Educational inclusion for migrants and refugees through language learning: difficulties, challenges and ways forward

Inclusão educacional para migrantes e refugiados através da aprendizagem de línguas: dificuldades, desafios e caminhos a seguir

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ABSTRACT
The teaching-learning process of languages for migrants and refugees is a challenge that goes beyond getting them to develop communication skills and moves toward inclusion through education. In order to analyze the main keys and difficulties when it comes to teaching this collective, this multiple case study selects seven European countries in whose educational contexts teachers and migrants work together. Specifically for this research, the perspectives of 35 experts were taken into account as a result of the data gathered through round tables. After developing a cross-case analysis, the results demonstrated significant connections which delved into analytical generalizations: (i) the importance of focusing on the cultural dimension and the motivation factor; (ii) the impact of structural vulnerability on students, which was identified as the main obstacle when it comes to achieving the objective of teaching, and (iii) the lack of institutional resources. Finally, (iv) active methodologies were proposed as a way forward to address these challenges.
Keywords: language teaching, inclusion, migrants and refugees, active methodologies.

RESUMO
O processo de ensino-aprendizagem de línguas para migrantes e refugiados é um desafio que vai além de fazer com que desenvolvam competências de comunicação e avançam no sentido da inclusão através da educação. Para analisar as principais chaves e dificuldades no ensino deste coletivo, este estudo de casos múltiplos seleciona sete países europeus em cujos contextos educativos professores e migrantes trabalham em conjunto. especificamente para esta pesquisa, foram levadas em consideração as perspectivas de 35 especialistas a partir dos dados recolhidos através de mesas redondas. Após o desenvolvimento de uma análise cruzada de casos, os resultados demonstraram conexões significativas que mergulharam em generalizações analíticas: (i) a importância de focar na dimensão cultural e no fator motivação; (ii) o impacto da vulnerabilidade estrutural nos alunos, que foi identificado como o principal obstáculo para atingir o objetivo de ensino, e (iii) a falta de recursos institucionais. Finalmente, (iv) foram propostas metodologias ativas como forma de enfrentar estes desafios.

Palavras-chave: ensino de línguas, inclusão, migrantes e refugiados, metodologias ativas.

1 INTRODUCTION

Teaching languages to migrants is a challenge that goes beyond language teaching (Gogolin, 2002; Euzebio, 2021; Tokunaga & Dirceu, 2022); that is why the role of teachers is to show and share how to live and communicate in a new reality (Sharkey, 2018), which, in short, helps this collective when it comes to integrating into a new community (Castles, 2004).

To achieve this objective, teachers should be clear about the importance of the focus on communication (Slade & Dickson, 2021). Students need, from the beginning, to learn how to behave within a new community of speakers (Arteaga, 2011). Therefore, it is necessary to go beyond the traditional perspective of teaching and think about an approach that pays special attention to multiple and different communicative scenarios (Sosinski, Young-Scholten, & Naeb, 2020).

In doing so, first of all, teachers have to ensure that their students, migrants, develop their communication skills (Baralo, Leralta, & Gómez, 2016). This term, according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, refers to a capacity that implies mastering a language according to the linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic levels (Little, 2011). The linguistic level implies mastery of lexicon, grammar, meanings, phonology, spelling and orthoepic (Hulstijn, 2014). The sociolinguistic level refers to cultural aspects, social conventions and the internal functioning of a community
Finally, the pragmatic level focuses on the functional use of linguistic resources in and for communicative exchanges. It includes the mastery of discursive, functional and organizational aspects (House 2003).

In addition, language users need to develop other general and basic skills:

- **Declarative knowledge**: Social and cultural knowledge and intercultural awareness (Fenner, 2006).
- **Skills and abilities**: practical and cultural skills and abilities (Amidyevna, 2022).
- **Existential competence**: attitudes, motivations, values, beliefs, cognitive styles and factors related to personality (Arnold, 2019).
- **The ability to learn**: reflection on the linguistic and communicative system, study skills and heuristic skills (discovery and analysis) (Brown et al., 2011).

