This article deals with differentiation of teaching methods and extra time in class for pupils with dyslexia by English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers in two Greek state secondary schools. Activity theory is applied to analyse the contradictions that emerge around the issue of differentiation for pupils with dyslexia from data compiled from interviews with teachers, pupils and parents and field notes from lesson observations across two schools. The analysis shows that contradictions are created when participants try to achieve their goals for differentiation by lack of teachers' knowledge, inadequate diagnosis, unclear school and Ministry policy, short duration of lessons and the number of pupils in class. The findings suggest the necessity of teacher training in dyslexia and the improvement of school and Ministry policy.

Key words: pupils with dyslexia, differentiation, extra time, contradictions.

Introduction

This article discusses the issue of differentiation for pupils with dyslexia in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classes. The data included in the analysis come from EFL classes in Greece but the issues raised around differentiation for pupils with dyslexia have implications for other foreign language learning contexts around the world.

Dyslexia is also referred to as ‘specific learning difficulties’. 'The nature and relationship of both concepts and their relationship remains controversial’. What is referred to as dyslexia could be considered as a variety of ‘dyslexias’ which could be included under the term specific learning difficulties (Pumfrey and Reason, 1991, p. 4). The term ‘dyslexia’ is used in this article as it is 'embedded in popular language' (Reason, 2002).

A Greek policy document from the Ministry of Education on the issue of assessing pupils with dyslexia mentions that pupils with dyslexia have ‘normal intelligence’ but manifest specific difficulties in learning especially in reading, writing and spelling and they often manifest ‘attention deficit’ (MNER, 2006).

Greek and English spelling and reading processes

Greek is an orthographically transparent language with irregular spelling, especially for vowels which may pose difficulties in spelling for children with reading disability. Protopapas and Skaloumbakas (2007) found that Greek 7th-grade children with reading disability face spelling accuracy difficulties but also reading and reading speed difficulties.

On the other hand, Spencer (2000) argues that there is a considerable deviation in the one-to-one mapping of phonemes to graphemes in English while the Greek language deviates only a little as Greek phoneme–grapheme correspondence is straightforward in reading but not in writing (Miles, 2000). Therefore, the Greek alphabetic system is more transparent than the English (Goswami, 1997). Spencer (2000) argues that this lack of transparency in English causes problems in reading and spelling. In fact, Seymour et al.’s (2003) research has shown that reading accuracy in transparent languages like Greek can be very high while reading performance in English was only 34%. Therefore, one may hypothesise that Greek pupils with dyslexia might face more difficulty in reading English than Greek because of the opacity of the English language.

Differentiation

Differentiation is important for all pupils with special needs in order to access the learning of EFL. The needs and abilities of pupils with dyslexia as well as all pupils with specific or general learning difficulties should be considered by EFL teachers. The focus of this article is on the needs of Greek pupils with dyslexia learning EFL because, as discussed previously, Greek pupils with dyslexia may face difficulties in reading and spelling English because of the opacity of the English language as opposed to the transparency of the Greek language (Spencer, 2000).
Differentiation is a means of curriculum access and should be part of a specialised programme for individual pupils with dyslexia (Reid, 2009). As Reid (2009) suggests, it is important that differentiation is seen as a way of supporting all pupils and that the stigma felt by pupils who receive a different type of programme from others in the class is minimised. However, differentiation is not only reduction of content taught to pupils (Reid, 2009). Visser (1993) sees differentiation as a process in which teachers use appropriate teaching methods that match the child’s learning strategies in a group situation.

Differentiation enables pupils to demonstrate what they can achieve and to experience satisfaction in their learning. Teachers can differentiate material in a task; they can accept different kinds of response according to the abilities of pupils. For example, differentiating material by task in a listening exercise may involve some pupils writing their responses while some pupils draw them and other pupils put them on audiotape (Crombie, 2000). Differentiated texts that are more readable for pupils with dyslexia because of sentence length, complexity and presentation can also be part of a differentiated approach (Wearmouth et al., 2003).

