

# *MaxiPAC*

## *OUTCOME 4*

### *How to deal with languages*

Summary Report Prepared for Collaborative Universities, Policy-makers, and other Experts  
on the MaxiPAC.eu Procedure to Maximize Previously Acquired Competences  
(Degrees and experiences) of Refugees and Third-Country National Students in European Higher  
Education

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## Acronyms

EAC = elsewhere acquired competences

EAQ = elsewhere acquired qualifications

ENIC/NARIC = The use of the ENIC (European Network of Information Centres in the European Region) and NARIC (National Academic Recognition Information Centres in the European Union) in one term refers to the network of collaboration between the national information centres on academic recognition of qualifications of in total 55 countries. The national information centres operate under the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention (1997).

EHEA = European Higher Education Area

EQS = European Qualification Scan

HEI = Higher Education Institutions (Universities & Universities of Applied Sciences)

IOM = International Organisation for Migration

MaxiPAC = Maximizing Previously Acquired Competences

RPL = Recognition of Prior Learning

## General Introduction

The MaxiPAC.eu project (Maximize Previously Acquired Competences at European Universities) started on 31st of December 2019 and concludes on 31st December 2022, with co-funding from the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union. Its target group, third country national student, persons in refugee-like situations, and persons coming from non-European countries who have acquired a skill, qualification, and do not have documentary evidence such as certificates for proving their previously acquired competences for various reasons. Its partner Universities include: The University of Lapland in Finland; EKKE (The National Centre for Social Research) in Greece; AEGEE (The European Student Organisation) in Belgium; the University of Bari Aldo Moro in Italy, and the project lead Thomas More University in Belgium. To achieve the goal of the project, partners took upon Outcomes 1-5:

1. Uniform Procedure to valorize previously acquired competencies (Thomas More Kempen - Belgium)
2. Modalities and organization aspects at the University (Bari Aldo Moro - Italy)
3. How to implement the procedure in Universities? (Thomas More Kempen - Belgium)
4. How to deal with languages? (University of Lapland - Finland)
5. E-learning support (EKKE - Greece)

On the legalities and rationale for addressing the above problem, the Bologna Declaration (1999) specifies that European Universities and Universities of Applied Sciences in Europe have the autonomy to valorize the qualifications and competencies acquired elsewhere according to their standards. Further, the Lisbon Recognition Convention (1997) did raise the need for EU countries to develop procedures to assess whether groups as refugees and displaced persons fulfill the relevant requirements for access to higher education and places of employment, even when the qualifications cannot be proven through documentary evidence. However, despite this autonomy, the targeted migrant group and those in refugee-like situations who travel to Europe continue to experience numerous challenges. In particular, where their previously acquired competencies are not recognized in Europe making them unable to work or study. Other barriers they face include inadequate access to e-services and language support services, among others. In some cases, dealing with University program requirements, learning procedures, and employment needs can be difficult, especially where information is made available in languages other than those of the target group.

To address the above challenges, MaxiPAC has developed a **procedure** with the following contents to make it easier for persons of the targeted migrant group to access higher education. The procedure also makes available, various steps that can be adapted to the overarching admission procedures for student enrolment in degree programs at European Universities. It takes into consideration, the following:

- **Structured scan:** A means to provide reliable information about the applicant's educational qualifications, work experience, and language skills. A scan that applies to all European higher education institutions upon taking.
- **Multiple short cases:** An initial and low-cost step to measure the feasibility of the student and the chosen program.
- **A portfolio:** This includes various forms of assessments offered to the applicant as the main step of the EAC procedure.
- **Psychosocial support:** Support provided to the student throughout the application process. Such support Integration training coordinated by the student services of the relevant higher

education institution with other local services that can support the refugee Integration training. This step is rather a continuous process during the procedure.

## 1. *Introduction Outcome 4*

This paper explores the various methods available for third-country nationals to quickly acquire the national language for further studies in higher education. It covers classic methods such as language courses, online courses, language learning apps, tutors, and language diaries. The paper also highlights new and innovative methods such as learning a language with 100 words, using social networks, learning through blue-collar work, watching local television shows and movies, and listening to music and podcasts. The authors emphasize the importance of selecting the right method based on the learner's goals, learning style, and available resources. The paper concludes that consistent practice and commitment are key to successful language learning, no matter the method chosen.

