

Article

Perception of Future Spanish Primary Education Teachers on Their Multicultural and Multilingual Competencies and the Sustainability of the Educational System

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Abstract: The objectives of this article are, first, to assess the self-awareness that future primary school teachers have on their role in integrating international students into school and society; second, to determine the importance they give to multiculturalism and multilingualism to develop the communicative competence of their international students. This work is an extension of previous research, started in 2019, with the overall objective of analyzing the sustainability of education systems regarding their current cultural and linguistic diversity. The research question is whether future primary teachers know both assessed aspects. The main problem lies in the initial training in the national language. Its initial design contemplated a context where all students were native speakers. However, the percentage of students with different cultural and linguistic backgrounds has continued to increase. Therefore, communicative competence is crucial for their academic and social inclusion. Through quantitative methodology, the future primary education teachers participated in a survey that addressed these issues. The results demonstrated that training in this aspect makes them aware of their role as mediators and social agents for inclusion. According to the findings, revising initial teacher training in didactics of the language is crucial.

Keywords: initial teacher training; communicative competence; inclusion; multiculturalism; multilingualism; right to education; human rights; primary education; educational system sustainability



Citation: del-Olmo-Ibáñez, M.-T.; Medina-Beltrán, M.-F.; Rovira-Collado, J. Perception of Future Spanish Primary Education Teachers on Their Multicultural and Multilingual Competencies and the Sustainability of the Educational System. *Sustainability* **2023**, *15*, 13123. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su151713123>

Academic Editors: Raúl Tárraga-Mínguez and Hao-Chiang Koong Lin

Received: 21 June 2023

Revised: 14 August 2023

Accepted: 26 August 2023

Published: 31 August 2023



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1. Introduction

1.1. Social and Educational Context of the 21st Century

The cultural and linguistic diversity in our society is challenging educational systems. According to the *World Migration Report 2022* [1], the number of migrants living in Europe has increased since 2015. In 2020, nearly 87 million international migrants were residing within European borders, representing a 16% increase to 2015 data. Moreover, over 40 million non-European migrants lived in the region by that year [1]. In 2018, UNICEF stated that one in four migrants that reached European shores were children—34,200 children arrived by land and sea, mainly in Greece, Italy, Spain, and Bulgaria [2]. This evidence shows that the generalized situation of the educative systems in European countries has changed. Diversity in ethnicity, language, and culture is now an essential part of European educative systems, and, therefore, they need to update according to this reality.

Until now, education was conceived from the perspective of national policies and the majority and predominant cultural point of view. Globalization, mobility, and technology define 21st-century societies and have shaken educational approaches in many respects. One of its main consequences is multiculturalism, which brings together multilingualism. On the one hand, multiculturalism implies the respectful coexistence of different cultures in a single space and should lead to interculturality as an attitude and dynamic of relationships between these cultures. On the other hand, multicultural coexistence involves

multilingualism. Both must lead to intercultural and plurilingual individuals and societies. The familiarization, knowledge, or use of different languages is one of the competencies that contribute to the inclusion of individuals. Equally, both multiculturalism and multilingualism are some of the concepts and goals that have been defined and developed in the primary guidance documents for language teaching that the Council of Europe has published since the beginning of the 21st century [3–6]. Applying these guidelines in the European education space would be desirable since all member states have assumed a communicative approach to language teaching.

Schools are settings that present the same characteristics as societies. For this reason, today's educational environments involve the same variants and challenges that cultural and linguistic differences bring to society at large. In many Spanish schools, the percentage of students of non-Spanish origin exceeds that of native ones; in others, these percentages are at balance, and schools with an exclusively national student body are an exception. It is of the essence to pay attention to these variables to ensure adequate and sustainable educational systems. Primary language teachers are the ones who will lay the foundations for the children's subsequent development and social inclusion. Thus, some solutions lie in the teacher's essential work. It is fundamental to ask questions about the trainee's perception of the importance of their teaching activity and competencies in multiculturalism and multilingualism for developing communication skills and integrating their international students.

