



Review

Linguistic Integration of Adult Migrants in Greece and Italy: Language Requirements and Learning Opportunities in L2 Greek and L2 Italian

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Abstract: Migration has almost always been accompanied by language-related processes and concerns. Integration dimensions interact with numerous language-related issues, such as language requirements and learning opportunities, and the purpose of our paper is situated in the broader field of linguistic integration of adult refugees and migrants in Greece and Italy. Greece and Italy share a double role both as host and transition countries, as two of the main EU entry points for refugees and migrants since the 2015 refugee crisis, and therefore they have been selected as two suitable cases to be further explored. This paper aims to give an overview of the language requirements and language-learning opportunities in the migration context in Greece and Italy. Through our comprehensive review of language requirements and language-learning opportunities in Greece and Italy, we have undertaken an examination of the two contexts employing a comparative approach to scrutinize the processes of linguistic integration. The information presented has shown that similar linguistic requirements are set in both countries although the use and implementation of the Knowledge of Society (KoS) tests seem to discriminate between the two contexts. The results agree with similar findings through indexes such as the Language Policy Index for Migrants (LAPIM) and the Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX).

Keywords: language requirements; learning opportunities; L2 Greek; L2 Italian



Citation: Mouti, Anna, and Lorenzo Rocca. 2023. Linguistic Integration of Adult Migrants in Greece and Italy: Language Requirements and Learning Opportunities in L2 Greek and L2 Italian. *Social Sciences* 12: 668. <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci12120668>

Academic Editor: Nikolaos Gogonas

Received: 30 August 2023

Revised: 26 November 2023

Accepted: 29 November 2023

Published: 4 December 2023



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1. Introduction

Migration has almost always been accompanied by language-related processes (Saville 2009) and concerns. The access to quality education and learning opportunities play an important and decisive role in the integration of refugee and migrant populations, and the recognition of linguistic repertoires and multilingual needs may form the planning dynamics of relevant programs and tailor-made courses. According to Rocca et al. (2020),¹ in the last two decades, more Council of Europe member states have been setting formal language and knowledge-of-society requirements as part of their migration and integration policies. In half of the member states, migrants need to meet these requirements for residency, and there are substantial and striking differences in the specific level of language proficiency required between member states. These differences exist not only among the different member states but also in the same member state over the progress of time, as also highlighted in the 2013 Report² by the Council of Europe, showing an increase between 2007 and 2013 in the number of countries attaching a language requirement to residence and citizenship. Council of Europe member states also vary when it comes to the degree to which they offer migrants language-learning opportunities, the number of hours provided, or the cost and the extent of the courses (Rocca et al. 2020; Beacco et al. 2017). In our paper,

we will focus on two Council of Europe member states examined in the [Rocca et al. \(2020\)](#) report and survey, Greece, and Italy, through a more detailed and updated lens.

[Bantekas and Michail \(2023, p. 2\)](#) mention frontier states such as Italy, Greece, and Turkey as transit stops of a temporary duration, “even though migrants find themselves in a frontier state for several years without the prospect of further movement”. They ([Bantekas and Michail 2023, p. 8](#)) state that frontier states “serve at least two purposes: (a) to act as buffer zones of migration to preferred destinations and; (b) to facilitate the migration policies of developed states by providing a (temporary) solution to the burden-sharing dilemma associated with irregular migration”. Greece and Italy share this double role both as host and transition countries, as two of the main EU entry points for refugees and migrants since the 2015 refugee crisis, and this is the main reason that these two contexts were selected.

For a general picture of the current situation to be provided, according to the UNCHR Operational Data Portal for the Mediterranean Situation,³ in 2022 the number of migrants (a large majority arrived through the Mediterranean route) reached 105,140 in Italy, with a significant increment (+57%) from the previous year. By the date of 8 October 2023, 136,874 migrants had reached Italy. It means that the same number in 2022 was substantially achieved and surpassed in less than 10 months. (By the end of 2023, Italy will probably not be far from the record of 2016, with 180,000 arrivals.) In Greece, arrivals of asylum seekers from the Mediterranean route in 2022 (12 months) reached 18,780 people (sea and land arrivals). By the date of 8 October 2023, 32,822 refugees had reached Greece, achieving almost twice the number in 2022. The five most common nationalities of sea arrivals (since 1 January 2023) in Italy are Guinea, Côte d’Ivoire, Egypt, Tunisia, and Bangladesh while in Greece they are the State of Palestine, Afghanistan, Somalia, Syrian Arab Rep., and Eritrea.

