



# Social Integration Processes of Immigrants in Schools of Huelva, Spain: Cultural Diversity and Educational Challenges

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## *Procesos de integración social de inmigrantes en escuelas de Huelva, España: diversidad cultural y retos educativos*

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### Abstract

This article, focused on the social integration processes of immigrants in the school environment, derives as a result of a Master's Thesis developed in the city of Huelva (Spain). Its objective is to analyse the integration processes of immigrant children in the schools of Huelva, acknowledging the social role of schools regarding the children's formation and socialising opportunities. Methodology: discourse analysis applied to data gathered through in-depth interviews and workshops on interculturality with students, teachers and parents as participants. Main result of this analysis: the real challenge for the school is not to adapt curriculum's contents to the diversity of the environment, but to manage them

effectively, meeting the particular needs of immigrants. It is there where citizens' rights and duties, as well as social participation opportunities are exercised. In this sense, it can be concluded that the challenge that schools face at intercultural contexts is to promote social integration through the development of abilities useful for life and for socialising. To this end, it is necessary to reorient the life course of children who left their roots, by promoting a dialog between their past and their present, which would allow the development of specific strategies contributing to the construction of their life course in a new social context.

**Keywords:** Cultural relations, intercultural education, social integration, immigrants, cultural diversity, school.

## Resumen

Este artículo surge como resultado de una Tesis de Maestría desarrollada en la Ciudad de Huelva (España), sobre procesos de integración social de inmigrantes en el entorno escolar. El objetivo consiste en analizar los procesos de integración de niños inmigrantes en las escuelas de Huelva, reconociendo el rol social que cumple la escuela con respecto a su formación y sus oportunidades de socialización. En cuanto a la metodología, se recurre al análisis del discurso a partir de datos obtenidos en entrevistas en profundidad y talleres de interculturalidad donde participaron estudiantes, docentes y padres de familia. Como principal resultado del análisis se plantea que el reto de la escuela no consiste

en adaptar los contenidos curriculares a la diversidad existente en su entorno, sino que los debe gestionar efectivamente, atendiendo a las necesidades particulares de los inmigrantes. Pues allí, se ejercen derechos y deberes ciudadanos así como oportunidades de participación social. De esta manera se concluye que el reto de la escuela en contextos interculturales consiste en fomentar la integración social a través del desarrollo de habilidades para la vida y la socialización. Para ello, debe reorientar la trayectoria vital de niños que han dejado sus raíces, promoviendo un diálogo entre su pasado y su presente, permitiéndoles desarrollar estrategias concretas en favor de la construcción de su proyecto de vida en un nuevo contexto social.

**Descriptores:** Relaciones culturales, educación intercultural, integración social, inmigrantes, diversidad cultural, escuela.

## 1. Introduction

Due to the recent migratory flows to Europe from Syria and other contexts of conflict, the role of the school in the processes of social integration of immigrants can be questioned. In fact, intercultural relations involve the creation of reconciliation strategies by the cultures present in a community given the conflicts derived from the existing diversity. In this respect, it stresses that integration is not only a mechanism to promote equality of treatment and social inclusion in the context of this diversity, but also a way of promoting social coexistence.

In this way, the objective of this article is to analyze the integration processes between foreign children in the schools of Huelva (Spain), recognizing the social role that the school fulfills in their training and taking into account the repercussions that the differences linguistic, cultural contrasts or previous processes of socialization. To this end, the role of the school as an integrating space where relationships, support networks and different forms of socialization are constructed are analyzed.

It is important to note that the concept of “foreigners” and “immigrants” is used in this article to refer to those who were not born in Spain.

In fact, according to the Spanish Civil Code, it is required to have at least one Spanish father or having been born in Spain, not to receive the nationality of the country of origin at birth, to acquire the status of Spanish national (2002). That is, a child born in Spain can be a foreigner if he does not have those conditions. Thus, it is evident that the idea of “foreigner” is also a cultural and symbolic construction that determines the possibilities of social integration. Finally, it is pertinent to mention that from the theoretical conceptualization, “immigrant” is the social status of someone who comes from another country and “foreigner” is the administrative-legal condition of a person in a country (Colectivo Ioé, 2005).

