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Institute of Education and Humanities

MA Bilingualism and Multilingualism

Demands and Strategies: The Impact of Immigration on the Public Educational System in Caxias do Sul, Brazil

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ECGE7002Q - Dissertation
Student Number: 1603783

September 2025

DECLARATION FORM

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I certify that the whole of this work is the result of my individual effort, and that all sources have been acknowledged.

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DECLARATION

I am satisfied that this work is the result of the student's effort.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I dedicate this paper to my beloved husband, whose support throughout the whole process has been unconditional. Maurício was the one who had always encouraged me to look at the world with curiosity and had always shown me the impact that this research can have on people's lives.

To my sons, Matteo and Gonzalo, who have inspired me to do something that can help me expand my view of the world. Thanks for their patience during the process, as their teenage hormones and mine have often put up a fight.

To my parents, who have unconditionally supported me in everything I do, understanding how my choices align with the very values they have shown me.

To my sister, whose energy and passion for life have been a source of inspiration to me.

To Dr Hywel Glyn Lewis for all his support, patience, and guidance over the years, and for believing and encouraging me to go further.

To all my current and past students, who have taught me that, when we do something we believe in, love and value, the reward we receive is priceless. Education is a powerful tool for transforming reality and making the world a better place.

To all participants in this research, for their contribution and willingness to help.

To all migrants who have left their homeland in search of a better condition of life. I wish the world to become a fairer place where we can move freely without barriers or judgments.

To South America, my continent, a place filled with culture and people with huge hearts.

To Brazil, my home, the place where I want to be.

ABSTRACT

Global patterns of displacement, driven by economic, political, and increasingly climate-related crises, have led to rising migration flows across borders. In Brazil, the recent and growing influx of Venezuelan immigrants has significantly impacted public education, particularly in the municipality of Caxias do Sul. This study investigates the educational challenges and opportunities arising from this new reality through a case study conducted in a local public school. Using a mixed-methods approach, which incorporates both qualitative and quantitative data collection, the research captures the perspectives of families, educators, and policymakers. Findings highlight the primary challenges faced by the educational system, such as linguistic barriers, teacher preparedness, and pedagogical practices, while also identifying potential strategies to support migrant integration. The literature review explores how political ideologies influence educational models and learning outcomes, as well as the potential cognitive benefits of promoting bilingualism. The study suggests that implementing a Two-Way bilingual education model—successfully used in other countries—could benefit both Brazilian and Venezuelan students by fostering inclusive and linguistically responsive education.

Keywords: Migration, Bilingual Education, Venezuelan Immigrants, Two-Way Model, Public Schools, Language Policy, Assimilation, Inclusion

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

1.1 The Brazilian Immigration Context

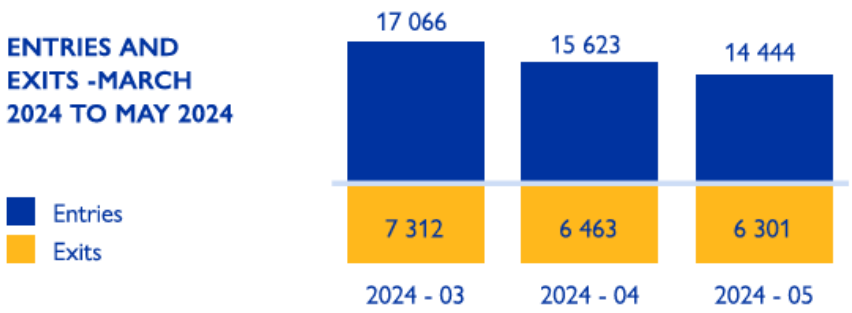
One of the fundamental phenomena affecting many people worldwide has been the need to migrate away from their homeland. Due to economic, political and, more recently, climate crisis factors that have been battering many nations, there has been an increased number of displacements as people look for safer and better living conditions. According to the paper published by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), which is part of the UN, entitled *World Migration Report 2022,* 'the current global estimate is that there were around 281 million international migrants in the world in 2020, which equates to 3.6 per cent of the global population'.

The report points out that most internal displacements within South America happened due to violence and conflicts rather than disasters, and Venezuela represented the most acute humanitarian crisis in the world at the time of its publication. The Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR), an economic and political body comprising Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, facilitates regional movement among its participating countries due to residence and labour agreements established between these countries. In Brazil, the entry point for anyone from Venezuela into the country is in Pacaraima, a bordering town in the Northwest state of Roraima. In 2018, due to the arrival of many migrants from Venezuela, the Brazilian government created 'Operação Acolhida' (Welcoming Operation) in partnership with the UN and various international organisations. According to the Brazilian government website, gov.br, the program aims to help migrants get their documents to establish themselves in the country. There, the UN and the Brazilian Federal Police (Polícia Federal) provide tents to help immigrants obtain the necessary documentation to enter Brazil, as well as temporary accommodation, hygiene facilities, and

psychological support. According to the paper published by the IOM (International Organisation for Migration), entitled *Welcome Operation Provides Venezuelans with a New Beginning in the North of Brazil* (free translation), published in April 2023, since 2017, almost 800,000 Venezuelan refugees and immigrants have entered the largest country in South America, mainly through its northern borders. The latest report, published in June 2024, estimates 7.77 million Venezuelan refugees worldwide, 6.59 million in Latin America and the Caribbean, with 568,100 in Brazil.

According to the IOM report, *Migration Trends in the Americas* (2024), the Brazilian government efforts to legalize and regulate immigration 'are guided by Decree No. 9,199 (November 20, 2017) on migration regularisation, Interministerial Ordinance No. 12 (June 14, 2018) on temporary visas and family reunification, and Law No. 13,684 (June 21, 2018) which provides for emergency assistance actions to support individuals in vulnerable situations due to migration flows caused by a humanitarian crisis. The figures below show the net migration of Venezuelans over three months, as well as the Venezuelan migrants ' population pyramid documents issued to immigrants from January 2017 to May 2024.

Figure 1:



Entries and Exits – March 2024 to May 2024

Entries to Brazil	47 133
Exits to Brazil	20 076
Net Migration	27 057

Figure 2:

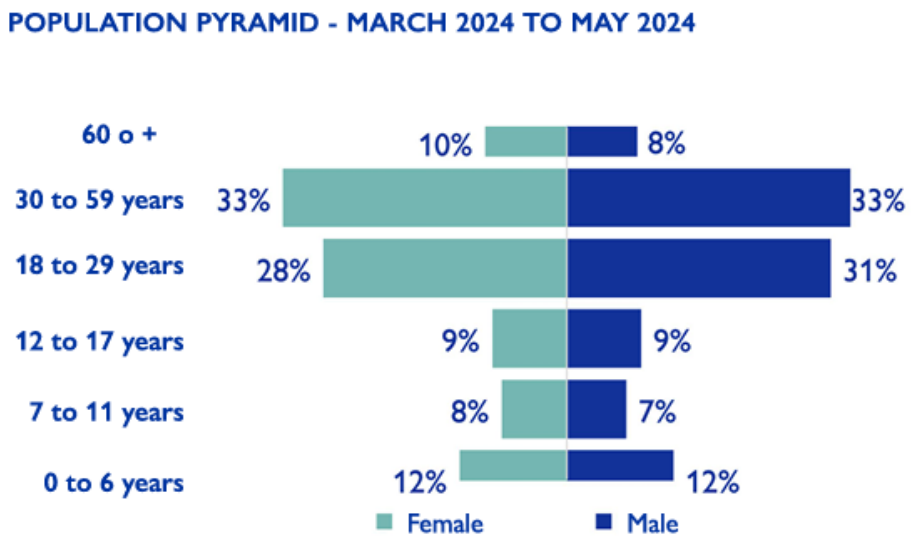
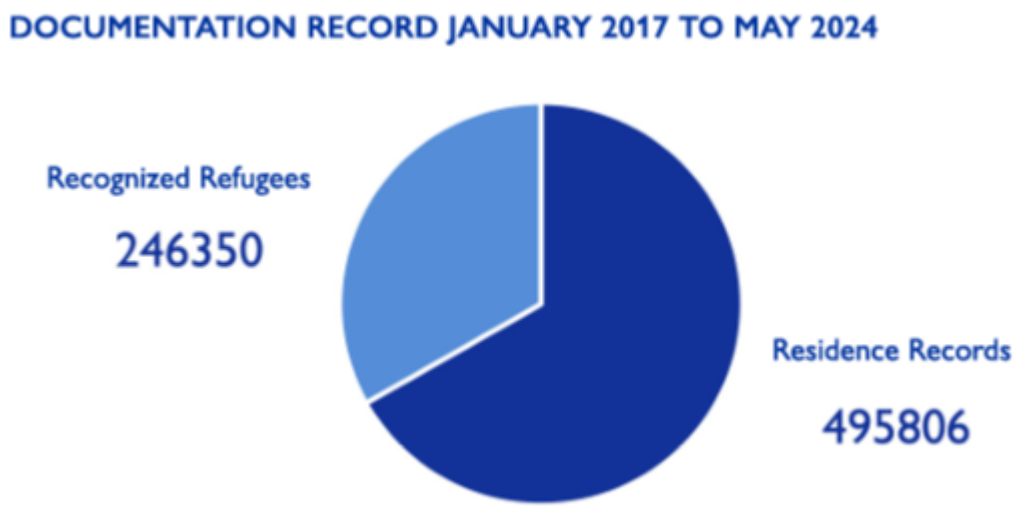


Figure 3:



Source:https://lac.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbdl2601/files/documents/2024-09/migration-trends-in-the-americas-april-june-2024.pdf

Due to this immigration trend, this research was conducted in Caxias do Sul, situated in the hills of Serra Gaucha, an economically prosperous town in the Southernmost state of Brazil.

According to the 2022 Census, the population was 463,338 (www.cidades.ibge.gov.br/brasil/rs/caxias-do-sul/panorama). Caxias do Sul is considered the second-largest city in the state of Rio Grande do Sul and offers employment opportunities, as the city also has numerous factories and slaughterhouses. According to local newspapers, the city has had a substantial influx of immigrants in the last decade and, especially since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, many immigrants who fled their home countries can be observed begging for food and spare change at traffic lights across the town. Also, many of these migrants are incorporated into the labour market, such as in factories, slaughterhouses and supermarket chains.

Another factor worth mentioning is the actual political status of the Brazilian government. The federal government is represented by President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, whose political ideologies emphasise social equality and progressive policies. However, the Chamber of Deputies and the current Senate are formed, in the majority, by politicians who defend the economy and have a more conservative view of the welfare the state should offer its citizens. The current Chamber of Deputies comprises 513 deputies from 19 different parties. Of them, 46.20% are conservatives, 27.48% are left-wing, and 26.31% are centrists.

In recent years, many families have arrived, especially from Venezuela, with school-age children, and the education system is facing new demands that have never been seen before. The present research is of extreme relevance, as it represents a very recent development that warrants examination. The research focuses on understanding what schools were doing and how they were coping with this new phenomenon; thus, perhaps, it could help local authorities in supporting the teaching and learning process of migrant students to make sure their full potential is fulfilled.

1.2 Research Aim

The research aims to understand the current linguistic demands on the local council's public education sector in Caxias do Sul, resulting from the influx of migrant students, particularly from Venezuela, who do not speak Portuguese, and the strategies adopted to address these demands.

1.3 Research Objectives

This research seeks to investigate:

- the demographics of students who come to Caxias do Sul, how long they have been living in the city, and the languages spoken by them;
- the perceptions of students, families and teachers within the educational system regarding any language barriers;
- the nature of actions that primary schools of the public sector take to overcome any language barriers among students;
- the pedagogical demands on teachers, families and students related to overcoming language struggles and supporting learning;
- the approach adopted in public primary schools towards language plurality.

1.4 Research Context:

The research addresses a current demand that has increased in recent years, a phenomenon that has never occurred before. The high influx of immigrants has challenged all individuals involved in the education system and deserves further examination. By comprehending the challenges faced by the parties concerned, strategies and possible changes can be thought of to assist and support students, families and schools. The investigation examined various aspects that relate to socio-cultural elements, as well as learning strategies and challenges.

This research critically examines the intersection of education, migration, and multilingualism, themes of significant relevance in contemporary sociolinguistic and pedagogical discourse. The study synthesises theoretical perspectives with empirical observations to analyse the socio-cultural and economic dimensions of immigrant integration. A particular focus is placed on Venezuelan migrant families, whose forced displacement contrasts with other migratory contexts yet highlights universal challenges in linguistic and cultural adaptation. By investigating these dynamics, the study contributes to broader academic discussions on equity in education, language policy, and the psychosocial impacts of forced migration. Furthermore, it underscores the need for inclusive pedagogical approaches that address the unique needs of displaced populations navigating unfamiliar linguistic and cultural environments.

As Baker (2011) pointed out, when dealing with policies regarding immigrants' languages or minority languages, policymakers typically take two different approaches: assimilation or pluralism. Both involve social and economic aspects, particularly when it comes to bilingual education. The first affirms that the state tends to influence or even intervene in individuals' values and culture, as it dictates that 'immigrants are expected to abandon their heritage language.' (Baker 2011:391). Not having a policy where immigrants' language is used as a tool for communication at school, for example, is a speedy process. This reality is especially true for young children and teenagers, who will transition from using their mother tongue to the main language of the adopted country, thus resulting in a language shift. Baker (2011:391) suggests that this ideology tends to marginalise immigrants' mother tongues as policymakers see them as 'divisive and potentially conflictive'.

Baker (2011) employs the term "melting pot" to describe a scenario in which diverse immigrants are combined to create a new, homogenised whole. In this context, individuals

gradually "melt" into a "single smooth essence," resulting eventually in the adoption of one unique language and, consequently, one distinct culture. Contrarily, pluralism emphasises the acceptance of immigrants' languages and cultures, recognising them as valuable assets to the entire community. This research will explore the current approach to language plurality in the city. By examining the duration of Venezuelan immigrants' residence in Brazil and their integration into the Brazilian education system, the study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of the teaching methodologies that have been implemented in these situations.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

To gain a deeper understanding of the various aspects related to the research topic, the literature review will provide a summary of the relevant themes and issues intertwined within this discussion. Hence, it is crucial to consider a fundamental aspect of language, as put by Li Wei:

> Language is a human faculty: it co-evolves with us, Homo sapiens; and it is we who give language its life, change it, and, if so desired, abandon it. When we speak of 'language contact', we are therefore talking about people speaking different languages coming into contact with one another. (Li Wei, 2003, p.3)

When languages come into contact with one another, it is crucial to understand that various socio-political, cultural, and cognitive factors are at stake. Li Wei (2007) notes that some individuals may choose to relocate from their current place of residence, while others are forced to do so. She points out that seven major factors could lead to language contact, and two of them are particularly relevant to the displacement of Venezuelans to Brazil: political and economic aspects. She also highlights that when different languages come into contact, the outcome is often bilingualism or even multilingualism.

Appel & Myskin point out that:

> If one thing can be learned from language-contact studies, it is how important the overall social context is. Sociolinguistics is not like chemistry, and when you put two languages together, the same thing does not always happen. (Appel & Myskin, 1987, p.5)

Ferguson (1959) coined the term diglossia, from the Greek meaning "two languages," to refer to a situation in which different languages are used within the same community by distinct groups of people. Hence, two languages co-exist but are not necessarily spoken or used by the entire population. Ferguson (1959) points out that these co-existing languages, used in different domains, have a High (H) domain, which is used in formal situations such as

schools, and a Low (L) domain, where the language is used in more informal domains, such as the home. Fishman (1972) refers to diglossia when discussing the use of two languages within a community in terms of their different status. In the studied context, the H language would be Portuguese, and the L language would be Spanish, which immigrants speak among themselves. Another very typical example would be Paraguay, where Guarani (L) is used in informal domains and Spanish (H) is used in official domains.

Bilingualism can be defined in many ways, and, as Mackey (1967:11) puts it, being bilingual is 'far from being exceptional', as it is a status that 'affects the majority of the world's population'. Additionally, Edwards (1994:1) pinpoints that the ability to communicate in two or more languages is a 'normal and unremarkable necessity for the majority of the world today.' Bilingualism tends to become even more common due to *current* issues, which involve geopolitical conflicts, climate change, and economic globalisation. Issues related to these factors will be discussed, as they are crucial to understanding the context of the current research.

2.1 Historical and Socio-Political Factors - Brazil's Context

Current debates on language acquisition cannot be separated from the political ideology underlying what is taught in the education system's classrooms. Understanding the nuances of different political ideological policies underpinning the choice of education will determine the expected outcomes. Taking this into consideration, it is important to point out that the aim of the education applied in many countries supports an ideal outcome which, according to Ferguson et al. (1977), is 'to assimilate individuals or groups into the mainstream of society; to socialise people for full participation in the community'. Thus, as indicated by Baker (2017), immigrants are expected to abandon their heritage language, as the linguistic-cultural

barrier could be seen as a problem, under the altruistic idea of helping immigrants to be part of society.

Shining a light on the historical formation of Brazil is crucial to understanding how it influences all aspects of contemporary society, both culturally, socially, as well as politically; thereby shaping the subjectivity of its people due to policies that are implemented. Hence, based on Wiley's (2015) language typology of language *policies* and Bourhis's (2001) typology of *political ideologies,* it is possible to draw a parallel between their concepts and definitions. Bourhis (2001) has created a typology of four political ideologies which impact languages, whilst Wiley (2015) has created a typology of four language policies which can be adopted:

1. According to Bourhis (2001), a *pluralist* political ideology allows (and encourages) the use of different languages within a country. This ideology equates to what Wiley (2015) highlights as a *promotion-oriented* language policy.
2. A *civic* political ideology (Bourhis, 2001) allows different languages to be spoken but only supports (financially, etc.) the official language or languages of the country. This ideology equates to what Wiley (2015) refers to as a *tolerance-oriented* language policy.
3. *Assimilation* is a political ideology which encourages people (such as migrants) to adopt the official language of the country and reduces or limits the use of their mother tongue (Bourhis, 2001). This equates to what Wiley (2015) refers to as a *restriction-oriented* language policy.
4. An ethnist political ideology (Bourhis, 2001) is where the mother tongue or other spoken languages are legally prohibited from being used. This equates to what Wiley (2015) refers to as a *repression-oriented* language policy.

The table below presents Bourhis' (2001) political ideologies alongside Wiley's (2015) language policies, using a colour-coded continuum that ranges from red, indicating repressive policies toward minority languages, to green, denoting promotional policies.

Table 1:

Bourhis' Political Ideology - Wiley's Language Policy

Political Ideology (Bourhis, 2001)	**Language Policy (Wiley, 2015)**	**Key Characteristic**
Ethnist	Repression-oriented	Prohibits non-official languages
Assimilation	Restriction-oriented	Discourages mother tongues and promotes the use of the official language(s)
Civic	Tolerance-oriented	Allows the use of non-official languages but doesn't support them financially, for example
Pluralist	Promotion-oriented	Actively encourages multilingualism

An analysis of these frameworks supports the assertion that Brazil's political ideology reflects linguistic assimilation, as Portuguese usage is not merely encouraged but is institutionally mandated as the normative mode of communication. This ideological orientation fundamentally shapes educational paradigms, wherein the selection of pedagogical models is contingent upon both the prevailing language ideology and policy, as well as their intended sociolinguistic outcomes.

Tosi (1998) reflects on the different ways in which cultural or linguistic assimilation occurs at various levels: explicit, implicit, and concealed, which can help analyse and identify the kind of assimilation currently taking place in Caxias do Sul, Brazil.

a) Explicit Assimilation**:** This form of assimilation is deliberate and openly acknowledged. It involves clear, intentional efforts and expectations by political authorities for an individual or group to adopt the customs, language, or norms of another culture. Explicit assimilation characterises enforcement through policies or social expectations, involving clear and visible changes which are imposed (such as adopting a new language or abandoning traditional attire, and/ mandatory schooling in a dominant language) or which are adopted voluntarily (such as immigrants adopting the dominant culture to integrate).

b) Implied Assimilation: this occurs more subtly and unconsciously, often as a natural consequence of prolonged exposure to a dominant culture. It can be defined as having no direct effort or force; it happens gradually over time, to the extent that individuals may not even realise they are being assimilated. It involves adopting behaviours, language or cultural traits passively. Interestingly, in this form of assimilation, for example, minority language students are seen as having 'special needs', and thus are often offered compensatory forms of education.

c) Concealed Assimilation: refers to *indirect or hidden pressures* placed on minority groups to assimilate. While overt assimilation policies may no longer be politically acceptable in many societies, assimilation can still occur subtly through discourses that look positive on the surface but actually privilege the majority culture and language.

Considering the various forms of assimilation and their characteristics described by Tosi (1998), one can infer that, in this case, the assimilation goal refers to an acculturation that promotes absorption (Wiley & Wright, 2004). Additionally, Skutnab-Kangas (1977) suggests

that assimilation can be more focused in *economic-structural* terms, which refer to a gateway of possibility and the approach adopted towards immigrants, as well as *cultural* assimilation, where the minority group often gives up its cultural identity, even if with more resistance in the case of migrants. Ruiz (1984) categorised the political dimensions surrounding bilingual education as language as a right, language as a problem, and language as a resource, arguing that 'while this framework can be a conscious process, it is also embedded in 'the subconscious assumptions of teachers, planners and politicians' (Ruiz 1984:16). The way that those in power perceive language can influence pedagogical aspects for both those delivering and receiving formal education. Baker (2017) argues that the dominant group has an interest in maintaining the *status quo* of its privileged position by ensuring that the majority language remains a emblem of a cohesive and integrated nation. Here, it is crucial to understand that, as the subject relates to political debate, it must be examined from a *historical* perspective of the Brazilian context. For this, one could go back over 500 years, when the Brazilian territory was solely inhabited by indigenous peoples who spoke, among them, over 1,000 different indigenous languages. These languages were systematically eradicated with the arrival of Portuguese colonisers from the 16th century onwards, followed by other European immigrants to Brazil in the 19th century. Rodrigues (1986) outlines:

> The history of indigenous school education shows that, in general, schooling has always had the goal of integrating the indigenous populations into the greater society. Indian tongues were seen as the biggest obstacle to such integration. Thus, the function of the school was to teach Indian students how to speak, read and write in Portuguese. (Rodrigues 1986)

According to *Povos Indígenas do Brasil*, the vast majority of the original indigenous languages have been lost over the past 500 years. This phenomenon mirrors what might be termed the 'persuasive altruistic equal opportunities rationale,' applied in the USA under the educational policies of *No Child Left Behind*, where there are alleged 'mutual' benefits for

both the assimilator and the assimilated. This framework is still replicated as a contemporary repetition of colonial dynamics, as examined by Geni Nuñez (2023) in her decolonial scholarship. Nuñez's work demonstrates how such constructs perpetuate colonial power structures and are Eurocentric, by casting dominant groups in the role of benefactors while imposing assimilationist demands on minority communities. This pattern directly corresponds to Brazil's historical formation, where, as Nuñez (2023) documents, colonial violence was systematically recast as civilising benevolence. Building on Nuñez's argument, one might argue that authentic cultural integration requires dismantling these transactional expectations, where immigrants are expected to trade cultural authenticity for conditional 'belonging', assimilating the language and culture of the coloniser.

