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La enseñanza de español a migrantes en España: la perspectiva del profesorado

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VOL. 3 (2024)

ISSN 2952-2013 pp. 26-43

<https://doi.org/10.33776/linguodidactica.v3.8159>

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*La enseñanza de español a migrantes en España:
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Abstract:

The aim of this paper is to approach the reality of Spanish classrooms for migrants in Spain and to reflect on different aspects of this type of teaching from the teachers' perspective. For this purpose, we have worked with a sample of 20 teachers of Spanish for migrants in several organizations located in different Spanish cities, who were interviewed between 2021 and 2022. The study is descriptive in nature with a qualitative data analysis and focuses on three dimensions: the students, the teachers and the teaching process. The results show that, in relation to migrant students, teachers consider their students to be vulnerable, but also indicate that they are more motivated by the need to know the language in order to find work and integrate into the host society. They also agree that a teacher with migrant students should be empathetic, patient, understanding, capable of mediating possible conflicts and interested in the social work involved in this type of work. As for the teaching process, the need to adapt materials and focus on a communicative approach that enables students to use the language in their daily lives was emphasized. The lack of autonomy of the students and the need to improve written comprehension and expression were highlighted as weaknesses. It should also be noted that this study is based on the teachers' experience, so it would be advisable to expand it with future research that gathers new data, such as the students' experience or the evolution of teaching in recent years.

Keywords:

Spanish; learning; migrants; teachers; second language instruction.

Resumen:

El propósito de este trabajo es acercarse a la realidad de las aulas de español para migrantes en España y reflexionar sobre diferentes aspectos de este tipo de enseñanza desde la perspectiva del profesorado. Para ello, se ha trabajado con una muestra conformada por 20 profesores de español a migrantes en varias organizaciones ubicadas en diferentes ciudades españolas, a los que se entrevistó entre 2021 y 2022. El estudio, de carácter cualitativo y descriptivo, gira en torno a tres dimensiones: el alumnado, el profesorado y el proceso de enseñanza. Los resultados muestran que, en relación con el alumnado migrante, el profesorado los considera vulnerables, pero también señala que cuentan con mayor motivación por la necesidad de conocer el idioma para encontrar trabajo e integrarse en la sociedad receptora. Asimismo, concuerdan en que un/a profesional de la enseñanza con alumnado migrante debe ser empático, paciente, comprensivo, capaz de mediar en posibles conflictos y de tener interés en la labor social que este trabajo implica. En cuanto al proceso de enseñanza, se incide en la necesidad de adaptar los materiales y de centrarse en un enfoque comunicativo que posibilite al alumnado utilizar el idioma en su vida diaria. Como puntos débiles se destaca la falta de autonomía del alumnado y la necesidad de mejorar la comprensión y expresión escritas. Asimismo, cabe señalar que este trabajo parte de la experiencia del profesorado, por lo que sería conveniente ampliarlo con futuras investigaciones que recojan nuevos datos, como la experiencia del alumnado o la evolución de la enseñanza en los últimos años.

Palabras claves:

Español, aprendizaje, migrantes, profesores, enseñanza de una segunda lengua.

Fecha de recepción: 02 de febrero de 2024

Fecha de aceptación: 09 de mayo de 2024

1. Introduction

Migration is a phenomenon inherent to human beings since their existence. Moving from one place to another became necessary for the survival of the species and this trace of the past is reflected in current migrations, whose purpose is also survival for social (war, religious or political causes) or economic reasons. According to UN data, in 2020 there were 281 million international migrants, which represents 3.6% of the world population and stands as the highest figure in recent decades (McAuliffe and Triandafyllidou, 2021).

In Spain, meanwhile, there were 6.8 million migrants in 2020, or 14.6% of the population (McAuliffe and Triandafyllidou, 2021). This figure continues to grow, with almost half a million migrants arriving in Spain from other countries in 2022 (INE, 2022). Although this is not always the case, a large part of migration is caused by the movement of people from developing countries in search of a better quality of life. The reasons, as mentioned at the beginning, are predominantly social and economic, so that migrants "are often considered poor and linked to the lack of resources or to the situation in their country of origin, being exposed to greater stigmatization, rejection and social exclusion" (Moles-López *et al.*, 2023). The response of the receiving population is key to the integration and adaptation of migrants, so various agencies at the national level play an important role, providing basic assistance, care for unaccompanied minors, reception programs, social integration measures, among other resources.

