

LANGUAGE AND SOCIAL INTEGRATION IN TIMES OF INCREASING ANTI-IMMIGRATION DISCOURSES. CHALLENGES FOR TEACHERS AND MIGRANT ADULT LEARNERS IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

LENGUA E INTEGRACIÓN SOCIAL EN TIEMPOS DEL CRECIENTE DISCURSO ANTI-INMIGRACIÓN. RETOS PARA EL PROFESORADO Y EL ALUMNADO MIGRANTE ADULTO EN LA UNIÓN EUROPEA

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***Abstract:** This article analyses the structural barriers affecting the processes of linguistic integration among adult migrants and refugees by focusing on both teachers' and learners' experiences in the context of an EU-funded project for good practice exchange. Reflections and assumptions of language teachers for migrants and refugees from four European countries (Spain, Germany, Italy and Poland) are set against the linguistic needs and expectations of their students through the case of a Pakistani migrant woman in Barcelona. Although language training for migrants' labour integration and participation is widely emphasized by supranational, national and regional institutions, it is not a genuine priority in most of the countries of reception. Limited training focused on issues related*

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to language and anti-immigration and/or nationalist discourses condition well-intended initiatives from third sector organisations. Moving away from purely pedagogical factors, this article aims to contribute to locating language learning as social integration under the lens of social justice.

Key words: *adult migrants; linguistic integration; language training; national identities; Catalonia.*

Resumen: *Este artículo analiza las barreras estructurales que afectan a los procesos de integración lingüística entre migrantes y refugiados adultos, centrándose en las experiencias tanto del profesorado como del alumnado en el contexto de un proyecto financiado por la UE para el intercambio de buenas prácticas. Reflexiones y supuestos del profesorado de lengua para migrantes y refugiados de cuatro países europeos (España, Alemania, Italia y Polonia) se contrastan con las necesidades y expectativas lingüísticas del alumnado a través del caso de una mujer pakistani migrante en Barcelona. A pesar de que las instituciones supranacionales, nacionales y regionales destacan ampliamente la importancia de la enseñanza de la lengua para la integración laboral y la participación de los migrantes, no es una prioridad real en la mayoría de los países de recepción. La escasa formación en lengua y nociones relacionadas con los discursos antiinmigración y/o nacionalistas condicionan las iniciativas bien intencionadas de las organizaciones del tercer sector. Alejándose de los factores puramente pedagógicos, este artículo pretende contribuir a situar el aprendizaje de lengua como integración social bajo la lente de la justicia social.*

Palabras clave: *migrantes adultos; integración lingüística; enseñanza de lenguas; identidades nacionales; Cataluña.*

INTRODUCTION

Migratory movements and the so-called “refugee crisis” of recent years have generated a renewed interest in the role of languages in the processes of incorporation of migrant populations into Global North countries (OECD, 2015, 2018). However, research on the provision of language services for refugees and migrants shows that this is not a priority in most of the countries of reception (Hanemann, 2018). Paradoxically, in the current international context, where the growth of “anti-migration” parties is pushing political debates away from the

perspective of social justice while focusing on old and renewed notions of otherness as threats to national identities, a lack of command of the languages of the host countries may be seen as a lack of commitment to becoming part of them. There are several well-known examples of leading political figures making public declarations on language and integration in different countries. US president Donald Trump has become a strong supporter of the exclusive use of what he considers to be the “national” language in United States, in line with the English Only movement, although this is not part of any legal text. However, he is not alone, nor new in this approach. In 2011, former French president Nicolas Sarkozy declared: “Of course we must all respect differences, but we do not want a society where communities coexist side by side. If you come to France, you accept to melt into a single community, which is the national community, and if you do not want to accept that, you cannot be welcome in France” (Cummins, 2015, p. 457). And before that, in 2005, British Prime Minister Tony Blair affirmed that “There’s people who are isolated in their own communities who have been here for 20 years and still do not speak English. That worries me because there is a separateness that may be unhealthy” (quoted in Cooke & Simpson, 2012, p. 125).

But it is also interesting to note how language and migration are included in the public discourse in countries of former emigration which, like Poland, have been encouraging immigration more recently due to expected workforce deficits soon as a result of their demographic crisis and with the aim of retaining their economic growth rates. In 2016, the head of the entrepreneur union Cezary Ka mierzak said that migrants from Ukraine and Belarus were “the best in the world”¹, not taking away jobs from Poles and with no cost for taxpayers, in contrast to migrants from the Near East and Africa, who were depicted as mostly not working and living on social benefits, a discourse that is part of Poland’s elites’ discontent with EU migration policy. Through amendments to the Act on the Card of the Pole, the symbolic as well as pragmatic attraction of young foreign neighbours who can prove to have some Polish ancestry has been promoted, including the acquisition of Polish (and EU) citizenship within one year. Despite the closeness invoked, promised benefits also include grants for “adaptation costs” and professional and language training,

¹ <https://belarusdigest.com/story/poland-lures-the-best-migrants-in-the-world-from-belarus/>

since although Polish and Russian (the language spoken by the vast majority of Belarussians) are both Slavic languages, they belong to the most distant branches within that group—their lexical overlap being much smaller, for example, than that between English and German.

Thus, either as part of clear-cut us-and-them frameworks or within discourses closer to a revival of pan-ethnic nationalism, or both, the assimilationist approach in language policies has been common in most countries of immigrant reception (Martín-Rojo & Mijares, 2007). This is combined with more pluralist approaches that defend the coexistence of more than one language in a state, sometimes sequentially, sometimes sharing the same space and time. Nevertheless, the turn in recent years of extreme-right parties to a more virulent debate on the role of language in the receiving territories has exacerbated the vocabulary and ideological positions on this issue. This upsurge goes beyond the debate between assimilationist and pluralist linguistic policies and may be used to justify a greater political abandonment of the language services for refugees and migrants than they already undergo. On the other hand, they hinder the analysis of the current reality from other analytical frameworks that help overcome oppositional relations between citizens. The current communicative practices emerging in most globalized cities require a review of the processes of language acquisition by migrants from different perspectives, moving away from one purely focused on the analysis of standard, visible evaluation results, which accentuates the responsibilities of the individual.

