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email: e-journal@inpatra.gr

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Karveli Evgenia, *University of Patras Department of Philology Graduate in Classical studies, University of Patras Department of Philology Postgraduate student in Classical Studies*

Loukopoulou Angeliki, *Philologist, Postgraduate student in Education Sciences, HOP*

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Gkakou Vasileia
Gkakou Aikaterini

Problems and obstacles in the learning process with SEN immigrant pupils

Περίληψη

Στόχος της παρούσας μελέτης είναι να επισημανθούν οι δυσκολίες στη διδακτική διαδικασία με μετανάστες μαθητές που έχουν ειδικές εκπαιδευτικές ανάγκες μέσα από ένα δείγμα 200 εκπαιδευτικών που εργάζονται σε σχολεία σε όλη την Ελλάδα. Το δείγμα συγκεντρώθηκε μέσω μιας διαδικτυακής πλατφόρμας της Google. Μέσα από την έρευνα προέκυψε ότι η πλειονότητα των εκπαιδευτικών συμφώνησε ότι διαφοροποιούν τους μαθησιακούς στόχους ανάλογα με τις ανάγκες των μαθητών και αξιολογούν την απόδοση των μεταναστών μαθητών κατά τη διάρκεια του ακαδημαϊκού έτους προκειμένου να τους δώσουν ανατροφοδότηση. Τα επαγωγικά στατιστικά στοιχεία κατέληξαν σε μερική επιβεβαίωση των τεσσάρων υποθέσεων. Αυτό σημαίνει ότι το φύλο, η εξειδίκευση στην «Ειδική Αγωγή» ή/και τη «Διαπολιτισμική Εκπαίδευση» και η εκπαιδευτική προϋπηρεσία σε μετανάστες μαθητές είχαν σημαντικό αντίκτυπο στις αντιλήψεις των δασκάλων για την αξιολόγηση των προβλημάτων στη μαθησιακή διαδικασία των μαθητών με ΕΕΑ που προέρχονται από διαφορετικό εθνικό/πολιτισμικό περιβάλλον.

Λέξεις-κλειδιά: μετανάστες φοιτητές, εξειδίκευση στη Διαπολιτισμική εκπαίδευση, μαθητές με ΕΕΑ

Abstract

The aim of this study is to point out the difficulties in the instruction process with immigrant pupils special education needs through a convenience sample of 200 teachers working in schools all over Greece. The sample was gathered through an online platform of Google. The study resulted that the majority of the teachers agreed that they differentiate the learning aims according to the students' needs and they evaluate the performance of the immigrant students during the academic year in order to give them a feedback. Inferential statistics resulted in partial confirmation of the four hypotheses. This means that gender, specialization in "Special Education" and/or "Intercultural Education" and the teachers' instruction experience with immigrant pupils had a significant impact on teachers' perceptions of assessing the problems in the learning process with SEN immigrant pupils.

Keywords: immigrant students, specialization in Intercultural education, SEN pupils

1. Introduction

The dimension of multiculturalism in the field of special education is an issue which unfortunately has been a matter of concern to the scientific as well as the educational community at the design of targeted educational policies for pupils with special educational needs coming from migrant families. While in recent decades both special education and intercultural education fields have attracted the interest of researchers as well as of political and educational bodies and are particularly popular independently, the research in the combined part of the two fields is very limited¹. In recent decades the migration of groups or populations specifically to Europe and other continents has increased greatly, both for economic, political and social reasons.

2. Theory

2.1. Migrant students with special educational needs

Migrant pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) constitute an overlooked group in the fields of research, policy, and practice². Their precise support needs or any specific issues with which they cope with at school are not clearly

1 European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education, 2009

2 Oliver, C., and N. Singal. 2017. "Migration, Disability and Education: Reflections from a Special School in the East of England." *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 38: 1217–1229

recognized yet. Migrant children are a highly diverse group, which includes children who may have migrated for economic reasons or fled their country of origin as a result of conflict and may have migrated with their parents, family members or unaccompanied. Children with SEN are similarly a very broad group, which includes many different types of needs. SEN categories are complex, fluid and socially constructed³ and there is no common European agreement on identification and categories⁴. The very limited existing literature on the topic highlights that the intersection between migration and SEN needs to be understood both in its national context – considering varied migration traditions, cultural and linguistic diversity and country specific approaches to SEN– but also in comparison, allowing cross- national issues and patterns to be identified.

2.2. The migration issue in school classroom and instruction

The identity of the European population has changed as European society gradually becomes more multicultural. This composition of the population, of course, is also reflected in the school population, including the school population with special educational needs. General and special education schools welcome students of different national backgrounds who were either born in countries other than the country of residence or were born in the country of residence but whose parents were born in another country. These students usually have a different culture and sometimes speak a language different from that of the host country in which, however, they go to school and interact with peoples who originate primarily from the country of origin⁵. Due to the intense mobility of populations internationally and in Europe in particular, important European and international organizations encourage national authorities to support and provide high quality education to all pupils, including students with special educational needs, regardless of national and cultural backgrounds.

It is noticed that usually teachers judge ethnic minority and low-income students' behaviors as more divergent than those of wealthier children. These perceptions are due to cultural biases of teachers. It is important that teachers create instructional environments that promote academic productivity and appropriate social behaviors for an increasingly diverse student population⁶. In addition it is crucial that

3 Gillborn, D. 2017. "Dis/Ability as White Property: Race, Class and "Special Education" as a Racist Technology." In *Assessment Inequalities*, World Yearbook of Education, edited by J. Allan and A. Artiles, 104–119. Abingdon: Routledge.

4 Riddell, S., and NESSE panel of experts. 2012. "Education and Disability/Special Needs - Policies and Practices in Education, Training and Employment for Students with Disabilities and Special Educational Needs in the EU." NESSE/European Commission

5 European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2019. *Integrating Students from Migrant Backgrounds into Schools in Europe: National Policies and Measures*. Eurydice Report. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

6 British Council (2013), *Culture at Work: The Value of Intercultural Skills in the Workplace*, British Council,

general and special education teachers educate themselves about things they do not know, use creative ideas to develop classroom interactions, create an atmosphere that welcomes parents, students, and staff, be knowledgeable about different teaching modes, and put individual students in a positive learning environment⁷.

2.3. Aim

The aim of this study is to evaluate the problems in the learning process with SEN immigrant pupils. In addition, the following four hypotheses were tested:

Hypothesis 1. The gender factor is expected to have a significant impact on teachers' perceptions of assessing the problems in the learning process with SEN immigrant pupils.

Hypothesis 2. A significant influence of the "Special Education Training" factor is expected on the teachers' perceptions of assessing the problems in the learning process with SEN immigrant pupils.

Hypothesis 3. A significant influence of the Intercultural Education Training Factor is expected on the teachers' perceptions of assessing the problems in the learning process with SEN immigrant pupils.

Hypothesis 4. A significant impact of the Teacher experience with immigrant pupils is expected on the teachers' perceptions of assessing the problems in the learning process with SEN immigrant pupils.

3. Methodology

3.1. Participants

A convenience sample of 200 teachers was gathered for the research purposes. This sampling technique was selected because it is more economical and less time-consuming. The sample was gathered through an online Google platform. As to the characteristics of the sample these were the following: the ratio of male and female participants in the study was 60% and 40% respectively, 43.5% degree of the teachers were between 30 – 35 years old, 27.5% were between 25 – 30, 11% were between 40 – 45, 8.5% were between aged 35 – 40 and the rest 9.5% were above 50 years old. Furthermore, 47.5% degree of the teachers had between 7 – 12 years teaching experience, 17.5% had less than 2 years, 16% had more than 16 years, 13% had between 13 -18 years and the rest 6% had between 2 – 6 years. Also, 63.5% degree of the teachers had less than 2 years teaching experience in special education, 26% had between 7 -12 years, 8% had between 2 – 6 years and the rest 2.5% had between 13 – 18 years. In relation to the level of education 62.5% degree of the teachers

United Kingdom.groups in German schools. The Journal of Special Education, 42(1), 47-54.

7 Festus E. O. (2007). "Multicultural Special Education: Effective Intervention for Today's Schools". Intervention in School and Clinic 42:148

had a master's, 30% had a university degree and the rest 7% had a PhD. For those that either had a PhD or a master's (69.5% in total), 46.8% had a master in special education, 27.3% had a master in different field, 15.8% had a master in multicultural education and the rest 10.1% had a PhD in special education. Regarding the teaching section 43% of the teachers acquired it in special education, 35% in general education and 22% in intercultural classrooms. Finally, 46% of the teachers said that their position in the teaching section was in intercultural classrooms, 37.5% were teachers of general education and the rest 16.5% were teachers of parallel support.

3.2. Material

This study used a structured questionnaire with eleven 5-point Likert questions. The questions were presented as follows: Do you differentiate the learning aims according to the students' needs?, Do you consider pupils' previous knowledge before you evaluate them?, Do you evaluate the performance of the immigrant students during the academic year in order to give them a feedback?, Do you integrate elements of the cultural background of the immigrant students during your instruction?, Is it important during the teaching process to use frequently the mother' language of the immigrant students?, Do you consider an obstacle in the learning process the learning difficulties that immigrant students face?, Do you believe that the cultural standards of the immigrant students affect the development of learning process?, Do you use specific teaching material during the teaching process of immigrant students?, Do you only follow the standards that the qualified carrier has defined during the teaching process and you do not enrich the learning process with your own activities?, Do you use innovative teaching strategies with the aim to teach better immigrant students that face learning difficulties?, Do immigrant students with special educational needs have the opportunity to present their knowledge according to their learning type?.

3.3. Statistical analysis

In this study, descriptive and inferential statistics have been used. Descriptive statistics were used in order to present the participants' characteristics and their answers to the main body of the questionnaire. Also, inferential statistics were used in order to test the hypotheses of the study. For this reason, the independent sample t – test was used (even though data deviated from normal distribution in almost all cases, the skewness and kurtosis indexes were not very high, between $+2$ ⁸, therefore the deviation was not significant in order to use non parametric test, also the levene's test was used before the presentation of the results of the t – test). The statistical analysis was conducted with the use of the statistical software SPSS22.0.

⁸ George, D. & Mallery, P. (2010). *SPSS for Windows Step by Step: A Simple Guide and Reference 17.0 Update*. Boston: Pearson.

4. Results

Table 1: Problems in the learning process with SEN immigrant pupils

	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neither agree nor disagree		Agree		Strongly agree		Strongly agree & agree	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Do you only follow the standards that the qualified carrier has defined during the teaching process and you do not enrich the learning process with your own activities?	84	42,90%	74	37,80%	4	2,00%	21	10,70%	13	6,60%	34	17,30%
Do you consider an obstacle in the learning process the learning difficulties that immigrant students face?	28	14,30%	59	30,10%	39	19,90%	50	25,50%	20	10,20%	70	35,70%
Do you integrate elements of the cultural background of the immigrant students during your instruction?	31	15,80%	58	29,60%	17	8,70%	56	28,60%	34	17,30%	90	45,90%
Do you believe that the cultural standards of the immigrant students affect the development of learning process?	26	13,30%	51	26,00%	26	13,30%	74	37,80%	19	9,70%	93	47,50%
Do you use innovative teaching strategies with the aim to teach better immigrant students that face learning difficulties?	9	4,60%	32	16,30%	56	28,60%	87	44,40%	12	6,10%	99	50,50%
Is it important during the teaching process to use frequently the mother language of the immigrant students?	18	9,20%	37	18,90%	38	19,40%	74	37,80%	29	14,80%	103	52,60%
Do you consider pupils' previous knowledge before you evaluate them?	13	6,60%	49	25,00%	19	9,70%	67	34,20%	48	24,50%	115	58,70%
Do you use specific teaching material during the teaching process of immigrant students?	9	4,60%	60	30,60%	12	6,10%	58	29,60%	57	29,10%	115	58,70%
Do immigrant students with special educational needs have the opportunity to present their knowledge according to their learning type?	0	0,00%	16	8,20%	46	23,50%	94	48,00%	40	20,40%	134	68,40%
Do you evaluate the performance of the immigrant students during the academic year in order to give them a feedback?	0	0,00%	9	4,60%	13	6,60%	110	56,10%	64	32,70%	174	88,80%
Do you differentiate the learning aims according to the students' needs?	0	0,00%	0	0,00%	5	2,60%	104	53,10%	87	44,40%	191	97,50%

Note: in the final column the sum of the “agree” & “strongly agree” is presented from the smallest to the largest

According to table 1 97.5% of the teachers agreed that they differentiate the learning aims according to the students' needs (neutral 2.6%). Furthermore, 88.8% of the teachers agreed that they evaluate the performance of the immigrant students during the academic year in order to give them a feedback (neutral 6.6%). Also, 68.4% of the teachers agreed that immigrant students with special educational needs have the opportunity to present their knowledge according to their learning type feedback (neutral 23.5%). In addition, 58.7% of the teachers agreed that they use specific teaching material during the teaching process of immigrant students feedback (neutral 6.1%) and that they consider the previous knowledge of the immigrant students before they evaluate them (neutral 9.7%). Moreover, 52.6% of the teacher agreed that it is important during the teaching process to use frequently the mother language of the immigrant students (neutral 19.4%). The analysis also resulted that 50.5% of the teachers agree that they use innovative teaching strategies with the aim to teach better immigrant students that face learning difficulties (neutral 28.6%). Additionally, 47.5% of the teachers agreed that the cultural standards of the immigrant students affect the development of learning process (neutral 13.3%). Furthermore, 45.9% of the teachers agreed that they integrate during the instruction elements of the cultural background of the immigrant students (neutral 8.7%). Also, 35.7% of the teachers considered as an obstacle in the learning process the learning difficulties that immigrant students face (neutral 19.9%). Finally, 17.3% of the teachers agreed that they only follow the standards that the qualified carrier has defined during the teaching process and they do not enrich the learning process with their own activities (neutral 2.0%).

