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“Multilingual Practices in Greek Primary Schools: Teachers'
Insights and Perspectives”

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Heraklion, Greece,

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"United in Diversity"
(European Union, 2000)

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Abstract

In Greece, in recent decades, large waves of migrant and refugee populations have arrived, transforming Greek society into a multicultural one. These changes have also affected the profile of Greek primary school classes, as there is no longer homogeneity among students. This study attempts to explore multilingual practices and multilingual education through an online questionnaire with both open-ended and closed-ended questions. Educators were required to respond to questions regarding their views on multilingual education, the approaches they use, the benefits, and the challenges they encounter in integrating multilingual practices into teaching.

From the findings, it appears that many educators recognize the benefits of multilingualism in the classroom such as improved student participation, cognitive development, and social integration, however, they struggle to implement multilingualism. Many educators encourage their students to use L1 to support L2, while at the same time many educators discourage their students, either due to institutional constraints or lack of educational training. Also, the study highlights inequalities in the implementation of multilingual practices, with some teachers implementing translation techniques, multilingual materials, and cultural exchange activities, while others are unable to integrate them due to lack of resources, student-teacher ratios, and lack of institutional support. Regarding European programs promoting multilingual education, such as Erasmus +, the research showed low levels of participation mainly due to bureaucratic obstacles. It is important to mention that, despite the fact that the research sample was small (25 primary education teachers), the findings are very important and reflect the Greek reality.

Future research should expand on these findings by including a broader range of teachers and exploring long-term multilingual practices across various educational contexts.

A systematic approach is essential for integrating multilingual education into Greek primary schools. Policy reforms, enhanced teacher training, and stronger institutional support are necessary to overcome existing challenges and promote linguistic diversity as an educational asset. By drawing from successful intercultural education models and strengthening collaboration between schools, policymakers, and communities, Greece can develop a more inclusive and culturally responsive education system.

Keywords: multilingual practices, Greek primary schools, teachers' perspectives, translanguaging, bilingual education, intercultural education

“Πολυγλωσσικές Πρακτικές στα Δημοτικά Σχολεία της Ελλάδας: Απόψεις και Στρατηγικές των Δασκάλων”

Ευαγγελία Ξενικάκη

Περίληψη

Η Ελλάδα έχει υποστεί σημαντικές δημογραφικές αλλαγές τις τελευταίες δεκαετίες, μεταβαίνοντας σε μια πολυπολιτισμική κοινωνία λόγω αυξημένης μετανάστευσης και προσφυγικών ροών. Αυτές οι αλλαγές έχουν επηρεάσει τα ελληνικά δημοτικά σχολεία, όπου οι τάξεις φιλοξενούν μαθητές με διαφορετικά γλωσσικά και πολιτισμικά υπόβαθρα. Η παρούσα μελέτη εξετάζει, μέσω ερωτηματολογίου, τις πολυγλωσσικές πρακτικές που εφαρμόζονται, εστιάζοντας στις απόψεις των εκπαιδευτικών, τις προκλήσεις και την υποστήριξη από θεσμικούς φορείς. Συγκεκριμένα, διερευνά την αντίληψη των εκπαιδευτικών για την πολυγλωσσία, τις παιδαγωγικές προσεγγίσεις που χρησιμοποιούν και τα εμπόδια που συναντούν στην προώθηση της γλωσσικής ποικιλομορφίας.

Τα ευρήματα δείχνουν ότι πολλοί εκπαιδευτικοί αναγνωρίζουν τα οφέλη της πολυγλωσσικής εκπαίδευσης, όπως η γνωστική ανάπτυξη και η κοινωνική ένταξη, αλλά σημαντικά εμπόδια περιορίζουν την πλήρη ενσωμάτωσή της. Παρά την ενθάρρυνση της χρήσης της μητρικής γλώσσας (Γ1) για την εκμάθηση δεύτερης γλώσσας (Γ2), πολλοί εκπαιδευτικοί παραμένουν επιφυλακτικοί λόγω μονόγλωσσων ιδεολογιών, θεσμικών περιορισμών και έλλειψης επαγγελματικής κατάρτισης. Η μελέτη αναδεικνύει ανισότητες στην εφαρμογή πολυγλωσσικών πρακτικών, με κάποιους δασκάλους να χρησιμοποιούν επιτυχώς διαγλωσσικότητα και πολιτιστικές δραστηριότητες, ενώ άλλοι δυσκολεύονται λόγω έλλειψης πόρων και υποστήριξης.

Η θεσμική υποστήριξη της πολυγλωσσικής εκπαίδευσης παραμένει αδύναμη. Οι δάσκαλοι τονίζουν την ανάγκη για προγράμματα επαγγελματικής ανάπτυξης, δίγλωσσο υλικό και τεχνολογικά εργαλεία. Επίσης, η συμμετοχή σε ευρωπαϊκά εκπαιδευτικά προγράμματα, όπως το Erasmus+, είναι περιορισμένη λόγω γραφειοκρατικών εμποδίων. Παρά το μικρό δείγμα των 25 εκπαιδευτικών, η μελέτη παρέχει χρήσιμα ευρήματα για την πολυγλωσσική εκπαίδευση στην Ελλάδα.

Η μελέτη υπογραμμίζει την ανάγκη για μεταρρυθμίσεις στην εκπαιδευτική πολιτική, καλύτερη εκπαίδευση των δασκάλων και ενισχυμένη θεσμική υποστήριξη. Εμπνεόμενη από τα μοντέλα Διαπολιτισμικών Σχολείων, η Ελλάδα μπορεί να αναπτύξει ένα πιο συμπεριληπτικό εκπαιδευτικό σύστημα που θα ωφελήσει όλους τους μαθητές, ανεξαρτήτως γλωσσικού υπόβαθρου.

Λέξεις – Κλειδιά: : Πολυγλωσσικές πρακτικές, ελληνικά δημοτικά σχολεία, απόψεις εκπαιδευτικών, διαγλωσσικότητα, δίγλωσση εκπαίδευση, διαπολιτισμική εκπαίδευση

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List of Abbreviations & Acronyms

BICS – Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills

CALP – Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency

CRT – Culturally Responsive Teaching

CUP – Common Underlying Proficiency

EU – European Union

HDS – Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler model

ICSs – Intercultural Schools

L1 – First Language

L2 – Second Language

LACI - Language-Based Approach to Content Instruction

RCs – Reception Classes

ZEP – Educational Priority Zones

1. Introduction

Greece has undergone profound demographic shifts in recent decades, transforming into a multicultural society due to a combination of migration, refugee movements, and socio-economic changes. These shifts are particularly visible in Greek primary schools, where classrooms now host students from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. According to data from the Ministry of Education, in the 2010-2011 school year, 33 different mother tongues were recorded in Greek schools (Hellenic Statistical Authority, 2010). The increasing linguistic diversity in Greek schools has presented new challenges and opportunities for the education system, in order to adapt practices and ensure equal access to education for all students and appropriate support. With Law 2413/1996, multiculturalism was recognized in Greek society, and by extension, it established intercultural education in school, providing appropriate support for foreign-language students. Furthermore, the Ministerial Decision (Government Gazette 1789/1999) established the principles for the teaching of Greek as a second language, as well as the necessary qualifications for teachers working in intercultural schools (Palaiologou, 2004). Damanakis (2005) states that for the integration of students with different linguistic backgrounds, innovative educational approaches are necessary, which aim, in addition to integration and linguistic development, but also at enriching the educational system with the linguistic and cultural resources that these students bring.

The multicultural transformation of Greece is particularly pronounced given its historical emphasis on preserving its cultural and linguistic unity. Showing a monolingual and monocultural identity (Kiliari, 2009). Over the past three decades, Greece has experienced multiple waves of migration and refugee arrivals. One of the most significant waves occurred following the collapse of communism in neighboring Albania, leading to a large influx of Albanian migrants between 1990 and 1996 (Pazaras, 2013). Between 1995 and 2011, Greece also welcomed repatriates from the Greek diaspora in Central Europe, America, and Australia, alongside economic migrants from non-Greek backgrounds (Karanikola & Pitsou, 2015). A second phase of migration began in 2011, marked by the arrival of refugees and asylum seekers from conflict-affected regions in Asia and Africa, including Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq, and Somalia. This crisis peaked in 2015–2016, with over a million refugees entering Greece (World Bank, 2022). Despite these shifts the Albanian population in Greece remains the largest immigrant group with legal residence permits in Greece (Greek Ministry of Immigration, 2024), having established a strong presence in the

country since the 1990s (Polyzou & Spyrellis, 2024). More recently, refugees from Ukraine have arrived in Greece due to the ongoing war in Ukraine (UNHCR, 2022). As of November 2022, a total of 21,025 Ukrainians had received temporary protection in Greece (UNICEF, 2022). Among all these arrivals, a significant proportion were children, creating an urgent need for expanded educational frameworks and structures (UNHCR, 2021). A recent example is the Ukrainian crisis where 6,330 Ukrainian children arrived in Greece. Most of them are 0-13 years old (81%) (UNICEF, 2022).

Greece's legal framework guarantees school enrollment for all children, regardless of their immigration status. However, effectively integrating these students into the education system remains a challenge. According to national legislation, compulsory education applies to all children aged 6 to 15, irrespective of their parents' legal status. With Law 1566/1985 and Law 2910/2001, equal access to education is established for all students regardless of origin, and more specifically, Article 40 of Law 2910/2001 stipulates that children of third-country nationals residing in Greece must attend Greek schools, and educational institutions are obliged to enroll students even in cases of lack of the necessary documentation. These demographic changes have introduced unprecedented diversity, with migrants and refugees contributing to a rich tapestry of languages, cultures, and religions. Teachers and policymakers have been confronted with a diverse classroom, forcing them to abandon traditional pedagogical practices and try to shape them by adopting new educational approaches to manage linguistic and cultural diversity.

The Greek education system, in order to meet the new challenges, has adopted certain measures in order to manage the increasing diversity. Initially, it has created programs such as the Zoning of Educational Priority (ZEP), Reception Classes (RCs) (Law 3879/2010), and Intercultural Schools (ICSs) (Law 2413/1996), with the aim of providing appropriate support to students with different linguistic backgrounds for their cognitive development and social integration. These initiatives prioritize the social and academic integration of diverse learners while encouraging intercultural dialogue and understanding (Paleologou, 2004). Despite these efforts, ensuring the success of multilingual education requires more than institutional frameworks, it demands effective classroom strategies, such as multilingual practices, harness the benefits of linguistic diversity.

Teachers play a pivotal role in this process. They are tasked with fostering inclusive learning environments that acknowledge and celebrate diversity. However, implementing multilingual practices in classrooms is no small feat. In general migrant students' multilingualism is not actively supported in schools, as teachers often do not implement

classroom policies or practices that foster linguistic diversity (Manoli, Mouti, & Kantzou, 2021). Many teachers lack the training required (Zachos & Moutsas, 2024), resources, or institutional support to navigate this complex landscape effectively. Additionally, societal attitudes, parental concerns, and policy limitations further complicate their efforts.

Multilingualism—a flexible process where languages mix and influence each other (García and Wei, 2014)—in education is widely recognized as an asset that can enhance cognitive development, foster social inclusion, and promote cultural awareness. However, the potential benefits of multilingualism depend significantly on the pedagogical practices employed by teachers. Teachers in Greek primary schools play a crucial role in managing multilingual classrooms, addressing the complexities of language acquisition, literacy development, and content mastery. Research by Cummins (1981) highlights the importance of creating inclusive classrooms that support students' first languages (L1s) while facilitating proficiency in the official language of instruction, Greek.

Furthermore, multilingual practices allow students to navigate and integrate their linguistic resources into the learning process. For example, the practice of translanguaging allows the student to use both their native language and the language of instruction simultaneously in order to express and understand the target language (García & Wei, 2014), while Scaffolded Language Support, on the other hand, provides students with temporary systematic and structured language support, in order to cope with assignments that they would not be able to complete without the support, and in this way, their commitment to the curriculum is strengthened (Gibbons, 2015). Another practice, such as Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT), recognizes linguistic and cultural diversity, and adapts teaching content to meet the needs of multilingual students (Hollie 2017). In collaborative learning, the goal is to exploit all of the cognitive, linguistic, and cultural resources of students in order to create group assignments in multilingual environments (García et al., 2011; Kibler et al., 2024), while bilingual education programs support both languages, both L1 and the target language, with the ultimate goal of acquiring L2. Lastly, parental participation plays a crucial role in preserving students' linguistic and cultural identity (Arias, 2015). By incorporating the above multilingual practices into the teaching, the teacher succeeds in creating a pleasant multilingual learning environment, where the student's commitment and motivation to the language of instruction is strengthened, their cognitive development and integration into the school community are enhanced.

The aim of this study is to investigate the multilingual practices employed in Greek primary schools and explore teachers' insights and perspectives on managing linguistic diversity in their classrooms.

Primary school teachers are invited to respond to an online questionnaire, which will collect data on their views on multilingualism in school, on the practices they use to manage multilingualism, and on the way multilingual practices are implemented. In addition, the research also focuses on the institutional support that primary school teachers receive, including their access to specialized training, resources, equipment, as well as their access to various European programs that enhance multilingualism in school. The questionnaire includes both closed-ended questions, in order to quantitatively analyze trends, and open-ended questions, for a qualitative analysis and in-depth analysis of the views and experiences of elementary school teachers.

By seeking and delving into the opinions and experiences of teachers, this thesis aims to provide valuable information on multilingualism in education and on the more effective integration of multilingual practices in Greek schools. The findings of the research can be used by policymakers to fill existing gaps, strengthen teacher training, and improve the allocation of resources with the aim of empowering students with different linguistic backgrounds. Ultimately, fostering multilingualism in education is not only a matter of academic achievement but also a crucial step toward social integration and cohesion in an increasingly multicultural Greek society.

2.Literature Review

2.1 Key Terminology and Theoretical Frameworks on multilingual Education

This chapter presents basic terminologies and theoretical approaches for a better understanding of multilingual practices, with an emphasis on the data of education in Greece. The entire theoretical framework is provided, in order to critically examine the views and perspectives of educators on multilingualism in education and on multilingual practices.

2.1.1 Defining Multilingualism and Related Concepts

According to García and Wei (2014), multilingualism is not simply the coexistence of multiple languages, but a fluid process in which the boundaries between languages are often blurred. In contrast, monolingualism refers to the use of a single language by an individual or society (Grosjean, 1989). In a monolingual environment, one language is used exclusively in all sectors, professional, educational and social, while in a multilingual environment, the ability to switch languages is utilized depending on the environment. Baker (2011) notes that this linguistic flexibility and switching enhances the individual's cognitive development, social skills and cultural awareness. Monolingualism, although it creates a sense of unified national identity and community, nevertheless reinforces the view of multilingualism as an advantage, especially in education, as it promotes communication, intercultural understanding and inclusion (Cummins, 2000). In recent years, the view of multilingualism as a dynamic process that challenges linguistic boundaries has been strengthened, and the idea that it is simply a coexistence of languages has been abandoned. García and Wei (2014) describe multilingualism as a process in which languages mix, influence each other and enable speakers to switch between different contexts with ease. In other words, while monolingualism offers certain cognitive and social benefits, such as a sense of shared national identity, multilingualism is considered increasingly necessary in today's complex and globalized society, as it develops critical thinking, adaptability, creativity, and problem-solving skills. The first language (L1) refers to the mother tongue or native language, which is acquired during early childhood in the home environment (Baker, 2001). It is also closely related to the term home language, that is, the language or languages spoken

at home. Cummins (2000) mentions the connection of L1 with home language, although in multilingual families, many different languages may be used.

The term native language, often used interchangeably with mother tongue, represents the language learned first and spoken most fluently during formative years. When tied to cultural identity and community heritage, this is referred to as the heritage language. A heritage language is passed down through generations, often preserved within immigrant or minority communities, serving as a link to cultural and familial roots (Fishman, 2001). In contrast, L2, or second language, refers to a language learned later in life, typically in formal or educational settings. The acquisition of an L2 is influenced by factors such as exposure, motivation, and the context in which it is learned (García & Wei, 2014). Finally, the schooling language denotes the primary language of instruction within educational environments. In many cases, this is the national or official language, which may differ from the home or heritage languages spoken by students. The interplay between these linguistic categories shapes students' learning experiences and highlights the importance of inclusive educational approaches that value linguistic diversity (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000).

In this study we will use the term first language to refer to the first language acquired, encompassing the concepts of mother tongue and native language.

In educational contexts, multilingualism is viewed both as a valuable resource and a potential challenge, depending on the pedagogical approaches adopted and the sociolinguistic environment of the classroom. On the one hand, multilingualism is an asset because it enriches students' cognitive abilities, cultural awareness, and social competencies. On the other hand, it can also present challenges, especially when educational systems have historically been structured around monolingual ideals. The way multilingualism is treated in the classroom, whether as a disadvantage to overcome or a resource to harness, can significantly impact students' educational experiences and outcomes (Grosjean, 1989; Cummins, 2000).

In addition to multilingualism itself, there are several related concepts that help to further elaborate on how languages function within educational settings. These include bilingualism, translanguaging, multiliteracies.

Bilingualism traditionally refers to the use of two languages. However, its definition is not always uniform, with interpretations varying from balanced fluency in both languages to the functional use of a second language in specific contexts. Grosjean (1989) argued that a bilingual individual is not two monolingual individuals in one, but an entity that reflects a different level of proficiency in each language, thus recognizing that the bilingual individual

responds differently to each language depending on the context in which he or she finds himself.

The term of Translanguaging was introduced by Williams (1994), and further developed by García (2009), who describes it as a fluid use of languages. In other words, he notes that bilingual or multilingual individuals do not switch from one use of language to another, but combine their linguistic abilities, thus highlighting the interconnection and dependence between languages. The teacher encourages the student to use all linguistic resources without distinguishing between languages, developing a fluid and flexible use of languages to support communication (García, 2009).

Multiliteracies extend beyond traditional literacy to include more skills, essential for contemporary society. Cope and Kalantzis (2000) argued that literacy includes a range of skills for interpreting and producing meaning in different modes of communication, beyond the written text, such as visual media, digital and oral forms. The principles of multiliteracies also include the acceptance and inclusion of the diversity of languages and cultures that non-native speakers bring to the classroom.

In Greek society, multilingualism and cultural diversity are now a reality, which is also reflected in school. Moreover, in primary schools there is a significant number of students whose mother tongue is not Greek. In these contexts, the teacher has a crucial role, not only in enhancing the cognitive development of these students, but also in promoting linguistic integration. This means that their role is not only to support students in acquisition the Greek language, but also to appreciate and include the linguistic and cultural resources that students bring with them. Grosjean (1989) argued that teachers' attitudes towards multilingualism directly affect students' attitudes towards language, culture and identity, as well as their academic performance and success.

2.1.2 Theories of Language and Multilingual Education

Theories of language and multilingual education provide a foundation for understanding how linguistic diversity can be effectively managed in classrooms. These theories offer insight into language acquisition, the relationship between languages, and the educational implications of multilingualism. Key theoretical perspectives include:

➤ **Sociocultural Theory**

Rooted in the work of Vygotsky (1978), sociocultural theory emphasizes the role of social interaction and cultural tools in cognitive development. Vygotsky argued that cognitive development is not an isolated process but occurs through social interaction and collaboration with others (Vygotsky, 1978). Applied to multilingual education, this theory highlights how language learning is mediated by social and cultural contexts, suggesting that teachers should leverage students' linguistic backgrounds as valuable resources. By engaging students in collaborative activities and drawing on their home languages, teachers can facilitate language development and promote cognitive growth. Furthermore, sociocultural theory advocates for a learning environment where language is seen as a tool for building knowledge, making it essential for teachers to recognize the diversity of students' linguistic resources and build on them to foster deeper learning (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006).

➤ **Cummins' Theory of Linguistic Interdependence**

Cummins' Theory of Linguistic Interdependence, introduced in his Threshold Hypothesis (Cummins, 1979), posits that proficiency in a L1 can positively influence the acquisition of a L2. According to Cummins (1981), the cognitive and academic skills developed in L1 provide a foundation for learning a second language. His Threshold Hypothesis suggests that for bilingual individuals to fully benefit from bilingualism, a certain level of competence in both languages is required. In the context of multilingual education, this emphasizes the importance of maintaining and developing students' home languages alongside the target language (in this case, Greek) in the classroom. Cummins (1984) also stresses that bilingual students need to be supported in both their social and academic language to succeed in educational settings, as these two dimensions of language proficiency operate in different ways.

