

## Record details

### IDESR ID

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### Title

A protocol for a systematic review of community and volunteer-led initiatives for social integration and language education of asylum seekers and refugees.

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### Review Question

The review questions are divided into three core elements that engage as fully as possible with the concept of community-based language education in a refugee and migration context. These questions are incorporated into the data extraction form:

1. How is community-based language education or related terms conceptualised?
2. How is community-based language education or related terms operationalised?
3. How is community-based language education or related terms evaluated?

### Rationale

It is estimated that there are over eighty million displaced people who have fled conflict, persecution, or violence (UNHCR, 2021). In response to the growing asylum seeker and refugee population, voluntary sectors have provided less formal learning opportunities (Simpson, 2015). Integration strategies require more than a one-size-fits-all language learning initiative. However, studies on formal language learning for migrants and refugees have dominated literature and policies. The demand for alternative approaches for the language learning of refugees requires a substantial focus within academia. However, there is limited evidence-based and comparable data on the full impact and contribution of nonformal language programmes for refugees and asylum seekers. Thus, this project, which is the first phase of a PhD study by the first author, seeks to produce an evidence-based analysis on the impact and outcomes of nonformal language learning approaches that take place in community and volunteer language education initiatives.

A systematic review is chosen for its strength in producing repeatable, transparent and quantifiable data. A systematic review evolves from a research question seeking "to identify, select and critically appraise relevant research, and to collect and analyse data" (Moher et al., 2009). The systematic review will collect scholarly outputs discussing community and volunteer-led language education. There is a growing interest in using systematic reviews to inform future educational policies and encourage further research into the best practices (Polanin et al., 2017). Thus, it is resourceful in providing accountable research into learning approaches that has remained overly qualitative and unquantifiable. This allows for the subsequent case study analysis (phase 2 of the PhD study) to be

grounded in the broader discussion of nonformal approaches to language learning. The protocol is to be published to encourage more accessibility and more discussions of community language learning approaches.

UNHCR. (2021). Global trends: forced displacement in 2020.

<https://www.unhcr.org/60b638e37/unhcr-global-trends-2020>.

Simpson, J. E. B. (2015). English language learning for adult migrants in superdiverse Britain. *Adult Language Education and Migration: Challenging Agendas in Policy and Practice*, pp. 200-213.

Moher, D., Liberati, A., Tetzlaff, J., Altman, D.G. (2009). Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses: The PRISMA Statement. *Journal of Clinical Epidemiology*, 62(10), pp. 1006-1012.

Polanin, J. R., Maynard, B. R., & Dell, N. A. (2017). Overviews in Education Research: A Systematic Review and Analysis. *Review of Educational Research*, 87(1), pp. 172-203.

## **Inclusion Criteria**

### Participants

**Include:** Records that refer to adult learners who are migrants, refugees, resettled, asylum seekers or of similar status that are learning a language to integrate into another country. This language may be the learner's second, third, or even fourth language.

**Exclude:** Children, youth or teenaged migrants, refugees or asylum seekers that are learning languages. Adults learning languages that are not asylum seekers, refugees, migrants or resettled migrants.

**Rationale:** This is to narrow the focus of the review to adult refugees, asylum seekers, migrants learning languages to integrate into the new country. The language in focus may be the learner's third or fourth language. This creates a focus on the specific language learning needs for adult refugees.

### Setting

**Include:** The language learning setting must describe a nonformal, informal, community-based, volunteer-led or related approach. This can be based in any country or city.

**Exclude:** Descriptions or studies on formal language programmes that do not refer to any nonformal, community-based or related approaches to language learning.

**Rationale:** This review focuses on adult refugee learners in community-based language learning. To develop upon the existing literature discussing nonformal approaches, it focuses on outputs that have already discussed and/or implemented the approach.

### Focus of the study

**Include:** Records that discuss the community-based, nonformal or related language programmes with asylum seekers or refugees as the learners. There is a description of the community-based language programme or related terms.

**Exclude:** Sources with no reference to the operation/evaluation/concept of community-based language learning for refugees or asylum seekers.

**Rationale:** This review focuses on the impact of community-based language programmes for refugees and asylum seekers. It must gather related research into the views and results for refugee learners and facilitators. This project aims to build on the existing discussions within literature. Thus, the search must source existing scholarly discussions and findings of community-based initiatives.

### Date of Publication

Include: Any date of source.

Exclude: Date of publication will not be a reason for exclusion.

Rationale: To include a wide scope of publications in this emerging research area, any date of publication will be accepted.

