

Immigrant Pupils and Intercultural Teaching Competencies

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Abstract

Over recent years, within the Spanish context, the existence of foreign pupils has generated new multicultural spaces in classrooms. Thus, we find ourselves with an education system which, in theory, must provide equality and fairness to all pupils, regardless of where they come from, social background, etc. In Andalusia, the number of foreign pupils registered for the academic year 2015/2016 was 89.893, this being one of the Spain's autonomous communities with more students of these characteristics. In this sense, the aim of this study is know the perceptions of secondary school teachers in Andalusia (Spain) regarding what additional competencies teachers of immigrant pupils. To answer this objective, we use a descriptive research model, where the approach for the collection and analysis of data is mixed, i.e. qualitative (in-depth interviews) and quantitative (questionnaires) techniques are used. To validate the content, the “Expert Judgement” technique was used, using a process of selection that is not so common in education research, named “Expert Competency coefficient”, or “K coefficient”. The validity of the construct was conducted through an exploratory factorial analysis, through the principal component extraction method of analysis and a Varimax rotation with Kaiser Normalisation. Internal consistency was verified through Cronbach’s Alpha values. The results show that teachers who work with immigrant pupils have a high level of awareness and strong attitudinal

skills. However, these teachers are clearly limited in terms of knowledge, which leads to a greater lack of abilities and skills.

Keywords: intercultural education, immigrant pupils, secondary education, teaching skills, teacher training.

Introduction

Within a multicultural context, we cannot avoid talking about the new challenges that educational institutions face in trying to find solutions which foster the inclusion of all pupils and which promote a favourable social dynamic for a peaceful coexistence. To make progress in terms of changing attitudes, something that the above requires, we must, on the one hand, understand that migration is a global phenomenon and, on the other hand, create educational initiatives aimed at developing intercultural competencies that foster communication, acceptance and mutual recognition.

For a decade now, it has been believed that intercultural competencies have three dimensions: knowledge, abilities or skills and attitudes. Knowledge refers to being familiar with the characteristics of other cultural groups, such as their productions, value scales, etc. Abilities and skills allow us to interpret other cultures and to learn how to interact with them. Attitudes allow us to accept that there are equally valid cultures apart from our own, which means willingness to question our own values, beliefs, behaviour and accept that they are not the only ones possible or the only ones which are correct (Gosselin & Meixner, 2013).

Raising intercultural awareness is related to knowledge on and the understanding of similarities and differences between the native culture and that of immigrants, including raising awareness on regional and social diversity in both spheres. In addition to objective knowledge, intercultural awareness encompasses raising awareness in the sense that each community is considered from the viewpoint of the other, as they are often characterised by stereotypes.

Lastly, intercultural skills and abilities refer to four competencies: the capacity to be able to establish relations between the culture of origin and the foreign culture; cultural sensitivity and the capacity to use a variety of strategies to establish contact with people from other cultures; the capacity to assume the role of cultural intermediary between the country's native culture and the foreign culture and to resolve conflict situations and cultural misunderstandings; and the capacity to overcome stereotypes (Barros & Kharnásova, 2012). Thus, it has been shown that interculturality involves a profound reflection on the opportunities that cultural diversity offers us, it being an element of fruitful exchange of values and attitudes, breaking down prejudices and opening up avenues for relations and exchanges, creating links and interdependencies between diverse cultural groups that coexist within the same education system (Leiva, 2012; Micó-Cebrián & Cava, 2014).

In this context of coexistence within schools, the figure of the teacher is essential in promoting and developing interculturality, which is why their attitudes, strategies and relations when teaching should reflect their commitment to transform the social and academic context. We are thus talking about a new teacher profile, which involves teachers who are thoughtful and critical in terms of cultural diversity, i.e. a professional individual who is open to dialogue, group deliberation and listening to options which differ from their own. Teacher training has become a fundamental tool in developing intercultural dialogue (Wubbels, Letje & Tartwijk, 2014), promoting the construction of knowledge by teachers themselves in a critical and thoughtful manner (Pinya & Muntaner, 2014; Tarozzi, 2014; Holmes, Bavieri & Ganassin, 2015). Research from the related fields of intercultural research and education suggest that the majority of teachers and teacher education students do not possess the prerequisite attitudes and behaviors required to effect such a change (Cushner, 2011; Cuevas, Contreras, García-Calvo & Pastor, 2014; Lanas, 2014; Cushner & Chang, 2015), and how such training is able to change the activation of stereotypes (Holmes,

Bavieri & Ganassin, 2015). The study of teachers' beliefs and attitudes in terms of awareness of their own values has played a particularly prominent role academic literature (Collinson, 2012; Pinho, 2015), such studies highlighting the prejudices which jeopardize the learning and development of members of immigrant groups (Etxeberria, Murua, Arrieta, Garmendia & Etxeberria, 2016) and which are of particular concern in certain contexts.

