This article examines the ways adult immigrants with special needs are discussed by experts, i.e. civil servants facilitating integration services and language educators teaching in integration training for adult immigrants. The article focuses on the following two questions: 1) How are the aims and implementation of integration training (i.e. administrative responsibilities) discussed, and 2) What kind of image of adult immigrants with special needs is construed in the discussions by experts.

The data of the study consist of 37 written statements on a development project Participative Integration in Finland (Osallisena Suomessa) implemented by a provisional law, and two recorded expert group discussions on the issues of counseling and training of adult immigrants. The results show that there is neither a shared nor a clear understanding of the aims of integration training for adult immigrants with special needs. Moreover, the responsibilities, i.e. who will take care of the group in hand, split experts’ into two groups: co-workers in employment sector see integration training for adult immigrants as a duty for municipalities, whereas experts in the municipalities are of the opinion that all adult immigrants should be offered a gate-way to Finnish working-life. The results also show that adult immigrants with special needs are either characterized as homogenous groups (such as stay-at-home mothers) or heterogeneous groups with heterogeneous needs. In the latter case, they are quite often grouped into opposing pairs such as academic vs. illiterate immigrants.