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“Language Education for Refugees and Migrants”

Postgraduate Dissertation

*“Examining Issues of Inclusiveness in Greek Primary Schools:  
Teachers’ Views and Attitudes towards Diverse Cultural  
Identities.”*

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Patras, Greece, June 2024

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*Finally, I would like to dedicate this thesis to my little nephew, Kosmas, as a small token of my love for him.*

## **1 Abstract**

For several years now, Greece has been a host country for large immigrant and refugee flows, who either temporarily or permanently reside in the country, thus further strengthening the already existing diversity of the population. The cultural identities that bring with them heterogeneous population groups make the discussion regarding the treatment of diversity and its coexistence with the so-called dominant culture of a country particularly important. Especially in educational settings where students are expected to obey school rules, the interesting question is how easy it is to make their diverse cultural identities visible. The purpose of this research, therefore, is to study how prepared the educational system is for this cultural diversity of students, while at the same time it is desired to investigate the views and attitudes of primary school teachers towards the diverse cultural identities of their students. Despite the fact that the new school curricula of 2021 and 2023 focus on the significance of multiculturalism and differentiated teaching approach, it is important to examine how this field is put into practice by teachers in the mainstream classrooms. Thus, a qualitative ethnographic inquiry was implemented, thus employing semi-structured teacher interviews and classroom observations. This observation stage took place in three general classes of a Greek primary school with part of the class population not having Greek as their first language. The thematic analysis of the findings confirmed the teachers' inability to adapt to the new diverse reality, often standing helpless and embarrassed in front of the cultural visibility of their students and unable to demonstrate intercultural readiness through their practices. So, the improvement of the Greek educational system is rooted in a deeper humanitarian redefinition and a critical pedagogy that the entire educational community needs to approach.

### **Keywords**

*diverse cultural identities; cultural visibility; intercultural competence; diverse pupils; Greek primary teachers;*

## 2 Περίληψη

Εδώ και αρκετά χρόνια, η Ελλάδα είναι χώρα υποδοχής για μεγάλες μεταναστευτικές και προσφυγικές ροές, που είτε διαμένουν προσωρινά είτε μόνιμα στη χώρα, ενισχύοντας έτσι περαιτέρω την ήδη υπάρχουσα ποικιλομορφία του πληθυσμού. Οι πολιτισμικές ταυτότητες που φέρνουν μαζί τους ετερογενείς πληθυσμιακές ομάδες καθιστούν τη συζήτηση για τη μεταχείριση της πολυμορφίας και τη συμβίωσή της με την αποκαλούμενη κυρίαρχη κουλτούρα μιας χώρας ιδιαίτερα σημαντική. Ειδικά στα εκπαιδευτικά πλαίσια, όπου οι μαθητές αναμένεται να συμμορφώνονται με τους σχολικούς κανόνες, το ενδιαφέρον ερώτημα είναι πόσο εύκολο είναι να καταστεί ορατή η ποικιλότητα πολιτισμική τους ταυτότητα. Σκοπός αυτής της έρευνας, λοιπόν, είναι να μελετηθεί πόσο προετοιμασμένο είναι το εκπαιδευτικό σύστημα για αυτή την πολιτισμική ποικιλομορφία των μαθητών, ενώ ταυτόχρονα επιδιώκεται να διερευνηθούν οι απόψεις και οι στάσεις των δασκάλων πρωτοβάθμιας εκπαίδευσης απέναντι στις ποικίλες πολιτισμικές ταυτότητες των μαθητών τους. Παρά το γεγονός ότι τα νέα σχολικά προγράμματα σπουδών του 2021 και 2023 εστιάζουν στη σημασία της πολυπολιτισμικότητας και της διαφοροποιημένης διδακτικής προσέγγισης, είναι σημαντικό να εξεταστεί πώς αυτός ο τομέας εφαρμόζεται από τους δασκάλους στις τάξεις της γενικής εκπαίδευσης. Έτσι, εφαρμόστηκε μια ποιοτική εθνογραφική έρευνα, χρησιμοποιώντας ημι-δομημένες συνεντεύξεις δασκάλων και παρατηρήσεις στις τάξεις. Το στάδιο της παρατήρησης πραγματοποιήθηκε σε τρεις τάξεις μιας ελληνικής πρωτοβάθμιας σχολικής μονάδας, όπου μέρος του μαθητικού πληθυσμού δεν είχε ως πρώτη γλώσσα τα ελληνικά. Η θεματική ανάλυση των ευρημάτων επιβεβαίωσε την αδυναμία των δασκάλων να προσαρμοστούν στη νέα ποικιλότητα πραγματικότητα, συχνά στέκοντας αβοήθητοι και αμήχανοι μπροστά στην πολιτισμική ορατότητα των μαθητών τους και ανίκανοι να επιδείξουν διαπολιτισμική ετοιμότητα μέσω των πρακτικών τους. Συνεπώς, η βελτίωση του ελληνικού εκπαιδευτικού συστήματος εδράζεται σε έναν βαθύτερο ανθρωπιστικό επαναπροσδιορισμό και μια κριτική παιδαγωγική προσέγγιση που πρέπει να υιοθετήσει ολόκληρη η εκπαιδευτική κοινότητα.

### Λέξεις – Κλειδιά

*ποικιλομόρφες πολιτισμικές ταυτότητες, πολιτισμική ορατότητα, διαπολιτισμική ικανότητα, ποικιλόμορφοι μαθητές, Έλληνες δάσκαλοι δημοτικής εκπαίδευσης*



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## **5 List of Abbreviations and Acronyms**

PEM Program for the Education of Muslim Children

ZEP Zones of Educational Priority

C Classroom

T Teacher

S Student

## 6 Introduction

In recent years, Greek primary schools have been struggling with the challenges of fostering inclusion in increasingly multicultural classrooms. The influx of diverse cultural backgrounds has prompted a reevaluation of traditional educational practices, with a growing emphasis on accommodating various cultural identities. Identity in this context is a multifaceted concept. According to Holliday (2010), it is a dynamic construction that goes beyond superficial markers such as nationality or native languages. In the Greek primary education system, pupils from various backgrounds bring with them a rich heritage of cultural narratives, values and experiences that shapes who they are and what they stand for. As illustrated by Giavrimis and Dimitriadou (2023), this complexity of various ethno-cultural characteristics often complicates the teachers’ task of promoting inclusivity. While many Greek primary teachers strive to respect and incorporate these diverse identities into their pedagogical practices (Karananou et al., 2022), there remains a tendency within the school community to interpret and manage cultural diversity through a lens of stereotypes and generalizations (Gkaintartzi et al, 2015; Sakka, 2010).

Despite efforts to embrace multiculturalism within educational processes, teachers and schools many times fall into the trap of stereotyping, which can lead to stigmatization and an assimilationist orientation. For example, a student from a migrant background might be unfairly assumed to have lower academic potential or to be less proficient in the Greek language. Such assumptions can lead to biased expectations and reduced educational opportunities for these students. In this context, the necessity for theoretical and practical implementation of intercultural education is crucial. Teachers should in such multicultural conditions be governed by intercultural competence and specifically be open and respectful towards the heterogeneity of their class (Alvarado-Causi et al., 2022; Cortez, 2014). To promote dialogue and cooperation through their practices, to mobilize students' critical thinking and help them to deconstruct backward attitudes (Magos, 2022). In this vein, the Greek education system tries to implement similar policies and to comply with the European standards for dealing with cultural and linguistic diversity in school spaces, whilst shaping the curricula.

Precisely because the role of a teacher, especially in the first school grades, has a profound formative influence on the child's personality, it is of particular interest to study

the views and attitudes of primary school teachers towards the diverse cultural identities of their students. For Magos (2022), even the simplest gesture by a teacher can be interpreted in a way that shapes minds. So, based on this initial idea, the objectives of this postgraduate dissertation have been formulated. Through a qualitative ethnographic inquiry, the researcher utilized semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions and two-weeks observation in three different classes of a Greek primary school. This research tools gave the chance to the researcher to interpret in depth the teachers’ practices applied in the learning process and how their attitude could manage to foster the importance of pupils’ cultural visibility and belonging. Also, this dissertation theme attempted to investigate whether new curricula of 2021 and 2023 and their proposal ideas effectively promote the importance of cultural diversity within educational environments and whether this phenomenon is addressed by simply creating a terminology that ultimately categorizes students.

According to the above argumentation, the researcher hopes to provide answers to these three following research questions:

1. Do teachers consider the cultural visibility important?
2. What are the teachers’ practices in support of their students’ cultural visibility during the educational process?
3. How teachers and school welcome cultural identities of their students?

In particular, the thesis is divided into 5 separate sections, each serving separately the coherence and progress of the research. Initially, the first chapter belongs to the introduction related to the research field. The next and second chapter deals with the methodology chosen and launched by the researcher to find the answers to the research questions. There, the choice of approach to research, the choice of research tools and the importance of thematic analysis as a means of analyzing and interpreting research data are thoroughly analyzed. The research findings, both from the interviews and from the observation stage, are then developed in detail in the third chapter. Finally, the last two chapters (fourth and fifth) belong to the discussion and the conclusion reached by the researcher.

## **7 Literature Review**

### ***7.1 The complexity of cultural identity***

For Magos (2022), all people have multiple identities that interact and form a composite that ultimately reflects a final self-image. This view confirms that individual identities are not static but dynamically mutate over the years and according to each situation and experience. Based on Albirini (2015)’s view on the Arabic language and Arabic culture, there is a widespread argument suggesting that language forms the foundation of entire identity. However, individual cultural identities are far more complex (Holliday, 2010; Vandeyar et al., 2017), as they are shaped by numerous additional aspects. It is important to mention that many of these become less visible in everyday interactions than others, as there is the tendency to prioritize certain stereotypical aspects of cultural identities (Correa & Tulbert, 1991; Hua, 2014). Therefore, the concept of identity is considered as a multidimensional co-existence of various elements, which determine the human constitution. Its complexity is the cornerstone that has shaped cultures and historical paths over the years. Language, nationality, ideologies, traditions, sexual gender, familial ties, and social gatherings are among the components comprising cultural identity.

The aforementioned aspects of identity that are strong in one period can weaken in the next and vice versa. Through continuous daily interactivities, people manage to incorporate more and more elements into their temperament profile, which is true for both children and adults (Crocetti et al., 2023; Magos, 2022). So, the formation of identities can only be a powerful process of construction and reframing. Within this specific context, societies often prescribe certain social patterns of identities that serve certain ethno-social standards, the so-called stereotypical characteristics. The stereotypical perception around the concept of identity is contradicted in the place of the multidimensional and meaningful image of the self. As claimed by Crocetti et al. (2023), there are two aspects that construct human identity, the personal and the social dimension. Social identity is defined as the part of the individual associated with membership in a larger social group, such as nation or religion (Crocetti et al., 2023; Verkuyten et al., 2019). In this social field, however, people shape their personalities and the way they interpret what is happening around them. Moral values, ideologies, relationships and even work choices largely shape what is called personal identity.

## **7.2 Migration and the ideology of “otherness”**

What is of particular interest to mention is the image formed by the wider society about the individual and that is where many stereotypical determinations originate. According to Holliday (2010), both cosmopolitanism and globalization serve as catalysts for the categorization of cultural identities. Over the years, hegemonic relations affected perceptions of diverse cultural identities and an informal division between “the western Self and the non-western Other” was formed, as defined by Holliday (2010, p. 165). At the same time, Castles (2014) and Parthenis and Fragoulis (2014) argue that due to the many terrorist attacks that marked the beginning of the 21st century, many cultural groups have been targeted as a threat to state security and the integrity of national identity. The prevailing ethno-cultural identity of a country affects the attitudes and opinions of its citizens towards foreign cultural group. Modern societies are characterized by diversity and, increasingly, super-diversity (Vertovec, 2007), elements that persistently challenge any entrenched dominant identity within a community. Despite of this thinking, they remain integral components defining contemporary reality (Castles, 2014; Foner et al., 2019; Holliday, 2010; Olwig, 2013).

In particular, modern societies have for years revised the traditional norms that made nuclear cultural structures and demarcated borders predetermined. This changed from the moment when the phenomenon of colonialism and then globalization acted so drastically in the daily interactions that the migration flows kept increasing (Castles, 2014). The migration, but certainly, the refugee crisis has led a huge number of people to forced or non-mobility in order to find better living conditions. Also, as Castles (2014) points out, “in destination areas, migration leads to unprecedented cultural and religious diversity” (p. 197). This treaty brought new dimensions to Migration Studies. The term of super-diversity was coined by Steven Vertoven (2007) as a need to define the new multicultural condition into which the whole world has now been driven. As a buzzword among researchers, super-diversity accurately characterizes every Western European country, which, in addition to the already existing cultural minorities, is witnessing the emergence of new multicultural and multilingual patterns (Gogolin, 2011; Foner et al., 2019). Among these countries, Greece should be included for several reasons.

