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"THIS IS NOT MY WORLD". ESSENTIAL SUPPORT STRATEGIES FOR NEWLY ARRIVED ADULT IMMIGRANTS LEARNING SWEDISH

Summary. In Sweden, the state-sponsored language education, *Swedish for immigrants* (Sfi), provides language and cultural knowledge for the integration of newly arrived adult migrants in Swedish society. Sfi's educational quality has sustained severe criticism. Through qualitative investigation of Sfi teacher work, this study aims to find out what pedagogical priorities guide the teachers' classroom practices with linguistically and culturally diverse students. Furthermore, it aims to compare the contributions to Sfi learning environments of ethnically diverse teachers whose language experiences are different. Research into second language acquisition and native and non-native second language teachers contextualize the research aims. Bakhtin's (1986) conception of human understanding as the meeting of two consciousnesses and García's ideas about translanguaging in language education for adult migrants provide theoretical perspectives. Classroom observation alongside teacher focus groups generated data. Content analysis condensed the data into five *essential support strategies* that foreground students' existential needs, their home languages as a learning resource, integration, learning challenge and instructional partnership between ethnically diverse teachers. Findings do not support the view that non-native language teachers are better equipped to teach second language students than their native counterparts but illuminate the unequivocal advantage of harnessing the pedagogical strengths of both teacher groups *cooperatively*.

Keywords: adult migrants; cultural values; second language acquisition; Swedish for immigrants; translanguaging.

Introduction

The extent to which newly arrived adult migrants acquire the language and orient to the culture of a new country fundamentally affect the course of their resettlement (Abdulla, 2017; Beiser & Hou, 2001). A lack of linguistic and cultural proficiency can give rise to a stinging sense of isolation in a host environment, an overwhelming feeling of not belonging to *this* world. Not surprisingly, effective host language induction programmes are high priority provision for both the migrant learners themselves and for European governments in the field of migration and integration (Beacco et al., 2017). In Sweden, the state-sponsored language education, *Swedish for immigrants*

(henceforth Sfi), has a national mandate to provide the basic language and cultural preparation needed for communication and social cohesion in Swedish society (Lindberg & Sandwall, 2012). Sfi education has been the object of persistent criticism including low flow-through rates, poorly qualified teachers and unsuitable teaching methods (Hyltenstam & Milani, 2012; Lindberg & Sandwall, 2017). In other words, the capacities and pedagogical performances of Sfi teachers have been targeted as failing to deliver an effective second language education for newly arrived adult learners.

This article reports research grounded in empirical investigation of teacher instructional activity in everyday Sfi classroom contexts and interactions. With a commitment to developing the quality of educational support for newcomers learning Swedish on Sfi courses, this study seeks to generate knowledge about the pedagogical priorities that guide these teachers' classroom practice. In an environment where the participant teachers are ethnically diverse, some *native* and others *non-native* speakers of Swedish, a further aim has been to compare the contributions of these different teacher categories to the learning conditions for Sfi students. Therefore, this study addresses the following research questions:

1.   What pedagogical strategies can be identified as essential for the educational support of newly arrived immigrants in Sfi settings?

2.   What are the pedagogical advantages and disadvantages for the adult learners of the different kinds of Sfi instructor?

The methods used to answer these questions were classroom observations and focus group interviews as focal events within a four-month framework of ethnographic fieldwork.

This article is divided into nine sections. Following the introduction, the Sfi context describes the setting in which this research has been conducted. Then, two intersecting spheres of research provide further framing for the study. Reinforcing this section is another on the theoretical orientations that give perspective and meaning potentials to study findings. Next, a section on the research methods seeks to clarify the tools used to produce and analyze the data. Study results are presented as *essential support strategies* that

epitomize the empirical data. A discussion of the results and conclusions form the final sections of the text.

The Sfi Context

Sfi is a state-funded and regulated language program aiming to provide newly arrived adults with the opportunity to gain foundational and functional knowledge of Swedish (Swedish National Agency for Education, SNAE, 2018a). A recent curricular commitment is to ensure tuition in basic reading and writing skills for those who need it (ibid.). Sfi comprises three study paths all geared to adult beginners in Swedish but directed towards different learner target groups ranging from underschooled students with limited literacy proficiency (Study path 1) to those with secondary or tertiary educational backgrounds (Study path 3). The educational mission is to "provide the language tools for communication, active participation in everyday life, in society, at work and for further study" (ibid., p. 7).

In 2018, there were 159,127 students studying Sfi in municipality-run programmes (SNAE, 2018b). Most Sfi students (28%) were born in Syria followed, in order of next most common country of birth, by Eritrea, Iraq and Somalia. With regard to study results, 63% of beginners who studied Sfi from 2016 to 2018 achieved pass grades in at least one course. Over the same period, there was a 24% drop-out rate leaving 13% without any registered details who are presumed to have continued their Sfi studies.