Language is a fundamental human *right*, as stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 2, which implies that one is entitled to all the rights, without distinction of any kind, such as language. This means that one has the right to speak and interact in one's own language, which is directly related to protection against discrimination. However, many languages across the globe are not regarded as important or prestigious as others, primarily due to their geopolitical and economic implications. As a discriminatory way of identifying the 'outsider', the one who does not belong, when language is perceived from a prejudiced perspective it becomes a *problem.*

However, in addition to language being a *political* problem involving discrimination, there has also been a *cognitive* discriminatory issue. Historically, many have believed that bilinguals experience cognitive difficulties because one of the two languages may occupy brain space, thereby preventing the other from developing and flourishing. This perception has also connected being bilingual with having a split personality and feeling dislocated socially and culturally.

Therefore, whereas the topic of this research has a clear *political* dimension in terms of the assimilation of a Venezuelan Spanish-speaking immigrant population with a Portuguese-speaking indigenous population in Brazil, it also has a central *educational* focus, as its title specifically highlights, namely, the current impact of such immigration on the public educational system in Caxias do Sul. It is to educational aspects that we, therefore, now turn in this review of related literature.

2.2 Bilingual Education

Cazden & Snow (1990) state that 'bilingual education' is a simple label for a complex phenomenon, as there is a wide range of models available. Consequently, these approaches employ different methodologies and serve various purposes in terms of the expected results in linguistic fluency and usage. This section aims to briefly describe and analyse the main models of bilingual education by considering their methodologies, expected outcomes and the bilingual elements present in each one.

Baker (2011) points out that the term 'bilingual education' involves much more than only education that operates in two languages. He states that 'there are socio-cultural, political and economic issues in the debate over the provision of bilingual education, particularly politics' (Baker, 2011:208). Consequently, when analysing different models of bilingual education, many aspects have to be considered, including political ideologies as well as socio-cultural and economic perspectives.

Bilingual education encompasses two primary objectives related to the purpose of educational instruction. *Transitional bilingual education* aims to shift the child's home language to the majority language, reflecting an assimilationist political ideology. On the other hand, *maintenance bilingual education* seeks to promote and maintain the child's

minority language. The latter reflects a pluralistic political ideology that supports language diversity and multiculturalism. Maintenance bilingual education often refers to preserving minority languages, which are perceived as 'Low' languages. Opposingly, transitional bilingual education reflects, as Skatnabb-Kangas (1977) states, economic-structural assimilation, thus leading to linguistic and cultural assimilation. These views of bilingual education, therefore, are directly related to the continuum of political ideology and language policies discussed earlier and to Bourhis's (2001) and Wiley's (2015) indication of either assimilationist-restriction-orientated or pluralist-promotion-orientated tendencies in policymaking.

These differing aims are presented in Ferguson et al.'s (1977) list, which contains clashing philosophies and political issues surrounding bilingual education. These aims vary from separatist views, such as efforts aimed at reinforcing elite groups and maintaining their privileged status, to more inclusive approaches that promote linguistic and cultural diversity, such as fostering a deeper understanding of language and culture. (Fergusson 1977). Such a variety of aims and methodologies is so vast and diverse that Mackey (1970) suggests a possible, but not definitive, list of 90 combinations of models of bilingual education.

In this paper, only the main models of education presented by Baker (2011:209-210) will be described and analysed, as they will relate to the context being researched in this paper.

2.2.1 Monolingual Forms of Education for Bilinguals (semi-bilingualism)

'We must have but one flag. We must have but one language…The greatness of this nation depends on the swift assimilation of the aliens she welcomes to her shores.' Theodore Roosevelt, 1917

Roosevelt's strong words illustrate the monolingual aims of some models of so-called ‘bilingual’ education. The ‘submersion’ model, for example, promotes monolingualism by following the principle of ‘sink, struggle or swim,' cited by Baker (2011). In this model, due to its aim and methodology, a minority language child is 'thrown' into a 'swimming pool' or a classroom where only the majority language is used in the teaching-learning process. Such models only contain one element of bilingualism: the child who speaks another language will eventually 'learn to swim' and become monolingual in the majority language. Consequently, such models lead to both cultural and linguistic assimilation. Skutnabb-Kangas (1977) states that linguistic assimilation presents two different aims: 'deculturation to achieve subordination and acculturation to promote absorption' (Baker, 2011:392). According to Freeman (2007), these models of ‘bilingual’ education represent the majority of programs funded in the USA, the Roosevelt quotation above, for example, being a true reflection of the country’s political ideology historically.

With regard to more recent times, however, according to Dicker (2008), these models clearly reflect the ideology of Arnold Schwarzenegger's government. The Hollywood actor, who served as governor of California from 2003 to 2011, maintained that 'children from Spanish-speaking homes would improve academically if they turned off the Spanish television channels and used English all the time.' However, research conducted in New York by Menken (2009, 2011) has shown that students who follow a monolingual education model exhibit limited academic literacy in English, even after many years of elementary education. Cummins (1979) argues that proficiency in a second language (L2) is partly dependent on the level of proficiency already achieved in the first language (L1).

2.2.2 Weak forms of bilingual education for bilinguals

2.2.2.1Transitional

Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) primarily involves a submersion model, with the exception that students are permitted to use their native language *temporarily.* As a weak model of bilingual education, its aim is also subtractive in nature. Students are initially taught in their home language until they become proficient in the majority language. Baker (2011) again illustrates this transitional education model with the example of someone learning to swim. He argues that in order to move to the main, deeper pool, one must practice swimming in a smaller, shallower pool. Therefore, this model differs from submersion, where students are thrown directly into ‘the deeper end of the pool’ as it were. By adopting Baker's analogy, TBE aims to increase the ability in L2, as the use of L1 only continues until students shift to the primary language to function in the majority language.

The political justification behind the adoption of transitional models is equality and the opportunity to expand and increase students' performance and participation in society. TBE leads to language and cultural assimilation through an 'altruistic' discourse of achieving social and economic success by acquiring L2. However, again, the only ‘bilingual’ element here is the child who enters the education system speaking L1 and exits speaking L2.

2.2.2.2 Mainstream with Foreign Language Teaching

This bilingual education model is widely employed in many countries worldwide. It is informally referred to as 'drip-feed' language education. In this model, mainstream school lessons are in the majority language. A second language is only taught *as a subject* in the curriculum, just like any other subject, such as History or Art, which is different from using the second language as a tool in the teaching-learning process. This model produces limited

bilingualism, as the student lacks persistent, longer contact with L2 due to its occasional delivery, and the methodology often concentrates on a grammatical approach to language acquisition.

Criticism of this education model highlights the fact that after many years of contact, students function poorly in L2 due to its weak methodology. Le Blanc (1992:33) criticises this model of foreign language teaching and its effectiveness. He states that:

> We all know how much our country invests in second language training. We are talking in terms of millions and millions of dollars…All these students are taking second-language courses and, once they have finished, should normally be able to function in the second language. But what happens in reality? (Le Blanc 1993:157)

As Baker (2011) points out, this model presents a paradoxical aspect of language teaching. Schools teach, ineffectively and at a high cost, the same languages in which many immigrants are already fluent, but are made to ignore, abandon and feel ashamed of speaking.

2.2.3 Strong forms of bilingual education for bilingualism and biliteracy

2.2.3.1 Immersion

The immersion method started as an experiment in Montreal in 1965. It began with a group of 26 kindergarten students. English-speaking parents requested an education that would enable their children, according to Baker (2011:239), 'to become bilingual and bicultural without loss of achievement.' In a nutshell, immersion refers to a classroom setting where the majority of children speak one language and are educated in two languages. This model has been successfully adopted in many countries as a robust bilingual education model that promotes bilingualism and biliteracy. Baker (2011) also argues that economic and employment advantages were motivators for the choice of immersion programs.

However, immersion also has some aspects that are not all positive, as Baker (2011) highlights. Some of the majority language students who have undergone 12 years of bilingual education often fail to achieve native speaker proficiency in English, particularly in productive writing and speaking skills. He also suggests that the receptive skills have developed better, and attributes this 'flaw' to the methodology, as 'perpetual insistence on correct communication is avoided.' (Baker 2011:241) Thus, students can become fluent speakers of an incorrect language, hence the concept of fossilised interlanguage. Dodson (1995) points out that teachers are so glad to listen to a child speaking in L2 that they place their focus on fluency rather than accuracy in terms of grammatical correctness and precision.

2.2.3.2 Maintenance/Heritage Language

Heritage language programs preserve students' minority languages, native or home languages, by using them as a medium of instruction, either partly or entirely. The aim is to achieve full bilingualism and biliteracy. Baker (2011:233) argues that the early start of bilingual education can create a 'domino effect' as it requires continuity beyond preschool, thus allowing students to progress through the entire education system in both languages. There are two ways that this methodology operates: static and enrichment maintenance. Whilst the enrichment model aims to improve the child's bilingual skills, the static model maintains the minority language but does not develop it. Various examples of this model, designed to secure the maintenance of indigenous languages, exist in the USA.

A question arises as to whether heritage language is a separate bilingual education model or whether it refers to heritage language as a medium of instruction. Baker (2011) points out that the term "heritage language" can sometimes sound old, so many countries have adopted "community language" or "international languages." Perhaps here, one could argue that heritage education is more closely related to identity and the maintenance of a community

language. In contrast, the majority language is more about an economic and globalised outcome.

2.2.3.3 Two-Way Dual Language

This bilingual education model applies to a situation where approximately half of the students in a classroom speak a majority language and the other half speak a minority language. In this way, both languages are used for instruction in the classroom. This model aims to produce relatively balanced bilinguals and, consequently, biliteracy. The model was created in 1963 by a Cuban community in Florida. The Coral Way Elementary School provided education in both Spanish and English to immigrant children. Interestingly, English-speaking children from middle-class backgrounds subsequently started to enrol.

This model has been replicated throughout the USA. However, what differentiates it from maintenance education is its compulsory element: the English language. There are various combinations of Spanish and English, Korean and English, for example, but there is no combination of another language without English being one of them. This is a mixture of two models: assimilation and bilingualism. Baker (2011:225) points out that the Dual Language model aims to 'produce bilingual, biliterate and multicultural children.' According to Lindholm-Leary (2000), the purposes of Dual Language schools include achieving a high level of proficiency in both languages, promoting biliteracy, enhancing general academic attainment, fostering positive multicultural attitudes, and achieving positive social, economic, and political outcomes.

2.2.3.4 Mainstream Bilingual / Bilingual Education in Majority Languages

This type of bilingual education involves the use of two (or more) majority languages to achieve bilingualism, biliteracy and cultural pluralism. The majority language can refer to a

language widely spoken locally, but it is not considered a majority language throughout the world. The model is used in countries that are already bilingual, such as Luxembourg or Singapore, or where inhabitants or expatriates express a desire to become fluent in another language, as in Japan, where students learn through a combination of English and Japanese.

A relatively recent variation of mainstream bilingual education, introduced in 1995/1996, became immensely popular throughout Europe: Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL). This methodology focuses on both language acquisition and content. Beardsmore (cited in Baker, 2011:245-56) points out that 'the major concern is about education, not about becoming bilingual or multilingual, and that multiple language proficiency is the 'added value' which can be obtained, at no cost to other skills and knowledge if properly designed.' In this model, between 10% and 50% of the curriculum is taught in a language other than the primary language. CLIL has achieved high success rates and has been utilised as a methodology for foreign language teaching in many parts of the world. Cambridge English website (cambridgeenglish.org) cites that 'CLIL describes an evolving approach to teaching and learning where subjects are taught and studied through the medium of a non-native language.'

2.3 Cognitive Aspects of Bilingualism

However, whereas the study of the linguistic assimilation of a Spanish-speaking Venezuelan population with an indigenous Portuguese-speaking Brazilian community has implications in terms of adopting the most efficient education models available, such an assimilative process also needs to be assessed in terms of its effect on the minority assimilated group, as well as on the assimilating majority.

Brief reference was made earlier to prevailing discriminatory attitudes towards others on the basis of language, including, ironically, towards those who have had a command of more than

one. Historically, teachers, doctors, speech therapists, psychologists, among other professionals, argued that bilingualism could cause a 'burden on the brain, mental confusion, slowdowns of the acquisition of the majority language, identity conflicts, split personalities, and even schizophrenia.' (Baker, 2011:139) However, research on the cognitive aspects of bilingualism has undergone considerable evolution over the last century. It has marked a change in attitude towards the ability to operate in two languages. Nevertheless, historically, the perspectives regarding bilingualism can be categorised into three very distinct periods:

- the period of detrimental effects
- the period of neutral effects
- the period of additive effects

2.3.1 The Period of Detrimental Effects

In 1890, Laurie described his attitude towards bilingualism as being something that caused mental deficit:

> If it were possible for a child to live in two languages at once equally well, so much the worse. His intellectual and spiritual growth would not thereby be doubled, but halved. Unity of mind and character would have great difficulty in asserting itself in such circumstances. (Laurie, 1980:15)

Arguably, this view is still the norm where public opinion is concerned, as many believe that thinking abilities and intelligence can be affected by the use of two languages. This view, from Laurie, a Cambridge University academic, influenced the public's perception of bilingualism for a long time, particularly in light of the British Empire's promotion of English over other languages. Thompson complemented Laurie's views in 1953, stating that:

> There can be no doubt that the child reared in a bilingual environment is handicapped in his language growth. One can debate the issue as to whether speech facility in two languages is

> worth the consequent retardation in the *common language of the realm.* (Thompson, 1953: italics added)

Baker (2011) identifies two primary concerns and beliefs regarding bilingualism. The first relates to the belief that the greater ability one has in a second language, the lower the ability is in the first language. This juggling or balancing, like weighing scales, is known as *Balance Theory*. Another belief related to efficient thinking is that bilingualism is believed to restrict the *efficiency* and ability to think if one speaks two languages. This perception argues that if the brain has to deal with two languages, the one that is 'occupying more room' will prevail over the other, meaning that one does not have enough brain storage space for two languages.

Early research, conducted by Saer (1923), tested both monolinguals and bilinguals using IQ tests to compare and analyse the relationship between intelligence and bilingualism. The scores obtained confirmed the negative view of bilingualism, particularly in terms of verbal IQ. He conducted the earliest empirically documented test with 1,400 Welsh-English children, aged 7 to 12, from bilingual and monolingual backgrounds. His findings showed a 10-point difference, with bilinguals scoring lower points. Saer (1923) described bilinguals as 'mentally confused and at a disadvantage in thinking compared with monolinguals.' (Baker 2011: 140). Further research conducted by Saer (1924) concluded that the same was true for university students and that the adverse effects of bilingualism were of a "permanent nature". These results, as pointed out by Chin and Wrigglesworth (2007), were deficient mainly because the bilingual population were tested in their second language, in this case, English.

Additionally, it is worth noting that, since then, researchers such as Goleman (1995) and Gardner (2003) have discussed the concept of intelligence, arguing that there are different intelligence styles and many more nuances than those tested and valued on an IQ test. Goleman, in particular, cites emotional intelligence as crucial to bilingualism and

multilingualism because it relates to one's adaptability, perception, expression, and communication of feelings, as well as the ability to relate to others, self-esteem, social competence, and empathy (Petrides et al, 2004). Gardner (2003:15) argues that 'different kinds of intelligence cannot be measured by a simple pen and paper test, and defends the idea of 'multiple intelligences.'

Although there were many flaws in the research method employed by Saer (1923), the results obtained had a significant influence in highlighting the negative cognitive aspects of bilingualism. Chin and Wigglesworth (2007) argue that traditional IQ tests 'measure only convergent thinking – that is, arriving at a single solution after assessing a series of problems. This excludes divergent thinking, which has been linked to creative intelligence.' (Chin and Wigglesworth, 2007:58). Even though the research was carried out during the late 1960s, the effects it had on the public as well as practitioners were highly influential. Jones (1993) stated:

> The quality of research is not as important in this respect as its adverse effect on the opinion of educators of the time, because this (and its unfortunate label "bilingual handicap") was the period, which coloured the attitude of the public towards bilingual education for future decades. (Jones, 1993:9)

The misconception of bilingualism as two languages co-existing as separate entities in the human brain reflects The Separate Underlying Proficiency Model of Bilingualism (SUP) and the 'Balance' or 'Balloon' Theory. The analogy of balloons is used to illustrate the idea that success in a second language happens at the expense of the first. Two fundamental viewpoints, as illustrated in Figure 4, underpin the 'Balloon Theory': both languages are considered to be totally separate and operate as such, and there is a limited space for each language due to the presence of the other

Figure 4:

The Separate Underlying Proficiency Model of Bilingualism (SUP)

The idea that a bilingual cannot have abilities in both languages stems from a comparison between the skills of monolinguals and bilinguals. It is also important to point out that a bilingual individual is not two monolinguals in the same brain. Thus, Baker (2011) argues:

> The balance and balloon picture theories of bilingualism and cognition appear to be held intuitively by many people. Many parents and teachers, politicians and large sections of the public appear to latently, subconsciously take the balloon picture as the one that best represents bilingual functioning. (Baker, 2011:265)

Grosjean (1982) points out that while learning a second or third musical instrument does not have harmful or detrimental effects on the first, this can be compared to learning a second and third language. Chin and Wigglesworth (2007) cite that:

> While mathematical skills and musical skills are seen to enhance mental ability and, therefore, mental space, language learning has always been seen as something that occupies mental space. When it comes to languages, the brain is seen as a finite space for which language or languages must jostle for room. (Chin and Wigglesworth, 2007:5)

Baker (2011) affirms that, based on some tests comparing bilinguals and monolinguals, none of these studies suggest that bilinguals experience mental overload, process information inefficiently, or have weaknesses in everyday thinking compared with monolinguals.

2.3.2 The Period of Neutral Effects

From the 1920s to the 1960s, bilingualism was viewed through a lens where its cognitive effects were considered neither clearly beneficial nor harmful. This transitional period saw overlapping perspectives from both earlier and later views, creating ambiguity in how bilingualism was understood. During this time, the prevailing belief was reinforced by negative labels such as the "bilingual handicap," a term highlighted by Jones (1993), which significantly influenced public attitudes toward bilingualism for decades.

2.3.3 The Period of Additive Effects

Until 1960, research had only shown that being bilingual had adverse cognitive effects. Chin & Wigglesworth (2007) state: 'from a practical point of view, knowing two languages simply means gaining access to two different worlds and having twice the opportunities.' Their statement implies that bilingualism brings benefits and opportunities. However, in 1962, Peal & Lambert carried out research that represented a milestone in examining the cognitive effects that bilingualism has on the brain. Their study involved 364 bilingual and monolingual 10-year-olds from a middle-class French school in Montreal, Canada, who all shared the same characteristics: socioeconomic status, sex, age, language, intelligence, and attitude. The results from this research not only showed that bilinguals scored higher on IQ tests, but they also revealed that bilinguals have more cultural awareness. In this case, they were more tolerant of the French-speaking community than monolinguals, whether French or English speakers. The research by Peal & Lambert represented a breakthrough because, as Chin & Wigglesworth point out, '[it] re-examined the issue of the relationship of bilingualism to intelligence, marked a watershed in the history of bilingual research.' (Chin & Wigglesworth, 2007: 59). The study not only recognised a variety of cognitive advantages but also revealed

that there are no detrimental effects in living with two languages. Among the research findings, Peal & Lambert (1962) concluded that bilingualism presents many advantages:

> Intellectually his experience with two language systems seems to have left him with a mental flexibility, a superiority in concept formation, a more diversified set of mental abilities… (Peal and Lambert 1962, p. 20)

The study used traditional IQ tests, but also tested the children in a 'range of thinking styles, strategies and skills.' (Baker 2011:146). The testing presented challenges that required spatial and perceptual processes, emphasising both spatial understanding and reasoning, as well as perceptual speed. Additionally, when symbolic manipulation was needed to form concepts and make connections between elements, it involved cognitive reorganisation and flexibility processing. Thus, Peal and Lambert defined this ability as 'mental or cognitive flexibility' and proposed that bilinguals' early awareness of two different codes, and their ability to associate two words with one object, may have enhanced the development of increased cognitive flexibility. (Chin & Wigglesworth, 2007: 60) Bilinguals have the ability to think more creatively because they feel divergently, thus creating different possibilities.

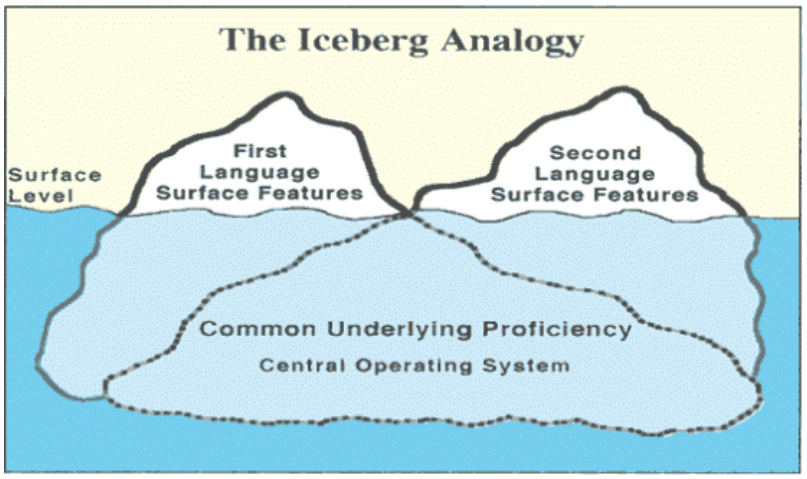
In response to the concept of the 'Balloon' Theory, described by Kolers (1963), and the perception that bilinguals store information *separately* and possess a different storage space for each language, the communication between the two parts being only possible by translation, Cummins (1980) proposes that two languages exist in the *same central processing system*.

