

narcissistically. When Nitsa begins to hit back, Vasili is in shock. He consults with the local priest (the "Father"), who provides his own phobic views of women, and suggests that the violence be increased. But, Nitsa is a worthy opponent of the patriarchy as represented by her husband and the priest (who is also Nitsa's uncle), and during a beating in her husband's restaurant, she scoops up a meat cleaver. The story ends with a stunning rationalization, as a hospitalized Vasili's outrage and fear transforms into even greater narcissism.

I had fancied myself married to a mortal woman and instead was united to a Goddess, a fierce Diana, a cyclonic Juno! I realized with a shock of recognition that one eagle had found another, perched on Olympian peaks, high above the obscure valley of pigeons and sheep. O fortunate woman! You have gained my mercy and forbearance and have proven to my satisfaction that you deserve my virile love and are worthy of my intrepid manhood!

Many readers of Petrakis' short story who have had extended dealings with Greek men will find elements in the portrayal of Vasili that they recognize. Of course, Greek-American literature is full of portrayals of pathological male aggressiveness and female dependency. My clinical experience does not indicate an age or class dimension to this. This does not mean that Greek Americans have any more or less problems in living out their relationships than other ethnic groups. In fact, the research discussed in the beginning of this paper may be an indicator of American psychology's phallogentrism. My intent in this paper is to point out that most of us are unconsciously harboring thoughts and feelings about women that we often deny, rationalize, and repress at the expense of a full understanding of what is going on. It is as if we sweep these feelings under the rug—only to trip over them at some point in the future.

I started with comments about the male norm and the need to understand the paradox of gender in its social ecology. Next, I offered some observations about the development of the female self and the male self. Finally, I used a Greek-American short story to highlight a narcissistic feature of the Greek male's personality. Obviously, I have left out a great deal with regard to gender arrangements and psychoanalytic explanations. Mature gender arrangements in our time, place, and culture, depend on mutuality. It is my belief that excessive dependency or independence gets human beings in trouble. Genuine mutuality results when we overcome unconscious projections, repressed fantasies, and unrealistic expectations. The relationships of Greek-American women and men are subject to these dynamics and need to be further explored.

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## The Pursuit of Greek Bilingual Education

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JOHN SPIRIDAKIS

ONE WOULD HAVE EXPECTED THAT THE EMERGENCE OF BILINGUAL education in the public schools of the United States would have been enthusiastically welcomed by the Greek community. Bilingual education elevated the status of certain ethnic languages in the classroom by utilizing them as the medium of instruction. Greek immigrants had focused their efforts on maintaining the Greek language in this new country since their arrival. However, the resurgence of ethnic identity, awareness, language, and bilingual education which characterized the 1960s ironically brought a measure of conflict to certain Greek ethnic enclaves in American society.<sup>1</sup> This paper focuses on the reaction to Greek bilingual education in the Greek-American community centered in Astoria, Queens, one of the largest of its kind in the United States.

The love and devotion of Greeks in general for their native language is a deep-rooted cultural phenomenon. The literature of ancient Greece offers young Greeks a comprehensive and potent rendition of their rich heritage. The vital historical expressions of Greek heritage, culture, and tradition have survived and have been preserved throughout centuries, despite the assault of various external and destructive internal social forces. The four centuries of oppression and enslavement of the Greek people and their land is well known. Their lives endangered, the Greeks

<sup>1</sup> On a description of Greek bilingual education and its variety of types see: C. J. Ovan-  
do, and V. P. Collier, *Bilingual and ESL Classrooms* (New York, 1985); J. Spiridakis,  
"Greek bilingual education: Policies and possibilities," *Education and Greek-Americans:  
Process and Prospects* (New York, 1987); S. K. Orfanos, H. J. Psomiades, and J.  
Spiridakis (eds.), *Education and Greek-Americans: Process and Prospects* (New York,  
1988), pp. 73-90; J. Spiridakis. An overview of Greek Bilingual Education Practices.  
Paper presented at the Hellenic Scientists Association of Boston's Fifth Annual Sym-  
posium, October 1-2, 1988. Reprint.



still managed to preserve their language and the sacred and holy artifacts of their Greek nationality. The famous "Krifo Scholio" (underground school) which operated clandestinely under the cover of darkness for hundreds of years while Greece was occupied, came to symbolize the courageous struggle of the Greeks to retain their language and culture. This nocturnal secret schooling phase in Greece was memorialized in the following popular poem:

"Fengaraki mou lambro  
Fege mou na perpato  
Na pigeno sto scholio  
Na matheno gramata. . . ."

