



Research Article

The Problems of Teachers Who Have Immigrant Students in their Classes and Solutions

Yıldız ÜNSAL¹  Gülsün ATANUR BASKAN^{*2} 

¹ Istanbul Okan University, Graduate School of Social Science, İstanbul, Turkey, yildizunsal8989@gmail.com

² Istanbul Okan University, Faculty of Education, İstanbul, Turkey, gulsunatanurbaskan@gmail.com


* Corresponding Author: gulsunatanurbaskan@gmail.com

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Abstract

This study aims to reveal the problems faced by teachers with immigrant students in their classes and to identify the solutions teachers find for the problems. The method of case study, which is one of the qualitative research designs, was adopted in this study. The data were gathered from ten teachers. Content analysis technique was used in data analysis of this study. The study was carried out on the basis of two themes which can be listed as the problems faced in the education of immigrant students and solutions for these problems. The sub-themes regarding the problems faced in the education of immigrant students can be listed as language problem, adaptation to peers and tendency to violence, indifference of parents and deficiencies about the education given by the teachers. Solutions for these problems can be categorized under four sub-themes, which are visits to parents, activities to overcome language barrier, changes in the yearly plans and in-service training.



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Introduction

The phenomenon of migration, which plays an important role in history, brings with it some major changes for both those countries whose citizens migrate to other countries and for those who let in immigrants. "Glossary of Migration" published by International Organization of Migration (IOM) defines the concept of migration as the process of moving to the borders to enter another country or moving to another place within the border of the same country (as cited in Bingöl, 2006). Migration is not just a physical change of place or demographic change, but a complex process involving a multi-variable pre-migration, migration order and post-migration conditions (Ereş, 2015). Recently, Turkey has been allowing a large number of immigrants to enter the country because of wars, including civil

ones, going on in neighbouring countries caused by political, social and economic factors. Immigrants coming from Afghanistan, Iraq, some Asian countries, Yemen, Pakistan, Lebanon and especially Syria settle down in different cities in Turkey.

With migration, changes are occurring in many migrating countries. These changes show themselves in the field of education. Especially in immigrant-intensive areas, physical infrastructure, classrooms, equipment, teacher qualifications, the content of the courses processed may vary. It is possible to say that the increasing number of students in the classrooms and the resulting lack of materials, decreased time for teachers, and disciplinary problems have arisen. Students who do not speak Turkish in schools have low academic achievement and may experience cultural incompatibility with other students. It can be said that this situation causes teachers with migrant students in their class to face a number of difficulties. Sarıtaş, Sahin and Catalbas (2016) stated that teachers and administrators faced language and behavioral problems related to foreign children, had difficulty in ensuring school-family cooperation and faced problems of National Education and school cooperation. Although there is not yet a standardized program for the education of migrant students in Turkey, it can be said that some measures are mandatory. Because differences in the education system in the emigrated country and the level of education of migrants negatively affect both the education managers of the emigrated country and the children who emigrate (Koşar & Aslan, 2020; Zengin, Ataş-Akdemir, 2020). This can lead to teachers under-training in migrant education based on their own knowledge and experience. In this regard, it can be said that teachers try to bring solutions to their difficulties on the basis of their own classrooms.

Cultural cohesion and environmental recognition activities to reduce the problems experienced by teachers both inside and outside the classroom will be carried out by including peers, parents and teachers in the programs, which will make the programs more effective on the adaptation of immigrant children (Gümüştan, 2017). The literature review shows that there have been many studies abroad and in Turkey that examine the problems faced by teachers having foreign students. It is especially remarkable to see that the number of studies conducted on immigrant education in Turkey has risen sharply for the last five years (Aydoğdu, 2019; Çöplü, 2018, Erdem, 2017; Gökmen, 2020; Güngör, 2015; Karaman & Bulut, 2018; Polat, 2019; Sarıtaş et.al., 2016; Yurdakul & Tok, 2018; Zengin, Ataş-Akdemir, 2020). With this study, the problems experienced by the classroom teachers in the education

of immigrant students and the solutions they found to these problems were examined. Revealing the difficulties teachers have in this regard can provide ideas for improving migrant education. In addition, different solutions of teachers can be a guide for other teachers who have difficulty in this regard.

Immigration and Its Effect on Education

It is possible to state that immigrants lead to changes in different areas. The cultural structure of the people who are engaged in migration movements towards Turkey directly or indirectly affects the policies taken by the state. Concepts related to migration can be considered primarily assimilation and integration (Bingöl, 2006). Assimilation is a process of adquiries that takes a long time politically, culturally and economically, changing as generations increase to the society they go to (Tezcan, 2000). Complete assimilation can be a difficult and long-lasting process in the sense that the individual or group completely forgets its own cultural history and adopts a new cultural belonging instead. Instead, integration can be achieved, where cultural and ethnic differences will not be eliminated. Greely (1971) stated that there must be six stages for integration. These stages; cultural shock is the gathering of individuals after shock and the discovery of identity consciousness, assimilation of those who are more elite than others, militancy, hatred of itself and the development of militancy to the contrary and integration (as cited in Yalcin, 2004). Thanks to integration, it can be said that domestic and migrant individuals live in harmony, but some problems are likely to occur during integration. One of the areas of this problem is the field of education. It is doubtless to say that one of these areas is education. In fact, Bravo-Moreno (2009) claim that immigrants affect the identity and education system of the host country.