The use of adapted or specialist materials and resources for pupils with dyslexia is closely linked to classroom-based learning support for such pupils. The availability of appropriate materials is one of the criteria of dyslexia-friendly practice according to Mackay (2004). Hunter-Carsch’s (2001) interviews with experienced teachers and special educational needs co-ordinators (SENCos) in the English Midlands showed that there is a trend towards class teachers using adapted materials. The SENCos suggested that practical ways of differentiating resources other than by differentiating ‘worksheets’ are needed. The use of special resources and especially information and communications technology (ICT) resources (CD-ROM and visual materials) was also reported by SENCos as effective for dyslexia support (Hunter-Carsch, 2001). The voice-to-text and text-to-voice technology has a lot of potential although there are many teachers and pupils who are not aware of it (Crombie and Crombie, 2000).

Rose (2009) refers to differentiation for meeting the learning needs of students with dyslexia as including whole class teaching but also guided group work, individual support in class from a teaching assistant or one-to-one tuition from specialist dyslexia teachers. Rose (2009) suggests that there is a need for short courses for teachers on teaching literacy intervention programmes and specialist training for a number of teachers.

As far as the Greek context is concerned, lack of available resources for pupils with dyslexia in Greece was reported in studies by Arapogianni (2003), Lappas (1997) and Constantopoulou (2002). Both parents and pupils in Lappas’ study (1997) considered that support from mainstream teachers as opposed to support from learning support teachers in Greece was weak because of the methods and materials used. Constantopoulou (2002) found that there were no books, no teaching materials, no apparatus and no IT available on dyslexia in Greek secondary schools.

Constantopoulou’s (2002) study conducted with Greek mainstream school teachers has shown that they are not trained to teach pupils with special educational needs (SEN), which explains teachers’ lack of confidence in teaching such pupils in Coutoscostas and Alborz’s (2010) study. It also appears to be very difficult for mainstream teachers to individualise in a class of 25–30 students since the Greek educational system requires schools to follow a common policy, identical curriculum textbooks and timetables and a whole class, teacher-centred didactic philosophy (Vlachou, 2006; Coutoscostas and Alborz, 2010).

Differentiation is also referred to as arrangements or special rights. Arrangements may depend on national policy, school policy or on the teacher’s decision. They may cover assessment or special conditions during examinations and foreign language study (Nijakowska, 2010). The arrangement of extra time for pupils with dyslexia is dealt with in this article because in the Greek Education Ministry’s policy (MNER, 2000) regarding the examination of pupils with dyslexia it is mentioned that extra time can be given to them if they ask for it. This article discusses whether extra time in class is also important for pupils with dyslexia.

Crombie’s study (1997) with 25 11- to 16-year-old Scottish pupils with dyslexia learning French showed that pupils with dyslexia performed poorly in reading and writing but also in speaking and listening and they required more time than the control pupils to complete the tasks of reading in both English and French. This finding has implications for teachers: they need to allow pupils with dyslexia extra time for processing information. Crombie and McColl (2001) also suggest that teachers of modern foreign languages (MFL) should be prepared to allow pupils extra time to answer questions and to complete work because pupils with dyslexia tend to be slower in responding to incoming information.

The issue of extra time was also mentioned in Nijakowska’s (2000) study; Nijakowska found that 66 per cent of the teachers allowed their pupils with dyslexia more time to complete a task. Arapogianni’s (2003) study showed that Greek teachers used the technique of giving extra time to pupils with dyslexia in the classroom.

Research has shown that pupils with dyslexia ask for extra time in class. The adolescents with dyslexia in Thomson and Chinn’s study (2001) mentioned being given more time as important for their learning as well. Johnson (2004) reports a survey study including 67 usable questionnaires from pupils with dyslexia in secondary schools. Among other elements, the pupils mentioned being given time to think and write as important.
Research questions

The research questions that this study aimed to investigate were:

1. What differentiation do pupils with dyslexia need and are offered when they learn EFL in Greek state secondary schools?
2. What differentiation do EFL teachers offer to pupils with dyslexia in the classroom?
3. Do EFL teachers use any special resources for pupils with dyslexia?
4. Do they give them more time in classroom activities?
5. What contradictions emerge when pupils and teachers try to meet their objects and goals regarding differentiation?