However, most pluralist perspectives not only have to face the monolingual discourses of those who link the nation-state with a single language, but also find it difficult to be accepted within progressive perspectives in bilingual contexts, where, as in Catalonia, some voices warn that linguistic policies that advocate linguistic diversity can undermine the status of minority languages (Erdocia, 2018; Jaspers, 2015). At the same time, recent works show how linguistic policies oriented towards protecting endangered languages can echo hegemonic language political agendas with dramatic effects on, for example, second generation education trajectories (Reyes & Carrasco, 2018).

This article aims to shine a light on the complex situations regarding the provision of language services for adult migrants and refugees in receiving areas where debates over language hierarchies and speakers' rights are highly politized, obscuring the needs of students and their access to rights and resources in society as well

as the adequateness of their teachers' approaches, training and awareness. It draws on data from two projects, an ethnography focusing on linguistic capital and mobility among migrants in Barcelona and an Erasmus+ project which brought together adult teachers of four different receiving countries and linguistic context (Catalonia in Spain, Poland, Italy and Germany) that explored innovative oral methodologies among newly arrived refugees and migrants with low literacy skills.

Moving beyond purely pedagogical factors, this article analyses the structural, social, and cultural barriers that intervene in the processes of linguistic integration among adult migrant populations. We start by reviewing the relationship between social integration and linguistic integration within the dynamics of bilingualism in Catalonia as an immigrant receiving society, which provides an example that complicates the analysis of integration ideologies described above and can shed light on other complexities or real scenarios where learning and integration are expected to take place. Then we reconstruct the teachers' assumptions and reflections about the difficulties they have in teaching through meaningful and useful ways for social integration as social justice with the available provisions of language services for migrants and refugees in the EU; finally, we analyse the linguistic needs and expectations of adult migrants in their everyday lives in contrast to their social construction as learners through the case of a Pakistani migrant woman in Barcelona.

Overall, we want to draw attention to the limitations of current approaches to language teaching and migration, placing the concept of social integration at the centre and under the lens of social justice.

1. SOCIAL INTEGRATION, LINGUISTIC INTEGRATION AND NATIONALIST IDENTITIES

"This is a country where we speak English. It's English. You have to speak English".

(Donald Trump during his presidential campaign in 2016. December 3, 2019. BBC News World)

"... There are indicators that point to the decline. First: although the school defends the language with immersion, Catalan is barely used in the leisure of children and adolescents. This is seen in the

school playground, where language alternation is continuous, but also in the transformation of the audio-visual world. The youngest have stopped consuming traditional media and the content they search for on the web is done mainly in Spanish and English. Second: Catalan speakers give up their language in any situation of conflict and very often when they interact with migrants. And this is happening in a territory that has received almost two million people in the last decade."

(Catalan TV program commenting on the current situation of the Catalan language. June 6, 2019. <https://www.ccma.cat/tv3/alacarta/30-minuts/llengua-ferits/video/5879592/>)

1.1. Social integration, social justice and implications for multilingualism

The concept of social integration has experienced a certain amount of rejection in the last two decades (Carrasco, 2021, in preparation) both in activism and academia, partly due to the way it has often been used in politics, policy and the media as the equivalent to cultural assimilation. In their introductory article to the special issue of the *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* devoted to Rethinking Integration, Grzymala-Kazłowska & Phillimore (2018) review the debates around the limitations of social integration as a tool to analyse new migration movements emerging from globalization and argue for the need for "new ways of conceptualising integration of transnational or transit populations, integration within fluid and super-diverse communities or the relationship between integration and intersectionality", among other issues.

However, institutions such as the Council of Europe never refer to integration as a one-way process but rather it urges its member states to develop bidirectional policies where the different institutions of the country also adapt to ensure that new citizens live under the same legal, social and financial conditions as the natives of the different countries (Plutzar & Ritter, 2008). More than ten years ago, Ferguson (2008) developed a background paper² for the United Nations in which the working definition of social integration

² Report commissioned by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) for the Expert Group Meeting on Promoting Social Integration, Helsinki, Finland, 8-10 July 2008.

proposed was inspired by a human rights and social justice approach. Social integration was understood as an inclusionary goal implying equal rights, resources and participation, almost overlapping with Fraser's definition of social justice as the intertwining of recognition, redistribution and representation (Fraser, 1996). Far from imposing uniformity and external ideas and values, this definition of social integration places responsiveness to cultural diversity at its centre and aims to benefit from critical views on mainstream policy models and goals. Ultimately, aiming at pursuing diverse, stable, safe and just societies, "social integration, then, requires the transformation of social values and institutions that perpetuate unequal relations rather than simply help for the disadvantaged to gain access to mainstream society" (Ferguson, 2008, p. 3). It also implies adopting an additive, rather than a subtractive approach (Gibson, 1988; Valenzuela, 1997) in relation to learning and acculturation, including language learning. What is more, adding languages to the overall linguistic competence of a receiving society in a time of intensive international interdependency should be regarded as the least controversial area related to managing cultural diversity since it objectively increases the total amount of cultural capital available to enhance transnational connections.

