

## 1.2.1 Migration contexts

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### Transcript

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#### Slide 1

Welcome to the 'Migration contexts' section of the course. This is a sub-section of the 'Linguistic diversity' section. In this segment, you will find out about some current issues concerning the European migration context and the role of language learning in the promotion of inclusion and social cohesion in multilingual classrooms.

#### Slide 2

In this section we will discuss some key-terms related to migration contexts, the importance of the educational inclusion of migrant students in Europe, how English is affected and used by multilingual speakers and the role of English as a lingua franca in an inclusive multicultural and multilingual classroom together with forms of ELF variations in cross-cultural learning contexts, in terms of narratives, interactions and mediations.

#### Slide 3

Before starting our discussion, we would like you to take some time and think about your personal experience. Firstly, watch the video "2019 GEM Report Animation" and think about the area where you live, as well as your own teaching situation. Do you think that the video realistically represents the new landscapes in multilingual classrooms? What did you feel watching the video? Did you notice anything familiar with respect to your own experience as a teacher? Once you have watched the video please consider these two questions and click the link under the video to share your views. Pause the video now to complete this activity.

#### Slide 4

Before considering the European migration context world migration flows deserve our attention. We are now witnessing the highest levels of displacement on record, as showed by the latest data released by the UNHCR. 70 million people around the world have been forced from home. Among them there are refugees, even under the age of 18, displaced people and asylum-seekers. There are also millions of stateless people who have been denied a

nationality and access to basic rights such as education, healthcare, employment and freedom of movement.

## **Slide 5**

Europe has been a crossroads of human mobility since ancient times. Throughout history, the region has been a central part of global migration systems which its States helped to establish and shape. Europe also played a crucial role in developing a set of rules and norms regulating human mobility in the region. In the last decades in Europe we assisted to the mobility of high- and low-skilled workers from Central and Eastern Europe to Western and Southern Europe; as well as new waves of immigration from North and Central Africa, Latin America and Asia to Southern Europe; and geopolitical conflicts in the Middle East and North Africa prompted an increase in the numbers of arrivals in Southern Europe of asylum seekers trying to reach Northern European destinations.

## **Slide 6**

The EU has adopted various sets of rules and frameworks to manage legal migration flows for asylum seekers, highly skilled workers, students and researchers, seasonal workers, and family reunification. Regarding other migration flows, the EU has adopted common rules for processing asylum requests, a decision to relocate thousands of asylum seekers from Greece and Italy, readmission agreements for returning illegal migrants. Asylum is granted to people who are fleeing persecution, war or serious harm in their own country and therefore in need of international protection. Asylum is a fundamental right and granting it is an international obligation, stemming from the 1951 Geneva Convention on the protection of refugees. Those who seek, or have been granted, protection do not have the right to choose in which Member State they want to settle, however. To this end, the Common European Asylum System provides common minimum standards for the treatment of all asylum seekers and applications. In practice, anyway, the current system is still characterised by differing treatment of asylum-seekers and varying recognition rates amongst EU Member States. This divergence is what encourages secondary movements and is partly due to the fact that the current rules grant Member States a lot of discretion in how they apply the common EU rules. The EU now needs to put in place the tools to better manage migration flows. The overall objective is to move from a system which encourages uncontrolled or irregular migratory flows to one which provides safe pathways to the EU for third country nationals. The European Commission has presented proposals in May and July 2016 to establish a sustainable system for the future, based on common rules, in order to assure a sharing of responsibility, and safe legal channels for those who need protection to get it in the EU.

## Slide 7

The European reports highlight that even though, in the majority of education systems in Europe access to education is provided for children with migrant backgrounds and intercultural education is integrated to some extent in the national curricula, policies and measures on learning support tend to focus on students' preparation rather than their social and emotional needs. Access to education and training for children with migrant background is not sufficient if it is not combined with quality education and learning which meets students' learning needs and aspiration.

