

# The Presence of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Pupils in the Official Greek Curriculum of Pre Educator Teachers: A Quantitative Content Analysis

Charikleia Pitsou

Med, PhD, University of Patras, Greece

---

**Abstract:** Multiculturalism is a prevailing phenomenon in many countries, including Greece. Today, schools are not characterized by homogeneity in their population as they include pupils of diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. The aim of this study is to examine in what degree and how the culturally and linguistically diverse pupils are presented in «The guide of pre educator teacher--Educational planning--Creative environments of learning», the Greek official curriculum for pre educator teachers, published by the Greek Ministry of Education in 2006, 10 years after the implementation of Law 2413/96 that was entitled «Greek Education Abroad, Intercultural Education and Other Provisions». This law is based on Intercultural Education which addresses issues related to multicultural classrooms. To analyze our material we used a quantitative content analysis, a descriptive and an interpretive. Results showed that, although there are enough references to culturally and linguistically diverse pupils, yet these are not in congruence with the aforementioned Law, but are more associated with the policy of integration, since the official language of instruction is Greek and only the superficial cultural elements of foreign pupils are accepted in the educational process.

**Keywords:** Culturally and linguistically diverse pupils, Official Greek curriculum for pre educator teachers, Intercultural Education, Law 2413/96.

---

## I. INTRODUCTION

### *Background of study:*

Multiculturalism, which takes place widely during the last decades, is undoubtedly a prevailing and hot issue worldwide, as it has caused changes to monocultural and monolingual societies which have received a vast number of immigrants from different countries. The Greek society is such one.

Taking into consideration the increasing flow of immigrants globally, it would be hard to say that there are societies which have as members only people who come from a nation and have the same mother tongue (Rodd, 1996). Nowadays, societies are characterized by multicultural and multilingual diversity, since immigrants come from different national, linguistic and cultural backgrounds. This diversity can be seen in classrooms all the way from kindergartens to high schools and has influence on educational practices (Banks, 2004). Schools, as official institutions, should respect multicultural and multilingual diversity in classrooms.

However, schools, (as official institutions,) are able to respect multicultural and multilingual diversity in classrooms, only if substantial changes and modifications take place in official curricula oriented both to teachers and pupils. Such

curricula which promote positively respect and interaction among people, do not disturb national cohesion. On the contrary, they recognize and praise national identities and cultures of all the people, contributing to the formation of democratic citizens, who are sensitive to issues related to cultural diversity and fighting discriminations (Derman-Sparks, and Team work ABC, 1989; York, 2003).

#### ***Official educational measures by the Greek state concerning cultural and linguistic diversity in schools/ education:***

The transformation of the Greek society from monocultural to multicultural during the last decades has influenced education all the way from kindergartens to high schools. The Greek state took official measures to cope with this transformation. These measures can be divided in three time periods (Markou, 1996; Nikolaou, 2002).

The first time period took place from the early 70's to the early 80's, and is characterized by the assimilation policy . The main point of assimilation in educational process is to encourage pupils of different cultural and linguistic backgrounds to adopt the main cultural and linguistic characteristics, which the dominant group has, especially in public sectors. This can be implemented if pupils who do not belong to the dominant group are able to learn the official language of the receptive country (Janzen, 1994; Nikolaou, 2002).

The second time period took place from the early 80's to the mid 90's, and is characterized by the integration policy . According to the principles of the integration policy, every minority group represents a culture which, not only has different elements from the dominant one, but also common ones (Govaris, 2001). However, what can be stressed is that, the only elements of the culturally and linguistically diverse pupils (CLDS) accepted are those pupils that do not cause any disturbances to the existing official educational practices. Cultural diversity is accepted under certain conditions.

At last, the third period has taken place since 1996, and is characterized by the implementation of the Law 2413/96, «Greek Education Abroad, Intercultural Education and Other Provisions». This Law attempts to put an end to past educational practices, and promotes Intercultural Education (IE) for CLDS as the best type of education. It consists of two sections, the first concerns Greek Education Abroad and the second Intercultural Education. IE applies to pupils who do not belong to the dominant group. According to Damanakis (1998: 79), these pupils are: “immigrants, resettles, Roma and Greek Muslims”.

