

ICT Use in L2 Education for Adult Migrants

A qualitative study in the Netherlands and Sweden

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Editor: Anusca Ferrari and Stefano Kluzer



JRC 59774 - 2011

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JRC 59774

Technical Note

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Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank all the experts, teachers, learners and institutions who were willing to participate in this study and gave their valuable insights.

A particular thanks goes to Stefano Kluzer for having set up the study.

We would also like to acknowledge that the questionnaire used with the learners was adapted from an instrument developed by the Technology & Social Change Group (TASCHA) at the University of Washington Information School (USA), Dynamic Organization Thinking (D-O-T) Research & Consulting (Spain), and the L'A.P.I.S. Social Cooperative (Italy) for the 'Immigrant women, e-skills, and employability in Europe' study. For more information visit: www.tascha.uw.edu/employability

Preface

Launched in 2005 following the revised Lisbon Agenda, the policy framework 'i2010: A European Information Society for Growth and Employment' established digital inclusion as an EU strategic policy goal. Building on this, the 2006 Riga Declaration on eInclusion defined eInclusion as meaning "both inclusive ICT and the use of ICT to achieve wider inclusion objectives" and identified, as one of its six priorities, the promotion of cultural diversity in Europe by "improving the possibilities for economic and social participation and integration, creativity and entrepreneurship of immigrants and minorities by stimulating their participation in the information society."

In the light of these goals, and given the dearth of empirical evidence on this topic, DG Information Society and Media, Unit H3 (eInclusion) asked the Institute for Prospective Technological Studies (IPTS)¹ to investigate from different angles the adoption and use of ICTs by immigrants and ethnic minorities (henceforth IEM) in Europe and the related policy implications. In response to this request, IPTS carried out several studies exploring the potential of ICTs for the inclusion of migrants and ethnic minorities. This study falls into this research line. This document reports on the results of a qualitative study on the use of ICT applications for L2 (second language) learning by adult immigrants in the Netherlands and Sweden. The purpose of this study was to discover the main drivers and barriers that influence the successful use of ICTs in formal L2 education and to formulate opportunities for future development.

This report was written by a team of experts and researchers from two different countries (Netherlands and Sweden) and from three different institutions:

- CINOP (Centre for the Innovation of Vocational Training and Adult Education), Netherlands
- Tilburg University, Netherlands
- Gothenburg University, Sweden

More on IPTS studies on ICTs for eInclusion at:

<http://is.jrc.ec.europa.eu/pages/EAP/eInclusion.html>

More on the research line on ICTs for learning the host country language at:

<http://is.jrc.es/pages/EAP/ICT-IEML2.html>

¹ IPTS is one of the seven research institutes of the European Commission's Joint Research Centre.

Executive summary

Language learning is an inevitable step towards integration. Tackling the need to provide courses on the host country language (or second language, henceforth L2) to adult migrants was one of goals set by the Common Basic Principles on integration and is becoming a priority for European Member States.

The two countries which are the object of this study, namely the Netherlands and Sweden, are characterised by two different policy regimes regarding language requirements for immigrants. In the Netherlands, knowledge of the Dutch language and society is a requisite for entering the country and applying for residence, in Sweden there are no such requirements but social welfare benefits are linked to Swedish for Immigrants (SFI) course attendance. In the Netherlands, the emphasis of L2 courses is on tailoring content to participants' profiles, with an explicit integration aim. In Sweden, the emphasis is on work placements and getting the learners connected with the labour market.

Despite these different policy regimes, both countries are known for using ICTs for L2 courses with adult migrants, albeit in different ways. In the Netherlands, the obligatory computerised test and a free market for L2 resources for adult migrants combined to produce an overwhelming number of digitalised or digital resources for learning Dutch. Currently, L2 learning material for adult migrants is rich in ICT resources and applications, as almost every method available on the market has an ICT component. Moreover, these resources are diversified to cater to different learner profiles, taking into account the needs of both highly educated and illiterate migrants. In Sweden, on the contrary, the ICT for SFI range is smaller, less target-group oriented and often freely available on the Internet, although it is likely to change shortly due to the recent introduction of a digital test.

According to a total of 155 stakeholders consulted, including academics, experts at policy and management level, local stakeholders, ICT developers and also learners, teachers and school managers, ICTs have a huge potential for L2 learning which has not yet been fully exploited. The ethnographic observations carried out during the five case-studies (three in the Netherlands, two in Sweden) confirm this opinion.

Benefits: ICTs are appreciated by teachers, learners and experts for the possibilities they offer for personalisation and flexibility. With technologies, learners can learn anywhere at any time and can follow personalised learning paths. Moreover, some

recognise that ICTs can help them learn in order to participate in society and the empowering effect of technologies is also appreciated. From the more strictly didactical point of view, ICTs offer more opportunities for repetition, more stimulating and relevant material, and more variety in the input. Learners see the links with the outside world and are exposed to real life situations in a protected way, thus they can overcome fears. Also, the individualisation of learning style is easier to achieve. Several stakeholders recognised that digital skills are needed by all citizens to be part of our highly digitalised societies. Therefore, L2 learning through ICTs is a double learning path, which permits migrants to acquire two sets of competences which enhance their integration.

Barriers: In order to be able to learn through technology, learners need to be able to handle technologies and must have at least some basic digital competence. It was noted in the case studies that only those learners who were conversant with technologies were able to show independence and autonomy in learning the L2 through ICT. Those with lower digital skills generally lacked the motivation to use ICTs, or were excluded as the course and platform demanded some digital competence. Some teachers reported that, in certain cases, migrants who develop digital skills may do so at the expense of developing language skills. In all the case studies, the most reported drawback of the various applications observed relates to speaking practice and feedback mechanisms. So far, technologies do very little to enhance speaking skills. In fact, contact time is often dedicated to speaking activities. Regarding feedback mechanisms, learners get instant feedback from most of the applications, which they appreciate but do not always understand. If they get an answer wrong, it is not always easy for them to understand why they made a mistake and how they can improve.

A barrier is also seen in the provision. First of all, access is not always guaranteed, as not all migrants have a PC/laptop at home, or have the possibility to use it. Applications for mobile technologies could thus be developed to allow wider access. Regarding access in educational centres, there is a trade off between quality and costs. Good applications can be very expensive, and there is the risk that these stay in laboratories and do not reach educational centres. Additionally, ICT applications, courses and resources have a short life cycle and need frequent updates. Teachers also report a lack of technical assistance and infrastructure, while they recognise that their attitude to and knowledge of the benefits of technologies have a high impact on their use in the classroom. A major barrier in the integration of ICTs is certainly the lack of awareness among teachers, who do not necessarily know how to (nor are they able to) integrate ICTs or how to exploit them fully in their lessons.

The case studies clearly demonstrate that the main **determinant for the success** of ICT use is the previous educational attainment of learners, both in terms of previous educational background and previous digital skills. For highly educated, digitally competent learners, ICTs do make a positive difference. If measures are not taken to support the lower achievers, the risk is that ICTs will mainly benefit those who are less in need. Moreover, and regardless of previous educational attainments, it is clear from our study that ICTs cannot substitute contact time, as very often they are a good tool for reinforcing competences but are not necessarily perceived by learners as building new competences by themselves. Learners report that they need to confront and monitor their performance with the help of a teacher to be sure they 'get it right'.

Based on the findings of the study, we **recommend** establishing more *clearly stated and coordinated policies in the area of ICT for adult second language education*. There are currently many disparities in how, when and where such applications are used by learners and teachers. There can even be said to be a question of by whom, as in both countries there is a noticeable variety in the willingness and ability of teachers to use ICT applications as part of the courses they teach, or as the main material.

A related recommendation is that *more resources be put into professional development for teachers* in order to overcome the discrepancy between teachers' readiness to engage with ICTs and policy makers' expectations that ICTs be an integral part of second language instruction. Many of those currently teaching these courses, both in the Netherlands and Sweden, underwent teacher training quite some time ago when the use of computers was not as pervasive, in either education or society, as it is today. Interviews show that some teachers actually feel uncomfortable with the technology they are expected to use in their classrooms.

From the learners' side, it is recommended that *the use of ICTs be adjusted to different learner profiles*. Learners can be very skilled at using the technology or, at the other extreme, may never have sat in front of a computer before. Most, however, will come with some basic digital literacy, but may need to be updated on specific skills necessary for using language programme software or learning platforms. An assessment of learners' digital skill levels therefore becomes as important as a diagnostic language level assessment. It may even be advisable to give those with low or no skills, in either the target language or digital literacy, instruction in using the technology in their mother tongue in order to avoid wasting time and frustration on the part of both the learner the teacher.

It is recommended in cases where ICT applications are used in teaching that these materials be looked at critically and that learner outcomes be compared. Not all ICTs are created equal: some may be no more than traditional instruction materials on a screen, whereas others use the interactive and multifaceted potential of digital materials in a way that promotes and accelerates learning. In general, however, the informants of the study agree that using ICTs facilitates individualization and variation in a classroom environment that is often made up of learners from very different backgrounds and study habits.

The final recommendations are more at the organizational level. One has to do with the test factor, i.e. how closely an ICT application is tailored to the desired outcome to a specific test that the migrant will have to pass. There is a risk that the instructional scope of the material focuses too narrowly on the required test result. Another more overarching concern regards the implementation of ICT programs to reduce costs. If increased use of ICT applications as part of teaching is associated with ever larger groups of learners for each teacher and fewer hours of direct contact with the learners in the classroom, this language education policy could be seen as threatening, or at least undesirable, by the teachers. Measures should be taken to help teachers overcome these fears and see the positive potential of ICT use in the classroom.

Table of contents

Acknowledgements.....	.iii
Prefacev
Executive summary.....	vii
1 Objectives and content of the study1
1.1 Policy background.....	1
1.2 Aims of the study and research questions	2
1.3 Methodology	5
1.4 Outline of the report	9
2 Policy framework and organisational context in the Netherlands	11
2.1 Introduction	11
2.2 Recent trends in migration patterns	11
2.3 Policy measures related to L2 education for adult migrants	13
2.4 The supply of L2 educational services.....	17
2.5 An overview of the wider range of L2 initiatives.....	18
2.6 New trends	19
2.7 Main Messages	20
3 Policy framework and organisational context in Sweden.....	21
3.1 Recent trends in migration patterns	21
3.2 Policy measures related to L2 education for adult migrants	24
3.3 The supply of L2 education services for adult migrants	26
3.4 An absence of other initiatives.....	27
3.5 New trends	28
3.6 Main Messages	29
4 The Dutch landscape of ICT applications for L2 education.....	31
4.1 Introduction	31
4.2 Methodology	32
4.3 Results: an overview of ICT materials	32
4.4 Overall language courses.....	33
4.5 Tools for training specific language skills	40
4.6 Educational websites.....	42
4.7 Resources, websites and communities for L2 teachers.....	43
4.8 Educational materials for parts of the Civic Integration Examination.....	44
4.9 Exams and tests	45
4.10 Main Messages	47
5 The Swedish landscape of ICT applications for L2 education	49
5.1 Methodology	49
5.2 Results: an overview of ICT materials	50
5.3 Educational web-sites.....	50
5.4 Course materials	52
5.5 Discussion/chat sites for language learners	53
5.6 Tests and test practice materials	54
5.7 Main messages.....	55
6 Opinions of key-informants in the Netherlands	57
6.1 Introduction	57
6.2 The macro-social scale	57
6.3 The meso-social scale	59
6.4 The micro-social scale	64
6.5 Main messages.....	67

7	Opinions of key informants in Sweden.....	69
7.1	Introduction	69
7.2	Responses from informants in research and development	69
7.3	Responses from informants in educational management and policy-making	71
7.4	Main messages.....	74
8	The Dutch case studies.....	75
8.1	Introduction	75
8.2	Case study 1: IJsbreker.....	76
8.3	Case study 2: De Virtuele Wijk	88
8.4	Case study 3: De NT2 Nieuwslezer.....	105
8.5	Main messages.....	112
9	The Swedish case studies.....	117
9.1	Introduction	117
9.2	Case study 1: 'Kreativ pedagogik' in day-time class	119
9.3	Case study 2: 'Digitala spåret' in evening class.....	133
9.4	Main messages.....	142
10	Conclusions and policy implications	145
10.1	Policy framework and organizational context.....	145
10.2	The provision of ICT applications for adult L2 education.....	146
10.3	Problems and needs in development and adoption of ICTs for L2	147
10.4	Difficulties and barriers in the adoption and use of ICTs for L2.....	149
10.5	Results achieved by using ICTs in L2 education	153
10.6	ICT use by L2 learners	154
10.7	Recommendations for policy makers	154
10.8	Suggestions for further research.....	156
11	Appendix 1: Interviews with key informants	159
12	Appendix 2: questionnaire with learners	163
13	References.....	179

1 Objectives and content of the study

1.1 Policy background

All EU Member States are affected by migration flows. Foreigners living in the EU27 accounted in 2008 for 6.2 % of the total EU population. Of these, almost two thirds were third-country nationals,² while just over one third were citizens of another Member State (Eurostat, 2010). Data of the same year report a EU27's population growth by 2.1 million inhabitants. The majority of this increase (72 %) is composed of migrants (Eurostat, 2010).

Europe's ageing population, the rising need for qualified personnel and seasonal workers, and other economic developments which go beyond the current crisis are all feeding into what is known as the 'pull factor' of migration (Ravenstein, 1889), which means that immigration flows into Europe are likely going to grow in the next decades. EU27 Member States face similar challenges regarding the complex and sensitive issue of the integration of migrants. The Hague Programme encouraged Member States collaboration to maximize the positive impact of migration, by insuring a common European framework for integration (European Commission, 2005).

Integration of migrants is recognized as vital for social cohesion and economic development (Niessen & Schibel, 2004). Proficiency in L2 is undoubtedly a key factor of migrants' integration, and can radically affect their access to basic services, employment, education and social and community networks. The basic knowledge of the host society's language, history and institutions is recognized as indispensable for integration by the fourth of the eleven Common Basic Principles on integration agreed by all Member States in November 2004 (Council of the European Union, 2004). Language education is also envisaged as a priority topic for the future European modules on integration (as a follow up of the three Handbooks on Integration), launched in the Vichy Ministerial Conference, November 3-4 2008.³ The desired/required level and type of language proficiency, and the pressure and efforts needed to acquire them reflect a wide range of personal, social and institutional conditions and needs. Given the acknowledged importance of language for integration, in all EU Member States L2 courses are provided to adult migrants, both new arrivals and established ones (Extramiana & Van Avermaet, 2010). Often, language

² Citizens coming from outside the EU27.

³ See:
http://www.eu2008.fr/webdav/site/PFUE/shared/import/1103_Ministerielle_Integration/confere_nce_integration_041108_Final_declaration_EN.pdf

courses are developed within broader training offers which include learning about the country's culture and history as part of reception and integration measures. These courses are provided by a variety of different entities and under different policy schemes. Some Member States' governments have come to regard a certain level of language competence and 'knowledge of society' a formal condition for obtaining the right to enter the country in the first place, for the award of work permits and (more often) to gain residency and ultimately citizenship (Extramiana & Van Avermaet, 2010). These requirements are often accompanied compulsory courses attendance and/or language and other tests.⁴

1.2 Aims of the study and research questions

Given the above policy context, and inspired by the increasing uptake of technologies for both learning and integration purposes, this study aims at understanding the benefits, shortcomings and opportunities derived by the use of ICTs for learning the host country's language by adult migrants. Its scope is limited at guided teaching/learning process in two selected countries: the Netherlands and Sweden.

The study is qualitative in nature and should be seen as an explorative contribution in a much under-researched area. For this purpose, the decision to develop the study in two countries only reflects two purposes: first, to allow a rich collection of data on the availability of ICT resources in a given market and an in-depth analysis of few selected case studies; second, to provide and enable comparison of research findings. The Netherlands and Sweden have been selected, among all European countries, as they represent two different policy integration regimes (one requiring a minimum language proficiency upon entry, the other linking course attendance to welfare benefits) and two different L2 for adult migrants' markets (the first being a highly developed private sector, the second being more characterised by scattered online free resources). Moreover, the Netherlands offer a quite unique landscape in terms of ICTs initiatives and ICT-enhanced provision of L2 teaching/acquisition by adult migrants and Sweden is known also to make use of ICTs for the same purposes, despite the different language requirements on migrants.

⁴ A critical analysis of this policy trend is provided in the concept paper and other documents prepared for the Intergovernmental Seminar on "The linguistic integration of adult migrants", organized by the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, 26-27 June 2008. See http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/MigrantsSemin08_MainDocs_EN.asp

This study provides a rich evidence and understanding of the use of ICTs in guided L2 learning by adult migrants in these two countries. This was done by addressing the research questions and goals illustrated below.

In all research questions, 'ICT use in L2 learning' refers to the different stages of the guided teaching and learning process and includes the preparation by teachers, the support of teachers, course delivery, communication with learners, assessment and test functions, learning materials.

Research question 1

What are the policy framework and the organisational context of L2 education of adult migrants in the two selected countries?

The answers to this question contain the following components:

- The recent trends in migration patterns into both countries and the challenges they raise from the perspective of language education.
- The policy measures and implementation programmes related to L2 education for adult immigrants.
- The supply of L2 education services for adult immigrants (sector regulation, supervising bodies, types and numbers of organizations, funding mechanisms, programmes etcetera).
- An overview of the wider range of L2 initiatives and initiatives for enhancing the integration prospects of immigrants, beyond the actors and activities of the compulsory language learning scheme, like local public administrations or NGOs.

Research question 2

Which ICT applications are actually being used in L2 education of adult migrants in the two selected countries?

The answer to this question gives an overview of the full range of existing applications, software and hardware. It starts from widespread to more innovative and describes how 'common' the use of these ICTs is in L2 learning. In addition, it describes whether the use of ICTs is part of a broader integration package.

The overview includes ICTs for the administration, preparations of lessons, teacher tools, learning materials and tools for learner and testing tools. From this extensive list, 1-3 cases in each country (three in the Netherlands and two in Sweden) were selected for a more in-depth analysis.

Research question 3

What are the drivers and barriers of ICT use in L2 education for adult migrants?

Two specific questions were addressed here:

- Which problems and needs drive the adoption of ICTs in L2 learning for adult migrants? And which goals are aimed at their use?
- Which difficulties and barriers are faced in the adoption and use of ICTs in this domain? How are they addressed and what solutions have been found?

See also question 4.

Research question 4

What results are achieved by using ICTs in L2 education of adult migrants and what is their broader impact?

The following sub-questions were addressed here:

- For which of the players and domains are ICTs seen to make a difference?
- Within these domains, what kind of changes (positive and negative ones) do ICTs seem to produce?
- What are the consequences of these changes (e.g. savings in time, money etc.) and how do they affect the quality of L2 education?

Question 3 and 4 were studied in depth in the cases studies. They provide a rich description of these experiences. Per case no less than three teachers, twenty learners and three managers or other (technical) staff of the organisations in charge were addressed. Moreover, at least three people from institutions at policy and programme level were interviewed (Ministry and school bodies). The type of research was mainly qualitative (descriptive, ethnographic).

Research question 5

What use is made of ICTs by the L2 courses' learners to engage with life in their host community, before and during the courses?

The answer to this question gives insight into the knowledge and use of ICTs in general and specifically to engage with life in the host country. This complements the analysis of the findings under question number 4.

Research question 6

What are the opportunities for enhancing the contribution of ICTs to L2 education of adult migrants? And which policy measures would be needed?

These concluding questions focus on the policy implications of the findings produced by this study. The answers to the first question identify opportunities for using ICTs to address unmet needs, open challenges or for improving current ICTs.

The answers to the second question within research question 6, concern the possible actions to be taken to exploit such opportunities at different policy levels in both countries.

1.3 Methodology

The research was carried out using three different methods of data collection: desk research; interviews of experts/key informants; case studies (ethnographic field work).

The analysis of the policy framework and organisational context, and overview of ICT applications being used in the two countries (Research questions 1 and 2) were carried out via desk research and interviewing experts within our own institutions and networks. For the other research questions (4-6) we used interviews of key informants and (ethnographic) case studies in which we observed the actual situation in which teachers and learners were working.

Information on policy trends and migration patterns discussed in this study are gathered from official statistics and reports. The overview of the ICT applications being actually used in L2 education of adult migrants has been based in the case of the Netherlands on three sources listing materials for Dutch as an L2 (ITTA, 2009; Langens, Fuhri, & Verspiek, 2009; "LES," 2009), and in the case of Sweden on a publication by the Swedish Institute for the promotion of Swedish language (SI, 2010) and on information available from the National Agency for Education (Skolverket: <http://www.skolverket.se/>).

In order to complete the understanding of the political and migration background and to understand the implication of the use of the identified ICT resources, interviews with key informants were carried out. These key informants represent experts at national and local level, ICT application makers and producers of didactic material, course providers, professionals in the educational sector and national scientists engaged in research on L2 learning and ICT applications. For the Netherlands, 12 interviews were conducted; while in Sweden 7 experts were interviewed. Although open ended in nature, the format of the interviews was prepared through general pointers before the actual interview took place. The interview topic guides, which are differentiated according to the expertise profile of the interviewee, were sent to the key informants and experts beforehand and can be found in Appendix 1. Interviews were undertaken either face to face or through the phone, considering the availability of the selected informants and with an eye on keeping travelling costs and time as low as possible. In order to have a wide range of experts and key informants, we approached publishers of L2/ICT material, educational centres for L2

education, research centres and policymakers with both a policy and a practice focus in the field of ICTs and L2 learning for adult migrants. This range of contacts allowed us to explore the interface between policy and practice and relate it to ICTs in L2 education for migrants. The interviews were all aimed at unravelling the drivers, barriers, results and impact of ICTs in L2 education. For these reasons, the topic guides (see Appendix 1) have touched upon the following issues: a) the status quo of ICT applications for L2; b) the advantages, disadvantages and obstacles related to ICT use in L2; c) the empowerment and obstacles that ICTs for L2 bring to migrant learners (and implications for highly educated and for those with low education attainments); d) key informants' visions on future ICTs for L2 directions. The topic guides, although based on the above-mentioned principles and on the plot presented in Appendix 1, were adapted to the interviewees' reactions and responses.

The overview of ICT applications used in the L2 teaching and learning of Dutch and Swedish for adult migrants allowed to identify some case study for an in-depth analysis. The three case studies that were selected for the Netherlands and the two that were selected for Sweden are all oriented to find answers to the questions that deal with the beneficial as well as the negative changes brought about by the use of ICT applications in the field of L2 learning for adult migrants. The choices in the Netherlands were dictated by the vast amount of different ICTs available and the aim to have three completely different ICT applications. The choices in Sweden were more dictated by the fact that the supply of ICTs at the schools was rather similar, but the target groups and learning setting was completely different.

All the case studies were qualitative in nature and availed themselves of ethnographic means for data gathering and analysis (Blommaert, 2005; Fabian, 1995). These ethnographic means for data collection and analysis allowed to cater for the views of different players (for example school heads, teachers and students) who could be encountering either positive or negative consequences from the use of ICTs at a socio-pedagogical level (explanation of content, examinations, results) and at an economic efficiency level (reduction of contact hours, reduction of staff employed, reduction of costs). Ultimately, the goal of these case studies was to deliver a portrait of the different facets of the micro-social situation observed. The portraits shed light on the uses as well as positive and negative changes brought in by ICTs applications.

The primary data of the case studies were gathered through non-participant observation. All lessons that were observed were annotated in the form of field notes. These were then redacted in a spew draft that allowed for developing theoretical insights in the reality that had been observed. The decision to focus observations on these two sets of

learning practices – i.e., *migrant engaged with ICTs* as well as *teacher-migrant interactions* either in preparation to or during feedback on ICT based L2 learning activities – it is due to wanting to see how ICTs are tackled by migrant students on their own as well as to see how teachers do either enable or hinder ICT based L2 learning. After an initial curiosity that led some learners to enquire about the visitor in their class, the learners did not seem to pay attention or mind the researcher's presence. Consequently, the job of maintaining distance from the students was managed. This distance was further reiterated by the approach of the class teachers in each case study who never have asked the researcher to step in during their daily classroom routine. In conclusion, the observer position adopted by the researchers involved in both the Dutch and the Swedish setting have striven to unobtrusiveness. The posture adopted resembled that of an (non-participant) observer who interacts only indirectly with subjects when needed, while busy in his observational task (Wragg, 1999).

On top of non-participant observation, the case studies were complemented by a written survey with learners, interviews with learners and teachers, and focus groups. The survey aimed at understanding the learners' personal background and their use of ICTs outside classroom settings. The questionnaire that was used from this survey was adapted from a study on migrant women, e-skills and employability (Garrido, Rissola, Rastrelli, Diaz, & Ruiz, 2010).⁵ Appendix 2 reports the original questionnaire that was received by the study team and a note detailing all the changes that were made to it to adapt it to the study context and aims.

Group discussions were conducted to allow migrants to explore and voice further their experiences of ICTs both in terms of L2 learning but also in terms of the consequences that ICTs hold for their emancipation in mainstream society at large. If possible and allowed for, all discussions were audio recorded. In the Netherlands this was possible, in Sweden the teachers and students did not allow this and there field notes were taken. During group discussions, the position of the researchers was limited to prompt the interviewees and ask them to expand or clarify their statements as well as to limit, when needed, the interventions of the more talkative one so to allow each group member to chip in. Furthermore, in order to overcome the language challenge that the interviews with migrants could imply because of their possible lack of proficiency in Dutch or Swedish, the group discussions always included a student who already had a high level of

⁵ Thanks to an open research agreement, the questionnaire submitted to learners of this study was based on the questionnaire developed by Maria Garrido (University of Washington) and other partners in their study on migrant women, eskills and employability. The original questions were in turn drawn from, or inspired by, the annual Eurostat survey on ICT use by individuals and households. For more information visit <http://tascha.uw.edu/research/employability/>

proficiency in the official language of the host country. This student, when needed, functioned as a translator for both the question posed by the researcher and the answers given by those informants. Not only did this practice lead to bridging the language barrier, it also helped to reduce possible distrust towards the external researcher.

Teachers were also interviewed to understand their perceptions on benefits, barriers and potential of the ICT applications in use. The intended minimum interviews of three teachers, twenty students and three managers for each case has not been possible to reach due to difficulties in finding enough willing participants, school holidays, illnesses etc. Table 1 summarises the number of key informants, managers, teachers and learners who took part in the study.

	Key informants	Case studies	Managers	Teachers	Learners	Total per country
Netherlands	12	CS 1	0	2	15	
	50 ⁶	CS 2	1	2	15	
		CS 3	0	1	11	109
Sweden	7	CS 1	0	3	15	
		CS 2	1	2	18	46
Subtotal	69		2	10	74	
Total						155

Table 1: Informants and interviewees

Although we could not reach the target of twenty students, there was enough variety among the learners to give a satisfying picture of the teaching and learning practice. Nevertheless, it has to be acknowledged that data may be skewed because of difficulties in finding learners and/or institutions who were willing to participate. Regarding the managers, the majority of those who had been contacted did not feel confident enough or were not interested in taking part to the interviews: out of the 5 case study, only two managers were interviewed. A total of 155 informants, teachers, managers and learners took part in the study.

Limitations of this study have to be acknowledged. The use ICTs for L2 by adult migrants is a very under-researched area, therefore, this study could not be built on previous methodologies and research on the topic. The scope has been very ambitious, trying to portray the state of the art of both policy context and ICTs for L2 resources and to

⁶ On top of these key informants, 50 teachers have provided feedback on three main questions during an interactive workshop with CINOP during the Conference on ICT and blended learning by the professional association of teachers of Dutch as a second language (BVNT2), 22 January 2010. This figure is presented in this table as a separate item as those 50 teachers did not undergo a comprehensive interview.

analyse some uses of these resources in a particular context. The methodologies employed are qualitative in the main. These ensure a richness of data in relation to the case studies, albeit that these are snapshots of activity in a fast changing field. The small sample size of key informant interviewees and of case studies analysed – and case studies participants – does not allow for generalisation. Moreover, it should be underlined that an ethnographic investigation is a portrait of a certain socio-cultural reality at a given time in history in a given place, trying to reconstruct the 'cultural ecology' of this space, that is made unique by its members and by the doxas that rule the actions of these members, i.e. internal rules that are seen and sold by the group members as common sense thinking (Blommaert, 2005; Bourdieu, 1991; Spotti, 2007). As such, what has emerged from the case studies has to be understood in the particular context where the research took place. Notwithstanding the above limits, and given the paucity of knowledge on this area, we believe that this study is unique and provides a first step into an area which certainly deserves wider and deeper research.

1.4 Outline of the report

The report is structured as follows: after this introductory one, in the following chapters information is presented alternating findings from the two countries. Chapter 2 and 3 report current policy frameworks related to integration, the requirements and provision of L2 for adult migrants, and migration patterns in the Netherlands (Chapter 2) and Sweden (Chapter 3). This is followed by an overview of the landscape of ICT applications for L2 education in the Netherlands (Chapter 4) and in Sweden (Chapter 5). The opinions of key informants are reported in Chapter 6 (the Netherlands) and Chapter 7 (Sweden). Chapter 8 analyses the three Dutch case studies and Chapter 9 the two Swedish case studies. Chapter 10 brings together the main points discussed in the previous chapters, provides some comparative conclusions and observations, and suggest recommendations for policy makers and possible further research in this area.

2 Policy framework and organisational context in the Netherlands

2.1 Introduction

This chapter will provide a general description of the policies on integration and the organisational context of L2 education for migrants in the Netherlands. It addresses research question 2:

What are the policy framework and the organisational context of L2 education of adult migrants in the two selected countries?

The next chapter will give the same description for the situation in Sweden.

2.2 Recent trends in migration patterns

Decolonisation was the main cause for immigration in the Netherlands after World War II. In 1949, the Dutch East Indies became a sovereign state: Indonesia. Between 1945 and 1965, over 300,000 Dutch people, Dutch-Indian people and Moluccans left Indonesia and came to the Netherlands. The Moluccans in particular struggled: they hardly received education and faced poor labour market conditions. The second Dutch colony, Surinam, gained full independence in 1975, and this caused another immigration flow: 300,000 Surinamese migrated to the Netherlands. A relatively large group ended up in de Bijlmer, originally meant as Amsterdam's 'model' high-rise district. However, the Bijlmer became nationally notorious for its desolate infrastructure and social problems. Migration from the Dutch Antilles (part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands) started in the 1990s. Prior to that, young intellectuals came to the Netherlands to study. However, from the 1990s onwards, underprivileged Antillians came to the Netherlands as a reaction to the economic situation on the Dutch Antilles. They were mainly young people. The total number of Antillians in the Netherlands is 130,000 (Gijsberts & Dagevos, 2009, p. 39).

A second cause of immigration apart from decolonisation occurred in the 1950s, when the Netherlands industrialised at a fast pace. During this post-war boom, the demand for workers for unskilled jobs increased, while the supply of Dutch workers decreased. As a result, unskilled workers were recruited in European Mediterranean countries, such as Spain, Italy and followed by Turkey and Morocco in the 1960s. The Dutch government regulated recruitment practices and made treaties with these countries. The workers

received temporary contracts, since it was expected that they would return after a few years. As such, they were called 'guest-workers'.

In 1973, the Dutch economy collapsed because of the oil crisis, and unemployment increased. Lowly educated workers, i.e. many of the Turkish and Moroccan 'guest workers', became the first victims of the economic crisis. They did not return to their native countries and were hit by unemployment. Many of these 'guest-workers' had to fall back on social welfare. Although the Dutch government tightened its immigration policy from 1973 onwards, immigration from the recruitment countries continued because of family reunification.

From the 1980s onwards, the flow of political refugees and asylum seekers to the Netherlands increased. In 1980, there were roughly 1,000 asylum seekers, but in the 1990s, 40,000 annual asylum requests were no exception. In 1987, the reception of asylum seekers was centrally organised: the so-called 'bed, bread and couch arrangement'. More and more asylum seekers received a temporary permit of residence and access to social welfare; (adult) education and labour were denied (Zorlu & Hartog, 2001).

Since the 1990s, the number of family reunifications of the former guest workers has decreased, but family formation continues. Even now, the majority of non-Western immigrants marry a partner from their country of origin.⁷ The Dutch government has tightened its immigration policies on family reunification and family formation several times. At this moment, the minimum age for family formation is 21 years (for both partners), the referent must have sufficient means of support (120% of the Dutch minimum wages) and a employment contract of at least one year (European Migration Network, 2008).

According to statistics, on 1 January 2010 one in five people in the Netherlands had a western or non-western foreign background. Half of them were born in the Netherlands and so belong to the second generation (Vliet, Ooijevaar, & Boerdam, 2010). **Figure 1** shows the percentage of people with a Non-Western foreign background from 1972 to 2010.

⁷ In the Netherlands the term 'non-western migrant' is used instead of 'migrant' in the context of integration policies. A 'non-western migrant' is a person of whom at least one of his/her parents was born in Turkey, Morocco, Surinam, the Dutch Antilles and a great number of other non-western countries in Africa and Asia (Gijsberts & Dagevos, 2009, p. 36)

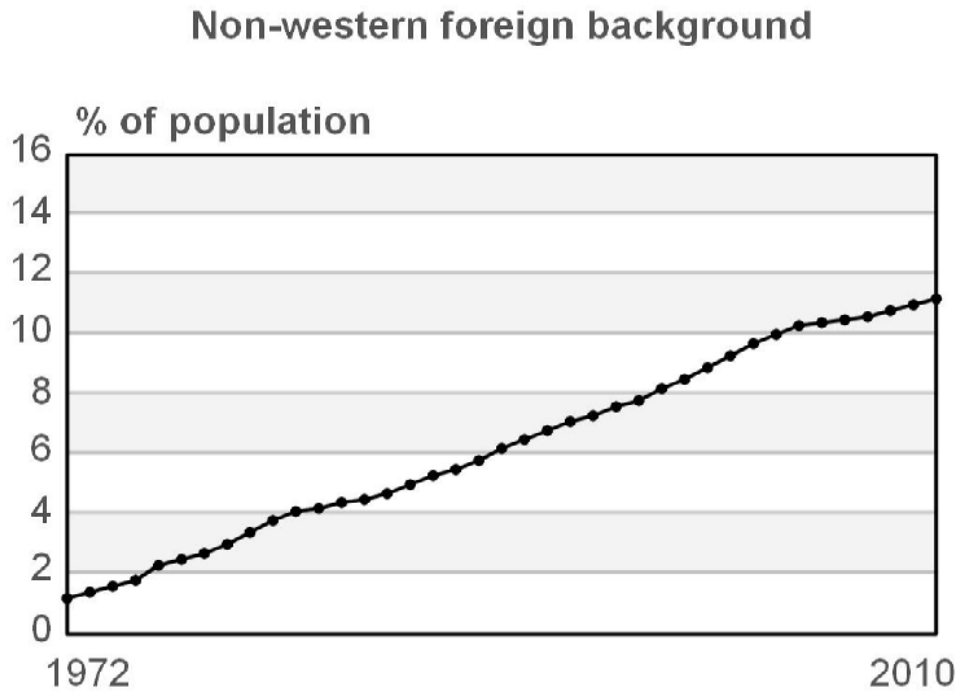


Figure 1: Non-Western foreign background as a percentage of the population of the Netherlands

Source: CBS 2011⁸

The origin of the non-Western population varies greatly from city to city. In Rotterdam, Amsterdam and The Hague people with a Non-Western background in 2008 accounted for one in three of the city population, in Almere one in four. In Utrecht, their share was 21% (Oudhof, Vliet, & Hermans, 2008).⁹

2.3 Policy measures related to L2 education for adult migrants

There was no integration policy in the Netherlands until the 1980s. In the middle of the 1980s, there was a debate about these issues. It had become evident that the guest workers would not go back to their native countries. But more importantly, it was clear that the non-Western immigrants were struggling in the Netherlands: compared to the Dutch, they were more often low educated, unemployed, living on social welfare and ending up in crime. Government efforts aimed at stopping this situation. Immigration policy turned into disadvantage policy with a special emphasis on education and support

⁸ For more information and statistics on people with a foreign background in the Netherlands, see: <http://www.cbs.nl/en-GB/menu/themas/dossiers/allochtonen/nieuws/default.htm>

⁹ The reader is directed to literature in English about the migration patterns in the Netherlands (J. Lucassen & Penninx, 1997; L. Lucassen, Feldman, & Oltmer, 2006).

to the labour market. Different ministries in each governmental period have been responsible for immigration policy, such as the Ministries of education, internal affairs, justice and spatial planning.

In 1998, the Civic Integration Newcomers Act came into force. All newcomers over 18 from non-Western countries were obliged to follow a language programme and to become familiar with Dutch society. Dutch local governments were responsible for the implementation and regional training centres took care of educational programmes. Not participating in the programme had financial consequences. The programme started immediately after registration at the local government and was free of charge. The programme finished after a year with a standardised test for language and knowledge of the Dutch society (Common European Framework of Languages level A2).¹⁰ The minimum of required hours was 320 hours a year. The Dutch government demanded immigrants to participate: the test was obligatory, but insufficient results had no consequences for the immigrant. The so-called 'old comers' could also do the civic integration programme on a voluntary basis. However, the programme did not yield the expected outcome. Over half of the old- and newcomers did not reach the target levels. Several divergent reasons are given for this low success rate varying from the high percentage of illiterates among the immigrants to the low quality of the educational offer.

Several studies on integration were performed on behalf of the government. Recommendations referred to the content of the programmes, immigrants' rights and duties, but also finance and accountability systems, administrative relations and free market processes in adult education (Minister of Interior, 1998).

In 2007, the Civic Integration Newcomers Act was replaced by the Civic Integration Act. The central right-wing government tightened its immigration policy: the immigrants' obligations increased, and their rights were restricted. Firstly, the immigrant himself/herself was responsible for his/her own integration. Following a language course was no longer obligatory, but the civic integration exam remained compulsory. Secondly, the immigrant was financially responsible for his/her own integration. And finally, the obligation to participate changed in an obligation to pass the civic integration exam. Immigrants must have a basic understanding of the Dutch language and of Dutch society before they come to the Netherlands. These are tested by means of a test by telephone, taken in the country of origin: The Civic Integration Examination Abroad. This test is

¹⁰ The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) describes specifications of language-learning targets and establishes six levels of competence in Foreign Languages, going from A1 (the most basic) to C2 (to most proficient): A1 Breakthrough; A2 Waystage; B1 Threshold; B2 Vantage; C1 Effective Operational Proficiency; C2 Mastery. For more information, see: http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/CADRE_EN.asp#TopOfPage

taken at level A1 minus¹¹ of the CEFR. In the Netherlands, a civic integration exam is taken at CEFR level A2. This exam consists of two parts. Assessments and/or portfolio proofs are part of the decentralized part. The Test Spoken Dutch, a digital language exam and a digital exam on Knowledge of Dutch society form the centralized part. If the immigrant passes the Civic Integration Exam, he can submit a naturalisation application. It is remarkable that the civic integration programme was organised in an exceptionally innovative way, along with the reinforcement of the requirements. For example: the immigrant chooses a learner's profile (work, upbringing-health-education).

Until 2007, only newcomers had to undergo civic integration, but the new law states that so-called 'old-comers' (non-Western immigrants who have lived in the Netherlands for some time but have never completed an integration trajectory) must follow a compulsory integration programme as well. The number of 'old-comers' is estimated at 250,000.

The Civic Integration Act does not apply to EU citizens. As a result they have no access to these specialized integration courses. Municipalities can make exceptions though, for example for citizens coming from Middle-European countries like Poland, Rumania and Bulgaria. In the Netherlands there are ample opportunities to follow language courses offered by commercial language institutes, ranging from individual online to group courses.

In principle the immigrant is held responsible for the costs of the integration course, but it is left to the municipalities how to deal with this. In fact all municipalities finance the costs of the integration trajectories, including the costs of examination. For those who are obliged to follow the integration trajectory there are no financial barriers. For EU immigrants who do not fall within this legislation it is different: they need to pay for it themselves.

¹¹ The level A1 minus has been described in the Netherlands to define an absolute beginner's level below the full A1 level.

