

Document downloaded from the institutional repository of the University of Alcalá: <http://ebuah.uah.es/dspace/>

This is a postprint version of the following published document:

Pena Díaz, C. (2019) Child language brokering: challenges in Spanish intercultural education, *Intercultural Education*, 30:4, 368-382, DOI: 10.1080/14675986.2018.1540107

Available at <https://doi.org/10.1080/14675986.2018.1540107>

© 2019 Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group

*(Article begins on next page)*



This work is licensed under a

Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives  
4.0 International License.

# CHILD LANGUAGE BROKERING: CHALLENGES IN SPANISH INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION

## 1. Introduction

The number of students of foreign origin in Spain increased ten-fold between the years 1998 and 2010, reaching 429,643 in compulsory education (from 6 to 16 years old) for the 2016-2017 school year. The presence of foreign students in the classroom has thus become a reality in Spanish schools and adequate tools must be designed to meet the challenges this presents. As in the rest of the European Union, Spanish intercultural education policies have been implemented (CIDREE, 2002: 14); however, hardly any state help is provided towards implementing these policies.

One of the main issues of multicultural diversity in educational contexts is that a large number of immigrant students have limited or no language Spanish skills, and their family, who are often in the same position, cannot usually provide language or teaching support. Due to language and cultural barriers, teachers cannot communicate with these students and their families resulting in them being deprived of the opportunities they are entitled to; therefore, this should be a priority for educational authorities. If no measures are taken to create bridges between families and educators, then there is no communication between them and generally, these children find themselves acting as interpreters and translators for their own family and their own issues, thus becoming child language brokers (CLB).

This paper aims to provide the results of qualitative research on two primary schools with a large number of immigrant students in Madrid, Spain, in order to study how they integrate minorities, identify their difficulties and find solutions for them, and whether these children have to act as language brokers in the absence of other interpreting measures.

## 2. Theoretical Background

### 2.1 Multicultural classrooms in Spain

In Spain, educational policies have not included much information on practical measures such as the type of approach schools with multicultural students should adopt. In fact, in the last two legal education acts, the terms ‘intercultural’ or ‘multicultural’ rarely appear (none in the last education act, LOMCE and only three times in the previous act, LOGSE), and not much attention has been given in those legal education acts to multicultural students. Not only theoretically has little attention been paid to multiculturalism as the term has not even been included in any national legal texts, but also in terms of funding, as social policies have been frozen or cut (following the global financial crisis, social welfare cuts were introduced and the few programmes designed for public education have been frozen). We are thus faced with an intercultural education model with no specific funding attached to it where the education of immigrant children from non Spanish speaking countries is left to each particular school or teacher’s idea and knowledge of interculturality. Not having specific linguistic support for families, there is usually not much room for communication to take place between families and schools other than friends or family acting as *ad hoc* interpreters or, specially, using the children to act as communication brokers.

Immigrant children tend to acquire Spanish relatively soon after their arrival, however, their families are normally left out of school activities and information as they mostly do not speak Spanish. We think that intercultural education as a means of integrating immigrants in the host context should incorporate families, as well as children, as they would help identify problems and difficulties which may arise (Rahona López, M. & Morales Sequera, S., 2013: 89).

## **2.2. Difficulties in the Multicultural Classroom**

Multicultural classrooms pose enriching challenges for teachers; however, conflicts tend to arise due to the many difficulties which they have to respond to and resolve. As has been noted, a very frequent difficulty which is present when trying to reach the goals of intercultural education is that most students do not speak the host language, which is essential for school integration and academic success. There are two main approaches to deal with this; children can receive their education in the host language with extra reinforcement, or children can receive their education in the host language, but also using their own language when possible. Before 2008, the main solution for children who did not speak Spanish was for them to receive extra reinforcement in the host language. Nowadays, as most *aulas de enlace*<sup>1</sup> have been reduced, in some *Comunidades Autónomas* (administrative-geographical regions in Spain) shut down, teachers are left to deal with this situation, without specific training in most cases.

Children who tend to become proficient in a new language and to adapt to a new culture more quickly (Weisskirch and Alva 2002), are asked to take on the role of language and cultural mediators and to translate for their parents, relatives, friends and members of their linguistic community in different domains, such as schools, hospitals, etc. (Buriel *et al.*, 1998; Hall and Sham, 1998; McQuillan and Tse, 1995; Orellana, 2009; Valdés, 2003; Weisskirch and Alva, 2002), thus becoming language brokers and expected to act as adult, professional linguistic and cultural mediators.