#### ***Intercultural Education:***

In general, if we attempt to make some definitions of Intercultural Education, it is not just a peaceful coexistence but the possibility for someone to be in dialogue, contact and interaction with people who belong to different cultural and linguistic backgrounds (Portera, 2004). Some authors stress its importance and mention claim that, if Education is not Intercultural, then it cannot be regarded as Education (Aguado & Malic, 2006; Coulby, 2006), because, as referred by Coulby (2006), it is a kind of national and religious fundamentalism.

At this point, we think it would be important to mention that, if the Law 2413/96 is not implemented substantially in the curricula, then IE will only be theoretical. In practical level, there will be the integration and assimilation policies. For the above reason, this research is thought to be extremely necessary, since it is positive that every child feels school practices do not reject the cultural and linguistic background of his family (Bowman & Scott, 1994).

#### ***Preschool education and diverse culturally and linguistically pupils:***

Greek public kindergarten classrooms are becoming more and more multicultural as, according to an official paper of the Ministry of Education (ME), during school year 2008-2009 there were 15,447 immigrants pupils and 1122 resettles ones (Ipode, 2010)<sup>1</sup>. This number will increase, since from school year 2008-2009 preschool education is compulsory for all children who are at the age of five<sup>2</sup>. For this reason, more and more kindergarten classrooms will be composed of CLDS.

However, how are CLDS defined in the bibliography? CLDS is an educational term used by the ME of the U.S.A. attempting, on the one hand, to define the pupils who are enrolled in schools but do not belong to the dominant cultural

<sup>1</sup> There has not been any other related official paper by the ME since then.

<sup>2</sup> Law 3518/2006.

group, and on the other hand, to define the pupils who do not speak the dominant language either fluently or at all because they are not native speakers of the receptive country (NAEYC, 1995). Nowadays, this term is also used to define the pupils whose mother tongue is different from the dominant language in the receptive country (García, 1991 as cited in NAEYC, 1995). As dominant cultural group is defined “the cultural group who controls the financial, political, educational and social institutions” (York, 2003: 262).

In our research, we define CLDS as those pupils whose parents are of cultural and linguistic backgrounds that differ from the dominant Greek one. Moreover, as different linguistic backgrounds we define those of which people do not speak the Greek language as their mother tongue. Additionally, as different cultural backgrounds we define those of which people come from other nations, countries, and who have different religion, history, cultural heritage, value codes from the Greek ones. Finally, we treat both the Greek language and the Greek culture as the dominant ones .

## II. METHODOLOGY

According to what has already been mentioned, we formed our research questions. To be more specific, in this research we try to find out in what degree and how CLDS are referred to, directly and otherwise, in the “The guide of kindergarten teachers--Educational planning--Creative environments of learning” (G) (Dafermou, Koulouri, and Basayanni, 2006). The G, which is our research material is fully examined, was written according to directives that authors were given by the Greek ME in 2003 according to an official decision (FEK, 303 & 304- 13-03-2003) and it has been officially implemented in Greek kindergarten schools since school year 2006-2007.

Moreover, in this research, we do not only aim at presenting the percentage of references to these pupils, but also to interpret if the references that concern them are influenced both by the social changes which have taken place due to the presence of ethnocultural groups in the Greek society as well as by the Law 2413/96. For this reason, we have two variables, “culturally diverse pupils” (CDS) and “linguistically diverse pupils” (LDS). Both variables are on a nominal scale and each one is measured apart (Riffe, Lacy & Fico, 1998).

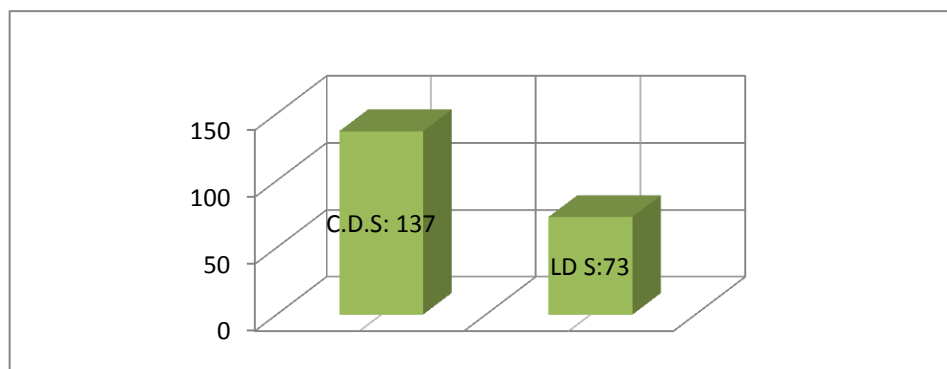
To answer the research questions, a qualitative content analysis, a descriptive and an interpretive were used. The categories for the CDS and LDS were formed step by step before we examined the research material. This means that they were formed based on a productive system of categories (Bonidis, 2004). First of all, a Descriptive Content Analysis was used, which, according to Thomas (1998), examines what is included in communication. Afterwards, we used an Interpretive Content Analysis which is based on the contextual interpretation. We did this to examine, on the one hand how and why our research material is presented in such a specific way and, on the other hand if it is influenced by the social-political context of modern social reality.