There is a consensus on the importance of acquiring the language(s) of the receiving country in eliminating social barriers, according to research and policy assessment (UNESCO & UIL, 2016). For instance, the importance of language training in social integration has been greatly emphasized by the European Commission (Commission of the European Communities, 2005). Nevertheless, research in multilingual contexts also demonstrates the need to modify the ideas of the receiving societies about what communicative competence for real life means. Again, the Council of Europe (2001) recognises this competence, which combines the entire communicative repertoire of a speaker in its concept of plurilingualism. The Council of Europe defines plurilingualism as

"the ability to use languages for the purposes of communication and to take part in intercultural interaction, where a person, viewed as a social agent has proficiency, of varying degrees, in several languages and experience of several cultures. This is not seen as the superposition or juxtaposition of distinct competences, but rather as the existence of a complex or even composite competence on which the user may draw." (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 168).

Thus, this approach to languages encourages responsiveness to the linguistic needs of new migrant populations from the perspective of interaction with local institutions and the communities in which they settle while it also implies an acknowledgement of their skills and contributions to them. Therefore, paying attention to the integration *context* (Crul & Schneider, 2010) and the local *conditions* of integration (Carrasco, Pàmies and Bertran, 2009) as well as analysing integration through *interaction* between migrants and nationals in symbolic, socio-economic and political spheres (Pennix and Garcés, 2016) becomes crucial when it comes to identifying and understanding the sociolinguistic dynamics that may hamper or enhance the acquisition of language competences by migrant populations.

Notwithstanding the above, the place of languages in the process of integration needs also be understood within specific *politics of belonging* (Yuval-Davis, 2006). In his thorough historical review of the regional politics of migrant integration in Catalonia, Alonso (2018) singles out three explicit elements of “the mental framework of Catalonia as a receiving society”, as he literally puts it: a belief in social mobility, the centrality of the Catalan language and an empathy towards a distinct Catalan identity expected from migrants. He also argues that changes could be identified from an agenda that understood integration as assimilation in the two first waves of large internal immigration from other parts of Spain at the beginning and the second half of the 20th century, to including a notion of equality when immigration became international and access to social resources could not be granted by citizenship. However, even though Catalan society had, by the end of the century, become a lot more diverse as a receiving society, identity discourses and the place of the Catalan language in them had barely changed and were even made institutionally stronger as part of the integration discourse. Again, the relationship between languages and belonging in the context of migrant integration may enable interaction and participation or can hinder both, and it conditions how learning is organised and delivered and what is expected from it.

Finally, in order to address linguistic integration in the light of social justice, it is essential to consider the *intersection between linguistic diversity, integration and gender*. In 2019 women constituted 48% of the world's 272 million international migrants (World Migration Report, 2020) and although it is often assumed that

receiving countries will provide them with greater levels of gender equality, research proves they experience gender-specific language barriers to participation, as pointed out by Piller (2016). The pervasive gender-blind understanding of migration and integration (Kraler & Kofman, 2010; OCDE, 2019) and the way women are viewed from a deficit framework places them in a more vulnerable position to access equal rights, resources and participation, which needs to be examined if we wish to bring to light the structural disadvantages they also face in relation to linguistic integration (Macdonald, 2013).

1.2. Language learning, immigration and problematized bilingualism in the local context

Traditionally, the notion that states can be identified with a single language (Heller, 1995) was widely seen as unproblematic, which necessarily led to the treatment of linguistic diversity as an anomaly. In recent decades, research into the cognitive benefits of multilingualism, the common perception of languages as commodities for the labour market, and also research on the linguistic knowledge of minorities, have provoked a multilingual turn (May, 2014), which conceives of integration as a two-way process, as mentioned above.

Influenced by this shift towards multilingualism, national or regional linguistic policies are introducing a commitment to the recognition of linguistic diversity. However, practitioners often grapple with conflicting messages corresponding to different agendas —recognition of linguistic diversity versus the traditional, and still prevalent, justification of the equation one language, one territory (Heinemann, 2018; Reyes, 2021, in press). In fact, this is the logic underlying anti-immigration political positions. These positions, under the current paradigm of securitization (Khan, 2016), turn a perceived weakness in the language of the state into a major factor in explaining the tensions that may occur in the community. Thus, the ability to speak the language of the country of reception is regarded as a ‘marker’ of integration and the lack of it as a ‘failure’ to integrate and so a potential security threat linked to radicalisation and terrorism (Meer, Peace & Hill, 2019).

In a bilingual receiving context like Catalonia, the discourses around the endangered language further complicate the understanding of linguistic integration as a matter of access to resources and

participation as full citizens (Reyes & Carrasco, 2018). After many years excluded from all official institutions during Franco's regime, the Catalan language managed to become an institutionalized language after the democratic restoration. Since then, linguistic policies have been oriented toward the protection of the minoritized language, making it the primary language in public spaces, such as education. However, the Catalan language has ended up adopting features typical of hegemonic languages and presenting itself as the standard public language, open to the whole world and as the main tool for social cohesion of the Catalan society (Woolard, 2008). Documents such as the *Pla per la llengua i la cohesió social* (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2009) or more recently the *Pla de Ciutadania i de les migracions 2017-2020* (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2017)³ are examples of the role that the Catalan language has taken as the main tool to unite Catalan society. The two documents are framed in the recognition of plurilingualism but emphasise that the Catalan language is the key element to uniting the reception society and accessing all its resources (Lapresta-Rey, Huguet & Fernández-Costales, 2017). As pointed out by Aramburu (2018) this strong relationship between language and social cohesion is linked with the 'Catalan integration model' established by Jordi Pujol (Catalan president from 1980 to 2003). This model adopted an assimilationist approach which differs little from the approach of other countries with more hegemonic languages. The same role for the language is claimed by nation-states with a monolingual approach to national languages (Martín-Rojo & Mijares, 2007).