While this Sfi context has the defining characteristics of a second (majority) language teaching enterprise (Lightbown & Spada, 2006), it is predominantly a segregated educational program. Newly arrived adult immigrants study Swedish exclusively alongside other newly arrived students and thus find themselves on the other side of an inclusive educational response. As a result, Sfi classes tend to be excessively linguistically, culturally and educationally diverse making teaching language and culture particularly demanding (Hyltenstam & Milani, 2012). Despite this, teachers are both language instructors and cultural interpreters who can contribute critically to immigrants' socialisation and sense of human dignity in their new homeland (Lindberg & Sandwall, 2012). In these sheltered Sfi premises, students gain

guidance in how to find their way into Swedish society but have limited opportunity to interact with members of the majority culture and those who are proficient speakers of the target language.

Sfi Teachers and Pedagogy

Sfi teacher qualification has been a longstanding object of criticism and concern (Official Inquiry, 2019). Only 41% of full-time Sfi teachers are certified educationally and qualified to teach at least one subject (SNAE, 2019). Moreover, in response to the influx of underschooled immigrant students, curricular goals have demanded additional teacher competences such as the task of developing basic literacy and study skills that many teachers feel unequipped for. Since teacher competence is a major determining factor of teaching quality (Hattie, 2008), this low level of teacher qualification implies a lack of pedagogical proficiency within Sfi education. A recent study of Sfi teaching (School Inspectorate, 2018) found few signs of an adult oriented pedagogy, a lack of individualisation in classroom instruction and insufficient levels of challenge.

Use of the students' mother tongues for second language learning has emerged as a major learning asset (Cummins, 2018; Nilsson & Axelsson, 2013; St John, 2010). An increase in recruiting bilingual language teachers who often know at least one of the students' mother tongues is challenging the monolingual norms and deficit views still clinging to second language learning methodology (Duek, 2017; Rosén, 2017). As opportunity and openness to use of students' multilingual capacities as resources for language development gains ground, target-language-teaching-only attitudes come under critical scrutiny. Although the majority of Sfi teachers have very limited knowledge of their students' primary languages, encouraging students with the same language backgrounds to cooperate creates *translanguaging spaces* for promoting language learning (Li Wei, 2018).

Native and Non-Native Second Language Teachers

The issue of how teacher background and mother tongue affect the pedagogical

merits of second language teachers has developed into a distinctive topic of study within second language acquisition (SLA) (Moussu & Llurda, 2008; Yuan, 2018). Most research on this topic has been conducted within the parameters of *native* and *non-native* teacher identities. Native speakers' high-level communicative competence, their unique cultural knowledge of the target language and characteristically strong self-esteem have served as a basis for assessing their pedagogical preeminence as second language teachers. Ongoing research in the field has challenged this pedagogical logic by recognising several non-native teacher qualities as pedagogically advantageous in second language teaching (Moussu & Llurda, 2008). Moreover, studies have increasingly assumed that these assets outweigh the disadvantages associated with non-native educators (Bigenstans, 2015).

While non-native language teachers frequently suffer from linguistic uncertainty, their experience of having learned the second language later in life well qualifies them to teach the language to other adult learners (Phillipson, 1992). Their multilingual experience and knowledge enable them to use the students' mother tongues advantageously to promote language-learning progress. For example, non-native teachers' more developed metalinguistic capacity means that they are better able to foresee what language items are likely to cause particular students the most difficulty and will consequently require targeted support. This knowledge means that they can raise their students' awareness of the similarities and differences between first and second language patterns by processes of *interillumination* (St John, 2010). Because they share cultural and language experiences with their students and have become proficient users of the target language, these teachers often provide real and accessible language models rather than the "foreign" models of their native counterparts (McKay, 2003). As those who have faced and overcome the many cultural, social and emotional challenges immigrants meet, non-native language teachers are uniquely positioned to understand their immigrant students' cultural struggles. Having accomplished such border crossings and recreated their identities as citizens of their adopted country, they can also serve as successful role models for their second language learners (Baker, 2014).

Since scant research into native and non-native second language

teachers has been conducted in relation to the teaching of languages other than English (Lindberg & Sandwall, 2012; Moussu & Llurda, 2008; Yuan, 2018), the present study is also positioned to make a valuable contribution to this field. While the distinction between the concepts of native and non-native is misleading (Davies, 2003), these terms are used in this study in order to relate it to a field of relevant research and because alternatives such as language teachers with Swedish as their mother tongue raise equally critical questions about the concept of mother tongue (ibid.).

Theoretical Overview

The difficulty or ease with which people orient to new cultural and linguistic phenomena has been related to differences in values and language habits (Inglehart, 2018; Lightbown & Spada, 2006; Schwartz, 2012). While values can be stubborn to shift and learning a new language as an adult is an arduous affair (Abdulla, 2017), Bakhtin's (1981, 1986) insights into human communication and consciousness have potential to shed light on the focal issues of this study.

