DOI: 10.14712/23363177.2026.9

Orbis scholae

EMPIRICAL STUDY

"No One Trained Us for This": Czech Foreign Language Teaching in Crisis-Affected Classrooms

Natalia Dombinskaya[1]

1 Charles University, Faculty of Education

CORRESPONDENCE
Institute for Research and Development in Education, Faculty of Education, Charles University, Myslíkova 7, 110 00 Prague 1, Czechia

dombinskaya@gmail.com

ARTICLE HISTORY
Received: 31 December 2025
Accepted: 24 June 2026

Abstract

Like teachers in other European countries receiving Ukrainian refugees, Czech foreign language teachers are responding to refugee students' trauma and language barriers with minimal crisis-specific preparation. The Czech school system, historically shaped by homogeneous classrooms, faced the sudden arrival of Ukrainian refugee students, who now represent 5.6% of the lower-secondary enrolment nationally, with 16.5% in some regions, placing unprecedented pressure on school leadership and teacher support systems. Even with wide-ranging support from the Czech government, teachers reported feeling unprepared for teaching in crisis-affected classrooms. This qualitative study explores the professional and emotional obstacles Czech foreign language teachers face, employing thematic analysis. Lower-secondary school teachers contributed through fifteen interviews and two focus groups across five regions. Analysis revealed teachers' professional isolation and limited access to specialised training, compounded by insufficient school-level coordination and support structures, which resulted in emotional exhaustion and decreased teaching effectiveness. These findings call for trauma-informed teacher training and coordinated leadership that provides professional development, fosters peer support, and prioritises teachers' wellbeing during crises.

Keywords

foreign language teacher education, crisis-context classrooms, refugee education, professional development, qualitative research, trauma-informed pedagogy

© 2026 The Authors. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0).

"No one trained us for this", a Czech English teacher confided about her exhaustion from navigating what she described as a "crisis in teaching" for almost four years. This sentiment was repeated by other Czech foreign language teachers in five Czech regions that hosted the highest concentrations of Ukrainian refugee families with school-aged children. In response to the 2022 Ukrainian refugee influx, classrooms transformed abruptly, requiring new approaches to working with children with war-affected trauma and speaking another language (Šeďová et al., 2025). Foreign language teachers' role became even more demanding. They were expected to help refugee students develop their language skills essential for participating in school life. Since the 2022 refugee influx, these challenges persist, as classrooms continue to require teachers to respond to complex educational, linguistic, and social-emotional needs. Familiar learning environments changed dramatically, putting teachers in a central, yet under-supported, role during a crisis that tested both their skills and resilience. Although research has examined Ukrainian refugee student integration into Czech schools (Lintner et al., 2023, 2025; Šeďová et al., 2025), the experiences of teachers working in crisis-affected classrooms are largely unexplored, despite their critical role in determining educational outcomes.

Since 2012, refugee education has shifted toward integration within host-country schools, where teachers are expected to support refugee students through the national curriculum and in the host-country language. This gives teachers a very different role from earlier phases, when refugee education was often provided separately or by non-governmental organisations (Dryden-Peterson, 2016).

Research shows the importance of trauma-informed and inclusive pedagogical methods, which are essential for responding to the complex needs of displaced students (Brunzell et al., 2016; Crosby et al., 2018; European Commission/EACEA/ Eurydice, 2019). Recent research on Ukrainian refugee children focuses on issues related to school enrolment and curriculum adaptation. It also provides practical recommendations for teachers who want to apply trauma-informed practices in their classrooms (Lintner et al., 2023, 2025; Šeďová et al., 2025). Despite extensive research on trauma-informed pedagogy, there are only a handful of studies that explore how teachers actually implement these approaches in their classrooms with refugee students (Cerna, 2019; Stathopoulou & Dassi, 2020). Existing studies indicate that teachers often face language barriers, cultural differences, and insufficient preparation, which means that they have to develop adaptive strategies on their own rather than through formal training (Frazier et al., 2025; Hauge et al., 2024). This qualitative study contributes to filling this gap. It explores how Czech foreign language teachers teach in classrooms that include refugee students. Namely, it investigates the challenges they face, the strategies they develop in practice, and the support they need to remain effective.

Czechia provides an excellent rationale for examining teaching in crisis-affected classrooms due to its exceptionally high per capita intake of Ukrainian refugees. With an estimated 36–37 Ukrainian refugees per 1,000 residents, Czechia has the highest Ukrainian refugee concentration per capita in Europe. It is well above that of Poland (25 per 1,000) and Germany (17 per 1,000) (UNHCR, 2025). The high number of Ukrainian refugees can be explained by longstanding historical, cultural, and economic ties between the two countries, Czechia's geographical proximity to Ukraine, and established labour and family migration networks (UNHCR, 2025).

Three research questions guided this study: 1) What specific difficulties do Czech foreign language teachers face in crisis-affected classrooms? 2) What pedagogical approaches do Czech foreign language teachers develop to meet the needs of refugee students? 3) What forms of institutional support do Czech foreign language teachers identify as necessary for effective teaching in crisis? To address these questions, the study draws on fifteen semi-structured interviews and two focus groups with lower-secondary FL teachers across five high-concentration regions.