Except for migrants of Latin American origin, all other migrants do not have Spanish as their mother tongue. Moreover, in the INE's Active Population Survey report, corresponding to the first semester of 2023, it is indicated that 7.3% of migrants over 16 years old have no education or only have incomplete primary education (Bustamante and Díaz, 2023). These circumstances can be a major disadvantage when it comes to integrating into the new society, both socially and occupationally, which is why teaching Spanish to migrants is an essential measure, as it allows them to develop language skills as well as cultural competence. In Spain there are several institutions that provide Spanish lessons to migrants; however, many of the teachers work as volunteers and do not always have sufficient resources and tools to be able to work with a student profile with this particular idiosyncrasy.

This paper aims to review the current situation of teaching Spanish as a foreign language to migrants from the perspective and concerns of teachers, who play an equally important role in the learning process as the students themselves. Our objective, therefore, is to reflect on different aspects of teaching Spanish to migrants based on the teachers' testimonies, specifically on these three points: students, teachers and the Spanish classroom. To this end, we have considered the following research questions:

1. What is the profile of the migrant student like?
2. What should a good teacher of Spanish for migrants be like?
3. What are the fundamental aspects that should be worked on in the classroom?
4. What changes should be introduced to improve the teaching of Spanish to migrants?

2. Theoretical framework

There is a large body of research on migration, focusing on different aspects, such as laws, policies, perceptions, measures and social situation, among others. Due to the subject of study of this paper, we have specifically reviewed the literature related to migration from the field of education.

All people living in Spain have the right to basic education, including migrant minors, as stated in Organic Law 4/2000, of January 11, on the rights and freedoms of foreigners in Spain and their social integration. Migrant minors, therefore, must be enrolled in school and can learn Spanish not only in the regular classroom, but also in specific classrooms, such as the Liaison Classrooms (Aulas de Enlace) in Madrid or the Temporary Linguistic Adaptation Classrooms in Andalusia (Aulas Temporales de Adaptación Lingüística - ATAL). On the other hand, adult migrants can learn Spanish in official institutions, such as Official Language Schools, the Cervantes Institute or Universities such as the University of Salamanca. In all of them they can obtain official certificates with their level of language proficiency according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) of the Council of Europe (Government of Spain. Ministry of Education, Vocational Training and Sports, n.d.).

Migrant students, both children and adults, present a higher risk of exclusion due to their vulnerability. Children have guaranteed access to the educational system but this does not guarantee that they do not suffer inequalities within the classroom (González-Monteaquedo and Zamora-Serrato, 2019). Adults, on the other hand, cannot always access official institutions to learn Spanish due to lack of resources. Therefore, it is necessary to highlight the work of volunteer institutions that not only teach them Spanish, but also provide them with support to facilitate their integration in the host country.

In regards to the literature on the teaching of Spanish as a second language to migrants, there has been a notable increase in recent years and we can find research about the three dimensions addressed in our study. Thus, we highlight studies focused on the figure of the migrant students, specifically about their motivation and resilience (Benallou, 2023; Martin *et al.*, 2022), as well as on multiculturalism in the classroom and its impact on students (Ceballos Vacas and Trujillo-González, 2021; Valenti, 2004). In terms to the figure of the teacher, we have research about its formation and the particularities of its profile (Crozet, 2016; Legaz-Torregrosa and Toscano Fuentes, 2022; Kramsch, 2014; Níkleva and García-Viñolo, 2023; Sosinski, 2018). Finally, we highlight several research about different aspects of the Spanish teaching process: a general perspective about the classroom situation (Arroyo González and Rodríguez Correa, 2014; Gómez-Pavón Durán, 2019; Kárpava, 2022); the analysis of teaching materials (González Fernández, 2023; Soliman, 2022); the use of new technologies before the pandemic (Jiménez Jiménez and Níkleva, 2015) and after it (Morales Rodríguez, 2021); specific aspects of the language which are also studied in the classroom, such as prosody (Sun and Herrero-Fernández, 2022), sociocultural and sociolinguistic competences (Horno-Cheliz and Vicente-Molinero, 2020; Primo Doncel, 2020) or literacy (Diambang and Diop, 2023). In terms of the methodology used in the classroom, there seems to be a fairly strong consensus on the preference for the communicative approach because of the advantages it offers to immigrant students (Domingues Cruz and Saracho Arnaiz, 2020; García Cano, 2022).

