

Language learning to support active social inclusion: Issues and challenges for lifelong learning

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Background

The European Union (EU) currently comprises 28 member countries with 24 official languages. However, there are actually many more minority language groups within various nations resulting in even greater diversity. The recent influx of large numbers of migrants from Africa and the Middle East, most of whom are arriving without a working knowledge of any of the official European languages, further complicates the matter. Consequently, proficiency in one or more of the languages spoken in Europe, particularly the official languages, is a priority both in policies and practices.

In this ethnically highly diverse context, it is important to foster social inclusion and active citizen participation if the European Union is to function democratically in a peaceful fashion, and be economically successful. Since language is related to access to democratic processes, a democratic language policy is essential (INCLUDE 2014). Indeed, over the past two and a half decades, several policies have been developed which relate to languages in the EU. These include the *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages* (CoE 1992) and the *European Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union* (EU 2000), which in clause 3 (Equality) prohibits discrimination on the basis of (among other factors) linguistic diversity. Section 2 of the *Treaty on European Union* (EU 2012) deals with language rights and recommends that every European citizen should learn two

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languages in addition to their native language. Linguistic diversity in Europe is thus officially recognised and laid down in the *Treaty* as follows:

Respect for linguistic diversity is a fundamental value of the EU, as are respect for the person and openness towards other cultures (EU 2012).

Many other EU policies also include consideration of language issues.

In an age strongly influenced by neo-liberalism, it is not surprising that a workable knowledge of languages, especially powerful languages of business, is also tied to economic advancement. Hence for some, language is not just a vehicle contributing to active democratic citizenship, but more importantly represents an asset in terms of human capital; this perspective holds that knowledge of certain languages will enhance possibilities of employability in the labour market.

The INCLUDE project

So there are policies in place for the support of linguistic diversity and language learning in the EU. The question is, how are these policies interpreted and implemented in practice? All of the articles in this special issue came out of a major EU project which addressed this question.

The INCLUDE¹ project was funded with support from the European Commission under the EU lifelong learning programme which ran from 2007 to 2013, supporting a range of exchanges, study visits and networking activities. Lifelong learning programmes were introduced by the European Parliament to “contribute through lifelong learning to the development of the Community as an advanced knowledge-based society, with sustainable economic development, more and better jobs and greater social cohesion” (EP 2006, p. 4).

Founded by a partnership among six European organisations,² the 36-month INCLUDE project was launched in 2013 and set out to build a network for the exchange and dissemination of common guidelines and good policy practices. The project was supported by the transversal programme “Languages, multilateral project Key activity 2”,³ committed to the promotion of language learning and linguistic diversity by supporting the development of language policies. More specifically, it addressed priority 2.2.1: “Strengthening social inclusion, equal opportunities and equity in education, including the integration of migrants and Roma”.

¹ The participants in the project decided to call it INCLUDE in order to give a clear direction for the objectives, instead of giving it an acronym which would have seemed more distant.

² The six founding organisations were: (1) Istituto per la Ricerca Sociale (IRS) – Italy; (2) Inicativas Innovadoras S.A.L. (IN) – Spain; (3) Agenzia per l’Orientamento e la Formazione, Istruzione e Lavoro (APOF-IL) – Italy; (4) Université de Bordeaux-LACES – France; (5) Vytautas Magnus University – Lithuania; and (6) Arcola Research LLP – United Kingdom.

³ For more information on this key activity within the Lifelong Learning Programme of the European Commission’s Education, Audiovisual and Cultural Executive Agency (EACEA), see http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/llp/index_en.php [accessed 20 June 2017].

The INCLUDE project aimed to raise awareness and, through its network, foster sharing and joint action in the field of linguistic policy for active inclusion purposes. This focus is in line with the European Council's *Resolution* on a renewed European agenda for adult learning (EC 2011):

strengthening social inclusion and active participation in the community and society, and improving access to adult learning for migrants, Roma and disadvantaged groups, as well as learning provision for refugees and people seeking asylum, including host-country language learning, where appropriate (ibid., p. 5).

The INCLUDE project also addresses the policy challenge of the social inclusion of youths at the margins of society, as underlined in a report prepared for the European Commission (Kutsar and Helve 2012). The aim of the INCLUDE project was all the more appropriate since up to its inception a common vision and action on language policy striving for active social inclusion did not exist, and policy debates included the support of migrants' language learning only within the framework of broader policies addressing multilingualism, social cohesion and respect of human rights. The network team thus decided to operate in the field of language policy and practice for the active social inclusion of groups at risk of exclusion (migrants and ethnic minorities, the so called NEETs – those “Not in Education, Employment, or Training”, the elderly, etc.).