Furthermore, studies on the use of a communicative approach by teachers and the prioritisation of communication as representing an efficient means by which to integrate immigrants into their surroundings are also relevant (Chamberlin-Quinlisk & Senyshyn, 2012; Phipps, 2013; Ferri, 2014; Arasaratnam, 2015).

Research into interculturality is currently moving towards a model of inclusive intercultural education, based on the acknowledgement of others with a different and meaningful culture, this supporting an attitude based on dialogue, cooperation and exchange as the basis for mutual cultural and educational enrichment.

Justification of the study and outline of the issue

Over recent years, within the context of Spain's educational system, there has been a constant increase in foreign pupils, particularly from North Africa and Latin America, across all levels of the system. This situation has generated new multicultural spaces in classrooms. Thus, we find ourselves with an education system which, in theory, must provide equality and fairness to all pupils, regardless of where they come from, social background, etc. However, in practice the reality is very different, data showing how our education system is not prepared for the increase in foreign students, despite the fact that in the last four years this number has gone down, and how, in the majority of cases, it does not have sufficiently effective solutions in place (Rosich & López Serentill, 2013; Kaldi, Govaris & Filippatou, 2018). In Andalusia, the number of foreign pupils registered for the academic year 2015/2016 was 89.893, this being one of the Spain's

autonomous communities with more students of these characteristics (Consejería de Educación, 2016).

If we look at non-university education in Spain, in primary education, we may see how, teachers tend not to have any difficulties as there are normally no changes in terms of attitude or method, due to the age and capacity for integration of pupils, problems which arise tend to be resolved (Rincón Verdera & Vallespir Soler, 2010, Martínez-Usarralde, Yanes-Cabrera & LLevot-Calvet, 2016). In fact, problems tend to occur more in compulsory secondary education (Díez Gutiérrez, 2014), which is why this stage in the education system is the subject of our study. In this regard, in the academic year 2015/2016 compulsory secondary education (known by the abbreviation 'ESO' in Spanish) received 28% of all foreign pupils in Andalusia and 28% of all foreign pupils in Spain.

The first reason which justifies our study is that a proportion of secondary school teachers believe the presence of immigrants in their classrooms to be problematic and a source of potential conflict (Sañudo, 2010). There are many teachers who express their inability and frustration in dealing with this reality, this perhaps being due to a lack of training given to prepare them for working in a multicultural context. The majority of teachers who work within the Spanish education system have not been trained to work in a culturally heterogeneous society (Níkleva & Ortega-Martín, 2015). Within the context of training, the development of intercultural competencies refers to a set of teaching strategies which foster the inclusion of immigrant pupils. In addition to the educational problem outlined above, the second justification for our study is related to the financial crisis which is exacerbating Spain's economic situation more and more, and in particular that of Andalusia. As of 2016, the Autonomous Community of Andalusia had an unemployment rate of 28.25% (INE, 2016), this meaning that it is the region with the least work in Spain. The duration and seriousness of the current economic crisis generate, on the one hand,

increasing and more dramatic economic hardship and, on the other hand, a devaluation of human capital. This is undoubtedly intensifying the negative perception prevalent within Andalusian society towards the phenomenon of migration, something brought to light in the 2015 Annual Report of the Permanent Andalusian Observatory for Migration (OPAM). In this regard, processes involving discrimination and social exclusion towards certain groups of immigrants are on the rise and of particular concern to families, schools, town/city councils, institutions, etc. The third justification for this study is the need to tackle the issue of training due to the importance that learning experiences based upon the exercise of human resources and inclusive citizenship currently has. In fact, it is within this framework that we find intercultural competencies (Consejo de Europa, 2008). We must also bear in mind the fact that academic success at school amongst groups which are particularly susceptible to being affected by discriminatory behaviour is a particular concern within Spain's contemporary education system (Zinovyeva, Felgueroso & Vazquez, 2014), as well as the education systems of other countries (Czura, 2018). The last reason which justifies this study is related to teachers as they are the most important factor in the development of an inclusive education system. There continue to be many secondary school teachers who are not sufficiently qualified in order to confront the profound change that the education system needs and thus face the challenge this new model represents. Efforts to improve the teaching competencies of those involved in secondary education must be based on an understanding of the factors which encourage the development of good educational practices.