➤ **The BICS/CALP Model**

Cummins (1984) introduced the Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) distinction to explain the different types of language proficiency. BICS refers to the conversational fluency required for everyday social interactions, which generally takes one to two years to acquire. On the other hand, CALP involves the more formal, abstract language skills necessary for academic success, which can take between five and seven years to develop fully. This distinction is crucial for understanding why multilingual learners might perform well in social situations yet struggle with academic tasks. It also underscores the need for teachers to provide extended support for students in developing academic language proficiency to ensure long-term academic success (Cummins, 1984).

➤ **The Iceberg Theory (Common Underlying Proficiency)**

Cummins' Iceberg Theory or Common Underlying Proficiency (CUP) (**Figure 1**), posits that the cognitive and linguistic skills that support language use in one language (L1) can be transferred to another language (L2) because they share a common underlying proficiency (Cummins, 1980). This model suggests that bilingual individuals do not possess two separate cognitive systems for each language, but rather one integrated system that supports both languages (**Figure 1**). Therefore, strong proficiency in L1 can help learners acquire academic skills in L2, provided that both languages are given sufficient attention and development in the classroom.

This theory reinforces the idea that supporting students' home languages is not only beneficial for their cultural identity but also enhances their overall academic progress across languages.

Cummins (2000) explains that when a child has a clear understanding of a concept in their L1, it helps them grasp that same concept in a second language more easily. For instance, if a child already understands what loyalty or equity means in their L1, learning the equivalent terms in a second language is simpler. However, if the child has to learn both the concept and its associated term in the second language, this becomes a significantly more challenging task.

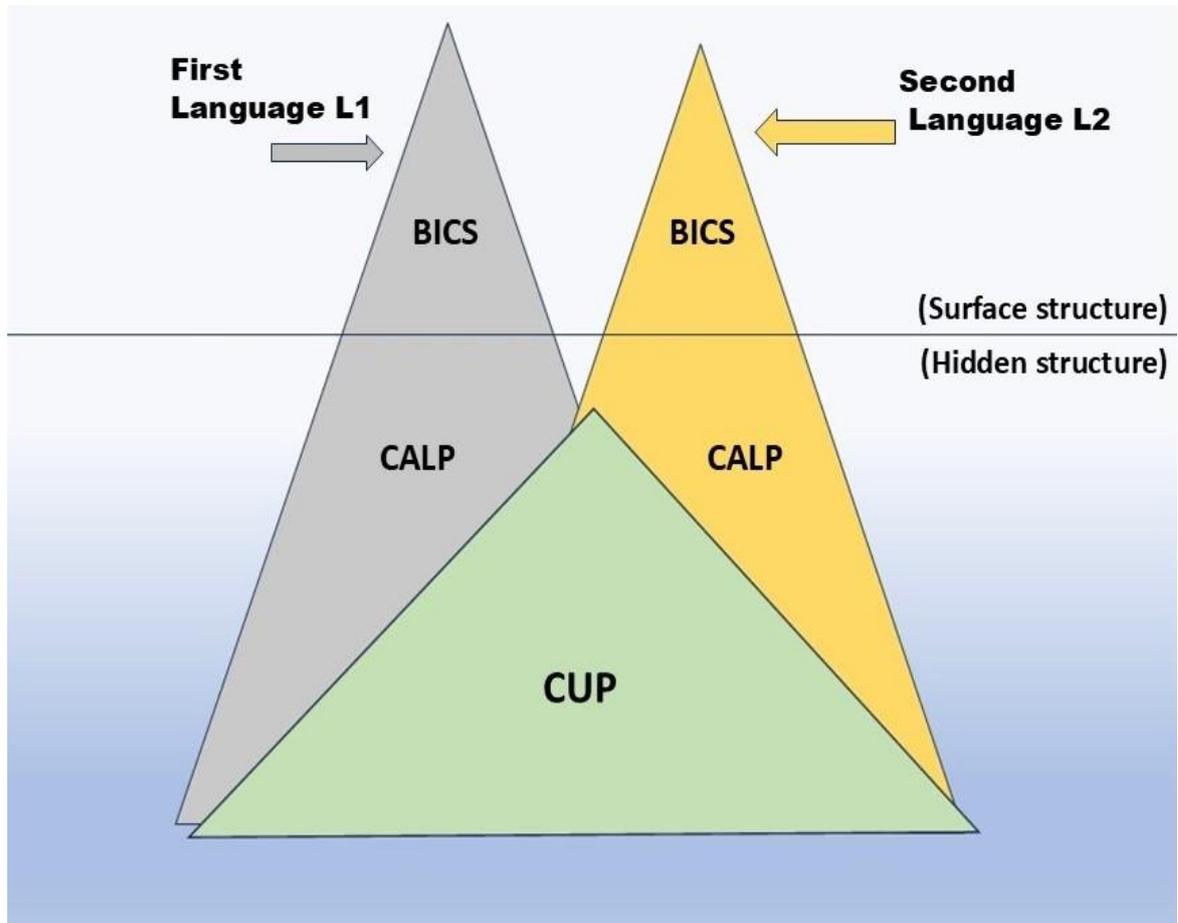


Figure 2. Simplified representation of the double Iceberg Model of L1/L2 Interdependence (Cummins, 1981).

This image illustrates Cummins' (1981) Double Iceberg Model, showing the interaction between L1 (First Language), L2 (Second Language), and their shared foundation: CUP (Common Underlying Proficiency). Grey (L1): Represents the first language, with surface-level Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and deeper Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). Yellow (L2): Represents the second language, also split into BICS (visible) and CALP (submerged). Green (CUP): The shared foundation, symbolizing transferable cognitive skills like critical thinking and problem-solving. This model emphasizes that strengthening L1 enhances L2 learning and vice versa through shared cognitive processes.

➤ **Critical Pedagogy**

The ideas of Critical Pedagogy, particularly those proposed by Paulo Freire (1970), have been adapted to multilingual education. Critical pedagogy advocates for the empowerment of marginalized groups through education, challenging dominant power structures. In multilingual education, this perspective encourages teachers to question and dismantle monolingual ideologies that often marginalize minority languages. By fostering linguistic justice, multilingual education can promote equity, especially for students from minority or migrant backgrounds. Freire's ideas support the view that multilingual education should be a tool for social change, enabling students to use language as a means of social and political empowerment.

➤ **Dynamic Systems Theory**

Emerging from fields like applied linguistics and complexity science, Dynamic Systems Theory (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008) views language learning as a non-linear, adaptive process. This theory emphasizes that language development is influenced by multiple interacting factors, including individual, social, and environmental dynamics. In multilingual education, this framework acknowledges the complexity of language learning and the need for teaching strategies that are flexible and adaptable to the needs of learners. It suggests that language development is not a linear process but one that evolves over time in response to various interacting factors. Dynamic Systems Theory underscores the importance of recognizing and addressing the individual differences among multilingual learners, and adapting teaching practices to reflect these complexities.

Each of these theories underscores the importance of embracing linguistic diversity as a resource rather than a barrier in education. By integrating these theoretical perspectives into teaching practices, teachers can create inclusive classrooms that support the cognitive, social, and academic development of multilingual learners. Greek primary school teachers, in particular, can benefit from these frameworks by recognizing the potential of students' linguistic backgrounds as assets that can enrich their educational experience and improve learning outcomes.

2.2 Multilingual Practices in Education

Multilingual education has become an essential approach in diverse educational settings, acknowledging the linguistic resources that students bring into classrooms. Various strategies have been developed to support multilingual learners, ensuring both linguistic and academic success. This section explores key multilingual practices in education, including translanguaging, scaffolded language support, culturally responsive teaching, collaborative learning, bilingual education models, and parental participation

2.2.1 Translanguaging

Translanguaging in education is a pedagogical approach that recognizes and encourages the fluid use of multiple languages in the classroom. It has emerged as an innovative teaching strategy in multilingual education, challenging traditional notions of language separation by promoting the flexible and strategic use of an individual's entire linguistic repertoire (García & Li Wei, 2014). Initially introduced by Cen Williams (1994), to refer to a pedagogical practice, where student was asked to write in one language for example in their L1 and to read in their L2 (Baked, 2006), translanguaging fosters an integrated approach where students draw on multiple languages to enhance comprehension, communication, and learning. Rather than treating languages as separate systems, it allows students to utilize their full linguistic repertoire, including their home languages, the school's dominant language, and even semiotic elements such as gestures, symbols, and visual cues, to support learning and meaning-making (García & Li Wei, 2014; Li Wei, 2018).

In educational settings, translanguaging creates inclusive and equitable learning environments by recognizing multilingualism as a valuable asset rather than a barrier (García, Johnson, & Seltzer, 2017). It is built on three core components: a translanguaging stance, which embraces multilingualism as the norm; a translanguaging design, which integrates flexible language use into instruction; and translanguaging shifts, which involve adapting teaching practices based on students' linguistic needs. This approach enables students to bridge home and school languages, enhance cognitive engagement, and promote deeper learning (Creese & Blackledge, 2010; Hornberger & Link, 2012; Mammou, et.al., 2023).

Despite its benefits, some scholars raise concerns about its impact on heritage language maintenance and the structured acquisition of dominant languages (García, 2009). However,

in diverse educational contexts such as Greek primary schools, where linguistic diversity is increasingly present, translanguaging remains a powerful tool for fostering multilingual competence, supporting student identity development, and ensuring more equitable and effective multilingual education.

2.2.2 Scaffolded Language Support

Scaffolding Instruction is a practice used by teachers to support students learning the language of instruction as L2, so that they can cope with assignments, where otherwise they would not be able to complete them independently (Gibbons, 2015). The concept of scaffolded learning was first developed by Vygotsky (Raymond, 2000). Through Scaffolded language support, the study program is made accessible, to linguistic minority students, who are in a position with the appropriate practices to engage in the learning process and complete the assignments and activities. In order for the teacher to choose the right scaffolding practices that suit the student, it is essential to know the student's background, language needs and requirements (Scaffolding Instruction, n.d.).

It is very important for the teacher to understand that this multilingual practice, in order to support the student in his academic improvement and his involvement in learning, must be an appropriate choice of technical scaffolds, based on the individual needs of each student, according to his language proficiency, the linguistic needs, its weaknesses and strengths (Palmer et al., 2016). Fenner (2024), notes that scaffold language support is a temporary practice of supporting the bilingual student. This means that a teacher uses this tool in its various forms, in order to get the student actively involved in learning, to complete the tasks, which he would not be able to do without the scaffold language support, at the same time, these practices change with the passage of time depending on the individual needs and the progress of the student, and finally, when the teacher considers that the student has reached a point where he can cope with teaching independently he tries to gradually remove the language support. That is, as content understanding and language proficiency of the language of instruction increases, scaffold language support decreases and is eventually eliminated (de Oliveria & Westerlund, 2023).

Blair, et al. (2024), argued that scaffolded language support is based on the Language-Based Approach to Content Instruction (LACI) model, which emphasizes the teaching of content through language. In other words, the student has access to the learning content of his level

and at the same time develops language skills and improves his language proficiency in the language of instruction. The LACI model is organized around six basic principles, the first of which is the connection of content with the student's experiences and everyday life (Lucas & Villegas, 2013). In this way, the student is motivated to be actively involved in the learning process. The second principle refers to the inclusion of students' cultural and linguistic resources in the context of teaching. This principle aims to give value to the student's background and resources, so that he feels welcome, and that his language is an asset and not an obstacle, while at the same time reflecting values of equality and acceptance. The next values of the model are Code-Breaking, in which the language of instruction is deconstructed to facilitate multilingual students, Challenge in which high goals are established for all students, and the specific principle is based on the argument of Gibbons (2015), where he states that often multilingual students face low expectations with negative results in their school performance. The next one is Community and Collaboration, which promotes the creation of collaborative learning communities within the classroom. Finally, it is its principle, Classroom Interactions, which promotes dialogue and structured discussions with the aim of developing language skills (de Oliveira, 2023).

Scaffold instruction is found in three forms, in Instructional Materials, Instructional Practices and Instructional Groupings (Staehr Fenner, et al., 2024). In their research, Pacheco, et al. (2017), describe some examples of scaffolding language support strategies. One such strategy is to use sentences as a template for multilingual learners to use to construct a sentence correctly. Another technique is to visualize the language with signs and tabs in the classroom. Furthermore, the recognition of L1 is a strategic scaffold, during which interlingualism is promoted and the student is encouraged to use L1 for better understanding and communication. Finally, they also describe the strategy of communication in multiple ways and any means such as gestures, images, notes. Blair, et al. (2024), conclude in their research that scaffold language support is a very basic multilingual practice for strengthening multilingual students, however it is important that it is adapted and appropriately structured to the student's needs. Furthermore, they emphasize how important it is to properly train subject teachers to incorporate and adopt scaffolded language support practices. As it is noted (Alvarez et al., 2023, Mauk, et.al., 2023), the main challenge and obstacle to the application of scaffold language support is the lack of appropriate training and specialization of teachers in multilingual education approaches. According to Mauk et al., (2023), the scaffold language support is not simply a tool in the

hands of teachers, but must be integrated into the daily life of the learning process, in order to create a learning environment with equal opportunities for multilingual students and ensure their participation in learning processes.

2.2.3 Culturally Responsive Teaching

Hollie (2017), defines Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT), as a pedagogical approach that recognizes cultural and linguistic diversity, and intensifies practices that shape teaching based on the needs of multilingual students. SupportEd team (n.d.), notes that "CRT is defined by adapting teaching methods to meet the varied learning needs of students, using cultural knowledge to scaffold learning, and creating a classroom culture that respects and values diversity". Therefore, based on the above definitions, it is understood that this practice focuses on creating a friendly learning environment for multilingual students, through the recognition of cultural and linguistic pluralism and its integration into the learning process, adapting the teaching to the needs of the student based on his cultural background, ensuring parity and equal learning opportunities for all students.

Ladson-Billings (1994), who was a key founder of CRT, notes that the core values of this practice are the recognition of students' cultural identities. Therefore, she encourages teachers to integrate students' cultural resources into the learning process. Furthermore, she argued that teaching should be adapted based on students' experiences and their cultural context, while simultaneously promoting the inclusion of students' linguistic skills in teaching. A central aspect of CRT is social justice, as the practice not only aims to improve learning but also serves as a proposal to ensure equal opportunities for all students, regardless of their national or cultural background. Finally, she suggested that teaching should be based on students' every day, real-life experiences, interests, and needs in order to motivate them to learn.

Gay (2010), in his work, focused on the need to integrate cultural diversity into the classroom. More specifically, he argued that the different cultural backgrounds of students, when recognized and incorporated, can enhance learning. He also mentioned that, based on cultural background, each student may have a different learning style, and the teacher should be able to recognize these different learning styles and adapt the teaching accordingly. In fact, he stated that encouraging students to use their L1 and other languages they know is an important part of CRT for improving learning. By promoting linguistic diversity and recognizing cultural identities, a school environment is created in which students feel

respected and safe, making it more likely that they will actively participate in the learning process. Finally, Gay (2010) emphasizes the importance of communication between the school, the student's family, and the community for better understanding the student's background.

Hammond (2015) focused on the concept of Cognitive Activation, which refers to developing the ability to analyze and understand learning based on students' own experiences and culture. Additionally, she argued that CRT promotes the enhancement of critical thinking and independent problem-solving skills. Like the other two theorists, Hammond (2015) also emphasized the importance of students feeling respected in order to be motivated to engage in teaching, and that teachers must adapt their teaching based on students' cultural identities and needs. Finally, she highlighted the significance of collaboration and communication between the school and the student's family, as well as parental involvement.

The practices of CRT, as described in the literature, vary; however, it is important to highlight some key ones. Krasnoff (2016) emphasizes *cultural scaffolding* as a significant practice, in which the educator utilizes students' prior knowledge and cultural experiences as a foundation for understanding new concepts. Additionally, creating a *collaborative learning environment* is crucial, where students work in groups, interact with one another, exchange experiences and perspectives, and, in doing so, are able to meet high academic expectations that they might not achieve through individual work. Another critical practice is *differentiating instructional content and teaching approaches* by incorporating texts and materials that reflect the diverse cultural backgrounds of all students in the classroom. This approach contributes to improved academic performance (Krasnoff, 2016). Another practice of CRT is the promotion of *code-switching* to facilitate communication for multilingual students (Hollie, 2017). Through this practice, students can switch between linguistic codes and styles depending on the context they are in, adapting their mode of communication to different environments. Additionally, CRT incorporates critical pedagogy into its practices, aiming not only to transmit knowledge to students but also to cultivate them into just and active members of society (Nieto, 1999). All these practices, along with others—such as *differentiated instruction* based on students' needs—create the conditions for student engagement and success.

Research, in which they have applied the practice of CRT, has proven that the adoption of such an approach in a multicultural classroom with multilingual students, has strengthened the participation and academic performance of multilingual students and strengthened their

self-esteem (Tate 2010, Zeichner, 2003). In the National Equity Project. (n.d.), it is also mentioned that in the practice of CRT, where the student feels that his speech has value and that his cultural and linguistic resources are honored, then the chances of him participating more actively in learning are increased. It is clear that CRT, as a multilingual practice, can play a significant role in the academic development of multilingual students. In a learning environment where the values of CRT are adopted, students feel that they are heard, that they and their cultural and linguistic resources are valued, recognized, and integrated into the learning content. They also perceive that the educator adapts the teaching process based on their prior knowledge, experiences, interests, and needs. As a result, they are highly motivated to actively engage in learning.

2.2.4 Collaborative Learning

Collaborative Learning, as a multilingual practice, is based on collaborative structures where the strengths of each individual member of the school community can be effectively exploited to improve learning (García, et. al., 2011, Kibler, et.al., 2024). The teacher of the class aims to divide the students into groups, ensuring that each group contains students with different levels of proficiency in the language of instruction. As the literacy levels of the students in the group vary, a collaborative atmosphere is created, in which the children begin to help each other in order to solve the tasks assigned to them. Students with low language proficiency are assisted by their classmates in the group who know the language, in order to understand the learning content. Similarly, students with greater proficiency in the language of instruction take on helper roles, during which they explain to the students with less language proficiency, and in this way, they themselves understand the subject matter better and in more depth.

For students to achieve linguistic communication within their group, they can use dictionaries, digital translation tools, or rely on group members who are proficient in both L1 and the language of instruction, allowing them to act as interpreters. All these techniques, along with the overall effort to communicate without linguistic barriers, where diversity is seen as an advantage rather than an obstacle, reflect the principles of collaborative learning (Melo-Pfeifer, 2020). Additionally, it is very important to mention that, through collaborative learning, as students collaborate and communicate with each other, they have more opportunities for interaction with authentic speakers of the language of instruction, thus providing more opportunities for linguistic development.

In the context of collaborative learning, Co-teaching is also included, which, as a multilingual practice for a multicultural classroom, is a crucial factor for the integration of students from language minorities and the improvement of their academic performance. This collaborative practice allows the integration of language instruction into the curriculum, without it being treated as a separate subject (Honigsfeld & Dove, 2019, Williams & Ditch, 2019). In other words, when students have, for example, Music or Arts in their schedule, the subject teacher will collaborate with a language teacher in the classroom, applying an interdisciplinary approach. This way, immediate linguistic support is provided to the student through the instruction of the subject matter, and since the student is not separated from the rest of the class, it also strengthens the sense of belonging as a practice.

Collaborative learning in a multicultural classroom combines many desirable outcomes. Firstly, through collaborative learning, the teacher can fully utilize the classroom's diversity, including all the linguistic, cultural, and cognitive resources of the students. Furthermore, it creates a climate of safety and acceptance within the classroom, where the experiences and opinions of all students are valued. Among themselves, students develop friendships and a sense of belonging to the group, which is especially important for minority students, helping them feel like members of the school community (Lowenhaupt & Reeves, 2015). Finally, in terms of the academic aspect of teaching, students are required to complete and accomplish complex tasks that they would not be able to finish on their own. As a result, their academic performance improves.

2.2.5 Bilingual Education Models

In the literature, various bilingual education models are described, each adopting a different approach and strategy for educating bilingual students. The outcomes of these models seem to be directly dependent on the emphasis placed on maintaining and recognizing the mother tongue and cultural identity or on the assimilation of these elements into the language of instruction and the dominant culture (Tourtouras, 2008).

Coelho (1998), in his research, highlighted the need for continued support for minority language students in their L1, alongside the teaching of the L2. In other words, he demonstrated that adapting teaching to the needs of the student, while simultaneously recognizing their linguistic and cultural heritage, strengthens their academic performance and encourages engagement in learning. Therefore, education models that focus on a single

language of instruction and aim for the assimilation of the student's L1 and culture, such as Segregation Programs, Immersion programs and Submersion Programs, have been shown by research to lead to low academic performance and student failure. These models have been rejected in the literature due to their failure to integrate multilingual students into the school community (Cummins, 2000), and therefore will not be further discussed in the following section. In contrast, models that focus on maintaining the cultural heritage of students and recognize their linguistic diversity lead to positive outcomes both in their academic performance and social integration. These models include Mother Tongue Maintenance Programs, Transitional Programs, Immersion Programs, Reception Classes, Supported Integration Programs, Withdrawal Programs, Bilingual Education, and Two-Way Bilingual Programs, which are described below.