## **2.3. Child Language Brokering**

Children acting as mediators between an institution and their families are defined as CLB (Bucaria and Rossato, 2010; Hall and Sham, 2007; Orellana, 2009). Bauer (2006: 24) indicates that the term “language brokering” was first coined by anthropologists to describe the activities of individuals who connect local and national worlds through “cultural brokering”. Thus, child language brokering refers to the children of migrants who interpret and translate for their parents, constructing versions of the new world for them (Hall and Sham, 2007: 4). Most authors state that CLB can be stressful and burdensome for children (Hall and Sham, 2007; Weisskirch and Alva, 2002; Wu and Kim, 2009), putting children at risk of academic failure, or limiting the child’s opportunities because their families expect them to continue brokering (Morales and Hanson, 2005: 494). Other authors report positive arguments stating that CLB facilitates strong parent-child bonds (Chao, 2006; DeMent and Buriel, 1999); and that children use their position of power in language brokering to protect their parents’ dignity and welfare (Orellana *et al.*, 2003; Valdés *et al.*, 2003). In developmental terms, the child is seen as exposed to adult knowledge prematurely, assuming adult roles and responsibilities (Burton, 2007).

CLB is a widespread phenomenon in Southern European countries where it often replaces PSIT. As opposed to other countries such as the UK, Sweden or Australia, which have a longer history of mass immigration and supply migrants with interpreting and translation services in a variety of languages and in most public offices and institutions, in Southern and Eastern European countries, when immigrants need to communicate with a public officer or a doctor, they normally have to resort to an *ad-hoc* non-professional linguistic mediator, who is a person belonging to their linguistic community and fluent in the language of the host country.

---

<sup>1</sup> *Aulas de enlace* are language classes designed to help non native Spanish students to acquire the minimum level to be able to follow lessons in the host language.

One of the most negative consequences is the responsibility placed on children, which may prove stressful and excessive, and some scholars have recommended that children should never act as mediators in the school context (Linse, 2011). Another aspect to note is that in this type of context, a student's interests and those of his/her family may not match. A child may also feel very uncomfortable having to interpret family issues for his/her teacher. However, the main issue, from a professional standpoint, is whether CLB can be considered a reliable interpretation as interpreting requires specific techniques and skills which are not inherent to multilingual speakers, bilingual or not (Pena-Díaz, 2016a: 79).

## **2.4. CLB in Spain**

In Spain, the current legal standard on nationality is the *Jus sanguinis*; citizenship is not determined by place of birth but by having one or both parents who are citizens of the state (CIDE, Ministry of Education and Science, 2005: 33). Therefore, children who are born, schooled in Spain, and learn the native language, may still legally be considered immigrants. From the early 2000s onwards, the number of foreign student began to increase sharply, from 80,587 foreign students enrolled in the academic year 1998-99 to 449,936 in 2004-05. However, due to the consequences of the present financial crisis, this number has dropped because many immigrant families have chosen to leave the country. In terms of their country of origin, in the 2010-11 academic year 65% of international school pupils were from South and Central America and Africa. For Latin Americans, the insertion into a Spanish school is not usually linguistically problematic (although miscommunications can also occur within the same language as cultural differences are not always adequately understood, Pena-Díaz, 2016b), but difficulties may arise related to their socio-economic reality and their previous schooling. However, the integration of African origin students, who constitute 24% of all foreign students, proves to be more complicated because of linguistic, cultural discrepancies (including food), and sometimes, not having received a 'standardised schooling in their countries of origin' (European Commission Report 2013: 34). The third largest group consists of children from other European countries (19.1%), followed by Asians (6.3%). Immigrants from Morocco constitute the highest number of individuals from a single country, followed by Ecuadorian nationals, and thirdly students of Romanian origin.

