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Motivation through solidarity: Adult immigrants and refugees learning Greek in non-formal educational settings

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The aim of this study is to describe and discuss the unique motivational characteristics of adult immigrants and refugees learning Greek as a second language, characteristics related to the concept of investment in second language learning, based on the results of a qualitative study carried out in non-formal educational settings. Seventeen (17) participants attending Greek lessons in non-formal educational settings in Athens, Greece, were interviewed through semi-structured interviews. The data obtained was analysed using thematic analysis. The students were asked about the reasons they are learning Greek and what motivates them to invest in studying the language. The results of the thematic analysis show that the main motives driving the participants to invest in learning Greek in the research settings were threefold: instrumental, integrative, and related to the L2 learning environment. Learning Greek was considered as a chance that could lead to greater job opportunities, empowerment, and greater integration into the host society. Additionally, the results highlight the fact that the atmosphere in the specific educational settings being very friendly and relaxed was very important for the participants and enhanced their desire to invest in learning Greek in the specific settings. Finally, the social aspect was also significant for the immigrants and refugees, who considered participation in the classes as a means of greater socialisation with both locals and other immigrants. The study highlights that non-formal settings are better suited to migrants/refugees' learning needs and can promote the social inclusion of vulnerable groups and their integration into the host society.

Key words: immigrants, refugees, non-formal learning, second language learning, motivation, solidarity

1. Introduction

The study of immigrants' and refugees' motivation to learn the language of their host country is today especially relevant (Henry, 2017; Kambon, 2015; Meniado, 2019; Stracke et al., 2014), as the number of displaced people has increased dramatically since 2011. In 2015, the number of displaced people worldwide was 65.3 million, the largest number recorded since the end of World War II, and it is believed to have already surpassed 68.5 million (UNHCR, Greece, 2018). Most refugees in Europe since 2013 have been from Syria, Afghanistan, and Somalia (Operational Portal, 2019). Immigration is a result of a combination of factors

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(financial, environmental, political, and social), either in the country of origin or in the host country. The European Union has long been considered a desired destination for many displaced people because of its financial and political stability (Eurostat, 2024). Wars in many parts of the world and the difficult conditions in refugee camps in neighbouring countries led many people to think they would be better off in Europe (López-Dóriga, n.d.). The influx of refugees that followed has caused what has been called a "refugee crisis", with more than one million asylum seekers entering Europe (European Union Agency, 2024).
All this brings to the forefront the vital role of learning the language of the country the immigrants and/or refugees will stay in. Learning the language of the host country is one of the first challenges anybody changing country of residence faces. Language learning is very important to facilitate their smoother integration into the host society (Mogli & Papadopoulou, 2018; Mogli, 2023). Fluency in the receiving country's language is a key qualification for immigrants' integration into the society of the host country (Ortega, 2009). According to extensive research (Beacco et al., 2017; Čuhlová, 2019; Jin & Cortazzi, 2011; Kim, 1988; Kim, 2017; Magos & Politi, 2008; Wedin & Norlund Shaswar, 2019), the intercultural adaptation of immigrants and refugees takes place through communication, which, in interaction with social contact, facilitates the newcomers' cultural adaptation to their new environment. A positive association between second language skills and immigrants' educational and occupational success has been shown (Ortega, 2009). Therefore, two related questions arise: which factors influence the second language acquisition of immigrants/refugees; and what is the role of motivation in this process?

The process of learning a second language (L2) is not identical for everyone (Garcia de Blakeley et al., 2017; Soto Huerta & Pérez, 2015). People differ greatly in how fast and how well they are likely to learn a second language; cognitive abilities alone cannot tell the whole story of individual differences. In explaining perception, behaviour, and learning, we also need to account for human intentions, goals, plans, and commitments (Androulakis, 2008; Ortega, 2009). These are influences that include volition and motivation and can make language learners succeed or fail (Albarracin et al., 2019; Dörnyei, 2001, 2003, 2009a; Dörnyei et al., 2006; Dörnyei, 2019a; Dörnyei et al., 2015; Dörnyei, MacIntyre et al., 2015; Garcia de Blakeley et al., 2017; Ives et al., 2022). People are increasingly being forced to cross linguistic borders due to various reasons which, in turn, affect their motivation when learning a second language; for instance, war, poverty or climate change, with the numbers of involuntary language learners of all ages increasing (Long, 2015). Consequently, there has been considerable interest in the factors affecting second language learning, such as ability, social factors, together with an emphasis on motivation and the role it plays in second language learning. Several models have been proposed, such as Gardner's (1985) model, which deals with the cultural context, individual difference variables and second language acquisition contexts, the social psychological model of bilingualism (Lambert, 1973), the social context model (Clément, 1980) and the acculturation model (Schumann, 1986). Dörnyei (2005; 2009b) extended the conversation and included three dimensions, the ideal L2 self, the ought-to L2 self, and the L2 learning experience, while Norton (2020) focused on a more instrumental construct which is related to investments in individual power. Kim (2013) also stressed the importance of sociocultural factors which affect

immigrants' L2 learning efforts and motivation: the transformation of a motive, integrated with specific, concrete goals and a sense of participation (Kim, 2007). Studies by Albarracin and her associates (2019) showed that extrinsic and integrative orientations influenced the acquisition of second language skills for immigrants.

