

Policy and Practice in Language Support for Newly Arrived Migrant Children in Ireland and Spain

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ABSTRACT: Over the last decades migration across Europe has continued to increase. Consequently, the issue of offering appropriate educational support for migrant students has been extensively debated across Europe and further afield, especially in countries with a history of immigration. However, less is known about how education systems in the 'new' immigration countries have responded to the needs of newly arrived migrants (NAMs). While various research and policy documents have highlighted the importance of proficiency in the language of instruction for social and academic outcomes of migrant children and youth: how language support is provided varies significantly from one jurisdiction to another. This article focuses on language support measures set up for migrant students in state-funded schools in the Republic of Ireland and Spain – both multilingual countries with more than one official language and with heterogeneous migrant population. In both countries, there is also a mismatch between an increasingly diverse student cohort and a homogenous teacher population.. Reviewing educational policy and practice in these jurisdictions in the areas of language support for migrants and how diversity is addressed in initial teacher education, the paper seeks to contribute to the debate on how to address the needs of migrant students in multi-lingual settings.

Keywords: immigration, education policy, Ireland, Spain, language support, multi-lingual countries.

Introduction

Although international migration has for a long time been a global phenomenon, recent social and structural developments have brought about changes to patterns of migration, particularly with regard to EU expansion, recent world-wide recession and the deepening refugee crisis. For most European countries, the profile of migrants in Europe is also very heterogeneous in terms of ethnicity and cultural and linguistic background as well as educational attainment (McGinnity and Gijsberts, 2015).

Newly arrived migrants (NAMs) can be considered a new disadvantagedⁱ group in immigration and educational research. It is important to note however that these children should not be perceived as a homogenous group. While it is beyond the scope of this article to differentiate between different groups, their educational and other needs vary depending on their background. How children and young people with migrant background fare in the education system, and later in the labor market, depends on their experiences and success in the new education system (Smyth et al., 2009).

Policies and practices aimed at supporting education of new migrants tend to vary and often depend on historical legacies and history of immigration in a jurisdiction as well as the profile of migrants in the country. Within the framework of educational support for migrants – the focus of this paper - all countries aim to help new arrivals with acquisition of the language of the host country. It is generally acknowledged that it is necessary to eliminate or minimize any potential barriers that may impede migrant children from accessing the regular curriculum and interacting with their peer group (Booth and Ainscow, 2002). Across a number of OECD countries, the main provision pattern in primary and post-primary schools involves migrant students attending mainstream classes while being given additional support in learning the language of instruction, although the number of hours and duration of support tends to vary across countries. In some countries, such as Sweden and Finland, there is an initial phase of separate intensive host language tuition for migrant children before transfer to

mainstream classes. Schools in the United Kingdom tend to combine withdrawal from class for supplementary tuition with the increased provision of within-class support for students (European Commission, 2013; Arnot, 2014).

While there has been little cross-national research on the effectiveness of different modes of language provision for migrant students, PISA results suggest that the gap in achievement between migrant and native children is narrower in countries where language support programmes are well established with clearly defined aims and goals (OECD, 2006). It can be argued that newly arrived migrants may find additional challenges in countries with more than one official language and where the teaching body is relatively homogenous in terms of teachers' ethnic and linguistic background (Author2 et al. 2011).

This paper focuses on national educational policies and school-level approaches to providing linguistic support to young migrants in two 'new' migrant-receiving countries with more than one official language – Ireland and Spain. Exploring support measures in language acquisition in these jurisdictions is important for a number of reasons. Firstly, a significant increase in cultural diversity in both countries due to relatively recent large-scale immigration makes Ireland and Spain interesting case studies. In both cases, the category 'migrant student' is far from homogenous but comprises nationals from EU countries, non-EU countries, unaccompanied minors, refugee children, and asylum seekers. Secondly, in both countries the linguistic background of the new arrivals is very diverse, which partially explains non-provision of heritage language tuition in schools. Thirdly, the teaching body in both countries is fairly homogeneous in terms of ethnic and linguistic background of the teachers. Finally, social transformations in Ireland (FitzGerald, 2014) and Spain coincided with the economic downturn which had a detrimental effect on public spending, including significant reduction of funding for education and migrant integration.

