The Languages of Others: Exploring the Assumptions of Teachers of Greek as a Second Language on Multilingualism

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Abstract

Education in multilingual and culturally diverse groups of adults constitutes an area where different cultural assumptions intersect and interact. Assumptions made not only by the teachers and the students, but also by the educational materials, the culture of the educational organization and the perceptions, attitudes and values that prevail in a broader context. In this paper, one dimension of this interaction will be considered. We will examine the way in which adult educators' assumptions about the role of different languages and different cultures as part of an educational program, intersect with their educational choices, particularly in moments of crisis or conflict within the group. Research findings show that the majority of teachers in our sample appear to adopt the strategy of assimilating culturally different groups or support their adjustment to prevailing assumptions. On the other hand, a smaller group focuses on smoothing over conflicts without considering the attitudes that caused them. Finally, a minority group of teachers seeks to exploit such incidents and create a climate of reflection and dialogue that leads to a transformation of views, which facilitates communication and understanding.

Key Words: intercultural competence, teachers' assumptions, multilingualism, adult education.

Theoretical Framework

As part of this research, theoretical considerations, which were developed through both intercultural approaches and theories of adult education, were used. Emphasis was given to those that focus on the critical reflection. These two theoretical frameworks, as will be seen, intersect at the level of communication between the teacher and the students and form the outline of an adult educator's intercultural capacity. The issue of teachers' cultural assumptions and how these are involved in the process of learning has occupied theorists of adult education, to a considerable extent. According to Freire, teachers need to bridge the gap between their own culture and the learners' culture so that the traditional teacher - student relationship is transformed into the relationship of "teacher-learner with learner-teacher" (Freire, 1972). Thus, adult educators must engage in a process of self-examination, regarding their own cultural identity. This includes their cultural beliefs, assumptions, values, attitudes, and behaviors.

They need to be able to suspend their cultural assumptions in order to understand the meanings learners confer on learning activities, processes, and materials. Effective teachers of minority cultural groups feel comfortable among students, even when they come from very different cultural backgrounds (Guy, 1999, p. 15). According to Benett's model, intercultural sensitivity develops through the transition from ethnocentrism to ethno relativism. It starts at the denial stage where 'our' assumptions are perceived as unique; it passes to the defense stage, followed by the minimization stage and leads to acceptance, adaptation and integration (Bennet, 1998). At the ethnocentrism stage, teachers seem more hesitant, vulnerable, and less open. At the ethno relative stage, a desire to experience different cultures and to take risks develops. As Lo Bianco, Liddicoat and Crozet (1999) point out, intercultural interaction is not about the maintenance of one cultural context nor the assimilation of another by the interacting parts. It is rather a matter of finding a place of mediation between these two positions by adopting a third position, formed by the intersection of the cultural perspective of the self and the other. In this context, it is connected to and reflects the education of active citizens who are active participants in shaping educational interventions, and are both the subject and purpose of interventions (Karalis, 2008).

The sharing of power between teachers and students is essential in adult education in general, but in culturally different groups, it is absolutely crucial. Carr (1999) observes that the recognition by the learners themselves that they are relationship networks formed by particular socio-cultural and cognitive experiences may help in remodeling the role of the language teacher into that of cultural mediator. The mono cultural orientations of teachers encapsulate them in a cultural scenario that leads to the belief that the home culture is the norm and encourages learners to comply with their own assumptions and values. They are therefore likely to be less effective with learners classified as culturally different (Hollins, 2006). In contrast, cross-culturally aware teachers perceive culture not as a stable, fixed, and timeless structure, but as "a river bed that creates its own form and direction over time due to a variety of influences" (Savaria-Shore & Arvizu, in: Hollins, 2006)

According to Byram (1997 and 2008) and Byram, Nichols & Stevens, (2001) intercultural competence involves attitudes of curiosity and readiness to rid oneself of suspicion about other cultures. It involves suspending belief in one's own discovery skills, interactions, and critical cultural awareness. This capability implies a critical approach, and the ability to evaluate the views, practices and products in one's own or the other culture on the basis of explicit criteria, the evaluation of the sights,. It necessitates the ability to shift one's individual boundaries in order to understand and accept views and attitudes hitherto rejected because they contradict dominant personal perceptions and choices (Magos, 2014). In order for teachers to avoid the role of ideological proselytizing, where success is measured by the degree to which students think like them, teachers must be aware of the philosophical argument concealed beneath their activities (Brookfield, 1986).