"My bright little moon  
Light my path that I may walk  
To go to school  
To learn to read and write. . . ."

The earliest Greek immigrants to America made extraordinary sacrifices to maintain their roots, language, and religion. The creation of Greek Orthodox churches was accompanied by the initiation of Greek "afternoon" parochial school systems. Early on, these schools were usually comprised of meager one-room school houses in which teachers taught Greek immigrant offspring the language of their ancestors. Following the first large wave of Greek immigration in 1767 to New Smyrna (Nea Smirni), Florida, the first Greek school was founded in 1777 in the neighboring city of St. Augustine. It is reported that the first teacher and headmaster of this school, which still stands over two hundred years later, was John Giannopoulos.<sup>2</sup>

Between 1870 and 1934, new waves of Greek immigrants came to the United States. The overall population of Greek-Americans increased and Greek-American communities multiplied. Greek parochial schooling became institutionalized in American society, offering the Greek language to Greek-American children in afternoon schools which operated after the English curriculum public school day ended. These schools were initiated by the local Greek Orthodox church and supported and assisted by the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North and South America. Greek Parochial "Day" schools also began to emerge in major cities such as New York, Chicago, San Francisco, and Boston,

<sup>2</sup> For a history of Greeks in America which includes a discussion of Greek education see: T. Saloutos, *The Future of the Greek Language in the United States* (Cambridge, 1960); B. Malafouris, *Greeks in America, 1527-1948* (New York, 1948); P. D. Bardsis, *The Future of the Greek Language in the United States* (San Francisco, 1976); J. A. Fishman, et al. *The Rise and Fall of the Ethnic Revival* (New York, 1985).

also operating, with few exceptions, under the supervision of the local Greek Orthodox church and the Education Department of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese in New York City.

During the period of time between World War II and 1960, when a new group of immigrants arrived from Greece, a concern and insecurity manifested itself in Greek-American circles about Greek education. Leaders in Greek-American communities sought and proposed various programs, methods, and ideas to address the perception that the Greek language in the United States was in danger of becoming extinct.

In 1954 at the Clergy-Laity Conference held in Savannah, Georgia, the establishment of a Greek University in America was voted upon amidst heated discussion regarding the challenge of preserving the Greek language in the United States. Fearful that the cost of maintaining such an institution of higher education would be too high, many members at this conference argued that available funds would be better spent nurturing Greek language learning at the elementary and secondary levels of education.

In the 1959 issue of the Greek-American magazine *The Argonaut*, the well-known editor of a Greek daily newspaper, clergyman, and author, Dr. Demetrios Kalimachos, noted the following:

And who doesn't want the Greek University for the purpose of propagating the language of Greek wisdom and Greek civilization in America? . . . however . . . regarding the question in *The Argonaut*, I wish to respond not with dreams, but with the actual tragic numbers. . . .

Perhaps I should emphasize that it is my nature to be an optimist. Nonetheless, I foresee insurmountable problems when I consider that among one million fellow Greeks in America, only a mere 2,000 of our children are studying the Greek language in the few existing Greek (parochial) day schools . . . [Translated from the Greek].<sup>3</sup>

This atmosphere of uncertainty and tension concerning the survival of Greek language in America, greeted another wave of Greek immigrants arriving in the 1960s and 1970s. These newcomers energetically and ambitiously sought to strengthen the Greek-American communities they became a part of. In New York City in the 1960s, and especially in the Astoria, Queens neighborhood, local Greek ethnic organizations proliferated, the enrollment of Greek parochial afternoon and day schools was at its peak, and Greek could be heard in shops, in homes, and on the streets in the community.

<sup>3</sup> D. Kallimachos, "The Impossible Dream: The Greek University in the United States," *The Argonaut* (New York, 1963). The author acknowledges Alex Spiridakis for his research and translation from the Greek of this article. See also, A. Spiridakis, "History of the National Herald," *The National Herald, 1915-1979* (New York, 1979).