Table 2: Differences between male and female teachers regarding the problems in the learning process with SEN immigrant pupils

	Gender				t	df	p
	Female		Male				
	M	SD	M	SD			
Do you differentiate the learning aims according to the students' needs?	4.45	.50	4.37	.60	.895	148.547	.372
Do you consider pupils' previous knowledge before you evaluate them?	3.59	1.25	3.25	1.31	1.815	194	.071
Do you evaluate the performance of the immigrant students during the academic year in order to give them a feedback?	4.07	.64	4.31	.85	-2.169	138.601	.032
Do you integrate during your instruction elements of the cultural background of the immigrant students?	3.21	1.38	2.75	1.35	2.295	194	.023
Is it important during the teaching process to use frequently the mother language of the immigrant students?	3.55	1.14	2.94	1.20	3.627	194	.000
Do you consider an obstacle in the learning process the learning difficulties that immigrant students face?	3.34	1.19	2.19	.96	7.245	194	.000
Do you believe that the cultural standards of the immigrant students affect the development of learning process?	2.86	1.17	3.31	1.32	7.537	189.332	.000
Do you use specific teaching material during the teaching process of immigrant students?	3.38	1.30	3.63	1.33	-2.513	194	.013
Do you only follow the standards that the qualified carrier has defined during the teaching process and you do not enrich the learning process with your own activities?	2.14	1.26	1.81	1.14	-1.288	194	.199
Do you use innovative teaching strategies with the aim to teach better immigrant students that face learning difficulties?	3.48	.94	3.06	.97	1.851	194	.066
Do immigrant students with special educational needs have the opportunity to present their knowledge according to their learning type?	3.59	.93	4.13	.60	3.039	194	.003

According to table 2 male teachers towards female teachers believed in a higher level that they evaluate the performance of the immigrant students during the academic year in order to give them a feedback ($M_M = 4.31$ $SD_M = .85$ vs $M_F = 4.07$ $SD_F = .64$, $p < 0.05$). Also, male teachers towards female teachers believed in a higher level that the cultural standards of the immigrant students affect the development of learning process ($M_M = 3.31$ $SD_M = 1.32$ vs $M_F = 2.86$ $SD_F = 1.17$, $p < 0.05$). Moreover, male teachers towards female teachers believed in a higher level that immigrant students with special educational needs have the opportunity to present their knowledge according to their learning type ($M_M = 4.13$ $SD_M = .60$ vs $M_F = 3.59$ $SD_F = .93$, $p < 0.05$). Furthermore, male teachers towards female teachers believed in a higher level that they use specific teaching material during the teaching process of immigrant students ($M_M = 3.63$ $SD_M = 1.33$ vs $M_F = 3.38$ $SD_F = 1.30$, $p < 0.05$). On the other hand female teachers towards male teachers believed in a higher level that they intergrade during their teaching elements of the cultural background of the immigrant students ($M_M = 2.75$ $SD_M = 1.35$ vs $M_F = 3.21$ $SD_F = 1.38$, $p < 0.05$). Furthermore, female teachers towards male teachers believed in a higher level that it is important during the teaching process to use frequently the mother' language of the immigrant students ($M_M = 2.94$ $SD_M = 1.20$ vs $M_F = 3.55$ $SD_F = 1.14$, $p < 0.01$). Also, female teachers towards male teachers believed in a higher level that learning difficulties are an obstacle in the learning process of the immigrant students ($M_M = 2.19$ $SD_M = .96$ vs $M_F = 3.34$ $SD_F = 1.19$, $p < 0.01$).

Table 3: Differences between teachers with special education specialization and teachers without regarding the problems in the learning process with SEN immigrant pupils

	Do you have expertise in special education?				t	df	p
	No		Yes				
	M	SD	M	SD			
Do you differentiate the learning aims according to the students' needs?	4.39	.59	4.44	.50	-.606	182.776	.545
Do you consider pupils' previous knowledge before you evaluate them?	3.24	1.28	3.64	1.26	-2.162	194	.032
Do you evaluate the performance of the immigrant students during the academic year in order to give them a feedback?	4.18	.75	4.16	.74	.225	194	.822
Do you integrate during your instruction elements of the cultural background of the immigrant students?	3.16	1.51	2.89	1.25	1.354	194	.177
Is it important during the teaching process to use frequently the mother language of the immigrant students?	3.45	1.25	3.17	1.14	1.639	194	.103
Do you consider an obstacle in the learning process the learning difficulties that immigrant students face?	3.01	1.20	2.75	1.26	1.508	194	.133
Do you believe that the cultural standards of the immigrant students affect the development of learning process?	2.91	1.31	3.17	1.19	-1.413	194	.159
Do you use specific teaching material during the teaching process of immigrant students?	3.57	1.42	3.39	1.21	.970	194	.333
Do you only follow the standards that the qualified carrier has defined during the teaching process and you do not enrich the learning process with your own activities?	2.07	1.17	1.94	1.27	.765	194	.445
Do you use innovative teaching strategies with the aim to teach better immigrant students that face learning difficulties?	3.21	1.10	3.40	.84	-1.350	173.469	.179
Do immigrant students with special educational needs have the opportunity to present their knowledge according to their learning type?	3.76	.91	3.85	.80	-.793	185.762	.429

According to table 3 teachers with special education specialization towards teachers without believed in a higher level that they consider their previous knowledge before they evaluate immigrant students ($M_N=3.24$ $SD_N=1.28$ vs $M_Y=3.64$ $SD_Y=1.26$, $p < 0.05$).

Table 4: Differences between teachers with multicultural education specialization and teachers without regarding the problems in the learning process with SEN immigrant pupils

	Do you have expertise in multicultural education?				t	df	p
	No		Yes				
	M	SD	M	SD			
Do you differentiate the learning aims according to the students' needs?	4.46	.56	4.29	.46	2.043	87.213	.044
Do you consider pupils' previous knowledge before you evaluate them?	3.37	1.28	3.71	1.27	-1.569	194	.118
Do you evaluate the performance of the immigrant students during the academic year in order to give them a feedback?	4.05	.76	4.58	.50	-4.410	194	.000
Do you integrate during your instruction elements of the cultural background of the immigrant students?	2.72	1.28	4.02	1.27	-6.022	72.537	.000
Is it important during the teaching process to use frequently the mother language of the immigrant students?	3.36	1.13	3.11	1.40	1.079	62.126	.285
Do you consider an obstacle in the learning process the learning difficulties that immigrant students face?	2.85	1.31	2.96	.98	-.599	95.441	.551
Do you believe that the cultural standards of the immigrant students affect the development of learning process?	3.10	1.27	2.87	1.16	1.097	194	.274
Do you use specific teaching material during the teaching process of immigrant students?	3.25	1.33	4.24	.93	-5.636	102.202	.000
Do you only follow the standards that the qualified carrier has defined during the teaching process and you do not enrich the learning process with your own activities?	2.06	1.14	1.82	1.43	1.018	61.618	.313
Do you use innovative teaching strategies with the aim to teach better immigrant students that face learning difficulties?	3.28	.90	3.42	1.20	-.748	59.438	.458
Do immigrant students with special educational needs do they have the opportunity to present their knowledge according to their learning type?	3.69	.78	4.20	.97	-3.628	194	.000
Do you consider important to enrich your knowledge by attending additional courses in relation to the education of immigrant students with learning difficulties?	4.36	.87	4.49	.51	-1.272	126.406	.206

According to table 4 teachers with multicultural education specialization towards teachers without believed in a higher level that they do not differentiate the learning aims according to the students' needs ($M_N=4.46$ $SD_N=.56$ vs $M_Y=4.29$ $SD_Y=.46$, $p < 0.05$). Additionally, teachers with multicultural education specialization towards teachers without believed in a higher level that they evaluate the performance of the immigrant students during the academic year in order to give them a feedback ($M_N=4.05$ $SD_N=.76$ vs $M_Y=4.58$ $SD_Y=.50$, $p < 0.01$). The statistical analysis also resulted that teachers with multicultural education specialization towards teachers without believe in a higher level that they intergrade during their instruction elements of the cultural background of the immigrant students ($M_N=2.72$ $SD_N=1.28$ vs $M_Y=4.02$

$SD_Y=1.27$, $p < 0.01$). In addition, teachers with multicultural education specialization towards teachers believed in a higher level that they use specific teaching material during the teaching process of immigrant students ($M_N=3.25$ $SD_N=1.33$ vs $M_Y=4.24$ $SD_Y=.93$, $p < 0.01$). Also, teachers with multicultural education specialization towards teachers without believed in a higher level that immigrant students with special educational needs have the opportunity to present their knowledge according to their learning type ($M_N=3.69$ $SD_N=.78$ vs $M_Y=4.20$ $SD_Y=.97$, $p < 0.01$).

Table 5: Differences between teachers that have educational experience in special education from 7 -18 years and teachers that have less than 7 years regarding the problems in the learning process with SEN immigrant pupils

	Experience as a teacher of special education				t	df	p
	0-6		7-18				
	M	SD	M	SD			
Do you differentiate the learning aims according to the students' needs?	4,40	,56	4,46	,50	-,622	194	,535
Do you consider their previous knowledge before you evaluate them?	3,32	1,16	3,75	1,52	-2,156	194	,032
Do you evaluate the performance of the immigrant students during the academic year in order to give them a feedback?	3,98	,75	4,63	,49	-6,090	194	,000
Do you integrate during your instruction elements of the cultural background of the immigrant students?	2,78	1,30	3,61	1,42	-3,987	194	,000
Is it important during the teaching process to use frequently the mother' language of the immigrant students?	3,20	1,15	3,54	1,30	-1,824	194	,070
Do you consider an obstacle in the learning process the learning difficulties that immigrant students face?	3,00	1,23	2,56	1,21	2,281	194	,024
Do you believe that the cultural standards of the immigrant students affect the development of learning process?	3,02	1,26	3,11	1,23	-,425	194	,671
Do you use specific teaching material during the teaching process of immigrant students?	3,32	1,34	3,88	1,17	-2,923	118,990	,004
Do you only follow the standards that the qualified carrier has defined during the teaching process and you do not enrich the learning process with your own activities?	2,12	1,20	1,74	1,22	1,990	194	,048
Do you use innovative teaching strategies with the aim to teach better immigrant students that face learning difficulties?	3,25	,99	3,46	,93	-1,340	194	,182
Do immigrant students with special educational needs have the opportunity to present their knowledge according to their learning type?	3,60	,86	4,32	,60	-6,658	146,639	,000

According to table 5 teachers that have experience in special education 7 -18 years towards teachers that have experience in special education less than 7 years believed in a higher level that they consider their previous knowledge before they evaluate them ($M_{0-6}=3.32$ $SD_{0-6}=1.16$ vs $M_{7-18}=3.75$ $SD_{7-18}=1.52$, $p < 0.05$). Furthermore, teachers that have experience in special education 7 -18 years towards teachers that have experience in special education less than 7 years believed in a higher level that they evaluate the performance of the immigrant students during the

academic year in order to give them a feedback ($M_{0-6}=3.98$ $SD_{0-6}=0.75$ vs $M_{7-18}=4.63$ $SD_{7-18}=0.49$, $p < 0.01$). Moreover, teachers that have experience in special education 7 -18 years towards teachers that have experience in special education less than 7 years believed in a higher level that they intergrade during their teaching elements of the cultural background of the immigrant students ($M_{0-6}=2.78$ $SD_{0-6}=1.30$ vs $M_{7-18}=3.61$ $SD_{7-18}=1.42$, $p < 0.01$). Also, teachers that have experience in special education 7 -18 years towards teachers that have experience in special education less than 7 years believed in a higher level that they do not consider an obstacle in the learning process the learning difficulties that immigrant students face ($M_{0-6}=3.00$ $SD_{0-6}=1.23$ vs $M_{7-18}=2.56$ $SD_{7-18}=1.21$, $p < 0.05$). Additionally, teachers that have experience in special education 7 -18 years towards teachers that have experience in special education less than 7 years believed in a higher level that they use specific teaching material during the teaching process of immigrant students ($M_{0-6}=3.32$ $SD_{0-6}=1.34$ vs $M_{7-18}=3.88$ $SD_{7-18}=1.17$, $p < 0.01$). Furthermore, teachers that have experience in special education 7 -18 years towards teachers that have experience in special education less than 7 years believed in a higher level that they do not only follow the standards that the qualified carrier has defined during the teaching process and you do not enrich the learning process with your own activities ($M_{0-6}=2.12$ $SD_{0-6}=1.20$ vs $M_{7-18}=1.74$ $SD_{7-18}=1.22$, $p < 0.05$). Finally, teachers that have experience in special education 7 -18 years towards teachers that have experience in special education less than 7 years believed in a higher level that immigrant students with special educational needs have the opportunity to present their knowledge according to their learning type ($M_{0-6}=3.60$ $SD_{0-6}=0.86$ vs $M_{7-18}=4.32$ $SD_{7-18}=0.60$, $p < 0.01$).