These aspects highlight the importance of and urgency needed in developing policies which promote interculturality in our society. Thus, aware of this reality, we will analyse the intercultural competencies which teachers in compulsory secondary education have or should have, not only as facilitators or mediators, but also as agents of change.

Purpose and research questions

Based on this context and following studies carried out in other Spanish autonomous communities (Murua-Carton, Etxeberria, Garmendia & Arrieta, 2012), we have put together the following research questions:

RQ1. To what extent are teachers qualified and trained in terms of intercultural competencies?

RQ2. What values do schools foster in terms of the inclusion of immigrant pupils?

RQ3. Do teachers consider the characteristics of immigrant students (language and culture) to encourage the school success of these students?

Method

The main aim of this study is to obtain necessary and sufficient data regarding what additional competencies teachers who work with immigrant pupils within the Autonomous Community of Andalusia (Spain) should have. For this purpose, informants are teachers and coordinators or head teachers of schools.

This research takes the form of a descriptive case-based research study, the collection and analysis of data for which is mixed with both qualitative and quantitative techniques being used. Six public compulsory secondary education (ESO) schools, located in the cities of Granada, Huelva, Jaen and Seville form the subject of this study. Case studies have been selected based on the following criteria: a) they must be schools located in areas with immigrants, b) at these schools, response measures for immigrant pupils (plan for coexistence, arrival plans, support groups, linguistic immersion classrooms, ordinary group support, etc.) must have been identified and outlined.

The first school is located on the outskirts of the city of Granada and is classed by the Education Authority as a priority school. There are 602 pupils here, of which 14% are foreign, a large proportion of these being Rumanian. The second school is located in one of the most deprived neighbourhoods of the city of Granada, where, of 569 pupils, 16% are ethnically gypsy.

The third school is located in the province of Huelva, on the Atlantic coast. Here, there are 876 pupils, of which 22% are of Moroccan origin, and 48 teachers. The fourth school is located in the city of Jaen, in a working-class neighbourhood. It has 472 pupils, of which 17% are foreign, and 31 teachers. The fifth school is in one of the most disadvantaged and deprived areas of the city of Seville. Here, there are 721 pupils, of which 21% are foreign, these coming namely from Morocco, the Sahara, Romania, China, Bolivia and Colombia. This school has 38 teachers. The sixth school is located in a newly built area in the province of Seville (Dos Hermanas). It has 429 secondary students, of which 12% are of foreign origin. The total number of teachers here during the academic year 2015/2016 was 27.

Table 1

Information on the schools.

School	Pupils	Type of pupils		Location	Type of school
		Immigrant	Ethnically Gipsy		
1	602	84	0	Granada	Urban
2	569	0	91	Granada	Urban
3	876	192	8	Huelva	Rural
4	476	80	3	Jaen	Rural
5	721	151	24	Seville	Urban
6	429	51	0	Seville	Rural

Access to the schools was discussed directly with the head teachers, to whom the details were initially presented verbally and in writing. Two techniques for collecting information were used: questionnaires and in-depth interviews.

The Likert scale questionnaire given to teachers is an adaptation of the one used by Murua-Carton, et al. (2012) in pre-school and primary education in Spain's Basque Country. Once adapted and validated, the result was a questionnaire with 40 items spread over 4 sections: awareness, attitude, knowledge and skills and abilities. Here, certain characteristics that teachers who work with immigrant pupils within the context of secondary education must have are described. For each statement, teachers were asked to assess the importance of each one on a scale of one to ten (1 being not developed at all, 2 and 3 being not very developed at all, 4 and 5 being not very developed, 6 and 7 being somewhat developed, 8 and 9 fairly developed, and 10 being very developed). 98 questionnaires were filled out, these being sent to teachers via an online questionnaire tool. The questionnaire may be accessed at the link below:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1bHDqA-tpyLuRKYJFu5PsuAwOvv7Q8kCf52jvNPzvJtw/viewform?embedded=true>

Table 2

Distribution of items by area.