In 1968, the Congress of the United States passed revolutionary legislation known as "The Bilingual Education Act" or Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.<sup>4</sup> The Act called for "entitled" public school students of various ethnolinguistic backgrounds to be taught their native language, as well as *through* their native language, along with English as a second language. Many minority groups living in America endorsed and embraced this legislation which was aimed at making the education of children with limited proficiency in English a more effective one. In the Greek-American sector of Astoria this federal legislation, along with its New York State and city counterpart regulations, opened a Pandora's box of new fears, suspicion, and insecurity related to the means of preserving the Greek language, and to the role of public schools in Greek education.

Bilingual education in the 1960s was America's formal recognition of the need of minority and ethnic groups to maintain their language and cultural attributes; in principle, it legitimized the linguistic and cultural contributions of America's ethnolinguistic groups to American society; it fostered an atmosphere of cultural pluralism as opposed to an unswerving assimilationist policy which would negate linguistic and cultural diversity in the context of American schools and society.

For Greek Americans who felt a strong loyalty to the Greek language and treasured their ethnic identity and nationality, the emergence of public school bilingual education presented a marvelous opportunity in the pursuit of Greek language maintenance and development.

In New York City, as in other Greek-American communities throughout the United States, Greek bilingual education had been the exclusive domain of the Greek Orthodox church, with few exceptions, since the inception of Greek language schooling in the United States in the 1800s. In the 1960s, the Greek parochial bilingual day schools as well as the afternoon Greek language classes conducted for Greek-American public schools students, were usually controlled and operated by representatives of the local Greek Orthodox church. Church-centered communities elected boards which would oversee the structure and organization of the Greek parochial school education administration.

The Greek-bilingual day parochial schools in New York utilized only English as the medium of instruction for teaching the mandated curriculum, the basic subject areas required to be taught. In addition to the English language curriculum of the day schools, approximately one hour out

<sup>4</sup> J. Crawford, *Bilingual Education: History, Politics, Theory and Practice* (Trenton, 1989).

of the six hours of daily subject matter instruction, was relegated to Greek language instruction, including history, culture, and religion. The local church boards utilized funds drawn from church community dues and tuition to erect school buildings, hire principals, teachers, custodial staff, and ancillary personnel, and to purchase books and materials. In most cases, textbooks for the Greek classes of the day and afternoon schools were obtained from Greece, and were the same textbooks used in elementary and secondary school in Greece. Many teachers of Greek in New York City parochial schools had been educated in the two-year teacher's college system in Greece. The appropriateness of the textbooks and teacher-training insofar as the teaching of Greek to Greek-American second, and third, generation children was questionable, given the research on second language acquisition and the importance of cultural relevance and motivation in second language learning.<sup>5</sup>

The Greek teachers, the Greek curriculum, and the texts utilized in the day and afternoon schools each reflected a bent for Greek as a *first* language. A few of the teachers had received some training in teaching Greek as a second or foreign language, utilizing methods that foreign language teachers in public schools were using. However, the characteristics of the typical Greek-American parochial school students varied; entry-level Greek language proficiency ranged from native-like oral language proficiency to little or no Greek proficiency. Most of the students fell in the middle range of having some oral proficiency in Greek, enough to communicate with parents, grandparents, or relatives on a basic interpersonal level.

The Education Department of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese ostensibly represented a central agency which would help ensure the integrity of the Greek language component of the parochial day and afternoon schools throughout the United States. Housed at the Archdiocese headquarters in New York City, this department has consisted of one person and an assistant since its inception. His Eminence, Archbishop Iakovos, also created an education board which served as an arm of the Education Department. This board has been comprised of community leaders and educators from New York, and also other parts of the country and Canada where feasible. The Education Department's role and practical impact in promoting Greek language education has been limited, since each parochial school system has been operated independently, and has had its own education board which was usually a subset of the community church board.