5. Conclusion

This article espouses the importance of multicultural special education in today's changing schools. Migrant students with SEN deserve an educational environment that gives them the opportunity to grow. In addition, they deserve general and special education teachers ready to face the dual nature of the combination special needs and multiculturalism. Teachers should be prepared to understand the relationship between language, culture, and learning. The issue is not whether existing teachers are good or bad; the issue is whether education policy should prepare teachers for the complexities of today's multicultural classrooms. Special education is necessary to maximize the potential of learners with exceptionalities. While there are legal obligations involved in working with these learners, the focus must be on doing what is right for them. Special education must be valued as an important educational phenomenon that works when general and special educators nurture different human intelligences, challenge their own perspectives, and incorporate multicultural voices as they resolve traditional problems confronting migrant students with SEN in their respective programs.

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Writer's biographical information

Gkakou Vasileia is a PhD holder in Pedagogy and works as a teacher at the Pilot Primary School of Serres. She currently studies Italian literature and Language at Aristotle University of Thessaloniki.

Gkakou Aikaterini has graduated as a Pedagogue from the University of Crete and holds a PhD in the same field. She has also a second bachelor degree in Management and Business Administration. She works at the Pilot Primary School of Serres and studies Theatre in Aristotle University of Thessaloniki.

Kaltsouni Paraskevi

The institution of the departments of integration in Greek educational system

Abstract

The last decades Greece has been making attempts to adopt an institutional framework for integration, through a holistic approach that will provide sustainable social and educational environments to all children with disabilities. School integration in Greece today is an organizational model with degrees: the general class without support, the class where there is the support of a special educator and the class with external support. In addition, there are the special and general class of part-time education, the all-day special class. In the past there were special classes which were replaced by integration classes¹. The present paper aims, through an extensive bibliographic report, to outline the presence of the institution of departments of integration in the Greek educational system, to present the advantages and disadvantages of the institution as well as concerns for their future.

Keywords: intergration departments, inclusive education, special needs, Greek educational system.

¹ Tzouriadou, M. (2008). *Mental retardation in the project "Invention", Specialization Teachers-Special Teaching Staff and Teacher Production Material for Mild Mental Retardation.*

Ο θεσμός των τμημάτων ένταξης στο Ελληνικό εκπαιδευτικό σύστημα

Περίληψη

Τις τελευταίες δεκαετίες η Ελλάδα προσπαθεί να υιοθετήσει ένα θεσμικό πλαίσιο ένταξης, μέσα από μια ολιστική προσέγγιση που θα παρέχει βιώσιμο κοινωνικό και εκπαιδευτικό περιβάλλον σε όλα τα παιδιά με αναπηρία. Η σχολική ένταξη στην Ελλάδα σήμερα είναι ένα οργανωτικό μοντέλο με διαβαθμίσεις: η γενική τάξη χωρίς υποστήριξη, η τάξη στην οποία υπάρχει η υποστήριξη ενός ειδικού εκπαιδευτικού και της τάξης με εξωτερική υποστήριξη. Στο παρελθόν υπήρχαν οι ειδικές τάξεις οι οποίες αντικαταστάθηκαν από τα τμήματα ένταξης². Ταυτόχρονα εξακολουθούν να υπάρχουν τα ειδικά σχολεία. Η παρούσα εργασία σκοπό έχει μέσα από μια εκτενή βιβλιογραφική αναφορά να σκιαγραφήσει την παρουσία του θεσμού των τμημάτων ένταξης στο ελληνικό εκπαιδευτικό σύστημα, να παρουσιάσει τα πλεονεκτήματα και μειονεκτήματα του θεσμού καθώς και προβληματισμούς για το μέλλον τους.

Λέξεις-κλειδιά: τμήματα ένταξης, εκπαίδευση χωρίς αποκλεισμούς, ειδικές ανάγκες, ελληνικό εκπαιδευτικό σύστημα.

1. Introduction

Departments of integration are the dominant structure of special education in recent years in Greek education as they have replaced all the special classes³. They are the ideal form of integration into the Greek educational system as students attend the basic subjects in the integration classes (language, mathematics) and the secondary courses in the general class together with their classmates. In this way, students with special educational needs and disabilities receive personalized education in order to alleviate their difficulties and at the same time enjoy the benefits of the general school by being integrated into an educational environment with their peers.

The ever-increasing number of students who have learning difficulties and their referral to departments of integration was the trigger for an article to present the course in time of the institution of integration classes as well as the advantages and disadvantages of this institution. Initially are presented the terms departments of integration and integration. Then there is a bibliographic reference to the departments of integration in the Greek educational system, the advantages and disadvantages of the departments of integration and, in conclusion, ways of improving them are expressed.

2 Tzouriadou, M. (2008). *Mental retardation in the project "Invention", Specialization Teachers-Special Teaching Staff and Teacher Production Material for Mild Mental Retardation.*

3 Law. 2817/2000, article 5, par. 1, 'Training of persons with special educational needs and other provisions. Ephemeric of the Government of the Hellenic Republic (FEK 78/A 14/3/2000)

2. Clarification of the terms.

The Department of Integration is a structure of Special Education, which operates within the General School (general and professional). The aim of the Department of Integration is the educational support of students with disabilities or special educational needs, within the school hours, through the specialized, individual educational programs that it provides them⁴. The Department of Integration is a separate department within the school unit and accepts students from all classes.

After the World Conference on Special Education in 1994 in Salamanca, Spain, the principle of inclusive education and inclusive school was adopted. Inclusive education means that all children despite their difficulties can be taught in the same classes, at the same time with the same curriculum but with differential ways of teaching⁵. In the education system, the term inclusion is often alternated with the term integration in order to describe the education of students with special educational needs with typical students in the general school⁶. The common feature of the two definitions is that they support coexistence at the educational and social level for people with or without disabilities⁷.

3. Purpose of the article

The basic aim of this article- which refers to this very important institution departments of integration - is to define department of integration, presenting the advantages and disadvantages of this institution. Finally, there is a reference to the difficulties and challenges that arise nowadays, regarding the specific institution and the conditions for its proper and uninterrupted operation.

4. Literature Review

According to article 6 of Law 3699/2008, students with disabilities and / or special educational needs and / or disabilities can study in specially organized and staffed integration departments, which operate in general schools and follow two types of programs. The integration departments have no administrative

4 Charoupias A (2011). *Regulation, Ethics & Guidelines*. In G Alevizos, A Vlachou, A Gena, S Polychronopoulou, S Mavropoulou, A Charoupias & O Chiourea (Eds). *Specialised educational support for including students with disability or/and special educational needs*. Athens: Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs: 9-27[in Greek].

5 Tilstone, C. (2000). Inclusion of students with special educational needs in general education: inclusion practices for students with severe learning difficulties. Stoa. Zoniou-Sideris (Ed.). *Integration. Utopia and realism* (pp. 223-235). Athens: Hellenic Letters.

6 Draper, N., Aleknavicius, K., & Crooks, L. (1998). *Teacher and student perspectives on a physical education inclusion programme at a college of further education*. University of Canterbury. School of Sport & Physical Education.

7 Zoniou-Sideris, A. (1996). *The disabled and her education*. A psychopedagogical accession approach. Athens: Greek letters.

status and are attached to general education schools. Their institutionalization began with Law 1566/1985 and Law 2817/2000 as special classes and later they were renamed integration departments.

The term special class was unfortunate, as it does not refer to any class in the school, but is a special program for children with special educational needs and / or disability in the class of the general school⁸ they had learning difficulties or behavioral problems for a few hours a week and then attended general class. They were divided into two types depending on the time of study: special class I full-time and special class II part-time⁹. Then children with other educational needs began to study.

Today it is the only model of school integration in Greece. The institution of special classes evolved very quickly, since from 1983 to 1997 703 were established mainly in primary education and very few in secondary education¹⁰ without thus ensuring a continuity in special education. Their organization and operation had a common framework in terms of housing, the assessment process and the number of students. The practical benefit of the special classes was important, as many students improved their cognitive field¹¹. Also had a positive effect on the cooperation and involvement of parents in the integration process, while contributing significantly to information and awareness of general education teachers showing a positive attitude towards students with special educational needs and / or disability. Despite the positive elements that emerged, the main argument of criticism they received is that because students are removed from their classrooms, segregation and labeling are enhanced¹².

In terms of their operation, as mentioned above, they operate in two different modes of programming. The common and specialized program defined by KEDDY (Center for Differential Diagnosis and Support) for students with mild educational needs and has as an upper limit of 15 teaching hours per week. Students who have received the necessary evaluation and opinion from KEDDY (Center for Differential Diagnosis and Support)¹³, but also children who have not received this opinion but always with the consent of the school counselor EAE (Special Education and Training) can attend the department of integration. For the establishment and operation of an integration department a precondition is the participation of at least three children and a relevant proposal from the diagnostic service. In the case where school units are co-located then the integration departments are

8 Polychronopoulou, S. (2001). Children and adolescents with special needs and abilities. Athens: Atrapos.

9 Christakis, G.K. (1994). *Special education issues*. Athens: Telethron.

10 Georgopoulos, V. & Dialynas, G., (2002). The Departments of Integration in secondary Education. From theory to practice experimental application in the 16th High School of Patras. *Special education issues*, 18, 27-31.

11 Christakis, G.K. (1994). *Special education issues*. Athens: Telethron.

12 Zoniou-Sideri, A. (1996). *The disabled and her education*. A psychopedagogical accession approach. Athens: Greek letters.

13 Polychronopoulou, S. (1999). The educational and social policy of the Ministry. Education for the provision of special education services to children with special needs. *Suggestions for the Implementation of School Integration*. *New Education*, 90, 87-103.

merged and the allowed number of students in them per integration department is twelve. The second program is that of the specialized group or individual extended schedule determined by a proposal of KEDDY (Center for Differential Diagnosis and Support) and concerns students with more serious educational needs. In these cases, with the consent of KEDDY (Center for Differential Diagnosis and Support), a specialized program is followed that is based on the needs and capabilities of these students and is independent of the public.

The integration departments are spatially housed in the formal education school and are attended by students with mild educational needs, behavioral problems and low school performance and the lessons take place for a few school hours during the week. The educational programs are tailored to the needs of the student and individual or group teaching is provided in a specific area of the school. In the integration department there should be rich supervisory material, computer less desks and depending on the educational need of the student there may be a rest area. The responsibility of educating the student with special educational needs and / or disability is shared between both the class teacher and the teacher of the integration department. The teaching practice in the general classroom is that of co-teaching and there is cooperation between the teachers of special education and general education in order to make modifications and adjustments in teaching, but also to evaluate the student's progress¹⁴.

Nevertheless, Greek education has given negative impressions with samples of reduced tolerance for diversity and great inelasticity due to the easy referral for assessment of students who are considered difficult, in order to join the field of special education. The integration departments maintained the separation within the general school by expelling children with special educational needs and / or disability from the general classroom as the schools are not prepared to deal with the diversity of students by shifting their own inadequacies and problems to disability and pathology of students¹⁵. Thus, the question is the adaptation of the school to the individuality and uniqueness of the student and the creation of an educational program adapted to his needs and not the adaptation of the student to the provided educational program¹⁶. Integration aims at education and upbringing for all students without exception in a school for all, something that can not be done without political will, assessment of the current situation and the adoption of an inclusive philosophy¹⁷.

14 Barbas, G. (2010). *Contradictions and perspectives in the school integration of students with intellectual disabilities*. Presentation at the 4th Panhellenic Conference of Therapeutic Gymnastics, Thessaloniki.

15 Lachana, A. & Efstathiou, M. (2015). *Why Inclusive Education? One Different Background - A Different Way of Thinking*. Special Education Issues

16 Papapetrou, S., Balkizas, N., Belegriati, Ch., & Yfanti, E. (2013). *Inclusive Education, A Comparative Study of Teachers' Attitudes in Greece and the Netherlands in relation to its legislation and educational structures inclusive education*. Sector of Special Pedagogy and Psychology, Speech Therapy - Counseling Laboratory.

17 Lachana, A. & Efstathiou, M. (2015). *Why Inclusive Education? One Different Background - A Different Way of Thinking*. Special Education Issues

4.1 Advantages of Integration Departments

There are many references from both the Greek and foreign language literature on the advantages of the integration departments. Most of their benefits for children with special educational needs and / or disability are mainly psychosocial and learning¹⁸.

Research in both primary and secondary education has shown that the performance of these students in the general classroom in the cognitive and social fields has improved¹⁹. The main advantages of studying in an integration department instead of a special class are the development of social and communication skills²⁰, maximizing the chances of interaction with children of normal development²¹ and achieving the goals of the individualized educational program²². In a study by Christakis²³ the participants reported that the integration departments also contribute to the reduction of student dropout, the main cause of which is school failure due to learning difficulties. The specialized educational staff together with a specialized program adapted to the abilities of the students leads to the improvement of the school performance and behavior. In a research of PI (Pedagogical Institute) it is stated that the departments of integration are considered an effective measure to deal with school failure and student dropout. Georgopoulos and Dialynas²⁴ report that students studying in the integration departments develop in the field of knowledge by giving them the self-esteem they needed to cultivate their social skills. According to the researchers, such a difference is due to the interaction of children with their peers, their participation in social activities that take part outside of school, but also the existence of support staff. The inclusion of children in a school of formal development facilitates the creation of friendships and the development of the social network²⁵. Also, according to Matsagouras²⁶ the students of the

18 Kochhar-Bryant, C. A., West, L. L., & Taymans, J. M. (2000). *Successful inclusion: Practical strategies for a shared responsibility*. Prentice Hall.