Research has highlighted that the role of motivation is pivotal in shaping adult immigrants' and refugees' attitudes towards learning the second language (Albarracin et al., 2019; Khan & Takkak, 2021; Ortega, 2009). The role of non-formal contexts has been investigated (Mogli, 2023), but there is a need for more studies specifically focusing on the motivation of the migrant/refugee students attending non-formal educational establishments. This study aims to address this gap by discussing the motivational propensities of immigrants and refugees learning Greek as a second language, based on the results of a qualitative study carried out in non-formal educational settings.

The primary research questions of the study were the following:

- What are the main reasons why immigrants and refugees learn Greek?
- What motivates them to invest in studying the language?
- Are non-formal educational contexts and the learning experience there more suited to migrant/refugee learners' needs, compared to formal ones?
- Is the atmosphere of friendliness and solidarity which characterises non-formal educational settings in Greece conducive to immigrants' and refugees' increased desire for participation in second language classes?

Historically, Greece has been a country sending immigrants to other countries in the past, while in recent years, the tide has turned, and it has received a large number of immigrants and refugees. With this influx since the 1990s in Greece, there has been increased demand for learning Greek. There were very few free language learning programs for Greek as L2 open to the public then (Simopoulos, 2014). There were and still are programs in Greek universities, which have been running for many years, but students there must pay fees to attend, which makes attendance extremely difficult in the case of immigrants/refugees. There have been programs by Centers of Vocational Education or NGOs and volunteer organisations (Simopoulos, 2014; Tsaggadas, 2017). Consequently, there was a rise of non-formal educational organisations, which tried to respond to demand and offered free classes of Greek as a second language to immigrants/refugees.

The settings studied for the purposes of this research were all non-formal and were operated exclusively by volunteers, many of whom (but not all) were teachers by profession, who had the desire to help the immigrants/refugees learn Greek as a second language. They were firm believers in anti-racism and solidarity with disadvantaged groups, who felt that migrants and refugees had been excluded from formal education, as many of the learners did not have the required paperwork to be eligible for Greek classes, which might have been organised by the government. Since second language learning is pivotal in migrant/refugee inclusion and integration in the host society, it is important to investigate the factors that motivate adult migrants/refugees to invest in learning the second language and which educational settings are best suited to their needs. This will help formulate important suggestions for language teachers, policy makers and everyone involved in migrant inclusion efforts.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Motivation in SLA

The nature of second language learning is very complex and there have been many attempts to define its characteristics. Motivation plays an important role for immigrants who are trying to learn the language of the host country as has been suggested by research done not only in Europe but also Asia and the US. Studies by Ożańska-Ponikwia and Dewaele (2012) in the UK suggest that progress in the L2 depends not only on immersion in the L2 but also on the L2 user's basic inclination to seek out social interactions in the L2. Instrumental motivation seems to predominate for Asian learners (Norris-Holt, 2001), while in the US intrinsic, extrinsic, and integrative orientations influence migrants' second language learning acquisition (Albarracin et al., 2019). In Canada, on the other hand, integrative and instrumental motivations, as well as attitude to the learning situation are all important factors according to a study investigating migrants' L2 acquisition in Canada (Mady, 2015). Research on second language acquisition among new immigrants in England, Germany, Ireland, and the Netherlands shows that conditions associated with efficiency, exposure, and incentives matter for language learning (Kristen et al., 2016).

The role of motivation in second language acquisition (SLA) has been well documented (Dörnyei, 2001; Gardner, 1985; Ushioda, 1994). According to Dörnyei and Ottó (1998), motivation refers to "the dynamically changing cumulative arousal in a person that initiates, directs, coordinates, amplifies, terminates and evaluates the cognitive and motor processes whereby initial wishes and desires are selected, prioritised, operationalised and (successfully or unsuccessfully) acted out" (Dörnyei & Ottó, 1998, p. 65). Dörnyei and Ushioda (2009) noted that L2 motivation was "in the process of being radically reconceptualised and retheorised in the context of contemporary notions of self and identity" (p. 1). The various social psychological models in second language acquisition seek to explain the individual characteristics that affect SLA, and sometimes how social context influences these characteristics, with an emphasis on affective factors such as attitudes, motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety, as well as the degree of contact between the L2 learners and the target language group (Siegel, 2003). Dörnyei introduced the theory of the *L2 Motivational Self System* in L2 motivation research to help understand what gives energy to L2 learners to sustain the effort it takes to master the second language. It consists of three dimensions, two future self-guides representing possible selves (ideal and ought-to) and the L2 learning experience, which can be a strong predictor of motivated behaviour (Dörnyei, 2019b). The L2 Learning Experience concerns "situation-specific motives related to the immediate learning environment and experience" (Dörnyei, 2019b, p. 21). Factors which are related to events in the classroom and characteristics of the learner group can affect L2 motivation significantly. Student engagement in learning tasks is a very popular notion and a multi-dimensional construct, as it stresses that for learning to be meaningful, the student must actively participate in the learning process, especially so in second language acquisition, as it requires an extended period of practice. The L2 student should engage with the school context, syllabus, and teaching materials, learning tasks, his/her peers, and the teacher (Dörnyei, 2019b).