The INCLUDE network activities revolved around three main axes:

1. collection and exchange of best practices on language policies and practices for social inclusion;
2. research into the state of the art at EU level, and delivery of recommendations how best to design such policies; and
3. dissemination at the widest EU level of research-based evidence of the existing link between language learning and social inclusion by way of presenting the compiled successful best practices, case studies, policies and resources.

The network offered a number of tools and materials, including an *Observatory* of language policies for active social inclusion (database, key documents, innovative practices, trends etc.) with a total of 57 case studies; an *Inventory* of Content and language Integrated Learning (CLIL) resources for active social inclusion with 44 case studies; three *Yearly reports* on the state of the art, and a *Roadmap* for the integration of language learning in social inclusion policies.

In the network's first yearly report (INCLUDE 2014), the researchers confirmed that the EU's declaration of language learning as an important priority to support the promotion of mobility and intercultural understanding was reflected in member countries' national policies. In recognition of the many minority languages existing alongside the 24 official EU languages, the report also confirmed that the EU had put in place policies to ensure that languages would not be a barrier to participation in society (ibid., p. 40). However, despite existing initiatives to promote language learning and rights, it appeared that in fact very little had been accomplished in connecting language learning to the promotion of social inclusion.

In year two, members of the INCLUDE network conducted national case studies in France, Italy, Lithuania, Spain and the UK investigating how language learning in those countries is contributing to social inclusion (INCLUDE 2016a). In their third yearly report (INCLUDE 2016b), the researchers presented an analysis of resources, identified gaps and proposed further action. The findings of their study can be summarised as follows:

- The language proficiency level is decisive for migrants' integration into the host society and also for their employability. Moreover, in the context of globalisation, it concerns more than the migrant community but also people engaged in mobility;
- Integration policies in different nations represent more than a commitment to migrant communities and minorities; they also demand more investment in service provisions and facilities from authorities and a larger involvement of the actors in the field;
- Integration is an energy- and time-consuming process. It needs continuous effort from both the migrant and minority communities and the authorities and other related associations and organisations. In order to develop a more sustainable plan, the linguistic integration courses should be connected with the professional training programmes;
- Promoting language diversity and protecting minority languages are well indicated in EU key policies, but some nations still consider the national language as the decisive element for migrants' entry and for migrants' and minorities' integration into their society;
- CLIL usage is differentiated due to the variability of settings: CLIL for teenagers is more often used and analysed than CLIL for younger children. The usage of CLIL is less frequently discussed in language training programmes for adults who do not participate in formal education;
- The CLIL approach can offer a variety of benefits to achieve social inclusion: for developing intercultural knowledge, understanding and communication skills; as an instrument for identity development, for accessing work placement, developing social networks and promoting long-term active participation in a multilingual society and working life;
- New tools and methods have been developed for language learning, proficiency assessment and language teaching with the application of new technologies. People can now find more digital resources on the Internet for learning a language in a more interesting way. More platforms have been constructed for language learning through communication and exchanges and for professional training. This virtual community enhances the individual's motivation for learning and creates more opportunities for social inclusion; and finally
- New research perspectives and methods help us understand more about impact variables in language learning and social inclusion so that pertinent policies can be defined to solve the problems. The review of the general concepts in language learning and social inclusion is helpful for us to update the situations in the field

and find more appropriate terms to define and analyse the problems (INCLUDE 2016b, pp. 52–53).

It is noteworthy that although the majority of these findings relate to the goal of the study to investigate how policies on language as well as language learning practices in the EU might contribute to active social inclusion, acknowledgement of the pressures of globalisation and neo-liberalism which prioritise employability, skills development and work placement is also prominent in justifying the importance of language learning and effective ways of achieving proficiency.

The mainstreaming of the project results was achieved through a strategy which combined stakeholder engagement, a membership campaign, members' engagement and provision of research documentation⁴ to promote the theme of language learning for inclusion to the wider public. In the final assessment, it is noted that membership in the network primarily comprises individuals, among them many practitioners who said that the INCLUDE initiatives stimulated their interest in the fields of language learning and inclusion. It can also be surmised that the higher number of practitioners in the network as compared to numbers of corporate members seems to mirror the concrete, practical approach of the INCLUDE Network design, focused on providing tools and facilities for practitioners in themes and topics relevant to language learning and social inclusion (INCLUDE 2016c).

Among the gaps identified, the INCLUDE researchers found that despite positive responses to the policies directed at social inclusion, actions to realise that goal were lacking. They suspected that this was probably due to the complex nature of the contexts; differences among nations and difficulty in diminishing discrimination against migrants, for example, in entrance to professional fields where non-migrants were favoured over migrants. They also found that it was difficult to assess the effectiveness of language programmes for social inclusion, in part because of the way such programmes are typically funded, either by national or regional governments. There were also few connections between linguistic programmes and professional training programme so that migrant communities had less access to the skills and professional training needed to allow them to enter the job market. Moreover, the INCLUDE researchers observed that the economic recession had also negatively affected funding for linguistic programmes across Europe. They noted that involvement of the business world in assisting in skills training would be welcome.