There have been various studies that have examined the two countries in the migration context. Some of these (e.g., [Barn et al. 2021](#); [Brändle et al. 2019](#); [Bertotti et al. 2023](#); [Samek Lodovici et al. 2017](#)) attempt to provide a comparative approach to the two countries in the migration context but none of them focuses on the linguistic integration aspects of adult refugees and migrants in the two countries. Additionally, studies have been conducted on the requirements for citizenship and migration policies within a broader context in these two countries. (e.g., [Gogonas and Tramountanis 2023](#); [Bantekas and Michail 2023](#); [Zincone 2012](#); [Tintori 2018](#)), but we will focus only on the linguistic and knowledge-of-society requirements in the migration context and the language-learning and language-support opportunities offered for free and mainly supported by the State. [Minuz \(2019\)](#) explores the relations among language and migration policies, and language teaching as a broad frame for adult literacy and L2 learning in Europe. Educational and language policies for adult migrants in the EU seem to be contradictory in principles and effects, as “while access to the host country’s language is strongly recommended as a means of integration, and is supported through programs and funding, the setting of legal standards for language competence risks preventing instead of fostering integration” ([Minuz 2019](#)).

The purpose of this paper is situated in the broader field of linguistic integration of adult refugees and migrants in Greece and Italy. This paper describes in a more detailed way the Italian and the Greek contexts within the more complex European situation (as presented in [Rocca et al. 2020](#)), attempting to provide a comparative approach between the two Mediterranean migration countries. This paper aims firstly to give an overview of the language requirements and language-learning opportunities in the migration context in Greece and Italy. Secondly, through this comprehensive review, we attempt to compare instances of linguistic integration between the two contexts and to stimulate reflection and debate on these issues.

2. Language & KoS Requirements and Language-Learning Opportunities: The Italian Context

2.1. An Overview

At the beginning of 2022, 5,193,669 foreigners had their residence in Italy, 8.8% of the overall population. Almost half of them (47.6%) are European, and, in particular, more than a quarter (27.2%) are EU citizens. Asians accounted for 22.6% and Africans 22.2%; 7.5% were Americans and a very small percentage were citizens of Oceania. Among the 198 communities present, the first five cover 48.4% of all foreign residents: the most numerous are Romanians (1.1 million: 20.8%), followed by Albanians (433,000: 8.4%), Moroccans (429,000: 8.3%), Chinese (330,000: 6.4%) and Ukrainians (236,000: 4.6%).⁴ After the substantial declines determined by the pandemic crisis, in 2021 Italy gave 241,595 new residency permits.⁵ With specific regard to the residency permits for work, they are regulated by the so called “Fluxes-decrees”. In 2023, the Government approved the new plan concerning fluxes till 2025: it was established to allow the entrance on total of 425,000 new workers (136,000 in 2023; 151,000 in 2024; 165,000 in 2025). In 2021, 67,040 people arrived in Italy (9478 MSNA—Minori Stranieri Non Accompagnati, unaccompanied minors). Out of these, 53,609 asylum applications were submitted and 42.0% of them received a positive response.