### ***7.3 The demographic diversity of Greece over the years***

Greece is a country with a diverse cultural background, since it is made up of various ethno-cultural identities (Palaiologou & Faas, 2012). This shows that multiculturalism is an integral part of Greek society that is constantly trying to gain respect and acceptance. Many events changed the Greek demographic, economic and socio-political background regarding cultural identities. Certainly, the country's integration into the European Union and globalization increased immigration inflows, while at the same time the geopolitical changes that occurred due to the dissolution of the former Soviet Union promoted new immigration waves (Palaiologou & Faas, 2012). In recent decades, Greece has welcomed more than one million co-ethnics returnees, such as Pontic Greeks, co-ethnics immigrants, such as Greek Albanians from southern Albania, and, of course, a significant inflows of economic migrants from eastern Europe, Asia and Africa. Moreover, Greece has become a host country for a large number of refugees and asylum seekers from countries such as Syria, Afghanistan and Ukraine. However, it is important to note that many Greek regions are historically characterized by their religious diversity, such as western Thrace. The religious minority of these areas consists of Muslims of Turkish or Romany origin and Pomaks (Dimasi & Theologou, 2019; Zafeiris et al., 2021; Palaiologou & Faas, 2012). Thus, this vibrant cultural mosaic justifies the need for more inclusive approaches, especially when it comes to issues of education.

### ***7.4 The Greek education system towards the cultural diverse students***

With its historical paths and geographic location, Greece has long been a melting pot of cultures, traditions and languages. This situation naturally react to monolithic and traditional theories about the social cohesion and dominant identity of a country (Foner et al., 2019). As noted by Stille (2015) and Magos (2022), this idea of cultural identity is significantly influenced by the social dynamics and pressures inherent within educational environments. It is elucidated that students who see elements of their culture acknowledged in the classroom procedure are affected positively and perform even better in their school duties than when these elements, such as their language, are marginalized (Stille, 2015). In particular, the Greek education system for years followed more assimilative policies. This assimilative approach did not cover at all elements of the different cultural backgrounds of the diverse students of a class. It systematically tried to promote the teaching of the language

and culture of the host country, such as Greece. An obvious example, as Magos (2022) emphasizes, are the children of Albanian families who are now characterized as a fully assimilating category of students, in contrast to newly-arrived students of refugee origin. Within this framework, the dominant position of the Greek school is strengthened and the diverse student is victimized for any learning failure, thus deepening the educational gap even more.

According to this argumentation, several researches focused on the attitude of the educational community towards the cultural diversity of the students. Sakka (2010) outlines that even if intercultural education has been introduced as a part of the current Greek education system by legislative provision since 1996 (Law 2413/96), the situation has not improved. On the contrary, educational policies do not tend to adopt the ideology of intercultural education since almost all measures aim at the integration or mainly the assimilation of non-dominant student populations. In fact, as emphasized by Sakka (2010), the monocultural, ethnocentric and homogenized functioning of the Greek educational system is strongly manifested in mainstream classes, even if many of them are now characterized by cultural heterogeneity (Karananou et al., 2022). Based on this, many teachers, despite their initial positive attitude towards culturally diverse students, pose several obstacles, such as language or lack of training in multicultural educational environments. This position is confirmed by several studies that observed that teachers supported the dominance of the Greek language and that in the case of students with a refugee or immigrant background, learning and acquisition of the Greek language is the only way to properly integrate students into Greek school classes (Angelopoulou & Manesis, 2017; Mattheoudaki et al., 2017; Giavrimis & Dimitriadou, 2023; Gkaintartzi et al., 2015; Karananou et al., 2022). A similar attitude is shown by the testimonies of the teachers of reception classes-ZEP, which have been established for the smooth integration of linguistically diverse students. Simopoulos & Magos (2020) reports that in most cases teachers, who assigned to multilingual classes, struggle to meet expectations due to several challenges. The significant language gap, insufficient state support, and their limited experience in teaching non-Greek speakers all contribute to these difficulties (Simopoulos & Magos, 2020; Karananou et al., 2022).

The challenges as well as the non-implementation of many intercultural practices such as the understanding of cultural elements, dialogue and social justice in the classroom



(Hajisoteriou & Angelides, 2015), shape an one-sided approach that results in the marginalization and victimization of diverse students. An important example is the case of students of Albanian origin. As Mattheoudakis et al. (2020) demonstrate, due to not providing bilingual lessons in schools many children of immigrant families are forced to set aside important parts of their culture such as their heritage language. This language shift is noticeable in the children of second-generation Albanian immigrants, who were born in Greece, and show a greater competence in Greek than in Albanian. In fact, an important factor is the attitude of Albanian families since an assimilationist perspective and a strong adoption of the dominant society’s view that Albanian language has no place in the public Greek sphere is observed (Gkaintartzi et al., 2014; Gogonas & Michail, 2015; Mattheoudakis et al., 2020).

### **7.5 Bilingual education and the PEM program**

On the other hand, bilingual education is available in the minority schools of Thrace, attended primarily by students from the Muslim minority community (Maligkoudi & Mavrommatis, 2023). Notably, despite sharing a common religion, this community is linguistically diverse, with members speaking different mother tongues. This linguistic diversity is mirrored in their varied socio-political practices and interactions with the majority Christian Orthodox community (Kalliga et al., 2022; Maligkoudi & Mavrommatis, 2023). Although many Muslims in the region speak Greek with varying levels of fluency and hold Greek citizenship, the competitive dynamics between Greece and Turkey significantly influence local inter-community relations. As Maligkoudi and Mavrommatis (2023) support, “bilingual education has strong political implications, which is the case of minority schools in Greece” (p. 2). Also, for many years bilingualism was seen by the state as a threat since the “foreign” language of an unfriendly neighboring country threatened the national integrity of the dominant ethno-political culture of the majority group (Tsitselikis & Mavrommatis, 2019). This view influenced educational policy and shaped teachers’ attitudes toward minority students. As García (2009) highlights, monolingual ideology flourishes in such environments. Despite stereotypes, particularly among the older generation (Magos, 2006), educational programs like PEM (*Program for the Education of Muslim Children*) have helped dismantle prejudices (Dragonas & Fragoudaki, 2006; Tsitselikis & Mavrommatis, 2019). These programs have encouraged many teachers to receive training in bilingual education for the Muslim student community of Thrace. Since

the early 2000s, this initiative has yielded positive results, significantly reducing school dropout rates among Muslim minority students. Moreover, according to Georgiadis and Zisimos (2012), the PEM program particularly helped Roma communities, since it “has been appeared capable in building bridges across differences, negotiating conflicts, and investing successful compromises” (p. 49).

### ***7.6 The necessity of intercultural competence through pedagogical practices***

In today’s globalized and increasingly diverse educational landscape, the need for intercultural competence is crucial. As several studies have demonstrated (e.g. Cummins, 2001; Cummins, 2021; Giavrimis & Dimitriadou, 2023; Magos, 2022) that intercultural education is an educational management that does not exclusively concern the immigrant or refugee students of a class, but responds to all students, majority or minority, regardless of their socio-political heritage. According to UNESCO (2006), intercultural education is characterized by respect for students' cultural identity through appropriate and responsible educational practices that promote the visibility of all students. It equips students with knowledge and skills that help them to participate actively and equally in society, while imparting to them the ability to respect and work productively with all heterogeneous groups. However, as Lee and Oxelson (2006), Magos (2022), Romijn et al. (2020) and Suarta et al. (2022) maintain, the teacher’s attitude determines the successful conduct of an intercultural approach. Also, for Okken et al. (2022), this success largely depends on the joint adoption of intercultural principles by both teachers and the school. The teacher should shape their work independently of external influences, while the school have to provide a safe environment where children can be visible and accepted. As noted by Magos (2022), many educators in Greece develop a policy of “cultural blindness” (p. 167), as they perceive and implement intercultural education with methods contrary to acceptable practices, ultimately prioritizing the dominant ethnocultural group’s culture as the only significant one. By enforcing the notion that all students must conform to a single cultural reality (Gkaintartzi et al., 2014; Lee & Oxelson, 2010), they inadvertently promote a technocratic educational model.

Intercultural competence refers to the ability to understand, communicate with, and effectively interact with people across different cultures. An interculturally competent teacher has to encompass a range of skills including cultural awareness, empathy,

adaptability and respect for whatever form of diversity (Pedrajas & Jalandoni, 2023; Romijn et al., 2020; Vandeyar et al., 2017). In this argument, Magos and Simopoulos (2009) recognize that the intercultural competence put the teachers in a continuous self-reflection and process, since through their applied educational practices their levels of intercultural competence, as well as readiness, are better reflected. On this basis, teachers should acknowledge that their young students bring a history of them to school which is, often, made visible through their home language. As Gounari (2014) suggests, this aspect of their cultural heritage is in danger of being lost when it is limited by assimilationist approaches that favor the power and status of the dominant language. Through language awareness activities, the importance of bilingual visibility in the learning performance of students is reinforced. As Helot and Young (2002) emphasize that the language awareness through the educational process develops the cognitive and affective aspect of students’ school progress “with the aim of promoting tolerance, the understanding of differences and the respect of other languages and their speakers” (p. 108). Moreover, native language awareness and cultural visibility in schooling can be beneficial for all pupils in fostering their motivation to learn more (Cenoz & Gorter, 2017; Cummins, 2000; Stoop, 2017). The motivation to learn can, also, come from interactive practices such as through multimodal teaching methods and identity texts (Stille, 2015), since this perspective empowers children to use their own view and voice (Streelasky, 2020). Furthermore, it is important to note that an interculturally competent teacher should demonstrate eagerness to promote a warm and respectful relationship with their students, and, also, hold high expectations of their learners (van Tartwijk et al., 2009). This can happen though collaborative activities between teacher and students or between peers. As Kaneva (2012) and Curtin (2005) argue, peer collaboration and team-teach approaches bridge differences, create friendships and empower students to become active members of their learning progress. Thus, the skills of responsibility, cooperation and solidarity are developed. In conclusion, the necessity of intercultural competence through pedagogical practices cannot be overstated. It plays a vital role in creating inclusive educational environments and facilitating all students’ integration (Nakeyar et al., 2018).

## **8 Methodology**

This chapter presents four different subchapters that outline the entire course of the research methodology. From the initial conceptualization and planning of the research to its implementation and the challenges that arose, the author of this dissertation explains in details the Research Approach (8.1), the Research Design (8.2), the subsequent Research Process (8.3) and, finally, the Research Problems (8.4).

### ***8.1 Research Approach***

The literature review states that the topic of the inclusive approach in Greek educational institutions is important and always yields thought-provoking findings. Based on the interest that lies in the study of educational approaches but also in the daily evident cultural diversity of school classes, this research will focus on the issues of inclusiveness and cultural visibility of the various student identities within primary education classes in Greece. More precisely, it is quite interesting to shed light on the primary teachers’ testimonies that either effectively or not confronted any stereotypes and prejudices about identity and diversity and put themselves in a deep critical reflection. Therefore, the outcome of this dissertation thesis will be aimed at the views and attitudes of primary school teachers who have, in their career so far, mingled in the educational process with multiple cultural identities of students. It is hope that by sharing their experiences, they would be able to voice their beliefs about the multicultural and multilingual education in Greek mainstream schooling and illuminate the practices adopted during the learning process with the aim of pupils’ cultural visibility and acceptance. So, this research theme will attempt to investigate, also, whether curricula and their designs effectively promote the importance of interculturality within educational environments and whether this phenomenon is addressed by simply creating a terminology that ultimately categorizes students.

Under this idea, the constructivist perspective will characterize the whole research methodology. According to Creswell (2014), individuals habitually seek answers to questions related to the humanitarian dimension of reality. This understanding can be achieved through the settings where people live and work. Everyday interactions and individual testimonies provide a wealth of interpretations that help the researcher understand the complexity of the world and the importance of the parameters in each case. For Mann and MacLeod (2015), constructivism is based on the idea of meaning-making. This research

will try to approach the issue of diverse cultural identities in the light of the teachers' personal experiences and according to their own beliefs to draw some conclusions about the attitude of both the teachers and the educational system in general regarding the diversity of the student population. In this way, this particular research does not follow any specific theoretical direction, but tries through the testimonies to interpret the reasons why teachers choose any educational approaches, how any challenges affect a multicultural educational environment and if their own experience can develop a new theory about the management of multicultural identities.