In the research the symbolic unit “theme” was used as code unit, because it is considered as the most suitable in case educational material is examined and analyzed. Due to the fact that the “theme” is a complicated code unit (Berelson, 1971), a content unit is needed that would be the basis for us to make the meaning specific (Crano & Brewer, 2002). As a content unit we used the “paragraph” (Holsti, 1969; Krippendorff, 1980).

Furthermore, Intercoder Reliability was used to establish reliability (Holsti, 1969; Krippendorff, 1980, 2004; Lombard, M., Snyder – Duch, J. & Bracken, C. C., 2002,; Riffe et al., 1998; Stemler, 2001, Weber, 1990). Reliability ranges from .880 to .917 and it is considered reliable (Krippendorff, 2004; Lombard et al, 2002, 2003, 2004; Riffe et al, 1998; Stemler, 2001, Weber, 1990). As concerning validity we used content validity or face validity, which is sufficient when the aim of the research is a descriptive one (Holsti, 1969). At the same time, we used external or social validity (Riffe et al, 1998).

## III. RESEARCH RESULTS

The presentation of the results is according to a descriptive content analysis and their analysis according to an interpretive content analysis. Specifically, in the G there are 137 references (65,2%) to the variable CDS and there are 73 references (34,8%) to the LDS (Graph 1).



**GRAPH 1: Presentation of CDS & LDS in the G**

***The presentation of culturally diverse pupils:***

The variable CDS includes six categories: different nationality, different religion, different way of life, elements of other countries and populations, mutual sympathy, acceptance and respect to the different 'other'- cultural one and other references. We examined the frequency in which these six categories are presented in the G (Table 1).

**TABLE 1: Frequencies of the categories of the variable culturally diverse pupils**

Culturally diverse pupils		
Categories	Number of references	Percentage of references
Different nationality	18	13,2%
Different religion	7	5,1
Different way of life	35	25,5
Elements of other countries and populations	37	27%
Mutual sympathy, acceptance and respect to the different 'other'- cultural one	22	16,1%
Other references	18	13,1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>100%</b>

Based on the above, the maximum number of references are in the third category, "different way of life", and in the fourth one "elements of other countries and populations". Both of them consist the 52,5% of the references of this variable. This may happen because these categories include the elements which, according to Derman- Sparks et al (1989), are used in the touristic approach, and according to Banks (2004) in the additive approach. –.

According to these approaches, the cultural comprehension of DSC is tried to be met only through projects. These projects concern subjects related to their food, clothing, music, celebrations and anniversaries. Also, these projects are the most common educational practices which include the invitation of parents or a person of the minority group, a narration of a book of a different culture, a form of learning which does not intend to transform the official curriculum of the dominant cultural group. However, such projects-approaches cannot have permanent and positive results concerning the diversity, since there are not integrated parts in the whole educational process (York, 2003).

Banks (2004) supports that such projects-approaches, which are not an integrated part in the whole educational process, are used to promote and appoint the values and principles of the dominant cultural and linguistic group. Such approaches are in harmony with the educational policy of integration and not with the intercultural education which the Law 2413/96

promotes. Moreover, they are in harmony with the national orientation in education which aims at the maintenance of the cultural and linguistic heritage of the dominant group. An orientation which controls, on the one hand, the type of knowledge which is promoted in the official curriculum and on the other hand, the pieces of information related to minority groups.

