English language as an integration tool: The case of Syrian refugees to the UK

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Introduction

In the context of the refugee crisis in Europe, the UK has promised to resettle up to 20,000 refugees by 2020, small but significant step, with the first group of 1000 having been resettled by December 2015. While Syrian refugees come with a special five years' Humanitarian Protection status which grants them direct access to education and the labour market, they face a range of challenges such as adapting to a new education system with different expectations for both children and parents, acculturating to their host community and finding employment. In all these aspects, language poses a critical challenge to the integration and resettlement processes. By integration here we mean the new requirements that migrants are expected to fulfil in order to fully participate in their new society. The significant role of language as a tool for fostering immigrants' integration into the host community is a topical issue within the European Union. As observed by Sole (2014: 57) language is arguably '…a cornerstone of integration policy in the EU, and the knowledge of the 'host' language is seen as a barometer of migrants' integration in a particular society.' Consequently governments and institutions are investing considerable resources in migrants' learning of the host language. In this paper we consider the linguistic challenges faced by Syrian refugees to the UK and explore the diverse initiatives for English language provision as employed by diverse institutions (e.g. school, faith groups, and the civil society) that are supporting the integration of Syrian refugees. These include language immersion and bilingual approaches. In this way we consider the varying roles of English and Arabic (the host and home languages) in supporting the learning of English and adjusting to life in the UK. Findings from interviews with a sample of Syrian refugees suggest that while children

seemed to cope well with the immersion approaches to learning English, the adult Syrian participants found the use of both English and Arabic beneficial in understanding English structures and culture. Drawing on our findings we argue that integration is a complex process that can be enhanced by employing a multi-pronged, multi-agency approach to English language learning.

In the sections that follow we explore the existing types of language provision that have been offered for migrants and then present the theoretical framework used to explore their effectiveness in the context of the forced migration of Syrian refugees in our study. We then briefly explain our sampling and methodology before presenting the themes that emerge from our data. Lastly in the discussion and conclusion section we highlight the significance of the study and make recommendations for language learning programmes for refugees in similar contexts.

Types of language provision for migrants

In the UK, English language provision for migrants and refugees in school settings is generally referred to as English as an Additional Language (EAL) and its main purpose is to facilitate children's access to the school curriculum. With older children (nearing 16) and adults this provision is called English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and may be focused on more general language learning outside of school rather than curriculum learning. If it is integrated with courses leading to vocational qualifications it is often referred to as embedded ESOL (Mallows, 2014).

Research on the language development and socio-economic integration of migrants has revealed two main language learning approaches that are commonly drawn on in EAL and

ESOL programmes (Arnot et al., 2014). The first approach is total immersion, which requires the exclusive use of the target language. The second approach is the partial immersion or bilingual approach, in which the mother-tongue, the target and any other language are used to support the development of the target language. These models reflect diverse perceptions of effective language learning as determined by different needs, aspirations and available resources. One common factor is that successful language learning programmes have been determined by the human element, that is, the dynamic involvement of key stakeholders such as the school, the community and parents (see, for example, Baquedano-López, Alexander and Hernandez, 2013).

While total immersion programmes were long considered to be more effective due to the high amount of input in the target language, recent research that draws on the theory of translanguaging show the benefits of bilingual approaches. The term translanguaging has been adopted by poststructuralist sociolinguists (e.g. Juffermans, 2011; Wei and García, 2014) to highlight the ability of bilinguals to appropriately use their entire language repertoire in communication. The argument is that in a globalised world, languages are mobile resources constructed within socio-cultural, political and historical contexts in which people interact. In this perspective language is not viewed as a structure or system of rules but an activity, '… a social process constantly reconstructed in sensitivity to environmental factors' (Canagarajah, 2007: 94).

Bilingual instructional practices that draw on translanguaging to support English learning in migrant contexts might include the use of bilingual class assistants who use strategies such as translation, peer support and codeswitching between the target and the home languages (see further García, Flores and Chu, 2011). Creese and Blackledge (2010: 112) demonstrate how

teachers enhanced students' learning by encouraging them '…to make links between the social, cultural, community, and linguistic domains of their lives.' Research has documented the cognitive and pedagogic benefits of allowing learners to use all their linguistic resources to support the development of the target language (Garcia and Wei, 2014) as well as '…increasing the inclusion, participation, and understandings of pupils in the learning processes; developing less formal relationships between participants; conveying ideas more easily; and accomplishing lessons' (Arthur and Martin, 2006: 197).