Instead, teachers must develop tolerance to ambiguity and contradictions (McKenna, 2003). Mezirow notes that the purpose of communicative learning is not to evaluate an assertion as true or false, but to improve understanding. "To do this, one needs to have access to the other frame of reference, to be able to understand mentally and emotionally and to seek common ground." (Mezirow, 2009). Moreover, he identifies the issue of rejecting ideas that do not fit predispositions, specifying the frames of reference as the "cultural and language structures through which we give meaning by attributing coherence and meaning to our experience." The peculiarity of frames of reference is how they work within and out of our consciousness and are formed by both mental routine and opinions (Mezirow, 2009, p. 129), while the conjunction of situated learning approach with that of transformative learning contributes to a better understanding of the formation of assumptions (Karalis, 2010, Raikou & Karalis, 2011). Characteristically, Mezirow mentions ethnocentrism, as an example of a habit of the mind. He defines it as "the propensity to consider others outside our group as inferior, unreliable, or less acceptable." (Mezirow, 2009, p.130). According to Cranton, when education is reforming, empowering or emancipating, the teacher takes the role of co-learner, discovering with and through the students and sharing experiences. Thus, an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect is created and the teacher functions as counselor for those learners who feel threatened by the dilemmas they face. (Cranton, 1994).

Research Field and Methodology

The research presented in this article took place over the period of three years (2009-2012) in a sample of adult educators who teach Greek as a second or foreign language in institutions of the Ministry of Education, in vocational training centres, organisations operating in certain universities and private bodies involved in the field of adult education in Greece.

For the purposes of research, triangulation was applied by combining qualitative and quantitative data collection methods: a questionnaire completed by 211 teachers and semi-structured in-depth interviews with 26 teachers.

This paper is based on data from responses to an open question (see below) which was answered by 177 (of 211) teachers. This particular sample of teachers is believed to representative of those who teach Greek as a second language in adult education institutions in Greece. These teachers are generally employed occasionally, part-time and on temporary courses of limited regularity. A group of teachers, with higher academic qualifications, usually a master's degree in teaching Greek as a foreign language or in applied linguistics, are employed with relatively greater stability on university courses. On the other hand, teachers in vocational training centers are generally the only ones who have received training and certification in the field of adult education. In general, teacher training courses for Greek as a second or foreign language focus on issues related to knowledge of the language and familiarity with teaching techniques. Only sporadically do opportunities to analyse the educational framework and the reality of education occur. Rarely, if ever, are trainees given the chance to analyse the educational process through observation and real contact with learners of culturally different groups and in different educational settings. Indeed, there is no focus on processing attitudes and identities through critical questioning and destabilizing assumptions.

According to papers at scientific conferences and workshops, the lack of negotiations around the identity issue can be attributed to the fact that the teachers of Greek as a second language to adults hold clearly differentiated attitudes towards different groups of learners. Students from low-status groups appear as disadvantaged and in need of a kind of charity or educational care. In many cases, they are described, by definition, as illiterate or are themselves blamed for being low-skilled, insufficiently trained for the needs of the Greek labor market and having integration problems. In contrast, 'visitors' from European countries, expatriates, and prospective Greek university students are considered privileged learners of a second language. This is because it is "mainly Europeans, who have a standard of living similar to that of the Greeks', perhaps superior."A "love of Greek culture" is considered a superior incentive to the "opportunistic" economic migrants'. It is considered to be a passport to a successful acquisition of the language. The immigrant's mother tongue is seen as an obstacle, as a burden to be overcome if they are to succeed in learning the language of the host country. However, for the "visitors" the native language is an asset, something to be proud of and a tool for learning the Greek language. So, from a monolingual perspective, the first language of the students is considered an obstacle to the extent that teachers have not sufficiently developed the ability to recognize the value of all languages as tools to facilitate the acquisition of new information (Jiménez and Rose, 2010). The teachers in our sample were invited to reflect on an open-ended question, as mentioned above, in a hypothetical situation as follows:

On a training seminar where you teach a mixed group of students (Greeks and Immigrants), a group of Greek students meet you at the break with the following request: "We would like to ask you to become a bit stricter with those three in the corner who are always talking among themselves in their own language. We would like it to stop. It's annoying us. The seminar is in Greek, isn't it? In addition, how do we know what they're saying? They might be laughing at us." Describe as specifically as you can your reaction to these students' request.