1.2. Previous Studies

This study is part of a research line that developed four years ago in several phases. They all focus on central cultural and linguistic diversity issues in the current educational context. The perspective of analysis is local and national for each setting, but it also offers a global view, as it befits the 21st century's mobility and digitization. Therefore, problems have been addressed at a country-specific level but with an international and pluralistic approach [5]. The significant increase in migratory movements over the past years and the recognition of minority cultures and languages have influenced the response to these rising needs. Under these circumstances, the research carried out within this line of investigations is a referential framework to continue guiding new paths in the future.

The first step started with a study on training primary education teachers in multiculturalism and multilingualism in the Valencian community in Spain [7]. The responses from practicing teachers were evident in the lack of training to develop their intercultural and multilingual skills. Most of them considered that such instruction is necessary to meet the needs of their diverse student body.

Secondly, the generalized situation of student diversity in the educational systems of European countries led us to extend the same analysis to Spain, France, Italy, and Greece. These four countries are essential to this study because they are significant gateways for migration toward Europe. In addition, their history as origin/destination countries and immigration policies are different. These characteristics allowed us to consider extrapolating the analyses, results, and implications to other European Union countries. In general, the tested problems and solutions present differences in each case. However, the school failure and dropout results as well as the teachers' answers, are similar. In the case of France, with a more extended history as a destination country, the problem of ghettoization appears to be worrying [8]. The surveyed teachers work in private, state-subsidized, and public schools. They overwhelmingly stated the lack of and the need for training in pluricultural and plurilingual competencies for teaching tasks.

The third step in this research line focused on the analysis of the challenges and needs of the education systems of countries around the world, not only for primary but also for secondary education [9]. This publication also incorporated the perspective of transit countries, or countries with a high percentage of internal diversity, as in the cases of Latin America [10] and India [11]. These two types of countries, which still need to be considered in the literature on multiculturalism, multilingualism, and language teaching, will be more

elaborately explored in future work. This third phase aimed to propose new lines for future studies and define the challenges to the sustainability of educational systems concerning multiculturalism and plurilingualism. The contributions of the authors show general interest and concern in the matter as they offer proposals that can be extrapolated and adapted to many contexts. The solutions and their stabilizing and sustainable effect have been tested and confirmed in some cases. Currently, our research continues in two ways: (1) the analysis of the contents of the initial teacher training plans and (2) the awareness of the students of the primary education teacher degree regarding their responsibility and role in the integration of international students into society through the acquisition of communicative competence, emphasizing the importance of education as a human right.

1.3. This Research

This article corresponds to the second research line. It offers the results obtained in a survey conducted among students of the degree in primary education teacher at the University of Alicante during the academic year 2022–2023. The survey was elaborated based on the questions that guided the research regarding the students' perceptions of their social and integrative role as future teachers of non-native pupils and their need to develop communicative competence for inclusion.

The research starting hypothesis is that, generally, the students need to become aware of the importance of communicative competence as a tool for life development, inclusion, and accessing education and other human rights. Alas, language is not usually understood as something that belongs to oneself: It deserves the pupils' respect as an academic subject. Communicative competence is crucial for native pupils to participate in society and access education, even more so for non-native pupils. This research aims to demonstrate that if students reflect on those questions and receive adequate instruction, they will assume the importance of communicative competence and their potential as social agents and mediators for inclusion through language teaching. Moreover, it is important to confirm that they recognize the need to develop multicultural and multilingual competencies as part of their teaching language training.

The students participating in the survey received instruction on these matters as part of the theoretical contents of their syllabus. They were asked to collaboratively create practical activities where they applied methodologies and resources that facilitate the inclusion of non-native students. The survey results confirm that the participants have assimilated the importance of their teaching performance and communicative competence as fundamental components for academic inclusion. They also recognize the requirement of multicultural and plurilingual competencies to achieve it.

2. State of the Art

The researchers reviewed the literature published during the last five years on Web of Science and Scopus databases to establish a frame of reference concerning the issues of this work. They implemented the search according to the objectives and the guiding research questions; words that appeared in the title and research questions were used. Finally, they searched for different combinations of terms to find publications on all aspects of the study. No works on the same issues or with similar objectives as this article were found in either database.