There is little literature devoted to CLB in Spain, indeed, as Antonini (2010) states, 'research on CLB has been generally based on descriptive and US-based studies, carried out for the most part among Spanish-speaking communities. The study of CLB in Europe began in the late 1990s and, until very recently, was exclusively UK-based.' There have been a few studies on CLB carried out in Spain, although García Sánchez (2014) examined how Moroccan immigrant children in a rural Spanish community are involved and cope with the cultural and linguistic mediation activities that they perform on a daily basis in different settings and venues. She found that rigid citizenship laws that consider immigrant children as non-Spanish nationals, but with the same rights and access to social privileges, constitute paradoxical exclusionary/inclusionary forces for Moroccan children, resulting in the othering of Moroccan children.

## **3. Qualitative Research**

### **3.1. Methodology**

Surveys and semi-structured interviews were conducted in order to examine the situation in two primary schools with a large percentage of immigrant children (mainly from Morocco, Romania, China and Latin American countries) in Southern districts of Madrid. The main aim was to find out whether children were acting as CLB, and if so, to what extent. Although we did not really expect many other measures to be taken, we also wanted to identify if there were others, and hence questions about PSIT (professional interpreters) and other resources were included. Sixty primary school teachers from

two schools (one in Parla and another in Leganés) were sent surveys by email, as this was the most convenient and effective way of carrying out the research, and 30 responses were collected. The survey consisted of nine questions, seven of which were open and two were closed. All the questions required an objective response, based on actual data, but two sought to obtain the personal opinions of the participants.

Six interviews were also carried out with participants who put themselves forward for interview, and although questions were formulated to guide the conversation, at the same time the participants were able to answer freely, thereby providing additional information. All the interviews were recorded and took place at the participants' workplace. The participants included two orientation teachers, who are responsible for collaborating with the school system in the management of linguistic and cultural barriers that arise when receiving foreign students and their families, while two other participants were teachers who deal with a large number of immigrant children. In addition, a PSIT, a member of a support service established by the Community of Madrid, and a worker from another government funded service in Madrid whose aim is to facilitate the acquisition of language for immigrant students who do not speak Spanish, were also interviewed.

## **3.2. Analysis**

### **3.2.1. Surveys**

The first question asked school staff from the Southern districts in Madrid whether there were immigrant students at their school, and if so what was their nationality. As the schools selected for this survey have a large immigrant population, all of the answers stated that they did, with over 20 different nationalities of students, including from Europe (Romania, followed by Poland and Bulgaria), the African continent (mostly from Morocco, followed by sub-Saharan African countries), from Latin America (especially Ecuador, but also Bolivia, the Dominican Republic and Colombia), and from Asia (China). The highest number of immigrant students came from Ecuador, Romania and Morocco. This data concurs with the official statistics regarding the presence of foreign students in Spain as discussed earlier. Taking this into account, authorities should include measures regarding those specific communities which are bound to need linguistic assistance, such as the Romanian and Moroccan. The *Master's Degree in Intercultural Communication, Public Service Interpreting and Translation* from the University of Alcalá in Madrid offers yearly courses designed to train linguistic and cultural mediators specifically trained to help these communities. In that programme are included different internships by which educational authorities could have, if not professional interpreters who would require payment, access to students who could help in different schools in the region.

The second question aimed to determine if these children spoke Spanish, as well as their general level. Out of the 30 respondents, twelve stated that the level varied according to the age that students arrive in Spain and the nationality of their origin, and four participants answered that the younger the children, the faster they acquired Spanish. Eight participants responded that students of Romanian origin acquired the language sooner than those who came from a Chinese or African background. Twelve participants responded that students enrolled in their schools had a good level of Spanish, although four specified that this situation was due to them having been born in Spain. Four other participants only had Latin American students, and therefore language is not a barrier for them; however, from a cultural point of view, two of these four respondents argued that they perceived slight differences in comparison with Spanish students. Six teachers stated that they normally had two or three students who did not speak any Spanish. In this regard, two of these six respondents revealed that the language skills of students arriving in Spain and being reunified with their family are usually at a slightly higher level than those of their peers who have arrived at the same time as their families. From this data, we can confirm that linguistic measure need to be taken, as there is in fact a large number of students who do not speak or understand Spanish. Children are bound to learn the host language in a relatively short period of time,

however, their families probably will not and thus need help to bridge communication problems with their children's educators. Different problems also take place depending on the home community and they should also be catered for.

