Dissertation marking and feedback sheet

Programme: Erasmus Mundus MA/Mgr. in Special and Inclusive Education
Module: Dissertation
Module code: ERM03L003S
Student Name: Erika Ginzburg

1st Marker's name: Dr. Jana Stará

Use (i.e. exploration and discussion) of literature/evidence
Erika Ginzburg uses the relevant literature and frame the topic of her work by sufficient context and research findings. Her analyses of the policy in supporting the special needs of pupils in different countries are sometimes inaccurate (for example the analyses of the Czech situation at pages 16-18 (compare the content of particular paragraphs)). On the other hand it is necessary to add that to analyze the situation is quite difficult because of many reasons. One of them is the fact that the understanding of the concepts disability and special education needs (and connected changes in school policies and legislations) has been changed through last decades over the world essentially and comparative studies and political documents react on these changes with certain delay. The second one is the fact that most materials about Czech legislation, mechanisms and school practices are available just in Czech. The part of the literature review focused on the research of school practices and their results (pages 18 (19)-22) brings important information. It would be valuable if this part of the work is broader.
Despite the comments mentioned above Erika’s approval of orientation in the topic area is quite well. The references and quoting are quite well documented; self-originated work is separated from other people’s work.

Design of project—research question or hypothesis, and methodology
Research questions are mentioned on pages 7-8. It would be definitely better if they are specified, developed in the methodological part of the work and connected with the methods’ description.
Erika manifests very good understanding of the qualitative research approach in general description of the methodological approaches (pgs. 24 – 27). She describes the methodology of her research sufficiently and argues why she decided to design her research project in a particular way. Due to the limited time and difficulties she had during the leading the research I am not sure the grounded theory is the right
approach she should choose as I am not sure she could receive the theoretical saturation. Additionally, if she decided for grounded theory approach she should focus more on getting sufficient respondents of her research (e.g. Why persons whose Czech during the studying in Czech compulsory schools was very poor were not involved in the research?).

**Data analysis and Presentation**
The result of Erika’s work brings findings that can illustrate practice of inclusive education and its results not just in the Czech Republic. The author approves her understanding during the data interpretations. If the literature review is more focused on research findings on practicing the inclusion of pupils with another mother tongue, the presentation of data (and design of items in interviews) should be richer.

**Structure, communication, and presentation**
In my opinion some parts of the dissertation are too general (methodological approaches) or do not follow the areas of interest significantly. As I already mentioned above the methodological part of the work should be explicitly focused on the research questions. Nevertheless, it is visible that Erika understands the issue and connected phenomena well and the structure and presentation of the issue is sufficient.

The author has worked autonomously; even she consulted individual parts of the dissertation during the process of writing with me and with her peer colleagues. According my opinion timeous and periodical consultation would improve the final result.

**Overall comments (including any areas for further improvement):**
Topics for author to be discussed during the advocacy:
1. Was the theoretical saturation in your research achieved? Why? What would you recommend to continue in your research?
2. How teachers should deal with the other cultural background of some of their students?

**2nd Marker’s name:**
Mgr. Šárka Káňová

**Use (i.e. exploration and discussion) of literature/evidence**
Erika chose a research theme (educational experience of a Vietnamese minority ethnic group in the Czech Republic) which is relevant not only in current Czech society, but elsewhere where cultural and language diversity becomes more and more common and thus a discussed topic. The main purpose of the thesis was according to the researcher to find out 1) what legislation governers education for students with special educational needs; specifically how this legislation enables language support for minority ethnic students; 2) how the learning needs of Vietnamese speaking students are affected and how do students view their school experience and the role of support; and 3) how speakers of other languages are being taught at schools.
Erika set the research aims right at the beginning of the thesis (pp. 7-8) but not with detailed conceptualisation of the research problem and operationalization of the research goals. She mentions information that regards the methodology in several sub-chapters rather than in one chapter called Methodology. Erika focused her attention towards the concept of human rights and explains the paradigm shifts in an international context.

Explanation of the topic was justified, a review of other pieces of research conducted was introduced and a review of the literature was made, thought I miss an introduction of relevant scientific theories that were applied. This part should have been more detailed and the researcher should have focused more on that. I also miss a kind of a conclusion of the literature review that would make a good link for the research part of the thesis.

Overall Erika proved a good understanding of relevant literature and key concepts.

**Design of project— research question or hypothesis, and methodology**

Erika applied a qualitative research approach using two research methods – a questionnaire and an interview. The process of the research methods identification was justified and their strengths and weaknesses addressed. By having a look on questionnaire form structure and the interviews’ transcript we can notice that many of the questions are rather closed and thus quantitative questions and if there is a qualitative question being asked, unfortunately only a short one sentence response is evident that does not provide us with rich data for a qualitative analysis.

Also in regard with the research sample creation and the obstacles connected with it I am not sure whether the grounded theory analysis was the appropriate and most suitable way of exploring the research questions. Finally there were only 4 teenage Vietnamese students who were included in the research study. Despite the fact that Erika may have faced significant communication barriers between her and the respondents which has to be taken into consideration I am not sure whether the way of snowball sampling how the 4 respondents in total were chosen was the good way and the only possible way of looking for a sample.

Generalization of the findings was not possible, nor intended. The study can however generate a valuable knowledge for politics, policy makers, researcher and the practitioners from the education and social service field.

**Data analysis and Presentation**

The chapter called “Data analysis and discussion” includes part of the research methodology and also the findings. The author of the thesis combines the findings that came out of the research together with outcomes of other pieces of research. Although the chapter provides valuable data that can certainly be used in future, Erika should have more focused on findings that came out of her research held in the Czech Republic.

Overall Erika proved good skills in conducting a piece of research focused on an aspect of education practice which is professionally relevant to her.

Erika declares that she used a grounded theory for analyzing the data she collected though I suppose she rather used thematic analyse with the tool of open coding. Data were examined in order to find constructs to describe the pre-coded domains. The way of analysing the data was not unfortunately properly introduced.
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