Τιμή της είναι το κορίτσι της.
Μια μικρή παιδιά, χαριτωμένη και χαμογελά.
Ο ένας κόσμος της, ένας παλιός κόσμος.
Ο οίκος της, το χωριό της, το γύρο της.
Το χαμόγελό της, το χαμόγελό της.
Ο κόσμος της, το χορτάρι της.
Ο πάππος της, το μαμάς της.
Ο άνθρωπος της, το κορίτσι της.

Το χωριό είναι περίπλοκος.
Το χωριό είναι γλυκό.
Το χωριό είναι μικρό.
Το χωριό είναι μεγάλο.
Το χωριό είναι παλιό.
Το χωριό είναι νέο.

Μια μαμάς σάλει το λευκό της εκριζώνα.
Τιμή της είναι το κορίτσι της.
Μια μικρή παιδιά, χαριτωμένη και χαμογελά.
Ο ένας κόσμος της, ένας παλιός κόσμος.
Ο οίκος της, το χωριό της, το γύρο της.
Ο χαμόγελό της, το χαμόγελό της.
Ο κόσμος της, το χορτάρι της.
Ο πάππος της, το μαμάς της.
Ο άνθρωπος της, το κορίτσι της.

Και την μαμά της με τη γυναίκα της.
Sophia’s second writing sample:

Once upon a time there was Little Red Riding Hood at the mountains. Her mother made her the cake to take her the cake and she stopped in the forest and picking flowers. She saw the wolf and she got scared and the wolf went first at her grandmother’s house. And Little Red Riding Hood came and asked the wolf: Grandmother why do you have such a BIG mouth? To eat you. Little Red Riding Hood then shouted and the woodcutter came. And they ate and they ate all together and they lived happily ever after
Fatima’s second writing sample:

Once upon a time there was Little Red Riding Hood. They called her like this because she was wearing a red cap. Her mother made a cake and she gave it to her to take it to her grandmother but she forgot that her mother told her not to talk to anyone. At the forest was the wolf and he saw Little Red Riding Hood and the wolf said: where are you going? I am going to my grandmother’s house. He ate the grandmother, Little Red Riding Hood came and she did AA. The woodcutter came and the wolf left and they lived happily ever after.
The compositions above and those that are presented below indicate that all participants managed to link the events together in a cohesive way by offering a satisfying content, too. Their writing here is strong and confident. All the events of the tale are correctly sequenced. Throughout their pieces of writing one can see that their stories contain many words and phrases remembered directly from the text indicating how all case study participants engaged with the events in the tale. For instance, Philippos and Sophia wrote:

‘On her way there she met a wolf. And the wolf says to Little Red Riding Hood: Little Red Riding Hood why don’t you go that way and I go this way?’ (Philippos)

‘Grandmother, why do you have such a BIG mouth?’ (Philippos and Sophia)

However, only the GAL pupil, Fatima, included the moral of the tale ‘...she forgot that her mother told her not to talk to anyone’, in her sample of writing.

The extracts below underline that pupils’ narrative have a clear direction. They give us a description of the protagonist and the setting, introduce the situation, make up suspense by citing the events with details, and marking the conclusion. Vasilis seems to be aware of the reader and sets the scene carefully, using literary vocabulary ‘a wolf rushed from a bush’ and ‘Little Red Riding Hood was gathering and gathering’.

**Vasilis’s second writing sample:**

Once upon a time there was Little Red Riding Hood. One day her grandmother ... (incomplete sentence). She went to the forest to find her. Then a wolf rushed from a bush and he said to her look these flowers. Little Red Riding Hood was gathering and gathering and then the wolf went first in grandmother’s house, he ate her. When Little Red Riding Hood arrived at her grandmother’s house too then the wolf worn her grandmother’s clothes and he said to Little Red Riding Hood I am your grandmother but Little Red Riding Hood noticed that it was the wolf and she shouted for help. Then the woodcutter came. The wolf got scared and he left and they ate the cake. And at the end they lived happily ever after.
Η Κοκκινοσκουφίτσα

Μία φορά έγινε μια κυρά
Ταφήσει η Κοκκινοσκουφίτσα
Και η κυρά πήγε να κλείσει την

όπως ο ζωγράφος την έψηξε

Αποκάλυψε τη ζέστη
και το τέλος η χιονιά
και η κυρά την έχει και στην

Ελιά και την

Το μεγάλο ξύλο από στον και

Η Κοκκινοσκουφίτσα

ήταν τόσο ζωγράφισα

Το μεγάλο ξύλο έφερε με την

Η Κοκκινοσκουφίτσα

ήταν τόσο ζωγράφισα

Το μεγάλο ξύλο έφερε με την

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Η Κοκκινοσκουφίτσα

ήταν τόσο ζωγράφισα

Το μεγάλο ξύλο έφερε με την

Η Κοκκινοσκουφίτσα

ήταν τόσο ζωγράφισα
Andreas’s second writing sample:

Once upon a time there was a little girl named Little Red Riding Hood because she was wearing a red cap and a red coat. One day her grandmother got sick and her mother ... (skipped this part and continued) on her way there she met a wolf. The wolf told her to go from but that wolf followed the shortest way. But the wolf arrived first and he ate her and then he ate the Little Red Riding Hood. And the Little Red Riding Hood saw the wolf and then the woodcutter came with an axe and then the wolf run away. And they lived happily ever after.
Chloe’s second writing sample:

Once upon a time there was Little Red Riding Hood living in her house. One day her grandmother got sick and Little Red Riding Hood made a cake for her to take it to her grandmother. She put the cake in a small basket. In the forest to pick flowers for her grandmother. Then the wolf came and Little Red Riding Hood was scared. Then the wolf went first at grandmother’s house and grandmother asked who it is. Little Red Riding Hood. But was the wolf and he put grandmother in the wardrobe. Little Red Riding Hood came and she saw the wolf in the bed and she screamed. The woodcutter came to save her. The wolf left. And they lived happily ever after.
Pupils’ compositions confirm what has been discussed in chapter 2 (Literature Review) regarding the link between what participants hear and read and what they write. Reading aloud the tale seems to have engaged pupils with the text and according to Barrs and Cork (2001) such readings enable children to attend more closely to the language of the text. As has been argued in chapter 2, Barrs (1992) maintains that when children hear stories, they do not simply listen to what happens, but store up the rhythms and cadence of the language, which they draw on their own stories (in Barrs and Cork 2001: 173).

Findings of the current research also underline that hearing the text read aloud gave students the opportunity to shape their compositions more confidently and to use a wider vocabulary. Pupils, following the same procedure of introducing each text, were also hearing texts from the main textbook read aloud but since those texts – mainly dialogues - were not as ‘strong’ as the selected tale, could not provide pupils with structural ideas for their writing. This is more obvious in their last writing sample, discussed later, which was based on a traditional folk tale.

The third sample of writing carried out early in March 2009 and was based on two pictures offered by the class textbook asking pupils to create a story. The pictures below were part of a double spread page included in the second part of the textbook. At first pupils had to engage with a text and its accompanied picture where the main characters of the book were sitting in front of a fireplace drinking a cup of hot tea and discussing about a key they found. The text in the textbook is still consisted of small conversations with simple sentences, where no literary pattern is being developed. Since pupils had been exposed to a variety of texts supplementary to the existing textbook, whose structure and format contributed to the children’s engagement in dialogic interactions and development of language learning skills, the text in the textbook is still not challenging enough to support young readers. Further, the picture accompanying the passage provides only the necessary information.

The pictures below (figure 4.9) are presented isolated in the next page and it seems that they do not have any connection with the text cited earlier in the textbook. The first picture is illustrating a bird being alone outside the window while it is snowing. The second picture
shows the bird lying in a small bed surrounded by a cat, a parrot and a dog. The cat is offering a cup of hot tea to the bird. The dog, named Molivios, (a character presented throughout the class textbook) is bringing a slipper and the parrot is covering the bird with a blanket.

Figure 4.9: Pictures from the first part of the class textbook

Even though this third piece of narrative produced a month later than the second one based on the fairy tale, pupils’ writing showed low amount of development. Participants were asked to point out any details from the pictures, to use their imagination to fill in any gaps in the pictures, to describe the characters and refer to their actions with as many details as possible. However, pupils did not comment on the events but merely recorded them. The extracts presented below give us an idea of children’s minimal development of the characters (bird, parrot, cat, dog) and of setting. In spite of the fact that few of the pupils managed to integrate a small dialogue within an earlier piece of narrative, with this third piece pupils did not responded as enthusiastically as with the fairy tale.
Philippos’s third writing sample:

One day there was a bird knocking the window. The parrot and the cat saw the bird and brought it into the house. The parrot brought him a warm blanket. The cat offered him a hot tea, Molivios brought a slipper and got well.

Sophia’s third writing sample:

It was a winter day and the bird knocked the window and the cat and the parrot opened him. The parrot brought a blanket. The cat brought some tea. Molivios brought a slipper. And the bird woke up and flew away.
Fatima’s third writing sample:

Once upon a time it was winter, knocked the window and the cat opened him. And the bird was sick. The cat brought him some hot tea. The parrot brought him a blanket and Molivios brought him a blanket and then he got well and flew away.

The plot could have been more developed including more detailed description of the events and details of the characters’ situations. There is no indication of the characters’ feelings nor any suggestion that the sick bird might be afraid or lonely outside in the snow. Even though children were asked to use their imagination to fill in the two pictures with more details, their compositions remained short without much use of colourful language. Yet, as the extracts below underline, three of the participants used adjectives to describe the blanket, the tea, the slipper and the bed; ‘warm blanket’, ‘hot tea’, ‘red slipper’, ‘small bed’.
Andreas’s third writing sample:

It was a winter day and a small bird was knocking on a window and suddenly the window opened and the parrot, the cat and Molivios took him in a small bed. The parrot took a winter blanket and covered the bird, the cat brought a cup of tea and Molivios was running to bring a slipper. As soon as the bird drank the tea, woke up and they lived happily ever after.

Chloe’s third writing sample:

There were these three friends and they are sitting close to the fireplace. There someone knocked the window and they opened the curtain and they saw a small bird. They welcomed it with great pleasure. But the bird was a little bit sick and the parrot covered it and Molivios brought a red slipper. Then after a few days left.
Vasilis’s third writing sample:

There was a sick bird knocking the window and then the parrot and the cat and Molivios opened. The cat brought him a hot tea and Molivios a red slipper and the parrot covered him with a warm blanket. The bird thanked them and flew away.

The compositions above show that all six case study participants seem to be struggling with the ending. No sooner they begin their story they end it leaving the reader with many unanswered questions such as ‘from where did this bird come from’, ‘how was feeling’, ‘what did the bird say’, etc.

Analysis of the data gathered and discussed so far, with reference to the wordless picture book and the fairy tale, provide evidence that the combination of good literary texts and interaction with them and with one another gave both GMT and GAL pupils the opportunity to engage actively and develop oral and written language. On the other hand, findings revealed that pictures without a specific framework, like the ones offered by the textbook are not challenging enough to inspire pupils develop as writers. It was expected that since pupils are well in the textbook, they would have been able to extend their vocabulary and make use of similes and adjectives to enrich their stories. However, their
compositions did not show any significant progress, in contrast to their samples produced based on the fairy tale and on the traditional folk tale, discussed later in this chapter. The two pictures offered by the textbook for inspiring writing did not give the opportunity to young learners to discover the role of the picture in narrative speech.

The fourth sample of writing was based on a text offered by the textbook early in May 2009. The book was offering students a short text with the title ‘Boats’ and the picture below. The text makes reference to a variety of boats that the uncle of one of the main characters of the textbook has collected from his trips; small and big boats, boats with sails, boats with funnels, ocean liners, etc. Then the text gives emphasis on the description of one of his favourite boats; a wooden boat that an old sailor from Skopelos, an island of Greece, made it. The text is non-fiction. The main aim of the text is to encourage pupils to search for information regarding the several kinds of boats. The text uses more verbs instead of adjectives, which might have helped pupils develop their compositions (For the original text from the class textbook see Appendix 3).

Figure 4.10: Picture from the second part of the class textbook
Pupils were given 10 minutes to read the text and ask questions. Then they gathered in a circle where they discussed the content of the text and the picture accompanying it. Students were also encouraged to touch upon this topic and share with the others any personal experiences. From pupils’ discussion and brainstorming a variety of words collected which they could use later in their compositions. It’s worth mentioning that pupils mentioned more adjectives than those offered by the text which they used in their compositions describing the boat they would like to have. Pupils also referred to the parts of a boat, even though the text in the textbook does not offer this information.

The narrative structure of this fourth composition is stronger than the third one, also based on the main textbook. I believe the fact that at least pupils have to deal with a text within a context, even though that is non-fiction, helped them engage more actively in a discussion and develop more ideas. Also the topic motivated pupils more than the last one discussed earlier and thus they produced more oral and written language. The content is also much more satisfying in pupils’ fourth sample of writing, including a detailed description of the boat they would like to have, but not as enriched as expected, due to the fact that we are almost at the end of the school year. Their writing is much more improved. The total number of words in all writing samples produced based on this text is slightly higher than in their earlier sample. Still, the text provided did not give the opportunity to pupils to expand their imagination and consequently their story. They mainly used information and copied words from the text. On the other hand the circle discussion helped enrich their vocabulary. They came up with words that they later used in their writing samples; words such as ‘bow’, ‘stern’, ‘sails’, ‘oars’, ‘funnel’, ‘anchor’, ‘deck’, ‘captain’, ‘sailors’, etc.