Area	Definition	Items
Awareness	Knowledge that the individual has in terms of his or her actions, his or herself and his or her own thoughts. This area is linked to aspects as diverse as culture, empathy, the ability to listen, the possibility of mutual	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8, 9,10,11

	enrichment between Spanish students and teaching staff and immigrant pupils.	
Attitude	Attitude of mind of each individual. This is related to problems resulting from racist or xenophobic attitudes.	12,13,14,15,16, 17,18,19,20,21
Knowledge	Expertise that an individual has on a given topic. This refers to the degree of information on aspects of native and foreign cultures, knowledge of certain terms in pupils' languages and group work dynamics to enable the integration of new pupils.	22,23,24,25,26, 27,28,29,30
Skills and abilities	The capacity to carry out a particular job. This refers to the ease/difficulty teachers often have when attempting to improve the performance of immigrant students, their ability to integrate into the new culture and their participation when creating spaces for coexistence.	31,32,33,34,35, 36,37,38,38,40

In order to validate the questionnaire (i.e. its content), a group of experts made up of 14 university teaching staff, experts in dealing with diversity, and 8 school teachers with experience in working with immigrant pupils, was chosen. In selecting this group, an "expert competence coefficient" or "K coefficient" was used, this being obtained from the following formula: $K = 1/2 (K_c + K_a)$, where K_c is the "expertise coefficient" or information that the expert possesses on the topic or issue; and K_a is the so-called "argument coefficient" or basis for the criteria of the experts (Cabero & Barroso, 2013). In our case, the K coefficient was greater than 0.8 in 18 of the 22 experts selected, this indicating a very acceptable degree of competency. The evaluations

of the experts were done in successive rounds and were anonymous, with the aim of achieving consensus, but with participants having the greatest autonomy possible (Delphi method).

Figure 1

Example of questions completed by the experts.

<p>Over your career, have you ever given classes/taught material on dealing with student diversity? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p>Have you ever organised or participated in research on multicultural or intercultural aspects of education? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p>Have you ever organised or participated in publications on intercultural education? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p>In the box below, please indicate the extent of your knowledge on the topic of immigrant pupils.</p>											
0									10		

The reliability of the questionnaire was calculated using Cronbach's alpha coefficient (O'Dwyer & Bernauer, 2014), whereby fairly high values were obtained overall (0.892). As regards the subscales that made it up the reliability rates found were high: Attitude (0.898), Awareness (0.895), Knowledge (0.890), Skills and abilities (0.888), because it is located in the range from 0.8 to 1. This values could be considered "very high". In order to analyze the dimension of the instrument, an exploratory factor analysis was carried out, through the analysis extraction method and a Varimax rotation with Kaiser Normalisation (Pardo Merino, 2002). The results found lead us to point out that the items are grouped into the four factors that had been foreseen. In order to analyse the data, SPSS 17 was used.

Regarding the in-depth interviews, we should state that those interviewed were selected based on criteria related to "significance" or in other words, the relevance of the individuals based on

how they fit in with the aims of the research and the group it deals with. Our key informants come from the six schools which form the subject of this study, namely: 12 members from the management teams, 6 counsellors and 6 teachers who specialise in education integration support. In terms of the handling and analysis of data, we opted for categorisation, using Nudist Vivo 7.0, a software that enables the qualitative analysis of data.

Figure 2

Guidelines for in-depth interviews with key informants.

Aim: To find out about the opinions of secondary school head teachers and members of management teams on intercultural competencies.

How long have you been a head teacher for?

How long have you been in teaching?

If I say "intercultural competencies", what is the first thing that comes to mind? What does the concept "intercultural competencies" refer to? Why?

Nowadays, what benefits do you think are achieved when teachers acquire intercultural competencies? Why?

On a personal level, do you consider yourself to have intercultural skills?

Is the Plan for Coexistence being implemented without any problems at your school?

Do you believe the implementation of the Plan for Coexistence amongst these kinds of pupils to be a priority?

Does the management team promote the Plan and provide teachers with incentives?

How is it promoted?

What are the main obstacles in implementing the Plan?

I'm going to list a number of qualities: initiative, autonomy, dialogue, tolerance, responsibility; respect towards others, cooperation, empathy, trust in others, open mindedness, pluralism, etc.