However complicated it may appear, this research worldview is typically seen as an approach to qualitative inquiry. In this case, the structure of a qualitative approach was chosen, since it allows to expand more openly the multiple meanings of the participants. As Denzil and Lincoln (2014) argue, a qualitative research focuses on a deep and broad understanding of the narrators' meanings, which are “socially constructed by individuals in interaction with their world” (Merriam, 2002, p.3). An important source of research is the participants, thereby approaching the uniqueness of the sample and paying the necessary attention to each of their answers. Placing the teacher participants at the core of the research, the aim is to investigate how their dominant position within a classroom may intentionally or unintentionally affect their attitudes towards students' minority cultural identities. The promotion of power relations between teachers and students is a phenomenon that characterizes monocultural and ethnocentric educational policies and almost always reinforces the categorization of students. Qualitative research does not place limits on the sharing of experiences and allows the participant to communicate as much information as they want, thus shaping the research outcome (Mann & MacLeod, 2015; Kim, 2014).

Regarding the issue of cultural identities and their visibility within the classrooms, the research community has mainly focused its attention on linguistic visibility. By emphasizing this aspect, it has analyzed the relationships among diverse identities in schools. The researcher, otherwise, has observed that there is a slight gap regarding the visibility of students' other cultural features beyond their heritage language in Greek primary schools. As noted by Magos (2022), the teachers' role and attitude towards each student individually determines the future development of their personality. Although there have been studies examining educational practices in Greek educational institutions concerning diversity and analyzing teachers' views and attitudes towards linguistic

visibility, this specific research aims to revisit the issue of cultural inclusion through the lens of a holistic approach to the culturally diverse students’ identity. After all, identity, as previously mentioned, is founded on a multitude of elements beyond language. Thus, the process of this qualitative research includes some key research questions that play the main axes of the final conclusion:

1. *Do teachers consider the cultural visibility important?*
2. *What are the teachers’ practices in support of their students’ cultural visibility during the educational process?*
3. *How teachers and school welcome cultural identities of their students?*

These three research questions will be the guideline of composing this dissertation and the following research design.

## **8.2 Research Design**

The purpose of this research is to study how prepared the educational system is for the cultural diversity of a classroom, while at the same time it is desired to investigate the views and attitudes of primary school teachers towards the diverse cultural identities of their students. Despite the fact that the new curricula focus on the significance of diversity, it is important to examine how this field is put into practice by teachers in the mainstream classrooms. Hence, a qualitative ethnographic inquiry is structured. Ethnography, as Creswell emphasizes (2014), is a way to model certain patterns of behavior and actions in a real time and place. This process is done with tools that allow the researcher to seek for an understanding of these patterns. Through this specific ethnographic research, the researcher tries to observe the attitudes of primary school teachers in multilingual environments in order to understand the influence of power relations between teachers and students, the multiple idiosyncrasies of students and the perceptions that exist in a flourishing super-diverse society.

Therefore, it seems reasonable that utilizing research tools like observation and interviews is the safest way to do this ethnographic inquiry. First things first, it was decided that the observation stage took place in a general education primary school in Greece. Through this decision, the researcher was looking for examples of behaviors that could lead to conclusions regarding the cross-cultural management of cultural student identities. Also, from the beginning, the goal was to focus the research on a general education school in order

to observe how in environments with predetermined dominant standards a student with a different cultural identity can arise. The school chosen is characterized by cultural and linguistic diversity as it is located near a Roma neighborhood and welcomes students from this community. At the same time, a large number of Muslim students of Pomak origin attend every year, while also many students come from families of Pontic immigrants or of half Russian or Georgian origin. This religious and ethno-cultural dimension of the school influenced the researcher to try to obtain approval for observation. After being informed of the necessary bureaucratic steps required, a letter was immediately sent to the principal of the school informing him of the researcher's intentions, the purpose of the observation and the desired time limit in which the observation stage could be conducted. The response was immediate and positive, since the researcher was received by the principal and the teachers' association, who had unanimously agreed on the researcher's presence in the school and in the classrooms and signed the necessary protocol paper.

From April 10<sup>th</sup> to April 24<sup>th</sup>, the researcher scheduled and implemented the observation stage, during which she was admitted to three different classes at the school, two of which were 3rd grade (C1 and C2) and the other was 6th grade (C3). On April 8<sup>th</sup>, the researcher was at the school for the first time where she met with the principal and the teachers of the classes who accepted her to be present during their classroom sessions. The criteria of the classes was the linguistic and cultural diversity that exists. Thus, after the consent of the teachers, certain observation hours were scheduled every day between April 10<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup>. The observation process by the researcher included only the teaching process within the school classroom and not the school breaks or the time intervals between lesson changes. The following table shows in detail the 9 days and 25 hours of observation as well as the lessons held during these hours.

**Table 1. Observation schedule**

<i>Observation Stage</i>			
<i>Day</i>	<i>Class</i>	<i>Lesson</i>	<i>Hours of Observation</i>
Friday 12 <sup>th</sup> of April, 2024	C1	Mathematics	1 hour
		Greek	2 hour
		History	1 hour



Monday 15 <sup>th</sup> of April, 2024	C3	Greek	1 hour
		Mathematics	1 hour
	C2	Mathematics	1 hour
Tuesday 16 <sup>th</sup> of April	C3	Mathematics	1 hour
		Social and Political Education	1 hour
Wednesday 17 <sup>th</sup> of April, 2024	C3	Greek	1 hour
		Mathematics	1 hour
	C2	Greek	2 hours
Thursday 18 <sup>th</sup> of April, 2024	C2	Greek	1 hour
		Mathematics	1 hour
Friday 19 <sup>th</sup> of April, 2024	C1	Greek	2 hours
	C2	Greek	1 hour
Monday 22 <sup>nd</sup> of April, 2024	C2	Greek	1 hour
		Mathematics	1 hour
	C3	Greek	1 hour
Tuesday 23 <sup>rd</sup> of April, 2024	C3	Physics	1 hour
		Mathematics	1 hour
Wednesday 24 <sup>th</sup> of April, 2024	C2	Mathematics	1 hour
	C3	Greek	1 hour

After the observation was completed, the interview stage began. It was originally proposed that the number of interviewees should reach 12. In the course of the research, the researcher managed to obtain a sample of 11 interviewees-teachers, all Greek language primary school teachers with different years of teaching experience in elementary education classes, as well as in classes with a multicultural background. The latter was, in fact, the basic assumption in the selection of sample, since the participants shared a same trait (Creswell, 2014). Specifically, 9 female teachers and 2 male teachers, of which only 5 have not received some kind of training in intercultural management issue, form the sample. Also, the reason why the researcher went to primary school teachers is that in Greek education, as well as globally, primary education along with preschool constitutes the compulsory entry that all pupils, regardless of origin and home language, should enroll to. According to Magos



(2022), these early educational environments are crucial for the flourishing of students’ personalities, more so than other educational stages. During this initial school years, young students are in the early stages of socialization and communication with individuals outside their family context and for this development primary teachers are important patrons. Moreover, the diversity of the sample managed to bring to the fore different points of view regarding the research question and open a great debate that will be interpreted afterwards. The following table shows in details the demographic characteristics of teachers.

**Table 2. Demographic characteristics of teachers**

<b>Demographics</b>	<i>T1</i>	<i>T2</i>	<i>T3</i>	<i>T4</i>	<i>T5</i>	<i>T6</i>	<i>T7</i>	<i>T8</i>	<i>T9</i>	<i>T10</i>	<i>T11</i>
<b>Gender</b>	F	F	M	F	F	F	F	F	M	F	F
<b>Age</b>	30	27	42	42	30	38	29	48	48	35	35
<b>Total Year in Service</b>	7	5	15	14	5	13	2	17	17	10	10
<b>Years in Service with Multicultural Classes</b>	4	2	12	10	5	12	1	13	12	9	10
<b>Training on Intercultural Issues</b>	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes

Initially, the participants were informed by phone or face-to-face about the nature of the interview, the research topic that the researcher is launching as well as the reasons why she is asking them to share their experiences. After giving verbal consent and specifying a day and time convenient for them to take place, a consent form was sent to all via email confirming the purpose of the interview, the anonymity of the interviewees' personal data and the maintenance of respect and confidentiality from the researcher to themselves during the whole interview procedure. It was also assured both in writing and verbally that at any time and for any reason they could cancel their participation.

The design of questions (Appendix), as mentioned before, was open-ended. As Mann and MacLeod (2015) support, “interviews are conducted from the perspective that acknowledges the subjectivities of both the participants and the researcher, considering the participant an active contributor and a co-constructor of knowledge” (p. 59). Indeed, this thesis’ goal is to achieve an open dialogue with the interviewee so that as much detail as possible is shared. Moreover, a key element of the thesis is the teachers’ view towards the different cultural origins of the students. So, it tends to be reasonable to choose open-ended questions, since the interviewees can argue openly about their choices and their beliefs. Furthermore, the semi-structured trait of the questions confirms the above claim. According to Isari and Pourkos (2015), semi-structured interviews provide flexibility in the process as they allow the researcher to modify, deepen, add or remove a question depending on the circumstances. Interviews according to this structure are a living organism that forms and evolves during the process. In this way, the stage of the interviews was designed with the opening questions to smoothly introduce the interviewee into the atmosphere of the questions. For the content of the questions, a logical sequence was followed that helped the researcher to understand and deepen the analysis of the data.

### **8.3 Research Process**

First and foremost, the research process started with some relevant bibliographic searches on the topic of intercultural education in Greece and more broadly, critical pedagogy. As a first thought, the possibility of the research focusing only on the linguistic elements of the students' identity was discussed. However, the research was chosen to focus on the overall approach to the notion of identity. Personally, the researcher wanted to understand how students' identities are reflected without taking into account only their linguistic characteristics. This, of course, brought more demands and challenges to the research process since as a starting point it is necessary to determine what identity is defined for each individual person and what is ultimately defined as "cultural identity". Therefore, a special basis had to be given to the perceptions of the teachers in this regard through the first literature review and whether and to what extent any stereotypical views prevent them from perceiving the real identity that a student has. Is a student's religion or language really what defines them, or does their background not differentiate them as much as public opinion makes them out to be?

So, these thoughts were the initial step to form the main axes of the research. Key words guided the search, while other aspects emerged during the research process that enhanced the final result. As Mann & MacLeod (2015) argues, the literature review provides familiarity with previous relevant research, which helps the researcher to understand exactly what they wish to look for and whether their research proposal succeeds in filling any research gap that exists up to that point. According to this idea, the research plan proceeded. Then, after defining the dissertation title, the objectives and the research questions, the process of finding a mainstream school in which the observation stage could be implemented began. In this case, the researcher was lucky since the process went smoothly. A relative of the researcher managed to communicate the purpose of the research and thus, the first informal consent was given by the principal of the primary school. Then, an official document was sent, which would explain in detail who the researcher is, the content of her research, the reasons for requesting permission to enter the particular school, and also the confirmation that the anonymity of the teachers will be ensured throughout the process, of the students and, of course, the school. After the researcher received a positive response to her request, a face-to-face meeting with the principal and teachers of the school was immediately launched.

According to Isari and Pourkos (2015), observation for research purposes carries significant weight, as it is grounded in the experiential data collected by the researcher. This choice is crucial for the final result, as it can confirm or challenge existing data, such as interview responses. Although designing the observation process is difficult, it proves to be a highly rewarding experience. Before beginning the observation stage, the data generation method was carefully planned. Key elements of the classroom environment, including crafts, identity texts, and general decoration, were the primary focus of the research. Attention was also paid to the teachers’ manners and gestures towards the children and the language of instruction used. The researcher chose to gather field notes during the observation and not after the end of the lesson, using a personal notebook. At the end of some sessions, the researcher informally discussed with the teachers, thus trying to clarify some issues that arose during the sessions and would help the researcher to record better conclusions.

The interview stage was launched between April 20<sup>th</sup> and May 10<sup>th</sup>, as originally planned. In all eleven cases of participants, the researcher clarified from the beginning the

purposes of the research and the format of the interview and after the positive consent was given verbally, the consent form was sent to their personal email. After this form was signed, the interview began. Although an interview plan was prepared with all the questions, the order of the questions happened to change several times due to their semi-structured format. Also, many questions were omitted after being answered in some way by the interviewee in an earlier question. The interviews were conducted in Greek via Viber or Facebook video call and recorded via the researcher's personal mobile application. The remote interview process through digital tools was chosen as the easiest way as both the researcher and the participants reside in different cities. The duration of the interviews depended on the range of the teachers’ responses and the researcher’s need for further clarification. Thus, the longest interview lasted 41 minutes and 18 seconds, while the shortest lasted 20 minutes. The remaining 9 interviews lasted an average of 30 minutes.