Who has to undergo civic integration?

- Oldcomers
- Newcomers
- Spiritual counsellors

Oldcomers:

Immigrants between 18 and 65 years of age, who had lived in the Netherlands for less than eight years when they were of school age and who do not hold a certificate demonstrating a sufficient level of knowledge of the Dutch language and Dutch society.

Newcomers:

Immigrants between 16 and 65 years of age. Civic integration is not necessary if the immigrant comes from a country within the European union, the European Economic Area or from Switzerland.

Spiritual counsellors:

Spiritual counsellors work for a religion or place of worship - for example an imam, a preacher, a priest, a minister, a religion teacher or a missionary. Spiritual counsellors with a temporary stay in the Netherlands also have to undergo civic integration.

Box 1: Civic integration

Source: www.vrom.nl

In 2008, a new central left-wing government was formed. Soon after, this government came with new plans to improve the quality of civic integration programmes and the performance of immigrants: the Delta Plan for Civic Integration. The basic principles of own responsibility and the obligation to pass the exam were maintained, but civic integration and participation were inextricably combined. The immigrant's wishes and ambitions are taken into account, and each immigrant is offered a tailor-made programme. In 2011, 80% of the programmes must be dual, according to the following combinations:

- Civic integration and pedagogical support;
- Civic integration and voluntary work;
- Civic integration and re-integration;
- Civic integration and (vocational) education;
- Civic integration and work;
- Civic integration and entrepreneurship;¹²
- Civic integration and participation.

Highly educated immigrants can do the State Exam Dutch I (CEFR B1) and/or State Exam Dutch II (B2). Last but not least: the special target group of spiritual counsellors are also compelled to do the above mentioned integration programme. Alongside of that they also engage in a number of topics that are relevant in their daily work, like their role

¹² In 2009, 'entrepreneurship' and 'participation' were added.

in their own religious community, dealing with young people and religion, knowledge of other religions in the Netherlands (Minister of Interior, 2007).

Over the past decades the L2 education supply in the Netherlands has become an intricate structure that needs specialized professionals as educators. Paradoxically, though, there is no formal certified training programme to become an L2 teacher. The government has as but yet not honoured the often uttered request for the certification of this profession: in fact anyone is allowed to teach in the L2 field, although more and more municipalities demand a certain quality of L2 teachers. Since 2003 there is a professional association for teachers of Dutch as a second language, the 'Beroepsvereniging van docenten Nederlands als Tweede Taal' (BVNT2 at www.bvnt2.org). This association promotes the improvement of teacher competences as an important component to improve the quality of the civic integration programmes.

2.4 The supply of L2 educational services

In the Netherlands the Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment is responsible for civic integration. The national government actively supervises local authorities and supplies information to the immigrant. Local authorities implement the integration policy: they too supply information to the immigrant, they pay in many cases the immigrants' costs for the courses and the examinations and they are responsible for financial sanctions. Under the new law these sanctions have not yet come into effect, because the first term for integration (3.5 years) has not yet expired.

An entire market has developed around civic integration education. Local governments often put large projects out to tender and different parties are invited to write a proposal. First of all the immigrants need to be recruited. This is often carried out by the local government, but recruitment is also contracted out to organisations familiar with the target group. An example is the group of 'integration ambassadors': immigrants who have passed the civic integration exam and who encourage other immigrants to follow the programme. Before immigrants come to class an intake and assessment takes place. During the intake the profile, the study pace and the amount of time needed are determined. Local governments often contract this out to other organisations.

Until 2007 vocational training centres took care of the integration courses. After 2007 these services have been left to the free market and other commercial parties can tender. This has lead to an enormous diversity in the provision of integration courses: from large reintegration companies to one-man businesses; from providers that serve all target groups to specialists that serve one specific profile (for instance civic integration

combined with work); from a local school to a regional provision. The quality of the offered programme also varies substantially, and that is why the government has created a quality mark for civic integration. There is however no inspection by the government. Several providers of language courses have already disappeared from the market. CINOP colleagues who have worked in the field for years have reported on these developments.

Then there is the examination. The government is responsible for the Civic integration examination abroad, which takes place at embassies and consulates. The decentralised part is also a free market product without a fixed price, but it is tied to certain quality standards. The central examination in the Netherlands is carried out by the Informatie Beheer Groep (IB-Groep). This IB-group is also responsible for the information systems concerning civic integration.

2.5 An overview of the wider range of L2 initiatives

The leading teaching and learning principle for second language learning is based on the concept of 'immersion education' and 'content and language integrated learning' (CLIL), following the principle that people acquire the language faster and attain a higher proficiency level when the language acquisition process is integrated in the context of their own environment. Therefore, dual programmes are the preferred teaching method for L2 in the Netherlands. These dual programmes evolve around 'learning to participate', in which both elements are combined: language acquisition is related to participation activities and participation activities play an active role in stimulating, facilitating and supporting the language acquisition process. Dual programmes have the advantage that acquisition of the language is linked to participation in society (VROM, 2007).

All this means that many social organisations and individuals are involved in integration, next to language providers. A 'buddy project' for immigrants has been initiated as part of the European Year of the Intercultural Dialogue, in which immigrants are guided by so-called 'language buddies', 'language coaches' or 'integration guides' (native Dutch people). This can take place in sports or cultural activities, but a Dutch native can also render support to an immigrant in internships or jobs. The government has reached an agreement with a number of social organisations to support female immigrants in the upcoming years to do voluntary work. This approach aims to learn to participate and to strengthen social cohesion within society.

The district directed approach is another way to improve participation of female immigrants in particular. The government has selected 40 so-called 'attention districts' in

the Netherlands. These districts are characterised by a high degree of social support, debt issues, family issues and social isolation. The government invests extra in these districts. Many non-Western immigrants live here. All women with children in pre- and early education are supposed to follow a civic integration course, as part of the programme 'pedagogical support' (VROM, 2007).

Following a vocational education is another integration path. However, only few immigrants follow this integrated training programme, in which acquisition of the Dutch language is combined with a vocational education. There is a possibility to follow a re-integration path and a civic integration course in one for immigrants with social benefits and immigrants who do not have social benefits but who do want to work. On a local governmental level, the budget for integration has merged with the budget for reintegration since 2009: the budget for participation. The national government expects that this makes the combination of reintegration and civic integration more accessible.

The combination of a civic integration course with a job is slowly starting to develop. These programmes demand close cooperation between local governments, companies and language providers. Several big companies have responded to an appeal to allow their employees to follow a civic integration programme. This mainly concerns 'oldcomers' who have been working for the company for years.

(Candidate) entrepreneurs can follow a tailored integration programme since 2009. The government added this programme because there is great interest in entrepreneurship in immigrant circles (for example in the hotel and catering business, trade and commercial services). The action plan 'power districts' stimulates entrepreneurship of immigrant women through micro credits. A number of pilots have started. It is remarkable that not only language providers and local governments play an active role, but also Dutch entrepreneurs.

2.6 New trends

Apart from all the efforts described here, the Dutch government has reached the conclusion that part of the family-reunification migrants still lag behind in integration and emancipation, even when they have lived in the Netherlands for a longer time. One quarter of the family migrants who pass the Civic Integration Examination Abroad are low-educated adults and it is difficult for them to participate in the Dutch society. The intake of these low-educated immigrants has harmful consequences for their civic

integration and the upbringing and education of their children. The government is therefore planning a number of policy changes:

- Increasing the level of the Civic Integration Examination Abroad up to CEFR level A1;
- Adding a exam 'literacy' and 'reading' (at the A1 level) to the Civic Integration Examination Abroad;
- Developing specific preparation materials.

Finally, over the last years, we have seen a change in migration patterns. In 2008, there was an increasing trend of asylum requests. Now the biggest groups of migrants come from middle- and eastern-European countries, such as the new European Union countries Poland, Romania and Bulgaria (Gijsberts & Dagevos, 2009).

2.7 Main Messages

Over the past decades the influx of immigrant in the Netherlands has increased steadily and since the 80's of the past millennium there is a raising awareness that the integration and participation of these large groups with different backgrounds (more often than not low-educated) needs specific attention. Learning the Dutch language is one of the most important parts in the integration process. Under different governments the rules and regulations for immigration into the Netherlands and to gain Dutch citizenship have become stricter in order to stop the yearly rise of numbers of immigrants and to be better able and equipped as a society to give immigrants a fair chance to fully integrate and participate. As a consequence the requirement for the language levels to be achieved have become stricter as well and for large groups of immigrants a certain language level is compulsory, not just for work but also for social benefit and in general to gain a residence permit or citizenship. Language education has therefore become a very important issue for all stakeholders in the integration process.

3 Policy framework and organisational context in Sweden

3.1 Recent trends in migration patterns

Unlike several other European countries, Sweden has never been a nation with colonies abroad. Historically, Finland was part of Swedish territory until 1809, when Sweden lost Finland to Russia, and for less than one hundred years, Norway was in a confederation with Sweden until it gained independence in 1905. In terms of migration patterns, rather than being a country that welcomed many newcomers to its shores, Sweden lost in the late 19th and early 20th century around a fifth of its population to emigration. The vast majority of those who then left Sweden settled in North America. Since then, however, the migration tide has turned (SCB, 1999).

The post-war industrial boom that occurred in Sweden, starting in the late 1940s and reaching its peak in the 1950s and 1960s, created a need for imported workers, and hundreds of thousands of men and women moved to Sweden from other Nordic countries and from Southern Europe. From Turkey, Greece, Yugoslavia and Italy, young men were recruited by Swedish industrial companies, and from Denmark, Norway and Finland, especially in the late 1960s, came both men and women to work in the manufacturing industries. Political events in Hungary 1956, Greece 1967, and Czechoslovakia 1968 added refugees to this labour immigration (SCB, 2004).

In 1967, the Swedish government passed a law that severely restricted the immigration of non-Nordic workers. The net effect was that immigration levels decreased sharply in the 1970s and the migrant population changed character. The result became a switch from labour to refugee and family reunification migration. Initially, most refugees came from South America (especially from Chile) and Asia, and once they had been granted asylum in Sweden, many had their family members join them as family reunification migrants. In the 1980s, countries in the Middle East and the crumbling Yugoslavia/the Balkans were added to the list of areas from which people came to seek refuge in Sweden, settled and, eventually, brought their families. Immigration from Africa only became significant in the 1990s, and it is countries in Northern Africa and the Horn of Africa that these migrants are mainly coming from. The Somali group especially stands out among refugee immigrants to Sweden and was recently reported to have surpassed the number of asylum seekers from Iraq, making them the largest group of refugee migrants to Sweden (SCB, 2004).

Groups	By birth country (2008)
Finns	175,113
Iraqis	109,446
(former) Yugoslavs	72,285
Poles	63,882
Iranians	57,663
Bosnians	55,960
Germans	46,854
Danes	46,167
Norwegians	44,310
Turks	39,230
Chileans	27,153
Lebanese	20,228
Total	758,291

Table 2 gives an overview of the ten largest migrant groups in Sweden in terms of birth country, i.e. what is often referred to as “first generation immigrants”. Approximately half of them have acquired Swedish citizenship (Nygren-Junkin & Extra, 2003). These figures are, of course, cumulative and reflect at least half a century of immigration to Sweden, as described above. As a result, the Somali group, although large among new-comers, does not show up in this list of the ten largest groups of migrants living in Sweden.

Groups	By birth country (2008)
Finns	175,113
Iraqis	109,446
(former) Yugoslavs	72,285
Poles	63,882
Iranians	57,663
Bosnians	55,960
Germans	46,854

Danes	46,167
Norwegians	44,310
Turks	39,230
Chileans	27,153
Lebanese	20,228
Total	758,291

Table 2: The ten largest migrant groups in Sweden in terms of birth country in 2002

Source: Statistiska Centralbyrån, 2008

The term 'migrant' is used in Sweden to indicate anybody that has come to Sweden from another country, even one of the neighbouring and culturally similar Scandinavian nations, despite the fact that treaties on Nordic cooperation in various fields make the movement between these countries very easy. Sweden has actually become one of the European countries with the highest proportion of migrants. Statistical data from 2008 show that around 14% of all residents in Sweden were born in another country, and the same goes for Germany and Austria. If those born in Sweden whose parents were both born abroad are added, the proportion increases to 19%. Additionally, if those with one parent born elsewhere are included, almost one quarter (24%) of the Swedish population were part of the group that can be referred to as residents with migrant backgrounds in 2008 (SCB, 2009). Although that may not sound like much in a country as large and sparsely populated as Sweden, the distribution of first-generation migrants, and increasingly also second-generation, is extremely uneven. The vast majority live in the suburban areas of Sweden's three largest cities. In Malmö, approximately 40% of the residents are of migrant background, in Gothenburg around 30% of the population have a migrant background, and for Stockholm the proportion of residents with a migrant background is 25%. A noticeable presence of persons with migrant backgrounds is also found in five larger towns in Sweden (Borås, Norrköping, Västerås, Uppsala, and Örebro). Typically, the housing in these suburban areas consists of multi-storey apartment buildings constructed in the 1960's and -70's. All migrant-dense suburban areas can be described as having low socio-economic status with high unemployment, many adults living on social assistance, and poor school achievement for the children (Bunar, 2001).

3.2 Policy measures related to L2 education for adult migrants

In Sweden, there is no requirement to participate in L2 education for a newly arrived immigrant, although it is strongly encouraged by migration authorities. In order to receive social assistance, however, participation in SFI (Swedish for immigrants) instruction is mandatory. Newly arrived refugees who have not yet been granted asylum have access to SFI instruction through a municipal government education provider, but they can not apply to other forms of language instruction through, for instance, independent adult education centres, as they do not have a Swedish personal identification number, which they need to register for courses. After a refugee has been granted asylum, the same requirement as for any immigrant to study SFI in order to get social welfare payments applies, but if the migrant can do without the welfare money, there is no obligation to participate in SFI instruction.

Settled immigrants with little or no command of the Swedish language can study SFI at the municipal instruction providers, unless they have already done so but not passed the final test within the assigned time (525 study hours in all), or they can seek instruction from an independent adult education provider (Folkuniversitetet, Lernia, Studium etc.). The SFI programmes end with a test that covers both spoken and written skills. To date, the test is administered in a traditional, paper-based format, but work is underway to have it done on-line. In order to seek employment individually through Swedish employment centres (Arbetsförmedlingen) the job applicant must have passed the SFI-test or equivalent, e.g. an exam at the end of a university Swedish language programme for foreign learners. The latter group may also take a test called "TISUS" (= Test I Svenska för Universitets-Studier, or test of Swedish for university studies) which a person must pass to be admitted to a degree programme at a Swedish university or college. This applies to all non-native speakers of Swedish who have not studied Swedish at a Swedish high-school and received a passing grade in Swedish as a second language or Swedish language arts when graduating from high-school. Children of Swedish families living abroad, who wish to do their post-secondary studies in Sweden, also have to pass the TISUS.

There is to date no language (and/or culture) test that has to be taken to apply for Swedish residency or citizenship. The Liberal Party of Sweden has had, and to some extent still has, such policies on their agenda, but they are not the majority in the current non-Socialist coalition government and the other three coalition parties do not support such initiatives. Nor do the current opposition parties (Nygren-Junkin, 2009). Until 2007, there was a National Agency for Integration, which was dismantled by the

coalition government when they took power after winning the election of 2006. Its responsibilities were instead distributed to the Ministries of Social affairs, Housing, Education, and Employment. This was done in an effort to reduce discriminatory practices and prevent exclusionary treatment, both of which were seen as obstacles to language learning, cultural integration, and access to the labour market.

The challenges in learning Swedish and integrating into Swedish society for the greater proportion of so-called visible minorities among recent migrants to Sweden are two-fold. First, there is the housing problem. Even though having Swedish neighbours does not necessarily lead to social integration, it does mean that you will hear the Swedish language spoken in the neighbourhood. However, the likelihood of recent arrivals to Sweden learning Swedish by being exposed to native speakers of the language in everyday life is severely reduced by the fact that they will, with few exceptions, only find rental housing in suburban areas, where most inhabitants are also migrants and few Swedes ever go. This is the result of the residential segregation that is a fact in most Swedish cities and larger towns (Bunar, 2001).

Secondly, it can be difficult to find work if you look non-European and have a "foreign-sounding" name, even after you have learnt the language and your qualifications are sought after on the Swedish labour market. Journalists of other ethnic backgrounds who speak native-like Swedish have on a number of occasions, and in different locations, proven this by applying for jobs over the phone using different kinds of names. For example, if the applicants used Swedish names, they were twice as likely to be called for a job interview compared to when they used Arabic names (Attström, 2007). The prospects of learning the majority language are not great if there is no exposure to speakers of the language neither in the neighbourhood nor in a workplace. Learning a language solely through formal instruction for a few hours five days a week is hardly sufficient to develop the proficiency needed to interact effectively with other native speakers than the L2-teacher/s (Elmgren, 2009).

As a result, integration policies today are rather aimed at getting migrants into the labour force - and becoming self-supporting - or into education programmes (Skr, 2008/2009:24). This is seen as the best way to improve on Swedish language skills, to learn about Swedish culture and, optimally, to be able to move to a less migrant-dense residential area, which in turn is seen as key to further language development and increased familiarity with how Swedes live, behave, and think. Swedish values and life-style choices are best learned from real-life first-hand experience (SOU, 2003:77).

3.3 The supply of L2 education services for adult migrants

SFI instruction is in most cases offered by municipal adult education centres (Komvux) and in some cases by the so-called "folkhögskolor", or people's colleges. These options are all free of charge to the migrant and paid for by government and municipal taxes, and around 80% of all those studying SFI do so at one of these instruction providers. They operate under the supervision of Skolverket (the National Agency for Education) and have their own set of national curriculum guidelines. However, the so-called School Inspection (Skolinspektionen) do not visit and investigate the SFI-classes taught around Sweden. A survey of the provision of SFI instruction nation-wide was commissioned by the Ministry of Education (www.statskontoret.se), but it did not evaluate the quality of the programmes. Success and drop-out rates were investigated, but several circumstances beside the learning environment itself were listed as possible contributing factors. Data about the educational background and professional qualifications of those teaching the SFI courses were gathered and presented in the survey but not related to instructional quality or learner outcomes (Statskontoret, 2009).

There are three different SFI study options, or tracks, depending on the learners' level of education in other countries and degree of literacy. Each track is made up of two course levels. The track 1 is intended for learners with no or minimal/functional literacy skills and an education background of 0-6 years, track 2 is for learners with a basic level of education and good literacy skills, usually defined as a secondary education background (e.g. high-school), while the highest level, track 3, is meant for learners with some kind of post-secondary education (college or university). Each track carries with it a predetermined maximum length of study time: 63 weeks for track 1, 55 weeks for track 2, and 31 weeks for track 3 (Elmgren, 2009). After completing the assigned track, learners are expected to pass the SFI-test, which is needed to apply for work through the national employment agency (Arbetsförmedlingen).

For those who need more time to learn Swedish, there are independent adult education providers, such as Lernia, Studium and Folkuniversitetet. Since the mid-90's, these options have also become an increasing segment of the regular SFI market, as government funds for adult education have been reduced. The participants usually have to pay for these courses themselves, but there is usually no time limit as to how long a learner can keep studying without completing the levels required to pass the SFI-test. The requirements to teach in these schools are usually rather undetermined and subjective, but it is even a fact in the government-funded programmes that, due to a shortage of qualified candidates, not all teachers there either have formal qualifications

to teach a second language. The different study options/tracks described above are also found among the independent providers as a way for the learners to best prepare for the SFI-test, given their educational backgrounds, but there are some variations. Among these independent providers there are also combinations of language education with either work-life practice or vocational training. These are now increasingly being introduced into the government-funded providers as well (Elmgren, 2009).

Smaller and very local initiatives can also be found, in addition to the more wide-spread programmes across the whole country, and then mostly in the big city areas. Examples of such options are learning Swedish by using your mobile phone (www.myvocab.se), learning Swedish through cooking ("Mat och prat" at the Bergsjö church in Gothenburg), and learning by volunteering at your children's school combined with getting SFI instruction in an unused classroom in the same building (the International School at Gårdsten, Gothenburg). In a few city areas there are also so-called Introduction Centres, usually publicly funded, where the objective is to give newly arrived families a start in their Swedish language learning without having to scatter the family members to different parts of town to attend different kinds of instruction. Under one roof, parents receive beginner SFI-classes, school-age children are given transitional instruction in preparation for later joining their regular class in a neighbourhood school, and the youngest children in the family are looked after in a day-care facility in the same building where the staff usually speak other languages in addition to Swedish. During breaks and for lunch, the family members are reunited with each other, and much worry and separation anxiety are thus prevented (Stefan Eriksson, personal communication 2004).

3.4 An absence of other initiatives

Sweden is a highly organized country where individual, small-scale initiatives tend to become short-lived, unless they quite rapidly grow into a larger scale operation. This in part has to do with the circumstance that it is difficult to employ people legally within the Swedish corporate taxation system without the initiative quickly becoming less than profitable. The reason is that an employer has to pay a substantial amount of social fees, sometimes referred to as "employer's tax", to the government, an amount often equalling what is actually paid in salary to the employee.

Such an expense makes many an entrepreneur think at least twice before deciding to hire staff. Adding to this the fact that Sweden does not really have a contemporary tradition of people doing volunteer work – if you work, you should get paid! – it becomes

obvious that not many other initiatives, in addition to those instruction providers mentioned above, are present in the current Swedish situation.

3.5 New trends

Two government initiatives aimed at getting migrants into the work force may however warrant a mention in this context. Due to the aforementioned residential segregation in Sweden, a job is perceived as a necessary complement to language instruction, due to the fact that migrants usually meet very few Swedes in their neighbourhoods. To compensate for this lack of native speaker contact, a work-place can offer opportunities to practice Swedish in a natural setting and with speakers of Swedish as a first language. So, in order to make hiring a migrant an attractive option for an employer, the government is now paying up to half the cost of the social fees that the employer has to pay for each employee, the so-called employer's tax that was mentioned above, if the person hired is an unemployed migrant. This initiative is known as "the step-in programme" (SOU, 2008:58).

The other one is called "the start-up programme", and it is aimed at migrants who want to start their own businesses. The spirit of entrepreneurship is often high among migrants to Sweden, compared with average native Swedes, but they usually have difficulty raising the initial funds to get their enterprise off the ground. As a rule, in Sweden migrants live in rental accommodation rather than own their own home and tend not to own a summer cottage either (which many Swedish families do), nor do they invest in financial portfolios, all of which makes them seem like bad risks to the banks, even if they have a steady job with a reasonably good salary. To counter this negative effect, the government is offering a guarantor option in order to encourage the banks to lend money to migrants who want to start their own business (SOU, 2008:58).

These two incentives have at the time of writing only been in effect for just over a year, at a time when the economy has not been doing very well anywhere in the western world, so it is probably too soon to say if they have been a success. An even more recent initiative is an effort to get native Swedes to volunteer as "refugee guides" to recent arrivals. This time of relatively high unemployment in Sweden might be a time when at least some people will think that doing volunteer work looks better on a CV than doing no work at all....

3.6 Main Messages

When we compare the Swedish situation with the Dutch there are a few important differences. The total yearly number of immigrants is lower than in the Netherlands, not only on an absolute scale but even more on a relative scale: the Netherlands is a much more densely populated country than Sweden. The background of the immigrants is different. Sweden has no history of colonies or so-called 'guest-workers' during the post-war boom in the 50's and 60's and has, as a consequence, less immigration for family reunification.

The most important difference for our study is that there is no official obligation for immigrants to learn the Swedish language. Nevertheless, they need to have a certain language level to be able to work and there is a compulsion to follow an SFI course if the immigrant is on social welfare. But in general the rules are less strict than in the Netherlands.

4 The Dutch landscape of ICT applications for L2 education

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will provide an overview of ICT applications and tools that are used in L2 education in the Netherlands and will address research question 2:

Which ICT applications are actually being used in L2 education of adult migrants in the Netherlands and in Sweden?

Chapter 5 will deal, in the same manner, with this research question for the Swedish situation.

ICTs stand for Information Communication Technologies, and as such covers any product that will store, retrieve or transmit information electronically in a digital form. In the context of this study, the full range of ICT tools are considered, starting from more traditional paper based L2 teaching methods that contain computer-assisted training materials in the form of a CD-ROM, DVD or webpage to innovative web-based e-learning methods.

In the Netherlands, the Civic Integration Act of 2007 stipulates that all newcomers over 18 years of age from non-Western countries must learn the Dutch language and they must become familiar with Dutch society. This process is referred to as civic integration. Until 2007, language and integration courses were administered by training centres for vocational and adult education under authority of the government. Since 2007, the market for L2 training provision is open and as a consequence private enterprises, like commercial language institutes, can offer language and integration courses too. In addition, the examination procedures have changed. These developments caused publishers to develop new training materials. As a result, there is a wide variety of L2 training materials in the Netherlands, from overall language courses to separate tools that have been developed to practise specific language skills, such as listening, grammar or pronunciation. Since 'Knowledge of the Dutch society' is a compulsory part of the civic integration examination, it is often integrated in the content of the L2 language course.

Section 4.2 provides information on the methodology and categorisation of all materials. Section 4.3 provides an overview of the ICT application materials used in L2 education in the Netherlands, categorized by type of content.

4.2 Methodology

Sources

Three sources were used as a basis to make a first provisional list of L2 teaching methods with an ICT-component:

- A study on self-study methods in civic integration (Langens, et al., 2009)
- A report on the State Exam of Dutch as an L2 (ITTA, 2009)
- *Lesson*, a journal for teachers of Dutch as an L2 ("LES," 2009)

The first publication was a study on self-study methods in civic integration, conducted by CINOP in 2009. Its aim was to provide an overview of all methods that were suitable for self-study. Thus, CINOP asked publishers to send their L2 teaching methods to CINOP in order to screen these methods for self-study. The second publication provided a recent overview of teaching materials for the Dutch State Exam. The third publication listed an overview of teaching methods for L2 Education and Knowledge of the Dutch society published between 2005 and 2009.

Selection criteria

The following ICT-components were included in the overview:

- Audio-CD
- DVD
- CD-ROM
- Internet/web-site

It was often the case that the ICT tool was part of a broader overall L2 training package, which meant that paper based materials were combined with, for instance, extra exercises on CD-ROM. Training materials that only consisted of paper based materials were excluded.

4.3 Results: an overview of ICT materials

After a survey of all materials, six main categories could be distinguished:

1. Overall language courses;
2. Tools to train specific language skills;
3. Educational websites;
4. Educational materials for the Civic integration examination;

5. Resources, websites & communities for L2 teachers;
6. Language testing materials.

Each of these categories will be described in detail in the following paragraphs. The tables contain lists of materials. In the text, only the most well-known and widely used tools and materials will be discussed in detail.

4.4 Overall language courses

As already mentioned in the introduction and in Chapter 2, all immigrants have to undergo the civic integration examination when they arrive in the Netherlands. The language level of the exam is A2, which means that all immigrants have to acquire the Dutch language to CEFR level A2. High-educated immigrants who want to study in the Netherlands can do State Exam I (CEFR level B1) and/or State Exam II (CEFR level B2), but these exams are not obligatory. State Exam I provides access to vocational education. State Exam II gives access to higher professional education or university. Overall language courses usually prepare for either the civic integration examination, State Exam I or State Exam II.

Civic integration examination

Table 3 presents an overview of the overall language courses that prepare learners (to some extent) for the civic integration examination. There is no language course that does not contain an ICT-component. There is, however, much variation with respect to the role of ICTs within the language course. Often, ICTs were intended for self-study; paper based materials were used for group lessons. The CD-ROM or website contained for instance grammar or vocabulary exercises to practise the language skills. The ICT-component could either be an obligatory part of the course ("IJsbreker" [Icebreaker], "De Delftse methode" [The Delft Method], "AAP"(Alfabetiseren Anderstaligen Plan) [non-native literacy plan]), or it was intended for extra practice to work on specific language skills or grammar exercises. The cd-rom included with "Sprakmakers" [Speech creators], for instance, contains a course for pronunciation, intonation and phonology. Recently, web-based e-learning language courses have come onto the market, such as "Nederlands aan het werk" [Dutch at work] and "Thuis in Nederlands" [At home in Dutch].

Almost all language courses have been developed for a specific target group, and it is important to state that the role of ICTs is not dependent on the target group. A high-

educated learner often acquires the target language more easily than the low-educated learner. As such, language courses for high-educated learners contain much self-study and the course occurs at a high pace. Most civic integration language courses, however, are intended for low-educated learners, since this is the largest group of immigrants. Examples are "Ijsbreker", "Spraakmakers", "Thuis in Nederlands". These courses are at a slower pace and the language material is often repeated for familiarisation. And finally, there are courses developed for illiterate learners who need to learn to read and write, such as "AAP" or "Een goed begin". These are very basic courses that start from zero and only go up to CEFR level A1.

Name language course	Target group	ICT component	Language level (start-end)
Ijsbreker [Icebreaker]	Low-educated learners	cd-rom; web-based version	0 – A2
Ijsbreker – Breekijzer [Break iron]	Low-educated learners slow	cd-rom; web-based version	0 – A1
AAP [plan for illiterate non-natives]	Illiterate learners	Audio-cd; website	0-alpha b/c ¹³
De Delftse methode Basiscursus Nederlands voor buitenlanders [Delft Method – a basic course Dutch for foreigners]	Low-educated learners	cd-rom; audio-cd; website	0 – A2
De Delftse methode – Nederlands voor buitenlanders [Delft Method – Dutch for foreigners]	High-educated learners	cd-rom; audio-cd; website	0 – A2
Een goed begin [A Good Start]	Low-educated learners slow	cd-rom	0 – A1
Nederlands aan het werk [Dutch at Work]	All L2 learners	e-learning, webbased	A1 – A2
Nieuwe bureu [New Neighbours]	All L2 learners	cd-rom	0 – A2
Spraakmakers [Speech makers]	Low-educated women	Audio-cd; cd-rom	A1 – A2
Thuis in Nederlands [At home in Dutch]	Low-educated women	Webbased e-learning	A1 – A2
Thuis in Nederlands – Klaar voor de start [At home with Dutch- Ready to go]	Low-educated women	Webbased e-learning	0 – A1
Nederlands in beeld [Dutch in focus]	Low-educated learners	Audio-cd; cd-rom	0 – A1
De Opmaat [The Prelude]	High-educated learners	Website with audio materials and exercises	0 – A2

Table 3: Language courses designed for the Civic Integration Examination

¹³ These levels are based on the *Raamwerk Alfabetisering* [Literacy Framework], developed in the Netherlands to describe three levels of literacy: Alfa A, Alfa B and Alfa C. Alfa C parallels CEFR level A1. Each level describes technical and functional reading and writing skills.

The language courses are described in more detail below, in alphabetical order.

"AAP" (Alfabetiseren anderstaligen Plan) [Plan for Illiterate non-natives], Boom publishers (2009)

The method is developed for illiterate L2 learners who have to learn to read and write. At the end of the course, the candidate has acquired a basic literacy level and is ready to start on a regular language course. The method is developed for guided language learning and is not suitable for self-study. The method consists of two booklets. All lessons are supported by many illustrations. The candidate can do exercises for listening, speaking, reading, writing and spelling on the internet, through the website www.alfabetiseren.nl. This website can also be used independently from the language method and is freely accessible.

"Breekijzer" [Break iron] Thieme Meulenhoff

Breekijzer is a simplified version of *IJsbreker*. The method is especially developed for low-educated slow learners who only have primary education and weak reading skills. The target level is A1. The method contains two workbooks, a teacher's handbook and a cd-rom. It is built up in the same manner as *IJsbreker*.

"Delftse Methode" [Delft Method] Boom publishers

Delftse Methode contains different L2 language courses for beginning, intermediate and advanced learners. It follows a communicative approach and the language is acquired through chunks and vocabulary and does not focus on grammar. Grammar rules are learned implicitly. The package consists of a book, wordlists, an audio-cd, a cd-rom and a website. The cd-rom contains all the texts and extra exercises to practise listening or pronunciation. The following materials are available for the different learners:

- *Basiscursus Nederlands voor buitenlanders, part 1 & part 2* [A basic course of Dutch for foreigners]: This training package is developed for low-educated L2 learners. Part 1 ends at level A1, part 2 ends at level A2. The textbook contains 16 lessons. All new words are translated in different languages. The candidate can listen to the texts from the textbook on the audio-cd. The cd-rom contains the lessons from the textbook, exercises and grammar.
- *Nederlands voor buitenlanders* [Dutch for foreigners]: The package is developed for beginning high-educated learners of Dutch. The book contains 45 lessons. All words are translated in different languages. A2 is the end level of the course. The cd-rom displays the texts from the textbook with translations. The candidate can listen to the sentences and repeat them. Then, he can listen to his/her pronunciation. The lesson rounds off with dictation exercises and a gap-fill text.

- De tweede ronde [The second round]: This is a continuation of the course *Nederlands voor buitenlanders*, and ends at level B1 (A2 > B1). It consists of 45 lessons and is built up in the same manner.

"Een goed begin" [a good start] Boom publishers

Een goed begin is a Dutch multimedia course for L2 learners in 30 lessons in which 350 words are learned. It can be used in class or as a method for remedial teaching for one or more language skills. It is targeted at low-educated slow learners and starts from 0. At the end of the course, the candidate is on level A1. Candidates are introduced to the computer (mouse and keyboard) and practice pronunciation, reading, spelling and writing/typing at a slow pace. A network version is available, which makes it possible for the teacher to monitor progress.

"IJsbreker" [Icebreaker] Thieme Meulenhoff

Thieme Meulenhoff developed *IJsbreker* as an overall language method for low-educated L2 learners. It is intended for formal L2 education. It is not developed for self-study, but under teacher supervision it is possible to work independently.

IJsbreker consists of three parts. Part 1 and 2 prepare for the civic integration examination. Part 1 leads to level A1, and part 2 to level A2. Part 2 is divided into two separate programmes, depending on the candidate's needs: Wonen in Nederland (Living in the Netherlands) and Werken in Nederland (Working in the Netherlands). Once learners have reached A2, they can continue on to B1 with part 3, Op Koers (On track). This prepares for the Dutch State Exam, part I. All packages contain a workbook, a wordbook, a teacher's manual and a cd-rom which contains the multimedia programme. There is also a web-based version available of the software. 50% of the language method is multimedia. The candidate can practice his/her language skills on the computer, such as listening, reading, pronunciation and vocabulary knowledge.

"Nederlands aan het werk" [Dutch at work] IT-preneurs

IT-preneurs developed *Nederlands aan het Werk (NAHW)* to prepare immigrants for the civic integration examination in the domain 'Work'. In addition, the programme also deals with the general parts of the civic integration examination, such as citizenship, finding a job and knowledge of the Dutch society. An exam preparation is also part of the programme. It is an e-learning method in which language learning is integrated in the preparation for the civic integration examination. The method is entirely web based and does not contain any paper materials. The entry-level is A1, and the target level A2. The candidate logs on to the programme on the internet and she/he can practice all themes needed for the civic integration examination. The teacher can monitor the candidate's

progress online. Each theme is built up in the following manner: a TV-series, an entry-level test, a story, practicing words, practicing language, practicing sentences, and the final test. The candidate prepares himself for the examination through group lessons, practical assignments and coaching.

"Nieuwe buren" [New Neighbours] Malmberg

Nieuwe Buren is an overall language method. It has separate modules for low-, middle- and high-educated learners and can prepare candidates for the Civic Integration Examination (level A2), State Exam I (level B1) or State Exam II (level B2). Within the programme for low- and middle educated learners, it is possible to follow the general programme or a work-oriented language programme. It consists of a multimedia programme (on the cd-rom), to be used individually, and a workbook that is used in group lessons. A video series forms the basis of the multimedia programme. The cd-rom also contains a dictionary and a grammar book.

"Spraakmakers" [Speech makers] Thieme Meulenhoff

Thieme Meulenhoff developed *Spraakmakers* to prepare immigrants for the civic integration examination in the domain 'Upbringing, health and education' (OGO). It specifically aims at immigrants with children who have been in the Netherlands for a longer time, i.e. 'old-comers'. They learn the Dutch language in the following contexts: raising their children, Dutch health care and the educational system. *Spraakmakers* contains five modules, and each module consists of ten lessons. The method consists of a workbook, a teacher's handbook, audio-cds, and a cd-rom. The cd-rom, intended for self-study, contains a course for pronunciation, intonation and phonology. A dictionary is also included. The candidate can practice with syllables, syllable stress and sentence stress, and intonation. He/she can also practice with sounds and sound discrimination and he can look up words in the dictionary. In the dictionary, the words are presented in context and it is possible to listen to the words and sentences.

"Thuis in Nederlands" [At home in Dutch] IT-preneurs

IT-preneurs developed *Thuis in Nederlands (TiN)* to prepare immigrants for the civic integration examination in the domain 'Upbringing, health and education' (OGO). In addition, the programme also deals with the general parts of the civic integration examination, such as citizenship, finding a job and knowledge of the Dutch society. An exam preparation is also part of the programme. The candidates who choose the OGO profile are mainly low-educated literate women. *TiN* is a web-based e-learning method in which language learning is integrated in the preparation for the civic integration examination. The entry-level is A1. The candidate logs on to the programme on the

internet and he can practice all themes needed for the civic integration examination. Through practical assignments, the candidate is encouraged to put everything into practice, which enhances participation in society. Each theme is built up in the following manner: a TV-series, an entry-level test, a story, practicing words, practicing language, practicing sentences, and the final test. The teacher can monitor the candidate's progress online.

TiN contains a separate module *Klaar voor de start* for those candidates whose language proficiency is below A1. Eight themes are discussed and each theme is built up in the same manner as *TiN*: a TV-series, an entry-level test, a story, language exercises, and the final test. The Virtual Neighbourhood is included as an extra optional feature. Here, the candidate can find more information on facilities based on their actual living environment. The Virtual Neighbourhood contains ten buildings, for instance a library, where they can practise short conversations with a virtual character. Based on their postcode, it is possible to chat with other language learners who live in the same neighbourhood and follow the same programme.

"Nederlands in beeld" [Dutch in focus] Boom publishers

This method falls in between a literacy method and a regular language course. Vocabulary is built up through pictures to words to sentences and texts. The book contains pictures that illustrate the meaning of words and sentences. It consists of 18 lessons, and each lesson contains several texts with new words. The cd-rom also contains the texts and the pictures. The candidate can click on a picture and listen to the sentence. It is also possible to train conversations. The programme asks questions and the candidate can answer the question. Depending on the answer, the programme replies. Extra exercises are also available on the cd-rom.

"De Opmaat" [The Prelude] Boom publishers

De Opmaat is built up around ten themes that are familiar for L2 learners, for instance education and work, health, living. The candidate can practise all language skills centred on these themes. Through the book, the candidate can log on to the website www.nt2opmaat.nl. This website contains practise materials in the form of gap-fill texts. The website also contains audio, word lists and extra exercises.

Many of these complete language and integration courses offer school licences for use on school LANs.

State Exam I & State Exam II

Table 4 presents an overview of the language courses that have been developed for preparation for the State Exam I and State Exam II. All courses consist of paper based materials combined with digital materials. There were no web-based e-learning language courses that make use of interactive possibilities. Only "IJSbreker" focuses on low-educated learners, but it is not used very often since only a few low-educated learners continue on to State Exam I. All other courses are intended for high-educated learners. The focus of ICTs is on learning the language. The CD-ROM or web-based version contains videos and exercises which form an obligatory part of the course. Examples are "Code" and "Nieuwe Buren".