In Turkey, immigrant children are given education with an approach called “inclusive education” (Yurdakul & Tok, 2018). In this way, these individuals will not be excluded and it will be easier for them to integrate into education and society. Thanks to this approach, which is based on disadvantaged groups being educated in the same class with their normal peers, migrant students can integrate into education and society (Lindsay, 2007). However, it can be said that the simultaneous education of many students from different cultures without speaking a language brings with it many problems. Domestic and foreign students, teachers, school administrators, parents and all other stakeholders of the school organization may be adversely affected during integration into this education. It is possible to say that such problems affect teachers who are the practitioners of education the

most. It can be said that teachers place great responsibilities on each other in terms of trying to ensure the harmony of students of different cultures with each other and to ensure communication between domestic and foreign parents.

Teachers' coping with such heterogeneous classes resulting from increased migration creates bigger problems besides existing problems (Kaya, 2018). Communication problems with parents who do not speak the Turkish also affect teachers in a largely negative way. It can be said that the issue of language is very important for children in getting involved in the education system, being successful, capturing opportunities. It has been emphasized that language education, which will start before the age of six, is of great importance in the harmony and success of children (McCarthy, 2010; as cited in Karaman & Bulut, 2018). However, students who come with migration can be of all ages. Solving language problems for migrant students can be very difficult for teachers.

Children who have come with migration may also have problems with friendship relations, communication, integration and cohesion. In childhood, when friend relationships are important, migrant children should be allowed to adapt, increase their academic achievements and culture. Thus, the academic achievements of migrant children can be improved by ensuring their adaptation to the educational institutions in which they study (Derosier & Lloyd, 2011). Academic adaption is a concept that includes social adaptation consisting of students' relations established at school as well as behaviours consisting of obeying social rules (Gökmen, 2020). It can be said that it is up to teachers to use teaching methods and techniques that allow cultures to interact with each other in schools with multicultural students. Otherwise, many problematic behaviors such as violence, bullying, sexual abuse may occur. In this regard, family-related studies are listed as promoting cultural beliefs, maintaining cultural life, education for children and employment for adults in order to facilitate family harmony (Fazel, Reed, Panther Brick & Stein, 2012; Zengin, Ataş-Akdemir, 2020). Carrying out studies on the development of peer relations with children within the school, organizing activities can be considered as factors that facilitate their adaptation.

Considering the psychological states of immigrant students, it becomes more difficult to tackle with the changing demographic structure of classes. Considering the psychological state of the students who come with migration, it can be said that it becomes difficult to cope with the changing demographic structure of the class. Overcrowded classrooms, improper

physical conditions, bureaucratic barriers can lead to teachers' motivations being reduced and they feel insufficient. It can be said that it has become the main task of teachers to deal with the negative psychological situations suffered by migrant children and to increase their academic success.

Teachers currently working in schools have not received any education on the education of migrant students in undergraduate education and do not have sufficient knowledge of migrant education. Therefore, it is very important to renew the education systems for migrants in accordance with this change in the country (Karaman & Bulut, 2018). Especially in the first years of the Syrian migration movement, the measures taken because of the view that the duration of migration would be short were generally implemented as health, housing and meeting basic needs (Isigüzel & Baldik, 2019). The migration of Syrians to Turkey, which began in 2011, demonstrated our country's unpreparedness in the field of migrant education. Prior to these years, no policies belonging to immigrant students were implemented. After the Syrian migration wave, the lessons were given with the Arabic curriculum with the idea that the migrants would return to their countries shortly. However, since the turmoil in Syria has not ended since 2013, it can be said that Turkey has started to take inclusive measures in the field of education. Accordingly, Turkish Ministry of National Education issued a circular on the education of Syrian students on April 26, 2013 and September 23, 2014 (MEB, 2013a; 2013b). With these circulars, the registration and recognition procedures of Syrian students were facilitated, registration was opened in local schools outside the Temporary Education Centers, a Foreign Student Information System (YÖBİS) was established for the follow-up and grading of the students, and Turkish courses were taught as a curriculum (MEB, 2013a; 2013b).

It is possible to say that many years after the start of migration, a standard immigration education policy has not yet been established. The conflict created by old-new educational practices can cause problems in some areas for migrant children. According to Roxas (2010), teachers lack knowledge and experience for the education of immigrant students. It is possible to say that teachers who lack this knowledge have to provide education according to their own ideas and experiences in order to meet the needs of these students. Teachers may face educational problems in subjects such as analysis of teaching content, use of teaching strategies, development and evaluation of measuring instruments.

Any in-service training that prepares teachers for migrant education can also be called very few.

