Training Adequacy and Pedagogic Practices of Teachers in Reception Facilities for Refugee Education in Greece during the Economic Crisis: A Case Study

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Abstract

This research paper, which uses Basil Bernstein's theoretical framework, aims to search the training adequacy of the teachers who work in Reception Facilities for Refugee Education (RFRE) and to examine the pedagogic practices that they use at the micro-level of the school classroom. Teachers who worked in a RFRE in Greece participated in this research, which was conducted with the use of the semi-structured interview research tool. The findings showed the following: a) the insufficient training that the RFRE teachers had received from the official national bodies; the teachers' effort to acquire the appropriate knowledge on their

own initiative, in order to be able to teach refugee students; the teachers' expressed need for training in matters of intercultural education, b) the pedagogic practices teachers used at the RFRE is linked to the implementation of an invisible form of pedagogy with a clear student-centered focus.

Keywords: Reception Facilities for Refugee Education, Teachers, Pedagogic practices, Training

1. Introduction

The unpredictable increase in the arrival of hundreds of immigrants and refugees occurred at a time when Greece, in the midst of severe economic crisis, strived to support a defective social welfare system. From 2015 until today, the Greek authorities and the local communities were asked to handle the reception and hospitality (temporary or permanent) of a substantial number of immigrants and refugees (Unicef, 2016). The Greek state, apart from the record keeping of the newly arrived population, had to urgently accommodate these people's housing, alimentation and medical care, as well as their children's education (Anagnostou & Nikolova, 2017).

Taking into account the special and harsh conditions which prevailed in the country due to the increased refugee flows, the Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs, in cooperation with the Institute of Educational Policy, formulated, supported and currently implements a plan for the educational induction of minor refugees who stay off school for a period of more than one year (Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs, 2016). In this context, due to the increased cultural diversity both at a social and at an educational level, the Greek school had to become open to multiculturalism via the change in the curricula and its orientation towards the new multicultural conditions, as well as via continuing education and teacher training (Rhodes & Beneicke, 2002).

The teachers' role is deemed crucial in this new reality, both in Greece and internationally, and teachers are required to be prepared and trained in order to be able to respond to their students' social, cultural and ethnic diversity (Papanaoum, 2005, pp.84-85).

Most international and Greek research approaches, examines and emphasizes teachers' training needs at all educational levels (Aravanis, 2011; Danti, 2005; Fraser, Kennedy, Reid, & Mckinney, 2007; Katavati & Tseregkouni, 2005; Papanaoum, 2003, 2005; Tourkaki & Vergidis, 2005; Rhodes & Beneicke, 2002; Van der Klink, Kools, Avissar, White, & Sakata, 2016; Valmas & Vergidis, 2011; Vergidis & Vaikousi, 2002; Xochellis, 2002; Zein, 2016).

The study of the scientific literature regarding Greek teachers' training needs showed that the majority of them supports that training is very important for their professional development, that it is necessary in order for them to overcome the deficiencies of their training, and it also showed that the training they have received has not proved to be helpful or effective (Papanaoum, 2003, pp. 22-24; Xochellis, 2002). Moreover, teachers stress the need for training in matters which mainly concern didactic methods, student psychological development and school classroom management, individual subjects of the curriculum, as well as matters of school life and cooperation with the parents. Additionally, they state that they wish to be trained in the inclusion of children with learning disabilities and special needs, and in the use of ICT in the educational process. They also consider important to be trained in matters of student performance assessment. Finally, themes related to intercultural education occupy an important place in their training needs (Asimaki, 2005; Katavati & Tseregkouni, 2005; Papanaoum, 2003, 2005; Tourkaki & Vergidis, 2005; Valmas & Vergidis, 2011). Therefore, it is realized that the majority of the teachers (regardless of the educational level at which they teach) feel unprepared and inadequately trained to handle cultural diversity and intercultural education. This realization is reinforced by the emerging reservations of the

society about otherness, after the large influx of thousands of immigrants, and by the teachers' lack of experience in multicultural environments and situations (Damanakis, 1997; Garcia & Lopez, 2005; Siwatu, 2007).

Furthermore, there are several teachers who consider themselves to be hardly effective in fulfilling their teaching duties when they are to teach students in culturally differentiated school classrooms (natives – foreigners – returnees – refugees). Thus, it seems that teachers were insufficiently informed and trained in matters of intercultural education during their studies (Karatzia & Spinthouraki, 2005; Xochellis, 2001).