Language courses designed for State Exam I			
Name language course	Target group	ICT component	Language level (start-end)
IJSbreker – Op Koers	Low-educated learners	cd-rom; webbased version	A2 – B1
Code	High-educated learners	cd-rom; webbased version	A2 – B1
De delftse methode – De tweede ronde	High-educated learners	cd-rom; audio-cd; website	A2 – B1
Nieuwe Buren	Middle-educated learners	cd-rom	0 – B1
Language courses designed for State Exam II			
Name language course	Target group	ICT component	Language level (start-end)
Nieuwe buren	High-educated learners	cd-rom	0 – B2
Code	High-educated learners	cd-rom; web-based version	B1 – B2
Nederlands op niveau	High-educated learners	DVD; website	B1 – B2
De Finale	High-educated learners	Website	B1 – B2

Table 4: Language courses designed for State Exam I and II

"Code" [Code] Thieme Meulenhoff

Code is an overall language method and consists of three parts. The language method is targeted at high-educated L2 learners who want to pass State exam I (level B1) or State Exam II (B2). Language tasks are presented to the candidates through video and audio fragments, followed by group and individual assignments. When the task is finished, the candidates reflect on the acquired skills. Different work forms are used, and the candidate can work through roughly 50% of the materials independently. Each part contains a workbook, a teacher's manual and a cd-rom. The web-based version contains the same materials as the cd-rom. The cd-rom contains the videos related to the

language tasks, but also extra exercises on vocabulary knowledge, listening, grammar and routines. A network version is also available, which makes it possible for the teacher to monitor the candidate's progress from a distance.

"Delftse Methode" [Delft Method] Boom Publishers

Please refer to previous section.

"Ijsbreker – Op Koers" [Icebreaker – on track] Thieme Meulenhoff

Please refer to previous section.

"Nieuwe buren" [New Neighbours] Malmberg

Please refer to previous section.

"Nederlands op niveau" [Dutch at level] Coutinho

Nederlands op niveau is a self-study method for high-educated learners who want to do State Exam II (CEFR level B2). The book is built up around eight themes and makes use of authentic materials such as texts from the internet, newspaper articles and audio-visual materials from TV-programmes. The learner can do extra grammar and listening exercises on the website. These are screen versions of materials that could also be done on paper.

4.5 Tools for training specific language skills

In addition to overall language courses, there are also tools that have been developed to train specific language skills. These tools are intended for self-study and are often used in combination with an overall language course. Their aim is to improve the Dutch language in a specific area, see Table 5. There is a great variety in the type of tools and the use of interactive possibilities that ICTs have to offer. What follows is an alphabetical list of tools with a description.

Name of the tool	Target group	ICT component	Language level	Language skill
Uitspraaktrainer	All L2 learners	Web-based tool	A1 +	Pronunciation
NT2 Nieuwslezer	High-educated learners	Web-based tool	A1+	Vocabulary
Konnex	High-educated learners	cd-rom	B1+	Idioms and collocations
Muiswerk	All L2 learners	cd-rom; network version	A0 – B2	Spelling, vocabulary, grammar, reading skills
Klare Taal	All L2 learners	cd-rom	A1 – C1	Grammar
Alfaschrift	Low-educated learners	Website	0 – basic literacy	Literacy

Table 5: Language course designed for specific language skills

"Alfaschrift" [Alfascript] Boom Publishers

This is a course to learn to read and write. It consists of a book and a website www.alfabetiseren.nl. The website is freely accessible (see above for full description).

"Klare Taal" [Clear language] Boom Publishers

Klare Taal consists of a book and a cd-rom. It only focuses on grammar and contains 88 lessons with example sentences, illustrations and many exercises. On the cd-rom, the exercises are provided with feedback and answers.

"Konnex" [Konnex] Thieme Meulenhoff

The computer programme *Konnex* is especially developed to train phrasal verbs, idioms and collocations, since many L2 learners who have acquired Dutch on level B1 are still insecure about the use of collocations and fixed phrases. Konnex consists of a cd-rom and a manual. It is developed for L2 learners who have acquired Dutch on level B1. It is also available as a network version.

"Muiswerk" [Mousework] Muiswerk

"Muiswerk" is a diagnostic computer programme used in formal L2 education. It can be accessed through a computer connected to the school's network. The programme starts with an overall diagnostic test. Based on the test results, the programme selects exercises in specific areas that are problematic for the language learner. This makes it possible to differentiate between learners and to offer a programme based on the learner's individual needs. While practicing, feedback is offered to the candidate, either in the form of the correct answer or in the form of language rules. The teacher can monitor

the learner's progress and he can also adjust the learner's programme. Based on the test results, the programme selects exercises in specific areas that are problematic for the language learner, such as grammar, spelling or vocabulary.

"NT2 Nieuwslezer" [Newsreader for Dutch as an L2] Edia

"NT2 Nieuwslezer" is an innovative tool that makes use of news sources on the internet. The learner chooses a topic of his/her own interest. Then, based on the learner's vocabulary level, the programme selects news items from the internet. These news items are then used in vocabulary exercises, such as fill-in-the-gap and translations. The programme always selects the latest news from the past 24 hours.

"Uitspraaktrainer" [Pronunciation trainer] Boom Publishers

Through the website www.uitspraaktrainer.nl the candidate can do exercises to improve his/her pronunciation.

4.6 Educational websites

In the Netherlands, there are many websites especially developed for immigrants. Here, only the most popular websites are listed. The websites are often used in conjunction to regular language courses.

Table 6 summarises the main content of three selected educational websites.

Website	Target group	Language level	Content
www.taalklas.nl	Illiterate learners	0-A1	Learning the language
www.alfabetiseren.nl	Illiterate learners	0-A1	Learning to read and write
www.steffie.nl	Low-educated learners	A1-A2	Participation in society

Table 6: Educational websites

www.taalklas.nl is a popular website that is part of www.etv.nl. "Taalklas" consists of a television series and a website with exercises. Three candidates are following a Dutch language course with a teacher in a studio. The viewer at home can watch the series on the internet and is invited to do the exercises on the website. The series are developed for low-educated learners on their way to the civic integration examination.

www.alfabetiseren.nl is a website developed by Boom Publishers for illiterate learners. It is part of the literacy methods "AAP" and "Alfaschrift" but can be used independently. The website contains exercises for practicing writing the letters. By clicking on a letter, you hear the sound and a hand appears that shows how to write the letter.

www.steffie.nl is a website for low-educated learners. In a simple, interactive way, Steffie, an avatar, explains how ordinary things work such as how to use the internet, how to send an e-mail or buying train tickets. The learner can also practice certain acts in a virtual environment, such as buying a train ticket or paying with a bank card. This is a safe and easy way to become familiar with these topics and to learn how to do them independently.

4.7 Resources, websites and communities for L2 teachers

The following resources, websites and communities can be used by teachers of Dutch as a second language:

- The BVNT2 is a professional association for teachers of Dutch as a second language. There is no official teaching qualification for teachers of Dutch as an L2, but the BVNT2 compiled a competence profile for the professional L2 teacher. They also organize an annual conference. The website www.bvnt2.org contains the latest news on developments within civic integration.
- *LES* is a professional journal for teachers of Dutch as a second language, with practical topics that have to do with civic integration. The latest developments, teaching materials and policy changes are described and commented on. Older issues of the LES-journal can be accessed online through www.tijdschriftles.nl.
- "Tussen taal en wereld" is a multimedia training on CD-ROM for teaching skills of Dutch as an L2. It can be used by teachers who want to expand their didactic knowledge.
- www.digidact.org is a website that offers a didactical training for teachers of Dutch as a foreign language (which is a different target group, although it is useful for teachers of Dutch as a second language as well).
- <http://educatie.kennisnet.nl/> is a portal that provides links to other websites and materials that can be used in the L2 classroom.

4.7.1 Educational materials for parts of the Civic Integration Examination

The Civic integration examination is taken at CEFR-level A2 and consists of several parts, as explained in Section 4.8.

Table 7 outlines the training materials and their ICT components.

Exam part	Training materials	ICT component
Test spoken Dutch	Op Weg	Audio-cd
	Onderweg	Audio-cd
	Thuis in Nederlands	E-learning webbased
Knowledge of the Dutch society	Bagage	Website
	EHBN	cd-rom
	Wegwijzer	Audio-cd
	Thuis in Nederlands	E-learning web-based
Electronic Practical Exam	Thuis in Nederlands	E-learning web-based

Table 7: Civic integration examination resources

“Thuis in Nederlands” [At home in Dutch] IT-preneurs

In addition to learning the language, Thuis in Nederlands also prepares for the following exams: Knowledge of the Dutch society, the Spoken Dutch Test and the Electronic practical exam. It contains a separate module to prepare for the exams.

“Op weg” [on track], “Onderweg” [on the way], “Wegwijzer” [signpost] Boom publishers

Both “Op weg” and “Onderweg” can be used as a preparation for the Spoken Dutch Test. It consists of a book and audio-cd. “Op weg” prepares immigrants for the Spoken Dutch Test abroad, before they come to the Netherlands. This test is taken at CEFR level A-. In 20 lessons, all the different parts of the exam are trained: basic vocabulary, listen and repeat, questions, and opposites. “Onderweg” is built up in exactly the same manner, but it prepares for the Spoken Dutch Test taken in the Netherlands, which is taken at CEFR level A2.

“Wegwijzer” prepares for the exam on Knowledge of the Dutch society and consists of 20 lessons. Each lesson contains five assignments that are comparable to the assignments from the exam. The candidate can listen to the texts through the audio-cd.

"Bagage" [Luggage] Coutinho

Bagage prepares the immigrant for the exam on Knowledge of the Dutch society, which is part of the Civic Integration Examination. The book is centered on eight themes that are related to Knowledge of the Dutch society and is developed to stimulate group discussions in class. The language level of the method is A2. The website contains tests and checklists for the candidate so he can monitor his/her own progress

"EHBN" [First aid for Dutch] Malmberg

EHBN is a multimedia course for people who have just arrived in the Netherlands and who have to pass the exam on Knowledge of the Dutch Society. The course gives all the basic information to know the country's regulations and institutions. Each module starts with a film, followed by one or more multiple-choice questions. The film can display subtitles in five languages: Dutch, French, English, Turkish, Moroccan Arabic. The programme also has tests to check whether the course content is acquired

The audio-cd contains examples of questions asked in the real exam. "Baggage", 'EHBN' and "Wegwijzer" are training materials especially developed to prepare for Knowledge of the Dutch society. "EHBN" is an example of a multimedia course. Each module starts with a film that displays basic information about Dutch cultural and legal rules, regulations and institutions, followed by multiple-choice questions.

4.8 Exams and tests

ICTs in the Civic Integration Examination

In the Netherlands, all components of the civic integration examination are taken at CEFR level A2. *Figure 2* displays a schematic overview of the different parts of the Civic Integration Examination. The exam consists of two parts. "Assessment" and "Portfolio" are part of the de-central exam, and ICTs only play a minor role here. In the central exam, however, ICTs do take a prominent place. The "Test spoken Dutch", "Knowledge of Dutch society" and "Electronic Practical Exam" (the dark gray shaded cells in *Figure 2*) are administered in a digital form. Each of these exams will be described in detail below, apart from "Portfolio" since there is no ICT component in this part of the exam.

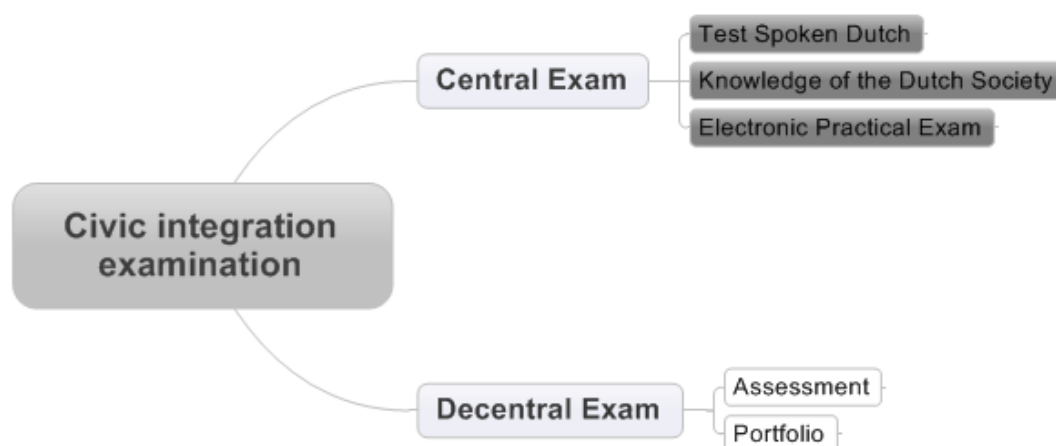


Figure 2: the Civic Integration Examination

The Test Spoken Dutch

The Test Spoken Dutch is a highly innovative test that is taken by telephone and takes approximately 13 minutes. The Test Spoken Dutch is taken abroad at CEFR level A1-, and is taken again as part of the civic integration examination in the Netherlands at CEFR level A2. Abroad, the test is taken at the embassy and the candidate receives an oral instruction in his/her own native language. When the candidate has understood the instructions, the telephone makes a connection to a computer and the test is taken automatically. Candidates get four types of questions: repeating sentences, short answer questions, sentence repeats and naming opposites. A computer (software programme related to a huge database of speech samples) assesses spoken language proficiency through the use of speech recognition technology. When the test is finished, the result can be called up through the candidate's unique Test Identification Number. To prepare for the *Test Spoken Dutch Abroad*, the candidate can order a set of study materials. *ABC* is a language method leading to CEFR-level A1, and *Ticket naar Nederland* [Ticket to the Netherlands] prepares for the *Test Spoken Dutch*, consisting of an audio-cd and a manual that is translated in eleven languages.

Knowledge of the Dutch Society

Knowledge of the Dutch society is a computer test and takes approximately 60 minutes. This test is also taken abroad. To prepare for the exam abroad, the candidate can order the film *Naar Nederland* [To the Netherlands] (translated in 13 languages) and a photo book containing 100 questions. In the exam, the candidate has to answer 30 questions with pictures on eight topics that are related to the Dutch society.

Electronic Practical Exam

The Electronic Practical Exam, only taken in the Netherlands, is also a computer test, which takes about 45 minutes. In this exam, the candidate has to answer approximately 40 questions on practical situations in one of two domains: "work", or "education, health and upbringing". The exam ends after 60 minutes.

Assessment

The assessment tests spoken and written language proficiency of immigrants in a functional context. Assessments have been developed for the following domains:

- (i) Citizenship
- (ii) Education, health and upbringing
- (iii) Work

Each candidate has to undergo three assessments. Here, it is important to randomly select a number of situations. Therefore, a system for randomisation has been developed. This system can be accessed through the website www.inburgeren.nl. Only the school's system administrator has access to this system. He prints an assessments set for the candidate and gives the set to the examiner. When the exam is finished, the results are administered into the system.

Other tests

Tests are often included in the overall language methods, usually for self-evaluation. They can be used by the L2 learner and the teacher to monitor the progress made in acquiring the Dutch language proficiency. "TOA" (Toolkit education and work), developed by Bureau ICE, can be used as a course-independent placement test or a test to monitor the progress made. Only TOA is a digital test system. Reading, listening and writing are administered digitally through a login on the computer, and tests from CEFR level A1 to CEFR level C1.

4.9 Main Messages

In the Netherlands there is wide range of ICT products for L2 learning and all language courses have an ICT component. The supply ranges from small tools for specific purposes or skills to complete courses that cover all skills and many different contexts for many different levels. In the past ten years a competitive market has developed for L2 learning materials. In line with the ongoing digitization of the Dutch society and the need for flexibility in teaching and learning for large and heterogeneous groups of immigrants, these L2 learning materials have almost all become completely or at least partially

digital. Although the Dutch government promotes the use of ICTs in L2 learning and for integration in general, the market is open to commercial parties and the government does not play a role anymore in the development of learning materials. As a consequence, there is a wealth of digital materials and most of them need to be paid for. The free materials on the web are often promotional materials or materials that were made and published by enthusiastic teachers.

Important parts of the compulsory integration examination plus the state exams for Dutch as a second language are in a digital format and have been so already for more than five years. This probably drives the development of digital training materials.

5 The Swedish landscape of ICT applications for L2 education

This chapter will provide an overview of ICT tools that are used in L2 education and will address research question 2:

Which ICT applications are actually being used in L2 education of adult migrants in the Netherlands and in Sweden?

In Sweden, there is no test (yet) given to applicants for citizenship or residence permits in order to assess their knowledge of the Swedish language and Swedish culture and society. Therefore, unlike in the Netherlands, no training materials for such purposes have been developed in Sweden. The one test that can be seen to some extent as a gate-keeper in Swedish society is instead the SFI-test, or test of Swedish For Immigrants. The test is taken at the end of the government sponsored beginner Swedish programme known as SFI and includes both oral and written language skills. Until 2010, this test was still offered in a paper-and-pencil + tape recorder form. A digital test has been implemented since 2010, and currently 6 different tests are used at 3 different levels (2 tests per level), corresponding to the 3 "tracks" that the SFI-programme is divided .This change may well bring about an increase in the availability of ICTs designed specifically to practice skills needed for a good test result.

This section provides information on the methodology used to get an overview of the ICT applications available to adult learners in L2 education in Sweden as well as a presentation of these materials, categorized by type of content.

5.1 Methodology

Sources

A net-search of "ICTs in SFI" yielded one source that provided an overview of several types of digital materials for learning Swedish. It is published by the Swedish Institute, an organisation for the promotion of Swedish culture and the Swedish language abroad, and is called "Swedish instruction on the net" (SI, 2010). In addition, the home page of the National Agency for Education (Skolverket) included links that focussed on the use of ICTs.

Selection criteria

Only ICT applications that are intended for use by learners of Swedish as a second or foreign language are included in this section. Some of them are not intended for adult

learners but could successfully be used also in adult education. Others are explicitly intended for the adult language learner. In some cases, Swedish is one of several languages that can be learned or practiced.

5.2 Results: an overview of ICT materials

The following ICT- application categories have been investigated for this overview:

- Web-sites with various useful links (instructional material and comprehensible information)
- Course materials available free of charge and pay-for use course materials
- Discussion/chat sites for language learners
- Tests and test practice materials

It was often the case that the ICT tool was part of a broader overall L2 training package, which meant that paper based materials were combined with digital materials, some interactive but some very traditional and closely resembling paper-and pencil exercises.

5.3 Educational web-sites

1. "Digitala spåret" (the Digital Track)

This web-site is designed and developed by the adult education teachers in municipality of Botkyrka, an immigrant-dense community on the outskirts of Stockholm, and everything here is available free of charge. It can be accessed directly at www.digitalsparet.se or through a link provided by the National Centre for SFI and Swedish as a Second Language (www.sfi.su.se). All materials are aimed at adults studying SFI or SAS, which is Swedish as a Second Language at one of the more advanced learner levels. Both easy-to-read information as well as instructional and practice materials are found here.

Among the general language course materials are:

- SFI Digital
- SAS Digital
- Mål 1 (Goal 1)
- Framåt (Forward)

These are all used in combination with paper-based materials. The content is focussing on providing both language instruction and knowledge of Swedish culture. The listening and reading sections progress gradually in complexity and speaking and writing exercises are added in the material to practice and process the information in the

talk/dialogue/text. The cultural component highlights traditional Swedish life-style and celebrations and could perhaps at times be seen as somewhat stereotypical.

Focussing more specific target areas within "Digitala Spåret" are links to:

- Safir (health-care oriented content)
- Bostad (about homes and residences)
- Historia (focussing on Swedish history)
- Kultur (Swedish culture in a contrastive intercultural perspective)

These can be used individually to pursue a special or professional interest of the learner, or they can be used in course groups for thematic work or, for Safir in particular, in the context of providing professional training as part of an integrated L2+job approach to SFI. The organisation of the content is less based on language complexity than on the factual content.

2. "Kreativ Pedagogik" (Creative Pedagogy)

This web-site has two sets of links:

- Nyheter och Media (News and Media)
- Ordböcker och Lexikon (Word-books and Dictionaries)

The first one lets the learner visit various Swedish newspapers, TV stations and radio programmes on-line. These materials are particularly useful as they provide an opportunity for the learners to go through the texts or spoken materials individually and repeatedly in order to gradually improve their comprehension of the content. Also, learners can match a newspaper story with an entry about the same event presented in a television newscast and/or the radio news. This provides a combination of written and spoken input about similar content using recurring vocabulary.

The second set of links consists of both regular translation dictionaries between Swedish and several languages represented among the learner's mother tongues ("Lexin" links) and Swedish-only word-books with explanations/definitions in Swedish (for example, "Växthuset" – meaning "the green house" – links). In addition, there are multimedia presentations from two of these sources:

- o Lexin: Bildteman (Pictures with text) and Lexinanim (Words/text with animations)
- o Växthuset: Bildteman (Pictures with sound) and Dialogteman (dialogs with text and sound)

5.4 Course materials

Here are materials that have as their main component paper-based materials that are supplemented by additional exercises that are done on computer. Extra reading material is occasionally also provided. These additions can be made available through a log-in code that the teacher gives to the learners, or made available on a CD-ROM which comes with the book(s). They are offered either free of charge (through Stockholm University) or pay-for-use materials offered by private providers.

"SOMM=Svenska Och Mycket mera" (Swedish and much more)

Free. It consists of a set of booklets that each focus on one topic/theme and each has a level of difficulty assigned to it. The learners get an access code to log on with by their teachers.

"Kom loss på svenska" (Get going in Swedish)

Free. A course package that is intended for exchange learners learning beginners' Swedish but also useful for SFI learners. However, these learners have to know English as all instructions/explanations in this material are given in English. The paper-based text can also be read on-screen by using the CD that comes with the package and has listening materials and all the exercises, usually with self-correcting response.

International Sweden University programmes (ISU)

Pay-for-use. This material is provided by the University of Lund and consists of teacher-led internet-based distance courses. The difficulty levels are graded according to the European Language Portfolio A-C scale and the range is A1 to C1. An internet-based distance course especially tailored to meet the needs of foreign health care workers (from medical doctors to nursing assistants) is also available.

LearnSweden

Pay-for-use. Internet-based distance courses and related material. In this books-plus-CDs package there are two main components: a rather traditional Swedish language course and another type of materials that focus on factual content about Sweden and Swedish culture.

Liber Hermods

Pay-for-use. Here are course materials suitable for both younger and older learners. There are packages for primary school level, secondary school level, and for SFI. The main difference is in the content with a much stronger focus on work life in Sweden in

the SFI materials. The digital components depend on the printed material and are found on a disc.

Swedish Online

Pay-for use. This web-based intermediate course is offered by the University of Melbourne and is intended for independent study. It is not for beginners but presupposes that the learner has already learned as much Swedish as is usually covered in one of the more commonly used paper-based course materials available on the market, both for learning Swedish in Sweden, such as "På svenska (In Swedish), or studying the language abroad, e.g "Svenska utifrån" (Swedish from the outside).

"Webbkurs i svenska som främmande språk – Lingua2: svenska" (Web course in Swedish as a foreign language – Lingua2: Swedish)

Pay-for-use. The Swedish Institute provides this course package intended for university learners and available at beginner to intermediate levels. It has a strong emphasis on oral skills in addition to reading and writing that seem to get most of the attention in other course materials. Swedish culture and society are seen as important aspects of the course, which is primarily intended for studying Swedish abroad but also could be used by learners of Swedish in Sweden.

5.5 Discussion/chat sites for language learners

Here are materials intended for language learners of all kinds, not only Swedish as a second or foreign language.

"Diskussionsgrupp – Vi studerar svenska" (Discussion group – We study Swedish)

The primary focus here is on practicing the Swedish that is being learned, or has been learned, by the participants. Native Swedish-speakers or very advanced learners can also take part, sometimes from another country than Sweden.

"Glosor.eu" (Glossary.eu)

A vocabulary exchange site. Many different European languages are represented and the focus is on creating vocabulary quizzes or practicing vocabulary by using someone else's quiz that is already available here.

"Lingofriends"

A world-wide language site where people from all over the globe can chat and practice a variety of language skills on a wide range of topics.

"Resurscentrum"

Materials and exercises for all who learn or teach a number of languages.

5.6 Tests and test practice materials

"Dialang"

European Language Portfolio based test of Swedish and other languages. The test results are reported in terms of levels A1 (beginner) to C2 (native-like) but there is no answer key and no feed-back on the responses. Focus is on diagnosis and self-assessment, and the test measures five language skills: listening comprehension, conversation, speaking/speech, reading, and writing.

"Folkuniversitetets språktest i svenska" (The Folk University's Swedish language test)

Placement tests at different levels for those starting Swedish courses at "Folkuniversitetet" (one of the independent adult education providers). The tests come with answer keys and can thus be use for self assessment as well, without any intention of taking one of Folkuniversitetet's courses.

"Interaktiva tester i svenska och svenska 2" (Interactive tests of Swedish and Swedish as a Second language)

For self-assessment and practice only. Feed-back is provided on incorrect answers, and both native and non-native speakers are intended as target groups.

"Nationella prov i sfi" (National tests of SFI)

Older SFI-tests are available for practice and self-assessment. It also provides an opportunity to become familiar with and get experience with the test format.

"Swedex"

Tests at the European language Portfolio levels A2 and B1. The tests proper cannot be accessed on-line, but the site offers sample tests and specifications as to what skills need to be practiced to get a passing grade on the tests.

"Tisus" (Test of Swedish for University Studies)

Entrance language exam for studies at Swedish universities and colleges. This test has to be taken and passed by every person who does not have a passing grade in Swedish in a Swedish high school diploma. Children of Swedish parents who have been educated abroad also have to do this, and this web-site offers an opportunity to practise the test format. The test proper is not offered on-line.

All these materials are available free of charge. Many of the ICT test applications can be used in an instructional context but are primarily intended for individual practice and self-assessment done at a home computer, in a computer lab in a school setting, or at a library.

5.7 Main messages

In Sweden there is also a fair supply of ICT materials for learning Swedish as a second language, although it is much less than in the Netherlands and not so differentiated towards the different target groups and the different language skills.

Many web-based products have been developed by schools, universities and teachers and are free of use. There is only a small commercial offer of ICT training materials for Swedish as a second language for immigrants. Some ICTs offer an integrated approach to language learning and integration into society, others are mainly focused on language training.

The expectation is that the introduction of a digital SFI exam will drive the development and use of more ICTs for second language learning in Sweden.

6 Opinions of key-informants in the Netherlands

6.1 Introduction

The use of ICTs in L2 education of adult migrants is a new phenomenon, which does not seem to have been studied yet in any systematic way. In fact, if we refer to information concerning suppliers of training services and number of teachers involved, suppliers of teaching tools/content and technology/platforms where ICTs are used, we notice that systematic information on the supply sector of L2 language training for adult migrants across the EU is not available. It is with the present study that we aim at setting up a milestone in this scarcely explored landscape and in so doing, the analysis that we present here refers to the opinions of different stakeholders involved in the field.

This chapter deals with the interviews that have been carried out with 12 key informants spread across a range of organizations that all play a role in the field of ICT applications, L2 learning and migrants in the Netherlands. These organizations were divided into six categories and account for the Ministry of VROM (Ministry of Housing, Spatial planning and the environment), municipal authorities and an advice body consulted by the government (the macro-social scale); publishers, application makers, course providers and scientists (the meso-social scale), L2 education professionals (school heads and teachers) engaged in the field of ICTs for L2 learning (the micro-social scale). A topic guide for the interviews of each category of key informants can be found in Appendix 1: Interviews with key informants.

Although we have decided to divide the key informants in categories, and report on them according to their positioning either on a macro, meso or the micro scale, this structuring does not intend to suggest that we are engaging with a top-down reality. Rather, what we aim to show here is how these scales interact with each other. In so doing, we also strive to highlight the gaps within and across the three scales.

6.2 The macro-social scale

From the discourse gathered from informants working at the ministry (VROM), as well as from municipal authorities and from an advisory body to the government (ITTA-sector education), there is a common strong emphasis on the new ethos that the integration process has taken on board. Integration does not have just an emphasis on learning the Dutch language. Rather, integration has taken on board the meaning of practical

participation within mainstream Dutch society. In order to cater for this participation in the most effective way possible, the integration trajectory has been formulated according to learning profiles that reflect the goals of the learner: work, childcare, (general) societal participation, and entrepreneurship. In all of these profiles the ministry promotes the inclusion of an e-learning component, ICT tools and an e-coach through which the learner can be stimulated to use the Dutch language in applied situations.¹⁴ Further, all the informants in the macro-social scale showed a strong awareness that the integration trajectory can not be the same for every learner. Rather, its success rate is strongly dependent on the learner's own educational background, e. g., low, intermediate, high. Hence, research dealing with an optimal level of learning effort/requirements has recently been set up.

Another common element that has emerged from the interviews is that there is a lack of clarity about what ICTs are. Further, when ICTs are defined, there is a lack of clarity about what good ICT applications are. The ministry of VROM, for instance, has adopted as a definition for ICTs any component of a learning method that involves the use of multimedia. Yet again, this definition remains fairly broad and it ranges from paper-based methods that have been digitized to ICT applications that are 100% web-based and focus on e-learning, whereby e-learning is addressed by the Ministry as the most purposeful form of learning. This is seen so because it allows the migrant to learn at his/her own pace both within and outside the formal learning environments. Hence the strong investment of the ministry in initiatives like 'E-TV'¹⁵ and 'E-cafe'.

Although, at ministerial level, there is no policy that regulates the presence and use of ICTs in L2 courses aimed at preparing for the integration exam, both the ministry and the municipal authorities that have been interviewed are searching for 'good practices'. That is to say, practices that show how the use of ICTs marks a clear improvement in the results scored by the learners and shortens the times of the integration process. This is why the ministry, both through municipalities and out of its own initiative, is assigning prizes for the best results and for the most innovative applications.

Beside the many positive signals that emerged from the interviews with key informants in this scale, there are still barriers that ICTs have to face in order to play a prominent role in the field of integration and L2 language learning for migrants. First, there is the lack of policy about ICTs in L2 learning for migrants both at governmental and municipal

¹⁴ It must be made clear though that the Dutch government neither develops training materials nor finances the development of them directly (anymore). It only encourages certain developments by innovation awards.

¹⁵ <http://www.etv.nl/>

level. While the ministry is engaged in developing general policy lines on this matter, three of the four civil servants working for municipalities in the field of migration and integration reported either to know little about ICTs in this field or that ICTs did not play a strong role in the integration process. Further, obstacles to ICT range from lack of coaching from teachers to newly-arrived migrants with a low education profile when using ICTs, to the lack of infrastructures for using ICTs to the costs that ICTs bring along with themselves. It is about costs that a distinction should be drawn. On the one hand, the key informants in this field talk about the costs that are bound to ICTs as such and to costs related to its implementation in schools. It costs much to develop good ICTs and, at present, neither municipal authorities nor the ministry are willing to invest in research aimed at the realization of new products. On the contrary, as it will be made clear in case study 3 about the *NT2 Nieuwslezer*, we see that municipalities, educational institutions and single learners are drawn back by the costs that come along with innovative ICTs, where these costs are implementation costs and subscription costs (user licences or school licences).

All key informants interviewed in this scale are well aware that ICTs have become a self-evident part of the everyday life of migrants. In their view, nevertheless, not all migrants have a laptop or a PC at home. They surely have a mobile phone, an ICT device that they could use for L2 language learning.

6.3 The meso-social scale

In the following section, we start from 1) publishers, we then move on to 2) developers of ICT applications and we finish with 3) course providers 4) scientists engaged either with the development of ICT applications or that were asked for consultancy on L2 learning, integration and ICTs.

For both publishers and application makers, there is a difference between those who have added ICT components to their (paper-based) didactic material and those application makers who are either working on the development of platforms and ICT applications alone and who did not start from printed material. For course providers, instead, there is a sharp awareness of the benefits and obstacles of the use of ICTs. These insights gained though are solely from large course providers. It is only through their opinion about how the course provision market behaves that we can assess the role of ICTs in courses organized by small providers. The latter, in fact, either did not reply to the request of being interviewed or explicitly refused to be interviewed for this study.

6.3.1 From books to ICTs for language learning

The analysis starts with the publishers, and more specifically, from Mrs M. In her view, new methods need to have a fine balance between the ICT component and the book. Though the new trend is to have learners starting off with ICTs and then moving to the book and carry out group tasks. ICTs though cannot take the place of the teacher who still remains a key figure in the learning process of an L2 as s/he helps learners to understand what and where they might have gone wrong. Another challenge that this publisher is trying to tackle through the use of ICTs is the strong heterogeneity that teachers are confronted with in class. If one manages to implement an adaptive ICT application then the teacher has one task less and can stay more focused on the learners on their individual learning trajectory. It is for these reasons that it is important to invest in ICTs. Furthermore, in her view, the integration market asks publishers, application makers, teachers and learners to be more flexible, hence not anymore to learn the Dutch language as a whole. Rather, learners have to learn those specific language skills and vocabulary that correspond to the specific profile that suits them best, and focus on those bits of Dutch language that can enable them to participate in mainstream society as soon as possible. In such a way, ICTs shorten the times required for participation. The language skills gathered by learners through the integration trajectory that they have to follow though seem to be by far not sufficient for learners to access the job market. This is why, in Mrs M's view, publishers are now trying to fulfil, through the use of ICTs, the demand brought by this new niche. That is, learners who have completed their integration trajectory, who have gained the integration certificate and with it, a permanent residence permit, but who still lack the level of Dutch that enables them to work. In her view ICTs seem to be the remedy for this lack, given that these former learners do need to develop their Dutch further from home and do not have the time to follow courses in formal learning environments. It is therefore a strong driver of ICTs that it enables people to work outside the classroom after they have already used ICTs in the classroom: *'they have the basics and now they can stand on their own feet'*.

As for the obstacles of ICTs, instead, there might be the lack of knowledge of how to use ICTs from the side of the teachers. Publishers do feel that teachers of Dutch as an L2 are much more adventurous than those teachers who are engaged with Dutch as L1 in secondary schools. A further obstacle has to do with the money investment that ICTs requires for publishers. While books may be used for six years, the updating of ICT-based learning materials requires much more effort and it has to happen more often than with books. The life cycle of an ICT application is rather two years and then it has to be updated again.

6.3.2 *From ICTs for language learning to ICTs for societal skills*

The challenge in the development of good material finds its core in the low-educated learners, which, according to Mrs. S. from an ICT development company, make up for the vast majority of learners who need coaching when dealing with ICTs. The biggest obstacle for ICTs is, in her view, rendering quite difficult topics – like signing a contract, history of the Netherlands, cultural issues – in a language that is accessible to people with a low mastering of the Dutch language. That is why a good ICT application should not only deal with language but should also try to stimulate the learner through different channels, such as images, sounds, colours as well as good voice-overs so that learners feel that they are dealing with another human being rather than with a machine. In other words, ICTs have the potential of transforming language learning into an activity that caters for the over-all development of the learner. It grants him/her the possibility to participate in mainstream society through trying out these situations beforehand. Such emphasis on practical situations is a reflection of a shift in the discourse around integration. Following the opinion of all the application makers that were interviewed we should not talk anymore about integration but about participation. All methods that are currently being developed, according to the application makers that have been interviewed, focus for a great deal on learning outside the formal learning environment. In such a way, the learning of Dutch as L2 that happens in the classroom is strengthened through the skills that learners develop about society at large. This principle can be summed up in the sentence: 'not learn and then do, but learn to do'.

ICTs, however, still seem to encounter some major obstacles at both institutional and classroom level. At institutional level, e-learning is envisaged as a good form of learning that calls upon the societal emancipation of the learner. Yet again, the learner needs to be monitored in his/her progress and in the tasks s/he has been assigned to carry out. This implies that schools should cater for contact time for effective monitoring. This contact time is, however, very expensive in particular for big language course providers. These big course providers have to face the task to match the learners' demands, be low in their costs and still be competitive in terms of ICTs. The application makers, also in line with what we see emerging from case study two, do have quite some problems in catering for these demands. At classroom level, following both Mrs S.'s and Mr W.'s opinion (both experts working in the field of ICT application development), teachers are key figures in the process of making ICTs effective for the learner. There can be no good ICT applications without the support, coaching and knowledge of good language teachers. Yet again, teachers are often not enough qualified or experienced for working with ICTs, and because of this reason they might either misunderstand the goals of a

certain application or limit its usage and choose a much more frontal approach to language teaching.

Another obstacle that has been pointed out by Mr W. has to do with the fact that the costs of ICT development are very high. For a good scientific back-up that involves the expertise of scientists engaged in research on L2 learning and more specifically, vocabulary development, there has to be a push coming from governmental, provincial or municipal funds. At this stage though, given the difficult time of economic recession, all financial funds regarding ICTs and innovation have been frozen.

Last but not least, a potential driver for ICTs is to make learning possible anywhere, anytime. Mr. V., from an ICT educational provider, has reported that learners spend a lot of their time in using a mobile phone, using means of public transport and in leisure activities among which we find watching television. In the best of cases, only some 20% of their time could be spent in a formal learning environment or by being engaged with tasks that have been assigned during formal language learning. Given that the amount of formal learning input cannot be changed because of the enormous costs that are bound to paying teachers for one extra hour, it would be much more profitable to have funds that allow the expansion of ICTs aimed at second language learning in informal environments. In his view, it is middle aged women from a migrant background that could profit from this the most. This is so either because they are often at home or because they are the last to have a go at the home PC and as such they would gain enormous benefits in working on their language skills either with their mobile phone, or when watching television.

6.3.3 *Providing courses*

The views concerning course providers have been gathered from Ms D., director of a training centre in Delft, and Ms P., who work for a College and has shed light on the workings of small course providers. It has to be highlighted that, also on the basis of what emerges from the interviews with civil servants at ministerial and at municipal level, ICTs are needed no matter who is providing the course. However, a matter that touches mainly small language providers is that those teachers engaged with small course providers tend to be conservative in their approach to ICTs. Understanding the use of a CD as ICTs is not enough though it is often sold as a valid ICT application. This anecdote brings us back to the problems at the macro-social scale about what good use of ICT is and of the need for good practice sharing and tailored policy.

6.3.4 Scientists

The four scientists that were interviewed all agreed on one main issue: ICTs are key to second language learning and this is done in order to diminish costs as well as to diminish the time that it takes a migrant to integrate and participate in Dutch society. This is one of the reasons why ICTs have become included in the curriculum for second language learning. However, it not always easy to prove that ICT use is always good or that ICTs are really money-saving.

When ICTs are interpreted in terms of adaptive learning and more specifically speech recognition technology for adaptive learning, an area that has strong potential at present for improving people's communication skills in an L2, or in terms of improving the breadth and depth of someone's vocabulary, then ICTs become extremely costly. It follows that in order to have good ICTs, there have to be investments to be made that support research. The use of feedback on pronunciation, for instance, seem to have brought many good results and there is currently an application under development that can give feedback not only in terms of pronunciation but also in terms of morphology and syntax.¹⁶ Not everyone though expects that learners would want to receive the same kind of feedback. Some wish to receive grammar feedback, others wish to receive feedback about how to tackle a situation and which are the sentences that should be used in that particular context; this is the reason why scientists plead for strongly adaptive ICTs rather than ICTs that address all low educated learners through the same feedback modes.

All scientists also confirmed drivers that had already emerged from other sectors. One of these drivers is the anonymity of the learner. Having a learner make a mistake in front of the class can freeze the production of this learner for much longer than when the same learner makes a mistake in front of the screen. The scientists that were interviewed all agreed with the presence of an e-coach or some form of help that can sensitize learners to reflect on their own errors and on how they behave when facing ICTs and language learning. In other words why do they keep on clicking if they realise that they have made a mistake? Yet again, repetition is the key to language learning that has often been attributed to ICTs as one of its main advantages. Following Mr A., a scientist in second language acquisition and vocabulary development, repetition is nothing new. It was already there when learning a language was done with the help of tapes and tape recorders. To confirm this, he reported an anecdote about a colleague who was learning Turkish. This colleague had to visit three times a week one of his parents who was old

¹⁶ 'My Pronunciation Coach – MPC', under development at Radboud University Nijmegen. See <http://lands.let.ru.nl/~strik/research/MPC.html> .

and needed care. Driving his car was therefore a great chance for this colleague to learn Turkish, repeating words out loud, with no one else in the car beside him, and with the possibility to listen to the voice of different speakers of Turkish and have the tape to repeat a certain sentence as many times as it was needed. In practice this anecdote points to a key driver of ICTs in L2 learning for migrants. That is good ICTs have to respond to the specific needs of the learner and use different channels that allow the learner to be exposed to accents, to texts that deal with issue in the society that they have entered. Another issue raised by scientists is that ICTs have the chance to use the L1 of the learner as a channel for developing the L2. It seems though that this potential for ICTs has remained unexploited yet.