Bakhtin (1986) embraces a view of human understanding as the meeting of two consciousnesses. This meeting is realised quintessentially in a speaker's response to another person's utterance, viewed by dialogists as *shared territory*. While human response always orients to the addressee in words and forms that are half someone else's, it simultaneously expresses a speaker voice and the endeavour to maximize the significance of one's own position to the other. At the heart of Bakhtin's account of understanding is his notion of *alterity* that is about the potency of difference and otherness to evoke perceptions and provoke struggle that "results in mutual change and enrichment". For Bakhtin, the *advantages of outsideness* as well as the *unique response of an individual self* must merge for a creative understanding of otherness that transcends the limits of a *single* consciousness and is ready to discover the new (p. 142).

Furthermore, Bakhtin (1986) notes that "[u]nderstanding is impossible without evaluation. Understanding cannot be separated from evaluation: they are simultaneous and constitute a unified integral act" (p. 142). The claim that

human sense-making entails evaluating selves, others and their actions (Linell, 2009) means that a change in cultural understanding readjusts a person's value orientation.

Congruent with dialogism's assumption that communication and cognition are indissoluble, Bakhtin's conception of language is integral to his account of understanding. Baktin's conviction that an utterance is always produced by a voice underlies his view of language "as a world view, even as a concrete opinion" (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 271). Since the language spoken in the new setting embodies a particular way of seeing the world and enacting difference in values (Wertsch, 1991) learning another language restructures a person's perception of everyday cultural reality by affording new ways to mean and know.

García's (2017) view of language education for adult migrants problematizes the notion of linguistic integration as language replacement and reframes it in terms of translanguaging. Translinguists argue that named 'national' languages are sociopolitical constructions and that the *reality* of language is the whole of a person's linguistic repertoire that belongs to and is deployed under the control of the individual speaker (Otheguy, García & Reid, 2015). On this basis, translinguists tend to associate additive and transitional second language pedagogies with linguistic oppression that denies the bilingual speaker agency and legitimacy (García, 2017). García (2017) profiles the following principles of a translanguaging pedagogy for adult migrants:

- Give migrants a "voice" and help them to develop it.
- Build on their strengths and interests.
- Make sure that students are "doing" language, performing genuine and authentic tasks, not just that they "have" language structures.
- Recognize the entanglements of migrants' worlds and words and use them in the process of finalizing the product that you intend.
- Ensure that they appropriate new features into an expanded repertoire that is their own, and not just that of a nation state or specific national group (García, 2017, p. 21).

Research Methodology

The project participants formed a team of nine Sfi instructors who taught newly arrived adult learners on the first study path. Seven of the nine instructors

were qualified language teachers and two of them, at the time of the research, were yet without a teacher certificate. All nine instructors had completed Swedish as a second language courses. Five of these teachers were born in Sweden and fit into the category of native Swedish teacher (NST) while four were born in a country other than Sweden and qualify as non-native Swedish teachers (NNSTs).

Over the course of a four-month academic semester, the researcher visited the research site at least one day a week amounting to approximately 20 days of fieldwork. On-site investigation included classroom observations, focus group interviews with the teachers and informal conversations. Direct observation was essential to gain a wider view of the teachers' instructional performance than might be gleaned from the participants' selective perceptions through interviews (Patton, 2002). Focus group interviews with the teachers in groups of four or five not only created opportunity for participants to express their opinions on Sfi work but also to engage in the kind of cooperative meaning making that regularly transcends what individual contributions can amount to (Farr, 1990).

The four focus group interviews, each an hour long, were audio-recorded, transcribed and examined by means of a qualitative content analysis (Patton, 2002). The field notes, written up directly after classroom observations, were formed around aspects of the instructional activity judged most salient or significant. These ethnographic accounts were compared with teacher voices to test and interpret the interview material. The results have been analyzed into five *essential strategies* for supporting newly arrived adult learners of Swedish as a second language.

Results: Essential Support Strategies

Fuelled by a national curricular commission and professional commitment, this teacher team strives for a needs-responsive Sfi pedagogy. Empirical investigation has aimed to explore what teaching approaches and practices stand out as significant for boosting the quality of learning environments in which newly arrived adults can learn Swedish as a second language successfully. Answers to these questions have been condensed into five

essential support strategies namely, *existential*, *multilingual*, *integrative, challenging* and *heterogeneous* support.

An *Existential* Support Strategy

The first pedagogical priority, attested to by teachers and classroom observations, is to fulfill the students' *existential needs* in this second language learning setting. When asked to describe the kind of learning environment the teachers strive to create, the teachers began by insisting that "a secure and relaxed learning environment", "group cohesion" and "a sense of belonging" are fundamental conditions for language learning with their students. To knit the group together and foster fellowship in the classroom are highlighted as primary because of the significant number of differences between students such as age range, languages, cultures, proficiency and literacy levels. The teachers voice a strong commitment "that the students feel seen (.) really seen […] for when they feel secure, seen, then they also learn (.) I think this is an approach that promotes their language development" (NNST). They emphasise unanimously that affirming students personally underpins their approach to Sfi teaching. One teacher described some of the ways she uses to realise an existential approach in the classroom:

> [I] try to reach each student (1) after a whole class presentation with the students working on their own or together (.) I go round as a teacher to make eye contact, to talk to each student so that they are acknowledged (.5) during the lesson (.5) in order to reach them all, not only those selected to answer questions or the like (1) I usually go round and like (.) talk with each student even when they are working in groups (.) so that they are seen (.) so that they have said something in Swedish each lesson (NST)

To be "seen" serves as an antidote to the common immigrant experience of being rendered invisible when without sufficient language to assert oneself. One NST teacher described the way she initially saw one of her students as "a reduced person" who, with the aid of an interpreter, "came across as a completely different person" so that she saw the person afresh as a unique and capable human individual. By being *seen*, students recover their human stature and are repositioned for meaningful participation.