## Outcomes

Include: Records that reference the impact of community language programmes for refugees and asylum seekers. This can be a description or study of the facilitator or learner perception through qualitative and/or quantitative analysis. This can be done through any research method for example interviews, focus groups or questionnaires.

Exclude: Records with no description or acknowledgement of the impact of community-based language initiatives. The review is not limited to specific evaluations and outcomes but must include some attempt to describe the operationalisation, conceptualisation or evaluation of the nonformal programme.

Rationale: One of the aims of this review is to gather existing research that has evaluated community-based language programmes for refugees to illustrate its impact. Thus, included publications need to report effectiveness of said programmes descriptively and/or systematically.

## Research design

Include: All research designs will be considered for inclusion. For example qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods.

Exclude: Research design will not be a reason for exclusion.

Rationale: This review focuses on collecting all types of evaluations and designs that have been used to review of community-based language learning for refugees. Thus, research design will not be a reason of its own for exclusion.

## Language of publication

Include: Papers published in English.

Exclude: Records not published in English.

Rationale: The researcher's first language is English and the search string is limited to terms of English language surrounding language education of refugees.

## Type of publication

Include: Records of any publication type will be included. This includes journal articles, books, book chapters, conference proceedings, master dissertations, doctoral theses, reports, professional journals, primary studies, literature reviews, editorials, commentaries/position papers, conceptual pieces, theoretical pieces, or descriptions of practices.

Exclude: Publication format will not be a reason for exclusion.

Rationale: Since research on community-based language initiatives is still in its infancy, this review is to include a wide scope of academic research including grey literature and online sources.

## Information Sources

For this systematic review, the research will not be limited to specific sources, the databases consulted include the main databases for the fields of education, language learning and multidisciplinary wider fields of social sciences. The search of grey literature is conducted on ProQuest as it allows for dissertations, reports, and theses. The databases will be accessed online through the subscription of Queen's University Belfast. The databases that will be searched are Scopus, ProQuest, Web of Science, ERIC, PsycINFO, EBSCO, and DOAJ (all collections and theses). This is to include all educational and multidisciplinary collections. It is not limited to specific

collections or journals as the context is to be fully comprehensive.

## Search Strategy

The study has been designed with the input from specialists in language education and research synthesis methodologies. The core elements of the research questions were divided into brackets and key terms for the search string. The search string is designed to capture the specific aspects of the project: language learning, the approach to language learning, adult learners, and the migratory status of the learners. To collect a comprehensive result of the scholarly outputs and tackle the lack of consistent terminology, the search string includes many variations of each term within brackets. In an attempt to collect literature that specifically answers the review questions, it was decided to focus the search to records that use the terms in their abstracts. Most databases allow for this type of search through the use of 'ab' or 'abs' in the advanced search function. This collects only the studies that mention the selected search string terms in the abstract description of the sources. The search string must create a result that is manageable practically whilst also being comprehensive of scholarly outputs.

The search string:

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("nonformal learning" OR "non-formal learning" OR "informal learning") AND ("second language" OR "language*" OR "L2" OR "English" OR "ESOL" OR "SLA" OR "second language acquisition") AND ("learn*" OR "teach*" OR "educat*" OR "support*" OR "class*" OR "group*" OR "club*" OR "school*") AND ("communit*" OR "trauma*" OR "volunt*") AND ("refugee*" OR "migrant*" OR "asylum" OR "traffic*" OR "victim*" OR "survivor" OR "resettle*" OR "adult migrant*" OR "adult refugee*" OR "refugee m*n" OR "refugee wom*n")
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The same search string is used for all electronic databases.

## Data Management

To maintain a transparent management of data, all search results will be exported to a Mendeley reference Library. The reference library records all biographical data of each record found. The results will also be exported to an EXCEL document to maintain transparency and safe keeping of all results. The reference library can also be used to remove any duplicates from the results. NVivo will also be used for qualitative synthesis.

## Selection Process

To create a transparent data selection process, the researcher will record data in the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) diagrams (Moher et al., 2009). This process has been piloted by the main researcher and reviewed by the supervisors. The flow diagram records the numerical values of studies that are both excluded and included in the first identification, screening, eligibility and inclusion stages. Alongside this process, all bibliographical information of the search results, the abstract screening notes, full-text screening and justification notes will all be recorded.

After duplicates are removed, the records that remain will be abstract screened. The researcher will screen the abstracts using the inclusion criteria. The records with abstracts that meet the inclusion criteria will move on to the next stage of screening. The records with abstracts that are to be excluded will be removed from the next stage. The proceeding records will be screened for full-text retrieval, and those available will be full-text screened with the inclusion criteria. The judgment of availability for full-text retrieval will be in regard to the Queen's University subscription access. Proceeding retrieval, any texts deemed not eligible to the criteria or unavailable online will be

excluded from the next stage. Those studies proceeding to the next stage will be included in the data extraction process. This stage has been piloted to enable the main researcher to receive feedback from her two supervisors who have expertise in the substantive and methodological aspects of the project.