Which of these do you consider to be the most important for teachers when working with immigrant pupils? Why?

What intercultural abilities or competencies are not present or not very well developed and need to be strengthened?

Do these kinds of pupils tend to pose new challenges in terms of inclusion?

Do teachers request information regarding specific topics on intercultural competencies?

How do you envisage teacher training in an ever more multicultural society?

And lastly, would you like to add anything else?

Main results

The results presented in this section are descriptive and attempt to summarise informants' perceptions on the topics put forward. Based on studies by Pajares (1992), we take perceptions to be a concept that encompasses the beliefs, opinions and considerations of individuals in their respective teaching-learning contexts. We have based our study on the perceptions and opinions of the informants and will attempt to reflect upon the initial encounters involved in this research.

Questionnaire

Amongst the secondary school teachers who completed questionnaires, 63% were men and 37% women. Moreover, 58% teach pupils within the first cycle of secondary education and 42% pupils within the second cycle of secondary education. In terms of their contractual situations, 45% are public employees, 20% are temporary staff and 35% have contracts. Regarding experience, 30% have between 11 and 15 years of experience, 45% between 15

and 25 years of experience, 9% between 5 and 10 years of experience and 16% have more than 25 years of experience.

Table 3

Classification of intercultural competencies in order of average scores obtained in the questionnaire.

Teachers must	Average (A)	Standard deviation (SD)	Asymmetry
Try to rid the school of any signs of racism or xenophobia.	8.98	1.844	0.027
Be aware of the need of putting oneself in the shoes of a person from another culture in order to understand him or her.	8.64	2.010	0.029
Be aware of how relations between those from different cultures are enriching.	8.28	2.102	0.036
Be aware of the needs of immigrants upon their arrival at schools.	8.24	2.135	0.030
Be aware of the values, attitudes, traditions, beliefs and customs of the culture.	8.23	1.956	0.041
Be capable of creating an atmosphere of coexistence, based on mutual respect and solidarity amongst pupils.	8.22	2.098	0.033

Be aware of the importance of setting an example when incidents arise due to differences.	8.14	1.976	0.052
Be aware of the fact that stereotypes can affect self-esteem and self-concept.	8.14	2.015	0.031
Take on an active role in avoiding conflicts which arise at school due to cultural reasons.	7.98	2.048	0.134
Be aware of the consequences of racist and xenophobic attitudes.	7.83	2.173	0.198
Be aware of the influence of multilingualism in educational development.	7.65	2.099	0.245
Be capable of analysing needs associated with intercultural coexistence at school.	7.53	2.117	0.243
Be capable of improving performance amongst immigrant pupils in the language(s) used at the school.	7.52	1.998	0.202
Foster academic achievement amongst immigrant pupils.	7.50	2.047	0.478
Be prepared to work towards overcoming resistance which arises in terms of the coexistence of cultures.	7.42	2.056	0.401
Accept changes in the nature of their work as a result of the arrival of immigrant pupils.	7.21	2.119	0.465

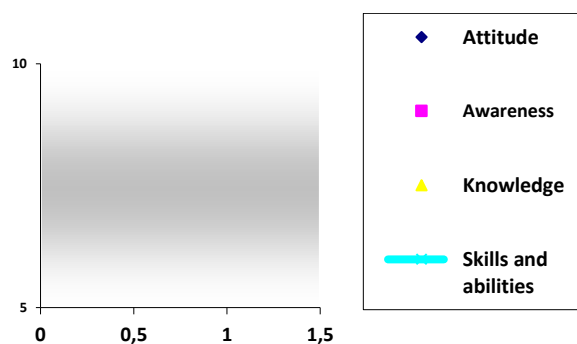
Be capable of reflecting upon and evaluating initiatives they have developed to bring about improvement.	7.13	2.201	0.501
Be aware of the influence the culture of origin has on immigrant groups.	7.11	2.048	0.476
Have information on the country of origin (education, politics, art, religion, etc.) in order to work effectively with immigrant pupils.	6.98	1.967	0.487
Be aware of the importance a language has within a culture.	6.94	2.058	0.409
Design and implement new learning experiences which acknowledge cultural diversity as a part of the curriculum.	6.93	2.254	0.576
Be familiar with some words and expressions in foreign pupils' native languages in order to make communication easier.	6.88	2.276	0.477
Be aware of cultural limitations.	6.83	2.189	0.424
Be aware of the influence of their own culture.	6.83	2.201	0.421
Be aware of the need to work together with other professionals in dealing with intercultural issues.	6.80	1.926	0.523
Organise activities which enrich the coexistence of different cultures.	6.80	2.273	0.487
Be aware of the need to listen openly.	6.76	1.899	0.511