1 The Context

In Czechia, initial teacher education has historically prepared teachers for relatively homogeneous classrooms, a pattern also found in other European systems (April et al., 2018; Bačáková, 2011; World Bank, 2025). Recent TALIS 2024 data show a clear preparation gap: while 74.6% of newly graduated Czech teachers felt confident teaching their subject, only 15.4% felt ready to manage multicultural or multilingual classrooms, and only 24.5% felt prepared to support students' social and emotional development (OECD, 2025, Table 4.5). Participation in related professional development also remained limited: 29% of in-service Czech teachers attended training on multicultural or multilingual teaching in the previous 12 months, close to the EU average of 28.2% (OECD, 2025, Table 4.22). These figures point to a broader difficulty: teacher education systems have not kept pace with increasingly diverse classrooms.

Since 2022, the composition of Czech school populations has changed noticeably. Between September 2020 and March 2025, the number of Ukrainian students enrolled in Czech primary and lower-secondary schools rose sharply from 8,408 to 51,416, constituting more than a sixfold increase. As of March 2025, Ukrainian students represented 5.6% of lower-secondary enrolment nationally, with some districts, such as Prague 14, for instance, reaching 16.5%. Of 51,995 classes, 23,050 (44.3%) now include Ukrainian refugee children, while 105 classes exceed 50% refugee composition. (Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic, 2025)

This fast transformation was demanding for Czech schools because historically they operated within linguistically and culturally homogeneous classes (Bačáková, 2011). Consequently, when Ukrainian refugee students entered mainstream classes, few schools and teachers felt ready to support this transition, given their limited experience working with students with a refugee background (Šeďová et al., 2025). The uneven regional distribution of refugee families added to these difficulties. Some regions, such as the capital (Hlavní město Praha), Středočeský kraj, and Jihomoravský kraj, had to adapt quickly, while others, including Zlínský kraj, Olomoucký kraj, and Moravskoslezský kraj, experienced relatively little change.

This shift made it clear that teacher preparedness is essential. The sudden increase in Ukrainian students brought challenges that teachers were not ready for. They were required to engage students with limited or no Czech skills, all while continuing lessons for their Czech-speaking classmates (Česká školní inspekce, 2023). Most Ukrainian children arrived affected by war exposure, displacement, and family separation (Preissová Krejčí et al., 2023; UNICEF, 2025). However, teachers were largely unprepared to instruct students with

a mother language different than Czech and lacked training in trauma-informed pedagogical approaches (Hlado et al., 2024; Šeďová et al., 2025).

These challenges impacted all teachers, yet the situation was especially complex for foreign language teachers. Unlike content-area teachers who can simplify Czech to convey meaning, foreign language teachers had to conduct lessons in a third language, English or German, for students who were simultaneously learning Czech. This combination creates what this study terms *triple language challenge*, which in turn renders traditional foreign language pedagogies largely inadequate, as these are designed for monolingual learners who share both a first language and the language of instruction. Teachers were forced to reconsider their instructional strategies, pacing, and assessment practices in real time, without training or institutional support for this kind of multilingual pedagogy.

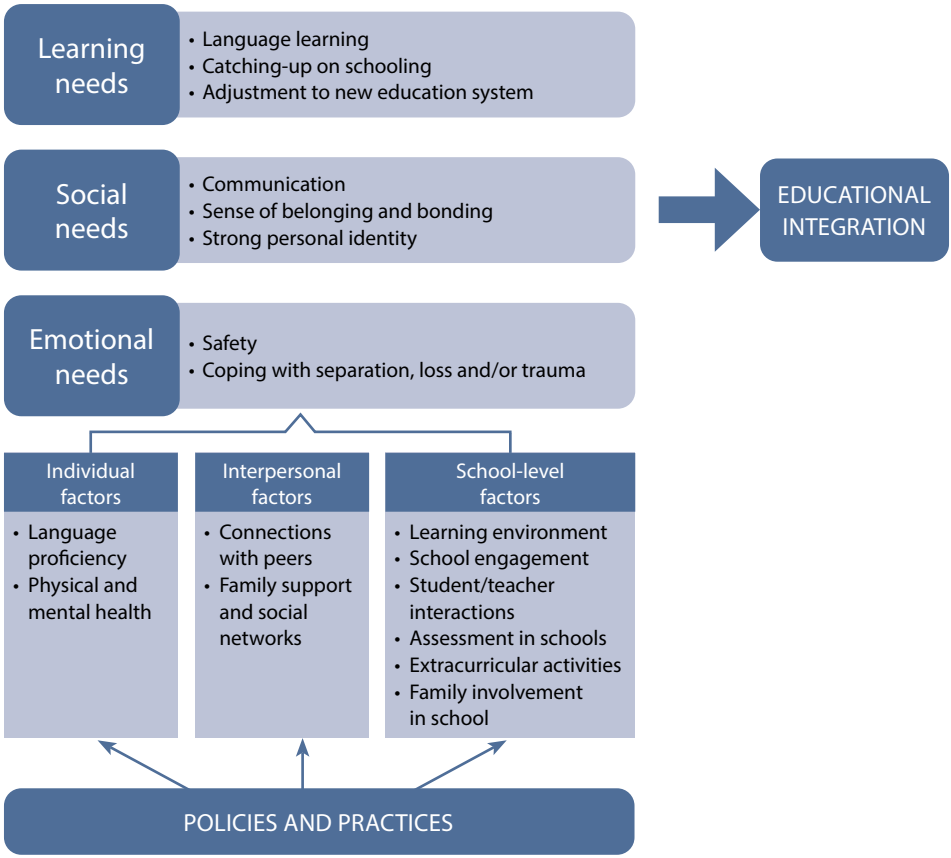
This situation constitutes a genuine educational crisis rather than merely a challenging transition. According to Aguirresarobe (2022), a crisis can be defined as "a sudden, negative, and temporally constrained change within a system that threatens to bring about a large and unforeseen transformation of a number of the identifying characteristics of that system and urgently calls for new approaches and solutions" (p. 17). The educational crisis introduced by the rapid influx of Ukrainian students meets these criteria fully. The onset of the crisis altered the previously uniform classrooms of Czech schools. The crisis placed considerable pedagogical demands on teachers because the education system was unprepared to accommodate such diversity, rather than because of the students themselves. It is essential to understand how foreign language teachers respond pedagogically under crisis conditions, where familiar practices fail and new approaches must be urgently improvised, in order to support both current Czech teachers and educators working in displacement contexts globally.