In order to ensure that migrant children have the same life chances as native children, the availability of targeted support measures at state and school level is crucial (Devine, 2013; Sime and Fox, 2015; European Commission, 2009; Smyth et al., 2009) as it may have long-term consequences for future life-chances of these young people. The article builds on existing studies on school-based support for migrant children by discussing language support available to migrant studentsⁱⁱ in Ireland and Spain. The paper is likely to be of interest to other countries with a large proportion of newly arrived migrants.

‘New’ migrant receiving countries: Ireland and Spain

In the not too distant past, Ireland, and to a lesser extent Spain, were seen as countries of emigration: however during the last decades, both countries have undergone a substantial social transformation. In Ireland, the Celtic Tigerⁱⁱⁱ era - characterised by an economic revival, saw an unprecedented influx of migrants into the country. During this time and until the beginning of the economic downturn in 2008, there was a general expectation that most migrants would return to their countries of origin. Instead, the number of non-Irish nationals increased by 124,624 or 30% (CSO, 2012, p. 33) between Census 2006 and Census 2011. The largest increases were among EU-12^{iv} national groups: Poles, Lithuanians, and Romanians. The immigrant population in Ireland is very heterogeneous, representing 196 nationalities and 182 languages (CSO, 2012)

There is a substantial variance in English language ability among this population. According to the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (2012, p. 29) in 2011, there were 93,005 migrant children in Ireland, accounting for 8% of the total child population. The proportion of migrant children in Irish schools varies by school sector, type of school and school size. Reflecting migration patterns (migrants’ age), there are more migrants in primary schools than in post-primary schools and migrant students are also more likely to attend disadvantaged larger schools in urban areas (Smyth et al., 2009). Although not yet prevalent,

there are some signs of emerging segregation: some schools tend to have very high proportions of migrant students while other schools have none. Not surprisingly, small rural denominational schools, fee-paying schools or Irish-medium schools are less likely to have migrant students. The language of instruction is English, with some primary and post-primary schools operating through the medium of Irish, the first official language in Ireland, although spoken by a minority. Irish is also one of the core subjects in Irish schools, although some groups of students, including those who have started schooling in a different jurisdiction, can be exempt from it^v.

Mirroring the trends in Ireland, the number of migrants in Spain nearly quadrupled in a short period of time. At present Spain has 5,294,710 foreign nationals living in the country (NIS, 2016). Unlike Ireland, the largest groups of non-Spanish nationals come from non-EU countries, although the proportion of EU-migrants is also high. The main nationalities represented are Romanian, Moroccans and British (Ministry of Employment and Social Security, 2012). In the 1999-2000 academic year, 107,303 migrant students attended Spanish schools (Ministry of Education, 2010). A decade later, in the 2009-2010 academic year, the number of immigrant students rose to 762,742—a sevenfold increase. A slight decline in the number of migrant children could be observed from 2011 to 2014. The majority of new arrivals come from the Americas, Europe and Africa. Children arriving from the Americas make up 47% of the total migrant child population; followed by arrivals from a number of European countries (25%), and those from Africa (24%). The bulk of migrant pupils are in Primary Education (44%). The next largest group is in compulsory Secondary Education (27%), and a smaller group is in Pre-school Education (19%). Migrant students are less likely to attend non-compulsory Secondary Education: *Baccalaureate* (4%) and in Vocational Training and Socially Guaranteed Programs (3%) as attendance in these schools often

depends on scholarship and residence permits (Department of Education, Culture and Sports, 2014).

Migratory movements in both countries have contributed to the growth of linguistic diversity in schools, a diversity that is not new, but which is more noticeable in recent years. Both countries have addressed the need to assist the new arrivals with learning the languages of instruction by developing relevant policies.

School-based support for migrant children: The importance of language proficiency

Migrant children spend a large part of their day at the school of the ‘host’ country, where they encounter students and teachers who often speak a different language from them. The academic and social integration of migrants is often influenced by issues around proficiency in the language of the receiving country (Author2 and McCoy, 2011). Schools and teachers may act (consciously or subconsciously) to legitimate the dominant culture (Bernstein, 1975; Author2, 2011) and thus contribute to the misrecognition of migrant social and cultural capital, including linguistic capital (Devine, 2011).