Tintori (2018) argues about migration laws that accrue from a combination of *ius sanguinis* (right of blood or descent), *ius soli* (right of the soil or birth in the country), and *ius domicilii* (right of abode or residence in the country), in order to discuss the public debate and political activities concerning the reform of the *ius soli* provisions in the Italian Nationality Law and naturalization patterns in Italy. Since our paper focuses only on the linguistic integration of migrants, this section will briefly present the Italian language and KoS requirements and tests in the context of migration in Italy as well as and language-learning opportunities in L2 Italian (see Machetti and Masillo 2023; Masillo 2021; Barni 2012; Deiana 2021; D’Agostino and Lo Maglio 2018; Bianco and Ortiz Cobo 2018). Machetti et al. (2018) discuss language policies for migrants in Italy, considering the extent to which Italian language policies are or are not capable of guaranteeing the possibility to participate in the democratic life of the country and therefore to have a genuine opportunity to integrate. They (Machetti et al. 2018), argue that the existence of education policies that concentrate entirely on preserving and promoting Italian projects makes diversity seem like something hard to manage. They do mention, though, good-practice cases in terms of local, individual, educational, and community action on language planning (e.g., by some Italian regions, such as Emilia Romagna, Lombardy, and Tuscany). Bianco and Ortiz Cobo (2019) seem to agree with the above promotion of the Italian language stating that “compulsory knowledge of the Italian language draws attention to the assimilatory character of the integration process, which is not a prerogative of Italy as a country, but is rather a common aspect within integration policies all over Europe”, while Ghio et al. (2022) investigates whether—and to what extent—poor proficiency in Italian impairs immigrants’ labor-market integration in Italy and highlights that “linguistic enclaves in workplaces, while not always representing a hurdle to immigrants’ labor market success, can generate trade-offs for other non-labor market integration outcomes”.

2.2. Language and KoS Requirements

In Italy there are three requirements currently in place: temporary residency; permanent residency; and citizenship. Temporary residency (DPR 179/11, so-called *Accordo di Integrazione*⁶) provides CEFR⁷ A2 only for speaking (with KoS content related to daily life). Apart from some exemptions, all third-country nationals have to meet the requirement within two years of their first arrival to obtain the residency permit renewal. For permanent residency (DI 7/12/21,⁸ ex DM 4/6/10, so-called *Decreto Maroni*), that can be asked after not less than five years of residency. It provides CEFR A2 for all the main four skills (listening, reading, speaking, writing). Apart from some exemptions, all third-country nationals must meet the requirement to take permanent residency (*permesso di soggiorno per soggiornanti di lungo periodo*). For citizenship (DDL 4/10/18,⁹ so-called *Decreto*

Salvini), that can be asked after not less than 10 years of residency. It provides CEFR B1 for all aforementioned four skills. Apart from some exemptions, all migrants (third-country nationals and EU citizens) have to meet the requirements to take the naturalization.

The law in force establishes four ways to comply with these legal obligations: 1. Attendance at language courses provided by CPIAs¹⁰ (it allows migrants fulfill the first two requirements, but is not sufficient for citizenship). 2. The passing of a CPIA test administered to migrants who were not enrolled in CPIA's courses. In other words, it means "external candidates" inscribed to the test directly by the prefectures. Otherwise, in the case of "internal students", the first way would find an application (this second way is possible only for the first two requirements). 3. The acquirement of a degree, starting from the lower secondary school, as awarded by a public school. 4. The passing of an official language certification awarded by one of the CLIQ members.

At this point and within such a scenario, it is important to mention the role of the CLIQ Association (Certificazione Lingua Italiana di Qualità/Quality Italian Language Certification) established in 2012 by the four institutions that are recognized by the State as certification bodies for Italian. The four institutions acting as Italian Language Certification bodies are the following: Università per Stranieri di Perugia, Università per Stranieri di Siena, Università degli Studi Roma Tre e Società Dante Alighieri (University for Foreigners of Perugia, University for Foreigners of Siena, University of Roma Tre and Dante Alighieri Society). They provide certifications for all the six CEFR (A1-C2) levels for the Italian language. The language requirements of A1, A2, or B1 level for citizenship and residency are also provided within this range, and in some cases there are also specific language tests for migration purposes (CELI- CERTIFICATI DI LINGUA ITALIANA PER IMMIGRATI and CILS (Integrazione in Italia and Cittadinanza).