2 Theoretical Framework and Literature

This study employs Cerna's (2019) holistic framework for analysing refugee students' educational integration since it recognises the complexity of their learning, social, and emotional needs (Arnot & Pinson, 2005; Sidhu & Taylor, 2009). Cerna (2019) posits that refugee children can only be successfully integrated and educated when all or at least most of these needs are addressed. Figure 1 depicts that refugee children need to learn the host country language, develop their mother language, adjust to a new education system, develop a sense of belonging, feel safe, and be able to cope with loss and grief as well as separation and trauma.

Based on this framework and in line with Cerna (2019), successful educational integration can be understood as requiring support at three interconnected levels: macro-level policies, meso-level school and community factors, and micro-level classroom practices and individual factors. The present study extends the framework, primarily applied to understanding refugee student needs, to examine foreign language teachers' experiences. It is particularly relevant here because teachers play an important role in refugee students' integration process across these interconnected dimensions. Teachers' perspectives not only help understand how policies and practices shape refugee students' experiences but

Figure 1 Holistic Model for the Educational Integration of Refugee Children



Note. Adapted from *Refugee education: Integration models and practices in OECD countries* (OECD Education Working Papers No. 203), by L. Cerna, 2019, OECD Publishing, p. 34.

also reveal how resources and everyday challenges enable or constrain their ability to meet refugee children's holistic needs.

Foreign language teachers operate across the macro, meso, and micro levels. They translate national integration policies (macro) into practice within school contexts (meso) through their everyday classroom practices (micro). This alignment makes the holistic framework particularly suitable for guiding this study since it enables the researcher to examine the experiences of foreign language teachers across different levels of the educational system. By analysing foreign language teachers' experiences at the macro-, meso- and micro-levels, the Cerna's framework is extended in an important way. It highlights teachers' dual role as policy implementers and as professionals with their own professional needs for training, resources, and support, thereby identifying gaps that may need to be addressed.

2.1 The Role of Foreign Language Teachers in the Integration of Displaced Students in Contemporary Classrooms

Contemporary foreign language teaching is shaped by global challenges such as multilingualism, cultural competence, digital literacy, and, most notably, large-scale forced migration (Guo et al., 2024; Jiang, 2025; Menegale, 2024; OECD, 2020a; UNESCO, 2025). European schools took in about 700,000 Ukrainian children who had to leave their homes in 2022–2023. This figure represents a 10% rise compared with 2022–2023 (UNICEF, 2024). This rapid growth in students' numbers, combined with the prolonged nature of the refugee crisis, has intensified the pressures on educational systems, schools, and schoolteachers in general, as well as foreign language teachers in particular. Reflecting on the Syrian refugee crisis, UNICEF (2014) warned of the risk of "lost generations" due to an increase in school drop-out rates, reinforcing the poverty trap for future generations.

All these considerations assign foreign language teachers a critical function in facilitating the integration of displaced learners and help them progress academically. Language proficiency is the primary barrier to school and society's inclusion (Dryden-Peterson, 2016). The European Commission: Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (2024) has conducted a survey, which reports that challenges to the inclusion of displaced Ukrainian children still persist in the third school year impacted by the war. Based on the responses of 23 Member States, language barriers were among the most challenging obstacles to accessing the curriculum, participating in classroom interaction, and forming peer relationships. The European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice (2023, p. 5) states that "languages are thus central to our lives and play a fundamental role in education" and beyond. Foreign language teachers are well positioned to support Ukrainian students in overcoming linguistic barriers and encouraging full participation in school and society, given their specific training in language development (García et al., 2024).