In this report, we illustrate in summary, key observations, and tasks implemented during the project, with special attention to "Outcome 4 – How to deal with languages" together with other outcomes based on summaries from partner Universities to the MaxiPAC project. The report also reflects on policy recommendations at the national, European, and international levels, based on experiences we gathered among the students and experts we worked with. It does so, with the hope that policy-makers, institutions of higher education, and associated organizations would take at heart, the importance of formalizing components of the MaxiPAC.eu procedure for wider implementation in European Universities and Universities of Applied Sciences.

The project followed the Applied Research design for data collection between the years 2020 and 2022 with the aid of the multimethod, which seeks to solve a specific problem affecting a society or organization. Data were analyzed using discourse and narrative analysis. Data was also subject to reporting through events and partner meetings of MaxiPAC.eu. The following were taken into consideration in this process:

- The development of a steering committee to coordinate various tasks
- A purposive sampling of the target groups
- The use of parallel roundtable discussions through a symposium focusing on "Outcome 4 – How to deal with languages" with participants including University administrators/staff, refugees, and other third-country national students.
- Engagement with various personnel at the central level of government through bilateral meetings, such as Senior Advisors and Experts specialized in policy-related issues linked to skill recognition and continuous education.
- In-depth interviews with students with a migration background such as other third-country national students.
- In-depth interviews with University staff belonging to the higher education units: Language Centre, Graduate School, Student Admissions, and Internationalization Services.
- Attention was also given to reviewing existing data on recognizing previously acquired competencies in higher educational institutions elsewhere, and, what good practices to learn from them.



- Considerable time was also spent in organizing and participating in Partner Meetings and events attended by representatives of Partner Universities to the MaxiPAC.eu project.

This document presents at the end policy recommendations on language support for third country nationals at the European, national, and higher education institution levels. The goal is to provide a framework for the valorization of refugee languages and cultures and to support refugees in overcoming language barriers in higher education. Recommendations include establishing language valorization programs, providing funding and resources, promoting the recognition of languages, fostering partnerships, and creating incentives. Higher education institutions are encouraged to offer language courses, tutors, exchange programs, assessments, support in academic programs, and foster a supportive language learning environment. These policy recommendations aim to support refugees in their integration and help them achieve their educational and career goals.



## 2. *How to deal with languages: good practices of Finland*

### 2.1. *Language valorization: good practices and challenges in Finland*

When applying to bachelor's, master's or doctoral-level studies, international applicants are required to demonstrate a good command of the English language. Usually, with a score of 6.5 or higher in both IELTS Indicator and Academic tests. Copies of the original certificate are also accepted subject to cross-checking with the database of the organizer of the test. A score of 92 or higher in TOEFL iBT / TOEFL iBT Special Home Edition. The applicant has the responsibility to ensure that the testing center sends the score slip or its electronic equivalent directly to the University of Lapland. Other options include a score of 62 or higher in the Pearson Test of English, PTE Academic / PTE Academic Online; skill level 5 in the subtests of reading, writing, listening, and speaking demonstrated using the National Certificate of Language Proficiency (YKI) issued at the Finnish National Agency for Education (See also: <https://www.oph.fi/en/national-certificates-language-proficiency-yki>). Other documents to be submitted by the application deadline include:

- Proof of language skills
- Copy OR officially certified copy of degree certificate
- Copy OR officially certified copy of the transcript of records
- Official translations of degree certificates and transcripts of records if they were issued in a language other than Finnish, Swedish, or English
- Possible program-specific required attachments
- Documents must either be officially certified by the awarding institution, or by a Finnish Notary Public.

See also: <https://www.ulapland.fi/EN/Admissions/Masters-Studies/Language-requirements>

Country-specific requirements also apply in the example of third-country national students (See: <https://www.ulapland.fi/EN/Admissions/Masters-Studies/Application-documents>). For instance, for persons who have completed their degree in an African country, the awarding institution must submit an official transcript of records by post to the University of Lapland. The transcript must be certified with an original stamp of the institution and the original signature of the certifying officer. The envelope must be sealed by the awarding institution's official stamp across the back flap (See also: <https://www.ulapland.fi/EN/Admissions/Masters-Studies/Country-specific-requirements>). Entry to Bachelor's degree programs by international applicants usually requires entrance examinations, transcript of records, proof of certification from higher education studies, and vocational qualifications of three years or more. If the educational documents are not in English / Finnish / Swedish, then an official and certified translation must be provided.

