

REVIEW

from the official opponent, Ph.D. in Philology, Associate Professor of Conversational English Department, Lesya Ukrainka Volyn National University, Semeniuk Antonina Afanasiivna on Paraskevi Kaltsouni's dissertation

“Integration of children with special educational needs into the inclusive classes of general schools in Greece”,

applying for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in

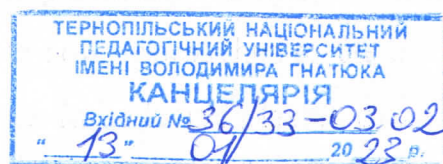
011 – Educational and Pedagogical sciences

The relevance of scientific work topic and its connection with scientific programs.

The submitted Ph.D. thesis deals with an important topic of children with special needs recognition that has been increasing significantly in the last decades and presupposes the necessity of their better understanding. The problems of socialization as well as supportive school programs for launching a process of their adaptation and self-evaluation are in the scope of sociological, psychological, methodological, and pedagogical studies nowadays. The active implementation of inclusive education and orientation of general educational institutions to the All-European recommendations on language education led to the search for new ways and methods of teaching children with psychophysical disorders.

At the current stage of the process of learning a significant role belongs to new techniques that would meet the requirements of modern education. Related to this Paraskevi Kaltsouni 's analysis of new approaches to the integration process of children with special educational needs in inclusive classes of general schools in Greece taking into consideration views of school teachers is **relevant**. Hence, it should be appreciated that the author chose this theme for her Ph.D. research.

Dissertation research is related to scientific developments conducted at the Department of Special and Inclusive Education. The topic of the dissertation was approved at the meeting of the Academic Council of the Ternopil Volodymyr



Hnatyuk National Pedagogical University (protocol No 5 from 28 of December 2021 year).

The most significant scientific results of the investigation. In the course of the study the author *developed her own vision* of the approaches to understanding of inclusive education in Greece; *formulated* the concept of “children/students with special educational needs” on the basis of literature review; *gave a thorough analysis* of the integration process of children with special educational needs into the inclusive space of general schools in Greece; *for the first time* presented and described the model of co-teaching - parallel support using design and conduct quantitative research on the study of teacher's views on inclusive education in Greece. *What is also positive* is that the author provided her own recommendations for making this process running smoothly on the basis of her own methodology of the research.

The degree of scientific statements validity, conclusions and recommendations formulated in the dissertation.

Analysis of the text of Paraskevi Kaltsouni's dissertation and dissertation-bound publications supply a strong basis for conclusions and relevant results' obtaining, regarding the scientific reliability of the information presented. The validity of scientific statements was approved at domestic and international scientific and practical conferences as well as by publishing 7 articles (1 article in a periodical scientific publication indexed by the Web of Science scientometric database that is of great scientific value).

The thesis is well grounded in a review of the existing literature on several related topics. Moreover, the thesis is based on a generally valid theoretical framework constituted by functional approach to integration of children with special educational needs in both academic and social learning.

The dissertation is of great interest from both theoretical and practical points of view, in addition to this, the effective methodology lies in a complex of interrelated methods of both theoretical (analysis, synthesis and systematization of scientific literature on the research problem) and empirical (diagnostic) nature.

Descriptive statistics methods used to process quantitative data, ensure their systematization; the reliability and objectivity of the results and achievements were supported by the statistical program SPSS.

Taking into account practical significance of the study, we consider it necessary to point out a wide scope of its findings usage in the process of theoretical courses on inclusive education developing; in professional training of would-be pedagogical workers for inclusive education. Furthermore, experimental verification of scientifically based study, which included a quantitative survey of 150 special education teachers aged 36 to 50 with up to 5 years of work experience, allows to recommend its implementation in the educational process of secondary education institutions of Greece for improving the quality of teachers' professional training in general. The empirical part is the strongest aspect of the thesis since it relies on the author's own and extensive primary research.

Evaluation of the content of the dissertation, its completeness in general.

The dissertation is of a typical, completely logical structure, and consists of an introduction, three chapters, conclusions, the list of used literature in English (376 titles), 39 tables, 41 figures, 1 appendix.

The **introduction** provides an introduction to the thesis and outlines the relevance of the research topic, defines the goals and objectives, object, subject of research, its methods, methodological basis of the study. The scientific novelty, theoretical and practical significance of the findings, personal contribution of the author, detailed approbation of research results and publications are highlighted.