Moher, D., Liberati, A., Tetzlaff, J., Altman, D.G. (2009). Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses: The PRISMA Statement. *Journal of Clinical Epidemiology*, 62(10), pp. 1006-1012.

## Data Collection Process

The selected studies that have proceeded through to the final stage of the PRISMA will be reviewed through the extraction forms. The extraction forms will draw out the relevant data for the review.

The information for data extraction was agreed within the research team and crafted into a comprehensive extraction form. An extraction form is to be completed on each selected study. The extraction form is based on the research review questions. The design of the extraction form was informed by a recent scoping review on a related topic (Chong & Reinders, 2022). Extracting raw data is useful for maintaining transparency and reducing the bias of interpretative results. However, it was concluded that there may not be enough raw data to only allow raw data to be extracted. Whilst there is no universal consensus on the type of extraction, it is necessary to remain consistent when selecting data (Chong & Plonsky, 2021; Major & Savin-Baden, 2010). Therefore, the review will extract all types of data. The data extraction form was piloted on 3 studies and feedback was received from the two supervisors.

Chong, S. W., & Reinders, H. (2022). Autonomy of English language learners: A scoping review of research and practice. *Language Teaching Research*, Advanced online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13621688221075812>.

Chong, S.W. and Plonsky, L. (2021). A Primer on Qualitative Research Synthesis in TESOL. *Tesol Quarterly*, 55(3), pp. 1024-1034.

## Data Items

The following information is selected for data extraction:

Methods and Participants:

Research questions, Design (qualitative, quantitative, mixed), Population description, Setting (primary, secondary, higher education, other), Other relevant sociodemographic information.

Descriptive information:

Conceptual framework, Theoretical underpinnings, Context of setting, Intervention description, Role of the provider, Role of the learner.

Outcomes:

Evaluation mechanism, Nature of evaluation, Provider perception, Learner perception, Effectiveness/outcome, Key conclusions of study.

## Risk of bias/trustworthiness of individual studies

It is agreed that the systematic review's methodology and protocol be public to ensure accountability and transparency. Quality appraisal is not relevant to the review as it focuses on an emerging research area. The aim is to survey the current state-of-the-art of the field, so the criteria is to be as inclusive as possible.

## Data Synthesis

The results will undergo a qualitative synthesis through the use of the application NVivo. NVivo is an application used to collect qualitative information and themes. A qualitative synthesis allows for collecting large quantities of qualitative data and producing an aggregated code (Sandelowski & Barroso, 2007). Synthesising the data involves comparing records and designing conceptual coding categories (Charmaz, 2014). This data synthesis is to collate and manage the outcomes of the systematic review. It will reveal how community-based nonformal language education for refugees is conceptualised and will shed light on specific examples of how these programmes are implemented. The synthesised findings, which covers methodological choices used in the included publications, will also inform ways to design primary studies on community-based nonformal language education. Synthesising qualitative data can contribute to the informing of policy and developing best practise within language education (Chong & Plonsky, 2021). Studies into learning approaches often face criticism for their "lack of generalizability" (Chong & Plonsky, 2021). Thus, the qualitative synthesis method optimises the use of the project's findings and results.

Sandelowski, M. and Barroso, J. (2007). Handbook for Synthesizing Qualitative Research. New York: Springer Publishing Company.

Charmaz, K. (2014). Constructing grounded theory (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE.

Chong, S.W. and Plonsky, L. (2021). A Primer on Qualitative Research Synthesis in TESOL. *Tesol Quarterly*, 55(3), pp. 1024-1034.

## Meta-biases

### Confidence in cumulative evidence

Quality appraisal is not relevant to the review as it focuses on an emerging research area. The aim is to survey the current state-of-the-art of the field, so the criteria is to be as inclusive as possible.

### Sources of Funding

This review is part of a larger project that is funded by the Department of Economy and a collaborative partnership with Belfast Unemployed Resource Centre and Queen's University Belfast.

### Role of Funders

The funders are providing financial support for PhD fees, stipend, and training.

### Anticipated or actual start date:

2021-10-01

### Anticipated completion date:

2024-10-01

### Other language resources

### Current Status

Ongoing

### Details of Published Review

### IDESR URL

<https://idesr.org/article/IDESR000030>