In Greece, as well as in other European countries, it is observed that training programs are repeatedly obsessed with the theoretical –and not the practical– approach of the multicultural school. There is an urgent need to change the orientation of the training programs due to the lack of pursuit of innovative pedagogic practices, the lack of appropriate teaching material and the teachers' inability to handle students' cultural particularities. The acquisition of basic pedagogical knowledge is not enough; instead, it is necessary for all teachers to receive multicultural education and training, both in Greece and at an international level (Alpaydın, 2017; Banks, 2004; Gay, 2002; Nikolaou, 2000, 2005). Therefore, we support that, over the past years, the research data obtained from Greece and abroad have shown major deficiencies in teacher education and training in matters of intercultural education and refugee student education in particular; as a result, teachers are confronted with big and unsolvable problems (Nikolaou, 2005).

This research paper aims to search the training adequacy of primary education teachers who work in RFRE and to examine the pedagogic practices that they use at the micro-level of the school classroom.

This article begins with the presentation of the concepts which were used in our research, taken from Bernstein's theoretical framework. The research questions and the methodology come next. The research findings are presented and analyzed subsequently, and the paper finishes with the discussion – conclusions section.

2. Theoretical Framework

In this research we will use the concepts of *code*, *classification*, *framing*, *pedagogic practices* and *recontextualization*, obtained from Basil Bernstein's theoretical framework; this enables us to detect the adequacy of the training paths followed by primary education teachers who work in RFRE, as well as to approach the total of modalities, i.e. the pedagogic practice alternations, which teachers use in the particular educational field (Bernstein, 1989, 2000, 2003; Bernstein & Solomon,1999; Cause, 2010; Solomon, 1994).

In Bernstein's theory, codes are principles where the power relations –regulated by class– are recorded, and they also constitute social control principles. Bernstein supports that *"codes regulate what goes with what, how each 'what' is manifested and how the corresponding social context is formulated"* (Bernstein, 1989, p. 22). In this sense, the 'meanings' and the 'what' may be words, subjects in the primary school curriculum, materials, concepts, and groups with different social characteristics.

Bernstein (1989, pp. 67-68) formulates a typology of educational knowledge codes based on the variations of the classification and framing concepts. Thus, two types of pedagogic codes referring to curricula are distinguished; the *collection* code (C++/F++) and the *integration* code (C--/F--).

Classification defines the extent to which boundaries are maintained among various categories, such as social groups or time and space categories, and, thus, it is inextricably linked to authority, which determines the distinction among these categories. Framing refers to what is appropriate and what is not within the framework of communication, i.e. within the pedagogical relationship framework. Moreover, it refers to the control that the transmitters (teachers) and the recipients (students) have regarding the selection, the organization, the time frame, the pacing and the assessment of the knowledge which is disseminated and received within a pedagogical relationship (Bernstein, 1989, 1990; Lamnias, 2002; Morais & Neves, 2001). Therefore, the codes are 'regulatory principles' to which the individuals silently adhere and through which the individuals' behavior and conscience is regulated (Bernstein, 1989, 1995). In fact, the dynamics of the transformation of the code which defines the individuals' pedagogical choices at the micro-level is created through the transformation of the silently obtained data of the macro-level (Atkinson, 1985; Bernstein, 1989, 2000; Lamnias, 2002).

In this research, we assume that the variations of the values of classification and framing will enable us to present 'the transformation' of the curriculum –a 'messaging system' through which the official educational knowledge is disseminated. We indicate that, in Greece, the main curriculum in primary education is regulated and implemented via the strong classifications and framings of a collection code, which is depicted in the current curriculum (Bernstein, 1989; Government Gazette 303/B/13-03-2003; Koustourakis, 2007).

In Bernstein's theory, the pedagogic discourse in the educational field expresses the dominant regulative discourse which concerns order. In other words, the pedagogic discourse is a principle that, in turn, includes authority and social control principles (Bernstein, 1989). In fact, in order to control and supervise educational action within the educational field, Bernstein refers to a control mechanism that he calls 'insulation maintainers'. This control mechanism consists of School Principals, School Advisors, or, in the case of the RFRE, Refugee Education Coordinators (RECs). It is specified that RECs who work in RFRE in Greece perform duties that ensure the proper functioning of the schools which host refugee students (Ministerial Decision 139654/ΓΔ4, Article 6).