The teachers clarify and justify this pedagogical priority by pointing out the positive effects of an existentially responsive learning environment. The first mentioned is motivation and enjoyment for "when students feel secure in the group (.) their motivation increases" and they also feel that "this is fun (.5) I'm really learning something" (NNST). A further important effect of an existential pedagogy is student willingness to join in, to venture a response and to communicate in the classroom. These teachers claim that an existential engagement is not only compatible with but essential for the success of any teaching method and relate it to attaining curricular course goals.

A *Multilingual* Support Strategy

The teachers' attitude to use of the students' mother tongues is positive but they also express an intuitive sense that they need to regulate mother tongue communication. One NNST participant summed up the teacher stance towards mother tongue mediation as follows:

> One cannot deny [students'] mother tongues (.) their knowledge in the mother tongue (.) I think that this is a resource for learning (.) in the whole process (2) it should be used but one must set boundaries for it.

The teachers are unanimous that the students' mother tongues serve as a medium to illuminate instruction and support cooperative, exploratory, learning in classroom. They see mother tongue communication among students as a source of cultural comfort and solidarity. They also point to the opportunity a multilingual support strategy creates to involve and encourage students as sources of knowledge, as interpreters and peer teachers in classroom instructional activity.

Concurrently, teacher accounts of multilingual support in the classroom project student home language use as both learning opportunity and pedagogical dilemma. A NST teacher said:

> The Arabic speakers are drawn to each other like magnets (1) for the most part they work well (.) intensively on the task (.) Swedish Arabic (.) Swedish Arabic continually […] but there can be a little too

> much Arabic (1) But when they use a common language (.) I see that they really help each other (.) they help each other understand (1) a <u>lot</u>. But (.) it's important to vary [the groups] so that they speak even more Swedish […] so I decide that this time you sit with someone who speaks Kurdish or Somali so that they can speak <u>more</u> Swedish (1) it's a question of weighing up the pros and cons.

In this description, *too much* Arabic is related proportionally to *too little* Swedish among the students. Underlying the teacher's concern is a recognition that students must *use* the language to *acquire* it. However, weighing up the fact that students really "help each other understand" when they can use a common language against the need to "speak <u>more</u> Swedish" is perceived as a tough pedagogical call. Moreover, same-language groups can marginalize and cause distress to students who do not have other speakers of their home languages to cooperate with. As an alternative to same-language groups, the teachers vary group formation by arranging students with different language backgrounds together for classroom tasks. Teachers maintain that mixed-language groups are important to encourage the use of Swedish as the medium of task engagement, to even the field of support for *all* members of the class and to exploit the learning affordances of heterogeneous student interaction. Regarding the basis on which groups are formed, a NNST teachers explained:

> Whether groups are formed according to a common language or not, depends on what they are doing. If the activity demands the use of students' mother tongues, then I'm not against them talking Arabic (.) to help each other (.) it's hardly going to hurt them (.) it leads to understanding (.) they understand what they are doing (1) but if it's a speaking activity (.5) such as a picture they should talk about (.) then mixed-language groups are preferable in order to <u>prac</u>tice <u>speak</u>ing (.) then they're obliged to exchange words in Swedish.

Classroom observations evidenced use of the students' home languages for various objectives such as orienting to tasks, conveying the meaning of troublesome words and cross-lingual comparison as in the following example[1]:

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[1] Key: T = Teacher; S = Student; TNR normal = Swedish; TNR cursive = Arabic; (<u>word</u>) = emphasis; (.) = micropause; (1) = silence in seconds.

1. T: Camara pratar i telefon (.5) inte? ((sts contribute answers)) på arabiska (.) på persiska (.5)
   Camara talks on the phone Not?   In Arabic   in Persian

2. <u>inte</u> kommer före verbet men på svenska (1) *be-larabi Camara <u>la</u> tatakellam bil-hatif* (1)
   not comes before the verb but in Swedish   In Arabic Camara not talks on the phone

3. på Svenska (.5) Camara pratar inte i telefon
   In Swedish   Camara talks not on the phone

In their discourse on multilingual support in Sfi environments, the teachers point to six factors that determine use of students' mother tongues in the classroom. These are student proficiency level, the complexity of the teaching item or task, the purpose of student classroom activity, the need to encourage and include students, checking student understanding and the circumstances of the specific interactional environment. The following extract illustrates at least three of these. It comes from a lesson with a beginner class aiming to teach 'parts of the body' in Swedish with the aid of the students' home languages. The Somali teacher, who speak Arabic and has created her own word list in Dari, shows a picture of Anna's face:

1. T: Hon heter Anna.   När ni skriver en mening *jumla* (.) *wahida jumla* <u>H</u>on *harf kabir*
   She's called Anna. When you write a sentence *sentence one sentence* She *capital letter*

2. verbet (.5) *fae'l fae'l* nummer två (1) <u>Anna</u> varför är det stor?
   The verb *verb verb* number two   Anna why is it big?