From this perspective it is essential to recognize the importance of education as a process that enables the right to participation and integral development. Indeed, it is necessary to adapt the educational system to the diversity of cultural backgrounds of children by properly managing such complexity and fostering intercultural competences among students, families and teachers. From this perspective, promoting knowledge and understanding of cultural diversity in the educational field allows improving the



processes of integration of children with each other. In this sense, these strategies strengthen social coexistence as it recognizes inclusion as a process that depends on children and communities. This is what is discussed below.

## 2. Theoretical Basis

### 2.1 From assimilationist education to intercultural education: a road to social integration

The accomplishment of this work is framed in the theoretical approaches provided from the concept of intercultural education. This term is first published in the late 1960s by Jack Forbes in *The Education of the culturally different: a multicultural approach* (Muñoz, 1997). First and foremost, it is a concept that refers to the need to create a social justice environment based on rights and respect for lifestyles in education based on cultural diversity.

To make a better approximation to this concept is necessary to have as a reference the context of the sociopolitical demands of the mid-60s. These include African-American movements in the United States and the various youth protests in various European countries. These are social and civil demands that, of course, have an impact on the educational field and, consequently, are expanding the use of the term from various disciplines. Also, the dynamization of migration processes in this stage of the twentieth century gives rise to new ways of understanding education as a process aimed at improving relations between people of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds within the framework of social relations established from equality and thus avoiding segregationism. According to Leurin (1987, quoted by Aguado, 1991), this approach is based on the possibility of educational practices in which the members of a society are encouraged to be aware of their interdependence.

Having exposed this argument, it is clear that interculturality in educational practice can be understood as a process of dialogue around the dif-

ference, understood as social and cultural diversity but in no case as inequality. It is achieved by sharing the “ethos” and the other’s points of view by interacting with each other (Aguado, 1991). The aim is to deconstruct the antagonisms based on the idea that only ethnic minorities are different since, on the contrary, all groups, including the majority, are built on an identity that builds them before other groups. According to Banks, academic programs based on interculturality can be recognized in those aimed at improving academic achievement as well as social integration of these minorities and, to the same extent, try to improve the communicative processes between both cultures to generate a constructive intercultural dialogue (1989).

In other words, we want to emphasize that intercultural education implies the encounter of the *whole* of society in the context of a common cultural exchange environment and not exclusively to ethnic and immigrant minorities. For this reason, it is possible to argue that it is not enough to verify the difference, but in itself it is enriching (Vázquez, 2001). Already in the early 1980s, in Dublin, the Conference of Ministers of Education in the Council of Europe advocated educational programs designed to dynamically integrate the cultural contributions of migrants in the different countries of the continent, with the Objective of achieving an intercultural dimension in education (Council of Europe, 1983).

However, difficulty arises when academic models and social institutions do not adequately address differences. Indeed, in spite of observing that the official discourses and even the policies of Europe and Spain in the matter of education are orientated towards interculturality, it still becomes evident that other approaches hinder the management of diversity. Either consciously or simply because of the difficulties involved in adapting curricula to the intercultural environment in classrooms, it tends to develop teaching processes linked to prevailing cultural models, which makes it difficult to integrate minorities and immigrants. In addition, there is still a lack of social awareness about this process. Regarding this idea, for example, Sartori considers that intercultural strate-



gies cause conflicts because in reality the politics of recognition would multiply the differences (2001).

In this way, the latter proposals would be more in line with assimilationist or compensatory alternatives than with other educational formulations related to interculturality and closer to inclusive, global or multicultural education (Aguado, 2005). In this respect, assimilatory education promotes the adaptation of students to the hegemonic culture (Dietz, 2003). In other words, it seeks to homogenize the cultural diversity existing in the school. On the other hand, compensatory education seeks to overcome difficulties of cultural and linguistic adaptation among students of minority cultural groups (Dietz, 2003). Therefore, in the long run the same objective is also sought in the previous case. The difficulty in these discourses is that they tend to translate diversity into inequality and emphasize the contrasts between cultures, reducing the identity of the individual to the result of a particular ethnic origin. In this sense, it should be said that differences should not be established between ethnic groups but between individuals mediated by cultural as well as individual circumstances (Vázquez, 2001). It is not possible to ignore the fact that apart from cultural traditions, there are also processes of socialization and a particular identity that equally determine the ways in which the individual relates to society.