For relevant cases, as persons in refugee-like situations and other third-country national students, who do not have paper evidence of their qualifications; persons who have acquired their previous competencies in languages other than English, Finnish, or Swedish, whose qualification(s) require language translation, persons are encouraged to submit their applications so they can be offered further assistance in the admissions process. Interviews with authorities in the language center, admissions unit, and internationalization services showed that in situations of degree applicants' requiring a recognition of their previously acquired language proficiency, individuals may be referred to the Finnish National Agency for Education responsible for the recognition of foreign qualifications and national certificates of language proficiency (an agency that completes legally binding decisions on the

recognition of foreign qualifications, a document-based process for situations as: receiving a decision on the recognition of their degree or studies, to prove eligibility for a post or position for which there is a qualification requirement based on law).

Another option is that of enrolment in the Open University system, where the applicant acquires Finnish, English, or Swedish language skills, and a required number of credits (completing at least 60 credits in an open University) to qualify for entry to University degree programs. Open University is flexible in that students can participate according to their suitable schedules. Our interviews with various University experts showed that persons arriving in Finland due to involuntary reasons such as forced displacement are encouraged to get registered at the Finnish Immigration office. A process to enable them to get identified and issued resident status with further assistance depending on what degree program the individual intends to study and the previously acquired competencies.

Other than practicalities for admitting refugees and third-country national students into European higher education, there are good practices associated with *Outcome 4 "how to deal with languages"*, when thinking of the kind of language challenges that emerge especially in the early stages of student enrolment at the University of Lapland. For instance, results gathered from interviews with experts in the Internationalization Services of the University showed that these Services perform when and where possible, in cooperation with University faculties and the Admissions Service to assess the previous competencies of students applying for degree studies, including other groups as refugees and Third-Country National Students. Where their previous qualifications do not meet degree program (including language) requirements for admissions, such as the lack of documented evidence, the case can be:

Other options that exist for refugees and third-country national students include:

- For instance, enrolling into the Open University system, where participants acquire Finnish, English, or Swedish language skills, and the required number of course credits (ECTs) that qualifies them for entry to University degree programs.
- Also, interviews with the University Language Centre revealed that the University offers Finnish language courses (levels A1, A2, B1, B2) for newly enrolled students on a subsidized basis, an opportunity for fresh students to learn at a low cost.
- For many years, the University has also adopted a "Finnish-friend program" initiative for newly enrolled students, an opportunity for the student to make first-hand friendships with the locals and improve their language skills. Also, a means to explore needed information for progress in one's study, work, and living in Finland.
- The use of student tutors has long been a kind of a tradition at the University. A student tutor acts as a volunteer to one or several newly admitted student(s) and takes on the responsibility to speed up student Integration training coordinated by Centre for Multilingual Academic Communication in Finnish society. However, the effectiveness of their role strongly depends on their knowledge and experiences and what kinds of needs exist on a case-by-case basis among refugees and third-country national students.
- In light of the ongoing Ukraine crisis, the University of Lapland adopted a Continues learning arrangement for refugees and other Migrant Student groups fleeing the war in Ukraine. The University supports Ukrainian nationals offering them studies for free such that Ukrainian refugees in Finland can participate through the Open University studies until 2023 or apply to University for a "non-degree right" to continue their studies (See also for more information: <https://www.ulapland.fi/news/Studies-offered-to-Ukrainians-free-of-charge/gwo3m1ga/fa22409d-af8a-4f7f-892a-8abe463a1411>)



- Although outcome 4 connects to language valorization, other good practices as support to acquiring a job that matches one's previous and present competencies are worth mentioning. The University of Lapland has Career Support Services, educational counselling, and peer support to enhance the working life connections among students and places of work, an initiative that also welcomes refugees and THIRD-COUNTRY NATIONAL STUDENTS in the University who are in search of jobs to support their studies.

On the barriers, results from interviews showed that some refugees and THIRD-COUNTRY NATIONAL STUDENTS face challenges in adapting to a new culture in a new place of residence or society. This is also evident in situations of getting one's previous language competency recognized in the new society and when finding employment opportunities. Much to do with inadequate access to e-services and language support services, where information may be displayed in a language the individual does not understand. This also connects to difficulties familiarizing with University program requirements, learning procedures, and job needs. Barriers also come about in the task of "support staff" assisting newly enrolled students. Here, student applicants come with diverse languages of origin and varied needs based on different experiences in countries they moved away from. In effect, this creates a need for general support arrangements on a "case-by-case" level which is in itself a challenge to implement considering, the needed costs, and human resources.

Other barriers are culturally embedded such as miscommunication and misconceptions about everyday life that can be perceived better with Finnish language skills. Socializing also comes with barriers for persons learning a new language, for those with mixed perceptions about behaviors of 'silence' during interaction with locals. For those not able to express themselves in the local language of the host society, the risk of them being in isolation or being left alone without getting the relevant assistance and support needed for their Integration training coordinated by Centre for Multilingual Academic Communication into society.