It is possible to say that Turkey needs a permanent policy in case of relive migration movements and because the children of existing migrants are born and raised in Turkey. In terms of preparing for these policies, the need for development and problem solving may arise in order for teachers to overcome such problems. It is needed to determine the emerging needs of children through migration, to organize educational strategies, to equippe teachers and school psychological counselors in these subjects, and to develop appropriate education programs due to the special needs of migrant students (Yao, 1985). It is thought that the investigation of the state of migrant education in solving education problems as a result of migrations will represent an example of the studies on refugee education in the world. It is thought to be important in terms of representing an example to academics who will research the educational problems of refugees and to the managers who will make decisions about solving the problems of refugees. For this purpose, the following questions were sought in the research.

- What kind of problems do teachers face in the education of immigrant students?
- What kind of solutions do teachers offer to the problems faced by immigrant students in their education?

This study is limited with the data gathered from ten teachers at four schools in the district of Zeytinburnu in İstanbul in the educational year of 2019-2020. It is assumed in this study that the participant teachers answered the study questions with their sincere and true feelings.

Method

This research was carried out using qualitative research methods and techniques. Situation study was carried out from qualitative research patterns. Case study is a methodological approach that involves an in-depth examination of that system using multiple data collection to collect systematic information about how a limited system works and works (Chmiliar, 2010). The steps of case study used in this study are as follows: 1) Developing study questions, 2) Developing the sub-problems of the study, 3) Determining the unit of analysis, 4) Determining the case to be studied, 5) Choosing the participants of the study, 6) Gathering the data and correlating the gathered data with hypothesis or sub-

problems, 7) Analysing and interpreting the data, 8) Reporting the case study (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016).

The major data collection tool in a case study is interview. Interviews provide researchers with the opportunities of interaction, flexibility and inspection through probing, which should all be used in order to reveal the experiences and meanings regarding a case (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016). The main data collection technique in the case study is negotiation. In order to reveal the lives and meanings of situations, it is necessary to use the interaction, flexibility and probes that the interview presents to researchers (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016).

Study Group

In this research, maximum diversity sampling method from purposeful sampling methods was used in the first step when creating the study group. When sampling maximum diversity, factors should be identified that make it possible to learn the most about the case examined (Neuman & Robson, 2014; as cited in Baltaci, 2018). For this purpose, in the 2019-2020 academic year, six teachers were selected from four public schools in Zeytinburnu district of Istanbul, mostly foreign students, who differed in terms of age, gender, and ethnicity of migrant students in their class. Other teachers were reached by using snowball sampling technique, which is also used in purpose-made sampling methods. This technique focuses on the person and critical situations in which rich data can be obtained and reaches the universe by tracking these individuals and critical situations (Creswell, 2013). In this study, each teacher interviewed ensured that we reached the next teacher. In this way, networks between teachers were used.

Table 1: The schools included in the study and their qualities

Name of School	Number of Students in School	Number of Immigrant Students in School
A Primary School	950	120
B Primary School	1524	234
C Primary School	1340	150
D Primary School	1640	185

The number of immigrant students given in the table 1 above refers to the number of children whose families are refugees. There are also students at these schools whose families are immigrants that have received residence permit. The foreign students that receive education at these schools come from different countries and they receive education in the same classes as their Turkish peers.

Table 2: The demographic qualities of the participant teachers

Nickname	School	Gender	Seniority	The Year of Service Time at the School	Grade	Class Size	Number of Immigrant Students in Class
Nesrin	A Primary School	F	6	5	2	31	12
Elif	A Primary School	F	15	10	2	30	13
Begüm	A Primary School	F	15	10	4	28	10
Enes	A Primary School	M	8	2	4	29	11
Cansu	B Primary School	F	10	2	3	40	12
Nilay	B Primary School	F	8	4	1	38	14
Yasemin	C Primary School	F	11	5	2	36	10
Hakan	C Primary School	M	16	7	4	36	13
Selin	D Primary School	F	7	1	3	32	10
Oya	D Primary School	F	20	8	1	28	12

The participant ten teachers are primary school teachers and they have at least ten immigrant students in their classes. 8 of the participant teachers are female while 2 of them are male. The interviews were conducted with teachers who were teaching at four schools with a high number of immigrant students and who, as we have learnt, were experienced and expert in giving education to immigrant students. The district of Zeytinburnu has a wide variety of immigrants as to the geographical roots. In these terms, this district is one of the multi-cultured regions.

Data Collection Tool

In order to determine the teachers' views on the problems they have with migrant students, a semi-structured interview form has been created by preparing basic questions and alternative questions using the existing field writing and expert opinion on the subject. This interview form was piloted to two teachers. As a result of the application, the questions were seen to be functional and included in the pilot application. The semi-structured interview form consists of three sections. Questions about the personal information of the participants interviewed in the first section (gender, seniority in the profession, the year of study at this school, the level of the class in which they teach, the number of foreign students in their class), the problems encountered in the education of migrant students in the second part to remain constant in the research themes, and in the third part, questions were prepared to determine solutions to problems and possible solutions. The main purpose of these questions is to get information about the functioning of the current education system on migrant education, the original statements, opinions and recommendations of experienced teachers in this field.