The main mission of the pedagogic discourse is the recontextualization function (Bernstein, 1989). Bernstein defines and links the concept of recontextualization to the process of selecting and transferring knowledge from the places where it is produced to the places where it is disseminated. The process of recontextualizing conveyed knowledge is essential; it is not just a transformation for the purposes of teaching, but it constitutes the basis for the formulation of pedagogic practices, which, in turn, define the unification of the macro- and the micro-level (education policy field – school classroom). According to Bernstein, training is characterized as a process of 'inclusion' and recontextualization of the knowledge that agents (teachers) convey within the dominant code (Bernstein, 1989, pp. 230-231). In this sense, training constitutes the secondary framework of reproduction of the disseminated knowledge, where recontextualized texts and practices are transferred from the primary

production framework, i.e. the 'mental field' of the education system, to the field of the implementation of teacher training (Bernstein, 1989, 1995; Moore, 2004; Sakkoulis, Asimaki, & Vergidis, 2018; Tsatsaroni & Koulaidis, 2010; Young, 2003;). Thus, the need to upgrade the educational process to the new reality of the intercultural school necessitates teacher training, confirming that teachers' initial education does not suffice, as it does not meet the needs that arise during their working life. In this respect, new ideas, new texts and new practices have to be created, developed and placed within the recontextualization framework, such as texts and practices which address the new educational needs of intercultural education (Bernstein, 1989, p. 231).

Pedagogic practices express *what* (content) is conveyed and *how* it is conveyed (ways in which it is transferred) in the educational process. They mainly manifest within the communicative framework of the school classroom. However, despite the fact that they express the micro-level, they are formulated on the basis of the structural features of the macro-level (Lamnias, 2002). The substantial logic of every pedagogical relationship depends on the close relation among three basic rules: the hierarchical rules, which concern the obedience to rules of conduct and ethics on the part of students; the sequencing rules, which concern students' expected progress at specified time intervals; and the criterial rules, which concern students' fulfillment of the assessment criteria. On a broader level, hierarchical rules are called regulatory rules, and sequencing, pacing and criterial rules are called instructional rules. In every pedagogical relationship, the essence of the relationship lies in the assessment of the performance of the recipient's ability (Bernstein, 1989, 2003). Finally, when the regulatory and instructional rules are explicit and the classification and framing values are high (C++/C+, F++/F+), a kind of pedagogic practice, called 'visible pedagogy', is produced. However, when the regulatory and instructional rules are implicit and the classification and framing values are low (C- -/C-, F- - /F-), a kind of pedagogic practice which Bernstein calls 'invisible pedagogy' is produced (Bernstein, 1989, 2003). In this sense, questions arise regarding the sociological approach and interpretation of the pedagogic practices implemented by the teachers who work at the RFRE within the specific spatio-temporal framework of this research.

3. Research Questions - Methodology

This research focused on the following research questions:

• Are primary education teachers who work in RFRE sufficiently trained, and how does their training contribute to the educational process?

• Which pedagogic practices do RFRE teachers follow in their educational work?

In order to answer the above questions, we used the case study research strategy. This strategy has its own identity, is purposive and has spatio-temporal limits. That is, it is a procedure in which a case is studied and evolved within the same spatio-temporal framework (Robson, 2007; Stake, 1995). This research studies the case of a primary education RFRE in Greece, in the school year 2016-2017, in order to research the RFRE teachers' training paths and pedagogic practices. The research lasted from April to May 2017.

The purposive sampling strategy was used to select the research agents and conduct our research (Creswell, 2011; Patton, 2002). In particular, the sample consisted of two primary education teachers (female) who worked in the school classrooms of the RFRE. It is noted that the average age of the research agents that participated in our research was 26 years. We focused on prior training courses that these teachers had probably attended, and we realized that only one teacher had attended a short, 20-hour training course (offered by a private body) on the teaching of Greek as a foreign language.