Responses were analyzed with the content analysis methodology and the categories assembled were crossed with the results of responses to four more questions in the questionnaire related to:

- The roles teachers adopt.
- The reasons why students do not participate.
- To what extent citizens of neighboring countries are considered culturally "relatives'' with Greeks
- The relationship of social inclusion to cultural adaptation.
- The cultural function of the teacher who teaches culturally different learners.

Research Findings

Our main research question was whether and to what extent the choices made by teachers in the handling of this incident:

a. related to their level of intercultural competence

b. interact with their choices on the key issues posed by modern theories of adult education on the role of the teacher and the importance of critical (re) thinking of assumptions as an element of transformative learning.

The analysis of responses to our open question established five key categories, which represent the views of the teachers who responded to this question. These categories are presented below:

1. Full acceptance of the Greek students' position without challenge or negotiation

There were 76 teachers in this category. They themselves were annoyed by the fact that such an incident would disrupt the class and would intervene "aggressively" to "restore" the operating rules of the class: Generally a group should not be allowed to discuss anything separately while the lesson is in progress. However, if this happened, I would ask the students to explain to us slowly, in clear Greek, what they were saying, so that we could participate in the discussion. If they refused, I would ask them to find a relevant subject for the whole class, and to discuss the other matter outside the classroom.

Typically, as in these cases, the complaining students are identifying with the group's implicit idea of 'adaptation' to the use of Greek. This is considered to be the only language that has a place on the course. In some cases the teachers magnify the students' complaint, by adding extra arguments such as saying as that the flow of the lesson is being interrupted.

I would agree with them and assure them that we would ask the students not to speak to each other. The reasons would be: firstly, they're making a noise; secondly, the flow of the lesson is being interrupted and thirdly, it is not polite for the others.

Many of the teachers identify the seminar as one from a Greek language program, although this is not implied in the question. Despite the fact that the three students who complain, state that "the seminar is in Greek," it does not mean that it is a Greek language seminar. In several of these cases, the teachers appear to support practices that consider limiting the occurrence of similar incidents, but usually focus on the dominating role of the teacher as the one who "startles", "keeps them alert", "breaks up cliques" and forms learning contracts without negotiation:

Not that I would ever be in this position because during the lesson I keep all the students involved by posing questions in a random order. This method   of surprising the students creates a collective, cheerful mood and broad participation. The above scenario, however, shows the creation of a clique. If there were a clique, the teacher should first reassure the complainers and the others. In the next lesson, the terms of the learning contract should be reiterated.

In each case, the foreigners who speak in their own language are the guilty party. Even if their right or need to use it is recognized, the complainants' position seems to be considered the fair and legitimate one. Thus, despite their rhetoric of respect to the language, tradition, and habits of others, the teachers do not make the complainants' attitude a subject for the group to process. On the contrary, they fully embrace their request, forbidding students to use languages other than Greek during the lesson. Teachers feel that making this choice contributes to a universal climate of understanding and trust, despite their apparent unilateral "alliance" with one of the two groups involved in the incident.

The next time I would explain to learners who speak in their mother tongue, that for their own good, it would be better to aim to speak Greek. This would help their integration into the group and reduce tensions.

2. Challenging (partially or totally) the complainers' position or making an attempt to interpret it but without negotiation.

The responses of 80 of the teachers fall into this category. Generally, teachers dispute the validity of the accusation against foreign students who speak in their own language. However, at the same time they do not subject the complaining group's attitude to negotiation. Usually permissiveness in the use of the mother tongue is accompanied by an indication that such a practice may become troublesome. At the same time, the negotiation of attitudes is not considered part of the educational process:

I would explain to them that they have the right to speak in their own language and exchange views so that they can explain to each other topics which they might not understand, as long as their voices do not interfere with the teaching process and class discussion and do not prevent others from hearing and participating.