This prioritization of the minoritized language leads to a greater offering of Catalan classes for migrants at the official level, leaving the teaching of Spanish to the private sector or the third sector. The migrant population, for which the management of linguistic diversity is in principle intended by the institutions, encounters linguistic policies and messages designed to address a bilingualism presented as problematic. However, their reality, and the needs that this generates, are framed in a bilingual, if not mostly Spanish context. For example, according to the latest survey of the linguistic uses of the population (EULP, 2019), Catalan is spoken as the primary language by 36.1% of the population, while Spanish is spoken by 48.6% in the region,

³ It must be said that in the *Pla de la Ciutadania i de les Migracions 2017-2020* there is also a recognition of the limitations of considering only language as a tool of social and economic integration.

with a greater imbalance in favour of Spanish in the metropolitan area of Barcelona. Furthermore, the jobs which migrants mostly access are carried out in a linguistic context of Spanish and that is also the only language spoken by the nationals in the working-class neighbourhoods they settle in. In sum, Spanish is the “local” language migrants and their children pick up naturally in everyday out-of-school interactions, but is not the language of tuition in schools, although school-age children also partly pick up other languages spoken by their classmates from all over the world (Reyes & Carrasco, 2018).

Thus, despite acknowledging linguistic diversity in official reports, the weight of a primarily monolingual approach to the protection of the language means that the same linguistic diversity is also problematized and exacerbated periodically by the media as reflected in the reflections in the opening quote of the section “...Catalan speakers give up their language in any situation of conflict and very often when they interact with migrants. And this is happening in a territory that has received almost two million people in the last decade.” This comment is a clear example of the principal concern when dealing with linguistic diversity in the Catalan context, not so much the barriers which migrants face when not accessing the language of reception, but the threats to the minoritized language when speakers of it yield to the hegemonic language and displace Catalan to intra-group use (Aracil, 1983, quoted in Pujolar, 2010), which has been identified as a sign of linguistic weakness (Fishman, 1965). Regarding the state of health of the Catalan language, there are different opinions that are more or less optimistic, but as far as the objective of this text is concerned, we are interested in highlighting how immigration in a bilingual context can also be presented as a threat to national identity as suggested by the words of Nicolas Sarkozy or Tony Blair.

Some authors have attempted to highlight that alternation between languages, not so much harms the minority language but harms the migrant citizens who may be deprived of a currently prestigious linguistic practice (Pujolar, 2010; Codó & Patiño, 2014; Block & Corona, 2019). Catalan is a language that has spread as the ordinary language by default among the middle classes, both originally Catalan-speakers and Spanish-speaking families (Frekko, 2013). However, focusing on the tensions between languages leaves little space for analysing the local *conditions* of integration as pointed out above and understanding the process of linguistic integration from the point of view of the needs of migrant speakers. At the end of

the day, although the existence and benefits of linguistic diversity are widely accepted, at least in principle, the acquisition of the language is still considered sufficient to remove the barriers to participation as full citizens, just as assimilationist policies have always argued (Martín-Rojo & Mijares, 2007). The idea that mastering the language or languages of the receiving country, in general, but even more when they are constructed by nationalist hierarchies, guarantees equitable access to the country's resources as suggested by promising messages directed to the migrant population has been largely proved to be mistaken (García, 2015; Reyes & Carrasco, 2018). But this naïve position can also feed anti-immigration discourses by making other factors of inequality invisible, in addition to naturalizing linguistic discrimination (Piller, 2016).

Many questions arise about the challenges these positions pose in EU receiving societies for training responsive teachers and organising provisions for language learning that are adequate for adult migrants and refugees. In the following sections we analyse some of them in detail.

2. METHODS AND CONTEXT

As said before, this paper is based on data collected from two different studies carried out by the authors: first, an ethnographic four-year project focused on mobility and language capitals that, among other results, unveiled the structural barriers faced by migrants in Barcelona, and second, data obtained during a training and exchange three-year process with adult education teachers in the Erasmus+ ORALPHA project⁴. Comparing the findings of the two projects reveals how the main discourses and approaches underlying language learning devices in the host countries become a drag on teaching effectively and meeting the adult learners' needs.

In this piece of work we analyse the data collected from teachers participants of the Erasmus project that focused on the possibilities of promoting social inclusion through the improvement of the practice of teaching the languages of the reception societies to the new realities of younger and older adult migrants and refugees, and

⁴ ERASMUS+ Cooperation for Innovation and the Exchange of Good Practices. KA204 2017-1-ES01-KA204-038450)

in particular reviewing traditional vs innovative literacy education. The authors' role in the project was to monitor the quality of the process to develop a methodological guide to provide expert knowledge and training on migration and linguistic integration issues, as well as to coordinate an online course for trainers.

Data for the elaboration of the ORALPHA-guide were gathered through five focus groups conducted in a first phase of the project, with 60 teachers in total in the 5 participant organisations of the countries involved (one in Germany, one in Italy, one in Poland and two in Catalonia, Spain). Three topics guided the discussion: the teachers and participants profiles, the teaching methods used, and the main difficulties faced, challenges and improvement proposals. As is common in these kinds of provision, two thirds of the participants were women and a variety of ages was represented, from recent graduates to retired volunteers.

Additional data were collected from participant observation and questionnaires in two international training workshops that included teachers from the language services of the four countries involved with an average participation of 30 teachers in each one. This methodology granted privileged first-hand access to teachers' assumptions about migration and language as well as their reactions to the innovative perspectives introduced during their training, especially through learning activities related to real situations from the field gathered in the ethnography conducted earlier. Before and after the workshop, the teachers supplied oral and written assessments in relation to their initial needs and expectations both at the end of the workshops and through systematic assessment guides provided to them once they had returned to teaching.

All the oral data were transcribed, and observations were registered in the authors' systematic fieldnotes. The resulting written materials, including the teachers' written assessments, were analysed using Nvivo11 through thematic coding emerging from the material itself as well as from the specialised literature reviewed.