Nine publications from the Web of Science used the terms 'communicative competence' and 'social inclusion'. The topics covered by these nine papers are as follows: two of them focus on autism and developmental disorders [12,13]; two on management; one on education and educational research; one on sociology; one on social reform; one on learning assurance; and one on models of technology acceptance. Filtering by open-access publications, only six results were found, five of which are articles [13–17] and one a systematic review [12]. Of all these articles, the only one related to the development of communicative competence is that of Vogel [17]. However, it focuses on first-language

didactics as far as the varieties of Slovene are concerned, according to its standard model and not as an additional language.

The results appearing in Scopus were much more numerous, with a total of 508, reduced to 141 after applying the open publication criterion. The topics of the papers were very diverse. Therefore, only some have been selected here according to their proximity to our research object. Firstly, there are those related to teacher competence, both in face-to-face and virtual environments [18]; a second group concerns the development of students' competencies [19–21]. Others deal specifically with intercultural competence but not in the context of social language teaching for non-native speakers [22]. Some studies highlight the closeness of multiculturalism and multilingualism [23,24], and some have been found to focus on students from indigenous cultures in relation to internal multiculturalism and the use of technology [25]. Some others target specifically displaced international students, such as Ukrainian children [26].

New search terms were added to the previous ones to continue the selection of articles: "Spanish", "communicative competence", "Primary teacher", and "social inclusion". The attempt was unsuccessful on Web of Science but not in Scopus. The findings are all in the social sciences field and come from three journals: *System*, *Linguistics and Education*, and *Teaching and Teacher Education*. Of these, the systematic reviews focus on teacher training in bilingual competencies to meet the needs of diverse pupils [23,27] and on literary gatherings as a means of overcoming social inequalities [28]. The remaining papers that deal specifically with teacher training are by authors Parmigiani, Spulber, Ambrosino, Molinari, Nicchia, Pario, Pedevilla, Sardi & Silvaggio, as mentioned above [26]. They mainly focus on pedagogical strategies for the integration of Ukrainian students, another on teachers' beliefs about multilingualism within a course on translanguaging [29]; one by Calafato [30], focusing on the need to develop the plurilingual competence of non-native teachers; and another dealing specifically with 'Spanish as a second language' for the inclusion of immigrant students [31].

A further search using "Primary teacher training" resulted in 155 documents from the Web of Science: five systematic reviews and 150 articles published in open access. Again, because of the scope of the results and the topics, these papers were selected according to their subject matter, including only those dealing with education and educational research, language and linguistics, and teacher training. Consequently, the number fell to 14. Eight of them focus on English as an additional language from different perspectives, including learning through curriculum content [32–39]. Three articles deal with the teaching of additional languages: One on the language policy applied by the Belgian government regarding the task-based methodology for teaching Flemish [40]; in another article, Fhonna and Yusuf [41] analyze the methodologies applied in Australia for the didactics of Indonesian as an additional language; and a study in Seychelles evaluates the quality of learners' written productions according to the language in which they write about their knowledge [42]. Finally, regarding language acquisition through content, Charamba [43] evaluates the process of translanguaging as a good practice for a multilingual science classroom in South Africa. Focusing on multilingualism versus monolingualism, [44] reports on the perceptions and differences of each type of learner when acquiring an additional language. These two works demonstrate, once again, the closeness of the concepts of multiculturalism and multilingualism. Finally, Estrada Chichón & Zayas Martínez [45] study the perceptions of future primary school teachers on grammar in language teaching.

As for the publications found in Scopus, the unfiltered total was 644: 28 reviews and 616 research articles on teaching and teacher education. Adding the criterion of open publication left 144, seven reviews, and 137 research articles.