While the CLIL approach to language learning is now generally considered an asset for social inclusion, more work is needed to employ CLIL techniques for vocational training. More training for language educators in the use of CLIL is needed both for linguistic purposes as well as vocational and skills training. Although teacher training in CLIL methods is well supported at the policy level, this has not played out sufficiently well in practice, and further research is recommended to explore the inconsistencies in practice and to study how actual language teacher training could change. The INCLUDE project also clearly promoted the necessity to adopt a multilingual approach to favour social inclusion (i.e., not only in terms of

⁴ The three *Yearly Reports*, a *Roadmap* and the *Exploitation Report* are available at <http://www.ardaa.fr/include-project>.

competence, but also in terms of an attitude of interest in and openness towards languages and language varieties of all kinds), all the more so as the chance to develop multilingualism should and can be made available to citizens through education and lifelong learning. As explained in the *Roadmap* (INCLUDE 2016d), there is a need to

convert these principles into concrete actions, thus providing the means of developing a common approach to promote social inclusion through language learning, taking into account that every situation needs its particular policy (ibid., p. 21).

In an age where xenophobia and nationalism are on the rise, the importance of multilingualism to counter such negative and destructive trends cannot be underestimated. The INCLUDE researchers firmly believe that

Multilingual citizens of Europe will be more tolerant. Their tolerance of diverse cultural identities will be built from within, and not learned as a social norm (INCLUDE 2016b, p. 39).

Through its linguistic policies, the EU has set the stage for this evolution, i.e. the policies to support language teaching for social inclusion are in place, but in practice the goals still have not been met and more work needs to be done.

About this special issue

This special issue was developed in the spirit of making the INCLUDE project, its workings and findings accessible to a research community beyond the European Community borders. It features articles from some of the research participants and from some of those who have embraced the approaches to language acquisition for social inclusion as well as committing themselves to the premise that language learning encompasses sensitive questions related to diversity, identity and culture. In a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic and multilingual world, this contention becomes all the more important.

Lifelong learning is of high relevance for citizens of the world to come to terms with a new reality of diversity. The seven articles in this special issue touch on the areas concerned with linguistic policy and planning to address language learning in a pluralistic society, support for minority languages and actions to encourage inclusion. Of special importance is the language learning approach involving Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), alongside similar approaches which promote content learning through the medium of a different language from the majority language of the students. The first three articles deal with the above issues. The other four articles provide case studies of innovative practices in language learning which can lead to inclusion. These articles describe special language learning classes and approaches for school-age children and adolescents as well an example of special programming for adult migrant women language learners.

In reviewing the *Action Plan* (EC 2003) developed in the EU with policies related to language learning, minority languages and social inclusion, the INCLUDE researchers identified several foci and initiatives and scored them related to the number of policies in place to support the initiative on a scale of 1–5.⁵

The first strand, “promoting language learning and linguistic diversity”, comprised three objectives; namely, lifelong language learning, better language teaching, and building a language-friendly environment. Overall, they found that this area had been fairly well covered by policies, with the objectives receiving scores of 3.1, 2.8 and 3.1 respectively.

The second strand was related to the *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages* (CoE 1992), with policies covering education, judicial authorities, administrative authorities/public services, media, cultural activities and facilities, economic and social life and trans-frontier exchanges. Here, the INCLUDE researchers found less impact of the policies, with only those supporting provisions for protecting minority and migrant languages in preschool, primary, secondary, higher, vocational and adult education receiving a score showing some positive policy action (2.8), while the other areas received scores ranging from 1.4 to 1.7.

As for the third strand concerning social inclusion, policies related to employability of migrant and minority populations, with measures designed to promote integration into the workforce of migrants and ethnic minorities, they found that the highest area of coverage related to the *Europe 2020* flagship platform⁶ against poverty and social exclusion with a score of 3.1, but of course this is a goal for the future. Time will tell whether the optimistic goals will in any way be attained.

Overall, the INCLUDE researchers documented a variable, modest and low performance of EU member states in achieving the targets of the *Action Plan* and the *Charter for Regional or Minority Languages*, showing that much still needs to be accomplished to realise the hopeful goals of the policies (INCLUDE 2016b). The articles by Joe Cullen and Bian Cui address the policy practice divide with regard to the three strands of policy.