In this sense, teachers will try to identify the communicative situations to which students will be exposed and recognize the actions that must develop as speakers of a new community (Danzak, 2011). Students may already be familiar with these situations because they are speakers of one or more languages, but in different contexts they have to learn to cope with the resources of a new language (Little, 2007). In this sense, it is also important to establish a correlation between the educational program designed and the educational needs of the students (Gravani et al., 2023).

When it comes to the educational context of migrants, another added challenge arises in the context of teaching, which has to do with the notion of cultural shock (Sabar, 2004). Students have to build their identity in the new language, which gets into conflicts with their ongoing situations, their motivations or their objectives (Dörnyei, 1998). All these elements will determine the success of its integration into the culture and language learning (Gibb, 2008). Therefore, teachers in these contexts have to focus on this cultural dimension to achieve greater integration of the new culture and develop an intercultural perspective of their realities. In this sense, it is necessary to design learning situations in which, instead of focusing on linguistic adjustments, sociocultural orientation is prioritized (Byram, 2002).

Likewise, teachers must abandon their ethnocentric previous beliefs and viewpoints (Palaiologou & Faas, 2012), due to the fact that in some cases teachers show no sensitivity towards traditions and values of migrants (McLaren & Johnson, 2007). The same occurs with the attitude shown towards their ways of learning (Kloubert, & Hoggan, 2006).
students come from different educational traditions and their expectations may vary even among students from the same origin (Slade & Dickson, 2021). In this sense, it arises as a difficulty the fact that they do not understand that the language and culture of the students are also important and can operate as a bridge which connects them to the new reality (Expósito & Favela, 2003). Likewise, it is possible to transfer all types of knowledge between the source language and the target language (Darvin & Norton, 2014). In other words, teachers must be able to help build new knowledge from pre-existing knowledge, taking advantage of the cognitive and strategic potential of students (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013).

In this context, it seems essential to know what the main keys and barriers are when it comes to teaching languages to migrants at the European level. Therefore, this study analyzes the perspective of teachers of migrants in 7 European countries to find out what their points of view are.

2 METHODOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

The methodological literature indicates that multiple case studies are preferable to single case studies: “The analytical benefits of having two or more cases is substantial” (Yin, 2003: 53), since “the analytical conclusions reached through from two cases will be more powerful than those that only come from a single case” (Yin, 2003: 53). That is why in this European Erasmus+ project (Ref.: 2022-1-DE02-KA220-ADU-000086496) 7 case studies have been chosen: the cases of Germany, Switzerland, France, Spain, Denmark, Italy and Greece in whose educational contexts teachers and migrants work.

Specifically for this research work, 35 experts were selected through the relevance sampling strategy motivated by analytical interests (Krippendorff, 2004: 120). In this way, 35 teachers with extensive experience in language teaching were brought together in different round tables. Round tables are methodologically characterized by the generation of micro-situations (Kitzinger, 1994: 105 cited by Bloor et al., 2000: 22) that involve a social group regarding a specific topic (Zaharia et al., 2017: 69). It allows collecting data, interpreting it to understand operating frames (Bloor et al., 2001: 17), establishing itself as a means for public participation and the democratization of knowledge (Bloor, 2001: 18), as well as a means for collective action and the implementation of changes (Hugentobler et al., 1992; Morgan, 1996: 133; Bloor et al., 2001: 13; Farquhar and Das, 1999).
In the case of the round tables the idea was that all the participants individually wrote on a piece of paper the answer to the following questions: What are the keys that help in teaching languages to migrants and refugees? / What are the barriers? They were given a margin of 15 minutes to respond.

They were then asked to share what they had written on the paper and discuss it. To do this, they had 30 minutes. This was the time also to share good practices or experiences related to the topic, and highlight the relevance of the socio-emotional and psychological aspects of the participants in language classes for migrants and refugees.

Regarding the information analysis techniques used, this research followed these steps: (i) immersion (Hsiu-Fang & Shannon, 2005: 1279; Elo & Kyngäs, 2008: 113; Drisko & Maschi, 2016: 102); (ii) simplification and reduction (Cepeda, 2006: 67), eliminating superfluous and redundant information under the criterion of interpretive relevance (Babbie, 2010: 400) and, finally, (iii) theoretical operationalization (Krippendorff, 1980: 76; Coffey & Atkinson, 1996 cited in Bloor et al., 2000: 63).