In order to study the matter at hand more extensively and to show the opinions of the teachers who participated in our research, we used the semi-structured interview research tool. During the data collection, we took research ethics into consideration. In particular, the participants were informed about the purpose of the research and consented to take part in it. The anonymity of the research agents was also ensured (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Creswell, 2012). After the interviews were completed and the data was collected, the content analysis method was used (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007; Iosifidis, 2008). We categorized our data with the subject matter as the recording unit, remaining with the obvious content of the text (Kyriazi, 2011; Robson, 2007). Finally, based on the research purpose and the theoretical framework, we created two analysis categories and one subcategory:

    A. *The training of RFRE teachers.*

    B. *The applications of the regulatory and instructional rules of invisible pedagogy.*

    B1. *The 'weakening' of the collection code.*

4. Data presentation and Analysis

4.1 The training of RFRE teachers

The recontextualization of knowledge offered through training, as it is recorded in the official pedagogical discourse, is the process via which the selection and transfer of knowledge, from where it is produced to where it is disseminated, is analyzed and interpreted. According to Bernstein (1989, 2000), teacher training is mainly implemented via the action of the *official pedagogic framework of recontextualization*; this includes all the official state institutions and factors, which shape and implement the educational policy. Thus, these factors are responsible for selecting and formulating the training programs offered to the teachers who are to staff the RFRE. The testimonies of the agents of our research reveal that the official pedagogic framework of recontextualization (state institutions and official state training bodies) has not supported teachers with appropriate training programs; as a result, they were placed in the RFRE without receiving support in the form of training. The following testimonies are indicative:

> '...nothing... we were not given any training by the Ministry' (Teacher 1 - T1).

> 'I was placed in the RFRE while I had no special skills and without having received any training by the Ministry' (T2).

However, the teachers' testimonies show that, after a long period of time when the RFRE had begun functioning, the Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs (official recontextualization field) implemented a short, distance learning seminar to meet the

teachers' training needs. Some of the teachers of our sample state:

> *'I started attending this seminar offered by the Ministry via Skype… which, however, did not help me at all; it was nothing special'* (T1).

> *'Actually, except a 2-hour seminar given at the end of February, while the school had started two months ago and we had figured out how to teach by ourselves, the Ministry conducted a live 2-hour seminar via Skype for all the RFRE teachers… that's all'* (T2).

Regarding the content of the recontextualized knowledge offered by the Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs, the teachers who participated in our research mention:

> *'At the seminar we were told that we could help the refugee students by teaching phonology, vocabulary or anything that corresponds to the B2 level of the Greek language. However, the children know nothing; they just know how to say "Good morning, how are you?". So the seminar was completely useless'* (T1).

> *'Teachers who had some personal experience talked to us in the seminar… They told us how they perceive things, that we should love children and approach them mostly emotionally… This seminar was not in the least helpful'* (T2).

Therefore, the content of the 2-hour seminar that these teachers received by the official state body did not manage to contribute to the educational process in the RFRE. The following extract is characteristic of this:

> *'At the seminar, they told us things that did not help us because we already knew them. We had been there for two months and had found our own methods and ways to approach and teach the students'* (T2).

While indicating the ineffectiveness of the seminar provided by the Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs, the teachers of our sample also stress that they need to receive adequate training by the official pedagogic field, as shown by the following statements:

> *'I would attend a seminar because one needs help in order to achieve something in the RFRE. I tried to do some things on my own and I was disappointed with the results. One has to receive help somehow… to be ready to teach such an intercultural classroom'* (T1).

> *'I entered the class without having received any other help or support. I worked mostly by experience. The Ministry was nonexistent; I would like to get more help, especially in matters of intercultural education…'* (T2).

Moreover, the Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs appointed the RECs as 'insulation maintainers', to act as links between the RFRE and the Ministry and to supervise the transmission of the official pedagogic discourse via the teachers' pedagogic practices (Bernstein, 1989; Solomon, 1994). The teachers who participated in our research make negative references to the REC's presence at the RFRE during the school year 2016-2017 and

explicitly state that the REC minimally filled the gap in their knowledge.

> *'The REC's presence was mostly typical and did not help me at all. The only thing (s)he did was to inform me about the exact number of children who came to school every day'* (T1).

> *'We were not in touch with anyone. What is more, the education coordinator, who was supposed to help us, came to school at the end of May-beginning of June. So what would she teach me at the end of the school year?'* (T2).

4.2 The applications of the regulatory and instructional rules of invisible pedagogy

According to Bernstein's (1989) theoretical framework, the internal logic of the pedagogic practices results from the formulation and combination of the regulative and instructional rules. The nature of these rules functions selectively within the pedagogic practices and shapes them accordingly.

The teachers of our sample describe an introductory phase of adaptation to the particular RFRE classroom before adopting their pedagogic practices, in order to be able to 'decode' the pedagogic framework within which they would implement these practices, as shown by the following representative statements:

> *'The first weeks I worked at the RFRE I mostly used body language to approach my students. I had no choice; I had to find a way to teach'* (T1).