3. Methods

This is a descriptive research with a qualitative data analysis. This type of approach is presented as the most appropriate for the research, as it has allowed us to inquire more deeply into the object of study, as well as to analyze the resulting data in detail.

3.1. Techniques

The interview was the technique used for data collection. It included fixed questions but also offered the possibility of expanding them when the participant needed to specify the information. Thus, we designed an *ad hoc* questionnaire of seven questions on three topics of interest for the study:

- The teachers' view about their students:
 1. What is the profile of migrant students like?
 2. What your students are like?
 3. Do you notice multiculturalism in the classroom? How is it reflected?
- The teachers' view about themselves:
 4. Does the teacher of Spanish for migrant students need specific skills? If so, Which ones?
 5. What can the teachers improve on?
- The particularities of the learning process of Spanish with migrant students:
 6. What tools do you usually use in the classroom?
 7. How would you describe your methodological approach?

3.2. Participants

The research was carried out with a sample of 20 participants, all of them teachers of Spanish as a foreign language to migrant students in several organizations located in different Spanish cities, specifically Granada, Madrid and Gijón. These organizations share a volunteer profile and offer Spanish classes for all proficiency levels, as well as support for the integration of migrant students and their families.

Regarding to the participants, we will refer to them with numbers (1-20) to preserve their anonymity. The only requirement to participate in the study was to have at least one year of teaching experience with migrant students. Age and gender were not significant factors, so no specific distribution was sought. Out of the 20 participants 13 are women and 7 are men, all between the ages of 30 and 60 and with higher education. Their teaching experience, on the other hand, is reflected in Table 1.

Table 1. Years of teaching experience of the informants

Informants	Years of teaching experience with migrant students
1	11
2	11
3	2
4	2
5	2
6	1
7	1

Informants	Years of teaching experience with migrant students
8	13
9	3
10	3
11	4
12	2
13	1
14	6
15	20
16	4
17	15
18	4
19	6
20	15

Source: own elaboration

3.3. Data collection procedure

The interviews took place in the years 2021 and 2022. The participants were contacted through telephone calls and e-mails to agree with them the date and time for the interviews. The questionnaire with the questions was also sent by e-mail so that they could read it before the interview. All informants participated on a voluntary basis, without financial compensation. Each interview was recorded through Google Meet under the pertinent authorization, to be later transcribed. Thus, a corpus of 20 interviews was formed with an approximate duration of ten hours (half an hour for each other) formed.

3.4. Data analysis

For the analysis of the data, comments and testimonies related to the object of study were extracted manually, seeking correlation, as well as coincident and divergent data in order to elaborate a coherent and cohesive discourse that allows reflection based on the testimony of teachers of Spanish as a foreign language to migrants in Spain. The analysis of the data was inductive, since it was based on a series of initial questions in order to reach a general conclusion. The information has been classified around three points of study: migrant students, the figure of the teacher and the teaching process. Each category in turn generated several subcategories as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Categories and subcategories of the study

Categories	Subcategories
Students	The reality in and out of the classroom
	The impact of their situation in the learning process
	Their attitude towards learning process
	Multiculturalism

Categories	Subcategories
Teachers	Skills
	Role in the classroom
Teaching process	Tools and devices
	Methodology
	Development of language skills

Source: own elaboration

4. Results

4.1. Migrant students

The results of our study show that students are a recurring theme in the teachers' concerns. Their migrant status, which for many of them generates a greater situation of vulnerability, produces among the teachers a deep awareness of the personal and vital circumstances of the students. Thus, informants 12, 15 and 18 express their knowledge of students outside the classroom:

They are students with very complex family situations... well then... always the first contact... I try to make them feel very welcome... get to know them one by one... and I try to ask them personally so that they can tell me about their country, their family... (Informant 12)

Above all, people who do not have a family nucleus and who have emigrated alone, there are many... above all, men who are here alone and who sometimes share an apartment... but in a rented room with whom they do not have much contact... or with companions of other nationalities with whom they do not understand each other very well. And of course, the situation of administrative uncertainty... the situation of a foreign country, the migration situation... and "I don't know what my future is going to be like, I don't know anyone..." Quite distressing. (Informant 15)

They are people who mostly don't work, they are here... alone, without their families most of them and... except for the Filipinos who come with their families. But most of them are people who are here alone. (Informant 18)

Likewise, informants 10, 11 and 19 emphasize how the personal situation of some students has an impact on the classes, always in a negative way, because they generate impediments to the proper functioning of learning or, as in the case of informant 19, they directly impede the ability to continue with the classes:

She was there with her little son and I was giving her the lesson, but if the child started crying or wanted to eat or whatever, she had to be there. It was an hour and a half of class and she could not be one hundred percent with me giving the class, because if the child started crying or if or... anything, or was distracted, then yes it was difficult. (Informant 10)

When they find a job and have to travel, they have to miss class or they can't work at home... or review at home content that has been seen in the classroom. Maybe more than at the family level, better at the work level, because when they have had to work they have not always been able to review well what we have done in the classroom. (Informant 11)

And other people... the children at home and they can't attend classes because they have the children... or anything else, like "I can't make ends meet because my husband is out of work or because I don't have a job". (Informant 19)

Despite the frequent adverse circumstances, informants 13, 14 and 18 agree that migrant students are highly motivated, either because they want to pass a DELE exam or because they are aware of the need to defend themselves in the language of the country in which they now live:

And of course, these students have a great advantage over the formal education students because they are so motivated (Informant 13).

I teach DELE A2 classes for nationality... as they want to pass the exam, they send you all the homework every week so that you correct the writing... we work on listening, we work on reading, we work on speaking as well... the motivation at the end depends on the student. If they want to take a nationality exam... they study a lot... They need Spanish to work, so they study a lot... (Informant 14)

They don't lose their motivation. They are people who are very, very motivated, very aware that it is important to study Spanish. I had never worked with people who were so eager to study. There are people who, regardless of their circumstances, come to class every day, all of them, they never miss. (Informant 18)

Spanish classes not only serve to learn a new language that allows them to integrate and work, but also become a meeting place where they can socialize both with the teacher and with their classmates and create networks:

It is not so much the fact of giving classes, but being with them, because many times they can be alone, they can be...like if you go to a different country and you say: "Who are you going to hang out with?" (Informant 9)

Coming to the class is also like a moment to... get out of my house and socialize a little bit. (Informant 15)

They already need to socialize because they are newcomers. They don't have networks, friends... they have nothing. (Informant 19)

They don't have the same friendship and family networks that people who have been here for years and years or who were born here and are more integrated... Coming to class is a way to socialize... much more than for us. (Informant 20)

Regarding the multiculturalism of the students, we find from cultural clashes on the part of the teachers, as in the case of informant 17, to situations of companionship due to the bond that is created among the students for having a shared experience, as informant 5 relates:

I did have a Nigerian student, to give you an example of shock for me, who I used to name her a lot to get her to participate, but she did not like me to use her name, and I did not know this, then she explained it to me: "It is that my culture..." She explained to me the three names she had, and she asked me to call her by the other one, that the others were very familiar. (Informant 17)

I think that students also begin to feel a lot of empathy with each other, the moment they find common points or there are certain things they say: "That's different, I didn't know such things" and they begin to find these spaces that they feel more shared... (Informant 5)

However, multiculturalism in the classroom also generates quarrels among students due to the creation of groups and distancing among them:

There was racism among them, within the countries, and yes, you notice that there are groups, those who are from the same country, go to the same floor, more than anything because they are families, and you notice that when you mix in a class a family or a group, for example, of Afghans, with another from another country, the one from the other country if it is less numerous, is relegated. (Informant 3)