2.3. Language-Learning Opportunities

In the scholastic year 2021/2022, 967,588 foreign students were enrolled in different states' learning environments in the Italian educational system. However, these numbers do not relate to the tuition offered to adults, which is in the next paragraph, as, particularly, adult migrants are typically engaged in courses of Italian as a second language. Language Support to Migrants (LSM), basically adult migrants, is represented by the CPIA—Centri Provinciali per l'Istruzione degli Adulti/ Provincial Centers for Adult Education/, State schools depending by MIM, the Ministry of Education. More than 4000 public teachers are employed within 129 CPIAs. This system provides different kinds of courses offered without any charge in general to adults aged more than 15. It means third-country nationals, as well as EU citizens, refugees, and asylum seekers with the pending status of their request, e.g., all the new arrivals by sea legally present in the Italian territory. CPIA is organized on a provincial level (for better co-ordination among the learning environments present at the local level), with their own more professionalized teachers' staff and, quite often, with their schools in terms of building and classrooms. Courses in Italian as a second language are mainly focused on A1 and A2 levels, with an institutional formative path of 200 h of tuition for CEFR band A, including KoS elements, according to the Ministry of Education Guidelines. CPIA can offer courses for other learners' profiles, such as Alfa and Pre-A1 courses for illiterate and low-literate migrants or B1 courses (This depends on several factors, e.g., the willingness of the head of CPIA, the balance between supply and demand, financial aspects, etc.).

Behind the CPIA system, Italy can count on the so-called third sector, thus the network of lay and religious associations, co-operatives, and NGOs involved in the field that are traditionally very active: around 2500 volunteers are estimated to give language support, again without charge. In addition, a double synergy is sustained. Firstly, the synergy between CPIA and the third sector, with a mutual recognition of the different roles, turns into a very positive connection between formal and non-formal learning. Secondly, the synergy between the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Interior, with additional language courses targeted to all country nationals (not only to asylum seekers and refugees)

that is co-funded by AMIF (Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, managed by the DLCI (Dipartimento Libertà Civili e Immigrazione) of the Interior).

Challenges related to the language support for migrants context have to do mainly with the management of mixed groups of learners, where “mixed” means “huge, heterogeneous” from many points of view: different CEFR levels present in the same learning environment, different literacy profiles, cultural distances, motivations to learn. Many asylum seekers do not have a migration project related to Italy: in other words, Italy is just a transit country they want to cross to reach North Europe. In this case, they often seem to have a lack of interest in the Italian language. Another challenge is related to how to address a training that ranges from low—all the way up to B1 for citizenship, the highest. There is a clear need to extend the offer: on the one hand, by implementing the Alfa and Pre-A1 courses; on the other hand, by introducing at least B2 courses—not linked to any requirement, but addressing the right of migrants to achieve the “vantage” described by CEFR.

3. Language & KoS Requirements and Language-Learning Opportunities: The Greek Context

3.1. An Overview

Regarding the Greek context, the total foreign population is around 1 million (estimate), almost 9% of the overall population. Out of the overall population in Greece, 91% are Greek citizens, 1.8% from the EU, 5.3% from Europe (ex-EU), 1.6% from Asia, 0.3% from Africa, 0.1% from the Americas, and 0.06% without citizenship. Among the communities present, the most numerous are Albanians (60.2%), followed by Chinese (5.6%), Georgian (4.3%), Pakistani (4.0%), Russian (3.2%) and Ukrainian (3.0%).¹¹ As far as the figures for regular migrants in Greece are concerned, data provided by the Ministry of Migration and Asylum (as cited in [Gogonas and Tramountanis \(2023\)](#)), have shown almost 755,000 regular migrants in Greece in August 2023, in a total population of 10,482,487 ([ELSTAT \(Hellenic Statistic Authority\) 2023](#)). According to the above sources ([Gogonas and Tramountanis 2023](#); [Ministry of Migration and Asylum 2023](#)), “the majority of that population are Third Country Nationals (460,000), followed by EU citizens and ethnic Greeks (245,000) and beneficiaries of international protection (50,000). Albanians are by a wide margin the nationality with the most valid residence permits, accounting for 60% of the total (approximately 276,000), while Bulgarians and Romanians are the two largest groups among European citizens, with 77,500 and 61,000 permits, respectively”.¹² Additionally, asylum applicants in 2023 (data from the Ministry of Migration and Asylum, until August 2023) were 27,414 (18,391 from Asia and 7293 from Africa).