> *'First of all, we did not know what we would encounter –neither did the refugee students. Initially, school was like a grace period; we experimented and judged which teaching practice was the most appropriate'* (T2).

However, after decoding the pedagogic framework, and after a necessary period of adaptation, it seems that the teachers of our sample began to use their pedagogic practices. Their statements show that they intended to use group work at the beginning of their teaching work:

> *'Based on my prior school experience, I immediately divided students into groups, since every classroom had a small number of students'* (T1).

> *'I had in mind what I was taught in University –that it is a good pedagogic practice to have students in groups, i.e. to use the method of group work. As such, I immediately divided students into groups'* (T2).

Nevertheless, this pedagogic practice seemed to be ineffective for the refugee students and constituted an obstacle to the development of the educational process:

> *'After all, I could not teach students in groups; it wasn't possible because, as I learned and realized, these children were taught in a very strict, teacher-centered manner at their school in Syria'* (T1).

> *'Group work was ineffective at the RFRE because these children had been used to a teacher-centered manner of teaching in Syria'* (T2).

> *'...group work did not work at all. Therefore, 'improvisation' is the magic word'* (T1).

According to recent studies (Hos, 2014, 2016), the Syrian curriculum does not provide students with socioemotional or practical support, but only with academic support. Solely the teacher-centered method is used in the school classrooms; this method discourages students' active participation and the development of critical thinking. As a result of this situation, it seems that the teachers of our research reformulated their initial practices and adapted them accordingly, taking into consideration the refugee students' teaching experiences.

As regards the educational process, the teachers apply implicit instructional rules (F-), leaving plenty of room for negotiation with the refugee students over the start of everyday teaching (Bernstein, 1989, p. 115):

> *'There were many times when we made deals in order for the students to go into the classroom, so that the lesson could begin, depending on the day and their mood. I used whatever I could to begin the lesson'* (T2).

The interviews of the research agents reveal that the teaching time in this RFRE was arranged via the 'cooperation' of the transmitters (teachers) with the recipients (refugee students). This means that the teaching time was organized and allocated via implicit instructional rules (Bernstein, 1989).

> *'We agreed that in the beginning they would play, eat and relax for fifteen minutes. Then, we planned to have 45-minute lessons, for as long as they would take it'* (T1).

Moreover, the findings of this research reveal that neither the sequencing rules, which regulate the time allocated to cover the syllabus, were specified (Bernstein, 1989, p. 118). The teachers of the sample state that:

> *'In the beginning it was very difficult because I was responsible for teaching, among others, little children who knew nothing anyway. But we had plenty of time to study and read every day without any time pressure to finish the lesson'* (T1).

> *'The teaching pace was sometimes normal and sometimes very slow. But there was no time pressure, as is the case in mainstream schools'* (T2).

The pacing rules linked to the rhythm of knowledge acquisition by the refugee students are described by the teachers of the sample as completely 'weakened':

> *'I don't want to introduce students to something totally new to them. Many times, however, we did the same things over and over again, especially when I perceived that they could not understand them'* (T1).

> *'We started by mostly looking at pictures and discussed what each picture showed. We learned the basic vocabulary and, in this way, we progressed slowly but steadily'* (T2).

According to Bernstein (1989, pp. 116, 121-122), the criterial rules are the ones which concern the verification that the official educational knowledge is acquired by students in a valid manner. In this study, it was shown that conventional assessment was replaced with the

research of each student's learning progress, which teachers tracked by interacting with the refugee students every day.

> *'There was no reason why either we or the children should be pressed. I had no form of assessment in mind. I evaluated each student's progress only by continuously interacting during the lesson'* (T1).

> *'If you are talking about a test, about a final assessment, no, there isn't such a thing! Continuous interaction in the classroom showed me what was going on, what each student had learned'* (T2).

The research findings revealed that, in the case of this RFRE, there was no clear curriculum which would constitute the regulative principle behind the adoption of the research agents' teaching practice:

> *'Is there a curriculum? We have nothing. That is, there are no officially defined written objectives. What is more, there are no school books, which are supposed to fulfill the teaching aims of a curriculum'* (T1).

> *'What is the curriculum?* (she laughs) *We are talking about something ideal which exists only in our imagination. So, there is no curriculum here! And don't get me started on the nonexistent school books'* (T2).