On the pedagogical level for acquiring Finnish language skills, some of the teachers we spoke to talked about challenges that exist among beginners in introductory language courses. For instance, where a course has participants with different knowledge levels of the language which mirrors students acquiring language skills at different learning EACes. It also becomes difficult for some individuals working part-time to meet up with living expenses resulting in less time for studying the language. The need for case-by-case approaches to peer support is also an area still developing with other needs to be achieved with questions about increasing the availability of language teachers and resources to match student needs.

Part of our task involved collaboration with Finnish HEIs using a symposium on language valorisation (See: <https://www.arcticcentre.org/events/MaxiPAC-Symposium--Best-practices-for-language-valorization-in-Finnish-Higher-Education/tx3hyamc/5193a772-7b4d-401e-ae72-1ae8a78233ca>), in partnership with the Attract Lapland Project at the Arctic Centre in Rovaniemi, the University of Oulu, University of Helsinki, Tampere University and Tampere University of Applied Sciences, and the University of Jyväskylä. Key to the findings from this collaboration is the existing services for the social inclusion, identification, and recognition of previous competencies among immigrants in higher education and work life. The SUPPORTING IMMIGRANTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION (Supporting Immigrants in Higher Education in Finland), for instance, administered through the Finnish National Agency for Education, with now several Finnish Universities being members of SUPPORTING IMMIGRANTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION, including: University of Jyväskylä, the University of Tampere, and the University of Helsinki, to name a few among others. Supporting immigrants in Higher Education services offers an opportunity for THIRD-COUNTRY NATIONAL STUDENTS and Refugees to enroll in language Integration training coordinated by Centre for Multilingual Academic Communication programs, and places of employment, and in completing their studies through the use

of peer support and psycho-social support programs. An analogous service to supporting immigrants in higher education is integration training coordinated by centre for multilingual academic communication (training programme coordinated by Centre for Multilingual Academic Communication, the Centre for Multilingual Academic Communication) offered at the University of Jyväskylä. Both services have been crucial to linking the previous competencies of immigrants in higher education with the right employment and support that matches their competencies. Also, worth mentioning is the use of International Mobility Services to coordinate and develop student and teacher mobility through advice, counseling, and support about work and learning, a service crucial to enable both Refugees and THIRD-COUNTRY NATIONAL STUDENTS to expand their existing networks in the study and employment journey.

## 2.2. Case-benefit by information on the MaxiPAC.EU procedure

Actual Impact indicates a success case among other Impacts. The case individual, aged 38, a refugee with origin from Turkey, moved from Rwanda to Finland in 2020 based on forceful and political circumstances both in Turkey and Rwanda. Considering the conditions surrounding the challenges of introducing novel procedures in Finnish HEIs, which often warrants networking beyond the University to engagements at the central level of government, this case presents a unique example worth sharing for purpose of assisting other refugees and THIRD-COUNTRY NATIONAL STUDENTS with similar experiences with the aid of the procedure. We summarise this case example as such:

- Got resettled in Finland through the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in the year 2020.
- Previous qualifications with a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration (2005) and a Master's degree in International trade (2008), evidenced by diploma certificates in Arabic acquired in Turkey.
- The individual was informed about the MaxiPAC.eu procedure and its elements.
- Received guidance about the procedure's stages.
- Showed considerable interest in the procedure.
- Raised relevant questions about the procedure and received clarification of the procedure through his participation in MaxiPAC.eu meetings, events, and interviews.
- Got admitted to a University degree by criteria of "referrals" brought forth through knowledge about the procedure, e.g. **Step 2 Multiple short cases** enabled the identification of the individual's knowledge and skills he previously acquired in Turkey and Rwanda; and **Step 4 Assessment of the psychosocial situation** enabled us to understand the individual's challenges of applying for the official recognition decision at the Finnish National Agency for Education, prompting a direct response on our part to assist further with referrals to the relevant authorities and means of support.
- Following our response and support received through referrals, the individual completed 60 credits in the Finnish language program, gained competence in Finnish language skills, and recently got enrolled in a Bachelor's degree program in Business Administration at Lapland University of Applied Sciences.
- A language difficulty the individual experienced connects to problems of acquiring official translations in Finland. An example, the individual mentions as translating some of his documents



from Arabic to English, with one page perceived as “unclear” by the translating authority – leaving the page not translated, causing delays in his journey to enter Finnish higher education.