As the following extracts highlight pupils wrote logically sequenced sentences without though challenging themselves to write with a more literary way. Thus, they followed the informative style of writing offered by the text in the textbook. They also did not draw on any personal experiences. The picture provided operated more informative than inspiring.
Andreas’s fourth writing sample:

I would like to have a cruise ship. My ship will be called ‘Marios’ and it will have a yellow colour. With my ship I will be going to many islands. I will do many trips. My ship will have bow and stern. My ship will have sails and the sailors will be holding the oars. I will be the captain and my sailors my assistants. I will be going to several countries. My cruise ship will have a casino, rooms, bouzoukia (a Greek word referring to a place where they play music and people dance) and many other things. I would like to have such a boat so much!

Chloe’s fourth writing sample:

I would like to have a cruise ship. My ship will be called ‘Virtue’ and it will have a white colour. With my ship I will be going to many islands. I will be doing many trips. My cruise ship will have an engine and it will be going too fast and smoke will be coming out of the funnels. I will be the captain and I will have many sailors. In my cruise ship there will be a cafeteria, cantina, casino, toilets, swimming pool, yard... Aa! One day I would like this to become true.
Vasilis’s fourth writing sample:

I would like to have a pirate ship. My ship will be called ‘Tiger’. It will have red colour. With my ship I will be going to many islands. I will do many trips. My ship will have bow and stern, sails and engine. It will have a funnel and an anchor. I will be the captain. With my pirate ship I will be finding treasures.

Philippos’s fourth writing sample:

I would like to have a pirate ship. My ship will be called ‘Taurus’. It will have black colour. My ship will have two sails and it will be opening from the back. From the back a boat will be coming out. With my pirate ship I will be finding many treasures and I will open them and I will see the gold. I will be the captain and my pirates will be helping me. I would like to have a pirate ship so much. (Philippos)
Sophia and Fatima produced almost the same story. Their stories mainly read like a list of several sentences composed based on words collected on the board during brainstorming. Both the text from the class textbook and the picture did not give enough background and plot to motivate and encourage pupils to compose a more colourful story.

Sophia’s fourth writing sample:

I would like to have a small boat. My boat will be called ‘Jack’ and it will have brown colour. With my boat I will be going to many islands. I will do many trips. It will have oars and sails and I will be going for fishing. I would like to have a small boat.

Fatima’s fourth writing sample:

I would like to have a small boat. My boat will be called ‘Zack’ and it will have black colour. With my boat I will be going to many islands. I will be doing many trips. My boat will have oars and I will go to the sea for fishing. I would like to have a boat.
The data collected from the third and fourth writing samples, both based on the class textbook, do not reflect any excitement for this way of learning and subsequently, of writing. All case study pupils managed to write a considerate number of logically sequence sentences but their imagination was not revealed. In my journal I recorded that those pupils who were struggling with the language, such as Sophia and the additional language learner, Fatima, did not willingly begun writing on their own and when they did they were happy to write a few lines just to get finished. However, the writing triggered by the text and picture based on boats is more lively than the one based on the pictures of the sick bird. Except from the weaker pupils, Sophia and Fatima, I believe that pupils are using what they have built on from the richer, supplementary, texts used so far. It looks as if richer stimulus is even more significant for strugglers and GAL pupils.

By the end of May 2009 pupils produced another piece of written narrative based on the traditional folk tale Spanos and the Forty Dragons: A Folk Tale from Cyprus. The story was first introduced in April 2009 and, as has been mentioned earlier, pupils had the opportunity to work with this book for 7 literacy hours along with texts from the class textbook. Throughout these sessions pupils explored the language of the folk tale by creating the characters through role-play in small groups and then by being encouraged to produce independently a draft based on the traditional folk tale in which they could use either the Standard Modern Greek language or the Cypriot dialect. By using this folk tale I wanted to explore the potential that might exists within this kind of text to inspire and motivate first grade students to become engaged in writing tasks and develop their writing skills.

At first students collected words from the tale which they later used to write their story. Evidence from this final sample of writing underlines the impact of the folk tale in enabling pupils not only to develop a stronger voice but to confidently retell it in a voice which is close to the voice of the original text. Right from the traditional opening, all six case study pupils established a strong storytelling voice:

‘One day, many years ago, there lived a boy with not any moustache on his face. That boy was called Spanos.’ (Philippos)
‘Once upon a time there lived Spanos. Spanos was saying that he was very brave. One day his fellow villagers said that he must kill the forty dragons because they have cut off the water of the village.’ (Vasilis)

In addition, pupils seem to be aware of how to construct a story clearly with beginning, middle and end, and how to develop a narrative idea establishing a setting, introducing magical objects and exploring their consequences. All writing samples include descriptions of the events, a character’s physical description and details of the character’s situations. They have also conveyed the relationship between the main hero and the villagers as well as the relationship between Spanos and the dragons. Here are the stories of Philippos and Fatima, a GMT and a GAL pupil:

Philippos’s fifth writing sample:

One day many years ago there was a boy who could not grow a moustache. This boy was called Spanos. His fellow villagers said to him to go and kill the forty dragons because they have cut off the water which was coming to their village. Spanos, on his way there came across the leader of the dragons. Spanos said to the leader: ‘Shall we put two bets?’ ‘Yes’, said the dragon. Spanos said to the dragon to sit and puff of smoke and the dragon said he will try. The dragon lost and Spanos won. Spanos picked a stone, squeezed it and wring out its juices. The he killed the boar and at the end the dragons were beating him but Spanos did not die. At the end Spanos killed all the dragons and he had poured over them boiling-hot oil. Then Spanos ran with his hands opened (influenced by the illustration – not mentioned in the text). The water had already reached the village and all the villagers shouted out: BRAVO!!!
Fatima’s fifth writing sample:

One day many years ago there was Spanos and the forty dragons. Spanos was saying that he is brave and his fellow villagers said to him to go and kill the dragons. Spanos wears breeches and shirt and waistcoat and boots. Spanos did many tricks. He said to the dragon to pick a stone and wring out its juices. The dragon did not manage to do it and Spanos won. Then he went and he killed the boars. He killed the largest boar and then the dragons came and they took the boar and they took it to the castle and Spanos went with them. The dragons were afraid of Spanos because he was strong and he will kill the dragons. He said to the dragons to take some oil and boil it and during the evening he took the oil and poured it over the dragons and the dragons died and the water went back to the village and the villagers were very happy.
Using a traditional folk tale in a first grade classroom with Greek mother tongue and Greek additional language learners convinced me of the benefits of utilising this medium for language learning. Through examining a folk tale from a cultural perspective, folkloric aspects such as food traditions, daily customs, setting, were explored. Chloe, Sophia and Fatima mention in their pieces of writing the traditional clothes that Spanos wears: ‘Spanos wears breeches, shirt, waistcoat, and boots’. Folktales can also be used as a code to discuss culturally or historically topics such as relationships or a war. Through the engravings of the book they were able explore the symbolism between the dragons and the Turkish invasion as well as the pigeons and the freedom that will come soon to the island:

‘Spanos let the water ran again free back to the village. And then the villagers called out to him: Hurrah! Well done Spanos. At the end the pigeons came and they brought the freedom. Just like the dragons left in this way the Turks will also leave from our Cyprus’. (Andreas)

‘Spanos killed the dragons and he led the water ran again free back to the village. The dragons were the Turks who invaded Cyprus’. (Vasilis)
Using folktales in teaching reading helps students to feel more connected to their own cultural heritage and the heritage of others while developing their reading interests (Lutz, 1986). Also, a big advantage of using a folk tale is that it has a predictable structure that assists pupils in comprehending the details of the story. As a result, students can instinctively predict story elements. Since there is a villain (the dragons) there will be a hero (Spanos). If there is a problem, there will be a solution. Pupils’ written narratives cited above indicate that all case study participants managed the traditional form very well. There are no wasted words. They realised that this kind of story is about plot. The main character and his actions are presented with detailed descriptions as the following stories by Andreas and Chloe illustrate:

**Andreas’s fifth writing sample:**

Once upon a time there was a boy called Spanos. One day his fellow villagers said to him that the forty dragons have taken the water from their village and they took it to water their gardens. Spanos took some ashes and a white cheese. Then, while he was going to the castle where the dragons were living he saw a dragon in front of him: “Wherever you try and hide, I’ll eat you.” Spanos said to the dragon that he will challenge him with two bets. “Ok”, said the dragon. Can you sit and give out a puff of smoke? “Let me try”, said the dragon. The dragon sat down but no smoke came out. Spanos sat down and smoke came out. Spanos did lots of such tricks, and in this way he killed all forty dragons. And the water began flowing towards the village. And the villagers shouted out: “Bravo, Spanos”. At the end the pigeons came and they brought freedom. Likewise dragons left in the same way Turks will leave from our Cyprus.
Chloe’s fifth writing sample:

Once upon a time many years ago there was Spanos. Spanos was brave, strong and fearless. Spanos was wearing breeches, shirt, waistcoat and boots. One day his fellow villagers said to Spanos: ‘go to kill the forty dragons’. Spanos came across a dragon. The dragon said: wherever you go I will eat you. Shall we put a bet? And he said yes. Can you sit down and give out a puff of smoke? I will try. He sat down but no smoke came out. Spanos killed the largest boar and the dragons were taken over by fear. The dragons wanted to kill Spanos. But Spanos tricked them again. Spanos killed all the dragons with boiling-hot oil. And the water began flowing towards the village. And all the villagers were saying: Bravo, Spanos!
Findings reveal that the folk tale enabled children to express their ideas with confidence, to draw conclusions and evidence from the text to support them. They were also able to learn how to organise ideas and to understand how they are connected to each other. Both the folk tale and the fairy tale, mentioned earlier, provided pupils with meaningful tasks in which they had the opportunity to use the target language. Last but not least, the six case study participants were able to understand not only what was directly stated but that which was implied, especially by the engravings of the book.

All case study participants’ narratives have a clear direction, although there is no paragraphing. In the opening a couple of sentences give us a description of the setting and introducing the character indicating his physical condition and his situation:

‘Once upon a time there was a boy called Spanos. One day his fellow villagers said to him that the forty dragons have taken the water from their village...’ (Andreas)
‘Once upon a time many years ago there was Spanos. Spanos was brave, strong and fearless. Spanos was wearing breeches, shirt, waistcoat and boots’. (Chloe)

‘Once upon a time there was Spanos. Spanos was saying that he is brave. One day his fellow villagers said to Spanos to go and kill the forty dragons because they have cut off the water’. (Vasilis)

‘One day many years ago there was a boy who could not grow a moustache. This boy was called Spanos. His fellow villagers said to him to go and kill the forty dragons because they have cut off the water which was coming to their village’. (Philippou)

‘Once upon a time there was Spanos. Spanos wears breeches, shirt, waistcoat, and boots’. (Sophia)

‘One day many years ago there was Spanos and the forty dragons. Spanos was saying that he is brave and his fellow villagers said to him to go and kill the dragons. Spanos wears breeches and shirt and waistcoat and boots’. (Fatima)

Andreas, Chloe and Philippou managed to incorporate a dialogue in their narrative successfully in an effort to highlight the moment when Spanos met the leader of the dragons. In this way they consciously imitate the narrative style and language of the tale:

‘Then, while he was going to the castle where the dragons were living he saw a dragon in front of him: “Wherever you try and hide, I’ll eat you.” Spanos said to the dragon that he will challenge him with two bets. “Ok”, said the dragon. Can you sit and give out a puff of smoke? “Let me try”, said the dragon’. (Andreas)

‘Spanos came across a dragon. The dragon said: “wherever you go I will eat you”. “Shall we put a bet?” And he said yes. “Can you sit down and give out a puff of smoke?” I will try’. (Chloe)

‘Spanos, on his way there came across the leader of the dragons. Spanos said to the leader: “Shall we put two bets?” “Yes”, said the dragon. Spanos said to the dragon to sit and puff of smoke and the dragon said he will try’. (Philippou)
Fatima had little spoken Greek when she first arrived at school. Being an inexperienced reader and writer in the Greek language, her participation and the work she produced throughout the case study indicate that she made rapid progress both orally and in writing. During the year this research enabled me to observe the effects of reading good literature on this GAL pupil’s reading and writing. Even though Fatima was not yet an experienced reader and writer in the Greek language, her fifth sample of writing demonstrates her narrative competence and her ability to introduce the character and to sequence events as they happened in the folk tale. Being new to Greek, Fatima overuses the same connective ‘and’ to carry the narrative on. She also makes full use of the language of everyday conversation, the Cypriot dialect, which makes her feel more comfortable in retelling her story.