The Education Department did sponsor, with the assistance of its

<sup>5</sup> J. Spiridakis, "The effects of Greek cultural units drawn from the popular arts on Greek-American student attitudes toward, and knowledge of the Greek culture." Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Florida State University, Florida (1978).



board, certain yearly functions such as "Greek Letters Day" and occasional workshops for Greek teachers in New York, which have typically been concerned with themes of Greek literature, religion, and classicism, rather than issues of methodology for teaching Greek as a second language and as an ethnic culture.

The Greek parochial day schools reflected an unfortunate disparity between the English language and Greek language curricula, and the methods and materials utilized by the English and Greek language teachers. In most cases, the English language curriculum, materials, and methodology reflected more innovation and reform than the Greek component, since most of the English teachers usually had the benefit of American college educational training, and curricula and materials that were on the cutting edge of educational reform in the United States.<sup>6</sup>

The appropriation of federal funds for public school bilingual education programs and training increased each year after the initial passage of the Bilingual Education Act of 1968. These funds were largely allocated to Spanish-speaking communities throughout the United States. However, by the 1970s, other smaller American ethnolinguistic communities, such as the Greek community of Astoria, New York, sought and obtained funding to participate in this public school approach which utilized two languages of instruction, English and Greek.

In the 1970s, in New York City, there were over one thousand Greek children in the public schools identified as limited English speaking who were eligible to participate in bilingual education classes. The number of such children was due to the increased number of Greek immigrants to the United States and New York City. For various reasons, these immigrant families, like immigrant families before them, enrolled their children in public schools rather than the day parochial schools.

In the Astoria community (which included other neighborhoods in its periphery), the administrators of Public School District 30 realized that the influx of limited English proficient (LEP) Greek immigrant children warranted the same treatment as LEP youngsters of Latino, Asian, Italian, and other ethnolinguistic backgrounds. Under the leadership of an innovative Greek-American school district administrator and her staff, proposals were written and funding obtained to institute Greek-English bilingual education classes throughout the public schools

<sup>6</sup> For a discussion of current trends and issues in Greek language education see: S. Sarantopoulos, "Modern Greek Education: A New Audience," *Journal of Modern Hellenism*, 7 (1990) 117-74; E. Konstantellou, "Education as a Means of Empowerment for Minority Cultures: Strategies for the Greek-American Community," *Journal of Modern Hellenism*, 7 (1990) 125-39; S. D. Orfanos and S. J. Tsemberis, "A Needs Assessment of Greek-American Schools," *Education and Greek-Americans*, pp. 185-203.

of Astoria. This unprecedented action, arising in other states as well, created the need for hiring specially trained Greek-English bilingual educators, organizing bilingual classes, and developing Greek-English curricula and materials which subsumed modern, appropriate methodology and relevant cultural themes.<sup>7</sup>

Funds were also obtained for the New York City Board of Education to screen and identify Greek bilingual teachers, from institutions of higher education such as St. John's University and Florida State University to set up training and scholarship programs for bilingual educators at the undergraduate and graduate levels, and for the development of a Greek bilingual curriculum and materials center.<sup>8</sup> In Greek-English bilingual education classes, the basic curriculum was taught to limited English-speaking students in Greek and English, often utilizing newly created or adapted bilingual curricula, texts, and materials. English was taught in these classes using up-to-date methods for teaching English to speakers of other languages, called "TESOL."

In the Astoria community, there was a mixed reaction in the Greek-American community to public school Greek bilingual education. There were those parents and community members who endorsed and welcomed the effort to teach the Greek immigrant children using their first language. There were those who recognized the role of Greek bilingual education in helping such children to maintain their Greek language and identity. Many newly-arrived Greek immigrants welcomed the idea of escaping the tuition requirement of the parochial schools, which were the only alternative for Greek language education until the emergence of the public school program. The groups against Greek bilingual education in the public schools were often quite hostile and vocal. There were those Greek-Americans who opposed any form of bilingual education because they saw it as a divisive threat to the fabric of American culture; others opposed it on another emotional ground: for the first time, the Greek language was being utilized to teach children of Greek descent without the control of the Greek Orthodox church. This phenomenon of Greek education on a large scale in New York City without religious influence spelled financial (enrollment) trouble ahead for the day and afternoon Greek parochial schools, according to these opponents of Greek bilingual education in the public schools. In addition, Greek language education in a secular context, divorced from the Greek Ortho-

<sup>7</sup> V. Anemoyanis, "Greek Bilingual Education in Historical Perspective," *The Greek American Community in Transition* (New York, 1982), pp. 171-80.