Foreign language classrooms are traditionally more multilingual, and FL teachers routinely work with learners with diverse linguistic repertoires and varying proficiency levels. This experience allows them to implement plurilingual and translanguaging practices, which are relevant in refugee-affected classrooms. Plurilingualism is important for promoting cultural tolerance and taking a more inclusive approach to language teaching (OECD, 2023; Sun & Zhu, 2023). Beyond linguistic competence, foreign language education supports intercultural communication and cultural awareness and creates a positive attitude towards linguistic diversity and a language-friendly environment (Council of the European Union, 2019), which is crucial for the social and emotional integration of displaced learners. In the light of these findings, foreign language teachers are not merely instructors of grammar and vocabulary, but they are facilitators of fostering intercultural competencies, encouraging learners to reflect on multiple worldviews, and guiding them in constructing their identities (Byram, 2021; Cummins, 2000; Kramsch, 1993).

Teachers of foreign languages face difficulties that are unique only to their field. Some of them include fluidity of language, diverse content, varied methodologies, the intensity of teacher-learner interactions, and the linguistic and cultural differences between native and non-native speakers (Borg, 2006; European Commission, 2018). Except for delivering the content knowledge, foreign language teachers must respond to linguistic and cultural diversity, which often calls for particular pedagogical approaches (European Commission,

EACEA & Eurydice, 2023). Social concerns, including migration and refugee flows, add complexity, requiring teachers to foster inclusion in heterogeneous classrooms (OECD, 2020b).

Professionalism in language teaching is crucial for effectively supporting diverse and multilingual learners, including displaced students. Institutional standards are important, but FL teachers also need to reflect on their teaching practices, professional values and beliefs and adapt their teaching to fit specific learners' needs and contexts. Research demonstrates that professional development and the knowledge of current pedagogical trends contribute hugely to foreign language teachers' effectiveness and confidence in classrooms with displaced learners (Klimová et al., 2023; Nghi & Hue, 2024; Uyar & Erozan, 2024). In short, combining professional standards with reflective practice is what helps teachers handle the complex challenges of multilingual, crisis-affected classrooms.

These considerations collectively point to a significant gap: while foreign language teachers are instrumental in the linguistic and intercultural integration of refugee students, there is little empirical evidence on how they actually experience this role in educational settings affected by forced displacement, particularly in Central European contexts where sudden large-scale displacement has transformed school populations almost overnight. This study addresses that gap directly.

2.2 Competencies and Challenges in Teaching Displaced Students in Mainstream Classrooms

Teaching displaced learners in mainstream classes presents formidable challenges for teachers (Şeker & Sirkeci, 2015) because many of them have insufficient competences essential to address the academic, linguistic, and psychosocial needs of displaced children (MacNevin, 2012; Naidoo, 2013). For instance, many teachers who worked with Syrian refugee children were native Germans with minimal preparation in language support, identity development, or trauma-informed approaches (Pinson & Arnot, 2007). Although the number of refugee students is increasing globally, there is little research on how teacher preparation programmes equip teachers for this task (Wiseman & Galegher, 2019).

Teachers need special skills to help refugee students successfully integrate into the new educational system and society. First, they must be prepared to teach students with limited proficiency in the language of instruction (Bunar, 2018). Fostering positive communication with students and parents is another important approach to ensure that students feel supported both academically and emotionally (Public Policy and Management Institute [PPMI], 2017). Third, teachers must support cultural diversity in classrooms, create safe and inclusive learning environments, and tailor instruction to students' needs (PPMI, 2017). Classroom observations, case studies, and video analysis of the lessons might help narrow the gap between theory and classroom practice (Forghani-Arani, Cerna, & Bannon, 2019). Research indicates that only a minority of teachers are adequately prepared to manage classrooms with displaced children because teacher training programs do not include enough courses on cross-cultural knowledge, student-centred teaching in diverse classrooms, or using differentiated instructional strategies (April et al., 2018).

There are different demands that teachers face in their classroom with displaced learners. Language barriers are a major challenge in refugee education, especially when the lan-

guage of instruction differs from both the students' and teachers' native languages (OECD, 2015). Although Czechia did not participate in recent European comparative surveys on Ukrainian refugee education, data from 23 other EU Member States mirror challenges documented in the Czech case (European Commission: Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, 2024). EU evidence identifies language barriers, continued online schooling in Ukrainian, student well-being and teacher shortages as key obstacles to integration (European Commission: Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, 2024). These challenges are often intensified by limited materials, overcrowded classrooms, shortages of qualified staff, and teachers' limited experience with displaced learners (Koehler & Schneider, 2019). Where formal programmes are lacking, teachers often rely on experience, moral commitment and creativity to meet students' needs (Lunina & Jurgilė, 2025).

3 Methods

Twenty-five Czech foreign language teachers participated in this study. 15 teachers contributed through individual semi-structured interviews, and ten participated in focus group discussions, each with five participants. Participants were recruited from various regions of Czechia with the highest enrolment of displaced Ukrainian students during the 2024–2025 academic year, including Hlavní město Praha (12,984), Středočeský kraj (7,898), Jihomoravský kraj (4,017), Plzeňský kraj (3,948), and Ústecký kraj (2,966) (Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic, 2025). The study was conducted between October 2024 and March 2025.