Regarding the interview data, they were transcribed with a digital tool *TurboScribe* and then studied thoroughly to be coded, as suggested by Tsiolis (2018). The analysis method chosen was the thematic content analysis which focuses on targeting and categorizing the necessary data in order to formulate the results more centrally. The thematic content analysis is characterized by Isaris and Pourkos (2015) as a method that promotes research flexibility, since researchers have the ability to construct multiple meaningful themes depending on the data they have gathered (Tsiolis, 2018). Indeed, in this case the researcher had the freedom to form the thematic units without a specific pattern but with the purpose of serving the findings and the research questions. Specifically, after all the interviews were completed, the transcribed texts were thoroughly studied and divided into categories according to the teachers’ responses: teachers, students, students’ community, school community. The findings of the observation stage were aligned with the interviews’ responses and in the last step the researcher divided the sum of findings into 8 separate sections. These sections served the researcher to become familiar with the data, code the findings, make themes, better study the already existing literature review and thus reach a conclusion.

#### **8.4 Research Problems**

Unavoidably, some research stages needed reorganization after some problems arose in the implementation of the original methodological plan. Since the end of March, the researcher

has initiated contact with the school principality to express her interest in attending a series of sessions held in classes with students whose first language is not Greek and whose cultural background differs from the dominant learning population. She successfully received a positive response from the principal of a primary school, and from April 10<sup>th</sup> to April 24<sup>th</sup>, she scheduled the observation stage, during which she was admitted to two classes at the school, one was 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and the other was 6<sup>th</sup> grade. However, along the way, there were some bureaucratic obstacles, as consent forms were given to the parents of the students in these two classes without my knowledge. Also, between 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> of April the religious Muslim holiday of Ramadan Feast took place and resulted in several Muslim students being absent during those days from the classes that the researcher was scheduled to attend. Furthermore, all forms had to be signed before the researcher could enter into these classes. Therefore, despite the original plan and agreement to start on April 10<sup>th</sup>, the researcher commenced her observation on April 12<sup>th</sup>. This happened because a teacher of another class (C1) of the third grade accepted me to enter the class, but from April 12<sup>th</sup> and after the signed consent forms of the students’ parents were collected.

Even the delay in the signatures of the consent letters by the parents created a special climate of discomfort. The letter they received was incomplete regarding the researcher’s research purpose and an attitude of prejudice was observed since some parents refused the researcher’s presence in the classroom for fear of hindering the learning process. On the part of the researcher, all measures were followed to smooth out any misunderstandings regarding her role in the classroom. In fact, the researcher herself proposed to speak to students of those three classrooms personally and explain her role and the purpose of her research, so that any questions of the parents could be resolved. In addition, all three classroom teachers contacted those parents who delayed the consent forms and asked them to sign them immediately. Notwithstanding the particular challenges, the researcher approached these challenges with flexibility and mutual understanding with the support of school staff.

Still regarding the interview sample it may not be direct and it may be filtered (Creswell, 2014), since in a live discussion there is a tendency for the speakers to embellish the data according to what they think will probably satisfy the researcher. Also, it is clear that the analysis of this sample provide a number of readings of the data and other researchers approach the same research question in a different way. At the same time, it is

important to mention that not only the participants but also the researcher needed to reflect on personal beliefs and attitudes since the research’s sociopolitical and idiosyncratic background may significantly influence the interpretations of the sample.

## 9 Findings

This chapter presents the research findings, encompassing both the observation phase and the interview phase. The data collection process took place during April and May 2024. Of the four subchapters on the *Findings* chapter, three focus on the observation data (9.1, 9.2, 9.3), while the fourth is dedicated to the interview data (9.4).

### 9.1 Observation Data of C1

The subchapter 9.1 have been divided into four sections (Observations 1, 2, 3, 4), which aggregate the observation data of C1. The C1 data collected over two days and the Table 4 shows the main axes that guided the researcher.

**Table 3. Demographic information of C1**

<b>Data of C1</b>	
Class	3th Grade
Number of Students	20
Age of Students	8-9 years old
Boys	6
Girls	14
Students’ pseudonym	S1, S2, S3
Observation hours	6
Observation days	2

The class C1 consisted of 20 young students, of which 14 were girls and 6 were boys. They all share a common religion, since they are Christian Orthodox. Specifically, 3 of the 20 students in total were children of Pontian immigrant families, while 2 of them had half Russian ancestry on their mother's side. Also, all 3 of these children were girls (S1, S2, S3). Their literacy skills are low and one of these three girls (S2) at the beginning of the year could not speak Greek fluently. According to information shared by the teacher with the researcher during an unformal discussion, S2's mother does not know any Greek and they mainly speak Russian at home. Also, there is an interpreter in the face-to-face meetings with the teacher. S3 is a member of a single-parent family and spends most of the day with her grandmother, since her mother is away a lot due to work.

### **Observation 1:**

The observation stage began with class C1 during the first hour of a mathematics session. The lesson commenced with a greeting from the teacher, who informed the pupils that they would be tested on material covered in the previous session. This announcement was met with a lukewarm response from the students. The teacher utilized the classroom projector to display the math exercises to be examined. After explaining the tasks in Greek, the teacher instructed the students to stand up and solve parts of the exercises in the order of their seating. The session continued until the break with the solution of the mathematic exercises by all students. The teacher through this way followed a more teacher-center educational approach.

### **Observation 2:**

On the same day, the observation stage continued for three more hours. The teacher dedicated two of these hours to teaching Greek, selecting a text about diversity titled "The Happy Meadow" from the school textbook. After the children were first examined in spelling, they gave their notebooks to the teacher and then the reading of the text began. All the children read a small part of the text loudly. The teacher was choosing at that moment the order in which the children would practice reading. S1 was quite fluent in Greek rather than S2 who struggled with the pronunciation of some words. The teacher gave time to S2 to complete her effort and in some text parts stood as language assistant for the S2. They talked about the symbolism of the text and the importance of diversity. It is important to mention that there was no supportive atmosphere when S3 was reading. Some children made



negative comments about her pronunciation without any intervention from the teacher. The pupil S3 on all observation days sat alone and her desk was almost at the back of the classroom, marginalized from the rest of the other students’ desks. In an informal discussion, the teacher mentioned that the children do not treat S3 well, considering her a tease and excluding her from their company. The teacher noted that S3 has difficulty fitting in and is dealing with an issue related to her weight. Additionally, the researcher observed that during a gymnastics session, S3 was sitting alone on the school steps while the other children played away from her.

### **Observation 3:**

During the final observation hour of the day in this particular class, the subject was History. The lesson focused on parts of the mythical return of Odysseus to Ithaca. As the children learned about Odysseus’ journey, they simultaneously worked on a painting activity, coloring the locations Odysseus visited on a pre-drawn map. During this time, the children were quite communicative and cooperative, engaging actively with each other in the painting activity while the teacher acted as a supervisor. The classroom decoration was simple, featuring only a map of Greece, an image of Jesus Christ above the whiteboard, some teacher-made crafts related to mathematical addition and multiplication, as well as a few students-made crafts depicting the voyages of Odysseus. However, there were no decorations reflecting the diverse cultural backgrounds of the students.

### **Observation 4:**

The lesson was Greek and the students followed the same procedure of the previous sessions: spelling test, reading and practicing adjectives with an exercise on the board. The teacher used the projector to show the children the exercise, which came from the school textbook. The teacher was also sitting in the chair and rarely got up during the sessions. In fact, during this session, a group of 3 students were not concentrating on the exercise and were talking to each other. Their teacher shouted at them loudly, blaming only one student for this behavior and despite his lack of homework preparation and mistakes in his exercises, he shows inappropriate behavior and is a bad example for other classmates.



**Table 4. Characteristics of C1**

	Yes	No
Identity texts		✓
Crafts with diverse cultural references		✓
Opportunities to share experiences		✓
Greek as the dominant language	✓	
Bilingual activities		✓
Peer-collaborative activities		✓
Teacher-center approach	✓	

## **9.2 Observation Data of C2**

The subchapter 9.2 have been divided into three sections (Observations 5, 6, 7), which aggregate the observation data of C2. The C2 data collected over six days and the Table 6 shows the main axes that guided the researcher.

**Table 5. Demographic information of C2**

<b>Data of C2</b>	
Classroom	3th Grade
Number of Students	19
Age of Students	8-9 years old
Boys	7
Girls	12

Students’ pseudonym	S4, S5, S6
Observation hours	9
Observation days	6

The class C2 consisted of 19 young students, of which 12 were girls and 7 were boys. Three of the 19 students are Muslim, while the rest are Orthodox Christians. These three students (S4, S5, S6), two boys and one girl, differ from each other in terms of origin since S4 and S5 are Pomaks and S6 is Roma. Also, S4 and S5 are twins.

### **Observation 5:**

As soon as the children entered the classroom, they ran and hugged the teacher. The session started with the teacher asking them how their weekend was and thus, a discussion began where all the children shared their experiences. S5 participated in tennis matches and wanted to show off her medal with the teacher's support. The teacher then asked all the children to exchange their homeworks and check the math exercises of the pupil sitting next to them at the desk, and then encouraged them all to stand up at the whiteboard and solve the new math exercises. The language of instruction was Greek. Since the previous week was the religious holiday of Ramadan Feast the teacher asked S3, S4 and S5 how they celebrated this day, but they did not want to share much.

### **Observation 6:**

The observation was carried out in the Greek and mathematics lessons. The teacher continued to encourage the children to work together in the exercises by dividing them into smaller or larger groups. All the children sat in pairs at the desks. S6 had as his assistant his classmate who sat with him at the desk or the teacher. In reading, the teacher would give him a specific piece to read, many times smaller than the rest because he was struggling and she wanted to encourage him to participate even in this way. In Greek they read a text about the development of machines and the evolution of robots. This was the occasion to start a dialogue with all the members of the class and in the end the pupils asked the teacher if they can bring their own toy-robots next time. Another day again in Greek lesson they talked

about the means of transport and the metro of Athens and all the children who had the opportunity to visit it shared their experience with enthusiasm.

**Observation 7:**

The peer-collaboration was promoted again among the students. Important mention should be made of the fact that the teacher moved around the classroom, she was not static, while she tried to be next to S6 to feel safe and to be able to ask for any help or guidance. The atmosphere of the classroom, in general, on all days of observation in this classroom was very positive, the decoration referred to various cultural elements of the children. There were children's family tree crafts taped to the walls and a large craft by the door with all the students' birth dates. There was also a bulletin board with invitations to children's birthday parties and a small library next to it. In an informal discussion, the teacher mentioned to the researcher that the children have been together since the 1<sup>st</sup> grade, they are very close and they all hang out together without any discrimination.

**Table 6. Characteristics of C2**

	Yes	No
Identity texts	✓	
Crafts with diverse cultural references	✓	
Opportunities to share experiences	✓	
Greek as the dominant language		✓
Bilingual activities		✓
Peer-collaborative activities	✓	
Teacher-center approach	✓	

### **9.3 Observation Data of C3**

The subchapter 9.3 have been divided into three sections (Observations 8, 9, 10), which aggregate the observation data of C3. The C3 data collected over six days and the Table 8 shows the main axes that guided the researcher.

**Table 7. Demographic information of C3**

<b>Data of C3</b>	
<b>Classroom</b>	<b>6th Grade</b>
Number of Students	21
Age of Students	11-12 years old
Boys	7
Girls	14
Students’ pseudonym	S7
Observation hours	10
Observation days	6

The class C3 consisted of 21 young students, of which 14 were girls and 7 were boys. S7 was a Muslim girl with Roma origin, sibling with S6 of class C2.

#### **Observation 8:**

The teacher followed a strictly structured, teacher-centered teaching as she was anxious about whether she would manage to teach what needed to in order to move on to subsequent chapters. She changed the program several times to adapt to the requirements. Although in the school program she had to teach Greek, she taught more mathematics because she was behind in the material compared to the other 6<sup>th</sup>-grade classes of school. This was due to the different needs of the students and the fact that she had to explain several phenomena in mathematics. In the Social and Political Education lesson, they talked about the European

Union. The children's participation was passive and uninterested, while S7 did not participate at all and found it quite difficult to read.

**Observation 9:**

In the Greek lesson, the students all participated together in a digital game to be able to find the meanings of the words. The interactive board was a basic tool of the teacher during all the observation days. On that day, the students were also divided into groups by digital lottery and tasked with making a group poster for the upcoming music festival their school would be participating in.

In Physics, a student made funny comments about the theory of wide-angle lenses and the teacher's explanation about cameras. This led the teacher to reprimand the student firmly, accusing him of not adapting to the rules of the classroom. On the other hand, in Mathematics, students were encouraged to take part and solve the exercises orally.