Joe Cullen, in his article entitled “Migrants and the language of instruction: Is the EU policy deficit driving new innovations in social inclusion?”, looks at the *Action Plan on Promoting Language Learning and Linguistic Diversity* (EU 2003) and the *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages* (CoE 1992) and posits reasons why these policies have not been fully carried out in practice. He argues that because of the global financial crisis along with the influence of “neo-liberal” discourse, responsibility for provision of services has been devolved from government sectors to the private sector, to independent agencies, as well as to citizens themselves. He does not see this as entirely negative, but takes the stance that the devolution has created new opportunities for social innovators. He cautions, however, that neo-liberal thinking, with its focus on market supremacy where the

⁵ On this scale, 1 is the lowest and 5 the highest, so when a policy is rated 3.7, for example, this means there is good evidence of that policy among the countries included in the project.

⁶ Launched in 2010, *Europe 2020* is the European Union’s ten-year employment and growth strategy. For more information, see http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/europe-2020-in-a-nutshell/index_en.htm [accessed 26 June 2017].

goal of education is seen in utilitarian terms, whose main task involves training people for the workplace, may not be able to fulfil the goal of true inclusion and active democratic citizenship. When language learning comes into play, he discerns a “punitive” element, whereby the programmes for language learning must be geared to language for the workplace and to “citizenship tests” if they are to be supported financially, leaving little room for social inclusion and cultural adaptation. Still, he notes the potential of the programmes provided by private organisations when they have jumped in to fill the gaps no longer controlled by state actions. The private organisations can employ “radical and disruptive approaches and tools which apply language in new ways to increase life opportunities for the vulnerable”. It remains an open question whether the services and programmes provided without state support will be sufficient to meet the goals outlined in the policies.

In her article entitled “The potential of transnational language policy to promote social inclusion of immigrants: An analysis and evaluation of the European Union’s INCLUDE network”, *Bian Cui* focuses on the third strand of policies mentioned above; namely those concerned with social inclusion. Her article complements Cullen’s contribution in that it too considers the effects of neo-liberalism on language programmes and on the goal of fostering inclusion of minorities, migrants and others outside of mainstream society. She asks whether language learning should be considered as a human right or whether its goal should be human capital building, and considers how that plays out in the context of social inclusion. She draws on the findings of the INCLUDE project and its databases in the Observatory of language learning for social inclusion (the policy database) and the Inventory of CLIL resources for active social inclusion (related to practices)⁷ and grounds her study in post-structuralist theories of language and identity. Her article provides some interesting data on percentages of newcomers to the five countries⁸ studied in the INCLUDE project who are functionally proficient in the national language of the country where they reside. The lack of proficiency in the host country’s language has, not surprisingly, led to exclusion of immigrants from mainstream society: they live in poorer neighbourhoods and work at lower-skilled jobs than citizens of the country, even though they may possess a higher educational background than the native residents. Bian asks whether language learning could help to improve the situation of the immigrants. She contends that language learning and its relation to social inclusion is situated on a continuum. The utilitarian approach to language learning which ties it to language for the workplace and is helpful for job seeking provides only a first step to inclusion. Much more needs to be done as the newcomers build their new identity in the host country and acculturate to the new society while retaining their core identity. As Bian states, “overall societal inclusion... requires immigrants’ full participation, engagement and empowerment to have their voices heard and valorised ... social inclusion plays out at different

⁷ The Observatory of language learning for social inclusion is introduced in the first INCLUDE report (INCLUDE 2014) and is analysed in the third report (INCLUDE 2016b). The Inventory of CLIL resources for active social inclusion is discussed at length in the second INCLUDE report (INCLUDE 2016a).

⁸ Italy, Spain, France, UK and Lithuania.

levels: from economic to cultural to ideological, and language learning provides the basic tool for the inclusion process". Like Cullen, Bian is cautiously optimistic that the policies which promote social inclusion and the practices which will result in inclusion have the potential for realisation in the EU.

All three strands of EU policies on language and diversity, "Promoting language learning and diversity", the *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages* and "Social inclusion policies", rely very heavily on Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) approaches in the language programmes. Although the chief aim of CLIL approaches is to achieve communicative competence, the techniques employed such as group work, collaboration among students when making sense of content in the new language, developing strategies for language learning and others, contribute to creating an inclusive classroom. CLIL classrooms are quite suitable for all types of students and are especially beneficial for newcomer migrant students. The second and third INCLUDE reports (INCLUDE 2016a, b) show a variety of benefits resulting from the application of CLIL methods. From the language acquisition perspective, CLIL approaches encourage language use and negotiation of meaning in communicative situations. The EU policy makers are moreover concerned with fostering inclusion among language learners across the region, and CLIL is considered a method which will in fact promote inclusion. It is contended that "CLIL develops multilingual interests, multilingual attitudes and moral development" (INCLUDE 2016b), which "increases social inclusion because it narrows the distance between different cultures and countries, builds bridges between individuals with different cultural and language background" (ibid., p. 44).