The aim of the third question was to investigate the methods and resources available at schools to communicate with students who do not speak any Spanish. Out of the 30 participants who participated in the survey, 24 had language support methods, although only four of the participants explicitly mentioned these resources and the available funds, commenting that they thought these resources were insufficient. Twelve respondents answered that language reinforcement was based on additional Spanish lessons, while four others revealed a lack of teacher training concerning linguistic support, since the cuts in education have led to a reduction in staff for this activity, and therefore fewer hours were dedicated to this task. Seven teachers mentioned the '*aulas de enlace*', centres in which Spanish is taught to foreign students before joining the educational system; however, they no longer exist. Once again, this proves that there are not enough resources available for schools to deal with communication barriers with students and their families.

The fourth question asked whether the school they worked at had ever asked for linguistic mediators and/or cultural mediators to facilitate communication with students and immigrant families who do not speak Spanish. According to the results, 15 participants said they had, whilst eight stated that their school had never asked for external help of this type. Out of this latter group, one participant stated that they should have asked for help, in particular with a Chinese family with whom they could not communicate, and thus the school used the interpretation of a five year old girl. Others mentioned the use of ad hoc interpreters (other family members). Out of the group who had asked for assistance, 12 respondents claimed to have used a linguistic mediator. They were all satisfied with the work undertaken by the professionals, although six respondents commented that this service was not that efficient, as in most cases interventions took a long time to arrive and they could not respond to all the communication needs that arise every day in school. Although this measure was not sufficient, it was well perceived. In general, intercultural and interlinguistic mediators are perceived as a positive action. It may not be able to solve all problems but it is a measure which can help in difficult cases and can avoid child language brokering occurring as frequently as it does.

The fifth question was concerned with communication with the families of immigrant pupils and these students acting as interpreters between their family and teachers. According to the responses, all 30 participants noted that this phenomenon occurs in their schools. More specifically, 14 answered that it happens very often, two respondents answered that it is not uncommon, and 10 respondents indicated that the situation occurs every once in a while. In addition, four participants stated that at their school they use other students of the same nationality and other families. This data proves that CLB is an everyday phenomena in Spanish education contexts. In fact, it is the only measure which seems to have been implemented at a general level by schools.

The sixth question asked whether they had designed a plan to support the integration of immigrant students into their school, and twelve participants stated that there was linguistic help for foreign students, such as individual Spanish tutoring. The remainder of the participants claimed there were no extra language classes available in their schools. More specifically, they mentioned that this resource had been present in the past but not currently. It is interesting to note that half of the respondents stated that students who do not speak Spanish were normally included in groups where learning disability students were placed. Eleven respondents stated that their school had projects to help the integration of immigrant pupils, including intercultural lessons that attempt to make Spanish students more aware of the culture of the foreign students. However, this is normally done on an individual basis, leaving it to the tutor who is responsible for promoting the values of multiculturalism in the classroom. Two teachers noted that both types of language support and knowledge of foreign cultures had been developed in previous years but are no longer available. The practice of linguistic

support seems to have been cut to a minimum and schools cannot count on it anymore. Even when it did take place, it does not have positive evaluation, as teachers think of these classes as ghettos for immigrant schoolchildren.

The seventh question asked who was responsible for translating past school records of immigrant students and 14 respondents did not provide an answer. In contrast, 16 respondents said no one translated documents at their school, but that the administration does try to understand the documents. The remaining teachers answered that it is the Ministry of Education who is responsible for this. Specifically, four teachers answered that students from Ukraine, Russia, Romania and North Africa bring their documents translated by a sworn translator and the administrative procedure is carried out by their embassies or consulates.

The eighth question aimed to find out if the teachers had ever had immigrant students who could not read or write, and 22 respondents answered positively to this question. With regards to the measures taken, 20 claimed that language support was activated to help these students *“as if they were small children”* (quote from one of the participants). It should also be noted that of the total 20 respondents, eight thought that such students should have a specific teacher to help them, while six participants claimed that there is no specialised personnel in charge of the education of these students. Another respondent stated that teachers do their best at an individual level without help from educational authorities or external funding. In most cases, these students are sent to learning disability groups. Once again, when measures are taken to help schools, they are not carried out in the best way and satisfaction is only limited. Further training is needed both for teachers and school personnel and also authorities.