In our study, we explore the extent to which programmes for migrants follow an immersion approach or whether they promote instructional practices that draw on translanguaging to support English learning. Using the theoretical lens of linguistic capability, we explore the effectiveness of these programmes in the context of forced migration.

Theoretical framework

To explore the effectiveness of the various types of provision available to the participants in this study and interpret their linguistic behaviour, strategies, motivations, we mobilise the theoretical construct of linguistic capability. The concept of capability has been found helpful as an interdisciplinary approach for dealing with barriers to the wellbeing of marginalized communities (Robeyns, 2006). Proposed and popularised by Sen (1999) and Nussabaum (2011), capabilities are defined as the opportunities available to individuals that enable them to accomplish particular functionings. An application of the capabilities approach includes a focus on the individual's abilities to act or to exercise agency. Drawing on the existing capabilities literature, Tikly (2016) argues that language is a capability which is critical for the realisation of all other capabilities. In the context of the migration of refugees, language and in particular the host or national language of the country migrated to is a critical

capability which enables them to access education, the labour market, goods and services in the host country – all factors which promote well-being.

We find Tikly's (2016) model of linguistic capability (see Figure 1) useful for understanding language learning and use within the broader context of language rights and social justice. The language rights perspective suggests that the guaranteeing of legal access to basic goods and services form the basis for realising social justice and policy. This, Tikly (2016) argues, is an important but insufficient condition for realising social justice. A social justice approach requires addressing structural inequalities related to class, gender, race and ethnicity, for example, that facilitate or inhibit the interests and voices of some language groups over others in unequal societies. Tikly draws on the work of Fraser (2008), who argues that overcoming injustice means dismantling institutionalised obstacles that prevent some people from participating on a par with others as full partners in social interaction. Tikly (2016) posits three key principles for social justice relevant for this study: inclusivity, relevance and voice.

First is *inclusivity* which relates to access to resources and opportunities required for learners to develop valued linguistic capabilities necessary for them to achieve desired outcomes. As Tikly (2016) argues, learners may not be able to access the same resources; as such, access is often shaped by injustices suffered in their varied pasts and consequent learning needs. For example, our learners, due to the political and socio-economic situation in their country of origin that resulted in their forced migration were unable to immediately access education because of lack of adequate linguistic capabilities in the host language. In this case inclusivity was made complex in that they needed to attend some sessions separately. The second principle relates to *relevance* in the sense that the acquired linguistic capabilities need to be

‘meaningful for all learners, valued by their communities and consistent with national development priorities in a changing global context.’ (ibid: 415). For example, adult English language learners in our study felt that the language skills meaningful to them were those related to specific trades such as English for chefs. The third principle is the need for learners to have a *voice* in the determination of which linguistic capabilities are appropriate for them and/or even how they want to learn, for example, the young learners in our study expressed that after a period of bilingual learning they wanted to move on to total immersion to expedite their language learning.

These three principles underpin the three interrelated enabling environments of the school, the home/community and wider education system which define Tikly’s linguistic capability model. As we will show in our analysis of data, these enabling environments play key roles in the provision of English language learning for the participants in our study by ensuring that they have access to the resources and opportunities they need, that they learn English in a way that is beneficial to them and that they are involved in decision making about such provision.

[INSERT FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE]

Tikly’s model helps us to understand the importance of enabling environments in the development of linguistic capability for disadvantaged people, such as Syrian refugees, within and outside the education environment. In addition, being situated within rights-based and global social justice approaches, the model enables us to take into account the role of the mother tongue and other linguistic resources in our subjects’ English learning. Further, with its focus on the wider policy environment, the model also suggests the need for all

stakeholders (including children, teachers, parents, community) to develop a range of capabilities to provide appropriate pedagogy for both refugee children and their parents.

As has been noted in existing literature (e.g. Rutter, 2009) the Syrian refugees in our study came to the UK with the hope and expectation of quickly moving on with life in terms of finding work and improving their social and economic integration. However, having come without necessarily having the knowledge of the host community language meant that gaining access to economic means and social stability could be a long, drawn-out process. Specifically with regards to employment, it has long been noted that the transferability of one's pre-immigration acquired training, skills and work experience is intricately tied to an individual's linguistic capability (cf. Madziva, McGrath and Thondhlana, 2014).