3.1 Participants and Recruitment

Purposeful sampling techniques allowed the researcher to gather relevant data from participants, as this strategy improves the representativeness of the pool and involves selecting participants who can meaningfully contribute to the research problem (Creswell & Poth, 2023). To ensure that participants had relevant experiences and expertise, it is essential to define clear inclusion and exclusion criteria (Salmons, 2022, p. 155). Based on these factors, the following inclusion criteria were defined for both the semi-structured interviews and focus groups:

- Lower-secondary teachers of foreign languages (Grades 6–9) working in public schools.
- Participants should be fluent in English, as it was the language of the data collection.
- Participants must teach a classroom with 1–5 displaced Ukrainian children.

The exclusion criteria were teachers who were not working with displaced Ukrainian students or teachers not teaching in public schools. Lower-secondary foreign language teachers were selected because this stage of schooling is crucial for refugee students. At this age, students often need to learn the language of instruction quickly to succeed academically and socially. They may face additional language barriers, not only with the local language (Czech), but they may also face difficulties with foreign languages, such as English, German, or French. The classroom composition, featuring 1–5 refugee students, helped iden-

tify general trends and challenges. As such, these classes represent 44.3% of all classes with refugee students in Czechia. Table 1 summarizes the key demographic and professional characteristics of participating teachers.

Table 1 Demographic and Professional Characteristics of Participating Teachers

Characteristic	Semi-structured interviews (*n* = 15)	Focus groups (*n* = 10)	Total (*N* = 25)
Region			
Hlavní město Praha	5	3	8
Středočeský kraj	3	2	5
Jihomoravský kraj	3	2	5
Plzeňský kraj	2	2	4
Ústecký kraj	2	1	3
Gender			
Female	13	8	21
Male	2	2	4
Age			
22–35	4	3	7
36–45	7	4	11
46+	4	3	7
Years of teaching experience			
0–5	3	2	5
6–10	4	3	7
11–15	4	2	6
16+	4	3	7
Years of experience teaching refugee students			
0–1	3	2	5
2–4	12	8	20
4+	0	0	0
Language taught			
English	9	6	15
German	4	3	7
French	2	1	3
Training/professional development related to teaching refugees			
Yes, formal training	2	1	3
Yes, informal only (workshops, webinars)	6	4	10
No training	7	5	12

Characteristic	Semi-structured interviews (*n* = 15)	Focus groups (*n* = 10)	Total (*N* = 25)
Class size in general			
Small (<15)	0	0	0
Medium (15–25)	3	2	5
Large (25+)	12	8	20
School location			
Urban	12	8	20
Rural	3	2	5
Number of Ukrainian refugee students currently taught (across all classes)			
1–2 students	6	4	10
3–5 students	7	4	11
6+ students	2	2	4
Access to support resources (teaching assistant)			
Yes	2	1	3
No	13	9	22

The researcher invited potential participants via email, using contact information available at the official school websites. The sample consisted of 25 foreign language teachers from five Czech regions. That eight of the twenty-five came from Prague is not coincidental, as the capital has absorbed a disproportionately high share of Ukrainian refugees due to the concentration of employment opportunities and educational infrastructure there, making it the most affected region in the country. Twenty-one of the twenty-five participants were female, which is consistent with the broader gender composition of the Czech teaching profession rather than anything specific to this sample. Perhaps more telling is the pattern of experience: while most participants had substantial general teaching careers behind them, their experience with refugee students was limited to between two and four years – a direct reflection of when Ukrainian arrivals began transforming Czech classrooms after February 2022. Eleven of the twenty-five participants were aged between 36 and 45, representing the core mid-career cohort of the profession. English was the dominant language taught, with fifteen participants teaching it, followed by German (7) and French (3), which mirrors the established hierarchy of foreign language provision in Czech lower-secondary schools. The most significant finding from the sample profile, however, is that only three of the twenty-five participants had received any formal training in teaching refugee students. Yet all twenty-five were teaching refugee students daily. The limited access to teaching assistants compounds this picture. Together, these two facts are not just demographic details; they define the conditions under which the findings of this study were produced.

3.2 Data Collection

The study was conducted in two stages. The first stage involved conducting and analysing semi-structured interviews, while the second explored focus groups. Both stages utilised internet-based technologies, which enabled the recruitment of a larger and more diverse participant pool in terms of demographics and backgrounds and eliminated travel expenses (Gray et al., 2020). Unsurprisingly, online interviews and focus group interviews are becoming more popular in research (Bloomberg, 2023; Flick, 2023). The researcher used the activities recommended by Creswell and Poth (2023, p. 54) "so that the study appears as a cohesive whole rather than as fragmented, isolated parts".

The primary rationale for using semi-structured interviews was "to ascertain the experiences, beliefs, and perceptions of FL teachers because social and educational issues are abstractions based on the concrete experiences of people" (Seidman, 2019, p. 7). The researcher developed guiding questions, which facilitated the discussion and encouraged the participants to share their insights and experiences on the research questions (Hatch, 2023, p. 107). Semi-structured individual interviews were conducted online via MS Teams and lasted approximately 45–60 minutes.