Theoretical framework

A theoretical framework was needed for this study that explores human learning within organisational systems in a collective way. Activity theory and the work of Engeström (2001) provided one such framework. Socio-cultural activity theory was initiated by Vygotsky (1978, 1987) when he tried to explain the learning process by arguing that learning enables people to think or do something beyond their capability and this is done in a historical, cultural and social context, with one or more people. Vygotsky believed that human activity happens when the subjects, those whose actions are analysed, resolve a shared problem, an ‘object’, by using ‘tools’ to achieve a goal (Martin, 2008). Engeström (2001) describes how the current understanding of activity theory has evolved through three generations of research. The first generation contributed to activity theory the idea of ‘mediation’ which was represented in Vygotsky’s (1987) triangular model (Figure 1) linking the subject and the object through mediating artefacts (Engeström, 2001).

In the second generation, which was developed from Leont’ev’s writing (Leont’ev, 1978, 1981; Engeström, 2001), Engeström expanded the triangular representation of an activity system to enable the examination of activity systems at an organisational level as opposed to a focus on the individual actors operating with tools (Daniels, 2004). This expansion of the Vygotskian triangle represents the social or organisational elements in an activity system through the addition of the elements of community, rules and division of labour (see Figure 2).

Activity theory was chosen as a theoretical framework for the data collection and analysis of this study because it allowed the inclusion of different groups of participants and the investigation of the relationship between them. The second principle of activity theory, multi-voicedness, was useful for this study as it enabled the investigation of...
multiple points of view on the same issue – those of the EFL teachers, the pupils, the parents and the Ministry of Education (Engeström, 2001).

Therefore, the subjects of learning of the activity system in school 1 and 2 are EFL teachers 1 and 2 and pupils with dyslexia George, Stathis, Petros and Thodoris (see Figure 2). A possible object of learning, that is, what the subjects are working on, is differentiated teaching (Daniels, 2004). The goal in an activity system is the result of the ‘creative effort’ that can be achieved when the problems are resolved (Davydov, 1999). A possible goal in this study is the inclusion of pupils with dyslexia.

The community representing the wider socio-cultural influences includes the context of the activity, that is, the people who are concerned with the same object: Petros’ mother, the headteachers of the schools, the other pupils and teachers, the local education authority (LEA) and the Ministry of Education (Daniels, 2004; Leadbetter, 2004). Therefore, the activity is a collective one and not an individual action of the teachers or pupils only (Engeström, 2001).

The division of labour in this study refers to the division of tasks between the EFL teacher, the headteacher and pupils in each school. The rules are the principles regulating the actions of the participants and they can be both written and unwritten: for example, the national policies on dyslexia and their interpretations by the headteacher of the school (Daniels, 2004) as well as the routines and professional practices of the teachers.

Since activity theory is deeply contextual and studies specific local practices it is often linked with the use of case study (e.g. Engeström, 1999a, b, 2001) which takes context and its details into account (Denscombe, 2003). A case study was an appropriate design for this study, using activity theory as a theoretical framework, as it aimed to go into sufficient detail and explore the complexities of dyslexia provision and multiple sources were necessary for the collection of data (Denscombe, 2003).

Methodology

Methods

Before starting the main study the methods were piloted in a secondary school in Greece for a period of two weeks. The main study included multiple methods for triangulation purposes which is a characteristic of case studies (Robson, 2002): semi-structured and unstructured ethnographic interviews with two EFL teachers, three pupils and a mother and lesson observation with field notes and digital audio recording of EFL lessons. The wider study included interviews with the mothers of all students, two fathers and three more teachers and a collection of documents.