The study and methods

This chapter is based on ethnographic research conducted between May and November 2016 with Syrian refugees that were resettled in the East Midlands region, in December 2015. Data were collected from 57 research participants through interviews, observations, focus group discussions as well as school reports. The sample comprised 8 Syrian families (16 adults and 15 children), 5 Syrian young people (who participated in a focus group) and 21 key informants including school-teachers, council authorities, representatives from faith-based organisations and migrant support organisations. The selection of key informants was purposefully determined to ensure the inclusion of the different organisations involved in supporting Syrian refugees.

Information about the research and an invitation to participate were presented to Syrian refugees in face-to-face meetings at a local migrant support organisation, followed by

signing of consent forms before interviews. Interviews with the Syrian families were conducted in their own homes, through an interpreter who is an academic from a Syrian background. These interviews have been translated into English. The broader research aims were to generate the views of the Syrian refugees about their integration into their new communities and the factors that supported them to integrate; solicit the views of the different agencies that were supporting them regarding the support mechanisms that were in place; and to draw out any lessons that could be of benefit to the wider refugee community.

The research was funded through the University of Nottingham's Sustainable Development priority area. The research aimed to understand how the Syrians (both adults and children) were settling in their new community as well as to explore the challenges they were facing as well as the opportunities available to them. All research encounters were audio recorded and transcribed and translated before analysis using thematic and discourse analysis techniques. Given the vulnerable nature of the population under study, key ethical procedures including ensuring confidentiality, anonymity, informed consent and avoiding harm were given high priority.

Syrian refugee families and English language learning: The context

In our study, the issue of English language as a tool for integration emerged as one of the key themes, and all of the participants were taking part in courses to improve their English language abilities. In this section, we provide a brief description of the language programmes that were being offered to the Syrian refugees who participated in our study. While the Syrian refugees were learning English from various places, they were involved in three types of coordinated programmes at the time of fieldwork. The first was a total immersion type of English learning programme which was run by a local migrant support organisation, commissioned by the county council to help manage the Syrian integration project. This

programme was only offered as an interim programme, given that most of the Syrian adults could not enrol in colleges to join ESOL programmes on arrival. By the time we rounded off our fieldwork, a few adults had enrolled in colleges which also employ the total immersion approach. The second type of programme was a bilingual programme that was being provided by a local ethnic minority community in collaboration with the Syrian community. The Syrian community consists of and is run by Syrians who previously came to the UK using other migration routes such as student visas, work permits and as asylum seekers. The third programme was the school system, which was the primary means of English language learning for the children involved in the study. To this end, we engaged with four schools where Syrian children and young people were enrolled, in order to gain an understanding of the approaches that the schools were taking to teaching English language to the newly arrived Syrian pupils. In the following, we first explore the integration challenges these children face at school and highlight the role of English in facilitating the process, then turning to the issues faced in the adult programmes.

The challenges of integrating Syrian children into the British school system and the role of English

As highlighted above, the Syrian refugees involved in our research had arrived in the UK in December 2015, towards the end of the school term. As such, children could not be enrolled in schools immediately, partly because of their traumatic situation, and partly because of the complex school admission procedures. Although children were eventually enrolled in early 2016, some children enrolled earlier than others, depending on individual children's learning needs and availability of places in schools and colleges in the particular local areas where Syrian families lived. Depending on their age and the circumstances they experienced in war-torn Syria or trans-migration countries, Syrian children had limited and/or disrupted

education experiences before coming to the UK. This all needed to be taken into consideration in the allocation of school places and resources. Interview discussions with the caseworkers who supported Syrian children with school admissions reveal that schools in the East Midlands have shown different reactions when enrolling Syrian children, depending on their prior-experience of working with refugee children. As one female caseworker related to us:

> Schools with the experience of dealing with refugee children are pretty good, they understand that the children are going to struggle and that they need extra help… whereas those schools without the experience were very negative. I've had schools ask me, 'How do we educate these children? What do we do with these children?' because most of them had not been in school for a while and all had no English at all…

Older children confirmed how the lack of English language made it difficult for them, the other children in the class and the teachers. As one Syrian young person noted in a focus group:

> It was difficult for us and other students …even teachers, they treated us a little different from other students, because we could not speak English so they struggled to talk to us or help us.