Thomas Somers' article, "Content and Language Integrated Learning and the inclusion of immigrant minority language students: A research review" makes a strong argument for the benefits of CLIL approaches for language learners from minorities. The questions he addresses in his paper include why minority language parents and students choose CLIL language programmes; how proficiency in two languages of instruction and overall academic achievement compare for minority and majority language students; how mainstream monolingual education or heritage language programmes compare with CLIL programmes; what pedagogical support is needed and, finally, which access criteria might prevent minority language students from enrolling in CLIL programmes.

Somers first provides a succinct characterisation of what CLIL means, drawing on the definition by Eurydice (2006),⁹ which declares CLIL to be "a generic term to describe all types of provision in which a second language (a foreign, regional or minority language/and/or another official state language) is used to teach certain subjects in the curriculum other than language lessons themselves". To respond to the questions he has set out at the beginning of the paper, he draws heavily on research literature from both Europe and abroad. He observes that CLIL as a language learning approach reflects many of the techniques used in French immersion classes taught in Canada. As such, Somers reports on many Canadian

⁹ Eurydice is a network created by the European Commission to document educational systems and policies in Europe.

studies which confirm the benefits of learning content through the medium of a language which is not the native tongue of the students.

Somers' paper provides an excellent review of the existing research literature in the area and should reassure those who have doubts about the efficacy of the CLIL approach and its potential not only for developing language proficiency, but also for fostering social inclusion. In his conclusion, Somers affirms the popularity of CLIL among immigrant minority language students and their families because of the linguistic, social, economic and symbolic capital benefits which result from such language learning approaches. In keeping with the agenda of language learning as a vehicle to enter the global job market, Somers asserts that CLIL programmes are an effective means to this goal, while also encouraging social integration. He proffers the human rights argument that immigrant minority language students should be provided with access to CLIL programmes, since this approach satisfies the ethnic minorities' aspirations to be able to gain/retain proficiency in the "old" minority language, in the "new" majority language, as well as in other foreign, international languages, thus preparing themselves for being able to hold their own in the globalised world. He advises against the approach that minority students should only concentrate on achieving proficiency in the majority language. Somers' arguments counter the "common sense" approach found in some regions (e.g. France), where only the best students are encouraged to enter CLIL classes, discouraging minority students from learning languages in this innovative way. No doubt the common reasoning goes that minority students should concentrate on learning the majority language, possibly abandoning use of their native tongue. This attitude has been disputed for a long time by such well-known researchers in the area as Jim Cummins (1981), who contends that first language maintenance contributes to mastery of other languages.

The benefits of CLIL programmes for minority students according to Somers are manifold: "immigrant minority language students may not only develop age-appropriate proficiency in the majority language, they also gain opportunities (a) to acquire advanced levels of functional proficiency in an additional language without endangering their academic success; (b) to take advantage of precisely the kind of (scaffolded, interactive, motivating) pedagogy that is intended to facilitate access to both content and language; (c) to develop positive self-image and motivation; and (d) to acquire important capital for achieving success economically and socially". This is a powerful endorsement of the CLIL method of language acquisition for minority (and majority) students.

The next four articles in the collection feature exemplary and innovative language learning practices which can lead to improved language proficiency and greater tolerance towards others.

Rebecca Dahm's "Can pluralistic approaches based upon unknown languages enhance learner engagement and lead to active social inclusion?" presents a most interesting study which she conducted in the Limousin and Aquitaine regions of France with English language teachers working with students aged 12–13. Her goal was to make monolingual mainstream students less wary of foreign languages and minority language newcomers feel that their linguistic background was valued. She was aware that in modern language classes in France (usually classes teaching

English as a foreign language) teachers rarely acknowledged any previously acquired linguistic knowledge of their students, thus unconsciously contributing to the gap between the French first language speakers and their 1st- and 2nd-generation immigrant and refugee peers. The PAUL (Pluralistic Approaches based upon Unknown Languages) technique Dahm applied in her study had most interesting results for language learning. Using PAUL in language classes develops language learning strategies and involves collaboration and problem-solving skills. Group work is a key element of the technique which shifts the role of the teacher to being a group facilitator rather than a more didactic traditional instructor addressing individual students. As facilitator, the teacher guides the students as a group to solve a linguistic problem and construct ways of making sense of the passage presented.

In Dahm's study, students were faced with making sense of passages in three languages unknown to them, Dutch, Italian and Finnish. The linguistic problem-solving tasks the students were asked to perform included understanding the text (metasemantic tasks), creating new sentences (metasyntactic tasks) and trying to pronounce the unknown language (metaphonological tasks). Over the school year during which the sessions took place, Dahm was able to document an increased engagement in the students' learning and the development of new language learning strategies. The students working in groups of four to complete the language tasks for the unknown languages learned to collaborate to create new knowledge. The students with teachers who acted as facilitators showed better results than those whose teacher used a more top-down didactic approach. For the purposes of the study, Dahm did not mix monolingual with bi-/multilingual students in groups, but her observations led her to surmise that using mixed groups of both monolingual and bi-/multilingual students would have resulted in greater benefits both in language learning strategy development and in acceptance of "foreignness" by the monolingual French students, as well as enhancing inclusion of the minority language students. The PAUL approach has thus proven to be a most useful tool both for improving language learning, but also for developing greater inclusion and understanding across different ethnic groups.