19 Mastropieri, M. A., & Scruggs, T. E. (2001). Promoting inclusion in secondary classrooms. *Learning Disability Quarterly*, 24 (4), 265-274.

20 Altman, R., & Kanagawa, L. (1994). Academic and social engagement of young children with developmental disabilities in integrated and nonintegrated settings. *Education and Training in Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities*, 184-193

21 Buysse, V., & Bailey, D. B. (1993). Behavioral and developmental outcomes in young children with disabilities in integrated and segregated settings: A review of comparative studies. *The Journal of Special Education*, 26 (4).

22 Gena, A., (2002). *Autism and pervasive developmental disorders*. Athens: Edition of the author.

23 Christakis, G.K. (2011). *The education of children with difficulties. Introduction to special education*. Athens: Interaction.

24 Georgopoulos, V. & Dialynas, G., (2002). The Departments of Integration in secondary Education. From theory to practice experimental application in the 16th High School of Patras. *Special education issues*, 18, 27-31.

25 Helmstetter, E., Peck, C. A., & Giangreco, M. F. (1994). Outcomes of interactions with peers with moderate or severe disabilities: A statewide survey of high school students. *Journal of the Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps*, 19 (4), 263-276.

26 Matsagouras, H. G., (2000). *Collaborative Teaching and Learning*. Athens: Grigoris

integration departments, in addition to their development in the cognitive part, developed other skills making them more acceptable to their teachers and classmates, a fact that motivates and encourages them to have a more active participation in school activities.

Another element that increases the feeling of satisfaction for the way the integration departments work is that the approach there is student-centered and the teaching methodology is more appropriate, contributing to the creation of a positive result²⁷. The above advantages can not go unnoticed, as these children usually show reduced social skills and low academic performance, receiving rejection and marginalization and leading them to depression²⁸, which is likely to follow them in their adult life.

More generally, through research findings, the benefits of integration concern the improvement of interpersonal skills²⁹, their self-esteem, their self-confidence³⁰, behavior and willingness to learn³¹. The development of feelings of camaraderie and self-confidence was also observed³² due to the establishment of relationships with their peers³³. They operate in the same educational and social environment as their peers, while it is possible to teach the same curriculum in the general classroom with the help of a special educator³⁴. The same is confirmed by a research by Imellou³⁵, where he states that in the first days the students of the integration departments feel embarrassed and afraid of being cut off from the classroom environment, however their attitude gradually changes and due to the support they receive they develop their self-perception, their self-esteem while cultivating communication skills.

The benefits of integration do not only concern children with special educational needs and / or disability, but also children of normal development.

27 Patsalis, Ch. (2008). The institution of integrating students with special learning difficulties in the Greek educational reality. *Scientific Step*, 9.

28 Vaughn, S., & Haager, D. (1994). Social competence as a multifaceted construct: How do students with learning disabilities fare?. *Learning Disability Quarterly*, 17 (4), 253-266.

29 Forrest, R. & Maclay, D. (1997). In Step with Inclusion. *Teaching Music*, 5 (3), 56-59.

30 Slavin, R.E., Madden, N. A., Dolan, L. J., Wasik, B. A., Ross, S. M., Smith, L. J., & Dianda, M. (1996). Success for All: A summary of research. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk*, 1 (1), 41-76.

31 Banerji, M., & Dailey, R. A. (1995). A study of the effects of an inclusion model on students with specific learning disabilities. *Journal of learning disabilities*, 28 (8), 511-522.

32 Ritter, C. L., Michel, C. S., & Irby, B. (1999). Concerning inclusion: Perceptions of middle school students, their parents, and teachers. *Rural Special Education Quarterly*, 18 (2), 10-16.

33 D'Alonzo, B., Giordano, G. & VanLeeuwen, D. (1997). Perceptions by Teachers about the Benefits and Liabilities of Inclusion. *Preventing School Failure*, 42 (1), 4-11.

34 Mastropieri, M. A., & Scruggs, T. E. (2001). Promoting inclusion in secondary classrooms. *Learning Disability Quarterly*, 24 (4), 265-274.

35 Imellou, O. (2007). Practices of planning and implementation of individual education programs for students with mild learning difficulties in the general school. The current situation, criticism and suggestions for improvement. In Orphan, Peter (ed.). *Special education in the knowledge society. 1st Panhellenic Conference on Special Education with international participation* (pp. 152-162). Society of Special Pedagogy of Greece in collaboration with the Department of Special Pedagogy & Psychology P.T.D.E. University of Athens. Athens: Grigoris Publications

According to research, there has been an improvement in the learning skills of children typical of development, since the presence of a second teacher in the class reduces the teacher-student ratio by providing a more individualized and collaborative teaching³⁶. Collaborative learning improves the areas of reading, language and vocabulary, while developing empathy, understanding and acceptance of otherness, interaction and communication by educating children to see their classmate as a child and not as something foreign by reducing prejudices³⁷. The general class teacher also gains benefits, as he better understands the individual differences between students, while at the same time improving their teaching skills through his collaboration with specialists working in special education³⁸. He also improves himself as a person who becomes aware of the acceptance of diversity³⁹.

Finally, the parents of the children also receive positive messages from the operation of the integration departments, since through this process they understand and accept the difference of their children, while at the same time relationships of trust and security are created with the special educator, who takes care of these children. All levels, but also feelings of satisfaction are born for the participation of their children in the educational process⁴⁰. Long-term friendships, self-esteem of the child and better integration into the general curriculum are some of the advantages mentioned by the parents of these children⁴¹. According to research by Kontopoulou and Tzivinkou⁴² the parents of children with special educational needs and / or disability receive a positive effect from the integration departments as they feel satisfied with the existence of a space for their children in the general school. Having a good cooperation with the special educator they understand the skills of their children and their satisfaction increases in terms of their learning course.

In summary, the benefits that result from the operation of the integration departments are the improvement of the self-feeling and self-image of the children with special educational needs and / or disability. In addition, their psycho-emotional

36 Kochhar-Bryant, C. A., West, L. L., & Taymans, J. M. (2000). *Successful inclusion: Practical strategies for a shared responsibility*. Prentice Hall.

37 Stainback, W., & Stainback, S. (1990). *Support networks for inclusive schooling: Interdependent integrated education*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.

38 Karagiannis, A., Stainback, W., & Stainback, S. (1996). *Rationale for inclusive schooling*. In S. B. Stainback & W. C. Stainback (Eds.), *Inclusion: A guide for educators* (pp. 3–15). Paul H Brookes Publishing

39 Eleftheriadou, R. (2015). *Inclusion Department: Views of special education teachers Primary education*. Thessaloniki: Aristotle's University. Thessaloniki.

40 Eleftheriadou, R. (2015). *Inclusion Department: Views of special education teachers Primary education*. Thessaloniki: Aristotle's University. Thessaloniki.

41 Mastropieri, M. A., & Scruggs, T. E. (2001). Promoting inclusion in secondary classrooms. *Learning Disability Quarterly*, 24 (4), 265-274.

42 Kontopoulou, M. & Tzivinkou, S. (2004). A Critical View of a New Institution in area of Special Education: The perspective of parents. *Pedagogical Review*, 38.

development, the development of their social and cognitive field, the acceptance of diversity by all members of the class and the change of their behavior which implies a reduction of negative attitudes and perceptions, thus eliminating marginalization phenomena by acquiring school. the humanistic character it should have⁴³.

4.2 Disadvantages of Integration Departments

Nevertheless, several reservations are expressed mainly by teachers about inclusive education. The departments of integration create contradictions in the curriculum and blur the concept of integration that takes place outside the general classroom, but within the general school⁴⁴. The main problem of integration lies in the fact that the appropriate adjustments are not made to the curriculum, teaching methods and practices that will aim to develop the basic skills of these children⁴⁵, but also the heterogeneity between of children in the integration departments, as some face mild learning problems and others severely hindering in this way the positive interaction between them and the collaborative teaching reinforcing feelings such as rivalry, marginalization and competition. In addition, research with general education teachers showed that there was no adaptation of the curriculum to the needs of students by offering a more specialized approach, but they were content to diversify their work and reduce their number with the logic that the cognitive requirements of these students are less⁴⁶.

Initially, the first consideration is the additional time that the class teacher must spend in order to create an individualized teaching program adapted to the abilities of children with special educational needs and / or disability, but also for attending special education training programs⁴⁷. In a study by Baines, Baines, and Masterson⁴⁸, teachers argued that preparation time for teaching these children was more time-consuming than formal education, and that their learning pace was clearly slower.

43 Cole, C. (2006). Closing the achievement gap series. Part III: What is the impact of NCLB on the inclusion of students with disabilities? *Center for Evaluation Policy Brief*, 4 (11), 1-12.

Tafa, E., & Manolitsis, G. (2003). Attitudes of Greek parents of typically developing kindergarten children towards inclusive education. *European journal of special needs education*, 18 (2), 155-171.

Giangreco, M. F. (1997). Key lessons learned about inclusive education: Summary of the 1996 Schonnel Memorial Lecture. *International Journal of Disability, Development & Education*, 59, 359-372.

44 Karagianni, P. (2008). *Disability, education and social justice*. Minutes 5th International Conference: Education and Social Justice, Patras.

45 Mastropieri, M. A., & Scruggs, T. E. (2001). Promoting inclusion in secondary classrooms. *Learning Disability Quarterly*, 24 (4), 265-274.

46 Zoniou - Sideri, A., Deropoulou-Derou, E., Vlachou-Balafouti, A., (ed.) (2012). *Disability and educational policy*. Athens: Pedio.

47 Gena, A., (2002). Autism and pervasive developmental disorders. Athens: Edition of the author.

48 Baines, L., Baines, C., & Masterson, C. (1994). Mainstreaming: One School's Reality: For More Than Seven Months the Authors Observed Carol Masterson's Classroom at Coats Middle School, a Public School in a Southeastern Suburb of a Large City in Texas. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 76 (1), 39

Also, the number of children in a class is a brake, since the larger it is and in combination with the existence of children with special educational needs and / or disability, it greatly reduces the teacher's involvement with each child. This was shown by the research of Scruggs and Mastropieri⁴⁹, where teachers agreed on the fact of reducing the number of students in the general classroom in case of a child with special educational needs and / or disability. In addition, problems are created in the organization of the school environment, since in many cases an integration department is created with many students who have increased needs, but the time allotted to them is short. The large number that exists in the integration departments is mainly due to the fact that students who do not have an official diagnosis from KESY can enroll⁵⁰.

In addition, there are many cases in which children of normal development reject, stigmatize these children discouraging their social progress⁵¹ due to the departure of students with special educational needs and / or disability to be transferred for a few hours to the Department Integration⁵². Teachers feared the negative effects and frustrations on their experiences with their interaction with children of normal development⁵³. There are also reservations on the part of parents about the quality of education of children of normal development⁵⁴.

The teachers of the general class report as another important problem the lack of education and training in special education creating their feelings of inadequacy in terms of receiving effective integration strategies⁵⁵, while they also mentioned lack of suitable designed spaces and educational material⁵⁶. Finding of PI (Pedagogical Institute) for Greece states that the material and technical infrastructure of many schools shows shortcomings and several gaps, while a research of PESEA (Panhellenic Scientific Association of Special Education) in

49 Scruggs, T. E., & Mastropieri, M. A. (1996). Teacher perceptions of mainstreaming/inclusion, 1958–1995: A research synthesis. *Exceptional children*, 63 (1), 59-74.

50 Bilanaki, E., & Tragoulia, E. (2010). The representations of her teachers formal class for the role of the Integration Department and for their own role in integration children with special needs in primary school. In E. Papanis & P. E. Giavrimis (Ed.). *Research, Educational Policy & Practice in Special Education, 8-10 October 2010* (pp. 2-13). University of the Aegean: Program Counseling and Methodology of Psychological Research.

51 Sabornie, E. J. (1987). Bi-directional social status of behaviorally disordered and nonhandicapped elementary school pupils. *Behavioral Disorders*, 13 (1), 45-57.

52 Bilanaki, E., & Tragoulia, E. (2010). The representations of her teachers formal class for the role of the Integration Department and for their own role in integration children with special needs in primary school. In E. Papanis & P. E. Giavrimis (Ed.). *Research, Educational Policy & Practice in Special Education, 8-10 October 2010* (pp. 2-13). University of the Aegean: Program Counseling and Methodology of Psychological Research.

53 Dumke, D., Krieger, G. & Schäfer, G. (1989). *Schulische Integration in der Beurteilung von Eltern und Lehrern*. Weinheim: Deutscher Studien Verlag

54 Smith, T., Polloway, E., Patton, J., & Dowdy, C. (2001). *Teaching student with special needs inclusive*. Needham Heights: Apearson Education Co.