2.2 The concept of investment

Motivation and investment share much common ground, as they represent two different perspectives which can both be used to examine why learners choose to learn another language. Motivation refers to "an internal state that enables an action ('to learn') and involves understanding the factors that cause this state. Investment, on the other hand, refers to a choice to participate in a social practice ('learning') and involves understanding the material and symbolic context in which this choice is made" (Darvin & Norton, 2023 p. 33). Investment researchers ask how, why and to what extent certain conditions shape the investment of an individual learner in learning the L2. The notion of investment in second language learning is particularly stressed by Norton (Norton, 2000; Norton, 2013; Norton & McKinney, 2011), which is compatible with the notion that the sense of self and identity is complex, multiple and a site of struggle and negotiation. Stressing the complex relationship between the social world and the language learner, she puts emphasis on the relations of power related to the language learning process (Darvin & Norton, 2015). While motivation theories often portray second language learners as having a consistent and unified identity, the concept of investment sees the learner as a social entity with a complex identity which constantly evolves depending on the context and is shaped through social interaction. A student might be highly motivated; however, they may not be invested in the language practices in a particular classroom if those practices involve elements of racism, sexism, or homophobia (Darvin & Norton, 2015).

According to Norton (Darvin & Norton, 2015), there is a need to consider the factors that facilitate the process of learning, and how individuals, who are defined by various characteristics such as race, ethnicity, gender, social class, and sexual orientation, might either be denied or granted the privilege to express their thoughts and opinions in each context. This notion has an important place in SLA, as it highlights the relationship between learner identity and the individuals' commitment to learning (Darvin & Norton, 2015; Triantafillidou & Hedgcock, 2007). According to Darvin and Norton (2015) and Norton and McKinney (2011), learners invest in learning a language because they will acquire symbolic and material resources, which will increase their cultural and symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1993) and social power (Darvin & Norton, 2017). The notion of symbolic capital is closely connected to the concept of investment. According to Darvin and Norton (2015), this concept points out the fact that learners do not enter learning spaces in the host country as blank slates; they bring with them their own resources, including material assets, linguistic skills, and social networks. In addition, moving into a new environment requires gaining new material and symbolic resources and also transforming the existing capital that learners have into qualities which are considered valuable in the new setting. This process is challenging, as the value attributed to certain aspects in one place may be significantly devalued in another. By learning the host language, the migrants/refugees acquire social power and the ability to participate in imagined communities, which are "groups of people and networks that learners aspire to be part of and that extend from local sets of relationships" (Darvin, 2019, p. 250). Participating in these imagined communities requires the formation of an imagined identity and learning the language is not just acquiring second language structures but participating in a community of practice (Norton & McKinney,

2011). The concept of investment views language learners as having "complex, multiple identities, changing across time and space, and reproduced in social interaction" (Darvin & Norton, 2017, pp. 2–3). When a learner makes an investment in the target language, they concurrently invest in their own identity and re-imagine themselves. In addition, learners demonstrate their autonomy by choosing what they consider agrees with their existing or imagined identities, thus accepting, or opposing dominant practices. They also decide to invest in or disinvest from the language within specific communities and educational settings (Darvin & Norton, 2017).

Power operates across different levels, micro, meso, and macro, reconfiguring patterns of inclusion and exclusion within and beyond language contexts (Norton, 2020). The dynamics between language learners and their instructors are unequal: instructors possess the power to influence these dynamics in various ways, bringing with them their own perspectives and assumptions about the world, which may differ from those of their students (Darvin & Norton, 2023). Investment puts emphasis on "how histories, lived experiences and social practices shape language learning" (Darvin & Norton, 2023, p. 29). Language learners, educators, and researchers employ diverse strategies to navigate the often unequal power dynamics, aiming to affirm a broader spectrum of identities through which individuals can express themselves and be recognised (Norton, 2020). When the learners feel accepted in their learning environment, teaching of the second language, effectively, the dominant language, with all the ideological charge it carries, does not become another means of control, but a tool of empowerment (Cummins, 2000; Cummins & Early, 2015; Darvin & Norton, 2015). As identity is something fluid, the investment of learners depends on "the dynamic negotiation of power in different fields, and thus investment is complex, contradictory, and in a state of flux" ((Darvin & Norton, 2015, p. 37). Studies by Ollerhead (2012) in Australia have shown that investment, the sense of belonging to an imagined community, and hopes for the future, were together an integral part of migrant identity. Lee (2014) also highlighted the role of identity and investment in second language learning environments, as investment contributed to the increase of the learners' participation and the shifting of their identity, which is socially constructed.

The concept of investment aims to capture the intricate link between language learners and the changing social landscape. It conceives of language learners as having complex, multifaceted social identities, and diverse goals. When language learners engage in communication, they are not simply exchanging information with speakers of the target language; rather, they are continuously shaping and reshaping their understanding of their own identity and their connection to the broader social context (Norton Peirce, 1995).