The Process of Data Collection

The data of this study, whose research design is a case study, were gathered via interviews conducted with teachers. First of all, the participants were given information about the aim of the study and the necessary permission was received after informing the teachers of the fact that the interview would be audio-recorded. Moreover, they were told that direct quotations would be used during the process of analysis and the owner of the quotation would be given a nickname without using the real names. The participant teachers were asked the interview questions and the data were gathered through interview form and audio recording. The gathered data were transferred to the computer.

Data Analysis

Content analysis technique was used in data analysis of this study. After the interview transcripts were read line by line, the data were coded. Themes were created after dividing the gathered data and codes under certain categories. After examining the concepts, the themes that were seen to be related were associated and explained accordingly.

In order to increase internal validity, a researcher working on the situation must clearly demonstrate how he came to his conclusions and present evidence of his inferences in a way that other people could reach (Simsek & Yildirim, 2016). For credibility (internal validity) within the scope of validity in the study, interview data was written in order to

provide participant confirmation and submitted to the teachers for the approval of the participants. For this purpose, an appropriate database should be created, all the procedures made for the repetition of the research in the future should be recorded and a study with a guiding quality should be prepared for the researcher (Yin, 2003). In order to ensure consistency (internal reliability) for reliability in the research, two researchers who are experts in the field were consulted in order to look at the research from an impartial perspective. For confirmability (external reliability), the interview data of the research, the codings made in the analysis process, the field notes taken are stored and ready to be submitted for confirmation review when necessary.

Findings

The two themes, the problems faced in the education of immigrant students and some suggestions for the solution of these problems, which were determined before the study started were taken as a basis during the study and sub-themes under these two main themes were reached at the end of the analysis. The frequency numbers for these themes and sub-themes are given in table 3.

Table 3: Frequency numbers of themes and sub-themes

Themes	Sub-themes	Frequency
Problems in the education of migrant students	Language barrier	10/10
	The problem about peer conformity and tendency to violence	10/9
	Parents' indifference	10/7
	Teachers' deficiency	10/5
Teachers' solutions to problems encountered in the education of migrant students	Visits to parents	10/8
	Activities to overcome the language barrier	10/7
	Changes in the yearly plans	10/6
	Receiving in-service training	10/5

Under the theme of the problems faced in the education of immigrant students, there came out four sub-themes, which are language barrier, the problem about peer conformity

and tendency to violence, parents' indifference and teachers' deficiency about education. Under the theme of some suggestions of solutions for these problems, there came out four sub-themes, which are visits to parents, activities to overcome the language barrier, changes in the yearly plans and receiving in-service training.

The First Main Theme: The Problems Faced in the Education of Immigrant Students

This main theme has four sub-themes, which can be listed as language barriers, the problem of peer conformity and tendency to violence, parents' indifference and deficiencies of teachers in educating immigrant students.

Language Barriers Faced by Immigrant Students

The data analysis carried out at the end of the interviews conducted with the participant teachers show that all of the ten participant teachers pointed out the language barrier as the first problem faced in the education of immigrant students. It is understood that the immigrant students who are included in the Turkish educational system without learning the Turkish language in advance cause serious problems at all grade levels. Some examples of teachers' expressions as to the problems they observe about language with immigrant students are given below:

"First of all, I come across the problem of language barrier in educating the immigrant students. We really have very serious problems as students come without knowing the Turkish language. We feel the problem of ill-communication at the utmost level as we do not know their language and there is no interpreter. Although I choose hard-working students in class as desk mates of these immigrant students, that does not work at all. Our books and education sets are in Turkish so immigrant students get really low marks in exams. We really have very big problems that we cannot overcome on this issue." (Teacher Cansu)

It is clearly seen that the fact that the resources and materials used for education are in Turkish and that there is no special curriculum designed for the education of immigrant students makes it more difficult for teachers to teach the Turkish language to the immigrant students.

"For example, they cannot do anything in Turkish lesson because there are verbal instructions. However, some of these students who do not know the Turkish language can do maths better and more quickly than the other hard-working students in class. If these immigrant students know the Turkish language, they might be very successful

academically, but they cannot do the verbal instructions as they do not know the Turkish language.” (Teacher Yasemin)

During the interviews with the participant teachers, all of the participants stated the language barrier as the major problem in the education of immigrant students. Starting from this point, it can be said that it is of vital importance for the immigrant students to know the language of the host country and to communicate with their teachers and friends in order to integrate into the education system properly.

The Problem of Peer Conformity and Tendency to Violence

Another problem that the participant teachers face in the education of immigrant students is the problem of peer conformity and tendency to violence. Nine of the ten participant teachers also stated that these students had troubles with obeying the school rules. Teacher Hakan drew attention to the problem of tendency to violence with these words: *“The most important problem I face out of the class is that they cannot get on well with their friends as they cannot express themselves. This is because when they cannot get on well with each other, both these immigrant students and the others have a tendency to violence.”*

Another teacher expressed this problem as below:

“The immigrant students in my class still can’t communicate via Turkish although they are third grade students. Therefore, there always come out problems such as fighting or scuffle. Such problems arise especially at break times. I always receive complaints at break times. As they get older, such discipline problems get more serious. Or when native students want to say something to them, they can misunderstand. There come out problems resulting from ill-communication, I accept that, but these problems sometimes go on even if they learn the language. Because they a habit or style created in the past. Moreover, I also think that parents play an important role here. However, in general, immigrant students have a tendency to violence and discipline problems.” (Teacher Selin)