Language can be seen as an instrument of power; migrant students and their parents, for whom the language of the host country is not their first language, may experience considerable difficulties negotiating their way through the education system and establishing themselves as partners in the home-school interface. Minority status is further reinforced by the fact that mother-tongue teaching has remained a marginal activity in many receiving countries (European Commission, 2013), possibly reflecting the need to bring students ‘up to speed’ with the language of instruction and the great variety of languages represented in schools. The situation is even more complex in countries with more than one official language, necessitating the new arrivals to learn more than one new language. The ease with which young people adopt an additional language depends on the age of their arrival –

younger children tend to be more successful in learning to speak with native fluency (see Naserdeen (2001) and Schuster (2005)).

Approaches to the delivery of language support vary across Europe. Stanat and Christensen (2007) identify five different types of language support:

- Immersion: students receive no specific language support but are immersed in the language of instruction in mainstream classrooms.
- Immersion with systematic language support: students are taught in mainstream classrooms, but receive instruction in specified periods to increase proficiency.
- Immersion with a preparatory phase: students participate in a preparatory programme before making the transition to the language of instruction.
- Transitional bilingual: students initially learn in their native language before teaching gradually shifts to the language of instruction.
- Maintenance bilingual: students receive significant amount of instruction in their native language, with programs which aim to develop proficiency both in the native and the second language.

A more recent report on educational support (European Commission, 2013) focused specifically on newly arrived migrant children (NAMs). Although the report acknowledged the importance of the proficiency in the language of the receiving country, it highlighted the importance of an integrated approach to NAMs's inclusion rather than focusing on individual measures. Yet, support in developing proficiency in the dominant language of a jurisdiction had remained the main approach to supporting new arrivals at school (Kambel, 2014). While some countries pursue a bilingual approach by integrating the mother tongue of migrant pupils into the educational progress, this approach is relatively rare in Europe (Siarova and Essomba, 2014).

Approaches to school-based educational and language support for migrant children

The approach to educational support for migrant students and associated policy development needs to be seen in the context of wider immigration policies. In Ireland the immigration policies regarding EU migrants were more regulated, but the immigration system took longer to establish clear procedures to deal with children of non-EU migrants born outside of Ireland who had since settled in the country with their families as well as refugees and asylum seekers. Overall, the development of immigration policies in Ireland has been relatively *ad-hoc*, especially at the time of first significant inflow of migrants. The increased numbers of migrant students in Irish schools over the past decades has challenged schools to adapt their practices and policies. It has also stimulated policy development at system level. The response has included the allocation of additional EAL teachers, funding of various agencies to develop curriculum, resources and materials and the provision of continuing professional development for teachers in the area of diversity. The key national support measure for migrant children in Irish schools remains the provision of additional English language tuition for those who do not speak English as their first language (DES, 2012a). Children can learn either in English-medium or Irish-medium schools, depending on parental preference. As the majority of newly arrived migrant children attend English-medium schools, the policy focus is on the provision of additional English language tuition for the new arrivals. According to Smyth et al. (2009), additional tuition is generally provided by withdrawing migrant students from some subject classes (mainly Irish or Religious Education). The Intercultural Education Strategy 2010-2015 states that “given the diversity of cultures now present in Ireland, it is not possible to commit to teaching all mother tongues in mainstream education provision (DES and OMI 2010, 47). The National Development Plan 2007-2013 (Government of Ireland, 2007) allocated €637 million for language support teachers to enable EAL learners “acquire a sufficient knowledge of the English language to enable them to benefit from the Irish education system at the same level as their peers”.