6.4 The micro-social scale

As for the micro-social level, three teachers were interviewed and some 50 teachers were asked to respond to three main questions in an interactive workshop by CINOP on a conference for L2 teachers in the Netherlands.¹⁷ Their experiences with ICTs, L2 learning and newly arrived migrants, ranged from extensive to limited.

First we start with the three teachers. Starting from the positive and extensive experience with ICTs, one of the teachers had implemented an ICT application, the Virtual Classroom. This application worked in such a way that it allowed her learners, mainly women, to participate in the lessons without having to leave their homes, while their husbands were at work. In such a way, women could interact through the use of webcams and PC that would allow them to talk to each other, as if they were in class. The role of the teacher moved from being a PC usage teacher to that of an e-coach. In her view an e-coach should be able to give her learners advice and pinpoint to them what they are doing wrong with their language use, both syntactically and semantically. An advantage of this application was the strong learning component and the strong emancipator potential of these applications. As the teacher reports: *'these women were finally alone, it was their territory, they were finally allowed to make mistakes with language but also to talk about women's matters without someone looking over their shoulders'*.

The *Virtual Classroom* could not substitute the actual formal instruction time as the learners were asked to attend in order to complete their portfolios for the integration trajectory. Although successful, the teacher has reported that she has found quite some

¹⁷ Conference on ICT and Blended Learning by the professional association for teachers of Dutch as a second language (the BVNT2) on 22 January 2010

obstacles at institutional level that brought her to give up this method and go back to language teaching in the formal learning environment. The school authorities did not see it fit to have Dutch language teaching taking place in this unconventional manner. Furthermore, the school where she worked was not so keen on investing in ICTs because it was seen as too expensive and not as a guarantee of success. This teacher could therefore be characterized as a 'lone ranger': because of her passion for ICTs she tried to set up an innovative ICT application but her need for development got caught amongst other demands from her institution. These big L2 course providers have to come to grip with problems like decreasing learner numbers, high drop-out rates and fierce competition as a consequence of a privatised market. These are all elements that, in her view, have pushed school authorities not to persevere with her approach and what finally brought her to say *'guys, I quit with it'*.

At the opposite end of the scale, we have two teachers currently employed at a major regional educational centre who did not share such a drive for ICTs. The first, M., is in her late 50s and about to retire. The second, L., is in her early 30s. Both work at the same institution, both have to deal with ICTs. M. did not feel confident about her knowledge of ICTs: *'it takes me longer than the learners to get around to it, nevertheless you have to do it'*. L. instead reported to find it really scary having to work with ICTs. She also says that she can see the benefits of it: *'learners learn two skills at one go, how to use a computer plus the language'*. L. is uncertain though about whether ICTs are actually improving the integration chances of her learners. She adds: *'and what do you get at the end of working with a PC? Nothing, an automated applause. You have not talked to anyone, you have not been out there, you have carried out your task right in front of a screen'*.

During a workshop for L2 teachers they were asked to respond to three questions that had been explained within the wider context of the research:

1. What positive aspects does the use of ICTs have for you as an L2 teacher within your teaching context?
2. What negative aspects or barriers do you see when using ICTs as an L2 teacher within your teaching context?
3. What is necessary to overcome these barriers?

To the first question they gave the following answers (the answers were clustered):

- ICTs give the opportunity for self-directed learning, for learning at one's own pace, at one's own level. It gives teachers opportunities for differentiation during lessons.

- It gives teachers time to do other activities with the group, like speaking.
- ICTs and specifically the web offer a wealth of authentic content. It makes it easier for teachers to offer interesting content. The students get motivated by real content with audio and video.
- ICTs offer the opportunity to learn independently of time and place. This is a positive point for learners who have a job and need to study at their own time.
- ICTs offer tools for diagnosis of the language level and of specific language problems.
- ICTs make life easier for the teacher, who can choose amongst so many sources and exercises.
- ICTs for language learning give learners the opportunity to learn digital skills at the same time as linguistic skills.
- There is a wealth of free available materials on the web.
- Teachers can monitor the progress of each learner through the specific administrative module that comes with the method.

The second question about the barriers generated the following responses:

- Technical problems. This was the main barrier for most of the teachers. Problems ranged from hardware to software to network problems.
- A lack of qualified staff that can deal with this type of technical problems.
- Another type of problems were not really technical but had to do with ICT related administration like login codes (that got lost), licence numbers, administration of results within different applications and within the school administration.
- Most teachers admitted that their own digital skills were not sufficient for dealing with the latest ICTs for L2. Most teachers experience a lot of 'techno-stress' and this makes them reluctant to try out new ICTs.
- It takes a lot of time to find out what an ICT application offers for the learners and the teachers. Lack of time.
- Finances: the most interesting pieces of software and L2 methods cost money.
- Management often sees ICTs as a means of reducing contact hours and cutting costs on teachers, whereas teachers are needed to guide the learners through the ICTs. There is a tendency to get more learners in a group, less contact time etc.
- Most teachers have the experience that learners at the lowest levels (illiterate, low literate) are frightened away from computers and ICTs and often fake personal problems (headache, stomach ache) so as to be able to leave the classroom.
- It is difficult to see and manage what learners are doing. Are they learning something?
- Not all learners have a PC or laptop at home.

- ICTs sometimes give teachers the feeling of becoming superfluous as a teacher. Learners stay at home because they can do the exercises at home.
- It is difficult for teachers to find their way through the enormous supply of ICTs for L2 and make the right choices.

The last question focused on what would be needed to overcome these barriers. These are the three main answer categories that were mentioned by all teachers. The answers were so overwhelmingly congruent within this group of teachers that we think that they reflect pretty well what the L2 teaching community as a whole thinks about this issue:

1. Institutes need more PCs and software, plus internet access, not only in the open learning centres where learners work independently, but in every classroom where Dutch is taught as a second language. The hardware and software should be updated regularly.
2. Teachers need support from a good technical helpdesk, qualified staff that can instantly solve technical problems.
3. Teachers need time and opportunities for training and updating their digital skills, general skills, but also specific skills for learning how to implement specific language learning software.

6.5 Main messages

All experts agree that ICTs offer great opportunities for L2 learning. The drivers that are most mentioned are the opportunities that ICTs can offer to cater for different trajectories and for learners with different needs (different educational background and different learning goals). At the macro-social scale it is expected that ICTs shorten the learning time and improve the results. This is often a driver for policies although there is no hard evidence that can prove that certain ICTs lead to these results.

Participation is seen as the main goal of an integration course and L2 learning is an important part of it. E-learning is seen as an important form of ICT application as it is expected to offer opportunities for independent learning. This could, on the other hand, also become a barrier, as some experts that were interviewed by us see many pitfalls. Also in E-learning environments a competent teacher plays a pivotal role and this is not always foreseen in the amount of contact time that teachers are allocated. It is also not clear enough what is seen as 'good' use of ICTs or E-learning for L2 educations.

All experts stress the importance of informal learning outside class and the role that ICTs could play there, not only at a PC but also via other channels like TV and mobile phones.

A driver that has not yet been used to its full potential is the opportunities that ICTs offer to use the L1 as a helpful tool to learn the L2.

At the meso-social scale the developers and publishers stress the importance of the role of the L2 teacher. They develop ICTs in which the teacher still has an important role as coach, organizer and speaking partner. At the micro-social scale the teachers see many drivers and positive effects of ICTs for L2 learning. In fact, they cannot imagine anymore how to teach without. There are still some important barriers, though: they need more ICT equipment, they need more technical support and they need more opportunities to develop their own ICT skills related to L2 learning.

An important bottleneck between the macro-social scale and the micro-social scale (the 'work floor') emerged from the interviews. Policy makers tend to assume that the use of ICTs for L2 learning always leads to better results and a reduction of learning time. This leads to policies at lower levels to reduce learning trajectories and contact time with teachers. Teachers often feel wedged between opposing demands: their management expects them to teach more learners within less time and learners need more guidance and coaching when working with ICTs. And as teachers they need more time to get acquainted with the many different ICTs that are available.

7 Opinions of key informants in Sweden

7.1 Introduction

The seven key informants in Sweden were divided into two main categories, one including experts within the areas of research and development, the other made up of key people at the policy and management level. All informants received a questionnaire, a Swedish translation of the corresponding Dutch documents, one for each category of respondents, and seven of them responded by e-mail and submitted their answers in writing. Some questions were identical in both versions of the questionnaire, while others were specific to each informant category.

7.2 Responses from informants in research and development

Four informants in the category research and development answered the questions in this questionnaire. Informant A is the head of the Institute for Swedish as a second language at a Swedish University and is also involved in research into digital applications in language development such as the setting up of vocabulary corpora and thematic databases in various professional fields, for example medicine. Informant B is a researcher at a Swedish University and is a national expert on the use of computers and digital tools in language education generally in Sweden. Informant C works at the National Centre for SFI and Swedish as a second language, and informant D is working on the development of the new digitalized SFI-test which is carried out at the University of Stockholm.

Informant A sees the advantages of ICT applications in adult second language learning as being the same as in any other language learning context. Working digitally makes the process adaptable to individual needs, it allows for independent studying, and offers access to diagnostic tests to monitor progress. The only disadvantage is that some individuals may have a problem handling the technology due to insufficient language or technology skills. Outside the classroom, informant A mostly sees ICTs as helpful for newly arrived adults in the home where language promoting activities can be accessed on the Internet as added practice over and above what they learn in a more traditional school setting. She also mentions the possibility of moving applications, such as dictionaries, into an I-phone in order to have translations readily available at all times.

In terms of integration, informant A is convinced that in order to function in Swedish society, it is absolutely necessary for recently arrived migrants to learn as soon as possible to use ICTs to do banking, get information through web pages and use the Internet to purchase goods and/or services. This she sees as a vital part of the integration process and a prerequisite for functioning independently in Sweden. She thinks language instruction for new arrivals is not focusing much on using technology and digital tools to introduce the learners to Swedish society, although even new-comers can use computers in a public library and usually have a mobile phone, through which they could access information electronically. Using ICTs applications in the classroom depends to a large extent, according to informant A, on the availability of both technical equipment and software.

Informant B definitely views ICTs and digital tools as an important resource in this language learning context, as is the case in every language learning context. For recently arrived adults, it may be even more beneficial as different sources on the Internet can provide frames of reference to the new environment in the learners own language and in comparison with his/her own culture. As ICTs are such an integral part of present-day Swedish society, migrants will need to learn to navigate the technology outside the classroom. In the classroom, digital learning offers flexibility and rapid progress, if the learner is motivated to study in this way. If the incentive to use computers as part of the language learning process is low, the "threshold" becomes very high and can become an obstacle rather than a support. The availability of language practice materials, current information and communication with other people is, however, a good reason to introduce recent arrivals to the world of computers. Informal use based on personal needs and social contacts is, according to informant B, the best way to assist the new-comer in the integration process, provided there is also an interest in and a need for learning the Swedish language.

Informant C highlights the benefits of involving many of the senses in the learning process and using a learning style that suits the individual. As a member of society one also has a need to become familiar with ICT applications to find information and access the labour market. Possible problems could be with adults who are unfamiliar with the technology and are not used to independent learning. If given proper guidance by a teacher, however, informant C can only think of advantages to adult language learners developing digital skills along with their language proficiency. This in turn enables the learners to participate in distance courses on-line in addition to their regular instruction or instead of it, which allows the learner to work and study at the same time.

Digital sources are important to integration as they invite society into the classroom, says informant C, and learners can familiarize themselves with the professional language of various work places. They can also practice creating digital portfolios and CV's as well as using mobile phones to access information about both the language and society. She sees a parallel process of language learning and integration through the use of ICT applications in SFI, and separating the two would be unfortunate in that the goal of the education is for the learners to be fully functional in Swedish society, and for this a holistic approach is necessary.

Informant D mentions the possibility of combining text, sound and image into stimulating language learning units as an advantage of working with digital materials. ICTs also offer the option of studying on-line and make learning material available at any time during the day (or night) when the learner has time to study. This enables the adult language learners to hold down a job while improving their language skills. In addition, it offers increased opportunities to individualise the content and the pace of the learning process. A disadvantage, as he sees it, is that much material that is available today is not truly making use of what digital technology has to offer but is often a "screen version" of printed paper-based materials. Working on this kind of traditional exercises alone in front of a computer removes the interaction that could take place if the learners were involved in more language promoting activities in a classroom.

When it comes to integration, informant D stresses that knowing how to use a computer is necessary for managing one's every-day life in Sweden. Using ICTs in language education then teaches the learners how to use a computer and thereby empowers them to access information digitally outside the classroom as well. He suggests practicing this by using authentic digital sources in the classroom and teach the newly arrived adult how to find addresses and phone numbers, checking bus schedules and ordering government forms on-line. The Internet has made it possible to bring the outside world into the classroom, and authentic communication can be practiced through the use of e-mails, chat rooms etc. The new SFI-test will include these kinds of authentic language uses, and informant D hopes this will bring about a greater willingness to develop learning materials, by publishers or by individual teachers.

7.3 Responses from informants in educational management and policy-making

All three informants in this category are operating at the municipal level. Informant E is the principal of all municipal SFI education in a Swedish big city and manages the

publicly funded programmes in the city. In the same city, but responsible for all adult education that is municipally funded, is informant F, while informant G works with adult education issues for the municipal government in a different Swedish city.

When newly arrived adult migrants come to Informant E's city, they are assigned an SFI class and a workplace for their practicum experience. A strong emphasis today is developing the ability in the learners to become self-supporting at the end of the programme. So-called blended learning, which integrates ICT applications into the more traditional classroom activities, is supported at the municipal level, and the schools have to present a work plan where they show how they will achieve this. Based on this information and on-going up-dating, the schools become "digitally certified". An effort to make individual development plans available digitally to SFI learners throughout the study and practicum process has not yet resulted in the intended integrative approach to the learning process. Only as long as the learner is at the same school can he/she access a study plan digitally.

Both low- and high-educated adults benefit, according to informant E, from using ICTs and digital tools in SFI education. It increases individualisation and meets the needs of society. Quality control is also facilitated by schools using ICT applications, and this is important when the municipality purchases instruction from a variety of private providers. In all, eight different independent schools are currently supplying instruction to the municipally funded SFI programmes in the informant city. All these have to be willing to adopt a "blended approach" to language learning. In the next five years, informant E sees an even greater role played by ICTs in SFI as the SFI-test is being offered digitally from this year on. In addition, all information about continued adult education after the SFI programme, as well as all application forms for such courses, are available digitally in a web catalogue.

Informant F answers that among recent arrivals to his city, every refugee is assessed and, when deemed capable of benefiting from instruction, assigned an SFI class. Other kinds of migrants, such as "love migrants", labour migrants and guest students, who have other sources of income than the government subsidies that SFI otherwise entitles to, are also directed to an SFI programme. There is a study counsellor available to assist these applicants. The municipality orders ICT applications for the schools and provides seminars and in-service training for the teachers as well as paying for extra study hours for learners to receive training in using digital materials and tools. There is also follow-up and evaluation of how the schools work in terms of using ICT applications.

When it comes to integration, informant F sees only advantages with giving SFI learners the opportunity to develop digital skills as soon as possible. This is necessary to participate in our digitalised society, she says, and to seek and get information and knowledge. It is also needed by these adults to be able to keep up with their children's development and learning in school and in Swedish society at large. Furthermore, being able to use e-mail and other digital communication tools, new arrivals can easily communicate with friends and family far away. Using ICTs definitely helps low-educated recent migrants to bridge difficulties encountered in the integration process, according to informant F, and the same is true for highly educated adult migrants as well. A variety of different education service providers is beneficial, she says, as it provides flexibility for the learners, especially when the concomitant practicum sessions become part of the SFI experience. Different professional training programmes can be combined with the regular SFI language instruction. They all work with ICTs, which is mandatory for those who supply services to the municipality funded education, and the on-line work also increases the contacts with the governmental employment agency. In the future, informant F also sees ICT applications becoming an even bigger component in SFI education as a result of the digitalisation of the SFI-test. This means that all learners must be able to handle the digital tools in order take the test.

Informant G, from a different municipality than Informants E and F, is responsible for a special ICT application that has been developed in his city by this informant. It is a digital merit portfolio, an electronic CV, and it has become a mandatory part of the SFI programmes in the city since October of 2009. It is to be implemented in the entire Skåne region, which covers much of southern Sweden. This application enables the learners not only to digitally put together a merit portfolio that will help in accessing the labour market, but also to practice expressing themselves about their skills, education and professional experience. These are crucial elements of being successful at a job interview, says informant G, and this work also empowers the learners to highlight their competencies in their own minds. Initially, the work on the e-portfolio can be done with supporting texts in the learner's mother tongue, but the objective is to create a portfolio entirely in Swedish as their language proficiency progresses.

The benefit to the integration process of developing this digital merit portfolio is not limited to the learner being able to perform well at a job interview, but it also provides a way for those who have non-academic experiences in their background to get an instrument that is similar to a formal validation. There is no such service available elsewhere in Sweden (only college/university graduates can get their credentials officially validated by the Swedish higher education agency). The e-portfolio also helps the

learners practice writing job applications by e-mail, and being able to talk about your work experiences can be useful outside of the employment seeking context as well. In the next five years, informant G foresees a rapid growth in the use of working on the digital merit portfolio as an integral part of SFI instruction, not only in southern Sweden, and that potential employers of new-comers to Sweden will increasingly become aware of how this system works and start asking for a job applicant's e-portfolio.¹⁸

7.4 Main messages

The informants at the research and development level are all very much in favour of including ICT applications in adult L2 education and even see it as a necessity for the immigrant learners to function independently in Sweden. The learning advantages they see are focussed on the flexibility offered both in terms of study time and in individualisation to suit different learning styles. ICTs as a link between the classroom and the outside world is another aspect, and the digitalisation of the SFI-test is expected to increase the use of ICT applications in the SFI programmes by teachers as well as learners and to motivate publishers to develop more materials that make use of the specific advantages offered by digital applications.

The informants at the management/policy-making level are as positive towards the inclusion of ICT application in SFI-instruction as were the experts from research and development. There is even a clearly expressed policy for one of the two cities that adult learners shall acquire digital skills as part of their SFI-courses and that the teachers shall be able to engage in teaching that integrates ICTs into the materials used in the classroom. There are extra funds set aside to teach both teachers and learners how to use the technology and in the other city, working on a digital merit portfolio has become a mandatory part of the SFI instruction and this e-portfolio writing process is expected to be used in SFI-programmes across Sweden in the future. The view that ICT applications are crucial to the newly arrived migrants' access to the Swedish labour market is a central element in the responses given by this group, which was also mentioned by the experts from the field of research and development. Among all expert informants there is clearly expressed commitment to the use of ICT applications in adult L2 education.

¹⁸ For more information, see www.eportfolioskane.se

8 The Dutch case studies

8.1 Introduction

This chapter reports on the three case studies that have been conducted in the Netherlands. The three case studies are all oriented to find answers about the positive as well as the negative aspects and related challenges brought about by the use of ICT applications in the field of L2 learning for adult migrants in formal settings. On the basis of those reports gathered during the desk research as well as on the basis of the insight gathered through experts and key informants interviews, the case studies in the Netherlands cover the following range of applications:

- The first case falls in the category of those applications that are widespread and have had – and still have – a high impact because of the large amount of locations in which they are applied. The ICT application is called 'Ijsbreker' (Ice breaker): a language course for beginners with a complete set of blended learning materials, some 50% ICTs).
- The second case falls into the category of those applications that are innovative as well as with a high impact rate. As for this case study, we have selected an application called De Virtuele Wijk ('Virtual Neighbourhood', a virtual learning environment for beginners, 100% ICTs). This application has recently won an educational award for furthering L2 learning for newly arrived migrants within their integration trajectory.
- The third case falls into the category of those applications that are innovative but not yet with a high impact rate. It is not (yet) as widespread as the previous ones and is called 'NT2 Nieuwslezer' (L2 Newsreader), a web-based tool for reading the daily news at the level of the beginning learner.

All the three case studies tackle the place for formal learning as a 'walled-in' organization and because of their ethnographic nature, they cannot *a priori* focus either on low or highly educated migrants alone. Rather, they are meant to reconstruct the learning environment that is being observed and to address the drivers, barriers, results and impact of ICT use in formal L2 education. Because of the variety of applications been launched, developed but also already established on the Dutch L2 market for newly arrived migrants, the case studies have focused – as outlined above – on covering the gamut of ICT applications that are currently available. It remains that in carrying out these case studies we have tried to observe selected initiatives in which were involved no less than 3 teachers, 20 learners and 3 managers and technical staff of the organization in charge. In fact it has not been possible to reach these numbers of teachers and

learners. In each case study it will be explained how and why sometimes the setting was somewhat different than what was intended. Moreover, it was also foreseen that learners would take part to a questionnaire (see Appendix 2). Results of the questionnaire have not been reported in the case studies as the researcher felt that there was a bias, due to the fact that low educated learners reported not being confident in completing it and often relied on another person (i.e. the teacher) in order to answer to the questions.

In the Netherlands as well as in Sweden, both ethnographers have asked for permission to report on the institution that participated in each case study, which have nevertheless been rendered anonymous. As for the names of both teachers and students, all of these are fictive.

8.2 Case study 1: IJsbreker

This section reports the first case study conducted at a College from a town in the western Netherlands. More specifically the first case study focuses on *IJsbreker*, a wide spread method for Dutch as a second language, containing an important ICT component.

This College is a public sector regional education centre (ROC) with 18 locations that are spread throughout the region. It offers 400 different vocational preparatory courses at the level of upper secondary vocational training (with some courses at higher professional education). Next to that, it also offers employee's trainings as well as various courses aimed at life-long learning (adult education). Last, the Education section of the College ascribes itself as the region largest provider of courses aimed at migrants that do not only have to do with Dutch language but also with the migrant's professional development and integration in mainstream society at large. The mission of the College is to 'provide educational grounds for the fulfilment of social responsibilities', to inspire learners to give the best of themselves, and to become self-sufficient in the development of their learning process 'in order to become citizens who can look at society with a positive, yet critical, outlook'. Further, the College's emphasis is on the learning demands and wishes of their (business) partners. In its course offer, the learning tasks that are being assigned to learners are related to both the reality on the work floor and to society at large. In practice, the College's educational offer is specifically aimed at adults both migrant and non-migrant. Its offer is divided in five themes. These are 1) Basic courses for Adult Learners, 2) Family and Society, 3) the Integration Exam, 4) Dutch for Foreigners, 5) Work and life in a Company. We now deal in greater detail with the contents and goals of those courses that fall within Theme 1, Theme 3 and Theme 4. We

do so in that these courses deal with ICTs, Dutch as a second language as well as (newly arrived) migrants.

Theme 1 deals with basic courses for adults. The course on *Computer Skills* is not specifically related to learning Dutch language. Rather, this course is aimed at giving all adult learners the basic knowledge they need in order to work with a PC, writing a word document, writing and reading e-mails, searching and retrieving information on internet and e-banking.

Theme 3 (the integration exam) and more precisely for the courses on *Dutch language learning* and *Learning about Dutch society*, there were no information to be retrieved from the College website, though an analysis of the structure and the aim of the course are given when we deal with the case study.

Theme 4 illustrates that the course *Dutch for Foreigners* is suitable for all migrants ranging from illiterate to those who are highly educated, though, it is not specified whether newly arrived or already settled in the Netherlands. It is remarkable that no explanation is given about how these courses aim at catering for all types of learners, ranging from those who prepare for the State Exam to those who want to follow an educational trajectory at the level of upper secondary vocational training to those who want to develop their literacy skills, e.g., improving reading and writing skills. In all the three cases, *Dutch for Foreigners* is a course that embeds the link between language learning and an improvement of the migrant's own societal position, e.g., the improvement of someone's position at work as well as in the area where someone lives. In other words, there is a strong emphasis on a discourse of societal participation (*mee doen aan de maatschappij*) where – at whatever level of education – the learning of Dutch, and the improvement of literacy skills in the standard variety are seen as means for an increased contribution of the migrant to social inclusion.

The information package that each migrant learner gets when following either the courses of Theme 3 or of Theme 4 explains (through the mean of Dutch) why Dutch language classes should be followed, how do these classes are organised, the societal benefits that can be achieved by following a Dutch language course and by passing the integration exam as well as for how long should these courses be followed before completion. Next to that, the migrant enrolled in one of the two courses can get acquainted with its integration trajectory through a large poster that shows the steps, requirements and certifications that this trajectory implies.

8.2.1 The ICT-application in focus

IJsbreker (*Ice Breaker*) is a basic language learning method for Dutch as a second language. It is aimed at adult immigrants who are alphabetized in the Latin alphabet and have an educational background of at least three to four years of primary schooling (low level) to a maximum of a few years of secondary education (intermediate level). IJsbreker is meant for intensive formal L2 schooling: 3 to 4 sessions (in total up to 9 hours) per week. IJsbreker consists of two parts:

Part 1: Living and working in the Netherlands (0 to A1)¹⁹

Part 2: Living in the Netherlands, Working in the Netherlands (two separate trajectories) (A2)

For the learner each part consists of a workbook, a personal word-list and IJsbreker Multimedia (the ICT-part on a cd-rom for stand-alone use or the network version on the school's LAN). For the teacher there is a digital administrative module to keep track of the learner's progress, a video/DVD with extra film materials per chapter, audio cd's and cd-roms with transcriptions and other extra information.

Didactic rationale behind IJsbreker

The didactic starting-points behind IJsbreker are:

- Reception before production. For that reason the text is first presented to be read and listened to, as often as needed, and with extra help through hyperlinks;²⁰
- Integration of functional and linguistic skills, with a strong lexical approach (grammar is offered in a very limited way);
- Self directed learning;
- Repetition.

IJsbreker is meant for use within a group of learners under the guidance of a teacher, offering ample opportunities for self directed and individual learning. 50% of the learning time should be dedicated to self directed learning with *IJsbreker* Multimedia at a PC. During the other 50% learners should work with workbook, under the guidance of a teacher. Half of this time (so 25% of the total learning time) should be dedicated to group activities where speaking the L2 is the main goal, as speaking/spoken interaction is hardly possible in *IJsbreker* Multimedia.

¹⁹ This refers to the CEFR levels at the start and end of the programme.

²⁰ Each new word is a hyperlink to audio, translation and a picture.

IJsbreker and ICTs

The ICT part of *IJsbreker* offers several different opportunities that support these didactic starting points. It offers the same texts that are offered in the workbook, enriched with audio, video, hyperlinks and exercises. It offers:

- A multi-medial dictionary, related to 160 thematic posters with illustrations, and translations in five languages;²¹
- A personal word-list to keep track of the words that are already known and words that need to be learned;
- Vocabulary exercises;
- Videos;
- Listening exercises;
- Language rules (grammar exercises and explanations);
- Speaking and repeating exercises (only limited: Speaking should be done in group sessions with the teacher).

For the teacher, *IJsbreker* offers an extensive administrative module that keeps track of the results of all learners at an individual level and at group level.

8.2.2 The classroom: its approach to Dutch as a second language for newly arrived migrants and the use of ICTs

The department providing Dutch as a second language at this College consists of a head of department, Mr. Hans, and two teachers, Ms. Lineke and Mr. Ralph.²² Given that Mr. Hans did not respond to neither my request of being interviewed nor to the attempt made by Ms. Lineke to arrange an interview, we have gathered information on the meso-educational discourse, in which the workings of this classroom are inserted, through written documents as well as through the long (semi) open-ended interview carried out with the class teachers. Both teachers have been working together at the College for a large number of years. They have been sharing this class and they have managed to move from a frontal teaching/learning approach into what they have defined, and presented during a workshop organised for other colleagues in this field, as a 'facilitating learning environment' (*facilitaire leeromgeving*). It is in this facilitating learning environment that, during the observation, they are engaged with 15 adult migrants who have been assigned to this course by the municipal authorities. All these migrant learners are engaged in preparing for the Integration Exam, though their educational level and their level of learning ability varies. This implies a large load of differentiation in the classroom that is catered for through the two teachers. In

²¹ English, French, Spanish, Turkish and Arabic.

²² The reader is reminded that all names are fictional.

Table 8 we report the name, educational level and method level used by the 15 learners in this class:

Name	Educational Background ²³	Profile
Muna	Alphabetization trajectory	IJsbreker I: living and work
Bejan	Middle educated	IJsbreker II: work
Michaela	Middle educated	IJsbreker I: living and work
Yonus	Middle educated	IJsbreker II: work
Siva	Low educated	IJsbreker II: living
Lidia	Middle educated	CODE Nederlands
Johan	Middle Educated	IJsbreker II: work
Paola	Middle Educated	IJsbreker II: work
Aysegul	Middle Educated	IJsbreker II: work
Chefena	Middle Educated	IJsbreker II: work
Nelsa	Low Educated	IJsbreker II: work
Ozlem	Low educated	IJsbreker II: living
Nasira	Low educated	IJsbreker II: living
Kadhijja	Low educated	IJsbreker II: living

Table 8: Educational Levels and profiles of learners in Case study I

Although in this class three learners from Eastern Europe have read for a degree either at BA or MA level, the class teachers have assigned them a middle educated background. This middle educated category applies to the vast majority of the learners in this classroom and there are only three learners who are labelled as low educated in that they have either never been to school or they have completed the last grade of primary education in their country of origin.

Following the understanding of the two teachers, they see *IJsbreker* has 'a very good communicative method'. As reported in the documents that the teachers have developed for a workshop,²⁴ *IJsbreker* is a communicative method in the sense that it implies much listening and reading as a precondition for speaking. The goal that the teacher have set for their class when using this method and its ICT component, is that the learner manages to tackle his/her own problems with language, working independently and

²³ As reported by the teacher.

²⁴ The two teachers were asked to give a workshop to other professionals about how to turn a classroom into a facilitating learning environment. The workshop has also dealt with how do learners learn a second language and with how *IJsbreker* should be employed in this type of leaning environment.

following the learning trajectory set out in the book at his/her own pace. The role of the teacher is to make the learner aware of learning techniques but with the principle in mind that the learner has to be given the chance to bump into a (learning) obstacle in order to understand how s/he has to tackle it. As explained in a document designed for a workshop by Ms. Lineke, the purpose of using *IJsbreker* is that the learner 'has to do it for him/herself' (*Algemeen IJsbreker*, 1). The philosophy that drives this facilitating learning environment has also consequences for the use of ICTs. Whereas in a traditional classroom setting the use of ICTs would be set at a specific time for all learners, in this learning environment learners have been given an individual learning plan that they need to follow. This plan accounts for a learning trajectory that prepares the learners to sit for the integration exam. In their plan, each learner is allocated a time that has to be spent either on the classroom's PC while engaged in exercises (listening and understanding, building vocabulary development), or in the multimedia area where he has to listen to a dialogue on a CD. As observed in this class ICTs are not used in order to develop speaking skills, which goes against the purpose for which this method was designed.

IJsbreker, at least for what concerns its use in this classroom, implies an ICT supported learning trajectory that requires learners to be able to turn on the computer, log in, find the right exercise with the use of a mouse-click, and that in turn requires hand and eye co-ordination. All those learners with a low educational background first had to be introduced to the use of a computer. Both teachers have reported that the development of computer skills were not an obstacle for the learning Dutch as L2 through ICTs: '*we have not made much of a fuss out of it, we looked at the basic requirements for using IJsbreker, we have exercised mouse co-ordination that is to say hand-eye co-ordination and once you have those you can do anything, then we have let the learners do the rest and coached them when they get feedback*'.

Further, the teachers added that it is 'common knowledge' that after their introduction to the cultural ecology of the learning environment, i. e., how someone does things here, learners are made aware that they have to follow the activities that are spelled out in *IJsbreker*. It is so that, in this learning environment, listening and understanding exercises are the most used while, according to Ms. Lineke, many learners tend to skip their vocabulary exercises. When learners carry out these vocabulary exercises, however, both teachers do make time for giving either a further feedback that goes beyond the 'right'/'wrong' feedback given by the ICT device as well as to go through the language rules that the learner seem not to have grasped. Ms. Lineke, in fact, pointed out that the feedback learners get from *IJsbreker* is not enough in particular for those learners who are low educated. This is because there is a gap between what the learners see on the

screen, i.e., the fact that they have done something 'wrong', and the actual grasping either of the grammar, i.e., why is a certain verb taking -t instead of -d when conjugated in the past, or of the semantics, i.e., why does a certain word does not fit in a given sentence. In other words they cannot always draw a distinction on whether it is a syntactic or a semantic problem that they are being confronted with.

8.2.3 Interviews with education professionals

From the teachers' interviews, it stands out that there is a gap reported with the language skills that her learners have at the end of the integration trajectory and the level that is required from them in order to participate in Dutch society at large. Ms. Lineke states that here at the College, you have learners with an 'integration obligation' (*inburgering plicht*) that requires learners to sign a contract with the municipality²⁵ where the migrant is resident. The fact that learners may manage to fulfil their integration obligation says very little about their actual proficiency in Dutch: *'the can know a lot, they can know how to work with a computer and do their exercises but once they have to make the step to get to level 3²⁶ then there is a lack of the basic knowledge.'*

Ms. Lineke then adds that, although migrants are considered to be at the margins of mainstream Dutch society, this is not the case for her learners: *'there are people who already have a role in society who don't need competence profiles and who can function when they bring their children to school and in carrying out house holding tasks but who then fail for the exam.'*

For then adding: *'There are strong pushes toward their integration and strong draw backs, ICTs help but it is the reality out there that makes it difficult, because they may manage everything here but then end up with no job.'*

Mr Ralph, instead, believes that the role of ICTs brings the learner to tackle a problem with language. He adds, however, that it is only through the help given by the teacher that the learner can manage to work further. Reason being, according to both teachers, that: *'a good method asks for a good teacher. IJsbreker is a great method which caters for the learning of Dutch, and here we have an environment which enables learners to*

²⁵ In principle, every (non-western) newly arrived migrant that enters the Netherlands from outside the EU has to make an appointment with the municipal authorities so to set up his/her integration trajectory. During this appointment a contract is signed between the municipality and the newly arrived migrant. This contract spells out the length of the integration course that last for a maximum of 18 months. Exceptions are drawn for those migrants who come from Bulgaria and Romania, given that although falling in the category of western migrants, they are still subject to the integration obligation.

²⁶ Level 3 corresponds with level B1 of the CEFR.

work independently and at their own pace. Yet again, the learner has to be made wanting to learn.'

Following both teachers there is also a gap between the use of ICTs from high educated and the use of ICTs from low educated people. ICTs, in their view, *'help for much repetition, yet again without a teacher, you miss the coach. These people, and mostly the low educated, need feedback from the teacher. The tick or the cross are not enough, they need to know what they do well and what they do less well.'*)

As Ms. Lineke added: *'ICTs can be a tragedy where the learner is snowed down by the input. That is to say, if he or she does not know how the programme works and how they can handle it. They just keep on clicking and then they say: 'I am done.'*

Yet again, ICTs are ideal for keeping track of the development of learners' language skills, as Mr Ralph states: *'because of the fact, as it happens with IJsbreker that learners save their results, you get a good insight in what they can do. Practicing, repeating, adjusting, putting into practice: you get two pigeons with one stone, on the one hand the learner learns and while he is busy, you can give more tailored advice to other learners.'*

In the understanding of Mr. Ralph instead, ICTs can also be an obstacle: *'on top of being technically limited by the system used at this school, which does not give the possibility to try out new things, there is also a driving licence ideology which limits teachers. Everything has to be done well and yet it has to be fast. A teacher, so to be a good teacher, has to teach skills but with an eye on the costs and on the time.'*

As he adds: *'The result is that on paper people are integrated, they can use a computer, we have taught them to learn Dutch through a computer. But what do we have in practice? Does it mean that they are integrated?'*

8.2.4 The learners and their views on ICTs and Dutch as a second language

The interviews started with Lidia, the most proficient learner in the class. Lidia comes originally from Serbia and moved to the Netherlands two years ago to join her husband who originates from Bosnia. Back in Serbia, she has read for a degree in Hungro-Finnish languages and philology and right before coming to the Netherlands she covered the post of English teacher at a local secondary school. She is now engaged with preparing for the State Exam 1, and she hopes to pass the exam and be able to be an English language teacher again as she was in Serbia. Rather than using *IJsbreker* – given that she is preparing for the State Exam 1 – she was put by the class teachers on another method called CODE and more specifically CODE 2. Lidia's own experience of working with the

Dutch language is different from her fellows who are working with *IJsbreker* and who are engaged in preparing for the Integration Exam. Lidia reports to be alone when working with Dutch language in this class, while she would like to have more chances to practice her oral skills. This lack of oral skills practice is also her main frustration in terms of ICTs. As she reports: *'you can do everything fine, get all the exercises right, but the PC does not talk back to you, it is not a person, it cannot make dialogues, so you work alone, or with people outside and you talk, but speaking and writing have to increase if I want a job'*

She then adds: *'with a PC and a book, it goes fast but it is not enough, you need other people, you learn from the mistakes you make while talking to them and of these people's own mistakes'*

We now move to Mihaela and Johan, the latter from Serbia although born to a Dutch father and the former from Romania. Both learners have graduated in their respective countries in Economics and Banking Administration. Mihaela has moved to the Netherlands with her husband who has been offered a job in the ship building industry. She has started her integration trajectory in September 2009 and, for what she can recollect, she is scheduled to complete it in 2011. Mihaela is using *IJsbreker* and she tries to attend classes for four days a week. Her main frustration with the Dutch language is her oral production and her vocabulary. The first is due to the lack of friends here in the Netherlands and she links the first problem with the second: *'if I don't talk, I learn no new words'*.

Further, Mihaela reports that she makes use of ICTs also at home, although not at the moment given that her PC is broken. She is happy with *IJsbreker*, though she finds the explanations of the words given by *IJsbreker* too complicated. Most likely she has difficulties in understanding the explanation of these words because they are not in her mother tongue. As Mihaela reports: *'I know very few words and therefore it is difficult for me to understand what the PC says back to me'*.

Interesting is that, rather than using a Dutch only dictionary she relies on an English-Dutch online dictionary while carrying out her exercises at home. When engaged with the use of ICTs in the classroom instead she says: *'it is possible to expand your vocabulary but you need to talk as well, and here we don't get the chance to talk, or only limited with the teachers'*. Kuba, from Serbia, is also high-educated with a background in economics and financing. As a youngster, he already lived in the Netherlands together with his father. He then moved back to Serbia and came back only two years ago with his

father because of his health problems that could be handled better here than in Serbia. He works often together with Mihaela and pushes her to try exercises out on the computer, telling her that she is learning fast. He is also on an integration trajectory though his attendance is hindered by his health problems. He reports that he already speaks Dutch, though the grammar is his problem. Further, he reports that he does not see the advantage of using any ICT programme for learning Dutch as an L2, as he states: *'yeah, you know this is all good, but you learn a language by talking to people, not by using a computer. It does not talk back to me man, it does not and that is pretty bad. Then you get out there and people say something and you don't understand'*.

The rest of the learners are all low educated and engaged in an integration trajectory. Among them there is Muna who is on an integration/alphabetisation trajectory. Muna, who comes from Kenya, is a 19 year old Muslim girl, who moved to the Netherlands to join her mother and her sisters. Her mother tongue(s) are Somali and Swahili, she holds a Somali passport because of a previous migration from Somalia to Kenya. Her integration contract will expire in Nov. 2011 and her goal is to go to work in the fashion industry, after having completed her integration trajectory. Muna reports to have very little affinity with internet as she does not like to make public information about herself. Her sisters, on the other hand, do use it at home and have set up profiles, among others, on Facebook which she refuses to use. She has learned how to use a PC in this class and to manage the exercises on the CD that comes along with *IJsbreker*. Although she reports that these exercises do have an accessible layout which allow her to understand what she has to do, she sees two main obstacles brought by ICTs. The first obstacle is the feedback, as she reports, without the teacher: *'I don't understand what it is written there, what it means with wrong....I mean, why is it wrong?'*

Her second obstacle is production. As she reports: *'to answer something is no problem but to produce something, it is really difficult, if you don't have many contacts with people'*.