Throughout the research year, Fatima and Sophia were often struggling with the basic elements of composition and their stories used limited vocabulary. The folk tale though enabled both girls to shape their narratives more confidently and to use a wider vocabulary. In their written narrative both girls were able to complete their story and sequence the events with a clear beginning, middle and end. All pupils were fascinated by the tricks that Spanos utilised to deceive the dragons which they described with more details, even though they were mainly using some book language to move the events on. Both girls’ stories contain many words and phrases remembered directly from the text:

‘He said to the dragon to pick a stone and wring out its juices’. (Fatima),

‘He placed a gourd with wine in his bed and the dragons were beating Spanos and the wine seeped onto the floor’. (Sophia)

Likewise, the narratives produced by the rest of the participants included many words and phrases, and sometimes a whole dialogue, remembered directly from the text:

‘... while he was going to the castle where the dragons were living he saw a dragon in front of him: “Wherever you try and hide, I’ll eat you.” Spanos said to the dragon that he will challenge him with two bets’. (Andreas)

Once upon a time there was Spanos. Spanos was saying that he is brave. One day his fellow villagers said to Spanos to go and kill the forty dragons
because they have cut off the water. Spanos went and he came across the first dragon and challenged him with two bets’. (Vasilis)

‘The water had already reached the village and all the villagers shouted out: “BRAVO!!”’. (Philippos)

Multiple readings of the folk tale, reading aloud and discussions in a literature circle seemed to have enabled all six case study participants to remember the language of the story and store it up for their writing. The most interesting part of their compositions and of their oral conversations is the amount of detail that all pupils remembered from the text and the illustrations. The traditional folk tale was an excellent support in developing reading and writing skills. The final piece of writing clearly illustrates all six case study participants’ growth and development as writers and the confidence they have acquired in constructing narrative. They carried the story along confidently, creating a clear structure with a beginning, middle and end, building up suspense, and marking the conclusion. Also, the engravings used within the folk tale, with plenty of detail, created great opportunities for making predictions and inferences as well as coming up with the symbolism of dragons and pigeons. It’s worth mentioning that all pupils were using a combination of Standard Modern Greek and Greek Cypriot dialect when writing.

Vasilis’s fifth writing sample:
Sophia’s fifth writing sample:

The texts used in this research, were sometimes functioned as a model for young learners to imitate and at other times as a basis to generate new ideas. Findings revealed what Barrs and Cork (2001) point out, that the selected texts not only provided a store of ideas and language but also served as supportive narrative structures. Children were able to draw on the tone and style of a story in composing their own texts. They built on the frameworks stories provided, sometimes retelling the events from a different viewpoint, writing a completely new version of a story, or even taking the story further. According to Barrs and Cork (2001: 60) “when children have been led to discuss the language of books, this sometimes influenced what they wrote”.

Conclusion

Throughout this empirical research I realised that it does not take a great deal of time for an observer to gain a sense of the vast diversity of events which take place in a typical primary classroom. However, when few of the pupils of the class have different language and cultural background, the situation becomes a little bit more complex. My research took as its starting point the relationship of text in the development of orality and literacy in first grade pupils in the Republic of Cyprus, and the contribution of supplementary texts in supporting oral language development and influencing the reading and writing of both GMT and GAL learners.

Evidence demonstrates that most of first grade students experienced difficulties in comprehending and responding to the narrative texts provided by the main class textbook. Also, lack of interesting material provided by the class textbook did not motivate pupils to engage actively in discussions and writing. Then again, reading and retelling fairy tales and other traditional folk tales, pupils’ motivation in reading and interaction with the text increased. Such stories kept young learners’ constant interest due to their introduction and essential story features such as conflict, climax and resolution. Retelling has been also found to significantly having improved story comprehension, sense of story structure and oral language skills. Analysing data from children’s conversations within literature circle discussions and group work, I was surprised and highly impressed by the ways in which the children demonstrate constant participation in the activities they are engaged in, and their willingness to engage in oral activities improving their narrative speech. The development of their narrative speech during the year has offered ample evidence of their growing ability to speak in the target language with confidence.

My teaching experience has revealed to me that writing is also complex for young children and especially for additional language learners. Evidence from this research has shown that we should help young learners understand that writing has real purpose first and then provide them with opportunities to express themselves on paper, without feeling too constrained correcting spelling mistakes. Additionally, evidence from the use of the textbook and the use of existing children’s literature revealed significant differences in
students’ engagement and learning outcomes. Imaginations were sparked through the illustrations of the books and discussions were developed based on the content of the texts. Pupils saw events, details and actions in the illustrations and the text of the books utilised which transferred into their writing. Findings have also shown that such texts might be considered one of the possible supplementary teaching materials for Greek additional language learners. A lot of the texts included in the main text book, which were created mainly for pedagogical reasons, lack the personal addressing to young learners. In contrast, good stories provide a study of universal values and needs and capture students’ interest and challenge them to explore new roads of meaning (Cameron 2001).
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

Following the analysis of data and the presentation of the findings, this final chapter concludes the thesis by providing a discussion of the outcomes of the research. The outcomes are discussed in relation to the research questions and by bringing together the main elements from the previous chapters. The chapter raises classroom and policy implications for primary and additional language teachers. Discussion in this section provides valuable information for primary school teachers and for those teachers who are working with additional language learners in a mainstream classroom. Since diversity grows within Greek Cypriot schools (see Chapter 1), evidence emerged from this research, indicate that Greek additional language learners are likely to greatly benefit from share reading and dialogic interaction with a text and with one another, within a literature circle discussion. The chapter also looks at the limitations of the research and concludes with a summary of the changes that took place in children’s oral and written language when studying quality children’s literature texts, supplementary to the existing textbook, and offers insights into how to use such texts.

5.1. Classroom and policy implications

The present case study has offered an additional way of enhancing oral development and promoting additional language learning in the context of Cyprus, by considering the use of children’s literature, including local authored in the Greek Cypriot dialect, in first grade classes. Even though, the inquiry of this bounded case study cannot draw any generalisations, I do believe that this study may offer significant insights into how to use such texts as well as suggesting important implications for practice for elementary education in the context of Cyprus.

Considering the most appropriate children’s literature books in conjunction with the most effective pedagogical approaches to the use of literature in enhancing and promoting language and literacy development for first grade GMT and GAL students, was not an easy task. By the end of the research though, the evidence gathered offers significant data of
what was involved in children’s learning process and of what happens when students are interacting with good literature texts in a natural classroom setting. It also offered evidence of how these experiences can form part of the language and literacy curriculum.

My fourteen years of teaching experience in various school settings and environments with students with diverse cultural and linguistic background, generated a great concern about finding ways to increase students’ pleasure and engagement in reading and talking about books, as well as to explore the relationship between children’s reading of literature and their oral and written development. At the time of writing there is no relevant educational material to be provided to primary educators for teaching additional language students and for supporting this range of diverse learners within a mainstream classroom, the supplementary texts used served as models for promoting and enhancing oral and written language development.

I have also noticed that few teachers, from those that I have worked with, use literature and literary texts regularly in their language classrooms. Teachers used to using mainly a textbook, find it difficult and sometimes a time-consuming procedure to plan lessons with new material. This has also been one of the main concerns of teachers when being asked to apply the new language and literacy curriculum. The teachers have been voicing some concerns regarding the absence of appropriate teaching material in order to achieve the goals of the New Literacy Curriculum (2010), and the time needed for planning lessons with new material.

Common to all sessions was the role of the text as a source and as an inspiration for retelling and writing, in conjunction with the pedagogy implemented. Data analysis offered evidence of students’ improvement in oral and written language and literacy, and enabled me to relate some of these improvements to the texts that have been studied supplementary to the main textbook. Unfortunately, this did not significantly happen with the existing class textbook. On many occasions the text did not motivate children, and talk did not flow; evidence of limited interaction or superficial conversation sometimes dominated by one or two individuals, mainly Greek mother tongue speakers with average knowledge and rich vocabulary. The existing textbook, even though it has been designed and constructed to
support young readers to learn and develop oral and written language, has no plot and conflict in its texts and characters to arouse curiosity and provoke interest. The textbook’s short dialogues, simple sentences and repetition of key words such as nouns and verbs, are considered motivating and helping young readers to engage and read easily. However, the textbook lacks literary features and implies a reader with little imagination; elements that could made the textbook more sufficient for the demands of a year one pupils, both GMT and GAL. Additionally, as has been discussed in a previous chapter, the existing language textbooks are mainly based on the Greek context where they are published, referring to places, context and everyday life in Greece, and consequently do not address the actual needs of Cypriot students.

Evidence from this research shows that quality children’s books could be an excellent source of learning and motivation. Exposure to rich language quality children’s books for reading and discussion had a direct impact on children’s oral and written language and literacy development. Due to their authentic character, they worked as a model for both GMT and GAL young learners, linguistically, structurally and in terms of content. The well-developed story line with the coherent text, the memorable language, the patterns and tunes that characterise the supplementary literary texts used for the purpose of this research proved to be effective in introducing new vocabulary and concept development, increasing comprehension and narrative ability for both GMT and GAL pupils. Using such literary texts in an elementary class served for creating a highly motivating, enjoyable and lively lesson, for both GMT and GAL pupils, and served as an excellent prompt for oral and written work.

The wordless picture book, the well-known fairy tale and the traditional folk tale employed in this research in order to answer the three main research questions, ensured that students had the opportunity to work with quality illustrations, good content and fine ideas, and with many levels of understanding. Such literary texts provide an excellent resource by which teachers can design interesting and motivating lessons. The selected wordless picture book encouraged children to employ visual literacy skills to draw inferences from what is pictured, respond to the quality of pictures and note the details in them, creating greater
motivation than ‘static’ pictures in the class textbook. It seemed to be able to engaged both GMT and GAL learners, and be shared and enjoyed by children at many different stages of reading. The wordless picture book as a genre supports learners who are not yet decoding print, and can build their confidence as readers and writers (Jalongo et al., 2002: 168).

All of the case study participants found the book easy to ‘read’ and the illustrations easy to follow. The absence of words allowed both the additional language learner and Greek mother tongue speakers who were struggling with the language to interact with the book without being intimidated by words they might not be able to read. As children were exploring the selected book and linking together the images, a story was formed that had a logical beginning, progression and end, demonstrating an understanding of sequence. Another important factor is that the book gave the opportunity to different individuals ‘reading’ the same book to construct different narratives using their imagination and think for themselves to create their stories and share them with one another. Such books could be viewed as stimulating pedagogic material more appropriate than the textbooks already used in first grade classrooms in elementary state schools in Cyprus; able to function across a variety of developmental levels.

As has been discussed in the literature review (see Chapter 2) folk and fairy tales were also used in education as a central object for educational improvement dealing with the role of creativity and imagination in the learning process, but rarely in elementary schools in Cyprus. More recently, such literary texts were put in the service of multicultural education and the acquisition of language skills by second or additional language learners. Evidence revealed from this research support the benefits of using folk and fairy tales with children in classrooms in order to enhance and develop language and literacy skills. The analysis of the traditional folk tale showed that when children heard the story and then retold it, their retelling followed a pattern, with a set of elements common to all other stories; setting, characters, problem or plot, resolution and theme. Using these elements in assessing students’ story writing development has proven to be very helpful, especially in evaluating what the GAL student has retained during literature circle discussions and storytelling time. This research agrees with many other researchers who have found that these elements of
folk and fairy tales being used in literacy sessions significantly had positive effects and improved low-performing students’ responses in oral and written activities (see Chapter 2: Literature Review).

Folk and fairy tales’ language is rich in imagery, clear and makes sense. The story moves purposefully and clearly, and the illustrations in each of these books are inspiring. The story is also strong and exciting holding children’s interest in spite of not understanding all the language used. The story arouses their curiosity and helps them respond positively to the target culture, language and language learning. As Hişmanoğlu (2005: 65) claims “literature is not only a tool for developing the written and oral skills of the students in the target language but is also a window opening into the culture of the target language, building up a cultural competence in students”. And this research enhanced language development and cultural awareness by employing authentic texts in a first grade class in Cyprus, such as the folk tale *Spanos and the Forty Dragons*. Particularly, in the selected folk tale there are specific cultural references for the context where the research took place and they are clear enough to be understood by all participants, who were able to produce more complex language at the end. Selecting this traditional folk tale which combines cultural heritage and contemporary reality, but also keeps the dialect of the island alive, this research provided examples of how such texts might be introduced into the classroom. Evidence from the analysis of participants’ oral and written language based on the traditional folk tale - a key text in this research - indicates a number of educational advantages of making use of the dialect in the classroom, showing the potential and richness of the dialect in local literary works.

Recently, understandings gained from the work of several linguists (Papanicola, 2010; Tsiplakou and Hadjionnou, 2010; Yiakoumetti, 2007) have indirectly influenced official language policy regarding the presence of Greek Cypriot dialect in the classroom and its systematic study within the context of literacy education. At the present time, “not only does the dialect acquire ‘visibility’ within the language classroom, but it also becomes an object of instruction” (Hadjioannou, Tsiplakou and Kappler, 2011: 533). However, despite the fact that the language curriculum adopts a positive stance regarding the dialect of the
island, no formal attempt has been made so far to introduce Greek Cypriot dialect as an additional vehicle for language and literacy development or for supporting GAL learners. The current research, using the Greek Cypriot dialect in classroom settings, has shown that the potential of the dialect in serving a range of communicative purposes; and that local literary works, in contrast to the existing textbook, contain language and notions related to Greek Cypriot culture and consequently familiar to Greek Cypriot students. As has been argued in chapter 1, having access in school to the dialect of the island, this is not only important for GMT pupils but will also help GAL learners as they hear the ambient language not only outside school but inside, too.

This study also took into account the social construction of knowledge by utilising student-centred discussion groups to encourage conversation in the target language in as natural as possible settings. Literature circles implemented in this research were significant in enabling students to talk deeply and with meaning and to realise the role of listening to the others and themselves talk in the literacy and learning process. Answering the first and second research question, this research argues that literature circle discussions created greater motivation and encouraged students to participate more often in the classroom, interact with the texts and one another in a non-threatening environment and construct meaning through this interaction. As has been argued in literature review (Chapter 2) “much learning occurs ‘effortlessly’ when the learners feel they are members of a group and that this in turn leads to a lower affective filter thereby resulting in more language learning” (Krashen, 1993: 71). Using retellings and role-play seemed to have influenced children in relating much more closely to the text, its characters and events. As has been mentioned in Chapter 4, by taking on a role, children had the opportunity to ‘live through’ some of the story’s events, motives and actions expressed in the target language. Additionally, discussions of the texts, retellings and role-play led to a more developed sense of how readers interpret texts and of the ‘multiple perspectives’ presented in a rich text (Barrs and Cork 2001).