Whereas methodological research describes focus groups as preliminary tools for developing interview protocols (Barbour, 2018; Flick, 2023; Morgan, 1988), educational research employs them more flexibly, extending their use beyond this primary function (Hatch, 2023). In this study, focus groups were used after individual interviews as a collective meaning-making space to (a) examine how teachers collectively interpret shared institutional challenges (RQ1, RQ3) and (b) validate and deepen themes that emerged from individual accounts. The decision about when and how to use the focus groups was based on the study's goals, the setting and research questions (Stewart & Shamdasani, 2014). Since RQ1 and RQ3 focus on the difficulties FL teachers face and the support they need within shared institutional settings, relying solely on individual interviews would have limited the study to personal accounts. Individual interviews provided rich personal accounts, but they could not reveal how FL teachers make sense of these challenges together or where individual experiences reflect collective patterns. Unlike individual interviews, where participants report their experiences to the researcher, focus groups create space for participants to respond to each other, push back, and sometimes change their minds mid-discussion. That negotiation itself becomes data, and this process is widely considered one of the key strengths of the method (Flick, 2023; Morgan, 1997). Individual interviews were therefore conducted first, followed by focus groups to deepen and verify the initial findings (Hatch, 2023; Salmons, 2022). This study is exploratory and explanatory in its orientation, which, according to Vaughn et al. (1996), is precisely the kind of research for which focus groups are most appropriate, particularly when the topic, as here, remains relatively under-researched.

When selecting participants for the focus groups, the researcher paid special attention to whether they "shared social or cultural experiences or concerns related to the study's focus" (Bloomberg, 2023, p. 284). This approach helped create a comfortable atmosphere for group discussion by understanding which categories of participants typically feel at ease interacting together. Moreover, in homogeneous groups, members are comparable in the essential dimensions related to the research questions (Flick, 2023). A group size of five

participants was considered sufficient, as this number allows individuals more room to expand on a topic (Bloomberg, 2023; Tashakkori et al., 2021). Focus groups were conducted online via MS Teams and lasted approximately 60–90 minutes. The researcher moderated the online focus groups herself. The researcher devised guiding questions to deliver focus group interviews in the form of a focus group protocol because it is "a way to keep track of the progress of the discussion and steer them in desirable directions" (Hatch, 2023, p. 156). The group setting also had practical significance, as several participants emphasised that discussing these experiences with colleagues felt less revealing than speaking with the researcher individually, which likely made the discussions more open and honest. All the semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions were audio recorded and transcribed using MS Teams software.

3.3 Data Analysis

To examine the data, the researcher used thematic analysis, guided by Creswell & Poth's (2023) "Data Analysis Spiral". The process began with managing and organising the data, which involved creating the files, ensuring their secure storage, and deciding on an analysis approach. The researcher then carefully read through the transcripts, making notes, memoing emerging ideas, and creating initial codes. This stage provided useful details about the data and helped identify significant patterns. The codes were gradually refined and grouped into meaningful themes. In the next step, patterns across the data were interpreted, and the statements were grouped into broader meaning units and interpreted in the context to understand participants' experiences fully. Finally, the findings were presented through a textual description and illustrative examples, capturing both what happened and how the participants experienced the phenomenon.

When the researcher analysed the focus groups, she relied on the comparative approach proposed by Flick (2023). The comparison went into two directions: content and process. The content comparison relates to specific ideas and themes that emerged during the group discussion. The process content refers to the group dynamics and whether the views of individual participants evolved during the discussion. First, the researcher analysed a single group, then focused on comparisons between groups. While analysing a single group, the researcher considered the following questions: how do the statements of participants differ, and what do they have in common? How do these discussions develop and change over time? When focusing on group comparison, the following questions arise: How do the groups differ in the contents and in the processes of discussing? What is the variety of speaking about an issue across all groups?

3.4 Ethical Considerations

Ethical concerns are critical in social research because human subjects are involved (Bryman, 2012; Creswell and Poth, 2023). The researcher respected participants' privacy and consent. When collecting data online, the researcher recognised that internet research can only be beneficial and successful if all ethical considerations are made and an ethical framework is followed (Flick, 2023). According to Flick (2023), participants ought to be

informed about the types of personal data that are stored and retained, granted access to them, and made aware of whether the researcher is recording them.

4 Findings

The thematic analysis of fifteen individual interviews and two focus groups identified twenty-three subthemes, which were then consolidated into seven core themes. Theme 1 encompasses two analytically distinct dimensions: classroom language barriers and family communication barriers, which, while interconnected, operate at different levels of the educational system and are therefore discussed separately below. The first five themes reflect the challenges that teachers encountered, whereas the remaining two highlight the pedagogical responses and support needs that arose from those challenges. These tensions constrain teachers' capacity to effectively teach classrooms with Ukrainian refugee students. The themes are as follows: 1) language barriers and communication challenges, comprising two dimensions: 1a) classroom language barriers and 1b) family communication barriers; 2) managing trauma and emotional needs in the classroom; 3) navigating cultural biases in teaching refugee students; 4) limited peer and professional network support; 5) inconsistent institutional support across regions; 6) adapting pedagogical approaches; 7) teachers' support needs

4.1 Language Barriers and Communication Challenges

Theme 1 captures the most pervasive challenge participants described: operating across multiple languages simultaneously, both inside the classroom and beyond it. It comprises two dimensions that, while related, manifest at different levels of the educational system.