We now move on to Yonus, a woman who came to the Netherlands after fleeing Afghanistan in 1998. Yonus is not obliged to follow any Dutch course as she already has a permanent residence permit. In the previous years, Yonus has been working first in the cleaning sector and then in the health care sector. It is Yonus' opinion that she has managed to play a role in Dutch mainstream society, get jobs and managed to have her children to move here in 2005 because she has put effort in learning Dutch. In 1998, she reports that she was very naïve as she thought that just by being here, her children would have been able to join her. Though she was confronted with the demand put on

her by the authorities that she had to be able to work and be independent in order to have her children to come here. Yonus states that she would have never made it without Dutch and that: *'With certain people in the neighbourhood where I live, but also here, you cannot even talk, they speak no Dutch. How can they work, function? They don't care, they just do their life. It is crazy that there are people like that'.*

She also reports that in order to improve one's language skills and to improve one's employment opportunity, you need Dutch. When asked what she thinks of the advantages of ICTs in second language learning, she reports that: *'I have always been willing to learn. I was scared to work with a PC first but then you just do it. One has to improve her own skills'.*

Yonus reports to like working with ICTs. In particular for what concerns *IJsbreker*, she believes that listening to Dutch gives her the possibility to improve her accent. Further she reports: *'through ICTs, you stimulate all learning channels. When you watch a video, you also listen and you can repeat it as many times as you want, so you keep on repeating and that helps'.*

Alike Yonus, Chefena from Somalia reports to see the importance of learning the language of the host country, and alike Yonus, he sees the facilitating role of ICTs in learning Dutch, he reports: *'Holland is great man, I came here for the weed....no, I am only kidding you, I am here because I am refugee, and I have to learn Dutch. And I will tell you, with a computer you can work fast and independent and if you are good all the girls look at you [...] I am the man, yeah the man among a table of three girls, and I am not even married, how sad'.*

Although *among* a bunch of jocular remarks that call upon a male identity, Chefena sees the use of ICTs as positive because fostering learning independence. Along these lines also Aisegul and Angela – that were part of the same focused group discussion – reported to like to work with the method *IJsbreker*, though again the possibility for communication with other learners were limited, as ICTs become an activity that because of this method is carried out in isolation from the rest: *'it is good method but everyone does his own thing. Everyone is busy with his own thing and everyone has his own exercises to follow, little interaction, you know'.*

Last, we have Bejan a 54 year old man from Iraq. Alike Chefena and Yonus, he is also been granted to stay through the *generaal pardon regeling*, a regulation that the Dutch government has implemented in order to grant a resident status to all those asylum

seekers who had come to the Netherlands before 2001. After 10 years in the Netherlands under the status of refugee from Iraq, where with having that status '*you can only eat and sleep*', he has now a municipal integration contract of 18 months that is due to expire in November 2011. When asked whether he uses a computer when learning Dutch in this class, Bejan keenly pointed out how *IJsbreker* works: '*Look, look sir. Here you have exercises and here you have computer. The book tells you and now you go to the computer.*'

He complains, however, that even though he knows Dutch and even though he knows how to use a PC he will still not find any work: '*I am old, I work 8 hours, and they think you are old man, we better have a young man. Me me, I am an electrician but who wants me, I am old.*'

The symbolic capital conferred by passing the integration exam as well as the use of ICTs are all elements that do not help Bejan overcome the demands of the work floor. In other words as Ms. Lineke mentioned, ICTs and Dutch language learning are not the only means through which the learners can bridge the gap between the reality within the learning environment and 'the reality out there'.

8.2.5 *IJsbreker* and ICTs

Here follows one episode of Dutch learning through ICTs, which happened during a visit to this facilitating learning environment. This episode deals with Bejan and sees him engaged together with the class teacher, in ordering words according to the Dutch alphabet. Although the re-construction of the episode does not aim to be a fully fledged key incident analysis of a classroom episode (Spotti, 2007), it sheds further light on the drives and barriers of ICTs and second language learning 'on the ground'.

Putting words in the right order

We are toward the end of the morning and, after having done the exercise assigned to him in the textbook, Bejan moves to the PC to carry out those exercises that are part of its work unit on *IJsbreker*. One of the exercises that Bejan is asked to do requires him to put a series of words in the right alphabetical order, for instance:

Rood (Red), *Rechts* (Right), *Rem* (Brake)

The solution is:

R e c h t s

R e m

R o o d

Bejan has to learn not to look just at the initial letter but to move on to the second, third or, if deemed necessary, on to the fourth letter in order to know which word comes first. Bejan finds it difficult to grasp this principle, as the feedback that he gets from the ICTs application is either right or wrong. Ms. Lineke, who is moving from one learner to another to check that everyone is on task as well as to answer the learner's questions, now goes to Bejan. They look at the first line of the exercise together and repeat the words Rood, Rechts and Rem. Ms Lineke then points out to him that he should move from the beginning of the word and try to put them in the right order. He tries and the result is faulty. Ms Lineke then invites him to think about the letter that follow and to see whether, if all the first letters are the same, whether the second letter gives any indication of which words comes first. When asked to write down the alphabet as a reminder for himself though, Bejan did know the first 8 letter of the Dutch alphabet. Ms Lineke suggested him that if he does not know the alphabet by heart, then there is very little that she can do about it and there is also very little that the computer can do to help him. Bejan tries then one more, he asks me whether he is doing it right and I invite him to think for himself. Ms Lineke gives support by telling him the alphabet is basic knowledge and that, at this stage, he should know it by heart. Apparently this exercise requires prior knowledge and skills that he does not have.

8.3 Case study 2: De Virtuele Wijk

This chapter reports the second case study, conducted at a Regional Education Centre in Delft, the Netherlands. More specifically the second case study focuses on *De Virtuele Wijk (The Virtual Neighbourhood)*; an ICT application that is innovative as well as with a high impact rate and that has received an educational award for furthering L2 learning for newly arrived migrants within their integration trajectory.

This regional education centre is in the Haaglanden region with a total population of 24,000 learners. It provides education for the work floor, lifelong learning as well as trainings aimed at their functionality. Given their regional prominent position in the field of education, the centre takes care that there is a link between what learners learn and how they can apply it on the job market as well as in society at large. The centre's drive is to strive to deliver an educational level that is better than the one provided by similar organizations of the same sort. The Dutch language courses are split in two categories that are Dutch Language (*Nederlandse Taal*) and Integration (*Inburgering*). The Dutch Language course cluster is then split into two courses. The first is aimed at improving Dutch language skills for learners who are not Dutch mother tongue. The second,

instead, is aimed at the improvement of reading and writing skills and it is solely open to learners who have Dutch as their mother tongue.

The second, that is the integration (*Inburgering*) course cluster, is aimed at newly arrived migrants who – whether already settled for a number of years or just arrived in the Netherlands – are engaged in an integration trajectory. The courses given for the integration trajectory are certified through the *Keurmerk Inburgeren*, a quality measurement system that certifies that this educational institution is well organised and that the quality of the courses taught is good.

As mentioned in the course overview, courses in preparation to the integration exam do have a multimedia component. It is specifically mentioned that the learner: 'learns the Dutch language with the help of exercises and films on the computer'. This learning activity is carried out in class as well as in the open learning centre, or at home. The classroom, instead, is pictured as a place of formal learning where learners get the chance to try out their Dutch, in short dialogues with other learners, as well as by dealing with the vocabulary of every day life situations. The centre's booklet also mentions that Dutch language learning is related to every day life situations. The learner is assigned tasks from the teacher, and proofs of these practical tasks are then put together in a portfolio. Last, the learner has to do an exam on the computer, though it was not specified whether this exam tests Dutch language or knowledge of Dutch society.

Learners preparing for the integration exam are assigned to a profile that should fulfil the purpose of their integration. This profile is determined during the intake with the learner. This intake is carried out by an employee at the centre, trained by the municipality. To each profile there is a matching method for learning Dutch. If the learner wants to work and has been assigned to the profile Integration and Work (*Inburgeren en Werk*) then s/he uses the method *Nederlands aan het werk* ('Dutch at work'). If the learner does not want to go to work yet because s/he is engaged in child rearing and house holding tasks then s/he is assigned to the profile Integration and Pedagogical Support (*Inburgeren en OGO*) s/he will be using *Thuis in Nederland* ('At home in the Netherlands' henceforth addressed as TIN). If the learner masters the Dutch language below level A1 of the Common European Framework of Reference then s/he uses *Klaar voor de Start* ('Ready to start'). Each method responds to the needs of the learner profile to which the learner has been assigned during his/her intake. As stated by the introduction booklet: '*in order to be integrated you must learn the Dutch language and build knowledge of Dutch society. Integrating means being able to function in practical situations, as – for instance – a talk with your GP, with a teacher or with your employer*'

8.3.1 The ICT-application in focus

Although it uses language and pushes migrants to retrieve information that allow them to actively participate in their neighbourhood life, *The Virtuele Wijk* (The Virtual Neighbourhood) is not explicitly designed as an L2 learning tool on its own. Rather, this ICT application is part of a much larger language L2 learning method, TIN. The principle that lies beneath TIN is having a balance between school based formal learning and learning in practice. What is needed in order to function in everyday life situation is introduced, tried out and discussed in school. It is the purpose of TIN and of its ICT components to introduce learners to the management of these situations given that the application of what they have learned can be fully grasped only when put into practice.

The tasks prepared in class are dealt with again once learners have practiced them. This is the main focus of TIN, having learners prepared step by step for the practical situations that they can encounter in everyday life. The method follows the following steps: 1) learners get a general orientation about the topic they will be dealing with through a TV programme as well as on the knowledge that they already have. Further, they are invited to experience these realities in practice. They are then invited to think about what language they need in order to tackle these situations. It is their task then to gather information, search for words and conduct short conversations in preparation to the practical task. Afterwards, their experiences are gathered together and they share their insight, reflecting on their language use. TIN also claims to be catering for differentiation on the basis that no learner has the same level of language proficiency. Its approach is to make linguistically weak learners work with linguistically strong learners. In so doing, the weak learners can grasp how language works in the situation that they are about to tackle.

On the basis of its focus on everyday life situations, TIN includes two ICT components. The first that has not been observed during this investigation is the online participation game. Modelled on the basis of a board game, learners corroborate the skills that they have developed through their textbook. Here they start off with situations that are related to their everyday reality for then, as reported in the introduction to this method, moving on to: 'more complex situations that may not play, as for now, a direct role to their contribution to mainstream society' (ITpreneurs, 2007, p. 28). Their participation is also supported by the fact that they are asked to make choices and these choices may result either correct or not completely fitting the situation in which they are engaged. In so doing, the learner realizes that s/he has to adjust his/her behaviour and language use accordingly to the degree of formality and register required in this specific situation. Each well managed situation has scores which are assigned to the learner. Pre-conditions for being able to work with this ICT application are a having language skills at level A1 and

being able to operate with a mouse. This game is part of the participation programme included in TIN and it is introduced and played by the learners once they reach Module 2. It is through working together that learners get introduced to different approaches to the same situation and may discuss their language use as well as their dilemmas. The scores are saved and stored so that both teacher(s) and learners can access them.

The goal of TIN as a whole is to have learners to gather information about the facilities that are in their environment, and allow them to find their place in the local reality that they inhabit. Often learners are limited by their lack of confidence and by a lack of Dutch in order to ask for information in formal situations. It is for this reason that TIN has a *Virtuele Wijk (The Virtual Neighbourhood)*.

The learner sees on its screen ten buildings, as for instance the municipality building or a library, where different types of formal interactions can be tried out through a virtual character. The chats deal with topics that they face in daily life and they are set as scenarios, as for instance at the library desk. During this chat, the text appears on the screen and the sentences are meant to be read in full and out loud. The learner on the basis of a prompt that s/he receives can try the chat as many times as he wishes, although repeating should also be stimulated by the teacher, the language proficiency level that a learner should have is A1 and s/he only needs to be able to use the mouse.

As in real life, chats are not only formal. Learners can also try out informal chats which can be done with other people in the neighbourhood. At the beginning of the work that they will be carrying out with TIN, every learner will have a profile based on personal information, e.g., their job, as well as their hobbies. It is on the basis of the postcode that has been inserted in their profile that learners can choose to communicate with people in their own neighbourhood, or with people who fall within their postcode. People that have been registered and who are currently online are shown on learner's own screen. Furthermore, learners can also retrieve information from their own neighbourhood. Information about community centres and health centres have been made available in order to enlarge their participation in the neighbourhood. The use of this information though can only happen through schools that have to set up a link with these institutions and ask them whether they can access their information. TIN has a module that can be filled in so to ask for the participation of these institutions. In TIN, and through the *Virtuele Wijk*, the learners are strongly stimulated to either participate or, at least, visit those places that are part of this ICT application.

8.3.2 The school: its approach to Dutch as a second language for newly arrived migrants and the use of ICTs

At the managerial level, the only informant that was felt to know enough about migrants, L2 learning and the use of ICTs is Ms Dyneke, Head of the Centre. Although her interview took place during the interviewing of key informants, her insights will be reported here. As for what concerns the classroom observed, both class teachers that were involved there have been interviewed. Although teachers from other profiles were asked to participate, there was no positive response from them to invest their time in this study.

It is Ms Dyneke's belief that the centre and all other regional education centres have gone through a time of crisis, since the opening of the market to private. Her centre, though, is still at a top position and tries its best not only to guarantee a high quality of its education but also in terms of the methods and the ICTs that they use. Though the use of ICTs has one of its barriers in its high costs for development and technical implementation and she wonders how both private and small scale course providers can actually match the costs while providing ICTs, if at all. Her understanding of a good use of ICTs is the following: *'it should not be seen as a way to put learners at work while having a break. You must coach them [the learners] really well. And once they have finished their exercises, ask, always ask, so what have you done? How did it go?'*

The question is whether ICTs are advantageous when learners are just offered ICTs and then left in front of a screen, in particular if these learners are low educated. Following Dyneke's view, it is the college approach always to be interested in the newest developments within the field of ICTs and L2 learning; though the centre has not been too receptive to e-learning because in her view it moves too much responsibility on the learner who is meant to be working from home but 'as you know one cannot control learners at home and at home there are always problems'. One of the groups that the centre has as its focus are those women from immigrant background, mostly non-western, who are either precluded or not aware of the chance that a participation course can provide them with. It is because of this reason, she states, that her centre has adopted TIN and with it the *Virtuele Wijk*. Integration, in fact, is not anymore solely the exam but it is the portfolio that the learners have to prepare. In order to prepare this portfolio they have to participate, but most of the times, these women do lack the opportunity of participating. Ms Dyneke is also critical of the approach followed by municipalities. In most cases the municipality wants to be informed about the ICT provisions that one puts at the disposal of the learners. Afterwards though, once the funds have been allocated *'it seems that it is about the bid that one makes'*. So we come to the paradoxical situation that regional educational centres that may have good plans,

have expensive teachers, they are an expensive organisation, with expensive contracts who are then not getting any funds from the municipality because they are too costly and, yet again, they are asked to invest in their ICT provision: *'What we do, makes a lot of sense but other organisations are much cheaper than us, although they are not engaged with ICTs at all.'*

In the teacher's opinion not all ICT use is good, in particular for those learners with a low educational background. ICTs have to be on the same language level as them and drive them further. If ICTs miss the assessment of learner's abilities then it gives way to much more disadvantages and frustrations than benefits. Two last obstacles that may hinder ICTs and its benefits are the teachers themselves. They are used to a more traditional approach and now have to include ICTs in it. And secondly they fear that with the use of ICTs contact time between teachers and learners will be reduced to save costs.

The class investigated at this educational centre counts for 17 learners of which 15 were present during the two visits to the classroom. All the 17 learners are preparing for the integration exam and they follow the Integration and Pedagogical Support profile. These learners are all women within an age range that goes from 21 to 56 years old and who, for the vast majority, have either a low or middle educated background, except for two learners who have followed high secondary education in their country of origin. In Table 9 we report the name and educational level, as passed on by the teacher, of these 15 learners.

Name	Educational Level
Onike	Low
Muhlise	Low
Tamusa	Low
Arzoo	Low
Amar	Low
Rana	Low
Sahar	Low
Juliet	Low
Filiz	Low
Akanan	Low
Sultan	Intermediate
Adela	Low
Meliha	Low
Seyran	Low
Gulsen	Low

Table 9: Educational level of learners in case study II

8.3.3 The teachers and their views on ICTs and the Virtuele Wijk

Here follow the insights gained from the two class teachers, Ms Andrea and Ms Pauline. Miss Andrea has spent all of her professional career in working within the field of Dutch as a second language. She is a graduate and she has written a BA thesis on language acquisition of immigrant children of Turkish background. Given the lack of jobs in her original area, she then decided to move to Turkey and teach Dutch as a foreign language there.

Her learner population was mainly made of Turkish men working in the tourism sector. This though did not give her the insight that she has gained since she has been teaching at this centre. The class that she is currently teaching, in fact, is made of women with a wide age range, who are mostly of Muslim background and low educated. On the other hand, there are a couple of learners like Sultan and Juliet who have followed education in their home country for 10 years and they have a somewhat higher educational profile than the rest. It is her firm belief that these are the kind of women who need to follow an integration trajectory the most. Through integration they also have to participate in mainstream (Dutch) society and in so doing, they can gain their emancipation, because one sees that at the end of the course *'they are really able to master their lives'*. In Ms Andrea's view, TIN is aimed at this specific category of learners and so are the participation game and the *Virtuele Wijk*. Ms Andrea appreciates the ICT component included in TIN, she reports that: *'they can work from home, they did not do it before but I have taught it to them and now, every week they sit for a test at the beginning of the unit here in class and they can do the closing test at home, they can work at their own pace and then I take care of the feedback'*.

Although praising the independent learning through ICTs, she also thinks that ICTs, with this kind of learners, cannot work on its own. There is always need of control from the teacher. Otherwise her learners: *'would keep on clicking with their mouse. ICTs alone never work. Take the example of Rana, we got started and then she shouts out, I am almost done with the whole programme', but although she has done everything almost all the stuff she has done is not sufficient. So one should always have a combination of group lessons and ICTs'*.

Another issue that ICTs do not seem to be able to bridge is the learning by heart. Learners like Arzoo, as Ms Andrea mentions, have great memory skills. They learn all the answers by heart, though:

Andrea: *'When you see them working with the ICT programme that you have in TIN and with the Virtuele Wijk, she suddenly realises that she is stuck, she does not know the language.'*

Researcher: *'And can you tell me something more specific about the Virtuele Wijk? '*

Andrea: *'With the Virtuele Wijk, they do not just learn language, but they also learn how to learn independently. Thanks to this application, they can work at home, at their own pace.'*

Researcher: *'Right.'*

Andrea: *'And that is exactly what you get with Virtuele Wijk, learning at your own pace, but learning a language in practical situations. Low and intermediate educated cannot do it by themselves; they need a teacher as coach.'*

On the one hand, the class teacher puts a strong emphasis on the emancipation of her learners. These women, in her understanding, would be at the border of society without the integration course. Further, it is the participation component embedded in the ICTs that plays a strong role in making them independent. Yet again, results can only be achieved through ICTs when this is coupled up to the teacher's own coaching. Without the teacher's own support, learners are less keen on using ICTs and, when they do, their use of ICTs does not enable them to learn. Rather, the most important matter to them is either to know the answers to the tests that they do at the beginning and at the end of the unit, or to get through the unit as fast as they can, so to show that they have completed it.

It is also Ms Andrea's opinion that the *Virtuele Wijk* still has two main problems that should be tackled. The first has to do with technical issues, the second with linguistic issues. Technically, the ICT application does give the opportunity to the learners to be wired up in their neighbourhood and thus to expand their range of social contacts and therefore to practice their Dutch. Furthermore, this ICT application also enables learners to get access to information about local institutions in their neighbourhood, such as the library or the school where their children go to. Ideally, this gives the learners the possibility to encounter and tackle everyday life matters. Yet again, this view of the *Virtuele Wijk* does not reflect the actual socialisation of these immigrant women. Some of them do go outside their neighbourhood and many of them have children who do not attend the school which they can access through the ICT application. According to Ms Andrea opinion, the *Virtuele Wijk* does also have some didactics shortcomings that go beyond the initial technical problems that any ICT application can face. In her view:

Andrea: *'Learners do not have the chance to practice the dialogue with the machine. One reads the answers that he gets but he cannot talk back.'*

Researcher: *'But they do use head phones right?'*

Andrea: *'Yes but the spoken interaction is not there. They use them so to listen to what it is being told them. They only repeat out loud what they see, you read the answer that you get but you do not talk. Without the language use than all this effort is pretty useless.'*

We now move on to Ms Pauline, who shares this classroom with Ms Andrea for two days a week. Ms Pauline has studied pedagogy and she then moved into the field of adult education. She has been working at this educational centre for the last 34 years. She has covered all the group profiles that are taught here, and she realises that she has gained a lot of pedagogic content knowledge and practical professional knowledge on the work floor. Ms Pauline sees ICTs as a blessing. In the beginning of her career, there were no methods that were specifically focused on teaching Dutch language to migrants and let alone ICTs. At present, she is working with TIN with its ICT applications. When asked about the *Virtuele Wijk*, she reported that this application does suit the overarching purpose of the course that these migrant women are following. They, in fact, gain a knowledge of practical situations that enables them to interact in mainstream society and emancipate. The main limitation of this ICT application, on the other hand, is the lack of grammar to which learners are exposed to:

Pauline: *'It is nice what they do, but they do not get any grammatical knowledge with this kind of ICTs. They do not get to know about weak and strong verbs in Dutch. But then again, these women do not need that, if you want to be better prepared at grammar and have to do with these things then you have to prepare yourself to the State Exam.'*

Researcher: *'hmm'*

Pauline: *'the level of the learners is too low.'*

Another issue tackled by Ms Pauline is the fast track on which learners are put in order to integrate and the role that ICTs play in this all. Learners have 18 months in order to fulfil their course requirements and she sees that, as for the case of the *Virtuele Wijk*, as an advantage. Though, she does not see ICTs a miracle remedy. There has to be the willingness of the learner, the capability of the teacher and last but not least ICTs.

When dealing in more depth with TIN she raises the point that these ICT applications do have some 'children's illnesses'. She understands that the developers of these applications want to show the best of what ICTs can offer, yet again, she calls for carefulness about its shortcomings. More specifically in the case of the *Virtuele Wijk* she states:

Pauline: *'I am not so excited about it, I do not see the added value of it'*

Researcher: 'yeah'

Pauline: *'Learners are not stimulated. Fine, they know where things are in their neighbourhood, where the municipality is and so forth, they know that information. But then again, in The Hague, you really see the map of the city, but here instead there are technical problems. There is a map of Delft that has a star on it and that says, here is the library and that is it.'*

Another downside that she points out is that there is absolutely no feedback given to learners:

Pauline: *Learners just look at the sentences displayed in front of them and read them but "that's it" [her emphasis in English].*

Researcher: *Right.*

Pauline: *Rather there should be questions that have to be developed and either you make them yourself or the Virtuele Wijk finishes there.*

Researcher: *And when do you think that ICTs are good ICTs?*

Pauline: *ICTs are good when learners learn from them, it is also pretty straight, you have learners who are highly educated, like you for instance and then it is easy, people work for themselves but still, they need to talk! And when working with the Virtuele Wijk you don't speak, you repeat.*

Researcher: *Right.*

Pauline: *ICTs have to be as broad as possible, but for low educated of the obstacles of ICTs is that it does not and it cannot come alone, there is no chance to have ICTs for low educated learners without the support of the teacher.*

There is an advocacy of the usefulness and a praising of ICTs, as a mean for making the integration trajectory of learners go faster. Though, there is also a fairly critical eye on what ICTs like the *Virtuele Wijk* can achieve. First, Ms Pauline advocates for a practical approach to teaching Dutch as L2. In fact, these learners are not learners who, because of their educational background, can cope with grammar. Then she advocates that good ICTs exist and that good ICTs are good when they are as broad as possible, that is, when they touch upon reading and listening but also speaking. It is the main goal of the *Virtuele Wijk* that learners get introduced to practical situations and the language registers that they should be able to use in these situations. However, the learners do not get the chance to use these registers because the ICT application does not allow them to talk back. Finally, although Ms Pauline is in favour of ICTs, she openly states that an obstacle for the optimal use of ICTs is to be found in the educational background of the learners. Low educated learners cannot work with ICTs on their own, they need coaching and support.

8.3.4 The learners and their views on ICTs and the Virtuele Wijk

The interviewing started with Onike. Onike is the only learner of this class who was asked by Ms Andrea to be interviewed on her own. The remaining 14 learners, instead, were interviewed in 4 groups of 3 learners each and one group of 2 learners. a learner who at the time of this investigation was waiting for her right to stay in the Netherlands. Onike is 21 years old, she comes originally from Sierra Leone and alike most of the learners here she has a low educated background, as she did not finish primary school in her country of origin. She moved to the Netherlands on March 2008 so to escape the dangers of living in a country with a high level of political instability and war. At present Onike is preparing for her integration exam though since she has come to know that she could be sent back to Sierra Leone, she has become strongly demotivated to follow classes and develop her skills in Dutch language. Looking back at what she used to do in order to improve her Dutch, she reported that she had a PC at home that she would use it regularly for 5 to 10 minutes a day in order to practice an exercise on Dutch language: *'5 to 10 minutes, no more, I know it is little but it helps me learning, and helps me to make the most of my time at home and still learn language'*.

She then adds that at home, one can concentrate better, that one can do much more and he is not bothered by other learners in the classroom who often talk during the explanations taking place in class. In Onike's view: *'at home you can concentrate in front of the computer, while you are working on language and the computer gives you answers back'*.

Yet again, she experiences quite some barriers in the use of the *Virtuele Wijk*. In her understanding this application is a game and when asked what she means with a game, she replies: *'well, there are many bugs, you have to move the puppet inside the building and sometimes it does not work so I make her walk against walls'*.

But then she states that this application does also have advantages: *'You can read a lot with the Virtuele Wijk. Me and Adela, we read, we read but speaking, well you cannot really and the answer is already there, so you try to understand but speaking just does not happen'*.

So, although working with a PC at home has its advantages, the ICT applications that they use in class encounters practical barriers as well as lacks of one skill that is the development of speaking skills.

The first group to be interviewed was made of Muhlise from Turkey, Tamusa from Russia and Arzoo from Afghanistan. Muhlise has been in the Netherlands for the last 9 years, she has come here after her marriage in Turkey with a Turkish man who already lived and worked in the Netherlands, she has now two children. Her integration trajectory started at this educational centre in 2008 and she is planning to sit for the exam either at the end of 2010 or the beginning of 2011. Tamusa, instead, has come to the Netherlands for the first time in 1999 because of her husband's job. In Russia she was a librarian in a local primary school. Due to the tragic loss of family members she had to leave the Netherlands twice and then stayed in Russia for a few months. This stays have made her stop attending an integration course. She is now scheduled to complete her integration trajectory and sit for an exam either in June or July 2010. The last group member, Arzoo, has arrived in 2002 in the Netherlands as a refugee from Afghanistan, she is now following an integration trajectory that she is scheduled to complete in November 2010. None of these three ladies is working at the moment, though the municipality requires from them to carry out voluntary work because in such a way they can practice their Dutch language skills and get in touch with Dutch society.

Muhlise's experience with ICTs is limited to the classroom environment. At home, in fact, she has no PC, Arzoo and Tamusa instead do have a PC at home that they use for keeping in touch with their families in the country of origin but also for learning Dutch through the CD included in TIN. Both Muhlise and Tamusa agree that ICTs make it difficult to learn a language because of the feedback that one gets: *'with verbs, difficult with verbs, sometimes I don't understand what to do with verbs, what do I do wrong. It's a matter of understanding why I do something wrong. What goes wrong? Why does it go wrong?'*

And Tamusa adds: *'yeah, yeah sir, I don't understand, you get wrong, wrong, wrong, good but then why wrong?'*

On the other hand, Tamusa points out that one of the advantages of using ICTs is that you can encounter new words. Her experience with the *Virtuele Wijk* is very telling in this respect: *'You get faced with new words, words that you don't know, and that although difficult because it asks for time to understand one exercise, it is also good because I know more words in the end'.*

Tamusa and the other learners then look back on to the exercise that they have carried out during the morning with using the *Virtuele Wijk*. In their view:

Tamusa: *'this unit about the library was easy. I know it well.'*

Muhlise: *'yes, yes, we know the language of the library.'*

Tamusa: 'yes.'

Muhlise: *'But the insurance company was difficult, very difficult.'*

Arzoo: *'Yes, the language was difficult, the terms were weird.'*

So while the ICT applications helps them in encountering new situations that reflect real life settings, they are also confronted with specific bits of Dutch language, the genre of insurance companies and when confronted with that, the learners find it difficult to find their way.

The second focused group discussion involved Amar and Sera, both refugees from Iraq who came to the Netherlands 11 and 13 years ago respectively and Rana, who is originally from Afghanistan and who has come to the Netherlands 12 years ago. All of them have a low educated profile: they all attended some years of primary schooling in their country of origin. While Rana and Amar are not so keen on following an integration trajectory and report to do it because the municipality has asked them to, Sera instead reports to look forward to her exam and that she is currently engaged in voluntary work because she wants to be in touch 'with the Dutch'. They all have a computer and a laptop at home, which they use regularly:

Amar: *'I use it for all sorts of things, also for Dutch.'*

Rana: *'Yeah, yesterday, yesterday, you know, yesterday I used it for the exercises of the integration programme, but I love talking and with Virtuele Wijk you cannot talk.'*

Amar: *'Yeah.'*

Rana: *'And also the accent counts, we cannot practice accent and then when we talk, we are foreigners, it is a matter of accent, they understand a lot but sometimes when I talk they look at you, like I don't understand.'*

From the informants' wording therefore it is not just a question of talking but also a matter of accent that cannot be practiced with the *Virtuele Wijk*. In terms of use of drives of the ICT application, Sera added:

Sera: *'I search for a job, I am almost done and this helps me for a job for real life, I am almost done, it is important for me to know, for my children, for my children at school'*

Researcher: *'and how about the exercise that you have done yesterday and today, the exercise of going to the library?'*

Rana: *'it was easy, easy, every day you use these words outside'*

Researcher: *'yeah'*

Rana: *'the library is easy, you go everyday to the library with your children and then you understand the situation'*

So on the one hand, the *Virtuele Wijk* prepares the learners for real life situations, while on the other they – as we have so far gathered – do not get either the chance to talk or the chance of developing the right accent. The discussion then unfolded as follows:

Researcher: *'And is it therefore easy to gather information on things that you don't know?'*

Rana: *'With the mouse?'*

Researcher: *'Please tell me?'*

Amar: *'With the mouse I have not learned it here, I have learned it before, before I did not know anything, two three times and then it is ok'*

Sera: *'I knew it already, you don't need school for using a mouse'*

So far we have encountered several issues that are drive and obstacles to the use of the ICT application employed in this class. On the one hand, we have a learner who takes it as a game, and who is not satisfied because of the lack of speaking skills involved. Other learners, although they see the drives of this application in the benefits that they gain from being exposed to real life situations they also call upon a lack of any possibility to practice their accent, a component of their Dutch language skills still makes them be foreigners in the eyes of others.

Last, although making the learners work with real life situations that are linked to the portfolio of their integration trajectory, the ICT application selected confronts the learners with genres and vocabulary that can be an obstacle in that it requires time in order to be understood. More time than the time that it was allocated during the activity observed in this class. As the first group, the Dutch used in the insurance company situation has given them a hard time. This lack of experience with a certain register, though, is more a development stage that learners may encounter with their Dutch language than a limitation of the ICT application. Native Dutch speakers too are not acquainted with every register of the Dutch language, as there is no native speaker who knows his/her language as a whole and who knows his/her language well (Hymes, 1996).

The third focus group is made of Laurette from Nigeria who is 30 years old and has come to the Netherlands in 2008 because married to a Dutch man, Adel from Colombia who came to the Netherlands in 2002 to join her sister and who then married a Dutch man and Sara who is from Afghanistan and who arrived in the Netherlands in 2008. While Sara and Adel have completed the lower grades of schooling, Laurette has been attending higher education in Nigeria where she obtained a diploma in urban and regional planning. All three learners have a PC at home that they use, among other reasons, for

learning Dutch and practice at home with the method that they use when in class. In their view the *Virtuele Wijk* is a good exercise to develop one's reading skills.

As Laurette states:

Laurette: *'Once you read, you understand and then it is easy to understand such a situation but if you read and you do not understand then it is difficult.'*

Researcher: *'Right.'*

Laurette: *'At times I look a word up in a dictionary'*

Sara: *'Yeah, Dutch is difficult, you know?'*

Researcher: *'Yes, yes I do know that, I am also not a Dutch'*

Adel: *'And the puppet did not want to enter the library'*

A driver for the use of this ICT application is the fact that one can read and get acquainted with real-life situations. This, however, becomes problematic when there is a lack of background vocabulary acquisition, as the learner does not understand the dialogue in which she is engaged. Another obstacle that the learners report in working with the *Virtuele Wijk* is that there are no wrong answers.

Laurette: *'If someone asks me whether I am doing the exercise well, then I judge it on the basis of the ticks that I get, but here you get no ticks'*

On top of this lack of feedback, the fact that the learners have been trained to think in terms of 'right' or 'wrong' answer is corroborated by the following answers:

Adel: *'You go in with the puppet'*

Sara: *'But what do you have to do with that puppet? You get talking and what?'*

Adel: *'It is difficult to understand what they want from you'*

In sharp opposition to Adel and Sara's approach, instead, is Laurette's approach:

Laurette: *'I get there and I click, I try to discover new information.'*

We now move to the fourth and last focused group that sees Filiz, and Akanan. Filiz is of Moroccan origin, she is a speaker of Moroccan Arabic as well as of German as she has lived in Germany since she was nine years old. She has come to the Netherlands in 2006 and she now has a three year old child, hence her choice to be a housewife. She has moved to the Netherlands because of her husband who is also of Moroccan origin although born, schooled and working in the Netherlands. Akanan is instead from Turkey. She has left Turkey to marry with a Turkish man who has lived in the Netherlands for 23 years. Filiz reports to understand pretty much everything that people say but her speaking and writing skills are, in her view, both poor. Both Filiz and Ajar are not

working, but they are engaged in voluntary work. Filiz relies very much on her husband in order to learn Dutch though he at times does not know why certain things happen in the Dutch language and that is when the use of ICTs, such as online dictionaries and grammar buddies from Dutch to German, come in handy. She sees the use of ICTs for learning language is *'neither easy nor difficult'*. When addressing the work done through the *Virtuele Wijk*, she says that the level of understanding that is required from this ICT application is fairly low. There are however some contests that are much easier than other:

Researcher: *'Is there anything easy or difficult in the use of the Virtuele Wijk?'*

Filiz: *'This was easy, easy, the library is easy, the school is easy, I know it but the grammar is very difficult'*

Akanan: *'Yes with the children.'*

Researcher: *'And how about grammar?'*

Filiz: *'I understand everything and then the next day I forget about the feedback the computer has given me'*

Akanan: *'Yes, yes for me too. Grammar, difficult, I am not used to work with computer, my children do it, I look for letters, what do I do, what should I do, they have to help me. To talk is easy, but writing is difficult.'*

The *Virtuele Wijk* facilitates someone's use of specific registers in Dutch in certain specific situations. Yet again, for learners it is difficult to apply the grammar and to get a grip on the feedback that working on the computer gives them.

In this case study of the *The Virtuele Wijk* we see that there is a strong obstacle that this application encounters, that is the binary way of thinking that is passed on to the learners. It is a recurrent pattern in their utterances that when they are given the possibility to work with language, they look for the grammar and they look for the security that the grammar of the Dutch language gives to them. Either it is right or it is wrong. It is paradoxical that an application intended for the development of language skills in real-life situations and intended also for the development of specific registers is then interpreted as ambiguous by the learners. Apparently it is not always clear to them what they should do and whether what they do is right. The *Virtuele Wijk* is intended for a great portion of self-directed learning. The target group is rather low-educated and has probably been exposed to very different and more traditional ways of teaching and learning: the teacher should say whether something is right or wrong. Here we see a problem with different cultures of teaching and learning. On the other hand, for some learners it does work, they are able to adapt to a more informal learning style and enjoy it.

An obstacle to obtain optimal results from this ICT application can be found in its technical implementation. As the title of the application says, what the ICT application maker is after here is to reconstruct the virtual neighbourhood of each of these students. The principle behind it is that the postcode of each student should be registered so that each student gets the chance to get acquainted with the institutions and the people of his/her own neighbourhood. Setting aside the fact that not all students may use solely their neighbourhood facilities, another problem that hinders this ICT application from succeeding is the lack of a middle man, appointed by the school, to be in charge of setting up these data base. In so doing, the students are confronted with a general neighbourhood that is the same for them all. This technical problem then defeats the whole purpose of having them to explore their own neighbourhood and to try out language use combined with the development of social skills in every day life situations.

This technical limitation, in turn, becomes an obstacle for the working of the class teacher. Her preparation for the use of this application is sound. She introduces her students first to a video that deals with the situation that the students are about to tackle, as for the lesson observed, she had a short video running about reading to young children and about a mother taking her child to the library. Further, the class teacher uses this questioning as basis for what the student will be doing with the *Virtuele Wijk*, that is going to the library and engaging themselves in an interaction with the library's helper at the main desk. Yet again this fails to be related to the reality of the students because their postcode has not been inserted and they are thus lead to a library rather than their library. Setting this aside, when the students are engaged in responding to the prompt given by the character in the *Virtuele Wijk* miss out on the development of communication skills and in training their pronunciation. The result is that they might end up memorising the answers without knowing whether something fits the communication exchange in which they are engaged with.

Another conclusion that can be drawn from this case study is the following. When an ICT application has been developed by a party that has the money to bring an application forward, then it works: the teacher takes on board the role of e-coach, and is, by the character of the application itself, forced to move away from the traditional approach of classroom teaching. Costs are not an impediment to the setting up of a technically demanding application, because there is a strong back-up form the developing company. On the other hand, costs become an obstacle to ICTs once the implementation of that ICT is not supported by its developer but had to be done solely by the teacher him/herself. As gathered from one of the key informants, the efforts of a single teacher are not always supported by the institutional frame in which the teacher works. ICTs, in

order to be effective, need to be supported by their developer who has the means to convince schools of the added value of that particular ICT application and to help them to set up the learning environment. Finally, also in this case study we see the problem of the lack of opportunities for practicing speaking skills.

8.4 Case study 3: De NT2 Nieuwslezer

This section reports the third case study conducted at a College in the central Netherlands. More specifically the third case study focuses on *NT2 Nieuwslezer* (*Dutch as a Second Language News Reader*). This ICT application was selected on the basis of its innovative character. It differs from the ones that we have dealt with in the former case studies, because of its limited spread within formal learning environments while it has gained a strong spread in informal learning environments, such as public libraries.

It should be noted that this case study offers a retrospective look on the experience of both teacher and learners on what it was like to use the *NT2 Nieuwslezer*. It is not a case study that looks at how learners and teachers currently work with this application. Out of a total of five subscriptions that were issued to this school in 2008, only two of the learners who were currently in this class had worked with the *NT2 Nieuwslezer*. This means that only these two learners could reflect upon their learning experience with this ICT application. This is so because the class teacher decided not to renew the subscription for 2009. The remaining 9 learners enrolled in this class, have also been interviewed about their understanding of the drivers and barriers of ICTs and of their experience in learning Dutch through ICTs.