The bilingual education model of Mother Tongue Maintenance Programs is an approach that adopts the maintenance of students' L1 alongside the teaching of the language of instruction. Cummins (2000) and García (2009) describe that this model strengthens the L1, promoting multilingual education, as it is believed that maintaining cultural and linguistic heritage enhances cognitive development and the acquisition of the language of instruction. Furthermore, for this model, it has been stated that recognizing the culture and maintaining the L1 helps develop feelings of self-esteem and pride among language minority students, as they internalize that their L1 is not a barrier but an asset within the classroom, thus increasing their motivation to participate (Baker, 2011).

Transitional programs are models that aim for a gradual transition from the L1 to the language of instruction. They achieve this by initially teaching in the L1 to help the student understand certain basic concepts, and over time, the use of L1 is gradually phased out, and instruction in L2 begins (García, 2009). Therefore, this is a model that also focuses on maintaining the L1 and recognizing linguistic and cultural diversity, while attempting to teach both of the student's languages. Research has shown positive results for this model in terms of students' cognitive development and social integration (Thomas & Collier, 2002) and more specifically, this model has shown improved results in the development of oral language in L2, without the assimilation of L1 (Jimenez, 2022).

The Reception Class education model is a practice aimed at integrating students with limited language proficiency in the language of instruction into the educational system of the host country. Intensive L2 courses are provided to enable the student to later follow the curriculum in the mainstream class and cope with assignments and academic subjects. Baker (2001) describes this model as an intensive language support system designed to develop

linguistic skills for full integration into the regular classroom. According to Sakellariopoulou (2015), Reception Classes are not considered a true bilingual education model, as they focus solely on teaching the language of the host country and do not place significant emphasis on maintaining L1. However, research findings on the implementation of Reception Classes indicate a significant improvement in multilingual students' learning outcomes and facilitate their social integration (Mastrogiannis et al., 2020).

The teaching model of Withdrawal Programs is a bilingual education model in which the language minority student is temporarily removed from the main class to strengthen their language skills, while simultaneously receiving instruction in their L1 (Garcia et al., 2007). It focuses on providing linguistic support for the language of instruction without neglecting the teaching of L1, thereby integrating the linguistic and cultural resources of the students into their education. However, Thomas and Collier (2002) point out a flaw in this model, as they believe that since the student is removed from the main class, even temporarily, their social integration is not achieved. The student is not given the opportunity for interaction and socialization with their peers, which results in marginalization and isolation. Despite this, research findings on the implementation of this model have shown improvements in students' language proficiency (García, 2021).

The Supported Integration Programs is a bilingual education model that allows multilingual students to fully participate in the regular classroom while simultaneously receiving targeted language support in both the language of instruction and their L1 (Cummins, 2001). This program aims to create a bilingual learning environment, promoting linguistic and cultural pluralism, and seeks to foster academic success and social integration for students. Research data from implementations of this model have shown that it contributes to the improvement of language skills, increased participation, and enhanced confidence in using the language of instruction among minority students (Learning Policy Institute, 2022).

According to Baker (2011), Bilingual Education is an educational model in which students receive equal instruction in both the language of instruction and their L1. The primary goal of this model is the academic development and proficiency of students in both languages. It describes an approach where bilingualism is not only recognized within the school environment but serves as the core principle of the school's operation. A learning environment is created that promotes full equality and equal value between languages and cultures. Corresponding research on the implementation of this approach has highlighted highly positive outcomes for students' academic performance, while also strengthening

cultural understanding and social cohesion (Texas Education Agency, 2019, Lindholm-Leary, 2020).

The Two-Way Bilingual Education Programs is a bilingual education model in which students from the dominant language and culture, along with students from the linguistic minority, are placed in the same classroom and receive instruction in both languages, aiming for proficiency in both (Lindholm-Leary, 2001). This model has demonstrated a multitude of positive outcomes for both groups of students, fostering mutual cultural respect. More specifically, students exhibit improved executive functions, enhanced cultural understanding, and contribute to social cohesion (Esposito, 2021).

2.2.6 Parental Participation

In the contemporary school, where diversity has increased significantly, where linguistic, ethnic, religious and cultural diversity is the main characteristic of contemporary societies and by extension schools, needs have changed and many critical educators have urged teachers to break away from traditional educational approaches. Instead, they refer to approaches that include connecting and communicating directly with students' homes and community organizations that support these families (Cummins, Chow, & Schecter, 2006, Schecter, et. al., 2008). Cummins et al. (2006), referring to the pursuit of connecting the school with the parents, adds that this practice is not limited to communication, on the contrary, an effort is made by the school to enrich the study program with the linguistic and cultural resources of the students' families, and to attempt to preserve this linguistic and cultural identity of the students and not to assimilate it. Arias (2015), strongly argued that the involvement and participation of the parents of linguistic minority students plays a critical role in the effective integration of students into the school community and for their school success. In other words, in his research he argued that the construction of parental involvement, of immigrant parents, in collaboration with community organizations that support them, can lead to the defense of educational reform that serves linguistic minority students.

There are many researchers who have argued that schools that have adopted the practice of active parental involvement in school life help in this way to overcome communication barriers between parents and teachers in schools with cultural and linguistic diversity (Schecter, et. al., 2008, Hargreaves, 2001, Pelletier et al., 2002, Sherri, 2006). The above opinion could be interpreted from many perspectives. First, it should be mentioned that, in

a school in which there is linguistic diversity, it is very important for the student of the linguistic minority to feel that he belongs to the school community and that he is an active member of it, who participates in all the activities. A factor that contributes to the smooth integration of the student in the school, in order for him to feel a member of the community, is when value is given to the linguistic and cultural resources of the student and his family. The involvement of the parents and the effort for direct communication between the school and the parents contributes so that the parents themselves are the first to feel that their opinion not only counts but has value for their child's school life. In this way, the parents feel like active members of the school community, and subsequently the student feels the same way. An extension of this argument, that is, the tightening of school-parent relations, is also the better academic performance of linguistic minority students.

Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995, present a model, the model of HDS (**Figure 2**), includes five levels, which is based on psychological frameworks, and explains how parents choose to be involved in the child's school life, in what ways and how involvement helps better academic performance of the students. At the first level, the factors influencing parental involvement are described, i.e. if they believe that they themselves have the responsibility to participate in the school community, if they believe that with parental involvement they can make a difference, if they feel welcome by the school for involvement but also from their children and that's it if they think they have what knowledge, skills and time to help their children with school activities. There is also an intermediate level between 1 and 2, which includes various factors that influence their choice to be involved or not in the school community, such as culture, values, beliefs, and to what extent these are identified or not with the school community (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2010). At level 2, actions that parents should take to contribute to the academic socialization of students are suggested, such as encouraging progress, practicing skills, teaching, guiding and helping with school activities. At level 3 students interpret their parents' behaviors described at level 2. At level 4 students develop characteristics of autonomous and independent learning due to parental involvement and at level 5 they achieve learning goals through the characteristics acquired at the previous level (Williams-Johnson, et.al.,2022). Parental involvement as seen in **Figure 2** is influenced by the parent's culture. Williams-Johnson, et.al., (2022), argued that parents' expectations for their children's school performance differ according to ethnicity, while noting that these perceptions may change even after immigration and refugee status and suggests that the cultural context of the parents must always be taken into account.

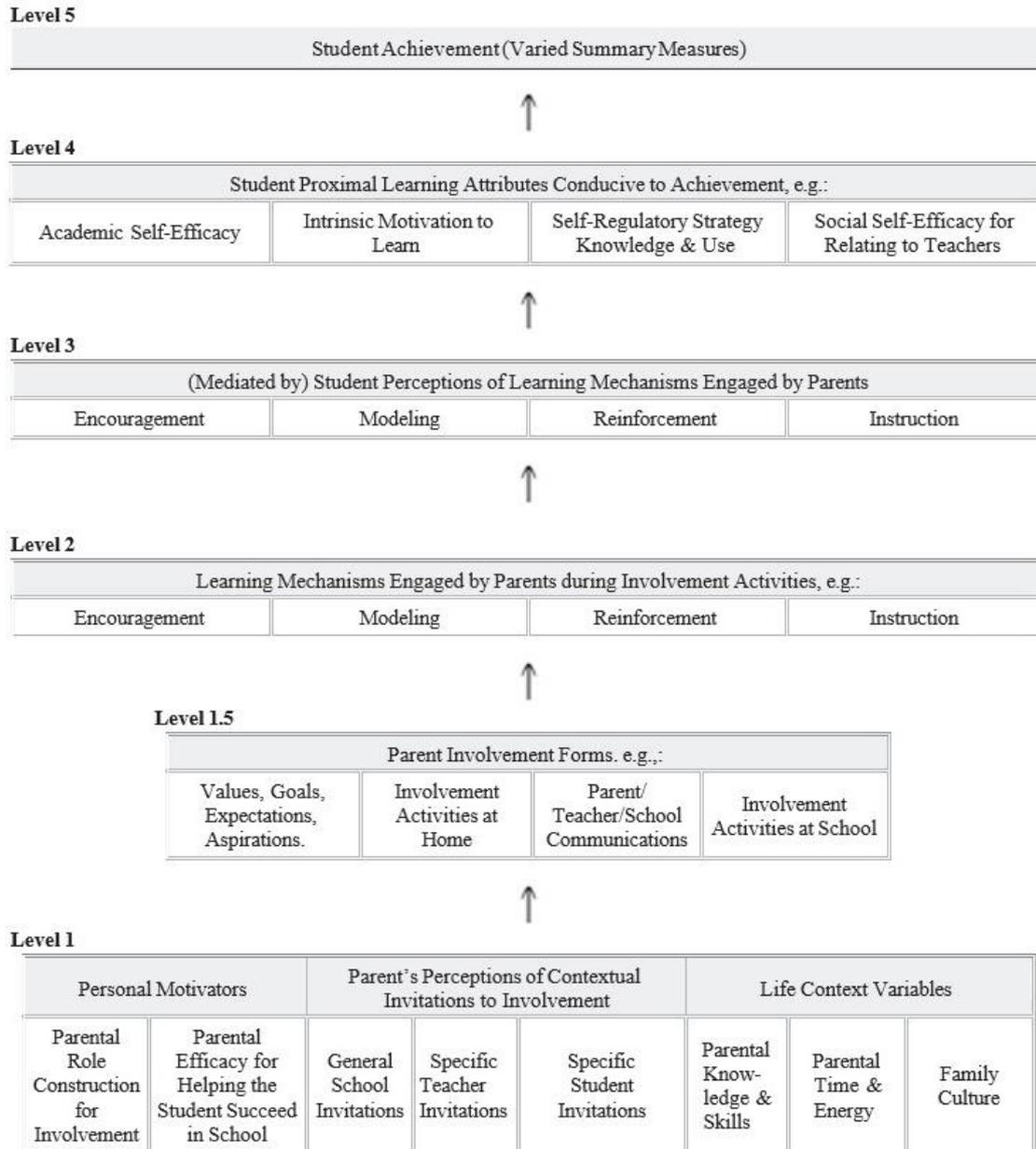


Figure 3: Model of the parental involvement process (taken from Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995, 1997, 2005).

This figure also appears in Hoover-Dempsey, K. V., Ice, C. L., & Whitaker, M. C. (in press). "We're way past reading together:" Why and how does parental involvement during adolescence make sense? In N. Hill & R. Cha (Eds.), *Family-school relationships in adolescence: Linking interdisciplinary research*. New York: Teachers College Press. Reprinted from Christenson, S., & Reschly, A. L. (Eds.). (2010). *Handbook of school-family partnerships* (pp. 362-379). New York, NY: Routledge.

Moreover, according to **Figure 2**, parental involvement also depends on whether they feel welcomed by the school. Therefore, it is very important for the school to be able to approach the parent in the appropriate way, so as to provide security and familiarity, and to give them an incentive for active involvement.

The HDS model also described the link between improved student academic performance and parental involvement and how this is interpreted through psychology. It has been established that immigrant students are associated with low academic performance, school dropout and failure. For this reason, the involvement of parents in the school life of the student is considered necessary, as a prerequisite to strengthen school success and inclusion (Hajisoteriou, et.al., 2016).

2.3 The Greek Educational System and Linguistic Diversity

The Greek educational system faces ongoing challenges in addressing linguistic diversity, a result of the country's increasingly multicultural society. In Greece, the education starts from the age of 4 at preschool, and then the compulsory education for children starts from 6-15 years old and include primary school (Dimotiko, ages 6–12) and secondary school (Gymnasium, ages 13–15). The arrival of immigrants and refugees in the country, in combination with the already existing linguistic minorities living in Greek territory, has created a strong linguistic diversity in Greek schools, simultaneously creating educational opportunities for systems.

The Greek state, in order to address the new challenges in education, has taken some initiatives ensuring equal access to education for all. More specifically, with the law 1566/1985, it states that all children in the greek area, regardless of ethnic origin and linguistic background, must receive at least the compulsory education as defined by the Greek educational system.

The greek education system, with the enactment of the law that guarantees the right to education for all children, has over the years introduced other initiatives to support students with different linguistic backgrounds and promote their integration. These initiatives include the establishment of RCs for accelerated language learning and ICSs tailored to diverse cultural and linguistic needs. However, it has been proven that these strategies are not sufficient to effectively support these students, and this is mainly due to the lack of resources, their inconsistent implementation and to the lack of specialized training of teachers.

In this section, these initiatives of the educational system in Greece to integrate and support students with different linguistic background will be explored. Key features of the RCs and ZEP, ICSs approaches, the opportunities they create as well as the challenges and limitations will be analyzed.

2.3.1 Reception Classes and Educational Priority Zones

In 1980 (Gazette 1105/B/4.11.1980), Reception Classes (RCs) were established, which aimed at linguistic support for students from vulnerable groups such as refugees and migrants. This program concerned accelerated lessons to enhance students' proficiency in Greek language, facilitating their integration into education. Additionally, with Law 3879/2010 RCs were further institutionalized by imposing morning sessions with flexible study programs adapted to the needs of multilingual students.

RCs operate within the broader framework of ZEP, established to address the educational challenges faced by students in socioeconomically disadvantaged areas. In fact, schools that have ZEP classes, receive additional funding, resources, and specialized teachers to enhance the educational outcomes of vulnerable students. However, both of these programs, RCs and ZEP, are criticized for inconsistency, lack of resources, and inadequate training of instructors, all of which are reflected in the poor results of students' progress.

2.3.2 Intercultural Schools

With the law 2413/1996, intercultural schools were established in Greece, which aim to support students with different cultural and linguistic backgrounds, with respect for diversity and ultimate goal for inclusion. Essentially, in these schools, they adapt the standard greek curriculum to the needs of multilingual students.

In 2021, there are a total of 26 Intercultural Schools (ICS) throughout Greece, which include both primary and secondary education. More specifically, only 13 of these are primary schools. This is a major shortfall, given that the number of children with a refugee and migrant background, under the age of 13, is huge. These schools cannot cover the significant number of multilingual students living in Greece, making the establishment of further ICS vital.

Educators working in ICS must align their practices and approaches with the objectives of these schools as defined in their founding legislation. These objectives, according to

Palaiologou (2004), include the promotion of knowledge, of cultural diversity, the encouragement of dialogue between cultures and the combating stereotypes and prejudice. However, systemic challenges, such as resource shortages and limited teacher training, hinder the full realization of these goals.

2.3.3 Systemic Challenges and Limitations

The Greek education system, despite having adopted some innovations such as RS, ZEP and ICS, to manage linguistic diversity in Greek schools, continues to face many challenges. Systematic constraints significantly hinder the work of the above programs, undermining the progress towards promoting integration and equal opportunities.

Although, in 2010, over thirty different languages were recorded in Greek schools (Hellenic Statistical Authority, 2010), and although the Greek education system has expanded practices to support multilingual students, the system remains essentially monolingual. The only exception is the case of the religious minority in Western Thrace, where a bilingual education model is applied. In the case of Russian-speakers and Albanian-speakers, although the legislation (L. 2413/1996) establishes the teaching of students' L1, this was applied sporadically until 2010 and only under favorable conditions (Revithiadou, 2015).

Programs aimed at vulnerable student groups, including Roma children, often prioritize integration into the Greek-speaking educational framework rather than supporting linguistic diversity. The absence of mother-tongue instruction for Roma students remains a critical gap, as it fails to address their unique educational needs (Georgiadis & Zisimos, 2012). This limitation underscores the need for a broader focus on incorporating students' home languages into their education.

A significant challenge is the inadequate training of teachers to manage a multilingual classroom. Teachers selected to work in either RC, ZEP or ICS do not necessarily have any training in intercultural education. Most receive limited training in teaching Greek as a second language, undermining the effort to support multilingual learners (Palaiologou, 2004; Georgiadis & Zisimos, 2012). This gap is proving particularly significant, and affects the quality of teaching that multilingual students receive. Added to this challenge is the lack of resources, where schools in rural or poor areas often lack specialized personnel, appropriate materials and infrastructure. These challenges are particularly evident in primary education, where the shortage of ICSs is most pronounced (UNHCR, 2021).

2.4 Teachers' Roles and Training in Multilingual Education

2.4.1 Educator Perceptions and Experiences

In multilingual classrooms, teachers are often confronted with linguistic and cultural diversity, posing significant challenges in delivering effective education. As primary educators in multilingual settings, Greek teachers' perceptions and experiences in addressing the needs of students without the language of instruction are crucial for understanding the role they play in fostering a successful learning environment.

Teachers who work with migrant children or pupils with limited proficiency in the Greek language face the task of adapting their teaching approaches to support these students' academic progress, language acquisition, and integration into the classroom community (Giannakou & Karalia, 2023). According to the literature, teachers recognize that there is a need for specialized training to address these challenges (Avramidou, et.al., 2011, Skourtou et.al., 2004, Chatzivasileiou, 2022). Teachers who provide language support for students must not only possess knowledge of second language acquisition but also be trained to apply strategies that accommodate the needs of diverse learners (Anderson et al., 2010).

Teachers report that professional development programs are essential in shaping their understanding of the complexities of language learning and supporting children with limited proficiency in the language of instruction. Teachers acknowledge the importance of having explicit knowledge of language structures that pose challenges for second-language learners and the ways in which these obstacles can be overcome (Christensen & Stanat, 2007). Additionally, the experiences of teachers in multicultural schools highlight the need for fostering an inclusive environment that values diversity, not only in terms of language but also in cultural contexts. Educators have expressed the opinion that integrating cultural background into teaching practices enhances student engagement and learning outcomes, as it creates a learning environment in which students feel that their linguistic and cultural heritage is valued (U.S. National Education Association, 2015).

They also state that the training that teachers who work in multicultural classrooms should undergo should include linguistic and cultural skills. It is important that through training,

teachers acquire the tools and resources to manage the multilingual classroom and understand that multilingualism, if exploited properly, functions beneficially and not as an obstacle to acquisition the language of instruction (Delezu, 2021). Many educators have expressed the need to integrate intercultural education into teacher training and preparation programs. (Zachos & Moutsas, 2024).

2.4.2 Professional Development and Support Needs

The professional development of teachers plays a crucial role in the management and effective teaching of a multilingual classroom. The basic needs in their training are the acquisition of language skills and the development of strategies for the optimal academic performance of all students regardless of language background (Giannakou & Karalia, 2023). Research has shown that teachers who are appropriately trained and prepared are more able to appropriately adapt their materials, adopt more effective teaching practices, and enhance opportunities for collaborative learning (White et al., 2006; Giannakou & Karalia, 2023). In Greek elementary schools, where linguistic diversity is increasing, the support and professional development of teachers is becoming vital.

A key part of the professional development of educators is learning to teach a second language. This specialization equips the educator with the tools to provide appropriate support to students learning Greek as a second language. According to Anderson et al. (2010), integrating direct language support into the teaching of subjects is particularly important, as it ensures that students have access to the curriculum while simultaneously developing their language skills.

Furthermore, teacher training should include cultural competence. That is, educators should be able to manage cultural differences, adapting teaching respectfully to the cultural background of students (Giannakou & Karalia, 2023). It is very important for educators to cultivate cultural empathy in order to cultivate a climate of respect and inclusion in the classroom for all students, but also to strengthen a positive and supportive relationship with immigrant families (Dinas et al., 2017). The culturally aware teacher is able to adapt teaching in such a way that each student feels a diverse member of the school community (National Education Association, 2015).