Be aware of the obstacles which arise when including practices from other cultures in the running of schools (calendar, timetables, school dinners, languages, attire, etc.).	6.73	2.089	0.574
Encourage contact with immigrant families and associations in order to gain a better understanding of situations which may arise at school.	6.72	2.043	0.634
Be capable of obtaining information on a particular culture.	6.71	2.170	0.602
Be familiar with group dynamics that foster the coexistence of cultures.	6.70	2.215	0.598
Be prepared to work towards creating and implementing specific plans and programmes for integrating immigrant pupils.	6.70	2.064	0.488
Be prepared to work with immigrants outside the school setting.	6.70	2.087	0.634
Be capable of asking for advice from spiritual leaders from within pupils' communities.	6.67	1.988	0.532
Adapt human and material resources in order to improve educational practices used with immigrant pupils.	6.60	2.283	0.602

Create spaces where and moments when immigrant pupils can practice their native languages.	6.48	2.178	0.624
Be aware of the impact that their way of communicating has on pupils.	5.97	2.143	0.633
Be aware of the fact that misunderstandings may arise when persons from different cultures interact.	5.93	1.991	0.601
Have an understanding of certain cultural elements (verbal and non-verbal) in order to enrich intercultural relations.	5.94	2.299	0.628
Be able to appropriately send and receive verbal and non-verbal messages.	5.78	2.201	0.630

Graph 1

Average score for each area



In Graph 1, we can see that the averages for the four areas are above the mean value (7.17), except for skills and abilities (6.95). In this regard, we may state that the data obtained

overall clearly shows that teachers who work with immigrant pupils are aware of the work they carry out, showing positive attitudes towards pupil diversity and possessing knowledge on this group of pupils. The greatest problems are clearly those connected to skills and abilities and knowledge.

As shown in Table 3, teachers who work with immigrant pupils believe, above all, that they must get rid of any signs of racism or xenophobia (A: 8.98; SD: 1.844). This item has the lowest value of standard deviation, which reflects the low dispersion of answers. This is followed by the ability to empathise, i.e. "to be aware of the need of putting oneself in the shoes of a person from another culture in order to understand him or her" (A: 8.64; SD: 2.010).

Possible difficulties or obstacles may arise when assessing knowledge and skills which teachers must possess, hence of six items which belong to the knowledge group, the following are below the mean value of the items (7.17): "Have information on the country of origin (education, politics, art religion, etc.) in order to work effectively with immigrant pupils" (A: 6.98; SD: 1.967); "Be familiar with some words and expressions in foreign pupils' native languages in order to make communication easier." (A: 6.88; SD: 2.276); "Be aware of cultural limitations" (A: 6.83; SD: 2.189); "Be aware of the obstacles which arise when including practices from other cultures in the running of schools (calendar, timetables, school dinners, languages, attire, etc.)." (A: 6.73; SD: 2.089); "Be familiar with group dynamics that foster the coexistence of cultures." (A: 6.70; SD: 2.215); "Have an understanding of certain cultural elements (verbal and non-verbal) in order to enrich intercultural relations." (A: 5.94; SD: 2.299).

However, the majority of obstacles present themselves within the area of *skills and abilities*. In this regard, we should mention that nine items are below the mean value of the items (7.17), namely: "Be capable of reflecting upon and evaluating initiatives they have developed to bring about improvement." (A: 7.13; SD: 2.201); "Design and implement new learning experiences

which acknowledge cultural diversity as a part of the curriculum." (A: 6.93; SD: 2.254); "Be capable of obtaining information on a particular culture." (A: 6.71; SD: 2.170); "Be capable of asking for advice from spiritual leaders from within pupils' communities." (A: 6.67; SD: 1.988); "Adapt human and material resources in order to improve educational practices used with immigrant pupils." (A: 6.60; SD: 2.283); "Create spaces where and moments when immigrant pupils can practice their native languages." (A: 6.48; SD: 2.178) and "Be capable of appropriately sending and receiving verbal and non-verbal messages" (A: 5.78; SD: 2.201).