The ninth question asked how they thought the issue of communication problems could be solved by communication for students and immigrant families who do not know the host language. Eighteen participants proposed as a solution the implementation of specialised personnel and more resources for those students with a significant curricular delay. Eight participants were in favour of establishing an interpreting service or language mediators to resolve communication difficulties between the two parties. In particular, one respondent stated that there should be interpretation services provided by regional authorities, and another teacher said that there should be a group of interpreters/cultural mediators who provide their services in different schools depending on the need. Eight respondents said they would be happy if they had the resources they used to have before the economic crisis. Other answers included the need for greater stability of the Spanish education law, particularly regards to the support measures for students with special needs, as legislative changes are frequent and this does not facilitate the adoption of stable and consistent actions. Another teacher thought that it is the responsibility of the families to seek help in order to communicate with the school and not vice versa. As we can see, there are different perspectives and thoughts about how non-Spanish speaking children should be dealt with. This implies a lack in training by educators.

### **3.2.2. Interviews**

The participants who took part in the interviews were two orientation teachers, two teachers who deal with a large number of immigrant children, one PSIT, and a worker from a service whose aim is to facilitate the acquisition of language by immigrant students who do not know Spanish. None of the other teachers wanted to participate. The purpose of interviewing the two participants was to gain outsiders' (regarding schools) view of the situation. It should be noted that all the participants mentioned the substantial cuts that have been imposed at this particular historical moment to social and educational services. In fact, after this significant reduction in funds (the exact amount is very difficult to establish but a 23% is estimated), schools no longer have sufficient financial resources to fund the translation and interpretation service that used to be provided.

The interviewed teachers frequently experienced having immigrant students with difficulties communicating in Spanish. They reported that they had not had institutional help in recent years and that they had consequently had to deal with this situation as best as they could. One of them explained that she grouped children of the same nationality in the same work groups, and thus they all helped each other with language problems, while others managed to communicate using drawings and gestures. The teachers found it very difficult but also reported the incredible capacity of children to adapt and learn Spanish before the school year was over. The biggest difficulty was found in integrating some of these students, as they sometimes had discipline problems which could not really be handled by speaking to them. Communication with families was a problem for all of them, especially the orientation teachers who very often felt that there was no communication whatsoever, and had to ask students to mediate. All the teachers spoke of cultural barriers and they reported that even if students and their families spoke Spanish, they still had problems communicating messages. Whenever communication problems arose, the only measure they could use was for students to interpret for his/her family if their Spanish was not good enough.

The PSIT interviewee belonged to SETI (translation and interpreting services for education) a public service which helps the families of immigrant students with no knowledge of Spanish to communicate with public educational centres and the administration by undertaking translation and interpreting tasks. In order to seek the intervention of SETI, schools must submit an application by mail, a day or a week before a meeting is scheduled to take place. If a request is received on the same day as the meeting, then the SETI professional is unable to attend the centre, as the organisation sends professionals with the most appropriate profile to perform their services for a school and this may take a few days to organise. According to the interviewee, it is sometimes difficult to find an adequate interpreter/translator, as for example Chinese families often refuse to talk to people who do not belong to their nationality. The participant stated that schools are appreciative of the service, however, it is not possible to provide schools with all the support they need. Indeed, as SETI is funded by the local government and at the moment it does not receive regular funding, the interpretation and translation service for schools has to be paid for by the educational centres and consequently many schools cannot use it because they do not have the budget to spend on this activity. In addition, the respondent indicated that the use of professionals from SETI by schools is currently rare, and educational authorities do not know how many students need language support; therefore, it is difficult to achieve funding exclusively directed to the practice. According to this reality, the interviewee indicated that only in cases of extreme emergency, if a school does not have enough money to contact SETI, will the city council use the service. For situations where the interpretation and translation service is not required, then centres are not eligible for the service, thus schools are left with no alternative but to manage situations as best they can.