In this sense, “integration” should not be equated with the assimilation of the educational practices of the host society nor to highlight the contrasts between children. In the specific case of immigrant children, this means strengthening the difficulties involved in a migration process whose repercussions imply a rearrangement of personal and cultural identity. This is evident because that situation in which integration is confused with adaptation is the one that influences the construction of ideologies and the attitudes that reproduce conflicts (Carbonell, 1999).

Given this situation, school practices that seek to incorporate children through segregation to “compensate” would tend to reproduce differences as “inequalities”. On the contrary, to develop more inclusive processes in the academic

field and to take into account that intercultural education involves all the school actors, would facilitate the understanding of the other and the reflection on oneself outside the ethnocentric view of culture. It follows that education for social integration must promote the encounter and dialogue of the different social groups that coexist in school, the construction of collective learning and the preservation of their own identity (Rodríguez, 2004). Inclusion education encompasses a broader focus and refers to the possibility of guaranteeing access, participation and success for all students, especially those belonging to social or cultural minority groups (Blanco, 2006).

## 2.2 Cultural origin and socialization processes

Culture is a representation of socially established symbols that acquire meaning in the midst of a particular context. From this argument, it is perceived that individuals are mediated by those configurations rooted in the collective consciousness, but apart from that, there is a margin of individuality that shapes individuals. This statement has to do with the development of identity being a process mediated by factors that not only respond to cultural explanations. To that extent, other specific categories related to the construction of gender, family, social classes, academic life, work or interpersonal relationships, would define the construction of individuality. In other words, people define themselves within those reciprocal interdependencies constructed from the social configurations to which they belong (Chartier, 1983).

Specifically, reference is made to the fact that despite belonging to the same culture, people respond to particular circumstances around family or social relationships. From this point of view, different socialization processes are conceived, in this case, as ways of constructing identity and developing attitudes around different aspects of social life.

Indeed, in considering the ways in which children are integrated into the educational context, it is necessary to state that their status as a



“migrant” does not necessarily imply difficulties in studying or relating. On the contrary, they are children with particular trajectories of life that manifest concrete needs. It is linked above all with the difficulties involved in the re-adaptation to a new language, a new culture or a new school in responding to values different from those learned from the family, or in daily life and not from the global concept of “culture”. In summary, the socialization processes in the school are also oriented by this type of social referents (Díaz, Franco, Martínez & Pozo, 2001).

While it is true that conceptions about the culture and origin of children have repercussions on their ways of socializing and relating, it is also true that each of them develops a personality that takes on different nuances in the face of rejection, acceptance or integration. Therefore, it is not possible to observe them through the stereotype related to certain cultural or regional origin. It is necessary to locate its particular social, cultural and economic complexity, taking into account that culture does not always determine the particular processes (Díaz & otros, 2001).

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1 Characterization of the population

*The research was carried out with 53 children belonging to the “Aula Promociona”<sup>1</sup> of Fundación Secretariado Gitano<sup>2</sup>. Of these, five come from abroad: two from Ecuador, one from Chile, one from Colombia and one from Romania. However, in the classrooms and among children not belonging to the program, there are others of Moroccan,*

*Romanian, Ecuadorian, Chinese, and Colombian nationality. Of those belonging to Promociona, 18 are between 5 and 6 of primary education<sup>3</sup> and are between 11 and 12 years old. The remaining 35 children are between 1 and 4 years of secondary education<sup>4</sup> with ages between 13 and 16 years; that is, 66.1% of the children belonging to the program. These are children from schools located in Districts III and V of Huelva:*

- **District III:** barriadas de Navidad, Santa Lucía, Cardenas, La Gavilla, Las Colonias, El Carmen y Hotel Suárez.
- **District V:** barriadas del Torrejón, Verde Luz, Hispanidad y Tres Ventanas.