Literature circle discussions were also valuable in supporting children’s understanding of the story, especially for the GAL child. Listening to texts read aloud, engaging in
discussions and retellings, proved to be significant practices for children such as Fatima. These teaching practices were a source of intense interest and especially helpful in engaging inexperienced readers into unfamiliar texts. Through speech, children seemed to have learned to organise their thinking, increased their vocabulary and their level of participation; and consequently their written language. This approach played an important role in the process of reconstructing a story and provided the teacher with a clear picture of students’ syntactical problems which might transfer later into their writing. Additionally, from the perspective of language development, this research has shown that due to the usage of vocabulary taught in context through children’s literature texts, first grade learners’ oral language increased and offered a foundation for the development of the other literacy skills.

Quality children’s books and setting up literature circles in order to answer the three research questions seemed to be able to bring changes and develop additional language learners’ speech and writing effectively. Teachers can use these approaches to include stories from children’s culture, too. Since the number of language minority students enrolling in primary schools in Cyprus has increased, using also multicultural literature in the classroom can promote language development and an appreciation of other cultures. At the beginning of this research, along with the textbook, I used three stories about travelling and multiculturalism and an Arabic folk tale (see chapter 3) in order to increase my additional language student’s self-esteem and make her feel accepted and comfortable to share culture with the rest of the class but also to enhance my mother tongue speakers’ knowledge about other cultures. Having read that folk tale first and then introducing the traditional folk tale from Cyprus authored in the dialect of the island, the discussion followed allowed exchanges of cross-cultural knowledge. The selected folk tale from Cyprus also invited discussion about culturally and historically topics such as relationships and war.

There is a great need to redesign the way language and literacy skills are developed in mainstream classrooms where GMT and GAL pupils coexist. Teachers training should be part of a wider policy able to provide language through a specific curriculum and
appropriate material that will make it more effective and have positive effects on pupils’ integration and socialisation. Teachers training should also be dealing with multiculturalism in education. The policy should be extended beyond language development and support to include practical ways in which the cultural needs of non-Cypriot students can be addressed in education. Elements from other cultures should be incorporated into the new curriculum. As has been mentioned earlier, the presence of immigrant children in the education system has increased the need for multicultural practices and second language acquisition support (Hadjioannou 2006; Tsiplakou and Georgi, 2008). Panayiotopoulos and Nicolaidou (2007) examining the Greek Cypriot educational model point out the absence of specific guidelines on approaching different ethnic and cultural groups. Greek as an additional language has marginal status as a subject discipline within the National Curriculum of Cyprus (see Chapter 2).

The changes in society call for the necessity to introduce pedagogically appropriate curricula for the teaching of Greek as a second or additional language, and to train both newly qualified and experienced elementary school teachers. As has been argue previously in this study, our goal is not to withdraw those pupils from the main classroom for specific language lessons but to put into practice new policies and theories; a special plan should be developed to meet the needs of those children while they are working within the classroom. The significance of this research is that it offers insights into how to use such texts in the classroom and a detailed analysis of classroom pedagogy which supports both GMT and GAL students. Perhaps the most significant contribution of this study is the fact that a foundation has been established for further studies, and more importantly for the use of quality children’s literature texts for Greek additional language learners in a mainstream classroom.

The current research calls for greater use of the island’s dialect in the classroom and might be of interest in other areas, such as Mauritius and Singapore, where the standard language used in school is different from the language used outside school. Also this research might be significant for those in other Greek speaking contexts such as Crete where the dialect of the island is still alive and is used in everyday life, while schools use the standard language.
The pedagogy used and the arguments for using standard and local language in the classroom may be useful for those teachers who tend to rely mainly on the textbook, to support language and literacy development or for supporting GAL learners throughout the Greek speaking world.

5.2. Limitations

As has been discussed in the methodology chapter, qualitative research was judged as the most suitable methodological choice appropriate to my research questions. And since the current research involves the collection and recording of data about a number of cases (six 6-year-old pupils) case study design using qualitative approaches has been adopted. The research took place in an “ordinary natural environment” (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995: 296); in an authentic classroom in a state primary school in Cyprus, investigating “a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context” (Yin, 2008: 18). Applying qualitative research enabled me to learn from first-hand about the social world I was investigating. Additionally, the product of a qualitative inquiry is “richly descriptive” and “the design is emergent and flexible, responsive to changing conditions of study in progress” (Merriam, 2009: 16). Easy access to data and various research components such as timing, resources and purposes were among the main reasons that I chose to apply case study research (Adelman, Jenkins and Kemmis, 1983; McDonough and McDonough, 1997).

Although this study presented a number of significant findings, the special features of case study research that offered the basis for its selection, also present further limitations. Besides the issues of closeness to the data which has been one of the big concerns raised by qualitative case study researchers over the years, case study research has also been criticised for lacking generalisability as well as for generating immense information about a small number of research settings (Merriam, 2009; Cohen, Manion and Morisson, 2011). This case study generated information about a small number of research settings and participants, and the data collected might be unique and significant, but findings cannot be
generalised to a larger population. Nonetheless, knowledge produced might be transferable to another setting.

Taking into consideration the outcomes of this study, a year after the research, I was also teaching first grade pupils. Evidence emerged from this research highlight that the approaches used and the texts introduced supplementary to the existing textbook, were particularly effective in supporting children’s language and literacy development, and created greater motivation in participating in the classroom. Hence, I decided to transfer the knowledge produced from my research to another setting, including children’s literature texts and adopting the literature circle discussion model as an additional way of enhancing oral language development and promoting literacy, for another first grade class. This approach and a variety of children’s literature texts have also been introduced at the second grade class I have been teaching this year and both literature circle discussions and the texts introduced supplementary to the textbook were also valuable in supporting young learners’ understanding of the story and serve as an excellent source of learning and motivation.

According to Merriam (1998: 19), case studies involving the study of a process have significant value for research and “insights gleansed from case studies can directly influence policy, practice and future research”. Even though, I realise that the inquiry of this bounded case study cannot draw any generalisations, I thus believe that the results may have important implications for policy and practice in the context of Cyprus.

A second limitation was my dual role as a teacher and a researcher of this study, and consequently as an interpreter and evaluator. Being in the insider position when collecting the data, the concept of validity becomes increasingly problematic because of the researcher’s involvement with the subject of study (Hermann, 1989; Rooney 2005; Sikes and Potts, 2008; Smyth and Holian, 2008). On the other hand, insider participant observation is considered the most important and challenging instrument in qualitative studies (Hermann, 1989). Even though, I was struggling to balance my teacher and my researcher role, being known allowed more rapid and complete acceptance by the participants, and gave me the opportunity to collect more detailed and resourceful research
data. However, the teacher’s/ researcher’s presence during data gathering, which is often unavoidable in qualitative research, could have affected participants’ responses.

A third limitation, is the fact that the research was conducted in a Greek Cypriot environment and the data collected were in Standard Modern Greek language and in the Cypriot dialect of the island, but for the purpose of this research were translated and presented into English.

In spite of the limitations in the methodology and analysis, there might be some other factors affecting the results of this research. One factor in particular is participants’ previous experience and knowledge of children’s literature books, print conventions and understanding of visual and print meaning. Parents’ literacy support offered to their children after school might also be a limitation for this study.

At last, I would like to draw on my own experience of keeping a reflective journal throughout this research and underline the significant contribution journal writing made in understanding of all facets of the research process. Keeping a research journal provided much insight into the processes which teachers experience in their work and development. These written accounts have benefits both for the writer, as well as – where the writing is made public – for the reader (Brog, 2001: 157). Even though the reflective journal was another source of data for the purpose of this research, it can be used as a form of reflective writing where the teacher can document her personal experience of the research process – and reflective writing by teachers can contribute to the professional growth.

5.3. Summary

As has been mentioned earlier, the research was an investigation into the significance of children’s literature texts, including those in the local dialect, for language and literacy development of year one pupils in the Republic of Cyprus. The main aim of this study was to examine whether an early experience of studying quality children’s literature, including texts in the island’s dialect, supplementary to the existing textbook, may enhance oral
language development and promote literacy. Looking at the response of 6 six-year-old pupils to a variety of texts, such as a wordless picture book, a well-known fairy tale and a traditional folk tale from Cyprus, this research also analysed the relationship between children’s reading of literature and their writing development. Additionally, central to the content of this research were ideas about ways of supporting and enhancing Greek mother tongue speakers and Greek additional language learners’ language and literacy development, and strengthening their confidence and the level of engagement in classroom activities, by implementing literature circle discussions and retellings. By the end of the research, I identified that the approaches used and the texts introduced supplementary to the existing textbook, were particularly effective in supporting children’s language and literacy development, and created greater motivation in participating in the classroom.

Looking both at the outcomes of the research presented in Chapter 4, in conjunction with the research questions set at the beginning of the research, it can be said that the findings, which compare the use of the existing textbook to the use of children’s literature texts, revealed significant differences in students’ engagement and learning outcomes. Analysis of the discourse of circle discussions and group work shows that students were engaged in highly dialogic interactions with the texts and with one another, when being introduced to quality children’s literature. There was important development of their narrative speech, along with significant evidence of the students’ growing ability to speak in the target language with confidence, to structure their writing, to write for an audience and shape their texts more consciously. Findings also underline the importance of these literary texts for children who learn Greek as an additional language; increased motivation and learning opportunities being two such significant benefits.

As has been argued previously, content analysis of the existing textbooks for Greek language learning led to improvements which are still being made. Having taught first grade for many years, I came to see that the existing textbooks are lacking interesting content and illustrations. Children’s literature texts are now been gaining momentum in the state schools in Cyprus. Employing literary texts to develop language and literacy skills it is not a new approach for state school in Cyprus, but is being used rarely. At present that the
New Literacy Curriculum (MoEC, 2010) aims to give learners the opportunity to come across as many literary texts as possible, and due to the increasingly multiethnic reality of the classrooms, this approach of employing authentic literary texts in the class becomes more important. Even though this is a step forward, there is a gap between documentation and action; no sufficient teaching material has been prepared regarding the teaching of the Greek language, resulting in using the same textbooks that were being used prior to the reform. The current research provides not only examples of how such texts might be introduced into the classroom but also the pedagogy involved in literature circle discussions. The significance of this case study is the fact that it offers a detailed analysis of a classroom pedagogy which supports Greek additional language learners, too.

As has been argued in Chapter 1, the safeguarding of the national identity of the island has been a critical issue during the turbulent years of the island and one of the fundamental aims of public education nowadays due to this recent increase in immigrant population. The cultures and civilisations passed through the island determined its modern history and left their legacy on the identity of Greek Cypriots; some of which are also present in the local dialect. This cultural diversity in the Cypriot society creates further challenges for the educational system which has to play a more significant role in preserving and strengthening the island’s national identity now. Yet, the main concern is how to place emphasis on national identity on the one hand without endangering harmonious coexisting with immigrants on the other hand.

The purpose of the current research was not to lessen the significance of using standard textbooks, but to investigate whether including also quality children’s literature texts in an elementary classroom where first and additional language learners coexist, might be an additional way of enhancing oral language development and promoting literacy. Now that children’s literature in the Republic of Cyprus has been developed and progressed its’ contribution can be proved particularly important in developing year one pupils’ language. According to Panaou and Michaelides (2011) during these past few years, many new writers have appeared, raising the number of Greek-Cypriot authors to a total of 120; and there are now 20 publishers, 4 of them publishing children’s books consistently, releasing
10 to 15 books per year. Contemporary authors and illustrators in Cyprus produce nowadays exceptional editions of children’s literature that deserve to reach larger reading audiences, such as elementary students.