#### ***3.2.2.1. Servicio de Apoyo Itinerante a alumnado inmigrante***

The *Servicio de Apoyo Itinerante a alumnado inmigrante* (SAI, Immigrant School Children Support Service) is another public city service which is available for schools to facilitate communication with students and immigrant families, and it offers advice and support regarding socio-affective integration of immigrant students to public primary and secondary schools. Its aim is to promote the incorporation of an intercultural perspective into the educational process by orienting educational staff in methodologies, materials and resources for teaching Spanish as a second language. We interviewed a responsible staff member who explained how the service works: when a school needs an intervention, then tutors phone the service and the support team attends the centre. The participant stressed that this is a very simple procedure, designed to avoid bureaucratic impediments. If the service receives several requests on the same day, then they will prioritise the school with the largest number of students in need. The interviewee stated that they provide two support measures: in less urgent circumstances, they provide material aimed at learning Spanish, while in case of serious linguistic or a total lack of language awareness, they teach language support classes to students. In some situations both tools are required. The



interviewee explained that language support classes are held during school hours, usually for two or three hours per week. The service aims to act as a linguistic bridge between students and teachers, and its purpose is to compensate for the communication gaps in Spanish. The respondent noted that these classes are usually put into practice for students of Romanian, Ukrainian, Chinese and Polish origin. The interviewee emphasised that the service has no training in translation and interpreting, and for this reason it does not deal with tasks such as document translation.

#### **4. Conclusions**

Results indicate that immigrant students and their families have difficulty in communicating with staff from their educational centre, and schools do not have enough resources to deal with this problem, with one of the only solutions available is for children to act as language brokers.

A student may belong to the first or second generation of immigrants, and in this case it is these same students who frequently 'interpret' for their families in educational contexts. Alternatively, students may come from a Latin American country, in which case there are no linguistic barriers to communication, however, there remain some cultural and integration problems which can occur. However, the results show that these two factors are not common for foreign students enrolled in Spain, and out of a total of 30 survey respondents, only twelve indicated this situation in their responses. The remaining 18 described situations in which teachers and other school staff have difficulty in communicating with immigrant pupils and their families who cannot communicate in Spanish.

With regard to the methods and resources available to address communication issues with students who barely speak Spanish, the results indicate that the majority of respondents rely on language support measures that include literacy classes, or depending on the centre, out of school language lessons, sometimes with the help of a voluntary school teacher. Teachers have to find their own solutions to deal with communication problems, such as using simpler registers in their material. It should be noted that some teachers lamented the lack or absence of adequate resources to meet their needs, and they commented that compared to past years, institutional measures have decreased. In addition, it should be noted that teachers did not mention the use of cultural and linguistic mediators/interpreters (PSIT) to improve communication with students who know the language. We believe that the respondents did not mention this resource because even if they had used it, it is not a common or frequent measure, and therefore it was not included as an available resource. In fact, when asked specifically whether schools have or have had the support of a PSIT, three respondents replied that this is not a common practice at all. Most of the staff contacted (18 out of 30 participants) had never worked with an interpreter/mediator, while those who had related occasional encounters. One respondent's centre had signed a Cultural Cooperation agreement and it is only for this reason that professional mediators had facilitated communication. Furthermore, it should be emphasised that two teachers mentioned the service of the SAI; however, as revealed in the interview with a member of this team, this is a student support service that is conducted entirely in Spanish and does not provide mediation. Finally, when mediation services have been used, they were for Chinese and Moroccan students and their families, and in every situation this professional intervention was greatly appreciated.

Regarding specific communication with students' families, the results show that a much more common method than mediation/interpretation, which would be the most desirable and effective way of solving communication problems, is the practice of CLB. In fact, this seems to be the most frequently used resource when a teacher or other member of the school staff needs to communicate with non-Spanish speaking families. According to the analysed data, most of the

participants said that the phenomenon takes place in their centre, although at different frequencies. The results also show that in addition to the students, other families may also mediate between foreign parents and school staff when their children do not speak Spanish well enough to be able to transfer what is being said between school staff and their families.

Considering the initiatives implemented to promote the integration of foreign students into the classroom, less than half of the respondents (12 of 30) pointed to the implementation of effective and appropriate Spanish language classes, and an even smaller number of participants (8 of 30) indicated that they have planned and developed intercultural lessons in which immigrant students presented the culture of their origin to their peers. From this finding we can suggest that it would be highly advisable to offer educational staff training in interculturality and multicultural classrooms.

In terms of the translation of school records and other written material, we found that no centre had the resources available to tackle translations. Therefore, if a family needs to translate the previous school records of immigrant students, the Ministry of Education or the embassies, are who translate this material, otherwise documents remain in the source language and the host school is unable to understand them. Authorities ought to find a way for families to translate documents which they ask them for.