To move closer to the topic of our article in the literature search, "multiculturalism" was added to these search terms. This action produced no results from the Web of Science. However, Scopus had 80 documents. After selecting those published in open access, the number dropped to 11 publications. Seven of these focus on different aspects of primary teacher training in multiculturalism and diversity, in some cases closely related to

multilingualism [46–51]). Again, the work of Romijn, Slot & Leseman [27] is fascinating as it discusses initiatives to improve intercultural competence through reflection and implementation as resources to achieve it.

Finally, using both with and without open publication filters, the terms ‘Spanish language teaching’, ‘Primary education’, and ‘human rights’ yielded only one paper from the Web of Science. However, it does not focus on the didactics of Spanish for immigrants but on the general human rights training that future primary teachers receive at university [52]. In the case of Scopus, before choosing open access, 21 results were obtained: two systematic reviews and 19 articles, of which only four are open access. Of these, only the article by Romijn, Slot & Leseman [27] deals with the training of teachers in intercultural competencies throughout their professional careers.

This is the only work focusing specifically on pre-service teachers’ perceptions of their teaching competence concerning multiculturalism, multilingualism, and the development of the communicative competence of their non-native learners. We did not find any research on their assessment of communicative competence as a means for these learners’ educational and social inclusion and for attaining education and other human rights.

However, we found some works that address a few of the issues in our research. These are cross-cutting issues explored or considered in studies focusing on other vital matters.

3. Conceptual Framework

As Spain is part of the European Educational Area, the documents published by the Council of Europe on language teaching have been adopted as the conceptual framework for this work, considering them for the research approach. The objectives of this study coincide with some of those set out in the Council of Europe’s texts on the acquisition of communicative competence and inclusion, the creation of intercultural and plurilingual environments, and the development of teachers’ pedagogical competence. These documents focus on didactic methodology and describe and define the concepts and thresholds of communicative competence development.

All these are suitable conceptual and didactic frameworks since they constitute a standard structure for all members of the EU. Teachers in the EU share common ideas, and all apply the communicative methodology similarly. Moreover, we chose these documents because they are the ones that future teachers should have a thorough knowledge of to carry out their teaching role in the school environment. For this reason, they have been included in the program of the University of Alicante.

In addition to the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2018) [3], the other three documents are crucial. One is specifically designed for the age groups corresponding to primary education [4]; another focuses on the CLIL method of learning through content [6]; and the MAREP document offers the perspective of multiple approaches to language teaching, including culture [5].

4. Materials and Methods

4.1. Methodology

The first research approach of this study is humanistic and personalistic, considering both subjects involved in the educational process. The learner and the teacher are placed at the center of the educational process and action. The needs of non-native students are a priority, which means considering what they need from their teachers to integrate into Spain’s academic and social context. On the other hand, the teacher is regarded as an actor who can contribute to these integration processes by developing communicative skills. Concerning teachers, there are two identified objects of study: Firstly, the pre-service teacher’s perception of their responsibility and influence on the integration of non-native students; secondly, their evaluation of multiculturalism and plurilingualism as part of their pedagogical competence to develop the communicative competence of their non-Spanish students. In this sense, initial teacher training is essential. It must provide them with both competencies.

Secondly, according to the European Education Area, the communicative approach to language teaching is the main line used in the teaching methodology.

A third approach of quantitative empirical analysis was used to collect and interpret the obtained data. Researchers developed a survey in the Likert scale format and defined questions following the main research topics. The students of the subject “Didáctica de la Lengua y la Literatura para la Educación Primaria”—part of the curricula in the degree in Primary School Teacher—completed this survey.

The guiding questions of the research in this article are as follows: Are future primary school teachers aware of their role as social actors and mediators in integrating pupils from non-native cultural and linguistic backgrounds? Are future primary school teachers mindful of the importance of communicative competence as a means of access to education as a fundamental right? Are future primary school teachers aware of the importance of multicultural and plurilingual skills for their pedagogical action in teaching communicative competence?