Based on what teachers said about the issue, it can be stated that immigrant students mostly have communication problems because of not knowing the Turkish language, which in turn leads them to have a tendency to violence as they are not understood. Teacher Nesrin tells her experiences about the problem of discipline as below:

“They have problems in adapting to class and school as they cannot speak and express themselves. I have a student coming from Eastern Turkestan. This student cannot speak our language well. Her/his friends make fun of her/him all the time as

s/he cannot speak. S/he is a heavy-built student. S/he starts to attack other students when they make fun of her/him. Such problems were very rare when s/he was at first grade but s/he is a second-grade student now, and the tendency to and degree of violence increases day by day. S/he displays inharmonious behaviours during ceremonies or other activities. S/he even sometimes disobeys me. Her/his friends rose against such behaviours. This student made herself/himself, the other students in class and me very upset."

According to interviews with teachers, 3. Two students in the class and 4. A student in the classroom has lost close relatives in the war in Syria. According to 4th class teacher Enes: *"They are ill-tempered because of the war from which they have come. They have developed an instinct to protect their families. They can attack somebody when this person says a very minor thing to their relatives or siblings. I mean, tendency to violence is mostly about protecting their siblings. Most probably, the families caution them to protect their siblings before sending them to school."* in the form of violence and combativeness.

Teachers told that these students play with each other at break times, they do not obey rules, they try to break the rules, and the problems about adaptation and tendency to violence gets more serious as the grade level rises.

Immigrant Parents' Indifference

Another problem faced by teachers having immigrant students in their class is parents' indifference, which is the third sub-theme. Seven of the ten teachers stated that the parents were indifferent and that they could not establish a communication with these parents.

"One of the most frequent problems I face is parents' indifference. Especially, the problem of absence is too severe. ... When those students don't come to school, I call the parents, but I can't get in touch with them most of the time. If I can, then, they just make an excuse and say that their kid will probably come tomorrow. The parents do not care about the students' homework at home, they do not contribute to the homework or other activities at all, the children are not encouraged, they don't come to parents-teacher meeting, they do not participate in ceremonies. They are always reluctant to join activities that involve parents at school."

As is seen in teachers' expressions, immigrant parents do not tend to cooperate with the school. Teacher Yasemin, who is teaching at the second-grade level, states that parents' indifference might result from the fact that these parents do not know the

Turkish language with these words: *“These families do not communicate with us at all, they do not come to school to talk about their children. The other parents would stay at school all day if we allowed them to do so. However, I have immigrant students with whose parents I haven’t met yet. We already cannot communicate even if they come to school. Perhaps, that’s already the reason why they don’t come to school...”* Moreover, the participant teachers expressed that school counselling service held meetings and seminars for immigrant students at a school and none of the immigrant families participated in these meetings and seminars.

“This year, we have been given seminars on how to communicate with parents within the scope of parent-teacher cooperation. I accept that it was specially designed for immigrant families. But we also talked about immigrant families during these seminars. Even if I try to use some of the methods I have learnt here, language barrier comes first.” (Teacher Cansu).

It has been identified at the end of the interviews that communication problems that teachers face in the education of foreign students lead to other problems. For example, it is impossible to ensure parent-school cooperation, teachers have difficulty in getting students’ and parents’ personal information, teachers cannot tell the problems about students to parents, and so students cannot be included in the education process properly.

Teachers’ Deficiencies in Immigrant Education

The participant teachers underlined the fact that they didn’t receive any course on the education of immigrant students or teaching in a multi-cultural class during their undergraduate studies, or they didn’t receive any in-service training after they started teaching. Teacher Begüm, who had received a training on Syrian students within the framework of inclusive education, emphasized that the training she had received on the topic was not applicable in class with these words: *“It didn’t contribute much, because the knowledge that is given at trainings and real life are two different things. ... The given training was not effective. I already didn’t use any of the information I learnt at the trainings.”*

On the other hand, Teacher Nilay points at her deficiency about educating immigrant students with these words: *“I received education on teaching language to those whose mother tongue is Turkish all throughout my undergraduate studies. I have no idea about teaching how to read and write to a foreign student. ... We give education to these students based on spontaneity. ...”*

The interviews with the participant teachers have revealed that teachers lack information and experience about the approach they should adopt considering the psychological states of these students besides their deficiencies in academic terms.

"I don't know how to approach to a student who has had a trauma during the migration. Even though sending such students to school counselling service is an option, the school counsellor has not received education on the topic as well. We are in a dead-end. I can't help the student. Our classes are too crowded. There are 30-40 students... I already spend half of the lesson time on dealing with the discipline problems. And now the other issues on top of that. I am totally perplexed. We don't know their inner life, we have difficulty in communicating with them. I feel insufficient about this. And this makes me feel that I am a bad teacher. Other teachers also complain about the same problem." (Teacher Nilay)

At the end of the interviews, it is striking to see that teachers lack education on teaching how to read and write Turkish to foreign students. It is clear that teachers have a serious deficiency on the topic from the expressions that teachers cannot meet the needs of the students or students cannot get efficiency from the lessons.