Concluding, the research makes a significant contribution to these current debates in Cyprus about the direction and purpose of children’s language and literacy development. Along with children’s literature texts, including those in the dialect of the island, the research explores approaches that make teaching interesting, interactive and motivating, by implementing literature circle discussions and social interaction through dialogue; a form of talk that has not been researched in the primary classroom in the context of Cyprus. Both the literary texts used and the pedagogies supported this research helped students to explore texts in an active way and discuss in detail, enter imaginatively into the worlds of the selected literary texts and access areas of language that the supposedly carefully constructed textbook could not offer. This research confirms the findings of other researchers and contributes to the research already conducted in the context of Cyprus. It also calls for greater use of the island’s dialect and the introduction and training in the use of a broader range of books in both Standard Modern Greek language and the Greek Cypriot dialect.
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# APPENDIX 1

## Monitoring Oral Development During Literary Sessions

| Name of the pupil: | Fatima | Pupil | | | | | Date: | 10.10.2008 | Picture and Text from the Class Text Book |
|---------------------|--------|-------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| **Motivation:** | listen with a response | 1 2 3 4 5 | Indicating dislike or like of a book or an activity (enjoyment) | 1 2 3 4 5 | Concentration (Being focused when reading and/or listening) | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| **Active participation in group/circle discussions:** | Level of engagement in the discussion | 1 2 3 4 5 | Initiates conversation | 1 2 3 4 5 | Reflective talk | 1 2 3 4 5 | Interaction with others in the circle (accept other students’ ideas and interpretations) | 1 2 3 4 5 | Share their opinions and provide evidence for them | 1 2 3 4 5 | Level of participation in role-play and drama activities | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| **Interaction with the text:** | Become involved in meaningful communication | 1 2 3 4 5 | Personal responses to the text and share them in discussions | 1 2 3 4 5 | Bring feelings and thoughts developed from their personal experience | 1 2 3 4 5 | Comprehension | 1 2 3 4 5 | ‘Reads’ the pictures of the story with contentment | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| **Development and Improvement of narrative speech (in the target language):** | Presents ideas clearly and coherently | 1 2 3 4 5 | Level of grammatically complete speech | 1 2 3 4 5 | Become aware of the general “feel” and sound of the additional language (for GAL) | 1 2 3 4 5 |
pupils).
Using his/her mother tongue with teacher/peers despite their inability to understand (for GAL pupils).
Frequency of repeating words and phrases of others.
Can tell and retell stories orally with consistency.
Respond to questions with yes/no answer.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enrichment of oral vocabulary</th>
<th>Understands general vocabulary used by the teacher.</th>
<th>1 2 3 4 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Understands the vocabulary of a story being read.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Experimenting with new words from the stories that have been read, using them in his/her narration.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The numbers 1-5 indicate the rate of recurrence of the indicators during a literacy session.

5= constantly (engaged in all the discussion throughout the research either by initiating conversation or engaged in a reflective talk)
4= frequently (5-6 times throughout the literacy session)
3= occasionally (3-4 times throughout the literacy session)
2= rarely (once in a while throughout the literacy session)
1= never
### Monitoring Oral Development During Literary Sessions

**Name of the pupil:** Fatima

**Date:** 7.11.2008 (The wordless picture book “Up and Up”)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivation:</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Listen with a response</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Indicating dislike or like of a book or an activity (enjoyment)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Concentration (Being focused when reading and/or listening)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Active participation in group/circle discussions:</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level of engagement in the discussion</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initiates conversation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflective talk</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction with others in the circle (accept other students’ ideas and interpretations)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share their opinions and provide evidence for them.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of participation in role-play and drama activities.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interaction with the text:</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Become involved in meaningful communication.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal responses to the text and share them in discussions.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bring feelings and thoughts developed from their personal experience.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehension</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Reads’ the pictures of the story with contentment.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Development and Improvement of narrative speech (in the target language)</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Presents ideas clearly and coherently.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of grammatically complete speech.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Become aware of the general “feel” and sound of the additional language (for GAL)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupils</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Using his/her mother tongue with teacher/peers despite their inability to understand (for GAL pupils).</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Frequency of repeating words and phrases of others.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Can tell and retell stories orally with consistency.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respond to questions with yes/no answer.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Enrichment of oral vocabulary</strong></td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understands general vocabulary used by the teacher.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
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**Name of the pupil:** [Name redacted]

**Date:** 10.10.2002 (Picture and text from the class text book)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Motivation:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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**Active participation in group/circle discussions:**

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</tr>
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<td>3</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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| Date: | 3.11.2008 | (The wordless picture book “Up and Up”)

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Samples from my daily research journal

Sample 1: November 7th 2008

Wordless picture book ‘Up and Up’
Στην αναφορά, η δασκάλα ίσως μια σειρά κάθε φορά και τα παιδιά προσπάθησαν να τονιστούν την ιστορία που εξέγαιει «εικόνες» της Βίβλου. Επειδή, έκανε και διάφορα μετάφρασης, συνεχίζοντας τη χωρίς να χρησιμοποιεί να περιέβλεπε τη δασκάλα. Συγκεκριμένα μεταφράσεις που μπορεί να είναι η συνέχεια της ιστορίας, Ο οποίοι παιδιά εδείχησαν ενδιαφέρον και εκπαιδευόταν και αναπτύχθηκε μια γρίφα επωνυμία. Η συνέχεια της σειράς μανε διαφέρει ποιος εβεβαιώθηκε η ιστορία.

Στο χορευτικό χώρο ευθύνης τα παιδιά έκαναν συγκές, συγκεκριμένα και είδες παιδιών γέμισαν για την παρέξον του κοριτσιού. Η συνέχεια του χώρου δημιούργησε ένα τοπίο αναγκής περιβάλλον και τα παιδιά ενώπιον της ακτίνας σημείωναν ότι η συνεχής ποίηση και η εκμαθησία, το κορίτσι σαν αλληγορικό κορίτσι και το κορίτσι που έκανε πολύ χρόνο, ήταν κατά κανόνα αγάπη. Έδειχνε ποιος ενδιαφερόταν και συνεχίζει η σειρά της συνέχεια.
Sample 2: November 10th 2008

Wordless picture book ‘Up and Up’

Session 2 (80 minutes) 10/11/2008

The wordless picture book «Up and Up»  
(Hughes, 1991)

Τα παιδιά χωρίζονται σε 3 οράδες από 6 παιδιά κάθε οράδα. Μία από αυτές τις οράδες είναι η οράδα παραθέματος. Κάθε οράδα είχε το δικό της βιβλίο και τωρά η παιδία έχουν περισσότερες ευχαρίστιες για μικρές και μεγάλες συμβάσεις των οράδων τους. Κάθε παιδί προσπαθεί να δημιουργεί την ιστορία που διαβάζεται μέσα από την εικονογράφηση.

Η οικία, ήταν ενδιαφέρουσα.

Πρόσεξε μέσα από τη συμμετοχή των παιδιών και την επιδρομή τους είχε το ένα στο άλλο, και άλλα στο άλλο. Η οικία ήταν ανεπανεμένη με διάφορες θέσεις καθαρισμού. Οι οράδες έχουν στο ένα το βιβλίο και στο άλλο το παιδί συνέχεια προσεκατομέμφεται και αναφέρεται και δίνει τους προσωπικούς συμβολισμούς.

Καθαρισμός στην αιθουσή από τα παιδιά, τα ζευγάρια παιδιών εξακολουθούν να προκαλούν φωνάζοντας ενημερώνοντας τα στοιχεία τους. Η δράση καθορίζει...
στην ομάδα, αλλά κυρίως για διευκρίνιση και
να θεωρηθεί ότι συνέχεια της ιστορίας κανόνισα
κάποιες ερωτήσεις.

Όταν τα παιδιά άκουσαν με ιδιαίτερη προσοχή αυτού
του μέρους και αρέστε μορφές πρόσωπην
στην ιστορία του, η δομοφονία να βρεθεί
το απόλυτης άξονας. Ήταν συγκεντρωμένα
και αργά προσπαθούσαν με ευπνία, αναπνοούσαν
και το ένα παιδί έκανε πάνω σε προηγούμενα
σχόλια.

Το βιβλίο αυτό εκτός της έκθεση των
παιδιών μέχρι το τέλος του μαινόμενο.
Τα
παιδιά έδιναν σπασία στην εικονική
και την κατανόηση της ιστορίας
και την επικεφαλής μέσα από σωνία. Είχαν
συγκεκριμένη θεώσα τους προσωπικότητες απομνημο
το βιβλίο και αργά προσπαθούσαν με ενδιαφέρον,
en συναισθηματικά και ευπνία.
The wordless picture book “Up and Up” (Hughes, 1991)

In this session the children are sitting on the floor in a circle away from their desks. I am also sitting in the circle with them holding the book we will study. I was presenting the book to the children turning all the pages one-by-one and the children noticed that the book has no text; just illustrations. The discussion begins by discussing the title of the book and the picture at the front page. Children are invited to make assumptions regarding the plot of the book, based on the title and the picture at the front page.

Right to the very end of the lesson all children were participating in the discussion and were interested in the book. Some children were standing up in order to have a better look of the illustrations, some other children were anxious to turn the page and some others wanted to hold the book in their hands in order to “read” it by themselves.

Afterwards, I was turning one page each time and the children were trying to “tell the story that the pictures say”. They were also talking to each other without much intervention from me regarding the story and what might be following. All children were looking enthusiastic and were interested in turning the page to find out what was following.

Children in the circle discussion were making connections, comparisons and were giving reasons of the girl’s actions. The discussions in the circle generated a safe environment and the children were feeling safe to talk, especially the additional language learner and the Greek mother tongue girl who was too shy to participate, so as some of the boys of the class. They were more motivated and the level of engagement and participation in the discussion was high, based on the amount of oral work produced throughout the discussion.
The wordless picture book “Up and Up” (Hughes, 1991)

In this session the children are separated in 3 groups of 6. One of those groups was the group for observation. Each group had its own copy of the book and each child had more opportunities to talk and discuss in their groups. Each child was narrating the story based on the illustrations and when one finished the next child was ready to speak. The discussion was interesting.

What I have noticed from their discussion and the interaction with each other and the text, is that children were thinking carefully about what they were about to say and they were beginning to respond to each other; to reflect critically on what they were seeing and drawing on their previous experiences.

During the narration from the children, the more experienced children were also helping those pupils in the group who were struggling with the language, such as the Greek mother tongue girl and the additional language learner. I was seating in the group, only joining in to ask for justification or making some questions to pupils to help to continue the story.

I have noticed that the children were focused, clearly listening to the previous comments and narrations and were responding. They were adding details in their narration or helping others find a word to continue. They were collaborating and were fully engaged in the discussion.

The wordless picture book seemed to have kept children’s attention until the end of the session. The children directed their attention to the illustrations of the book. They had made their own personal affective responses to the illustrations and were familiar to the outline of the plot. The children were engaged in really close “reading” of the illustrations of the book.
A. Transcripts of 6 case study pupils’ oral data – development based on the wordless picture book ‘Up and Up’

Oral work was transcript in Greek and the transcripts were partially translated. The analysis was conducted from the original Greek text and the outcomes were reported in English. The only parts translated in English were the quotations included in the thesis (here are in bold). It’s important to note that when pupils where narrating their stories they were using both Standard Modern Greek and the Greek Cypriot dialect.

1. Andreas’ oral work: 10/11/2008

Up and Up

Ανδρέας: Μια φορά κι έναν καιρό ήταν ένα κοριτσάκι και έκανε δραστηριότητες. Σε κάποια φάση δεν είδε τον βράχο και σκόντασε πάνω του και ... και έκανε μία τούμπα και πήγε το κεφάλι της. Μετά έπιασε μιαν κόλλαν τζαι ήθελεν να κάμεν έναν φτερό. Έβγαλεν τα και ήταν έτοιμη να πετάξει. Έπιασε ποτα στην σκάλα τζαι ήταν έτοιμη. έκαμεν το. Εν εμπόρεσεν να πετάξει τζαι έπιασεν χαμέ. Μετά εσκέφτηκεν κάτι άλλο. Έπιασε μπαλόνια, εφούσκωσεν τα. Εν εμπόρεσεν να πετάξει μετά πιο πολλά επήεν πας στο δέντρο τζαι μετά επετούσεν μετά πολλά επήεν πας στο δέντρο επετούσεν επίασεν την πόρτα. Ηταν ένας ταχυδρόμος με κάτι πράματα. Με έναν αυγό τζαι της έπιασεν. Μετά το άνοιξεν, είδεν έναν αυγό με μιαν κορδέλα. Έβγαλεν την κορδέλα, άνοιξε το αυγό μετά το αυγό μπήκεν μέσα μετά τρύπησε, έππιασεν τζαι άρχισεν να τρώει. Αφού το έβλεπεν, στριφογύριζε ανάποδα, πετούσεν σαν τα φτερά πήγαινε γρήγορα και ο παπάς της και η μάμα της προσπαθούσαν να την πιάσουν ήταν πίσω από κάποιους άλλους. Μετά ο παπάς της έπετοσε.  

(Η δασκάλα επεμβαίνει για να κάνει μια διευκρίνιση) 

Δασκάλα: Είναι σίγουρα ο παπάς της; 

Ανδρέας: Α, ένας παππούς. Μετά κάποιος κύριος έβλεπεν κάτι. Σαν το έβλεπεν ήρτεν το κοριτσάκι και την έπιασε και είδεν την μετά ποι (παύση) έπαξεν το πράγμα του για να την πιάσει. 

Δασκάλα: Τι ήταν αυτό;
Ανδρέας: Μμ…

Δασκάλα: Κάτι σαν δίχτυ;

Ανδρέας: Ναι μετά έπιασεν το δίχτυ του και προσπαθούσε να την πιάσει και έκατσεν πάνω στο κλαδί. Μετά ήρταν και μερικά πουλάκια … (παύση) σκαρφάλωνε σκαρφάλωνε αλλά τίποτα δεν έγινε. Προσπαθούσε να την πιάσει μετά πέταγε κι αυτή κι έτσι στους δρόμους πάνω από … (παύση).