2.3 Non-formal learning

The study focuses on non-formal learning environments, since the need to do more research outside formal educational settings has been identified, to determine whether non-formal education is better suited to adult second language learners. Coombs and Ahmed (1974) define non-formal education as "any organised, systematic, educational activity carried on outside the framework of

the formal system to provide selected types of learning to particular subgroups in the population, adults as well as children" (Coombs & Ahmed, 1974, p. 8). It is organised (even though this can be loose), and it may (but not necessarily) have a curriculum (which is always flexible) (Non Formal Pathways, 2017). There is no clear distinction between formal and non-formal educational programs; they are often combined in hybrid programmes, which have proven to be more effective (Radcliffe & Colletta, 1989; Non Formal Pathways, 2017; Norqvist & Leffler, 2017). According to research, there are certain defining characteristics of non-formal education (Lima et al., 2019; Non-Formal Pathways, 2017; Radcliffe & Colletta, 1989; Shavard, 2014; Singh, 2015): it is less structured compared to formal education and is, therefore, more flexible; learner centricity is an important characteristic of non-formal education; it is based on participatory learning and is student-centered, taking into account the needs and interests of the learners; the fact that it is based on a participatory learning system means that the traditional role of the teacher changes, and the instructor is not the sole provider of knowledge, but also learns together with the students; non-formal education tends to be close to real life concerns and has more direct targets; non formal educational activities strive to be as close as possible to the learners' real life concerns and promote skills-oriented and experiential learning; learning to learn is also encouraged, so that students develop skills that will allow them to manage their education themselves, as well as self-evaluation, based not on competition but on a friendlier approach and the encouragement of the students to evaluate their progress; the whole process aims to help the learners clearly understand how the learning will benefit them both personally, socially and professionally; finally, it is more democratic and solidary, as the participants contribute to all activities and learn cooperatively.

Adult education and non-formal education are very important in today's globalised world, where mobility of populations is the norm. They can offer opportunities for vulnerable groups with less access to formal education institutions such as immigrants and refugees. Because the main priority of immigrants and refugees is to provide a livelihood for themselves and their families, their priority is basically work, so they cannot attend formal education courses and often have no access to formal education; thus, non-formal education is often the only choice they have. The European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA, 2015) stresses the importance of adult education, both for refugees and the host societies. Adult and non-formal education offer opportunities for vulnerable groups with less access to formal education institutions.

There are numerous benefits of non-formal education for immigrants/refugees. It is flexible, it can be easily adjusted to specific needs of vulnerable groups like these, and it does not require many resources. For instance, it can use volunteers as instructors. It intensifies motivation for learning the L2, as it has immediate results and creates a sense of belonging to the community (of the class/school and the host community). As a result, it promotes interaction outside the classroom, intercultural contact with members of the host community and also promotes inclusion (Greaves et al., 2019; Non Formal Pathways, 2017; Wiktorin, 2017). It helps migrants/refugees integrate, organising intercultural encounters with the locals, as it is important for the latter-mentioned to understand who migrants and refugees are, where they come from and why they have left their home counties. This is especially pertinent nowadays with the rise of xenophobia in Europe.

3. Data and methods of the research

The interviews were conducted between April 2018 and June 2018. The settings, where Greek language was taught to migrants/refugees and where the study was conducted, were three in number: The Sunday School of Immigrants, the Migrants Social Center, and the Pireaus Open School for Immigrants. All of them were in Athens, Greece, and were involved in promoting immigrant/refugee rights. The instructors teaching in the classes that the researcher conducted the research in were ten (10) in total, seven (7) women and two (2) men, only two (2) of whom were qualified Greek language teachers and one with experience in teaching but on another subject, biochemistry. All the rest (7) did not have any experience in teaching before volunteering to teach in the respective language setting. They were motivated to offer the classes for various reasons, mainly to show solidarity to migrants, and help migrants better integrate into the host society. Through volunteering to teach Greek to migrants/refugees, they wanted to fight racist attitudes and therefore saw learning Greek as a means of supporting immigrant/refugee rights.

The non-formal educational settings investigated had all been operating for many years and had a lot of experience in teaching Greek as a second language to immigrants and refugees. The Migrants Social Center had been operating for twenty-two years at the time the study was conducted. It was established by the Network of Social Support for Immigrants/Refugees and was one of the first non-formal establishments offering free classes to immigrants/refugees in Greece. The classes take place in a building that was occupied, in Exarcheia, which is a migrant-friendly neighborhood in Athens. Conditions for teaching are not ideal, the building is not suitable for classes, the lessons take place in the bar of the building under occupation and there is noise from outside. The classes take place on weekdays and weekends. The Sunday School of Immigrants has also been operating for fifteen years, again in a building that had been occupied. All the instructors are volunteers (some of them being second generation immigrants themselves). The building is not suitable for classes: there were some classrooms but, due to the large number of students, lessons took place everywhere in the building which, consequently, was noisy. Classes only take place on Sundays because this is the only day immigrants do not work. Finally, the Pireaus Open School for Immigrants is in Piraeus, a neighbourhood with a large immigrant population, and has been operating for fourteen years. Unlike the other two, the lessons take place in a public school building outside regular school times, mainly on Wednesdays and weekends. The people involved also support solidarity and anti-racism. The instructors in all the settings are all volunteers.

The study participants were refugees and immigrants who were attending Greek lessons in non-formal educational settings in Athens, Greece. The interviews took place at the settings of the schools, usually after class, because the participants felt more at ease there, as this was a familiar environment, but also because they led very busy lives, most of them working long hours. Consequently, it would have been extremely difficult to arrange a meeting in a place and time outside the classes. The study was conducted through semi-structured interviews conducted in Greek (except for two participants who chose to speak in English) although the choice of language was left to the participants. The study participants were asked about their Greek language learning history, the reasons

they were learning Greek, and what motivated them to invest in studying the L2. They were asked what their expectations from the classes were, and if they responded to their needs. They were encouraged to comment on their relationship with their instructors and the specific educational setting (see the Appendix). The interviews were manually transcribed and analyzed using thematic analysis.