Teachers who participated in our research reiterated the challenges that Syrian children have faced, emphasising the role of English in developing relationships with other children as an initial valuable step in the learning and integration processes. However, the situation was

noted to be worse in the context of children with complex needs, as in the example of deaf children, related to us by one female teacher of the deaf:

> We're talking about profoundly deaf children who haven't got English language, Arabic language or sign language …the first week they were here was so difficult for them, and for us, because they just had nothing. You could see that they were open to communication, but with no language at all it was impossible to make this happen…

The above narratives highlight the critical role of English in the integration processes of the Syrian refugees in our study and the challenges of finding ways to facilitate their learning of English taking into account their diverse circumstances. Tikly's linguistic capability model helped us to explore the enabling environments that played key roles in the provision of English language learning for the participants by ensuring that they were able to access the resources and opportunities they needed for effective learning. In the following sections we consider these enabling environments.

The school as an enabling environment: Teachers' preparations and approaches to dealing with the Syrian students

In this section, we discuss the approaches taken by teachers in the four schools we researched to deal with the Syrian students, reflecting on issues of training and resources. A good starting point is to acknowledge that, in the UK, schools have long recognised the presence of children whose first language is not English, with schools making efforts to ensure that class teachers are well equipped to support such children (Arnot et al., 2014). To this end, we learnt from one school that teacher training is being provided in order to effectively help children in their 'translanguaging' (Becker, 1995) process. This confirms that

translanguaging is a concept that is being employed in teacher professional development initiatives and that, as a result, a growing number of teachers may seek to make use of it. As indicated in one Syrian child's progress report (Report 1):

> Staff have been given a number of different training sessions (at both campuses) to support them in how to adapt their teaching to make it suitable for EAL students...

We noted that in schools where EAL training was not provided, teachers sounded less confident in their own teaching approaches. As one male teacher told us:

> I haven't had any (EAL) training as such. But I definitely think it would be of benefit to be trained in it, just to learn new strategies of how to encourage more independence, how to encourage independent reading and spelling.

The above excerpt points to the need for teachers to be well trained in the different initiatives that can help them to tailor language provision to the needs of specific groups. In line with Tikly's model, those involved in the education of refugee children need to develop relevant capabilities to enable them to provide appropriate pedagogy for the children. While the literature (e.g. Arnot et al., 2014) shows that EAL training has previously been provided to equip teachers with the necessary skills, more needs to be done particularly in relation to provision of funding for such training and encouraging all schools to provide this much needed training for their teachers.

The use of the mother tongue

One of the learning opportunities mentioned in our study, and which has received considerable attention in second language pedagogy literature, is the use of the mother tongue to support English language learning (García and Wei, 2014). In our study, we noted that while this might not be a universal requirement, some teachers have been incorporating the use of the mother tongue in their teaching. For example, in one school we learnt that teachers were taking advantage of bilingual students and using them as a resource for supporting the newcomers. As one Syrian female student related to us:

> so the teacher assigned a student to help me during classes, she speaks Arabic and English very well. So if there's anything that I need, she tells first in Arabic and then English, so I can understand.

Also depending on the availability of resources, some schools have been able to employ bilingual supply teachers to help complement their efforts. While there is evidence that where this has been offered, Syrian children have found it helpful, we noted that once the children reached a stage where they felt settled, they preferred to learn English for themselves rather than depending on bilingual teachers. This was clearly articulated in our focus group by one male student as follows:

Student1: At first we had someone who helped us, he spoke Arabic, he would help us separately and we would also go back and learn together with other children.

Interviewer: So would you like some more?

Student1: No, I want to learn by myself. If I speak English all the time I will learn more words and can speak better English…

Overall, we noted that where resources were available, teachers initially employed partial immersion (English and Arabic) to help children adapt to their new learning environment, with total immersion (exclusive use of English language) being used once children had settled into the new system. In such contexts, student learning and attainment seems to be better. This is evidenced by the progress reports we reviewed from one school where this approached was being employed as expressed in Report 2 below:

> Y is making excellent progress. His vocabulary is developing every day. He is able to make himself understood about most things and his natural exuberance means he is very sociable and thereby hearing a great deal of new language, which he is soaking up. He is able to work out the pronunciation of more complex words using quite sophisticated blending and segmenting skills.