However, during the recession, the number of EAL teachers fell considerably (Smyth, et al. 2009). A survey of primary schools conducted for the National Assessment 2014 (Kavanagh et al., 2016) indicates that primary schools have an average of 2.4 officially sanctioned GAM/EAL posts with an average of 0.4 additional, officially sanctioned language support posts. Among the surveyed schools, 2.3% of 2nd class students and 2% of 6th class students were in receipt of language support for English. The proportion in receipt of language support for English was higher in designated disadvantaged (DEIS) Urban Band 1 schools (5.3% for 2nd class and 6.5% for 6th class). Other associated supports include the distribution of language assessment kits to primary and post-primary schools, in-service provision for language support teachers, guidelines on EAL for all teachers, and a booklet on intercultural education in both primary and post-primary schools. In addition, in some areas less formal programmes, funded by NGOs, and in some cases, by the Governments of sending countries, are supporting parents to acquire English and children to maintain their mother tongue (for example, Polish weekend schools). In 2012-13, resources available for special needs education and language support were combined into a single allocation process with schools having autonomy on how to deploy resources between language and learning support (DES, 2012). These students can also avail of general social and academic support (including the government-funded DEIS programmes)vi available for all students. Furthermore, Ireland supports migrant students by enabling them to sit the Leaving Certificate (the final exam which gives access to higher education) in 15 EU languages. The Department of Education and Skills, along with the Office of the Minister for Integration, has also published the Intercultural Education Strategy, 2010-2015. The strategy highlights the need to be conscious of diversity and to create intercultural learning environments. Resources available include the provision of an information portal on the educational resources available for newcomers, entitled Accessing Intercultural Materials (AIMS).

In Spain, there is no general legislative framework for migrant education and the legislation may vary significantly between Autonomous Communities.^{vii} The educational system is decentralized and allows for Autonomous Communities and school autonomy^{viii}. Measures to assist migrant students in learning the language are thus specific to each Community. Since 2000 all the Autonomous Communities and the Autonomous Cities have developed their own programmes. This reflects the attempts to bring the policies more in line with the rapidly changing demographic and social reality in Spain (Arroyo, 2014).

The regulations and the strategies adopted in each Autonomous Community vary according to whether they include linguistic support for migrant students and how this provision is delivered^{ix}. For example, in Catalonia, the guidelines for providing language support for migrant students were included in the Plan for Language and Social Cohesion, which formed part of the Plan of Citizenship and Immigration. In the Basque Country, support measures for migrant students were outlined in the Program for the Care of Migrant Students, which also included language support.

The Autonomous Communities also differ in the degree of autonomy given to schools in developing measures of linguistic support. While La Rioja enables each center to follow its organizational guidelines, the process is very different in the Autonomous Cities of Ceuta and Melilla, where the process of integration of migrant students is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Science, which through collaboration with the Autonomous Cities, regulates the specific measures to attend migrant students.

The third aspect that marks a difference between the various administrations is the existence of another official language^x on the Autonomous Community (Balearic Islands, Catalonia, Galicia, the Basque Country and Valencia). The legislative language policy development in such Communities tends to be more advanced compared to monolingual Communities. Thus, the Autonomous Communities with their own co-official language

began the legislative development on linguistic policy in the 1980s, so that they can be seen as pioneers in the adoption of linguistic adaptation measures for students. Consequently, the regulation is also more specific and detailed than the legislation developed by the other Autonomous Communities on this matter (Grañeras et al., 2007).

Some of the bilingual Autonomous Communities (Catalonia, Balears and Galicia) give priority to their own regional language and limit the teaching of Spanish to certain subjects. Other regions, while adopting regional languages as language of instruction, have developed a variety of models. For example, Navarra and the Community of Valencia utilize linguistic models based on the predominant language in an area, territory or municipality. Both linguistic models combine several possibilities for learning both languages, regional as well as Spanish.

Although in Spain, the measures taken to support migrant student vary significantly between Communities, what can be affirmed is that one of the measures taken to support migrant students is the provision of “specific linguistic classrooms”. These classrooms have received different denominations¹ in the different Autonomous Communities in the Spanish State^{xi}. The diversity of designations is an indicator of the heterogeneity of the regulatory framework in which they are framed (Orders, Royal Decrees, Plans, etc.) (Fernández & García, 2015). The main aim across these classrooms is to ensure that newly arrived migrant students acquire the language(s) of instruction to move as quickly as possible into mainstream classes.