<sup>8</sup> The Northeast Center for Curriculum Development operated in the Bronx under the auspices of the New York City Board of Education, 1974-1978. Interdisciplinary Greek bilingual curricula and texts were developed for the early childhood grades. Personnel included Constantina Pavlou, John Siolas, and Eugenia Spiridakis.



dox religion, was a disturbing and unacceptable development to proponents of the parochial schools and church control.

Apart from the national politics and controversy shaping bilingual education in the 1970s, was the smaller, localized battlefield of Greek bilingual education in New York City which was most heated for several turbulent years commencing about 1975. Greek-American community leaders and many community members in the Astoria area were not really sure what to make of Greek public school bilingual education. Since it was then in its infancy, those who lined up for and against it usually made arguments grounded in often unclear and limited information available about such innovative programs. The one issue which was clear was that the Greek language was being used and taught in the public sphere. There was fear among community leaders that their church-backed Greek language systems which they worked so hard to create would become weakened. It was feared by many that public Greek bilingual-education programs would further erode the loyalty of the new wave of Greek immigrants who arrived in the 1960s and 1970s to mainstream Greek Orthodoxy. The Greek church was losing its most valued asset and a key source of control and influence, Greek language education in the United States.

Initially, the public school Greek bilingual programs were serving a population of Greek immigrant children who were not the usual clientele of the day parochial schools. In fact, the parochial schools were typically ill-equipped to serve such children. The afternoon schools often enrolled such children, although prior to the 1970s wave of Greek immigration, these classes like the day schools, were comprised of second- and third-generation Greek-American students whose parents sought the enrichment aspect of Greek education, religion, and culture.

A few years after its inception in the public schools of Astoria, second- and third-generation Greek-American parents also began to realize that the public school program offered the possibility of Greek schooling outside of the day and afternoon school system. However, it was a minority of such parents who chose this option. The public bilingual classes in the 1970s and 1980s remained primarily the province of limited English proficient first-generation Greek-speaking (LEP) immigrant children, although a few English proficient (EP) Greek-American and non-Greek-American children could be found in such classes. According to the applicable regulations, these classes could accommodate up to forty percent English proficient (EP) children.

However, public school administrators often did not publicize or encourage this option which would have counteracted the popular view of public bilingual education as "compensatory." The chagrin over public school bilingual education experienced by Greek parochial school

leaders was initially appeased by the fact that only Greek immigrant children that the parochial schools could often not initially assist were enrolled in public school bilingual programs. These leaders and Greek church proponents never realized in the 1970s and 1980s the potential of the public school bilingual programs to seriously attract second- and third-generation children who would have otherwise attended the church school system.

Greek public bilingual education in Astoria faced resistance on several fronts throughout the 1970s and early 80s. The Astoria Greek-American community was a crucible of assimilating second-third- and fourth-generation hyphenated Greek-Americans. For most non-Greek community members, only religion remained as the index of their ethnicity. There were obscure remnants of national identity, but not language identity, for the largely Italian, Irish, and German Catholic mix of the greater Astoria community. At the same time, there were Greek-Americans of third and fourth generations, who had intermarried, or whose only tie to Greek ethnicity was a semi-annual (Christmas and Easter) visit to the Greek Orthodox church, and occasional Greek ethnic yearnings stirred by occasions of special interest such as ethnic conflicts abroad which reached the American media.<sup>9</sup> Fully assimilated Greek community members in Astoria often had no use for the Greek language, just as "English-only" movement activists, colored by their nativism and hostility for all things "foreign," had no use for languages other than English in American social and institutional life. Joining these forces against public Greek bilingual education in Astoria were the advocates of Greek education only in the context of the Greek Orthodox parochial schools. This group saw public Greek bilingual education also as an assault on assimilation, in addition to an assault on the efficacy and survival of the Greek parochial schools and the Greek Orthodox Church.