- Based on the experiences we had in this case example, we propose *Step 4 Assessment of the psychosocial situation* as a focal step in the formal context of implementing the procedure. That would greatly benefit the individual and other cases as this allow a follow-up on the individual’s study progress, employment support, and other forms of support crucial for the well-being and the enhancement of self-capacity building among individual cases.

### ***3. The best ways for third-country nationals to acquire the national language quickly regarding accessibility in higher education***

Knowing the local language is often a requirement for enrolling in higher education programs, making it a critical factor in a refugee's ability to pursue their academic goals and improve their future prospects. This chapter will examine the benefits of learning a local language as a refugee with a focus on access to higher education.

We will explore the different tools and techniques available for learning a new language specifically for third-country nationals who need to learn a new language quickly with a view to further studies in higher education. There are, of course, the classic ways to learn a language and these are also useful for refugees in a new European country. We are thinking of: language courses, online language courses, language learning apps, tutors, and keeping a language diary. We cover these briefly here, because we want to focus on the best ways of third-country nationals to acquire a national language quickly regarding accessibility in higher education. Each of these approaches has its own advantages and disadvantages, and the most effective method will depend on the learner's goals, learning style, and available resources. Whether learners choose to attend language courses, use language learning apps, or work with a tutor, the key to successful language learning is consistent practice and a commitment to improvement.

First, let's zoom in on the traditional ways of learning a local language. Language courses are one of the most traditional and well-established methods for learning a new language. They provide a structured learning environment, where learners can attend classes in person, interact with teachers and classmates, and receive immediate feedback. They offer a comprehensive approach to language learning, covering all aspects of the language, including grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and conversation skills. Online language courses offer a flexible and convenient alternative to traditional language courses. They can be accessed from anywhere and at any time, making them an ideal choice for busy individuals who cannot attend classes in person. Online courses often use multimedia materials, such as videos, audio recordings, and interactive exercises, to engage learners and help them develop their language skills. Language learning apps have become increasingly popular in recent years as a convenient and effective tool for learning a new language. They offer a variety of features, such as flashcards, quizzes, and audio recordings, to help learners develop their vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation skills. Some language learning apps use gamification techniques to make learning fun and engaging, while others offer personalized lessons that adapt to the learner's progress and level.

In the context of this outcome, we want to highlight those tools that are particularly useful for refugees who want to quickly learn a local language in order to enter higher education. They are more alternative forms of language acquisition that fit the specific situation of third-country nationals: learning a language with 100 words; the use of social networks for language learning; learning a new local language through blue-collar work; watching local television show and movies; listening to music and podcasts.

### 3.1. *Learning a language with 100 words*

Learning a new language is an challenging journey for refugees. It requires dedication, practice, and patience. In this chapter, we will focus on the basics of language learning, specifically, learning a language with 100 words. This method is designed to help you quickly get started with speaking and understanding a new language. By focusing on a small set of words, you can start to form sentences and communicate with others in a foreign language.

Learning a language with 100 words is a great way to get started on the language learning journey for third country nationals. By focusing on a small set of essential words, the person can quickly begin to communicate in a foreign language and continue to build upon the language skills. It's also a way to learn happy with a fast rate of success.

Starting with 100 words provides a solid foundation for further language learning. These words are selected based on their frequency of use in daily conversation, making them essential for effective communication. Additionally, learning 100 words can provide a sense of accomplishment and motivation to continue learning.

Selecting the right 100 words is critical for successful language learning. A good set of words should cover common topics, such as family, food, and travel, as well as everyday expressions, such as “hello” and “thank you.” A recommended list of 100 words can be found in language learning textbooks, online resources, or through a language teacher.

Once you have selected your 100 words, it's time to start practicing. There are several ways to practice, including speaking with a native speaker, watching language-specific media, and writing in the language. Repetition is key to retaining the words and making them a part of your active vocabulary.

As the refugee has learned and practice 100 words, he will naturally progress learning additional words and phrases. The goal is to continuously add to your vocabulary and strengthen your language skills. With time and dedication, you will find yourself speaking, reading, and writing in your new language with ease.

### 3.2. *The use of social networks for language learning*

Social networks have emerged as a valuable tool for language learning, offering learners the opportunity to practice and improve their skills with native speakers and a wealth of online resources. These networks provide a virtual environment where learners can interact with native speakers, practice their speaking and writing skills, and receive feedback from other users.

However, the limitations of social networks must also be considered, including the lack of structure and guidance, inconsistent feedback, and potential challenges with motivation and discipline. Despite these limitations, social networks remain an important and accessible platform for language learners and can play a valuable role in helping them to achieve their language learning goals.