Based on the theoretical operationalization, what is relevant about the discourse has been determined: a main idea is introduced to subsequently intertwine that idea with the subsequent one. It is always an interpretive work, searching for meanings (Juaristi, 2003: 154) and linking an idea with others (Schreier, 2012), which is a relevant exercise when it comes to answering the research question (Drisko & Maschi, 2016: 102).

Once this work is done, a cross-case analysis has been applied, facilitating the dialogue between common points – significant connections – in the different processes (Yin, 1981: 108; Khan & Vanwynsberghe, 2008) in such a way that the knowledge obtained from rich holistic cases can be put at the service of broader objectives (Khan & Vanwynsberghe, 2008) producing analytical generalizations (Borman et al., 1986: 48; Miles & Huberman, 1994) and sharing new knowledge (Khan & Vanwynsberghe, 2008: 4-5), being an interactive and cyclical process (Pérez & Cuervo, 2008: 69-70).

Cross-case analysis allows concepts to be developed and related (Eckstein, 1975; Ragin, 2004); demonstrating that the effects in the selected cases are in fact similar enough to be treated as part of the same phenomenon (mutual illuminations) (Khan & Vanwynsberghe, 2008: 5).
### 3 RESULTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>What are the dimensions which help when it comes to teaching languages to migrants and refugees?</th>
<th>Which are the obstacles and barriers?</th>
<th>Good practices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Adapt teaching materials and methods and enrich textbooks to meet their needs; knowing how to deal with student frustration, traumatic experiences and intercultural differences; know how to motivate students and how to deal with large classes; manage the expectations of teachers and students; show empathy and understanding, but being transparent about clear rules; select useful/non-abstract teaching topics. Be empathetic and open to the new.</td>
<td>Traumatic experiences and post-traumatic stress; out-of-school experiences and illiteracy; management of diverse identities; linguistic and cultural diversity; neurophysiological conditions. Lack of school experiences. Higher level of stress when adapting to a new society. Non-literacy.</td>
<td>Authentic listening.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>In a migratory context, sociocultural and intercultural skills are needed. Distant cultures can present greater difficulties: (i) the same cultural references are missing; (ii) the examples you give or the references you transmit are different. An idea recognizable to everyone cannot be for all students. We cannot know everything about all cultures, but we can have the habit of reaching and reflecting on what is culturally understandable and also what is culturally unacceptable to certain people. Specially for those who teach people with a migratory background, it is necessary to know how to represent language as an action, as something that is done, not just the grammatical structure. We must avoid approaching language as a subject-verb exclusively, but rather focus on what we want to do: What is this textual structure for? I may not be interested in tenses, but I could understand the action each ones represents, according to the function and the objective each one has. It is vital perceive language as a concrete action. We need to perceive language as linked to a meaningful experience, as something lived, the more abstract it is, the less linked to a real experience, the less successful I will be when it comes to understanding and learning. Assign tasks,, such as for example walking into an agency and ask for ID information.</td>
<td>Teachers must induce production to the extent possible, their role is that of facilitator in certain situations. When language is represented in an abstract way and not in a meaningful/concrete way. When selecting teachers, you must take into account the space they give to students.</td>
<td>Lessons outside the classroom/outdoors. Conference at the Quirinal. Eco-language. Talía - listening techniques for audiovisual language. Memory, visual game. Storytelling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>The important goal is to adapt to the context: you have to carry out a good analysis of the students' reality in order to focus priorities and adapt to the communicative needs, this will help to achieve greater motivation. Integrating Ghettos, stereotypes and prejudices are very harmful. One of the most important difficulties is the overload of teachers, the difficulty in responding to the enormous.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Jane Arnold Materials.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
locals into classrooms and activities, while making the language and culture of migrant students present, minimizing as much as possible the radical changes they are experiencing. It is important to convey to students that learning the language will include them into a society unknown to them. Teachers must be empathetic, patient and show closeness to build a bond with the students. Treatment by the institution must also be welcoming and dignified.