The next article in the collection, "Une approche plurilingue pour faciliter l'inclusion scolaire: engagement et dynamique pédagogique" [A multilingual approach to facilitating inclusion: Educational commitment and dynamics] by *Nathalie Ribierre-Dubile*, complements Dahm's study, in that Ribierre-Dubile also recognises the pedagogical potential of including and acknowledging the knowledge which multi- or plurilingual students bring to the language classroom. Ribierre-Dubile's study involved elementary students aged 8–10 in the Bordeaux region of France as they embarked on learning their first foreign language, English. She contends that rather than trying to assimilate minority language students into the majority language, downplaying the value of keeping their first language, and hence, implying lower value of the language and culture of minority students, language teachers should encourage these students to celebrate their language and share it with their classmates. The *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)* (CoE 2001) promotes plurilingualism. One of the activities included in the *European Language Portfolio* (CoE 2002), which is part of the toolkit supporting CEFR, is the preparation of a language biography which students

create documenting any knowledge they have of other languages besides the majority language, thus celebrating a diversity of language knowledge.

Ribierre-Dubile's study is related to strategies students employ when learning a new language, and she made use of Rebecca Oxford's (2003) *Strategy Inventory of Language Learning* (SILL) as well as Michael O'Malley and Anna Uhl Chamot's (1990) studies on learning strategies. The students (aged 8–10) in her study were divided into two groups, plurilingual or monolingual students. The two groups were presented with a printed text in English as well as an audio version. They were tasked with making sense of the texts. She wanted to compare learning strategies of the plurilingual versus the monolingual students when reading or listening to the texts. Although in general neither monolingual nor plurilingual students were able to make connections and sense of much of the text read aloud to them without access to the printed form, showing that students are better trained in making sense of printed text, it was clear that the plurilingual students comprehended more of the text, irrespective of whether it was presented to them only in print form, only aurally, or aurally plus print format. This suggested to Ribierre-Dubile that the plurilingual students had access to more strategies when making sense of unfamiliar material, a logical conclusion given that these students were already involved in acquiring an unfamiliar language (French) and had to make sense of it in order to succeed in their school studies. In "think aloud" sessions where students explained what they did to understand the passage, she noted that the plurilinguals were using rather sophisticated metacognitive strategies, making connections with the way the words sounded, or relating them to words they knew in other languages. It occurred to her that if teachers could make use of the strategies used by the plurilingual students in the language classes, this might lead to greater social and academic inclusion and would certainly raise the self-esteem of the plurilingual students who could demonstrate that they possessed knowledge they could share with the majority language students instead of always struggling to understand what was going on in class.

Ribierre-Dubile also describes some other activities used in class to validate the languages and culture of the minority students whereby those students provided versions of texts being studied in English in their own language. Their parents often helped out with written forms when the language was, for example, Arabic. This reflects recommendations made by Jim Cummins (2007, 2009) to validate the multi-plurilingual classroom by displaying artefacts and texts written in the various languages represented in the class. Throughout her article, she stresses the importance of the teacher's engagement in the interaction of learning with both the pluri- and monolingual students. As she concludes, "the child and the teacher should thus be able to enter into an exchange as much pluricultural as plurilingual where their investment in learning the language will be synonymous with the pedagogical dynamic and social and academic inclusion".¹⁰ This case study illustrates how the pedagogical approaches to language learning for social inclusion

¹⁰ *L'enfant et l'enseignant devraient ainsi pouvoir se retrouver alors dans un échange, tout autant pluriculturel que plurilingue, où l'engagement de chacun à entrer dans la langue sera synonyme de dynamique pédagogique et d'inclusion sociale et scolaire.*

as documented in the INCLUDE databases can be applied to language learning of even very young children.

The following article by *Norah Leroy*, “‘Modern foreign language teachers – don’t leave those kids alone!’ Linguistic-cultural ‘give and take’ in an ad-hoc tutoring scheme” provides an example of an innovative language learning approach used with young adolescents learning English in the Dordogne area of France. As with the other examples, this approach, which involves minority English students living in France tutoring younger schoolmates in English turned out to result in more inclusion, better cross-cultural understanding, and improved language proficiency of the student participants in both French and English. Leroy describes the situation of newly arrived British migrant students, not fitting in well with their French peers, neglecting even their English classes arguing they already knew English well enough, as well as lack of acceptance of the newcomers by the French students.