The interviewees were 17 in total (4 women and 13 men) and were from: Afghanistan, Albania [4 participants], Bangladesh [2 participants], India, Iran, Ireland, Pakistan [4 participants], Nigeria and Ukraine. Their ages ranged from 26 to 57 years old. Most of them had been living in Greece for many years (Table 1).

Most of the interviewees had a relatively good L2 competence: they could express themselves fluently, understand and answer the researcher's questions in detail (not surprising, as many of them had lived in Greece for many years). There were some beginners who spoke in English and some who agreed to give the interview but stressed that their Greek was not so good, but the majority of the students were attending more advanced language classes. Even the participants who commented that their level in Greek was not adequate were, in fact, able to respond to all the researcher's questions and express their views on what was being asked. It needs to be noted, however, that since most of the interviews were held in Greek, it means that the participants had a relatively high level of L2 proficiency and might be considered 'successful' learners. This factor may have had an impact on the study results.

Table 1. Participants

Interviewee	Setting	Gender	Age	Country of origin	Length of stay in Greece
S1	Migrants Social Centre (MSC)	male	29	Afghanistan	5 years
S2	Piraeus Open School for Immigrants (POPIM)	female	57	Albania	22 years
S3	POPIM	female	52	Albania	20 years
S4	POPIM	female	30	Albania	4 years
S5	MSC	male	45	Albania	2 years
S6	MSC	male	30	Bangladesh	10 years
S7	MSC	male	26	Bangladesh	6 years
A8	POPIM	male	45	India	14 years
S9	POPIM	male	34	India	17 years
S10	Sunday School of Immigrants (SSI)	male	40	Iran	14 years
S11	SSI	male	28	Ireland	2 years
S12	POPIM	male	44	Pakistan	23
S13	POPIM	male	35	Pakistan	14
S14	POPIM	male	28	Pakistan	10
S15	POPIM	male	57	Pakistan	15
S16	POPIM	male	40	Nigeria	17 years
S17	POPIM	female	56	Ukraine	3,5 years

The interviewees were not personal acquaintances of the researcher, but she personally knew some of their instructors, which facilitated the participants' willingness to give interviews. There were no other criteria for participation, the only requirement being for the migrants/refugees to attend Greek classes in a non-formal educational setting and their willingness to participate in the study. It is worth noting that, of those who refused to give an interview in the Pireaus Open School for Immigrants, the majority were women. It proved particularly helpful, in this regard, that the researcher spoke some basic Hindi –enabling her to introduce herself to the participants in English, Greek and Hindi- and was familiar with Indian and Pakistani culture. This immediately attracted Indian and Pakistani migrants, who were very interested to know how she had learnt the language, creating a relaxed atmosphere which helped participants feel at ease and express themselves freely. It also happened that some migrants who were interviewed encouraged some of their classmates, who were initially shy, to be interviewed as well.

4. Results

Based on a thematic analysis of each of the 17 recorded interviews investigating the motivation and reasons for the immigrants and refugees to learn Greek, different categories of motivational variables surfaced. For the purposes of analysis and tracing underlying trends, variables which shared common characteristics were classified together and this resulted in three descriptive categories emerging: instrumental, integrative (Gardner & Lamber, 1972) and motivation related to the L2 learning environment (Dörnyei, 2019b). The fact that the setting was non-formal also seemed to play an important role in the participants' decision to attend classes there and further invest in second language learning.

4.1 Motivation for learning Greek as L2

4.1.1 Instrumental motivation

Instrumental motivation proved very important for the participants. Specifically, this had to do with work, their residency application, family, dealing with public services, knowledge of specialised vocabulary regarding their professions and acquiring autonomy to be able to function in every day demands of life in the host country by communicating in the target language.

Work was one of the most important reasons why the participants attended the class; learning Greek was considered by the immigrants and refugees as a chance that could lead to greater job opportunities. Most participants mentioned work as the main reason for attending the classes. They believed a better knowledge of Greek would: help them find work; help them in their work by using the L2 in their current workplace; improve their job prospects by enabling them to find a better job.

> "I lost two-three job opportunities because of that reason, because I couldn't speak (Greek)" (S10)

> "That's why I come here, to learn to speak and to find a job" (S1)
>
> "It's the first question when you go to work. They ask if you speak Greek. If you don't know the language, how can you manage, how can they explain how to do your job, what you have to do?" (S9)
>
> "I want to learn Greek and I can't read the order, I am a cook, what shit do I cook if I can't read Greek" (S18)
>
> "If I didn't know Greek I wouldn't be able to move on in my job and my life" (S15).

Another reason mentioned was because it would promote their residence application.

> "My lawyer told me to go to school because it will help with my papers" (S14)
>
> "They asked for it there [means the public service where she had gone, in order to fill in paperwork] and I asked, they didn't know, I asked some friends, they say there is (this school)" (S1).

Those of the participants who had a family mentioned that knowledge of Greek would make it easier for them to help their children with their homework.

Very important for the participants was the ability to communicate with public services and learn specialised vocabulary in order to communicate with doctors and in hospitals.