Based on these results, we may clearly detect two kinds of problems which teachers face. On the one hand, we must highlight the lack of importance teachers place on knowledge regarding verbal communication, this possibly impacting upon on the creation of spaces where these individuals have spaces where and moments when they may practice their native languages. On the other hand, we see the importance placed on the capacity for reflection and evaluation with the aim of bringing about improvement (7.13), this impacting upon the capacity to analyse needs related to intercultural coexistence (7.53) and therefore the improvement in performance amongst these pupils (7.52).

In terms of the level of *awareness* presented by teachers, we must point out that, in spite of the fact that only four items are above the mean value of the items, these are placed in the first 8 positions: "Be aware of the need of putting oneself in the shoes of a person from another culture in order to understand him or her." (A: 8.64; SD: 2.010); "Be aware of how relations between those from different culture are enriching." (A: 8.28; SD: 2.102); "Be aware of the importance of setting an example when incidents arise due to differences." (A: 8.14; SD: 1.976) and "Be aware of the fact that stereotypes can affect self-esteem and self-concept." (A: 8.14; SD: 2.015).

In terms of the *attitudes of teachers*, we see that five of the nine items in this area are above average and have very satisfactory scores, as is the case with "Try to rid the school of any signs of

racism or xenophobia." (A: 8.98, SD: 1.844), which is in first place. After this come: "Take on an active role in avoiding conflicts which arise at school due to cultural reasons." (A: 7.98; SD: 2.048); "Foster academic achievement amongst immigrant pupils" (A: 7.50; SD: 2.047); "Be prepared to work towards overcoming resistance which arises in terms of the coexistence of cultures." (A: 7.42; SD: 2.056); "Accept changes in the nature of their work as a result of the arrival of immigrant pupils." (A: 7.21; SD: 2.119). In terms of less valued items, we find "Be prepared to work with immigrants outside the school setting." (A: 6.70; SD: 2.087), as well as "Be prepared to work towards creating and implementing specific plans and programmes for integrating immigrant pupils." (A: 6.70; SD: 2.064). We may also highlight the item "Encourage contact with immigrant families and associations in order to gain a better understanding of the situations which may arise at school." (A: 6.72; SD: 2.043), with an average below our reference values.

Interviews

The interviews focused on four main areas: teacher training, the needs of immigrant pupils, resources and teacher competencies within the area of interculturality. The analysis of the interviews confirms and expands upon results obtained in other research (Murua-Carton, et al., 2012; Díez Gutiérrez, 2014). In terms of the first area, those interviewed believe that teachers have moderate training on diversity, particularly regarding immigrant pupils. They state that such training is a result of their own initiative, with them requesting courses and seminars through the school's management team.

“**INT3:** Immigration took us by surprise. We were not prepared for these kinds of pupils. In fact, at the beginning a number of teachers suffered from stress due to the situation. They did not know how to react.”

“**INT9:** During this time we had to tackle the situation head on. Most of us did not receive any training on this in our initial training. This was completely unknown territory for us. What I'm really referring to is pupils who speak a different language.”

A large percentage of teachers are aware of the needs of immigrant pupils and try to make an effort to integrate and include them successfully at their schools.

“**INT6:** As a head teacher, I often put myself in the shoes of students. Teachers at my school are aware of the need to integrate them and avoid problems in terms of coexistence. Here, we are very aware of the issue, shown by the fact that we are in constant contact with the families, as well as by the specific diversity measures we have in place.”

This raising of awareness amongst teachers brings with it a series of attitudes which encourage diversity and in most cases contribute to fostering an atmosphere that promotes coexistence. That said, there are cases where, due to lack of training, teachers are helpless. One reason for this is the lack of teaching support staff.

Regarding the needs of immigrant pupils, it is important to state that those interviewed clearly emphasise the "problems" that these kinds of pupils represent for teaching staff and the running of the school as a whole. They believe that immigrant pupils and their characteristics pose a problem in terms of the smooth running of the teaching and learning process and, in some cases, even impact upon coexistence. Among the problems most felt, those interviewed mention immigrant pupils lagging behind in terms of the curriculum and, in some cases, them not speaking the official language in which teaching is given, this thus representing a significant obstacle to their inclusion.

“**INT9:** The fact that some immigrant pupils do not speak our language means they have problems integrating. Many of them thus become more and more isolated, even arriving at self-marginalisation in some cases. This is one of the main problems.”