According to the results, teachers that have received students with a lack of schooling (22 of 30) have had to deal with this issue by themselves, generally through applying language support measures. In the minority of cases, this was carried out by a specific teacher. Another method was to introduce students into lower level courses. Once again the teachers reported a lack of economic resources available to address this difficulty and highlighted that they should be able to count on the use of specialised personnel, PSIT, and institutional resources.

In general, throughout this investigation, staff did not seem to be satisfied with the education authorities and stated that although in theory there are resources available to them, such as SETI and SAI, in practice they do not have enough funding and thus cannot be used by public schools. Instead, a phenomenon that occurs frequently in schools is the practice of child CLB. In our opinion, this practice is not the best resource, as CLB may entail disadvantages, such as translation errors, misinterpretations, stress, feeling of discomfort by the student interpreter, and manipulation of the message being transmitted. However, as this is an everyday practice it seems reasonable to identify ways in which this type of practice can be carried out under the most favourable conditions for the student. In fact, it is probably wiser to use a student instead of other immigrant families from the centre, as among other issues, this would deprive a student and their family of the right to the privacy of information.

The greatest challenges for students and their families when they are language brokering in the present Spanish context is that they may not be fluent enough to be able to transmit information, as well as the fact that when the family is called in for an interview it is normally due to a problem by the student and the fact that s/he is the communication vehicle may bias information thus resulting in miscommunication problems. Teachers, on the other hand, cannot be certain that information is being communicated faithfully.

We are aware that because of economic cuts to the education system, it is now almost impossible to opt for alternatives. We also add that, from our point of view, it is recommended that a larger number of centres could trigger measures for the integration of immigrant pupils in the classroom because schools can play a key role with regard to the willingness of future citizens towards an intercultural society. Peer interpreting could be a helpful way of integrating new students from the same background. We also believe that it would help schools to have a free internal or external service, which is able to inform staff about the previous academic records of immigrant students. Indeed, this information might be useful to better understand students and their past educational evolution. Finally, in the context of the currently available resources

as analysed in this study, our hope is that SETI and SAI may soon receive new grants and provide free services to schools that need them, as we are confident that this service could continue to operate without budget constraints on the part of educational institutions.

## References

- Alegre, M. & Subirats, J. (2007). *Educación e inmigración: nuevos retos para España en una perspectiva comparada*. Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas.
- Alfaya Hurtado, J., Muñoz Repiso Izaguirre, M. (2005). La atención al alumnado inmigrante en el sistema educativo en España. *Volumen 168 de Investigación* (Centro de Investigación y Documentación Educativa, España), Ministerio de Educación.
- Antonini, R. (2010). The study of child language brokering: Past, current and emerging research. *mediAzioni* n.10.
- Arnáiz Sánchez, P. (2000). *El reto de educar en una sociedad multicultural y desigual*. Ministerio de Educación pública. Centro Nacional de Recursos para la Inclusión Educativa.
- Bauer, E. (2006). Practicing kinship care: Children as language brokers in migrant families. *Childhood*, vol. 23, no. 1: 22-36.
- Bucaria, C., Rossato, L.. (2010). Former child language brokers: preliminary observations on practice, attitudes and relational aspects. *mediAzioni* n.10. [En línea] URL: <http://mediazioni.sitlec.unibo.it/> (Última consulta: 29 de marzo de 2014).
- Buriel, R., W. Perez, T.L. De Ment, D.V. Chavez & V.R. Moran (1998). The relationship of language brokering to academic performance, biculturalism, and self-efficacy among Latino adolescents. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences* 20(3), 283-297.
- Cantle, T. (2012). *Interculturalism. The New Era of Cohesion and Diversity*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 142-143.
- CIDREE (Consortium of Institutions for Development and Research in education in Europe). (2002). *Hacia una Europa diferente. Respuestas educativas a la Interculturalidad*: 14. [On line] <http://www.mecd.gob.es/dms-static/c6d799f0-c2e2-4a8c-b351-6a5a56f6e1f6/europa-respuestas-educativas-interculturalidad-pdf.pdf>
- European Commission Report. (2013). [ec.europa.eu/euraxess/.../20130911\\_Researchers%20Report%202013\\_FI...](http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/.../20130911_Researchers%20Report%202013_FI...)
- García Sánchez, I.M. (2014). *Language and Muslim Immigrant Childhoods: The Politics of Belonging*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell (Studies in Discourse and Culture series).
- Giménez, C. (1997). La naturaleza de la mediación intercultural. *Revista Migraciones, n.10 - Diciembre 2001*. Instituto Universitario de Migraciones. Universidad Pontificia de Comillas. Madrid.
- Gozdecka, D., Ercan, S. and Kmak, M. (2014). From multiculturalism to post-multiculturalism: Trends and paradoxes. *Journal of Sociology*, 50(1): 53.
- Hall, N. & Sham, S. (1998). *Language brokering by Chinese children*, paper presented at the Annual Conference of the British Educational Research Association, Dublin.
- Hall, N. & Sham, S. (2007). Language brokering as young people's work: Evidence from Chinese adolescents in England. *Language and Education*, 21(1): 16-30
- Hidalgo, V. (2005). *Cultura, multiculturalidad, interculturalidad y transculturalidad evolución de un término*. [On line] URL: <http://pedagogia.fcep.urv.es/revistaut/revistes/juny05/article04.pdf>