Δασκάλα: Τι είναι αυτό; Πώς το λέμε;

Ανδρέας: …

Δασκάλα: Μήπως μανάβικο; Φρουταρία;

Ανδρέας: Α, ναι. Μετά πέταγε πάνω από την πόλη. Πήγε στο σχολείο της και αναποδογυρίστηκε τζίνι τζέμι πάνω και προσπάθησε να την πιάσει και τέτοια. Μετά έκανε τζίνος ο κύριος να την πιάσει αλλά δεν τα κατάφερε. Μετά επροσπάθησε να την πιάσει και τζίνι τζέμι πάνω και τζίνος ο κύριος να την πιάσει αλλά δεν τα κατάφερε. Εκείνος ο κύριος έπεσεν κάτω τζίνος ο κύριος να την πιάσει αλλά δεν τα κατάφερε. Μετά επροσπάθησε να την πιάσει και τζίνος ο κύριος να την πιάσει αλλά δεν τα κατάφερε. Μετά έπεσεν κάτω τζίνος ο κύριος να την πιάσει αλλά δεν τα κατάφερε.
κινήσεις. Άρχισε να πετάει να πάει πάνω στους τοίχους να περπατάει ανάποδα ... (πάυση) να πετάει γύρω από τον κόσμο να μπαίνει μέσα στα σπίτια, να πετάει γύρω απ’ τις τράπεζες. Αυτός ήταν ένας κακός που ήθελε να την αρπάξει και να την πάσει για να την ... Την είδε από το ... πώς λέγεται αυτό που βλέπεις τα ... (πάυση) εε ...τηλεσκόπιο. Πήρε ένα δίχτυ που πιάνει και προσπάθησε να την πάσει και πετούσε αυτή παντού και δεν την πάνει. Πετούσε, ξανανέγρηξε να πετάει, πετάει πάνω από τα φρούτα πάνω από την πόλη, εκεί είναι οι συμμαθητές της και τους κοροιδεύει. Εδώ η δασκάλα τους λέει να μην της δίνεται σημασία. Εδώ λέει μη γελάτε και ... εδώ πετάει και κάνει κάτι σχέδια έτσι (δείχνει με το δάχτυλό της τις φιγούρες που κάνει το κορίτσι στον αέρα). Εδώ κάνει πάλι σχέδια έτσι για να την βλέπουν, αυτό θέλει να την πάσει. Εδώ πετάει πάνω απ’ το αερόστατο και την άρπαξε, την άρπαξε ο κακός και την άρπαξε βγήκε το σακάκι της και έφυγε. Το κοριτσάκι πήρε μια βελόνα και του έσπασε το αερόστατο. Μετά ... (πάυση) μετά έπεσε αυτός ο κακός. Το κοριτσάκι μπήκε μέσα στο πανί και έφυγε. Και στο τέλος χαρετούσε τους συμμαθητές της και εβλεπε το πουλάκι που πεταεί, που πετάνε και έκανε διάφορες κινήσεις, τα εβλεπε, μετά γύρισε στο σπίτι έφαγε και κοιμήθηκε εκεί στο τραπέζι.


**Up and Up**

Βασίλης: Μου άρεσε πολύ το παραμύθι. Θα δώσω ένα όνομα στο κορίτσι.

Δασκάλα: Ποιο όνομα;

Βασίλης: Άννα.

Δασκάλα: Τι κάνει η Άννα εδώ;

Βασίλης: Πετά.

Δασκάλα: Πού βρισκόμαστε;

Βασίλης: Σε μια πόλη.

Μια φορά και έναν καιρό η Άννα εκαθόταν στο χορτάρι στο σπίτι της τζαι είδεν ένα πουλί τζαι μετά επέταξεν το πουλί τζαι είδεν το τζαι μετά η Άννα αν μπορεί να πετάξει τζαι τζίνη. Η Άννα άρχισε να τρέχει αλλά έπεσεν ... (πάυση) έπεσεν τζαι μετά εθύμωσεν. Κάποιος εχτύπησεν την πόρταν. Ήταν ο
ταχυδρόμος τζαι έφερε κάτι. Ταί έπιαν το, μετά είδεν το, έσπερεν το τζαι μέσα ήταν ένα
αυγό τζαι ... τζαι μετά εμπήκεν μέσα στο αυγό τζαι το έσπασεν. Έφαν το αυγό, κάτι έπαιν
τζαι επετούσεν. Ανεβαίνε σε τοίχους, σε ταβάνια, έκανεν τούμπες στον αέρα τζαι έφυεν
που το σπίτι της πετώντας. Οι γονείς της ετρέξαν να την πάσουν αλλά επετούσεν τζαι ήταν
πολλά γρήγορη. Μετά ήρθεν ο κόσμος να την πάσαι τζαι ένας κύριος με την ομπρέλα να
την αρπάξει. Μετά είδεν την κάποιος με ένα δίχτυ τζαι επέτασεν έξω να την κυνηγήσει με το δίχτυ. Μετά ανέβασε στο δέντρο τζαι έπαιν
έξω το σπίτι της πετώντας. Οι γονείς της ετρέξαν να την πιάσουν αλλά επετούσεν τζαι ήταν
πολλά γρήγορη. Μετά ήρθεν ο κόσμος να την πάσαι τζαι ένας κύριος με την ομπρέλα να
την αρπάξει. Μετά είδεν την κάποιος με ένα δίχτυ τζαι επέτασεν έξω να την κυνηγήσει με το δίχτυ. Μετά ανέβασε στο δέντρο τζαι έπαιν

Δασκάλα: Τα παιδιά τι έκαναν;
Βασίλης: Έτρεξαν να την πάσουν... (παύση).
Δασκάλα: Το κοριτσάκι μας τι έκανε;
Βασίλης: Έκανε τούμπες στον αέρα. Επήαν σπίτι, επετασεν τζαι εμπήκεν μες στο αερόστατο για να την πιάσει. Παραλίγον να την πάσαι μόνο που εξέφυγεν του. Μετά πέτασε σε ένα σπίτι τζαι εσκουντούφλησεν και κτύπησε στο κεφάλι τζαι έκλαιγε. Τώρα το κοριτσάκι ζωγράφιζε και τώρα το χρωμάζει. Το

Δασκάλα: Τα παιδιά τι έκαναν;
Βασίλης: Έτρεξαν να την πιάσουν... (παύση).
Δασκάλα: Το κοριτσάκι μας τι έκανε;
Βασίλης: Έκανε κοριτσάκι στον αέρα. Επήαν ντομέι ποδά. Κύριος εν αντέβαν άλλον τζαι εμπήκεν μες στο αερόστατο για να την πιάσει. Παραλίγον τον κόσμο να την πάσαι μόνο που εξέφυγεν του. Μετά πέτασε σε ένα σπίτι, εσκουντούφλησεν και κτύπησε στο κεφάλι και έκλαιγε. Τώρα το κοριτσάκι ζωγράφιζε και τώρα το χρωμάζει. Το


Up and Up

Φίλιππος: Είμαστε στην πόλη και αυτό το κοριτσάκι παίζει σχοινάκι. Αυτό το
κοριτσάκι σκέφτηκε κάτι. Είδε ένα πουλάκι και σηκώστηκε για να τρέξει να το
πιάσει και προσπάθησε να πετάξει. Δεν είδεν το βράχο, επετασεν τζαι άπτησε να το
κοριτσάκι χοροφρήσει και κτύπησε στο κεφάλι και έκλαιγε. Τώρα το κοριτσάκι ζωγράφιζε και τώρα το χρωμάτιζε. Το
χρωμάτισε και το κόβει τώρα. Έφτιαξε δύο φτερά. Τα φόρησε και πήγε πάνω στη σκάλα. Προσπάθησε να πετάξει. Πέταξε λίγο και έπεσε κάτω. Και τώρα φουσκώνει μπαλόνια και τα φουσκώνει όλον πιο μεγάλα και γίνονται πιο μεγάλα και ... και τα δένει με την κλωστή και τα κρατάει και πετάει. Ξαφνικά τα μπαλόνια έσπασαν και έπεσε κάτω. Έπεσε κάτω και θύμωσε και η πόρτα χτύπησε και ήρτεν ο ταχυδρόμος και τους έφερεν έναν τεράστιον αυγό και το έπιασεν το κοριτσάκι και το άνοιξεν. Το άνοιξεν και μετά ... και μετά το άνοιξε και μπήκεν μέσα και μετά άνοιξεν και ... το σπάξε, το τρέφει, το τρώει και μετά και μετά ... μετά επόνησε την κοιλίτσα της πάρα πολύ. Ξαφνικά άρχισαν να πετάξει και άρχισαν να κάνει κόλπα πάνω στον τοίχο και μετά πήγαν από πάνω και θύμωσαν το γονείς του και άρχισαν να πετάει και να κάνει κόλπα στον αέρα. Και έφυγαν από την πόρτα και άρχισαν να πετάει όλον και πιο υψηλά και ο πατέρας της έπιασεν ... έπιασεν το ...

(Η δασκάλα παρεμβαίνει προσπαθώντας να διορθώσει μια παρανόηση του μικρού όσον αφορά τον πατέρα του κοριτσιού της ιστορίας και ενός κυρίου που δείχνει η εικόνα.)

Δασκάλα: Αυτός είναι ο πατέρας της;
Φίλιππος: Ναι.

Δασκάλα: Κοίταξε καλύτερα αυτή την εικόνα. Το κοριτσάκι πετάει υψηλά και αυτός ο κύριος μέσα στο σπίτι κάπου κοιτάει, ενώ ο πατέρας της βρίσκεται εδώ κάτω.
Φίλιππος: Ναι ο κύριος βλέπει το κοριτσάκι που πετάει. Έπιασεν το δίχτυ και τρέχει να το πιάσει αλλά πέταξε υψηλά και όλο πιο υψηλά και άρχισε να παίζει αερόστατο και κάπου κοιτάει, ενώ ο πατέρας της βρίσκεται εδώ κάτω. Τώρα το κοριτσάκι πετάει έσπασε ... (δείχνει με τα χέρια του). Πέταξε και ο κύριος θέλει να πάει στο αερόστατο και βγήκε από το αερόστατο και μπήκε στο σπίτι. Τώρα το κοριτσάκι πέταξε κάτω και ο κύριος βλέπει το κοριτσάκι που πετάει και προσπαθεί να το πιάσει και πήδηξεν και μετά πήδηξεν εκείνον. Είδαν το παιδάκι και είδαν το άλλο και άρχισε να πετάει και να κάνει κόλπα στον αέρα. Και έφυγαν από την πόρτα και άρχισαν να πετάει όλον και πιο υψηλά και και άρχισε να πετάει και να κάνει κόλπα στον αέρα. Και έφυγαν από την πόρτα και άρχισαν να πετάει όλον και πιο υψηλά και και άρχισε να πετάει και το άνοιξε και ...
Μια φορά και έναν καιρό ήταν ένα κορίτσι που έβλεπεν ένα πουλάκι και της … και καθόταν … και το κυνηγούσε … (παύση).

Δασκάλα: Τι να ήθελε άραγε;

Σοφία: Να πετάξει. Έτρεχεν και δεν είδεν μιαν πέτρα μπροστά της και έπεσεν και έκλεγεν και σχεδίαζε φτερά για να τα βάλει και να πετάξει και … και … από την σκάλα επιπάθησε και μετά έπαθαν και ήβρε φουσκοντα τες φουσκοντα της κρατούσε και πήγαινε πιο πάνω πιο πάνω … (μεγάλη παύση).

Δασκάλα: Τι έπαθαν τα μπαλόνια της;

Σοφία: Τα μπαλόνια έπαθαν … (παύση). Έπαθαν, θύμωσε. Η πόρτα χτυπά και της έπεσεν και τούς φίλους του και την τρέχαν και την τρέχαν και ανοίγε και τον ανάψε και τον πήγαν πάνω πάνω και έκανε σχήματα στον αέρα και ο κύριος είπεν να την πιάσει και επήνε … (παύση).

Δασκάλα: Τι είναι αυτό; (δείχνει το αερόστατο)

Σοφία: …

Δασκάλα: Μήπως ένα αερόστατο;

Σοφία: Ναι και πήγαιν για να την πιάσει και πετάξει πιο πάνω από κείνην … (παύση).

Μετά βγήκε πάνω στην κεραία και το έπιασεν. Έπαθε το αερόστατο της αντί να την πιάσει και πήγαινε πάνω και πήγανε να το τρυπάνε και έπεσαν χαμέ και έπαθαν όλο μαζί. Ο κόσμος έβλεπεν από πάνω το κοριτσάκι και είδεν τους φίλους του και ο κύριος την έπιασε και πήγα
στούς γονείς της. Την αγαπούσαν και οι άλλοι κόσμοι έφυγαν και τους έκαναν γεια και ήρθε το πουλάκι, έφυγεν, έφυγεν και έφυγεν επήννεν με τους γονείς της για να πάουν σπίτι να φάν.


Up and Up

Φατιμά: Εδώ είναι έναν πόλη (παύση) ... ένα πουλάκι που τον είδε κοριτσάκι ... (παύση) τζαι ... (παύση) σπίθκια ... (παύση) δέντρα. Το κοριτσάκι έβλεπε το πουλάκι τζαι ήθελε να ... να ... (παύση) πετάξει. Τζαι έκαμε έτσι (δείχνει με τα χέρια γιατί δεν μπορούσε να βρει τη λέξη) για να πηδήσει ... (παύση) νόμιζε ότι εν να πηδήσει ... (παύση) να πετάει ... (παύση) έπεσεν χαμε τζαι έκαμε έτσι για να πηδήσει. Μετά έπεσεν χαμε ξανά. Μετά φυόσκωσεν μπαλόνια τζαι μετά έπεσεν τα τζαι πετάει πάνω τζαι ... τζαι έπεσεν χαμε ... (παύση).

Δασκάλα: Εδώ τι γίνεται;

Φατιμά: Ήρτε σε ένα σπίτι. Κτύπησε την πόρτα τζαι άνοιξε του ένα ... (παύση).

Δασκάλα: Τι είναι αυτό;

Φατιμά: ...