Public school demonstrations by the above-noted groups against Greek public bilingual programs in the 1970s attempted to thwart the implementation of these programs for which federal, state, and local funds were available. Although the demonstrations to ban such bilingual education were not successful, they did cast a shadow over these programs. Since participation in the bilingual programs in the public schools were optional, many Greek parents opted not to have their children

<sup>9</sup> For a discussion of the linguistic, cultural and religious tenacity, attitudes and values of different generations of Greek Americans, see: C. Constantakos, "The Greek-American Subcommunity," *Education and Greek-Americans*, pp. 35-71; A. Scourby, *The Greek-Americans*; E. C. Vlachos, *The Assimilation of Greeks in the United States* (Athens, Greece, 1968); G. A. Kouvetaris, "The Futuristics of Greek America," *Journal of Modern Hellenism*, 7 (1990).



participate in programs labelled "un-American," programs which they were told would not teach their children enough English to succeed.

Both assimilated Greek-Americans and the newcomers shared the critical and tenacious Greek value of educational achievement. The desire to maintain the Greek language, even for those parents who sent their children to public schools, was evident in the vitality of the Greek afternoon schools. The role of Greek as the medium of instruction for the general public school curriculum was rarely fully accepted by the parents who enrolled their children in the public bilingual education classes. Success in American life required assimilation, at least in the form of learning English properly, and the utilization of Greek beyond that of a language course for its maintenance did not sit well in the minds of many immigrant Greek parents.

The pressure of the English-only in the Greek-American community advocates, the Greek-only through the Greek church schools advocates, and the confusion over the role of the Greek language as a medium of instruction in the public school bilingual education programs, resulted in the limited use of the Greek language as a medium of instruction in the public school. Bilingual public school Greek bilingual teachers also had to deal with principals, school board members, and parents who were determined that Greek would ultimately be used minimally for instruction and that English would prevail in the classroom. Bilingual teachers were thus faced with the decision of whether to comply with the "native" language or bilingual education pedagogy mandated by bilingual program district level supervisors, or to obey the command of their immediate school-based supervisors to follow the English curriculum in English as extensively as possible, even if it meant flouting bilingual education regulations.

The hostilities between the parochial school interest group and the public school camp intensified for awhile due to certain events. Many Greek teachers and English curriculum teachers in the New York City parochial schools took advantage of tuition scholarships made available through federal funding to receive higher education training in Greek bilingual pedagogy. These teachers were able to receive graduate or undergraduate degrees and also to obtain certification or licensing for teaching in the public schools. They were able to learn methods of teaching Greek as a first and second language, and methods of teaching English as a second language, using creative materials and approaches.

Not surprisingly, many of these teachers left the parochial system to fill the vacancies for Greek bilingual teachers in the public schools. Some of the most talented, experienced teachers in the Greek parochial system inevitably responded to the lure of a more secure and financially rewarding career in public education.

The conflict between the parochial school group and the public school supporters also revealed itself in other forms. One recently hired public school Greek teacher was suddenly relieved of her afternoon Greek parochial school post which she had held for many years. In 1980, in an effort to exert power over the public schools to the extent possible, the Greek church community in Astoria endorsed and supported a slate of Greek-American candidates to the nine-member school board of the public school district in Astoria. Two Greek-American candidates, including this writer, were elected. While the public school board of District 30 did not directly have a voice in deciding the hiring of teachers, the board members had power over the administrative staff for personnel. It was apparent that some Greek parochial school teachers who attempted to obtain teaching positions in the public schools met with resistance from certain parochial as well as public school administrators who they believed were influenced by parochial school proponents attempting to stem a feared exodus of teachers.

Many of the parochial school teachers who did obtain positions in the public schools of Public School District 30 and elsewhere had completed graduate or undergraduate education training under the auspices of a federally funded teacher-training grant for Greek bilingual educators. These teachers were exposed to innovative pedagogical concepts and techniques associated with what is termed "reciprocal-interaction" emphasis in education. The "reciprocal-interaction" view of education focused on teaching-learning activities such as "cooperative learning" and "whole language," wherein the students actively participated in the learning process. This emphasis in education replaced "transmission"-oriented pedagogy which characterized the usual classroom approach wherein the teacher lectured or recited the lesson and students were expected to be passive recipients of the knowledge conveyed to them.<sup>10</sup>

The teaching of Greek in the public school programs by the early 1980s was informed by a range of innovative educational theories and practices which the parochial schools Greek programs did not typically enjoy. Moreover, the public school bilingual teachers of Greek were trained to assess the varying levels of Greek language proficiency and to organize their curriculum and lessons based on the linguistic variation of the students in both Greek and English.