This College is a private enterprise that offers training services to the community. It is spread across several locations, mostly clustered in the middle and northern part of the Netherlands including two of the major big cities, namely Amsterdam and Rotterdam. It is an organization that offers a wide range of services that go from integration of migrants, to re-integration at work, to trainings in the healthcare sector as well as in the ecological sector. As for the location in the town where the case study was undertaken, the College offers Dutch language courses to (newly arrived) migrants in preparation to their integration exam or to the State Exam according to each single learner's learning profile, educational background and intake talk with municipal authorities. The Dutch language courses carried out there fall within the *Taalaktief* (active language) trajectory. This is a trajectory aimed at the integration in Dutch mainstream society and re-integration of migrants at work. The trajectory is split into four categories that are: everyday life, childcare, work and professional education. Language education at the

College is understood as a mixture of both lessons in language proficiency and the trying out of everyday life situations, all of which are designed to suit the personal needs of each migrant, their wishes and their will. Although most of the migrants are sent to this College after their intake talk with the municipal authorities, companies, schools and other organizations can make use of the services offered by the College in order to stimulate someone's language learning and his/her participation. All language courses offered by the College that are aimed at the integration of migrants are certified through the *Keurmerk Inburgeren*, a quality assurance system that certifies educational institution that offer integration and L2 courses.

As for the College of the third case study, its language courses are meant for both newly arrived and already settled migrants who want to integrate. Their language courses are also open for those learners who want to achieve a higher level of proficiency in the Dutch language because they wish to continue with their education. This second category of learners gains a level of language proficiency that allows them to sit for State Exam 1 or 2 (CEFR level B1 or B2). The lessons are supplemented by both activities and excursions to places of general interest that are key to understanding Dutch culture and customs. Lessons take place either during the morning or in the evening. This enables to cater for the needs of those learners who are at work during the day as well as to cater for the needs of those learners, mainly women, who have time off their mother's duties and household duties. Courses range from a minimum of three months (shortened exam training) to 18 months (integration programme).

8.4.1 The ICT-application in focus

The *NT2 Nieuwslezer* is a direct product of scientific research carried out at the University of Tilburg. Research has demonstrated that both young Dutch people with a low level of proficiency in Dutch as well as immigrants can reap enormous benefits in the development of the breadth and depth of their vocabulary by reading articles taken from newspapers on a daily basis. These articles should not be older than 24 hours and they can deal with any topic. It is then up to the user to choose which article s/he fancies to read. Further, research on second language learning and vocabulary development has pointed out that after reading about thirty texts, there is an improvement and increase of vocabulary known by the reader. The *NT2 Nieuwslezer* selects these texts automatically and decides for which level of language proficiency these texts are suited. The *NT2 Nieuwslezer* selects and adapts the articles that learners are given access to. This access is established on the basis of a test that learners have to carry out before entering the application. This test measures both their language proficiency and vocabulary knowledge. When the learner encounters an unknown word, the application supplies a short explanation of the word's meaning as well as a translation of the word in any

language. In this way, the reading of articles about current matters that are at play in mainstream society does not only stimulate an increased vocabulary but it also stimulates the migrant to build knowledge of Dutch culture. The Ministry of Home Affairs has selected the *NT2 Nieuwslezer* as one of the ten most successful innovations in the Public Sector.

8.4.2 The school: its approach to Dutch as a second language for newly arrived migrants and the use of ICTs

The Dutch as a second language section at the College where the research was undertaken is made up of two teachers and one manager. The manager of the section had no knowledge of ICTs and second language learning, as she reported she was only concerned with practical matters such as scheduling lessons and distributing learners. Concerning the two teachers, only the teacher of the class that has been observed agreed with being interviewed. This was also due to the fact that the other teacher had no knowledge of the *NT2 Nieuwslezer*, as she had never worked with it in the previous school year.

All the 11 learners in this class are preparing for the integration exam, their profiles ranging from work to child care. Out of these eleven learners, two of them are not subject to an integration obligation laid on them by the municipality and this is so because they do not hold any 'non-western' passport. The first is Susana who comes from Portugal and has read for a degree in her country of origin. The second is Goodluck, a man who is currently engaged in writing a book about the oil war in Africa. He has a PhD from an American university and has an American passport. In Table 10 we report the name and educational level, as passed on by the teacher, of these 11 learners.

Name	Educational Level
Lisette	Low
Leizel	Intermediate/Low
Mohammed	Intermediate
Susana	Intermediate
Chen	Low
Mohammed Ali	Low
Sandra	Low
Rebecca	Low
Chantita	High
Goodluck	High
Harry	High

Table 10

8.4.3 The teacher and her views on ICTs and the NT2 Nieuwslezer

Ms Patty is a graduate from the university of Amsterdam with as major Dutch language. She has then specialised in Dutch as a second language. After that she has started working here at the College, though she has piled up some experience during her traineeship that has taken place at a relatively small commercial course provider that she wishes to keep anonymous. It is her belief that here at the College much is focused on the learner and that although results are important because of the pressure put on them by municipal authorities, she sees a major difference with the place where she has carried out her traineeship. Further, the quality of education that is offered here, in comparison with her previous employer, is much more uniform and there is a strong didactic back-up. The quality of the didactic material employed here is much higher than the one she has had experienced at her previous employer. In her view anyone can start becoming a course provider but then the quality of the lessons given by small course providers is poor. It is understandable that the success rate is key but if success rate means low quality or lack of care for the clients than providers are engaged in the wrong approach. She reports that when working at this small provider she was clearly told:

'the municipality is our client and the learners are the means through which we keep the municipality happy.'

She sees this approach as ill fitting to the actual reality of people following an integration course. The municipality is a body that assigns an institution a task while the clients are the learners because it is them who after this course will have to face society's demands.

At present, Ms Patty is mainly engaged with learners preparing for the state exam. She is also teaching this class where most of the learners are preparing for the integration exam. In her view the difference between the two groups is huge in terms of the material that is used in class, of the level and topics that can be dealt with during these chats and, last but not least in terms of the way in which the learners preparing for the integration exam approach to the use of ICTs. Learners who have either an intermediate or high educational level are surely more advantaged in working with a PC and ICT applications:

'one realizes it right away, those who have been studying are much more at ease with a PC, they are faster in searching for information on the internet.' (P01, Interview)

On the other hand people who are following the integration trajectory are keener on using Dutch language as a means of communication amongst each other, mainly because they are hungry for achievement as well as because they have much more difficulties in using English than those who belong to the highly educated group. In Patty's view ICTs

are a 'complementary activity' rather than a substitution for lessons based on a book and contact with the teacher. In general, when working with ICTs, the oral interaction is missing. For this reason she lets them work in pairs because when they work together they can learn from each other. In her view, though, ICTs are also a good substitution for work on paper:

'I think it is a nice and fruitful extra. Learners can try out their grammar, verbs for instance. And it also takes away a lot of work from the teacher. But one has to watch out that the teacher does not end up thinking that they can do it all by themselves'. (P01, Interview)

ICTs have therefore to have an added value. She is fairly critical of her own attitude towards it when she reports that it could be easy to slip into a 'go and try it out on the computer' mode because you have to take care of the needs of the whole class. A reason for her opinion and fear of falling into this easy way out can be found in the professional experience that she has gathered during her traineeship at a commercial course provider. There language was not seen as interaction. In her view, though, language is mainly oral interaction. Further, Ms Patty has some doubts that the feedback given by an ICT application is actually good for the learners. In particular for those learners with a low educational background, she sees that the feedback is at times not understood. There is no spoken feedback, no intonation. On the other hand she points out that there are also strong benefits from ICTs that can be a driver in using it in the classroom. When dealing more specifically with the *NT2 Nieuwslezer*, she mentions that one of the strong advantages of such an application is the continuous updating of the articles that learners can have access to:

'it is positive to have something like this, it saves time, we do that ourselves as well but then you have to select articles, cut them, photocopy them, put them in plastic folders and then you have to start once again' (P01, interview).

Yet again an obstacle of this ICT application is the lack of spoken interaction. Ms Patty believes that it is better to read through an article, tackle its structures as well as its content and discuss it with the whole class:

'with interaction you can combine several language skills, such as listening, speaking and understanding. A computer is much more reading, writing and it has to work.' (P01, interview).

The experience of those learners that used it last year was also not so encouraging. Looking back she realizes that many of the articles that the learners had to tackle were too difficult, that is they were not matching their proficiency level. Interesting is the fact

that she claims that while this could be acceptable for learners who have a low educated background, it is not what should happen with learners with a high educational background.

The image of the good learner who should be able to make use of an ICT application is strongly coupled up with a learner who has a high educational profile rather than a lower as it implies by default much more developed language skills. Ms Patty asks herself why this was so. In her understanding of things these difficulties came from the fact that these articles were not talked about in class, rather they were left to themselves to analyse them and to deal with their syntax:

'it would be more suited as a preparation to an exam rather than a reading exercise because that is what it is in the end of the day.' (P01, Interview).

Here Ms Patty focuses on developing reading skills rather than using this ICT application for the development of vocabulary breadth and depth as well as knowledge of Dutch society.

8.4.4 The learners and their views on ICTs and the NT2 Nieuwslezer

Here follow the views gathered from the learners. Only two learners were able to give their views on the use of the NT2 Nieuwslezer because they had used it in 2008. The remaining 9 learners instead, were asked about their own experience with ICTs related to learning Dutch as a second language. Further, they were asked about their more general views on the drivers, barriers and obstacles that in their view are related to the use of ICTs for L2 learning. All the interviews happened individually except for the case of Harry, one of the two learners who had worked with the NT2 Nieuwslezer. Because of his work, he was too busy to be interviewed and he asked whether it would be possible to answer the interview questions via e-mail in English. The other 9 interviews were carried out in English except for two learners whose English was too poor.

The first learner who had worked with the NT2 Nieuwslezer is Harry. He came from Colombia to the Netherlands in 2008 to be with his girlfriend, who is now his wife. He is a qualified veterinarian. Here in the Netherlands he has started off his own business as a photographer and a graphic designer. He reports that because of his job he can do almost anything with a computer, specifically with graphics and animations. His view on the NT2 Nieuwslezer is the following: *'the items were not interesting because they did not match what I was looking for, I am searching for technical vocabulary for design and photography.'*

Yet this lack of thematic vocabulary is contrasted with a more positive opinion that focuses on what he has achieved through this ICT application: *'I think it is a good tool in as much as it allows you to learn a lot of new words.'*

Harry reiterates though that the articles he has come across, did not give him the knowledge he wished to gain about places to see in the Netherlands and art and artists.

Goodluck, the second learner who has made use of the *NT2 Nieuwslezer*, is from Nigeria, he works in the field of international development. He used to live in New York and runs a development organisation. He is in his early 50s and met his wife in the US who is now working in the Netherlands. He was addressed by the teacher as *'a very interesting man, too clever for his own good, he is someone who can learn himself a language without anyone's help'*.

In his reflection about the ICT application, Goodluck reported that: *'I think it was good. It was good because I could read and learn about where I live and what people do. There is some crazy stuff out there man. But I liked it and I did not have to bother no one with it.'*

He mainly focused on the autonomy that a learner gains by using the *NT2 Nieuwslezer*. This call upon autonomy in learning a language comes back when dealing with ICTs at large. He states:

Goodluck: *'So I want to talk about the disadvantages.'*

Researcher: *'hmm, hmm.'*

Goodluck: *'If you are not computer literate then you are gonna find a problem. You will be confronted with how to do two things at the time, studying how to use a keyboard, and then I tell you, if I don't know how to use a keyboard then I have difficulties.'*

Goodluck: *'If I say the word drunk I need to have a face in mind an expression that reminds me of what that word means.'*

Researcher: *'Yeah.'*

Goodluck: *'And sometime, one is just confronted with the basic difficulties or better the basic challenges of learning. I have a very great advantage, I am computer very very literate.'*

Researcher: *'hmm, hmm.'*

Goodluck: *'More than average of course because I write, so when you have that advantage you are able to listen and to concentrate on the language. It is not appropriate to go to the class for me. I am gonna save time, I am gonna exercise judgment, be independent. I don't want any frictions in terms of human relations, I can*

go on and on. So I think, this for me is perfect. Then people can learn two, three languages. I prefer to learn the basics and expand before I go to the class.'

Researcher: *'Yeah, yeah.'*

Goodluck: *'If there is a book the book is pronouncing it for you but here you have a button, you can click on it. The computer is very perfect.'*

Researcher: *'Let me get it right so you think [...]'*

Goodluck: *'They should be exposed to computer first, then to language then go to the classroom, cause they learn with ease.'*

The interview with Goodluck was very interesting. He first focused on computer literacy and on the lack of these skills and the consequences that this might have for someone learning a foreign language. First, s/he has to master these skills and then s/he can move on working on language. He also suggests a pedagogy (as it works for himself) that sees people starting from the computer, grasping a language through ICTs and then coming into the classroom. He, in fact, is working on his own, in front of the PC all the time. The ICT application that he works with repeats for him as many times as he wants and only after having finished his work at the computer he will be willing to join the classroom.

The *NT2-Nieuwslezer* is a specific tool for improving reading skills and expanding the learner's vocabulary. It is meant for individual use, it has no strict learning path, it is an open system in which the learner can use whatever s/he likes. From this case study we see that the teacher found it difficult to incorporate this type of tool in her lessons. She did not know how to use it for different learner levels and had the belief or expectation that speaking should also be part of the learning task while working with the *NT2-Nieuwslezer*. When learners found it too difficult, she could not help them any further. Only the very high educated learner was able to help himself with this tool and was very happy with it.

8.5 Main messages

In the first case study, we have focused on *Ijsbreker*. *Ijsbreker* is a widely spread method that, although it has gone through many changes, it has been on the market of Dutch language teaching to newly arrived migrants for the last two decades. Although *Ijsbreker* is currently undergoing yet another revision which will lead to the publication of *Ijsbreker Plus*, the version that has been investigated follows a communicative approach with a strong emphasis on expanding the learner's own lexicon. The principles underlying the exercises of this ICT application mean, at least in the usage that has been observed,

were along the line of: try – error – feedback – repetition. Though there is also the implication of a social/affective strategy that is combined with the cognitive one, e.g., the use of social interactions displayed in the exercise to assist in the comprehension, learning, or retention of information about how a certain bit of language works (at times this approach is also addressed as meta-cognitive strategy). As explained by *IJsbreker's* didactics, this method is meant for use within a group of learners under the guidance of a teacher, offering self directed and individual learning. 50% of the learning time should be dedicated to self directed learning with *IJsbreker* Multimedia at a PC. During the other 50% learners should work with a workbook, under the guidance of a teacher. Half of this time (so 25% of the total learning time) should be dedicated to group activities where speaking the L2 is the main goal, as speaking/spoken interaction is hardly possible in *IJsbreker* multimedia.

To start with, none of the learners interviewed in the first case study reported any problems with the use of a PC and with coming to grip with understanding how the method *IJsbreker* works in its ICT applications. Rather, the general feeling gathered from all the interviews is that working with a PC when learning Dutch as an L2 is a common thing that takes place mostly in class. Out of the 15 learners, 4 learners reported that ICTs offer the possibility to engage in language learning also at home. Further, the views of these learners who were strongly focused on the use of ICTs at home, had mainly to do with their own keenness to develop their skills. In short, they recognised themselves as highly skilled learners who have undergone a degree in their country of origin and who want to be able to overcome the language qualification barrier required from them so to move on with their career.

A second issue that emerges from the evidence gathered in the first case study is that there are two main impediments to ICTs. As gathered from the fieldwork carried out at the College, ICT applications are present at scheduled times in the learning trajectory of all learners. The use of ICTs though does not seem – in the case of low educated learners – to bridge the lack of knowledge that these learners may have about the L2. It is only through knowledge of the required language skills and understanding of the remedy instructions given by the teacher that the learner comes to grasp what he has missed during his exercise with the ICT application. In other words, when basic knowledge is lacking – whether that is either the lack of the meaning of a certain word, or lack of knowledge of the Dutch alphabet, then this application can do very little on its own.

Last, the picture that emerges from both the teachers' and the learners' interviews is that there are two barriers that may hinder the benefits of ICTs for the learning of Dutch

language. These are: a) the variability in learners' approach and b) the institutional support that teachers may encounter when using ICTs. As for a), the learners have reported a wide spectrum of approaches/attitudes to ICTs. There are learners who are strongly motivated, and their motivation appears to go beyond the high/intermediate/low educated divide. These learners do use the ICTs in *IJsbreker* in their own spare time at home, according to their specific language needs, i.e., working on the depth and breath of their vocabulary in Dutch. Those learners, instead, who are encountering either difficulties with the Dutch language as L2 or who believe to have to start from the book first and then move onto 'using the PC', do see ICTs as a part of the method that they have to follow, and this is done mostly in class. As for b) instead, the teaching staff experiences a lack of institutional support when they want to try out and implement (new) ICT applications. They also report on technical limitations and policy/investment obstacles that prevent them to experiment with more innovative language learning ICTs. These technical limitations have to do with the server at the College, while the investment obstacles are brought by a heavily loaded bureaucracy for obtaining new ICTs. Further, the teachers felt they were limited in their ability for monitoring learning, tracking progress and eventually using ICTs for identifying learners' strengths and weaknesses as well as offering learners the possibility to work more effectively and efficiently. According to the teachers this was due to the minimal role that the teaching of Dutch as L2 plays at the College as well as to the time and differentiation demands that these two teachers have to face within the facilitating learning environment that they have set up. On the other hand, the developers of *IJsbreker* mention the rich administrative teacher's module that gives the L2 teacher the opportunity to track all progress by each learner individually and per group and offers extra exercises for those who have specific needs. This module was not used during the case study and the teachers did not mention it. Our conclusion is thus that the teachers may not have had a complete overview what this ICT application is offering and have no experience with the more sophisticated functions within it.

In the second case study the drivers and obstacles to the use of the ICT application employed in this class were many. It must be pointed out, though, that this application *Virtuele Wijk* had as its focus societal participation. Learning Dutch as an L2 is only a secondary focus, although the instruction language and the role plays in the application are in Dutch. On the one hand, there are learners who take this application as a game, and who are not satisfied because of the lack of speaking skills involved. On the other hand, there are learners - although they see the drivers of this application in the benefits that they can gain from being exposed to real life situations - they also call upon a lack of any possibility to practice their accent, a component of their Dutch language skills that

still labels them as foreigners in the eyes (ears) of others. Last, although making the learners work with real life situations that are linked to the portfolio of their integration trajectory, the *Virtuele Wijk* confronts the learners with genres and vocabulary that can be an obstacle in that it requires time in order to be understood. The time that it was allocated during the activity observed in this class was not enough. As the first group said, the Dutch used in the insurance company situation gave them a hard time. This lack of experience with a certain register, though, is more a development stage that learners may encounter with their Dutch language than a limitation of the ICT application. Native Dutch speakers too are not acquainted with every register of the Dutch language, as there is no native speaker who knows his/her language as a whole and who knows his/her language well (Hymes, 1996).

To sum up, in this case, ICTs facilitate someone's use of specific registers in Dutch in certain specific situations. Yet again, although highly empowering for female learners in terms of societal emancipation, for learners it is difficult to apply the grammar and to get a grip on the feedback that the software gives them. There is a strong obstacle that this application encounters, that is the binary way of thinking that is passed on to the learners. It is a recurrent pattern in their utterances that when they are given the possibility to work with language, they look for the grammar and they look for the security that the grammar of the Dutch language gives to them. Either it is right or it is wrong. It is paradoxical that an application intended for the development of language skills in real-life situations and intended also for the development of specific registers is then interpreted as ambiguous by the learners. Apparently it is not always clear to them what they should do and whether what they do is right.

In the third case study, the experience of those learners that used the *NT2 Nieuwslezer* application last year was not so encouraging. The *NT2-Nieuwslezer* is a specific tool for improving reading skills and expanding the learner's vocabulary. It is meant for individual use, it has no strict learning path, it is an open system in which the learner can use whatever s/he likes. From this case study we see that the teacher found it difficult to incorporate this type of tool in her lessons. She did not know how to use it for different learner levels and had the belief or expectation that speaking should also be part of the learning task while working with the *NT2-Nieuwslezer*. When learners found it too difficult, she could not help them any further. Only the very high educated learner was able to help himself with this tool and was very happy with it. Here we see that the expectations and competencies of the teacher did not match the goals and intentions of the developers of the ICT tool.

9 The Swedish case studies

9.1 Introduction

The two case studies selected for Sweden are, as for those in the Netherlands, both oriented to find answers about the beneficial as well as the negative changes brought about by the use of ICT applications in the field of L2 learning for adult migrants in formal settings. The current situation in Sweden, with no language testing by the government of either residential permit or citizenship applicants, means that there is no market supply of study materials corresponding to the availability of such materials in the Netherlands. Nor has the use of ICTs in adult L2 education been formally studied. In the nation-wide survey of SFI instruction, carried out in 2008 and published in 2009, the one and only mention of digital tools is under the heading "Flexible forms of teaching – a way to combine SFI and employment" where 30% of the responding education providers report that they offer distance courses, presumably on-line, and 40% that they provide opportunities for ICT-based independent studies. No data is however available on how many learners use these digital options. Because of the available information being very limited, the case studies in Sweden, together with the insights gathered through interviews with experts and key informants, aim at shedding some light on the actual use of digital tools in adult L2 education by investigating the following ICT applications:

- the first case study investigates the use of ICTs in the day-time programme at a municipal instructional facility for adults in a big Swedish city of the South. The learners meet daily to study at the school, and the main application in focus for this case study is called 'Kreativ pedagogik' (Creative pedagogy). The up-take area for this school is made up of the entire city. The demographic aspect is influenced by the fact that these learners are enrolled in full-time instruction during the day for which they are entitled to receive social benefits from the government. They are thus more likely not to have a job in Sweden yet and will probably be relatively recent arrivals. Even though there may be some EU labour migrants and "love-migrants" among the learners, the majority of them can be expected to have come to Sweden as refugees or for family reunification. Of importance to this study is therefore that most participants have had little exposure to Swedish society yet and are living on limited incomes. Their familiarity with computers and ICTs depends on what they had learned before coming to Sweden as well as the extent to which ICT applications are used by them in the classroom.
- the second case study was carried out in an evening-programme, at the same

SFI-instruction facility. The learners only get together with their teachers once a week but are expected to study the same number of hours per week as those in the day programmes by working independently on-line between the meetings. This programme is designed to be used with a learning platform called "Fronter" and some computer familiarity is a prerequisite for taking the evening course. Two parallel groups have been investigated. The ICT application in focus here is 'Digitala spåret' (The digital track), an L2-educational platform available at this school that both offer a great deal of flexibility for teachers as well as the individual learner to choose what materials to work with. Among these learners, compared to the previous group, there are more labour migrants who have a job during the day, which increases their exposure to native Swedish speakers outside of their school and residential environment.

The two case studies focus on both low- and better educated newcomers, with the expectation that the first case study will yield more recent arrivals and fewer well-educated participants. The expectation for the second case study was that there will be a higher incidence of learners who are in the Swedish work force and therefore have more contact with Swedish culture and main-stream society. One focus is therefore how these differences affect the choice of ICT applications in the context of Swedish language instruction. Will they be used in the day-time programme to compensate for lack of first-hand experience to teach about Swedish life-style as well as the language? And learning to use a computer is very much part of present-day Swedish life-style. Will the greater familiarity with digital tools among the learners in the evening programme make their teachers more likely to provide a wider range of computer-based learning materials?

The goal of these case studies is to show to what extent and how the ICT applications in focus are used by teachers and learners in these two instructional contexts. If they are not used much in the day programme, reasons for this will be sought – is it because of financial constraints, teachers' "technophobia", the learners' unfamiliarity with the medium, or is it just simply inertia and unwillingness to try something new? Are the evening programme participants more likely to access other digital sources than those made available through the teachers? Looking at the question how, the focus will be both on what the materials are used with, i.e. textbooks and/or other paper-based materials, and in what settings they are used, such as in the classroom or in a computer lab, during scheduled study time or flexibly as the learners see fit. Are the learners mostly using ICTs for individual study and extra practice? Are the programmes just "screen versions" of traditional paper-and-pencil materials? Are all the learners expected to do home-work

on a computer or is it only true for the evening programme? Are the participants learning digitally for life in Sweden or just practicing for the SFI-test?

Another issue to investigate is to what extent the digital applications have cost the school any money or if they are available on the net at no cost. Some free high-quality materials can be downloaded through government-funded web sites such as the National Agency for Education. Others, provided by major publishers, have to be purchased for an installation fee. An initial investment to acquire these tools is based on a decision by the school management and is a matter of school policy, whereas the use of materials that are free of charge becomes an individual teacher's didactic choice, which may or may not be supported by school policy. And if it is a didactic choice, how commonly do teachers at the school choose to work with ICTs? What do they think of as their obvious or potential benefits? Do they see a connection between the importance of not only learning the language but also developing good computer skills in order to prepare for the Swedish job market in particular and daily life in Sweden in general?

The answers to these questions should influence both school policy and municipal as well as national policy about the use of ICT applications for successful integration of newly arrived migrants. The results of the case studies will shed light on the actual uses as well as positive and potentially negative effects of the ICT applications. The information was gathered through field-notes, observations and recorded interviews with 1 principal, 5 teachers, and 33 learners, taking into account both case studies. The case study reports describe the actual setting and which people were actually interviewed.

9.2 Case study 1: 'Kreativ pedagogik' in day-time class

The first case study is based on the city's largest school providing adult education to second language learners of Swedish with around 2500 learners and well over 100 teachers working there. There are day-time programmes that meet five times a week and evening programmes with classes scheduled once a week but with the learners expected to work independently in between meetings, often with an ICT component. The courses offered at the learning centre are mostly language courses at different levels of the SFI (Swedish For Immigrants) programme, but there are also courses in English for immigrants to Sweden and various professional training programmes that are offered in conjunction with practicum periods in Swedish work places. These professional programmes focus on sectors such as business, transportation, hospitality and tourism. They are today also an integrated part of the SFI instruction, which has recently begun to

emphasise the need of work place experience for new-comers to Sweden as part of their introduction to Swedish language and society.

The school itself is a majestic brick building from 1918, originally a public school for children and youth, which was completely renovated a few years ago in order to accommodate the municipal adult second language education in 2007, together with two smaller schools in other parts of the city. Public transportation from all suburban residential areas makes the school easily accessible wherever the learners may live, and its location near the Central train station places it in the heart of downtown. The municipal government purchases the hours of instruction from ABF, the biggest independent provider of adult education in Sweden, so the SFI courses are free of charge to the learners (ABF is a non-profit organisation and any surplus that may occur is reinvested in its educational endeavours).

For the first case study, two classes in the day-time programme and their three teachers have been investigated. This programme is a full-time study programme of 30 hours/week, and new arrivals to Sweden with no other means of support, qualify for government benefits by attending class regularly. Absenteeism is reported to the person responsible for SFI at the municipal level, who then contacts the learner. The investigation was carried out through classroom observations and interviews with the three teachers and a selection of their learners. In all, 15 learners took part, eight from a larger class with two teachers co-teaching a total of around 30 learners at an intermediate to low intermediate level, and seven learners from a class of just under 20 low intermediate to elementary learners that are taught by one teacher. The learner participation in the group interviews was voluntary, and no more than these 15 had any interest in taking part in the group interviews. These interviews with the learners were done at two different times, one for each of the class groups. The relative spread of levels in each group made it possible for those who still had quite limited Swedish proficiency to participate in the group interview, as the ones with better Swedish skills could help them. Also, those who shared higher skills in another language were allowed to discuss the questions among themselves using another language than Swedish.

The interviews had as their point of departure a questionnaire, one for the learners and another one for the teachers, which had been developed by the co-researcher in the Netherlands and translated from Dutch into Swedish, adjusting for the Swedish context where necessary.²⁷ This gave the learners written visual support for the spoken interview

²⁷ The topic guide for the teachers can be found in Appendix I. The questionnaire used with the learners originated from an open research agreement (see acknowledgments) and was originally developed for a survey on women, eskills and employability (Garrido, et al., 2010).

questions, and they could help each other filling in their answers on the questionnaire pages after a brief group discussion of the content of the question. At the end of each group interview session, a more informal and freely discussion aimed specifically at what the learners themselves felt about the use of ICT applications in their language learning process. During this final part the researcher took notes, as one of the teachers had pointed out that using a tape recorder may have an inhibiting effect on some of the members of the two groups. Each group interview session lasted approximately one hour, and lastly the questionnaires were collected for analysis.

The interviews with the teachers took place twice, once before the learner group interview and once after. The teachers, who have all been given fictitious names in this report, had before the first interview received their questionnaire and e-mailed their answers to the investigator. At the time of the interview, they were asked questions at that time had as their point of departure what the teachers had answered in writing. They were therefore not identical in each teacher interview. The questions in the follow-up interviews sprang from what had been said by the learners in the group interview sessions and from what had been seen in the classroom observations. Due to time constrains, these second interviews with the teachers were carried out by telephone. The classroom observation occurred for one class before the group interview and for the other one shortly after it. For scheduling reasons, this was the only possible way of doing the two observations. As the observations were not done to assess the learners but rather to get a picture of the classroom environment and the teaching mode of the teachers, it seemed unlikely that it would make any difference to the group interview participants whether or not they had met the investigator in their classroom before sitting down with her in a group room.

9.2.1 The ICT Application in Focus

Both classes observed used digital materials but, as was seen above, in different settings and to varying degrees. One ICT application that the two co-teachers as well as the single teacher liked and encouraged their learners to use was the web site *Kreativ pedagogik* (Creative pedagogy).²⁸ According to the teachers, it is also well liked by the learners, and it is available on-line free of charge. Even for elementary learners with little computer experience it is easy to navigate because of its clear and simple design, which enables the learners to use it independently and allows the teacher to be available as a language expert and not as a technology consultant. The latter aspect is of course important for the teacher from a professional point of view, but it is also an advantage

The researcher in Sweden translated the version of this questionnaire as it was adapted by the researcher in the Netherlands.

²⁸ www.kreativpedagogik.se

for the learners as they do not get frustrated and have to sit waiting for the teacher to come and help them when they could spend their time on a more productive activity.

Kreativ pedagogik consists of a wealth of materials and is divided into seven sections (see **Figure 3**) of which the first two are most frequently used by the classes in this case study.



Figure 3: Kreativ pedagogic sessions

The first one – “Nyheter och media” (News and media, see below) is a set of links to various media sites, and the second one – “Lexikon och ordböcker” (Dictionaries and wordbooks) is a set of links to a number of on-line dictionaries and vocabulary sites. Although it is mostly the second section that the learners in this case study find particularly useful, the teachers encourage them to try out some of the media sites as well, especially in the larger group that is at a higher level in their Swedish language development. There are media sites available that are specifically intended for users of Swedish with limited language skills, both an easy-to-read newspaper – “8 sidor” (8 Pages) – which is also available read aloud as a listening option, and a radio newscast in simplified and distinctly pronounced Swedish – “Klartext” (Clearly said) – which is produced for second language listeners and even has a set of follow-up comprehension questions for self-testing. As well, there is a TV news programme – “Lilla Aktuellt” (Little Current Events) that is primarily aimed at younger viewers but can be suitable also for an adult audience with limited Swedish language skills. On-line books are also available in this section of *Kreativ pedagogik* – “Låna” (Borrow, an e-library service) and “Gratis e-bok” (Free e-book) – and a list of easy-readers can be found as well – “LättLäst” (EasyRead) – that can be ordered on-line.

In the second section, “Lexikon och ordböcker”, are not only almost 100 different on-line translation dictionaries, most of them “Lexin” dictionaries specifically intended for language learners, but also a Google translation site with 23 languages available. A phrase book in 60 languages can be found under the link “Parlör” (Travel phrase book), and “Lexin” also has four special vocabulary sites that use written words with still pictures and sound as well as animations. Here is also a “Lexin” link called “Dialoger”

(Dialogues”) that provide model dialogues for situations related to three different topic areas, work, health care and leisure activities.

The other sections of *Kreativ pedagogik* may be a bit too challenging for the learners in this case study, but for the ones with a rapid progression there are links to many sites with interesting information. The link “Svenska” (Swedish) contains a great variety in difficulty levels where some are suitable for an intermediate language learner, e.g. “Förkortn.” (Abbrev.) about common Swedish abbreviations, and “Grammatik” (Grammar), a basic grammar book in Swedish with exercises.

Under Svenska is also a link called “Svenskkurs” (Swedish course) which yields the on-line course “Safir”, a Swedish beginner’s course that can even be used by those with very limited language skills. For the advanced learner there is anything from dialects to swear words to old-fashioned expressions, some of which is primarily intended for native speakers.

The section called “Samhälle” (Society) contains links to sites that address various aspects of Swedish society and culture. The language level is very challenging for intermediate learners and more appropriate for advanced learners, and most of the texts are originally intended for native speakers. One link, “Immigrant”, also has versions in English and Spanish. Some of the content areas that are covered are tourism, geography, plants, Swedish history, Swedish traditions, politics, and law. Even links to Migrationsverket, Sweden’s immigration authority, are found here as are links to Arbetsförmedlingen, the government’s employment agency, and other useful sites for job-seekers and the unemployed.

The “Stockholm” section has links to just about any information imaginable about the Swedish capital and although the links mostly are intended for native speakers, many of them should be navigable for high intermediate to advanced language learners. For those already familiar with this city, the information is obviously more accessible as prior knowledge will facilitate understanding if the language is bordering on being too challenging.

In the last Swedish language section of *Kreativ pedagogik*, called “Blandat” (A Mix), are assembled a variety of links on different topics, many of them in language that is manageable for the intermediate learner, some even at the low intermediate level. The topics include health care tips, how to tell time, how to use a computer keyboard correctly as well as other computer related help, word games such as Scrabble (“Alfapet”

in Swedish) and a currency exchange site. Specifically for the Swedish language learner is a link called "Studera svenska" (Study Swedish) that leads directly to "Digitala spåret" (the Digital track) that in turn leads to among other digital study options "Safir". Two of the major components of Digitala spåret, "Mål (Goal) and "Framåt" (Forward) are to be used in conjunction with textbooks in hard copy and are therefore only partially digital.

Finally in *Kreativ pedagogik* is the section "English Swedelinks" that contains all kinds of information about Sweden and things Swedish in English as well as links to dictionary and translation sites – back to section two – and various options for studying Swedish on-line. They do, however, require some knowledge of English (except for "Safir" that appears as a link here as well) as the examples in *Figure 4* from this section illustrate.

<u>Alphabet</u>	How do you pronounce the Swedish letters and sounds? Listen here. It gives you a pretty good idea about it even if it's not 100% perfectly pronounced (e.g. "U" is too much alike "Y")
<u>Some notes</u>	Some Notes on the Swedish Language
<u>Introduction</u>	Introduction to Swedish
<u>Beginners Swedish</u>	This course produces a series of short, image-intensive lessons focusing on everyday situations. This tutorial can also be downloaded as one Zip file containing the source material.
<u>Games</u>	Some small games to help you learn some basic words.
<u>Hear and learn</u>	Hear and learn useful expressions with small animations.

Figure 4: an example of some links of the "English Swedelinks" session in Kreativ pedagogik

In addition, there is a language exchange link and even a site to visit for families who want to raise their children bilingually, only available in English.

9.2.2 The Teachers in Focus

From the teacher interviews it became clear that the ways in which the three teachers viewed and implemented ICT applications in their teaching were not identical. One logistical difference became very obvious during the classroom observations as the two co-teachers, henceforth called Eve and Mike, used a computer room once a week in order to be able to give all their learners access to a computer, and they had none in their classroom, whereas the teacher with the smaller class, henceforth called Anne, had computers along one wall in her classroom that her learners could make use of whenever they felt the need to consult a computer resource. This affected the way the teachers organised the ICT use in their teaching. In both classrooms, however, the ICT

applications were there to support and expand on work done by the learners in books and on paper, which could be described as the mainstay of the materials used by all the learners. In terms of amount of time spent by the learners working at a computer, Eve and Mike's class spent 20% of their class time in the computer room, and Anne estimated that most of her learners spent 10-15% of their time in the classroom in front of one of the computers.

Anne, who had computers right there in her classroom, encouraged her learners to consult on-line dictionaries and to work on different grammar modules on the computer as the need occurred in the individual learner. The main learning material in Anne's classroom was however paper-based and focused on the Swedish language textbook "SFI Läs!" (SFI Read!), books A-B and B-C. The letters designate the difficulty level of each textbook and correspond to the levels included in each of the "SFI tracks" that learners are assigned when they start studying. In Anne's class, the spread in learner levels was quite noticeable and using digital materials, in addition to two versions of the textbook, was a manageable way for her to deal with such a heterogeneous class. In the more traditional whole-class teaching parts of her lesson, the computers sat idle, but when the learners were working independently with texts or on work-book exercises, most computers were in use most of the time.

From what could be observed, however, there were clearly learners that wanted to use a computer as much as possible and there were those who liked to avoid it. This was later confirmed during the group interview session with members of that class. The women were more reluctant than the men, and especially the younger males in that class were eager to use the computer to assist them in their learning. One of them even seized the opportunity to check his e-mail while he was there anyway and the teacher was busy with one of his classmates. As the tables and chairs in that classroom were placed in group settings with 4-6 learners around each table, Anne quite often had her back to the computer wall while she was helping those who were working on paper. Developing computer skills as part of the language learning process was not a noticeable priority in this classroom, but the digital tools available were treated as useful resources for those who chose to take advantage of them.

In Eve and Mike's class, computer use was limited to one 3-hour morning session every week when they had access to the computer room. All learners then worked at their individual computers, and much of the work consisted of practicing and expanding on work that had been done in the regular classroom earlier. That work was book/paper-based, by necessity, and the main textbook here was also "SFI Läs!" but in this more

advanced class, the B-C and C-D versions of the book were used. Again, two versions of the book were used, each corresponding to one of the "SFI tracks" indicated by the letters. The books came with a CD-ROM of additional exercise material - beyond what was found in the ordinary textbook exercises - which Eve and Mike had installed in the computer room, and the learners found it useful to spend their time at the computer honing their skills in this way. They also used dictionary links ("Lexin") available to them through one of the ICT applications the teachers had recommended that could be used free of charge ("*Kreativ pedagogik*") and some learners liked to work with the illustrated follow-up material that could be used in conjunction with the dictionaries. A grammar practice exercise programme ("Form i fokus") had been purchased by the school and installed so the learners could access it in the computer room, and some of them also used this resource during the weekly computer session. There was thus flexibility and choice in terms of what the learners chose to spend their time at the computer on, and they could decide for themselves or in consultation with one of their teachers. At times, Eve or Mike would recommend that a learner should spend computer time on practicing a particular language skill, so there were more opportunities to individualise the teaching during the computer sessions than was the case in the regular classroom, according to these teachers.

While in the computer room, Eve and Mike also spent part of the session teaching the class how to use "Word" to create a document and then write their own texts. This was a recurring feature, they said, and they saw it as an essential skill for the learners to have, once they were out in "the real world". It can therefore be said that these teachers did not see the computer work as solely an extension of the regular classroom teaching, but also as a way of providing their learners with the a tool they would need outside the classroom, for example in a future work-place. In addition, this part of the session became an opportunity for the learners to work on creating their own Swedish texts and focus on their written production critically as the software in the computers would indicate spelling mistakes and grammatical errors. If the learners then either were able to self-correct or called on one of the teachers for assistance, the Word document exercise also included an explicit language learning component.

Although the learners in Eve and Mike's class did not get an opportunity in school to learn by using digital tools outside the computer room, the two teachers made frequent and varied use of a "smart-board" in their regular classroom. Whether or not the learners saw this as computer assisted teaching (and learning) was not clear and probably depended on the individual learner's familiarity with computer applications. Anne, however, did not use this digital tool much in her classroom and complained that there were "technical

problems" with the equipment. She also mentioned that many of her learners were better skilled at using both hard- and software than she was, particularly those who were highly educated in their home countries, which she saw as "a problem". In the pre-interview questionnaire was a question whether the school had provided teachers with adequate in-service training to confidently use ICTs in the classroom, to which she answered, "Unfortunately no". In the interview, she explained that she had mostly had to be self-taught and learn by trial and error or by asking more computer confident colleagues.

In contrast, Eve and Mike both answered that the school had offered them good professional development in how to use digital applications in their teaching. Eve in particular was very positive about the in-service training she had been offered. A possible reason why these teachers rate their school's in-service training so differently may be found in the fact that Anne is a bit older than Eve and Mike. This gives her an edge in terms of teaching experience, but the two younger teachers may have an advantage in terms of a higher comfort and skill level with working digitally already before they started teaching at the school. As a result, they found the professional development offered to be quite sufficient, and their greater prior experience with computers made them better able to take advantage of the in-service training the school provided.