Δασκάλα: Τι έφερε αυτός ο κύριος; Τι δουλεία κάνει;

Φατιμά: ...

Δασκάλα: Μήπως έφερε κάποιο γράμμα;

Φατιμά: Όχι, κάτι άλλο. Έφερε της έναν αυγό τζαι έβαλε δαμε, άνοιξε το η κορούα τζαι ήθαν ... είδε μια αυγό μαύρο τζαι άνοιξε το μπήκε μέσα τζαι έφεσε το. (παύση)

Δασκάλα: Και τι έγινε μετά;

Φατιμά: Αρχίσε να θυμώσει ... (παύση για λίγο) και άρχισε να πετάει ... και να περπατάει πάνω σε τοίχους.

Δασκάλα: Αυτοί οι δύο ποιοι να είναι άραγε;

Φατιμά: ... (παύση για λίγο). Εν ηξέρω.

Δασκάλα: Εδώ τι συμβαίνει με το κοριτσάκι;

Φατιμά: Επροσπαθούσε η γυναίκα να το πιάσει. Μετά ο άντρας προσπαθούσε να το πιάσει.
Δασκάλα: Τι είναι αυτό; (δείχνει το δίχτυ) Έχεις ξαναδεί;
Φατιμά: Ναι αλλά εν ηξέρω.
Δασκάλα: Είναι ένα δίχτυ. Το κοριτσάκι τι έκανε;
Φατιμά: Πήγε πάνω σε ένα δέντρο. Το κοριτσάκι επήεν πάνω και ο άντρας προσπαθούσε να το πιάσει. Το κοριτσάκι πετά στην πόλη, στο σχολείο… (παύση).
Δασκάλα: Τι κάνει εδώ έξω από το παράθυρο του σχολείου;
Φατιμά: Βλέπει.
Δασκάλα: Και τα παιδιά τι κάνουν;
Φατιμά: Γελούν. Το κοριτσάκι πετάει τζαί κάμνει έτσι (δείχνει πως κάνει τούμπες το κοριτσάκι με το χέρι της). Ο κύριος εν τω έπιασεν τζαί εθύμωσεν. Πήδησε μέσα στο … (παύση).
Δασκάλα: Τι κάνει εδώ έξω από το παράθυρο του σχολείου;
Φατιμά: Βλέπει.
Δασκάλα: Εν ηξέρω.
Δασκάλα: Ένα αερόστατο.
Φατιμά: Μπήκε μέσα ο κύριος να πάει ψηλά να πιάσει το κορίτσι τζαι το κοριτσάκι πάει πιο ψηλά και έφτασε δαπάνω (δείχνει τις στέγες των σπιτιών). Πάνω σε ένα σπίτι και ο κύριος έπιασεν την. Αντί να πιάσει τζίνος έπιασεν σακάκι της κορίτσις τζαι επέτασεν ψηλά τζαι έπασαν το τζάι ο κύριος πέφτει χαμέ. Έπασαν τον κύριο. (παύση)
Δασκάλα: Ποιους βρήκε εδώ το κοριτσάκι;
Φατιμά: Τους φίλους της.
Δασκάλα: Τι κάνουν εδώ με τον κύριο που την κυνηγούσε;
Φατιμά: Ευχαρίστησεν τον.
Δασκάλα: Αυτοί ποιοι μπορεί να είναι;
Φατιμά: Αγαπούσαν την … η μάμα της τζαι ο παπάς της.
Δασκάλα: Στο τέλος τι έγινε με το κοριτσάκι;
Φατιμά: Χαιρετά, παένει σπίτι, το κοριτσάκι να τρώει το αυγό της.

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Β. Transcripts of 6 case study pupils’ oral data – development based on European fairy tale ‘Little Red Riding Hood’

1. Andrea’s oral work: 25/11/2008

Little Red Riding Hood

Μια φορά κι έναν καιρό ήταν η Κοκκινοσκουφίτσα και αρρώστησε η γιαγιά της και βοήθησε τη μάμα της να φτιάξει μια σούπα τζαι στο δρόμο … τζαι επήεννεν στο δρόμο τζαι ξαφνικά πετάχηκεν ο λύκος τζαι της είπεν:

- Εσύ θα πάεις από αυτό το δρόμο τζαι εγώ θα πάω από αυτό το μονοπάτι.

Και η Κοκκινοσκουφίτσα εβλεπε πολλά λουλούδια και εμάζεψεν ώσπου να βραδιάσει και ο λύκος πήγε πιο γρήγορα και χτύπησε την πόρτα τζαι είπε:

- Ποιος είναι;

Είπε ο λύκος:

- Εγώ είμαι γιαγιά η Κοκκινοσκουφίτσα.

Τζαι είπεν η γιαγιά τζς Κοκκινοσκουφίτσας.

- Άνοιξε γλυκιά μου είναι ανοιχτά.

Μετά είδε το λύκο τζαι ο λύκος εκλείδωσεν τη γιαγιά μέσα στην ντουλάπα. Μετά ήρθεν η Κοκκινοσκουφίτσα τζαι εχτύπησεν την πόρτα. Μόλις εχτύπησεν την πόρτα…

- Ποιος είναι;

Είπε η Κοκκινοσκουφίτσα:

- Εγώ είμαι γιαγιά η Κοκκινοσκουφίτσα.

- Πέρασε γλυκιά μου είναι ανοιχτή η πόρτα.

Τζαι ειδεν την τζαι είπεν:

- Γιαγιά τι μεγάλα αυτία που έχεις!
- Για να σε ακούω καλύτερα.
- Γιαγιά τι μεγάλα μάτια που έχεις!
- Για να σε βλέπω καλύτερα.
Τζαι μετά ήρθε ο ξυλουργός τζαι έθκιωξεν τον λύκο τζαι εφάαν ούλλοι το κέικ τζαι ζήσαν αυτοί καλά τζαι εμεις καλύτερα.

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**Little Red Riding Hood**

Μια φορά ήταν η Κοκκινοσκουφίτσα και μια μέρα είχε αρρωστήσει η γιαγιά της και πήρε το δρόμο για να πάει για τη γιαγιά της. Το σπίτι της γιαγιάς της ήταν από την άλλη πλευρά του δασικού και μετά συνάντησε τον κακό το λύκο και ήταν γκρίζος και λέει:

- Εσύ θα πας από κείνο το δρόμο κι εγώ από αυτόν το δρόμο.

Και η Κοκκινοσκουφίτσα έβλεπε λουλούδια και σταματούσε. Έβλεπε λουλούδια και σταματούσε και ώσπου βράδισε και ο κακός ο λύκος πήγε πιο γρήγορα και χτύπησε την πόρτα και λέει η γιαγιά:

- Ποιος είναι;

Και είπε η Κοκκινοσκουφίτσα εε… είπε, είπε ο λύκος:

- Εγώ είμαι γιαγιά.

Και μετά μπαίνει ο λύκος και την… και παίρνει το κλειδί της ντουλάπας και την κλειδώνει στην ντουλάπα. Και μετά έρχεται η Κοκκινοσκουφίτσα. Σκεπάζεται ο λύκος από κάτω από τα παπλώματα και σκεπάζεται ως το λαιμό. Και μετά έρχεται η Κοκκινοσκουφίτσα και λέει:

- Γιαγιά είσαι μέσα;

- Ναι είμαι. Άνοιξε την πόρτα είναι ανοιχτή.

Μπαίνει μέσα και λέει:

- Γιαγιά γιατί έχεις τόσο μεγάλα αυτιά;
- Για να σε ακούω καλά.
- Γιαγιά γιατί έχεις τόσο μεγάλα μάτια;
- Για να σε βλέπω καλά.
- Γιαγιά γιατί έχεις τόσο μεγάλο στόμα;
- Για να σε φάω.

Και σηκώνεται ο λύκος και την κυνηγάει γύρω από το τραπέζι. Και μετά έρχεται ο ξυλουργός και τον λύκο τον κυνηγάει και ξανά ποτέ δεν ξαναγύρισε στο σπίτι της Κοκκινοσκουφίτσας, ο κακός λύκος. Και έζησαν αυτοί καλά κι εμείς καλύτερα.


Little Red Riding Hood

Μια φορά κι έναν καιρό ήταν η Κοκκινοσκουφίτσα και προχωρούσε για να πάει στη γιαγιά της και να της μαζέψει λίγα λουλούδια και να ... και ύστερα βρήκε το λύκο και μετά ο λύκος λέει στην Κοκκινοσκουφίτσα:

- Εγώ θα πάω απ’ εδώ κι εσύ απ’ εκεί.

Και ύστερα η Κοκκινοσκουφίτσα μάζευε λουλούδια, μάζευε όσπου να βραδιάσει και μετά ο λύκος έφτασε πρώτος και ύστερα έπιασε την ... την γιαγιά και την κλείδωσε μες στην ντουλάπα και ύστερα ήρθε η Κοκκινοσκουφίτσα και είπε στο λύκο:

- Γιαγιά τι μεγάλα αυτιά που έχεις! (με το ανάλογο ύφος)
- Για να σε ακούω καλύτερα γλυκιά μου. (αλλάζει ύφος και τόνο στην φωνή του)
- Γιαγιά τι μεγάλα δόντια που έχεις!
- Για να σε τρώω καλύτεραααα...

Και ύστερα άκουσε ο κυνηγός τις φωνές και ήρθε, επλήγωσεν τον λύκο και ποτέ εν τον εξαναιδίσεσε. Και ύστερα εμοιραστήκαν το κέικ και έζησαν αυτοί καλά κι εμείς καλύτερα.

Little Red Riding Hood

Μια φορά κι έναν καιρό ήταν η Κοκκινοσκουφίτσα. Μια μέρα βοήθησε τη μαμά της να κάνει ένα κέικ για τη γιαγιά. Όταν πήγαινε για το δρόμο συνάντησε το λύκο. Της είπε ότι ήθελε να επισκεφτεί τη γιαγιά της. Η Κοκκινοσκουφίτσα μάζεψε κι άλλα λουλούδια. Ο λύκος ήρθε πρώτος στη γιαγιά. Χτύπησε και είπε:

- Είμαι η Κοκκινοσκουφίτσα.
- Πέρνα γλυκιά μου. Η πόρτα είναι ανοιχτή.

Ο λύκος έπιασε τη γιαγιά και την κλείδωσε στην ντουλάπα. Ύστερα ήρθε η Κοκκινοσκουφίτσα και ο λύκος της είπε:

- Ανοιχτή είναι η πόρτα γλυκιά μου.

Η Κοκκινοσκουφίτσα ρώτησε:

- Γιαγιά πόσο μεγάλα χέρια έχεις!
- Για να σε αγκαλιάζω καλύτερα, είπε ο λύκος.
- Πω πω γιαγιά, είπε η Κοκκινοσκουφίτσα. Πόσο μεγάλα αυτιά έχεις!
- Για να σε ακούω καλύτερα, είπε ο λύκος.
- Πω πω γιαγιά! Πόσο μεγάλα μάτια έχεις!
- Για να σε βλέπω καλύτερα.
- Πω πω γιαγιά! Πόσο μεγάλα δόντια έχεις.
- Για να σε φάω καλύτερα γλυκιά μου.

Μετά ο κυνηγός … εννοώ ο ξυλοκόπος, πήγε και έδωσε τον λύκο και μετά μοιράστηκαν το κέικ και ζήσανε αυτοί καλά κι εμείς καλύτερα.

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Little Red Riding Hood

Μια φορά ήταν η Κοκκινοσκουφίτσα και αρρώστησε η γιαγιά της. Ακολούθησε το μονοπάτι και πετάχτηκε ο λύκος και της είπε:

- Πήγαινε ποδά. Εγώ θα πάω από δω.

Και ο λύκος πήγε πιο γρήγορα. Η Κοκκινοσκουφίτσα είδε λουλούδια και μάζεψε όσην ώρα για να νυχτώσει ... (παύση) και η γιαγιά είπε:

- Μπες μέσα ... (παύση)

Και ήρτεν η Κοκκινοσκουφίτσα ... (παύση) και ο λύκος είπε:

- Είναι ανοιχτή η πόρτα, έλα μέσα.

Και η Κοκκινοσκουφίτσα:

- Γιαγιά γιατί έχεις μεγάλα μάτια;
- Για να σε βλέπω καλύτερα.
- Γιαγιά γιατί έχει μεγάλα αυτιά;
- Για να σε ακούω καλύτερα.
- Γιαγιά γιατί έχεις μεγάλα δόντια;
- Για να σε φάω.

Και ο ξυλουργός άκουσε μια φωνή. Μετά ο λύκος ... άνοιξε ... (παύση) και άκουσε μια φωνή και έβαλεν το ...έφκαλε το στρώμα που πάνω του και μετά η Κοκκινοσκουφίτσα και ο λύκος ... (παύση) ήταν το τραπέζι τζαι εκάμναν όπως έναν μεγάλο γύρω στο τραπέζι και μετά εφάγαν την σούπα και ζήσαν αυτοί καλά κι εμείς καλύτερα.
6. Φatima’s oral work: 25/11/2008

Little Red Riding Hood

Μια φοράν τζαι έναν τζαιρόν ήταν η Κοκκινηκκουφίτσα. Επήεν στη γιαγιά της… (παύση). Μετά … (παύση).

Δασκάλα: Γιατί ήθελε να πάει στη γιαγιά της;

Φατιμά: Η μάμα της έκαμεν κέικ και επήεν στην γιαγιά της που ήταν άρρωστη. Μετά της είπεν η μάμα της να μεν μιλά με κανέναν… (παύση).