Theme 1a: Classroom Language Barriers (Micro-level)
No teacher is fully prepared for the challenge of teaching a foreign language to students who are still learning Czech. Unlike content-area teachers, who can simplify Czech to convey meaning, foreign language teachers must conduct lessons in a third language, English, German, or French, for students who are simultaneously acquiring Czech. When students are not fluent in the instruction language, it is challenging for all: teachers, displaced students and local students. This creates what could be termed a "triple language challenge" that does not merely complicate instruction but exposes the gap between refugee integration policy and classroom reality. FL teachers reported that they needed to balance content delivery, language support, and emotional safety, even though only a few had developed these skills in their previous work with homogeneous classrooms. They also faced practical issues, such as a lack of multilingual materials and little time for individual student support (Česká školní inspekce, 2023). This complexity was evident in teachers' accounts: "I'm trying to teach English, but they barely understand the basics of Czech. It's like a double barrier."

This is not just a practical problem; it shows that foreign language classrooms are where the lack of support for refugee students becomes most apparent. Integrating refugee stu-

dents directly into classrooms without preparatory Czech language classes seems to be falling short.

Theme 1b: Family Communication Barriers (Meso-level)
This second dimension of Theme 1 extends beyond the classroom and operates at a different level of the educational system. Teachers highlighted serious difficulties in communicating with parents about student progress: "I know the parents care about their children, but the language barrier makes it almost impossible to have meaningful conversations about their child's progress or struggles."

Many teachers described the inability to establish "trustful relationships" with families. Importantly, this barrier reflects systemic gaps in supporting refugee integration, rather than any lack of effort by teachers. After more than four years of the crisis, the fact that schools still have no consistent solutions in place suggests that no one has taken responsibility for addressing language barriers at a broader level.

This communication breakdown is a meso-level failure. Schools have not provided translation services, multilingual communication platforms, or trained interpreters. At the macro-level, policy responses have prioritised financial support for enrolment over the communicative infrastructure needed for genuine family engagement, revealing a fundamental misalignment between what integration requires and what has been provided.

4.2 Managing Trauma and Emotional Needs in the Classroom

Interviews demonstrated that, although teachers could recognise trauma-related distress among refugee students, they frequently felt unprepared to intervene effectively: "More training in trauma-informed teaching would be helpful. I've had to learn a lot on my own, but I still feel limited in what I can do without proper support."

The data revealed an important issue: teachers were aware of their students' emotional needs, but they felt ill-prepared to support them. Beyond simply feeling undertrained, some teachers expressed fear of causing harm: "We were never trained to work with children who escaped from war. We are afraid of doing the wrong thing."

The absence of trauma-informed training leaves teachers unsure about how to interpret behaviour. Did a student's disruptive behaviour represent a trauma response that required compassion, or was it an adolescent testing a boundary that required firm limits? Teachers described the difficulty of finding the right balance, as excessive leniency could create disorder in the classroom, while strict discipline could intensify students' trauma: "I feel like I'm walking a tightrope. If I am too strict, I risk triggering them. If I go too easy, the classroom loses control, and nobody learns."

Teachers in the focus group shared how uncertain they often felt. They hesitated about how to respond to students' personal stories and whether certain activities, like writing about their experiences, could hurt them. These doubts demonstrated the weight of responsibilities teachers felt with minimal preparation to meet them.

This tension became more intense when emotional support and academic instruction came into direct conflict. Teachers recognised that traumatised students required different approaches, yet they faced pressure to maintain curriculum pacing and academic standards for all students. This scenario created what participants described as an impossible choice:

slow down to provide emotional support and risk falling behind academically, or maintain instructional pace and watch refugee students disengage: "I often ask myself, should I push the lesson forward, or should I stop and just listen to the student? There is pressure to cover the curriculum, but sometimes emotional support is more important than grammar."

This theme points to a gap at the macro-level. While the Czech government responded rapidly to provide enrolment access for Ukrainian students (a macro-level policy success), it did not simultaneously mandate or fund trauma-informed training for teachers. At the meso-level, schools lacked partnerships with mental health professionals who could support both students and teachers. Teachers had to handle complex psychological situations without professional guidance, a factor that greatly contributed to their emotional burnout.

4.3 Navigating Cultural Biases in Teaching Refugee Students

One of the most complex themes that emerged from the data involved teachers' awareness of prejudice and bias towards refugee students, both in their colleagues and, for some, within themselves. Several participants noted that some colleagues held cultural stereotypes about refugee students, assuming they were "behind" academically or "difficult to teach". More concerning were reports of teachers who expressed beliefs that "Ukrainian students just won't ever fit in with Czech culture" and viewed them as "a burden".

However, it is encouraging that there are teachers who are aware of their biases and work actively to address them: "I had to reflect on how I view Ukrainian students and tried to become more open-minded. I think that's something every teacher needs to do: question their assumptions and challenge them."

Those who had reached this level of self-awareness translated it into practice by noticing refugee students' strengths, integrating diverse perspectives into lessons, and, in some cases, seeking out knowledge of Ukrainian culture and history: "Reading about Ukrainian history and culture helped me better understand my students and create a classroom environment which was both supportive and respectful."