Support networks and opportunities for collaborative learning are also very important for teachers' professional development. Many educators have reported that the exchange of

ideas, experiences and materials with other teachers working in multilingual classrooms is beneficial for them. In this way, educators share best practices, strategies, overcome challenges, and improve their teaching techniques. Sirius (2014) notes that teacher support networks have proven valuable in promoting ongoing support for teachers working in multicultural classrooms.

Many countries, based on the above data, have developed structured support networks for teachers working in multilingual classrooms, such as Spain and Germany. Examples of such networks are the online network HOLA and the Language Support Coaches, which provide resources and materials to teachers, with the main goal of learning the language of instruction and integration (Sirova & Essoemba, 2014). Similarly, Greece can benefit from the creation of similar networks to support educators in their professional growth and to ensure that they are well-equipped to teach in diverse classrooms.

2.5 European Union Programs for Intercultural Education in Primary Schools

In the European Union, the critical role that education, and particularly primary education, plays in promoting intercultural understanding and awareness of linguistic diversity has been recognized. The EU has created educational programs, especially for primary education such as Erasmus+ and Creative Europe, with the aim of raising awareness among students and teachers about cultural diversity, and promoting linguistic diversity as a natural part of education (European Commission, 2021; European Union, 2020).

In this section, it will be examined how these programs are implemented in primary schools, how they can support teachers in promoting multilingual education, the challenges they encounter, but also the opportunities they are given through these European programs.

2.5.1 Erasmus+ in Primary Schools

Erasmus+ is the EU's most widespread tool for promoting linguistic diversity and cultural exchange. It is a funded programme that provides opportunities for primary school teachers

and students to collaborate and develop relationships with students from other institutions in other countries.

One application of Erasmus+ is the collaboration for the creation of cross-border encounters. Through this application, students have the opportunity to interact with their peers from other countries, and come into contact with different languages and cultures. One such example is bilingual narratives, creating storybooks where students provide the narrative in L1, while simultaneously learning about the linguistic heritage of their peers. Such an application strengthens cognitive skills but also respect and appreciation for students' different linguistic backgrounds and diversity (Breidbach & Vetter, 2020). Corresponding cultural exchange programs allow students to become deeply acquainted with the traditions, cultures, cultural elements, and routines of other nations. Moreover, when musical traditions, foods, and dances are also involved in these exchanges, learning becomes more attractive for students.

Erasmus + also offers many training opportunities for teachers. More specifically, it offers funded training programs, through which teachers have the opportunity to attend seminars, conferences and workshops tailored to managing linguistic and cultural diversity in the classroom. These sessions usually cover language learning techniques through play, using multilingual games. In fact, these educational opportunities are enriched by visits to schools in other partner institutions, to closely monitor and observe best practices in multilingual education without exclusions (Lefever & Genders, 2021).

Schools, through the program, can design and develop tools that meet the language needs of students. That is, they can create interactive tools, such as games, picture books, and applications that make language learning more accessible and attractive. One example is the collaborative project "Languages for Young Learners", co-created by schools from Greece, Italy, and Finland. In collaboration, these schools created comprehensive language packages with flashcards, storybooks, and audio materials in multiple languages. Through the program, students not only developed language skills and cognitions but also developed feelings of respect and appreciation for other languages but also significantly improved their cultural awareness (European Commission, 2021).

2.5.2 Creative Europe in Primary Schools

Creative Europe is a complementary programme to Erasmus+, using the arts to promote intercultural dialogue. To achieve its objectives, the programme focuses on integrating imaginative and creative activities into primary school so that students have the opportunity to explore and celebrate their cultural differences.

A basic principle of the program is to overcome and bridge language barriers through the use of art. For example, theater workshops are a platform in which the student has the opportunity to practice new languages in an expressive and interactive environment. Through theatrical workshops, students enrich their linguistic proficiency. Also, music is an important tool in the program, as through music students come into contact with new vocabulary, pronunciations and elements of other cultures (European Union, 2020).

Creative Europe also promotes programs to develop digital tools with the aim of engaging students in intercultural dialogue. That is, through digital applications, games and animated content, students come into contact with cultural routines and characteristics. In addition, it promotes cooperation between schools and cultural institutions such as art museums, theaters. A typical example of the program is that of "Art beyond Borders" where students create works of art that reflect their cultural heritage, in collaboration with cultural institutions. These works of art are then exchanged with partner schools from other countries, encouraging dialogue and mutual respect between children with different cultural backgrounds (Lefever & Genders, 2021).

2.5.3 Barriers to Program Implementation in Primary Schools

Although European programs promoting intercultural dialogue, such as Erasmus+ and Creative Europe, provide many benefits to primary schools, their implementation presents many challenges and obstacles. Initially, administrative complexity acts as a deterrent to participation, as application procedures are complicated. In addition, smaller schools face obstacles due to a lack of resources and basic equipment in order to be able to engage in international collaborations. Another inhibiting factor is the fact that adapting programs to

students' needs requires very careful planning, which adds a large workload for teachers to their already difficult job (Breidbach & Vetter, 2020).

2.5.4 Opportunities for Primary Schools

However, the opportunities provided by European programs promoting intercultural dialogue outweigh the challenges. Students' contact with multiple languages enhances cognitive development, problem-solving skills and cultivates a positive attitude towards linguistic diversity. Additionally, cultural exchange programs build feelings of cultural understanding, reducing stereotypes and cultivating inclusion.

For teachers, participation in such programs prepares them and provides them with the knowledge, techniques and approaches to be able to address and manage a multicultural classroom. These experiences equip the teacher with the tools to innovate and create a learning environment where all students are valued and understood.

There are many examples of such programs that have shown impressive results. One such is the eTwinning program "Fairytale Without Borders: Let's create a fairy tale together". In this program, countries such as Greece and Poland collaborated and created and shared storybooks in many languages, promoting understanding and language learning through creativity (European Commission, 2024). Another example is the Erasmus+ "Young Explorers" program, in which students from schools in Italy, Finland and Portugal collaborated. In this program, they explored environmental issues through collaborative activities. Through hands-on learning, students had the opportunity to investigate local environmental problems and exchange information with the partner schools. This project encouraged multilingual communication, as well as deepened students' knowledge of environmental issues by promoting intercultural dialogue through shared experiences (European Commission, 2018).

Another program is the Mosaic Platform, which aims to integrate refugees and migrants into education in countries such as Malta, Greece and Portugal. The program provides tools and materials for creating cohesive, intercultural classrooms, as well as strategies for managing classes with students from different linguistic backgrounds. The Mosaic platform encourages collaboration between students from different cultural backgrounds, fostering inclusion and mutual cultural respect. Finally, it enables educators from all over Europe to

collaborate and exchange views and experiences, thus supporting practices that promote inclusive teaching (Mosaic Platform, 2019).

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Purpose, Questions, and Framework

This research explored the multilingual practices implemented by primary school teachers, especially in classes with students with migrant and refugee backgrounds, but also in classes with Roma students. There is an urgent need to expand existing knowledge in this field, as the diversity in Greek primary schools is increasing. At the same time, however, educators seem to be unprepared to manage this linguistic diversity, lacking appropriate training and education, with the result that they are unable to adequately support these students. Addressing these issues is necessary to ensure appropriate linguistic support and social integration of students learning Greek as a second language.

This study explores teachers' attitudes towards multilingualism in education, how they perceive multilingual practices and how they implement them, if they adopt them, what institutional support they receive and what challenges and obstacles they encounter in implementing multilingual approaches.

To investigate the above questions, the following targeted research questions were established, around which the entire research will revolve.

- What multilingual strategies do teachers in Greek primary schools employ to support students' language development and academic success?

- What are teachers' perceptions of the role of students' L1s in promoting inclusion and academic achievement?

- What challenges do teachers face when implementing multilingual practices, and what support do they receive or require to overcome these barriers?

This study draws on theories of multilingual education, sociocultural theory, and inclusive education to explore whether and how teachers in Greek primary schools use multilingual practices in classrooms with students from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. It is investigated how teachers perceive students' use of L1 for support and academic success, the challenges they face in implementing multilingual practices, and whether they have received appropriate training to address these challenges. The research is informed by sociocultural theory, which emphasizes the role of social interactions in learning, and inclusive education principles, which advocate for equal access and support for all students regardless of linguistic background.

In this research, it was chosen to explore the views of educators, hoping to explore the issue from the perspective of teachers, as they are considered to play a critical role in shaping a multilingual-friendly environment, and in shaping students' school experiences. As an educator myself, I recognize firsthand that educators are the ones who shape the climate in the classroom, who choose which approaches and strategies to apply. In fact, I have worked in a school with many students with immigrant and refugee backgrounds and Roma students, so I have faced the same challenges that teachers face in a multicultural classroom. It turned out in my case that I was not ready and adequately prepared to manage this linguistic and cultural diversity.

The year I worked as a teacher in that school had a profound impact on me and was a determining factor in conducting this research. I discovered firsthand the difficulties and challenges that educators face in a diverse classroom, as well as the opportunities offered by all the linguistic and cultural richness that students bring with them. By investigating the perspectives and strategies used by educators, the work aims to present ways to improve multilingual education, and to ensure that all students, regardless of their linguistic background, have equal opportunities for academic success.

The research uses mixed methods, as both quantitative and qualitative data are collected regarding teachers' profiles, classrooms, and perspectives on multilingualism in education.

3.2 Data Collection and Analysis

3.2.1 Access to Research Site/Participants

In my research, I sought to investigate multilingual practices in Greek primary schools, and the perspectives and strategies of teachers. To collect data, I created an online questionnaire,

addressed exclusively to primary school teachers, who work in schools with students with different linguistic backgrounds, ethnic origins, and Roma students. It focuses on multilingualism in education and multilingual practices, how teachers manage multilingualism and in what ways they implement multilingual practices, in order to support their students in their cognitive development and academic progress.

To identify the appropriate sample for the research, I focused on schools that operate RCs within ZEP, established under Law 3879/2010. These schools, with ZEP programs, are designed with the aim of supporting students with a migrant and refugee background as well as Roma and other ethnic minority students, in order to provide them with appropriate education according to their needs and to integrate them into the social community. Thus, schools with ZEP programs are ideal for exploring teachers' perspectives on implementing multilingual practices.

The primary schools in which RCs within ZEP operate are very important, as the teachers who work in them are usually educators who frequently work with populations that have different linguistic backgrounds, therefore the views and experiences of these educators are valuable for these research questions. To identify these schools, I consulted the official Ministerial decision (Φ1/90390/Δ1/06-08-2024 (ΦΕΚ 4670B/09-08-2024)), which lists ZEP schools eligible to operate RCs for the 2024–2025 academic year in Greece .

In addition to ZEP schools, I also considered ICSs in Greece, established under Law 2413/1996, due to their focus on supporting students from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. These schools adapt the Greek curriculum to meet the needs of non-Greek students, ensuring inclusivity and fostering intercultural dialogue. While there are 26 ICSs nationwide, only 13 serve primary-level students (provided in the Appendix A). Given their emphasis on multilingual education, ICSs play a crucial role in addressing the challenges faced by linguistically diverse student populations, making them highly relevant to my research.

Teachers working in ICSs are particularly valuable for this study because of their experience in managing multilingual and multicultural classrooms. Trained in intercultural and bilingual education, these educators are equipped with the skills needed to support students with diverse linguistic backgrounds. Their expertise in addressing the unique challenges of

multilingual classrooms offers critical insights into the implementation of effective multilingual education practices.

Lastly, through leveraging my professional network as a primary school teacher, I was able to connect with teachers who have experience teaching in multilingual and multicultural environments. This combination of formal guidance and networking ensures the selection of teachers who have relevant experience and are best positioned to provide meaningful responses to the questionnaire.

3.2.2 Data collection

The data collection process was carried out through an online questionnaire with 28 questions, which, in order to ensure accessibility for educators, was written in both Greek and English (provided in Appendix B). The questionnaire is specifically designed for primary education teachers, and aims to collect data on teachers' views and perspectives on multilingual practices as well as the challenges they face.

The questionnaire was created and hosted through the digital tool Google Forms, due to its ease and friendliness of use both for its creation and for the participants to answer it. The educators had the comfort of answering the questionnaire with ease and due to the anonymity, that was applied, they had the opportunity to provide honest answers with comfort. Finally, the questionnaire was designed to be answered by participants in 15 minutes.

The questionnaire includes closed-ended questions, in order to conduct a quantitative analysis of trends, as well as open-ended questions, to collect, in order to conduct a qualitative analysis and to explore in depth the perspectives and opinions of educators on multilingualism and multilingual practices. This mixed methods approach allows us to have a complete and more holistic picture of the research questions at the end of the research.

The questionnaire was distributed as follows:

1. Through targeted e-mail. Specifically, I sent the questionnaire by e-mail to the official e-mail addresses of intercultural primary schools in Greece, as well as to somewhere ZEP programs operate.
2. Telephone communication, as in addition to emails, I also contacted many schools by telephone to emphasize the importance of distributing the questionnaire to the school's teachers, and encouraging participation.

3. Professional networking, as through personal acquaintances I encouraged educators, who fit the characteristics of the participants' profile, to participate in the research and answer the questionnaire.

The goal was to secure at least 25 to 30 responses, in order to have rich material and data for the analysis and answering of the research questions. The user-friendly format in which the questionnaire was designed, and its short possible completion time of 15 minutes, in order to maximize participation, and to collect material for the exploration of teachers' perspectives on the multilingualism in Greek primary schools.

3.2.3 Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire was designed to collect both quantitative and qualitative data on the teachers' profile, their views and perspectives on multilingualism in education, the implementation of multilingual practices as well as the challenges they face in their implementation, and the challenges they face in their implementation.

The questionnaire consists of 28 questions and is divided into distinct sections, each serving a specific purpose:

- Section A: Teacher Profile collects demographic information, including gender, age, years of teaching experience, and any training in intercultural education. This section helps categorize responses for statistical analysis and identifies any correlations between teacher characteristics and their perspectives on multilingual education.
- Section B: Multilingual Students in Your Classroom focuses on the composition of the classroom, including the languages spoken by students and their countries or regions of origin. This section provides context for understanding the challenges and opportunities teachers face in multilingual classrooms.
- Section C: Views and Experiences on Multilingual Educational Practices asks teachers to reflect on how multilingualism influences their teaching strategies and student inclusion. The responses will be analyzed to identify common strategies, challenges, and successes.
- Section D: Application of Multilingual Educational Practices explores the specific practices and resources teachers use to support multilingual students. This section

will reveal the most frequently employed strategies in Greek schools and their perceived effectiveness.

- Section E: Challenges and Support from the School examines the obstacles teachers encounter and the support they receive from school administration. Analyzing these responses will help identify external factors that influence the successful integration of multilingual education.
- Section F: Suggestions and Future Outlook invites teachers to offer recommendations for improving multilingual education. These insights will be valuable for policymakers and stakeholders who aim to enhance multilingual practices in primary schools.
- Extra Section: European Programs and Support assesses teachers' familiarity with European initiatives, such as Erasmus+ and Creative Europe, which could support multilingual education. This section evaluates the accessibility and usefulness of these programs for educators in Greece.

Each section is designed to gather specific insights into the application, challenges, and potential for multilingual education, contributing to both statistical analysis and qualitative understanding of the field.

3.2.4 Data Analysis

The analysis of the questionnaire responses will be conducted in two stages, quantitative data analysis and qualitative analysis, depending on the type of questions, ensuring a deep understanding of educators' perspectives on multilingualism.

Quantitative Analysis The data from the closed-ended questions (Section B, D, E, and F) and the demographic data (Section A) will be analyzed in statistical analysis, that is, in a descriptive analysis of general characteristics and trends. An example is, the categorization of teachers according to the lack or absence of training in multilingual education, therefore after the statistical analysis a percentage of teachers who have received training will result.

Qualitative Analysis The open-ended questions (Sections C, D, E, F, and the Extra Section) will be analyzed using thematic analysis (Nowell et al., 2017). The following steps will be taken:

- **Coding:** Responses to open-ended questions will be reviewed and categorized into themes that reflect recurring concepts or ideas. In other words, the responses of the educators will be categorized into larger themes, for example, responses regarding the challenges they face will be categorized into units such as "lack of resources", "language barriers" or "lack of training".
- **Theme Identification:** These codes will be grouped into larger themes, allowing for a deeper exploration of teachers' experiences with multilingual education. For example, the responses of respondents in section C can be grouped into "positive effects of multilingualism" and "challenges in implementing multilingual practices"
- **Pattern Recognition:** The analysis will look for patterns across different sections of the questionnaire, identifying commonalities or differences in teachers' perceptions and strategies. For example, it may reveal how teachers' personal experiences with multilingualism align with their beliefs about its effectiveness in promoting student inclusion and academic success.
- **Interpretation and Reflection:** The qualitative data will be interpreted within the context of the broader study and informed by existing research on multilingual education. In this part of the data analysis, an interpretation is made from which the implications of multilingual practices in Greek elementary schools will emerge.

Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Data

In the end, the quantitative and qualitative data are merged, and will create a comprehensive picture of the perspectives of educators in Greek primary schools on multilingualism and multilingual practices. The statistical data will help contextualize the qualitative insights, offering deeper understanding into how teachers perceive and apply multilingual strategies. In other words, if the quantitative data shows that the largest percentage of educators have received training in intercultural education, the qualitative data will show to what extent this training has influenced the implementation of multilingual practices.

This mixed-methods approach ensures that both numerical trends and personal experiences are fully explored, offering a comprehensive analysis of multilingual practices and challenges in Greek primary schools.

4.Results

This part presents the results obtained following a detailed questionnaire addressed to Greek primary school teachers, the aim of which was to obtain their views and their experience regarding the use of multilingual practice in Greek primary schools. Several key aspects were addressed like: teacher's demographic data, students' linguistic profile, and the importance of the use of students L1s in the educative context. Moreover, the questionnaire explores teacher experience with multilingual education and the application of multilingual practices in the classroom, the challenges they face and their suggestions for improvement in this area. Finally, the survey explored Greek teachers' engagement and awareness with European programs like Erasmus + and Creative Europe, identifying the opportunities and the barriers that they can face in accessing these kinds of initiatives. The following part outlines the key findings based on teachers' responses.

4.1 Teacher's Profile and Professional Development

This first section of the survey collects demographic and background information about Greek primary school educators.

Specifically, **Questions 1 to 3** collected data on participants' age, gender and, years of teaching experience. **Question 4** examined the grade levels they teach. **Question 5** inform whether educators had received training in intercultural education.

In total, 25 teachers from different parts of Greece took part in the questionnaire, with 21 being female and 4 males. Which corresponds to 84% women, and 16% of men.

If we look at participants' age, we can see that teachers were predominantly young, with 48% aged 20-29, 48% aged 30-39, none were between 40-49 and only 4% were over 50 years old.

Regarding teaching experience, 72% of respondents were early-career educators with 0-5 years of experience, the remaining participants had 6-10 years (16%), 11-20 (8%), and over 21 years (4%) of experience in education.

The Greek primary school or "Dimotiko Scoleio" lasts six years and starts after kindergarten. Grade levels are organized by age, as follow: A' Taxi or first grade for ages 6 to 7, B' Taxi or second grade for ages 7 to 8, G' Taxi or third grade for ages 8-9, D' Taxi or fourth grade for ages 9 to 10, E' Taxi or fifth grade for ages 10 to 11 and St' Taxi or sixth

grade for ages 11-12. The distribution of teachers across these grades was relatively balanced, with 36% teaching grades 1-2, another 36% teaching grades 3-4, and 28% teaching grades 5-6. This balance ensures broad representation of teaching practices across the entire primary school spectrum

Finally, in terms of professional development, 48% of teachers reported having received training in intercultural education, while 52% did not. These results highlight a significant lack of training opportunities for a large proportion of Greek educators.

4.2 Profile of Multilingual Students in Greek Primary Schools

This second section of the questionnaire focusses on the composition and the linguistic diversity of student present in Greek primary classrooms. The questions addressed to teachers in this section, explored the total number of students in the classroom, the countries of origin, the L1s spoken by students, and the number of multilingual students -those who understand or speak two or more languages (Szczepaniak-Kozak et al.,2023). The following findings provide valuable insights into the multicultural and multilingual landscape of Greek primary schools.

4.2.1 Classroom Size and Multilingual Students

Question 6 was about the total number of students in Greek primary classrooms. Teachers' responses revealed variations in classroom size across Greek primary schools. Most of teachers (15%) reported having 10–20 students in their classrooms, while 7% indicated class sizes of 21–25 students. Only 3% of teachers reports having less than 10 students. reflecting the typical classroom distribution in Greek primary education.