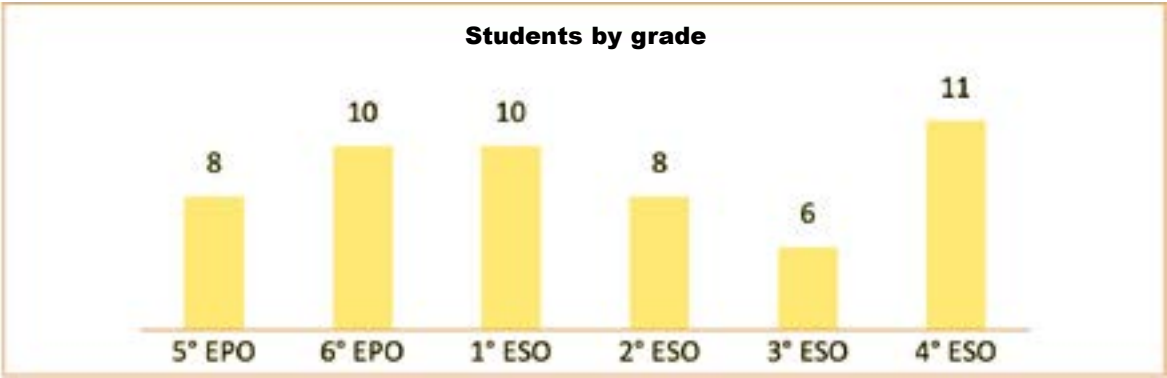
As for the schools there are some that are officially attached to the program and others that are intervened on an occasional basis. Thus, this research was conducted with children belonging to the following:

- **Bound by agreement with Aula Promociona:** CEIP Onuba, CEIP Andalucía, IES Virgen de Belén (Cinta), IES Virgen de Belén (Barriada de Navidad), IES La Marisma, CEIP Manuel Siurot, Colegio Hispanidad.
- **Occasionally Intervened:** Safa Funcadia School, Cardenal Spinola School, CEIP José Oliva, IES Los Rosales, Ciudad de los niños.

Next, four Figures are presented which characterize the population by age, courses, sex, total of students and schools.