Finally, as explained earlier, our analysis also draws on data from a paradigmatic case-study (Merriam, 2009) that focuses on the structural barriers faced by migrants and their relation to languages through the experience of a migrant woman. Her case was selected from a larger study carried out over four years in a high school and its surrounding community in Barcelona through a multilevel ethnography (Ogbu, 1981). She was one of the students'

mothers with whom in-depth interviews were carried out. Her case was used in the training materials for the teachers' workshops in the Oralphi+ project due to the richness and complexity of the case. By a case-centred approach, teacher participants were encouraged to compare the situations presented to the experiences of their own adult students and to reflect on how to identify common challenges in the specific linguistic complexities of their social context.

3. TEACHERS' ASSUMPTIONS AND REFLECTIONS ABOUT THE PROVISION OF LANGUAGE SERVICES FOR MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

Teachers' recruitment and profiles, as well as the lesson schedules, teaching methods and materials used in the language services were surprisingly similar in the five participant organisations, regardless of the local diversity in the origin of flows, legal frameworks, receiving and resettling models, migrants' and refugees' rights granted, or even of the type of provisions and resources allocated in each country. Generally, teachers in language services for migrants and refugees either come from adult education provisions or from activism and volunteering around migration and integration, related, or not, to third sector organisations. Some of them are language teachers but others are graduates in other fields. In Germany, Italy and Poland only the official majority and/or "national" language of the country was taught, while in Catalonia the courses offered to adult migrants and refugees were either Catalan or Spanish in the metropolitan area of Barcelona, but only Catalan in other areas.

The analysis of the data also identified the most common teacher concerns as well as prejudices and lack of awareness of some relevant issues related to migration. Among their contradictory assumptions and reflections, the following are the most relevant in relation to the issues raised by the case study we will analyse in the next section.

–Teachers' awareness of their own limitations combined with a lack of knowledge of the impact of other issues beyond the class methods on the students' learning and experiences.

After analysing the reflective exercises of the focus group discussions and before the workshops, the participant teachers were

asked about their concerns regarding the teaching of host languages to adult migrants and refugees and about the benefits they expected to acquire from the project training activities. Most teachers wished to learn more effective methods to teach illiterate, adult migrant and refugee students that increased specific challenges of adult education. Some of them also wanted to acquire more background knowledge about new migration flows. Other participants were eager to understand how refugee students really feel to better motivate and declared, for example, “I’d like to be able to focus more on the students’ needs”. Finally, others expected to learn how professionals from other EU countries worked with these students, saying they wished “to become more open to new challenges and methods”, “to discover new materials” and “to change my approach”.

Although an overwhelming majority of participants declared they thought the most valuable parts of the training would be the practical learning, some of them also included high expectations from experts’ inputs on updated research and declared they expected to improve their knowledge about language, migration and literacy. All of them had positive expectations about improving their ability and confidence as teachers “to help adult migrant and refugee students” and wished “to know how to learn from students”.

One of the first reactions of all the participant teachers at the beginning of the training meetings was to find gender and ethics issues in the programme and some even initially questioned the presence in the core contents of updated language and migration research in the context of integration of adult migrants and refugees. However, gender and migration sessions scored the highest in their assessments and, even during the workshops, teachers showed their surprise about how important responsiveness to gendered practices, experiences and needs was, as well as motivation and teaching materials. Simulation of language lessons, literacy teaching and learning from other partners’ presentations also received positive assessment, together with updated perspectives on language and migration that seemed to be widely unknown to most of them. As for the field exposures, visits and interviews with migrants and refugees in community associations, while being highlighted as very relevant and necessary for training, many teachers were observed to be unfamiliar with them and most refrained from interactions. It became clear that this was especially the case among those who did not come from activism.

The expected gain of confidence as teachers was achieved as a goal, especially when participants found out they shared challenges and skills with their colleagues from the other countries despite apparent differences, but also when they could connect their migrant and refugee students' experiences and needs with more effective ways to teach them. The words of one teacher participant summarized it well: "I see now that I have to pay more attention both to inclusion and to explore new teaching materials". However, the challenge remains for them to be able not only to introduce multilingual pedagogies but to learn how to build on individual plurilingual repertoires and groups' plurilingual skills to increase effectiveness in learning the host language(s) (García, 2017; Haznedar, Payton & Young-Scholten, 2018). Which brings us to the next point.

–Students regarded as voiceless according to traditional linguistic ideologies:

Another remarkable coincidence among the teacher participants in the four countries during the focus group discussions was their limited views of the linguistic background of their students, adult migrants and refugees who in many cases came from multilingual countries and had travelled and stayed for several years in other countries before arriving in Europe. They were often described as "only speaking their mother tongue". As we could see in the workshop activities and the related field exposures of the subsequent project phases, the main interest of both host and guest teachers was to see the students' fluency in the language of the receiving society. No questions were addressed to them about other languages they might know, nor were they encouraged to use other plurilingual resources they might have to help increase their communication skills.

–Critical views of structural inequalities affecting migrants and refugees combined with cultural essentialism and paternalistic attitudes towards them in language classes

Teachers were aware of multiple factors that may condition the acquisition of the language(s) of the receiving society by migrant adults and refugees but at the same time they tended to problematize cultural diversity and presume illiteracy or low levels of formal education among them, even though this may not be the case, or

the fact that some may speak five languages. They tended to feel insecure and have no alternative teaching strategies to manage both challenges, for example:

“In my classes there are always students with different cultural habits (regarding: time, care of themselves...) that affect my job.” [Italy. Participant 02 FG12].

“Life circumstances clearly affected the learning process: it is really difficult to learn the language if you are focused on more important personal issues...” [Italy. Participant 04 FG1]

Many teachers showed they wished to do a better job, but they simply lacked the tools. For example, in one of the focus groups held in Catalonia, teachers admitted being helpless when trying to make adult migrant and refugee students the centre of learning based on their own interests and pace, due to a lack of resources to teach that way. In another focus group, teachers mentioned how difficult it was to do it when students really struggled to find a long lasting and regular job, but this did not happen until many years after their arrival, which increased irregular attendance and dropping out.