One of the major advantages of social networks for language learning is the opportunity to practice with native speakers. This can help learners to develop their pronunciation, listening, and speaking skills, as well as to learn colloquial expressions and cultural nuances that may not be covered in traditional

language classes. Furthermore, the interactive and collaborative nature of social networks can help to keep learners motivated and engaged in their language learning journey.

Another advantage of social networks for language learning is their accessibility and convenience. Social networks can be accessed from anywhere with an internet connection, allowing learners to practice and learn at their own pace. Additionally, the vast array of resources available on these platforms can be tailored to meet the individual needs and learning style of each learner.

While social networks offer many benefits for language learning, they also have several limitations. One of the main limitations is the lack of structure and guidance, which can make it difficult for learners to progress and track their progress. Furthermore, the quality of feedback from other users on social networks may be inconsistent, which can hinder the learning process.

Additionally, social networks can also present a challenge in terms of motivation and discipline. The lack of face-to-face interaction and accountability can make it easier for learners to procrastinate or become distracted, hindering their language learning progress.

### 3.3. *Learning a new local language through Blue-Collar Work*

Blue-collar work refers to manual labor jobs that involve manual skills and manual dexterity. Examples of such jobs include factory work, construction, and manual service jobs. Such jobs are often performed by immigrants and foreign workers who are looking for a means to support themselves and their families. Working in blue-collar jobs can provide a unique opportunity to learn the local language as they often involve close interaction with the local population. For example, workers in a factory may interact with local workers on a daily basis, giving them a chance to practice the language and improve their speaking skills. Additionally, blue-collar work provides real-life context for language learning, making it a more practical and enjoyable experience. In contrast to traditional language classes, blue-collar work provides a setting where the language is used in a meaningful and relevant context, allowing the worker to apply what they have learned and see immediate results.

While learning a new language through blue-collar work can be beneficial, it also presents some challenges. For example, the fast-paced and often noisy working environment can make it difficult to hear and understand what is being said. Additionally, the pressure of the job may make it difficult for workers to focus on language learning. So it is important to choose a job where the refugee-employee has to communicate a lot in the local language and where people understand each other well.

Learning a local language as a refugee through a blue-collar job can have a significant impact on a person's future prospects. By improving access to higher education and increasing career prospects, refugees can take control of their future and achieve their full potential. By taking advantage of language learning opportunities and setting achievable language learning goals, refugees can overcome the language barrier and improve their chances of success in their new host country.

By learning the local language through a blue-collar job, refugees can meet the language requirements for higher education and increase their chances of pursuing their academic goals.

Blue-collar jobs can lead to (1) increase their financial stability; (2) by learning the language through a blue-collar job, refugees can increase their chances of finding employment in their field of interest; (3) learning the local language as a refugee through a blue-collar job can also increase a person's confidence and self-esteem. Being able to communicate effectively with colleagues, supervisors, and

clients in the local language can make a person feel more secure and confident in their abilities, which can have a positive impact on their mental health and well-being.

### 3.4. *Watching local television show and movies*

While traditional language classes have proven to be effective in teaching refugees the basics of the language, they often lack the cultural context and real-life situations that are essential for the acquisition of communicative competence. The role of local television shows and movies in language acquisition: local television shows and movies can provide refugees with valuable exposure to the local language, culture, and way of life. These forms of media can provide authentic and engaging content that is relevant to refugees' daily lives and that can support their language learning in a fun and interactive way. Furthermore, television shows and movies can offer an opportunity for refugees to engage with the local culture and to learn about the customs and traditions of their host country, which can be critical to their integration into the local community.

The study was conducted with a sample of 20 refugees residing in Europe who had recently arrived in the host country. The participants were divided into two groups: Group A (experimental group) and Group B (control group). Group A was asked to watch two local television shows or movies per week for a period of six months, while Group B received traditional language classes during the same period. At the end of the six-month period, the language proficiency of both groups was assessed using a standardized language proficiency test.

Results: The results showed that Group A (the experimental group) demonstrated a significant improvement in their language proficiency compared to Group B (the control group). The average score of Group A on the language proficiency test was 85, while the average score of Group B was 65. Furthermore, the participants in Group A reported that watching local television shows and movies was an enjoyable and engaging way of learning the language and that it provided them with valuable insights into the culture and way of life in their host country.