In view of this, informants 4 and 7 consider that not only cultural differences can cause the creation of groups among the students, but that it can also have a generational cause or, even, because of the difference in the levels of knowledge of the language:

They do make groups, for example, I have two students who are... who are in their forties. Those two men always come together. Those who don't... those who don't understand much Spanish are also on this side... they group together. (Informant 4)

This difference of levels in the classroom is one of the obstacles with which the teachers most agree, since it makes it difficult to organize the classes, slows down the learning of students at a more advanced level and significantly harms students at the beginning level, who may feel intimidated:

Another problem we had was the gap between students. Because especially the men, they left home, they were out in the street, they worked outside, they had more contact with the language. And there were no resources to divide the groups according to levels... (Informant 6)

There are people who have a very high A1 level and people who have or are considered to have an A1 level, but who have just graduated from literacy classes... So I have seen people with a lower level who didn't want to speak because they were too embarrassed. (Informant 10)

It happens that they don't understand, they are embarrassed to ask and that everyone sees them. (Informant 18)

4.2. The teachers

The second theme addressed in the teachers' testimonies was the role of the teacher. The informants reflected on their role in the classroom, especially taking into account the idiosyncrasy of the profile of migrant students and the frequent multiculturalism that occurs in the classroom. Informants 1 and 5 indicated the qualities needed to manage potential culture clashes that may arise with students. Likewise, informant 1 valued positively that teachers should know something of each student's culture:

We have to avoid culture shock. We have to be open-minded, we have to understand the other. I think we have to have an open mind, and be able to do that, to have empathy and sympathy for other people. (Informant 1)

I would call it like that you have to prevent, you have to be very very intelligent emotionally or culturally. You as a teacher... when approaching certain topics and certain things that... You have to ask the students how they feel, if they feel comfortable, stressed or upset... (Informant 5)

But if we really want to achieve an intercultural class where everybody feels comfortable, we have to know about the culture of the students... (Informant 1)

Along with these qualities, the importance of the teacher as a mediator in the classroom was especially emphasized, for the resolution of possible conflicts, but also to facilitate the integration of the students into the language and culture of the new community:

The teacher at the end has to act as a guide, as a mediator, above all to integrate them, because learning Spanish is not only for them to speak Spanish, it is to integrate them into the Spanish language, culture and society. (Informant 6)

Informant 9 stressed the importance of being empathetic, while adding other qualities that a teacher must have, such as being respectful, patient and approachable. In fact, he mentioned how years later he still hears from former students:

Of course, that's what it is, to flow, because if you let yourself go in class, they will let themselves go and they will feel comfortable and laugh with you. (Informant 9)

For example, I have had several students come to me saying: "Please help me with the curriculum". It is very nice to hear from them today. Even yesterday a former student sent me a message saying "Professor, I hope you are well, I got a job". (informant 9)

As a negative aspect, informants 2 and 5 comment that teachers are sometimes rigid or inflexible when teaching, either by insisting on a teaching method or by wanting to use English as a bridge language. The latter can be useful in certain cases where the student knows a little of the language, however, most of the time migrant students do not know English and start exclusively from their mother tongue:

I started with the alphabet, which I wouldn't do today at all, it was a total waste of time. But of course, you seem to need to mark your teaching position, as if it were any kind of manual, which is useless in my opinion. (Informant 2)

But these people really don't care about English at all. And I feel that sometimes you would like to rely, like in this language that you also consider... that lately... it's the most universal in quotation marks, like the most popular or yeah,

I don't know. And it's not really the case. And you have to start looking at other ways (Informant 5)

However, the teacher's knowledge of other languages can also be useful, as in the case of informant 10:

Then, it was useful for me that I knew French and also Russian to talk to them in those two languages and teach them some words in Spanish. (Informant 10)

On the other hand, informant 16 emphasizes the importance of human contact in the classroom to generate an atmosphere of trust and support among students and also with teachers. The difficult situation that this type of student's experience on a daily basis is very present, which is also pointed out by informant 15, who considers that the migrant teacher also has a social work, as well as a training that is not always valued due to the marginality in which the migrant is socially placed:

I believe that human contact is fundamental. I guess I'm old school in that sense and human contact... I think it's a fundamental part of teaching. You teach me, I teach you and we both see each other... it's something that is really necessary. (Informant 16)

Let's see, there is this idea that teachers of migrant students are always precarious, voluntary, poorly trained... well, it is a stereotype because there are many cases... but the idea that people have about the group, about the students that they are migrants, poor, vulnerable extends to everything that surrounds them and then it seems that for migrants anything goes. It seems that anyone can teach Spanish and that is not the case. In addition, we have the dual role of denouncing these situations of social injustice and also the function of making the population aware of the need for equal opportunities and rights for all people. We have this double social and combative part that must be united. (Informant 15)

4.3. *The teaching process*

The third topic of reflection for the teachers was the most important aspects within the Spanish classroom and with respect to the learning process, as well as its particularities due to the profile of the students. Thus, informants 12, 15 and 16 talked about the creation of materials, the use of tools and the contents of the classes. Informant 12 commented on how traditional tools are combined with innovative ones. For her part, informant 16 spoke of the use of specific materials for migrants, especially at initial levels, which led to the creation of her own textbook. This specificity in the material was also mentioned by informant 15, who emphasized the importance of adapting the contents to the reality of the student and the need to integrate them into the receiving society.

In general, we use a blackboard, we use a textbook... and then I use my mobile phone to look up songs if they come up. Maybe I ask them about a person they like, a singer... then I look for songs and play them. This year we have started to use maps... and then you show them and say: "Where is your country?" And we look for information... on the Internet about their country... the inhabitants, the agriculture... so that I can locate them, know exactly where they come from... (Informant 12)

We got together in order to have specific material for the students and we managed to develop a manual for us. So our material we try to make it a lot... of course, that's first level, then at a higher level you need to... transmit other knowledge that is more grammar, for example, the subjunctive and... then you use maybe a much more neutral material, much more general. But at the beginning our materials are very specific for migrants. (Informant 16)

Our students have to do what the framework says...the action-oriented approach, especially, this is important with these students. They are here to make a living, they are here to insert themselves

socially and to insert themselves in the labor market, to live and work in Spain. What we do is based on people's needs, we work very individually... what does this person need? (Informant 15)

The personalization of content, as well as the creation of specific materials, are the result of the multicultural nature of the Spanish classroom which, although it can generate more difficulties, is a positive and enriching aspect:

It's a space where we all learn. (Informant 8)

Informant 5 points out that not all topics are equally accessible when it comes to addressing them in the classroom; while informant 2 remarks that interculturality should not be forced but should arise naturally, through the teaching of the language itself:

I think that topics such as religion, politics... are complicated. (Informant 5)

We have to let the singularities of each one emerge, but always with the excuse of language. Language has been very useful to me, at least from language we can exchange something. And if through that, intercultural anecdotes appear...great. But not to ask: "In your country...this?" That is an act of arrogance...of which we often sin because we fear the silence of the classroom. (Informant 2)

Informant 2 also mentions the importance of using everyday life situations to teach not only language but also culture, something that informants 9, 10 and 11 agree with, as they integrate materials from everyday life. Thus, they work on both lexical and cultural competence:

I like to bring them articles so that they can start soaking up the culture here in Spain. (Informant 9)

They learn vocabulary at the same time they are learning about culture. (Informant 10)

I really like to bring everyday things, a magazine, a newspaper, a shopping list, a recipe, a curriculum... or an application such as a census application. Things that are real and that they need to understand in order to be able to apply for them. (Informant 11)

As for the methodology applied in the classes, more than half of the informants (4, 7, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20) agreed in using the communicative approach. However, this choice seems to imply less development of written comprehension and expression:

I try to be like very dynamic, trying to be very oral, trying to recreate situations that are lived on a daily basis, whether it is going to the doctor, shopping, a job interviews... and take advantage of all this background that they sometimes have already had from their experience or to prepare precisely those possible situations that they are going to encounter and where they are going to need, precisely, to put them into practice. (Informant 11)