3.2. Language and KoS Requirements

The data gathered by [Gogonas and Tramountanis \(2023\)](#) showed a different approach to obtaining citizenship across the years from an extreme version of *jus sanguinis* (right of blood), to a move towards *jus solis* (right of soil) and finally a shift towards recognizing both *jus sanguinis* and *jus solis*, with some gradual emphasis on the role of education in the qualification for Greek education attendance. Based on the provisions of the new Citizenship Code (Law 4735/2020), applicants should have sufficient knowledge of the Greek language, culture, and history, and be socially and economically integrated in the country. This is one of the linguistic and KoS requirements in the Greek context, and in this section we will briefly present the Modern Greek language and KoS requirements and tests in the context of migration to Greece (see also, [Kantzou and Mouti, forthcoming](#)). Language education for adult refugees and migrants in the Greek context has been examined through a variety of studies, providing information about teachers’ and learners’ profiles, language courses and materials, etc. (e.g., [Androusou and Iakovou 2020](#); [Chatzidaki and Tsokalidou 2021](#); [Karavas et al. 2021](#); [Mattheoudakis et al. 2021](#); [Mogli and Papadopoulou 2018](#); [Papadopoulou et al. 2022](#); [Kourtis-Kazoullis et al. 2019](#)), but there is quite limited research and studies regarding language and KoS requirements in the Greek context. Examples in Greece of setting differentiated language requirements will be presented, e.g., in the context

of residency and citizenship, for access to the labor market and higher education. Three institutions are offering official certifications for Greek as an L2: the Centre for the Greek Language, the School of Modern Greek of Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, and the Greek Language Teaching Center of the University of Athens.

The first one is the Centre for the Greek Language, a non-profit organization established in 1994 in Thessaloniki and supervised by the Greek Ministry of Education. The center offers a complete certification system for the six levels of the CEFR Scale: A1 (A1 for children who are 8–12 years old and A1 for adolescents and adults), A2, B1, B2, C1, and C2. The other two institutions offering offer certification for Greek as an L2 have been established and run under the supervision of two universities, the University of Athens and the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, through their Modern Greek language schools for adult learners. The examinations conducted by the corresponding University lead to a certificate at the B2 level (the only level offered by the Universities), which is a requirement for enrollment in a Greek University or vocational school.

In addition to these certificates, language testing is integrated into the processes of obtaining long-term residence permits and Greek citizenship, along with a knowledge of society (KoS¹³) assessment. About the long-term residence permit, the testing procedure is conducted by the General Secretariat for Vocational Education, Training, Lifelong Learning, and Youth of the Ministry of Education. More specifically, foreign citizens who have not certified their knowledge of Greek in any other way (e.g., a formal education degree from a public school or an A2 Certificate) need to sit a specifically designed A2 level language exam. The exam evaluates the candidates' proficiency in all four traditional language skills. In addition, candidates take a Greek history and culture test, which is conducted in Greek in the form of multiple-choice questions.

Regarding the citizenship and naturalization process, in 2020–2021, the naturalization process was modified, and the Certificate of Knowledge Adequacy for Naturalization (PEGP) was introduced, focusing on both language skills and knowledge of society. More specifically, the language level required is set to B1, and candidates are examined in reading, writing, listening, and speaking. In addition to the language test, there is an extra test component focusing on Greece's geography, history, culture, and institutions. As Gogonas and Tramountanis (2023) comment "a great number of topics covered in the exam are exceedingly challenging, resembling entrance exams for higher education, and promote extensive memorization rather than meaningful understanding" and they relate the heightened difficulty of the exams to the small number of applicants to participate in the exams out of the 30,000 pending applications.