Question 9 focused on the number of multilingual students present in Greek primary classrooms. According to teachers only a small number of multilingual students were reported, with 68% of them declaring they taught 0-5 of multilingual students, 28% indicated 6-10, and a small minority (4%) noted having 11–15 multilingual students. Finally, no classrooms were declared having more than 16 multilingual students. These suggest that multilingual students are present in Greek primary school, but in this survey, they form a minority in the reported classrooms.

4.2.2 Countries of Origin of student

Question 7 aimed to identify the countries of origins of students in Greek primary schools. More precisely, teachers reported 21 different countries or regions from which students originate, as listed in **Figure 3**. The most frequently cited countries of origins of foreign student were Albania (27,9%), Ukraine (13,1%), and Russia (9,8%). These were followed by Bulgaria (8,2%) and Syria (6,6%). Other countries with lower representation in Greek classrooms included Egypt, Pakistan, and Turkey, each accounting for 3,3% of the student, respectively. Roma students represented 3.3% of students in Greek classrooms. A smaller part of students accounting each for only 1,6% of the student, were from Austria, China, Czech Republic, England, France, Gambia, Germany, Italy, Philippines and Spain. This result illustrates the broad geographical and cultural diversity of foreign students within Greek primary schools. Students' countries of origin distribution are shown on **Figure 3**.

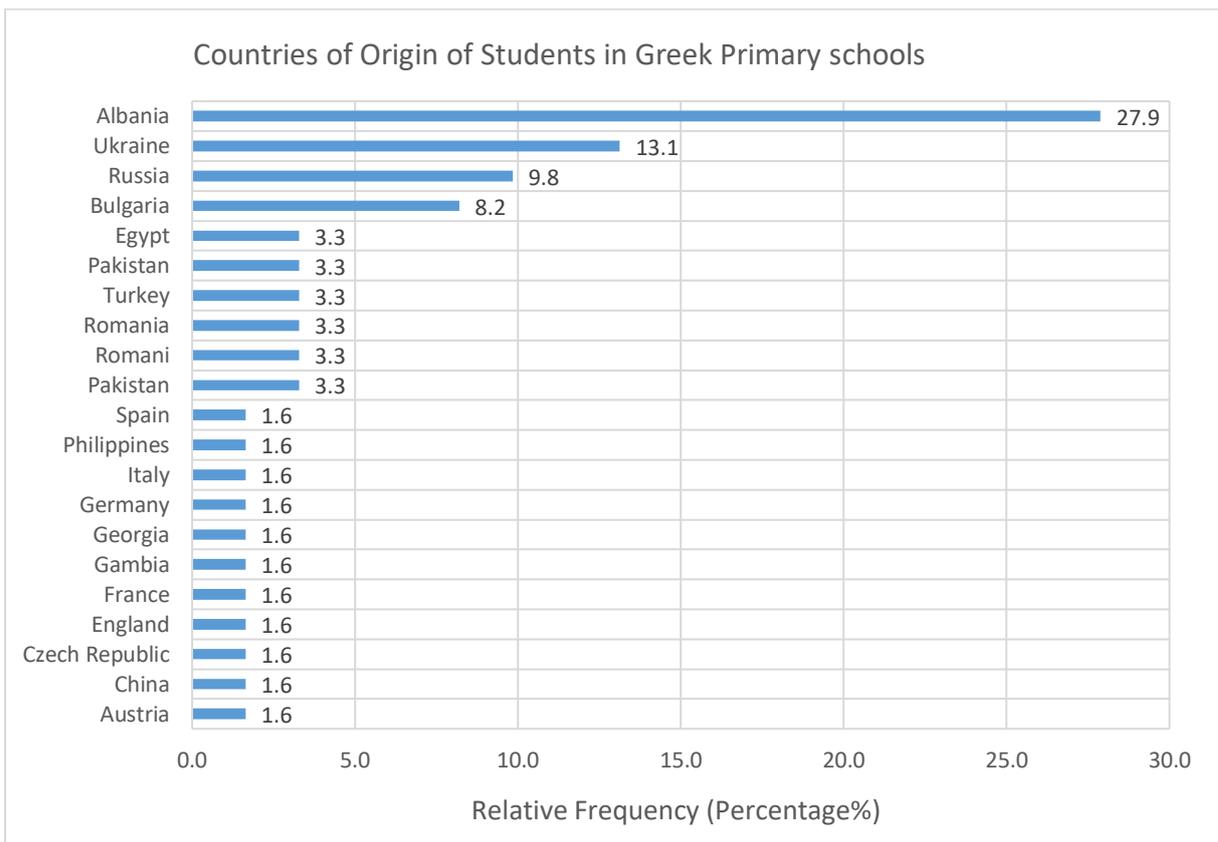


Figure 4 : Students' Countries of Origin Distribution.

Bar graph illustrating the distribution of students' countries of origin in Greek Primary schools as reported by teachers. The countries are listed on the vertical axis, with the horizontal axis showing the relative frequency (in percentage) of students from each country in the surveyed classrooms (N=25).

4.2.3 Languages Spoken by Students

Question 8 asked teachers to list the different languages spoken by their students. Teachers reported a total of 18 different languages and dialects in their classroom, as listed in **Figure 4**. The most common languages spoken by students are Albanian (30,4%), Ukrainian (10,7%), and Russian (8,9%), followed by English (8,9%) and Arabic (7,1%). Romanian and Bulgarian were also frequently cited, each accounting for 5,4% of students, respectively. Another prominent language reported by teacher were Romani, spoken by 3,6 % of students. A smaller proportion of student spoke Turkish (1,8%), Georgian (1,8%), as well as German (1,8%), Urdu (1,8%), Czech (1,8%), French (1,8%) and Chinese (1,8%). Finally, some regional dialects were reported, including an undefined Turkish dialect (1,8%) and a Greek dialect known as Cretan dialect (3,6%). In total, 16 different languages and two dialects were reported by teachers in this question. The Distribution of students' languages spoken in Greek Primary schools is shown in **Figure 4**.

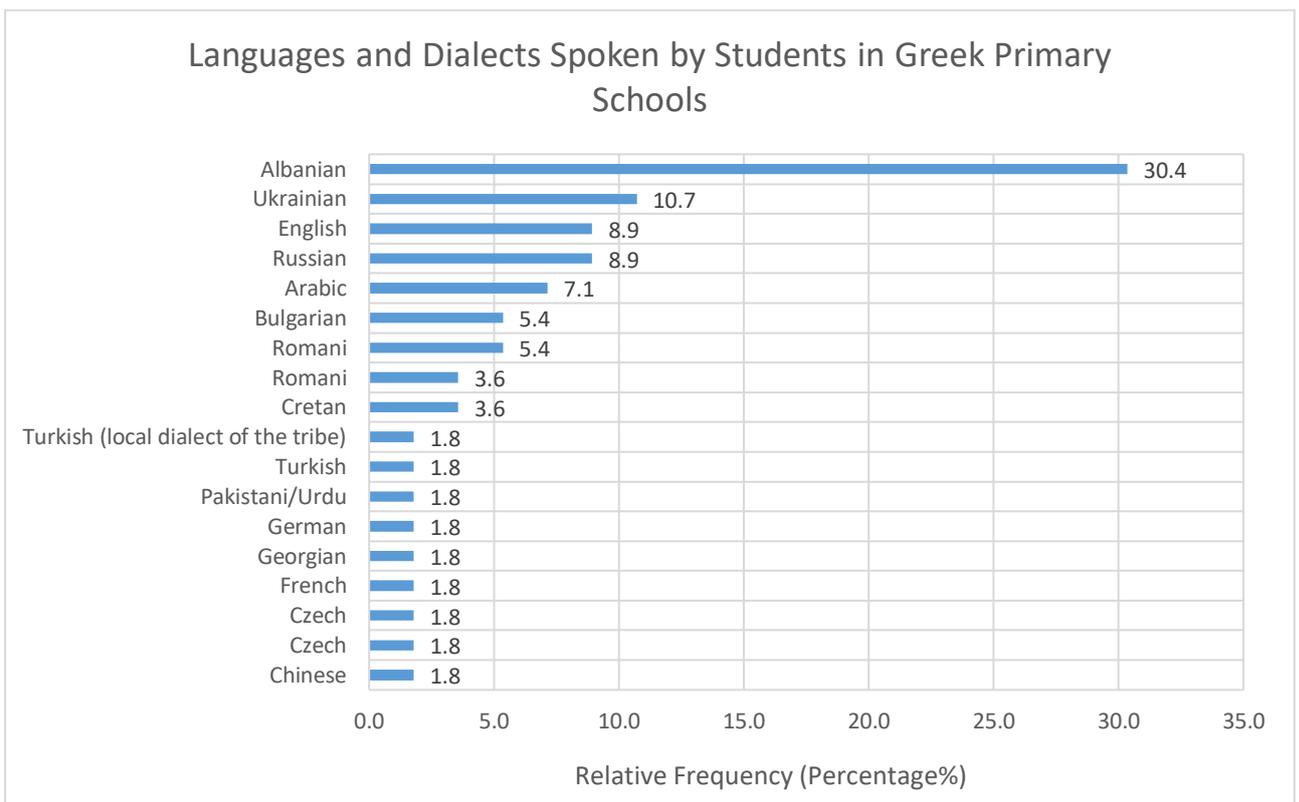


Figure 5 : Students' Languages Spoken Distribution.

Bar graph illustrating the distribution of students' languages spoken in Greek primary schools, as reported by teachers. The languages are listed on the vertical axis, with the horizontal axis showing the relative frequency (in percentage) of students (N=25).

4.3 The role of students' First Languages in Greek Classrooms

This third section of the questionnaire concerns the role of students' L1 in the classroom. On one hand, it examines whether teachers encourage the use of students' L1 and how L1 use influences their participation in class activities and overall learning. On the other hand, the questions also explored the impact of students' L1 use on their academic performance and social inclusion, and how it may impact the learning of the Greek language as a L2.

Questions 10 asked teacher if they encouraged the use of students' L1 in the class. The results showed that 60% of respondents supported its use, while 40% indicated that they do not. These findings are shown in **Figure 5A**.

In **Question 11** teachers also reflected on how the use of students' L1 influences students' participation in the course and the overall learning. A majority (56%) perceived the impact as positive. However, 16% viewed it negatively, while 28% believed that it had no significant effect. These results are shown in **Figure 5B**.

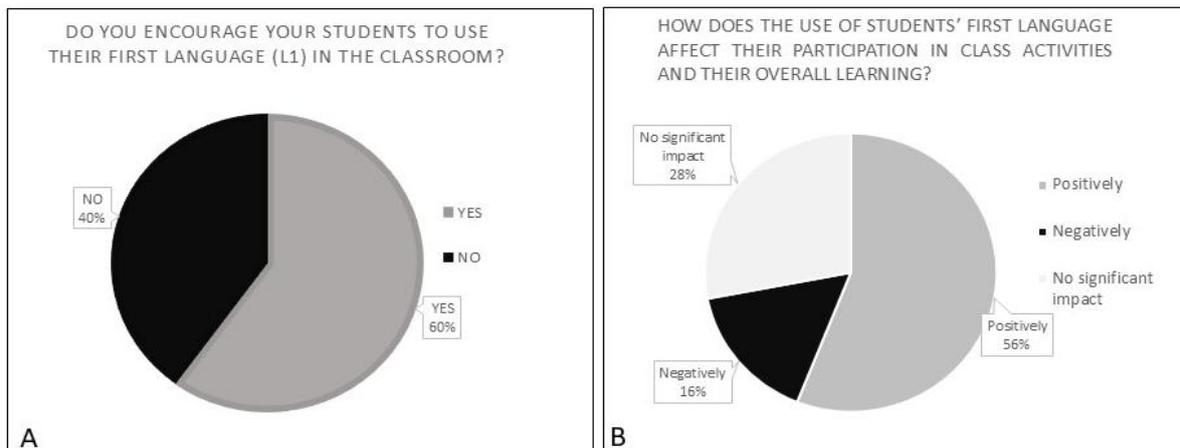


Figure 6 : Teachers' Perceptions of Multilingual Practices in Greek Primary School Classrooms:

Use of First Language (L1) and Its Impact on Classroom Participation (N=25).

Question 12 asked teachers whether the use of students' L1 improves their academic performance and social integration. The obtained responses showed that 60% of teachers believed that using students' L1 improves these aspects, while 12% disagreed. Notably, 28% expressed uncertainty.

Question 13 investigate wheter the use of students' L1 in the classroom may impact the learning of the Greek as a L2. The majority of teachers (76%) responded that the use of students' L1 impacts their acquisition of Greek as a L2. Conversely, 24% believed that it had no such influence. The results of question 12 and 13 are shown in **Figure 6A** and **6B**, respectively.

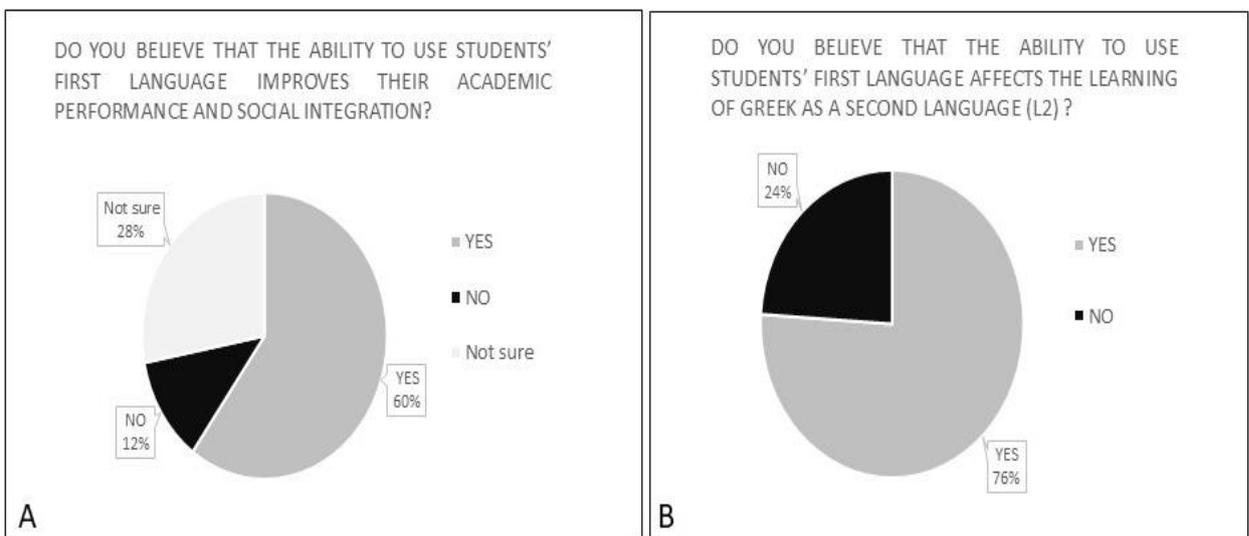


Figure 7 : Teachers' Perceptions of First Languages' Impact on Academic Performance, Social Inclusion, and Greek Language Acquisition.
(N=25)

4.4. Teachers' Views and Experiences on Multilingual educational practices.

This fourth section of the questionnaire explores teachers' views and experience regarding multilingual educational practices in Greek primary classes.

Teachers were invited to reflect on the impact of multilingualism on teaching strategies and student integration, as well as the effects of linguistic diversity in their classes. Moreover, the role of students' L1s in the teaching process was examined to understand whether they contribute to inclusion, engagement, and overall learning outcomes.

4.4.1 The Role of Multilingualism in Education

Question 14 explored teachers' perceptions of multilingualism in education, its impact on teaching strategies, and its influence on the integration of students from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

Teachers had divided opinions, viewing the impact of multilingualism in education from both positive and negative perspectives. However, they generally agreed that it plays a crucial role in fostering inclusivity and enhancing the learning process.

According to some teachers, multilingualism has a positive impact in education by fostering an inclusive learning environment, cultural understanding and cognitive development. It also increases students' languages skills and cognitive flexibility. The use of students' L1s in the classroom boosts self-esteem, and increase students' confidence that help in overall learning.

Several teachers highlighted how multilingualism fosters cultural understanding and bridges connections between students of different linguistic backgrounds. One teacher remarked, *"Multilingualism in education enhances cognitive development, promotes critical thinking, and cultivates cultural awareness. It prepares students for a globalized society."*

Another teacher stressed that using students' L1s in the classroom enhances their confidence and encourages smoother integration: *"Children feel comfortable and familiar when their L1 is used, which facilitates their learning of L2 as well."*

Furthermore, teachers noted that multilingual environments enrich teaching strategies by allowing teachers to draw comparisons between languages, thus helping students better understand linguistic structures. One teacher observed, *"Using the students' mother tongue in the classroom leads to easier memorization of grammatical and syntactical rules."*

In another hand, some teachers express concerns about multilingualism in the classroom, viewing it as a challenge to the learning process. They believe that it can initially complicate communication and make learning more difficult for students, especially when they are not yet proficient in the dominant language. Finally, some argue that multilingualism is not always feasible in the current Greek educational system, where resources and support for diverse linguistic needs are limited.

4.4.3 Positive/Negative Effects of Linguistic Diversity

Question 15 explored teachers' opinions on the effects of linguistic diversity in the classroom. They were encouraged to share specific examples or experiences to support their observations.

Teachers' responses reflected diverse perspectives, with the majority highlighting the positive effects of linguistic diversity in education. Many emphasized how it fosters intercultural understanding, enriches the learning experience, and enhances student collaboration. Examples included students sharing words from their L1s, learning about different cultures, and feeling more confident and included in the classroom environment.

One case illustrate how informal interactions can promote intercultural understanding: *"During breaks, Greek students encourage their foreign peers to speak to them in their language."* Another teacher noted the enthusiasm students display when sharing aspects of their linguistic and cultural identities: *"During a celebration, we asked a student to show us greetings and words in Russian. Her positive attitude influenced her classmates as well."*

However, challenges such as communication barriers and varying levels of proficiency in the classroom language were identified as potential drawbacks. For instance, one teacher reported that *"Students who speak the same language often tend to get distracted when they communicate with each other during the lesson."* Nevertheless, many educators felt these challenges could be mitigated with appropriate pedagogical strategies.

4.4.4 Views on Using students' First Languages

Question 16 asked teachers about their opinions on the use of students' L1s in the teaching process and whether it contributes to their integration and participation.

Teachers were largely supportive of incorporating students' L1s into the learning process, citing benefits such as increased engagement and smoother transitions to the classroom language. One teacher shared, *"A child's first language is very important for their cognitive*

development. Concepts that have already been formed in L1 can be more easily transferred to L2". One response emphasized, *"The use of first languages in teaching significantly contributes to student integration and participation"*. Teachers also acknowledged that using students' L1s can create a sense of belonging, especially when multiple students share the same language. One teacher remarked, *"It helps, especially when there is more than one student speaking the same language—they don't feel alone or out of place."*

Specific strategies for using L1s were also discussed, including incorporating them into classroom activities to create a sense of inclusion. For example, one teacher suggested, *"Using routines like saying 'good morning' in different languages helps students feel that their language is accepted and valued."* Another teacher described an activity in which students compared grammar and vocabulary between their L1 and Greek, promoting both understanding and engagement: *"Children can more easily understand grammatical phenomena when they identify similarities and differences between their mother tongue and Greek."*

However, a few of them expressed concerns that encouraging the use of L1s might slow the acquisition of Greek for some students. One noted, *"Using multiple languages in the classroom may hinder uniformity in the learning process."* Another case pointed out that excessive reliance on first languages could be a barrier to learning Greek. One response mentioned, *"I prefer the exclusive use of Greek when the student can manage, as it ensures better language immersion"*. Nonetheless, most teachers agreed that strategic incorporation of L1s can help students feel valued and connected to their learning environments.

4.5. Implementation of Multilingual Educational Practices

This fifth section of the questionnaire explores implementation of multilingual educational practices in the classroom. The questions address whether teachers have implemented multilingual practices, the strategies they have used, and the results of these practices. They were also asked to share the resources or tools they consider essential for the effective implementation of multilingual practices, such as teaching materials, training programs, or technology. Additionally, the questions investigate what strategies or methods teachers use to support linguistic diversity in their classrooms and enhance the inclusion of multilingual students, with a focus on describing the practices they implement to foster linguistic and cultural integration

4.5.1 Implementation of Multilingual Practices

Question 17 asked teachers whether they had implemented multilingual practices in their classrooms. If so, they were invited to describe the practices they used and their outcomes. If not, they were asked to identify the main limitations or obstacles preventing them from applying such practices.