The interviews with participants were conducted in the Greek language and they were transcribed and translated into English. This process involved construction of meaning and interpretations by the transcriber and translator (Marshall and Rossman, 2006). One problem was that the interviews were in spoken form transcribed in the Greek language which had to be translated in written form in the English language. This created a problem of equivalence.

The case studies in this article are ethnographic because this study had a longitudinal element as it involved contact with participants in a setting over a prolonged period of time (Brewer, 2000). The researcher spent 13 weeks collecting data with school 1 participants and 16 weeks collecting data with school 2 participants. The researcher also kept contact with EFL teacher 2 and attended seminars with her in the year after the study.

The data were analysed using activity theory in order to investigate the perspective of the different groups of participants and the relationship between them as well as the relationship between the participants and the tools, the rules, the community and the division of labour and how these influence the achievement of participants’ goals. Patterns in teachers’, pupils’ and parents’ needs became the focus of analysis as well as the contradictions in the achievement of the participants’ goals. Contradictions are tensions or dilemmas that arise from the processes within and between the elements of the activity system and become the object of collaborative learning (Martin, 2008). Therefore, the analysis aims at identifying the contradictions that arise when teachers, pupils and parents try to work on their objects as well as the factors that caused these contradictions. Contradictions between elements of the activity system are indicated in the figures by lightning-shaped arrows (Engeström et al., 1999).

Context and participants

The data for this study come from two state secondary schools in Athens. The study was first carried out at an upper secondary school in borough 1 (see Figure 3). The second school was a lower secondary school in borough 2. Both schools belong to the same LEA, called Athens C. The data used in this article from school 1 involved an EFL teacher, EFL teacher 1. Student 1, George, is also mentioned in the analysis. He was 17 years old and in the second year of senior high school. He had a diagnosis of dyslexia at the age of 14. He had EFL lessons up to B class at a language school. EFL teacher 1 had 19 years of teaching experience, six of which were in the state sector.

The data used in this article from school 2 involved three 12–13-year-old boys, one mother, Petros’ mother (Mo3) and their EFL teacher. Student 2, Stathis, was 13 years old as were student 3, Petros and student 4, Thodoris. They all attended the low-ability EFL class at school. Stathis attended EFL lessons at a language school for C class. Petros attended private lessons for A class at home. Thodoris, who had an IQ of 119, attended EFL lessons at a
language school for B class. The diagnostic report was the same for all of them: they all had normal IQ and experienced difficulties in spelling and handwriting as well as having dyscalculia. (Diagnoses that Greek state schools accept are produced in state diagnostic centres that give an IQ test to pupils and tests that assess pupils’ reading, writing, spelling, reading comprehension, maths, phonological skills, speech, etc. The reports given to pupils to take to schools produced by the same diagnostic centre are usually similar.) EFL teacher 2 had 19 years of teaching experience, eight of which were in the state sector.

The selection of schools was guided by convenience, that is, the accessibility of schools and the availability of individuals in them due to professional contacts (Cohen et al., 2007; Fine and Shulman, 2009). The headteachers had also given the researcher the information that there were pupils with dyslexia in the schools. The EFL teachers selected were the ones who had pupils with dyslexia in their classes and who agreed to participate in the study after being informed about its aims and procedure.

The criterion for choosing pupils was a dyslexia diagnosis and their parents’ informed consent to participate in the study. In order not to identify the school and the participants, pseudonyms were used for the pupils and the teachers’ names were replaced with codes such as EFL teacher 1 and 2, headteacher 1 and 2 (Delamont, 2002).

The researcher was not a teacher at the schools in which the research was conducted but was a teacher permanently employed by the Greek Ministry of Education working in another LEA. Although an outsider to the two schools, the researcher was part of the same culture, had passed through the same educational system, had grown up and gone to school in the same area as the first school and had lived in the area of the second school.

Findings

The issues dealt with in this article were teachers’ knowledge of dyslexia, differentiated materials and methods and extra time in class. Knowledge and training about dyslexia would enable teachers to differentiate their teaching for pupils with dyslexia.