**Observation 10:**

Although there was no mention or discussion about the cultural origins of the students, the teacher on the last observation day chose to teach a text about the religious and cultural diversity. This text referred to the peaceful coexistence of Christians and Muslims, and the way they celebrated together their major religious holidays, Easter and Ramadan. During this time, the teacher asked the researcher to take part in the reading and read the dialogue of the text consecutively with the teacher. Afterwards, the children shared the customs and family traditions they have for these religious holidays and S7 participated more actively and seemed to shine when elements of her identity were heard in the classroom.

**Table 8. Characteristics of C3**

	Yes	No
Identity texts		✓
Crafts with diverse cultural references		✓

Opportunities to share experiences	✓	
Greek as the dominant language	✓	
Bilingual activities		✓
Peer-collaborative activities	✓	
Teacher-center approach	✓	

#### **9.4 Interview Data**

This subchapter presents an overview of the information that the 11 primary teachers disclosed during the interview procedure. Eight sections list the views of teachers on the importance of cultural visibility (9.4.1), on their role in multicultural environments (9.4.2), on educational practices (9.4.3), curricula and school equipment that they consider effective for the visibility of their students’ identities (9.4.4), for the attitude of both teachers (9.4.5), students (9.4.6) and their families (9.4.7) regarding the visibility of their cultural heritage, but also finally for the practices of the school community in order to welcome the diversity of students’ identities (9.4.8).

##### **9.4.1 The importance of cultural visibility within the classroom**

The 11 interviewees-teachers provided testimonies that showcased the diverse cultural identities of students, reflecting the ethno-cultural pluralism in Greek school classrooms. Many interviewees predominantly discussed their interaction with Muslim students of Pomak or Romany origin, while others shared their experiences with refugee children from Afghanistan and Iraq or children from second- and third-generation immigrant families from Kazakhstan, Russia, Albania, Turkey, Saint Dominic, and the Netherlands. Therefore, the teachers’ perspectives on this diverse student population and the importance they place on bring to the forefront such cultural heritage within the school context are particularly noteworthy.

Especially, three out of eleven interviewees-teachers remarked that the visibility of the students' cultural identity promotes the feeling of safety and comfort within the classroom

environment. As their responses of these three interviewees conclude, it is something that “*personally fight for a lot*” (Teacher 5), as in the case of the Roma students, due to their lack of social integration, they did not know Greek and that any attempt to communicate was quite difficult. However, one of these three interviewee-teacher chose to learn Romani so that she could approach them, doing so students to feel more comfortable with the teacher. Also, these three interviewees -teachers consider that beyond the security that the student manages to feel, the class becomes a realistic example of society. According to their responses, the school reflects society which is a heterogeneous partnership of people and cultures. So it is a human right for every student and every family to bring to school the identity they choose, since it is an integral part of the social whole. In this statement, they added that with the cultural visibility of the diverse students, the demystification of stereotypes is achieved and the members of the class learn to accept diversity, respect each other and cooperate.

*“It is important because the classroom and the school reflect society. We live in a society that has not been homogeneous for many years and decades, even though we might not want to acknowledge it. Therefore, I believe it is important for this diversity to be visible in classrooms and for students to have their space. This includes the students and their families, allowing them to showcase their identity in the learning process.”* **Teacher 10**

However, five out of eleven interviewees-teachers interpreted the cultural visibility of diverse students as an inclusion policy that serves to avoid possible antisocial behavior from these students. All these five teachers mentioned that cultural visibility is a method that, on the one hand, helps to integrate diverse students into the whole class, but at the same time potentially results in dangerous situations that jeopardize the other students’ safety. It was also mentioned by two out of eleven interviewees-teachers, that the visibility of different cultural identities helps children to solve questions for the diversity of their classmates and it is something that “*it cannot stop or hide, since there is a different religion that is something completely different from ours*” (Teacher 3). Moreover, according to one out of eleven responses, this kind of visibility assists teachers in understanding the linguistic and intellectual gaps of their culturally diverse students and frequently it is not so necessary to put so much emphasis on cultural diversity and students’ cultural heritage all the time. When

necessary, it is essential to emphasize the differences between student groups so that there is no fear of the unknown or the unfamiliar within the rest of the class. This approach supports the idea that inclusion is achieved without devaluing any member.

Based on the above responses, eight out of eleven interviewees-teachers perceive the importance of cultural visibility as a facilitating mechanism for exaggerating the weaknesses of diverse students in relation to the dominant Greek language and this kind of visibility can help teachers to understand the differences between student groups. Nevertheless, it is not a priority during the learning process.

#### **9.4.2 The teachers’ role in multicultural school environments**

In environments where different children's identities intermingle and multiple learning needs are fostered, teachers find themselves between different educational directions. The choices they make shape both the role they choose to play and the broader attitude they maintain towards the multiculturalism and multilingualism of a classroom. The responses of the interviewees strongly supported the importance of the teacher since it is this position that directs, balances and promotes respect and tolerance towards any phobias and prejudices. An atmosphere of support and encouragement of all identities is created through the figure of the teacher. Two out of eleven interviewees-teachers supported their ideology of a supportive role-model that the teacher figure should serve. According to their responses, the teacher should emphasize the classroom atmosphere, promote respect for anything different, and create space within the educational process, by adopting activities that promote multiculturalism and students’ heritage. Also, according to other two out of eleven responses, the teacher should facilitate the educational process and promote more differentiated pedagogical methods that serve better and more effectively the learning progress. This supportive model of the teacher should act as supervisor to diverse students in order to encourage to participate more and give them appropriate opportunities to open up using even individualized teaching approaches wherever possible. Additionally, the teacher’s role is to protect the linguistically weak students from being targeted or ridiculed by other members of the class.

*“I aim to smooth out all contradictions, so to speak. I try to integrate them in such a way that it doesn't appear they are falling behind, either academically or socially. For*



*instance, when we are reading and a child is struggling, I might give them a marked part of the text to read in advance, so they don't have to read the entire text. This way, when they read, it won't seem like they are struggling, and they won't be singled out.” **Teacher 1***

In addition, the pedagogical role of a teacher can slip away many times in a multicultural classroom and other aspects of this figure are promoted. One interviewee-teacher shared a personal experiences, where the majority of her class is of Romani descent with a very low level of literacy. Children's multifaceted learning difficulties and psychosocial fragility put teachers in a situation where they have to review their primary role, as the following testimony demonstrates.

*“Because the situation is very unique, I have children who have very low literacy levels, both in their families and themselves. When they came to the first grade, they had never in their lives seen paper or pencil; they had no contact with any school environment. First of all, I had children who were afraid to enter the classroom because they don't have doors at their homes. For me to understand this with a child who doesn't speak the language, doesn't speak Greek to express it to me, is very young, and for other reasons cannot express it to me, we had such issues. [...]. So, I try within this context. Sometimes, the truth is, the pedagogical role slips out of our hands, as our educational advisor knows very well. We are forced to enter a realistic process where you are not just an educator for these children; you are a parent, a social worker, a psychologist, and a correctional officer. The teacher's role is not just educational, at least in my class, and it cannot be simply educational.” **Teacher 5***

However, six out of eleven responses focused on the difficulties that a teacher has to face hence interpreting their position as difficult, inadequate and weak against a Greek education system that continues to overlook all forms of diversity. In fact, one out of these six responses placed attention on the inability of the Greek system to support cultural diversity, thus forcing teachers to function as “employees” within an educational environment that systematically ignores all forms of diversity despite their effort to be facilitators and patrons of an equal visibility. Three out of eleven interviews-teachers

strongly agreed with this response, pointing out the challenges that a primary school teacher has to overcome every day, such as learning difficulties, insufficient teacher preparation time to cover all needs, but also the unwillingness of many teachers to be trained in the call of a multicultural reality.

Thus, it becomes apparent that six out of eleven responses characterized their role as a teacher in a primary multicultural classroom as a difficult and often impossible task, as the challenges are many and the willingness to adapt is often insufficient. The four out of eleven responses that supported the significance of an adoptable role of the teacher in the cultural visibility of the pupils certainly did not devalue the challenges, they simply argued that the role a teacher will take in a multicultural classroom is determined by personal beliefs and choices.

#### 9.4.3 Educational practices and diverse cultural identities

Regarding the responses that focused on educational practices, there are several examples that draw attention to the formation of an educational figure that will be governed by patience and great flexibility. It is also emphasized that traditional pedagogical methods cannot be applied in multilingual educational environments, but it is desirable to promote differentiated teaching and group cooperative learning more. Therefore, seven out of eleven interviewees-teachers argued that the combination of flexible teaching methods and a differentiated approach of the students brought very desirable results. In fact, in school environments with a significant percentage of school dropouts or intermittent attendance, the teacher should be ready to manage any situation. In the case of one out of these seven responses, interviewee-teacher try to offer material for everyone because her class make up of different levels of students’ literacy and academic perspectives. Since it is a small class, they do Greek and Mathematics, and then, as much as the schedule allows, teacher conducts activities based on the children’s interests. Also, she mentioned the impact of brainstorming sessions which help a lot to her effort to approach the pupils, as her response witnessed “*they are not typical students who come prepared from home, with their books and notebooks*” (Teacher 5).

Moreover, differentiated teaching is a choice that is made gradually as it is applied only in cases that are proven to need it. Giving an other example, one out of these seven interviewees-teachers emphasized that in a personal teaching experience, differentiated

teaching helped culturally diverse students become more active in class since teacher couldn’t give them a whole text to read. They broke it into smaller parts. The same approach was followed by two out of eleven interviewees-teachers in reading and copying tasks. These two interviewees-teachers, also, pointed out the importance of peer collaboration and dialogue between teacher and pupils, but also the significance of an active teacher who does not sit in the chair but as a facilitator scrolls around the classroom.

*“[...] A teacher needs to be adaptable in the classroom, depending on the dynamics of the class. Additionally, a student might have unique characteristics or some form of disability.*

*Using differentiated instruction, for instance, or having the desks arranged in groups, which is something I saw the importance of this year, as I hadn’t implemented it before.*

*Helps incredibly! If a child, particularly those from another country, is struggling, the group can support the student, so I don’t have to intervene directly. In summary, differentiated and cooperative group teaching methods [...].” **Teacher 1***

Closing the issue of practices, four out of eleven interviewees-teachers referred to suggestions related to the promotion of gatherings and cultural festivals as “*a foundation of something more significant*” (Teacher 10) so as to bridge more the relationships of the school community with parents, while instead of providing mother tongue lessons to both diverse students and to teacher, experiential learning approaches are some more ideas that have either been implemented or are being proposed for the future. Last but not the least, one out of these four teachers supported, also, the idea of games that puts in the process of students to represent different cultures, for example China as she pointed out, and following the rules to get closer.

Therefore, the proposed practices of the teachers, some of which have been implemented, show a willingness to highlight the diverse cultural identities of the students and an adaptability, such as differentiated teaching, towards their diverse idiosyncrasies. It is certain, however, that the subject is still approached superficially, as celebrations or traditional foods and games with representations of cultures play a leading role in teachers’ perceptions of cultural diversity.

#### 9.4.4 Mainstream primary classes’ curricula and material equipment.

Amid the series of questions, particular attention was given to the responses concerning the school curricula of 2021 and 2023 for the general primary education classes. According to their latest design, the promotion of differentiated teaching is foreseen as a necessary principle that a teacher should follow in today's multilingual context. Based on this argumentation, the teachers were asked to express their opinions on how effective and helpful these analytic curricula are in their effort to carry out the previous educational practices and highlight the cultural heritage of their students.

Eight out of eleven interviewees-teachers claimed that the curriculum design has not significantly helped them. On the contrary, any efforts to highlight the cultural identities of their students were made using their own resources and ideas. Additionally, according to all responses, the curricula are characterized as superficial and lacking substantial contribution to the necessity for visibility of all identities. In fact, the model of educational tactics as well as the design of general primary classes was commented by all teachers as outdated and without the necessary tools. As Teacher 9 typically comments *"It's like we're in the Middle Ages."* Also, two out of eleven teachers focused on the insufficient equipment of the classrooms and, often, the lack of computers or projectors, which as a result make them unable to function productively, while at the same time the school textbooks seem to have very low expectations for the cultural visibility and the numerous linguistic needs of a multicultural classroom. Especially, it was maintained by nine out of eleven responses that the opinion about the non-adaptability of Greek textbooks is a crucial parameter, pointing out that the material primary teachers have is not suitable for bilingual students – not even for native ones - as a monolingual approach is systematically used in the Greek education system. But even if small references are made in the textbooks through pictures of children from other countries with no-Greek names, *"it doesn't help those children who are in the classroom from another country, it doesn't help them. It helps the Greeks to learn to accept these children, rather than helping these children to integrate"* (Teacher 8). The time pressure, the requirements to complete the prescribed school curriculum and the lack of ZEP classes lead to an impasse to address whatever needs their culturally diverse students have. One out of eleven responses emphatically argues that the limited structure of the curriculum and the school syllabus limits every efforts and creates discomfort and stress for the teachers themselves.