Another difference in the answers given by Anne on the one hand and by Eve and Mike on the other hand is the way they refer to the use of ICTs and digital tools in the pre-interview questionnaire. Anne states that teachers often use digital materials when they could just as well have printed it out and distributed it to the learners on paper. Eve and Mike, in contrast, view the digital tools as an integrated part of their teaching and find that they can usually individualise better and be more flexible with their learners when they work in the computer room. Working digitally provides easy access to information and tools, such as on-line newspapers and dictionaries, and allows more independent work on the part of the learners. "It speeds up the learning process for learners who acquire the language easily", Mike commented. Eve added that those who struggle with their language learning can take the extra time they need to practice certain aspects of the language in front of the computer, without slowing down their classmates or needing as much attention from her or Mike. However, in training spoken language skills on the computer, they both agree, there can be too much listening and not enough talking. Eve also voiced another concern: "Too many pronunciation drills and too little real communication".

One area where all three teachers are in agreement is that working digitally is not as beneficial to those among their learners who only have a limited education background. Most of these individuals have no or little familiarity with using a computer, and teaching

them how to use the technical equipment initially becomes more important than the actual language learning. "They need a long time to learn how to handle a computer, which takes time away from the language learning," comments Anne. They also lack study skills and may have limited motivation or belief in their own ability to succeed, all of which makes them less able to work independently and monitor their own progress. In the questionnaire, Mike writes, "The main limitation is in their lack of study technique, motivation and technical competence". Eve answers in her questionnaire, "Working with ICTs can seem time-consuming and meaningless, especially for those who are not used to working independently". In the interview she mentions another negative effect for those with a low education background, which is that using ICT applications usually means either having the learners working individually in front of a computer or having the teacher lecture in front of the whole class using a "smart-board" or power-point presentation, adding: "Work in small groups does not get much room in the digital classroom." However, all three teachers mention in the interviews that group work is a way of learning that the low-educated thrive on. The sharing of knowledge and the mutual support that provide security and confidence in the smaller group are beneficial to these learners in a unique way. "That cannot be replaced by any down-loaded material or virtual communities," said Anne.

When asked to look to the future, Mike hopes for "special introductory modules" to teach the low-educated new-comers to Sweden and the school how to become more comfortable and gradually more skilled at using digital material and computers. "This," he writes in the questionnaire, "requires a real investment on the part of the school and a desire to change. Today I don't feel that there is willingness to that." Digitalising much of more traditional practice material as well as recording certain lessons or lectures by the teachers, so they can be used over and over again by the learners at the computer, is another wish for the future that Mike talks about in the interview. Eve also foresees increased use of ICT applications and digital tools in the future and mentions a discussion about a shared digital resource bank for all ABF teachers that is said to be in the planning stages. "This," she says, "would benefit both learners and teachers." Quality improvement for teachers as well as for learners is also at the heart of Anne's vision for the future when she calls for better access to computers and technical support in order to increase the use of ICT applications and digital tools in SFI education.

9.2.3 The Learners in Focus

The questionnaire that was completed during the group interviews by the participating learners was divided into sections that dealt with a) personal background information, b) computer skills and usage patterns, and c) integration and employment issues.

Personal background of the learners

Among the day-time programme participants, the interview groups represented ten different nationalities and ten different first languages. More than one person gave their nationality as Iraqi (4), Kurdish (2) and Somali (2). Among the remaining seven, four were from non-European countries (Lebanon, Iran, Russia, Brazil) and three from Europe (Rumania, Serbia, France). The most common first language was Arabic (3), followed by Assyrian, Kurdish and Somali (2). The most commonly known second languages were, in addition to (some) Swedish, Arabic and English (3 each). Nine persons identified themselves as Muslims and six as Christians. Ten of the respondents were married, two in a common-law relationship, and three were single. Eight respondents had no children while seven of them did.

The reasons for coming to Sweden were mostly related to family matters. Ten of them gave family reasons, often in combination with "working" or "studying". Only two persons in the interview groups had come for political/humanitarian reasons. Nine of them were planning to apply for Swedish citizenship, two had already applied (and one of them had become a Swedish citizen), two were not interested in getting Swedish citizenship and one person did not answer the question. Their educational backgrounds from the home country were quite varied with three of them having a university degree and one person less than six years of basic schooling. Nobody in the interview groups had known any Swedish before coming to Sweden, which for the most recent arrivals had happened in 2008 while a couple of learners had been in Sweden since 2004.

Computer skills and usage patterns

All the interviewed learners used a computer and the Internet, and all but three did so every day. That most of those respondents who only had access to computers at school once a week still used a computer on a daily basis, indicates that they also used a computer outside class. Eleven respondents reported having a computer at home, and those who did not have one used a computer at a library, an internet-café or when visiting friends. Only one person never used a computer outside school. In addition to using a computer for their studies (11 persons), they used it for recreation (9), finding phone numbers and/or maps (8), banking (7), and for travel purposes (5). Almost everybody used e-mail and read on-line papers, and more than more than half participated in chats/blogs on the Net. One person had a personal blog, and four participated in social networks such as Facebook.

There was some variation in terms of what the interview participants indicated that they could do on the computer. Most respondents were able to attach documents/files to an e-

mail. They also knew how to copy and move texts on the computer and could cut and paste to create new documents. Some could reduce files and install new components, but only two had learned to write their own programmes. Two respondents had their own web pages, but three people answered that they had no special digital skills at all. Whether they had more advanced or very basic computer skills, most of them reported having learned to use a computer from family and/or friends. Many added that they were also self-taught, and some had improved their computer skills in school. Although all but two persons indicated that they regularly visited a library, only one answered that the library had been a place for learning how to use a computer.

Integration and employment

Language is a key to integration, but in countries like Sweden where the vast majority of adults, even parents of young children, go to work every day, it is also of vital importance for integration into society to find employment. What one does or has been doing at work is, in addition to the weather, a common topic in informal social conversations in Sweden, where it is considered less acceptable to, for example, discuss politics at a party. Extended small talk with Swedes becomes a challenge without a job to talk about. But without talking to Swedes, it becomes difficult to improve one's spoken language skills - without good language skills, it is hard to get a job. It can easily become a vicious circle.

As all of the interview participants are enrolled in a day-time study programme, it is not unexpected to find that nobody has a full-time job. Nobody, however, has any part-time employment either, such as a week-end job, except for one person who was at the time doing a practicum period in the afternoons as part of the SFI programme. In contrast, everybody except two respondents is looking for work. Indeed, eleven of the fifteen respondents have answered that they are learning Swedish so that they will be able to apply for a job.²⁹ Eleven persons answered that one of the main reasons for learning Swedish is integration into Swedish society, and most of these respondents gave both getting a job and integration as reasons for learning Swedish. In the group interview discussions it became obvious that they see the connections between language, employment and integration. "How can I meet Swedish people if I don't have a job? They don't live where I live," said one of the participants. When the respondents were asked in the questionnaire to write down what problems they have encountered in Sweden, the most frequently given answers are finding or applying for a job and getting an apartment. Both these problems are obstacles to integration in Sweden, as not having

²⁹ Getting a passing grade on the SFI-test is generally seen as a prerequisite for being able to use the government's employment agency.

your own place to live makes it impossible to invite anyone to your home. Social gatherings in Swedish culture usually take place in the host's home and not at a pub or a bistro or a neighbourhood restaurant.

When asked in the questionnaire to choose from a list what computer applications would be useful for them to get a job in Sweden, twelve out of fifteen answer "using the computer to look for work". Two of them had earlier written that the main problem they had encountered in Sweden was not being able to use the government's employment agency to look for work as they have not yet passed the SFI-test. Instead, they and ten more see the option of seeking employment on the Net as useful for getting a job in Sweden, thereby by-passing the government option. In one group discussion, it was even suggested that they would stand a better chance of being called to an interview if they apply on-line, compared to having to use the telephone to contact the prospective employer. Even with good written language skills, they realize that they will still have a noticeable accent when they speak Swedish. They may not have read any studies about this, but they have developed an astute awareness of how negatively many prospective employers in Sweden react to an "immigrant accent".

At the end of the questionnaire, the group interview participants were asked to rank on a scale from 0 to 5 how important the following nine different skills are for getting a job in Sweden:

- knowing my mother tongue
- knowing Swedish
- knowing other languages
- basic skills in mathematics and technology
- digital skills
- being a good learner
- social skills/integration
- initiating and working independently
- cultural skills

Not surprisingly, "knowing the Swedish language" is the most important skill. It is closely followed by "social skills and integration into Swedish society" and "being able to work independently and initiate activities". Next is "having good computer skills" and after that "knowing my mother tongue". On the lower half of the list is "knowing another language", and one may wonder if the answer had been the same had the option been English instead of just any other language. The same ranking is given to "being a fast learner" and even less importance is given to "basic skills in Mathematics and

Technology". Last and least important is the option "having cultural skills", defined as for example singing, dancing, artistic talent. Some of the respondents said that they were not sure about some of the options and were told to just leave that line blank. (Those non-responses were not calculated as 0, which stood for "no use at all" and clearly indicated a point of view, but were instead left out completely in the analysis of the data.)

Informal discussion

In the closing informal discussions at the end of each group interview, the participants were asked about what they thought about the use of digital tools and ICT applications by themselves and by their teachers in the SFI programme they were attending. Both groups thought that their teachers used just the right amount of computer assisted learning and teaching while they were in school, but the groups differed in terms of how they looked at using the computer to do homework. The participants in the lower level group did not like using a computer outside of school to work on their Swedish language learning, although most of them used a computer for other purposes. One person, a 20-year-old male, was the exception and would have liked to get more homework to do on-line. When it was pointed out by his classmates that he could choose freely among the various activities available through *Kreativ pedagogik* to do extra work at home, he said that he preferred to be given specific tasks by the teacher. "Otherwise", according to this learner, "it is too easy to get distracted and start doing other things on the Net" (This was the same young man that had checked his e-mail in the classroom). Three women in the lower group said that they rarely, if ever, used a computer outside the classroom but did not mind using one in class. The remaining three in the group, all men of varying ages, had nothing against using a computer for private purposes but preferred doing homework in a more traditional way.

The group of learners from Eve and Mike's class were more accepting of getting homework to do on the computer, as they only had a chance to work on-line once a week. They saw the benefits of practicing on a computer outside school what they had been working on in the computer room, as long as it was one of the ICT applications that were available free of charge so they could access it from home or the library. Some of the women in this group were quite positive towards using digital material and doing homework on-line, perhaps a result of their higher level of education and European backgrounds. There was only one man (from Lebanon) in this interview group, and he said he was "okey" with getting homework to do on the computer, adding that "My Danish wife can always help me out if I get computer problems". That comment leads to the tentative conclusion that the more society at large is digitalised and using ICT

applications in daily life in the learner's country of origin, the more positive he or she is to including ICTs and digital tools as part of the language learning process.

9.3 Case study 2: 'Digitala spåret' in evening class

The second Swedish case study was also carried out at the same learning institution but with two classes from the evening programme, where the learners meet once a week with their teacher and work independently on the computer between the classroom meetings, using a learning platform called "Fronter" and doing much of their work with material from the language learning web-site "Digitala spåret" (the Digital Track). In order to study in one of the classes in this ICT-based programme, the learners must have some initial familiarity with the use of digital tools and have basic computer skills. The evening programme is considered as full-time studies, like the day programme in the first case study, but the physical meetings are limited to three hours a week, starting after 5pm. This enables learners to be gainfully employed while studying the Swedish language. Both classes in the second case study are higher than beginner/elementary level, and the learners have either taken the basic level(s) in a day-time SFI programme or learned some Swedish already before coming to Sweden.

The participating classes consist of approximately 20 learners each and are taught by two teachers, who will be called Eric and Rita in this report. Eric's class is low- to high-intermediate and Rita's is high-intermediate to advanced. Ten learners from Eric's class took part in the first group interview session, which was held in conjunction with their evening class, and eight learners from Rita's class joined the group interview conducted the following evening during their weekly meeting at the school. Originally, ten participants from both classes had shown an interest in participating in the group interviews, but some learners in the higher level class were absent that evening, including two of those who had indicated that they were willing to be part of the interview session. As with the day-time groups, these interview sessions used a learner questionnaire as point of departure, and the questions in it were explained and discussed before the learners wrote their answers in the individual forms. At the end of the session, after the questionnaire had been completed, an informal freely formed discussion gave the participants an opportunity to give their opinions about the use of digital materials and the computer as teaching and learning tools.

When the need arose, the participants were allowed to discuss among themselves in another shared language than Swedish to clarify some point or question to one another. This happened more frequently in the more advanced group, from Rita's class, where the

participants seemed to strive for a more exact understanding of the questions. Comments like "What do they really mean here?" were made in connection with some answer options in the questionnaire, for example about previous education from their countries of origin or regarding their use of computers. In both Eric's and Rita's groups, more talking and discussions occurred between questions than in the groups in the first case study. For example, terminology such as "nationality" as opposed to "citizenship" generated some minutes of discussion, as did the question on religion, where some in the group claimed to have no religion at all and were unsure about what to answer. As a result, the interview sessions in this case study also lasted approximately an hour, just as in the first case study, even though the interview groups in this case study spent less time than the groups in the first case study on actually comprehending the content of the questions in the questionnaire. In addition, the informal discussions at the end became very brief, as both groups thought the ICT-based learning model they had chosen worked well for them.

The teachers of the two classes, Eric and Rita, were interviewed in the same way as were the teachers in the first case study, once after having completed the teacher questionnaire and once again after the group interviews and classroom observations. The observations were done the same evenings as the group interviews took place, just before the group interviews started. As a result, the learners did not know the reason why an extra person was in the classroom except as a "visitor", which the teachers had mentioned was not an unusual occurrence. Therefore, the learners did not adjust their classroom behaviour in any way during the observation period. The real identity of this extra person only became known when those who had agreed to volunteer were asked to leave with the visitor for the group interview session.

The first interviews with the teachers were directly related to the answers they had given in the teacher questionnaire, while the second interview questions were linked to information given by the participants in the group interviews and to the classroom observations. Consequently, the interviews with Eric and Rita did not entirely consist of the same questions. For practical reasons, the second interview with each teacher was in both cases conducted by telephone. It is unlikely that the answers were influenced by the fact that the second interview was done over the phone instead of being carried out face-to-face, as both Eric and Rita had already met the investigator in person in connection with the first interviews and the classroom observations.

9.3.1 *The ICT Application in Focus*

The ICT application mostly used by both these evening classes is a learner web-site called "*Digitala spåret*".³⁰ It is easily accessed through a direct link in Fronter, the learning platform used by both classes and by other educational institutions in Sweden as well. All information about the course is available in Fronter, such as the course outline and links to course materials, and the learners can communicate with their teacher as well as talk to each other in a discussion forum. A notice board informs the learners about changes, useful news and other up-dates, and there is a link to the schools own newsletter. Power-point presentations done by the teachers, with recorded sound, can be up-loaded so the learners can review them and go through them several times in order to enhance the comprehension and recollection of the content. Every learner has a personal folder where the teacher puts commented assignments that have been handed in digitally, either in Fronter or by e-mail. Group rooms can also be created for the users (both learners and teachers) to communicate in a smaller context than the discussion forum.

Digitala spåret offers great variety both in terms of types of materials available and difficulty levels to choose from. These advantages offer maximal flexibility in terms of language challenges and study rate to the learners in these SFI classes, hence the reason why there are at the time of the case study high intermediate learners in both groups. Some in the lower level class have learned more rapidly than others, while some in the higher level class have for various reasons needed more time than their classmates to develop their Swedish language skills to an advanced level.

To choose language level, there is a list of seven degrees of difficulty, the highest ones actually being beyond the SFI-test level (one called SAS, Swedish as A Second language, and the top level GY which stands for "gymnasium", the Swedish word for high school). Thus, learners with a very rapid language learning trajectory can actually start working at a higher level than the SFI programme officially has to offer even before they have finished their SFI education and passed the SFI-test. This is particularly valuable to these learners who are doing much work independently, between the weekly classes, and therefore may progress at very different paces. Also, as can be seen below (The Learner in Focus), some of these persons were married to or living with a Swede and thus had access to a language resource at home. Furthermore, half of the participants had jobs and more than half of them lived in areas of the city that are dominated by ethnic Swedes. All of these factors provide more language input on an every-day basis than for

³⁰ www.digitalasparet.se

the learners in the first case study, who with few exceptions lived in immigrant-dense suburbs on the perimeter of the city. Therefore, in the second case study, the variety in progress among learners in the same class can be expected to be considerable and requiring access to materials that do not inhibit the more rapid development in some participants.

In *Digitala spåret*, as with *Kreativ pedagogik*, the learner is invited to choose not only level but also thematic content and type of learning material. In addition to the digital material, there is a printed textbook associated with this ICT application, called "Framåt!" (=Forward!), which is available at six different levels of difficulty. Exercises for these graded textbooks are available on-line through *Digitala spåret*, and are accessed by clicking on a picture of the cover for the textbook in question. The exercises focus more on form than content in that they have the learner practice grammatical structures, such as tense forms or preposition choices, or fill in a word or short phrase on a blank, so-called *cloze tests*. Some content questions check comprehension, but the learners are not invited to do any elaborations beyond the readings or read between the lines.

The themes available in *Digitala spåret* are listed alphabetically on left side of the start page of the application, and on the right hand side are the levels of difficulty that the learner can choose to work at. The thematic topics are work, residence, economy, family, leisure, history, health, culture, language, literature, society, Sweden, education, and science. There is some overlap in materials between, for example, culture and society, literature and Sweden, or education and science. In some themes, such as family and health, the lower level materials are taken from the Safir programme, while the more challenging levels in the respective themes are from other sources, some written or adapted for language learners, others primarily intended for native speakers. There are both visual and auditory materials available, and exercises such as cloze tests (see above) are often self correcting, with or without explanations following an incorrect answer. As with *Kreativ pedagogik*, on-line dictionaries are only a mouse-click away, and grammatical resources are also part of *Digitala spåret*.

With a direct link to *Digitala spåret* in Fronter, the learning platform, the learners in the computer-based evening courses have an almost endless supply of materials to choose from and practice their Swedish with, at least in terms of writing/grammar and reading as well as, to some extent, listening. Opportunities to practice talking/speaking are limited to pronunciation drills, which emphasise phonemes in relation to the letters of the alphabet or individual words, but intonation and stress patterns are, as the teachers pointed out, best learned and practiced in the classroom. Here again, those learners who

have easy access to native speakers of Swedish in their every-day life will have an advantage over those who only interact with other learners, albeit at varying stages of Swedish language development. By using *Digitala språket* as the main ICT application for their learners, the teachers in the second case study have provided an immensely flexible and content-rich digital material for their learners to work on at their individual computers.

9.3.2 The Teachers in Focus

The two teachers, Eric and Rita, were both comfortable with ICT applications being a major part of the teaching their learners were exposed to. They saw their role as, on the one hand, being a resource available to the learners on-line via Fronter, the learning platform used by the learning centre, or by e-mail, who could be consulted when or if a learner encountered some specific problem while working with the digital material outside the classroom. On the other hand, they saw themselves as primarily responsible for the learners' development of spoken language skills, which also became obvious in the way the weekly classes were taught. Both teachers identified these roles in the first interview, and explained that it was difficult for the learners to work productively on talking/speaking at the computer, except for practicing individual sounds/phonemes with materials that included pronunciation drills.

During both observations, much of the classroom activity was centred around working on oral exercises where the learners practiced pronunciation, were engaged in conversation practice in pairs/small groups or were reading aloud to the class. Special attention was given by both teachers to stress and intonation, which they felt were not elements of pronunciation that could successfully be learned digitally. In the more advanced class, some of the learners were giving short talks to the class, and their teacher Rita explained in the second interview that this would eventually be done by all the learners in her class through a rotating speaking schedule. These individual talks in front of the whole class were not part of the speaking activities in the intermediate level class, but Eric would at times use singing as a way for them to practice stress and intonation. He also felt that learning some items from a collection of popular traditional Swedish songs would be beneficial to the learners' cultural integration. "If they are at a party with Swedes, there will be a sing-along session", he said, "and then it is better if they know some tunes."

The intermediate class met in a classroom where there were some computers along one of the walls, and during the observation a few learners were practicing pronunciation with digital exercises while at the same time consulting with Eric. In the follow-up interview, he explained that these learners wanted confirmation that they were producing the sounds correctly before doing more work on that material on their own. "They don't want

to practice it the wrong way and then get stuck with it", he explained. The learners in the more advanced class did not have access to any computers at the weekly meetings, but Rita had access to a Smart-board, and some learners would use power-point slides when they were presenting their individual talks to the class. She mentioned that the first two weeks of the course, the classes had been held in the computer room at the school, so the learners could become familiar with the learning platform under the guidance of the teacher before they were expected to work on it independently. "Even the ones with excellent computer skills found this useful the first week", she told the researcher, "and then they could just do work on the platform the second time and use me as a language resource."

The advantages of working on this kind of learning platform are, according to Eric and Rita, that it allows flexibility in terms of both time and place. "It saves commuting time for the course participants and allows them to be gainfully employed at the same time," said Rita. Eric mentions that "class time is not lost because of late-comers, and late sleepers as well as early risers can study when they are most receptive and alert." Both teachers agree that the main disadvantage is that studying in this way becomes difficult for persons with no or very little computer experience. This is often the case for low-educated learners, who first need to get the skills necessary to navigate the platform. Becoming comfortable with the medium of instruction becomes time-consuming and as challenging as learning the new language. That is the reason why the school requires that those choosing to study in the evening programme already have computer experience before they sign up for it.

Looking to the future, however, Eric and Rita are both confident that using ICTs in language education will soon be the rule, not the exception. Eric mentions the greater need for distance courses using ICT applications as learners become more geographically scattered due to the shortage of accommodation in the bigger cities in Sweden, while Rita emphasises the impact of the economy on education. As funding is reduced, more teaching will have to be done without the teacher physically present, and learning will take place during more "teacher-free" lessons when learners can access equipment available at the school and meet their classmates, but the actual teaching will consist of recorded lectures and reviews by the teacher(s) that are available through a learning platform. She also believes that there will be an increase in educational materials using interactive digital formats such as games. Eric adds that he hopes that through ICTs a blog or newspaper could be created, which would be run by and for the learners as their very own arena, preferably with a multilingual content.

9.3.3 The Learners in Focus

The questionnaire used in the group interviews with 18 of the evening programme learners was the same as for the interview groups in the first case study. The answers were therefore divided into the same three content categories.

Personal background of the learners

Among the 18 participants in the second case study group interviews, 16 different nationalities were represented. There were two persons Chile and two from Turkey, but the rest all came from different countries. In the more advanced group, two participants gave their nationality as Swedish, as they had both acquired Swedish citizenship, but one of them (who had been born in Kosovo) had also retained his Albanian citizenship. Another respondent had written "Albania" as birth country but answered "Canadian" to the question about nationality. One person gave German as nationality but Turkey as birth country, but the researcher's assumption that this was a nationalised Turkish immigrant to Germany was incorrect - on the line for mother tongue was written "German". In addition to German, another 12 first languages were represented in the two groups. Spanish and Albanian were the mother tongue for 3 persons each, and 2 had Turkish as their first language. The remaining 9 languages all had only one native speaker among the participants. Other European languages in the group were Polish, Serbo-Croatian, English and Catalan, and among non-European languages were Farsi, Arabic, Urdu, Tigrinya and Mandarin. Many of the participants shared other languages as several also spoke English, some knew French, and a couple could use Spanish or Arabic in addition to their developing Swedish. Among these interview group learners, there were seven Muslims, four Christians and six non-believers, plus one who did not answer the question about religion. Seven persons were single, six were married, and five live in common-law relationships.

Most respondents had come to Sweden to work or study, or both, some for "love" or family reasons, and two for political/humanitarian reasons. Seven participants wanted to become Swedish citizens (in addition to the two that had already been granted Swedish citizenship) and of them three had already applied. Another four were not sure they would stay in Sweden for as long as is required to qualify, and five respondents were not interested in becoming Swedish citizens. Their educational background from their countries of origin was generally quite high. Only seven respondents did not have a university degree, and among them the lowest educational level was nine years of schooling. Two of the university graduates had a Master's degree, and both had had it validated in Sweden. Four more had got their educational credentials validated, three Bachelor degrees in Science/Engineering and one a diploma as a nursing assistant. Of

these validated graduates, only the nursing assistant had found work in Sweden that was related to her education.

Most respondents had no knowledge of Swedish before coming to Sweden. Unlike the participants in the first case study interview groups, however, three of them had actually learned some of the language before migrating. All gave as their reasons for learning Swedish “applying for work” or “integration”, many both of them and some one of them in combination with “family”. Two did not give any reasons why they were learning the language. Four respondents in the higher group had studied Swedish at another education provider in addition to attending the SFI programme. Another four, two from each interview group, had taken courses in Sweden to learn how to use a computer. “I had to if I wanted to take the evening course”, one of them commented. Everyone in the intermediate group had arrived in Sweden in 2008 or 2009, except one who had come in 2006. In the higher group the spread was greater with some arriving as early as the 1990’s and the most recent arrival living in Sweden since 2008.

Computer skills and usage patterns

All respondents in the second case study used the Internet every day, most of them more than two hours a day, except one person who used it only three to five times a week. Everyone used a computer at home and all of the nine participants who had a job answered that they also used a computer at work. Some respondents also used a computer at a friend’s home, at a university/college or at a library, and one person used an Internet café. In addition to using a computer to study and, for those who were employed, to work, several participants also played computer games or used the computer for recreation or a hobby in some other way. Many used the computer to find practical information such as phone numbers, do their banking, buying goods and services, and reading on-line newspapers. Everyone was involved in chat rooms and all but four had joined social networks such as Facebook. Of these four, three also had their own blogs and one respondent had a blog but did not participate in any social network.

In terms of what the respondents were able to do on a computer and use the Internet for, seven marked that they could do everything, including writing their own computer programmes, and seven (not entirely the same seven) could use the Internet for everything, including creating their own home page, but only one of them had his/her own web page. Everyone knew how to use a computer for everything except writing programmes, and most of the participants could use the Internet for everything except creating a home page. Some persons did not mark that they were able to share files/documents, but in both group discussions arose about this question, and it was

pointed out that file sharing was not legal any more in Sweden – “You’re not allowed to do that!” -and therefore you could not do it even though you knew how to. All but two of the participants had learned how to use a computer in some educational facility. One respondent even commented, “I had to take computer classes so I could choose the evening SFI programme”. One person had learned to use a computer from family/friends, and another had done so at work. Almost everybody also answered that they were self-taught. Several persons were regular users of libraries, but nobody had learned how to use a computer at a library.

Integration and employment

Unlike the respondents in the first case study, as many as nine participants in the second case study had jobs, while three had been working in Sweden but were now unemployed. Of those who did not work, only two answered that they were not looking for work. Of those who were employed, one was also looking for another job, as this person, like four others, had (or had had) a job with no connection whatsoever to previous education or experience. Seven of those who were working had jobs that were completely or partially related to their professional background and education. All job-seekers in these interview groups found it useful to look for work on the Internet.

Of those working in Sweden, two answered that they nonetheless had problems with social integration in the city. One wrote that “Integration takes a long time but it is easier once you have learned the language”. Another employed respondent claimed that integration into Swedish society was not a problem for those who know English (this Urdu-speaker had English as a second language) while the other working respondents had encountered no problems at all in Sweden or only reported having problems finding an apartment. Among those who were unemployed, only four wrote that finding a job was a problem for them in Sweden, but two complain about the general discrimination they have met in Sweden due to their “foreign” looks. Meeting Swedes is also mentioned as a problem, which indicates a not very successful integration and makes it difficult to practice the Swedish language with native speakers. This appears to be less of a problem for those of the respondents who have a job. As in the first case study, the links between employment, language and integration become obvious in the second case study as well.

When it comes to the question at the end of the questionnaire, where the respondents had to rank a list of skills on a scale from 0 to 5 based on how important each skill for finding work in Sweden (see Case study 1 for a list of the nine skills), there are several similarities between the answers in these interview groups and the ones in the first case study. With few exceptions they all agree that knowing the Swedish language is very

important but not many see the value of their mother tongue in the same way. Being a good learner, socially integrated and good at working independently are all skills that are seen by almost everybody in both case studies as rather important to very important. In terms of cultural skills, most respondents in both case studies answered that it was rather important. Where there are differences is in the skills related to other education. While few respondents in the first case study saw much value in knowing other languages or having basic skills in mathematics and technology, these skills were all seen as important to very important by the participants in the second case study.

Having a good educational background from the country of origin appears more closely connected with the respondents' ability to study on-line than with the likelihood of finding work. All participants in evening programme interview groups had at least nine years of schooling from their home countries, and most of them were university graduates, but only half of them had found employment in Sweden. This in turn seemed to become an obstacle to integration into Swedish society, even though a job was no guarantee for a successful integration process. Those who answered that they had no or few problems in Swedish society were those respondents who are "love migrants" and/or living together with a Swede, married or common-law. There are more of these respondents in the higher group than in the intermediate one, and the two intermediate love migrants were recent arrivals, having both moved to Sweden in 2009.

Of the six respondents in the advanced group that came to Sweden due to a relationship with a Swede, only one is currently unemployed but has had a job since coming to Sweden. Could it be that employment, language and integration become a vicious triangle, where without one it becomes all but impossible to get the other two in Sweden? The participants in the second case study agreed that learning the Swedish language through an ICT-based programme was beneficial to their language acquisition process and enabled those who already had jobs to keep working while studying Swedish. However, to what extent their improved language proficiency and their highly developed digital skills contributed positively to integrating into Swedish society, and for those still unemployed, accessing the labour market remained an open question.

9.4 Main messages

In summary, both classes in case study one reported benefits from using ICT applications as part of their language learning in the SFI day-time programme. They all experienced greater flexibility and freedom of choice, which allowed for better individualisation of the instruction. The group that only accessed computers once a week, Eve and Mike's class,

also learned to create their own documents on the computer and could use additional grammar practice software that had been purchased by the school and installed in the computer room. The fact that this group experienced a wider range of ICT applications could have to do with the fact that their teachers seemed more comfortable working digitally than did Anne, the teacher of the lower level group. However, the very fact that Anne's class was more at a beginner/elementary level could have made it more time consuming and less appealing to both teacher and learners to use computer-based materials, if the technology was not already familiar to most of the learners.

However, in the second case study, all participants were computer literate before they started their SFI course, as this was a prerequisite for taking one of the ICT-based evening courses, and they all turned out to be quite highly educated with at least nine years of education from their countries of origin. The language learning rate seems to be accelerated by the use of the digital learning platform and ICT applications instead of more traditional classroom instruction. The one area where the weekly meetings at the school were needed for language learning and skill development was when it came to working on the spoken language. Whether it was pronunciation or talking practice, all agreed that the shared physical space in the classroom was better for learning those aspects of the language. Even though pronunciation drills could be done at the computer, learners wanted confirmation and reassurance that they were "getting it right" and not getting fossilized in some kind of approximation that may be difficult to correct later. For everything else, however, they were very satisfied with the digital option that they had chosen for their continued Swedish language learning, as these participants were all at least at the intermediate level and some had already reached the level required for the SFI-test (approximately B1).

10 Conclusions and policy implications

In this chapter, we will try to draw some conclusions from the data that we collected in our research and from the information provided by the expert informants in the Netherlands and in Sweden and in the two workshops with international experts. The first workshop was held in Seville on 1-2 October 2009 and the second was a virtual meeting on 4 May 2010 on the Adobe virtual meeting platform. The first workshop defined some of the issues to be tackled during the study. The aim of the second workshop was to discuss the study's results with a group of international experts and policy-makers. The chapter will end with some policy recommendations and suggestions for further research.

10.1 Policy framework and organizational context

At first glance, we see two different policy frameworks in the Netherlands and Sweden. The main difference is based on the fact that there are very dissimilar practices in the two countries concerning the use of testing to apply for residence. In the Netherlands, most newcomers have to pass an integration examination, which includes a Dutch language test, resulting in pressure on them to do language and integration courses to prepare for the examination. In Sweden, on the other hand, the rules are less strict and it is left to the immigrant to decide whether or not to do language and integration courses, although they are compulsory for those receiving social welfare payments. Access to the Swedish labour market is also in practical terms impossible without a pass grade in the SFI (Swedish for immigrants) test. However, the right to stay and live in Sweden is, at the time of writing, not affected by language or integration test results.

In the Netherlands, we see a great emphasis on tailoring courses and tests to different target groups with different needs. For all participants in the process, this is seen as a positive development. The development towards more integration between language learning, integration courses and participation in society (the dual path) is also seen as positive. We see a similar development in Sweden, with a particular emphasis on getting the adult L2 learners connected with the labour market through the provision of practicum periods in various work places as part of the language learning programmes. As the test-based requirements in Sweden are less demanding, the development of different types of courses and tests is not as extensive there as in the Netherlands, where we see the 'backwash' effect of strict legislation with a compulsory test resulting in the production of materials targeting the specific skills needed to pass the test.

In both countries, the costs of language and integration courses are covered by either the national or municipal government, and the municipalities play an important part in providing instruction for newcomers to the respective countries. In the Netherlands, the municipalities buy courses for migrants but do not organize these courses themselves, nor do they employ teachers. The market for language and integration courses is a free and open market and many players offer courses for different target groups. This also means that there is an unregulated market for developers of ICT applications for adult L2 learning, which has led to a huge supply of course materials for various purposes and learners but of varied quality. In Sweden as well, it is the municipalities that buy courses for adult immigrants, but the course providers are more often also government-funded organisations. The supply of course materials is provided not only by publishers but also by schools and universities. The commercial market for ICTs for adult L2 learning is still small but expected to grow following the introduction of digital SFI-tests in 2010.

10.2 The provision of ICT applications for adult L2 education

In terms of the availability of ICT applications, there is a clear difference between the two countries. In the Netherlands, a wealth of ICT applications aimed at the adult L2 learner can be found for all types of target groups and in many different forms and designs. It is actually so overwhelming that one of the greatest challenges for teachers is to find the right application for the right learner or learner group. Most Dutch ICT applications have been developed by commercial parties such as publishers and specific ICT developers. They cost money, and often the language course provider buys user licences for its learners. In Sweden, the range of ICT applications for adult L2 learners is smaller, but some of the applications are free of charge, available on the Internet, and have been developed with public funds. There are fewer specific materials aimed at different target groups, proficiency levels, language skills, etc. It is the teacher who has to choose the right components for each learner, or a learner may decide to try independently what is available on-line. In the Netherlands, there are also some free sources available on the web, but they usually offer more traditional exercises.

From this, we draw the conclusion that the free market in the Netherlands, combined with the compulsory test for all immigrants, leads to a more numerous and more diverse ICT provision for L2 education. In contrast, the availability in Sweden of learning materials free of charge on the Internet has provided teachers with ICT applications and digital materials they can use as they see fit without the educational institutions having to invest any funds in software and licences.

10.3 Problems and needs in development and adoption of ICTs for L2

ICTs can make many positive contributions to the learning of an L2 as part of the adult migrant's integration process. In this section, we sum up the main factors that have been mentioned in our research by stakeholders at all levels. All these potentials of ICTs can provide solutions for the following main challenges in adult L2 education.

The diversity of educational and cultural backgrounds of adult immigrants

Using ICTs can successfully deal with the problem of the strong heterogeneity of the learner population. These applications can help offer more flexible learning programmes and a higher degree of individualization. Programmes can be designed for specific roles and profiles and for different proficiency levels, which helps cater to the individual needs of the learner. The cultural and educational diversity in the learner groups can be addressed by offering a selection of themes and complexity levels in terms of the content of the ICTs that are developing the same language skills.

For adults with low levels of education, using ICT applications has an extra positive effect as they learn two things at once - L2 skills plus digital skills. Whether they have migrated to the Netherlands or to Sweden, they must be digitally literate to function and find work in their new countries of residence.

The diversity of migrant's needs and learning goals

The use of ICT applications in language instruction can shorten the learning time. With the help of ICTs, learners can develop language proficiency faster as their specific individual needs can be focused on and addressed. Teachers can work with different learning goals and needs in a group at the same time and in the same classroom. Also, ICTs offer opportunities for independent learning outside the classroom, whether at a library or at home, in combination with classroom instruction or entirely independently.

This is particularly motivating for learners who are unable to attend classes because of work or other responsibilities such as family commitments. They can now learn the L2 at any time and in any place (e-learning). Many learners have a laptop or PC at home and the informal use of these devices is part of their every-day lives. This familiarity with computers as a tool for communication or shopping can act as a driver for L2 learning through the use of ICT applications. In addition, most learners have a mobile phone, and ICTs can also offer language practice on mobile devices, although there are as yet not many applications available. With Internet access in newer mobile phones, these opportunities for language learning are likely to increase. Time spent commuting or

waiting in line at stores or offices could be usefully employed with language skills development.

Low motivation and participation in courses

Traditional second language instruction for adult migrants has not always been successful in keeping learners motivated, which can result in declining participation in the courses. For learners who find the traditional classroom environment uninspiring, ICTs offer more authentic and motivating language learning materials. ICTs address different channels of information processing, using different senses with the combination of audio, pictures, video and interaction. Learners can access all kinds of authentic resources in the target language, which bring the outside world into the classroom or the home, and have the opportunity for authentic communication (chat, Skype) with other learners of the same language or with native speakers. Indeed, with speakers of the same mother tongue they could discuss in their first language certain aspects or elements of the L2 in order to cooperatively overcome difficulties in comprehension or production. This opportunity to enhance L2 learning with the help of the mother tongue has yet to be further developed in either the Netherlands or Sweden.

Furthermore, ICTs can offer language practice situations, where learners can try out their skills before they use them in 'real life'. This provides an opportunity for repetition, which is a key to successful language learning. A learner can even practice anonymously, which adds a sense of security by removing the threat of making a mistake in a real communication context or in the classroom. In this way, ICTs can bridge the gap between formal and informal L2 learning, especially for those with limited self-confidence when it comes to language learning.

Another important driver is the fact that ICTs offer opportunities for all kinds of informal learning, such as finding information on the web. This is in line with the general policy in both the Netherlands and Sweden that language learning for adult newcomers should be part of a broader perspective, which is participation in society. Learning how to use ICTs must be a part of that, because one cannot fully participate in these highly digitized societies without basic digital skills. This is particularly true for parents who want to keep up with their children's development and school work and therefore are especially motivated to learn by using ICTs. For low-educated migrants, successfully developing digital skills through learning the new language with technologies also has an empowering effect.

Teachers' preparation and motivation

With the use of digital technologies, both teachers and learners can monitor progress with digital diagnostic tests. These ICTs can save teachers time for the preparation of other learning activities, and the learners receive instant feedback on their results from the digital test programmes. In both the Netherlands and Sweden, the Internet offers a wealth of testing materials that can be used free of charge.

A motivating factor is that, with ICTs, teachers have more options for differentiation and individualization in class. This is more difficult with more traditional teaching methods which tend to favour a whole-class instructional model. The use of ICTs also supports blended learning (partly e-learning and partly classroom learning) and gives the teacher a new, and perhaps challenging, role.

The cost factor

Another challenge mentioned by the informants in this study is the cost factor: how can governments and municipalities offer good quality L2 education to adult migrants at the lowest possible cost? It was not always mentioned explicitly but referred to in terms of reduction of learning time required to reach a specific proficiency level in the target language. The implication is an expectation of better, as well as faster, results, which would reduce instruction time for each individual learner, thereby lowering the cost of the adult L2 education needed to reach the language goals as defined by tests. Whether these expectations are met by the use of certain ICT applications did not become clear during this research and would need further investigation.

10.4 Difficulties and barriers in the adoption and use of ICTs for L2

As mentioned above, ICTs are already part of the everyday lives of most migrants and of the members of the host society. Moreover, ICT applications are already being used in L2 instruction. Therefore, all respondents and experts in this study pointed out that the use of ICTs for L2 education should not be questioned, and that it would be better to explore how to use these applications to achieve their full potential. In so doing, however, we have also found that there are still many barriers that hinder ICT adoption and limit their potential. Below we summarise the main findings.