In most cases, the complaint of "mockery" is disputed, and there is some attempt to put the incident into a more rational context: "they are probably explaining things in their own language that they do not completely understand in Greek." On the other hand, they adopt the notion of "disruptive behavior" despite the fact that it is clear in their complaint, that these students are not disrupted by the volume of noise of the foreign language being spoken. What does bother them is the use of a code other than the dominant one in this specific context.

Teachers whose responses fall into this category seem to reproduce the hierarchical relationships between the two groups on the seminar. By refusing to ban the use of the mother tongue, but pleading for leniency from the complainers, this group is thereby defined as dominant:

I explain that I will be stricter. They're most likely explaining to each other in   their language what is being said in Greek. I ask the Greeks to be tolerant   towards them and promise to ask the three to speak more quietly so as not to   disturb and not be heard so much.

Finally, teachers do not investigate the assumptions underlying the protest, but seek to modify the cause of the problem as expressed by one of the two groups, namely the use of the mother tongue. So while formulating various interpretations of the behavior of the foreign language speakers, they do not question the attitude of the complaining group at all. These are typical cases of teachers' ambivalence. They are critical of the complaining group, but they address their comments and restrictive rules to the immigrant group:

Greeks' request: Is immature, indicative of behavior with inherent complexes. my response: Ask them to reduce the discussions if they disrupt the smooth running of the seminar.

The dominant view in the use of the mother tongue seems to include the right to use it. However, benefit of using the Greek language is also emphasised. Thus, the use of the mother tongue appears "harmful" for foreign students, and is sometimes described as unnecessary "chatter." Here several teachers appear personally annoyed by the incident and focus on trying to defend their role as responsible for not allowing the formation of "groups" in the classroom. Several teachers refuse the protesting group's request without discussion ("I would brush them off") and without feeling that an issue had been raised that merited discussion. ("I would continue my work as I think best."/ "It's none of their business.")

3. Attempt normalization and conciliatory management, with a focus on improving the atmosphere within the group

57 responses fall into this category. Most, (37 out of 57), question the objections raised by the group of students, without their attitude being subject to negotiation. Most teachers attribute the incident to a lack of sufficient contact between the two groups within this context. They are trying to remedy this by rearranging groups in class or devising work plans that involve mixed groups. The attitude of the complaining group is not normally considered to be a product of prejudice nor does   it need to be the subject of negotiation:

I would encourage the three isolated learners to participate in mixed nationality groups and to engage in activities that disrupt the micro-group   they have formed. I would not resort to direct observation because this would chill the atmosphere.

A fairly wide range of responses appears in relation to the accountability of the immigrant students in the incident. In some cases, their talking is considered to be disturbing. However, the accusation of derision is rejected and there are calls for "lenience" or "tolerance" by the Greeks. Other teachers appear to adopt a more neutral stance on the issue of disturbance, separating it from the language spoken by the students. In general, this neutrality does not imply a similar approach towards the two groups. It is proposed that the Greeks show greater understanding but the approach towards the immigrant is more intrusive:

These circumstances are ideal for fostering tolerance and mutual respect. Therefore, I would suggest firstly that Greeks understand that the three immigrants feel more comfortable speaking in their language. Second, I would want to ask the three immigrants if the subject of their discussion was of interest to the rest of the group, then it could become a whole group discussion.

On the other hand, for 17 of the teachers whose focus is on improving the atmosphere, the position of the group making the accusation appears indisputably justified. Moreover, in the case of these responses, many teachers seem to find the investigation of this incident disturbing. They interpret the incident a challenge of their role and "leadership" abilities by both groups:

Definitely, out of natural reflexes alone, I do not tolerate such behavior, neither from the one side of resentment, nor from the other of indifference, chatting. (...) If my students are not a united group, I cannot work with them.

4. Focus on permissiveness (usually of a "charitable" type) or tolerance of the use of the mother tongue

The responses of 37 teachers start from the assumption that it is neither legitimate nor desirable to prohibit the use of the mother tongue by foreign students and invoke respect for each language. In this context, they interpret the event based on logical reasoning, denying the accusation of irony.

The students speak their own language for practical reasons, because it can be easier to explain or clarify something to each other. Thus, instructors seek to encourage contact between the two groups, hoping that this will improve the climate and create better cooperation:

I reassure them privately saying that they probably speak in their language, because it is easier for them, not because they want to say something that they don't want the Greeks to hear. (...). Finally, I try to gradually introduce cooperative activities, if possible, where Greeks and non-native speakers are encouraged to participate in the same group.