3. S: *ism*
   name

4. T: <u>*ism*</u> (.5) namn(.5) alla namn börjar med stor bokstav (1) <u>hon</u> heter Ann ((T puts a full-stop
   name   name   all names begin with a capital letter   she's called Anna

5. on the board)) och vi ska inte glömma punkt (.) *nokte* (2) var kommer Anna ifrån?
                    and we shouldn't forget the full-stop *full-stop* Where does Anna come from?

6. S: *Italia* Sverige
   Italy Sweden
   […]

7. T: hon är glad och vacker (.5) <u>och</u> (1) man binder ihop två ord *farhana* <u>och</u> *jamila*
   She's happy and beautiful and   we connect two words   *happy*   and *beautiful*

8. S: *helwa*
   sweet

9. T: här är Annas ansikt (.) *wajh*
   This is Anna's face   *face*
   […]

10. S: ögon (.) *àyn?* ((S points to his eye))
    eyes   *eye?*

11. T: *àyneyn* (.5) öga *wâhid* ((T raises extended index finger))
    eyes   eye *one*

Several features of this slice of instruction demonstrate a flexible and strategic use of the students' mother tongue. It illustrates a common strategy of multilingual support namely, inserting another language word immediately after the Swedish word to illuminate its meaning (lines 1, 2 & 5). Furthermore, the multilingual character of this teacher's instruction legitimises student use of their mother tongues to answer the teacher and engage with the instructional flow (lines 3, 6 & 8). Thirdly, in line 7, the teacher's talk in two languages allows her to highlight a focal Swedish lexical item (och) by bracketing it between two familiar Arabic adjectives and emphasising it so that students *notice* it. Fourthly, lines 10 and 11 represent a momentary dyadic exchange in which the student's question in two languages and pointing is judged by the teacher under the circumstance to be most efficiently answered by direct Arabic-Swedish language comparison with Arabic and gestural reinforcement.

An *Integrative* Support Strategy

With regard to integration, two kinds of support strategies have been identified in the data – *outside-in* and *inside-out* pedagogical investments. An outside-in integration strategy aims to prepare newly arrived adult students for competent participation *beyond* the classroom by introducing everyday life-based tasks *into* the classroom. When the teachers were asked what they were currently keen to develop pedagogically, they emphasized instructional activities that can equip their students with the skills and tools they need to cope with the demands of everyday life in Swedish society. These included digital competence such as computer skills, internet searching, using web-based dictionaries as well as handling recorded instructions, registering being ill and contacting school via mail or online communication platforms. In the teacher responses, managing these everyday services and systems was closely related to a concern for students' integration and preventing a sense of not belonging in their new surrounds:

> The students need to feel part of society (.) integrated and not outside
> it (.5) this is not my world (1) if they don't understand and don't feel
> part of the community (.) this is not my world (STA 2).

Project data also point to an alternative integration strategy that orients to the question "How can we *do* integration in our classroom as part of the community?" This complements an *outside-in* integration strategy with an *inside-out* one that seeks to realise integration in the intercultural spaces between teachers and students. In one observed lesson, the students were encouraged to take personal stances on aspects of the host culture and to explain their value orientations to each other. The teacher used several strategies to stimulate constructive discussion in Swedish. She introduced topics that students could orient to such as child-rearing, what a "good citizen" is and positive or negative aspects of Swedish society. She arranged mixed language discussion groups to increase student heterogeneity and elicited from the students why it was advantageous to do so. They answered, "We think differently", "We work together", "We give one another advice", "We're willing to speak Swedish" and "Our Swedish improves when we use it". The teacher validated student views by taking up their contributions affirmatively and insisting, "Democracy means that you can express your own viewpoint and that it is not wrong". Students engaged in animated discussion. They resonated with the teacher's efforts to create an affectively conducive climate by emphasising that encountering respect for their personal views in the classroom is vital for their willingness to share their personal views on cultural value topics in Swedish. One student explained, "Here we don't laugh at those who have difficulties speaking Swedish". Simultaneously, the pedagogical context included opportunity for students to use their home languages to orient to the task.

In the following exchange, the students have decided to discuss the question, "Do women like looking after children more than men?"