Research Phases

A research implementation plan was designed with the following phases:

- (1) Problem identification: Primary school teachers need help to respond to the current situation of culturally and linguistically diverse pupils. Previous research shows they have yet to receive multicultural and multilingual training to deal with this situation. This type of diversity needs to be addressed in current university programs for primary language teachers.
- (2) Define the initial hypotheses and research questions.
- (3) Definition of state of the art and a frame of reference for the research. The selection criteria applied to the publications collected from the databases were that they should be systematic reviews, research articles, and/or reflective and informative articles and that they should be open access.
- (4) Selection of participants within the undergraduate program for primary teachers. Third-year students participated. The chosen subject focuses specifically on the teaching of basic communicative skills. In addition, since the academic year 2022/2023, its curriculum has included theoretical content on international diversity in primary education and creating activities in which future teachers are asked to apply this content.
- (5) Designing a Likert scale questionnaire to collect research data.
- (6) Interpreting and discussing the results concerning previous studies and papers quoted in the state-of-the-art section.

4.2. Participants

The participants were 116 students in the third year of the primary education course at the University of Alicante. The total number of students in the subject “Didáctica de la Lengua y la Literatura en castellano para la Educación Primaria” is 388, divided into nine groups with different numbers of students. Five groups attend classes in the morning and four in the afternoon. Even though all students were invited to participate in the survey voluntarily and anonymously, only 116 decided to participate in the research.

These students have already completed two of the three periods of work experience included in the curriculum of the Bachelor of Education. In real classrooms, they could observe the presence of non-Spanish speaking pupils and the difficulties that they, teachers, and schools face in achieving their full academic integration.

Another relevant variable is that before the survey, these students had received training in multiculturalism, multilingualism, and communicative competence for teaching international students. The theoretical content they received focused on knowledge of the documents published by the Council of Europe and described in the conceptual framework. Once they received instruction on the academic content, they had to create four collaborative practices for developing each basic communicative competency. They all required active methods, collaborative work, adapted materials, and multicultural and multilingual

content. All the resources they used should fully include non-Spanish speaking students in all the communicative practices in the primary classroom. After all these, the students realized that their intervention was beneficial and that it was possible to include non-Spanish pupils in the school's daily activities. This exercise made it possible to evaluate the impact of this training on future teachers.

4.3. Instruments

The theoretical basis of the tool is addressed in the conceptual framework section. According to the Council of Europe documents, the instrument's design considered their concepts of the communicative approach, communicative competence, multiculturalism, interculturalism, multilingualism, plurilingualism, integration, and inclusion. As mentioned above, the instrument is a survey organized as a Likert scale. It is divided into two categories with a total of 7 closed questions. The possible answers are rated between 1 and 4, with each number corresponding to the options 'Strongly disagree', 'Disagree', 'Agree', and 'Strongly agree'.

The results presented here correspond to the questions in categories 1 and 2. Category 1 focuses on the "perception of the right to communicative competence as a prerequisite for access to the right to education and inclusion in society." The questions addressed are: (a) deficiencies in the development of communicative competence are an obstacle for non-native students to follow curricula and educational activities in primary education adequately, and (b) deficiencies in the adequate development of communicative competence are a significant cause of school failure and dropout among non-native students in Spain. As for category 2, "Perception of the need for training in interculturalism and multilingualism for the teaching competence of Primary school teachers", the two questions are: (a) Training in multiculturalism/interculturalism for teachers is necessary to respond to the needs of non-native students in primary education in Spain, and (b) training in multilingualism/plurilingualism is necessary to respond to the needs of non-native students in primary education in Spain.

IBM SPSS Statistics, version Base 22.0, was used to analyze and present the data and results.

5. Analysis of the Survey Results

The results are presented according to the order in which the categories and questions appear in the survey.

The data obtained are expressed as a percentage of the total number of responses, as shown in the Table 1 below.

Table 1. Category 1. Percentages of the students' perception of the right to communicative competence as a requirement for access to the right to education and for inclusion in society.