The Second Main Theme: Teachers' Solutions for the Problems Faced in the Education of Immigrant Students and Some Suggestions

Under the main theme of teachers' solutions for the problems faced in the education of immigrant students and some suggestions, there are four sub-themes, which can be listed as visits to parents, activities to overcome the language barrier, changes in the yearly plan and having in-service training.

Visits to Parents

The interviews with the participants revealed that eight of the ten participant teachers visited the families of immigrant students in order to deal with the problem faced in the education of immigrant students. According to the gathered data, it is clear that immigrant students and their families have communication problems and teachers need to establish a healthy communication with these students and families in order to solve this problem.

"When I was unable to get replies to my notes, I got help from a friend of mine to send these families some notes in Arabic. Then, they started to send me notes in Arabic and thus we could establish a communication. They welcomed me wholeheartedly when I visited them afterwards. My student's mother wanted him/her to go on his/her education too much and she always asked for help from me

about that. ... Of course, we carried out these visits with an interpreter. I told her that we together needed to tackle with this issue. They observed a decrease in the discipline problems of this student from that day on. I think, the family also felt valuable in that way. ..." (Teacher Elif)

Within the framework of visits to parents, the participant students mentioned a project called "My Guest, My Teacher" conducted by İstanbul Provincial Directorate of National Education. Within the scope of this project, the teachers aimed at increasing the academic success of students by means of paying visits to all the students' houses one by one and observing them in their houses. However, according to Teacher Enes, the teachers were reluctant to visit families and the rate of participation in the project was low.

"I decided to pay a visit to these families. I went to immigrant students' houses together with one of the mothers who helps me with class. We really achieved to establish communication with some of them. In fact, I realized through these visits that they did not come to school because they were shy away from coming to school." (Teacher Nesrin)

The participant teachers stated that they could understand via the family visits the reason why immigrant families were unable to cooperate with schools. They also underlined the fact that immigrant students' behavioural problems rather than academic troubles decreased to a great extent at the end of the family visits.

Activities to Overcome the Language Barrier of Immigrant Students

Seven of the ten participant teachers stated that they arranged extra language activities as a solution for the language problems of immigrant students.

"Although I am teaching at second-grade level now, some of my immigrant students could not learn to read and write in Turkish, and they are about 7 or 8 students in total. To solve this problem, I decided to teach them how to read and write by starting the process from the beginning. Every day, I assigned the other students to write or paint during the last lessons, and we started the language activities on the other side. I observed that they improved in this way. If they do not improve enough in this way, I will demand extra education for them." (Teacher Yasemin).

Teacher Elif told that all the teachers who were teaching at second-grade level at school decided to carry out a joint project for those students who could not read or write. These students were 20 in total. The teachers, in turn, came to school two hours earlier

before the classes started and gave education to these students voluntarily. They emphasized that ten students learnt to read and write via these extra courses and they went on the courses with others.

Teacher Cansu, who was teaching at third-grade level, said; *“There are extra courses on Maths and Turkish under the name of training programme at primary education at third and fourth grade. I decided to give education at these courses and started to give education to those students who do not know how to read and write. I also try to make the process faster by means of including my students that do not know how to read and write in the course.”* When the participant teachers’ opinions are considered, most of the teachers stated that they carried out extra courses on how to read and write for immigrant students in order to overcome the language barrier in the education of immigrant students.

Changes in the Yearly Plan

One of the solutions suggested by the participant teachers regarding the problems faced in the education of immigrant students is about the changes in the yearly plans. Six of the ten participant teachers stated that they made some changes in the yearly plan. The yearly plans in the Turkish educational system are flexible, which means that teachers can make some changes in the yearly plan and take some topics at an earlier or later date considering the needs of their class and region. In general, the teachers spare more time for the topics about how to read and write.

“I assign the immigrant students to use different resource books in class whereas I go on with the normal plan with other students. I include more visual aids. If I have a student who is really bad at it, I send him/her to first-grade level class temporarily.” (Teacher Begüm)

There is no Individualized Curriculum designed for immigrant students or any other individual programme designed to meet the individual needs of students after identifying their level. The teachers stated that they amended their programme *“covertly”* in accordance with the needs of their students as there is no inclusive programme provided by the state. *“At first, I didn’t do music, art and P.E. classes at all. I gave importance to reading and writing Turkish.”* (Teacher Nilay) Moreover, the teachers said that they spent much time on rhythmic counting and four operations in Maths while they *“stole”* time from music and P.E. classes.

Receiving In-Service Training on the Education of Immigrants

Another solution suggested by the participant teachers is receiving in-service training on the education of immigrants. Five of the ten participant teachers stated that they had received training on the education of the immigrant students.

“I did some research when I saw that none of the methods I used were effective, and I demanded an in-service training. Normally, I didn’t use to participate in the in-service trainings, but this time, I voluntarily decided to join this training. And the training really enlightened me on the topic.” (Teacher Selin)

The teachers underlined that the immigrant students were accepted to Turkey without any previous planning and that they were not competent enough to give education in a multi-cultural class. They told that they were trying to take the advantage of in-service trainings on the education of immigrant students provided by the Ministry of National Education or other private institutions.