And then well... the methodology... well, simply communicative, in the sense that what we do is talk a lot. They need to talk... talk a lot... because they need to learn to express themselves, to learn the rules of politeness, to know the expressions they have to use for a future job. (Informant 12)

My methodology is based on what is called the communicative approach, that is to say, it starts from situations of the students' daily and social life. (Informant 13)

The basic objective is for the student to be able to communicate, not fluently, but to do the shopping, to go... for example, to the airport... to read... more or less the basic concepts of Spanish at an A1 level, at an A2 level, and more or less an intermediate B1, B2. And they are real situations because they need, for example, to go to the doctor... or to register, to shop in supermarkets... the basic concepts of everyday life. (Informant 14)

I always try to follow a very dynamic approach, an approach of... that they participate a lot, a lot. (Informant 16)

So, in the end, I always go for the communicative, so that they can speak... and the emergency Spanish... this one they call... that I don't like very much, but in the end it is useful. Effective in the short term, isn't it? So a lot of communication, a lot of speaking, a lot. (Informant 19)

Finally, informants 9 and 15 pointed out some aspects that could be improved and implemented in the classroom. Informant 15 highlighted the need to achieve greater autonomy in the students; while informant 9 emphasized the need to develop personalized exams due to the typical unevenness of the groups, which he had already started to do:

Autonomy is a pending subject. (Informant 15)

I do not do generalized exams, but specific exams for each student's level. (Informant 9)

5. Discussion

From the results obtained, we can affirm that teachers have a high degree of awareness of their students' profile. The most repeated themes around the figure of migrant students are their situation outside the classroom, their motivation and their multicultural profile.

Coinciding with González-Monteaudo and Zamora-Serrato (2019), teachers consider that their students are in a situation of risk and exclusion due to their vulnerability within the system, as many arrive alone and without resources to a new country and have to adapt to a new society, culture and language. Their goal is therefore not only to teach them Spanish but also to make them feel welcome and understood. Likewise, the reality of migrant students outside the classroom is detrimental to the learning process and, in some cases, prevents the student from continuing to attend classes.

However, teachers also emphasize the motivation of their students. They consider that, despite starting from a disadvantaged situation (Martin et al., 2022), the need to find a job and socialize increases their interest in learning the language, which becomes a key element in integrating into the host society. Furthermore, Spanish classes are a meeting place where students can create new bonds and find a temporary refuge.

Student multiculturalism and how this is reflected in the classroom is a recurring theme among teachers. They point out negative aspects such as cultural clashes between teacher and student or among the students themselves, as well as the creation of groups among students, which leads to distancing and, in the worst cases, confrontations. The teachers' role as mediators in the classroom is essential in these situations, as they must resolve conflicts and create an appropriate environment

for the correct development of learning (Ceballos Vacas and Trujillo-González, 2021;Valenti, 2004). However, multiculturalism also entails positive aspects such as the creation of bonds between students due to their shared experience as migrants, as well as the enrichment of learning about new realities beyond one's own culture.

In terms of the figure of the teacher, the most discussed topics were the skills needed to perform their work and the importance of their role in the classroom.

The teachers agreed that in order to carry out this type of work, specific qualities are needed, such as being open-minded, empathetic, emotionally intelligent, patient, approachable and respectful. In addition, due to the multicultural nature of the classroom, it is advisable for teachers to learn about their students' cultures beforehand. Knowing other languages, especially those spoken by the students, is also useful; however, teachers tend to settle for using only English as a bridge language, which often does not work because the students do not know this language.

They highlighted the social work of the teachers and the importance of their role as mediators in the classroom, which is already mentioned in research such as Kramsch (2014), who sees the teacher as an intercultural mediator, and Crozet (2016), who considers him an agent of social transformation. Thus, the teachers must avoid conflicts and facilitate the integration of students into the language and culture of the new community. To this end, it is essential to develop skills such as listening, being a problem solver and knowing how to adapt the methodology and materials to the particular needs of the students.

In relation to the learning process, the conversation revolved around three main themes: the use of tools and devices, the methodologies employed, and the development of language skills.