55 Panteliadou, S. & Kotoulas, V. (1997). School Integration of People with Special Needs Educational Needs: A suggestion. *Contemporary Education*, 96/97, 136-146.

56 Dumke, D., Eberl, D., Venker, S. & Wolff-Kollmar, S. (1997). *Weiterentwicklung sonderpädagogischer Förderung im Urteil von Lehrern*. Bonn: Copyright bei den Verfassern.

2005⁵⁷, which examined the adequacy of 510 integration departments found that only 19.2% are housed in suitable rooms. These deficiencies are reinforced by the results of EPEAEK (Business Education and Initial Vocational Training Program) (PI, 2004), where according to this 54.7% of the integration departments operate in auxiliary spaces, warehouses, corridors, while only 26.5% operate in regular rooms.

Another problem is the changes in the role of the teacher, where the integration may cause an identity crisis in the teachers, since changes are made in their role in the school⁵⁸. The general class teacher used to have no responsibility for the progress of students with special educational needs and / or disabilities and worked alone. With the integration, the general education and special education teachers cooperate for the learning and social development of children with special educational needs and / or disability and at the same time share the responsibility for their progress⁵⁹. However, there are often disagreements, but also problems in assessment, teaching planning, supervisory tools and parental counseling.

In addition, Wiedmeyer and Lehman⁶⁰ expressed similar concerns about the effectiveness of support programs, ie whether they meet the individual needs of students. They claimed that children in special classes face problems such as: a) being socially stigmatized, b) not being able to generalize the skills they had in general classes, c) general education teachers were not responsible for the learning needs of students with special educational needs and / or disability, d) there was often a lack of communication between general education and special education teachers. These four problems are also observed in the Greek reality. However, another concern that does not apply to Greece, but to other countries abroad, was that, e) students with special educational needs and / or disabilities may not have attended school or classroom events because were in the special classes for the same period of time.

According to a research that examined the views of special educators for the integration departments, the factors that contribute to the students forming a positive attitude towards this institution are the pedagogical atmosphere, the small departments, the individualized teaching approach according to the individual needs of each child but also the experience in combination with the knowledge of the teacher⁶¹.

57 Efstathiou, M. (2007). *The institutions of school inclusion of people e with disabilities in the face of housing problems and multifaceted foreclosures*. In Proceedings of the Hellenic Institute of Applied Pedagogy and Of Education (HELLENIC), 4th Panhellenic Conference on: "School Iso for Children Anisa ". Athens, 4-6 May 2007.

58 Sage, D. D., & Burrello, L. C. (1994). *Leadership in Educational Reform: An Administrator's Guide to Changes in Special Education*. Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.

59 Epstein, T. & Elias, M. (1996). To reach for the stars: How social affective education can foster truly inclusive environments. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 78, 157- 162.

60 Wiedmeyer, D., & Lehman, J. (1991). The "house plan" approach to collaborative teaching and consultation. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 23 (3), 6-10.

61 Patsalis, Ch. (2008). The institution of integrating students with special learning difficulties in the Greek educational reality. *Scientific Step*, 9.

The positive, friendly and warm environment of the integration departments together with the appropriate organization helps the students to develop their self-esteem. Also, according to Georgopoulos and Dialynas⁶² the students who participated in integration departments developed social skills making it easier for them to integrate into the pedagogical and social development of the classroom, but also of the school in general, while due to the small number of students participating separate and individualized teaching practices performed by children experience success by giving them confidence, while at the same time improving their performance in the general classroom⁶³. Students develop skills that allow them to participate in general classroom activities as well, making them acceptable to their teachers and classmates, creating opportunities for their active participation⁶⁴.

In addition, the integration departments due to the specialized educational program they provide contribute to a great extent to the reduction of student dropout, as it is directly related to school failure and learning difficulties, while the attitude of students changes for the school, since through encouragement, Rewarding, emotional support and appropriate educational approaches increase their self-confidence and reduce their negative attitude towards school, which comes from low self-esteem and learning difficulties.

Another research⁶⁵ states that children studying in the integration departments have left the marginalization of the classroom, while they can afford to have an exclusive teacher, who will adjust the educational part according to his pace and needs. providing him with ongoing encouragement and emotional security. The same research also refers to the benefits they offer to the integration departments. Initially, special education teachers reported that their involvement with people with special educational needs and / or disability offered them self-improvement, professional development and awareness of the acceptance of diversity. Regarding the students, they said that the integration departments give advantages in both the cognitive and the social sector, with the ultimate goal of their full integration in the regular classroom.

Conclusions

The integration classes are necessary to fill the learning gaps of the students so that they can integrate smoothly in the general classroom following without difficulty the flow of the lesson. The socialization, self-confidence and supportive relationship between child and teacher full of confidence that is created are the main benefits of this institution. Finally, in addition to the children, the positive effect of the integration

62 Georgopoulos, V. & Dialynas, G., (2002). The Departments of Integration in secondary Education. From theory to practice experimental application in the 16th High School of Patras. *Special education issues*, 18, 27-31.

63 Patsalis, Ch. (2008). The institution of integrating students with special learning difficulties in the Greek educational reality. *Scientific Step*, 9.

64 Matsagouras, H. G., (2000). *Collaborative Teaching and Learning*. Athens: Grigoris

65 Eleftheriadou, R. (2015). *Inclusion Department: Views of special education teachers Primary education*. Thessaloniki: Aristotle's University. Thessaloniki.

departments is transferred to the children's parents, since through communication and cooperation they understand the child's skills and their satisfaction for the upward progress of their children increases. Integration classes for children without educational needs, it is important because these students, due to their daily involvement with children with such difficulties, accept the difference of individuals, cooperate and interact with them, but also become aware. on matters of special education and generally respect the individuality and rights of every human being.

Although the school integration of children with special needs is supported by the current institutional framework, the relevant legal regulations are characterized as deficient and with low educational and social support. The departments of integration in order to continue to provide education services to students with special educational needs should have a clear legislative framework and appropriate books and curriculum. In addition, teachers of general education should be trained in co-education and its implementation in the Greek educational system.

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Writer's biographical information

Paraskevi Kaltsouni: PhD student majoring in Special Education, Ternopil Volodymyr Hnatiuk National Pedagogical University, Ternopil, Ternopil region, Ukraine. Email: vivikaltsouni@hotmail.com

Tsiouma Caterina

Limitations and perspectives of error feedback in L2 learning: A brief overview

Abstract

This paper explores error feedback (or corrective feedback - CF) as a key notion in second language acquisition (SLA). A brief literature overview is intended in order to investigate the great controversy among researchers about correction's limitations and perspectives, as to whether error feedback (EF) helps L2 students improve their accuracy and overall performance. The review starts around the 1980s, focuses more on the skeptical conflicts taken place between 1990-2009, and depicts in the last decade a more neutral progress of the theoretical concept. It concludes in support of error feedback, emphasizing the need for additional research and personalized treatment of L2 learners during feedback provision.

Keywords: error feedback, corrective feedback, Second language acquisition (SLA), language teaching (TL)

Περιορισμοί και προοπτικές στην ανατροφοδότηση λαθών κατά την εκμάθηση της Γ2: Σύντομη επισκόπηση

Περίληψη

Η παρούσα εργασία διερευνά την ανατροφοδότηση λαθών (ή διορθωτική ανατροφοδότηση) ως βασική έννοια στην απόκτηση δεύτερης γλώσσας (Second Language Acquisition, SLA). Η σύντομη επισκόπηση της βιβλιογραφίας επιχειρεί την κριτική διερεύνηση της μεγάλης διαμάχης μεταξύ των ερευνητών σχετικά με τους περιορισμούς και τις προοπτικές διόρθωσης, ως προς το αν η ανατροφοδότηση λαθών βοηθά τους μαθητές της Γ2 να βελτιώσουν την ακρίβεια στις λεκτικές αποτυπώσεις και τη συνολική τους απόδοση. Η ανασκόπηση ξεκινά περίπου τη δεκαετία του 1980, εστιάζει περισσότερο στις σκεπτικιστικές αντιπαραθέσεις που έλαβαν χώρα κατά τα 1990-2009 και απεικονίζει την τελευταία δεκαετία ως μια πιο ουδέτερη εποχή, δεδομένης της προόδου της θεωρητικής αντίληψης. Εν κατακλείδι, υποστηρίζεται η ανατροφοδότηση λαθών σφάλματος και τονίζεται η ανάγκη για επιπρόσθετη έρευνα και εξατομικευμένη αντιμετώπιση των μαθητών της Γ2 κατά την παροχή ανατροφοδότησης.

Λέξεις-κλειδιά: ανατροφοδότηση λαθών, διορθωτική ανατροφοδότηση, κατάρκτηση δεύτερης γλώσσας, γλωσσική διδασκαλία

1. Introduction

In the second half of the 20th century, while the notions of *assessment* and *evaluation* were explored, the concept “feedback” was introduced by Stufflebeam, since in his approach evaluation is a feedback mechanism of the whole educational process with the main purpose of continuous improvement and refinement of its effectiveness.¹ When the concept is placed in the educational setting is called error-feedback or corrective feedback (CF)², since it implies correcting learners’ errors³. The term “corrective feedback” refers to “an indication to a learner that his or her use of the target language is incorrect”⁴. Especially, error-feedback is considered as students receiving notes from teachers or peers on their achievements

1 Stufflebeam, D. (1968). Toward a Science of Educational Evaluation. *Educational Technology*, 8(14), 5-12. Retrieved April 29, 2021, from www.jstor.org/stable/44422348.

2 In this assignment the notions of *error-feedback* and *corrective feedback* are used as synonyms. In the conclusion it is mentioned that the literature review permits this alternative usage of the two terms.

3 Dempsey, J. V., & Sales, G. C. (1993). *Interactive instruction and feedback*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J: Educational Technology Publications. (retrieved April 25, 2021, through google books); Blummer, B. & Kenton, Jeffrey & Wiatrowski, M. (2018). Promoting ethnic diversity and multiculturalism in higher education. *IGI Global*; 10.4018/978-1-5225-4097-7 (retrieved April 28, 2021, through google books).

4 Lightbown, P. M., & Spada, N. (2013). *How languages are learned*. (4th Ed.). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, p. 216.

in various activities. The comments offered may be formal or informal, oral or written, depending on the tasks engaged⁵. Taking this into account, it is evident how CF plays a crucial role as an essential part in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and Language Teaching (LT)⁶.

In the last 30 years, deep, specialized, and comprehensive study of error feedback has been carried out, but, even today, error feedback seems to be an open question, since there is a contradiction between the scientific discourse. The question is whether this frequent process, in which the profile of the L2 students' abilities is presented, contributes or not to their realization of weaknesses and virtues of their speech, avoiding anger or frustration (because a written utterance used, for example, may have weaknesses in spelling and punctuation, but it is possible to be written in the right style and, finally, to be quite effective), and improve the L2 abilities, accuracy, quality of L2 usage and keep them motivated⁷. So, the crucial question is: how can error feedback assist bilingual students in their learning process? The narrow collaboration with the teacher helps learners to improve their linguistic skills, giving them the willingness to try to develop further their competence?

2. Literature review

Exploring the error correction role on language acquisition before the 1990s, the argumentations can be divided into four categories, accounting distinct findings: (1) positive effects on Language Learning (LL),⁸ (2) negative effects on LL,⁹ (3) have no obvious effect,¹⁰ (4) negative effects on LL when it is absent.¹¹ In a

5 Blummer, B. & Kenton, Jeffrey & Wiatrowski, M. (2018). Promoting ethnic diversity and multiculturalism in higher education. *IGI Global*; 10.4018/978-1-5225-4097-7 (retrieved April 28, 2021, through google books).

6 Ellis, R. (2009). Corrective Feedback and Teacher Development. *L2 Journal*, 1(1). doi:10.5070/12.v1i1.9054

7 Lightbown, P. M., & Spada, N. (2013). *How languages are learned*. (4th Ed.). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press; Ortega, L. (2009). *Understanding second language acquisition*. New York, USA: Routledge.

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8 Hendrickson, J. M. (1980). The treatment of error in written work. *Modern Language Journal*, 64, 216-221; Cardelle, M., & Corno, L. (1981). Effects on second language learning of variations in written feedback on homework assignments. *TESOL Quarterly*, 15, 45-66; Lalande, J. F., II. (1982). Reducing composition errors: An experiment. *Modern Language Journal*, 66, 140-149; Herron, C., & Tomasello, M. (1988). Learning grammatical structures in a foreign language: Modelling versus feedback. *French Review*, 61, 910-922.

9 Krashen, S. D., & Terrell, T. D. (1983). *The natural approach: Language acquisition in the classroom*. Elmsford, NY: Pergamon Press; Semke, H. D. (1984). Effects of the red pen. *Foreign Language Annals*, 17, 195-202.

10 Cohen, A. D., & Robbins, M. (1976). Toward assessing interlanguage performance: The relationship between selected errors, learners' characteristics, and learners' explanations. *Language Learning*, 26, 45-66; Semke, H. D. (1984). Effects of the red pen. *Foreign Language Annals*, 17, 195-202; Krashen, S. D. (1985). *The input hypothesis: Issues and implications*. New York: Longman; Robb, T., Ross, S., & Shortreed, I. (1986). Salience of feedback on error and its effect on EFL writing quality. *TESOL Quarterly*, 20, 83-95.