“I am trying to encourage students to do group work in order to cure students’ problem of adaptation. However, it is not effective. I send these students to school counsellor, but s/he doesn’t have much to do as s/he doesn’t know how to approach these students, I mean, as s/he does not have any education on the topic. I have received a training on trauma as I thought that it would be enough to have some knowledge about some psychological approaches rather than their academic success, and I really realized some false facts about how to approach immigrant students.” (Teacher Hakan)

As is clear, participant teachers try getting in-service training in order to solve the problems about immigrant students resulting from their academic state and bad psychological conditions, and they are volunteer to participate in such trainings.

Discussion and Conclusion

This study aims at revealing the problems faced by the teachers in the education of immigrant students and some possible solutions suggested by teachers by means of conducting interviews with teachers who have immigrant students in their classes. Two main themes that were determined before the study were taken as the basis in the study and sub-themes related to these two main themes were formulated accordingly. The migration wave coming from Syria since 2011 have affected education to a great extent. Nearly 340 thousand immigrant babies are born every year in Turkey, which allows immigrants coming

from various countries such as Iraq, Afghanistan, African countries and Turkic Republics. These immigrant children receive education with equal rights and conditions as their peers living in Turkey (MEB, 2014 Regulations).

At the end of the data analysis, it was clear that the participant teachers expressed the language barrier as the first problem they faced in the education of the immigrant students. It is understood that those students who are included in the education system without learning the Turkish language in advance lead to serious problems at first-grade level as well as other levels. It is identified in this study that the main reason why foreign students have problems in the educational process is that they get into the system without knowing the Turkish language. Seker and Sirkeci (2015) carried out a study in which they found out that immigrant students had difficulty in using the Turkish language because they were not provided with a special educational programme designed for them. Language problems is the primary trouble in the education of immigrant students which is a big hindrance in front of their academic success. Li and Grineva (2017) also carried out a study with immigrant students and their teachers, and they found out that immigrant students had difficulty in social and academic adaptation because of emotional troubles, identity clash, language barrier, lesson topics, school rules and discipline, interaction between teacher, students and peers. Eren (2019) conducted a research on the educational troubles of immigrant students and found out that language barrier for both immigrant students and their parents are the main reason of the problems faced in the education of immigrant students. According to another study carried out by Galloway and Jenkins (2005), in parallel with the findings of this study, the biggest problem of the foreign students in California and Texas is language barrier and adaptation problems accompanied with it.

Another problem faced in the education of the immigrant students is peer conformity and tendency to violence. It has been identified in this study that the immigrant students and their parents have difficulty in adapting to a new culture as these students are included in the Turkish educational system to receive the same education with their Turkish peers in classes although they do not know the Turkish language. Immigrant students need to receive a supportive education on many issues as they have to adapt to a new culture after coming from difficult conditions. Ereş (2016) emphasizes that immigrant students have problems with their friends in terms of social relations while Polat (2012) states that immigrant students have problems in various areas such as adaptation, ill-communication between

school and families and counselling. Zaleska and Copf (2016) has carried out a study and concluded that the disintegration and disjointedness between families and schools make it more difficult for children to adapt (as cited in Aydoğdu, 2019). Kasdemir (2010) found out that students' education is impaired and discipline problems arise because of communication problems. Fandrem and Strohmeier (2009) found out that immigrant male students' level of proactive aggression is high whereas Güngör (2015) found out that foreign students display behaviours that are accepted to be a breach of discipline.

As is seen, the problems faced by the teachers in the education of immigrant students are the problems with obeying the school and class rules, aggressive behaviours and tendency to violence, cases that affect the discipline in class and at school negatively. During this adaptation and orientation process, immigrant students need developmental support as well as psycho-social support in order to overcome the traumatic experiences and adapt to the life in the country they have just arrived (Almqvist & Broberg, 1999).

It has been determined that there is another problem experienced by teachers with immigrant students in their classrooms and parental apathy that comes across as the third sub-theme. Mace, Mulheron, Jones and Cherian (2014) found that economic problems and language barriers were the reasons parents were indifferent to school. The problems that administrators have with parents are mostly problems caused by parents' long working periods, due to financial difficulties, students are not adequately cared for, some parents cannot support children because they are illiterate, so attendance at parent meetings is low (Sönmez, 2018; Zengin, Ataş-Akdemir, 2020). Kultas, (2016) has produced similar results in its research. Accordingly; Financial problems are one of the most common problems experienced by Syrian students. According to the data obtained, it is seen that the problem of housing and nutrition experienced by Syrian families in the basic sense is reflected in the education of the children. Almost all families are experiencing financial problems and are unable to meet children's educational needs, school tools and equipment due to these problems.