As a rule, the teachers' reactions are based on distinguishing between speech in either language and disturbance. They say they would intervene if they had difficulty in carrying out the educational process and not because of the use of a language other than Greek:

I intervene only when students disturb – obstruct the teaching process, make a   noise challenge others (in Greek or not), insult or show indifference to the lesson.

However, there is no lack of cases where the disturbance is taken as a given fact and the reaction as probably justified. Here, there is an appeal to the foreign language speakers to adapt to the only common language of communication:

If they create a problem because of the noise, then the request is not focused on their language. Then I would ask the foreign students to share their views with others in Greek, since it is the only common language of communication.

Thus, despite permissiveness in the use of the mother tongue, several teachers whose responses fall into this category seem to self-negate themselves and adopt the assumption that the mother tongue has no useful value, eventually prompting foreign students to seek to use the Greek language for their own benefit. Ultimately the dispute over the accusation of mockery and of resistance to the use of a different language in the class does not lead to the processing of these views. Neither are the assumptions that constitute the subconscious theory of the group that stated the problem processed. Instead, the request is reframed and appears justified on the basis of the practical usefulness of the official language. In this case, the seminar is described as a Greek language seminar, although the presentation of the incident does not indicate that. Respect for the use of the mother tongue does not seem to result from a conviction on the basis of conscious criteria. It is rather an invoking of human sensitivity and understanding. Thus, the group of immigrant learners is often described as "those poor children," who are disadvantaged and in need of "our" tolerance:

I would say to the Greek group that they should show a little understanding   towards these children from another country and should not judge them   strictly. Then I would politely ask the three to be quiet in the seminar.

5. Attempts at negotiation of the attitudes of the group with the focus on the attitude of the group which complains about the immigrant learners.

A smaller group of 14 teachers focuses on the priority of negotiating the assumptions of the group that raises the issue. The intention of negotiation is usually based on trying to understand the perspective of the students who appear annoyed. It involves the pursuit of dialogue and the development of communication and interaction between the two groups through group activities:

I would talk with the group of Greek students and try to understand their attitude.   In   an   atmosphere   of understanding, rather than rejection, I would   explain the reasons why I would not impose the exclusive use of Greek in the class. In class, at some point, I would have a discussion/ group process to work through any problems / issues that the students expressed. Finally, I would introduce techniques that promote interaction between learners (group work) in all sessions, making sure to alternate the members of the groups.

In the same context, the responsibilities of the teachers themselves are highlighted as well as those of the dominant group that marginalises the group of immigrant learners:

I would begin by explaining that the reason they are speaking amongst themselves in their language stems from the fact that we have isolated them.

In some cases, teachers are not confined to forming a framework that enhances the involvement of immigrant learners. Instead, they seem to interpret the attitude of the protesting group as a product of stereotypes and prejudice and try to make it a subject of negotiation through experiential activities designed to develop empathy:

I would ask them to explain what exactly had annoyed them. Then I would ask them what they thought was the explanation for the behavior of the three in the corner and discuss this with them. Then I would ask them what they thought   we could all do together to change the situation. I would also explore the possibility of creating a project, which would include all students actively participating in groups.

These teachers seem to adopt a different perspective on the use of the mother tongue. They do not see it as a matter of human tolerance, but as the right of a minority group based on equality. They often seek to create a context where different identities and different languages can coexist to express themselves and interact.

The teacher as the dominant player

A significant number of teachers, 67 in total, as demonstrated by the above observations, reportedly focus on the incident as something that particularly bothers them, as it puts into question their position and role. These teachers are trying to "put an end" to the issue summarily leaving no room for further negotiation, seeking to regain control and their central and guiding role:

With this in mind, I would make a recommendation for more quiet in the classroom, and because it is disturbing me, I would do this to avoid any further developments and ultimately any fighting between the two sides.

Thus, these teachers often cite the necessity of being strict and their "dominant role" as they make comments to students:

I consider the issue. I reassure them that nothing alarming is happening and   going back into the classroom, I take control of the situation.