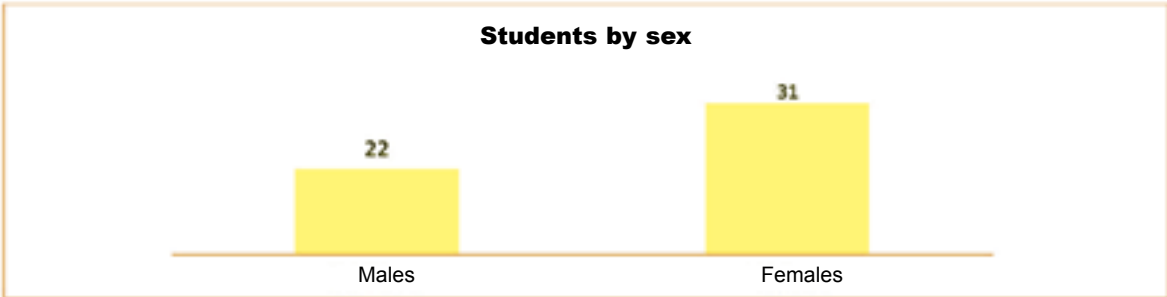


Figure 1



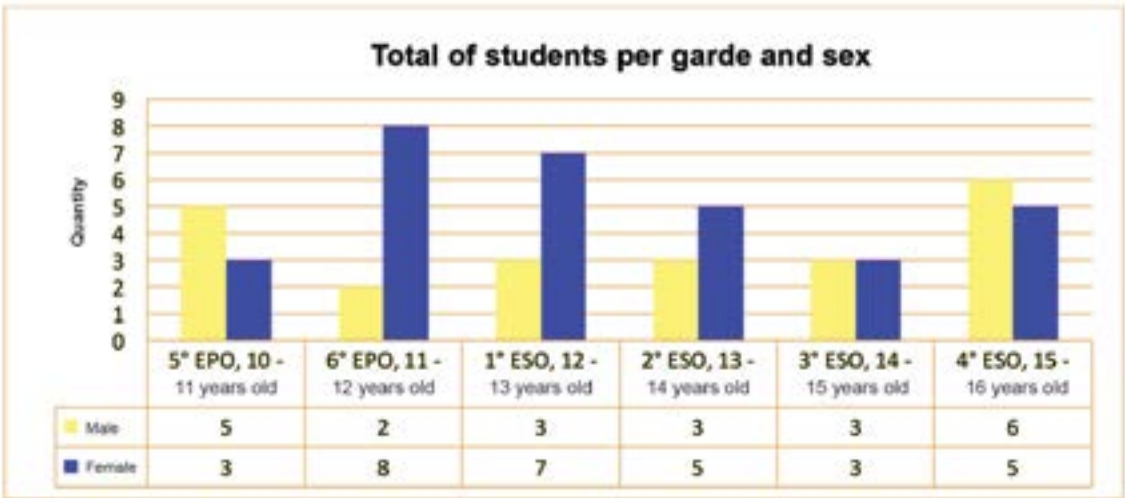
Source: own elaboration

Figure 2



Source: own elaboration

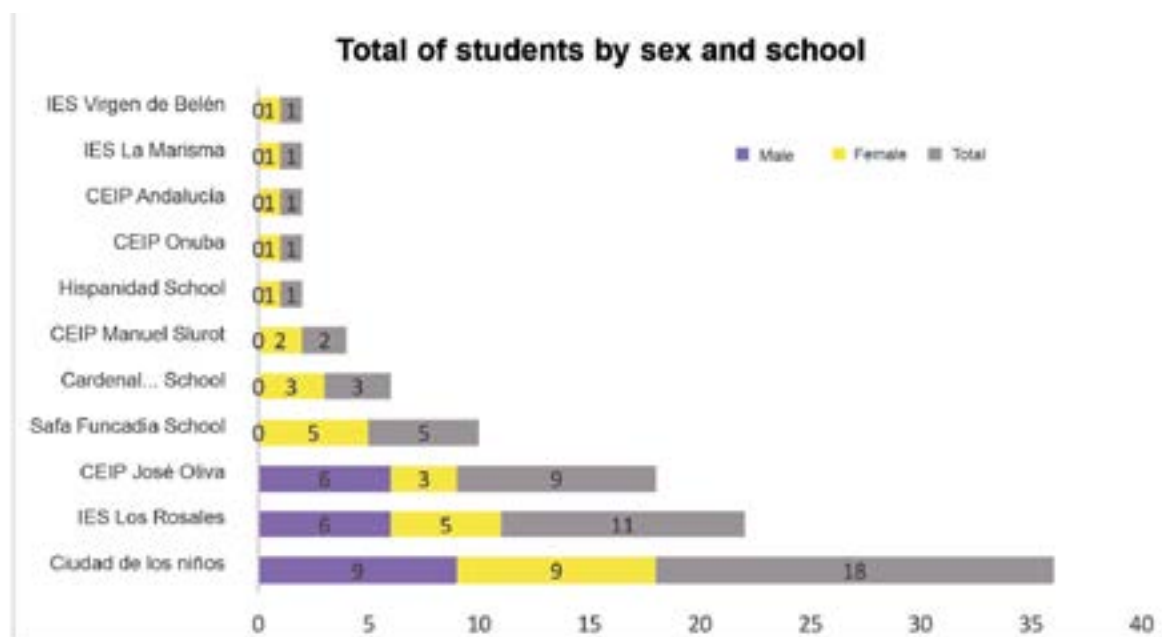
Figure 3



Fuente: elaboración propia





**Figure 4**

Fuente: elaboración propia

### 3.2. Description of the methodological process

#### 3.2.1 Methodological approach

Discourse analysis was used as a methodological approach that serves to understand the discursive practices that occur in a social context where oral and written words form part of the activities developed there (Calsamiglia and Tusón, 1999). The objective of this strategy is linked to the need to know the meaning that the related actors attribute to the situations. For this, an inductive type of reasoning is used, where some conclusions are made from particular examples (Dávila, 2006). Likewise, it is expected to be a propitious way to know values, ways of thinking and reactions to diversity. With this, it is tried to know the particular behaviors around the intercultural relations in the classroom in order to understand the processes of socialization of the children and their forms

of social integration. Thus, three main themes are addressed: social representations, socialization processes and teaching - learning dynamics.

### 3.3. Phases of the investigative process

#### 3.3.1. First phase: Data recollection

For the collection of data intercultural education workshops and in-depth interviews with foreign children, teachers and parents were used. Thus, questions were asked to characterize the population and to identify attitudes regarding intercultural relationships in school.

#### 3.3.3. Second phase: Systematization of information and data analysis

Subsequently, the characterization of the population was systematized. Then, from the classification of discourse provided by children, teachers and parents, began to build a matrix of analysis to identify the main findings. From there, three



categories and four subcategories emerged for each. In addition, this served to obtain a preliminary analysis of the information. Everything is summarized in the following matrix of analysis.