*“[...] There needs to be the teacher's free will in handling the material and the textbook. We shouldn't be obliged to teach a specific syllabus. [...]. This restriction is very limiting, and being required to cover a certain percentage of the syllabus is extremely stressful and unhelpful.” **Teacher 4***

In this way, the findings show that both the new curricula and the equipment of mainstream education classes do not meet the expectations of all teachers. Curricula are characterized as restrictive, technocratic and superficial in terms of students' cultural diversity, serving the dominant Greek culture, while primary classrooms are not equipped with the appropriate tools for teachers to highlight students' cultural identities, as advocated by all teachers' answers.

#### 9.4.5 **Teachers’ attitude towards diverse cultural identities.**

Under this kind of challenges, the way each individual teacher chose to act was investigated. Thus, beliefs and attitudes towards the diverse cultural identities of students were revealed which provide enough food for thought. Both negative and positive intentions of the teachers are demonstrated regarding the adaptability of the lessons according to the needs of the students, while the presence of multicultural students seemed to sometimes create anxiety, despair, but also joy and a creative spirit.

In particular, the presence of pupils with a different mother tongue and a different religion than the dominant model, troubled three out of eleven interviewees-teachers. According to their responses, their difficulty was that when they spent a lot of time at home preparing lessons that could include children with a diverse cultural identity. This preparation stressed them out as the response emphasized “*I share the culture that it’s good for the curriculum to progress*” (Teacher 9). Even if they often neglected the needs of the diverse students in the class in the best interests of school syllabus, they do not consider that they did anything wrong given the low expectations and few teaching hours. One out of these three interviewees shared her experience with a Muslim student who did not know Greek at all. Despite teacher efforts, the pupil failed to make any progress. The reason this happens is the lack of knowledge of Greek, which according to the teacher was not tolerable in the case of the particular student since he was born and raised in Greece. Also, in other

case, the need to try to translate the exercises into Albanian was an obstacle to the progress of the session because “*it is not right for Greek students*” who had a higher literacy level than the pupils with Albanian origin.

*“ The truth is that I questioned why this child, living here in Greece and being a Greek citizen, does not know at least some basic Greek. It’s unacceptable for a student to come to school and not be able to communicate even a single word with the teacher. [...]. In this case, I also see a bit of an issue with the family. I understand that at home they will speak their own native language, but it would be good if they also learned some of the language of the country they live in.”* **Teacher 3**

On the other hand, five out of eleven interviewees-teachers, despite the difficulties they had to face, chose to diversify the entire lesson plan in order to be able to convince their students to maintain their attendance at school. The children's psychological and social insecurities gave them the reason to pursue a pioneering lesson plan. Because of the high number of school dropouts, one teacher out of these five interviewees-teachers wanted to ensure that these diverse children could stay in the classroom. As she pointed out, these children faced many psychological problems, such as panic attacks, since as the teacher testifies “*they had never seen a door in their lives and were afraid of a closing door. Their homes are not walled structures.*”. This circumstance managed to strengthen her and get rid of phobias and anxiety that she previously had, still choosing to do the lesson in the yard to make the students feel better. Furthermore, in the case of a pupil of Albanian origin, his classmates, driven by prejudice, assumed that he might engage in theft or delinquent behaviors. Consequently, when the teacher became aware of the situation, she modified the lesson plan. During the *Skills Development Workshops* lesson, she decided to dedicate the teaching hour to emphasizing the importance of diversity. At last but not least, three out of these five interviewees support that a multicultural educational environment is an opportunity for a more creative and beyond-the-ordinary teaching approach. Above all, they expressed that they were not afraid of approaching culturally diverse students, while highlighting their cultural heritage is an opportunity for a more open, interesting and, simultaneously, enjoyable lesson in which everyone can participate.

In relation to the above analysis, six out of eleven responses are summarized in the opinion that *“some things are beyond my control”*. Hence, six out of eleven interviewees-teachers consider the emergence of cultural identities a quite challenging task for them and many times it was the reason for them to feel stressed and quite charged with extra preparation. The remaining five interviewees, however, argued that the interaction with diverse cultural identities of students and the process of integrating them into a new school environment was a pleasant challenge and an opportunity to think outside the box.

#### 9.4.6 **Students’ attitude towards their cultural visibility**

Another important part of the interviews focused on the students' attitude towards any attempt by the teacher to highlight their cultural identity during the educational process. As eight out of eleven responses indicated, the students faced the visibility of their cultural heritage positively and responded by communicating various elements of their culture. Especially, according to these eight responses, it is an opportunity for these children to talk about their morals and customs, to highlight aspects of their religion and thus to develop a dialogue between all members far from limitations and prejudices. Highlighting the cultural identity, the children's faces immediately shine, as the response below emphasizes.

*“Kids who are “alloglossa”? Well, of course, they are happy to speak and have others listen to them, and they feel that they are part of it and not so isolated. [...]. Their faces light up. [...].” **Teacher 8***

However, three out of eleven interviewees-teachers admitted that the pupils did not adopt a positive stance towards their cultural visibility and chose to remain silent for fear of marginalization, being targeted or even revealing their linguistic weakness. Although the low Greek language proficiency is the barrier holding these children back, students’ personal beliefs affect their sense of belonging. Specifically, when students were supposed to present their crafts in class, a student of Albanian descent feared that the teacher did not include his craft with the others because of his ethnicity. In reality, the student himself had forgotten his craft at home. With this narrative, this teacher aimed to share with the researcher that this particular student feels self-conscious about his background and harbors an internalized fear and prejudice because of his identity, leading him to try to conceal it. A



similar experience was shared about a Muslim student who was embarrassed to talk about her religion in front of the class for fear of being marginalized by her peers.

*“The little girl who speaks Russian is very happy about it and always tells the other students, “Let me write on the board and show you how this is in Russian,” or “Let me write this word in Russian,” and she says it with joy. She’s not embarrassed by it. However, the little girl who is Muslim and has a different culture and religion, she feels a bit shy. She feels that because she is one of the other kids and part of a group with popular girls, if her characteristic becomes visible, they might see her differently. Only the little girl. Her twin brother, on the other hand, is not shy at all. He’s happy to talk about it. Recently, when they had their celebration for Bayram, he talked about it, while the little girl felt more embarrassed.” **Teacher 4***

In conclusion, despite the fact that eight out of eleven interviewees’ responses highlighted the positive reception of cultural visibility among diverse students, it is crucial to carefully examine the three out of eleven responses that bring to the discussion issues of internalized fear, prejudice, and guilt experienced by the children regarding their identity. Especially when it affects teachers' attitudes toward diverse students.

#### 9.4.7 Diverse students’ communities

Another aspect of the students' attitude towards their cultural visibility seems to be the family and in general the wider community to which they feel they belong. The six out of eleven responses supported the family's encouraging attitude towards the visibility of the diverse elements of their culture, while the five out of eleven responses touched on the issue of influences that determine not only the attitude of students but also their family members regarding what part of their identity they want to bring to school. Many times the family environment of a diverse student is affected by the attitude that the teacher chooses to implement and it is not really the student's or the family's decision what identity they choose to display at school and how positive they are about the visibility of that identity. The attitude, for example, of one out of eleven interviewees-teachers, affected one of her Pomak students who, while intelligent, was lagging behind in the Greek language. So, he advised parents to force their child to speak only Greek at home so that he could perform better at school.



*“We cannot blame the children themselves for this, of course. [...]. The identity they choose to carry at school is not entirely their own decision. [...]. I have sometimes told parents to speak to their children in their own language at home. It generally helps with their language development. And parents insist. Maybe a teacher told them otherwise in the past. You know, because this happens too. Perhaps they felt that school is something separate from the rest of our lives. So, here, they only speak Greek. I don’t know. Nevertheless, the choice isn’t really much of a choice in reality. It has to do with a host of influences, especially when we’re talking about a child.” **Teacher 10***

In fact, it is important to mention that according to three out of eleven responses it appeared that the children's family environment hesitates due to fear, insecurity and personal beliefs to communicate cultural elements of their identity. These three interviewees-teachers attributed this attitude to their cultural and religious background, as some Muslim families often choose to interact more frequently with members of their own community. Also, in their narratives, when the parents realized the teacher's good intentions, they began to open up and allow their child to do the same. Additionally, one out of these three interviewees noted that she found it striking that the parents of an Albanian student were more concerned with their child's behavior than with their academic progress. This raised suspicions that they preferred their child to conform to the school rules rather than stand out.

Therefore the support and attitude of a student's family environment towards the cultural visibility of their identity is significantly determined by the school itself and the teacher's attitude towards the diversity that each child brings to the school.

#### 9.4.8 **School’s practices**

With reference to the question of the practices followed by the school community, the answers varied. The question was asked so that the interviewees could express their opinions and experiences from what they have witnessed in their teaching career so far. The school, according to the decisions of the principal and the majority of teachers, sometimes follows methods that promote the visibility of pupils’ idiosyncrasies and promotes activities that encourage them to support the uniqueness of their cultural identity. As one out of eleven interviewees-teachers said, the school managed to organize some extracurricular activities, such as astronomy classes and theatrical performances, so that the children could experience new things. In fact, as emphasized in her response, the astronomy classes were closely linked

to the students' way of life, especially since some of the students come from Roma neighborhood where observing the world outside and nature is more familiar to them than living in houses. Furthermore, both the teacher and the rest of the school's educational community continuously encouraged the Roma students to pursue their dreams, which was something the students were hearing for the first time.

*“We have children who are very flexible, very good at sports, excellent in dance, and great in music, they play musical instruments and sing beautifully. We try to encourage them in these directions. I will never forget the way a student's eyes lit up when I heard him sing rap, and I asked him, "Have you ever thought about becoming a rapper? Write lyrics." He was shocked because no one in his life had ever told him he could become anything other than his father's profession. [...].” **Teacher 5***

However, seven out of eleven interviewees-teachers demonstrated the school community's indifference to the issue of cultural visibility. Particularly, they admitted that there are no efforts to highlight the cultural identity of the diverse students from the school's side, and any attempt that was made, highlighted the culture of the dominant Greek society. In this context, one interviewee-teacher out of these seven pointed out that in the two years she has been at the primary school, despite the arrival of refugee children from the camps and their attendance at the school, no efforts have been made to integrate them into school celebrations or events. The reason, she emphasizes, is their interrupted attendance or, in many cases, school dropout and due to these circumstances they aren't chosen to showcase something from their culture.

In contrast to the above responses, three out of eleven interviewees-teachers focused on their anxiety and fear of the wider dominant community's criticism of students' superiority. It is also emphasized that society directly influences the school and whatever approaches it chooses. Based on their responses, society has changed and has become quite violent not only towards foreign students, but even towards the Greeks, “*their own*”.

*“[...] There is no reason for them to bring an identity into a school and an educational system that constantly rejects them. So, I find it very logical that both the children and their families are hesitant. [...] Colleagues, the school principal, the head of the educational unit, the surrounding community, the parents of other children, our society is largely xenophobic, and naturally, teachers and educators are often part of this society. Their views reflect what happens outside. Many times, you try to take two steps forward, and you must be two thousand times more careful, because in reality, you don’t know what you will face or what reactions you will encounter. For instance, bringing in another culture or allowing a child with a different religious identity to talk about it in class can be seen negatively by some.” **Teacher 10***

Beyond the positive actions and psychosocial empowerment of one school case, ten out of eleven interviewees-teachers prove that the general attitude of Greek primary schools reflects a homogenous and often patronizing attitude towards the importance of the cultural visibility of diverse students. In fact, Greek society, although diverse, imposes a one-dimensional and ethnocentric approach to all students, which the school reflects through its practices.