Depending on the Autonomous Community, the classes may be referred as 'welcoming', 'temporary' or 'immersion' class. The students that participate in these classes are traditionally placed in the regular classroom but receive additional support in specific classes

¹ *Aulas Enlace* in the Community of Madrid, *Aulas d'acollida* in Catalonia, *Aulas Temporales de Adaptación Lingüística* in Andalusia, *Aulas de inmersión Lingüística* in La Rioja , *Aulas de inmersión lingüística* in Asturias, *Aulas de Acogida*, among others.

for part of the school day or week. Students join mainstream classes in some subjects that do not require a high level of competency in the language of schooling, for example Arts or Physical Training. In addition, the model provides students with access to practical subjects. While language support focuses on the provision of basic vocabulary, efforts are made to teach subject-specific vocabulary. Typically, when the newly arrived student enters a specific class in a state school, more emphasis is initially put on the language of schooling and, as the student's knowledge of the language improves, more school subjects are gradually introduced.

One of the main differences observed depends on the recipients of these programmes. Some of the classrooms are centered only in Secondary School, although most of the Communities work with Primary and Secondary Education students. As a general rule, the pupils of Pre-primary Education do not join this “specific linguistic programme”, except for Castilla La Mancha and Galicia. Another trend in other Communities is to allocate the immersion classroom only for students of Secondary Education (Balearic Islands, Catalonia, Aragon and Navarre), while others also include the last cycle of Primary, like Asturias or the Valencian Community. In summary, the tendency is to implement these classrooms for students in the second cycle of Primary Education onwards, i.e. eight or nine year old (Asturias, Andalusia, Madrid, Murcia, among others). Younger children stay in their classrooms integrated with their peers.

The amount of literature ~~produced~~ on this subject suggests the enormous academic interests that this “specific classroom” has developed: i. e. on *Aulas Enlace* in Madrid (Boyano et al., 2004; García, Pérez y Patiño, 2008; García et al., 2010; Goenechea et al., 2011; Guerrero, 2013, Inglés, 2009; Martín y Mijares, 2008); on the case of the Linguistic Temporary Classrooms in Andalucía (García et al., 2008, 2015; Guerrero, 2013; Jiménez et al., 2008; Ortiz, 2011); or for the case of Catalonia (Espelt, 2009; Oller & Villa, 2008;

Palaudarias & Garreta, 2008; Vila et al., 2006, 2009, and Serra, 2006). The scholarly literature has analyzed the value and the problems of these classrooms. Opinions are divided although a large part of the scientific community seems to find this measure “segregating” (Castilla, 2014; García et al., 2011; Gibson and Carrasco, 2009; Martín, 2003; Terrén, 2008, and Trujillo, 2004. On the one hand, several studies (García et al, 2010; Garcia and Olmos, 2012) have shown that these types of measures "for migrants" not only do not reach their goal - the passage to the regular classroom with sufficient linguistic knowledge -, but isolate students who come to them with the risk of segregating migrant students which aggravates the difficulty of establishing relationships between immigrant students and the indigenous students (Castilla, 2014; Martin, 2003). Not in vain, these specific classrooms have been defined as “host bubbles” (García, 2009). On the other hand, some studies (García at al., 2011; Terrén, 2008) point out that students who participate in those classrooms have enormous difficulties when it comes to joining their regular classrooms. However, the most positive aspect of this programme has been the delivery and involvement of teachers who make the students find a more positive socio-emotional environment, thus less competitive and where teachers can pay more personalized attention (García, 2010; Pérez, 2007).

Grañera et al. (2007: 163-164) differentiate between three subcategories of “specific linguistic classrooms”. In general, these classrooms are intended for students who enter the school system with no knowledge of the language of instruction and exhibit behavioral issues. These students are given a period of adaptation in order to facilitate their incorporation into the education system. The approaches taken fall into three broad categories:

- Temporal classrooms or semi-permanent classrooms. In this group there are itinerant classrooms (Andalusia, Extremadura, and the Basque Country) where these classes exist for one or several academic years according to the influx of the migrant

population. This is also the case for the Basque Country. The second group are those classrooms with a more permanent character in the schools. Such is the case of Aragon, Galicia, or Murcia). The students join during part of their school day, although the time decreases as the students progresses in the domain of the vehicular language of learning.