As opposed to the 'Balloon' Theory analogy and the Separate Underlying Proficiency (SUP) model of bilingualism, this concept is represented by the 'Iceberg' analogy and the Common Underlying Proficiency (CUP) model (see Figure 4 below) which conceives bilingualism as two separate peaks of an iceberg on the surface but joined and sharing the same central operating system in the brain.

Furthermore, Bialystok also (2001a) maintains that bilinguals store both languages in the same storage space, but that they possess two separate input channels and two output channels, each dedicated to a specific language. Baker (2011:146) quotes Bialystok (2001:104): 'Adults are not confused by the fact that two linguistic systems share processing space for knowledge and communication. Recent research suggests that bilinguals possess both integrated and distinct mental representations'. Kroll & De Groot (1997) indicated that the unwritten representations of each language are stored independently, although the conceptual representations are shared. Baker (2011) points out two aspects related to how bilinguals' brain functions:

> Both languages are active when just one of them is being used, and that even if there are shared conceptual representations and both languages are active in bilinguals, functionally the languages are independent (e.g. when speaking, reading and writing). (Baker, 2011)

Figure 5:



The Common Underlying Proficiency Model of Bilingualism (CUP) or Iceberg Theory

(Source:https://autumnfld.files.wordpress.com/2011/11/the_iceberg_analogy_reference.gif accessed 12/09/2025).

With regard to the present research and the assimilation of Spanish-speaking Venezuelan migrants with an indigenous Portuguese-speaking Brazilian community, the literature review,

so far, has encompassed political and educational issues surrounding this process. However, it was stated that "in terms of adopting the most efficient education models available, such an assimilative process also needs to be assessed in terms of its effect on the minority assimilated group, as well as on the assimilating majority."

Examining the educational models available highlighted the possibility of promoting and/ or maintaining bilingualism when adopting 'strong ' models of bilingual education. Despite not being a common political initiative worldwide when involving High majority languages in contact with Low minority languages, and dependent on the adoption of a pluralistic political analogy, the immigration of a Venezuelan Spanish-speaking population into Portuguese-speaking Brazil, involving two major languages, raises important questions regarding whether the first language of Venezuelan children, Spanish, should be maintained or not. In other words, which of the previous models examined above should be adopted to further *bilingual* proficiency rather than monolingual Portuguese outcomes? Should Spanish-speaking children be subjected to subtractive Submersion or Transition bilingual education models, as at present, or provided with additive alternatives, such as heritage or immersion models, for example. Furthermore, despite the need for medium-term or long-term planning, would not the current situation also enable the consideration of adopting the Two-way model of Portuguese-Spanish bilingualism for the benefit of indigenous Brazilian children also, thus promoting proficiency in both languages?

It is argued that, given the present circumstances, such an argument is irrefutable, based on the *cognitive* benefits which current research maintains are provided by educating children bilingually, as highlighted below.

2.4 Bilingualism and Metalinguistic Awareness

Tummer & Herriman (1984:12), cited in Baker (2007), define metalinguistic awareness as:

> The ability to reflect upon and manipulate the structural features of spoken language, treating language itself as an object of thought, as opposed to simply using the language system to comprehend and produce sentences.

Bilinguals, either consciously or subconsciously, can analyse, compare and contrast their two languages. This process is called *objectification*. Vygotsky (1962), cited in Lewis (2017), suggested that bilingualism empowers a child "to see his language as one particular system among many, to view its phenomena under more general categories, lead[ing] to awareness of his linguistic operations.' Baker (2007) suggests that the vocabulary size of a bilingual child is likely to be larger than that of a monolingual child in one language. The awareness of different grammar structures and usages, as well as the avoidance of language interference, can bring bilingual metalinguistic benefits. Chin and Wigglesworth (2007) suggest that bilinguals have:

> An advantage when it comes to analysing language forms owing to their early exposure to two different linguistic codes, since such exposure promotes a more analytic orientation to linguistic operations.

Cummins (1977) describes bilingual children as possessing an ability to "analyse linguistic input." Metalinguistic awareness is defined by Chin and Wigglesworth (2007) as the ability to focus on different aspects of language structures, such as words, phonemes, and syntax. Thus, bilinguals have a more flexible ability to separate an object from its concept and have a greater capacity to view language as more arbitrary than monolinguals. Baker (2007) points out that more recent research on bilingualism and metalinguistic awareness focuses mainly on the process of thinking rather than the products of thinking, meaning that the focus is based on information processing, memorisation, and language processing.

Chin and Wigglesworth (2007) explain that metalinguistic awareness requires the understanding that language is symbolic and, therefore, the relationship between form and function is arbitrary. Metalinguistic awareness has been studied in four areas that define linguistic structure: word awareness, phonological awareness, sentence awareness, and semantic awareness.

2.5 The Thresholds Theory

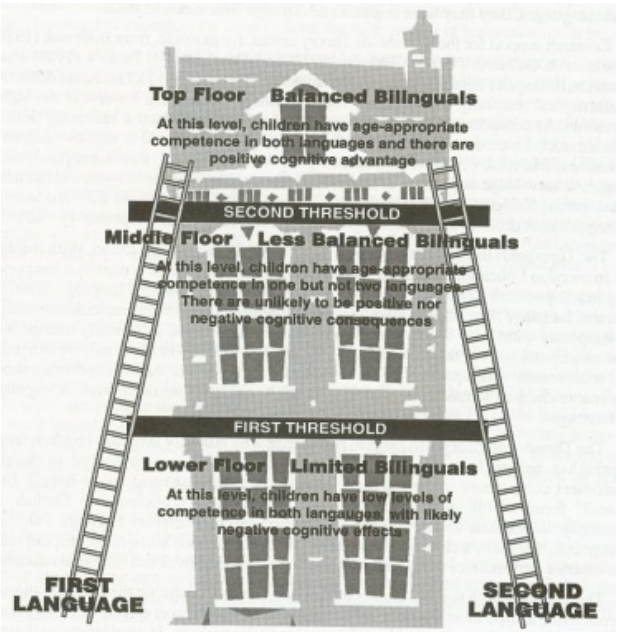
Cummins (1976) and Tooukomaa and Skutnabb-Kangas (1977) proposed that the cognitive benefits of bilingualism would only be acquired if there were a certain level of proficiency, and many researchers suggest that the more "balanced" a child is, the greater the cognitive advantages will be. For this, Cummins proposed a theory that relates cognition and levels of bilingualism. He illustrates this relation as three different floors of a house, in which each level of language proficiency is considered as having either "positive" or "negative" cognitive aspects.

The Thresholds Theory proposes that limited bilinguals or 'semilinguals', those on the first 'floor', who have low abilities in both languages, are likely to experience adverse cognitive effects because they cannot operate effectively in either language. In the educational system, the child would struggle to cope in the classroom. The middle 'floor' represents children who have age-appropriate competencies in one language but not the other. It is suggested that at this level, children do not have benefits or unfavourable cognitive consequences. The top 'floor' represents children who have age-appropriate language competence in *both* languages and who may experience full positive cognitive benefits.

However, Chin and Wigglesworth (2007) present a problem regarding the Threshold Theory when suggesting " the difficulty in establishing what these thresholds are in concrete terms.'

Consequently, Edelsky *et al.* (1983) indicate that the theory requires further empirical investigation, taking into account different linguistic and cultural groups. Chin and Wigglesworth (2007) argue that there are also social issues, including the context in which children fail to achieve the lower level.

Figure 6:



The Thresholds Theory

(Source: https://autumnfld.files.wordpress.com/2011/11/74860041.jpg Accessed: 02/04/2018)

Chapter 3 - Methodology

To gain a broad understanding of the linguistic impact, demands, and strategies faced by the public educational system in Caxias do Sul due to immigration, the research employed a mixed-methodology approach, combining both qualitative (interviews and observations) and quantitative methods (questionnaires).

3.1 Context of the Study:

The choice of investigating public council schools was made in this research because immigrants, primarily driven by economic factors, usually send their children to those schools that offer quality education at no cost. In Caxias do Sul, there are schools run by the city council, some of which are administered by the state, as well as private schools. Additionally, schools managed by the council offer education to children from the age of 4 and young people up to 14 or 15 years old. In contrast, state-run schools offer education that spans secondary school students from the age of 11 to 18. It is interesting to note that, in terms of quality, council schools in some cities, including Caxias do Sul, offer a better education than schools administered by the state. Council's schools offer education in three academic levels: Educação Infantil, Pré I and Pré II, equivalent to kindergarten, *Ensino Fundamental 1,* grades 1 to 5, students aged 6 to 10, and *Ensino Fundamental 2,* grades 6 to 9, students aged 11 to 15 years old. Students receiving pre-school education and those in Ensino Fundamental I had a single teacher who taught all subjects, as the learning was integrated. Those who were in Ensino Fundamental II had one teacher per subject and received two weekly periods of English as a foreign language. It was considered that the investigation could provide a clear view of the education system, including its challenges, and help to understand the linguistic reality faced by migrant students in Caxias do Sul, with the possibility of improving the education quality and support to teachers, students, and families alike, as well as providing policymakers with an overall understanding of this context.

This educational case study relies on its relatability, as it can be adapted to research in different contexts, where some variables may be similar, while others may not. Contrastingly, generalisability could not be applied due to the myriad variables that can impact the findings, such as the sample of families, socio-economic background, and the researcher herself, among other aspects. As stated by Bassey:

> An important criterion for judging the merit of a case-study is the extent to which the details are sufficient and appropriate for a teacher working in a similar situation to relate his decision-making to that described in the case study. The relatability of a case-study is more important than its generalisability. (Bassey, 1981, p.85).

The school is located far from the city centre, and is considered an underprivileged neighbourhood. Abramo Pezzi was chosen for the research because, according to the SMED (Secretaria Municipal de Educação), Local Education Local Authority, it had the most significant number of immigrant students among the council's 81 schools in Caxias do Sul. Of the 363 students, 81 (22.76%) from Venezuela and one from Argentina spoke Spanish as their mother tongue. Through the questionnaires, it was discovered that another student was from Haiti.

The students were divided into 15 classes. According to one of the staff members whom the researcher interviewed, the number of students who did not speak Portuguese in the 2024 academic year had doubled compared to the previous year. The influx of immigrant students into the school had been continuous and gradually increasing to the point where only one of the classrooms did not have a single immigrant student. All 14 classes remaining, therefore, had at least three Venezuelan students. The highest percentage of immigrant students was observed in 2nd Year B, as shown in the table below, where more than a third (36.84%) of the students came from Venezuela. Also in 4th Year B, where 36.36% of students were Venezuelan.

Table 2: Number of Immigrant Students at Abramo Pezzi School in 2024

Class	**Total number of students**	**Venezuelan students**	**Percentage of Venezuelan students**
Pre-school 1	20	6	30,00%
Pre-school 2	22	5	22,73%
1st Year	26	6	23,08%
2nd Year A	20	6	30,00%
2nd Year B	19	7	36,84%
3rd Year A	26	7	26,92%
3rd Year B	27	3	11,11%
4th Year A	23	6	26,09%
4th Year B	22	8	36,36%
5th Year	27	4	14,81%
6th Year	30	9	30,00%
7thYear	33	3	9,09%
8th Year	31	6	19,35%
9th Year A	20	5	25,00%
9th Year B	17	0	0,00%
TOTAL	**363**	**81**	**22,76%**

Council schools in the city offer a programme called *PRA - Projeto de Recuperação de Aprendizagem,* or Supplementary Learning Lessons Project (free translation), which involves removing children from classrooms who are having more difficulties with Mathematics during their time at school. Due to the significant demand and to support the Venezuelan students' learning development, this programme was adapted for language teaching at the school, where a support teacher worked with the students, offering extra activities which focused on developing reading and writing abilities in Portuguese. According to Baker (2017), this would correspond to the Mainstreaming/Submersion model with withdrawal classes in which the minority language children are withdrawn from the mainstream lesson to receive extra language tuition with the aim of making them proficient in the majority language. An important aspect to emphasise is that the teacher from this programme and the rest of the teaching staff did not speak Spanish, except for a Portuguese Language teacher,

who could also speak Spanish. The school secretary sector noted that, when parents were called to school, due to the language barrier, they often depended on volunteers to help with translations, who then interpreted, thus bridging the communication gap between the parties.

3.2 Justification for Methodology

According to Dawson (2019), mixed methods are chosen for qualitative research, such as interviews and observations, to 'explore attitudes, behaviours and experiences', whereas quantitative research 'generates statistics'. The use of different approaches in this research 'aimed at 'lead[s] to confirmation of the findings from different sources of data' (Bell & Waters, 2018: 25), thus ensuring that the results there was are a solid collection of data that enabled in-depth analyses surrounding the linguistic, cultural and educational challenges faced by the school, teachers, families and policymakers. The use of mixed methods helped in grasping the demographics, in addition to providing a sound overall understanding of how people feel and perceive their reality. Therefore, undertaking research through methodological triangulation, which involves the employment of different research instruments (both of which can be qualitative, for example), leads to findings that can be better understood, and the information which can be cross-checked, thus allowing for more truthful and thorough insights.

According to Bell & Waters (2018:140), methodological triangulation leads to an increase in *validity* that 'reflects the reality it claims to represent', and *reliability,* that is, 'the extent to which an assessment tool, method or procedure produces stable and consistent results under constant conditions on all occasions.' Quantitative data were collected in this research using questionnaires. In contrast, qualitative data were gathered through conducting interviews and observation, thus allowing the researcher to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the topic and mitigate the weaknesses of using either method alone. (Bell & Waters, 2018:25). The data derived from the different methods provided by theme and analysed using 'building

blocks' which refers to the different themes that appeared in a research. Braun and Clarke (2019) refer to it as Thematic Analysis because it is a 'method for systematically identifying, organising, and offering insight into patterns of meaning (themes) across a dataset.' (Braun and Clarke, 2019: 297)

3.3 Quantitative Methods

Focus group

Initially, 25 parents attended the focus group as they were invited to participate in a meeting held on a day when they were already present at the school to collect their children's academic reports. This session was to introduce the researcher in person before distributing questionnaires in the subsequent weeks. The discussion also provided an opportunity to gather insights from parents regarding their migration experiences, including their arrival and settlement in Brazil, their reception in both the country and the school, and the challenges they encountered due to language barriers. During the session, many participants shared personal narratives, expressed concerns, and mentioned strategies they had been using to support their children's education. The researcher, being a native speaker of Brazilian Portuguese, is also fluent in Spanish; thus, the meeting was conducted in their mother tongue. The meeting proved highly significant, with attendance exceeding expectations as additional seating had to be arranged to accommodate all participants. The occasion played a crucial role in establishing trust and assuring participants that the study was not an act of surveillance but rather an opportunity for dialogue. The session fostered an environment of openness, enabling parents to share personal narratives that resonated with others in the group. This exchange fostered a sense of mutual understanding and connection among participants, allowing the families to understand the objectives of the research as the researcher explained that they would be receiving a questionnaire in the coming weeks.

3.3.1 Questionnaires

To obtain objective, far-reaching survey data, the research involved questionnaires that provided, according to Moser and Kalton (1971), the 'demographic characteristics' as well as 'the opinions and attitudes of some group of people'. Taking advantage of the easy accessibility and reachability of online surveys, the questionnaires were created using Microsoft Forms, which, in addition to facilitating access, eliminated the need to print them out. As well as open-ended questions, the questionnaire contained closed-ended questions to gather information such as demographic details, e.g. the number of students at school, the origin of migrant students, the languages spoken by them (as many Venezuelans also speak indigenous languages), and the number of years living in Brazil. The questions involved Likert scales, multiple-choice questions, and open-ended questions, which aimed to provide a more detailed overview of participants' perceptions and experiences of the education system in Caxias do Sul. By using both open and closed questions, the data collected contained information that could be cross-referenced and analysed later on.

In accordance with good practice, before sending questionnaires to the chosen population, it was considered crucial, as stated by Bell & Waters (2018), to pilot a survey, as this enabled the identification of any questions that may be leading, presuming, or even offensive. Piloting can also help the researcher understand if the questionnaire is too long or not clear enough, or whether some adjustments to the language used are required. Based on the results of piloting and analysing participants' answers, any necessary amendments to the questionnaire can be made before the final version of the survey is sent out. In this instance, the pilot for the families' questionnaire was done with some school headmasters, teachers, and professional acquaintances who were Spanish speakers. The questionnaires served as the starting point for this research, providing crucial information from which the other methods were derived.

Initially, the questionnaires were sent out to families, with a letter informing the participants about the research and inviting them to take part. The questionnaire, containing a total of 31 questions, (Appendix A) and the information letter (Appendix B), both in Spanish, were sent to 34 families, covering all immigrant families at the school. These were sent by the school administrator via a link in a WhatsApp message, directing respondents to the Microsoft Forms. The school secretary explained that, over the past few years, the use of this messaging app had become an official means of communication, as parents could access information instantly. However, after two attempts made by the secretary, the response rate was very low, with only eight families responding. Consequently, the questionnaires were printed and distributed to parents via the Venezuelan students, along with a note explaining the project, which also included a deadline for their return. As a result, the return was 100%, as all families returned the questionnaires. However, one questionnaire was returned almost unanswered, and the reason, as stated in the form, was that the family's mother tongue was not Spanish, but Creole, since they were from Haiti.

3.4 Qualitative methods

3.4.1 Observations

For this research, two participative observations and one non-participative observation were undertaken to understand the classroom dynamics and how teachers interacted with students, as well as interactions among students. The first participatory observation was conducted in a 9th-grade class, where 25% of the 20 students were Venezuelan. During observation, the students were separated into groups as they worked on an art project. The five Venezuelan students formed one group and spoke Spanish among themselves. During the initial observation, the teacher was asked about the criteria for group formation, to which she responded by saying that the students had self-selected their groups. Initially, this was meant

to be a non-participative observation; however, due to the setting up of the classroom and the nature of projects with which they were working, the researcher subsequently engaged with the Spanish-speaking group in Spanish to ask about their adjustment to both the host country and the school environment, as well as their interactions with classmates and teachers.

The researcher conducted a non-participative observation in a second-year classroom comprising 19 students, of whom seven were Venezuelan, representing 36.84%. The observational component of the study took place in a classroom setting equipped with a greenboard positioned at the front, where the teacher arranged student desks in orderly rows and columns, with each pupil seated individually. The teacher was teaching some mathematical concepts in Portuguese, and then the students engaged with their work. During the time students had to solve the exercises, it was clear to observe that Venezuelan students were communicating with each other to finish their task. Later, the Physical Education teacher took the class to the school's gymnasium, where they participated in a variety of physical activities, including competitive games, which was enjoyed by all students.

3.4.2 Interviews

Interviews were conducted with school staff, teachers, and policymakers to gain insight into their perspectives on the topic. During the interviews, open-ended questions (Appendix D) were asked, allowing room for the interviewees to include any relevant information from their experiences and pedagogical practices, when applicable.

Three semi-structured interviews were conducted at the school, involving the headteacher and two teachers, as well as two additional semi-structured interviews with members of the local city council. Before the start of each session, the researcher obtained permission from each participant to record the interview. The headmistress and one of the teachers had their

interviews recorded, as they did not mind, but one of the interviewees said that she preferred not to be recorded.

The decision to interview the principal was made to gain a clear understanding of the current demands, strategies, and possible suggestions she might have. The researcher interviewed the principal in her office; the transcript of which from the recording can be found in Appendix F. The participating teachers were those available at the time, due to their time constraints, and the interviews took place in the teachers' room. The interviewees were willing to contribute their views and own experiences of the teaching and learning process. One of the educators taught Portuguese to 5th graders, and the other educator worked with 4th-year students, solely in charge of her class, as she taught all subjects except Physical Education and Information Technology. The interview can be found in Appendix G.

As stated previously, ideology operating within a specific social and political context determines the model of education delivered to students. For this reason, it was crucial to interview public figures from the *Câmara dos Vereadores*, the city council, as they were the policymakers, mainly because the focus of the current research was council-run schools. For this, the choice included a female representative from the Conservative party, PSDB (*Partido da Social Democracia Brasileira*), a former teacher in both private and public schools, and a journalist. The second interviewee was a male city council member representing the Left-wing Party, PT (*Partido dos Trabalhadores*), a Doctor in Education whose education policies were central to his mandate, and was also the president of Câmara dos Vereadores. Finally, a third interview was with a left-wing council member, also a History teacher who had worked in the classroom for many years. The interviewer recorded the three interviews, and the transcripts are included in Appendices I,J and K and the open-questions can be found in Appendix H.

3.5 Additional Questionnaire

During the research process, it became evident that an additional questionnaire was necessary, as the initial information gathered from educators was limited due to time constraints. As a result, the responses did not sufficiently capture the challenges, demands, and strategies experienced by this group. To address this gap, the researcher distributed a supplementary questionnaire via Microsoft Forms. (Appendix D)

3.6 Ethics

It is essential to note that confidentiality and anonymity were maintained throughout the entire research process. The investigation complied with the ethical requirements of the University of Wales Trinity Saint David's Research Ethics Committee as well as the Confidentiality Term for research carried out in Brazil and attached to the *Plataforma Brasil,* in conformity with Brazilian requirements. To conduct the research, it was mandatory to obtain authorisation from the Local Education Authority - SMED (Secretaria Municipal de Educação). Bell and Waters (2018) discuss the idea that the terms 'confidentiality' and 'anonymity' can sometimes be misinterpreted, which can lead to an ethical breach. In terms of confidentiality, Bell & Waters (2018) state that it is a promise made to the participants that they will not be identifiable anywhere in the research. However, to carry out interviews later on in the process, it is important to pinpoint that the questionnaires cannot be anonymous, as the name of the person needs to be known so that the researcher can invite the participant for an interview if necessary. This information was presented to the families, school staff and politicians who took part in the research.