In conclusion, the findings of this study suggest that watching local television shows and movies can be an effective way of supporting the language acquisition of refugees in Europe. By providing authentic and engaging content that is relevant to their daily lives, local television shows and movies can help refugees to acquire communicative competence in their host language and to integrate into their host community. The results of this study provide valuable insights for policymakers and practitioners working in the field of refugee resettlement, and they highlight the importance of using innovative and engaging methods to support the language acquisition of refugees.

### 3.5. *Listening to music and podcasts*

In this chapter, we examine the potential of music and podcasts as a tool for learning a local language for refugees in Europe. Music and podcasts are valuable tools for language learning for refugees in Europe. They offer a fun and engaging alternative to traditional language learning methods and provide an immersive experience that exposes learners to authentic language use. By using music and podcasts to learn a local language, refugees can build a connection to the local culture and community, improve their language skills, and gain greater access to essential services.



Music is an excellent tool for language learning because it combines rhythm, melody, and lyrics to create an enjoyable and memorable experience. The repetitive nature of music helps to reinforce vocabulary and grammar patterns, making it easier to recall new words and structures. Additionally, music provides a natural context for language use, helping learners to develop their listening and speaking skills in a fun and engaging way. For refugees, music can be especially helpful in building a connection to the local culture and community. By listening to music in the local language, refugees can become familiar with the rhythms and sounds of the language, making it easier for them to understand spoken language when they encounter it in real-life situations. Additionally, music can provide a sense of comfort and familiarity for refugees, who may be experiencing feelings of isolation and homesickness.

The rhythmic and repetitive nature of music makes it an ideal tool for language acquisition, and podcasts provide an immersive experience that exposes listeners to authentic language use in a variety of contexts. Additionally, music and podcasts offer a fun and engaging alternative to traditional language learning methods, making them appealing to refugees who may be discouraged by the difficulty of traditional language courses.

Podcasts are a valuable tool for language learning because they offer an immersive experience that exposes listeners to authentic language use. Unlike traditional language courses, which often use artificial language examples, podcasts provide a window into the way that people actually use language in real-life situations. This can help refugees to understand the cultural context of the language and to develop their listening and comprehension skills in a more meaningful way.

In addition to listening to podcasts, refugees can also participate in podcast-based language exchange programs, where they can practice speaking and listening to the language with native speakers. These programs can provide an opportunity for refugees to build relationships and engage with the local community, which can help to counteract feelings of isolation and improve their overall sense of well-being.

In conclusion, the use of music and podcasts as a tool for language learning for refugees in Europe has the potential to make a significant impact on the lives of refugees and their ability to integrate into their new communities. By providing a fun and engaging way to learn a local language, these resources can help refugees to overcome some of the challenges associated with language acquisition and improve their overall quality of life.



## 4. Policy Recommendations

### 4.1. Policy Recommendations on the European level

Two international agreements at the European level have been crucial to the MaxiPAC.eu project, its outcomes, and in particular, that on language valorization. For instance, the 1999 Bologna Declaration stresses the need for Universities and Universities of Applied Sciences to have autonomy in valorizing qualifications acquired elsewhere according to their standards. Further, the 1997 Lisbon Recognition Convention emphasizes the need for European countries to develop procedures to assess whether refugees and displaced persons fulfil the relevant requirements to enter higher education or employment activities, even when the qualifications cannot be proven through documentary evidence. However, taking into consideration, global changes, national commitments to international conventions on Fundamental and Human Rights and EU Immigration Policies, and cooperation among international institutions and non-state actors would be key to adapting Bologna and Lisbon tools as transparent legal frameworks. This can be adopted constructively using effective national policies introducing alternative avenues for language valorization in Universities. Both Bologna and Lisbon's tools provide independent autonomy to Universities of those European countries that have ratified these declarations.

### 4.2. Policy Recommendations on the national levels

The recommendations outlined in this paragraph aim to provide a framework for national level support for language valorization in higher education institutions in Europe for refugees. By providing national level support for language valorization, higher education institutions can play a crucial role in helping refugees rebuild their lives and integrate into their new communities.

Recommendations:

1. Establish language valorization programs for refugees at the national level: national level programs should be established to provide language and cultural courses for refugees, including courses in the host country's language.
2. Provide funding and resources for higher education institutions to integrate language valorization into their curricula: national level funding and resources should be provided to higher education institutions to integrate language valorization into their curricula, including training for faculty and staff on how to valorize refugee languages and cultures.
3. Promote the recognition of languages as part of higher education: the host country should recognize the value of the national language and promote their recognition as part of the higher education curriculum.
4. Foster partnerships between higher education institutions and community organizations: national level partnerships should be established between higher education institutions and community organizations to provide language and cultural programs for refugees, including language classes and cultural events.