> "You will go to school, the tax office, you need to fill in a paper, you have to wait if someone knows, you have to ask someone 'can you please?'. It's a different thing to be able to read on your own. In the past they would put a paper in front of me and they said 'sign here' but I didn't know what it was. Now at least I can read what it says" (S10)
>
> "Only at the doctor, because I didn't speak English to the doctor, that's why I hadn't learnt. I had health problems and I had to do physio and it was hard for me and I learnt to speak there, because I can understand" (S8).

In addition, they wanted to learn the language to facilitate doing everyday chores, getting around the city; one participant particularly mentioned he started the classes because he wanted to get a driver's license.

Being more autonomous without having to rely on locals for help also appeared to be important.

> "In order to know about everything, to see this street where I have to go and to read the street signs, I don't like to ask" (S18)

Acquiring literacy skills or improving their level in it was stressed by the participants and it gave them skills and power to cope with everyday challenges.

> "Because I really liked to learn Greek. When I came to Greece I didn't even know a word, I knew only «yes» and «no», nothing else and I wanted to learn Greek" (S6).

> "Whatever I need at the government [offices], wherever I go, to fill in my information, I go on my own and everything I've learnt so far helps me very much" (S15)

> "In order not to be fooled, it's good for me to know, I knew how to speak but it was a problem, to have a letter that writes something and I had to go to a friend or a lawyer so that they tell me what it says. It's good for me to write and read" (S2).

The learning of the second language, therefore, has the dual purpose of both serving the learners' pressing needs to function in their host environment on their own, and becoming more independent and autonomous.

There were also practical reasons why the participants chose to attend the specific classes; primarily, because they were free of charge,

> "We have class and it was for free… I thought, it's free, it's a chance, I have to grab it, that's why I came" (S13).

Additionally, they were close to their house/workplace and because the days/times of the classes were convenient for them (Sunday, which is the only day of the week they do not go to work). This is very important, as many of the participants would not be able to afford even low tuition fees—they also prioritise work, so again, they would not be able to enroll in a formal language class that took place on a regular basis.

4.1.2 Integrative motivation

Learning the host language was also seen as a way to learn about the host culture.

> "I feel learning the language helps you to learn about the culture also, because it's interlinked so you learn about the Greek culture through the language" (S19)

> "(the instructor) except for the class, (he talks about) culture, history, all this he explains very nicely and I am interested in that" (S5).

Therefore, language and culture are interconnected, with the learners' desiring to improve their knowledge in both.

Integration into the host society was also mentioned by the participants. They pointed out that they lived in the host country, so it was only natural to want to learn the language, since they planned on staying in Greece. Some participants mentioned being married to a Greek person as motivation for learning the host language.

> "I want to live in Greece and I want to know how to read a book, a newspaper, I want to write when I go to an office, to fill in, how to do, that is if you want to stay in a country you have to know the language" (S7)

> "Because it's important, I live in Greece so I have to learn, I want to communicate with the people more easily, I understand better, it's very important (to know) the Greek language, it's worth learning it" (S10)

> "Since I decided to stay here in Greece, I have to learn the language, to learn Greek well so that I can stay here, otherwise, I don't know; I have to learn the language" (S15).

Issues of respect seemed very important for the participants. By learning the language, you earn respect, so by acquiring language skills you acquire symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1993).

> "It's better, whoever goes to another country they have to learn the language, to work, you have to speak seriously, to speak, that is respect, so that they know you are a foreigner but they don't care, I have to respect everyone and they (have to) respect me. If I speak well, everyone will respect me" (S13).

Socializing with other immigrants and refugees but also their Greek instructors was mentioned by many participants as a reason they attended the classes.

> "I also use Duo Lingo along with the Greek lessons and I feel these apps can help with the Greek lessons, but I think the classes are the most important to, especially places like Steki where volunteers help immigrants and stuff like this and you meet people and you learn about the culture and stuff like that" (S19).

Other activities which were organised in these settings, like trips or parties, were also a chance to meet people and make friends. Additionally, knowledge of the host language was clearly seen as a means to integrate into the host society.

> "(If) I learn, (if) I know how to speak Greek it will be easier for me to integrate" (S3).

The interpersonal aspect of being in a learning environment and meeting classmates and instructors alike seems to enhance the desire to invest in attending classes and is seen as a facilitator for the participants' integration into the host society.

4.1.3 The L2 Learning Experience

The educational process followed in the non-formal educational settings, the relaxed approach in the classroom, was mentioned as an important reason for attending the classes, since it created an atmosphere of support and solidarity. The immigrants and refugees felt no pressure or stress and they had the sense that everybody, students, and teachers alike, contributed to the lesson.

> "For me, I like to not be so serious but I think you learn better if you are more relaxed but I do know people that said like sometimes in Maro's class there is too much laughing, so I just enjoy the gathering, I don't want to come to class and I know everything, I want to learn even if I only learn one or two new words a day I am happy" (S3)

> "I love how everybody is contributing, a good teacher, everyone has to contribute" (S19).

A participant who also attended classes in the public Second Chance School (a school for adults who have not finished their formal education, operating in the afternoon) commented that the lessons in Sunday School for Immigrants were more relevant for people who learn Greek as a second language and more suited to their needs.