EFL teacher 1’s goal was to use different methods or to differentiate her material for George and possibly for other weak pupils in her class. She recognised that she was not using the right method for pupils with dyslexia:

M: Can you teach [pupils with dyslexia]? Do you have the confidence?
T1: I have the confidence but if I don’t know what problem exactly they have (pause). I may obviously not be using the right method for them, I simply can’t have one method for them in class and another method for the rest of the class (interview, T1, 13 November 2006).

EFL teacher 1 would be willing to use dyslexia-friendly methods with all the pupils if she was trained on that:

T1: if someone gave me some guidelines the method may have been interesting and I could use it with other pupils as well but since I don’t know . . . (interview, T1, 13 November 2006).

She also found it difficult to find special material for George because she lacked the knowledge to do so:

M: About teaching material as far as I understand there isn’t . . .
T1: [there isn’t] something special for them because I haven’t got the training to be honest (interview, T1, 19 January 2007).

EFL teacher 2 complained that the diagnosis of the pupils with dyslexia did not include teaching advice:

T2: This paper [diagnosis] is never accompanied with advice on how I should deal with the problem (interview, T2, 2 March 2007).

EFL teacher 2 also thought that the diagnosis that pupils with dyslexia received from the diagnostic centres was inadequate because it was identical for all pupils, which means that it did not specify the individual student’s needs:

T2: When we have ten children and they all bring papers that are like photocopies . . . the only thing [that differentiates them] are the stamps they put on. I’m sorry but
this tells me that . . . we don’t know anything (interview, T2, 2 March 2007).

The researcher also talked to EFL teacher 2 about the Education Ministry’s guidelines to teachers. She said that they only dealt with the oral examination and the spelling mistakes that pupils with dyslexia make but they did not mention anything about supporting the pupils in class:

T2: My child the only thing we know is that we don’t take notice of the spelling mistakes and we examine the student orally and we count on his oral examination.

M: Yes, otherwise it doesn’t say anything else.

T2: Otherwise it doesn’t say anything else and it doesn’t tell me what to do to help the child when I teach (interview, T2, 2 March 2007).

Therefore, the lack of knowledge of dyslexia and the lack of information on the pupils’ needs were two problems in the teachers’ efforts to reach their object of differentiating their methods. The lack of tools created a contradiction in the activity system.

Figure 4 presents the objects and goals that EFL teachers 1 and 2 had for pupils with dyslexia. EFL teachers 1 and 2 were the only subject of learning for the object of differentiated teaching as this did not appear to be the object of pupils with dyslexia. The idea of differentiated teaching did not seem to concern them, probably because it was not a common practice in Greek schools and they were not aware of it as an option. The second generation of activity theory was used because the EFL teachers were guided by the school’s policy and the Education Ministry’s guidelines in their work (rules in Figure 4). These rules created another contradiction in the activity system because the policies did not provide any information on differentiation, as the teachers said. The tools also created a contradiction: teachers’ lack of knowledge on dyslexia, the inadequate diagnostic reports and guidelines to teachers.

The next theme to be discussed is the issue of time-as-support using evidence from school 2 interview data. Since teachers had inadequate knowledge of dyslexia and there was no specialised material for pupils with dyslexia, as shown above, pupils in school 2 had very limited experience of differentiation and considering their age (12–13 years), they were unable to suggest any other kind of differentiation. The same applies for parents.

Evidence is provided from data on the issue of extra time in class for pupils with dyslexia from interviews with all pupils of school 2, a mother, EFL teacher 2 and field notes from lessons. The analysis shows that pupils do not always have extra time because of the lack of school policy and unclear guidelines from the Ministry of Education.

All pupils of school 2 said that they need extra time to answer questions in class. Stathis said he needs more time to do exercises in class. He wants the teacher to allow students to work at a different pace in class so that all pupils can get the work done:

St: even in exercises it happens, someone may finish much earlier, because he finishes earlier there is no need . . .