Leroy, a British ex-pat herself married to a French citizen, speaks from personal experience. Her three children, whom she brought up in France, did not always feel that they fit in as full members of French society. They also sometimes seemed overly sensitive about their mother when she communicated with local French residents, fearful that her slight accent might be disadvantageous to their sense of belonging in the Dordogne region.

Leroy draws on the work of Bonny Norton and Kelleen Toohey (2001), who have noted that language acquisition is hampered for individuals who have been marginalised because they are immigrants or belong to a minority group. Leroy has observed this problem with British migrant students and believes that “it is crucial for migrant children to be valorised in the immediate social environment (school) in order for them to interact with others and develop proficiency in the second language, French”. The ad-hoc tutoring scheme she describes, in which British students enrolled at 3ème level (upper secondary school)¹¹ could tutor students at 6ème level (lower secondary school) in English, was possible because fortunately the English classes of the 6ème and 3ème classes were scheduled for the same time and the classes were situated next door to each other. Thus, the British students, instead of attending the English class which they found boring and unnecessary, worked instead in English with their younger peers. The older British students took their tutoring duties seriously and enthusiastically prepared for their sessions with the younger students which involved a warm-up, introduction of a topic to be studied, such as “my favourites”, pronunciation practice, plus a writing exercise and oral interactions. The tutors also used the session to complete a review of English learned by the 6èmes over the year using typical communicative activities such as games, role plays, drama, quizzes and the like.

After the tutoring scheme was completed, Leroy interviewed the teachers involved as well as two students to sound out their impressions of the approach. Some of the themes which emerged from the teacher interviews included positive

¹¹ In France, children start primary school (which lasts five years; from CP to CM2) at age 6. They proceed to lower secondary school (four years, from 6ème to 3ème) at age 11, and to upper secondary school (three years, from Seconde to Terminale) at age 15, finishing at age 18.

identity formation, better integration, improved interpersonal relationships, a change in attitude towards the English class by the British students from disinterest and disengagement to renewed interest in improving writing skills so that they could better assist their younger tutees. When she interviewed the students, the British ones recalled how isolated and alienated they had first felt when they had come to France and how difficult it had been to make friends. The French students talked about their initial resentment against the British newcomers, which was partially overcome when British and French students began to interact and help each other in their studies. As it turned out, because of the success the British students were enjoying in tutoring the 6ème students, some of the French 3ème students also wanted to participate in tutoring because of the potential for building social status. Overall, this study provides another example of how innovative language teaching can foster active social inclusion. Leroy believes that the ad-hoc tutoring scheme reflects sound pedagogical practice, which those aspiring to be language teachers should make use of. This kind of approach meets the policy expectations of developing a language-friendly environment. This corroborates one of the findings of the two previous articles, namely that minority students who can demonstrate that their cultural capital can contribute to the classroom begin to feel more a part of the learning context and are better accepted by their peers. The potential for developing tolerance to different cultures and languages is considerable.

The final article in this collection, “‘I want to speak like the other people’: Second language learning as a virtuous spiral for migrant women?” by *Johanna Ennser-Kananen* and *Nicole Pettitt*, provides us with the case of migrant women as second language learners in two contexts, Europe and North America. The paper speaks to challenges adult migrant women face as they learn the language of their host country on their journey of resettlement. The authors are concerned with gender-related issues which impinge on migrant women as they strive to fit into the new environment. This paper presents two contexts of language classes, one a mixed-gender second language (L2) classroom for migrants in Austria, the other a women-only L2 classroom in the United States (US). It is generally assumed that when migrants learn the language of their new host country, the result will be improved access to employment or higher education programmes; better inclusion into the host society; and a better understanding of the new culture leading to the desire for acculturation. Linda Morrice (2016) has termed this process of betterment through proficiency in the language of the host country the “virtuous spiral” because of all the supposed benefits which accrue once one has attained language competence. Ennser-Kananen and Pettitt, while they do not deny the benefits for migrants of gaining language proficiency, problematise the notion, especially for the migrant women who participated in their study. The two questions guiding this article are: “What does L2 learning have to offer migrant women, and is L2 proficiency automatically an advantage for them?” and “Challenges for migrant women L2 learners: What are the obstacles and desires of learning to ‘speak like the other people’?”