ITEMS	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)	Total
(a) Deficits in the development of communicative competence are an obstacle for non-native pupils to adequately follow the curriculum and educational activities in Primary education.	2.6	12.1	28.4	56.9	100
(b) Lack of adequate development of communicative competence is a major cause of school failure and early school leaving among non-native speakers in Spain.	0	13.8	44.8	41.4	100

As the results of question (a) clearly show, students believe that communicative competence is fundamental to the academic development of international students. If 28.4% of the respondents 'agree' with the statement of the question, the percentage of those who 'strongly agree' is twice as high. Students show a high level of awareness of the need for non-native students to develop communicative competence for their academic development.

Similarly, in question (b), the percentages of responses agreeing that deficiencies in the development of communicative competence are a definitive cause of school failure and dropout appear to be much higher than those disagreeing. Moreover, there were no responses at all that showed disagreement. However, 'agree' is slightly higher than 'strongly agree' on this occasion, although both answers are equal. On this occasion, the clear idea of the future teachers regarding the necessity of the acquisition of communicative competence for the academic integration and success of foreign children is once again evident. It can be said that the new contents and reflective practices introduced in the subject of language and literature teaching in the academic year 2022/2023 have been assimilated by our students.

The second category of questions in the survey explores the idea of training needs in teaching skills to respond to the demands of current educational environments. The questions were divided into two categories: (a) multiculturalism and interculturalism, and (b) multilingualism and plurilingualism.

Questions (a) and (b) 'disagree' have disappeared. Very low percentages appear for 'strongly disagree', and the highest rates correspond to an agreement in general. However, it should be noted that the 'strongly agree' option is visibly more elevated in the case of multiculturalism (question a). The idea of familiarity with and knowledge of other cultures is more accepted than that of multilingualism (question b). This issue of the perception of plurilingual teachers deserves its own new line of research. This concept, the definition of their profile, and the training they should receive need to be defined.

The results of the two questions show high awareness among the students. They have experienced training practices in schools with international students. They have also received theoretical training in multicultural and plurilingual teaching and applied it in inclusive activities carried out in the subject. The intervention has been successful, and the students are aware of the importance of their role for these pupils.

6. Discussion

In light of the results obtained, there is a need for further research focused on the topic of this paper. Some ideas for investigating new issues appear in the "Future research directions". During this work, several problems have emerged that require attention.

Concerning the state of the art and the results of our research, no precedents focusing on the specific objectives mentioned here were found. We see some general lines of convergence in some concrete aspects. It seems essential that some papers focus on the implicit and/or explicit assumption that multiculturalism and multilingualism are closely related in language teaching [23,24,44,46–51]. For this reason, we have included both concepts in our study. The work of Romijn, Slot & Leseman [27] is again of particular interest in this respect. However, no one has paid attention to the situation of non-native students in language classes in host countries.

On the other hand, the questions in category 2 (Table 2) of the survey confirm the need for training in these two areas. When the focus is on primary school teachers, the number of studies found in the search decreases, as well as when the focus is on language teaching. However, multilingualism is sometimes considered from the perspective of other subjects [43].

Table 2. Category 2. Percentages of the “Perception of the need for training in interculturalism and multilingualism for the teaching competence of Primary school teachers”.

ITEMS	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)	Total
(a) Teacher training in multiculturalism/interculturalism is necessary to meet the needs of non-native pupils in Primary education in Spain.	1.7	0	14.7	83.6	100
(b) Teacher training in multilingualism/plurilingualism is necessary to meet the needs of non-native pupils in Primary education in Spain.	3.4	0	19.8	76.7	100

Some studies focus on additional language didactics, sometimes in specific countries [32–40]. Only the article by Vogel [17] focuses on first-language didactics, albeit in the case of Slovenian varieties and not for international students. Therefore, our results cannot be contrasted with them.

Nor did we find any studies focusing on teaching Spanish to migrant pupils in primary education or the relationship between language teaching and school failure and dropout. Some similarities can be drawn with a few works that come close to the research objectives presented here. The work of Parmigiani, Spulber, Ambrosino, Molinari, Nicchia, Pario, Pedevilla, Sardi & Silvaggio [26] on the care of Ukrainian children provides guidelines for their integration in three phases: reception, inclusion, and learning. The implicit coincidences with our research approach are obvious since the activities included in each phase are intercultural, including communicative competencies and the development of academic sub-competencies in the last phase of learning.

