

Chapter 15

Teaching Refugee and Immigrant Adults: Strategies and Resources to Respect and Develop the Languages They Speak

Joy Kreeft Peyton

*Center for Applied Linguistics, Washington, DC,
USA*

Ian Cheffy

SIL International, UK

Belma - Haznedar

Boğaziçi University, Turkey

Katharine Miles

FlashAcademy, UK

Fernanda Minuz

Johns Hopkins University SAIS Europe, Italy

Martha Young-Scholten

Newcastle University, UK

ABSTRACT

This chapter concerns adult migrants to a new country who are learning the language and literacy of the country and have limited education and literacy in their heritage language. After describing this learner population, the authors discuss trends in language education in different countries, as programs and practitioners have sought to serve them, which include a shift toward respecting and developing their heritage language. The authors describe a set of professional development modules designed to help practitioners work with this learner population, focusing on one of the modules, Bilingualism. This addresses the languages that learners speak when they come to the new countries, how practitioners can facilitate development of these languages, and the resources they need to do this. The chapter concludes with a description of an online hub with links to resources in learners' languages, which is available to educators, materials developers, learners, parents of children, and others.

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-7998-8985-4.ch015

INTRODUCTION

In the field of adult education -- in Europe, North America, Australia, New Zealand, and increasingly in many other regions -- teachers are working with a learner population that they have not been specifically prepared to work with -- adults who have come to the new country as migrants or refugees (Young-Scholten, et al., 2015). They are learning to speak, understand, read, and write in the majority language of that country, but they have not yet developed print literacy (reading and writing) in the language(s) of their country of origin, their home or heritage language (henceforth referred to as heritage language). While the number of adults (defined as those aged 15 and above) with limited formal education and literacy has been decreasing worldwide, still over 770 million adults worldwide are identified as lacking minimum literacy skills (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2020). In addition, the rates of migration of these individuals is increasing. In their new countries, these adults face major challenges in moving from a basic to an intermediate level in their linguistic competence in the new language and in acquiring even basic literacy skills in a language that they do not yet know. They may take eight times longer to reach the same proficiency levels and skills as their educated and literate counterparts (Condelli, et al., 2003; Kurvers, et al., 2010; Schellekens, 2011; Tarone, et al., 2009; Young-Scholten & Strom, 2006).

Those who work with these learners as paid teachers, volunteer tutors, or program administrators commonly have little or no relevant training for doing so, even though they are highly motivated. Even those practitioners who may have many years of experience working with adult second language learners, or with young children learning to read, often have not had training and professional development focused specifically on the backgrounds and needs of these adult learners (see, e.g., Schwab, et al., 2015). Instead of having knowledge of the learning processes and trajectories of these learners and research-based expectations about their potential, their approach to working with them stems from previous experiences and might not always be aligned with the characteristics and potential of this learner population (Fernández, et al., 2017; Lightbown, 1984; Young-Scholten, et al., 2015). Research shows, however, that these learners make more progress when they are taught by those with such training (Condelli, et al., 2010; Paget & Stevenson, 2014; Schellekens, 2011).

This chapter first gives a brief description of this population of learners, then discusses trends that have developed in their education in different countries as programs and practitioners have sought to serve them. It then describes a set of online professional development modules that has been designed to help practitioners work effectively with this learner population. The main focus of the chapter is on what has largely been neglected in discussions of integration of migrants: the languages that learners speak when they come to their new countries and whether and how practitioners can support their languages of origin in the instructional process, to develop their proficiency as multilingual and multicultural individuals. It concludes with a description of an initiative that those who work with this learner population might engage in together: the development of an online hub of resources in learners' languages, from many different countries, which is available worldwide to educators, materials developers, learners, parents of children, and others, with guidelines for using it.

17 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage:
www.igi-global.com/chapter/teaching-refugee-and-immigrant-adults/306776

Related Content

Fostering Cultural Awareness Through Storytelling at a Multilingual Primary School

Núria Hernández-Castillo and Maria Pujol-Valls (2022). *Research Anthology on Bilingual and Multilingual Education* (pp. 1004-1024).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/fostering-cultural-awareness-through-storytelling-at-a-multilingual-primary-school/292781

Contextualizing Second Language Writing in Literature Courses: Locality of Pedagogy for Innovative Practices

Mir Abdullah Miri and Bui Phu Hung (2021). *Futuristic and Linguistic Perspectives on Teaching Writing to Second Language Students* (pp. 287-306).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/contextualizing-second-language-writing-in-literature-courses/267025

Experiential Metafunctional Analysis of Liu Xijun's "Bei Chou Ge" and Its English Versions

Cheng Huaming (2023). *International Journal of Translation, Interpretation, and Applied Linguistics* (pp. 1-11).

www.irma-international.org/article/experiential-metafunctional-analysis-of-liu-xijuns-bei-chou-ge-and-its-english-versions/316932

In Other Words: What's Happened to Metaphors in the Translation of Political Texts

Yiqing Liu and Caiwen Wang (2021). *International Journal of Translation, Interpretation, and Applied Linguistics* (pp. 16-30).

www.irma-international.org/article/in-other-words/281670

Foundational Processes, Home-School Partnerships, and Culturally Responsive Practices for Dual Language Learners

Kristina M. Howlett and Heather D. Kindall (2018). *Handbook of Research on Pedagogies and Cultural Considerations for Young English Language Learners* (pp. 1-27).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/foundational-processes-home-school-partnerships-and-culturally-responsive-practices-for-dual-language-learners/190971