- Language Immersion Classrooms (LIC): The main feature of this category is immersion. Students stay in this class for the whole day or for a great part of the school day. The length of the stay tends to vary between Communities. After this time the student can join an ordinary classroom and receive the necessary support or reinforcement. This approach is practiced in Asturias, Navarra and Madrid (*Aulas Enlace* or Link Classrooms).
- Finally, the Intercultural classrooms. The objectives of the third category (also called Classrooms of Intercultural Revitalization in Cantabria or Classrooms of Linguistic and Social Adaptation in Castilla-León) is to establish a link with the families who join the Community and the educational and social institutions. The main objective is to give a more global and integrative attention. In this regard they not only welcome students from other cultures and respond to their educational needs, but also stimulate proposals of intercultural nature in this regard.

When documents refer to the teachers of these "specific classrooms" they do it as: "specific teacher", "support teacher ", "compensatory teacher", "specialist teaching staff" when in our opinion all teachers should be responsible for the language support that these students require. As far as the training of these teachers is concerned, there exist remarkable differences among Communities. Although according to Núñez et al. (2006) there is a general lack of prior preparation. Commonly they belong to the Language Departments, the Foreign Language Departments, or the Social Sciences Departments. However, the most striking issue

is that in a number of these Communities, such as Andalusia, Cantabria, Catalonia, Ceuta and Melilla, the Valencian Community, the Balearic Islands, La Rioja and Navarre, no requirement in the professional profile of teachers is demanded. As for the specific training in Spanish as a Foreign Language, it is only contemplated in Madrid and in the Basque Country (Arroyo, 2017 in press).

In addition, the needs of the changing student population are reflected in a revised curriculum. Canaries, Asturias, Castilla-La Mancha and Murcia explicitly highlight the need for migrant students to acquire language and communication skills in order to access the regular curriculum. Regions tend to have a different focus on migrant integration: access to regular curriculum (Andalucía, Cantabria, Basque Country), development of basic social skills psycho-emotional integration (Asturias and Castilla-La Mancha), and becoming familiar with the Spanish culture (Castilla and Leon and Murcia).

Central to the education of the newly-arrived, multilingual students is a socio-culturally supportive environment in schools and in the society (Nilsson and Axelsson, 2013). Policy developments regarding providing support for migrant children in Ireland and Spain have been reactionary rather than pro-active, often reflecting *ad hoc* approaches to immigration policies.

Discussion and policy implications

In both the EU and the OECD, the migrant population has grown by more than 30 per cent since 2000 (OECD, 2015). Subsequently countries have developed various policies and measures regarding migrant integration, including supporting migrant children in schools in the receiving countries. Policies related to immigration and education tend to have a direct impact on students' educational careers and well-being in general. While factors that impact migrant integration are many and varied, the main barrier tends to be limited proficiency in the language of instruction (Author1, 2010, 2011). There is a general consensus among

researchers and policy-makers that proficiency in the language of the receiving country is important, as it provides a means of bridging links to the new community. At school level, low proficiency in the language of instruction is likely to have a detrimental impact on the academic and social integration of newly arrived children. This, in turn, may impact on their well-being and result in social isolation and limited post-school pathways and life chances in general. In a longer perspective, poor integration may result in problems around social cohesion of the receiving country. Host societies have an obligation to provide new arrivals with sufficient opportunities to acquire the language(s) of the country. A recent report by the European commission (2015) notes that factors that are likely to prevent migrant children without proficiency in the host language from reaching their potential include insufficient resources and staff competencies; assessment tools and negative perceptions of the abilities of migrant children that results in placing them in lower ability tracks and special education classes; and lack of opportunities to develop their mother tongue competencies to higher levels (p.5). These are areas to be considered by policy-makers to devise policies that support all children to reach their potential. At the same time, limited attention given to heritage languages conveys a message that not all cultures are appreciated equally. This may have serious consequences for students' sense of belonging to the school.