Chapter 4: Analysis and Presentation of Data

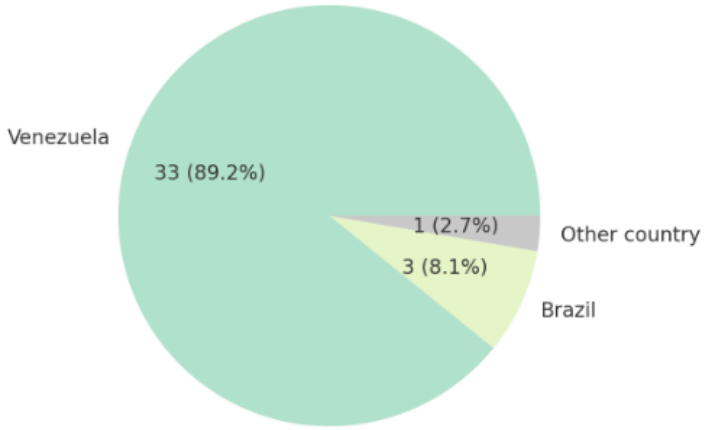
This chapter presents the data derived from the different research methods, including questionnaire findings, interviews and observations. The questionnaire was designed to explore multiple dimensions of the students' experiences, including patterns in migration history, home language practices, perceptions of learning Portuguese, and attitudes toward the maintenance of their cultural and linguistic heritage. By collecting this information, the study aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of both demographic characteristics and attitudinal perspectives, allowing for an integrated analysis of how migration and home language environments relate to language learning and cultural identity.

4.1 Parents' Questionnaires:

As noted, printed questionnaires were distributed to all 35 families of immigrant students enrolled at the school, ensuring full participation across the target population. Abramo Pezzi school had 363 students, of whom 81 were immigrants, representing almost a quarter of the students. As seen in Table 3, of the immigrant students, 89.18% were born in Venezuela.

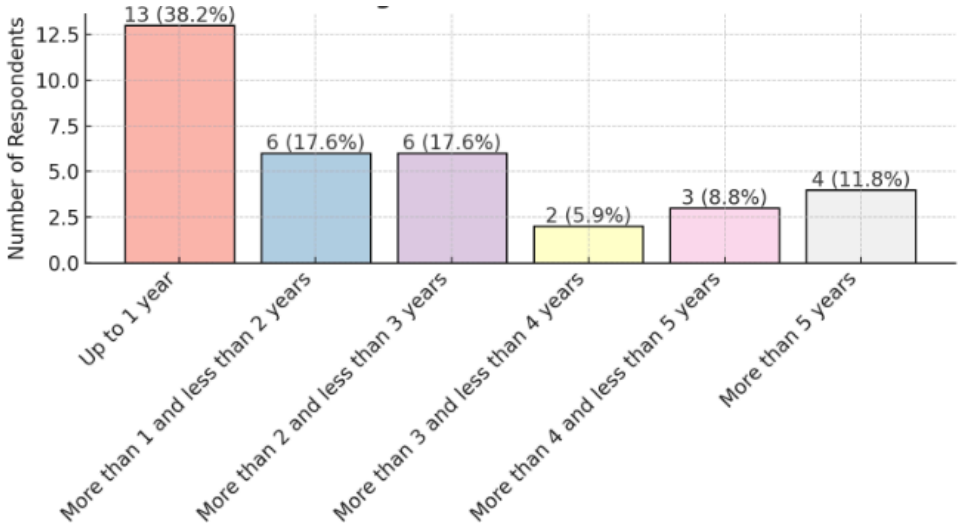
4.1.1 Demographic Data:

Table 3: Children's Place of Birth



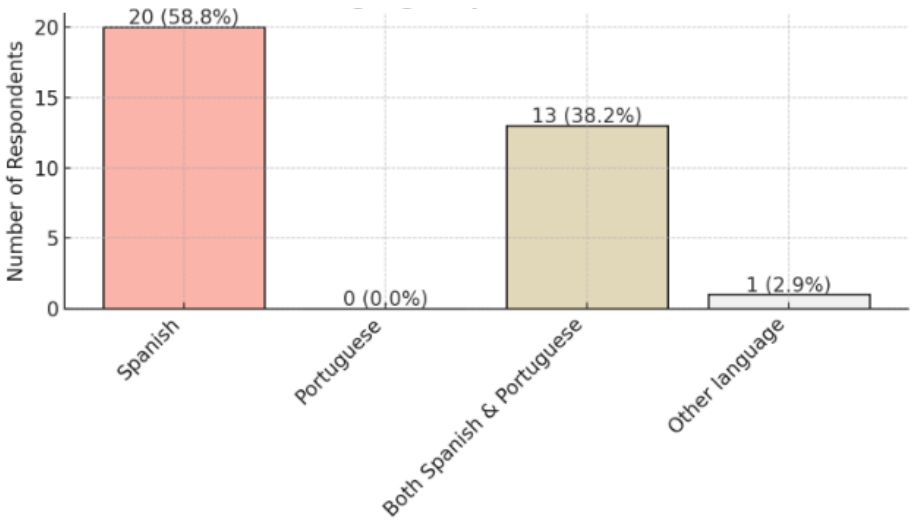
Survey responders were asked about the length of time that the families have been in Brazil, as shown in Table 4. 55.8% were living in Brazil for less than two years, indicating the recent increase in the influx of families into the educational system.

Table 4: Length of Residence in Brazil



As seen in Table 5, a total of 58.8% of respondents affirmed that the language spoken at home was Spanish, in contrast to none of them speaking only Portuguese at home. 38.2% of the respondents spoke both Spanish and Portuguese at home, and only 2.9% of the respondents spoke another language, in this case, Creole from Haiti.

Table 5: Languages spoken at home



Families were asked to indicate the number of people living in the household. As illustrated in Table 6, more than half of households (51.5%) consisted of 5 or more members living together, 30.3% of them consisted of 4 or more members, and only 18.2% consisted of 3 people.

Table 6: Number of people in the household

Household size	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
2 people	0	0.0
3 people	6	18.2
4 people	10	30.3
5 or more people	17	51.5

Note. Percentages are calculated from the total number of respondents (N = 33). Values rounded to one decimal place.

Families were asked about their intentions of staying in Brazil or returning to their home country. From the respondents, almost half of them (45.5%) indicated an affirmative intention to remain in Brazil and a further 36.4% foresee staying in Brazil as a possible choice. Only 18.2% of them were not sure whether they would return to their home country or stay in Brazil. Interestingly, none of the respondents reported the intention of not staying in Brazil.

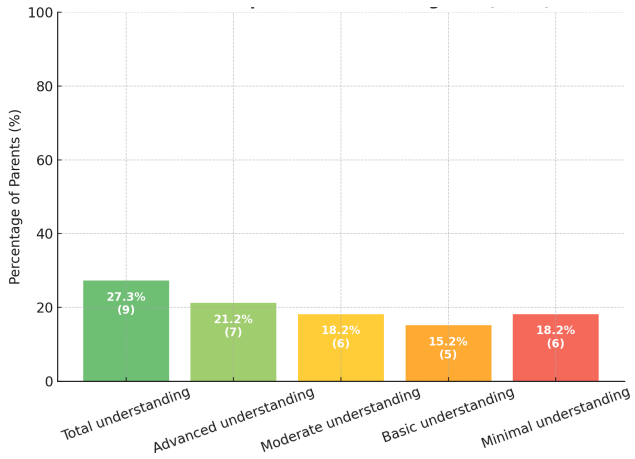
Table 7: Intentions to stay in Brazil or return to home country

Response	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Definitely stay in Brazil	15	45.5
Possibly stay in Brazil	12	36.4
Not sure	6	18.2
Definitely don't stay in Brazil	0	0.0

4.1.2 Families' Language Comprehension and Expectations

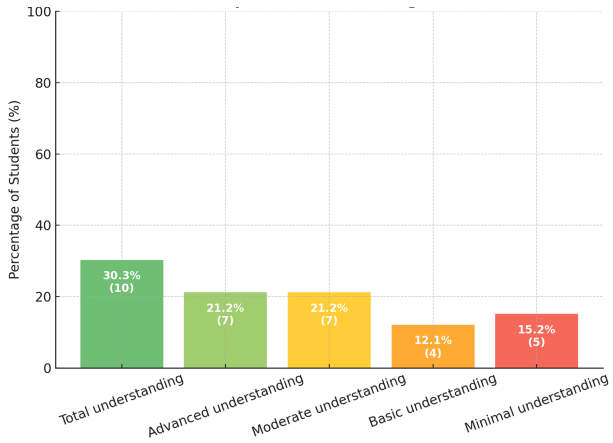
Table 8 illustrates parents' comprehension of Portuguese, with 27.3% of them affirming to have a total understanding of the language, followed by 21.2% indicating an advanced knowledge. Of the respondents, 18.2% had a moderate understanding, followed by 15.2% who had a basic understanding and 18.2% with a minimal comprehension of the language.

Table 8: Parents' Comprehension of Portuguese



As illustrated below in Table 9, parents were asked about their perceptions regarding their child's / children's understanding of Portuguese. Almost half of the students, or 48.5% had, according to their parents, moderate, basic or minimal understanding of Portuguese, impacting their understanding and performance within the education system.

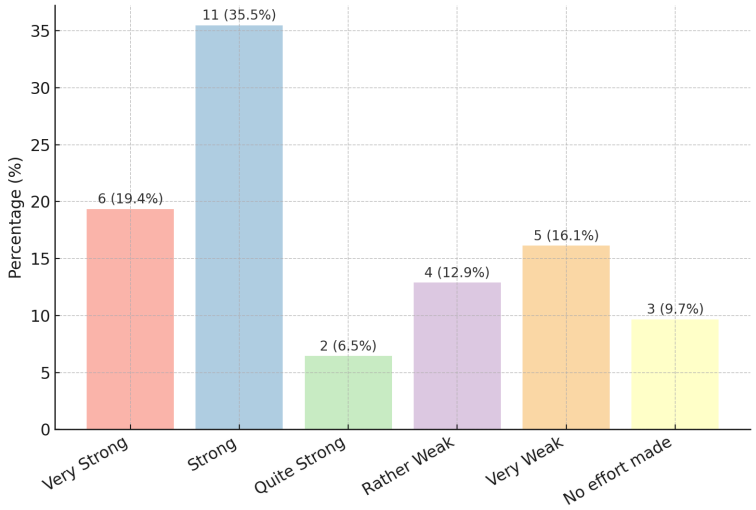
Table 9: Children's comprehension of Portuguese



4.1.3 Challenges and demands:

As illustrated in Table 10, parents were asked about their perception with regard to the effort made by the school in order to maintain their child's/children's Spanish language. 19.4% of the respondents considered the efforts to be robust, followed by 35.5% who believed these efforts are strong. A total of just over a quarter of the respondents indicated that the effort was very weak or non-existent.

Table 10: Efforts made by the school to maintain the Spanish Language



Parents were asked about the importance of their child/children to learn Portuguese. The results shown demonstrated that the acquisition of the local language was extremely important by 84.8% of families, contrasting with none of the respondents (n=0) who pointed out that learning was not necessary. This demonstrates a strong consensus among participants on the central role of Portuguese acquisition in their children's educational performance and social integration.

Table 11: Importance of learning Portuguese

Response Category	Number of Responses (n)	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Not important	0	0.0%
A bit important	1	3.0%
Important	2	6.1%
Very important	2	6.1%
Extremely important	28	84.8%
Total	**33**	**100%**

4.2 Observations:

Three observations were conducted, two participatory and one non-participatory, revealing that Venezuelan students predominantly communicated in Spanish among themselves and tended to sit in close proximity to fellow Venezuelan classmates. Notably, when interacting with Brazilian peers, they often chose to speak Portuguese, despite having only limited proficiency in the language.Possibly they felt they have to be well behaved and spoke Portuguese as much or possible.

4.3 Interviews:

The interviews were conducted with the headteacher, teachers, and members of the local city council, which were recorded by the interviewer and later transcribed into Portuguese using an online tool. The accuracy of the transcript was satisfactory, with the exception of a few local expressions and sayings, which were reviewed by the researcher. The interviews were then translated into English. Some relevant extracts derived from the interviews that have been highlighted below, providing a variety of aspects within the ethnographic research, which focus on the cultural and social contexts in which individuals live.

Interviewee Profile	Response	Theme
Member of the City Council	'We don't always account for unexpected events, like a crisis in another country leading to an influx of migrants.'	Immigration Challenges
Member of the City Council	'Welcoming someone isn't just giving them basic groceries or rent support – it's helping them belong.'	Immigration Challenges
Member of School Staff	'I think it's important that they don't lose their cultural essence or the values they bring.'	Linguistic and Cultural Maintenance
Member of School Staff	'We'd want people who speak our language.'	Importance of students acquiring Portuguese
Member of School Staff	'During parent-teacher meetings, some teachers highlight the importance of practising Portuguese at home too—as an exercise for both parents and children.'	Language spoken at home
Member of School Staff	'X. is a child who hardly speaks at all. He understands a few words but doesn't feel confident speaking Portuguese. So I speak quite a lot of Spanish with him and encourage him to speak Portuguese.'	Use of the mother tongue as a means of communication
Member of School Staff	'We say in meetings: It's not the best way, but we're doing what we can.'	Challenges of the educational system
Member of School Staff	Well, initially, as I mentioned, we really saw it as a problem. Because it was new, challenging, a change, and so on, but now that we've had more time with it, we see it as a right, and something that actually enriches the school. Even though it brings daily challenges to the classroom, I do think it's valuable—the exchange.	Language as a problem/resource

Member of the City Council	It should even be a legal requirement that when someone arrives in a country, somehow they must learn that language.	Assimilation process
Member of the City Council	For me, the language barrier is one of the strongest forms of exclusion.	Importance of students acquiring Portuguese
Member of the City Council	It's a challenge because the teachers are not prepared; they were not trained to deal with this situation. This wasn't part of their training, especially the language issue, which is a very big barrier.	Challenges to the education system
Member of the City Council	If Venezuelan children are well integrated into school, if they learn Portuguese, if they keep Spanish as well, if they feel welcomed, if they feel at home, this is what will ensure that they will also integrate well into society.	Assimilation x Integration

4.4 Teachers' Questionnaires:

As mentioned, time containment had been a challenge in obtaining data from the educators; therefore, questionnaires were sent out via WhatsApp. The school had 45 educators who worked across pre-school, *Ensino Fundamental I* and *Ensino Fundamental II*. A total of 10 questionnaires were returned via Microsoft Forms from the respondents; nine teachers taught immigrant students, and one did not. The questionnaire was formulated in a way that, if the teachers did not teach immigrants, the questionnaire would end. The results obtained from the questionnaires are presented below.

4.4.1 Classroom Demographics:

From the results obtained, the average number of immigrant students taught by the teachers was 5.4, considering the classroom that taught the highest number of students who were not originally from Brazil. From the data obtained from the teachers, the average classroom had six students who were not originally from Brazil.

4.4.2 Teachers' Language Perceptions:

Another question asked teachers to rate, on a scale of 1-5 (1 being not important at all and five being very important), whether they considered it was important for their immigrant students to learn Portuguese. The average rating was 4.89, meaning that all respondents considered it very important to acquire the local language; eight respondents answered very important, and one quite important.

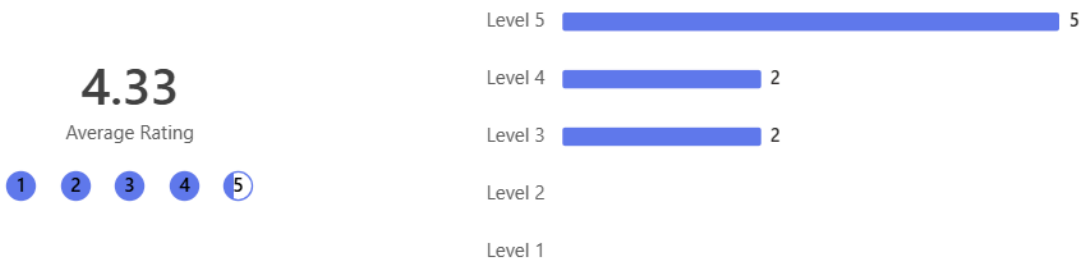
Table 12: The importance of students learning Portuguese

Further to the previous question, teachers were asked to list the reasons why they considered learning Portuguese to be essential for the students, and the main answer, appointed by 11% of the respondents, was related to literacy. Other reasons included social, cognitive, cultural, and personal development, as well as the ability to understand and follow instructions given.

Teachers were asked about how important they considered it that their non-Brazilian students maintained their mother tongue, in this case, Spanish. As shown in Table 13, 4.33 out of 5

points, this result meant that educators saw language maintenance as something considered very important by the vast majority of them.

Table 13: Importance of students maintaining the Spanish Language



Educators were asked to rate from 1 to 5 (1 being strongly disagree and five being strongly agree), about their perceptions of students who had already acquired Portuguese, to help those who had not yet acquired a sufficient level of Portuguese, using Spanish as a means to communicate and facilitate their learning process. As seen in Table 14, the vast majority of teachers agree with immigrant students using Spanish to help each other academically.

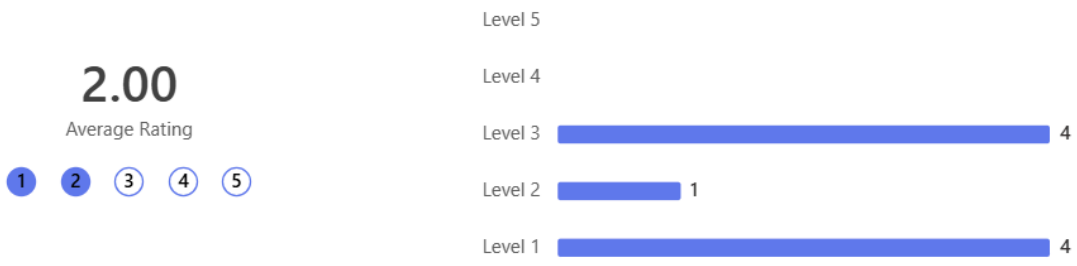
Table 14: Teachers' agreement on students using Spanish among themselves

4.4.3 Teachers' perceptions of how qualified they feel with regard to teaching international students:

Again, on a scale of 1-5 (1 being the lowest and 5 the highest), teachers were asked about how qualified they felt regarding teaching students whose mother tongue was not Portuguese.

As seen below, teachers considered themselves to have a low qualification to teach immigrant students.

Table 15: How qualified teachers felt in dealing with immigrant students

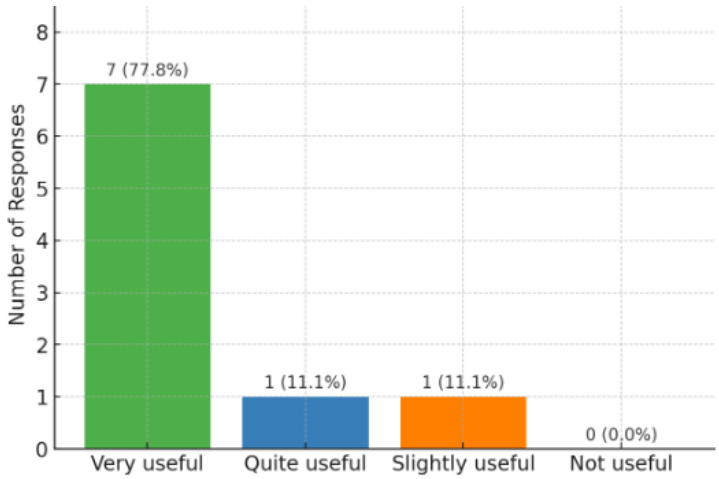


4.4.4 Teacher's perceptions on possible strategies to support immigrant students

Questions 13 to 18 required teachers to rate some possible strategies and resources to support immigrant students, and how useful they thought they might be. Their answers are analysed below:

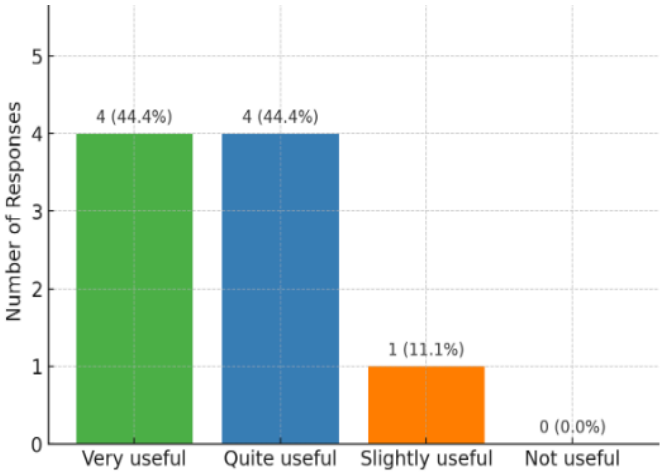
The vast majority of teachers (77.8%) pointed out that professional development workshops would be very useful to their pedagogical practice..

Table 15: Professional development workshops:



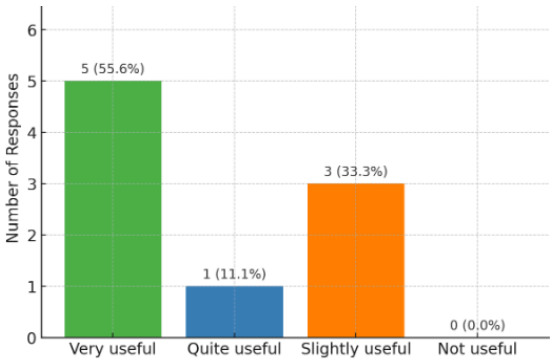
Teachers considered that the provision of materials and resources in two languages would be very useful to 44.4% and a further 44.4% thought it would be quite useful.

Table 16: Access to bilingual materials and resources:



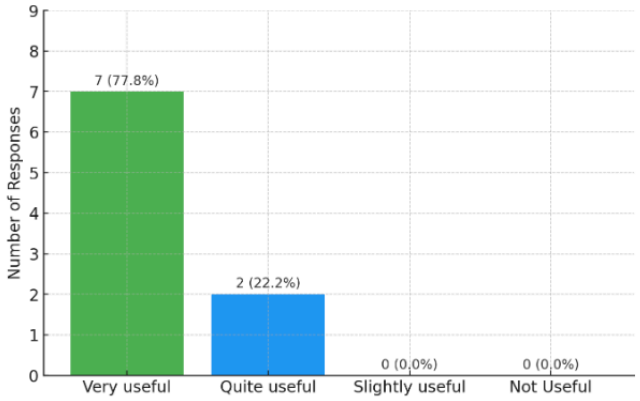
Educators had a more divided view with regard to the help of classroom assistants or interpreters. 55.6% of teachers indicated that it would be very useful, 11.1% thought it could be quite useful and 3.3% perceived it as slightly useful.