The selection of the object and subject of study are reasonable as they mark Paraskevi Kaltsouni 's awareness in the investigated area and related issues, her own vision of the research problem, which involves the formulation and solution of a number of specific tasks, realizing the main purpose of the study, with which the author successfully coped.

Chapter 1. **INCLUSIVE AND SPECIAL EDUCATION: APPROACHES TO UNDERSTANDING** presents very relevant and extensive scholars' investigations and literature review that already exists in relation to inclusive

education. The theoretical basis for the children with special educational needs integration in the process of overall learning is analyzed with references to factors that make this successful.

In the theoretical core of the thesis, the author considers the social construction of disability and special educational needs, on the one hand, and teachers' perceptions of integration of children with special educational needs in general schools, on the other, that gives a possibility to characterize the scope of inclusive education more fully and clearly.

In Chapter 2. **EDUCATION OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS IN GREECE** the author thoroughly examines the main principles of inclusive education process implementation in Greece and provides an argument for developing distance education for children with special educational needs. More specifically, she considers the departments of integration and parallel support in inclusive education top priority and also provides evidence to challenge the importance of the administration and the executives in co-teaching and cooperation between the teachers of special education and general education. What is also positive is that the analysis provided by Paraskevi Kaltsouni will make it possible not only to make modifications and adjustments in teaching, but also to evaluate the student's progress.

Chapter 3. **RESEARCH OF SCHOOL TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS ON INTEGRATION OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS INTO INCLUSIVE CLASSES** provides the analysis of existing problems that prevent transforming theory into practice in school life for people with disabilities in various education systems in Greece despite the dominance of integration into international educational discourse; outlines the methodology of the study and describes the relevance of quantitative research in gathering information about the attitudes of second grade schools teachers about the integration of students with special educational needs in general schools.

In the practical core of the thesis, this method enabled to receive valid results of the study and the author concluded that research educators are positive

about inclusion but they have a confused picture of their role and responsibilities and need assistance mainly from support staff.

Conclusions provide a summary of the study and its reasonable findings.

In general, the thesis is positively characterized by the systematicity and transparency of the logically and consistently presented material, respect to the heritage of domestic and foreign scholars. The terminology used by the author does not overburden the work, shows to the author's linguistic erudition. What is more, the dissertation is technically well designed: the results of the study are systematized in tables and graphs, with a detailed data analysis to them, which indicates the thoroughness of the conducted research and represents a decent amount of work and a valuable contribution of the author.

Violations of academic integrity in Paraskevi Kaltsouni's thesis are not found but there are some points that encourage discussion:

1. When proving the relevance of the thesis topic, the author of the study should provide statistical data on the number of children with SEND who study in general secondary education institutions in Greece and need integration into the educational process.

2. Paragraph 2.2. is dedicated to the analysis of distance education for children with special educational needs in Greece. Taking into account the wide use of distance learning in modern conditions, the author of the study should pay more attention to the coverage of the main aspects of its implementation in Greek schools for children with SEND.

3. In paragraph 3.1 the author should describe the procedure of forming of samples.

4. In the course of the study the author uses terms "integration" and "inclusion" to describe the education of students with special educational needs with typical students in the general school. The author would need to clarify whether she uses the term "inclusion" as alternative with the term "integration" more convincingly or there is a difference.

However, the comments made do not reduce the scientific value of the dissertation, are mostly of a recommendatory nature and do not affect the overall positive evaluation of the conducted research.

Overall, the thesis presents a valuable analysis of inclusive classes integration process with regard to co-teaching - parallel support – provided in general schools in Greece and I consequently recommend the thesis for the final defense.

Paraskevi Kaltsouni's dissertation **“Integration of children with special educational needs into the inclusive classes of general schools in Greece”** is a complete independent research in its content and form, that corresponds to demands, determined by the order of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine (from January, 12 in 2017, No. 40) “On approval of the Requirements for the preparation of a dissertation” by the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine (from January, 12 in 2022, No 44) “The procedure for awarding the Doctor of Philosophy degree and canceling the decision of the one-time specialized academic council of a higher education institution, scientific institution on awarding the Doctor of Philosophy degree” and its author deserves to be awarded the Doctor of Philosophy degree in the field of knowledge 01 Education / Pedagogy, specialty 011– Educational, Pedagogical Sciences.

Official opponent, Ph.D. in Philology,
Associate Professor
of Conversational English Department,
Lesya Ukrainka Volyn National University

A. A. Semeniuk