This article has considered the situation of two new immigrant receiving countries: Ireland and Spain. While Spain and Ireland are different in many ways, including the structure of their education systems, the relatively recent large-scale immigration is something that both countries have experienced in recent decades. Both countries are currently developing measures to support migrant students who do not speak the language(s) of the receiving country and may know little of its history, culture, and present circumstances. The main targeted policy measure in both countries is to support migrant

students in the acquisition of the language(s) instruction, with little or no provision in place for learning heritage languages.

. In Ireland migrant students receive targeted English language support for two years, although there is some discretion regarding the circumstances of individual school. Existing research indicates some difficulties in successfully managing this process in such a way as to avoid disrupting student progress in certain subjects and labelling migrants as ‘different’ (Smyth et al., 2009). The study at the time showed that there was considerable variation across schools in teacher satisfaction with existing language support provision. The educators tended to be dissatisfied with the (lack of) availability of trained specialist language support teachers, appropriate resources and the dearth of professional development for mainstream class and subject teachers. While there is paucity of research on this issue in recent times, public discourses indicate that little has changed and policy-making is lagging behind. This situation is, by and large, mirrored by policy-making in Spain.

Due to low language proficiency levels migrant children in Ireland and Spain are placed in classes of lower age groups or less academic post-primary programmes in order to enable migrant students come ‘up to speed’ with the language of instruction. In this way some school processes seem to unintentionally reproduce disadvantage in the provision for migrant children and youth and perpetuate misrecognition. Tuition in heritage languages in Irish and Spanish schools is generally not provided; this gap has been addressed by some migrant communities who provide mother tongue tuition in unofficial ‘weekend schools’. Low mother tongue competences may, however, have a detrimental impact on learning a second language. In addition, it may adversely impact on migrant students’ ability to communicate with relatives still living abroad.

Recognition (instead of mis-recognition) is likely to enhance children’s self-confidence and assist in coming to terms with their mixed identities (European Commission,

2015). The situation becomes even more complex when the receiving country has more than one official language, in which case the new arrivals are faced with learning two new languages. In Ireland, migrant children who have started their educational careers abroad may be exempt from learning Irish; however, this may limit their access to certain tertiary courses and future careers

However, lack of language proficiency is just one of the challenges facing schools. Some authors argue that one should take a broader approach to helping the newly arrived children who may not only have difficulties with the language of instruction, but can find the culture of the receiving country very different from their own (Carrasco *et al.*, 2011; Rodrigo-Alsina, 2009). In order to 'bridge the cultures', these studies insist on the need to consider that language learning is related to the active participation of all students in social interactions with their peers. According to these studies any policy that segregates students into different linguistic or cultural groups will have negative impact on social integration and sense of belonging of the students.

While it was beyond the scope of the study to discuss the heterogeneity of the newly arrived migrants in Ireland and Spain, the authors acknowledge that some new arrivals have had fragmented educational careers and may need basic literacy education. These individuals are more likely to experience difficulties in navigating the education system of the host country. In fact, access to schools has also been highlighted as an issue in both Ireland and Spain. Driven by low house rental prices, many new arrivals concentrate in specific areas which may lead to 'ghettoization' (García and Carrasco, 2011; García and Olmos, 2012). In turn, this is likely to impact on the levels of educational attainment. Drawing on PISA 2012 results, Jiménez and González (2012) note that a high concentration of disadvantaged

students is more likely to result in low academic attainment than the proportion of migrant children in school.

In the context of continuing migration and current humanitarian crisis, Ireland and Spain serve as useful case studies regarding approaches taken in supporting migrant children. The experiences of both countries highlight challenges involved in developing an inclusive educational experience for all students, especially if the policy development lags behind the needs of the new arrivals. The Great Recession added another layer of difficulties to the support of newly arrived, often disadvantaged and vulnerable, migrant children and their parents.

It is important to note that the educational process always involves students with diverse backgrounds, regardless of the context in which it takes place. Thus, the question lies in the principles upon which the education system is built. We have to consider whether the school adheres to policies that promote mono-lingualism (intending to homogenise the school population) or policies that aim to foster plurilingualism. At the same time, it is important for students to feel that additional languages are an asset rather than an impediment.