Table 17: Classroom assistants/interpreters:



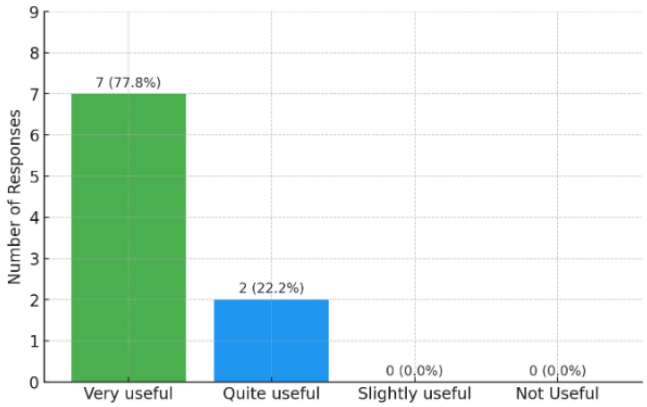
When asked about the usefulness of peer collaboration as a resource to support immigrant students, 77.8% of teachers considered it very useful, while 22.2% viewed it as quite useful.

Table 18: Peer collaboration with colleagues:



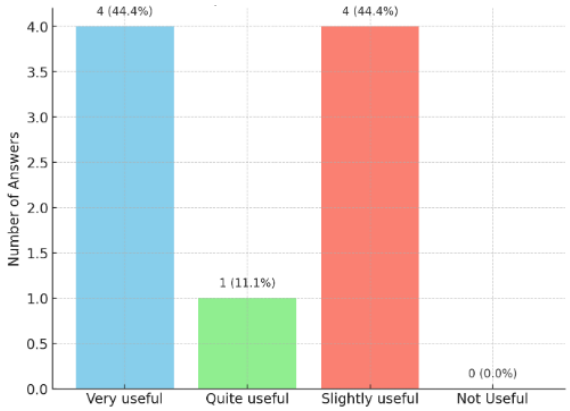
77.8% of teachers stated that receiving guidance from specialists would be very useful, while 22.2% believed it would be quite useful.

Table 19: Guidance from specialists (e.g. Foreign language teachers, speech therapists):



According to 44.4% of teachers, having basic Spanish courses would be very useful, a further 44.4% of them considered it to be slightly useful, and 11.1% indicated that such courses could be quite useful.

Table 20: Guidance from specialists (e.g. Foreign language teachers, speech therapists):



Chapter 5 - Discussion and Conclusions

This research aimed to investigate the demands, impacts and challenges faced by the council's educational system in Caxias do Sul in the wake of the influx of immigrants from Venezuela, and the strategies adopted to address organisational and pedagogical issues. The quantitative and qualitative data obtained provided themes that were identified during the research process. Braun and Clarke (2019) refer to Thematic Analysis as it 'provides accessible and systematic procedures for generating codes and themes from qualitative data.' Braun and Clarke (2019:297) suggest that codes refer to the 'building blocks', thus allowing the researcher to identify patterns in the research that can be organised using core concepts. The use of Thematic Analysis allowed the researcher to identify three main themes across the collection of data, which were:

- the tension between assimilation and linguistic and cultural maintenance;
- the education system's lack of preparation, as well as teacher training and support;
- possible strategies that could be adopted to cater for bilingualism and the possible cognitive benefits it can allegedly offer.

5.1 Assimilation versus linguistic and cultural maintenance:

A diasporic process cannot be seen as easy, as many immigrants had to move away from their home country for various reasons. To be part of the new country, Brazil, many immigrants felt that they must abandon their culture, which may have meant losing their native language in order to be accepted and integrated into the new country. However, because the migrants' language was Spanish, a major language, this could have meant that a language shift might not be inevitable mainly because there was a large community of Venezuelans who tended to speak their mother tongue among themselves. In the studied context, particularly given the

results obtained from the questionnaires, where 58.8% of respondents used Spanish to communicate at home and 81.8% live in households of four or more people, such circumstances may have contributed to maintaining linguistic and cultural identity. However, the social context in which the *students* found themselves, due to its restriction-oriented nature, discouraged the use of the mother tongue in official places and encouraged the use of Portuguese. As stated by school staff, 'We'd want people who speak our language.' Hence, as pointed out by Tosi (1998), assimilation can be a natural consequence of time exposure to linguistic and cultural traits. Skutnab-Kangas (1977) suggests that assimilation can be more focused in economic-structural terms, which refers to a gateway to better job opportunities. Thus, when analysing what might motivate Venezuelan immigrants to assimilate into their new country's socio-cultural and linguistic context, one could infer, by citing Gardner (1985), that both integrative motivation and instrumental motivation were involved; the former relating to a 'willingness to be valued members of the other language community' and the latter to 'the advantages that would result from proficiency in a second language'. (Gardner, 1985, p.6)

5.2 The education system's lack of preparation, teacher training, and support:

Due to the recent and constant influx of immigrants into the council schools, issues related to the language barrier, which had never occurred in such a high proportion before, became something with which educators had to deal, despite the limited knowledge and resources they had. As put by Marisol, a member of the city council: 'I don't think we fully grasp the scale of this change yet. We hear Spanish at the petrol station, in the shops – but don't always realise these same people are in our schools and need support.' Teachers pointed out that the

educational system was already stretched from dealing with the demands already in place, such as students with disabilities, and those with ADHD and autism, for example.

Teachers who replied to the questionnaire highlighted that the linguistic barrier is the biggest challenge they face. As expressed by a teacher regarding why she thought that learning Portuguese was important: 'As a Science teacher, I consider it essential that students know Portuguese, as it is difficult for them to understand the topic when I do not speak Spanish and they do not know Portuguese. Translation, in this case, is impossible, as these are very specific terms that they often do not even know in their native language."

5.3 Possible strategies that could be adopted to cater for bilingualism and the possible cognitive benefits it can allegedly offer:

By understanding how the cognitive benefits of bilingualism effect a balanced bilingual individual, the implications of Cummins' (1976) and Tooukomaa and Skutnabb-Kangas's (1977) Threshold Theory (see above) suggest that perhaps one strategy that could be adopted within the school is to have a pilot project where a class of preschoolers, age 4, on entering the council educational system, could be exposed to both Portuguese and Spanish. Adopting the Two-Way Dual Language model, discussed previously for example, a strong model of bilingual education, would promote a high level of fluency and biliteracy (Lindholm-Leary (2000) in *both* languages for indigenous Brazilian children and Venezualan immigrant children alike. Additionally, young learners would become aware of both cultures and benefit from a positive social experience, thus contributing to the economy, fostering social cohesion and a sense of belonging to the community.

5.4 Study limitations:

A case study of one school cannot be generalised to all settings, as each case study presents a set of numerous variables. Hence, this research reflects the context, data and reality of one school only. However, the analysis could be applied to other schools, and similar methods could be used to obtain both qualitative and quantitative results.

According to Bassey (1981, p.85), 'the relatability of a case study is more important than its generalisability', suggesting that the power of a case study lies in its rich, contextualised understanding rather than broad application. Transferability enables teachers, researchers and policy-makers to interpret the relevance locally, making judgments based on how closely their own context aligns with the case. As Bassey explains, 'a case study which is rich in explanation and interpretation can offer to other practitioners a sense of understanding that leads to action' (Bassey, 1981, p. 85); hence, making *relatability* a process where analytical reflection replaces statistical certainty, using findings to shape practice based on practical understanding rather than theoretical prediction.

Another limitation in this study was the teachers' time and availability, as the responses from teachers were limited and low, with only 10 out of 45 teachers replying to the questionnaires.

5.5 The potential for future research:

Although the research context was a relatively recent phenomenon in the city, due to the increasing number of immigrants entering the education system, further research is recommended to confirm the findings and expand on the perceptions of all individuals involved. A more in-depth investigation, including further observations and interviews with students, would be desirable to gain a deeper understanding of the challenges and possible strategies which they used to cope within the system, as non-native speakers of Portuguese.

Additionally, it would be interesting to gather some views from members of the council's Education Secretary regarding the strategies and plans that can be adopted to support teachers, students, and their families. Another aspect that could be further investigated is to interview and discuss issues with members of the National Education Ministry Cabinet, specifically the *Ministério da Educação e Cultura (MEC)*, whose minister was Camilo Santana at the time of the research.

As immigration tends to increase due to various factors mentioned previously, perhaps a discussion about the possibility of adopting a 'National Protocol' for immigrant students could be initiated once they arrive in Brazilian schools. The BNCC - Base Nacional Comum Curricular defines the aims and goals for the Brazilian education system, from kindergarten to secondary school. This document outlines the knowledge, competencies, and abilities that students are expected to develop throughout their school years.

The adoption of a protocol which would cater for the immigrants' language needs could be beneficial for both Venezuelan and Brazilian children who could be offered bilingual education. Rather that giving Venezuelan Heritage bilingual education in Spanish or, immersion, which could mean that only one group of students might benefit, the adoption of the Two-Way to include education in both languages and including both Venezuelans and Brazilian students as well.

5.6 Conclusion:

The research aimed to investigate the recent influx of Venezuelan immigrants into the educational system of Caxias do Sul. Additionally, it aimed to provide different perceptions on the organisational consequences to schools and the education system from the perspective of teachers on the frontline, as well as governors and policymakers. As the issue is relatively

new to the system as a whole, the current research aims to serve as a gateway to establishing initial thoughts on the demands and challenges facing schools, particularly in light of the language barrier faced by newcomers. However, despite the current problems created by the influx of in-migration, and in addition to the need to adopt pedagogical strategies that can cater for both indigenous students born in Brazil as well Spanish-speaking newcomers from countries such as Venezuela, the situation, ironically, could also offer opportunities that could promote the provision of bilingual education to all, and cognitive benefits to both linguistic groups which bilingualism allegedly provides according to recent research.

As Bialystok (2001) argues, 'bilingual children show earlier development of cognitive strategies related to selective attention and inhibition of irrelevant information' (p. 53), which are key components of executive functioning. These cognitive benefits support the case for implementing bilingual education programs, not only to preserve linguistic diversity but also to enhance students' academic and intellectual development. Furthermore, Bialystok (2001) has shown that these cognitive effects are not limited to one linguistic group, meaning that both native speakers of the majority language and those acquiring it as a second language can benefit. 'The cognitive benefits associated with bilingualism are not constrained by socioeconomic status or language pairings, indicating the broad value of bilingual education in diverse communities' (Bialystok, 2009:40).

Chapter 6- Recommendations

The model of education delivered at the time of this research in the council educational system is known as transitional bilingual education, which is considered a 'weak' form of bilingualism (Baker, 2011). In this model, students, including migrants, are required to transition from their mother tongue to the majority language taught at school. The language outcome of this model is relative monolingualism, referring to minority language students who are placed in mainstream schools where the education system is conducted in a language that is not their mother tongue.

It is essential, of course, to highlight that Brazil is the largest country in South America and the only one where Portuguese is the official language; the vast majority of the South American population speaks Spanish as a primary language or one of its official languages. Based on the proximity of Spanish-speaking countries to Brazil, the initial recommendation, and perhaps the most feasible in the short term, would be for Brazilian schools, particularly in Caxias do Sul, to introduce Spanish as a second language from the 6th grade to the 9th grade. This would offer students the opportunity to practise the language with fellow native Spanish-speaker classmates, hence promoting 'intercultural sensibility and awareness', the 'increase of intellectual fitness and stamina' as well as 'social, emotional and moral development, self-awareness, self-confidence and social and ethical values' (Baker, 2011:120). Another recommendation would be to develop a pilot project with one kindergarten classroom, where the curriculum would be adapted to utilise the Two-Way model for Portuguese and Spanish. This model focuses on both bilingualism and biliteracy, and, as Baker (2011) notes, the third element is multicultural education for children.

Although not a common political initiative globally—particularly in cases involving dominant majority and minority languages in contact - the migration of Spanish-speaking Venezuelans

into Portuguese-speaking Brazil presents a unique scenario. With two major world languages in contact, it raises critical questions about whether the first language of Venezuelan children, Spanish, should be preserved. Should Spanish-speaking children continue to be placed in subtractive models like Submersion or Transitional bilingual education, as is currently the case? Or should they be offered additive alternatives, such as heritage first language programs or immersion second language models?

Moreover, while medium- and long-term planning is necessary, could the current context also support the adoption of a Two-Way Portuguese-Spanish bilingual education model—not only for immigrant children but also for indigenous Brazilian students—thus fostering bilingual proficiency in both languages which would be mutually beneficial. It is argued that, given the present circumstances, such an argument is irrefutable, based on the *cognitive* benefits which current research maintains. As the school researched is the one with the highest number of Venezuelans in the city, the adoption of the Two-way Dual Language model, according to Baker (2011), could be implemented by following these practices:

- both languages, Portuguese and Spanish, would be used as a means of instruction - in this case the City Council could hire qualified Venezuelan teachers;
- the atmosphere of the school would be bilingual, with all signage, announcements and extra-curricular activities balanced between both languages, so that one did not retain a higher status than the other;
- as well as teaching both languages as a subject, focusing would be on the grammar rules, for example, focus would be given to communication skills through the language itself, as a means of communication;

- length is another aspect that would have to be observed, and the recommendation would be a minimum of four to five years;
- teacher and staff training would be ensured so that they could communicate with students in *both* languages.

Furthermore, it is essential to note that the Two-Way method represents, as Smith (2009) puts it, the exact opposite of assimilation, and it can promote social integration and harmony. Tankersley's (2001) article, entitled "Bombs or Bilingual Language Programme," discusses the positive outcomes of having effective two-way language programmes to promote community spirit by understanding, thus respecting, both languages and, as a result, both cultures, therefore developing a sense of belonging.

Nelson Mandela summarised this idea effectively: 'If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his own language, that goes to his heart.'

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APPENDICES

Appendix A:

APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL APPROVAL

In order for research to result in benefit and minimise risk of harm, it must be conducted ethically. A researcher may not be covered by the University's insurance if ethical approval has not been obtained prior to commencement.

The University follows the OECD Frascati manual definition of **research activity**: "creative work undertaken on a systematic basis in order to increase the stock of knowledge, including knowledge of man, culture and society, and the use of this stock of knowledge to devise new applications". As such this covers activities undertaken by members of staff, postgraduate research students, and both taught postgraduate and undergraduate students working on dissertations/projects.

The individual undertaking the research activity is known as the "principal researcher".

Ethical approval is not required for routine audits, performance reviews, quality assurance studies, testing within normal educational requirements, and literary or artistic criticism.

Please read the notes for guidance before completing ALL sections of the form.

This form must be completed and approved prior to undertaking any research activity. Please see Checklist for details of process for different categories of application.

Delete the Guidance Notes at the end of the form BEFORE submitting your application

SECTION A: About You (Principal Researcher)

1	Full Name:		Daniéle De Meneghi Da Meda			
2	Tick all boxes which apply:		Member of staff:	☐	Honorary research fellow:	☐
3	Undergraduate Student	☐	Taught Postgraduate Student	X	Postgraduate Research Student	☐

4	Institute/Academic Discipline/Centre:	
5	Campus:	Carmarthen
6	E-mail address:	theplacecaxias@gmail.com
7	Contact Telephone Number:	55 54 98123 6471
	For students:	
8	Student Number:	1603783
9	Programme of Study:	Master in Bilingualism and Multilingualism
10	Director of Studies/Supervisor:	Dr Hywel Lewis

SECTION B: Approval for Research Activity

1	Has the research activity received approval in principle? (please check the Guidance Notes as to the appropriate approval process for different levels of research by different categories of individual)	**YES**	**x**	**NO**	☐
				Date	
2	If Yes, please indicate source of approval (and date where known): ***Approval in principle must be obtained from the relevant source prior to seeking ethical approval***	Research Degrees Committee	**x**		
3		Institute Research Committee	☐		
4		Other (write in) Dr Hywel Glyn Lewis, Programme Manager	☐	**03/06/2023**	

SECTION C: Internal and External Ethical Guidance Materials

	Please list the core ethical guidance documents that have been referred to during the completion of this form (including any discipline-specific codes of research ethics, and also any specific ethical guidance relating to the proposed methodology). Please tick to confirm that your research proposal adheres to these codes and guidelines.	
1	**UWTSD Research Ethics & Integrity Code of Practice**	**x**
2	**UWTSD Research Data Management Policy**	**x**
3		**x**

SECTION D: External Collaborative Research Activity

1	Does the research activity involve collaborators outside of the University?		**YES**	☐	**NO**	**X**
2	If Yes, please provide the name of the external organisation and name and contact details for the main contact person and confirmation this person has consented to their personal data being shared.as part of this collaboration.					
3	Institution					
4	Contact person name					
5	Contact person e-mail address					
6	Has this individual consented to sharing their details on this form?		**YES**	☐	**NO**	☐
7	Are you in receipt of a KESS scholarship?		**YES**	☐	**NO**	☐
8	Is your research externally funded		**YES**	☐	**NO**	☐
9	Are you specifically employed to undertake this research in either a paid or voluntary capacity?	Voluntary	**YES**	☐	**NO**	☐
10		Employed	**YES**	☐	**NO**	☐

11	Is the research being undertaken within an existing UWTSD Athrofa Professional Learning Partnership (APLP)	If YES then the permission question below does not need to be answered.	**YES**	☐	**NO**	☐
12	Permission to undertake the research has been provided by the partner organisation	(If YES attach copy) If NO the application cannot continue	**YES**	☐	**NO**	☐

Where research activity is carried out in collaboration with an external organisation

13	Does this organisation have its own ethics approval system?	**YES**	☐	**NO**	☐
14	If Yes, please attach a copy of any final approval (or interim approval) from the organisation				

SECTION E: Details of Research Activity

1	Indicative title:	Demands and Strategies: The Impact of Immigration on the Public Educational System in Caxias do Sul		
2	Proposed start date:	May 2023	Proposed end date:	30th September 2025
3	**Introduction to the Research (maximum 300 words)** **Ensure that you write for a <u>Non-Specialist Audience</u> when outlining your response to the three points below:** ● *Purpose of Research Activity* ● *Proposed Research Question* ● *Aims of Research Activity* ● *Objectives of Research Activity* Demonstrate, briefly, how **<u>Existing Research</u>** has informed the proposed activity and explain ● *What the research activity will add to the body of knowledge* ● *How it addresses an area of importance.*			
4	**Purpose of Research Activity** The purpose of the research is to understand the current linguistic demands and strategies being used in the public education sector in Caxias do Sul, due to the influx of migrant students, especially from Venezuela, who do not speak Portuguese.			
5	**Research Question** What are the demands on families, students and school staff and what are the strategies that a local school is taking to cope and support the learning process of migrant students?			
6	**Aims of Research Activity**			

	The research aims to understand the current linguistic demands and strategies being used in a school within the public education sector in Caxias do Sul, due to the influx of migrant students, especially from Venezuela, who do not speak Portuguese.
7	**Objectives of Research Activity** This research seeks to investigate ● the demographics of students who come to Caxias do Sul and the languages spoken by them. ● the perceptions of students, families and teachers towards the educational system regarding language barriers. ● the nature of actions that primary schools of the public sector take to support language barriers among students. ● the demands on teachers, families and students related to overcoming language struggles and supporting learning. ● the approach used in public primary schools towards language plurality.
8	**Proposed methods (maximum 600 words)** Provide a brief summary of all the methods that **may** be used in the research activity, making it clear what specific techniques may be used. If methods other than those listed in this section are deemed appropriate later, additional ethical approval for those methods will be needed.
9	The research will adopt both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Through a methodological triangulation, the findings that can be better understood and the information can be crossed over. Quantitative date: questionnaires Qualitative data: semi-structured interviews and observations.

10	**Location of research activity** Identify all locations where research activity will take place.
11	Escola Municipal de Ensino Fundamental Abramo Pezzi Rua Frei Eugênio, 540 - São Cristovao, Caxias do Sul - RS, 95058-130
12	**Research activity outside of the UK** If research activity will take place overseas, you are responsible for ensuring that local ethical considerations are complied with and that the relevant permissions are sought. Specify any local guidelines (e.g. from local professional associations/learned societies/universities) that exist and whether these involve any ethical stipulations beyond those usual in the UK (provide details of any licenses or permissions required). Also specify whether there are any specific ethical issues raised by the local context in which the research activity is taking place, for example, particular cultural and/or legal sensitivities or vulnerabilities of participants.
13	For any research to be carried out in the public education sector in Brazil, an approval from the local authority Education Office must be obtained. This authorisation was obtained on 16th November 2022, under the administrative process n. 2022/41025 signed by Nádia Brocheto, Pedagogical advisor and by Ms Paula Maria Martinazzo, local Secretary of Education, in the city of Caxias do Sul, state of Rio Grande do Sul.

14	Use of documentation not in the public domain: Are any documents **NOT** publicly available?	**NO**	x
		YES	☐
15	If Yes, please provide details here of how you will gain access to specific documentation that is not in the public domain and that this is in accordance with prevailing data protection law of the country in question and England and Wales. *(this box should expand as you type)*		

SECTION F: Scope of Research Activity

1	**Will the research activity include:**	**YES**	**NO**
2	Use of a questionnaire or similar research instrument?	**x**	☐
3	Use of interviews?	**x**	☐
4	Use of diaries?	☐	**x**
5	Participant observation with their knowledge?	**x**	☐
6	Participant observation without their knowledge?	☐	**x**
7	Use of video or audio recording?	**x**	☐
8	Access to personal or confidential information without the participants' specific consent?	☐	**x**
9	Administration of any questions, test stimuli, presentation that may be experienced as physically, mentally or emotionally harmful / offensive?	☐	**x**
10	Performance of any acts which may cause embarrassment or affect self-esteem?	☐	**x**
11	Investigation of participants involved in illegal activities?	☐	**x**

12	Use of procedures that involve deception?	☐	x
13	Administration of any substance, agent or placebo?	☐	x
14	Working with live vertebrate animals?	☐	x
15	Other primary data collection methods, please explain in this box For example, 'focus groups'. Please indicate the type of data collection method(s) in this box and tick the accompany box.	☐	☐
16	Details of any other primary data collection method:		

If NO to every question, then the research activity is (ethically) low risk and **may** be exempt from **some** of the following sections (please refer to Guidance Notes).

If YES to any question, then no research activity should be undertaken until full ethical approval has been obtained.

SECTION G: Intended Participants

1	**Who are the intended participants:**	**YES**	**NO**
2	Students or staff at the University?	☐	x
3	Adults (over the age of 18 and competent to give consent)?	x	☐
4	Vulnerable adults?	☐	x
5	Children and Young People under the age of 18? (Consent from Parent, Carer or Guardian will be required)	x	☐
6	Prisoners?	☐	x
7	Young offenders?	☐	x
8	Those who could be considered to have a particularly dependent relationship with the investigator or a gatekeeper?	☐	x
9	People engaged in illegal activities?	☐	x
10	Others (please identify specifically any group who may be unable to give consent) please indicate here and tick the appropriate box.	☐	☐
11	Other – please indicate here: (this box should expand as you type)		

12	**Participant numbers and source** Provide an estimate of the expected number of participants. How will you identify participants and how will they be recruited?	
13	How many participants are expected?	Once a meeting with the school principal has been carried out, the number of participants will be known.