Demand, and the little time they have in the classroom. The lack of perseverance on the part of the students due to their situation and context of vulnerability: difficulties in attending classes and studying on their own, unstable groups due to the mobility of the students due to the provisional situation to which they are subjected. Difficulties in the classroom due to the heterogeneity of the group: disparate levels of knowledge of the language, very diverse levels of literacy even in their mother tongue, disparity in academic levels. At the lowest levels of knowledge and literacy, this makes very difficult to find a correct teaching strategy, since it is not possible to use reading and writing in tasks with non-literate or non-schooled students.

In reference to teacher training: the lack of knowledge on the part of teachers of the customs and culture of migrants; that teachers without specific training usually have difficulties starting language teaching at the lowest levels, when students cannot understand or express anything and it is not possible to resort to a lingua franca (English, French...).

**Denmark**

Daily dose of language learning helps. The content must be meaningful and relevant to the lives of the participants. Committed teachers and a varied program and content. Relevant content that makes sense. Adapted use of digital resources, neither too much nor too little. Subject knowledge (Danish as a second language education), pedagogy, didactics. See the students based on their skills and background. Teaching based on communicative principles. Use of language. It must be relevant and useful in the daily lives of students: integration, job search, citizenship...

Within the framework, it is nice to be given free rein as a pedagogical tool. Using, for example, board games on different conversation topics to learn Danish fluently.

In the Danish Education Act, there is a requirement regarding module exams. Sometimes it is more important to pass exams than to learn the language. They need to pass the exam, but it might be helpful to have more lessons, more time. There is not enough number of periods for teaching and a quick time to go through the courses/modules. It takes time to cognitively learn a new language, and we do not have time to do it correctly. School as a context in which a new language is learned; there is a lack of relationship with reality for the students. It can be difficult and taboo to learn a new language and it is easier to use, for example, English instead. It can be Practice-oriented content.

**Group outdoor activities**

Role-playing games. Photographs to work on emotions. Combine printed materials with ICT.

Material that they can use both at school and at home. WhatsApp to support teaching. Listening as part of learning and acquiring a new language. Playful teaching.
difficult for students to research or be motivated to do things in a foreign language.

Switzerland

Let them listen to the radio, watch television and read as much as possible to complement their studies in class. Not only learning the language in the classroom, in a structured way, but outside the classroom, in the students' free time.
It is good to use different methods when teaching a language, such as images, films and group work.
Internal motivation: students feel safe and happy at school, their progress becomes clear on its own.

It is a long road to achieve your goals, and the worry of not being able to work in your profession in the host country. Students find difficult to follow the Swedish media, and if they do not understand anything, they are less likely to watch television or listen to public radio, which are excellent tools for learning a new language.

Sometimes the books students use are not of great quality; Students often do not take enough time to learn the new language and give up too easily.
It can be very individual, but it can be difficult to concentrate when a lot is going on in life. Another difficulty is that many are not used to the school culture in Sweden. For example, students expect the teacher to give them long lectures on grammar every day and therefore do not see the point in independent tasks. It can also be difficult if the students themselves do not see their progress.

Connection with the languages one already speaks EPA Method digital reading The circle model (Gibbons). It contains four phases in which students, at different stages, build knowledge and work with examples about things that they will later produce. Good will and good examples

Greece

When someone teaches migrants, the first thing they should keep in mind is that they have to be flexible and open to new approaches.
Create a relationship of trust, class schedules that fit their schedules so they do not miss classes, adapt the course to their educational level and individual needs, an experiential approach to the acquisition of vocabulary and communication skills, not sticking to grammar rules and syntactic.
Additionally, there are several other key factors that can help in teaching languages to migrants and refugees, including:
- Cultural sensitivity,
- Active learning: Language teaching should be interactive and engaging, allowing students to practice speaking, listening, reading and writing in a meaningful context.
- Real-life situations: Language teaching should include real-life situations and authentic materials that reflect the daily lives of refugees and immigrants, such as workplace communication, grocery shopping, and healthcare interactions.