This is not to imply that the public school bilingual program was a panacea for Greek education or English language education. There were teachers who had been exposed to modern methods but who

<sup>10</sup>J. Cummins, *Bilingualism and Special Education: Issues in Assessment and Pedagogy* (San Diego, 1984).



nonetheless taught children using inappropriate methods. In addition, the public school bilingual teachers were not always "balanced bilinguals," in that either their own Greek or English language proficiency was less than perfect. Moreover, as noted earlier, the goal of biliteracy was often thwarted by "anti-bilingual education" school administrators.

It appeared in the 1970s, in spite of limited success with certain students, that the Greek language component of the parochial schools was saddled with outdated methods and materials which did not address the linguistic, cultural, and pedagogical needs of students who had limited or varied exposure to the Greek language at home. The textbooks and curricula used in Greece could not be relied on to motivate and cultivate Greek literacy in children for whom Greek was a second language and culture. At the same time, the Greek public school bilingual program wrestled with its problem of articulating its somewhat confusing rationale and implementing well-intended native language approaches in the face of all sorts of obstacles from within and outside of the bilingual program.

It was natural for the parochial school bilingualists to feel slighted by the public school programs. After all, the public schools had the financial resources to attract the best and most talented of educators. It was an uneven playing field, and the complaints of the parochial school bilingualists certainly evoked sympathy. Another response, however, was that the parochial schools were now facing well-deserved competition from the public schools; that the parochial schools had mismanaged their mandate to create a truly bilingual, biliterate, and bicultural Greek-American child and adult; that the public schools offered the chance to Greek immigrants of effectively preserving and legitimizing Greek language and ethnicity in American schools and society. Recently, Greek public bilingual education parents got angry at efforts of the parochial school educators seeking to involve their students in Greek public bilingual education events and conferences.

During the 1980s, out of the mud-slinging emerged a tenuous consensus among the public and private school bilingualists (apologists) that the best interests of both school sectors would be served by the offering of joint workshops and conferences for teachers. In fact, the Education Department of the Archdiocese sponsored such workshops, calling upon teacher-trainers with expertise in the innovative approaches to first and second language education, curriculum development, and bilingual language assessment. Educators from the public schools were also invited.

In Community School District 30, annual city-wide Greek parent conferences were hosted beginning in the 1980s. These conferences

successfully united the Greek community parents in a common cause of achieving the best education for their children. Workshops for parents at these conferences were presented by Greek-American educators and administrators primarily from the public school sector. Children enrolled in the public school Greek-bilingual education programs performed Greek folk dances and gave recitations.

Several years ago, an annual "Bishop's Luncheon" seminar was organized by Bishop Alexios, of the Community of Astoria. The workshops and teacher-training benefitted the teachers of Greek in the public and private sectors. One purpose was to make parochial school Greek teachers more sensitive and responsive to the individual linguistic and intercultural needs of the students; innovative materials for teaching Greek as a second language were introduced in many parochial schools as well.

In the public schools of District 30, Greek bilingual programs gave rise to "maintenance" classes of Greek as a second or first language. These classes enabled children who had completed whatever Greek bilingual program was offered in their school to continue studying the Greek language as another subject. A major failing of the public Greek bilingual program, an inevitable one given the assimilationist pressures already described, remains the inability to structure Greek bilingual classes for more than one of two contiguous grades at a particular school. This failure profoundly affects the goal of developing bi-literacy, since the research literature, as well as common sense, predicates such development on the receipt of at least several contiguous years of balanced bilingual schooling.

In the mid-1980s, the District 30 public schools also embraced a novel and heralded concept in bilingual education: the "two-way bilingual program." LEP Greek immigrant children were placed in classes with their EP peers. While the Greek-speaking children learned English as a second language, the English-speaking children studied Greek as a second language. Both groups of children were also taught their respective second languages through the general curriculum subject areas to reinforce their language learning. Classroom situations were structured wherein the two groups interacted with each other in "peer-learning" episodes. Only "reciprocal-interaction" pedagogy and materials were to be utilized, along with a balanced bilingual teacher, or team-teachers who each taught through either Greek or English. This program, as other Greek public school bilingual programs, has been discontinued recently in Astoria because of the current paucity of enrolled and identified Greek LEP children.