The responses varied, with some teachers actively incorporating multilingual practices, while others cited obstacles such as lack of resources, limited training, or classroom constraints. Many of them, who implemented multilingual practices, reported positive outcomes. A common strategy was encouraging students to share their linguistic and cultural heritage. Teachers often invited students to teach their peers simple words or phrases in their L1s and to contribute to cultural celebrations. For example, one teacher stated, “I often ask students about words from their L1s and encourage them to teach us. We also write greetings in multiple languages during celebrations.” This approach fostered cultural exchange and a sense of belonging among students.

Some teachers also used multilingual materials and activities to promote inclusivity. These included creating bilingual materials or engaging students in projects such as multilingual collages or presentations about their countries of origin. One teacher explained, “We created a collage with input from all students in their L1s and compared literary works from different countries to emphasize similarities and bridge cultural differences.” Similarly, interactive multilingual games were employed to facilitate language learning and cultural exchange. A teacher highlighted the use of a memory game where students matched foreign words with their meanings, noting, “This activity helped integrate non-native speakers more smoothly into the classroom.”

Cultural presentations were another common strategy, allowing students to showcase traditions, cuisines, and customs from their backgrounds. One teacher shared, “Students from different countries presented their customs and traditional dishes, which sparked engaging conversations and fostered mutual understanding.”

However, some teachers were unable to implement multilingual practices due to various barriers. A frequently mentioned challenge was the lack of resources and training. Teachers expressed frustration over the absence of appropriate materials or professional development opportunities, with one noting, “The lack of educational resources and the high number of students in the classroom made it difficult to successfully implement multilingual practices.”

Additionally, limited linguistic diversity in some classrooms restricted opportunities for multilingual activities. For instance, a teacher remarked, “There was only one bilingual student in my class, which limited opportunities for multilingual activities.” In other cases, behavioral challenges and structural constraints within school programs further hindered implementation. One teacher commented, “I work in a full-day program, where absenteeism and behavioral problems hindered the implementation of multilingual strategies.”

4.5.2 Essential Resources or Tools

Question 18 inquired about which resources or tools teachers considered essential for the effective implementation of multilingual practices.

Teachers identified several key resources and tools as essential for effectively implementing multilingual practices. Technological tools, such as interactive whiteboards, translation applications, and digital learning platforms, were widely regarded as valuable. One teacher emphasized, “Technological tools like translation apps, bilingual learning platforms, and interactive whiteboards can make multilingual practices more effective and engaging.”

The need for specialized educational materials was another recurring theme. Teachers highlighted the importance of bilingual textbooks, dictionaries, and culturally relevant teaching aids to support linguistic diversity. As one teacher stated, “We need bilingual materials that integrate both the students’ L1s and the instructional language.”

In addition to materials, teachers expressed a strong demand for professional development programs to equip them with the skills needed to implement multilingual practices. Many suggested workshops and hands-on training sessions, with one teacher commenting, “Workshops and hands-on training sessions would help teachers apply multilingual strategies more systematically and confidently.”

Collaborative activities and multimedia tools were also highlighted as valuable resources. Interactive games, songs, and digital tools that incorporate multiple languages were seen as effective ways to engage students and promote inclusion. One teacher noted, “Interactive games, songs, and digital tools that include different languages can significantly improve student engagement.”

4.5. Multilingual Educational Activities

Question 19 invited teachers to share one or more educational activities they had implemented with their students that incorporated multiple languages.

Out of the 25 teachers who participated in the questionnaire, only 14 responded to this question, with five stating that they had not used multilingual practices in their classrooms. As a result, only 9 teachers shared specific multilingual activities they had implemented in their teaching. A variety of approaches were described that aimed at fostering linguistic diversity and cultural inclusion in the classroom. These strategies range from creative and artistic activities to more structured linguistic exercises, all designed to encourage students to engage with multiple languages.

One common theme is the integration of multilingualism into creative and interactive activities. For example, one teacher described an activity where students created a sun with their handprints, writing messages on each hand in different languages. Similarly, another teacher incorporated music by having students listen to and translate the song "*Αν όλα τα παιδιά της γης*" ("*If All the Children of the World*"), into Arabic and Albanian, making language learning a collaborative and engaging process.

Several teachers emphasized cultural exchange as a way to implement multilingualism in their classrooms. Some organized activities where students presented traditional customs, holidays, and dishes from their home countries in their L1s, followed by a discussion or translation into Greek. These activities helped students develop an appreciation for different cultures while practicing language skills.

Linguistic-focused activities were also reported, such as the creation of bilingual or multilingual dictionaries, where students compiled vocabulary from their languages. Additionally, a structured exercise involved students describing their countries' traditions in their L1 before translating key terms into Greek.

Incorporating multilingualism into celebrations and special occasions was another common strategy. Some teachers encouraged students to share songs, greetings, and holiday traditions in their L1s, fostering an environment where multiple languages were naturally integrated into classroom interactions.

4.6. Challenges and Institutional Support

The sixth section of the questionnaire explores the challenges educators face in implementing multilingual practices and the level of institutional support available to them. Specifically, the questions examine the main obstacles teachers encounter, such as training gaps, time constraints, inadequate infrastructure, and attitudes from parents or colleagues. Additionally, educators were asked to evaluate how supportive their schools or

administrations are in adopting multilingual approaches and to suggest measures that could enhance this support.

4.6.1 Challenges in Integrating Multilingual Practices

Question 20 asked teachers about the main challenges they face in integrating multilingual practices into their schools and invited them to consider issues such as training, time constraints, infrastructure, or the attitudes of parents and colleagues.

Several challenges were highlighted by teachers, like time constraints, lack of proper training, infrastructure issues, and the attitudes of both parents and colleagues.

One of the most frequently cited issue is the lack of time. Teachers reported that tight schedules, along with the extensive curriculum they must cover, leave little room for implementing multilingual practices. As one teacher expressed *“The biggest issue is time. The curriculum demands are so great that it’s hard to incorporate extra activities”*.

Another issue involves the attitudes of parents and colleagues. Some teachers noted that certain parents, especially those with Greek backgrounds, were resistant to the use of multilingual strategies, fearing that it might hinder their children’s acquisition of Greek. One teacher explained *“Some parents feel that multilingual practices might harm their children’s learning of Greek”*. Similarly, some colleagues were not fully supportive of multilingual practices, viewing them as a distraction from the core educational goals. A teacher remarked that *“The attitudes of some colleagues can also be an obstacle to the integration of multilingual practices,”*.

The lack of suitable infrastructure and teaching resources was another major issue. Teachers reported that schools often lacked bilingual materials, appropriate textbooks, and the necessary technological tools to effectively implement multilingual practices. One teacher mentioned that *“The resources are limited, and the school doesn’t provide the necessary support to implement multilingual education properly”*.

Finally, many teachers highlighted the absence of specialized training in multilingual education. The lack of professional development opportunities left teachers feeling unprepared to manage linguistically diverse classrooms. One teacher noted that *“The lack of training in managing multilingual classrooms makes it difficult to implement effective strategies”*.

4.6.2 Institutional Support

Question 21 asked teachers how supportive their school or administration is in using multilingual approaches and what could be done to enhance this support.

The level of institutional support for multilingual approaches varies across schools. While some teachers reported positive experiences with school administrations, others faced difficulties due to insufficient resources.

Several teachers emphasized the importance of providing training on managing multilingual classrooms and creating inclusive lesson plans. As one teacher stated, *“It would be very beneficial for teachers to receive training in managing multilingual classrooms, and for schools to provide multilingual teaching materials.”*

In addition, teachers noted that there is a need for better infrastructure, including more bilingual resources, technological tools, and funding for language programs. Teachers suggested that the Greek Ministry of Education should allocate more resources to support multilingual education. One teacher explained that *“More funding is needed for multilingual materials and teacher training”*.

To enhance institutional support, several teachers recommended changes in curriculum design and the creation of more flexible programs that cater to the needs of multilingual students. *“The curriculum should be more flexible to accommodate the individual needs of multilingual students,”* one teacher suggested. Additionally, some teachers pointed out the importance of reducing class sizes, which would give teachers more time to focus on individualized instruction for multilingual learners. Teachers also noted the importance of involving parents and the wider community in promoting multilingual education. As one teacher suggested: *“It would help if schools organized informational sessions for parents, especially those who are hesitant about multilingual education”*.

4.7. Suggestions and Future Perspectives

This seventh section of the questionnaire asks teachers to reflect on the changes or improvements needed for the successful integration of multilingual practices in Greek schools. Teachers were also invited to provide recommendations for training programs that would help educators effectively use multilingual methods. Finally, the questions encouraged participants to share their vision for the ideal implementation of multilingual practices in primary education, focusing on key priorities and potential benefits.

4.7.1 Changes for Multilingual Practices

Question 22 asked teachers what changes or improvements they believe are necessary for the integration of multilingual practices in Greek schools. Several changes were emphasized by teachers, like the need for co-teaching between teachers specialized in ZEP Schools and classroom teachers, the implementation of project-based methods, and the creation of specialized teacher training programs. Additionally, reducing the curriculum's emphasis on content and offering dedicated time for multilingual integration, such as a specific class hour each week, were considered important. Teachers also suggested reducing class sizes and creating groups based on students' countries of origin to facilitate more tailored instruction. Funding for infrastructure and professional development programs, alongside the creation of multilingual teaching materials, was seen as essential for improving the multilingual education environment. A greater focus on the cooperation between schools, parents as well as raising awareness about multilingualism, was also highlighted as necessary for fostering a supportive environment.

4.7.2 Teacher Training in Multilingual Methods

Question 23 asked teachers for their suggestions on how to train educators in using multilingual methods. Teachers expressed an important need for more specialized training to help them use multilingual practices in classrooms. Some of these recommendations included experiential workshops to help teachers understand the benefits of multilingualism, intercultural education seminars, and ongoing professional development programs. Teachers suggested that training should focus on integrating technological tools, developing cultural sensitivity, and applying differentiated teaching strategies. Finally, they advocated for more practical seminars and inclusion of intercultural education courses in teacher education programs.

4.7.3 Ideal Implementation of Multilingual Practices

Question 24 inquired how teachers envision the ideal implementation of multilingual practices in primary education, focusing on the main priorities and potential benefits. According to teachers, the ideal implementation would involve a holistic approach that fosters a more inclusive and collaborative learning environment. They envision an educational system where multilingualism is integrated into all subjects and activities, encouraging students to share their L1s and cultural experiences. Key priorities for the ideal

implementation, include prioritizing younger learners and beginner students of Greek, as they would benefit most from a smoother integration into the educational system and Greek culture. A supportive environment where students accept diversity and engage in mutual respect was seen as essential. Teachers also expressed the importance of reducing stereotypes and promoting spontaneous, "colorful" learning experiences, with classrooms becoming places where students learn not just academic content, but also about each other's cultures and languages. Finally, there was strong support for the creation of flexible programs that allow for the consistent integration of multilingual practices throughout the school year, without time constraints.

4.8. European Programs and Support

The final section of the questionnaire focuses on European programs and support available to teachers for the implementation of multilingual education. It explores teachers' awareness and engagement with European initiatives, such as Erasmus+ and Creative Europe, which that promote multilingualism in education. Teachers were asked about their familiarity with these programs, their participation in them. Additionally, participants were invited to provide their perspectives on the accessibility of these programs in Greece and to suggest improvements to make them more inclusive and beneficial for teachers.

4.8.1 Familiarity with European Programs

Question 25 examined teachers' familiarity with European programs or initiatives that support multilingual education, such as Erasmus+ and Creative Europe.

According to teachers, familiarity with European programs such as Erasmus+ and Creative Europe remains limited among educators. Only 12% of them reported being familiar with these initiatives. In contrast, an 84% admitted that they were not familiar.

Question 26 asked participants to describe their involvement with these programs, or, if they were not involved, to explain the reasons for their lack of engagement.

Participation in this question was relatively low, with only 13 teachers providing answers with all explaining their lack of involvement in European programs. The reasons for non-participation varied among teachers. Some had no personal experience with European programs, as their roles were limited to teaching. Others stated that their schools had never taken part in such initiatives. A lack of professional development opportunities from

educational authorities or universities was also a common barrier. Many teachers cited heavy workloads and time constraints as obstacles, while some noted that Erasmus+ programs were often pursued by school administrators, with priority given to permanent staff over substitutes.

4.8.2 Accessibility of European Programs for Greek teachers

Question 27 asked teachers whether they believe European programs, such as Erasmus+ or Creative Europe, are accessible to them as educators in Greece.

when asked whether European programs are accessible to educators in Greece, opinions were divided 64% of respondents felt that these initiatives are accessible, while 36% disagreed.

Question 28 aimed to gather participants' opinions on ways to increase European programs accessibility for teachers. Educators offered numerous suggestions to make European programs like Erasmus+ and Creative Europe more accessible. One of the most common recommendations was enhanced communication, such as regular updates through emails, informational seminars, and the creation of networks where teachers can exchange experiences and best practices. Training and professional development were also emphasized, with calls for workshops or short courses to guide educators through the processes and benefits of these programs.

Teachers also urged for more institutional support, including: active promotion by school administrations and education authorities, simplified application processes, and the establishment of partnerships with organizations that have experience in European programs. Inclusivity was another key point, as many suggested ensuring equal opportunities for both substitute and permanent teachers to participate. Teachers recommended increasing funding and resources to reduce financial and bureaucratic barriers and provide schools with the means to participate more actively.

finally, those who found European programs inaccessible highlighted several critical factors, including inadequate communication from educational authorities, limited promotion of these programs within schools, and the high workload that prevents educators from dedicating time to learning about or applying for such opportunities.

5. Discussion

Building on the insights gathered from the questionnaire, this discussion provides valuable analysis of the current state of multilingual education in Greek primary schools, as perceived by teachers. It explores the demographic backgrounds of teachers, the diversity of students' origins and languages in Greek classrooms, and the pivotal role of students' first languages in fostering learning and inclusion. Furthermore, it examines teachers' perceptions of multilingualism, the practical implementation of multilingual educational practices, and the challenges that arise in integrating these approaches. Finally, the discussion highlights the level of institutional support available, the extent of engagement with European programs, and forward-looking recommendations aimed at enhancing multilingual education.

5.1 Demographic Overview and Professional Development of teachers

The Questionnaire were sent by email, to a broad number of targeted schools across Greece, like ZEP and ICSs schools. Moreover, as a primary school teacher I also sent it to my professional network. Despite a considerable effort to increase participation, only 25 teachers responded to the questionnaire. They were all active primary school teachers in Greece during the 2024-2025 academic year. The gender distribution among participants revealed a significant imbalance, with 84% of respondents being female. This reflects broader trends within the Greek education system, where research indicates that women dominate the teaching profession (Maragkoudaki, 1997).

Demographic data also revealed that the majority of participants were early-career professionals, with 72% having between 0 and 5 years of teaching experience. This is due to the low participation in the questionnaire and the fact that most respondents were teachers from my personal network. As an early-career teacher, my network mainly belongs to this category.

Additionally, there was a notable balance in the distribution of teachers across primary school grade levels. Specifically, 36% taught grades 1-2, another 36% to grades 3-4, and 28% taught grades 5-6. This balanced representation is significant for our research, as it provides diverse insights into teaching practices across the entire primary school range.

An important finding was that 52% of the teachers had not received training in intercultural or multilingual education. This gap in professional preparation suggests that many of them are not well-equipped to address the needs of linguistically diverse classrooms, a challenge that is becoming increasingly important in Greece.

These results highlight the urgent need for targeted professional development in multilingual education. Research has shown that training in cultural competence and multilingual strategies can greatly enhance teachers' confidence and effectiveness in managing multilingual classrooms (Amin et al., 2024). Such initiatives would be particularly beneficial for early-career teachers, who may lack the practical experience needed to navigate the complexities of multilingual settings.

5.2 The Origins and Language of Students in Greek Classrooms

Teachers' responses revealed a significant level of linguistic and cultural diversity in Greek primary schools, with students representing 21 different countries and speaking 18 different languages. Although the teacher sample in our study is relatively small (with only 25 participants), it is evident that the number of countries represented in the classrooms is considerable, as is the variety of languages spoken. This finding is in line with national research conducted by the Greek state in 2010, which highlights the important diversity of students' origins in Greek schools. Indeed, According to data from the Greek Ministry of Education, during the 2010-2011 school year, 33 different mother tongues were registered in schools across Greece (Hellenic Statistical Authority, 2010, <https://www.statistics.gr/el/statistics/-/publication/SED24/->). According to teachers the most common students' origins present in Greek schools are from Albania, Ukraine, and Russia. These results reflect well the current migration patterns in Greece. Indeed, as stated by the Euronews Albania (2023) Albanian nationals continue to be the largest group of migrants with legal residence permits in Greece. Additionally, Ukraine and Russia are among the top 10 nationalities of third countries with residence permits in Greece as of January 2024, alongside countries like China, Pakistan, Georgia, Bangladesh, Egypt, India, and the Philippines **Figure 7**. The growing numbers of Ukrainian and Russian nationals may be linked to the political and social crises in these regions, which have prompted waves of migration of Ukrainian (UNHCR,2022) to neighboring countries like Greece.

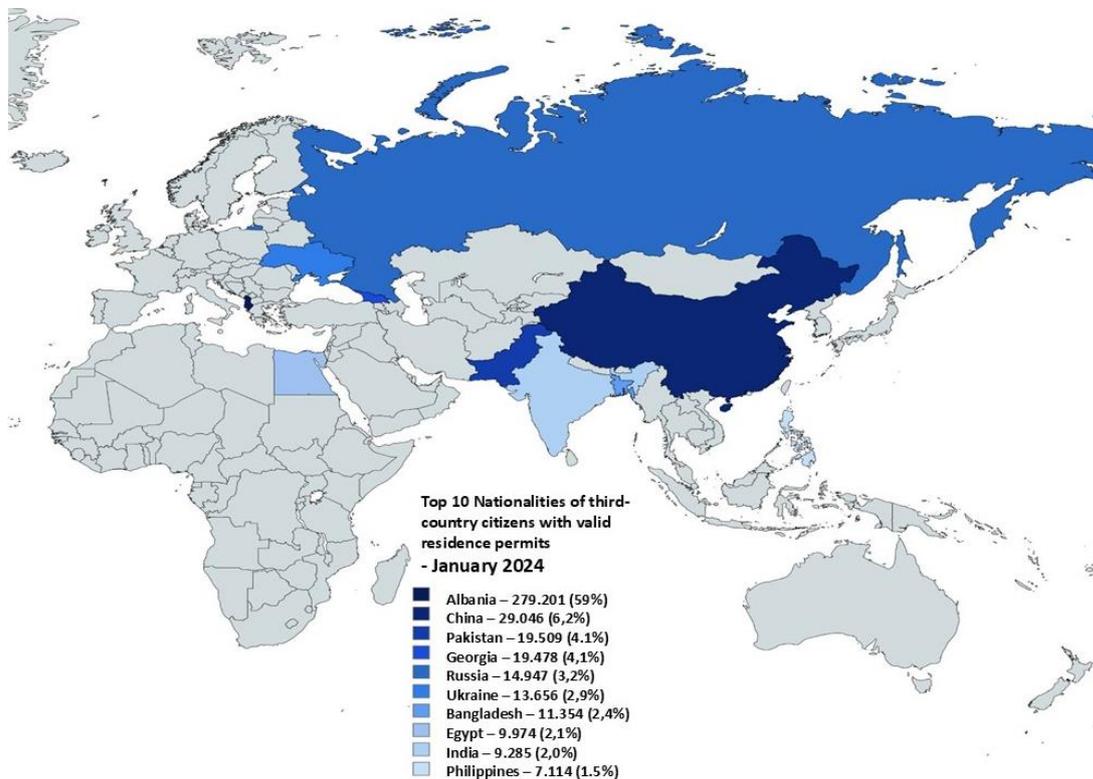


Figure 8 : Overview of the Top 10 Nationalities with Valid Residence Permits in Greece.

A map displaying the distribution of the top 10 nationalities of third-country citizens holding valid residence permits in Greece as of January 2024. Figure adapted and modified from Data sourced from the Greek Ministry of Migration and Asylum (2024).

While the number of multilingual students in individual classrooms was generally low, average of about 2-3 foreign language students per class (Fourtounis, 2011), the variety of languages, ranging from Albanian and Ukrainian to lesser-represented languages such as Urdu and Czech, indicates a complex linguistic landscape. Teachers must navigate this diversity while balancing the need for inclusion with the demands of teaching the national curriculum.