14	Who will the participants be?	School staff, including the school principal, pedagogical coordinators, teachers, families and students.
15	How will you identify the participants?	School staff, students' carers and students.

16	**Information for participants:**	**YES**	**NO**	**N/A**
17	Will you describe the main research procedures to participants in advance, so that they are informed about what to expect?	x	☐	☐
18	Will you tell participants that their participation is voluntary?	x	☐	☐
19	Will you obtain written consent for participation?	x	☐	☐
20	Will you explain to participants that refusal to participate in the research will not affect their treatment or education (if relevant)?	x	☐	☐
21	If the research is observational, will you ask participants for their consent to being observed?	x	☐	☐
22	Will you tell participants that they may withdraw from the research at any time and for any reason?	x	☐	☐
23	With questionnaires, will you give participants the option of omitting questions they do not want to answer?	x	☐	☐
24	Will you tell participants that their data will be treated with full confidentiality and that, if published, it will not be identifiable as theirs?	x	☐	☐
25	Will you debrief participants at the end of their participation, in a way appropriate to the type of research undertaken?	x	☐	☐
26	If NO to any of above questions, please give an explanation			
27	*(this box should expand as you type)*			

28	**Information for participants:**	**YES**	**NO**	**N/A**
29	Will participants be paid?	☐	x	☐
30	Is specialist electrical or other equipment to be used with participants?	☐	x	☐
31	Are there any financial or other interests to the investigator or University arising from this study?	☐	x	☐
32	Will the research activity involve deliberately misleading participants in any way, or the partial or full concealment of the specific study aims?	☐	x	☐
33	If YES to any question, please provide full details			
34	A laptop computer and a charger, a mobile phone and a charger, a voice recorder. *(this box should expand as you type)*			

SECTION H: Anticipated Risks

1	**Outline any anticipated risks that may adversely affect any of the participants, the researchers and/or the University, and the steps that will be taken to address them.** If you have completed a full risk assessment (for example as required by a laboratory, or external research collaborator) you may append that to this form.		
2	**Full risk assessment completed and appended?**	**Yes**	☐
		No	x
3	**Risks to participants** For example: emotional distress, financial disclosure, physical harm, transfer of personal data,		

	sensitive organisational information	
4	Risk to Participant: - Recent migrants might suffer emotional stress due to the impact of recent displacement and might feel that somehow participating in the research will impact negatively their settling into the school or community. *(this box should expand as you type)*	*How will you mitigate the Risk to Participant* The researcher will make sure that the participants understand there there are no psychological, emotional and physical risks in the participation on the research. The research aims to understand the difficulties encountered in terms of language barriers. *(this box should expand as you type)*
5	If research activity may include sensitive, embarrassing or upsetting topics (e.g. sexual activity, drug use) or issues likely to disclose information requiring further action (e.g. criminal activity), give details of the procedures to deal with these issues, including any support/advice (e.g. helpline numbers) to be offered to participants. Note that where applicable, consent procedures should make it clear that if something potentially or actually illegal is discovered in the course of a project, it may need to be disclosed to the proper authorities	
	(this box should expand as you type)	
6	**Risks to investigator** For example: personal safety, physical harm, emotional distress, risk of accusation of harm/impropriety, conflict of interest	
	Risk to Investigator: - Lack of participation; - Difficulty in travelling, due to the distance; - Public Sector Strike *(this box should expand as you type)*	*How will you mitigate the Risk to Investigator:* The researcher will employ various methods to facilitate communication with parents and students, ensuring their active participation, whether it be in-person or online through platforms such as Zoom or other similar tools. *(this box should expand as you type)*
7	**University/institutional risks** For example: adverse publicity, financial loss, data protection	
	Risk to University: - Compliance risks; - Ethical risks *(this box should expand as you type)*	*How will you mitigate the Risk to University:* The researcher will make sure that the guidelines are followed and make sure all actions taken will comply with GDPR regulations as well as the University Data Protection rules.By following these actions and continuously prioritizing GDPR compliance and University Data Protection rules, the researcher ensures the responsible handling and protection of personal data throughout the research project. This commitment demonstrates respect for privacy rights and helps maintain the trust of participants and the university community.

		(this box should expand as you type)

8	**Disclosure and Barring Service**			
9	If the research activity involves children or vulnerable adults, a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate must be obtained before any contact with such participants.	**YES**	**NO**	**N/A**
10	Does your research require you to hold a current DBS Certificate?	☐	**x**	☐

SECTION I: Feedback, Consent and Confidentiality

1	**Feedback** What de-briefing and feedback will be provided to participants, how will this be done and when?
	After the research has been carried out, feedback will be given to the school principal and a report will be available to all participants concerned.
2	**Informed consent** Describe the arrangements to inform potential participants, before providing consent, of what is involved in participating. Describe the arrangements for participants to provide full consent before data collection begins. If gaining consent in this way is inappropriate, explain how consent will be obtained and recorded in accordance with prevailing data protection legislation.
	The researcher will produce a research consentment form, explaining to the participants what is involved in the research as well as how the data will be used. Data derived from the research will be made available to all participants.
3	**Confidentiality / Anonymity** Set out how anonymity of participants and confidentiality will be ensured in any outputs. If anonymity is not being offered, explain why this is the case.
	The investigation will comply with the University of Wales Trinity Saint David's Research Ethics Committee as well as the Confidentiality Term for researches carried out in Brazil and attached to the *Plataforma Brasil,* in conformity with the Brazilian requirements. By confidentiality, Bell & Waters (2018) state that it is a promise made to the participants that they won't be identifiable anywhere in the research. However, to carry out interviews later on in the process, it is important to pinpoint that the questionnaires cannot be anonymous, as the name of the person needs to be known so that the researcher can invite the participant for an interview if necessary.

SECTION J: Data Protection and Storage

In completing this section refer to the University's Research Data Management Policy and the extensive resources on the University's Research Data Management web pages (http://uwtsd.ac.uk/library/research-data-management/).

1	Does the research activity involve personal data (as defined by the General Data Protection Regulation 2016 "GDPR" and the Data Protection Act 2018 "DPA")?	**YES**	**NO**
	"Personal data" *means any information relating to an identified or identifiable natural person ('data subject'). An identifiable natural person is one who can be identified, directly or indirectly, in particular by reference to an identifier such as a name, an identification number, location data, an online identifier or to one or more factors specific to the physical, physiological, genetic, mental, economic, cultural or social identity of that natural person.*	**x**	☐
2	If YES, provide a description of the data and explain why this data needs to be collected:		

	The research will involve audio recordings of participants which is considered to be personal data according to the General Data Protection Regulation 2016 and the Data Protection Act 2018. *(this box should expand as you type)*		
3	Does it involve special category data (as defined by the GDPR)?	**YES**	**NO**
	"Special category data" *means sensitive personal data consisting of information as to the data subjects' –* *(a) racial or ethnic origin,* *(b) political opinions,* *(c) religious beliefs or other beliefs of a similar nature,* *(d) membership of a trade union (within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992),* *(e) physical or mental health or condition,* *(f) sexual life,* *(g) genetics,* *(h) biometric data (as used for ID purposes),*	☐	**x**
4	If YES, provide a description of the special category data and explain why this data needs to be collected:		
	(this box should expand as you type)		

5	Will the research activity involve storing personal data and/or special category data on one of the following:	**YES**	**NO**
6	Manual files (i.e. in paper form)?	**x**	☐
7	University computers?	☐	**x**
8	Private company computers?	☐	**x**
9	Home or other personal computers?	**x**	☐
10	Laptop computers/ CDs/ Portable disk-drives/ memory sticks?	**x**	☐
11	"Cloud" storage or websites?	**x**	☐
12	Other – specify:	☐	☐
13	For all stored data, explain the measures in place to ensure the security of the data collected, data confidentiality, including details of password protection, encryption, anonymisation and pseudonymisation:		
	Data will be kept on Google Drive, a cloud storage system only available to the researcher as it requires a password. The password is not going to be made available to anyone else, with the exception of the researcher. Encryption techniques twill be used to safeguard our data. This means that the data is scrambled and can only be accessed with the appropriate decryption key. Encryption helps protect the data while it is stored and when it is transmitted over networks. To safeguard individuals' privacy, we remove or replace personally identifiable information (PII) from our data. Anonymization involves removing direct identifiers, such as names or addresses. Pseudonymization involves replacing direct identifiers with pseudonyms that cannot be easily linked back to the original identity. *(this box should expand as you type)*		

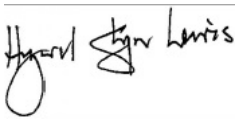
14	**All Data Storage**		
15	Will the research activity involve any of the following activities:	**YES**	**NO**
16	Electronic transfer of data in any form?	**x**	☐
17	Sharing of data with others at the University?	**x**	☐
18	Sharing of data with other organisations?	☐	**x**
19	Export of data outside the European Union or importing of data from outside the UK?	**x**	☐
20	Use of personal addresses, postcodes, faxes, emails or telephone numbers?	☐	**x**
21	Publication of data that might allow identification of individuals?	☐	**x**
22	Use of data management system?	☐	**x**
23	Data archiving?	**x**	☐
24	If YES to any question, please provide full details, explaining how this will be conducted in accordance with the GDPR and DPA (and/or any international equivalent):		
	The research will be carried on outside the EU, as it will happen in Brazil. The researcher will ensure that throughout the whole research, GDPR regulation will be followed. *(this box should expand as you type)*		
25	List all who will have access to the data generated by the research activity:		
	Tutors at the University of Wales Saint Trinity, school headmaster/mistress and the researcher herself. *(this box should expand as you type)*		
26	List who will have control of, and act as custodian(s) for, data generated by the research activity:		
	The researcher herself. *(this box should expand as you type)*		
27	Give details of data storage arrangements, including security measures in place to protect the data, where data will be stored, how long for, and in what form. Will data be archived – if so how and if not why not.		
	All data, notes and recordings derived from the research will be safely kept on Google drive. The only person that will have access to this data will be the researcher herself. Google drive is a safe place. Google employs a variety of security measures to protect data including encryption, two factor authentication and access controls. *(this box should expand as you type)*		
28	Please indicate if your data will be stored in the UWTSD Research Data Repository (see https://researchdata.uwtsd.ac.uk/). If so please explain. (*Most relevant to academic staff)*		
	No *(this box should expand as you type)*		

29	Confirm that you have read the UWTSD guidance on data management (see https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/library/research-data-management/)	**YES**	**x**
		NO	☐
30	Confirm that you are aware that you need to keep all data until after your research has completed or the end of your funding	**YES**	**x**
		NO	☐

SECTION K: Declaration

31	The information which I have provided is correct and complete to the best of my knowledge. I have attempted to identify any risks and issues related to the research activity and acknowledge my obligations and the rights of the participants. In submitting this application I hereby confirm that I undertake to ensure that the above named research activity will meet the University's Research Ethics and Integrity Code of Practice which is published on the website: https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/research/research-ethics/		
	Signature of applicant:	Daniéle De Meneghi Da Meda	**Date:** 07/06/2023

For STUDENT Submissions:

32	Director of Studies/Supervisor:	Dr Hywel Lewis	**Date:** **07/06/2023**
33	Signature:		

For STAFF Submissions:

34	Academic Director/ Assistant Dean:		**Date:**
35	Signature:		

Checklist: Please complete the checklist below to ensure that you have completed the form according to the guidelines and attached any required documentation:

x	I have read the guidance notes supplied before completing the form.
x	I have completed **ALL RELEVANT** sections of the form in full.
x	I confirm that the research activity has received approval in principle
☐	I have attached a copy of final/interim approval from external organisation (**where appropriate**)
☐	I have attached a full risk assessment (and have NOT completed Section H of this form) (where appropriate) *ONLY TICK IF YOU HAVE* ***ATTACHED A FULL RISK ASSESSMENT***
x	I understand that it is my responsibility to ensure that the above named research activity will meet the University's Research Ethics and Integrity Code of Practice.
x	I understand that before commencing data collection all documents aimed at respondents (including information sheets, consent forms, questionnaires, interview schedules etc.) must be confirmed by the DoS/Supervisor, module tutor or Academic Director.
x	I have deleted the guidance notes before submitting the PG2 for consideration

RESEARCH STUDENTS AND STAFF ONLY All communications relating to this application during its processing must be in writing and emailed to

pgresearch@uwtsd.ac.uk , with the title 'Ethical Approval' followed by your name. You will be informed of the outcome of your claim by email; therefore it is important that you check your University and personal email accounts regularly.
STUDENTS ON UNDERGRADUATE OR TAUGHT MASTERS PROGRAMMES should submit this form (and receive the outcome) via systems explained to you by the supervisor/module leader.

Appendix B:

Dear Participant,

My name is **Daniéle De Meneghi Da Meda**, and I am a student on the **MA Bilingualism and Multilingualism programme** at the **University of Wales Trinity Saint David**, in the United Kingdom.

I have already had the pleasure of meeting some of you in person at the school, where we had the opportunity to engage in a truly meaningful conversation. I am conducting my research at **Abramo Pezzi School**, as it is the school in **Caxias do Sul** with the highest number of students whose first language is not Portuguese — your child is one of them.

The aim of this project is to understand how the education system is supporting students whose home language is not Portuguese, and to reflect on strategies that can support not only the students and their families, but also the teachers who work with them.

Your responses are very important to my research and will hopefully provide me with a comprehensive understanding of the challenges, needs, and support received by your child and family, as well as help identify strategies to improve the teaching and learning process.

Please be assured that **all information provided will be treated with strict confidentiality**, and **your identity will not be disclosed under any circumstances**.

Thank you very much for being part of this project. Your participation is truly appreciated, and I am very grateful for your help.

Yours sincerely,
Daniéle De Meneghi Da Meda

Appendix C: Parents' Questionnaire in Spanish

Cuestionario Pais - EMEF Abramo Pezzi

Estimado/a encuestado/a,

Mi nombre es Daniéle De Meneghi Da Meda y soy estudiante del Programa de Maestría en Bilingüismo y Multilingüismo en la Universidad de Gales Trinity Saint David, en el Reino Unido.

Ya he tenido el placer de conocer personalmente a algunos de ustedes en la escuela, donde tuvimos la oportunidad de tener una conversación realmente fructífera. Estoy realizando mi investigación en Abramo Pezzi, ya que es la escuela en Caxias do Sul que cuenta con el mayor número de estudiantes cuya lengua materna no es el portugués, y su hijo/a es uno/a de ellos/as.

El objetivo de este proyecto es comprender cómo el sistema educativo está apoyando a estudiantes cuya lengua materna no es el portugués, así como reflexionar sobre estrategias para apoyar tanto a los estudiantes como a sus familias, y a los profesores que trabajan con ellos.

Sus respuestas son muy importantes para mi investigación y, con suerte, me proporcionarán una comprensión amplia de las demandas, dificultades y el apoyo brindado a su hijo/a y su familia, así como la identificación de estrategias para mejorar el proceso de enseñanza/aprendizaje.

Quisiera asegurarles que todos los datos proporcionados serán tratados con confidencialidad y su identidad no será revelada de ninguna manera. Muchas

gracias por formar parte de este proyecto. Su participación es realmente importante y aprecio mucho su ayuda.

Atentamente,

Daniéle De Meneghi Da Meda

* Required

1. Por favor proporciona tu nombre (que se mantendrá en la más estricta confidencialidad)

2. ¿Cuánto tiempo ha vivido en Brasil? *

- ◯ Hasta un año
- ◯ Más de 1 año y hasta 2 años
- ◯ Más de 2 años y hasta 3 años
- ◯ Más de 3 años y hasta 4 años
- ◯ Más de 4 años y hasta 5 años
- ◯ Más de 5 años.

3. ¿Cuántas personas hay en su hogar? *

- ◯ 2 personas
- ◯ 3 personas
- ◯ 4 personas
- ◯ 5 personas o más

4. ¿Qué idioma hablan en casa **como familia**? *

- ◯ Español
- ◯ Portugués
- ◯ Ambos español y portugués
- ◯ Otro idioma
- ◯ Otro idioma (que no sea portugués) y español Otro
- ◯ idioma (que no sea español) y portugués

5. Si ha mencionado **otro idioma** en la pregunta 4, por favor, especifique:

6. Por favor, indique dónde nació su hijo(a) (que asiste a Abramo Pezzi): *

- ◯ Venezuela
- ◯ Brasil
- ◯ En otro lugar

7. Si tiene más de un hijo estudiando en Abramo Pezzi, indique el número de niños que se relaciona con cada opción/país.

8. Si ha respondido 'en otro lugar' (que no sea en Venezuela ni en Brasil) en la Pregunta 6, por favor, especifique el país:

9. Indique en una escala del 1 al 5 qué tan competente considera **su comprensión** actual del portugués (1 siendo muy limitado, 2 siendo bastante limitado, 3 siendo bastante bueno, 4 siendo bueno y 5 siendo muy competente): *

1	2	3	4	5

10. Indique en una escala del 1 al 5 qué tan competente considera la comprensión del portugués de **su hijo/hijos en la actualidad** (1 siendo muy limitado, 2 siendo bastante limitado, 3 siendo bastante bueno, 4 siendo bueno y 5 siendo muy competente): *

1	2	3	4	5

11. Indique en una escala del 1 al 5 qué tan importante cree que es que **su hijo/hijos desarrolle(n) competencia en portugués** (1 siendo no muy importante y 5 siendo muy importante): *

1	2	3	4	5

12. Indique en una escala del 1 al 5 qué tan importante cree que es que su hijo/hijos desarrolle(n) competencia en portugués, pero **sin perder la capacidad de usar el idioma español** (1 siendo no muy importante y 5 siendo muy importante): *

1	2	3	4	5

13. Ingrese en una escala del 1 al 5 qué tan importante cree que es que su hijo/hijos **mantenga(n)** su competencia y habilidades en el idioma español (1 siendo no muy importante y 5 siendo muy importante): *

1	2	3	4	5

14. ¿En qué medida diría que su hijo/hijos es/son capaz(es) de mantener el **uso del español** en la escuela en este momento? *

- ◯ Muy a menudo
- ◯ A menudo
- ◯ Bastante a menudo
- ◯ No a menudo
- ◯ Nunca

15. Si su hijo/hijos todavía puede(n) **usar el español en la escuela** en cierta medida, ¿con quién usa(n) el idioma? *

- ◯ Amigos
- ◯ Algunos profesores
- ◯ Otros (por favor, especifique)

16. Se puede(n) usar el Español en la escuela que no con los amigos y algunos profesores, por favor especifique:

17. ¿Qué idioma diría que su hijo/hijos usa(n) **con otros compañeros de escuela no brasileños** en este momento? *

- ◯ Español
- ◯ Portugués
- ◯ Ambos español y portugués
- ◯ Español y otro idioma
- ◯ Portugués y otro idioma

18. Si ha mencionado 'otro idioma', por favor, especifique.

19. ¿Cómo evaluaría **los esfuerzos de la escuela** en este momento para ayudar a su hijo/hijos a mantener su competencia y habilidades **en el idioma español?** *

- ◯ Muy fuertes
- ◯ Fuertes
- ◯ Bastante fuertes
- ◯ Bastante débiles
- ◯ Muy débiles
- ◯ No se ha hecho ningún esfuerzo.

20. ¿Cómo evaluaría los **esfuerzos de la escuela** en este momento para ayudar a su hijo/hijos a mantener su **identidad** venezolana (o no brasileña)? *

- ◯ Muy fuertes
- ◯ Bastante fuertes
- ◯ Bastante débiles
- ◯ Muy débiles
- ◯ No se ha hecho ningún esfuerzo.

21. ¿Cuánto tiempo **esperas** que tarde tu hijo/hijos en desarrollar competencia en **portugués de acuerdo com su edad**? *

- ◯ Hasta 1 año
- ◯ Hasta 2 años
- ◯ Hasta 3 años
- ◯ Hasta 4 años
- ◯ Hasta 5 años
- ◯ Más de 5 años

22. Indica en una escala del 1 al 5 en qué medida crees que tu hijo/hijos **se siente(n) bienvenido(s)** en la Escuela Abramo Pezzi (1 siendo nada en absoluto, y 5 siendo muy bienvenido(s)): *

1	2	3	4	5

23. Indica en una escala del 1 al 5 en qué medida crees que tu hijo/hijos **está(n) motivado(s)** en la escuela (1 siendo nada en absoluto, y 5 siendo muy motivado(s)): *

1	2	3	4	5

24. Indica en una escala del 1 al 5 en qué medida crees que **el potencial académico de tu hijo/hijos se está desarrollando** en la Escuela Abramo Pezzi (1 siendo nada en absoluto, y 5 siendo muy desarrollado): *

1	2	3	4	5

25. Si sientes que el potencial académico de tu hijo/hijos **no se está desarrollando por completo,** por favor explica por qué no:

26. ¿Qué tipo de apoyo **lingüístico** (ayuda con el idioma) recibe(n) tu hijo/hijos en la Escuela Abramo Pezzi? Por favor, **describe**:

27. ¿Sientes que el apoyo brindado por la escuela es suficiente? *

- ◯ Si
- ◯ No

28. **Si no**, ¿qué crees que podría mejorarse? ¿Como?

29. **Como padre/madre, ¿en qué medida** puedes ayudar a tu hijo/hijos con sus tareas o deberes escolares? *

- ◯ En gran medida
- ◯ En cierta medida
- ◯ En muy poca medida
- ◯ En absoluto

30. Si puedes ayudar a tu hijo/hijos, **por favor describe en qué medida** puedes hacerlo con sus tareas escolares y **de qué manera**.

31. ¿Es tu intención **quedarte en Brasil** en el futuro previsible o regresar al país de donde viniste? *

- ◯ Sí, definitivamente, quedarme en Brasil
- ◯ Sí, posiblemente, quedarme en Brasil
- ◯ No estoy seguro/a
- ◯ Definitivamente no
- ◯ Option 2

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Microsoft Forms

Appendix D:

Questionário Educadores

Prezado(a) professor(a),

Me chamo Daniéle De Meneghi Da Meda e sou estudante do Programa de Mestrado em Bilinguismo e Multilinguismo na Universidade de Gales Trinity Saint David, no Reino Unido.