**Chart 1**

Analysis Matrix	
Category	Sub-category
<b>Social representations, prejudices and stereotypes</b>	Cultural representations
	Peer attitudes (rejection, acceptance, understanding)
	Assimilationism and compensatory education
	Intercultural Education
<b>Socialization processes and cultural background</b>	Family support
	Concepts about the role of parents and educators
	Traditions, religion, culture
	Process of socialization, identity and individuality.
<b>Curricular Structures and Academic Environment</b>	Curricular programs that do not respond to diversity

**Source: own elaboration**

## 4. Analysis and results

### 4.1. Factors that influence the processes of social integration of foreign children in Huelva (Spain)

The development of the issues raised intends to know the specific attitudes and behaviors that influence the social integration of children in classrooms. Specifically, this section has been divided into three fundamental parts: the first is about social representations, prejudices and stereotypes; the second is about the processes of socialization and cultural origin; and, the third, it is related to the curricular structures and the academic environment.

Thus, it is considered necessary to know the aspects related to the perceptions of teachers and children around the foreigners and vice versa. Second, we study the cultural references and the individuality of children, based on an analysis of the family environment and their expectations for

the future. Finally, we analyze the attitudes related to the behaviors in front of the educational processes developed in the classrooms and the deficiencies detected in these processes.

To this end, we intend to analyze the discourses of children, teachers and parents in the situations that arose in the course of the developed activities. Thus, this work collects different opinions and stories related for the purpose of illustrating their perceptions and to substantiate the argument developed below.

### 4.2. Social representations, prejudices and stereotypes

When analyzing schools in the city of Huelva, it is evident that the relations between immigrant and native children are mediated by the complexity of their particular visions vis-a-vis the "other" culture. Underlying the social constructions that at 10 and 11 years of age, children have been able to build through their socialization processes, on the different groups that cohabit the Spanish context. However, it is necessary to clarify that two attitudes





des converge with each other in a reciprocal way. On the one hand, it is evident that among children these imaginary about other social groups, possibly, help to establish the vision about only one of them. On the other hand, these attitudes are not necessarily decisive in the established integration processes.

In principle, collective imaginaries are those symbolic systems through which a society is constructed with respect to another and creates a social identity that dimension a particular way of interrelating. As a result of a historical process that has bequeathed a collective memory in a social organization, it is also a cohesive element and functions as the basis of the cultural and ideological structure of society, elements that constitute its self-representation. According to Baczkó,

“these representations of social reality (and not simple reflections of it), invented and elaborated with materials taken from the symbolic flow, have a specific reality that resides in its very existence, its variable impact on mentalities and the collective behaviors, in the multiple functions that they exert in the social life” (1999).

Thus, collective representations have a legitimizing effect on socially established ideologies and symbols that acquire significance within a particular society.

### 4.3. Foreign students: Between equality, adaptation and interculturality

With respect to the situation of the foreign students in the schools visited in Huelva, it was possible to detect the existence of three main discourses: the one of the equality, the one of the compensatory education and the one of the mutual adaptation.

The discourse of equality emphasizes the need to establish equality in the rights and opportunities of all students. Paradoxically, it tends to dispute the essence of cultural diversity, stating

that such similarity of possibilities would also imply using the same strategies in the education of immigrant children. Mainly, it is the assimilationist discourse where it would be recognized that the possibilities of social integration of the children are directly related to their accommodation to the underlying cultural context.

It is true that discourses like this stand out in highlighting the equality of rights among students when they are in school, but it is also true that they obviate the socio - cultural and individual dimension of the child by suggesting that a process of adaptation to the host society is required. Instead of being a mutual process. On the other hand, similar discourses emphasize the possible repercussions at school level given the difficulties involved in the migration process.

The discourse of compensatory pedagogy, on the other hand, recognizes the diversity present among children, both in terms of their cultural origin, their social or family situation and even their individual particularities. However, it focuses on strategies that compensate for the academic aspects of the integration process. Ultimately, the “adaptation” to the native culture would also be sought. Above all, it is related to appreciations about certain academic difficulties that the child would have as a result of the migration process.