4.3 The 'weakening' of the collection code

The teachers who participate in our research seem to use pedagogic practices that tend to a form of integrated pedagogic code. This is because, via loose framings as shown by their testimonies, they change the nature of the 'authority' relations between transmitters (teachers) and recipients (students) in the pedagogic relationship, thus increasing the recipients' rights (Bernstein, 1989, p. 68).

The integrated code of educational knowledge offers more flexibility regarding the ways of knowledge acquisition. This means that it reduces the transmitter's authority over the conveyed knowledge and it increases the recipient's authority, thus changing the power relationship between the transmitter and the recipient in the educational process (Bernstein, 1989, p. 76). The teachers of our research state the following:

> *'We were a big group. Every day we played in the classroom and they hugged me all the time. I was something different for them* [refugee students]*; something new and more approachable…'* (T1).

> *'They didn't regard me as the teacher they had back in Syria –the strict, dogmatic, unapproachable teacher'* (T2).

The development of cooperative teaching relationships between the RFRE teachers is also interesting. In particular, the teachers cooperated to devise a way in which they would convey the information included in the Greek Language and Mathematics subjects. The cooperative relationship was built on the initiative of the teachers who worked in this school. Therefore, the teachers of this RFRE moved in the direction of an integrated code, despite their exposure

the collection code which dominates the Greek education system, and they also took the necessary pedagogic actions (Bernstein, 1989; Koustourakis, 2007).

'I had an excellent cooperation with my colleague and this is very important because we sometimes co-taught Greek Language and Mathematics' (T1).

'*Every time my colleague and I co-taught a subject, it went very well*' (T2).

The result of this educational partnership was the reduction of the refugee students' assessment criteria. According to Bernstein (1989), the assessment criteria are not explicit and specific in an integrated code. They are associated with students' active participation and with their will to actively take part in the educational process. This is realized within a pedagogical relationship that encourages creativity and spontaneity, and which does not put emphasis on the students' final product. Rather, the focus is on the process of knowledge acquisition on the part of students (Bernstein, 1989). In this light, the teachers who participated in our research mention the following regarding the assessment of the refugee students:

'When I taught the lesson together with my colleague, everything changed … It was as if the children's motivation changed. They tried harder and participated actively … We told them how beautiful the pictures they drew were and had them talk about these pictures in any way they could, even by using body language. For me, this was an achievement!' (T1).

'We didn't care if they would learn how to do division; we let them freely express their thoughts and told them how interesting they were. This is how we assessed them. What mattered to us was their participation and their will to learn even the slightest thing … I saw their effort and felt that I was useful' (T2).

The research data showed that the teachers of the RFRE that we studied promoted an integrated code via the development of a cooperative relationship. They did this through the adoption of specific pedagogic practices which provided refugee students with continuous feedback and motivation for learning, by using their knowledge, experience, skills and interests (Bernstein, 1989; Ntoliopoulou & Gourgiotou, 2008).

5. Discussion - Conclusions

This research paper has aimed to search the training adequacy of primary education teachers who worked in RFRE in the school year 2016-2017 and to observe the training contribution to the educational process. Moreover, we intended to examine the pedagogic practices that these RFRE teachers used when they performed their duty at the micro-level of the school classroom.

Regarding the first research question, it has been shown that the teachers of the sample hold a clear, strong opinion about the main cause of the problems they encountered when they were placed at the RFRE. It seems that the systematic in-service training, as a component of the recontextualized discourse, which was not offered to them by the official pedagogic framework of recontextualization (Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs),

constituted an insurmountable obstacle for the fulfillment of their duty and the proper function of the RFRE (Bernstein, 1989, 2000).

The lack of systematic training and on-site support of the teachers led the Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs to some interventions and corrective actions, such as a short training program and the placement of the RECs, via whom an effort was made to support and communicate with the teachers. In particular, after the lessons had long started at the RFRE, the Ministry organized a short training-informative program via teleconference. However, the teachers who participated in our research explicitly stated that this training program was not appropriate for their support in this new educational endeavor, because its content did not address their training needs. The content of this short training mainly pertained to the trainers' personal views and experiences and not to teaching practices relating to the provision of intercultural education. As a consequence of this 'problematic' situation and according to our research data, the recontextualized discourse transferred to the RFRE teachers via the training program did not manage to convey the 'what' (content) and the 'how' (pedagogic practices) of the educational process (Bernstein, 1989, 2000).