Another problem faced by the teachers having immigrant students in their class is that they haven't received any training on this issue before. The teachers stated that they did not have a course on the education of immigrant students or teaching in a multi-cultural class during their undergraduate study, or they weren't provided with an in-service training on the issue after they started to teach at schools. Erdem (2017) carried out a study which

aimed at examining the educational problems of primary school teachers having immigrant students in their class, and found out that the teachers needed professional training on teaching the immigrant students. MacNevin (2012) carried out a study which aimed at examining the educational process with students all of whom were once a refugee, and found out that the teachers needed professional development and in-service training on teaching students with a traumatic past and teaching in a multi-cultural class. Polat (2019) carried out a study to gather primary school teachers' opinions on the process of teaching how to read and write to foreign students and found out that the pre-service and in-service training given to the teachers on teaching immigrant students is insufficient. İmamoğlu and Çalışkan (2017) conducted a study in which they emphasized that the teachers are left alone with their own skills and knowledge without receiving an effective training on the topic beforehand. It is seen that teacher training programs and in-service trainings in Turkey lack issues such as immigration and education of immigrants. The participant teachers stated that they started to visit the immigrant families in order to solve the problems faced in the education of the immigrant students. Çöplü (2019) emphasizes that it is necessary to increase healthy communication with families, visit them at their homes, include them in social activities in order to achieve academic success of immigrant students. Sarıtaş et. al. (2016) carried out a study on the problems about the foreign students at primary schools, and they concluded that teachers tried to establish a communication on the basis of words with the immigrant families via taking the advantage of the other students or families who had come to Turkey before and know how to read and write Turkish as a translator or by using *Google Translate*. It is clear in this study that the participant teachers tried different channels to communicate with families. The teachers who visited these students at their homes one by one and took care of them and talk to them personally really got fruitful results. Visit to families might really be helpful to increase the academic success of immigrant students and minimize the adaptation problems. In this way, immigrant families can contribute to the educational process more and they can be more effective in implementations designed for their children.

The participant teachers stated that they were arranging extra language activities to overcome the language barrier which is a big problem in the education of the immigrant students. Considering the fact that these students will probably not go back to their countries in the near future and stay here for a long time, their integration to education system should

start with language education. Çöplü (2019) emphasizes that immigrant students should be provided with extra programs and trainings in order to help them reach their peers' academic level in class. Saritaş et. al. (2016) found out that primary school teachers try carrying out extra lessons in order to solve these problems that they face in the educational process. Sarıkaya (2014) underlines that in Belgium, extra courses or counselling and teacher support programs are implemented to help students' adaptation to school and lessons at schools where there are mostly immigrant students. Bulut, Kanat Soysal and Gülçiçek (2018) conducted a study in which they emphasized that the curriculum designed for Syrian students should include a special program. There were Iraqi, Afghan and Pakistani students in Turkey before the migration wave from Syria began. The Syrian children were given education at Temporary Education Centres as they were thought to go back to their countries. Then, as they stayed longer, they were integrated into normal schools via the method of inclusive education. During this integration process, it is important to render an inter-cultural education, to help the children gain some values belonging to their own culture and support the children to overcome the cultural gap between school and home (Sevinç, 1999).

Another solution suggested by the participant teachers for the problems they face in the education of the immigrant students is making changes in the yearly plans. Including peers and parents in the process of dealing with topics such as empathy, peer relations, cultural adaptation and getting to know the environment in the curriculum designed for the immigrant students will make the curriculum more effective (Gümüştun, 2017). Çöplü (2019) underlined that methods to prepare adaptation and orientation programs should be used. The teacher should consider students' skills, their level of English and their needs in other areas while they are developing a curriculum or implementing it in class. Another solution suggested by the participant teachers for the problems they face in the education of the immigrant students is receiving in-service training on the issue. It can be said that teacher training should include training on the education of the immigrant students in order to help the teachers meet the new needs. Aydın (2017) carried out a study to examine the problems that primary school teachers come across in teaching how to read and write, and the role of in-service training in overcoming these problems. At the end of the study carried out by Aydın (2017), it was found out that the teachers who had received an in-service training on the issue had a higher score in the test done within the framework of the study. According to

Ergene (2016), teachers not only give education to students or teach them some skills and knowledge but also create proper conditions to help them develop psychically and psychologically. Teachers can serve this function only by getting the necessary expertise on the issue.

It is possible according to this study to list the possible solutions suggested by the teachers who have immigrant students in their class for the problems they have about these students as below:

- Conducting a prep class for those students who have problems with the language and academic success.
- Giving a comprehensive in-service training to primary school teachers and school counsellors at state schools on the education of immigrants in order to help those students adapt to their schools.
- Giving Turkish language education on a language level base rather than using a class basis.
- Developing rehabilitation programmes for those students having a high level of trauma.
- Developing consistent and comprehensive policies on the education of immigrants in Turkey.
- Including not only academics but also experts who are experienced in the field work as well as paediatricians in the in-service training programmes designed for teachers who give education to immigrant teachers.
- Including courses on education of immigrants and teaching in multi-cultural classes in the teacher training program at universities.

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Author Contribution Statement

Yıldız ÜNSAL: Conceptualization, methodology, measurement tool, implementation, data analysis, review-writing and editing.

Gülsün BASKAN: Conceptualization, methodology, implementation, consultancy and control preliminary draft writing and editing.

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