## Slide 8

Moreover, reports underline that teachers are not prepared to work in culturally diverse classrooms because of the lack of teacher training on these topics, migrant students whose home language differs from the language of instruction do not have a right to study their home language at school, and a lack of support is recorded for teachers and school heads, for example, in the lack of teaching assistance and intercultural mediators. Newly arrived migrant students are usually placed in preparatory classes or lessons if their language skills are not strong enough to follow mainstream teaching. Once children and young people from migrant backgrounds are enrolled in the education system, they may be placed in different settings. There are generally three ways in which these classes are organised: the students are placed in mainstream classes for most lessons but take some lessons in separate groups. Students are placed in separate groups for most of their lessons and join mainstream classes for some lessons, for example sports, arts and music, and in other cases students are placed in separate groups for all their lessons. Among countries having good strategies for integrating migrant students in education, European reports name Germany, Austria, Portugal, Slovenia, Finland and Sweden for a strong emphasis on diversity in the promotion of diversity dimension in classrooms.

## Slide 9

But why is the integration of students from migrant backgrounds into schools an important topic? A student who is well-integrated into the education system has more chance of reaching their potential, in general. Students from migrant backgrounds, however, face a number of challenges in this respect that can affect their learning and development. Challenges related to the migration process, for example leaving the home country, having to acquire a new language, new rules and routines; other challenges related to the socio-economic and political context as well as those related to student participation in education. In this sense, migrant students risk to be left behind their native-born peers in most European education systems.

## Slide 10

It is also important to underline that teachers need to help students dealing with trauma and traumatic experience related to migration. Teachers need ideas and strategies that can be used to better understand their learners and to build inclusive classrooms where migrants or refugee learners are present. Taking into account what we have discussed so far, now please watch the video “Challenges of working with a multilingual class” and think about the area where you live, as well as your own teaching situation. Do you agree with the teacher speaking in the video? What are in your opinion the main challenges of teaching in a multilingual classroom? Once you have watched the videos, consider these two questions and click on the link under the video to share your views. Pause the video now to complete this activity.

## Slide 11

We all live in a multilingual world. English now is the global lingua franca for education, trade and employment, and is an essential skill for anyone wanting to succeed professionally or academically. Properly managed language policy, however, can help to ensure that English can be taught effectively and incorporated into society without having a negative effect on the first languages, cultures and local identities of the learners of English. And therefore, an understanding of English and multilingualism is especially important in an age of growing migration flows. People migrate for many reasons, escaping oppression and war, or searching for better opportunities, but it is clear that the languages that they have access to or aspire to use can greatly influence and contribute to the success with which migrants are able to be included in their host societies. This suggests the need for a language policy worldwide which provides people with the languages and the language skills that they need both at home and in their future global destinations. A new language policy should promote the quality of curriculum, teaching, and learning in state education, as well as the role of the multiple languages in a more positive and protected context. New language skills are needed for a multilingual society. Learners should be trained to develop the necessary sensitivity towards the cultural and linguistic needs of their community. The role of compulsory education is critical and crucial, and we need a language education policy which both respects mother tongue heritage and also prepares young people for a globalised world where English is a lingua franca, and not only English. This has implications for teachers’ education, of course, and curriculum design for state education at both primary and secondary level, and it is obvious that more research is needed to accelerate the development of high-level language proficiency in young people, especially, with new pedagogical models that face the low spoken proficiency outcomes of many European current foreign language programmes.