–General feeling of being left alone by institutions and limited usefulness of actual conditions of development of language courses:

Teachers in all countries complained about the lack of institutional coordination, resources and training and the short duration of the projects, which they tended to think were national problems; all of them also imagined other countries' provision of language services were probably more consistently organised. The sense of never-ending restarting at basic levels of language tuition not only would hardly meet the needs of many different students but was frustrating both for the students and for the teachers involved, with repetition of contents, duplication of services and discontinuous learning trajectories of the students. Moreover, everywhere, budgets for language services have experienced dramatic cutbacks and the literacy provision has been exponentially reduced. Because of this, non-profit organizations are getting more and more responsibility for offering language and literacy lessons, especially to those students who depend on free courses, and the organisations depend on changing availability of funds according to policy orientations:

"What I am saying is that the education administration (...) is giving up its functions (...) and who is funding literacy (programmes) is the Department of Work. [Spain. Participant 2 FG1]

"And sometimes the project starts but then it does not end. For example, the Diputació de Barcelona started great projects to bring all the Adult Schools together in a network, but now (last elections' results) it has been lost." [Spain. Participant 03 Spain. Participant 1 FG2]

–Gender-blindness: either ethnocentric gender agendas or not gender-sensitive at all

In line with well-established findings from gender and education research scholarship, teachers tended to hold essentialist or culturalist views of women's more systematic work and good attitude in classes. This recurrent interpretation by teachers has been proven to mask their potential as learners beyond their good attitude, especially when these gender stereotypes are applied to female Muslim students (Mirza, 2008). Women are also easily homogenised as predominantly carers, "as struggling, low-skilled parents rather than highly-resourced, capable adults who require specific, appropriate information in a suitable learning environment" (Macdonald, 2013:148):

"They [female migrants] have a great ambition to learn everything very fast! Even if they are often too shy to take an active part within the class, they work at home and in class diligently." [Germany. Participant 01. FG1]

"What I see is that some women want to understand their (children's) school grades, speak, understand a meeting... well, the language. (...). They want to understand the school grades without having to ask their husband...". [Spain. Participant 06. FG2]

There is a general lack of reflection on the structural barriers of the receiving society that men and women must face and most language training programmes appear to be gender blind, as Angeli (2019) notes in her study in Cyprus, which is likely to contribute to the lack of monitoring of achievement of the courses. This has been reported in the British context by Phillimore (2011), but it is something general in the countries of reception (Hanemann, 2018), which the teachers' remarks of the (ORALPHA) project confirm. Thus, for example, they did not express great concerns about

gender issues beyond those they associated with what they believe to be needs to be addressed, that is, to act against sexism in the students' cultures, for example by forcing adult men and women to sit and work together in classes. They also speak of the "risk of segregation" when students of different nationalities and with different migrant or refugee experiences resist certain groupings and activities. And yet, as stressed by the Council of Europe (2001), the development of communicative competence involves other dimensions that are not strictly linguistic, such as awareness of socio-cultural and linguistic diversity, for which migrant students are already better positioned because of their own migration experience. Teachers should not miss the opportunity to work from this awareness to support the development of interculturally competent citizens (Haznedar, Payton & Young-Scholten, 2018). But this cannot be achieved if the deficit perspective and lack of self-criticism of teachers persists.

The next section shows how Parveen, a migrant woman from Pakistan leaving in Barcelona, struggles to make room for language classes within her difficult circumstances, what the consequences are for her real access to rights and resources and the many misunderstandings entailed.

4. PARVEEN'S LINGUISTIC EXPERIENCES IN BARCELONA: EVERYDAY ENCOUNTERS AND SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONS

"when we ask for the instruments to safeguard our own language, the shared cultural trunk, the identity of reference, we are also doing it because it is part of our model for social cohesion" (Artur Mas, former Catalonia's president from 2010 to 2016, quoted in Aramburu 2018:4).⁵

"I used to go to language classes, but then my husband had the accident and I have to be at home to support him" (Parveen)

⁵ This comment reflects the assimilationist approach of the 'Catalan integration model' we have referred to above which links the language of the territory with social cohesion.

As pointed out in the previous section, language teachers for refugees and migrants show a high awareness of the multiple factors that affect language acquisition among their students, along with a problematized vision of cultural diversity. We have also commented on the more simplistic picture presented by sections of the media and certain politicians: the acquisition of the receiving language or languages, which should be emphasized as a right, is shown as an obligation avoided by many migrants (Simpson, 2016). Representing the communicative practices of migrants through a stereotyped and deficit perspective complicates our understanding of what people really experience. To analyse better the role that language plays in refugees' and migrants' social integration, let us look more closely at the paradigmatic case of Parveen. Her needs and expectations contrast strongly with these representations.

Parveen is the mother of a secondary school student who attended one of the schools included in a longitudinal ethnographic research in Barcelona carried out in parallel to the [ORALPHA] project. She is described by her son's teachers as a kind and lovely woman, but living in "the Pakistani ghetto", and not speaking a word of Catalan or Spanish. The teachers' representation of Parveen echoes Blair's idea of self-isolation, quoted in the introduction. When we interview her, we discover that yes, she has lots of problems using Spanish or Catalan after 7 years living in Barcelona. However, many other important social factors which impact her language acquisition and linguistic and social integration are also revealed. Parveen used to be a teacher in Pakistan before coming to Barcelona with great expectations for her children's education, but now she is dejected and concerned to observe that these expectations are not being realised. Previous interviews with her son had revealed her important educational role in Pakistan. During the interview, she demonstrates that she continues to be extremely interested in the education of her children, as well as her concern about some educational decisions made at school regarding her youngest son. However, we also know from him that she no longer plays the same role as in Pakistan. In Pakistan, she spoke with teachers, sought extra tuition when necessary, and followed school assignments herself, among other things. All this has been interrupted in the country of reception.