## **10 Discussion**

The research findings were able to offer a wide range of responses and perspectives regarding the importance of students' cultural visibility within a general education classroom. The research, focusing on the views and attitudes of primary school teachers, shared the experiences of the eleven interviewees who supported their teaching ideology and thus led the researcher to the point of certain conclusions. At the same time, the data aid that emerged from the research stage of the observation complemented the aforementioned interview data with rich and thoughtful material. In this section, all these findings analyzed and interpreted in order to formulate specific answers regarding the initial research questions. The practices of teachers and the school community itself promote certain ideological approaches that define whether or not it is considered important to highlight students' culturally diverse identities during the educational process. According to a first and quick glance into research findings, the various challenges dominate, with many

teachers expressing concerns about the difficulties of managing classrooms with diverse cultural backgrounds. The monolingual orientation of school textbooks, along with the volume of the curriculum, tends to reflect a delineated learning framework that does not provide opportunities for non-dominant identities to be promoted. As Simopoulos and Magos (2020) support, the Greek school system was unprepared to face this kind of teaching challenges that appeared with the arrival of a large number of refugee children from 2016 onwards. Furthermore, ten out of eleven interviewees-teachers argue that the rigid and nuclear structure of the Greek mainstream educational curricula severely restricts efforts to adopt progressive and multicultural educational approaches for ethno-culturally diverse pupils. This context creates significant obstacles to the implementation of intercultural teaching methods, as some responses indicate a lack of intercultural competence and a reliance on stereotypical views towards addressing diverse cultural identities.

### ***10.1 Teachers’ views towards their students’ cultural visibility***

First and foremost, with respect to the first research question regarding the importance of the cultural visibility during the education process, nine out of eleven interview responses was quite positive about this issue. As defined by three out of eleven responses, the school is a micrograph of a super-diverse society and it is an integral element that the visibility of this cultural pluralism has the right to be represented, as Stoop (2017) demonstrates. For Cummins (2001), discouraging the visibility of cultural identity is interpreted by children as a command to distance themselves from something deemed unacceptable and as a result victimizes the pupils themselves. This means that the school should be an open place where all forms of diversity have to be represented without discrimination, marginalization or categorization. Furthermore, as highlighted by two out of the eleven interviewed teachers, this visibility reinforces fundamental principles of interculturalism and social justice, aligning with the perspective of Warner and Dupuy (2017). Through the promotion of all cultural idiosyncrasies, equality between the members of a school class is immediately advocated, while at the same time the necessary attention and value is given to everyone regardless of origin, religion, nationality or social background. Also, four out of eleven responses linked visibility with the breaking down of stereotypes and taboos, since students are equipped with cultural knowledge and skills that make them capable members of a society of solidarity and understanding among the various national, cultural and religious groups and states. In this way, this view confirm what several research studies have

supported in relation to the benefits of intercultural education (Cummins, 2001; Foner et al., 2019; Magos, 2022; Stille, 2015). Namely, Magos (2022) acknowledges that intercultural education is associated with acceptance of diversity and tolerance and respect for all individual identities that constitute a school environment.

It is important to note that, according to the interview’s findings, there is an impression of a positive belief in the visibility of students' cultural heritage. However, certain words and phrases suggest a more oppositional approach compared to what is promoted by intercultural dialogue in an educational process. Specifically, according to three out of eleven interviewees-teachers, the significance of cultural visibility is defined as a tool that can highlight major differences between individuals, reveal linguistic gaps relative to the dominant language, and guide teachers in resolving learning issues, ultimately leading to the successful assimilation of students. Based on one out of eleven responses, a primary teacher tried to convince a student's family to speak more Greek than Pomak as a home language, believing that the student would improve its academic performance. At the same time, the comparison between “our” identity and the identity of “others” through the emphatic use of the term “our” in three out of eleven responses, and the perception that cultural visibility functions as a tool to highlight learning weaknesses, indicate a difficulty in understanding the crucial role of various cultural elements in students' learning progress as well as in their psychosocial development (Nakeyar et al., 2018). It is of great importance to emphasize that ten out of eleven interviewees teachers did not address the interaction of first and second language during the educational process, while according to the observation data in all three classes Greek language was the dominant code of communication and teaching. Compared to this situation, Helot and Young (2002) point out that when students have the possibility to interact with two languages at the same time, it is supported that the intellectual capacity is strengthened, since through the mother tongue they manage to understand, connect and acquire the second language better and more efficiently. In fact, through home language visibility during the course, students become more motivated to learn (Cenoz & Gorter, 2017; Cummins, 2001), while at the same time feeling accepted for the identity they bring to the classroom.

Thus, this analysis proves that three out of eleven interviewees-teachers perceive the importance of cultural visibility in an unfavorable way and interpret its use as a method that reinforces the gap between weakly literate students and strong ones, where the latter most

often belong to the dominant cultural group. In particular, teachers argued that visibility promotes the integration of culturally diverse pupils, but *“it’s not necessary to bring it up in every lesson or have constant discussions about it”*. This point of view illuminates what Magos (2022) says about the integration approach, thus confirming that the interpretation of this approach by teachers is superficial and ultimately ends up leading the culturally heterogeneous students to conditions of forced assimilation and adaptation to the rules of the dominant group. For this reason, although the initial intention projects a positive attitude, in the end it concludes questioning the importance of cultural visibility and often being indifferent to it, something that can be particularly strengthened with the practices applied in a multicultural classroom and the role a teacher chooses to play among multicultural and multilingual student profiles.

### ***10.2 Teachers’ role and their practices in supporting their students’ cultural identity***

Regarding the second research question concerning the teaching practices and their efficiency in supporting students cultural visibility during the educational process, seven out of eleven responses indicate that teachers consider differentiated teaching and the utilization of rich, alternative and flexible educational material for all students' needs as effective teaching practices, while the importance of cooperative learning between peers was also suggested. The peer collaborative learning is a teaching practice supported by several cross-cultural studies. Kaneva (2012) and van Tartwijk et al. (2009) acknowledge that pairing up children to support each other with the language learning process not only foster them to make friendships, but it also provides good role models for the newly-arrived pupils. This positive result is also confirmed by interview and observation findings, since by implementing the practice of peer cooperative learning teachers discovered that it helped both the students and themselves in creating a stronger relationship between the members. Moreover, according to observation findings, two out of three teachers implemented many times this practice, thus encouraging pupils to students to take an important role in the development of the lesson. In these cases, the students assumed the role of corrector and assistant, while at the same time they were asked to solve mathematical exercises cooperatively with their pair-mates. Also, based on observation phase, one out of three teachers was very eager to walk around the classroom and act as a facilitator not only for the culturally diverse student, but also for everyone. As Curtin (2005), this interactive

approach to teaching is a fruitful procedure in mainstream school classrooms with multicultural background and maintains a positive teacher-student relationship.

The warm teacher-student relationship was mentioned by eight out of eleven interview responses regarding the role a teacher should have in trying to encourage and promote the importance of cultural diversity within the classroom. To achieve this, the teacher should inspire confidence, be supportive and encouraging with students, be open and at the same time to have awareness and knowledge towards the cultural background of pupils. This, of course, predispose a competence and readiness to manage cultural diversity without stereotypical perspectives. According to Holliday (2010), cultural identity can be characterized as complex since it is not formed exclusively by the specific stereotypical characteristics of a social group. People can belong to more than one cultural reality at the same time, while their mother tongue does not necessarily reflect the ethno-social part of their identity (Verkuyten et al., 2019). Four out of eleven interviewees-teachers fail to capture this view in their practices, suggesting cultural celebrations, traditional recipes and foods, and games with stereotypical representations of different cultures as good virtues for the cultural visibility of their students. For Magos (2022), these practices do not help the construction of a cross-cultural and supportive environment, rather they act as reinforcements for the representation of stereotypes, prejudices and conceptual confusion between the concept of cultural identity and something “exotic”. Even if four out of eleven teachers’ responses supported the practice of cultural evenings as “*a foundation for something more significant*” and an opportunity for bringing new aspects to the school, this needs special attention from teachers since these practices are often interpreted as problematic and unrepresentative of the actual cultural background that a student carries (Gkaintartzi et al., 2015; Magos, 2022).

Despite any intentions and ideas for cultural visibility within the context of the educational process, an assimilative and monolingual ideology can be seen that characterizes some proposed practices of teachers. Four out of eleven interviewees-teachers argued that the possibility of bilingual lessons and team-teach approach (Kaneva, 2012) are practices that yield and strengthen cultural sensitivity and visibility among the members, albeit the implementation of these suggested practises was not observed in any of the three classes (C1, C2, C3) at the observation stage. On the contrary, the dominant language of instruction was Greek, all identity texts such as genealogical trees in the C2 were written in



Greek and there was no motivation from the teachers to integrate any linguistic elements of their diverse students in the course of their teaching practice. Therefore, this tactic tend to agree with some studies (Giavrimis & Dimitriadou, 2023; Gkaintartzi et al., 2015; Gkaintartzi and Tsolakidou, 2011; Mattheoudakis et al., 2020; Karananou et al., 2022; Sakka, 2010) that Greek teachers prefer a monolingual teaching approach justifying it as a matter of lack of teaching time, poor curriculum design, low to non-existent familiarization and expertise with managing multilingual school needs and are led to practices that force the home languages loss. Especially, according to observation findings one out of three teachers supports this approach during learning procedure and, also, based on his interview’s responses, admitted that he asked the parents to convince their child to use the Greek language more than the home language in their daily routine, transferring the responsibility of the student's intellectual weakness to the family and creating a guilt complex (Gkaintartzi et al., 2015). The same ideology is illuminated by one other out of eleven interviewees, since she considers it “*unacceptable*” the fact that her students, born and raised in Greece, do not know how to use the Greek language fluently but choose their Pomak home language, something for which the teacher blames the students’ family.

This practice automatically affects the attitude of the students and their parents as to which identity they will choose to display and defend at school. As three out of eleven interviewees-teachers emphatically states to their replies, the fear of the parents and their doubt that their identity will be valued with respect by the school community is evident in their responses. Many parents with a non-dominant cultural background than the one projected by the school resist possible intercultural and inclusive practices of the teachers either because they feel weak due to a lack of a common communication code or because they fear that their identity will be targeted and misinterpreted by the teachers and the society (Gogonas & Michail, 2015). Based on findings, they found it difficult to highlight their Albanian and Muslim students' cultural identity because these students resisted sharing their personal cultural characteristics, treating it with prejudice, guilt and often silence. According to Gogonas and Michail (2015), this is a frequent phenomenon among students of Albanian origin who have largely assimilated into the Greek reality and have renounced many cultural and linguistic elements of their heritage.

In conclusion, the majority of the teachers who took part in the interviews, but also two of the three teachers who allowed the observation stage to take place in their sessions,



show more assimilationist tendencies in terms of the practices they follow and difficulty in interpreting and applying intercultural principles. In fact, it is emphatically understood that the challenges are enormous, according to the responses given, making it even more difficult and impossible from their point of view to achieve any effort to highlight the students' diverse identities. The concept of cultural identity is in many cases approached in a superficial, manipulative and perfunctory manner, although four out of eleven interviewees-teachers pointed out quite good practices and argued that the success of intercultural visibility is clearly judged by the mood and attitude that teachers choose to apply, the intention to get out of their comfort zone and revise previous monolithic and ethnocentric educational policies.

### ***10.3 The school’s attitude compared to that of the teachers***

This part of this section will endeavor to answer the third and final research question of this study which is dedicated to the attitude maintained by the Greek primary school community towards the culturally diverse identities of the pupils and to what extent within these circumstances it manages or not to stand the teachers. Beyond the positive actions and psychosocial empowerment of one school case, ten out of eleven interviewees-teachers prove that the general attitude of Greek primary schools reflects a homogenous and often patronizing attitude towards the importance of the cultural visibility of diverse students. As demonstrated by Simopoulos and Magos (2020), the Greek education system has been facing many challenges regarding multiculturalism for many years. Undoubtedly, these difficulties, for example the lack of appropriate preparation, limited access to internet and digital devices, were not created by the increased presence of bilingual or trilingual students in the classrooms, but by a broader inability of the educational system to evolve according to the demands of the times. This is, actually, evident even today through the interview responses of all eleven primary teachers, who emphatically stated that neither the new curricula of 2021 and 2023 have helped, nor have the school textbooks and classroom equipment been improved to meet the diverse literacy needs of the multitude of students in general education classrooms. According to one out of eleven responses, the limited access to digital devices was a decisive factor in failing to meet the students' needs, thus forcing the teacher to provide the appropriate material through their own income and digital tools, while as observed by the researcher during the research stage of the observation the technical equipment e.g. projectors, out-of-school books that surrounded the school libraries, but also

the digital tools that were managed during the course were all in Greek with no choice of another language. Also, the school textbooks are unsuitable not only for a bi-/multilingual learning population, but also for those whose mother tongue is Greek based on nine out of eleven responses, while the syllabus is stressful and unhelpful and creates emotional anguish to six out of eleven interviewees-teachers with the aim of meeting the mandated goal, which is to complete the material regardless of challenges and difficulties. The lack of appropriate preparation at all levels and the sense of being alone against this demanding circumstances are elaborated by Simopoulos and Magos (2020), while, as Palaiologou and Faas (2012) point out, Greek identity is deeply embedded across the entire spectrum of school educational planning, most notably in the knowledge imparted to students in general schools. Greek history and Christian religion are dominant, as evidenced by observation findings. In every classroom, there is an image of Christ and during religious studies, children of different faiths either leave the classroom or remain passive throughout the lesson. As a result, for Vandeyar et al. (2017), this negatively influenced the non-dominant religious identity of many cultural diverse students.