Of course, this ideology recognizes the complexity that the child can produce, but focuses on possible methodologies to correct it if it seeks to achieve better academic results. Sometimes it deals with specific aspects, such as improving the teaching of Spanish to Moroccan or Chinese students. On the other hand, it also recognizes that Latin American children may have less difficulty in sharing a common language. That is to say, contrary to what is expected, it could be difficult the learning process by founding expectations developed around certain stereotypes created from the immigrant student status.

Finally, the last discourse promotes the idea of mutual adaptation, not of interculturality. In fact, other teachers are in agreement with the need to adapt pedagogical proposals to the cultu-



ral diversity present in the classrooms, but they argue that in many cases it generates difficulty. In general, it is stated that it is necessary to adapt the curricular structures to develop new relationships among children in the framework of a process of reciprocal integration, where each cultural group is recognized as different and valuable in itself.

#### **4.4. Relations between foreign and native children**

Despite being between 10 and 11 years old, children are recognized as active agents of the migratory process and not only as sons and daughters of newly arrived foreigners in the country. They also feel like fundamental players in this process of family and social restructuring because they know that like their parents, they left their friends, their families and their schools. Thus, it can be seen in children of this age that they are rebuilding their identity from a continuous process of interrelationships between the society they left behind and the host society. In this way, some of the children who arrived younger and have a clearer tendency towards cultural assimilation accept that they also belong to that "other" country that they know through their parents.

For example, a boy was born in the same country as his mother and in his discourse, as in other children, there is a constant tension between that country that they crave and the one where they have built their social networks since childhood or where they are redefining their identity. In fact, at the beginning of adolescence, they are still developing that process. On the other hand, it is clear that this circumstance is conditioned by the levels of acceptance or rejection manifested by the school environment (Cabrera, Marín, Espín, Rodríguez and, 1998). Thus, some children recognize the reality of the difficulties derived from the process of integration in the new society.

The other discourse usually developed by children is one of mutual adaptation. In fact, it is often stated through these arguments that the start always entails certain difficulties, but later

they manage to get around because native children ultimately take different attitudes ranging from acceptance to tolerance, respect or kindness. In fact, one of the facts that stands out is that stereotypes, prejudices or possible reservations against a child of another culture or nationality, cancel to a certain extent when school life allows children to be individualized. That is to say, individuals are removed from social constructions in front of certain groups by recognizing their particularities without detriment for those stereotypes against other members of these collectives can be maintained. Although it is true that sometimes these cultural differences do not define criteria according to which native children intend to choose their friends.

#### **4.5. The role of the family and cultural background**

With regard to the cultural references of children, the less or greater support they receive from the family as well as the values instilled from the home are some of the factors that influence these processes of socialization. In the investigation carried out in the schools of the city of Huelva, the presence of three main discourses about the family influence in the integration of the children was detected: the one of the school as a benefit, the one of the parents as educators and the one of the family absence.

In the first one, the parents recognize the role of the school as a decisive factor in the development of their children. There is an interrelation between their frustrations when they do not finish high school and the aspiration that their aspirations are achieved through the children. In that sense, academic spaces would fulfill a social function insofar as it serves as an instrument for social opportunities. This leads to a direct relationship between the exclusion process because of its lack of schooling and the concrete possibility of accessing the world of work.

The second refers to the questioning of parents about the role of teachers in the education



of children. Sometimes it is the idea that parents consider that they are the ones who should educate children. On the other hand, there is a tension between two different visions of the space known as “school”. On the one hand it is the vision about the home as a scenario of integral education, where their children acquire the values required to live in society. And on the other hand, it is also the conception of these parents about the failures of Western education, where it would not be possible to learn what they teach at home.

The third is related to the teachers’ perspective regarding the repercussions derived from the lack of participation of the parents in the educational processes. Indeed, throughout the motivational programs to which they were invited, only very few of them accompanied their children. In this sense, educators suggest that some parents are not always available to cooperate with their training, a situation that could be verified. However, it is paradoxical that the activities carried out under the “Promotional Classroom” result from a voluntary enrollment in the program. In any case, this clarification becomes relevant when it serves to show that there is a constant tension between the desire to achieve the success of the children and the idea of the ways in which they could collaborate with this process.