5.3 The Role of students' First Languages in Learning and Inclusion

The findings of this study highlight the complex and often contested role of students' L1s in Greek primary school classrooms. When asked whether they encourage students to use

their first language, 60% of teachers reported doing so, while 40% indicated that they do not. This reflects a broader debate in multilingual education regarding the benefits and challenges of L1 use in learning environments (Cummins, 2001; García & Wei, 2014; Matheoudakis, et.al., 2017). More than half of teachers (56%) perceived L1 use as beneficial, emphasizing its positive impact on student engagement and cognitive development. These findings are consistent with research suggesting that allowing students to draw on their L1 in the classroom fosters participation, enhances comprehension, and supports a deeper understanding of new concepts (Cummins, 2007; García, 2009). Bilingual education models that incorporate the teaching of the L1 language contribute to a better understanding of the Greek language (Stergiou, & Simopoulos, 2024). In contrast, 16% of teachers viewed L1 use negatively, while 28% believed it had no significant effect (Matheoudakis, et.al., 2017). This division in perspectives aligns with studies indicating that while many teachers recognize the advantages of multilingualism, institutional and ideological barriers often discourage the integration of students' L1s in mainstream classrooms (Gkaintartzi et al., 2014; Tsokalidou, 2012).

A key issue explored in this study was the extent to which L1 use influences students' academic performance and social inclusion. The results indicate that 60% of teachers believe L1 use enhances these aspects, suggesting that multilingual practices may contribute to a more inclusive and equitable learning environment. This aligns with research showing that incorporating students' L1 can strengthen their academic confidence and foster a sense of belonging, particularly for immigrant and refugee students (García & Kleifgen, 2018; Skourtou, 2015). However, 12% of teachers disagreed with this perspective, and 28% expressed uncertainty, suggesting that further professional development may be needed to raise awareness of the importance of using students' L1 in the classroom.

Regarding the impact of L1 on Greek language acquisition (L2), 76% of teachers acknowledged its influence. This is in line with the theory of linguistic interdependence (Cummins, 2001) that suggests that proficiency in a student's L1 can support second-language learning, as cognitive and literacy skills transfer across languages. Nevertheless, 24% of teachers believed that L1 had no significant effect on L2 acquisition, reflecting a divide in perceptions that has been documented in prior studies (Gkaintartzi et al., 2014; Tsokalidou, 2012).

These findings echo broader trends in Greek education, where attitudes toward multilingualism remain mixed. While some teacher recognizes the value of bilingualism, many still view L1s as an obstacle to Greek language acquisition. Gkaintartzi et al. (2014)

found that 79.2% of teachers believed L1 instruction should be scheduled outside of regular school hours, reinforcing the notion that Greek should remain the dominant classroom language. This highlights the persistence of monolingual ideologies in Greek education and the need for policies that promote linguistic diversity as a resource rather than a challenge (Skourtou et al., 2006). More recent research by Tsokalidou (2021) has shown that although linguistic diversity in Greek schools has increased significantly, the institutional system remains dedicated to the teaching of the Greek language, limiting the integration of students' languages and intercultural education.

5.4 Perceived Role of Multilingualism in Education

Teachers had divided opinions, viewing the impact of multilingualism in education from both positive and negative perspectives, but in general they widely recognized the value of multilingualism in promoting communication, cognitive development, and cultural understanding.

Multilingual classrooms were perceived as inclusive spaces that celebrate cultural diversity and foster global awareness, aligning with research highlighting the benefits of linguistic diversity in education (García & Lin, 2017). Teachers acknowledged that multilingualism enhances critical thinking and language acquisition, supporting Cummins' (2001) theory of linguistic interdependence. However, some teachers noted that these advantages could be hindered by language proficiency gaps among students, emphasizing the need for targeted instructional strategies to support learners at different linguistic levels (Gkaintartzi et al., 2014).

Linguistic diversity was largely seen as an advantage that foster student engagement and intercultural competence. Teachers highlighted activities such as language-sharing exercises and cultural celebrations as effective ways to enhance classroom dynamics, a perspective supported by studies indicating that multilingual practices contribute to positive learning environments (Cenoz & Gorter, 2022). However, communication barriers, particularly when students used their L1 in ways that hindered comprehension during lessons, were identified as potential challenges. Some educators viewed these instances as distractions, though research suggests that structured multilingual strategies can help manage such issues effectively (Creese & Blackledge, 2010).

Finally, most teachers supported the use of students' L1 as a tool for both academic and emotional support, believing it fosters confidence and aids L2 learning, in this case Greece. Strategies such as comparing language structures and incorporating students' cultural backgrounds into lessons were commonly employed, reinforcing the idea that a multilingual approach can enhance student outcomes (Conteh, 2018). However, a minority of teachers expressed concerns that excessive reliance on L1 might slow Greek language acquisition for certain students, a debate reflected in broader discussions about balancing bilingual education with national language proficiency goals (Siarova et al., 2017).

5.5 Implementation of Multilingual Educational Practices

The findings reveal that while a majority of teachers (15 out of 25) reported implementing multilingual practices in their classrooms, the extent and nature of these practices varied significantly. The most frequently employed strategies align with established multilingual education frameworks, including translanguaging, scaffolded language support, CRT, collaborative learning, and bilingual models.

One of the most commonly cited approaches was translanguaging, where teachers encouraged students to explain concepts in their first language or compare Greek to it. This aligns with García and Wei's (2014) perspective on translanguaging as a means to facilitate comprehension and reinforce learning. Similarly, scaffolded language support was evident through the use of bilingual dictionaries and peer assistance from older bilingual students, providing structured guidance to second-language learners (Gibbons, 2015). These strategies helped bridge linguistic gaps and ensured better engagement with the curriculum. Furthermore, several teachers implemented CRT by incorporating multilingual greetings, cultural discussions, and presentations. Such practices reflect Hollie's (2017) definition of CRT, which emphasizes adapting teaching to recognize students' linguistic and cultural diversity. Likewise, collaborative learning was promoted through group activities where students used their first language for discussion before presenting in Greek, in line with García et al. (2011) and Kibler et al. (2024), who highlight the benefits of leveraging the linguistic strengths of all members of the school community.

Although bilingual models were not explicitly adopted in the form of structured dual-language instruction, some teachers attempted to integrate bilingual approaches through translation exercises and cross-linguistic comparisons. Additionally, while parental participation was not a primary focus, discussions about students' cultural backgrounds in

class may indicate an indirect effort to bridge the gap between home and school, reinforcing Arias's (2015) view on preserving students' linguistic and cultural identity.

Despite these positive efforts, barriers to multilingual education remain evident. Ten teachers reported not implementing any multilingual practices, citing challenges such as a lack of resources, training, large class sizes, and uncertainty about how to integrate such approaches effectively. These limitations suggest a need for targeted professional development and institutional support to enable educators to implement multilingual strategies more consistently and effectively.

The analysis of teacher responses highlights the essential resources and tools required for the effective implementation of multilingual practices in Greek primary schools. The findings indicate that educators recognize the importance of educational programs, teaching materials, and technology as key elements in supporting multilingual education.

A significant number of teachers emphasized the necessity of bilingual teaching materials, such as dual-language books, dictionaries, and visual aids. These resources align with best practices in multilingual education, enabling students to bridge their first language with Greek more effectively. The role of culturally inclusive textbooks and printed materials was also mentioned, reinforcing the need for instructional resources that reflect students' diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

Technology emerged as a crucial tool, with teachers advocating for digital platforms, translation applications, interactive whiteboards, and specialized educational software to facilitate multilingual learning. The integration of AI-powered translation tools, multilingual learning apps, and digital games was particularly highlighted as a way to engage students and support language acquisition. These findings are consistent with research emphasizing the transformative role of technology in second-language learning, allowing for more personalized and adaptive instruction.

In addition to materials and technology, several teachers stressed the importance of specialized training programs and professional development. They pointed out that many educators lack the necessary preparation to implement multilingual strategies effectively, highlighting the need for structured teacher training workshops, ongoing support, and access to a shared repository of multilingual resources. This aligns with the broader discussion in language education research, which underscores the role of teacher training in the successful implementation of inclusive practices.

A few responses also referenced the importance of physical classroom resources, including posters, flashcards, and culturally relevant visual materials, as well as interactive learning

activities, such as multilingual songs, role-playing, and storytelling. These methods can help create a more engaging and supportive learning environment for multilingual students.

Despite these insights, some teachers noted challenges related to resource availability and institutional support. Limited access to bilingual materials, inadequate technological infrastructure, and a lack of structured multilingual curricula were identified as barriers. These concerns point to the need for systematic policy changes and increased investment in multilingual education, ensuring that all teachers have the tools and training necessary to support their students effectively.

Regarding the methods used to support linguistic diversity in the classroom and enhance the inclusion of multilingual students, only 14 teachers participated, of which, only, 9 shared the methods they use. A key approach identified was the use of multilingual greetings and cultural presentations. Teachers encouraged students to greet the class in their L1 during morning routines, reinforcing a sense of inclusion and linguistic awareness. Similarly, students were given opportunities to share traditions, customs, and recipes from their home countries, fostering cross-cultural dialogue.

Another frequently mentioned practice was the creation of multilingual materials, such as bilingual dictionaries and multilingual vocabulary lists. Some teachers engaged students in translating key phrases, holiday greetings, and basic words into multiple languages, sometimes using technology to facilitate the process. These activities align with scaffolded language support, as they allow students to compare languages, recognize similarities, and develop metalinguistic awareness.

Teachers also implemented multilingual music and storytelling as educational tools. For example, one activity involved singing a well-known song and translating it into different languages, helping students develop both linguistic and cultural connections. Additionally, multilingual storytelling activities, such as reading or translating stories in multiple languages, were used to promote literacy and inclusivity.

Some teachers introduced multilingual projects that encouraged collaborative learning. For instance, activities such as describing countries in different languages, sharing cultural elements, and mapping words between languages allowed students to explore linguistic diversity while reinforcing their Greek language skills. These approaches align with CRT, as they validate students' linguistic identities and create a more inclusive learning environment.

Despite these efforts, 5 teachers indicated that they had not implemented multilingual practices in their classrooms, suggesting potential barriers such as lack of training,

resources, or confidence in integrating multiple languages into their teaching. This underscores the need for structured professional development programs to equip educators with effective multilingual strategies.

5.6 Challenges and Institutional Support

The integration of multilingual practices in education is hindered by several challenges identified by teachers, including time constraints, lack of resources, resistance from parents and colleagues, and inadequate training. These barriers highlight the need for enhanced institutional support.

A main obstacle teachers face is the lack of time to incorporate multilingual practices due to heavy curriculum demands. This finding aligns with previous research that emphasizes the tension between curriculum delivery and the adoption of innovative teaching methods (Gao, 2014). Additionally, resistance from parents, particularly those of Greek heritage, who fear multilingualism may hinder their children's acquisition of Greek, further complicates the integration of multilingual strategies. Teachers also noted insufficient infrastructure, including the lack of bilingual materials and appropriate technological tools, which restricts effective multilingual instruction (Cummins, 2000). The absence of professional development opportunities in multilingual education also leaves teachers unprepared for managing linguistically diverse classrooms (Aronin & Ó Laoire, 2011; Gkaintartzi & Tsokolidou, 2021).

Teachers reported varying levels of institutional support for multilingual approaches. While some administrators expressed theoretical support, practical resources and time were often lacking. This disconnect between policy and practice has been widely documented (Cenoz & Gorter, 2011; Dendrinos, 2020). To enhance support, teachers suggested implementing targeted professional development programs, providing bilingual materials, and investing in better infrastructure. Stergiou and Simopoulos (2024) in their research found that the intercultural readiness of educators, and the positive attitude towards multilingualism associated with the creation of the union environment that promotes a sense of belonging, empowerment and intercultural interaction. Flexible curricula and smaller class sizes were recommended to better accommodate multilingual students' needs (Skourtou, 2019).

Finally, increased engagement with parents, especially those skeptical of multilingualism, was also seen as vital for fostering broader support for multilingual education.

5.7 Suggestions and Future Perspectives

The findings of this study highlight essential areas for improvement in integrating multilingual practices in Greek primary schools. Teachers recommended structural changes, with one key suggestion being co-teaching between general educators and specialists from ZEP schools, aligning with research advocating for collaborative teaching models in linguistically diverse classrooms (Cenoz & Gorter, 2011). Furthermore, teachers emphasized the effectiveness of project-based learning, where students engage in real-world projects to develop knowledge and skills. This approach helps integrate multilingualism naturally into the curriculum, fostering active participation (Cummins, 2000).

Another significant recommendation was reducing class sizes and grouping students based on linguistic background to provide tailored instruction. This is supported by studies showing that differentiated instruction can improve the academic success of multilingual students (García & Lin, 2017). Teachers also called for dedicated time within the curriculum for multilingual integration, such as a weekly class hour, to ensure systematic implementation. Moreover, increased funding for multilingual teaching materials, technology, and teacher training programs was seen as crucial for creating a sustainable multilingual education framework. Strengthening cooperation between schools, parents, and the broader community was also highlighted as essential in promoting awareness and acceptance of multilingual practices (Baker, 2011).

A key issue identified was the need for targeted teacher training to successfully implement multilingual education. Teachers advocated for experiential workshops and intercultural education seminars to enhance their understanding of multilingualism's benefits. Research indicates that professional development in cultural sensitivity and differentiated instruction is critical for multilingual classrooms (Aronin & Ó Laoire, 2011). Specialized training improves teachers' ability to manage multilingual classrooms, promotes inclusive education, and enhances student outcomes (Amin et al., 2024). Furthermore, training programs should focus on integrating technological tools, an increasingly necessary skill in modern educational settings (García & Wei, 2014).

Moreover, there was strong support for incorporating intercultural education courses into university teacher training programs to reinforce multilingual competencies from the outset.

However, many of these programs, such as "Intercultural Education: Theoretical and Experiential Approaches" at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, and "Annual Training in Intercultural Education" at Panteion University, are paid professional development courses. There are also postgraduate programs, such as "Intercultural Studies and Greek as a Second Language" at Frederick University and "Intercultural Education and Mediation" at the University of Nicosia, which require substantial fees. The cost of these programs limits their accessibility, particularly for educators and students with fewer financial resources.

Teachers envisioned an ideal multilingual education model where multilingualism is integrated across all subjects, rather than being confined to specific lessons. This approach aligns with research showing that integration of multilingual practices into everyday learning promotes inclusion and cognitive flexibility (Bialystok, 2018).

In the ideal multilingual classroom, teachers emphasized the importance of respect, diversity, and engaging learning experiences. Reducing stereotypes and promoting peer learning, where students share their L1s and cultures, was seen as vital. This supports findings that multilingual education fosters social cohesion and critical thinking (Skutnabb-Kangas & McCarty, 2008). Additionally, teachers emphasized the importance of flexibility in adapting multilingual practices throughout the school year, ensuring they are seen as integral to the learning process rather than supplementary.

5.8 Engagement with European Programs

European Programs and Support The findings on teachers' familiarity with European programs such as Erasmus+ and Creative Europe reveal a significant gap in awareness and engagement. With only 12% of teachers reporting familiarity with these programs, it is clear that there is a need for greater support and communication regarding the opportunities these initiatives offer. This lack of awareness is consistent with previous studies that found limited participation in European programs among Greek educators (OECD, 2024). The barriers to engagement with European programs identified by teachers, such as excessive workload, lack of proper training, and bureaucratic obstacles, mirror the challenges faced by teachers across Europe.

According to the European Commission (2023), one of the key obstacles to teachers' participation in European educational programs is the time commitment required, especially given their already demanding roles. Additionally, the complexity of application processes

and lack of support from educational authorities are common barriers that hinder teachers from fully engaging with these programs. Teachers' recommendations for improving accessibility to European programs, such as enhanced communication, simplified application processes, and increased institutional support, are all valid and align with current policy recommendations aimed at increasing teacher engagement in European educational initiatives. Ensuring equal opportunities for both substitute and permanent staff and reducing financial and bureaucratic barriers are crucial for making these programs more inclusive and beneficial for all educators (European Commission, 2023).

6. Conclusion remarks

The present research aimed to investigate multilingual practices in the context of public primary schools, focusing on teachers' views and attitudes, the challenges they face and the institutional support they receive. With the current demographic data characterizing the population of Greece, primary school classrooms are increasingly characterized by linguistic diversity, while requiring specific intercultural and multilingual techniques. In the context of the present research, it was investigated to what extent primary school teachers employ intercultural techniques, and to what extent they are supported in this process, as social and political conditions worldwide, position Greece as a station of migratory flows.

The results of the present study revealed that although many teachers recognize the important role of multilingualism, social inclusion and cognitive development, their implementation is not so easy. More specifically, it was found that on the one hand, the majority of teachers support the use of students' L1 language in the classroom while recognizing its benefits in learning L2, on the other hand, many teachers are not ready for a clear integration of L1 in the classroom, due to institutional barriers, ideologies that reject bilingualism in the classroom, and due to lack of appropriate professional training. The above contrast highlights the difference between the theoretical support for multilingual practices and the practical difficulties of implementation on the part of teachers.

In the context of the present research, the different ways and approaches used by teachers were highlighted. Many of them promoted students' use of L1 language by asking them specific words. Such and similar practices promote a sense of belonging on the part of the

students. Besides this, several teachers stress the lack of professional training, lack of resources and institutional barriers as important problems in multilingual education.

Several teachers also stress the importance of bilingual materials, technological tools and special training programmes to improve their teaching in terms of intercultural education.

In this way, the present thesis is part of a series of literature references that emphasize professional development in the context of intercultural education. The present thesis also highlighted the inconsistencies that characterize the institutional support received by primary education educators.

Although the present research faced certain limitations, as the 25 respondents are considered a small sample, the results of the present research highlighted specific trends and opinions of the educators. The difficulty in finding a sufficient number of participants, despite efforts, highlighted the difficulty in reaching teachers for the purpose of studying intercultural education. The limitations of the present study are not only limited to the number of participants, but also to their responses, as these did not include specific materials that would help them to better understand their views. Additionally, it should be noted that the majority of participants had no more than 5 years of teaching experience, which does not represent a wide range of teachers with experience or separation. Finally, none of the participants worked in intercultural schools, in which intercultural education is undoubtedly very important. For this reason, future research is needed.

Based on the results of the research, specific recommendations can be made, both in terms of teacher training and policy. More specifically, at the first level it is proposed to include multilingual pedagogy in teacher training. At a second level, it is proposed to incorporate corresponding policies that do not see multilingualism as a challenge within the educational process, but as a potential through which all students, regardless of their linguistic and cultural background, can benefit. In addition, it is proposed to expand programmes such as Erasmus+ and Creative Europe, with the aim of professional development for teachers and immersion in intercultural contexts and experiences. Finally, contact between the school and the local community, parents and other stakeholders and policymakers is essential to develop a sense of intercultural and inter-linguistic cooperation.

Overall, this thesis highlights the important role of intercultural education in the context of primary education. At the same time, it highlights the difficulties faced by teachers themselves in intercultural settings and proposes concrete solutions at the educational and policy level for its more effective integration both in the educational process and in the minds of teachers, students and various other stakeholders. Ultimately, comprehensive and properly integrated intercultural education in primary education can create more inclusive and culturally responsive learning spaces that benefit all students, regardless of their linguistic background.