11 Vigil, N. A., & Oller, J. W. (1976). Rule fossilization: A tentative model. *Language Learning*, 26, 281-295; D'Anglejan, A. (1978). Language learning in and out of classrooms. In J. C. Richards (Ed.), *Understanding*

more recent literature overview, investigating the attitudes and opinions about the value of EF perspectives for writing speech, Truscott,¹² Ferris¹³ and Chandler¹⁴ lead in the debate. In short, the former is against of EF, Ferris defends the practice for grammatical errors, while other, like Chandler, more modest, look for its pros and cons of this model in L2 writing classes for learners receiving error feedback.

Deepening at the contribution of literature, in the early 1990s, Cristine Kepner presents the results of an experiment, in which two types of written EF provided to L2 learners (message-related comments and surface error-corrections) and concludes that the error corrections written feedback type is not helpful, because consistent feedback does not improve L2 writers' verbal-ability classification, in order to avoid surface-level errors, and it does not promote the production of higher-level writing by L2. According to Kepner, this model of EF is helpful only for "low verbal-ability students to perform at the same level as high-verbal-ability students on measures of accuracy in L2 writing (the surface-errors count)"¹⁵. Similarly, next year, in another significant paper with negative findings of EF in an ESL group, Ken Sheppard tests the improvements and results in grammatical accuracy (verb form errors and punctuation related with grammatical clause) and examines the contrastive differences between "discrete-item attention to form and holistic feedback on meaning"¹⁶. He emphasizes that the stage of the corrections for the L2 learning process must be determined and is offish and reserved of effectiveness. Later, this decade, John Truscott advocates that, although students' desire is to receive feedback, grammar correction should not be classified among writing subjects because then EF is ineffective and potentially harmful.¹⁷ In fact, based on research data in his paper of 2007 Truscott shows strongly that the error

second and foreign language learning: Issues and approaches. Rowley, MA: Newbury House (pp. 218-237); Higgs, T. V., & Clifford, R. (1982). In T. V. Higgs (Ed.), *Curriculum, competence, and the foreign language teacher*, Skokie, IL: National Textbook Co. (pp. 57-79).

12 Truscott, J. (1996). The case against grammar correction in L2 writing classes. *Language Learning*, 46, 327-369; Truscott, J. (1999). The Case for "The Case Against Grammar Correction in L2 Writing Classes": A Response to Ferris. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 8(2), 111-122. Truscott, J. (2004). Evidence and Conjecture on the Effects of Correction: A Response to Chandler. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 13, 337- 343; Truscott, J. (2007). The Effect of Error Correction on Learner's ability to Write Accurately. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 16, 255-272.

13 Ferris, D. (1999). The case for grammar correction in L2 writing classes: A response to Truscott (1996). *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 8(1), 1-11. doi:10.1016/s1060-3743(99)80110-6; Ferris, D. (2004). The "grammar correction" debate in L2 writing: Where are we, and where do we go from here? (and what do we do in the meantime?). *Journal of Second Language Writing* 13(1), 49-62.

14 Chandler, J. (2003). *The efficacy of various kinds of error feedback for improvement in the accuracy and fluency of L2 student writing*. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 12(3), 267-296. doi:10.1016/s1060-3743(03)00038-9

15 Kepner, C. G. (1991). An experiment in the relationship of types of written feedback to the development of second-language writing skills. *Modern Language Journal*, 75(3), 310. <https://doi.org/10.2307/328724>

16 Sheppard, K. (1992). Two Feedback Types: Do They Make A Difference?. *RELC Journal*, 23(1), 103-104.

17 Truscott, J. (1996). The case against grammar correction in L2 writing classes. *Language Learning*, 46, 327-369; Truscott, J. (1999). The Case for "The Case Against Grammar Correction in L2 Writing Classes": A Response to Ferris. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 8(2), 111-122.

correction impact on learners' ability to write precisely is unhelpful all the way.¹⁸ Also, he criticizes *revision studies* as a type of study used by researchers in favor to measure the learners' success in written essays after feedback.¹⁹ Along these lines, he proposes that CF should be abandoned in LT.

On the other hand, in the debate, there are studies in favor of EF that examine the positive and improving changes in L2 learners' writing ability over a period of time.²⁰ Diana Frantzen (1995) suggests that a grammar review is a benefit to a content course and EF advances the development in grammatical accuracy in writing in the L2.²¹ A counterclaim on Truscott's argument on the negative impact of EF on fluency in 1999 comes from Fiona Hyland, who presented a case study of teachers and six ESL academic writers, including teacher protocols, interviews, and texts. She demonstrated that the majority of the students, who received the feedback, when they edited their drafts, corresponded to their teacher's comments, and she concludes that EF improves students' current writing and contributes to their language development.²² In addition, error manipulation through feedback is advocated by Chandler, who contradicts Truscott's claim (1996-1999)²³. Jean Chandler, through experimental and control group data, argued that correcting grammatical and lexical errors in L2 students' exercises leads to significant improvement by a conscious reduction of them later, without affecting the fluency or quality of speech. Moreover, Chandler also focused on how to correct errors, with an accurate indication of the error and its reconstruction or by underlining only its position.

In such a manner, theorists have studied a considerable issue for researchers and classroom practitioners: which types of CF are most effective and in which context.²⁴ Dana Ferris identifies two types of feedback, the direct

18 Truscott, J. (2007). The Effect of Error Correction on Learner's ability to Write Accurately. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 16, 255-272.

19 Ferris, D., & Roberts, B. (2001). Error Feedback in L2 Writing Classes: How Explicit Does It Need to Be? *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 10(3), 161-184.

20 Frantzen, D. (1995). *The Effects of Grammar Supplementation on Written Accuracy in an Intermediate Spanish Content Course*. *The Modern Language Journal*, 79(3), 329. doi:10.2307/329349; Hyland, F. (2003). Focusing on Form: Student Engagement with Teacher Feedback. *System*, 31(2), 217-230; Chandler, J. (2003). *The efficacy of various kinds of error feedback for improvement in the accuracy and fluency of L2 student writing*. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 12(3), 267-296. doi:10.1016/s1060-3743(03)00038-9

21 Frantzen, D. (1995). *The Effects of Grammar Supplementation on Written Accuracy in an Intermediate Spanish Content Course*. *The Modern Language Journal*, 79(3), 329. doi:10.2307/329349

22 Hyland, F. (2003). Focusing on Form: Student Engagement with Teacher Feedback. *System*, 31(2), 217-230.

23 Chandler, J. (2003). *The efficacy of various kinds of error feedback for improvement in the accuracy and fluency of L2 student writing*. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 12(3), 267-296. doi:10.1016/s1060-3743(03)00038-9

24 Bitchener, J. (2008). Evidence in Support of Written Corrective Feedback. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, doi: 10.1016/j.jslw.2007.11.004; Bitchener, J., Young, S. & Cameron, D. (2005). The Effect of Different Types of Corrective Feedback on ESL Student Writing. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 14, 191-205; Ferris, D., & Roberts, B. (2001). Error Feedback in L2 Writing Classes: How Explicit Does It Need to Be? *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 10(3), 161-184;

(“when an instructor provides the correct linguistic form for students”) and the indirect (“when the teacher indicates that an error has been made but leaves it to the student writer to solve the problem and correct the error”).²⁵ In a collaborative study published the previous year, Ferris & Roberts had already tested the two categories in groups of L2 learners and concluded that both underlining and coding feedback when used benefit successfully the learners in revising grammatical errors.²⁶ Chandler, also, after comparing EF types in a different context (direct correction, underlining with description, simple description, and simple underlining) concludes further that direct correction is more effective for long-term development, as it allows for fast and accurate revision, and both students and teachers prefer it. According to her, self-correction was even more preferable to learners when the errors were just underlined; likewise, simply underlining requires less time for the teachers.²⁷ So, both CF methods are worthwhile, depending on the targets set or the various types of errors, neither undertook the influence of EF on the specific types of errors.

More recently, contributing to the evaluation of the examined CF method, John Bitchener’s work provides confirmative data in favor of written CF. Concretely, Bitchener et al.’s study illustrates the positive impact of the connection of written and oral feedback in accuracy levels of certain grammar forms (use of the past simple tense and definite article); nonetheless, no impact was observed on the use of prepositions.²⁸ In this research base, Bitchener’s comparative study supports again the positive effects of written CF on particular linguistic aspects in L2 learner’s writing.²⁹

Finally, the last decade’s interest in CF literature seems to be more neutral. As it is concluded from the material studied, after mentioning the controversies of the past, authors underline, with prudence and moderation, the academic and educational significance of EF, and shape the types used by teachers to point up learners’ attention³⁰: (1) explicit correction, (2) metalinguistic feedback, (3) clarification request, (4) repetition, (5) elicitation, (6) recast.³¹ Additionally,

25 Ferris, D. (2002). *Treatment of error in second language writing*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, p. 19.

26 Ferris, D., & Roberts, B. (2001). Error Feedback in L2 Writing Classes: How Explicit Does It Need to Be? *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 10(3), 161-184.

27 Chandler, J. (2003). *The efficacy of various kinds of error feedback for improvement in the accuracy and fluency of L2 student writing*. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 12(3), 267–296. doi:10.1016/s1060-3743(03)00038-9.

28 Bitchener, J., Young, S. & Cameron, D. (2005). The Effect of Different Types of Corrective Feedback on ESL Student Writing. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 14, 191-205.

29 Bitchener, J. (2008). Evidence in Support of Written Corrective Feedback. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, doi: 10.1016/j.jslw.2007.11.004.

30 Lightbown, P. M., & Spada, N. (2013). *How languages are learned*. (4th Ed.). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

31 Blummer, B. & Kenton, Jeffrey & Wiatrowski, M. (2018). Promoting ethnic diversity and multiculturalism in higher education. IGI Global; 10.4018/978-1-5225-4097-7 (retrieved April 28, 2021, through google books).

the modes of feedback are distinguished: (a) oral CF occurs “online” through immediate interactions and (b) written CF happens “offline” as a consequence of a delaying reception. Another distinction is between explicit and implicit CF.³² Scientists (such as Ellis, 2010; Lyster, Saito, & Sato, 2013; Nassaji, 2017; Blummer et al, 2018) focus on learning contexts as well³³. Especially Nassaji’s study suggests the importance of “immediate correction”.

3. Discussion/Conclusion

Considering all these juxtaposed arguments pronounced during conferences and investigated in research publications in books and articles, we explored valuable examples of a huge number of debating discussions related to the studied topic. Since behaviorist and cognitive approaches of L2 learning have considered feedback as a supportive tool to language teaching³⁴ and taking into consideration the conflicting results on the EF effects for SLA and language pedagogy, in general, but also in particular error types, some critical thoughts on them we will be illustrated briefly.

In trying to map the opposing views on EF, along with the question of the method’s effectiveness, we observe that researchers use as alternative notions the error feedback and corrective feedback, without concrete differentiating of the definition. Also, most argumentative research involves the written speech, while according to Truscott (2007) some of them are controlled experiments³⁵ [Ferris (2003, 2004), Kepner (1991), Semke (1984), Polio et al. (1998),³⁶ Fazio (2001),³⁷ Robb, Ross, & Shortreed (1986)], and other are uncontrolled experiments [(Hendrickson (1981), Lalande (1982), Frantzen (1995), Chandler (2003), Chandler (2004),³⁸ Bitchener, Young, & Cameron (2005), Ferris (2006)]. In opposite, often the oral speech EF is addressed positively.³⁹

32 Mahmoud, S., Oraby, K. (2015). Let Them Toil to Learn: Implicit Feedback, Self-correction and Performance in EFL Writing. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 8, pp. 1672-1681, doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.17507/tpls.0508.18> (retrieved April 29, 2021, from: <http://www.academypublication.com/ojs/index.php/tpls/article/view/tpls050816721681>)

33 Ellis, R. (2010). A framework for investigating oral and written corrective feedback. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 32(2), 335-349; Lyster, Roy & Saito, Kazuya & Sato, Masatoshi. (2013). Oral corrective feedback in second language classrooms. *Language Teaching*, 46. 1-40. 10.1017/S0261444812000365; Nassaji, H. (2017). Negotiated oral negotiation in response to written errors. In Nassaji, Hossein & Kartchava, Eva. (2017). *Corrective Feedback in Second Language Teaching and Learning: Research, Theory, Applications, Implications*. UK: Routledge (retrieved April 28, 2021, through google books); Blummer, B. & Kenton, Jeffrey & Wiatrowski, M. (2018). Promoting ethnic diversity and multiculturalism in higher education. IGI Global; 10.4018/978-1-5225-4097-7 (retrieved April 28, 2021, through google books).

34 Ellis, R. (2009). Corrective Feedback and Teacher Development. *L2 Journal*, 1(1). doi:10.5070/12.v1i1.9054.

35 Sheppard, K. (1992). Two Feedback Types: Do They Make A Difference?. *RELC Journal*, 23(1), 103–110;

36 Polio, C., Fleck, C., & Leder, N. (1998). “If I only had more time:” ESL learners’ changes in linguistic accuracy on essay revisions. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 7, 43–68.

37 Fazio, L. L. (2001). The effect of corrections and commentaries on the journal writing accuracy of minority- and majority language students. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 10, 235–249.