Regarding the RECs, the research findings showed that they did not manage to fulfil their role. This proves that the particular institution was not able to improve and empower the teachers in matters of training and teaching practice, so that they could fulfil their daily needs at the micro-level of the school classroom in this RFRE.

The teachers of the sample expressed the need to be trained in matters of intercultural education on their own. Moreover, they tried to fill the gap in their knowledge by themselves and to overcome the obstacles they encountered because of the lack of effective training actions on the subject of their work. These findings also agree with the research conducted by Papanaoum (2003, pp. 22-23), where it is characteristically stated that teachers *'...need training in subjects which they have been barely taught during their studies, but which prove to be particularly important for their work, as shown by their experience'*.

Regarding the teaching practices that the RFRE teachers use, we found that the regulative and instructional rules tended to the principles of invisible pedagogy (Bernstein, 1989). Moreover, the research findings showed that the pedagogic practices used by the transmitters are dominated by weak classifications (C--/C-) and framings (F--/F-). The weakening of the classification and framing values usually takes place within an integrated code so that, as Bernstein (1989) characteristically indicates, it can encourage the refugee students to actively participate in the educational process (Bernstein, 1989, 2000).

In more detail, the instructional rules were implicit and seemed to tend to invisible pedagogy. The way in which the teachers of the research organized and allocated time showed that the instructional rules were 'blurred' (Bernstein, 1989). Besides, the school unit timetable reflects the priorities of the school, and it gives an indication of the daily and weekly school structure and of the way in which teaching time is organized. In this light, it seemed that the timetable organization and management was decided together with the students and left room for the negotiation of an agreement between the transmitters and the recipients in the pedagogical relationship. Additionally, in the case of the pacing rules, we found flexible sequencing rules

regarding the allocation of teaching time that is provided in order to cover the syllabus. According to the data of this research, the teachers were not trapped into the inflexible use of time and did not regard time as an obstacle to the fulfillment of the teaching objectives, as they were not asked to follow a specific curriculum. Our findings do not agree with other research conducted in the Greek educational field, which shows that most times teachers experience high work-related stress because they are pushed to follow a specific curriculum within a defined and usually strict time limit (Antoniou, 2006; Pappa, 2006, pp. 137-138). A similar condition was found to prevail over the sequencing rules. Flexibility and adaptability characterize every effort of planning the educational process on the part of teachers, thus revealing the 'weakened' sequence as regards the organization and arrangement of the time frame in which knowledge is spread.

Regarding the assessment criteria of the refugee students, we have found that the teachers of this research had difficulty in precisely defining them. Their statements revealed that they were orientated towards student assessment through a continuous process which aimed to increase the children's learning effort, to encourage their initiative and spontaneity and to significantly decrease every external force. A social-pedagogical relationship of continuing interaction between the teacher and the students seemed to have been built in this way; in this relationship, the teacher acted as the 'facilitator' for the transmission of knowledge (Bernstein, 1989, pp. 121-122).

Coming to the end of our conclusions, it is evident that, while the Greek primary education system is governed by a collection code (C++/C+/F++/F+), in this case study this code was weakened through the application of principles that tend to an integrated code. This was evident from the way in which knowledge was conveyed to the students and from the refugee students' evaluation (F--/F-) (Bernstein, 1989, 2000).

Training is a key issue in an innovative structure for the Greek education system, such as the RFRE, as it is an essential prerequisite so that teachers can acquire appropriate knowledge and practices for their teaching work. Our findings are close to similar research, which supports that teachers have to be continuously equipped with the essential theoretical knowledge and practical skills and experiences in order to effectively perform their teaching and social duty (Horenczyk & Tatar, 2002; Xochellis, 2005).

As the refugee flows are constantly increasing in Greece, and needs arise regarding the creation of new reception facilities for the education of refugees, it is of interest to study the organization and function of the education services that are provided to them. Actually, it would be interesting for such a research to focus on Greece but also on Italy and Spain, which are the refugees' gates of entry to the European Union.

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Notes

1. Training needs consist of two core components: the subjective component, which concerns teachers' awareness of lacking some knowledge and skills, and the objective component, which concerns the amendment of the curriculum and the school books, but also the introduction of new technologies to schools etc. (Vergidis, 2003).

2. The purpose of intercultural education is defined as *'the organization and function of primary and secondary education school units in order to give education to students with educational, social, cultural or learning particularities'* (Law 2413/96 - Article 34).