Integration and language learning tend to be more successful in environments that support cultural recognition and promote of diversity. Based on our analysis of policies regarding language support to migrant students in Spain and Ireland, it is evident that a number of conditions need to be in place in order to improve the experience of these students. As Gibson and Carrasco posits (2009) despite official efforts to welcome immigrant youth, Spanish education system operates, paradoxically, in ways that are unwelcoming, relegating immigrant youth to the margins of school life. In Ireland, Author2 et al. (2012) note that some migrants are likely to experience cumulative disadvantage, whereby migrant students are often found in disadvantaged large urban schools, are allocated to lower academic streams or non-academic programmes in schools. Poveda, Jociles and Franzé (2014) note that the

support for migrant students in schools has adopted an “externalizing logic”, in which responsibility for educational outcomes is transferred to processes and programmes outside “ordinary” teachers' realm of action, rather than an inclusive educational approach. In order to help the new arrivals to reach their potential it is essential to recognise that language proficiency must be at the core of educational policies and integration processes in the destination countries, alongside with an inclusive approach to cultural diversity. It is important to note that the integration of migrant students is a process involving a spectrum of conditions beyond the transmission of grammatical knowledge and skills or semantics of language use.

. The role of teachers is pivotal in the process of integration through language acquisition. Teachers need to be trained not to perceive migrant children only as children “who lack a language” (deficit perspective)² but see them as “plurilingual students” or ‘new speakers’ who ought to be the model of reference for all students in the XX1st century.

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² For more information see: <http://www.mothers tongues.ie/partners.html>

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ⁱ While ~~they~~ NAMs have many needs in common with other disadvantaged groups (limited economic capital, living in disadvantaged areas and so on); their particular difficulties lie in the newness of the transition between jurisdictions, possible lack of existing immigrant enclaves where pertinent information could be

passed on; lack of insider knowledge how official systems, including education systems – work (Author 2 et al. 2011); not knowing the 'rules of the game' (Bourdieu, 1990). Some students may also have considerable gaps in their schooling and many have undergone traumatic experiences in the process of migration.

ⁱⁱ The authors are aware of the difficulty of defining 'immigrant children' – their experiences differ due to background, legal status, language skills, ethnicity, religion and, many other factors. It is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss the differences between and within various groups of migrant children – a topic that would merit further research in both national contexts. In the context of this paper we refer to newly arrived migrant students as children and young adults, born outside their current country of residence to parents also born outside the host country and who are of school age or below (according to the national regulations for compulsory education) and subsequently enter formal education in their host country (European Union, 2013). These students may have a different legal status in their host country (asylum-seeker, temporary or permanent resident, national passport holder), but they are permitted to access formal education in schools. The education provided within detention centres for asylum-seekers is excluded from the analysis in this article.

ⁱⁱⁱ The Irish economy was at its peak during the period between 1997 and 2007; and was thus named the “Celtic Tiger.”

^{iv} EU-12 comprises new EU Member States (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovenia and Slovakia)

^v For further information see Author2 and Smyth (2016).

^{vi} Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) the Action Plan for Educational Inclusion, was launched in May 2005 and remains the Department of Education and Skills policy instrument to address educational disadvantage. The action plan focuses on addressing and prioritising the educational needs of children and young people from disadvantaged communities, from pre-school through second-level education (3 to 18 years).

^{vii} Spain is divided into (17 Communities and the two autonomic cities of de Ceuta y Melilla), which makes the situation very complex.

^{viii} In the Spanish context, although it is supposed to be a comprehensive system, there is the possibility of introducing measures or specific programmes available to certain students outside the ordinary classroom. For instance, linguistic programmes for immigrant students, special programmes for learning disabilities or special programmes for disabled children.

^{ix} The work of Arroyo (2014); Del Olmo, 2012; Fernández y García (2015), García, 2009; Grañeras et al. (2007), Moscoso, 2013; Siqués et al., 2012; Vila et al., 2009 provides an excellent summary of the different educational measures developed for migrant students in the different Autonomous Communities.

^x In the Irish case, the Irish language is the first official language of the State, although spoken by a minority of inhabitants. However, Irish is one of the core subjects at school. Newly arrived migrant students may be exempt from learning the language.

^{xi} Currently some of these classrooms are under reform due to the economic recession of the country.