The isolation that teachers point out is also quite true, although it does not seem self-imposed when examining her situation more closely. With a husband on sick leave, she has to be at home nearly

24 hours a day. He had a serious work accident shortly after Parveen and their children managed to be reunited with him in Barcelona, and he lost all capacity to care for himself. The family had tried to access a day centre to free Parveen from some of her caring responsibility. However, Parveen and her son explain that they failed in this. They have the impression that the professionals of the centre quickly got rid of them after realizing it was not going to be an easy case. It is difficult to judge the social care practitioners' reaction, but what the interview clearly reveals is her feeling of failure in dealing with the institution that could have provided them with the service needed.

The family also struggles economically. For instance, at the time of the interview, the family was under the threat of eviction after the loss of income following the father's work accident. Parveen combines the care of her husband with occasional sewing work at home in less-than-ideal conditions. She had sometimes joined language classes in the past, but she did not have much time to keep them up since she had to care for her husband nearly 24 hours per day, at the same time as sewing. At the time of the interview, she also is looking after her one-month-old grandchild.

Beyond individual responsibility

Representing Parveen by her isolation and lack of linguistic knowledge problematizes her social and linguistic integration as due to her shortcomings, and not the barriers that society imposes on her. Nevertheless, Parveen's case allows us to gain insight into some of the structural barriers, such as poor access to the labour market, housing difficulties or limited social support, which is consistent with the outcomes of research in other contexts (Hanemann, 2018; Angeli, 2019; Meer, Peace & Hill, 2019).

At the same time, the prevalent prejudices in folk theories about second language acquisition among adults can also contribute to the idea that the lack of language acquisition is predominantly the speakers' responsibility. It is common to hear that age is the major problem in learning a language for adults, or that the lack of prior schooling for a large part of the migrant and refugee population seriously hinders the learning of the languages of reception. The little existing research on literacy refutes the idea that age or previous situations of non-schooling are explanatory factors for the learning

problems that students of this type encounter (Young-Scholten and Naeb, 2017). However, these beliefs can become themselves a barrier to overcome. If it is generally accepted that people such as Parveen are too old and too poorly educated to learn a new language, it can be normalized that little else may be done to reverse the situation. Besides, in the case of Parveen, it is not true that she had a previous situation of non-schooling. But the stereotypes often applied to Muslim women referred to in the previous section make them more vulnerable to the derogatory attitude that they are hardly able to assume facets other than their caring ones. In this way, the expectations in the courses aimed at profiles close to Parveen can be easily lowered by the institutions and the drop-out rate in these easily accepted.

Needs and expectations of Parveen

Analysing Parveen's needs and expectations regarding her social and economic integration, we can observe how essential it is to acquire the language of reception for at least four key dimensions: education, health, housing and work.

First, the migratory project of Parveen's family was intimately linked to the family's educational expectations for their children. In order to carry on with the previous educative role she had in Pakistan, Parveen would benefit from acquiring language skills. But the accommodation by the school to her linguistic needs and a greater awareness of these needs would also have a positive impact on the engagement between Parveen and the school.

Second, the specific and complicated situation with her husband makes it more than advisable for her to acquire better linguistic competence in order to manage the family's health and social care needs. Likewise, an adaptation by the institutions to their linguistic needs could have reduced the danger of communication breakdown.

Third, being at risk of eviction Parveen would also benefit by acquiring more language skills to communicate with the relevant authorities and gain support from activist organizations in the area of evictions. But one could also expect the receiving society to develop ways of working with linguistically diverse communities to prevent language from acting as a barrier to accessing basic rights.

However, Parveen would not only need linguistic accommodation for supporting her children or accessing services. Hegemonic discourses tend to only highlight these two motivations among

migrant mothers (Macdonald, 2013). She would also need linguistic support for developing her own professional career. In addition, another female family member was also conditioned by limited linguistic competence of the language of reception. That had the impact of doubling Parveen's care responsibility when her daughter could not access a labour market that guarantees basic rights such as maternity leave.

Parveen's linguistic repertoire

From the perspective of the receiving society there is a danger that migrants may be considered as "voiceless", because they are not able to use the language(s) of that country "and still do not speak English", "lovely woman, but not speaking a word of Catalan and Spanish." However, migrants' communicative competence acquires a completely different value if we put aside the traditional linguistic ideologies.

Many migrants use more than one language because they come from countries which are multilingual. For instance, back in Pakistan, Parveen frequently spoke at least three languages. Parveen's family language was Pothwari, one of the minority languages spoken in some areas of Pakistan. She also had a good command of Urdu, the language which has been promoted in Pakistan in recent decades as the official language of the country (together with English). Besides this, she used English in her work in an English medium school and supporting her children's education, also in an English medium school.

As pointed out by the Council of Europe, when a speaker uses different languages, they do not need to have the same degree of proficiency in all of them to be a successful communicator; what is emphasized is the general communicative proficiency using different linguistic resources. The linguistic awareness in this kind of plurilingual communication is also highly valued as a condition to become interculturally aware and prepared for becoming a citizen of the globalised cities. Because of their personal experiences of multilingualism and their contacts with the languages of the society of the receiving country, many migrants and refugees are much more aware of linguistic issues, of similarities or differences between languages and of the different communication contexts which exist. However, this linguistic awareness is erased by the comments about

migrants when presenting their communicative competence only in relation to the language or languages of reception (García, 2017).

In the case of Parveen, her children bring Spanish and Catalan home when they use it among themselves or watch T.V. or support her in bureaucratic processes. Although she speaks predominantly Pothwari among her family, she keeps using her Urdu for social encounters with other people from Pakistan, which is quite a common communicative practice of Pakistani people in the diaspora (Larrea, 2017). She has also had contact with Spanish through Spanish classes when she has been able to attend them. Finally, she also has some knowledge of Arabic at some level through the reading of the Koran, and of Hindi through watching television.