M: She shouldn’t hurry.

St: . . . to start all together because neither I nor anybody else will have the time to even do it (interview, Stathis, 25 February 2007).

Petros also said he needs more time to answer questions in class. He needs more time to think of the answer:

M: Do you want a little more time when she asks you that is?
Thodoris, like Petros, needs more time to answer questions in class. He claims the teacher once gave him ten seconds to answer a question which he thought was not enough. He did not have time to think and understand the question he read and he asked another student:

M: Does she give you time to answer when she asks a question in class?
Th: No, I think I would like more time.
M: You would like more time.
Th: That is, I was confused once and she gave me ten seconds to answer, to say the right thing, I didn’t have time to think of it, to understand what I was reading and she went to another child to continue the teaching hour (interview, Thodoris, 11 April 2007).

Petros’ mother said that the EFL teacher cannot give extra time to pupils with dyslexia, as the researcher asked her to do, because there is no time to give. She explained why there is not enough time for each student: every student has two to three minutes if you divide the 45 minutes that the lesson lasts by the number of pupils in class (25), which is not enough time:

M: I simply told her to give more time to the specific pupils and she said that there is not much time . . .
Mo3: No, there is not much time because . . .
M: Because there are 25 [pupils] in the class
Mo3: Because if you take the 45 minutes it is 2 or 3 minutes for every child, what can you do in 3 minutes? (interview, Mo3, 4 May 2007).

In the first lesson observed in school 2, EFL teacher 2 waited twice when she asked Petros to answer questions in class. In the first instance he gave the wrong answer and she directed him where to look for the answer but he could not answer. In the second instance Petros knew what the question meant but he could not answer immediately. She gave him some time to look at the question and think of the answer even though another student (Thodoris) showed that he knew the answer:

‘She nominated Petros to answer where Brenda’s bedroom is. He gave a wrong answer and she said in English “look at the text”. He didn’t answer and another student gave the answer. She is asking Petros the meaning of the question “what colour is her carpet?” He gave her the correct answer about the meaning of the question. He didn’t find the answer to the question immediately and she said “take a better look, what it says in the book”. Thodoris knows the answer and wants to say it’ (field notes, 16 February 2007).

EFL teacher 2 said that she gives pupils with dyslexia some time to answer questions in class which is what the researcher observed. She also gives as much time as she can for exercises in class. For example, in an incident with Petros who could not answer a question she rephrased the question but when she saw that he did not know the answer, she did not insist because she had to present the next lesson. The other pupils may also start to call out the answer which means she has to let them answer and move on:

M: Do you give them some time to think of it?
T2: Yes that’s what I do but can I tell you what happens? When I see that the student is stuck because he doesn’t know something, like Petros did today, you saw that I waited.
M: Mmm.
T2: I asked the question again, I tried to help him. I saw that he didn’t know, I can’t insist more because time passes.
M: Yes.
T2: I won’t have time to present [the next lesson] and the others will start
M: to call out
T2: Yes you see them they don’t wait.
M: Yes. Do you give them more time to do the exercises?
T2: In class?
M: In class and in tests.
T2: In class I give as much time as I can (interview, T2, 2 March 2007).

Therefore the rules, that is, teachers’ common practice which requires the EFL teacher to check pupils’ previous knowledge or give pupils the chance to speak, and to present the new lesson in 45 minutes, do not allow the teacher to give more time to pupils with dyslexia to think of the answer. The rules – the Education Ministry’s policy – which give each EFL teacher 45 minutes three times per week for that year to teach EFL to 25 pupils create a contradiction in the activity system of school 2 (see Figure 5). The other pupils in the community who would call out the answer also create a contradiction. The object of EFL teacher 2, the pupils with dyslexia and Petros’ mother of giving extra time pupils in the community who would call out the answer also create a contradiction. The object of EFL teacher 2, the pupils with dyslexia and Petros’ mother of giving extra time pupils with dyslexia to answer a question in class is not always met according to what the pupils and the teacher said. There is multi-voicedness in this example as there is evidence of the same issue from different perspectives. Pupils and EFL teacher 2 are in the subject position but not Petros’ mother who is in the community because there is no evidence of her collaboration with EFL teacher 2.