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Appendix A: Official List of primary Intercultural Schools in Greece

List of primary Intercultural Schools in Greece:

list <https://edu.klimaka.gr/sxoleia/diapolitismika/548-katalogos-sxoleia-diapolitismikis-ekpaideyshs>

1. **Δημοτικό Σχολείο Διαπολιτισμικής Εκπαίδευσης Αλσούπολης Αθήνας**
Ελευθερίας 18, 14235 Ν. Ιωνία
Tel: 210-2776459, 210-2751176
Email: mail@dim-diap-n-ionias.att.sch.gr
2. **Δημοτικό Σχολείο Διαπολιτισμικής Εκπαίδευσης Αμφιθέας Αθήνας**
Τύρινθος 3, 17564 Αμφιθέα
Tel: 210-9423118
Email: dimdiapf@sch.gr
3. **87ο Δημοτικό Σχολείο Διαπολιτισμικής Εκπαίδευσης Αθήνας**
Ορφέως 58, 11854 Βοτανικός
Tel: 210-3465125
Email: mail@87dim-athin.att.sch.gr
4. **Δημοτικό Σχολείο Διαπολιτισμικής Εκπαίδευσης Χανίων**
Αν. Μάντακα 111, 73136 Χανιά
Tel: 28210-97348, 28210-97640
Email: mail@16dim-diap-chanion.chan.sch.gr
5. **Δημοτικό Σχολείο Διαπολιτισμικής Εκπαίδευσης Θεσσαλονίκης**
Καπάτου & Γαλανάκη, 54629 Θεσ/νίκη
Tel: 2310-529932
Email: mail@dim-diap-thess.thess.sch.gr
6. **3ο Δημ. Σχολείο Διαπολιτισμικής Εκπαίδευσης Μενεμένης Θεσ/νίκης**
Κων/πόλεως 58, 54628 Θεσ/νίκη
Tel: 2310-763945
Email: mail@3dim-diap-menem.thess.sch.gr
7. **5ο Δημ. Σχολείο Διαπολιτισμικής Εκπαίδευσης Μενεμένης Θεσ/νίκης**
Κων/πόλεως 58, 54628 Θεσ/νίκη
Tel: 2310-763945, 2310-707313
Email: mail@5dim-menem.thess.sch.gr
8. **Δημοτικό Σχολείο Διαπολιτισμικής Εκπ/σης Νέων Επιβατών Θεσ/νίκης**
Σχολείων 1 - 57019, Νέοι Επιβάτες Θεσ/νίκη
Tel: 23920-23133
Email: mail@dim-n-epivat.thess.sch.gr
9. **6ο Δημοτικό Σχολείο Διαπολιτισμικής Εκπαίδευσης Ευόσμου Θεσ/νίκης**
Ειρήνης & Μακεδονομάχων, 56224 Θεσ/νίκη
Tel: 2310-764235, 2310-765326
Email: mail@6dim-evosm.thess.sch.gr
Website: 6dim-evosm.thess.sch.gr
10. **6ο Διαπολιτισμικό και Ολοήμερο Δημοτικό Σχολείο Ελευθερίου-Κορδελιού Θεσ/νίκης**
Δαβάκη 18, 56334 Ελ-Κορδελιό Θεσ/νίκη
Tel: 2310-761420, 2310-705638
Email: mail@6dim-diap-elefth.thess.sch.gr
Website: 6dim-diap-elefth.thess.sch.gr

11. **9ο Δημοτικό Σχολείο Διαπολιτισμικής Εκπ/σης Ιωαννίνων**
Γλυκίδων 145221, Κάστρο Ιωάννινα
Tel: 26510-22203
Email: mail@9dim-ioann.ioa.sch.gr

12. **Δημοτικό Σχολείο Διαπολιτισμικής Εκπαίδευσης Σαπών Ροδόπης**
Γ. Γεννηματά 2, 69300 Σάπες
Tel: 25320-22066, 25320-21037
Email: mail@dim-sapon.rod.sch.gr
Website: dim-sapon.rod.sch.gr

13. **Δημοτικό Σχολείο Διαπολιτισμικής Εκπαίδευσης Ιάσμου Ροδόπης**
Ίασμος, 69200 Ροδόπη
Tel: 25340-22267, 25340-21003
Email: mail@dim-iasmou.rod.sch.gr

APPENDIX B: THE Questionnaire (English and Greek Versions)

Questionnaire in English:

The following is the English version of the questionnaire that was used for data collection. This questionnaire was created online through Google Forms

Multilingual Practices in Greek Primary Schools: Teachers' Insights and Perspectives

The aim of the present survey is to explore teachers' opinions, experiences, and suggestions regarding the integration of multilingual practices in Greek primary schools. It particularly focuses on classrooms with a high presence of students from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, including refugees, migrants, and Roma students.

The survey is addressed to Greek primary school teachers and is conducted as part of the research requirements for a Master's Thesis within the *Language Education for Refugees and Migrants* postgraduate program at the Hellenic Open University.

The results of this survey will be used exclusively for research purposes, ensuring complete anonymity. Your honest responses are essential for drawing reliable conclusions and understanding the challenges and opportunities in implementing multilingual practices in education.

Completing this questionnaire will take approximately 15 minutes, and your participation will significantly contribute to the successful completion of this study.

Thank you for your valuable time and input.

1. **Teacher Profile ***

Gender:

Να επισημαίνεται μόνο μία έλλειψη.

Male

Female

2. **Age: ***

Να επισημαίνεται μόνο μία έλλειψη.

20-29

30-39

40-49

50+

3. **Years of Teaching Experience: ***

Να επισημαίνεται μόνο μία έλλειψη.

0-5

6-10

11-20

21+

4. **Grade Levels You Teach: ***

Να επισημαίνεται μόνο μία έλλειψη.

Grades 1-2 (Α'-Β')

Grades 3-4 (Γ'-Δ')

Grades 5-6 (Ε'-ΣΤ')

5. **Have you received training in intercultural education? ***

Να επισημαίνεται μόνο μία έλλειψη.

Yes

No

Multilingual Students in Your Classroom

According to Szczepaniak-Kozak et al. (2023:57), "multilingualism is used for all forms of using two or more languages, while in others, bilingualism is used to denote the use of only two languages". Here we refer to a person who understands/speaks two or more languages as multilingualism, considering bilingualism as a special form of multilingualism.

6. **What is the total number of students in your classroom? ***

Να επισημαίνεται μόνο μία έλλειψη.

Fewer than 10

10-20

21-30

31+

7. **From which countries or regions do your students originate? ***

(Please list the countries or regions of origin of your students.)

8. **What languages do your students speak?**
(Please list all the languages spoken by your students, including dialects or regional variations.)

9. **How many multilingual students do you teach in your classroom?** (This includes bilingual students as stated in the definition above, where multilingualism refers to individuals who understand or speak two or more languages.)

Να επισημαίνεται μόνο μία έλλειψη.

- 0-5
- 6-10
- 11-15
- 16-20
- More than 20

10. **Do you encourage your students to use their heritage language in the classroom?**

Να επισημαίνεται μόνο μία έλλειψη.

- Yes
- No

11. **How does the use of students' heritage languages affect their participation in classroom activities and overall learning?**

Να επισημαίνεται μόνο μία έλλειψη.

- Positively
 Negatively
 No significant impact

12. **Do you believe that using students' heritage languages improves their academic performance and social inclusion?**

Να επισημαίνεται μόνο μία έλλειψη.

- Yes
 No
 Not sure

13. **Do you think that the possibility of using the students' first language affects the learning of Greek as C2?**

Να επισημαίνεται μόνο μία έλλειψη.

- Yes
 No

Untitled Section Experiences and Perspectives with Multilingual Educational Practices

Multilingual

educational practices refer to the purposeful use of multiple languages in educational settings to foster communication, learning, and cultural understanding. These practices involve recognizing and utilizing students' diverse linguistic backgrounds by integrating their native languages alongside the language of instruction. This approach enhances language awareness, supports inclusion, and improves learning outcomes by valuing students' multilingualism and cultural identities.

Ruiz, R. (1984). Orientations in language planning. *NABE Journal*, 8(2), 15-34. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08855072.1984.10668464>

Calafato, R. (2021). Teachers' reported implementation of multilingual teaching practices in foreign language classrooms in Norway and Russia. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 105, 103401. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2021.103401>

14. **How do you perceive the role of multilingualism in education?** *
- (What impact do you think it has on teaching strategies and the integration of students with diverse linguistic backgrounds?)

15. **Have you observed positive or negative effects of linguistic diversity in your classroom?** *
- (Please share specific examples or experiences to illustrate your observations.)

16. **What are your views on using students' heritage languages in the teaching process?** *

(Do you think it contributes to their inclusion and engagement? Why or why not?)

Implementation of Multilingual Educational Practices

17. **Have you implemented multilingual practices in your classroom? If yes, what practices have you used, and what were the outcomes?** *

(If not, what are the main limitations or barriers you face in implementing these practices?)

18. **What resources or tools do you consider essential for effectively implementing multilingual practices?** *

(e.g., teaching materials, training programs, technology.)

19. **What strategies or methods do you use to support linguistic diversity in your classroom and enhance the inclusion of multilingual students?** *
- (Please describe the practices you implement to support linguistic and cultural integration.)

Challenges and Institutional Support

20. **What are the main challenges you face in integrating multilingual practices into your school?** *
- (Consider issues such as training, time constraints, infrastructure, or the attitudes of parents and colleagues.)

21. **How supportive is your school or administration in using multilingual approaches? What could be done to enhance this support ?** *

Suggestions and Future Perspectives

22. **What changes or improvements do you think are necessary for the integration of multilingual practices in Greek schools?** *

23. **What suggestions do you have for the training of teachers in using multilingual methods?** *

24. **How do you envision the ideal implementation of multilingual practices in primary education? (What would be the main priorities and benefits?)** *

European Programs and Support

25. **Are you familiar with how to collaborate with European programs or initiatives (such as Erasmus+, Creative Europe, etc.) that support multilingual education?** *

Να επισημαίνεται μόνο μία έλλειψη.

Yes

No

26. **If yes, please describe how you have worked with these programs. If no, please explain why you haven't been able to engage with them.**

27. **Do you believe that European programs, such as Erasmus+ or Creative Europe, are accessible to you as a teacher in Greece?** *

Να επισημαίνεται μόνο μία έλλειψη.

Yes

No

28. **What do you think could be done to make these programs more accessible to teachers in your position?** *

Thank you very much for your participation! Your opinions are valuable for the promotion of research and the integration of multilingual practices in education in Greece.

Questionnaire in Greek:

The following is the Greek version of the questionnaire that was used for data collection. This questionnaire was created and distributed online through Google Forms to participants.

Πολυγλωσσικές Πρακτικές στα Δημοτικά Σχολεία της Ελλάδας: Απόψεις και Στρατηγικές των Δασκάλων

Αγαπητέ/ή Εκπαιδευτικέ,

Ο σκοπός της παρούσας έρευνας είναι να διερευνήσει τις απόψεις, τις εμπειρίες και τις προτάσεις των δασκάλων σχετικά με την ενσωμάτωση πολυγλωσσικών πρακτικών στα ελληνικά δημοτικά σχολεία. Επικεντρώνεται ιδιαίτερα στις τάξεις με υψηλή παρουσία μαθητών από διαφορετικά γλωσσικά και πολιτισμικά υπόβαθρα, περιλαμβανομένων των μαθητών προσφύγων, μεταναστών και Ρομά και άλλων εθνοτικών ομάδων.

Η έρευνα απευθύνεται σε δασκάλους των δημοτικών σχολείων της Ελλάδας και διεξάγεται στο πλαίσιο των απαιτήσεων της μεταπτυχιακής διατριβής του προγράμματος Εκπαίδευσης Γλωσσών για Πρόσφυγες και Μετανάστες του Ελληνικού Ανοικτού Πανεπιστημίου.

Τα αποτελέσματα αυτής της έρευνας θα χρησιμοποιηθούν αποκλειστικά για ερευνητικούς σκοπούς, διασφαλίζοντας πλήρη ανωνυμία.

Η συμπλήρωση του ερωτηματολογίου θα διαρκέσει περίπου 15 λεπτά, και η συμμετοχή σας θα συμβάλει σημαντικά στην επιτυχή ολοκλήρωση αυτής της μελέτης.

Ευχαριστούμε εκ των προτέρων για τη συμμετοχή σας!

Ευαγγελία
Ξενικάκη

1. **Προφίλ Εκπαιδευτικού ***

Φύλο:

Να επισημαίνεται μόνο μία έλλειψη.

Άνδρας

Γυναίκα

2. **Ηλικία : ***

Να επισημαίνεται μόνο μία έλλειψη.

20-29

30-39

40-49

50+

3. **Έτη Διδακτικής Εμπειρίας : ***

Να επισημαίνεται μόνο μία έλλειψη.

0-5

6-10

11-20

21+

4. **Βαθμίδες που Διδάσκετε:** *

Να επισημαίνεται μόνο μία έλλειψη.

- Τάξεις Α'-Β'
- Τάξεις Γ'-Δ'
- Τάξεις Ε'-ΣΤ'

5. **Έχετε οποιαδήποτε εκπαιδευτική κατάρτιση στην διαπολιτισμική εκπαίδευση;** *

Να επισημαίνεται μόνο μία έλλειψη.

- Ναι
- Όχι

Πολύγλωσσοι Μαθητές στην Τάξη σας

Σύμφωνα με τη Szczepaniak-Kozak et al. (2023:57), "η πολυγλωσσία χρησιμοποιείται για όλες τις μορφές χρήσης δύο ή περισσότερων γλωσσών, ενώ σε άλλα, η δίγλωσσία χρησιμοποιείται για να υποδηλώσει τη χρήση μόνο δύο γλωσσών". Εδώ αναφερόμαστε σε ένα άτομο που κατανοεί/μιλά δύο ή περισσότερες γλώσσες ως πολύγλωσσο, θεωρώντας τη δίγλωσσία ως μια ειδική μορφή πολυγλωσσίας.

6. **Ποιος είναι ο συνολικός αριθμός μαθητών στην τάξη σας;** *

Να επισημαίνεται μόνο μία έλλειψη.

- Λιγότεροι από 10
- 10-20
- 21-25

7. **Από ποιες χώρες ή περιοχές προέρχονται οι μαθητές σας;** *
(Παρακαλώ αναφέρετε τις χώρες ή περιοχές προέλευσης των μαθητών σας.)

8. **Ποιες γλώσσες μιλούν οι μαθητές σας;** *
(Παρακαλώ αναφέρετε όλες τις γλώσσες που μιλούν οι μαθητές σας, συμπεριλαμβανομένων των διαλέκτων ή τοπικών παραλλαγών.)

9. **Πόσοι μαθητές στην τάξη σας είναι πολύγλωσσοι;** *
(Αυτό περιλαμβάνει δίγλωσσους μαθητές όπως ορίζεται παραπάνω, όπου η πολυγλωσσία αναφέρεται σε άτομα που κατανοούν ή μιλούν δύο ή περισσότερες γλώσσες.)

Να επισημαίνεται μόνο μία έλλειψη.

- 0-5
- 6-10
- 11-15
- 16-20
- Περισσότεροι από 20

10. **Ενθαρρύνετε τους μαθητές σας να χρησιμοποιούν τη μητρική/ πρώτη τους γλώσσα (Γ1) στην τάξη;** *

Να επισημαίνεται μόνο μία έλλειψη.

Ναι

Όχι

11. **Πώς επηρεάζει η χρήση της μητρικής γλώσσας των μαθητών τη συμμετοχή τους στις δραστηριότητες της τάξης και τη γενικότερη μάθηση;** *

Να επισημαίνεται μόνο μία έλλειψη.

Θετικά

Αρνητικά

Χωρίς σημαντική επίδραση

12. **Πιστεύετε ότι η δυνατότητα χρήση της μητρικής γλώσσας των μαθητών βελτιώνει την ακαδημαϊκή τους απόδοση και την κοινωνική τους ένταξη;** *

Να επισημαίνεται μόνο μία έλλειψη.

Ναι

Όχι

Δεν είμαι σίγουρος/η

13. **Πιστεύετε ότι η δυνατότητα της χρήσης της μητρικής γλώσσας των μαθητών επηρεάζει την εκμάθηση της Ελληνικής ως Γ2;** *

Να επισημαίνεται μόνο μία έλλειψη.

Ναι

Όχι

Εμπειρίες και Απόψεις για τις Πολύγλωσσες Εκπαιδευτικές Πρακτικές

Οι πολύγλωσσες εκπαιδευτικές πρακτικές αναφέρονται στη σκόπιμη χρήση πολλών γλωσσών σε εκπαιδευτικά περιβάλλοντα για την προώθηση της επικοινωνίας, της μάθησης και της πολιτισμικής κατανόησης. Αυτές οι πρακτικές περιλαμβάνουν την αναγνώριση και αξιοποίηση των γλωσσικών υπόβαθρων των μαθητών, ενσωματώνοντας τις μητρικές τους γλώσσες παράλληλα με τη γλώσσα διδασκαλίας. Αυτή η προσέγγιση ενισχύει τη γλωσσική επίγνωση, υποστηρίζει την ένταξη και βελτιώνει τα μαθησιακά αποτελέσματα, εκτιμώντας την πολυγλωσσία και τις πολιτισμικές ταυτότητες των μαθητών.

Ruiz, R. (1984). Orientations in language planning. *NABE Journal*, 8(2), 15-

34. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08855072.1984.10668464>

Calafato, R. (2021). Teachers' reported implementation of multilingual teaching practices in foreign language classrooms in Norway and Russia. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 105, 103401. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2021.103401>

14. Πώς αντιλαμβάνεστε τον ρόλο της πολυγλωσσίας στην εκπαίδευση; *

(Ποια επίδραση θεωρείτε ότι έχει στις διδακτικές στρατηγικές και στην ένταξη μαθητών με διαφορετικά γλωσσικά υπόβαθρα;)

15. Έχετε παρατηρήσει θετικές ή αρνητικές επιδράσεις της γλωσσικής ποικιλομορφίας στην τάξη σας; *

(Παρακαλούμε μοιραστείτε συγκεκριμένα παραδείγματα ή εμπειρίες για να υποστηρίξετε τις παρατηρήσεις σας.)

16. Ποιες είναι οι απόψεις σας σχετικά με τη χρήση των μητρικών γλωσσών των μαθητών στη διδακτική διαδικασία; *
(Πιστεύετε ότι συμβάλλει στην ένταξή τους και τη συμμετοχή τους;)

Εφαρμογή Πολύγλωσσων Εκπαιδευτικών Πρακτικών

17. Έχετε εφαρμόσει πολύγλωσσες πρακτικές στην τάξη σας; Εάν ναι, ποιες πρακτικές χρησιμοποιήσατε και ποια ήταν τα αποτελέσματα;
(Εάν όχι, ποιοι είναι οι κύριοι περιορισμοί ή εμπόδια που αντιμετωπίζετε για την εφαρμογή αυτών των πρακτικών;)

18. Ποιοι πόροι ή εργαλεία θεωρείτε απαραίτητα για την αποτελεσματική εφαρμογή των πολύγλωσσων πρακτικών; *
(π.χ., διδακτικά υλικά, προγράμματα εκπαίδευσης, τεχνολογία.)

19. **Αν έχετε αναπτύξει πολυγλωσσικές εκπαιδευτικές πρακτικές σε αυτό το πεδίο, θα θέλαμε να μοιραστείτε μία ή περισσότερες εκπαιδευτικές δραστηριότητες, που έχετε πραγματοποιήσει με τους/τις μαθητές/-τριές σας και περιλαμβάνουν τη χρήση πολλαπλών γλωσσών.**

Προκλήσεις και Υποστήριξη από το Σχολείο

20. **Ποιες είναι οι κύριες προκλήσεις που αντιμετωπίζετε κατά την ενσωμάτωση πολύγλωσσων πρακτικών στο σχολείο σας;** *
- (Σκεφτείτε θέματα όπως η εκπαίδευση, οι χρονικοί περιορισμοί, οι υποδομές ή οι στάσεις των γονέων και των συναδέλφων.)

21. **Πόσο υποστηρικτικό είναι το σχολείο ή η διοίκηση σας στη χρήση πολύγλωσσων προσεγγίσεων; Τι θα μπορούσε να γίνει για να ενισχυθεί αυτή η υποστήριξη;** *

Προτάσεις και Μελλοντικές Προοπτικές

22. Ποιες αλλαγές ή βελτιώσεις θεωρείτε απαραίτητες για την ενσωμάτωση των πολύγλωσσων πρακτικών στα ελληνικά σχολεία; *

23. Τι προτάσεις έχετε για την εκπαίδευση των δασκάλων στη χρήση πολύγλωσσων μεθόδων; *

24. Πώς οραματίζεστε την ιδανική εφαρμογή των πολύγλωσσων πρακτικών στην πρωτοβάθμια εκπαίδευση; *
- (Ποιες θα ήταν οι κύριες προτεραιότητες και τα οφέλη;)

Ευρωπαϊκά Προγράμματα και Υποστήριξη

25. **Είστε εξοικειωμένοι με το πώς να συνεργαστείτε με ευρωπαϊκά προγράμματα ή πρωτοβουλίες (όπως το Erasmus+, το Creative Europe κ.λπ.) που υποστηρίζουν την πολύγλωσση εκπαίδευση;** *

Να επισημαίνεται μόνο μία έλλειψη.

Ναι

Όχι

26. **Αν ναι, περιγράψτε πώς έχετε συνεργαστεί με αυτά τα προγράμματα. Αν όχι, εξηγήστε γιατί δεν έχετε καταφέρει να συμμετάσχετε σε αυτά.**

27. **Πιστεύετε ότι τα ευρωπαϊκά προγράμματα, όπως το Erasmus+ ή το Creative Europe, είναι προσβάσιμα σε εσάς ως εκπαιδευτικός στην Ελλάδα;** *

Να επισημαίνεται μόνο μία έλλειψη.

Ναι

Όχι

28. **Τι πιστεύετε ότι θα μπορούσε να γίνει για να γίνουν αυτά τα προγράμματα πιο προσβάσιμα στους εκπαιδευτικούς στη θέση σας;** *

Σας

ευχαριστούμε θερμά για τη συμμετοχή σας! Οι απόψεις σας είναι πολύτιμες για την προώθηση της έρευνας και της ενσωμάτωσης των πολυγλωσσικών πρακτικών στην εκπαίδευση στην Ελλάδα.

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.