Ennser-Kananen and Pettitt carried out their case studies independently, one at a volunteer-run refugee aid centre in Austria, and the other in a family literacy programme for refugee mothers and their children in the US. Their findings show that despite advantages in general for migrants who learn the language of the host

country, one should not assume that all migrant women benefit equally from the programmes offered. The case in Austria seems to support positive outcomes as a result of the language programme, including an increased ability to interact with local residents, a type of respite from potentially difficult family situations, and the possibility of being granted asylum as a result of language certificates earned. The instructor in the Austrian centre believed that her classroom provided “a safe space for practising new roles and relationships ... as well as incentive for women to experiment with new identities and discover opportunities for personal development”. Most women in the US programme experienced the same advantages, and yet there were some troubling factors. Though migrant women in the US may use their new L2 proficiency to access better employment possibilities, some were passed over for positions by employers who preferred to hire less proficient English speakers (for lower salary) and who wished to maintain a sense of racial and linguistic superiority over their employees. The authors cite research that shows how “racism, sexism, and linguistic discrimination interact to undermine the ‘virtuous spiral’ of L2 proficiency and make L2 proficiency an unreliable factor for social advancement”. The situation of one woman at the US refugee centre is presented as an example of the unfortunate reality that refugees may have achieved a certain amount of success and economic well-being in their new environment, and yet still not match the social status they once enjoyed in their home country. Another woman in the US centre declared that she did not want to become a US citizen, although she did want to learn the language as well as she could. This troubled the assumptions that citizenship is the goal of all refugees. The authors acknowledge that they have raised more questions than answers regarding the situation of migrant women as L2 learners. They recommend further research in three areas. The first one concerns the actual benefits refugee women may gain from migration and resettlement; here the authors contend that research which deals with issues of gender, migration and language learning needs to be expanded. Second, they call for imaginative and transformative opportunities for L2 learning which take on board gender-equitable access to L2 learning. Finally, they recommend making more use of bidirectionality between learners and teachers, pointing out how much teachers learn from the histories and aspirations of their students. This provocative study on female adult language learners and the challenges they face in their new environment complements the other contributions to this special issue with a slightly different perspective on the goals of language learning for inclusion and leaves us with much to reflect upon.

To sum up: over the INCLUDE project’s three-year duration, the participating researchers amassed a huge amount of data on the EU policies related to language learning and to promoting social inclusion and tolerance of marginalised groups and newcomers in the region. In the process, they documented practices which contribute to the fulfilment of the intent of the language policies, but also revealed the extent to which gaps exist between the optimistic promise of the policies and the incorporation of the spirit of the policies in actual practice. Their country case studies presented in the second deliverable (INCLUDE 2016a) provide ample proof of the challenges countries face as they grapple with helping their minority and marginalised groups acculturate to the majority society as well as preparing them

for entry into the workforce. The INCLUDE network provided a platform where practitioners from across Europe could communicate and discuss the challenges they encountered. As documented in the *Exploitation Report* (INCLUDE 2016c), members of the INCLUDE network appreciated the goals and initiatives of the project and hoped to be able to implement its recommendations in their own teaching or research context. Here are a few statements from some network members, representing both researchers' and practitioners' views:

“The INCLUDE project allowed me to understand the importance and relevance of language for social inclusion which is my area of interest. The project brings together interesting stakeholders in inclusion.” (ibid., p. 16)

“As a language teacher in French higher education and [higher education] HE researcher, I am interested in the social impact of language teaching and learning beyond the classroom.” (ibid., p. 16)

“I like the INCLUDE network initiative and I believe it is extremely relevant in light of the current situation both in Europe and worldwide (I mean the increasingly globalized world and migrant mobility).” (ibid., p. 17)

“As a researcher, I am interested in language contact and language change. As a citizen, I would like to see intelligent management of multilingualism for a humane society.” (ibid., p. 17)

Europe is undeniably multicultural and multilingual and if the EU is to succeed as an economic union, these factors must be accepted. Language education, especially the kind which employs CLIL techniques, can be a powerful agent for raising the consciousness of European citizens towards the multilingual, multicultural reality. The INCLUDE research contributions provide the data to support further development of language programmes as a factor in promoting European political dialogue on tolerance and inclusion. The final report prepared by the network, *The Roadmap for the Integration of Language Learning in Social Inclusion Policies in Europe* (INCLUDE 2016d) sets out the principles on which the plan to move forward is based:

- Language rights are part of human rights.
- Social inclusion depends also on language knowledge.
- Economic/employment opportunities for the individual and the development of human capital in a society depend also on language knowledge.
- Multilingualism has a significant influence on the evolution of a European identity.
- Multilingualism is multiple.
- Multilingualism is possible.
- Multilingualism is practical (ibid., pp. 20–21).

Having completed their work on the project, the INCLUDE researchers expressed their hope that the principles outlined can be converted into concrete actions which will result in a common approach to promote social inclusion through language learning (ibid., p. 21). The articles included in this special issue reflect the principles

set out in the INCLUDE project, and review its accomplishments and its potential for further change. The last four articles illustrate promising practices in the spirit of the INCLUDE aspirations for examples of language teaching for inclusion. It is to be hoped that this important work, initiated by this project and its network, will continue, thus supporting active social inclusion.

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