A similarity can also be found in the work of Romijn, Slot & Leseman (2020) [27], who defend the need for preparation in intercultural competencies for primary school teachers through reflection and practice. Such procedures were used in the didactic intervention carried out with the students participating in our study. The results were positive.

Among the practices proposed by some authors are literary meetings [28]. These were not included in the practices proposed to our students or in our research. However, they may be relevant and will be included in further innovative proposals in our program.

The new content added this year to the subject considered in this research includes strategies for translanguaging and multilingualism to acquire communicative competence in the target language, Spanish. In this sense, the approach is similar to that of Rodríguez-Izquierdo, González Falcón & Goenechea Permisán [31].

To conclude the discussion chapter with previous work, it is necessary to highlight that the results obtained in two of our previous investigations [7,8] showed coincidences in the perceptions of in-service and pre-service teachers regarding all the issues analyzed here.

The negative results from the research on primary school teachers' self-awareness of their responsibility and influence on the realization of human and children's rights leave an essential gap in the humanistic training of teachers. Because it is so apparent, this fundamental aspect of education is not usually considered. Insistence is placed on methodological, epistemological, technological, organizational, and curricular issues, and language teaching is usually taxonomized within the social sciences. However, as it is centered on the human being, it is genuinely humanistic and personalistic, which is hardly mentioned. This reminder is intended to draw attention to this unique sense of formative work, which is also one of the objectives of the EU, and to make it present in a new way. This objective and the full realization of human and children's rights [53] must place the importance of the acquisition of communicative competence in its rightful place [54]. Without it, access to education and full inclusion in society on equal terms and with

equal rights is impossible. Neither is the sustainability of education systems and societies possible [55].

7. Future Research Directions

In light of the literature and the results obtained, it seems necessary to continue with the research lines in progress and the approaches and perspectives defined. Improvement in these lines of research naturally opens up new avenues and directions for extending the studies. At this point, it seems essential to include the gender perspective as a variable in the possible questionnaires to be carried out in subsequent stages. Age variables have already been considered in previous studies and will also be included whenever appropriate to the nature of the research.

We will also compare the results of the two studies we are currently carrying out. We will contrast and draw conclusions about the initial training that future teachers receive and their perception of their role as mediators and agents for the inclusion of their students. We will conclude on the coherence and adequacy of the contents and competencies of the programs developed within the framework of the needs of the actual educational context.

Another new line of research is what should be understood as a ‘multilingual Primary teacher’, what is the perception of the concept by in-service and prospective teachers, and what should be taught in initial and continuing teacher education programs.

Finally, as we have emphasized, attention must be paid to transit countries. They are conditioned and pressured by social, cultural, and economic influences but are hardly prepared to take them on. Neither administrations, professionals, nor the population expects situations for which they have no training or experience. Nor are migrants prepared for a temporary but extended stay in many of these countries, and their conditions are often far from dignified. All these geographical areas have not been considered from the educational and communicative perspective that this article and our previous studies adopt.

Author Contributions: Conceptualization, M.-T.d.-O.-I., M.-F.M.-B. and J.R.-C.; Methodology, M.-T.d.-O.-I. and M.-F.M.-B.; Software, M.-T.d.-O.-I.; Validation, M.-T.d.-O.-I., M.-F.M.-B. and J.R.-C.; Formal analysis, M.-T.d.-O.-I. and M.-F.M.-B.; Investigation, M.-T.d.-O.-I., M.-F.M.-B. and J.R.-C.; Resources, M.-T.d.-O.-I., M.-F.M.-B. and J.R.-C.; Data curation, M.-T.d.-O.-I.; Writing—original draft, M.-T.d.-O.-I. and M.-F.M.-B.; Writing—review & editing, M.-T.d.-O.-I., M.-F.M.-B. and J.R.-C.; Visualization, J.R.-C.; Supervision, M.-F.M.-B.; Funding acquisition, J.R.-C. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement: Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

Data Availability Statement: Not applicable.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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