1. T: Fadila (.) vad tycker Fadila
   Fadila   what does Fadila think

2. S1: kvinnor måste göra det (.) Det tycker inte men om det
   women must [look after children] men don't like doing it

3. S2: man måste dela uppgifterna
   but the tasks should be shared

4. S3: det är svårt (.) barn behöver promenera (.) leka (.) det är mamma som måste göra det
   it's difficult   children need to go for walks, to play. It's mum who must do these

These four lines unpack different aspects of parental positions on child rearing. After the teacher has solicited Fadila's opinion on the topic (line 1), S1 responds with the view that the preferences of men compel women to bear the task of childcare (line 2). S2 forwards an alternative vision of shared responsibility (line 3). S3 counters with a stance that evaluates the idea as "difficult" because women are better suited than men to serve the daily needs of children (line 4). These exchanges also disclose some important conditions for language and intercultural learning. Line 1 highlights the crucial importance of engaging and listening to the personal voices of those on the edge of a community who are seeking to become fuller and contributing members. The students' dialogue yields signs of the way different voices responding to each other, stance by stance, generate conditions for participants to realise their own meanings in Swedish. Each student utterance also expresses *evaluation* of the different viewpoints – unfair, fair, unrealistic. These moral resonances have a relativizing effect on the participants' alternative positions so that they are cast into a new light and, to various degrees, interrogated. Through dialogic interanimation between different voices and concrete opinions, the participants gain vantage points from which to reappraise their value positions.

A *Challenging* Support Strategy

Teacher discussion around the theme of support for their students brings into focus the critical balance between the motivational effects of students experiencing learning success and the developmental potential of coping with challenge independently. Regarding the first, the teachers concurred with the voice of one NS team member that, "what increases motivation is that [the students] see that they're making headway. An important part [of our pedagogical task] is to point out student progress". The teachers' accounts of meeting their students where they are educationally disadvantaged with a teaching approach attuned to their everyday *lived* experience projects a logic of securing the students' experience of success by lightening their cognitive load.

Counter voices, in the minority but no less insistent, expressed a concern that the task of paving the way for students to succeed should not

neglect to create challenging learning conditions that exert productive pressure on adult second language learners. One NST cautioned:

> But also signal that one has expectations on students […] that they engage with what I offer them (1) if I offer them a way into the language (.) then I want to feel that they show me a response to it (.5) and there is some demand here (1) one has to begin somewhere with making demands.

This teacher's reaction signals that explicit expectations and demands on learners to reciprocate teacher efforts with corresponding engagement should also be central features of the team's pedagogy because requiring study commitment and creating opportunity for personal effort from students is vital for language learning.

The theme of challenge as learning dynamic was also raised by another teacher with regard to the goal with more advanced Sfi classes to foster abstract, cognitively complex, thinking:

> With [the C group] it's more a question of maintaining a balance (.5) I can't simply prioritize everyday-related activities (.) with them I have other goals to attain (.) these have to do with abstract content (.) far away from the students' daily lives and at the A and B levels they have only been used to thinking mechanically (.5) and then suddenly at the C and D levels comes abstract content […] I must give them this kind of mindset too.

This contribution insists that introducing cognitively demanding tasks for developing metalinguistic analytic skills in step with student advancement is a strategic language learning goal. When combined, these assertions imply that the goal of facilitating learning for Sfi students by making sure they experience language learning success regularly through accessible and simple instruction must be offset by demanding independent student engagement and opportunity to grapple with complex content.

A *Heterogeneous* Support Strategy

In the data, the notion of heterogeneity *as supportive* stands out in relation to educator competence and student group formation (see section 3). Comparison between NSTs and NNSTs makes evident that teacher capacities and

vulnerabilities can be found among both kinds of instructor in this setting (see research question 2). The main comparative results are outlined and, where relevant, illustrated in the following tables:

Table 1

The pedagogical advantages and disadvantages of NSTs for Sfi learners

Advantages	Disadvantages
Competent and fluent target language models	Tendency towards unmodified talk and difficult-to-grasp refined Swedish models
Extensive experience and knowledge of Swedish culture and society, e.g. Swedish calendar, seasonal highlights, social habits and values, etc.	Do not know the students' mother tongues – constrains their explanatory scope
Ability to contextualize and illustrate new language richly in other target language sentences and life spheres	Limited ability to introduce cross lingual comparison and foster metalinguistic awareness
Target language interaction between an NST and students can draw them into negotiating meaning and gaining comprehensible input for learning Swedish	Limited understanding of the students' cultural backgrounds, immigrant journeys and learning thresholds

Table 2

The pedagogical advantages and disadvantages of NNSTs for Sfi learners

Advantages	Disadvantages
Multilingual explanation	Target language vulnerability and inconsistency
Ability to draw cross lingual comparisons/contrasts for developing metalinguistic awareness among students	Risk of students becoming dependent on NNST support and of diluting students' learning opportunities by overuse of the students' home languages
Intelligible and meaningful target language models Use of accessible Swedish (easier synonyms, straightforward formulations, "Arabic" articulation)	Creation of educational inequality in the translanguaging classroom in that NNSTs know only some of the students' home languages

Advantages	Disadvantages
Solidarity with students and empathetic understanding of their immigrant transitions/journeys	The reactions of students who prefer not to receive home language support.