The Two-Way Greek Bilingual Program was initiated in a public school of Community School District 30 in 1985. It represented the



greatest threat to the Greek day and afternoon programs in Queens. The Two-Way Program, taught by Xanthi Giannoutsos, sought the following student outcomes: to offer an opportunity to develop functional bilingualism and bi-literacy in Greek and English for EP and LEP students; to increase awareness of the culture associated with each language; to enhance the prestige of the Greek language; and to improve the academic achievement of both EP and LEP students.

Unfortunately, it is this writer's opinion that the goal of genuine bilingualism has been thwarted in parochial school settings because Greek language instruction was not made relevant to the students as accomplished through the Two-Way "Immersion" approach. The Greek language in the parochial school has not been given the social legitimacy and validation it received in the Two-Way approach. Greek in the parochial school has often been taught devoid of any Greek-American intercultural sensibility. This has also been the case in the public Greek bilingual programs as well as in the parochial school system, where the classes are comprised entirely of Greek immigrant or Greek-American students, and teachers again ignore the cultural context of Greek language education in the United States.

The notion of "immersion" language education was a natural approach which could have been utilized in the parochial schools and still can. However, although the concept was raised and explained to parochial bilingualists and administrators, it was felt that the idea of the parochial school children being taught their academic subjects through Greek would be viewed, erroneously, as antithetical to the ultimate and, in reality, the real goal of the parochial bilingual schools and Greek-American parents—the development of English literacy and assimilation into American society.

Not long ago, the parents of a child of South-American background who had applied to enroll him in a Greek-American parochial school in New York were told that the child could not enroll because he did not speak Greek. It is ironic that third and fourth generation Italian, Irish, German, and Greek as well as African-American parents, enrolled their children in the "Two-way" public Greek bilingual program during the few years it was operating. These EP children from multicultural backgrounds were taught Greek as a second language in a quasi-immersion approach in which they were taught certain academic subjects in Greek and shared a classroom with Greek immigrant children whose proficiency in English was limited. These multicultural parents wanted their children to become bilingual, proficient in Greek and English. They were not threatened by the use of Greek or the presence of Greek children who spoke little English. There was no sense that the bilingual program was remedial or compensatory in nature, or only

appropriate for immigrant Greek children; the program was viewed as one of enrichment in which English proficient children would learn Greek and limited English Greek proficient children would learn English. The Greek children's knowledge of Greek was given pedagogical and social legitimacy as Greek was an integral part of the bilingual curriculum and language of instruction.

A letter from Bishop Alexios recently sent out to certain Greek-American individuals and educators stated, in part, the following:

I am seeking your assistance in helping me to study and reflect upon the body of Greek Orthodox educators serving the public school system of Queens. . . . As the Bishop for these people, I feel obligated to provide a means to help better organize them, and most importantly, to help them study, get to know, and feel a sense of pride for them to identify as Hellenes . . .

In recent years, such a letter to concerned individuals has not emanated from educators in the public sphere of bilingual education; the Church has assumed a renewed leadership role in Greek language education, wisely seeking to capitalize on the momentum of the 1980s.

In the Astoria Greek community, Greek immigration has significantly leveled off in the 1990s; many Greek-American families have also migrated from urban Astoria to the more assimilated suburbs. At a time when public school and parochial school bilingualists in New York City are most in agreement that they must work together to bolster the waning Greek language education programs in both sectors, it is ironic that the intended beneficiaries of their efforts are out of reach. However, in the suburbs, third-and fourth-generation Greek-American families in established or newly organized church communities, seek to initiate new Greek afternoon classes, recruit itinerant Greek language teachers, and struggle yet to fulfil the desire for Greek bilingualism and Greek culture in the American cultural mosaic. The spirit of the "Krifo Skolio" continues to illuminate the pursuit of Greek bilingual education in its shifting incarnations.