Teachers agree that they tend to combine the use of traditional tools, such as the blackboard, the textbook or maps, with innovative tools, such as the cell phone, especially after the covid-19 pandemic (Morales Rodríguez, 2021). Likewise, and coinciding with García Cano (2022), teachers see the need to personalize content, adapting existing materials and creating new ones to meet the multicultural profile of the students. In fact, in one association they have created their own textbook for initial levels. However, they also point out that interculturality should not be forced, but should be worked on in a natural way, without forcing the cultural topics to be dealt with in class.

As for the methodology applied in the classes, more than half of the informants agreed to use the communicative approach, linked to orality, dynamism, participation and work on concrete situations of the students' daily life (Domingues Cruz and Saracho Árnaiz, 2020). In this way, they recommend using real materials, such as newspapers or cooking recipes, with which to work on language and culture. The use of this type of materials within a communicative approach allows the development of linguistic competences, such as lexical competence, as well as cultural competences. It also promotes oral skills. However, it was pointed out that written skills, especially written expression, are less developed.

Finally, some aspects that could be improved in the learning process were pointed out, such as the need to achieve greater autonomy in the students or the development of personalized tests due to the differences in the level of the students, which has already begun to be implemented.

6. Conclusions

The aim of this paper is to review the current situation of teaching Spanish as a foreign language to migrants from the perspective of teachers. For this purpose, we have compiled the teachers' testimonies, specifically around three points: the students, the teachers and the teaching process. Moreover, all research questions have been answered. Thus, the teachers agreed that migrant students are usually in a situation of vulnerability, as they often experience difficult situations that have a negative impact on their learning. However, they are also considered a highly motivated student profile, aware of the importance of learning the language of the host country in order to integrate and work. Teaching in the Spanish classroom is not only about language, but also about culture, even becoming a space for socializing and creating bonds. However, on certain occasions there are distances between students due to cultural, generational or level differences. The latter makes the teacher's work particularly difficult because the teacher has to work with very different levels at the same time, to the detriment of both advanced and beginners. The teachers, however, recognize this situation and try to take measures to make learning as optimal as possible, such as the development of personalized tests, adapted to the level of each student.

Likewise, the teachers valued the figure of the teacher, especially in the context of working with migrant students. They consider that a good teacher must have open-mindedness, empathy, emotional intelligence, respect, patience and understanding. It was emphasized that their role is not only to teach the language, but also to mediate in possible conflicts, integrate students and carry out social work for the migrant community. In addition, the convenience of knowing other languages, having knowledge of the students' cultures and knowing how to adapt to the situation and to each student was emphasized.

In relation to Spanish lessons, the teachers highlighted the use of traditional and innovative tools, as well as the personalization, specification and adaptation of materials and content, especially at the initial levels, where students urgently need to know how to perform specific tasks such as shopping or looking for a job. For this reason, the approach used is mainly communicative, seeking to work on oral skills through dynamic and participative activities in which students learn to solve everyday situations, thus integrating cultural competence. The development of this competence is also worked on through the lexicon of everyday texts. In this way, the Spanish as a foreign language classroom becomes a space for teaching language and culture, both parts inseparable from each other, since a sufficient development of communicative competence will allow the social and cultural integration of the migrant, while cultural knowledge will result in a greater development of communicative competence. Finally, some changes to improve learning were mentioned, specifically the need to generate greater autonomy among students, the development of personalized tests, and paying more attention to comprehension and written expression.

With this paper we intend to extend the literature on the teaching of Spanish to migrants and to provide new data on the situation in the classroom from the teachers' perspective. This, however,

is a limitation since we have only worked with the teachers' testimonies and from a qualitative data analysis. Therefore, it would be advisable for future research to expand the corpus to include the students' point of view and carry out research with quantitative data analysis.

We also hope that our research can provide useful information for possible practical applications in the Spanish classroom for migrants, such as providing greater support for the situation of students outside the classroom, training new teachers and developing new materials with which to work from the reality of migrant students and their multiculturalism, as well as looking for ways to work on written skills within the communicative approaches followed in the classroom.

7. References

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