As illustrated, both NSTs and NNSTs exhibit significant competencies as well as limitations that configure the quality of pedagogical support in Sfi learning environments. In the interviews, the teachers emphasize the instructional value of NSTs and NNSTs working alongside each other in the classroom because of the many ways in which they "complement one another". NST with NNST co-teaching maximizes an efficient use of their various instructional strengths and provides "extra support" for their large groups of study path 1 students with limited schooling and study skills. NSTs regarded the participation of a bilingual teacher in the classroom as "an extraordinary asset" because she can, for example, explain abstract words, guide students in literacy-focused activity, operate as a "quick dictionary" and accelerate the pace of the lesson. Both NSTs and NNSTs feel more secure in their role when they have a partner teacher to work with.

Discussion

The results of this study foreground an existential approach to language and culture learning. Treating support as existential turns the pedagogical focus onto meeting the deep human longing to be *seen* and to feel *valuable* as a primary condition for successful language education and integration. With an imperative to ascribe value to students as autonomous individual subjects, teaching takes on intrinsic *moral* dimensions that pay pedagogical dividends. Newly arrived adult immigrants' sense of invisibility and diminished value can lead to low self-esteem and, in the classroom, to an avoidance of tasks if they are judged as unlikely to result in success (Bandura, 1997). By addressing students' existential needs and engaging their substantial strengths, teachers can reverse this debilitating mindset. An existential approach is likely to foster a willingness among second language learners to venture voice, to test interpretation, risk response and manage interaction on the basis of their current language understanding (Long, 1996; Swain, 2000).

The teachers' pedagogical priorities clearly reflect García's (2017) principles of a *translanguaging* pedagogy. Their approach prompts and responds to student voices and viewpoints; it encourages students to *do language* directed towards meaningful communicative goals; the approach engages with the alienation of migrants' worlds and creates conditions for them to appropriate new linguistic features into their own repertoires. These criteria credit this language education as a translanguaging pedagogy that recognizes the linguistic assets of the students and uses their capability to incorporate new language patterns into their indigenous ways of communicating.

However, when the teachers' stance and practice is superimposed onto a translanguaging pedagogy, disparities emerge that interrogate some of translinguists' often-cited assumptions (García & Li Wei, 2014). The teachers' practice of sequencing both home-language and mixed-language groups in their approach to second language learning demonstrates that a multilingual support strategy is compatible with recurring pedagogic activity that pushes students to interact in a new emergent language. This is simply because language needs to be *made sense of* and *made sense with* to be learned (Bruce et al., 2016; Swain, 2000). Lesson observations indicated that most students recognized the importance of producing Swedish for improving it and were willing to comply with the pedagogic demand. When language learners choose to operate under linguistic constraints, their agency is not violated but *exercised*. Moreover, for Bakhtin, language does not start with nor belong to the speaker (see García, 2017) but must be taken, often forcefully, from other people's discursive practices and made one's own. From these semantically generative contexts, speakers draw on other people's linguistic repertoires, *their words*, to maximize the meanings of their own voices. Thus, rather than deny migrants voice (see García, 2017), an adherence to the way other people actually use language in socially specific environments is likely to empower migrants as autonomous speakers by extending their communicative range and increasing their opportunity to be significant in a variety of verbal-ideological contexts. None of this implies that a student's home language is excluded or made redundant, for languages "throw light on each other: one language can, after all, see itself only in the light of another language" (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 12). Thus, a learner's own language knowledge always

participates in constructing comprehension, in formulating response to others, and it makes sound pedagogical sense to exploit such fundamental participation.

Bakhtin's account of human understanding as the meeting of two consciousnesses stands against any notion of integration as *assimilation* that is, as effacing or minimizing the newcomer in a process of "going native". Migrant individuals or groups may cross but do not erase the demarcations of self and other consciousnesses for only *then* is communication meaningful and cooperation possible. Neither does integration mean holding multicultural ranks for the *other* must be entertained to perceive things with any degree of veracity. These perspectives imply that engaging the culturally different consciousness always yields more penetrating understanding and that cultural adaptation is determined between newcomer and insider participants-in-interaction. The real danger to resettling in a new sociocultural environment is not what is strange and unknown but closing the door on otherness as a source of potential change and enrichment.

Data suggests that integration can be enacted in the classroom when students engage dialogically with each other's value orientations in a secure and affirmative environment. For Bakhtin (1981), speakers in linguistic interaction, whatever the specific language they choose, always express voices that *interanimate* each other. When different voices connect responsively, participants gain a clearer sense of their own meanings and identities in relation to alternative ways of seeing and doing things in life. Simultaneously, this relativising dynamic challenges the claim of any single ideological position, value, even 'self' or 'other', to be *absolute*. Thus, dialogue bears the potential to contest, even destabilise, ethnocentric standpoints and to enable participants to view other cultures and values from an *ethnorelative* perspective (Lorentz, 2018). At the heart of sustainable integration is a creative and responsive orientation to the *other* that transforms both agreement and disagreement, commonality and strangeness, into new ways to express experience, to perceive and evaluate cultural difference. The catalyst in orienting to new cultural phenomena lies on an existential plane; *to be seen* makes it possible *to see others* with justice and advantage.