Já tive o prazer de conhecer pessoalmente alguns de vocês na escola.. Estou realizando minha pesquisa na escola Abramo Pezzi, pois é a escola em Caxias do Sul com o maior número de estudantes cuja língua materna não é o português.

Minha dissertação, entitulada **Demandas e Estratégias: O Impacto da Imigração no Sistema Municipal de Ensino em Caxias do Sul, Brasil,** cujo objetivo é compreender quais são as demandas e desafios diante da chegada de estudantes que não dominam a língua Portuguesa.

Suas respostas são muito importantes para a minha pesquisa e me proporcionarão uma compreensão ampla das demandas, dificuldades e do apoio necessário para melhora do processo de ensino-aprendizagem.

Gostaria de assegurar que todos os dados fornecidos serão anônimos.

Muito obrigada por fazer parte deste projeto. Sua participação é realmente importante! Fico à disposição em caso de dúvida.

Atenciosamente,

Daniéle De Meneghi Da Meda
(54) 98123-6471

* Required

1. Em qual nível de educação você atual? *

- [ ] Educação Infantil
- [ ] Ensino Fundamental 1
- [ ] Ensino Fundamental 2

2. Você ensina alunos cuja língua materna não é o português? Se não, agradeço pela sua participação. *

- ◯ Sim
- ◯ Não

3. Quantos alunos da sua turma não são originalmente do Brasil? (Se você leciona em várias turmas, por favor escolha a opção que representa a turma com maior número de imigrantes.) *

4. Como professor(a), quão importante você considera que seus alunos **aprendam português**?
(5 – Muito importante, 4 – Bastante importante, 3 – Nem importante nem sem importância, 2 – Pouco importante, 1 – Nada importante) *

1	2	3	4	5

5. Por que você considera isso uma questão importante? *

6. Quão importante você considera que os **estudantes imigrantes mantenham** sua proficiência em **espanhol** no futuro?
(5 – Muito importante, 4 – Bastante importante, 3 – Nem importante nem sem importância, 2 – Pouco importante, 1 – Nada importante) *

1	2	3	4	5

7. Em que medida você concorda que estudantes imigrantes, que já adquiriram um nível de proficiência em português, possam **usar o espanhol** para ajudar colegas que ainda **não adquiriram** um nível suficiente de português?
(5 – Concordo totalmente, 4 – Concordo, 3 – Nem concordo nem discordo, 2 – Discordo, 1 – Discordo totalmente) *

1	2	3	4	5

8. Como professor(a), quão **importante** você considera que seus alunos, que não são originalmente do Brasil, **aprendam português e mantenham a língua espanhola**?
(5 – Muito importante, 4 – Bastante importante, 3 – Nem importante nem sem importância, 2 – Pouco importante, 1 – Nada importante) *

1	2	3	4	5

9. Quanto aos seus alunos imigrantes: você considera que a habilidade de falar espanhol uma vantagem ou uma desvantagem? *

- ◯ Vantagem
- ◯ Desvantagem
- ◯ Nem vantagem nem desvantagem

10. Em resposta à pergunta anterior, por favor, explique sua escolha: *

11. Em que medida você se **sente qualificado(a)** para ensinar alunos que não falam português?
(5 – Muito qualificado(a), 4 – Qualificado(a), 3 – Moderadamente qualificado(a), 2 – Pouco qualificado(a), 1 – Nada qualificado(a)) *

1	2	3	4	5

12. Na sua opinião, quais **estratégias** (a nível escolar ou de políticas públicas) poderiam apoiar melhor os professores e alunos em salas de aula bilíngues? *

13. Com relação ao **apoio para o ensino de alunos imigrantes** que não falam português, por favor, avalie na escala o quão **útil** você considera cada um dos seguintes itens: *

a) Treinamento de aperfeiçoamento profissional:

- ◯ Muito útil
- ◯ Bastante útil
- ◯ Pouco útil
- ◯ Nada útil

14. **b) Acesso a materiais e recursos bilíngues:** *

- ◯ Muito útil
- ◯ Bastante útil
- ◯ Pouco útil
- ◯ Nada útil

15. **c) Monitores em sala de aula/intérpretes:** *

- ◯ Muito útil
- ◯ Bastante útil
- ◯ Pouco útil
- ◯ Nada útil

16. **d)Colaboração e trocas entre colegas educadores:** *

- ◯ Muito útil
- ◯ Bastante útil
- ◯ Pouco útil
- ◯ Nada útil

17. **e) Orientação de especialistas (por exemplo, especialistas em língua estrangeira, fonoaudiólogos)** *

- ◯ Muito útil
- ◯ Bastante útil
- ◯ Pouco útil
- ◯ Nada útil

18. **f) Curso Básico de Espanhol para professores:** *

- ◯ muito útil
- ◯ Bastante útil
- ◯ Pouco útil
- ◯ Nada útil

19. **Muito obrigada pela sua contribuição à minha pesquisa. Sua opinião é muito apreciada.**
Atenciosamente,
Daniéle De Meneghi Da Meda

Appendix E:

1. What challenges do you face when teaching students who are non-speakers of Portuguese?
2. How do you address the varying language proficiencies of students in your classroom?
3. What benefits do you believe bilingualism or multilingualism brings to students academically, socially, or culturally?
4. Do you think being bilingual or multilingual impacts students' cognitive development or learning abilities? If so, how?
5. How do you feel about students speaking in their mother tongue (or a language other than the majority language) during class or school activities?
6. Do your students speak to each other in Spanish? How do you feel about it? Do you think it is positive or negative? Why?
7. Do you think allowing students to use their mother tongue in the classroom helps or hinders their learning? Why?
8. What strategies or solutions do you think could help foreign students integrate better into the classroom?
9. Are there specific resources or support systems you believe schools should provide to assist students whose mother tongue is not Portuguese?
10. Do you perceive language diversity in the classroom as a right (something to be celebrated and preserved) or as a problem (a barrier to learning)? Why?
11. How do you think schools can balance the need to teach the majority language while respecting and valuing students' native languages?
12. Do you think bilingualism can benefit students? Why? Why not?
13. What kind of support or resources do you believe would be useful and effective in the classroom to you as a teacher?
14. What kind of help do you need to help the students who do not understand Portuguese?

Appendix F:

Headmistress

Interviewer:
Very well. Raquel, I'm going to ask you a few questions. What challenges do you, as a school, face when teaching children who don't speak Portuguese? So, the Venezuelan children arrived without any, absolutely no Portuguese. What is the main challenge?

Headmistress:
It's communication, first and foremost, isn't it? Initially, the challenge is oral—being able to make yourself understood and understanding them, right? Because we don't speak Spanish fluently either, so that's a crucial issue at the beginning, before you can even start teaching Portuguese. I think that's one of our biggest challenges, because some children arrive not speaking a single word.

Interviewer:
Yes, some come speaking only Spanish, with no Portuguese at all?

Headmistress:
Exactly. The ones who've just arrived from Venezuela, who are still getting used to things.

Interviewer:
And later on, do you notice that they begin to pick things up?

Headmistress:
Yes, they start learning, and so do we, but those first encounters are quite difficult. Very challenging.

Interviewer:
And how is it when there are students who've just arrived and others who have already been with you for a while? How does that difference in language proficiency play out in the classroom?

Headmistress:
Well, from what the teachers tell us—since they're the ones with the students day to day—they try to introduce Portuguese gradually. It seems to be a bit easier in early years, like nursery or Year 1, because younger children tend to learn faster. But where more is expected of them, there isn't a separate approach; they're included in the daily routine. Even at the diagnostic level, we try to see what they're bringing with them—even in their own language—what makes sense in Portuguese, what doesn't.

So yes, the start is difficult because it requires teachers to really understand their students. But yes, it's very much a transition period that needs to be respected.

Interviewer:
Do you feel a bridge is being built from Spanish to Portuguese—a transition?

Headmistress:
Yes, exactly, a transition phase. We understand that since they've come here, they need to

learn Portuguese. Of course, if we had more knowledge of Spanish, it would make things easier—more oral mediation, or even adapting some things into their language. Not that teachers don't make an effort—some are really trying to learn more Spanish. But the aim is still for them to learn Portuguese.

Interviewer:
But as a pedagogical practice, for example, since there aren't many Spanish-speaking teachers—I remember you said there were very few—how do you handle it if a pupil takes a test and writes all the answers in Spanish?

Headmistress:
Well, as I said, the teachers do try to validate those answers. They try to see if the response matches what was asked. If it's aligned with the task, they accept it. But if it's completely off, then it can't be marked. It's a real challenge.

Interviewer:
Do you think being bilingual or multilingual brings cognitive and cultural benefits?

Headmistress:
Yes, we understand that it's very valuable. For anyone who can learn a second language, it's a huge gain. And for these children, since they've come here, it's an advantage—they're going to learn a second language. So that's what we try to highlight: that they came here, and the idea is that they learn.

It's like going to live in the United States. Either you learn the language yourself, or the schools will teach you English. Same if we went to live in Venezuela. Of course, if our school offered Spanish, that would help. We've already submitted three memos about this.

Maybe it's time to rethink the second language currently offered—at the moment it's English, right?

Interviewer:
Yes, and English feels a bit distant.

Headmistressl:
It's important, but yes, it feels far from this reality we're experiencing now. In the past, Spanish was offered, but that required a specific public exam. So there are bureaucratic issues. But it's something that should be considered long-term.

Interviewer:
And just imagine the benefit—these kids could help those who only speak Portuguese. How rich that would be!

Headmistress:
Yes, this kind of coexistence leads to exchange. They start picking up expressions, and that's so enriching. We'd love to offer more, but as I said, it would require a specific recruitment process. The municipality hires through public exams. That Spanish teacher category was removed ages ago. I think there are just two or three left from that older round of hires.

Interviewer:
Wow—and Spanish is so much closer, especially in this context. Argentina, Uruguay—it's a language of our continent.

Headmistress:
Exactly. And we hear it daily here. Imagine the value.

Interviewer:
And how do you feel, or what do teachers say, when Venezuelan students speak Spanish among themselves? Does it cause issues, or is it seen as a necessary exchange?

Headmistress:
Some teachers think it's not very positive because it means they don't practise Portuguese. Personally, I think it's important that they don't lose their cultural essence or the values they bring. I don't see a problem. But yes, some teachers feel it isn't helpful. They try to bring them back to Portuguese—"Let's speak in Portuguese now, let's practise." Some are fine with it; others believe it hinders learning.

Interviewer:
I remember observing a Year 9 class last year doing an art project, and they were all working together, speaking Spanish. The teacher seemed very open, understanding that it was important. That perspective is so valuable.

Headmistress:
Yes, I think they need to keep their language, just like we would if we moved abroad. We'd want people who speak our language. It's like that Portuguese author said: *"The Portuguese language is my homeland."* That's your sense of belonging. It brings identity.

Interviewer:
So would you say allowing them to speak Spanish helps or hinders learning?

Headmistressl:
It can interfere with Portuguese learning, especially in speaking and even writing. But I think the interference is small. The difficulty is also on our side—as an Area 1 teacher, my focus is on early education. Teachers who are trained in both Portuguese and English might find it easier to relate to language acquisition concepts.

Sometimes I find myself wondering how we could help more. The guidance we get is usually about encouraging practice—speaking, writing—and it's easier when the students are open to it. Just like we would need to be open to learning a new language.

Interviewer:
Are there older students who resist writing in Portuguese?

Headmistress:
Yes, in Years 4 and 5, we've seen that happen. And that can be a problem. Some want to speak only in Spanish, write in Spanish—even when the teacher asks for Portuguese. There's resistance. So we work on showing them why learning Portuguese is important—because they're here, they need to communicate, they'll need to work here one day.

Interviewer:
And do you think that resistance might come from the family?

Headmistress:
It could. We've considered that. During parent-teacher meetings, some teachers highlight the importance of practising Portuguese at home too—as an exercise for both parents and children.

Interviewer:
That's interesting, because in our research, parents say they don't want their children to lose Spanish. They want them to keep it—but also to learn Portuguese. So there's a contradiction.

Headmistress:
Yes, because if they start speaking only Portuguese at home, they might lose their Spanish. That's probably the biggest fear.

Interviewer:
Exactly. Because our mother tongue is our emotional language. If I stop speaking to my child in the language that touches me, that shaped me, what's left in terms of connection?

Headmistress:
Yes, it's about preserving essence. It's complicated.

Interviewer:
It's complex. I said to my professor the other day, "I don't know how to answer these questions." And he said, "That's because there is no single answer, Dani. It's complex. It involves so many things—subjectivity, culture, identity."

Headmistress:
Exactly. And we still don't really know how to deal with it. Because it's all so new.

Interviewer:
When did this start?

Headmistress:
Around 2021, during the pandemic. I think the first students started arriving in 2019, but the real surge was in 2023 and 2024. That's when the big wave came.

Interviewer:
So yes, this is new for everyone—for the teachers, for the education department.

Headmistress:
Yes, and they've had some ideas, but nothing's come of them yet.

Interviewer:
And even something that sounds simple—like hiring Venezuelan monitors—gets blocked by red tape. Because it has to go through public exams or tenders.

Headmistress:
Yes, that's right. One nice idea they had was to partner with language schools, bringing

professionals into our schools. But it didn't move forward—because of funding, regulations, and legal constraints.

Interviewer:
And if the underlying ideology is that they don't *need* support in Spanish, then the question doesn't even get asked.

Headmistress:
Exactly, it's not studied. And meanwhile, the schools just get on with it. We do our best. We say in meetings: "It's not the best way, but we're doing what we can." So nothing ever gets implemented properly.

Interviewer:
Would you like a break?

Headmistress:
Yes, let's take a quick break. Thank you.

Interviewer:
Hmm. Do you remember there used to be some extra lessons when the kids were taken out of class?

Headmistress:
Yes, that was for the PRA, and now it's become more about literacy.

Interviewer:
Ah, so it's now more focused on literacy?

Headmistress:
Yes, it's more about literacy now—the programme is focused on that.

Interviewer:
Right. So you no longer remove pupils from class like before?

Headmistress:
Actually, up until last year we did. And yes, the teacher would have individual sessions or small group work, sometimes even within the classroom. We did things a bit differently last year, with regroupings and activities based on literacy levels. Because the main focus really is reading and writing.

And the situation with foreign students was also taken into account—the issue of learning Portuguese. At first, we only had two sessions: two mornings with the teacher, and two afternoons. Then that was expanded—especially in the morning—to five mornings a week.

Interviewer:
Wow!

Headmistress:
Yes, because we had a significant number of students. And in Area 2 as well, we had pupils with serious difficulties. So she was also able to work with those students. This year it hasn't

started yet—it's due to begin next week. And now it will be more focused on Years 3, 4, and 5—those pupils who still haven't learned to read and write, and also for the foreign students.

We haven't yet planned exactly how it will work, but we have three morning sessions and three in the afternoon for this teacher to work with those pupils.

Interviewer:
And have you noticed any improvement?

Headmistress:
Yes.

Interviewer:
Is it visible?

Headmistress:
Very. Of course, in some cases there are health issues being investigated—some learning difficulties. But in general, yes, there is significant progress. Even with the limited sessions we had before, we could already see improvement in learning.

Interviewer:
That's great—because it's more individualised, or done in smaller groups.

Headmistres:s Yes, the teacher has a different approach and can focus more on individual needs, which sometimes isn't possible in the classroom, because there are so many demands.

Interviewer:
Right, lots of needs.

Headmistress:
Exactly.

Interviewer:
And what's the name of this project? Is it still called PRA?

Headmistress:
No, now it's just called "Mais Alfabetização" (More Literacy).

Interviewer:
Just "Mais Alfabetização", okay. So it's no longer PRA?

Headmistress:
No, not anymore.

Interviewer:
As the headteacher, do you see this linguistic diversity as a right or as a problem?

Headmistress:
Well, initially—as I mentioned—we really saw it as a problem. Because it was new, challenging, a change, and so on. But now that we've had more time with it, we see it as a

right, and something that actually enriches the school. Even though it brings daily challenges to the classroom, I do think it's valuable—the exchange.

Interviewer:
Now, if the world had no red tape—what would be your ideal setup for this school, in a dream world?

Headmistress:
That it would be a bilingual school.

Interviewer:
And how do you imagine that working?

Headmistress:
That we would have sessions—and not just one person, but several people—who are fluent, so we could offer that extra knowledge, an additional subject to support those with greater difficulties.

Interviewer:
Let me just check my notes… I think that's it, Raquel. Now, I've got one more question. I made a little chart here—look.

These are two authors who did separate works. One, Burris, talked about ideology, and Wiley connected the type of ideology with pedagogical practice—or with how bilingualism is viewed.

So here we have a scale, from red to green. Red meaning "no way," and green meaning "OK."

The first is called **ethnicist**—this is when people are forbidden to speak another language.

Then comes **assimilation**, which is **restrictive**—sometimes it's allowed, sometimes not—but it discourages use of the other language, for example, Spanish.

Next is **civic**, where there's a policy of **tolerance**. So, speaking another language is tolerated, but there is **no financial support** for it.

And finally, there's **pluralist**, where there is **active promotion** of the other language, encouraging multilingualism.

Where do you think we, here at Abram and Paz, fall within this framework?

Headmistress:
I think in the civic category.

Interviewer:
That's what I thought too.

Headmistress:
Yes, because there's no financial support or incentive. It's more about moral support—as I mentioned earlier, from the education department or other agencies—so that we could offer

better conditions. Both for the teachers and the families. Some additional support would be so important. It really would make a difference.

Interviewer:
I think that's it. Thank you so much.

Appendix G:

Yes, initially they were at separate tables – children fluent in Spanish and those fluent in Portuguese. And then, to create a bond between them, at first, I joined the tables. They were four to a table, so I grouped them into six per table, and then we started rotating them to encourage contact. Because the younger ones didn't understand Spanish, they didn't understand what was going on. So, I started explaining things in both languages at the same time – I'd speak a bit in Portuguese and then switch to Spanish. Some people would say, "But the child who came from abroad won't learn Portuguese that way." No – they will begin to associate what the words mean.

And we managed to build two types of learning moments. For example, during storytime, I'd read a story in Spanish one day, and the next day in Portuguese. Sometimes I'd alternate between pages – one page in Spanish, the next in Portuguese. It's like music – they start picking up on the meaning. They worked out the meaning of the words. Sometimes I'd be speaking to a child in Spanish, and the others, who were fluent in Brazilian Portuguese, could understand whether I was telling someone off, having a chat, or explaining the task. They understood and automatically made the mental shift. It was great because, by the end of the year, all of them were doing it.

They even started asking, "Teacher, how do I say this in Spanish? I want to tell him something." So, they no longer needed to rely on the teacher to communicate. They were finding their own tools and strategies. And they spoke Spanish to their peers, too. They would ask about pronunciation – whether it was correct – because sometimes their classmates couldn't understand them. And the others also had to speak in Portuguese. It's very much like a wooden spoon metaphor here, isn't it? I won't go. I couldn't.

Let me ask you something, Dai. How did the school view all this?
Well, at first, Aguerino Zunho School is in quite a poor area of the city, so it receives a lot of underprivileged children. They didn't place much importance on this at first. They did do some welcoming work with the families, recognised their cultures, celebrated both cultures in some activities – but beyond that, there wasn't much else.

Because, in the playground, they would gather in little groups. Even though they were in different classes or year groups, they'd gather and speak only their own language. Some teachers even said, "They won't bond because they're not mixing." But they hadn't been given a chance to form those bonds. That bridge wasn't created.
Exactly. And you built that bridge.
I managed to create the bridge. So, they played together. And then other children from other classes came to talk to me – the older ones, to have contact with the language as well.

Because in that neighbourhood, Planalto, they have communities – they created little Venezuelan settlements, renting houses all near each other.
So they remain only among themselves?
They stay connected to their own language and culture. And you hear a lot of complaints about their culture – they play loud music late, they speak louder, their tone of voice is different. Their hygiene habits are different, their food – greasy food in the morning – is different.

When the little ones brought packed lunches to school and opened their containers, while other kids had cakes, cereal bars or fruit, they'd bring "arepa," eggs scrambled with sausage – and when they opened the containers, that smell of oil in the morning would put others off.

So we started to have discussions about it – why is that? Because it's their culture. And local families from the same neighbourhood would say, "That smell of oil in the morning…" but it's cultural, folks – just like our beans, or *buchada* (a traditional dish).

We discussed this with them. And in the teachers' lounge, whenever I had the chance, I'd bring it up. I always say: "Imagine being parachuted into another country where nobody speaks your language or understands your culture." That's what happened to these kids. The parents are adults. They knew what was coming. But these kids – especially the little ones – they were lost. They felt excluded.

So what did they do?
They stuck together. And once they were able to communicate with others, they saw – when I was supervising break time in the gym – that there was someone who could speak their language. Their eyes would light up.

They felt like they belonged.
Exactly. They felt welcomed.
And imagine how amazing it would be if we had more people like you.
Yes – but I can't be in contact with everyone. I only see them at the end of the day.
And when you see them, do you…?
I talk to them. I listen to them chatting. Sometimes I'm heading to my car, and I talk to them on the street. They once asked me if I was from Argentina.
Really?
I think it's because of the fluency – the accent changes.

Yes, it changes a lot. Their accent is more closed. When I studied Spanish, I learned the Spain variant because I was planning to take their exam.
Yes.
Then I went to Mexico and Colombia.
How cool.
Totally different.
Yes, completely different – the accent, the tone.
Exactly – that "lisp" in the language. And I told them, "Guys, you'll see that even among yourselves from different regions – it's just like in Brazil. Each region speaks with a different accent."

It was really interesting. I enjoyed it a lot.
And what's it like for you here? You have a Year 5 class?
Yes, I have a Year 5 class with four Venezuelan students.
With different levels of Portuguese proficiency?
Yes, different levels. One of them barely speaks. Elvis is a child who hardly speaks at all. He understands a few words but doesn't feel confident speaking Portuguese. So I speak quite a lot of Spanish with him and encourage him to speak Portuguese.

I use techniques like using a classroom microphone so he can hear himself. Sometimes kids speak in a low voice, very quietly. I want him to hear himself. For the whole class, really. We've done some games and activities, and he's started to communicate more.

Before, he would only ask to go to the toilet. That was the only thing he'd say. Now he asks questions, asks for help, says what he needs. He does understand – he's been in Brazil for three years – but he's just not confident enough to speak.