38 Chandler, J. (2004). A response to Truscott. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 13, 345–348.

39 Lyster, Roy & Saito, Kazuya & Sato, Masatoshi. (2013). Oral corrective feedback in second language classrooms. *Language Teaching*, 46. 1-40. 10.1017/S0261444812000365.

Furthermore, as Ellis has indicated as well, the topics under discussion include (a) the EF contribution to L2 acquisition, (b) the agent of correcting (teacher, peers, learner), (c) the classification of errors to be corrected, (d) relation between the type of feedback and the highest effectiveness, (e) the appropriate moment for feedback (immediate or delayed).⁴⁰

And the crucial question remains: how can error feedback assist bilingual students in their learning process? To sum up, it is hard to choose one corrective feedback strategy, which could function better for grammatical errors in L2 learners' writing. Despite this, students' need for feedback, as educators are aware of their teaching experience, shows that its presence in LT and SLA is more than desirable. Hence, it is important to investigate more on EF, applying more interdisciplinary practices such as deeper language analysis from linguistics and findings of sociocultural theory (SCT), based on Lev Semeonovich Vygotsky's⁴¹ works, where the learning process is viewed as a result of the interaction.⁴² For example, Liu moves on to search how ESL students respond to feedback received for a previous draft when they write another draft of the same essay and what impact the feedback has on morphological, semantic, and syntactic errors.⁴³

As a proposal, it may be interesting to prepare questionnaires to study L2 students' own perceptions-attitudes and whether the correction attempts to satisfy criteria such as treatment of linguistic skills, deeper accuracy, more diligent content, development of language and literacy disciplines adequate for specific scholar/academic tasks and real language (communicative approaches). But firstly, we must realize that also the special traits of individual learner factors,⁴⁴ such as each student's personality, motivation, age, educational and socio-cultural background, play a clear matter. This means that error feedback employed to correct L2 learners' errors should be well pre-determined as a strategy, according to their personalized profile.

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41 Lev Vygotsky (1896-1934) was a famous Russian psychologist. His works on language development play a fundamental-crucial role in 20th and 21st century thought and scholars.

42 Ellis, R. (2009). Corrective Feedback and Teacher Development. *L2 Journal*, 1(1). doi:10.5070/l2.v1i1.9054; Mitchell, R., Myles, F., & Marsden E. (2013). *Second language learning theories (3rd Ed.)*. Groydon, UK: Routledge.

43 Liu, Y. (2008). The effects of error feedback in second language writing. *Arizona Working Papers in SLA & Teaching*, Vol. 15, 65-79 (access online on *Journal of Second Language Acquisition and Teaching*: <https://journals.uair.arizona.edu/index.php/AZSLAT/article/view/21254/20834> retrieved April 25, 2021)

44 Ellis, R. (2010). A framework for investigating oral and written corrective feedback. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 32(2), 335-349.

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Writer’s biographical information

Caterina Tsiouma has studied Philology at the University of Patras, Greece (with specialization in Modern Greek & Byzantine Studies) and Spanish Language and Civilization at the Hellenic Open University. She holds a Master’s Degree in Modern Greek Literature (University of Patras) and has also specialized in ancient history, culture, and civilization (MA, Marconi University, Italy). She has worked as a proofreader and expert editor at several Greek publishers for almost a decade, as well as Greek literature and language teacher in private and public secondary education in Greece (substitute teacher). Currently, her research interests are associated with Modern Greek and comparative literature, and teaching and learning of foreign/second languages, especially in demanding intercultural and diverse environments, such as in refugees and migrants.

Angelaki Rosy-Triantafyllia

Multiculturalism in children's historical novels. Setting a fertile environment for justice and equal treatment

Abstract

Historical narratives for young children, apart from entertaining them and quenching their spiritual thirst, they contribute in the observation of ecumenical problems. Given that Byzantium was a melting pot of cultures and religions which reached its apogee because of the peaceful coexistence of the people who cohabited at its territory, historical novels that present Byzantium's History help children realize the historical dimension of multiculturalism and understand individual, racial and religious diversity. This article examines the way five talented Greek writers used narrative techniques in order to introduce pluralism to children in their historical novels, taking under consideration notable multicultural policies that indicate History and Literature as means which identify minorities' cultural offers. It will be also pointed out that Children's Literature conduces to the conformation of a person's cultural identity, promotes the respect and the acceptance of diversity and builds the basic skills needed for intercultural co-existence.

Keywords: Children's Literature, Historical novel, Byzantium, intercultural education

Πολυπολιτισμικότητα στα παιδικά ιστορικά μυθιστορήματα. Καλλιερώντας τη δικαιοσύνη και την ισότητα

Περίληψη

Τα ιστορικά μυθιστορήματα για παιδιά, πέραν του ότι τέρπουν τους αναγνώστες και διανοίγουν τους πνευματικούς τους ορίζοντες, συντελούν στην ανάδειξη ζητημάτων οικουμενικής εμβέλειας. Δεδομένου πως το Βυζάντιο ήταν χοάνη θρησκειών και λαών και έφθασε στο απόγειο της ακμής της χάρη στην ειρηνική συνύπαρξη των φυλών που κατοικούσαν στα εδάφη του, τα ιστορικά μυθιστορήματα που πραγματεύονται την Ιστορία του δύνανται να διδάξουν στον αναγνώστη την έννοια της πολυπολιτισμικότητας και της ατομικής, εθνικής και θρησκευτικής διαφορετικότητας. Το άρθρο εξετάζει τον τρόπο που πέντε ταλαντούχοι Έλληνες συγγραφείς για παιδιά, συνυφαίνουν τη Λογοτεχνία με την Ιστορία και δια της επισήμανσης της οικουμενικότητας του Βυζαντίου, αποδεικνύουν πως η Παιδική Λογοτεχνία συντελεί στην καλλιέργεια της συλλογικής συνείδησης και την αποδοχή της διαφορετικότητας, στη βάση της πεποίθησης του ανήκειν σε μια ευρύτερη κοινότητα με κοινή πολιτισμική κληρονομιά.

Λέξεις-κλειδιά: Παιδική Λογοτεχνία, ιστορικό μυθιστόρημα, Βυζάντιο, διαπολιτισμική εκπαίδευση

1. Introduction

The term ‘multiculturalism’ refers to a culturally diverse society, where culture includes racial, religious or cultural groups and is manifested in customary behaviors, cultural assumptions and values, patterns of thinking, and communicative styles¹ - a society that challenges stereotypes and promotes a realistic glimpse into the lives of diverse groups of people². History studies the social groups, highlights the diverse forms and their contradictions and analyses the reasons for ruptures and structures of any changes that occur within them. Additionally, as manifested by its name, History is a science highly interested in human individuality, temporality, temporal multiplicity, detection of causal relations and even the historic otherness. It is, in fact, science and, at the same time, narration constructed from subjects, who have to somehow connect evidence.

But although History should broaden its view of the world ends up soaked

1 Cantle, T. (2013), Interculturalism as a new narrative for the era of globalization and super-diversity. Στο: Barrett, M. (επιμ.) *Interculturalism and Multiculturalism: Similarities and Differences*, Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing, σ.σ. 69–70.

2 Bullivant, B. M. (1989), Culture: It’s nature and meaning for educators. Στο: J. A. Banks and C. A. Banks (επιμ.), *Multicultural Education: Issues and Perspectives*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon, σ. 30.

by heavy doses of political and/ or military facts, provincialism and ethnocentrism. This is opposed to the idea of multicultural education, which-provided from an early age- encourages young people to develop positive attitudes toward other cultures and helps them become empathetic and respectful³. Literature is considered as an exponent of our cultural characteristics, because themes or patterns of myth and narration have always been the different customs and cultures, social reality or historical contexts, such as the displacement of ethnic groups because of political and financial reasons⁴. Therefore, we turn to Literature in order to define our place in this multicultural environment we live in or to give meaning to the experiences that make up our individual and collective identity⁵. This article emphasizes that, since societies have become more heterogeneous and important part of school curriculums and educators pedagogies is the cultivation of multicultural notion, parents and educators do and should utilize multicultural Literature as an important pedagogical approach.

2. Aim of the study

This paper focuses on the power of historical fiction for children and its contribution to multiculturalism. Significantly, we focus on the idea that while authors in their historical novels explain human depravity and human history with a steady eye to young readers and try to create spaces for marginalized writings to be heard, they simultaneously help children comprehend the concepts of race and ethnicity in their social and historical context and recognize histories of oppression, racial intolerances. The sample of this paper constitutes of the books below:

K. Sinou's, *Anna and Theofano*, a double historical biography that transfers the young readers around the 10th century, when the ruling Macedonian dynasty and the Byzantine Empire were at their peak,

Tzanis' *The Zealot of dreams*, a book which discusses the moral, economic, ideological and ecclesiastical decadence of Byzantium and the anti-aristocratic movement of the Zealots (1342-1349) in Thessaloniki, as it was seen by a young moral man,

Paparthodwrou's *The lost stamp of Ioustinianus*, a historical novel which urges the young readers to travel back in time with a diverse group of young boys and a girl and land at the Hippodrome of Constantinople in 532 –when Nika riots took place,

3 Escayg, K.A., (2019), "Who's got the power?": A critical examination of the anti-bias curriculum. Στο: *International Journal of Child Care and Education Policy*, τ. 13, σ. 17.

4 Hefflin, B. R. and Barksdale-Ladd, M. A. (2001), African American Children's Literature That Helps Students Find Themselves: Selection Guidelines for Grades K-3. Στο: *The Reading Teacher*, τ. 54, σ. 813.

5 Sims Bishop, R (1987), Extending Multicultural Understanding through Childrens' Books. Στο: B. Cullinan (επιμ.), *Children's Literature in the Reading Program*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association, σ. 63.

Voloudaki's *Elisabeth and Damianos*, a book that its plot unravels in Constantinople in January 1137, when at the throne of Byzantium was John Comnenus, and

Zarambouka's *Illustrated Byzantium, Vol. 1 & 2*, books that represent the most key issues which took place between 324 and 610 in Byzantium, according to the author's opinion.

Within the books, is evident the authors' effort to expose racist policies that work to subordinate certain groups of people and their attempt to cultivate intercultural competence to their audience. The cultural, racial and ethnic composition of every country today has become increasingly diverse. This brings not only new opportunities, but new demands as well⁶. As part of the modern Greek reality, the role of the Children's Literature proved to be highly important, since it seems that it may help alleviate prejudices concerning minority groups. The aforementioned books may facilitate children's cross-cultural understanding and engage them to read between and beyond lines- something extremely valuable in our times. All books are analyzed according to the methodological tools of the Critical Theory of Race⁷, as well as of the Cultural Iconology⁸, focusing on the words that are used to describe the other in a literary text the way relationships are prioritized (motifs and textual structure, e.g. the environment the other moves in, the selection of gender and the age of the other etc), the story's scenario, if and how much is it based on cultural myths or stereotypical depictions of the *other*, taking also under consideration Mingshui Cai's Theory⁹ about the physical, the cultural and the inner borders, meaning the borders in people's minds.

3. History and Literature

On the one hand, History is a construction and poetic process, a set of points that unite to make sense of the past, the present and the future, a textual structure open to interpretation / ideologically mediated linguistic structures; on the other, borders between History and Literature were never demarcated. This lead to the rejection of the idea of a unique History, because people embraced the one according to which History (like any form of knowledge) is produced in various ways and Science is simply one of them; History may offer us possibility, but Literature offer us certainty¹⁰. The History and Literature interweaving seems,

6 Benett, C.I. (2003), *Comprehensive multicultural education: Theory and practice*, 5th ed. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, σ.σ. 37-41.

7 Milner, R. H. (2008), Critical Race Theory and Interest Convergence as Analytic Tools in Teacher Education Policies and Practices. Στο: *Journal of Teacher Education*, τ. 59, σελ. 336.

8 Αμπατζοπούλου, Φ. (1998), Ο Άλλος εν διωγμώ. *Η εικόνα του Εβραίου στη λογοτεχνία και στον κινηματογράφο*. Αθήνα: Θεμέλιο, σ. 510.

9 Cai, M. (2002), *Multicultural Literature for Children and Young Adults*. Westport, Connecticut & London: Greenwood Press, σ.222.

10 White, H. (1975). Historicism, History, and the Figurative Imagination. Στο: *History and Theory*, τ. 14, σ.σ. 48-54.

therefore, essential since it allows us to understand the human adventure through time in the whole, but also to obtain a clear image of the complex reality.

While History is seen as a reflection of the human condition and is the means by which we manage our past, Literature- and, in particular, the historical novel, where the historical truth is infused with the writer's sensitivity, thoughts, lyricism and skills- is the means that allows us mental leaps and imaginary movement within the past¹¹. Historical and literary genres are indeed different but none of them depicts fully reality and both of them have narrative and rhetorical tactics and they aim to interpret, to delight and to cultivate the human mind. Of course, historical genre, even though it is subjected to the variations of subjective considerations during the recording of historical reality, it isn't wilful as the conceptual drawings of the literary genre¹². Historical novels' themes are based on people and events of a bygone era, whose special characteristics are imprinted thanks to the writers' imagination and persistence for detail, accuracy and realism¹³.