According to the above, despite the fact that there are positive references to CLDS in the research material and a related project which is proposed, we cannot say that there is a pure transformation from the educational policy of integration to the educational policy of interculturalism.

#### *The presentation of linguistically diverse pupils:*

The variable LDS includes five categories: different language, pieces of literature in foreign languages, elements of other countries and populations, mutual sympathy, acceptance and respect to the different 'other'-linguistic one and other references. It is examined the degree in which these five categories are presented in the G (Table 2).

**TABLE 2: Frequencies of the categories of the variable linguistically diverse pupils**

Linguistically diverse pupils		
Categories	Number of references	Percentage of references
Different language	22	30,1%
Pieces of literature in foreign languages	9	12,3%
Names of foreign origin	27	37%
Mutual sympathy, acceptance and respect to the different 'other' linguistic one	15	20,6%
Other references	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>100%</b>

Based on the above, we can make the same comments as we have already made about the CDS. We realise that, the LDS are also presented according to the touristic and the additive approach, since they are invited to present "their linguistic wealth" to the school space only during some teaching and learning hours. Even if the LDS have the opportunity to present "their linguistic wealth", this happens in a superficial way, because in reality, what is promoted is just the dominant language and, as a result, monolingualism.

Monolingualism is promoted by not having the mother tongue of the LDS taught. The policy of monolingualism is detrimental to the self-esteem and self-confidence of LDS (Evaggelou, 2007). Moreover, the absence of teaching pupils' mother tongue means violating their basic human rights, because linguistic rights of ethnic minorities are inalienably connected with human rights (Trueba, 1991, as cited in Baker, 2001).

However, the policy for the LDS adopted by the Greek ME is that of integration, according to which the LDS are allowed to present at school only those ethnocultural and linguistic elements of theirs which do not disturb the dominant group and the official educational practices (Markou, 1997).

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The results of our research have shown that some positive steps have been taken place in favour of the CLDS in the G. Although there is a considerable number of references in it, it adopts a concealing national orientation, promoted through the principles of the integration policy, monoculturalism and monolingualism. This happens, because the only pupils accepted in schools are those whose pupils' personal elements do not cause agitation and realignments to the already existing official educational practices. Thus, there is not any IE, but, on the contrary, there is a concealed integration policy which cannot bring permanent results towards the promotion of the Law 2413/96.

According to what has been referred above, we consider that only a number of references to the CLDS, though vast, in a curriculum for teachers or pupils is not a robust IE. What is truly needed is the acceptance of diversity to be promoted to all official and practical levels, and be cultivated far away from national orientations and social exclusions so that all people can implement the aims that have in their life. This can only become true, if all people live in a social context which is characterized by solidarity, mutual comprehension and respect (Balias, 2004). For this reason, it would be interesting to expand this research so that it can be implemented in the field of pre-school classrooms.