- Jordan, J. A. (2000). *¿Qué educación intercultural para nuestra escuela? II Jornada del Consejo Escolar de Navarra* [La escuela intercultural. Situación y propuestas]. Pamplona.
- Kymlicka, W. & Norman, W. (2000). *Citizenship in Diverse Societies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Kymlicka, W. (2010). The rise and fall of multiculturalism? New debates on inclusion and accommodation in diverse societies. *International Social Science Journal*, 61(199), 97-112.
- Levey, G. (2009). Cultural Diversity and its Recognition in Public Universities: Fairness, Utility, and Inclusion, in Joseph Zajda and Holger Daun (eds), *Global Values Education: Teaching Democracy and Peace*. New York: Springer, 143-53.
- Linse, C. (2011). Creating taxonomies to improve school-home connections with families of culturally and linguistically diverse learners. *Education and Urban Society*, 43(6), 651–670.
- McQuillan, J. & Tse, L. (1995). Child language brokering in linguistic minority communities: Effects on cultural interaction, cognition, and literacy. *Language and Education*, 9(3): 195-215.
- Orellana, M. F. (2009). *Translating Childhoods: Immigrant Youth, Language, and Culture*, New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press.
- O'Rourke, B. & Castillo, P. (2009). 'Top-down' or 'bottom-up' language policy: Public Service Interpreting in the Republic of Ireland, Scotland and Spain' in R. de Pedro, I. Perez and C. Wilson (eds.) *Interpreting and Translating in Public Service Settings*. London: St. Jerome, pp. 33-51.
- Pena Díaz, C. (2016a). Public Service Interpreting and Translation (PSIT) as a Social Integration Tool. *NEW VOICES IN TRANSLATION STUDIES*, vol 14: 74-99.
- Pena Díaz, C. (2016b). Linguistic and pragmatic barriers in immigrant health care in Spain: the need for INTERLINGUISTIC & INTERCULTURAL mediators. *Entreculturas*, vol 7. & 8
- Pretceille, M. (2001). *La educación intercultural*. Barcelona, Idea Books.
- Prokopiou, E., Cline, T., & Crafter, S. (2013). Child language brokering in schools: Why does it matter? *Race Equality Teaching*, 31, 33-36.
- Rahona López, M. & Morales Sequera, S. (2013) *Educación e inmigración en España: desafíos y oportunidades*. Organización de Estados Iberoamericanos para la Educación, la Ciencia y la Cultura (OEI).
- Valdés, G. (2003). *Expanding Definitions of Giftedness: The Case of Young Interpreters from Immigrant Families*, Mahwah, NJ: LEA.
- Vertovec, Steven (2010) Towards post-multiculturalism? Changing communities, conditions and contexts of diversity. *International Social Science Journal*, 199(61), 83-95.
- Weisskirch, R. S. (2010) Child language brokers in immigrant families: An overview of family dynamics. *MediAzioni* 10.
- Weisskirch, R.S. & Alva, S.A. (2002). Language Brokering and the Acculturation of Latino Children. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences*, Vol. 24, no. 3: 369-378.
- Wu, N.H. & Kim, S.Y. (2009). Chinese American adolescents' perceptions of the language brokering experience as a sense of burden and sense of efficacy. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 38(5):703-18.