It is significant that in several cases the teachers do not mention it as a procedure resulting from the interaction of a group or as an expression of dynamics, but as "my lesson" in which "suggestions cannot possibly be made to me." Usually teachers are driven to behave critically to both groups, or only to the immigrant student group. In some cases, the inclination towards a dominant role is combined with a negation of the students' adulthood, "it's not their business" or even with irony:

I would tell them that I would settle the matter by stating that you do not need to bother them ... However, if they continued to talk among themselves, I would   approach them smiling and would say: "You talk really nicely, I wish I could understand your language. But, what are we learning here? I'd like to hear you   saying   it   in Greek ... What have we been learning for so long?" So, in a nice way, I   would say that what's happening isn't nice.

Typically, some teachers speak of their students as adults, but their practices indicate otherwise:

I'll tell them that the students are adults and responsible for their own behavior. However, if I actually saw this happen in the classroom, I would distract them, by assigning exercises or separating them, if they were disturbing the learning of others.

In these cases, management is usually limited to interventions: orders for silence and splitting up the groups. This is undertaken exclusively by the teacher:

Then I address the three who are talking amongst themselves. I mention that they are disturbing the others and it would be good to express their questions to the whole class. If the situation does not improve, I would interrupt the group who are talking amongst themselves and ask some other students to help those who have trouble with the language.

Some teachers choose to manage the situation with methods such as the surprise tactic and random questioning. They define the formation of cliques as the source of the problem in the lessons. In these cases, processes such as the establishment of the learning contract regulate the situation: the teacher announces the rules that everyone must respect.

Quantitative data and cross tabulation.

As shown by the quantification of responses, those teachers who fully accept the group of complaining students, without any negotiation, make up the vast majority (62%). These views emphasize the dominant role of the teacher. Moreover, 70% of all teachers appear to share similar assumptions. The answers to relevant questions, as illustrated in the following table, move in the same direction. Note that a lower average indicates a greater degree of identification.

Table 1: Assumptions on multilingualism and educators' roles

	Full acceptance	Questioned without negotiation	Negotiation of attitudes
Expert	4,66	4,88	4,64
Partner	3,38	3,38	3,71
Authority	6,77	6,91	6,93
Mentor	2,64	2,76	3,71
Coordinator	3,30	3,27	2,86
Facilitator	2,97	2,67	2,21
Assistant	4,39	4,15	3,93

The main differences between the three groups and especially between the first and the third appear with regard to the roles of mentor, coordinator, facilitator, and assistant. The role of mentor is chosen to a significantly greater extent by the first and second group compared with the third. On the other hand, the roles of facilitator, coordinator, and assistant are selected to a significantly greater extent by the teachers of the third group in comparison, primarily, with those of the first, but also with those of the second.

The views of the groups vary according to the participation of the learners. In general, the teachers who fully accept the position of the protesting group tend to identify the causes of non-participation in terms of factors related to the learners. These include the indifference of the learners, the learners' educational capital, and the lack of familiarity with the process of learning related subjects. On the other hand, teachers who seek a negotiation of attitudes are more accepting of interpretations which attribute accountability to the educational context and to the process of education itself. The teaching method and way the teacher approaches/presents the subject, the teaching material and the heterogeneity of the group are also factors.

Table 2: Assumptions for multilingualism and participation

	Full acceptance	Questioned without negotiation	Negotiation of attitudes
The language difficulty	3,81	3,14	3,36
The learners' indifference	4,35	5,10	4,79
The learners' educational capital	4,34	4,56	5,07
The teaching method – the way teachers present the subject	3,71	3,65	3,29
The teaching material	4,63	4,50	3,86
The lack of familiarity with the process of learning related subjects (languages)	3,43	3,57	4,64
The heterogeneity of the learners' group	4,32	4,54	3,79

When a learner or a group of learners in your class does not participate, is often absent, or does not show interest, it is usually because of the table below shows the degree of cultural familiarity felt by three groups of teachers with Albanian and Turkish citizens. These two groups have been a long term target of the most negative stereotypes in Greek society:

Table 3: Assumptions on multilingualism and cultural familiarity

To what extent do you consider the citizens of the following countries 'cultural relatives' of Greeks?

	full acceptance			questioned without negotiation			negotiation of attitudes		
	little – minimal	not sure	fairly – very much	little – minimal	not sure	fairly – very much	little – minimal	not sure	fairly – very much
Albania	38,2	13,2	48,7	24,1	16,5	59,5	14,3	0	85,7
Turkey	34,7	16,0	49,3	20,8	16,9	62,3	14,3	7,1	78,6

Teachers who fully accept the position of the Greek students show a significant difference to those that focus on negotiating attitudes. This is in relation to the indicators of cultural familiarity in the two particular groups. The group that questions the position of the Greek student, without negotiation is in the intermediate value range.
The three groups also differ significantly in their attitude to the prospect of assimilation of 'the other' and the fear of cultural disintegration.