3.3. Language-Learning Opportunities

Regarding language-learning opportunities, as presented in Kantzou et al. (2017), and Kantzou and Mouti (forthcoming), language education for adult migrants in Greece is fragmented, and classes are highly diverse in terms of students' language competence, literacy, and language background. They may follow different learning paths, but there is some common ground, and that is that usually the organization of the studies follows the CEFR scale (Kantzou and Mouti, forthcoming) in a variety of educational settings e.g., Sunday schools for migrants, or courses organized by NGOs and municipalities, formal educational settings such as the School of Modern Greek.

Migrants (15+) and unaccompanied minors of this age have the opportunity to be enrolled in secondary education and vocational training in state schools. Adult migrants may be enrolled in the Second Chance Schools, although L2 Greek language support is not mandatory and offered through special-case initiatives (e.g., by the head of the school). Adult education is available in Greece¹⁴ and several educational programs for adults are organized by state or private agencies, NGOs, and other organizations. The General Secretariat of Lifelong Learning of the Ministry of Education is the responsible authority for most of the educational programs for adults, and some indicative examples will be provided: Schools of Second Chance are for adults who have not completed mandatory

education providing afternoon classes and granting a Junior High School–Gymnasium certificate. Additionally, as found on the official website of the Ministry of Migration and Asylum¹⁵ L2 Greek language education is offered in: the Migrant Integration Centers (M.I.C.), which operate as branches of Community Centers in municipalities, the Integration Training Centers of Project HELIOS, implemented by the International Organization of Migration, the Lifelong Learning Centers of the Ministry of Education and Religion provide informal education to adults, but also the Non-Governmental Organizations or/and other bodies, foreign organizations, entities representing third-country and solidarity schools offering language support in L2 Greek in various settings across Greece.

The main challenge is that there is no such thing as a unified state provision for learning opportunities organized by the state for the linguistic support of adult refugees and migrants. There might be fragmented initiatives, as we have already mentioned, but there is no such thing as an organized frame for the language education of adult migrants. No organized planning is offered to all linking L2 learning opportunities with language and KoS requirements for the migration context. Challenges—similar to the ones of the Italian context—are related to the management of mixed groups of learners with different CEFR levels present in the same learning environment, different literacy profiles, cultural distances, motivations to learn L2 Greek based on relocation plans, and different destination countries.

4. Comparative Analysis and Discussion

This paper aims to give an overview of the language requirements and language-learning opportunities in the migration context in Greece and Italy. Through our comprehensive review of language requirements and language-learning opportunities in Greece and Italy, we have approached the two contexts through a comparative approach to the linguistic integration processes. Language-learning opportunities of L2 Italian are mainly organized through the CPIAs and the relevant synergies with the Third sector while in the Greek context, the existing language-learning opportunities are not that organized under a state-unified framework (although they exist through various ways and initiatives). It should be guaranteed, though, that it would be communicated to the refugees and migrants interested. The updated (in relation to previous studies) information presented in the previous sections has shown that similar linguistic requirements are set in both countries, although there is this difference regarding the KoS tests that seems to differentiate the two contexts. There are no KoS requirements in the Italian context apart from a rather “simple” one regarding daily life, integrated into the A2 speaking skills requirement for the temporary residence permit. In addition, there is a requirement for temporal residency in Italy while there is no such requirement in the Greek context. We should highlight that there is no entry requirement either in Greece nor Italy, something that exists in other European countries and Council of Europe member states. We should clarify that in Table 1 below, we have not included the possible exemptions and special regulations implemented in the two contexts.

Broadening our discussion of the findings in the wider context, we should refer to Rocca et al. (2020, p. 12) mentioning that: “Nearly half of the member states surveyed require migrants to pass a KoS test before entry to gain residency or citizenship status. Most often, these tests focus on history and geography, constitution and law, or customs and traditions of the host country. In nine out of 10 cases, KoS tests are in the host country’s official language, and they typically require reading skills. As such, KoS tests function as implicit language and literacy tests. In quite a few cases, the language proficiency level needed to pass the KoS test likely exceeds the CEFR level of the language test”. This is probably the case of the KoS component of the naturalization/citizenship procedure and the extended residence permit in the Greek context, as in the Italian context, there is no such KoS component, and the one in the temporal residence procedure is implemented orally.