In this whole situation, the teachers seemed to stand weak, nothing different could be done as the policies that prevail in a school are beyond the teacher's control. Beyond the positive actions and psychosocial empowerment of one school case, ten out of eleven responses prove that the general attitude of Greek primary schools reflects a homogenous and often patronizing attitude towards the importance of the cultural visibility of diverse students. The confusion, ambiguity and ambivalence of teachers projects an attitude that presents cultural diverse students as yet another problem in the already difficult and dysfunctional Greek school system, as Gkaintartzi et al. (2011) also asserts. Although the majority of responses show a positive intention to welcome and include diverse individualities in a one-dimensional educational framework, words and phrases of two out of eleven interviewees-teachers such as "*alloglossa*" or "*it is not right for Greek students*" infer that teachers end up knowingly or not to adopt an assimilative orientation in the attitude they will take towards the various dominant and non-dominant cultural identities. Moreover, their attitude demonstrates an internalized bias towards multicultural classrooms, since teachers who have low academic expectations of culturally and linguistically students and do not reflect on their own effectiveness fail to qualify as an educator with strong intercultural competence. In fact, the intercultural competence flourishes in the teachers’

views and attitudes when through them they wish to promote a mutual acquaintance and a harmonious partnership and mediation among the members of a class (Magos, 2022). Unfortunately, this was not achieved in one out of the three classes during the observation stage, since no intervention was observed in the negative comments and bullying towards pupils, who is characterized by the teacher as a girl who, due to her extra weight and spontaneity she cannot be integrated into groups. For Pedrajas and Jalandoni (2023), when teachers attribute their students' non-participation and non-inclusion to their external characteristics, they utterly reinforce the gender-stereotyped habits.

Thus, it is indeed a complex issue the concept of cultural identity and its management in a school classroom where naturally they all interplay together and form a special hybrid many times depiction of the contemporary school reality. However, the broad aspects of this concept reveal a difficulty in interpreting interculturality and the importance of students' cultural visibility, while adhering to often stereotypical and ethnocentric orientations, which does not help the emergence of numerous and diverse identities. Curriculum design proves inadequate despite efforts to emphasize interdisciplinary and experiential approaches. On the contrary, they are characterized as technocratic and primarily serve the dominant ethno-cultural group, according to Greek primary teachers' experiences. Thus, both the inability to support the curricula and the passive attitude of the school community demonstrate a difficulty in approaching the issue of multiculturalism in the light of intercultural principles. Even if some teacher training programs on the management of diversity in school classrooms have succeeded in reducing the high dropout rates of language diverse students (Dragonas & Fragoudaki, 2006; Tsitselikis & Mavrommatis, 2019), the research concludes that the assimilative orientation is so dominant in the foundations of Greek educational system as well as in the attitude of the general educational community. It is therefore certain that the highlighting of the culturally diverse idiosyncrasies of the students will only be possible when the whole society manages to reconsider and reform its basic core and unhook itself from backward beliefs that promote racial discrimination and stigma.

## **11 Conclusion**

In a society that is undoubtedly called upon daily to debunk erroneous “Darwinian” theories concerning the dominance of the strong over the weak, to promote policies that serve the

common good, and to develop practices that envision a peaceful and harmonious coexistence of all diverse identities, education must certainly be a key ally. It is a fact that modern societies now have to revise old socio-political norms about homogenous identities as there is no doubt that they are characterized by a strong cultural diversity. This issue is also strongly evident in educational settings, where it is now impossible to find a strictly nuclear class whose members share common cultural origins. As demonstrated by Maligkoudi and Mavrommatis (2023), teachers are policy-agents and due to that, this study was designed to investigate the attitudes of teachers beyond the policies they are called upon to serve. The researcher wanted to not only record the opinions of primary school teachers regarding the issue of cultural visibility of cultural diverse students in a general education classroom, but also to understand how prepared and equipped the Greek school is to welcome students whose first language is not Greek. It is natural that in such environments a multitude of identities interact strongly with both common and different backgrounds.

In the course of this research, an effort was made to study all data safely and honestly, trying that the researcher’s sociopolitical and idiosyncratic background did not obscure the tangible reality highlighted by the findings. The methodological part of the research was carefully designed, serving the purposes of an ethnographic qualitative research. Therefore, eleven semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions were carried out in which eleven Greek primary school teachers participated. These interviewees differed from each other in terms of age, gender and years of prior service in mainstream or multilingual education classes. These demographic differences also largely dictated their subsequent responses. Simultaneously, for the purposes of the research, alongside the interview phase, an observation phase was also implemented. The researcher, having obtained permission from the school principal, observed the learning process in three different classes of a primary school. The three teachers of these classes also participated in the interview phase. The sample, which the researcher managed to collect, was coded into thematic sections according to the research questions, while at the same time it was analyzed and interpreted according to the literature review.

To recap, the participants stated that they consider it quite important that all students can be visible and can project their cultural identity in any way they want. It appeared from the responses that the identity of the diverse students becomes quite visible either through the use of their mother tongue or through their second language proficiency. In particular,

seven out of eleven interviewees argued that highlighting the students' cultural identity in the educational process promotes an inclusive environment and helps students build their awareness and respect for diversity. It also encourages all members of a school class to realize the heterogeneity of society and embrace the uniqueness that diversity provides. Although the role of the teacher is completely connected with the strong cultural visibility of the students and works as a facilitator through educational practices, ten out of eleven teacher responses showed that the educational community has difficulty interpreting and managing the diverse identities of the students. This of course creates anxiety, stress and ambivalence many times in the teachers, who argue that any effort on their part is hindered due to the inadequate Greek education system, the dysfunctional implementation of the curriculum, the increased teaching syllabus and the general technocratic and at the same time monolithic approach of the education received by all students in mainstream primary schools.

Nevertheless, according to the observation data, the teachers choose to follow the material faithfully, ignoring any attempt to make the culturally diverse students visible and promoting a more assimilative and stereotypical attitude towards them. Even teachers who had received an intercultural training or had an experience over their service with multicultural and multilingual educational environments expressed the opinion that diversity cannot be supported in circumstances that imposes the dominance of Greekness throughout the educational spectrum. The use of the adjective "*alloglossa*" about the linguistically diverse pupils, the low expectations for literacy progress, the selected material that promotes the exotic depiction of a foreign people, the outdated cultural celebrations that reinforce the gap between the dominant and non-dominant cultures of the school, and many other factors confirm that both teachers and the school community are complicit in an assimilative educational policy. This, of course, led the researcher to conclude that the Greek educational system has not changed, teachers are fearful and powerless regarding any intercultural approach, and the practices and equipment (e.g. textbooks, digital tools, projectors, computers, internet access) of general education primary classes fail to meet the numerous needs of students. Overall, Greek society remains xenophobic and dysfunctional in protecting the rights of each student to openly express any cultural identity they choose to bring to school.

With full awareness, the researcher presents the above conclusions after spending only two weeks in a single Greek primary school, observing the educational process in just three classes, and gathering data from only eleven primary teachers. This makes it justifiable and acceptable that the interpretation of the research findings might have been viewed through a limited personal perspective and that the conclusion cannot be generalized. It is important to note that due to the researcher's limited knowledge of the religious holidays of the Muslim community, the start of the observational phase coincided with the start of Ramadan Feast celebrations and the justified absence of some Muslim students. As a result, the observation period in two classes was extended and started later than initially agreed upon. This may have somewhat affected the sampling. However, the researcher's flexibility during this phase and the collaborative effort with the school's teaching staff provided a certain resolution to this issue.

Certainly, different approaches by other researchers could provide a more comprehensive and realistic depiction of the teachers’ views and attitudes towards diverse cultural identities. Therefore, these issues can be a subject for further discussion and research as educational practices evolve, school communities are enhanced with materials and teaching staff each year, and society is called to adopt more flexible, tolerable and inclusive policies towards all forms of diversity. After all, all students, regardless of socio-cultural backgrounds, ought to have the opportunity to use their voice, be empowered for their identity’s visibility and encouraged to use their uniqueness without fear or marginalization. The Greek school and teachers have to stand as facilitators in this effort and through more flexible curricula surpass the challenges and ensure a safer school environment for all.

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## 13 Appendix

### ΕΡΩΤΗΣΕΙΣ

1. Μπορείς να μοιραστείς μαζί μου τα πολιτισμικά προφίλ των μαθητών της τάξης ;
2. Τι πιστεύεις ότι είναι η πολιτισμική ορατότητα μέσα σε μια σχολική τάξη ;
3. Πως γίνεται ορατή η ταυτότητα των μαθητών σου μέσα στη τάξη ;
4. Ποιός είναι ο ρόλος του δασκάλου μέσα σ’ένα πολυπολιτισμικό εκπαιδευτικό περιβάλλον ;
5. Είναι σημαντικό να γίνεται ορατή η πολιτισμική ταυτότητα των μαθητών μέσα στη τάξη και στη διάρκεια της εκπαιδευτικής διαδικασίας ;
6. Με ποιους τρόπους μπορεί η ορατότητας αυτή των μαθητών να επηρεάσει τους ίδιους αλλά και την εξέλιξη του μαθήματος ;
7. Θεωρείς ότι το πολιτισμικό προφίλ κάποιου μαθητή επηρέασε την στάση/μέθοδο/τρόπο σου απέναντι του ; Μπορεί να σε επηρεάσει το πολιτισμικό προφίλ ενός μαθητή ; Νιώθεις ότι πρέπει να κάνεις κάτι ;
8. Υπάρχουν προκλήσεις στη προσπάθεια του δασκάλου να αναδείξει τις διαφορετικές πολιτισμικές ταυτότητες των μαθητών ;
9. Οι διαφορετικές πολιτισμικές ιδιοσυγκρασίες των μαθητών στάθηκαν εμπόδιο στην προσπάθεια σου για ανάδειξη της πολιτισμικής τους ορατότητας μέσα στη τάξη ;
10. Ποια είναι η στάση της ευρύτερης πολιτισμικής κοινότητας των μαθητών αναφορικά με την ορατότητας της πολιτισμικής τους ταυτότητας μέσα στην εκπαιδευτική διαδικασία ;
11. Υπάρχει ενθάρρυνση από τη μεριά της οικογένειας αυτών των παιδιών ώστε να γίνονται προσπάθειες ανάδειξης της ταυτότητας τους ;
12. Ποιες πρακτικές θεωρείς ότι μπορούν να βοηθήσουν στην ορατότητα των διαφορετικών πολιτισμικών στοιχείων των μαθητών ;
13. Τι πρέπει να έχει ένας εκπαιδευτικός για να μπορέσει να σταθεί απέναντι σε διαφορετικές πολιτισμικές ταυτότητες μαθητών ;
14. Πιστεύεις ότι οι τάξεις γενικής εκπαίδευσης είναι εφοδιασμένες με τα κατάλληλα εργαλεία (εκπαιδευτικό υλικό, σχολικά βιβλία) για να υποδεχθούν μαθητές που διαφοροποιούνται γλωσσικά και πολιτισμικά από τη πλειονότητα της τάξης ;
15. Μπορεί και προάγει το υπάρχον εκπαιδευτικό υλικό την σημασία της πολιτισμική διαφορετικότητας ;
16. Θεωρείς πως τα αναλυτικά προγράμματα σπουδών έχουν καθοδηγήσει τους δασκάλους επαρκώς ως προς τη σημασία της ορατότητας αυτής μέσα στη τάξη ;
17. Πως το σχολείο στο σύνολο του αναδεικνύει την διαφορετικότητα των πολιτισμών ; Ποιες πρακτικές ακολουθεί ;
18. Αν μπορούσες να προτείνεις κάτι που θα μπορούσε να αλλάξει και να βοηθούσε στην προσπάθεια ανάδειξης της πολιτισμικής κουλτούρας των μαθητών, ποιο θα ήταν αυτό ;



**Author’s Statement:**

I hereby expressly declare that, according to the article 8 of Law 1559/1986, this dissertation is solely the product of my personal work, does not infringe any intellectual property, personality and personal data rights of third parties, does not contain works/contributions from third parties for which the permission of the authors/beneficiaries is required, is not the product of partial or total plagiarism, and that the sources used are limited to the literature references alone and meet the rules of scientific citations.