4. Contemporary children's historical novels and multiculturalism

Culture is lived and learned by the children every day through their families' interaction, through customs, values and stories, as well as through language. Parents and teachers play an important role in children's lives as they affect their views, conceptions, behaviors and perspectives on diversity. Since children begin to notice differences and construct classificatory and evaluative categories very early, multicultural learning opportunities need to be provided to them from an early age¹⁴. Given that Literature has significant power in broadening children's experiences and guiding their learning about cultural differences, it is vital that there are literary texts which allow children to construct their own meaning about different cultures and identities, far away from prejudice, leading them to respect and tolerate individuals from different countries, appreciating their various ethnic and cultural characteristics. Children's Literature propels practices which can prevent children from developing biased negative attitudes towards people from other countries or belong to the so-called minority groups¹⁵. Multicultural books for children and especially historical novels have the power to help young readers become more

11 Girault, B. (2015). De la didactique à l'épistémologie de l'histoire: une réflexivité partagée. *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales*, τ. 70, σσ. 207.

12 Rimmon- Kenan S. (1985), *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics*. London and New York: Methuen, σ.σ. 31-33.

13 Collingwood, R.G. (1994), *The Idea of history*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, σ.σ. 245-246.

14 Moll, L. C., and Greenberg, J. B. (1990), Creating zones of possibilities: Combining social contexts for instruction. Στο: L. C. Moll (επιμ.), *Vygotsky and Education: Instructional Implications and Applications of Sociohistorical Psychology*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, σ.σ. 319-348.

15 Colby, S. A. and Lyon, A. F. (2004). Heightening awareness about the importance of using multicultural literature. Στο: *Multicultural Education*, τ.11, σ. 24.

sensitive so as to appreciate their similarities with other people, overshadowing any fears that stem from the stereotypes of the dominant social groups¹⁶.

It is also observed that in postmodern children's books and especially in historical novels today, the intertextual dialogue with History enables even more the deregulation of previously prefabricated concepts in children concerning identity and diversity, in the vast textual universe. Postmodern and postcolonial Children's Literature is considered a critical component in an intercultural curriculum, as it represents images and information from around the world and reflects different languages and cultures, promotes cross-cultural understanding and appreciation and offers young readers the opportunity to explore their own perceptions and values¹⁷. At this point, though, it is important to highlight that in children's books sometimes difficult concepts are represented, so the guidance of an adult might be the best solution for sensitive topics as racial prejudice are explained effectively¹⁸.

Given that, as mentioned above, Literature and History are related and that historical novels' authors make efforts to represent as realistically as possible the historical and cultural context as well as the political complexities of the era they wish to represent in their books, it is not a surprise that they are also considered as multicultural writers since they actually depict the human experience, including behaviors related to culture, race, ethnicity, religion and gender. As the Byzantine empire was a multi-lingual and multi-ethnic society, childrens' novels that highlight Byzantium's cultural diversity are considered as intercultural, as long as textual and illustrative narrations prove that the authors use accurate historical information in order to portray Byzantium's diversity without romanticizing the experiences of minorities¹⁹.

5. The sample

The sample, as mentioned above, consists of childrens' historical novels that represent the Byzantine era. Specifically, in all the books, the postcolonial, postmodern authors intertwined historical science and literary techniques in order to reveal to the young readers the mechanisms of the social structures through time. Through the narrative voices they all unroll Byzantium's historical, political and social life in their books and do not neglect to indicate to young readers that they embrace diversity and they support "transformative" education²⁰. Avoiding the embellishment of modern life in

16 Αγγελάκη, Ρ. (2018), Διδακτική της ιστορίας. Το Βυζάντιο στη λογοτεχνία για παιδιά, από το 1955 μέχρι σήμερα: Συγκριτική και ιδεολογική προσέγγιση. Θεσσαλονίκη: Γιαχούδης, σ.σ. 75-79.

17 Anstey, M. (2002). "It's Not All Black and White": Postmodern Picture Books and New Literacies. Στο: *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, τ. 45, σ.σ. 444-457.

18 Louie, B. Y. (2006), Guiding principles for teaching multicultural literature. Στο: *International Reading Association*, τ. 59, σ. 442.

19 Ching, S. (2005), Multicultural Children's Literature as an Instrument of Power. Στο: *Language Arts*, τ. 83, σ. 130.

20 Pattnaik, J. (2003), Learning about the other: Building a case for intercultural understanding among minority children. Στο: *Childhood Education*, τ. 79, σ. 205.

their books, the authors gave voice to marginalized people and placed them in the foreground of the narration, aiming to create a positive image for them. The writers wanted to represent the byzantine atmosphere in their books critically and approach it interculturally, without emphasizing in differences between the Byzantines and the characters that belonged in other racial or religious groups. In all the books the “capital of Romania” is represented in a way that could enable children obtain a collective consciousness which extends to the belief that they belong to a wider community with common cultural heritage. In addition, as the historical novel's further feature is the presentation of the values, the norms and the ideas that can be bounced in modern times, every writer tried to unveil the positive and negative aspects of the past, in order to motivate children to embrace and accept themselves through the knowledge of History and choose to accept without criticism people from both genders and from diverse cultural, language, and ethnic groups²¹.

5.1. *Anna and Theofano*

In Sinou's (double) historical fiction biography entitled as “Anna and Theophano, Princesses abroad”, readers get informed that alongside the geographical spread of the state, the Byzantine emperors at that time attempted to win over their rivals through diplomacy, mission and Christianization; in that spirit the two young heroines of the novel were asked to leave their birthplaces and marry foreign monarchs. Through their intercultural respect and kind behavior the two heroines- even though they were females- managed to transfer the Hellenic and Christian morals and customs in the foreign countries and fulfilled their purpose: The foreign monarchs signed treaties of friendship and arbitration with Byzantium. It must be pointed out that, apart from Anna's and Theophano's gentle behaviour, Christianity is demonstrated by the third-person- narrator of the text as a means to approach people from other cultures. Additionally, although it is underlined that in the vast extent of the Empire, Greek language found fertile ground to be established and contributed in the integration of the different cultural groups in Byzantium, it is strongly pointed out that this happened through the fertile interaction between all the people who inhabited the territory of the multinational Byzantium and the amalgamation of the Greek, Roman, Jewish, Arabian, etc. cultural elements. It is also worth noting that the author handles with special attention the tendency of different groups to assimilate to the dominant cultural one; a trend which is known to promote the official language and culture on communities and often results in the cultural homogenization that leads to the loss of diversity and cultural past of the *Other*²².

21 Banks, J. A., and C. A. McGee Banks (2001), *Multicultural education: Issues and perspectives*, 4th ed. New York: Wiley, σ. 25.

22 Bisin, A., and Verdier, T. (2000), A Model of Cultural Transmission, Voting and Political Ideology. *Στο: European Journal of Political Economy*, τ.16, σ. 11–16.

5.2. *The Zealot of dreams*

The allegation that historical fiction acts as improved History shedding light the actual facts and the defective (as it aims to be more real than the fact), it seems that is embraced by Tzanis, since in his book talks about the eternal values and the fundamental ideals of the Greeks, but also about their weaknesses, complementing in this way the work of historical scientists. He focuses, more specifically, on the fanaticism of the Zealots and the brutal way they revenged their compatriots, who had different perceptions. But although the author undoubtedly endorses the opinion that Literature is associated with the Nation²³ and permeates his text with elements that enhance and validate the concept of national identity -by linking, for instance, Greek antiquity with Byzantium- he manages successfully to balance between Hellenism and cultural diversity by informing young readers that Byzantine Thessaloniki was inhabited by many tribes and social groups that finally understood, after many catastrophes, that they had to communicate and work in harmony with each other in order to survive with dignity and being able to manifest freely their religion or belief in worship.

5.3. *The lost stamp of Ioustinianus*

Thodoris Papatheodorou inserts History into fiction to subvert historical facts and rewrite them from a different perspective. He, too, raises important issues such as cultural pluralism, equality, solidarity, educational equity, tolerance and self-worth in his historical novel and, actually, promotes the idea that everybody can and will become more unified. But he stresses that this is a process that requires learning about different races and subcultures and accepting them. Taking advantage the fact that young readers can relate to fictional characters on the same age²⁴, he presents the young protagonists of his novel empathetic and caring, always ready to trust and help each other: blind people, orphans, refugees, Romani, etc. Highlighting that the Nika riot was one of the most catastrophic incidents in the history of Byzantium, the author wishes to promote that violence is never the answer and that the key to co-existence is not ego and pride, but self-esteem and respect for the others.

5.4. *Elisabeth and Damianos*

Equally interesting is Voloudaki's attempt to sensitize young readers on the issues

23 Even-Zohar, I. (1996), *The Role of Literature in the Making of the Nations of Europe: a Socio-Semiotic Study*. Στο: *Applied Semiotics / semiotique appliqué*, τ. 1, σελ. 20-22.

24 Nikolajeva, M. (2002), *The rhetoric of character in Children's Literature*. Lanham, Maryland: The scarecrow Press Inc, σ.σ. 110-115.

of racism and social exclusion. The book's plot is based on Byzantium's cultural diversity and the protagonist's effort to educate her young daughter, Elisabeth, to become more unified with people with different backgrounds, as was Damianos, a young poor and orphan boy who was later adopted by Elizabeth's mother, and work harmoniously in groups. The author's effort to entice young readers to learn about empathy and relate to their peers, open up and trust each other is also evident in the episodes of the novel where it is stressed that the Byzantine emperor himself chose for the position of Grand Domestikos his old Turkish friend, in spite of the known differences between the two specific nations; another clue that historical novels can allow children to become familiar with the fact that societies are heterogeneous - conception which leads in obtaining intercultural competence²⁵ and enables the realization of one's nation's assets and defects.

5.5. *Illustrated Byzantium, Vol. 1 & 2*

Finally, Zarambouka in her hybrid, postmodern books disentangles the intertwined threads of fiction and reality and depicts in her own sketches the byzantine atmosphere. It is obvious that the spread of the Greek language and the Orthodox Christian doctrine in the Byzantine territories are emphasized as the two basic elements that managed to unify the different cultural groups that lived within its boundaries of the vast empire. We could allege that the author and illustrator wishes to consolidate History in her work as a result of osmosis, exchanges and interactions among different ethnic groups. As she obviously realized that intercultural competence becomes more and more increasingly important for young children, she stresses in both her books perennial subjects related to cultural, historical and national identity and the interpretations of History²⁶. She tries to educate children about the silenced histories of marginalized groups in Byzantium, as was the Jews and those who believed in ancient Greek Dodecatheon, but her main goal is the intercultural and historical learning. For that purpose she underlines that Early Christian cult practices emerged from ancient Greek, Roman and Jewish traditions; Zarambouka, actually, promotes the idea that the inhabitants of the Byzantine territory, even different, they were still characterized by a complex of common features and we suspect that she wants to make children able to interpret historical narrations and, at the same time, competent enough to handle information on the past in such way so as to understand it²⁷.

25 Leung, K., Ang, S. and Tan, M.L. (2014), Intercultural Competence. Στο: *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, τ. 1, σ.σ. 502-510.

26 Cox, J. N. and Reynolds, L. (επιμ.), (1993). *New Historical Literary Study*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, σ.4.

27 De Leon, L. (2002), Multicultural Literature: Reading to Develop Self-Worth. Στο: *Multicultural Education*, τ. 10, σ. 49-51.

6. Conclusions

Five historical novels for children were selected, in order to observe whether and to what extent this particular literary genre allows children to understand the intrinsic link between culture and History and gives them the opportunity, while connecting with themselves and their culture on a deeper level, to see the equalization of the races and shape cultural identity. All five authors use History and historiography in their novels in order to highlight the positive effects of the harmonious coexistence between different races and cultures and underline that this was essential for Byzantium to thrive²⁸. They undisputedly did studious historical research aiming to present the multiple historical truths and not only confirmed the link between History and Literature, but also tried their best to prove that Children's Literature has (inter)nationalizing effect; multicultural texts for children intend to expose young readers to issues such as racism and prejudice, with the main purpose to eliminate and solve these problematic attitudes²⁹.

Given that racism is one of the major problems plaguing our society and is expressed in various ways, the authors made sure that the multicultural character of the Byzantine empire was reflected in order to enable young readers realize that societies have always been in their special way heterogeneous, whilst heterogeneity is presented as an enriching clue of national identity. They tried to raise awareness towards the "Others", who were presented as characters that enriched the cultural life of each place they came to inhabit. We could argue that the writers espouse the opinion that Children's literature constitutes one of the pillars of intercultural education and promote History as a result of exchanges and interactions between disparate ethnic groups. Consequently, the only way to peoples' progress is acceptance of different cultures, equal recognition and mutual cooperation³⁰.

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Writer's biographical information

Rosy-Triantafyllia Angelaki is a Historian, Tourcologist and holds a PhD in Children's Literature. Her dissertation was funded by the State Scholarship Foundation. Between 2010-2013 she translated Ottoman registers for her work at the Center for Byzantine Research, the Society for Macedonian Studies and Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and she won scholarships from the European Education and Culture Foundation and the Melina Merkouri Foundation. She is currently a post-doctoral researcher in the Department of Early Childhood Education, Faculty of Pedagogical Studies, in Aristotle University of Thessaloniki where she she teaches History of Children's Literature and Multicultural Children's Literature as an academic scholar. She also teaching Children's Literature and Digital Literature at the University of Nicosia and is a co- operative member of the educational staff at the Hellenic Open University.

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