5. Create incentives for higher education institutions to participate in language valorization initiatives: the host country should create incentives for higher education institutions to participate in language valorization initiatives, such as funding for language courses, recognition for higher education institutions that participate in language valorization initiatives, and recognition for faculty and staff who are involved in language valorization initiatives.

#### 4.3. *Policy Recommendations on the level of the Higher Education Institutions*

The policy recommendations outlined in this chapter provide a roadmap for higher education institutions to support the language valorization of refugees. By providing language courses, tutors, exchange programs, assessments, support in academic programs, and fostering a supportive learning environment, higher education institutions can play a critical role in helping refugees overcome language barriers and achieve their educational and career goals.

Policy Recommendations:

1. Offer language courses: Higher education institutions should provide language courses, particularly English language courses, to refugees to support their language development. These courses should be designed to be accessible, flexible, and culturally sensitive, and should take into account the unique language needs of refugees.
2. Provide language tutors: Higher education institutions should provide language tutors for refugees to support their language development. These tutors should be trained in language teaching methods, as well as cultural sensitivity, to ensure that refugees receive the support they need to develop their language skills.
3. Offer language exchange programs: Higher education institutions should offer language exchange programs for refugees to support their language development. These programs should provide opportunities for refugees to practice their language skills with native speakers and to engage in cross-cultural exchange.
4. Provide language assessments: Higher education institutions should provide language assessments for refugees to determine their language proficiency levels. These assessments should be used to place refugees in appropriate language courses, and to track their progress over time.
5. Provide language support in academic programs: Higher education institutions should provide language support in academic programs to help refugees overcome language barriers. This could include language-enhanced courses, language-focused study groups, and language support services.
6. Foster a supportive language learning environment: Higher education institutions should foster a supportive language learning environment for refugees. This could include creating a welcoming and inclusive campus culture, promoting cross-cultural exchange and collaboration, and providing opportunities for refugees to share their language and cultural heritage.

## 5. Conclusion

The paper explores the importance of language acquisition for refugees seeking higher education in their host country. This paper highlights the importance of national language acquisition for refugees seeking higher education in their host country. The study explores various methods for refugees to quickly acquire the language, with a focus on accessibility in higher education. These methods range from traditional language courses and tutors to more innovative approaches like using social networks and learning through work. The effectiveness of these methods depends on the learner's goals, learning style, and resources, but consistent practice and commitment to improvement are key to success. The study's goal is to provide refugees with the tools they need to overcome language barriers and achieve success in their new host country. The paper provides recommendations for policy changes at the European, national, and higher education institution levels to support language valorization for refugees and enable them to overcome language barriers and achieve their educational and career goals.

The University of Lapland has established several good practices to deal with the language challenges faced by international students, particularly refugees and third-country national students. Admissions to bachelor's, master's or doctoral-level studies require a good command of the English language, which can be demonstrated through recognized language proficiency tests. In situations where students do not have paper evidence of their qualifications, they can be referred to the Finnish National Agency for Education for recognition. Additionally, the University offers various programs such as the Open University system, Finnish language courses, and the Finnish-friend program to assist students in improving their language skills. The University also has a tradition of using student tutors to help newly admitted students integrate into Finnish society. The University is also offering a continuous learning arrangement for refugees fleeing the war in Ukraine by offering them free studies through the Open University until 2023 or the option to apply for a "non-degree right" to continue their studies.

The acquisition of the national language is a critical factor for refugees who wish to pursue higher education in their host country. This chapter explored the best ways for third-country nationals to acquire the language quickly, with a focus on accessibility in higher education. We looked at different approaches, from classic methods such as language courses and tutors, to more innovative alternatives such as learning a language with 100 words, using social networks, learning through blue-collar work, watching local television shows and movies, and listening to music and podcasts. The most effective method will depend on the learner's goals, learning style, and available resources, but the key to successful language learning is consistent practice and a commitment to improvement. Ultimately, these approaches will enable refugees to overcome language barriers and improve their chances of success in their new host country.

Recommendations for policy changes at the European, national, and higher education institution levels have been outlined to support language valorization for refugees. By establishing language courses, providing language tutors and assessments, fostering supportive language learning environments, and promoting recognition of languages as part of higher education, higher education institutions can play a critical role in helping refugees overcome language barriers and achieve their educational and career goals. International agreements such as the Bologna Declaration and Lisbon Recognition Convention provide a foundation for these efforts, and the development of transparent legal frameworks can help to adapt these tools to changing global conditions.