

National and Kapodistrian University of Athens
School of Philosophy
Faculty of English Language and Literature

**THE MULTICULTURAL GREEK SCHOOL: THE EFL TEACHER IN THE
MULTICULTURAL CLASSROOM**

Stavroula Lagou

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

December 2014

Advisory Committee: Prof. Anastasia Papakonstantinou, Ass. Professor Evdokia Karavas, Professor Sophia Papaefthimiou-Lytra

ABSTRACT

The present study aspires to fill a considerable gap in the field of multicultural teaching in Greece. More specifically, the study investigates EFL teachers' views concerning multicultural policies in Greece, as well as the practices they employ in order to assist culturally-diverse students' learning and integration. The particular focus of the study is placed on the employment of motivation, class management, facilitation of learning and social cohesion practices, as well as practices to increase students' meta-cognitive strategies. Additionally practices that foster parental involvement in the school and resolve conflict in multicultural classrooms are investigated. The present study also investigates the role played by two important factors: a) multicultural teacher training and b) experience with additional languages, in the formation of teachers' policy views and in the employment of their practices. Finally, through focused observation the study investigates the actual practices employed by EFL teachers, in order to assist EFL learning and integration of culturally-diverse learners.

A mixed-method approach (triangulation) is followed in the study so that more reliable and valid results are ensured. Quantitative findings are collected through Likert type questionnaires, addressing a sample of 298 EFL teachers, in which they express their views concerning multicultural policies in Greece and report their practices, when teaching multicultural classes. Qualitative findings are gathered with a) semi-structured interviews conducted with 50 EFL teachers, so as to cross check

the initial findings and clarify on a variety of issues also addressed in the questionnaire and b) a classroom observation project, realized in 9 classrooms from urban, semi-urban and rural areas in Greece. This observation brings to light the actual practices employed by EFL teachers, in multicultural classrooms.

Findings gathered from the questionnaires and interviews indicate the extensive use of motivation, class management, facilitation of learning and social cohesion practices, as well as practices to increase learners' meta-cognitive strategies, foster parental involvement and resolve conflict, in order to assist immigrant learners' integration and language learning. However, observation in the multicultural EFL classrooms sheds considerable light over the actual practices teachers employ. More specifically, in comparison to what teachers have initially reported, observation findings indicate that in the majority of the observed cases, immigrant learners' needs are often neglected, or considered non-existent, and that EFL teachers teach their multicultural classes, as if they were (ethnically) homogeneous ones. Additionally, though the employment of mainstream practices to assist all learners in class is quite extensive, practices that address immigrant learners' particular needs for integration and language learning are considerably limited. The findings of the study lead to considerable pedagogical implications and stress the need for more effective teaching and integration practices to address learners from culturally-diverse backgrounds.