“**INT6:** Students who speak a language other than ours pose a major problem for us. We don't have the means or resources to deal with this. It is obvious that if we do not meet a pupil's needs, he or she will not feel supported and this will be a constant source of conflict. The Education Authority must take note of this. Our problem has nothing to do with material resources, but with human resources.”

Amongst those interviewed, there is a general feeling of not being supported by the Education Authority. The majority of head teachers interviewed agree that the Education Authority cannot do any more, mainly in the area of intercultural training, in order to respond to the major challenge that multiculturalism presents, as well as the problems that cultural diversity generates, both for teachers, pupils and schools. Thus, the Education Authority must optimise and provide schools with the means to develop plans for accommodating foreign pupils and legislate on a figure in charge of intercultural matters. Moreover, particular emphasis is placed on the development of special protocols for immigrant pupils, which make the process of registration at schools easier.

“**INT10:** These families tend to have many problems when registering their children as, in the majority of cases, they are not familiar with the process or official language. This means they have problems applying for grants for school dinners and study grants. This is a major problem that the Educational Authority must solve.”

Regarding the area of teaching competencies, those interviewed mention the importance of having a positive attitude towards immigrant pupils. In this regard, they mention a strong adhesion to values as a core requisite for the mediation of educational processes for these students, such values being associated with social competencies (understanding, friendship, respect, responsibility, etc.).

“**INT6:** In order to teach in such contexts of diversity, the presence of teachers with social values is necessary. These include tolerance, instead of discrimination, understanding different

points of view, etc. Rather than talk about intercultural competencies, I prefer to talk about values...”

Those interviewed believe that inclusion requires consistent teaching staff, i.e. those who stick to their principles and beliefs, believe in what they are doing and what needs to be done, and spread values. In this regard, great emphasis is placed on the development of ethical competencies as a way of fostering values, an essential aspect which must be present in all teacher training.

Discussion and conclusions

The conclusions derived from the previous data, and with regards to the research questions, reveal the following aspects:

RQ1. Teachers have a high level in the areas of awareness and attitude, regarding the work they carry out in their respective schools. However, they appear to be clearly restricted in terms of knowledge, which means a greater lacking in skills and abilities. This aspect confirms a certain lack of training amongst teachers who work with these kinds of pupils. In spite of this, teachers display a very positive attitude towards their work. These aspects coincide with other studies, such as those by Murua-Carton et al. (2012) which look at primary school teachers. However, teachers do not consider themselves sufficiently trained in terms of intercultural competencies, but instead feel they successfully carry out their work due to the development of teaching strategies which are a result of their own initiative.

RQ2. The second conclusion focuses on the model of inclusive education which the management teams studied give particular importance to, with particular emphasis being given to the importance of being committed to social justice and the fight for equality and fairness (Dijksterhuis, 2010; Jackson, 2011). The values fostered at the schools studied emphasise the social component, incorporating moral and emotional spheres into processes, but without

compromising the effectiveness of these or the results obtained (Micó-Cebrián & Cava, 2014). This more human and creative focus better meets the current needs of immigrant pupils, focusing on the development of ethical competencies which bring about new values, breaking down prejudices and creating new spaces for relations and exchanges (Leiva, 2012).

RQ3. The third conclusion suggests that the Education Authority does not encourage that native languages be maintained and used and that teaching staff do not include them in their teaching practices. Of the schools studied, none have adopted any specific strategy which puts emphasis on the native languages and cultures of immigrant or minority pupils, the reason behind this being to avoid the learning of the second language from jeopardising their native language and family identity. Communication problems caused by not knowing the language of the host country and the (almost always traumatic) experience of immigrating and uprooting are particularly highlighted. Teachers display a great interest in foreign children learning Spanish as quickly as possible so they may participate in classroom activities which are based on a particular culture (i.e. Spanish customs, values, traditions, language, etc.). These findings coincide with other studies carried out in Spain (Barros & Kharnásova, 2012).

Generally speaking, we may say that the phenomenon of immigration in the context of Andalusia has great relevance, as teachers and key informants who completed the questionnaire and took part in our interviews show.

Statements on open data, ethics and conflict of interest

The data described in this article contains no personal, or personally identifiable information and are not accessible to other researchers as per written agreement with participants and ethical approval. There is no conflict of interest regarding this work.

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