However, in more complex situations such as that of deaf children, the immersion and bilingual approaches we have highlighted above as effective were not an option, at least initially, as teachers mentioned that they had to start from scratch given the uniqueness of the children's learning needs. As noted by the teacher of the deaf we cited earlier:

> These children had no language at all, and had not been in school at 11 and 13. We had to start from scratch as the children had very little Arabic which they have been learning at home and no English at all… The focus in the first place is on British sign language, to give them a capacity to be able to communicate. And then the second focus would be on the more literacy side of things. The mother is very useful in this respect…

The link between contextual complexities and the need for the creation of specific enabling environments noted by Tickly (2016) is made even more apparent in the case of the deaf children in our sample. In keeping with the inclusivity principle of social justice, deaf refugee children needed to be accorded access to appropriate resources and opportunities for acquiring the valued linguistic capabilities necessary for them to achieve desired educational outcomes. As noted in the narratives above, these children who came without any Arabic sign language needed to learn British sign language before they could even begin to develop literacy skills. To create an enabling environment in this case, schools needed to engage appropriately skilled manpower and provide resources required to deal with the specific needs of deaf children. As the teacher explains:

> In terms of resources, everything has been from scratch. We're using a scheme called Racing to Language, which has got a lot of visual material. So we use pictures and videos, with support from one of our trained workers…In this case teachers had to adopt diverse appropriate strategies for meeting specific needs, which in turn had a huge impact on workload.

Home and community as enabling environments: Parents-school partnership and the role of the community

In our study we noted that, while the parents-school partnership is generally important for children's learning, Syrian refugee parents, at least initially, were not in a position to effectively interact with the school or support their children with homework critically because of their lack of English language proficiency. The teachers we interviewed were acutely aware of this problem and the challenges it posed for them. Thus, initially, schools had to put some measures in place including supporting Syrian refugee children to do their homework in school or asking them to work at home, but on activities that did not need parental support.

However, in the case of the deaf children, the parents-school partnership was noted to be central to children's learning, implying that the responsible parent needed to quickly learn both the English language and British sign language in order to be able to participate in and support their children's education. A good example was that mentioned above of one mother with two deaf children. She was acknowledged by her children's school as a key resource in her children's education. This mother, who, in addition to attending English lessons at the various places (discussed below), was also getting support from a sign language teacher as well as from a friend who was fluent in both Arabic and English. In this case the various approaches to learning English were seen as complementing each other in helping the mother to effectively support her children. As noted by the mother's friend:

> She (the mother) is learning English from different places… She has an English teacher who comes to teach her British sign language at home… I help her to learn English (using both English and Arabic) which she needs to understand things in both languages.

In this case the general system which provides funding for the development of special needs support, school, community and home environments are seen as working symbiotically to support children's learning.

Syrian adults and the challenges of learning the English language

As noted above, besides the school system for children, there were at least two types of coordinated programmes that Syrian adults were involved in, one interim programme which employed immersion approaches and another which offered a bilingual (English and Arabic)

programme. In this section, we explore the data which provides evidence for how these programmes typify an enabling community environment, addressing the stated needs of the participants.

In an interview with a member of the Syrian community leadership, he highlighted the different programmes that Syrian adults took part in, in ways that evidence that the refugees were getting support from different places. This is summarised by one member of the Syrian Society in the excerpt below:

> There is an ethnic minority organisation which provides Saturday English lessons and these are delivered in both Arabic and English… The Syrians are also taking English lessons at a refugee support organisation, and these are delivered in English only. Some have now been enrolled in colleges where lessons are done in English… There are local churches that also sponsor Syrian refugees to take IELTS, this is undertaken at colleges in English only.

However there were suggestions that these programmes were not adequately addressing the needs of the participants in varied ways. As one Syrian refugee father (family 4) puts it:

> We take lesson at the [Migrant support organisation] and sometimes it's hard to understand because the teacher only uses English … we also learn English at [ethnic minority organisation] every Saturday… it's better here because you can understand because the teacher also uses Arabic, but it's only one day per week, so the time we spend learning is too short… Also I am 52 and learning a different language is hard…

The excerpt above demonstrates that because of this participant's limited capabilities, the development of a new language alongside an existing one was seen as the ideal. This resonates with Creese and Blackledge's (2010) study which suggests that bilingual approaches may help make links for learners between the social, cultural, and historical experiences of their lives (see also Tikly, 2016). In our study, it was revealed that some Syrian adults had very little education and for those who had been to school for longer, the teaching approaches that are used in Syria are very different from those employed in the UK. We found one interview with a Syrian teacher at the ethnic minority organisation or 'Saturday school' quite useful in understanding why bilingual approaches seemed appropriate especially for adults:

> English is not well taught in Syria, and this could be one reason why the refugees are struggling to grasp the language when the teaching approach involves English only. The older men, most of whom can't even read or write and because of this, what they need is English for specific purposes. So I use a bilingual approach where I have to explain certain things in Arabic and within this Arabic explanation, I bring in English words as a starting point to learn vocabulary, and teaching them words in the context in which they are used...