When students and teachers do not have a common language that both can use and with which they can basically communicate. However, this mainly applies to the level of A1 students, who do not have even the basic knowledge of the language they are learning.
Also, many of them do not have any type of schooling, there are many cases of people who come from Pakistan who never went to school and do not appreciate schooling.
In general, in Greece there are limited access to language programs due to lack of available classes.
- Difficulties such as transportation or childcare.
- Trauma and stress: Many refugees and immigrants have experienced trauma, stress or displacement, which can affect their ability to learn and retain new information.

For online courses, videos and interactive activities (kahoot, quizlet, etc.) and boards. For face-to-face courses, extracurricular books and written material. Role playing games Augmentative and alternative communication (AAC methodology)
Multilingualism: Many refugees and migrants are multilingual, and language teaching should build on this existing knowledge, recognizing and valuing their linguistic diversity. Qualified teachers: teachers must be qualified and trained to work with refugees and migrants, and they need to have intercultural communication.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Action-oriented perspective: conceptualization, systematization</th>
<th>Lack of adapted visual aids (videos, images, posters) for the acquisition of new vocabulary.</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Suggest tools and methods tailored to your needs</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Create links with students</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Attend class regularly</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Establish levels based on the students' knowledge</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Create a database of volunteers (via Google Drive, for example)</td>
<td>Lack of adapted visual aids (videos, images, posters) for the acquisition of new vocabulary.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Have access to relevant training</td>
<td>Lack of adapted visual aids (videos, images, posters) for the acquisition of new vocabulary.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Teaching the Greek language through art and culture.

- Cultural and linguistic differences: Cultural and linguistic differences between refugees and immigrants and the local population can make effective communication and teaching difficult.
- Gender inequality: Women may face additional barriers when it comes to learning languages, such as cultural expectations on gender roles or lack of access to childcare.
- Prejudice and discrimination: Refugees and immigrants can suffer prejudice and discrimination from the local population, which can make their integration and access to language education difficult.
- Legal and administrative barriers: Legal and administrative barriers, such as language proficiency requirements for citizenship or residency, can create additional challenges for refugees and migrants seeking access to language education.

France: Action-oriented perspective: conceptualization, systematization
Adapt the content to the level of the students
Be nice
Suggest tools and methods tailored to your needs
Adapt to the needs of the students
Create links with students
Attend class regularly
Promote oral expression
Put facts of daily life into situation
Establish levels based on the students' knowledge
Create a database of volunteers (via Google Drive, for example)
Have access to relevant training

Source: Own elaboration
Main responses from each country on the keys, barriers and good practices in teaching languages to migrants and refugees

4 CONCLUSIONS

A detailed analysis of the data obtained verifies that the participating teachers have given importance to the teaching in language acquisition, such as the (i) importance of adaptation to the communicative needs of the students; (ii) the role of the teaching staff as a reference in the process and (iii) the need to understand the multicultural richness of the classroom.

As a consequence, the proposed activities must be connected to their reality and respond to the concerns and interests of the students. Furthermore, they must provide information about the target culture, which promotes social inclusion. To achieve this goal, a good analysis of the reality of migrants should be carried out. The practical implications of what they are learning will have an impact on their attitude and motivation toward the target language. To promote this motivation, teachers can keep a record of the learning achievements and contribute, in this way, to the self-regulation of knowledge.

On the other hand, it is observed that, despite being diverse international contexts, the difficulties encountered are common: (i) the cultural heterogeneity, (ii) the academic and linguistic levels of the participants and (iii) the difficulties that arise when following a program due to the obstacles that many students face when it comes to following the session on a regular basis, as a consequence of their situation of structural vulnerability. Finally, (iv) the lack of institutional resources to satisfy the true demand of students seems to be a deficit shared by different contexts.

In addition, this research underlines the importance of the materials used in classroom with migrant students being flexible, adaptable and with many possibilities of use. The language curriculum has to be tailored to a very varied target group whose needs are constantly changing. Among the examples that have been highlighted, those resources that are framed in active methodologies stand out, which seek greater interaction between participants and relate the lessons in a more direct way to the reality of the students.
REFERENCES