### REFERENCES

- [1] Aguado, T and Malic, B. (2006). Intercultural Education: teacher training and school practice, UNED, Madrid, 15-17 March 2006. *Intercultural Education*, 17:5. pp. 447-456.
- [2] Baker, C. (2001). *Foundations of bilingualism and Bilingual Education*. Athens: Gutenberg. [in Greek].
- [3] Balias, S. (2004). *The human rights in the era of democracy*. Athens: Papazisis. [in Greek].
- [4] Banks, J. (2004). *An introduction to Multicultural Education*. Athens: Papazisis. [in Greek].
- [5] Berleson, B. (1971). *Content Analysis in Communication Research*. (Facsimile of 1952 edition). New York: Hafner Publishing Company.
- [6] Bowman, T., B & Stott, M., F. (1994). *Understanding Development in a Cultural Context: The challenge for Teachers*. In: *Diversity & Developmentally Appropriate Practices Challenges For Early Childhood Education*. Mallory, L., B., & New, S., R. (ed.) New York and London: Teachers College, Columbia University. pp.119-133.
- [7] Bonidis, K. (2004). *The content of school book as a research material*. Athens: Metaixmio. [in Greek].
- [8] Govaris, X. (2001). *Introduction to Intercultural Education*. Athens: Atrapos. [in Greek].
- [9] Coulby, D. (2006). *Intercultural Education: Theory and Practice*. *Intercultural Education*, 17: 3. pp. 245-257.
- [10] Crano, W.D. & Brewer, M.B. (2002). *Principles and Methods of Social Research*. Second Edition. Mahwah NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- [11] Dafermou, X., Koulouri, P. and Basayanni, E. (2006). *Kindergarten teachers' guide*. *Educational Plannings*. Creative Environments of Learning. Athens: O.E.D.B [in Greek].
- [12] Derman-Sparks, L. and Team work ABC. (1989). *Anti-bias Curriculum: Tools for Empowering Young Children*. Athens: Sxedia. [in Greek].
- [13] Evaggelou, O. (2007). *Intercultural Curricula*. Athens: Tipothito- George Dardanos. [in Greek].
- [14] FEK 304/1303-2003. (2003). *A Cross Thematic Curriculum Framework (C.C.T.F.) and Curriculum of Studies (A.P.S.) for pre-primary school*.
- [15] Janzen, R. (1994). *Melting Pot or Mosaic? Educational Leadership: Educating for Diversity*, 51: 8. pp. 9-11.
- [16] Holsti, O., R.(1969). *Content Analysis for the Social Sciences and Humanities*. Reading, M.A: Addison – Wesley Publication Company.
- [17] Ipode. (2010). *The number of Immigrant and Resettles Pupils of Public Pupils during the school year 2008-2009*. Retrieved: [www.ipode.gr](http://www.ipode.gr) on 31-03-2014.
- [18] Krippendorff, K. (1980). *Content Analysis. An Introduction to its Methodology*. London: Sage Publication
- [19] Krippendorff, K. (2004). *Reliability in Content Analysis. Some Common Misconceptions and Recommendations*. *Human Communication Research*. 30:3, pp. 411-443.
- [20] Law 2413. (1996). *Greek education abroad, Intercultural Education and other provisions*. [in Greek].
- [21] Lombard, M., Snyder – Duch, J. & Bracken, C. C. (2002). *Content Analysis in Mass Communication. Assessment and Reporting of Intercoder Reliability*. *Human Communication Research*, 28:4. pp. 587-604.

- [22] Lombard, M., Snyder – Duch, J. & Bracken, C. C. (2003). Correction. *Human Communication Research*, 29:3. pp. 469-472.
- [23] Lombard, M., Snyder – Duch, J. & Bracken, C. C. (2004). A Call for Standardization in Content Analysis Reliability. *Human Communication Research*, 30: 3. pp. 434-437.
- [24] Markou, P. (1996). *Approaches of Multiculturalism and Intercultural Education- Training of Teachers*. Athens: Greek Ministry of Education & G.G.L.E. [ in Greek].
- [25] Markou, P. (1997). *Introduction to the Intercultural Education. Greek and International experience*. Athens: K.E.D.A.
- [26] National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). (1995). *Responding to Linguistic and Cultural Diversity. Recommendations for Effective Early Childhood Education. A position statement of the National Association for the Education of Young Children*. Retrieved from: <http://www.naeyc.org> on 13/04/08.
- [27] Nikolaou, G. (2002). *Integration and Education of Immigrants Pupils in the Primary School. From “homogeneity” to multiculturalism*. Athens: Greek Letters [ in Greek].
- [28] Law 2413. (1996). *Greek education abroad, Intercultural Education and other provisions*. [ in Greek].
- [29] Portera, A. (2004). *Stereotypes, prejudices and intercultural education in Italy: research on textbooks in primary schools*. *Intercultural Education*, 15. pp. 283-294.
- [30] Riffe, D., Lacy, St. & Fico, F. G. (1998). *Analyzing Media Messages Using Quantitative Content Analysis in Research*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- [31] Rodd, J. (1996). *Children, Culture and Education*. *Childhood Education*, 73: 1. pp. 325+.
- [32] Stemler, S. (2001). *An Overview of Content Analysis. Practical Assessment. Research and Evaluation*. 7(17). Retrieved from: <http://PAREonline.net/getvn.asp?v=7&n=17> on 13.02.2008.
- [33] Thomas, R. M. (1998). *Conducting Educational Research. A Comparative View*. Westport, CT.: Bergin & Garvey.
- [34] Weber, R. P. (1990). *Basic Content Analysis*. London: Sage Publications.
- [35] York, S. (2003). *Roots & Wings. Affirming Culture in Early Childhood Education*. Rev. ed. St. Paul: Redleafpress