**Discussion and conclusion**

Since this is a small-scale study the issue of transferability of its findings should be raised. Only if two cases, settings or contexts are similar is there transferability from one setting to another (Donmoyer, 2000). Therefore, this study could offer insights for activity systems in other secondary schools with similar characteristics, for example schools in urban areas of Greece, as the laws and guidelines from the Education Ministry concern all the schools in Greece and in other countries with similar policies.
In this article issues regarding differentiation for pupils with dyslexia in EFL classes were discussed using activity theory. It was shown that the subjects of the activity system, the two EFL teachers, faced difficulties in meeting their objects of differentiating their methods and materials for pupils with dyslexia because of lack of tools – their lack of knowledge and inadequate tools such as the Ministry’s guidelines and diagnostic reports. Studies by Arapogianni (2003), Lappas (1997) and Constantopoulou (2002) reported the issue of lack of teaching resources that teacher 1 in this study mentioned as a problem when trying to differentiate her methods.

Furthermore, this article confirms Constantopoulou’s (2002) finding that secondary schools, including language teachers, do not have sufficient knowledge and training about dyslexia. Therefore, initial teacher education is needed, which includes reference to special educational needs. In-service training in special needs with specific reference to dyslexia needs to be organised by state services or the LEAs and it needs to be advertised in schools. Training is needed for secondary school teachers of all subjects and it needs to be specific to each subject. The issue of differentiation of methods, for example the use of multi-sensory methods, and differentiated materials and ICT resources could be addressed in the training (Hunter-Carsch, 2001; Wearmouth et al., 2003).

Extra time in class could also be given by teachers to pupils who ask for it as pupils in this study have requested this. It was shown that the subjects in the activity system of school 2 – all pupils with dyslexia in school 2, EFL teacher 2 and one mother – wanted more time in class for pupils with dyslexia in order to answer questions. It was shown that EFL teacher 2 could not always achieve the object of giving extra time in class to pupils with dyslexia because of the rules of the activity system which created a contradiction – the Education Ministry’s policy which gives very little time for EFL lessons and the number of pupils in class. This finding indicates that foreign language teachers need to consider giving more time to pupils with dyslexia to answer questions and complete exercises. This can only be achieved if the number of pupils in class is smaller or if the lessons are longer.

The number of pupils in class and the small amount of time allocated to individual pupils have been reported by pupils and parents in Lappas (1997) as factors leading to weak support from mainstream teachers in class. Nijakowska (2000) investigated whether EFL teachers give more time to pupils with dyslexia to complete a task when they need it, as investigated in this study, and found out that 66% allowed their pupils with dyslexia more time to complete a task. Arapogianni (2003) also found that the teachers in her study used the technique of giving extra time to pupils with dyslexia to complete a task. As far as pupils are concerned, Thomson and Chinn (2001) and Johnson (2004) found that adolescents with dyslexia considered extra time to be important, especially for writing, which is similar to the needs of all pupils in school 2 of this study. This study investigated the issue of extra time in class from the perspective of teachers as well as pupils and parents, which has not been done by other researchers.

Activity theory allowed the inclusion of different groups of participants in the study, which has not been done in previous research. It allowed the creation of new knowledge on dyslexia provision in Greek urban schools and the identification of what is problematic about it and where change can start. However, the subjects in this study tried to manage the situation through individual solutions rather than by collaborative learning (Virkkunen and Kuutti, 2000). Other studies on dyslexia provision could be conducted using a developmental work research (DWR) methodology, in which teachers, pupils and parents are brought together in workshops where they can discuss their objects and goals and the contradictions emerging when they try to achieve
their goals. They can collectively decide on solutions to their problems and their implementation can be investigated by the researchers.

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