Nevertheless, all these different communicative interactions have been undermined by an isolation that we have already observed is due to their complex social and family situation. This isolation not only affects their linguistic integration but also their previous linguistic capital. Not having so many interactions with people speaking different languages also has a negative impact on her proficiency in languages such as Urdu or English. This loss of linguistic knowledge has been described as linguistic decapitalization (Martín-Rojo, 2013). A similar linguistic decapitalisation has also been observed among the younger migrant population transferring from the Pakistani education system, where English is the language of tuition from secondary school onwards, to the Catalan education system. Students like Parveen's son, for example, need to put their efforts into learning a language of tuition they can hardly practice with anyone outside the school but will condition their access to higher education, where English is again highly valued and even official (Reyes & Carrasco, 2018). Their multilingual knowledge is not recognized as valid cultural capital in this local/national context as Erel (2010) has also pointed out. Thus, focusing only on the acquisition of the languages of reception, whether they are hegemonic or minority, blurs the analysis of these situations of linguistic discrimination, which act as one more barrier to their social and economic integration. Prioritizing unidirectional strategies to protect the language, '*instruments to safeguard our own language*' complicates the ability to find strategies to support bidirectional integration.

How their plurilingualism develops in the country of reception is going to depend on various factors, such as the opportunities for

language learning or the possibilities of linguistic encounters with all the languages significant to their realities (Plutzer and Ritter, 2008)—realities resulting from the mobility of globalization which need to be understood beyond the boundaries of nation-states and monolingual approaches.

5. FINAL REMARKS

When we look closely at the needs and expectations of Parveen, it becomes obvious that when it comes to avoiding linguistic discrimination, the provision of language courses is not enough. The social and economic realities of migrants and refugees must be taken into consideration and so it is necessary to change or adapt all types of public services. That is the real significance of the two-way process of integration referred to by the Council of Europe. Only then would it be possible to ensure the opportunity to take part fully in the political, social, economic and cultural life of the new country.

Moreover, a lot could be done to improve the provision of language services to support linguistic integration. On paper, the need for language training for people to get into jobs and education is emphasized, but there is no investment in specialized teachers' training or in monitoring the quality of the courses in language services, many of which depend on the third sector initiatives and funding as well as on volunteer work. Our original approach, focusing on teachers from four EU countries in a long, in-service, innovative training with shared and comparative reflections on practice, has been able to identify very similar shortcomings in this commitment, and very common needs among teachers' training. One consequence of the lack of commitment to the adequate provision of language services is an uncoordinated response in which political agendas of defending the national or territorial languages often prevail.

The dependence on volunteers and the lack of specialized training implies that linguistic integration continues to be problematised (García, 2017). Teachers without training in the benefits of multilingualism and on migration can hardly work from the linguistic strengths of their students, nor understand that their passage through national territories is part of a much broader mobility, inscribed in current capitalist regimes of mobility (Glick-

Schiller and Salazar, 2013). If integration is not to be a one-way process, it is essential to abandon a monolingual position and to recognize the complexity and richness of the linguistic knowledge of migrants and refugees; it is necessary to be aware of and celebrate all the linguistic knowledge gained from their mobility, which includes many different languages at many different degrees and not necessarily uniform (Pennycook & Otsuji, 2015; Reyes, 2021, in press). But behind the common problematization of linguistic diversity is a strong monolingual ideology which holds the belief that a native speaker is a perfect speaker, and which cannot embrace the value of partial linguistic competences (Blommaert, 2010). This linguistic ideology is reinforced by anti-immigration discourses, but also by discourses that focus on defending minority languages (Reyes & Carrasco, 2018, Reyes, 2021, in press).

In a context such as that of Catalonia, the recovery of the language has been linked to the idea that gaining the language is a guarantee of gaining resources, recognition and participation as a full citizen. But this can be as dangerous as a traditional defence of the national identity. As Plutzar and Ritler (2008) remind us, command of the language is a necessary condition, but not sufficient for full participation in the context of reception and a lack of awareness of this may lead to a failure to intervene in eliminating other barriers that migrants and refugees face (Hanemann, 2018).

If language is the centre of the social integration project instead of the needs and expectations of the migrant and refugee population, it is easy to ignore what has been pointed out recently by some authors in relation to the Catalan context: those who have had positive experiences of integration and develop feelings of belonging are the ones who speak more of the language promoted in the territory (Lapresta-Rey, Huguet & Fernández-Costales, 2017). However, they need to have had these positive experiences. Paradoxically, Parveen's motives for abandoning her language classes are due to structural disadvantages that do not provide her with these positive experiences of integration. And yet, these same situations of disadvantage are conditioned by her lack of linguistic competence in the languages of the host country.

Anti-immigration discourses that place the responsibility on migrants "to integrate" through language learning, while not caring about adequate provisions to make it possible, in fact limit their belonging to subordinate positions within civic stratification

processes (Kofman, 2002). This ends up appearing as an objective result of their lack of integration—a dangerous alibi that may reinforce the tricky populist radical-right discourses on gender equality (Krizsan and Siim, 2018). Finally, becoming “a national” is already problematic within a world economic system that forces people to move. But it is even more difficult in a territory within a state that tends to promote the learning of an endangered language, Catalan, “as a means to” and “as a proof of will of” social integration in an ideological framework inspired by a notion of national rights, while access to nationality depends on taking examinations only in the common official language, Spanish. For all these reasons, focusing on the dynamics of linguistic integration, which undoubtedly depends on actual interaction, also reveals itself to be a fertile arena for the analysis of the actual context and conditions of/ for social integration.

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