The vital role the instructors played was also mentioned during the interviews. The participants considered them very good at what they do, and some had

developed connections with certain instructors, even outside the classroom. The teachers were described as having a more personal, friendly relationship with many of the participants; this was given as an important reason why the students invested time and effort to attend the classes. In short, the relationship between student and teacher, in the specific context, is not in accordance with the regular unequal dynamics of the teacher having authority; rather, everybody feels equal, valued, and respected. The instructors were described as friends with the participants.

> "With John (the instructor) we have been together for many years and we know each other very well. He explains really well and I like that. It's also because of the teacher now, because of the teacher we try not to miss a class, because he gives us such a nice class" (S9)

> "As soon as I came here and I saw the people that were here, they were very happy, the teachers, all of them are very nice, I don't know what to say, and I said: 'I am not going away from this school, I won't change (schools)'. Because I had been to other schools too and I said: 'I am not going to change for anything' and I said: 'As long as I can, I will continue Greek here, I won't stop for anything' " (S6).

All the settings in which the research took place expressed solidarity with immigrants and refugees through different means, one of them being the provision of Greek classes for free. Besides this, there were other activities organised with the aim of promoting inclusion and a feeling of belonging and acceptance between migrants and locals. The fact that the instructors were volunteers was evidence for the participants that their instructors were really interested in teaching immigrants and refugees and that they actively practiced solidarity with disadvantaged groups. The participants stressed the fact that their solidarity through volunteering to teach for free was what made them really effective educators, and which helped the students to learn the language in a more relaxed, friendly setting.

> "I think here it's better to learn because everyone who gives class here they do it with their heart, work done with the heart you have to believe, what is done like trrrrrr, what to learn? What is done with the heart, the brain wants, it works. If (the teacher) doesn't say it with (their) heart, you can't understand anything. That's why I like it here, I learn better" (S16).

The non-formal settings and the whole approach of the instructors created a friendly atmosphere, where solidarity with migrants was expressed in an explicit way and everyone was treated as equals; there was, in short, no racism. The basic indicator of this solidarity, according to the participants, was the fact the instructors volunteered to teach Greek for free.

> "Here there are very good people, they all love me, I came to learn and we are happy with everyone at the school, because they come and we have class, I like this, this shows they are compassionate people and they help us and they are happy, that is they help and love you. They never think that these people are foreigners. They never think about it, that's it" (S13).

The fact that the atmosphere in these settings was relaxed and friendly surfaced as a very important factor in most interviews. Volunteering was greatly appreciated and was taken as a token of the instructors' interest and willingness

to help immigrants and refugees integrate in their host society. Many participants attributed the effectiveness of the lessons to the fact that the instructors loved what they did.

In addition, attending classes was also seen by the immigrants and refugees as a pleasant way to spend their free time, which was itself very limited due to work obligations. The investment the participants made and their increased motivation specifically, due to the solidarity and friendly, non-racist attitudes of everyone involved was explicitly mentioned. They stressed that the atmosphere in these settings was different from other schools they had attended in the past and that this was an important factor that reinforced their motivation to attend the classes and devote the extremely limited free time they had, due to work commitments, to learning Greek.

> "That's why it's different, the school helps, the climate changes, because we are 5 days, 6 days at work, then at home, there is nothing else, the school is something else, that's why I DEFINITELY come to school, the atmosphere is different, we see friends, we laugh, we tell jokes, we have a good time" (S9).

Overall, participants felt respected and valued in the specific contexts while the attitude of solidarity of the instructors towards them seemed to be an important factor which motivated them to attend the classes regularly.

5. Discussion

According to the results of the study, immigrants and refugees' motivation is comprised of different tenets which seem to be interconnected; there are a variety of reasons, often overlapping, why the participants decide to invest time and effort into taking Greek classes. This is also seen in other research on immigrants'/refugees' motivation (Kristen et al., 2016; Mady, 2015; Meniado, 2019; Ożańska-Ponikwia & Dewaele, 2012; Stracke et al., 2014).

The motivation of migrant and refugee students attending second language classes in non-formal educational settings is comprised of instrumental and integrative motivation, which is to be expected, as second language learners often feel the need to invest time and effort in learning in order to be able to carry out practical, everyday tasks in the second language and to improve the knowledge they may have already acquired while living in the host country. In accordance with Dörnyei's (2019a) ought-to self, the participants feel they have duties and obligations to perform in the host country and feel that they need to acquire enough knowledge of the L2 so that they can perform practical, everyday tasks. Instrumental motivation seems particularly important, as the participants feel that they would improve their job prospects by speaking the host language. But there was also a strong desire for integration into the host society and improvement of their prospects/position/status, motivating participants to attend lessons and invest in them. This is in accordance with research results which have stressed the importance of integrativeness in second language learning motivation (Dörnyei, 2019a; Ortega, 2009). Instrumental and integrative motivation seem to predominate in other studies which research migrant motivation (Albarracin et al., 2019; Bernaus et al., 2004; Mady, 2015).