## Slide 12

The term 'multilingualism' can be applied to people who have competences in a number of languages or to places where many languages are used. It is probably helpful to use the Council of Europe's distinction between multilingualism and plurilingualism. 'Multilingualism' refers to the presence in a geographical area, large or small, of more than one 'variety of language'. 'Plurilingualism' instead refers to the repertoire of varieties of language which many individuals use, and it includes the language variety referred to as 'mother tongue' or 'first language' and any number of other languages or varieties. In this sense, second or foreign language learning classes are often multicultural classes nowadays, especially with the rise of movement and mobility around the world. Moving to a new country is a life-changing experience. Learning the host language is central to this new beginning and is strictly related to the adaptation to a new culture. Language learning could promote social and life-skills that are necessary for building inclusive societies, which are essential for many learners to integrate in a new community or in a new country. However, there is a need for a language policy that implicitly promotes ethnic harmony and social cohesion, through the use of activities and methodologies that serve this purpose in the classroom.

## Slide 13

Language could play an essential through using methodologies that promote communication in mixed classes where migrants, refugees and host communities learners work together. Multilingual language classes could be used as safe spaces empowering learners and promoting learner autonomy. Bearing these aspects in mind think about the following speaking topics. Which of them do you find more useful and inspiring to trigger a discussion about migration and its issues with your learners? And why? Click the link under the video to share your views.

## Slide 14

A proper intercultural education can create the space and conditions necessary for all students from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds to communicate with each other, learning together and develop as individuals, aware of their own cultural identity and respectful of others' cultures. It is the teachers' biggest job to help students see diversity as something interesting but normal. If teachers are able to raise students' awareness and celebrate their diversity, they should educate themselves about their students' cultures and backgrounds. Teachers should ensure that their classes are safe spaces rather than intimidating ones. And teachers should be supported in developing language skills and intercultural competencies in terms of multilingualism, plurilingualism, and the ELF-awareness. It is also important to understand and recognize migrants' L1 competences and skills, as well as practicing plurilingual effective communication and abilities in order to express meaning and

intentionality in a multilingual context. Teachers should also be aware that some students might not feel confident or prepared, and other students might suffer from traumatic experience if they come, for example, from conflicts in their countries, and calling them to speak could result in a counterproductive effect. Teachers should be supported in implementing new curricula, in using new teaching methods in an ELF-aware perspective and in enhancing the competencies of dealing with displaced learners, including lesson planning and preparing new materials.

### **Slide 15**

In this sense, an ELF-aware teaching in an inclusive multicultural and multilingual classroom could be a good solution to introduce English as a Lingua Franca uses which are very frequent in migration contexts where speakers appropriate standard uses of the English language shaping them to fulfil communicative purposes and, then, creating new hybrid forms and linguistic innovations. In migration contexts, the use of ELF is very frequent and extensive, and interactions and exchanges may be defined in terms of narratives, when speakers reformulate their own migration experience, using ELF; interactions in daily intercultural encounters, negotiating meaning and expressing intentionality; and mediations when ELF is used to bridge cross-cultural gaps and face possible misunderstandings.

### **Slide 16**

Considering all the insights coming from the sections of the course about ELF and this one about migration contexts, watch the following videos. Three links are provided to three different videos: *Helping Immigrant Students Adjust to New Schools, New Lives*, *"The story of Moro"* and *"Space snack time with Samantha Cristoforetti"*. Would you use any of them in your own classroom? Why or why not? What kind of discussions would you have with your learners to raise their multilingual and multicultural awareness? Once you have watched the videos consider these two questions and click on the link under the video to share your views. Pause the video now to complete this activity.

### **Slide 17**

In this section we have discussed three key-issues that have to be considered. Migration is an expanding global reality in Europe and worldwide. Migrants make significant contribution to their host countries with their cultures, with their languages and experiences. And education is the key to build bridges and teachers the key to the successful inclusion. All these aspects are fundamental elements of the same process. The crucial role of migration and educational contexts, in general, and in language teaching, in particular, cannot be ignored or overlooked. Building inclusive classrooms nowadays is at the basis of the European social cohesion where multilingual and multicultural components are

respected and properly protected. In this regard this section has highlighted the ways in which the content of a typical EFL teaching can be enriched in an ELF perspective to address the needs of multilingual learners, especially those with migrant background in today's multilingual and multicultural world and societies.