The following table depicts the attitudes of the three groups towards the statements:

1. In order to live and be accepted in another country, one must be willing to adapt to the local culture.
2. In the name of respect for other cultures, there is a risk of the disintegration of 'our' own national, cultural and religious heritage.
3. The mission of the teacher who teaches culturally different learners is to foster the acceptance of the culture and values of their "own" country.

Table 4: Assumptions on multilingualism and cultural integration

	full acceptance			questioned without negotiation			negotiation of attitudes		
	rather disagree – disagree	not sure	rather agree – agree	rather disagree– disagree	not sure	rather agree – agree	rather disagree – disagree	not sure	rather agree – agree
need to adapt	16,2	9,5	74,3	18,5	14,8	66,7	35,7	0	64,3
risk of cultural disintegration	53,3	12	34,7	70	17,5	12,5	78,6	21,4	0
foster cultural acceptance	20,5	12,3	67,1	42,5	13,8	43,8	57,1	14,3	28,6

The teachers, who fully accept, without negotiation, the position of the group of Greek students, also appear to support to a greater extent a focus on negotiating the following attitudes. Firstly, adapting to the dominant culture is a prerequisite for staying and earning acceptance in a foreign country. Secondly, in the name of multicultural coexistence and respect for other cultures, there is a risk of disintegration of 'our' own national, cultural and religious heritage. Finally, when the teacher teaches to culturally different students, they must assume the role of cultural ambassador, cultivating acceptance of the culture and values of the country.

Conclusions

The majority of teachers in our sample have significant experience in multicultural learning environments and training experience either in adult education or in intercultural approaches. Despite this, most of them seem to adopt the approach of enforcing the dominant group's agenda and the assimilation or slight adjustment to this, by the minority group. It seems that a somewhat smaller number of teachers use strategies of cultural neutrality and smoothing over disagreements; in the case where cultural evaluation attitudes are not negotiated. On the other hand, it seems that a small number of teachers (8%) utilize negotiating attitudes, in a context where the process of reflecting on assumptions acquires value. The latter group not only seems disposed to reflect critically in relation to the incident, but also seeks to encourage processes that promote reflection on assumptions and transformative learning. It identifies with roles closer to the facilitator and less to the mentor and focuses on participatory activities and refuses to blame the students in cases of 'failure'.

Compared to the other teacher groups, especially to the one that accepts without reservation the agenda of the protesting group; they feel greater cultural comfort with citizens from Albania and Turkey. Additionally, they identify little or comparatively less with the fear of cultural disintegration and with options which make the teacher a cultural preacher. It seems that cultural "assumptions" and "mental habits" (Mezirow, 2009) are not exclusively influenced by the experience of contact: our entire sample of teachers has a range of educational experience with immigrant groups. Neither are they uniquely influenced by training, as long as it is provided using a methodology that focuses on the transmission of knowledge and not on the active negotiation of experiences and attitudes. Thus, teachers with extensive experience in culturally diverse groups and training in intercultural approaches do not distance themselves from ethnocentric assumptions and appear trapped in the endorsement of that culture as the norm. (Byram, 2008, Benett, 1998) They penalize the manifestation of differences: the use of another language in the public space. If the training of teachers does not focus on reflecting on basic assumptions (Mezirow, 2000), it does not create the necessary conditions in which shifts in mental schemata and frames of reference can be facilitated. On the other hand, the degree to which one negotiates one's identity appears to intersect in a fairly consistent way with one's educational choices. Teachers showing a lesser degree of intercultural competence appear to make choices more compatible with traditional models of knowledge transfer and the dominant teacher role.

On the contrary, the development of intercultural competence seems to broaden mutual understanding (Mezirow, 2009) and it is linked to the adoption of the role of facilitator and cultural mediator (Carr, 1999) thereby increasing the scope for active learning.

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