The L2 learning environment, specifically the friendly atmosphere in the classroom, seems to be a significant factor which helps sustain migrant'/refugees' student motivation to continue attending the specific type of classes. The L2 Learning Environment (Dörnyei, 2019b) seems to be, for the specific sample, a very important motivational factor. The non-formal educational approach followed by all three establishments seems suitable for the immigrants' and refugees' needs and intensifies motivation. The participants themselves expressed very positive attitudes towards the particular instructional setting. The friendly atmosphere and the personal relationships not only with other immigrants and refugees but also with their instructors were important factors leading to the immigrants'/refugees' attendance and investment in language learning. Some of the participants mentioned that they had attended other classes in the past or were even attending classes in other settings at the same time; nevertheless, they expressed a definitive preference for the particular environments, stating that the lessons there were more relevant to their needs as second language learners. Consequently, it seems that non-formal educational settings and the way they are organised to facilitate an atmosphere of respect, friendliness, and solidarity, are conducive to immigrants' and refugees' heightened participation in them. The fact that all the instructors were volunteers was greatly appreciated by the participants, who mentioned that the love and respect with which the instructors approached them made them more effective in teaching the second language and greatly enhanced the students' motivation to attend the classes.

Attending classes and improving their level in the second language seems to have important emotional effects on the participants, who feel themselves to be more part of the host society; they consider they gain more respect this way and get the chance to expand their circle of acquaintances by socializing with their teachers and classmates. Learning the L2 would give them the symbolic capital they need (Bourdieu, 1993; Darvin & Norton, 2017) to reach their ideal self (Dörnyei, 2019b) and become better integrated into the community and get the respect they need, far from racist attitudes. In addition, the learning of the second language makes them more independent, empowering them and facilitating their integration into both the micro-environment of the class and the macro-environment of the host country. In short, emotional, and social issues also come into play in the participants' decision to attend lessons, not only purely instrumental or cognitive concerns.

In conclusion, the study highlights the importance of second language learning for the social inclusion of vulnerable groups like immigrants and refugees; it additionally focuses on the significance of the educational setting in the enhancement of motivation and the empowerment of the students. The atmosphere of solidarity and friendliness in the settings which were studied contributed significantly to the participants feeling accepted and respected. Other research has reached similar findings (Beacco et al., 2017; Dörnyei, 2009b; Kim, 2017; Magos & Politi, 2008; Mogli & Papadopoulou, 2018; Mogli, 2023; Myers-Scotton, 2006; Ortega, 2009; Wiktorin, 2017). The non-formal environment gave participants the opportunity to come into contact with other immigrants and refugees but also with native speakers of the language (their instructors). Their integration into the host society can be facilitated through second language learning and attending classes in non-formal educational settings seems to be suited to their needs, as the educational/emotional environment created and the

teaching approach followed seem not only to motivate immigrants/refugees to attend, but also sustain motivation.

It must be stressed, though, that motivation and attitudes towards a second language are not something static or stable; they are multi-dimensional and can be influenced by various factors (internal and external). It is not so much the type as the intensity of motivation that makes the difference in learning a second language; there is no determining factor, they are all interconnected. It also depends on the context, which is influenced by societal factors (Dörnyei, 2003, 2019a; McGroarty, 1996; Myers-Scotton, 2006; Papi et al., 2019).

More research is needed to confidently link student engagement, motivation, and future student aspirations. It is important to determine what factors can boost motivation for adult immigrants and refugees to invest in learning the host language; the results of the advantages non-formal education offers could then be transferred to other, more formal, educational settings.

6. Limitations of the study

The size of the sample was small and there needs to be more extensive research on immigrants'/refugees' motivation related to second language learning in non-formal environments. In addition, other non-formal educational settings, like those of NGOs teaching immigrants and refugees Greek, lack the element of instructors' volunteering and subsequent solidarity with those populations, which could have a significant impact on the students' motivation. In addition, at least in Greece, migrant students rarely attend formal educational settings; there needs to be an investigation regarding the reasons for this and if it is related to the fact that non-formal learning environments are more suitable to adult second language learners. More extensive research, both qualitative but also quantitative, on adult immigrant/refugee motivation would be needed to draw more general conclusions (although it may be difficult to reach a large number of migrants/refugees). It would also be interesting to do comparative research to spot differences in approaches between formal and non-formal settings and how they affect motivation.

Additionally, the participants in the study had a relatively high level of L2 proficiency in Greek, making them unrepresentative of the whole second language learner population. More research that includes interviewing beginners in their native language or English could shed more light on motivation for a more diverse student population. More extensive research could also inform policy making and all aspects of refugee/migrant L2 education, as efforts can be more targeted to enhance their motivation and could be reflected in curriculum development, material production, teacher training, the design of the educational environment and efforts for greater inclusion in the host society through various initiatives.

Disclosure statement

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Appendix

Interview questions

As the interview protocol was semi-structured, the way the interviews were conducted depended on various factors, including the language proficiency of the interviewees in Greek; it also depended on rapport built between the researcher and the interviewees, as they were not personal acquaintances of the researcher. This meant that there was a chance to talk about issues that were not anticipated beforehand. For the purposes of facilitating the interview process, there was an interview guide which was prepared before the interviews took place. Some of the questions asked included the following:

- Why do you want to learn Greek?
- Do you want to learn Greek in order to stay in Greece permanently or so as to be able to communicate until you settle in another country?
- Do you speak Greek outside the classroom? With whom?
- Do you feel it is a personal achievement of yours when you speak Greek?
- Do you believe that the Greek you know so far opens some doors for you in order to find employment and become integrated in Greek society?
- Why did you choose to study here? Have you had lessons somewhere else?
- Are the classes relevant to your needs?
- Are the classes about things you find interesting?
- Do you believe your social life is richer because you attend these classes and that you meet people through them?
- Do the lessons help you deal with problems you might have and feel stronger?

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