The lack of awareness and policies at different levels

In general there seems to be a lack of alignment of policies on the use and value of ICTs for L2 learning at the different levels: i.e. at governmental, municipal and school levels. For example, e-learning is heavily promoted by policy makers at the highest

(governmental) level, but there is no clear vision of the role of an e-coach. At another level, like the management of a school, e-learning can be seen as too unconventional and teachers who are motivated to experiment with it are not encouraged, as was found in the Netherlands. There are no substantial investments in ICTs at the different levels.

In Sweden, the disconnection between the different levels of policy-making is typically found in funding, where the government prioritizes spending on ICTs in all parts of the education system, including L2 instruction for adults, but where teachers are encouraged to use ICT materials that are available free of charge instead of asking the school management to spend money on buying ICT software. There is more willingness to purchase additional hardware, so that learners can easily access computers on the school premises and/or have some available in every classroom. However, investing in IT-support by having technical assistance readily available as needed was not given a high priority.

Lack of sufficient digital skills and training for teachers

For L2 learners, the teachers remain key figures for giving support and guidance in the language learning process. This was found to be particularly true for learners with a low educational background. However, most teachers are not qualified or experienced enough to work with the latest ICTs for L2 learning. They often misunderstand the goals of an application, and they do not have the time to learn on the job how to work with every new version or application. Many teachers do not feel comfortable with ICTs and computers in general, nor do they know precisely what can be done or accomplished with certain specific ICT applications for L2 learning. Although e-learning is promoted by policy-makers as the solution to the multitude of challenges in adult L2 education, many teachers lack the skills necessary for successful e-coaching.

In addition, there is a lack of professional development for L2 teachers on how to work with ICTs in adult L2 learning. If such training is offered by the employer, it is however not always designed to meet the needs of participating teachers. There may be, as was the situation in one of the Swedish case studies, an overly optimistic perception of the participants' familiarity with computer applications and pre-existing digital skills. The result was an initial comprehension gap that was never bridged and the training was therefore unintelligible for those who needed it the most. Often, though, there is no professional development available at all, and this is probably due, at least in part, to the generally low socio-economic status of the job.

Quality of the ICTs for L2 education

It is not clear among the different stakeholders what 'good' ICT applications for adult L2 learning actually are. Some ICT applications and materials are simply screen versions of paper-based materials. Sometimes publishers do it the other way around and make paper versions of digital materials, because teachers do not want to be 100% dependent on ICTs, as there can be technical problems that cannot be dealt with promptly. This brings us to the question: what are good ICTs for L2 learning? Just because a source or exercise is digital does not mean that it helps in learning the target language.

In most cases, the ICT application we have analysed seems to remove the spoken interaction from the L2 curriculum. This is a serious problem that was mentioned several times in the data from both the Netherlands and Sweden. As yet, there are not many ICT applications for L2 learning that focus on speaking in either Dutch or Swedish. Also, if the learners are meant to work independently, they tend to work on other language skills individually but skip the speaking exercises, if such components are included. The teacher should therefore add specific moments for speaking, apart from the ICT work, but because of big classes and mixed-level groups they often find it impossible to do so. Even though most ICTs offer some speaking exercises, they need to be organized in class and this is often too difficult to accomplish.

There is very little scientific evidence that ICTs for L2 learning 'work'. Those applications that have scientific backup and have been developed in co-operation with scientists are expensive and not always easy to sell. There is a risk that they remain in the labs. The development of intelligent, interactive, multimedia L2 applications is very costly, and publishers will only engage in this if they can be sure that they will make a profit from it. The risks are higher than for books, as ICTs have a much shorter life cycle than books and publishers need to produce updates sooner.

Low levels of digital literacy of migrant learners

The low educational profile of large groups of migrants is a serious barrier to successful implementation of ICTs for adult L2 learning. This is not simply because they lack digital skills - they can learn these fast enough in their first language - but because they lack learning skills. With ICTs a certain level of general learning skills is needed. Most learners with limited educational backgrounds lack the learning skills and study habits that are needed for independent L2 learning with ICTs or for e-learning models for L2 learning.

At the same time, there is a lack of ICTs for L2 learning suitable for absolute beginners whose first language is very distant from the target language and who are low-educated, even illiterate. ICTs could use the mother tongue as a helpful tool for those learning the L2 or another integration subject. However, this potential has not yet been exploited very often in either the Netherlands or Sweden, although the software which could enable this function exists.

Lack of technical assistance and infrastructure

Most of the teachers who participated in the study, in both the Netherlands and Sweden, complain about problems with the technical equipment at school. This is true for both hardware and software. In general, there is a lack of technical infrastructure and technical assistance available on the premises, so no help can be had when it is needed the most. If the equipment is not working when it is required during class, getting help two hours or two days later is not very useful. These circumstances give teachers the feeling that there is a risk associated with depending entirely on the ICT applications to work as intended.

Not all recently arrived migrants have a PC or laptop with Internet connection at home (or have access to it, like the women in some families). This makes it difficult for teachers to work with specific ICTs intended for learning at home or outside school. They can, at best, be a voluntary supplement to what is done in the classroom but never regular homework.

ICTs are too expensive or are used as a trade-off with teacher time

The costs of ICTs for L2 learning are not clear. Often only the costs for hardware and software are calculated. But implementation, technical support, e-coaching/professional development and maintenance costs are often forgotten, so this is where the budgeting problems tend to arise. Another problem is that ICTs are seen as a means of letting learners learn more independently, which makes managers decide to reduce teaching time. Thus, there is a suspicion among some teachers that the increasing use of ICTs in L2 learning is a threat to their future employment.

In a competitive market like that of the Netherlands, small course providers that are new on the L2 education market choose the cheapest options in ICTs for L2 learning, which are not always the best. They tend to choose one 'standard' application that can be used for large groups. Other ICT tools for specific target groups or the training of specific skills (like a pronunciation trainer for Chinese learners of Dutch) are then neglected because they cost 'extra' money. In Sweden, where bigger municipal providers still dominate, cost-cutting in many municipalities makes educational institutions encourage teachers to

use digital materials that are available free of charge. These ICTs offer a great variety of materials which in effect makes the teacher responsible for helping the learners select what is suitable for them. Teachers then spend less time actually teaching the language than suggesting on-line materials. Of course, there is no way of consistently checking if the learners are actually working according to the teacher's recommendations.

10.5 Results achieved by using ICTs in L2 education

ICTs do make a great difference for learners, teachers and schools. Most informants in both the Netherlands and Sweden are positive about these changes: more individualized learning paths, more authentic learning, more opportunities for repetition, etc. The negative changes are that the introduction of ICTs is often seen as a way to cut costs. It often means that teachers are assigned to more and bigger groups and have less time to work on the integration trajectories of their students. The greater number of learners each teacher has to work with also makes it more difficult to get to know the learners individually, which in turn impacts negatively on the teacher's ability to benefit from the increased opportunities for individualised learning that the use of ICTs provide. If cutting costs is the main driver for introducing ICTs, we expect the quality of L2 education to decrease. Many teachers in the field, especially in the Netherlands, have expressed this concern.

A positive result is that all immigrants develop digital skills during their integration trajectory. This has a broad impact in that it helps them to participate in society in general. They must be digitally literate to enter the labour force and it enables them to access services that are increasingly available only over the Internet.

There is little information about the quality of the different available ICTs for L2 learning. Thus, the actual results in terms of saving time and money are unclear, although all parties state that ICTs do save time and money, without specifying how. It is hard to imagine learning and teaching today without ICTs. This option is just not there anymore, at least not in these two highly digitized countries with large groups of new migrants arriving every year. We have not, however, found any actual evidence of one group using ICTs achieving better language learning results than another similar group not using ICTs. This type of research was beyond the scope of this study.

It is obvious that if an ICT application is used by a skilled teacher under the right conditions and for the right target group (for which it had been designed), the didactic impact can be high. More can be done in less time, learning will be facilitated in many

ways and learners will be motivated. It is, however, not always clear to many people, even experts in the field, what a good ICT application for language learning is. There are many different views. Better understanding by all stakeholders of what a good ICT application for L2 learning is would be helpful.

10.6 ICT use by L2 learners

For the large group of low-educated migrants, working with ICTs is often a new experience. Some groups of migrants in the Dutch integration course work with a PC for the first time in their lives, and newcomers to Sweden may touch their first computer keyboard when they register for the SFI-programme. It empowers them and helps them to become more digitally competent. From the evidence that we have gathered, it is clear that most learners become enthusiastic about working with PCs and the Internet. Even though not all migrants have these facilities at home and will not necessarily continue to use them, we have the impression that most do. They can access computers at libraries, community centres or schools, and they use ICTs to communicate with family and friends in their home country, with other learners of Dutch or Swedish as an L2 (especially when this is encouraged by the L2 teacher) and with other friends in the new country. They increasingly use the Internet as a source of information. It helps them a great deal when all these opportunities to use ICTs have been introduced and practiced in the integration course, or early in the SFI-programme. For beginners, using their first language to familiarize themselves with the technology would be more efficient and less frustrating for those with limited educational backgrounds. However, most highly educated migrants are very well acquainted with the use of ICTs before they come to class, and they pick up new applications very quickly. For them, it is just as natural to use ICTs for language learning as it is for other activities.

10.7 Recommendations for policy makers

The following recommendations have been drawn from our research results and the discussions in the two workshops.

1. Develop a common level of information and understanding among stakeholders

Stakeholders at different levels (like policy-makers, education providers, teachers, ICT companies and learners) have different perspectives and expectations of what the role of ICTs could be for enhancing L2 education. Sometimes there are even misunderstandings, for instance in the case of the expectations placed on self-directed learning with ICTs. A common level of information and understanding and, preferably,

some consensus on how to enhance the L2 education approach and the role that ICTs can play, are needed for a sustainable change process.

2. Develop an overall policy on the role of ICTs for L2 education

As a consequence of a lack of understanding of the role of ICTs for L2 education, the policies at different levels do not always match. The development of an overall policy, from the macro-social scale to the meso- and micro-social scales (from national policies to school and teacher policies), is needed. There is a need to accept that there are no standard solutions. Instead, diversity in teaching and learning concepts should be promoted.

3. Strengthen the position and competencies of the L2 teacher

Teachers remain a key factor for success in the language learning process and in the implementation of ICTs for adult language learning. It is necessary to strengthen their position and give them opportunities to develop their competencies. Developing a competency profile, which has already been done in the Netherlands,³¹ and focusing on ICT skills and e-coaching skills are good ways to start this process. In-service training opportunities should be offered and communities of practice should be developed for L2 teachers in the field of ICTs for adult L2 education as a part of strengthening the socio-economic status of the profession in general.

4. Invest in technical assistance and maintenance (at the institutional level)

Educational institutions should provide teachers with the right technical equipment and the relevant technical assistance and maintenance. Without enough hardware and software and the right technical assistance at the right time, every implementation of ICTs in L2 education is doomed to fail.

5. Promote research to find evidence for the effects on L2 learning of specific ICTs

Publishers do not have the money to carry out this kind of research, nor do governments, so it has to come from other sources. However, innovative ICTs for L2 learning could be taken from the universities to the marketplace.

6. Invest in the development of low-cost and accessible ICTs for L2 learning

Smart phones and other simple, relatively cheap gadgets offer opportunities for other types of ICTs with which large groups of migrants could be reached. Stimulating the development of small, easy and low-cost ICTs and focusing on low-educated target groups is therefore recommended. These types of ICTs should focus on oral communication (listening and speaking), although text messaging applications and dictionary resources could also be included.

³¹ By the BVNT2, the professional organisation of teachers of Dutch as a second language. At http://www.bvnt2.org/db/WAS4c0f566ef047b/Competentieprofiel___handleiding_herziene_versie_juni_2010_1_.pdf

10.8 Suggestions for further research³²

At the policy level

It is not clear what the real costs of ICTs for L2 learning are and what the benefits in terms of cost reduction could be. Publishers will have figures on what their return on investment per product is, which will give some insight into the commercial market. As yet, there are no insights into the costs per institution, per target group or per learner, and the possible cost reduction through the implementation of particular ICT-based teaching and learning models is unclear. More research is needed to find out whether the general expectations of reduction of learning time and cost are realistic.

Cross-national studies would be a very useful means of exploring related policy matters in more EU countries, as well as further investigating the issues about L2 teachers. As part of any study of this kind, we would recommend looking at different sectors, including the private sector, where new types of tutors are being drawn into the 'profession' through the use of ICTs.

Increasingly, policy makers are looking for evidence of impact other than learner or tutor satisfaction in L2 learning. The case studies in this research have not measured the impact on L2 learning as such: we have not tested the learners' language proficiency with and without the help of ICTs. Measuring any differences and attributing them to ICT use is a complex and contested field. However, it would be interesting to carry out this type of research whenever a new product is introduced on the market (see also the level of developers and scientists).

Another interesting point to investigate at the policy level is in what way 'the test factor' influences the development and implementation of ICTs for L2 education. In other words, does a digital test lead to more digital teaching and learning? And in what ways would new ICT applications be more tailored to the desired outcome to a specific test that the migrant will have to pass? Will this carry with it the risk that the instructional scope of the material focuses too narrowly on the required test result?

At the level of the L2 teachers

During our study, it became clear that there is uneasiness among L2 teachers about ICTs. This was also confirmed by experts in the virtual discussion. At times this uneasiness can be an obstacle not only to reaping the full benefits of ICTs in the L2 classroom but also to the development of learners' L2 proficiency. A possible research

³² With input from Professor Sue Webb, University of Sheffield, UK.

path would be a cross-national study dealing with the drivers for and obstacles to the use of ICTs for L2 learning by teachers. It would be interesting to study some expert teachers to find out what makes them particularly skilled in dealing with ICTs for adult L2 learning and define the success factors.

As part of this research or as a separate study, it would be interesting to find out more about the practical professional knowledge and the pedagogic content knowledge of L2 teachers in using ICTs for adult L2 learning. Such a research project could avail itself of the strength of an ethnographic approach that sheds light on the question: What do teachers actually do as they teach L2 through ICTs? But also, what do they think they do, as they do what they do with ICTs in the L2 class?

We have also concluded that the socio-economic position of the adult L2 teacher is not satisfactory. Research could be done to find out what the socio-economic status for this profession is in different countries (in relation to other kinds of teachers and other jobs) and how it impacts the use of ICTs in L2 education for adult migrants.

At the level of developers and scientists

Research is needed to define what good ICTs for L2 learning are. These should be defined for the different language skills (reading, listening, speaking, and writing) and for the different target groups. The result could be a set of quality parameters with some examples of good practices by skilled teachers.

More research is also needed to find out what the didactic impact of a specific ICT for L2 learning is. In this context, the long-term effects are of particular interest.

Furthermore, as the development of ICTs for L2 learning is expensive, it would be interesting to investigate what ICTs are, or can be made, language independent, i.e. so that the tool or course design could be used for different target languages in different countries. At the same time, more research is needed to explore the opportunities of ICTs relating to types of languages (either the L2 or the L1) with different alphabets/writing systems and linguistic forms.³³

³³ There are a few software products (such as ELLIS as used in the USA and UK in Learndirect centres funded by the national government and used with 1,000s of learners in the UK) that have a variety of L1 languages within the software to support the L2 learning; and there are other packages such as Tell me More, provided by the private company Auralog, that exploit speech recognition software that appear to be widely used. Auralog claims 7 million people worldwide are using their product! Perhaps these products should be examined in further work.

At the level of the learners

Further research needs to be done on learners. The cases presented here are very valuable, but the very fact that they highlight diversity among learners, types of ICTs usage and types of provision means that there is much more comparative work to be done to develop a fuller understanding of the drivers and barriers and costs and benefits. In fact, these five cases studies are limited snapshots and there is a need to carry out more studies on how learners and tutors use different forms of ICTs over time and how usage affects learning and cultural integration. This research would require a longitudinal approach in order to assess impact more adequately.

11 Appendix 1: Interviews with key informants

This section reports the topic guide that was used as a basis for the interviews with key informants. Each section refers to a different profile of the experts.

Experts at national level

- 1) Does the government (at the national level) support/initiate the development and implementation of ICT applications for L2 learning and integration?
- 2) In your view, do ICT applications bridge the difficulties encountered in the integration trajectory of low-educated newly arrived migrants?
- 3) In your view, do ICT applications enhance the integration trajectory of highly-educated newly arrived migrants?
- 4) What roles do ICT applications play in achieving the integration goals, apart from learning Dutch/Swedish as an L2?
- 5) What are the planned goals for the next 5 years (2009-2013)? Is there a governmental vision laid out both in terms of integration as well as in term of the use of ICT applications and L2?

Experts at local level

- 1) At your municipality, what is the status quo of the plans laid out for the integration of newly arrived migrants?
- 2) Does the municipality support/initiate the development and implementation of ICT applications for L2 learning and integration?
- 3) In your view, what are the advantages of using ICT applications in the integration trajectory? What are the disadvantages/shortcomings of ICT applications?
- 4) In your view, do your ICT applications bridge the difficulties encountered in the integration trajectory of low-educated newly arrived migrants?
- 5) In your view, do your ICT applications enhance the integration trajectory of highly-educated newly arrived migrants?
- 6) (for the Netherlands) The L2 sector has known a strong privatisation. Do you have a picture in mind of the ideal course provider? Does that include the use of ICT applications as well?
- 7) What ICT applications does your municipality offer specifically to immigrants, other than those for L2 learning and integration courses?
- 8) What are the planned goals by your municipality for the next 5 years (2009-2013)? Is there a municipal vision in terms of integration being laid out? Is there a specific reference to ICT applications?

ICT Application Makers & Producers of Didactic Material

- 1) What is the status quo of your specific ICT applications in the field of L2 learning for migrants?
- 2) Are these ICT applications taking into account of the diversity of learners' educational backgrounds?
- 3) Are these ICT applications catering for adaptive and independent learning? If so, do you have any evidence for that?
- 4) What are the advantages of ICT applications for highly educated migrants? And what are the advantages for low educated migrants?
- 5) What are the limitations/obstacles of ICT application in the making of didactic materials for highly educated migrants and for low educated migrants?
- 6) What are the advantages and the disadvantages for the teachers that have to work with these applications?
- 7) Are these ICT applications regarded potentially as cost saving means? Do you have any evidence for that?
- 8) Are these ICT applications considered to extend their learning potential also beyond the formal learning environment?
- 9) What type of ICT applications are you going to develop for L2 learning and integration in the next 5 years (2009-2013)? Where do you think, is the market heading toward?
- 10) In what way are migrants given new learning opportunities through the use of ICT based didactic material?

Course providers

- 1) What role do ICT applications play in the courses that you offer for the integration of newly arrived migrants?
- 2) What are the advantages of the ICT applications for the development of newly arrived migrants' L2 learning?
- 3) What are the obstacles/shortcomings of these ICT applications for L2 learning to newly arrived migrants? How do you deal with these obstacles?
- 4) How do these ICT applications enable highly-educated learners to learn the L2?
- 5) How do these ICT applications enable low-educated learners to learn the L2?
- 6) Do you think that these ICT applications make the course more effective and efficient? Do learners learn faster/better? And do they learn new skills?
- 7) Are there any specific requirements, laid on you as course provider, for the inclusion of ICT applications?
- 8) If so, do you find these requirements easy to fulfill? Or do you think that they are too demanding (in terms of time and money)?

Professionals in the educational sector (heads and teachers)

- 1) What role do ICT applications play in the courses that you offer for the integration of newly arrived migrants?
- 2) Do you use ICT applications in your courses to adult migrants? Which ones? How?
- 3) Do you know what types of ICTs are being used and what are their advantages and shortcomings?
- 4) Does your institution emphasize the use of ICT applications? Have you been trained for using these applications?
- 5) What are the advantages and limitations of ICT applications for highly educated migrants?
- 6) And for low educated migrants?
- 7) And for you as a teacher?
- 8) Where do you see yourself going in 5 years from now, in terms of ICT use for teaching Dutch/Swedish as an L2 to newly arrived migrants?

Scientists engaged in research on L2 learning and ICT applications

- 1) What are the current advantages and disadvantages of ICT applications' implementations in the field of L2 learning for migrants?
- 2) Do ICT applications for learning an L2 also empower the immigrant outside the formal learning environment? If so, in which areas of the migrant life?
- 3) How do ICT applications push the boundaries of learning Dutch/Swedish as an L2?
- 4) How do you see ICTs developing in the field of integration courses?
- 5) Do you see a difference between ICTs for L2 learning and more general ICTs for integration? If so, in which direction should ICTs for integration develop?

12 Appendix 2: questionnaire with learners

The questionnaire used for the case studies was adapted from an instrument developed by the Technology & Social Change Group (TASCHA) at the University of Washington Information School (USA), Dynamic Organization Thinking (D-O-T) Research & Consulting (Spain), and the L'A.P.I.S. Social Cooperative (Italy) for the study on Immigrant women, e-skills, and employability in Europe (Garrido, et al., 2010). The original questionnaire (in English) is reported in the following pages, with permission from the research group.

The questionnaire was received by the research team in English and Dutch. The Dutch questionnaire was translated into Swedish by the Swedish researcher. The following changes were made to the questionnaire:

- 1) the questionnaire was adapted from a solely female sample to a mixed sample
- 2) c3 was taken out as the topic was not relevant to the purpose of this study
- 3) c4 of the original questionnaire has then been re-numbered c3
- 4) a new question c4 (c7 in the original version) was added to see whether any of the studies followed by the students were on a long distance learning base and therefore implied the use of ICTs for learning.
- 5) The question c 10 of the original version was excluded as we thought that there would have been homogeneity among the sample that was used in the case studies
- 6) The question C 13 present in the original version was taken out given that our standpoint was that these students have no previous qualifications for the host country's language. This question though was catered at a latter stage in the interviews
- 7) Section D has remained untouched
- 8) From section E, only two questions that were part of the original version were used: E1 and E4.
- 9) From section F, only question F1 of the original questionnaire was used because it gives a pretty complete portrait of the activities that are enjoyed by the migrants and that could then be related to the use of ICTs in order to find information about them.
- 10) In comparison with the original version used in the study on women and employability, the research team has decided to shorten section G and focus on three key points that were: a) career trajectory (if any and including also the job carried out in the country of origin) b) current working situation and c) the link between ICT skills, jobs and language learning

In general, the questionnaire worked well with high educated migrants while it was very hard to complete for migrants with lower educational background and low literacy levels. In those cases, the filling in of the questionnaire was a challenge and it had to be supported by the class teacher, thus biasing the results as the teacher was influencing migrants' responses.

Questionnaire for Immigrant Women in the European Union

We are a group of researchers working on a study to understand the opportunities and challenges that immigrant women face to access the labor market in the European Union. Your participation will help organizations to improve the services available for immigrant women and improve their employment opportunities in the region. The questionnaire is anonymous.



In question A.3. "Contact NGO" refers to the organization who contacted you to make this interview and/or where you are being interviewed

A. INTERVIEW DETAILS

A.1 Date questionnaire was completed: ____ / ____ / ____ (day/month/year)

A.2 Country: _____

A.3 Contact NGO: _____

A.4 City of residence: _____

A.5

Province: _____

A.6

Region: _____

B. STANDARD DATA

B.1 Age:

B.2 Nationality: _____

B.3 Country of birth: _____

B.4 City: _____

B.5 Religion practiced: _____

B.6 Year of arrival in ...(Country): ____

B.7 Are you married and/or do you cohabitate?

Yes, I am married ☐

Yes, I cohabitate ☐

Widow ☐
No ☐

B.8 If yes, does your husband/partner live:

In my home country ☐

In ...(Country) ☐

Elsewhere ☐

B.9 If yes, is he:

The same nationality as you ☐

(Country national) ☐

A different nationality ☐

B.10 Do you have children?

Yes ☐

No ☐

B.11 If yes, do they live with you?

Yes ☐

No, they live in my home country ☐

No, other ☐

B.12 If yes, are any of your children under 5 years old? Yes ☐

No ☐

B.13 Why did you come to ...(Country) / to the European Union? (give up to two reasons max)

1. To study

2. To join my family

3. To work

4. For medical care/health reasons

5. For political or humanitarian reasons

6. Other (specify):

B. 14 Do you intend to apply for ...(Country) citizenship?

Yes, I have
already
applied ☐

Yes, as soon as I
meet the
requirements ☐

Don't know, the
requirements
are difficult ☐

No, I am not
interested ☐

C. EMPLOYABILITY: LONGLIFE LEARNING

C.1 Most recent educational qualification obtained in your home country:

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. No qualification <input type="checkbox"/> | 5. Vocational training diploma <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Primary school certificate <input type="checkbox"/> | 6. Level 1 (three-year) university <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Middle school certificate <input type="checkbox"/> | 7. Level 2 (specialization) university <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. High school diploma <input type="checkbox"/> | 8. Master's and/or specialization <input type="checkbox"/> |

C.1a Main area of
study (please
describe)

C.2 What educational qualification have you had recognized in ...(Country)?

C.3 If you have had an educational qualification recognized, after how many years did this happen? ____

C.4 In(Country), have you taken/are you taking any training courses/seminars? (***select all that apply***)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. None <input type="checkbox"/> | 9. Home care assistant <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. ...(host country language) language <input type="checkbox"/> | 10. Cleaning services technician <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Other official languages <input type="checkbox"/> | 11. Practitioner of trade or craft <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Other languages <input type="checkbox"/> | 12. Enterprise creation expert <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Language teaching <input type="checkbox"/> | 13. Computer skills basic/ <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Translation/interpreting <input type="checkbox"/> | 14. Computer skills Advanced <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. Cultural Mediation <input type="checkbox"/> | 15. Other (specify) <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. Social worker <input type="checkbox"/> | |

C.5 If you have obtained qualifications in ...(Country), what are they? (***select all that apply***)

C.6 If not, for what reason? (***please specify the two main reasons***)

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| 1. Problems with the location where the course was held | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. High cost of enrolling and attending | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Unable to attend because of the hours | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Problems with the language | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Problems connected with my residence permit | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Lack of time | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. Other | <input type="checkbox"/> |

C.7 If you have taken courses,
were some of them Internet
based?

Yes ☐ **No** ☐

C.8 Number of languages spoken (*including mother-tongue language(s)*) ☐☐

C.9 Mother-tongue:

C.10 Level of knowledge of ...(host country's language) **LANGUAGE:**

COMPREHENSION		SPOKEN		WRITTEN	
Basic level	<input type="checkbox"/>	Basic level	<input type="checkbox"/>	Basic level	<input type="checkbox"/>
Medium level	<input type="checkbox"/>	Medium level	<input type="checkbox"/>	Medium level	<input type="checkbox"/>
High level	<input type="checkbox"/>	High level	<input type="checkbox"/>	High level	<input type="checkbox"/>

C.11 Did you speak ...(host country's language) before entering the European Union?

Yes ☐ No ☐

C.12 If you have taken courses to learn...(host country's language), why did you do so? (*give up to two reasons*)

1. To obtain my residence permit ☐

2. For work reasons ☐

3. For family reasons ☐

4. To become better integrated ☐

5. Other: ☐

C.13 If yes, what is the most recent Italian language certification gained? (*specify the level*) _____



D INCLUSION AND DIGITAL SKILLS

D.1 How often do you use: (*please choose one answer for each of the two listed items*)

	Never	Occasionally	1 – 2 times per week	3 -5 times per week	Daily, 2 hours or less	Daily, more than 2 hours
1. Computer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Internet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

D.2 If you don't use the Internet, why not?

D.3 If you do, which are the 3 **places where you most often** use a computer/access the Internet?

- | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| 1. At work | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4. At a non profit center (association, foundation, cooperative, etc.) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. At home | <input type="checkbox"/> | 5. At a public location (job center, library, etc.) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. At the home of friends and/or relatives | <input type="checkbox"/> | 7. At a university | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. At a private center (Internet point etc.) | <input type="checkbox"/> | 8. Other (specify): _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> |

D.4 How often do you use a computer for each of the following? (**give one response for each item**)

	Never	Occasionally	1-2 times per week	3-5 times per week	Daily
1. Games, Leisure, recreation, entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Study	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Hobbies/creative projects	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Managing household/family matters	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

D.5 Which of the following have you already done on a computer? (**select all that apply**)

1. Copying and/or moving a document/folder	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Using the "copy" and "paste" command to copy information	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Using arithmetical commands (add, subtract, multiply, divide)	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Compressing documents	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Connecting/installing new peripherals (e.g. printers, modems, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Writing a program using specialist programming languages	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. None of the above	<input type="checkbox"/>

D.6 In the past 12 months, for which of these activities have you used the Internet? (**select all that apply**)

- | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| 1. Communication (e-mail) | <input type="checkbox"/> | 8. Looking for a job | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Communication (VOIP calls, chatting, blogging) | <input type="checkbox"/> | 9. Work | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Information (online newspapers and/or magazines, etc) | <input type="checkbox"/> | 10. Public services (certificates, appointments) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Information (web TV, web radio) | <input type="checkbox"/> | 11. Online purchases of products/services | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Travel (reservations, ticket purchases, etc.) | <input type="checkbox"/> | 12. Selling items online | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Children's schoolwork | <input type="checkbox"/> | 13. Online banking services | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. Study, personal development | <input type="checkbox"/> | 14. Other (specify): _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> |

D.7 Which of the following do you know how to do on the Internet? (***select all that apply***)

1. Use a search engine (<i>Google, Yahoo, etc.</i>)	
2. Send e-mails with files/documents attached	
3. Send messages using IM chats, newsgroups, or online forums	
4. Make voice calls (<i>using Skype, Messenger, ooVoo, etc.</i>)	
5. Use shared files/documents and/or exchange music, videos, films, etc.	
6. Create a web page	
7. None of the above	

D.8 Do you have a personal BLOG?

Yes ☐ No ☐ I don't know what a blog is ☐

D.9 Are you part of an online social network? (***Facebook, Myspace, etc.***)

Yes ☐ No ☐ I don't know ☐

D.10 Do you write for or contribute to online newspapers/ web radios/ web TVs / portals? Yes ☐ No ☐

D.11 How did you learn what you know with new technologies? (***select all that apply***)

1. From relatives, friends and/or acquaintances	
2. At school	
3. At an upper secondary institution	
4. At university	
5. At a non-profit facility (association, foundation, cooperative, civic center, etc.)	
6. At a public facility (job center, library, etc.)	
7. At a private facility (commercial Internet point, etc.)	
8. Self-taught (alone)	



E SOCIAL INCLUSION AND SOCIAL SKILLS

E.1 What problems have you encountered in ...(Country)?

E.2 Do you use the public health service?

es, I have a health card ☐ Yes, but only emergency services ☐ No, I cannot access them ☐ No, I don't need them ☐

E.3 Do you deal with bureaucratic and/or administrative matters by yourself? Yes ☐ No ☐

E.4 Do you attend: (*multiple answers allowed*)

1. Parent-teacher conferences	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Building residents' meetings	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Trade unions and/or trade association meetings	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Public libraries	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Neighborhood assemblies/meetings	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Your ethnic and/or language and/or religious community, on a regular basis	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. ...(Country nationals) friends, on a regular basis	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Community centers, associations, foundations and/or volunteer organizations	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Multicultural groups	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Other (specify):	<input type="checkbox"/>

E.5 Do you have any group leadership roles? (*e.g. parent representative and/or leader of a group*)

Yes ☐ No ☐ | If yes, specify what **Role(s)**:

E.6 If you frequent non profit bodies/associations, are these: (*select all that apply*)

1. Immigrant associations/foundations	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. National associations	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Cultural associations/foundations	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Women's associations	
5. Religious associations/foundations	
6. Open universities (e.g. UPTER, etc.)	
7. Other (specify):	

E.7 Are you a member of any non profit bodies/associations? Yes ☐ No, never have been ☐
☐ No, not now ☐

In questions E8 – E11 “This organization” refers to the organization who contacted you to make this interview and/or where you are being interviewed

E.8 How did you come into contact with this organization: *(select all that apply)*

1. By taking part in initiatives, seminars, etc.	
2. Through a contact in my community	
3. Through family contacts and/or friends	
4. Through the Internet	
5. Through radio and/or TV	
6. Through leaflets, information brochures in public places, doctor's offices, etc.	
7. Through advertisements in newspapers, magazines, etc.	
8. On the street	
9. Other (specify):	

E.9 Year of first contact with the chosen organization:

E.10 What do/did you most appreciate about the services offered by this organization: *(select all that apply)*

1. Its open, friendly atmosphere	
2. The network of contacts offered by the association	
3. The clear information I received	
4. Assistance in dealings with public institutions and private bodies	
5. The competence of its operators	
6. The ability to access free and/or low cost services	
7. Other (specify):	

E.11 How do you rate the services that you access through this organization? *(please choose one response for each listed service)*

	Not used/ Not available	Unsatisfactory	Not very satisfactory	Fairly satisfactory	Very satisfactory
1. Immigrant assistance, information, social inclusion	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Orientation: strategies and tools for finding	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

work

3. Help with: Resumes, written applications and job interviews	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Assistance with legal matters and residence permits	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Psychological support, care homes, housing, childcare	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Computer skills training / Internet access	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Language training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Vocational training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Assistance with starting a business, microcredit, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

E.12 What could the European/....(Country) authorities do to improve the life of immigrant women?

F. CULTURAL INCLUSION AND CULTURAL SKILLS

F.1 Which of the following activities do you enjoy? (**select all that apply**)

<i>ATTIVITÀ SVOLTE</i>	In your first language	In Italian	In another language
1. Television programs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Radio programs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Print newspapers and/or online news	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Reading and/or studying	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Cinema/home viewing of DVD films/videos	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Concerts, musical events	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Festivals, folk events, dancing, singing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Other (specify):	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

F.2 Do you take part in artistic-cultural activities: (**select all that apply**)

1. I don't participate ☐ 2. Privately ☐ 3. In a group ☐ 4. In public ☐

F.3 If you participate in artistic-cultural activities, what is your role? (***select all that apply***)

- | | | | |
|-------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Artist/creator | <input type="checkbox"/> | 5. Technician | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Promoter | <input type="checkbox"/> | 6. Translator | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Organizer | <input type="checkbox"/> | 7. Communicator/journalist | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Teacher | <input type="checkbox"/> | 8. Other | <input type="checkbox"/> |

F. 4 Do you use multimedia technologies in your artistic/cultural work? **Yes** ☐

F. 5 Do you use different languages in your artistic/cultural work? **Yes** ☐



G EMPLOYABILITY: CURRICULUM VITAE AND WORK

G.1 Did you work before emigrating? Yes ☐ No ☐

G.2 If yes, what occupations did you engage in? (list the two that you consider most significant):

1.	2.
----	----

G.3 If no, why not? (***please choose up to two main reasons***)

- | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Not permitted to do so for religious reasons | <input type="checkbox"/> | 5. Was underage | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Did not need to | <input type="checkbox"/> | 6. Couldn't find work | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Looked after the family | <input type="checkbox"/> | 7. Political reasons (war, etc.) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Other family reasons | <input type="checkbox"/> | 8. Other | <input type="checkbox"/> |

G.4 Jobs held in(Country) (list up to three):

CURRENT JOB:
PAST JOB:
PAST JOB:

G.5 Are you currently working? Yes ☐ No, but I am looking for work ☐ No, I am not seeking work ☐

G.6 Who has helped you, or could help you, find, keep or improve your work? (***please list the three channels you consider most useful***)

- | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| 1. Channels/networks of the associations that assisted you on arrival | <input type="checkbox"/> | 5. Contacts at public centres for employment | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Recommendations from family and/or friends | <input type="checkbox"/> | 6. Support given by immigrant associations | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Informal channels of the community you belong to | <input type="checkbox"/> | 7. Support given by women's associations | <input type="checkbox"/> |

4. Trade union channels

☐ 8. Other (describe) _____ ☐

G.7 Main occupation: (in terms of time)
I am an employee ☐ Independent (consultant, interpreter, etc.) ☐ Entrepreneurial (SME, cooperative, etc.) ☐

G.8 Economic sector:
Agriculture ☐ Industry (manufacturing of goods) ☐ Services sector (commerce, tourism, etc.) ☐

G.9 Do you work in a nonprofit organization? (*association, foundation, cooperative, etc*) Yes ☐ No ☐

G.10 Is your work: Occasional/seasonal ☐ On a fixed-term contract ☐ On a permanent contract ☐

G.11 Is your work: Part-time ☐ Full-time ☐

G.12 Hours worked per week (average): _____

G.13 Is your income sufficient to cover the basic needs of your family? Yes ☐ No ☐

G.14 Are there other sources of income in the family aside from yours? Yes ☐ No ☐

G.14a If YES, which is the source of this income? (select all that apply)

- | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| 1. Subsidy for unemployment | <input type="checkbox"/> | 5. Pension for invalidity | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Salary from another member of your family | <input type="checkbox"/> | 6. Support from a women's organization | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Subsidy for self-employment/creation of your business | <input type="checkbox"/> | 7. Other (describe): _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Widower's pension | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |

G.15 Do you consider your occupation related to your training / field of study?
Not at all ☐ A little ☐ Partly ☐ Completely ☐

G.16 On the whole, are you satisfied with your work situation?
Not at all ☐ A little ☐ Partly ☐ Completely ☐

G.17 If it were possible, which of the following would you like in your job? (*choose up to two*)

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| 1. A fixed-term contract | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4. A full-time contract | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. A permanent contract | <input type="checkbox"/> | 5. Nothing: the existing contract is fine | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. A part-time contract | <input type="checkbox"/> | 6. Other _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> |

G.18 If you could choose, what type of work would you like to do? _____

G.19 How satisfied are you with the following aspects of your work? **(choose one response for each item)**

	Not at all	Somewh at	Fairl y	Very
1. The opportunity to learn new things	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. The chance to obtain a long-term residence permit and citizenship	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. The respect of others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. The pay	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. The prospects for improving your position	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. The ability to reconcile family and work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. The benefits (maternity leave, pension, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. The services offered by the Public Administration	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Access to forms of subsidized credit, microcredit, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Opportunities provided by Internet and by e-commerce	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

G.20 Have new technologies helped you and/or can they help you to improve your work situation? **(Please choose one response for each item)**

	Don't use them	Not at all	Somew hat	Fairly	A lot
1. Looking for/finding a job using the Internet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Taking on-line training courses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Obtaining information from specialist websites	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Presenting/selling products/services on the web	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

G.21 How much do you think that the following skills have helped you / can help you to improve your work situation? **(assign a score from 0 = minimum to 5 = maximum to each item in the list)**

1. Language (Mother tongue)

0	1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---	---

2. Language (Italian)

0	1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---	---

3. Language (Other)

0	1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---	---

4. Basic mathematics and science and technology

0	1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---	---

5. Digital (use of new technology, computer and internet)

0	1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---	---

6. Ability to learn (Learning to learn)

0	1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---	---

7. Social and civic (understanding/adapting to the Italian customs/way of life)

0	1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---	---

8. Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship

0	1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---	---

9. Cultural (understanding/expression through music, dance, singing, etc.)

0	1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---	---

G.22 Do you have your own website? Yes ☐ No ☐

Thank you very much for your participation

Centre for Information & Society www.cis.washington.edu

Dynamic Organization Thinking www.d-o-t.eu

ARCI - L'Apis www.arci.it

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European Commission

JRC 59774 – Joint Research Centre – Institute for Prospective Technological Studies

Title: ICT Use in L2 Education for Adult Migrants

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Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union

2011

Technical Note

Abstract

This report presents the findings of a comparative study on ICT use for L2 acquisition by adult migrants in the Netherlands and Sweden. For both countries, it provides information on their policy context and the requirements regarding L2 knowledge by adult migrants, on the ICT provision for L2 education and a qualitative snapshot of the role of ICTs for L2 education for adult migrants according to some key informants in both countries. Moreover, it supplies 5 case studies (3 for the Netherlands, 2 for Sweden), where the impact of ICTs for L2 acquisition has been investigated through ethnographic research, highlighting driving factors and barriers for the integration of selected ICT tools in the L2 provision for adult migrants.

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