When I give instructions in Portuguese, he understands fine. If I speak Spanish, he responds in Spanish. It's really a matter of confidence. Henrique and Mauricio speak more Portuguese. Mariana speaks for all of them combined!

Yes – but she speaks very fast and mixes the two languages. But she's very communicative. When they're not sure what to do, she helps them. She's quite dominant, so I try to give her specific tasks and communicate more with her in Spanish. She speaks more clearly in Spanish than in Portuguese. She switches between the two languages – what we call *cambio*.

Appendix H:

1) How does the municipality of Caxias do Sul welcome immigrants?

2) From the perspective of the public administration, is the arrival of Venezuelan immigrants seen as a problem or an advantage?

3) How important is it for immigrants to learn Portuguese?

4) Is speaking Spanish a problem or an advantage?

5) Do you think being bilingual is an advantage or a problem?

6) Is there any discussion within the city council regarding the challenges and demands faced by families, teachers, and school leadership due to the language barrier in schools?

Appendix I:

How do you think the city of Caxias do Sul views immigrants? Do we have a welcoming culture? What's your perception?

Let's see. I think we hear both sides. People often say Caxias is cold and unwelcoming. I'm not originally from Caxias – I was born in São Leopoldo, but I came here when I was very young. My mum is from the countryside of São Paulo, and my dad is from São Francisco de Paula. So, we weren't born here. I hear people say that Caxias is closed off and difficult when it comes to welcoming others, even professionally. But that's not how I see it. Maybe because we were well received, I do see it as a welcoming city – it offers jobs, education, and healthcare.

Of course, we have our challenges, but I believe the city understands its own history – it was built this way. When we think about who we are, we're the result of a mixture of cultures – of people who came here despite hardships and helped form the city we live in today. So, even though people still repeat the idea that Caxias is cold, I think we've stopped considering whether that's truly the case.

Today, I see it differently. I see a city that shows solidarity. We saw it during the floods, during the pandemic, and in everyday campaigns like the winter clothing drive. The community really comes together to help those in need, not just financially vulnerable people, but anyone in difficulty. I believe our city has a welcoming spirit. For the most part, yes. Administratively, we often talk about how many nationalities are present in the city – they're in the workforce, in schools, in all sectors.

So, yes, I believe Caxias welcomes and respects people. I also think we tend to repeat what others say without questioning. Someone may have had a negative experience, and it gets repeated as if it applies to everyone. I don't think that's fair. People here can be cautious – there's a certain wariness that comes from past hardship. That can make them stricter, more reserved – but not unwelcoming. There is warmth, yes.

From a local government perspective, how is the arrival of Venezuelan migrants viewed? As a problem or an opportunity?

Both. I wouldn't say it's seen as a problem. It might bring difficulties, not problems. From a public administration standpoint, when we set a yearly budget – for example, the City Council approves spending for the year ahead – we don't always account for unexpected events, like a crisis in another country leading to an influx of migrants.

Caxias, for instance, is constitutionally required to invest 15% in healthcare – but it invests 27%. Why? Because we don't serve just our own population. We're a reference city for healthcare for 48 other municipalities. Plus, our population grows due to people arriving from outside. That's where the challenge lies – in adjusting the budget and thinking about how to train and support these newcomers.

But it also brings clear advantages. First, cultural – we learn a lot from people from other places. And second, for the labour market. You can't go anywhere in Caxias – a shop, a service – without hearing Spanish or something similar. They're already integrated into the workforce. And we know there are plenty of job vacancies in Caxias – what's often missing is qualified or willing labour.

So, yes, there are clear economic benefits. Many migrants are also entrepreneurs who inject fresh energy into the economy. It's not a problem – it's a challenge that needs attention, but not something that can or should be stopped. Even if some want to build walls instead of bridges – that's not the way. We must welcome people and recognise the benefits they bring: new ideas, new cultures, entrepreneurial spirit.

And in education?
As a former teacher, I can say: it's beautiful. Imagine having the chance in the classroom not just to talk about other cultures but to live them. That's fantastic.

And what's the importance of immigrants learning Portuguese?
It's the bare minimum. I'm a huge supporter of the work done by local organisations like CAM (Centro de Atendimento ao Migrante) and people like Sister Celsa – she's incredible. Welcoming someone isn't just giving them basic groceries or rent support – it's helping them belong.

Belonging means getting into the workforce, the school system – but also helping them see that they can take part fully. So teaching Portuguese is essential. Not to erase their culture or language, but to help them participate and feel at home.

We've seen waves: Haitians, Senegalese, Ghanaians – each with different reasons for coming. We need to support them, not leave them in precarious jobs, but help them find better roles and integrate. And as so many are in customer service roles, Portuguese is vital.

We need language programmes not only for children in school, but also for teenagers and adults. There are free courses – some universities offer them. True inclusion goes far beyond saying "welcome" – it means enabling people to live with dignity and take part.

Is speaking Spanish a problem or an advantage?
It's both – but I see it mostly as an advantage. They feel proud when we communicate with them. It's a two-way street – and that's what's beautiful. Living with differences, finding common ground. They often come feeling they have nothing to offer, just seeking help. But when we show them they can also help us – even with language – it's powerful.

And being bilingual – isn't that amazing?
Exactly. Our own children, especially those from vulnerable backgrounds, often struggle to see the value of learning another language. But imagine if they're learning in a bilingual environment, with Spanish-speaking classmates. That gives meaning to learning.

We often struggle to justify language learning in school. But when it's part of daily life – it becomes natural. And there are cognitive benefits too. Language shapes how we think. Spanish feels different from English. Bilingual kids absorb more, especially at younger ages.

These migrant movements offer real opportunities. Yes, challenges too. The healthcare system is already stretched. But this is our reality, and we need to learn and adapt.

You mentioned middle-class children taking private English or Spanish lessons. Imagine if schools offered this using native speakers!
Exactly! Imagine inviting Venezuelan parents or professionals to help teach. Imagine being

the first bilingual school in the municipality. That's entirely possible – some schools already have 30% or more migrant pupils. We could become a model.

And instead of dry grammar lessons, we could teach Portuguese in early years, Spanish in later years – and children would become bilingual naturally.

It also boosts self-esteem.
Absolutely. For migrant children, it's empowering. They're the ones who already understand both languages – they shine. Anyone who's been in a foreign country knows how difficult it is not understanding signs, packaging, timetables. But here we have the chance to build something truly inclusive.

And it's right in front of us – we just have to act.

And have you seen any of this reflected in the City Council or education policy?
There's some movement, but it's very individual. The Council mainly works on demand. If someone brings a concern, we look into it. But we could do more – especially around teacher training and support.

Teachers already deal with so much – special needs, autism spectrum, learning difficulties, syndromes. And now many also have to support large numbers of migrant students. We've tried to help through training and support, but more is needed.

I don't think we fully grasp the scale of this change yet. We hear Spanish at the petrol station, in the shops – but don't always realise these same people are in our schools and need support.

We need data to make better decisions. When we see that 30% of a class are migrants – that demands a new approach. But as I said, unless someone brings the issue to us, we might not notice.

And the migrants themselves might not speak up – they don't know who we are, they fear repercussions. They're vulnerable – not just financially, but emotionally.

So we need to build trust, show affection, and challenge that outdated idea that migrants take things away. They bring so much. They help us build the city, they are part of it – just as much as anyone born here.

Last thing – I have a chart (in English) about language ideology. It ranges from prohibitive to pluralistic. Where would you place yourself?
Ah, completely pluralistic – absolutely. We must never restrict other languages. We should encourage diversity. Look at how proud people are of their Italian heritage here – they still speak it! So why would we deny others that pride?

It's a beautiful thing when someone makes an effort to speak Portuguese, even if it's "portunhol," and we make an effort to understand. That exchange is powerful. Everyone learns.

This pluralistic view must be our standard. Even the idea of "tolerance" isn't enough – tolerating implies putting up with something unpleasant. That's not the point. These people didn't arrive empty-handed – they came with rich cultures we can all benefit from.

Appendix J:

Right then, so the Abramo Pese School, which is over in São Cristóvão. In the São Cristóvão neighbourhood. They have 363 pupils in total, 81 of them Venezuelan, which makes up 22.76%.

So we're talking about nearly a quarter. There's a Year 2 class where, out of 19 pupils, 7 are Venezuelan, which is 36%. There was a questionnaire for the parents, handed out, received back, recorded.

38% of these parents have been in Brazil for less than a year. 81% consider it important to learn Portuguese without losing Spanish. 67% expect their children to learn Portuguese in less than a year.

75% feel very welcome at the school. And this figure here is very important to me: 45% definitely want to stay in Brazil. And 36% possibly want to stay in Brazil.

So if we think about these figures, we're talking about quite a large population within this school. And then, in conversation with the headteacher Raquel – very open – she was explaining to me what strategies they're trying to find, trying to strike a balance, bearing in mind that only one of the teachers has any fluency in Spanish. So it's a language barrier, a real language barrier.

And from there, as you're both the Chair of the Council and a teacher, your opinion is very important, because I think we could perhaps think of a project. I spoke with Rose too, I spoke with Marisol, about maybe planning a project together. A pilot project – perhaps Caxias could have a genuinely bilingual class, imagine that? Yes, yes, yes.

Well, first question. How do you think, Lucas, that the city of Caxias do Sul welcomes Venezuelan immigrants? Now there's another wave of Venezuelans, but we've already had many Senegalese, Haitians. You know, going around the city, exchanging experiences with fellow teachers, this is a demand that comes up very strongly.

I think the issue of inclusion and of immigrants, who in very significant numbers are enrolled in our schools, and I – my training is as a historian – I can't help but think a bit about the city's vocation for welcoming, that in the past we received Italian-descendant immigrants, Germans and others, and at that time the Empire, the end of the Empire, the start of the Republic, made a choice and created a range of public policies supporting those immigrants who arrived here, who left their countries of origin in a difficult process, of course. The diaspora always carries sadness.

No one leaves their home easily. Hope is important, but leaving your homeland, your place, many of your relatives, carries great sadness, even depression. Today science has advanced in terms of mental health – another theme for discussion. But in the past, at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century, there was an option, based on economic factors, linked to the transformation of Brazilian society, moving away from slavery, choosing free labour, the policy of "whitening", and so on.

Those immigrants arrived and, socially and economically, prospered, thanks to the choice the State made at that time. In other words, they benefited, even though they faced many

difficulties, of course. When they arrived here, with very little, but they had access to land, State support, in an economy that was prospering, based on free labour, smallholdings, mixed farming, trade that led to industrialisation.

Well, about 150 years have passed, and here we are, in this city with that welcoming tradition, historically speaking, and we have received waves of immigrants of various nationalities, driven by problems in their home countries, coming to Brazil because of our welcoming stance, unlike many countries, especially in the Global North. Today there are many discussions around the Global South, and we are right in the middle of that.

So, Brazil is a welcoming country, with open borders, that receives people from countries facing war, famine, disease, social problems, such as Haiti in the past, African countries, and now Venezuela. And when they come to Brazil, in this search – in this forced search, in this diasporic process – when they arrive in this continental country, naturally people look for regions with jobs, with better conditions.

And so we've received a significant number of immigrants. That's the context, isn't it? Venezuelans aren't going to stay in Roraima, they're not going to remain in the north. I don't have information on the northeast, but I do about the southeast, the big metropolises, and here, in our city, where a significant number have arrived.

I think, and as president, one of the first visits I received here was from CIC (Industry and Commerce Chamber), and CIC told me we had 5,000 job vacancies open. So, while for the municipal manager, within the federative system in Brazil, I understand it weighs heavily on mayors. Because when an immigrant arrives, they attend the municipal school, they are treated by the city's public health service, by social assistance, and the federative system does not provide the additional resources that the local authority needs to offer quality. Unlike 150 years ago, when the Empire and the Republic made the choice, encouraged it, spent resources.

So I think that's a problem. And I often hear our mayor say that we have an ever-growing number of immigrants accessing our public education network, health services, social assistance, and that is a fact. But I think the city has managed to offer support to those who arrive here, within its capacity, within its limits, also thanks to civil society, the parishes, which play an important role in this welcoming process.

So, from what I see in schools, in public spaces, in the city centre, in businesses, the Venezuelan population has adapted well, they are here, working, living their daily lives. In the neighbourhoods, too. So, I think there has been a very significant welcome, even if not ideal, because we know there are difficulties.

We can't ignore that prejudice exists. Sometimes cultural barriers, language barriers, these things exist. But I think the majority of the population of Caxias sees it in a positive way, and, to be honest, I think Venezuelans also have a way of fitting in, of showing their presence, of taking part in city life.

And the schools, as you just pointed out with your data, have received a very large number, which is a challenge. It's a challenge because the teachers are not prepared, they were not

trained to deal with this situation. This wasn't part of their training, especially the language issue, which is a very big barrier.

So, I think it's an ongoing process of construction, that requires dialogue, requires projects, requires initiatives such as the one you're proposing, that we can think about together. To try to build alternatives. And I think education is the key, you know?

Because if Venezuelan children are well integrated into school, if they learn Portuguese, if they keep Spanish as well, if they feel welcomed, if they feel at home, this is what will ensure that they will also integrate well into society.

So, the role of the school is fundamental, because it's there that this encounter happens, on a daily basis, in the classroom, in the playground, in relationships, in exchanges. So I think it's a very important challenge.

Appendix K:

How do you think Caxias do Sul welcomes these immigrants?

Well, I think there are some institutions that do this work, like CAM, for example, the Migrant Assistance Centre. But I think, as far as the public authorities go, there could be more welcoming – not just in the sense of receiving people and providing help. That, I think, Caxias does manage. I think there used to be more prejudice; today I don't see so much of that. But I do sometimes notice a lack of public policy initiatives. For example, there are things that don't even cost money. They don't. It just takes initiative, political will, creativity. And I think that's really lacking.

In 2014, if I'm not mistaken, I worked for a while at the Fourth CRE, and there was already an agreement with teachers working in a school to help, to give Portuguese lessons to immigrants who were here. Like tutoring? Yes, teaching Portuguese itself. An initiative of the State government. I think that doesn't exist anymore. I, as a teacher, to give you an idea, once had a boy and a girl from Haiti. But one spoke Creole and the other spoke French. And the girl who spoke Creole – sometimes I would draw something and she wouldn't understand. Then I thought, no, but this isn't just a language issue, because drawings people usually understand.

It was only at the end of the year that we discovered she was also enrolled in Special Educational Needs support. Because barely, not even her own name, could she write properly, and she was 15 years old. So it wasn't just a matter of language. And the boy, then, who spoke French – imagine having to teach Brazilian history to someone who had come from Haiti but spoke French. The only tool we had was those translation things, during the pandemic – Google Translate, or a little text run through the translator. That's really the bare minimum, but it's not true inclusion, is it? So, what do I think? I think we need to work with people who come from abroad, but above all with those who are already here.

To show them the richness it is to have someone from another country in your classroom, how much they can also learn from them. But I'll tell you, the language barrier is complicated, because people hold back for fear of speaking incorrectly, or not understanding, right? But I think the municipal government could put more public policies in place, give more encouragement, especially in schools. Brazilian teachers and students should have specific training to understand the richness of this exchange of knowledge between countries, shouldn't they? I think that's what's missing. Because it's not just, as we sometimes say, oh, you have to welcome – imagine arriving in another country. That's important, to feel comfortable in that country.

But it's not just that – they can feel good, but also feel that they are important in that country, can't they? Because sometimes I think, imagine this: I had a pupil who was born in Germany, but came to Brazil when he was small. Everyone would say, "Oh, you're from Germany" – so that was something to be proud of. If it's a European country, the relationship is different, isn't it? The relationship changes. So I think that's something that needs working on with everyone, even prejudice itself, which is a bit internalised, so that it doesn't come out as open discrimination. And when we speak of immigrants, it's not just Italian immigrants, is it? All of them bring contributions to the country, to the city, and so on.

Very well. For the public administration then – as a councillor in the city, I don't know if these debates take place – but is the arrival of Venezuelans seen as a problem? Or as an advantage? Or neutral? What do you perceive?

Well, sometimes it's harder to talk about others, but I have heard people say – not that it's bad – but people saying that, for example, Caxias needs more and more when we call for more classrooms. Just this year, people from over 40 nationalities have arrived in Caxias. So, what do I feel? Somehow, even if subtly, there's this question that, well, look, coming from abroad, you have to have public services to support those people, don't you?

But not in the sense of not wanting people to come. I think there is a certain concern about it. And it depends on the country too – I notice a difference. Perhaps with Venezuelans people even accept them more, because there's all this talk that Venezuela has a left-wing dictator. "Let's welcome these poor souls who came here", right? But when it was Senegalese immigrants, or perhaps because of colour, because of race – I remember when other Senegalese came, and Haitians, and Ghanaians – the situation was worse. But I think now, at this moment, the biggest concern is having enough public policies to serve the people who come, not only from other countries.

But I think with Venezuelans there isn't all that prejudice. And it's interesting – perhaps because of skin colour, or maybe because the language is closer, it's easier. The culture too. Spanish is a Latin language, so maybe it's more understandable, isn't it? So, in relation to Venezuelans, I think they'll find it easier to integrate. Because, as we say, one thing is access to the language and spaces, but more than that, it's about genuine inclusion, isn't it? Feeling part of the group. And that doesn't have to take ten years before someone feels they belong in society, does it? I think the world should have advanced more in that respect. But we see now, don't we? More and more borders being closed.

I had a T-shirt that said: "Cursed be every fence that prevents a man or woman from loving and being happy" – but fence in the sense of a border, of a space you can't cross. Very symbolic. Borders are something that shouldn't even exist, because humanity has moved from one country to another ever since human beings started walking. But still they exist, and sometimes we notice even more barriers now. I'll tell you, as a councillor I haven't really had that debate much. I've taken part in a few events in Porto Alegre, which were precisely about working on this in schools – how to truly accept. What I know about this is from those events I attended, really.

And I've done a few live streams, including with people who had come from abroad. But the debate itself doesn't exist, not as something very present. No, what we've had more often are polemics, to be honest. Once, I think it was in 2023, we had a really intense council session where a councillor said that immigrants come here to "turn Brazil into a Paraguay". Referring to street vendors, wasn't it? Saying Brazil would become like Paraguay. I was furious. I said, "Well, who made Paraguay into what it is today? Brazil did." Then I brought up the Paraguayan War – I was livid. And this came from councillors I didn't expect it from. Not the ones you already know what to expect.

So, there have been debates like that. About people selling things on the street, taking space from business owners and shops who pay taxes – that sort of debate. And then one day someone said to me, "Oh, those lot just dodge taxes." And I said, "Well, there are plenty of people in Parque do Sol who dodge taxes too." So it got quite heated, but that was the line of

discussion, you know? About street trading, not paying tax. And another time, I heard people saying, "They come here to take jobs." But if you count how many from Caxias have gone to other countries, there are more people from Caxias taking jobs abroad than immigrants taking jobs here. So those xenophobic discussions, yes, we've had those too.

But I believe now, especially because we've started rebuilding the country with a more humanist vision, more politically correct, people don't have the cheek to say such horrors so openly. I think that has lessened those views. At least people hold back more, don't they? Which is what I always say: if you've got a prejudice, work on it – we all have some form of prejudice – but don't put it out there, because that's when it becomes discrimination. So, I still think we can improve, but we need to have this debate every day. In fact, we could organise one of these debates sometime. Yes, for some committee maybe – it would be very interesting. Wouldn't it, Rose? Present these figures. These figures, yes.

Hold a public meeting, something like that. Imagine? To look at this. Yes, I've already thought about it. Because it's reality, isn't it? Yes, we could bring it either to the Education Committee, which I'm part of, or the Human Rights Committee. I think it would be very interesting. Let's think about it. Let's do it. Yes.

Rose, what do you think is the importance of immigrants learning Portuguese?
Well, I think it's everything. Because I've travelled to some countries, you know, and I couldn't communicate. I remember once, a long time ago, I went to England – and well, it may just have been my particular experience in those days I was there, so we can't generalise. But I knew my English from language classes, which was that Latin-American, Americanised English, not classic British. And I tried to speak, and it was worse. Honestly, I don't know – maybe they thought I looked Indian, because they also have prejudice against Indians. At the time my hair was still black. But I think for someone to feel included, to open up, it's fundamental to learn Portuguese, you know? It should even be a legal requirement, that when someone arrives in a country, somehow they must learn that language.

For the locals too, because when we travel – I was talking about myself – if I go to England, I have to try to speak English, don't I? Now, if an English person comes here… once when I worked at the council I received a consul from India, for example. He spoke English. I received him and I tried to speak English with him, you see? So, with dominant languages that's how it is – if someone comes here, you have to speak to them, but if I go there, I also have to speak their language. So it's a bit perverse, this logic, isn't it? So, if a Venezuelan comes here, I don't necessarily have to speak Spanish with them. They have to know Portuguese, because that will be good for them, and for us, and it will allow real inclusion. That's how I see it.

For me, the language barrier is one of the strongest forms of exclusion. Linguistic exclusion is very powerful – it excludes a lot. But there's also what you said, about not losing Spanish. That's essential. Because I tell my pupils: I teach, but I learn more from you. There was a boy too, from the Dominican Republic, and he'd already been here for many years when I taught him. He must have been about 12, maybe since age 7 in Brazil. And he spoke – I can't remember exactly – I think one half of the Dominican Republic was linked to France, the other to Spain, so I think he spoke Spanish. And someone asked him, "Do you still know how to speak Spanish?" He said, "A little." He had lost it. Because if you come very young, or don't use it, you lose it.

So, I think they need to learn Portuguese, but there should also be some way of keeping their roots. Because if we think, for example, of Italian here in our region – there was a time, Dani, when I worked with international relations, and we brought people from Italy here. Urban Italians, it was a project on rural tourism. And the people from the Colonies were all talking away to the Italians – "talhando" (carving, making dialect). And one of the Italians said – and it wasn't malicious, but when it's not malicious it can be worse, because it's from the heart, it's organic – she said, "You could give them Italian lessons, because they speak it all wrong." Of course, that language here evolved differently, it was all mixed up. But how many years does it take to build a language? What cultural value that has! And then to lose it – the same with indigenous peoples – it's very sad.

So, it's important that pupils and families who come here keep practising their original language. That their new language becomes an addition – so they are bilingual. Yes, bilingual. Well, you asked – is speaking Spanish a problem or an advantage? I think it's an advantage, isn't it? Because the person will learn Portuguese and still speak Spanish.