A significant issue emerging from this study is what *challenge* has to

do with *support*. Teacher voices on learning support highlight at least two principles that both belong to balanced pedagogical support. One is the view, according with human motivation theory (Dörnyei, 2001), that an expectancy and experience of successful performance determine the amount of effort learners are willing to devote to pursuing certain goals. However, a focus on the need for educationally vulnerable students to feel they are succeeding in their studies easily translates into a conception of support as primarily about making content easier to manage by reducing learning challenge. The second principle is expressed by the claim that reasonable challenge conditions human learning (e.g. Piaget, 1951; Vygotsky, 1978). In view of these principles, study results indicate the need to make a distinction between assistance as *doing for* learners and assistance *for doing* tasks themselves. In a pedagogy for adults who have developed mental capacities, it is important to entrust students with cognitively engaging tasks so that learning is not framed as the mechanical completion of exercises or a question of teachers funneling knowledge into students. The notion of *learning* support is complex but has fundamentally to do with actions that enable people to meet challenge and opportunities for self-determined and independent (language) performance.

Conclusions

Concerning heterogeneity, study findings reveal that the characteristics of NSTs and NNSTs entail both advantages and disadvantages for second language learners. These results challenge the attempt in second language acquisition contexts to claim the pedagogical superiority of one group of instructors over another kind, at least with regard to "native" – "non-native" attributes. Indeed, teacher characteristics profiled in literature as assets were seen at times to entail pedagogical disadvantages while some teacher "disadvantages" created unexpected learning opportunities (see Table 1 & 2). As illustrated, no one kind of teacher has it all or champions the field. This means that the distinction between a NST and a NNST is not *in itself* a reliable predictor of optimal conditions for learning Swedish as an additional language. The findings counsel a cooperative, holistic approach that honors the unique contributions each teacher can make and recognizes the value of harnessing

the pedagogical strengths of both teacher groups for an eclectic and comprehensive second language pedagogy.

The findings of this study imply that *support strategies* for adult immigrants in second language settings may be rated *essential* when they embrace heterogeneous scope, feasible challenge, dialogic engagement, multilingual resources and when they boost the students' sense of their self-worth. Essential support strategies stand out as primary tools for the shift among migrants from an experience of "This is not my world" to the hope of finding a home in *this* new world.

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„TAI NE MANO PASAULIS". PAGRINDINĖS PARAMOS STRATEGIJOS KĄ TIK ATVYKUSIEMS SUAUGUSIEMS IMIGRANTAMS, BESIMOKANTIEMS ŠVEDŲ KALBOS

Santrauka. Švedijoje pagal valstybės finansuojamą švedų kalbos mokymo programą *Švedų kalba imigrantams* (angl. *Sfi*) suteikiama kalbos ir kultūros žinių, padedančių ką tik atvykusiems suaugusiems migrantams integruotis į Švedijos visuomenę. *Sfi* mokymo kokybė sulaukė griežtos kritikos. Atliekant kokybinį *Sfi* mokytojų darbo tyrimą siekiama išsiaiškinti, kokiais pedagoginiais prioritetais vadovaujasi mokytojai, dirbdami su kalba ir kultūra besiskiriančiais mokiniais. Be to, siekiama palyginti skirtingoms etninėms grupėms priklausančių mokytojų, kurių kalbinė patirtis skiriasi, indėlį į *Sfi* mokymosi aplinką. Tyrimo tikslus kontekstualizuoja antrosios kalbos mokymosi ir gimtosios bei negimtosios antrosios kalbos mokytojų tyrimai. Teorinį pagrindą sudaro Bakhtino (1986) žmogaus supratimo kaip dviejų sąmonių susitikimo samprata ir Garcíos idėjos apie suaugusių migrantų kalbinį ugdymą. Duomenys buvo surinkti stebint klasę ir iš mokytojų tikslinių (angl. *focus*) grupių. Atlikus turinio analizę, duomenys buvo suskirstyti į penkias *pagrindines paramos strategijas*, kurios išryškina mokinių egzistencinius poreikius, gimtąją kalbą kaip mokymosi šaltinį, integraciją, mokymosi iššūkį ir skirtingoms etninėms grupėms priklausančių mokytojų mokymo partnerystę. Tyrimo rezultatai nepatvirtina nuomonės, kad mokytojai, kurie nėra gimtakalbiai, yra geriau pasirengę mokyti mokinius antrosios kalbos nei jų gimtakalbiai kolegos, tačiau parodo neabejotiną pranašumą, kurį suteikia abiejų mokytojų grupių pedagoginių privalumų panaudojimas *bendradarbiaujant*.

Pagrindinės sąvokos: suaugę migrantai; kultūros vertybės; antrosios kalbos mokymasis; švedų kalba imigrantams; transkalbystė.