Table 1. Language and KoS requirements in Greece and Italy.

	ITALY	GREECE
Entry Language Requirements	No Requirement	No Requirement
Language Level Requirement/Exam for Temporary Residency	A2 (Speaking) with KoS content related to daily life	No Requirement
Language Level Requirement/Exam for Permanent/Long-Term Residency	A2	A2
Language Level Requirement/Exam for Citizenship	B1	B1
KoS Test	No Requirement	Requirement for both Permanent Residency and Citizenship

[Carlsen and Rocca \(2022\)](#), introducing language test activism, discuss this concept regarding the migration policies in Western societies requiring migrants to pass language tests to gain access to human and democratic rights such as residency, family reunification, and citizenship, as well as to enter the labor market or higher education. They argue that language testers have a special responsibility for justice and consequences, especially in cases where language tests are used to control migration and integration. In the same line, [Wodak and Boukala \(2015, p. 254\)](#) say that “language competence plays a central role in EU migration policies [. . .] Although European legislation presents language requirements and language testing as a means of “integration”, language requirements seem to represent an obvious formal legislative obstacle to migration and determine who should or should not belong to the EU”. These issues may complicate the role of Greece and Italy as both host and transition countries regarding the linguistic integration for the refugees who are either residing temporarily or permanently settled and use either lingua francas or their mother tongue to communicate with other non-Greeks or non-Italians. Questions may arise regarding the languages for which courses are developed, the language proficiency levels targeted, and whether tailor-made courses are created to address specific language needs. Furthermore, exploring how diversity issues are managed within diverse and heterogeneous working groups is essential.

Interestingly, linguistic integration instances examined in this paper, seem to agree with quantitative rankings already provided by Migration-Integration Indexes in a wider context.

The Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX) is a unique tool that measures policies to integrate migrants in countries across six continents, measuring eight areas of integration policy. Through quantitative analyses (categorical principal component analysis), MPG’s research team identified key dimensions that underlie all areas of a country’s integration policy. These dimensions help to describe a country’s overall approach to integration and the MIPEX ranking of Italy is characterized as temporary integration—halfway favorable and ranked at 58/100 while Greece is characterized as equality on paper—slightly unfavorable and ranked at 46/100. These rankings could be seen in the light of the MIPEX of the EU28 countries’ rankings, with their integration policies being on average, only halfway favorable (49/100), creating as many obstacles as opportunities for immigrants to participate and settle in their new home country.¹⁶

MIPEX presents a general/overall integration comparison while in our paper we attempt to make an updated, more detailed comparison regarding linguistic integration which has been already provided by [Rocca et al. \(2020\)](#) and is currently updated through the LAPIM Index ([Carlsen and Rocca 2023](#)). LAPIM¹⁷ is a new Index that has been recently launched, and in which Greece and Italy have been included in its piloting phase. The Language Policy Index for Migrants (LAPIM) measures the linguistic requirements in

integration and citizenship policy as well as learning opportunities for migrants across Europe. It is the first index of its kind to be designed specifically for this purpose. It was designed within the IMPECT research project anchored at the Western Norway University of Applied Sciences to rank countries according to their relative strictness in language policy. Findings regarding data collected through the implementation of the LAPIM Index in Greece and Italy will be examined in further research, although some initial findings presented by Carlsen and Rocca (2023) give Italy a 67/100 ranking while Greece is placed on 50/100 and thus in the middle of the relative strictness continuum in language policy.

Further complimentary and ongoing empirical research is already planned and implemented as there is ongoing research conducted in Greece and Italy with a variety of case studies representing different educational settings and student populations. Instruments for the ongoing and planned research in the relevant settings are and will be learners' questionnaires/language checklists, language portraits, and language tests. Interestingly, other studies, including in both Greece and Italy, have been conducted focusing on special groups of learners, such as the low-literate migrants in the IMPECT project (Carlsen et al. 2023) and the LAMI-LASLLIAM assessment tools (ALTE-LAMI SIG Group & Council of Europe 2023) or the literacy issues in general (Minuz and Borri 2016).