#### **4.6. Curricular Structures and Academic Environment**

It has also been found that school difficulties among some foreign children have to do with the different ways of understanding knowledge. It is evident that the forms of learning change from one culture to another and in the case of classrooms; this is manifested with greater intensity. In this case, the problem is that the curricula are insufficient to attend to the cultural diversity of the children and this usually generates demotivation among the educators. In addition, this situation is what causes the academic difficulties among some children, since some of these curricular structures are outside their interests.

Therefore, it is necessary to emphasize that in intercultural contexts, the academic programs should be made according to the personal and social development needs of the child. This is related to the creation of an academic space where intercultural dialogue is established through respect for diversity and seeking objectives in which they identify themselves. For this reason, it is fundamental to recognize that the difficulties presented by foreign children in the classroom are due to the fact that the contents and purposes are not significant or recognized in them (Rodríguez, 2003). As a consequence, the school environment must seek the deconstruction of the ethnocentric representations of culture to generate learning based on the shared existence of cultural representations. It is primarily a process of ethnic de-centralization to improve children’s knowledge of themselves and the culture of the other to improve coexistence.

### **5. Discussion and conclusions**

In analyzing the extent to which cultural diversity influences integration processes among children, it has been shown that while belonging to a particular ethnic group or country may influence relationships between children, these factors are not always an obstacle. This is because, despite belonging to a particular social or cultural group, children carry with them a particular identity developed from their socialization processes, their family environment and even their life trajectory. Therefore the relationships they establish with their environment are linked to factors of different character. In fact, it was detected that the greater or less capacity for social integration among children is also mediated by circumstances related to the family and social environment, as well as the construction of their identity and expectations of the future.

Similarly, it was identified that another obstacle arises when institutions and educators recognize the importance of fostering the social and school integration of ethnic and immigrant



minorities, but do not adequately address such diversity. On the other hand, when some recognize these shortcomings, they do not have adequate human or curricular resources. From this perspective, several discourses detected in this research denote an assimilationist orientation. Thus, the problem is not even the obvious need to learn the language and characterizations of the host society, but rather the emphasis placed on educational normalization and cultural integration as a matter of “others” and not as a matter of “all”.

Having said this, it is clear that the social integration of children and young people is especially important because it depends not only on their academic success but also on their integral development. For this, then it is necessary to rethink the curricular structures through the reconstruction of the contents with emphasis on interculturality. This approach is essential to understand that the initial acceptance should be made from the beginning of the interactions between peers and indigenous educators as an element to achieve an effective inclusion process. In order to achieve this, it is necessary that the immigrant students integrate in a normalized context from the first moment, since the development of their identity and the construction of their socialization processes depend on the balance in the relations within the classroom.

Regarding this point, it is clear that another aspect related to integration has to do with the set of attitudes that the host society deploys to address the complexity of cultural backgrounds. In this context, specific strategies to address the needs of the child in relation to their personal and academic training from equity in opportunities and duties are revealing. Of course, it is essential to recognize individual rights and an educational practice that also includes a commitment to fight against social exclusion to achieve real change in the educational community (Montón, 2002). Indeed, effective management of interculturality, promoting knowledge and understanding of cultural diversity in the field of education, can

improve the processes of social integration of immigrant children.

Finally, within the framework of the recent migratory processes towards Europe from Syria and other contexts of conflict, it is possible to argue that the challenge of the school context is to significantly affect the life course of immigrants. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the educational environment to promote the construction of interpersonal relationships where difference does not become synonymous with antagonism but with the possibility of constructing and learning collectively from the other. In this sense, the objective should be to seek the integral development of the child through an education that promotes life skills and abilities to live together in community. Thus, the challenge of the school in intercultural contexts is to reorient the life trajectory of children who have left their roots, promoting a dialogue between their past and their present, allowing them to develop concrete strategies in favor of building their life project in a new social context.

## Notes

1. Programa orientado a fortalecer la inclusión social, las relaciones interculturales y la construcción del proyecto de vida de población inmigrante y gitana en España.
2. ONG orientada a fortalecer la inclusión social, laboral y educativa de población inmigrante y gitana en España.
3. Primera etapa de la educación básica obligatoria en España. Representada en las Gráficas 1 y 3 con la sigla de EPO.
4. Segunda y última etapa de la educación obligatoria en España antes de ingresar a la formación superior. Representada en las Gráficas 1 y 3 con la sigla de ESO.

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