Δασκάλα: Και τι έγινε στο δάσος;

Φατιμά: Και λύκος … λύκος είπε:

- Πού πάεις;
- Πάω στη γιαγιά μου.
- Πήνενε εσύ δαμέ τζαι εγώ δαμέ

… (παύση)

Δασκάλα: Και ποιος έφτασε πρώτος στη γιαγιά;

Φατιμά: Λύκος έφτασε στη γιαγιά. Είπε… εχτύπησεν την πόρτα, η γιαγιά είπε:

- Ποιο είναι;
- Γιαγιά είμαι η Κοκκινηκκουφίτσα
- Και …(παύση) άνοιξε πόρτα.

… (παύση)

Δασκάλα: Και τι έγινε; Ποιος ήταν στην πόρτα;

Φατιμά: Λύκος. Μετά ήρτε η Κοκκινηκκουφίτσα. Είπε:

- Γιαγιά τι μεγάλα αυτιά έχεις;
- Γιαγιά τι μεγάλα μάτια έχεις;
- Γιαγιά τι μεγάλα δόντια έχεις;

... (παύση)
Δασκάλα: Στο τέλος τι έγινε;
Φατιμά: … (παύση)
Δασκάλα: Ο λύκος τι έκανε;
Φατιμά: Έφαεν την Κοκκινηκκουφίτσα.
… (παύση)
Δασκάλα: Και μετά;
Φατιμά: … (παύση)
Δασκάλα: Στο τέλος;
Φατιμά: Έφαεν την Κοκκινηκκουφίτσα.

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Α. Συντεταγμένα κείμενα από τον κύριο κλάσματος κατάλογο (Αρχή Α)

Το παράξενο ταξίδι της Συννεφένιας

— Ξέρω κι εγώ ένα παραμύθι για τον άνεμο και τη βροχή.

Ο βασιλιάς Φωτιάς, η Συννεφένια και η κόρη τους η Χιονένια ζούσαν σε ένα παλάτι. Ο Φωτιάς δεν τις άφηνε να βγουν έξω ποτέ. Στερέωνε την πόρτα με ένα βαρύ ξύλο.

Μία μέρα όμως το ξέχασε. Τότε ο Άνεμος φύσηξε δυνατά και άρπαξε τη Συννεφένια. Την πήρε μαζί του στο ταξίδι του...
...Ο Φωτιάς έψαχνε σε όλη τη γη, πουθενά η Συννεφένια. Ο Άνεμος πετούσε ψηλά με τη Συννεφένια στα φτερά του. 
«Θέλω να δω την κόρη μου» έλεγε η Συννεφένια και δάκρυζε. Ψιχάλες τότε έπεφταν στη διψαμένη γη.
Ο Άνεμος της φώναξε: «Κλάψε όσο θες, στη γη δεν ξαναγυρνάς». Τότε το κλάμα της δυνάμωνε και χινώταν βροχή.
Καράβια

Καράβια μεγάλα, καράβια μικρά, καράβια με πανιά, καράβια με φουγάρα*, βάρκες, καίκια, υπερωκεάνια... Αυτός είναι ο θησαυρός του θείου Παύλου. Καράβια παρόμοια με τα αληθινά, όμως πολύ μικρότερα. Μοιάζουν με παιχνίδια. Από παιδί τα μαζεύει κι έχει πια μια μεγάλη συλλογή.

Κάθε φορά που γυρίζει απ’ τα ταξίδια του, βγάζει τα καράβια από το μπαούλο. Τα ξεσκονίζει, τα χαϊδεύει, τα καμαρώνει. Όλα τα καράβια έχουν ονόματα. Το αγαπημένο του είναι η «Σάιτα», ένα ξύλινο καίκι με πανιά. Το έφτιαξε ένας γέρος ναυτικός από τη Σκόπελο.

Στον Ορφέα άρεσε περισσότερο το καράβι που είχε ζωγραφισμένα δύο τεράστια μάτια στα πλαίνα της πλόρης** του.

– Έτσι ήταν τα πολεμικά καράβια στην αρχαία Ελλάδα, είπε ο θείος Παύλος.

* φουγάρα: το μέρος απ’ όπου βγαίνει ο καλυτός από τις μηχανές του πλοίου.
** πλόρη: το μπροστινό μέρος ενός πλοίου.
Δασκάλα: Θα ήθελα να παρατηρήσετε με προσοχή την εικονογράφηση αυτού του βιβλίου και να μιλήσουμε λίγο για τις δύο πρώτες σελίδες και τις δύο τελευταίες του βιβλίου.

Φατιμά: Ο Σπανός εδώ φαίνεται ότι είναι δυνατός επειδή σκότωσε τους δράκους. Πιτά πάνω στους δράκους και τα χέρια του είναι ψηλά. Δείχνει ότι σκότωσε τον δράκος.

Δασκάλα: Πολύ ωραία. Μπράβο. Συμφωνούν και τα υπόλοιπα παιδιά; Τι άλλο παρατηρούμε;

Χλόη: Είναι ασπρόμαυρα και χαραγμένα και είναι ασπρόμαυρες οι γραμμές.

Δασκάλα: Οι δράκοι πώς είναι;

Χλόη: Έχουν μέσα σχέδια, παράξενα σχέδια. Αυτά εδώ μου φαίνονται σαν αστέρια, εδώ κύκλους, εδώ γραμμές, έτσι σαν τη θάλασσα. Εδώ είναι κάτι βούλες μικρές. Οι δράκοι έχουν και πολύ λεπτό σώμα και τα χέρια τους έχουν μεγάλα νύχια.

Βασίλης: Κι εμένα μου φαίνεται παράξενος ο δράκος. Έχει άσπρες βούλες και όλο το άλλο είναι μαύρο.

Ανδρέας: Εγώ βλέπω τον ήλιο που έχει ίσιες γραμμές. Τα γράμματα εν κυπριακά και αγγλικά.

Χλόη: Είναι η Κύπρος.

Δασκάλα: Τι εννοείς φως;

Χλόη: Μπορεί να ήταν πολύ σκοτεινά και όταν τους σκότωσε ο Σπανός τους σαράντα δράκους να έλαμψε, να ήρθε το φως.

Δασκάλα: Αυτό που λες είναι πραγματικά πολύ ενδιαφέρον. Τι άλλο μπορείτε να μου πείτε για αυτή την εικόνα;

Φατιμά: Είναι η Κύπρος.

Χλόη: Ναι, δείχνει την Κύπρο. Ότι η Κύπρος ... ότι οι δράκοι περικυκλώνουν τους Κύπριους και ... και ... αυτό το περιστέρι φέρνει την ειρήνη.

Φίλιππος: Το περιστέρι είναι ανάποδο.

Ανδρέας: Γύρω από την Κύπρο υπάρχουν πολλοί δράκοι.

Βασίλης: Δανείστε όμως ... ότι έγιναν σαν τους Τούρκους οι δράκοι για αυτό τους έβαλε μαύρα σύννεφα.

Δασκάλα: Είναι πολύ ενδιαφέρον. Γιατί νομίζετε ότι οι δράκοι εδώ είναι οι Τούρκοι;

Βασίλης: Οι Τούρκοι έφεραν μαζί τους δράκους.

Ανδρέας: Κακούς δράκους για να πιάσουν την Κύπρο.

Χλόη: Εδώ το πλαίσιο γύρω από την Κύπρο είναι μαύρο. Δεν έχει χαρά εδώ. Τα σύννεφα είναι μαύρα και δεν έχει ήλιο. Είναι παράξενο το παραμύθι.

Φατιμά: Είναι όλα μαύρα εδώ.
Σοφία: Μόνο το περιστέρι είναι άσπρο.
Δασκάλα: Μήπως έχετε παρατηρήσει και κάποιο άλλο χαρακτηριστικό της Κύπρου;
Χλόη: Τα ρούχα τους;
Ανδρέας: Φορούν γιλέκο τζαι βράκα. Στα παλιά χρόνια φορούσαν στολή. Την παραδοσιακή στολή.
(Η Χλόη μας λέει για τις παραδοσιακές στολές που φοράνε οι άνδρες και οι γυναίκες στην Ελλάδα.)
Χλόη: Εμείς φοράμε φόρεμα. Τα κορίτσια φοράνε φόρεμα. Είναι μπλε και άσπρο και έχουμε και ένα πανί μπλε με άσπρο πάλι ή με κόκκινο, μπλέ με κόκκινο. Έχουν πάνω σχέδια, λουλούδια. Οι άντρες φοράνε φουστανέλα. Φοράνε ένα καλτσόν. Φοράνε στα παπούτσια τους μια φούντα. Είναι οι τσολιάδες.
Δασκάλα: Οι γυναίκες εδώ στην εικόνα μας πως είναι ντυμένες; Τι κρατούν;
Ανδρέας: Φορούν και οι γυναίκες στολή. Ένα φόρεμα μακρύ και κρατούν μια κούζα.
Χλόη: Κανάτα.
Βασίλης: Τη λέμε και στάμνα.
Χλόη: Και αυτό εδώ γύρω γύρω μοιάζει με έναν κέντημα όπως αυτά που έκαναν παλιά οι γιαγιάδες.
Φίλιππος: Και τα γράμματα εν παράξενα. Κάποια εν μεγάλα και κάποια εν μικρά. Κάποια εν ίσια τζαι κάποια εν ζαβά. (Αφιερώνουμε λίγο χρόνο ώστε τα παιδιά να γυρίσουν μία μία τις σελίδες του βιβλίου και να δουν την εικονογράφηση. Σταματάμε στην τελευταία σελίδα.)
Ανδρέας: Αυτή η τελευταία σελίδα εν η πιο ωραία.
Χλόη: Δείχνει το ουράνιο τόξο και τα περιστέρια αγκαλιασμένα γιατί βρέχει. Βρέχει και μετά τη βροχή έρχεται το ουράνιο τόξο και το ουράνιο τόξο φέρνει τη χαρά.
Ανδρέας: Στο εξώφυλλο ήταν οι δράκοι που περικύκλωναν την Κύπρο, αλλά τώρα ο Σπανός νίκησε και η Κύπρος είναι περικυκλωμένη από τα περιστέρια που φέρνουν τη χαρά και την ελευθερία.
Βασίλης: Τα περιστέρια είναι άσπρα και χαρούμενα ... πολύ χαρούμενα ... επειδή νίκησαν τους Τούρκους.
Φατιμά: Και τους δράκους.
Χλόη: Τα χρώματα της εικόνας είναι πιο άσπρα. Τα περιστέρια είναι άσπρα και χαρούμενα.
Δασκάλα: Τι μπορεί να συμβολίζουν αυτά τα περιστέρια; Γιατί έχουν αγκαλιάσει την Κύπρο;
Φατιμά: Επειδή ενίκησαν τους Τούρκους.
Δασκάλα: Τους Τούρκους λέει η Φατιμά. Ποιοι ήταν οι Τούρκοι δηλαδή σε αυτή την ιστορία;
Βασίλης: Εέ... οι δράκοι.
Ανδρέας: Επειδή ο Σπανός νίκησε τους δράκους, οι Τούρκοι εφύγασιν. Ότι εν η ελευθερία. Ότι ελευθερώθηκε η Κύπρος.
B. Pupils’ samples when working out their role in drama sessions

Group 1: (Andreas, Vasilis and Fatima)

Andreas:

Vasilis:
Fatima:
Group 2: (Chloe, Philippos and Sophia)

Chloe:

Φιλόπος:

Δεν μπορώ να το πιστέψω... Είμαι έτοιμος να το βρεθώ.

Μου αρέσει καί θα τους δώσω την αλήθεια.
Sophia:

Δεν έγινε να μάθω τα πράγματα που θα μου πρέπει.

Μου αρέσει η πραξικότητα, την θα αναντίωσα, την θα αναγκασθώ.

Δεν είμαι υπομόνη, θα ανάβω την αναγκαιότητα, θα αναγκασθώ.

Στοιξιά χειμερινών.

Δεν έγινε να πραγματεύσω τον πόμο.
A. Samples from my daily research journal:

Sample 1: October 3rd of 2008
Class textbook – Letter Ππ «Πεπόνι, πεπόνι»

3/10/2008
Class Text Book
Letter Ππ
"Πεπόνι, πεπόνι"

Το είρημα αυτό είναι το διπτερό κείμενο με το οποίο εκτίθηκε η έκθεση του παρασκήνια
ημέρα και τετελείστε ημερολογια.
Το είρημα αυτό είναι το μακεδονικό παράφημα.

Το παράφημα μεταφράζεται στο ιερό εύγενο μου τον εορταστικό άνθρωπο στο
κοινωνικό σκηνικό του θρησκευτικούς ή προσωπικού επιχειρηματικού στο
κοινωνικό σκηνικό. Αποτελεί αυτή την καταγωγή προσεκτικά και να τευχερεύει σε υποχώρησ.

Για αυτό το λόγο είναι εύκολο να αναγνωρίσει τον εορταστικό 
ημέρα του εορταστικού ίδιο και εις ξοφόρα για 5 μήνες.

Για εκείνη τις ουσιώδεις όψεις παρατηρεί ότι η περίοδο του εορταστικού 
ημέρα και εις ξοφόρα για 5 μήνες.
Sample 2: November 10th 2008
Class textbook: Unit 3: “Karagiozis – Shadow Theatre”
Sample 3: May 2009

“Spanos and the Forty Dragons: A Folk Tale from Cyprus”