5. Conclusions

Overall, this comprehensive review of the linguistic integration instances in Greece and Italy may contribute significantly to our understanding of the opportunities provided and the barriers faced by migrants in the name of language requirements and knowledge of the society. The significance of our work is mainly situated on our focus on two of the countries characterized in the bibliography as the “frontier states” of the EU, the ‘first arrival countries for people arriving on dangerous routes via the Mediterranean Sea’, the ‘first countries of entry to the EU’, ‘the two main gateways to the European continent’, ‘transit countries’ and as ‘main entry points to the EU’. We aim to stimulate reflection and debate on language requirements and language-course provision among countries that seem to share similar characteristics in the migration field and especially in these Euro–Euro-Mediterranean countries. Certainly, further research on a comparative review between the countries of the European South, such as Greece and Italy, and the European North, such as the Scandinavian countries (e.g., Norway see Hamnes Carlsen and Moe 2016), would be of great interest.

Author Contributions: Conceptualization, A.M. and L.R.; investigation, A.M. and L.R.; writing—original draft preparation, A.M. and L.R.; writing—review and editing, A.M. and L.R.; funding acquisition, A.M. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: This research was funded by the Research Committee of Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece (907/12-10-2021).

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement: Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement: Data are contained within the article.

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

Notes

¹ The purpose of the 2018 survey presented in this 2020 report has been to map the language and KoS requirements, as well as the learning opportunities, provided for migrants⁵ in the Council of Europe member states. To date the Council of Europe has carried out 4 surveys among its member states on policy and practice relating to the linguistic integration of adult migrants and available material may be found here: <https://www.coe.int/it/web/lang-migrants/surveys> (accessed on 25 November 2023).

² Available online: <https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=09000016802fc1ce> (accessed on 25 November 2023).

³ Available online: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/mediterranean/location/5205> (accessed on 25 November 2023).

- 4 This paper presents the Italian context referring to the last “Migration dossier”, published by IDOS and related to the situation at the date of 1st January, 2022. In addition, with particular regard to the refugees’ fluxes, the current scenario is addressed, thanks to official data collected at the date of 17 August 2023.
- 5 See ISTAT publication available here: <https://www.istat.it/it/files//2022/12/CENSIMENTO-E-DINAMICA-DEMOGRAFICA-2021.pdf> (accessed on 25 November 2023).
- 6 Available online: <https://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/2011/11/11/011G0221/sg> (accessed on 25 November 2023).
- 7 Common European Framework for Languages Scale A1-C2. CEFR from now on (accessed on 25 November 2023).
- 8 Available online: <https://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/2022/02/12/22A01025/sg> (accessed on 25 November 2023).
- 9 Available online: <https://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/2018/10/04/18G00140/sg> (accessed on 25 November 2023).
- 10 Centri Provinciali per l’Istruzione degli Adulti, Provincial Centers for Adult Education, State schools depending by MIM, the Ministry of Education.
- 11 Data from the Ministry of Migration and Asylum-August 2023: <https://t.ly/FJ9WE> (accessed on 25 November 2023).
- 12 Available online: <https://t.ly/FJ9WE> (accessed on 25 November 2023).
- 13 Knowledge of Society-KoS.
- 14 Available online: <https://help.unhcr.org/greece/living-in-greece/access-to-education/> (accessed on 25 November 2023).
- 15 Available online: <https://migration.gov.gr/en/migration-policy/integration/drasis-koinonikis-entaxis-se-ethniko-epipedo/mathimata-ellinikis-glossas> (accessed on 25 November 2023).
- 16 See in detail <https://www.mipex.eu/key-findings> (accessed on 25 November 2023).
- 17 For more information about the development and validation of LAPIM, see Carlsen and Rocca (2023) and <https://www.hvl.no/en/research/project/impect/news-and-events/> (accessed on 25 November 2023).

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