In line with the views expressed in the above excerpt, Syrian adult refugees, especially older men, frequently told us that, because of their ages and low levels of comprehension, what they thought they needed was English for Specific Purposes to help them access employment or set up small businesses, given that most of them came with hands-on skills. As one Syrian father (family 2) noted:

> In Syria I was the head of a department for assembling washing machines and ovens… I should be able to find work in my field, if I concentrate on learning the words or language that relates to my job and then find a job to apply this language. I can overcome the language issue as I focus on the language that I need as I work and working would also improve my language.

As previously noted, it is important that learners are given a voice in decision making about what linguistic capabilities are appropriate for them to effectively function in their new environment. As noted before, the adult interviewees in our study appeared to be reasonably clear about what English language skills they needed to begin to work in their various trades and they seemed to also have an idea about how they wanted to learn. For example, specific needs English was preferred to get them to begin to work more quickly and they wanted Arabic to be used alongside English in their English language learning. While efforts were being made to use a bilingual approach in their teaching, the teaching of English for Specific Purposes needed to be considered by English language providers (Paltridge and Starfield, 2012).

Discussion and conclusion

Through the lens of linguistic capability, our exploration of data has revealed complex socio-political-cultural and economic dynamics involved in providing appropriate language services to Syrian refugee participants. Overall, our findings suggest that among other factors a combination of a traumatic journey, political goodwill, positive media representation and a sympathetic host government and public has worked to shape the linguistic processes and outcomes of our participants.

We have shown how schools have responded to the complexities presented by the unique circumstances of the Syrian crisis, making complex adaptations to their school environment and using both total and partial immersion strategies albeit with limited appropriate resources to accommodate the diverse language needs of their new arrivals.

The findings have also revealed the complexities of adults' language needs which are entwined with socio-economic-cultural and political considerations. In this regard we have seen the power of multi-agency and enabling environments in attempts to develop their linguistic capability using diverse teaching approaches and strategies. However, the unstructured way in which agencies worked and a general lack of financial and human resources may have hampered more effective complementarity and success.

A number of recommendations which could be of interest to stakeholders both relating to current and future Syrian refugees and other refugee groups are possible to formulate from this study. Overall, our findings show that a combination of immersion opportunities, bilingual teaching as well as a readiness to deal with special needs such as those of deaf children is critical to supporting refugee integration in host communities.

Within the school context, teachers in migrant and refugee receiving schools need to be given access to teacher professional development initiatives where they can receive appropriate training in translanguaging and bilingual pedagogies. While schools are aware of and appreciate the existence of such initiatives, financial constraints, especially due to the current government austerity policy and the related budget cuts, may hamper access to training. Availability of funding is also a determining factor in the case of the use of bilingual teaching assistants. While the practice has been popularised in the UK school system in the past, it is

reported to be on the decline due to financial constraints. Our findings show that it needs to once again be brought to the fore in educational policy discussions.

Our findings, however, show that there are less costly complementary initiatives that can be extended and formalised, such as the use of bilingual peers. In this regard, schools need to be aware of the role of bilingual peers in supporting migrant and refugee children with whom they share a language and use them as resources.

Our findings have highlighted the particular challenges of refugee deaf children and those who work with them and the difficulties of providing appropriate language support. While the call for further special needs units has been recognised, not all schools have such units and the ones that do tend to be under-resourced. The critical need for well-resourced units has been highlighted for our participating schools by the challenges they face in dealing with Syrian deaf children. In this case, language support also needs to be extended to parents of deaf children to help equip them to support their children educationally at home. One way to achieve this is to strengthen the link between the school and home so as to help parents to integrate faster into the school community, which would also encourage their language learning.

The adult participants in our study showed a willingness to take advantage of available initiatives to quickly learn English in order to accelerate their integration. As such, authorities need to look into ways of promoting Syrian refugees' participation in voluntary work as a way of facilitating their language learning. In addition, as they noted, adults with hands-on skills may gain quicker access into employment and small businesses through the provision of courses such as English for Specific Purposes.

Finally, there is need for a more structured and coordinated multi-agency language provision as a step towards developing a framework for supporting refugees and asylum seekers.

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