Despite these individual efforts, participants expressed a clear need for institutional support in addressing prejudice. In reality, meaningful integration requires deeper changes in both institutional culture and individual mindsets.

4.4 Limited Peer and Professional Network Support

Many teachers described feeling professionally isolated, lacking professional networks for sharing strategies when teaching refugee students: "At times I feel like I'm on my own when it comes to figuring out how to support these students."

This professional isolation was particularly acute for teachers in schools with few refugee students or in regions with less developed support infrastructure. The absence of peer support networks meant that teachers could not learn from colleagues' successes and failures. Teachers who experimented and developed effective strategies did not share them with their peers, which hindered the refinement and spread of these approaches across schools.

A few teachers said they really wanted organised professional networks. They needed regular meetups with other foreign language teachers working with refugee students, forums for sharing lesson plans and strategies, and opportunities to learn from colleagues

facing similar challenges: "I'd love to talk to other English teachers about what's working and what's not."

Some teachers built informal support networks that helped them cope emotionally, but these could not substitute for professional expertise or structured collaboration. Not all teachers had access to supportive colleagues; some worked in competitive or unsupportive school cultures, and others were the only foreign language teacher in their building. Even the most supportive peer relationships could not provide professional expertise, reduce workloads, or address systemic deficits: "My colleagues are wonderful. But friendship doesn't teach me how to handle trauma. It doesn't reduce my class size. It helps me cope, but it doesn't fix the actual problems."

This lack of horizontal knowledge-sharing compounded the impact of limited formal training: teachers were neither prepared through pre-service education nor supported through ongoing professional communities of practice.

This theme highlights a meso-level failure: schools did not establish or facilitate peer learning structures, such as regular collaboration times for teachers working with refugee students, cross-school networks for sharing pedagogical approaches, or mentorship programmes that paired experienced teachers with those who were new to multilingual classrooms. At the macro-level, policy frameworks failed to recognise professional learning communities as essential infrastructure for crisis-context education.

4.5 Inconsistent Institutional Support Across Regions

The support available to teachers varied dramatically, creating significant inequities in teaching conditions across regions and schools. In some regions, teachers reported access to teaching assistants, specialised training opportunities, and active leadership support for addressing refugees' integration challenges: "Our principal brought in specialists, organised monthly meetings for teachers working with Ukrainian students, and made sure we had translation support. I know teachers in other districts who have none of that."

In contrast, others described minimal resources, absent support staff, and little administrative attention to the specific demands of teaching refugee students. Teachers in less-resourced areas explicitly noted this geographic disparity: "In Prague, there seem to be more resources available. Out here in the countryside, we're just expected to figure it out ourselves."

Training opportunities further exemplified this inconsistency. Opportunities for training teachers working with refugee students were limited: twelve of twenty-five participants reported receiving no training related to refugee education, three accessed formal training programmes and the remaining ten participated solely in informal workshops or webinars.

These disparities point to failures at every level of the education system. At the macro-level, national policies allocated funding but failed to set the standards for how schools should support teachers or distribute resources. At the meso-level, schools were left to figure things out on their own, resulting in highly uneven outcomes. Some principals actively sought training opportunities and allocated resources; others treated refugee enrolment as a temporary phenomenon requiring minimal adaptation. At the micro-level, a teacher's ability to effectively support refugee students depended less on their skills or

preparation than on chance – whether they happened to be in a school with a committed principal and adequate resources or one where they were left to manage alone.

4.6 Adapting Pedagogical Approaches

Despite uneven support, teachers demonstrated impressive creativity in adapting their instruction for multilingual, trauma-affected classrooms. These adaptations took many forms, from varied instruction methods and creative pedagogies to culturally responsive teaching.

Teachers allowed students to demonstrate understanding in different ways, such as speaking, writing, and drawing. It proved more effective than relying simply on traditional tests. They created tiered assignments with varying difficulty and used flexible grouping strategies: "I've started using peer tutoring a lot more. Sometimes I pair up Czech students with Ukrainian ones. The Ukrainian students can learn some English in a more relaxed environment."

Beyond differentiation, teachers employed creative approaches including games, songs, inquiry-based learning, flipped classroom models, gamification, art-based learning, and outdoor instruction. Teachers scaffolded language through simplified speech, contextual learning strategies, and judicious use of translation tools. Culturally responsive practices involved acknowledging cultural diversity when students presented their cultures and incorporating stories and customs from their countries of origin. Prioritising basic communication skills over grammatical perfection created a more relaxing setting: "I let them share about Ukrainian holidays and traditional foods. It helped Czech students understand their classmates better. And honestly, communication matters beyond perfect grammar at this stage."

Importantly, teachers also recognised the importance of emotional and psychological support. They created safe classroom environments and collaborated with school psychologists and built in flexibility. Students could take breaks when they felt tired or overwhelmed.

Teachers' ability to develop these strategies demonstrates their professional competence and commitment. However, it is troubling that these approaches emerged through individual trial-and-error rather than structured training. Access to established best practices would save teachers' time, reduce stress and prevent the unnecessary reinvention of strategies.

4.7 Teachers' Support Needs

When teachers were asked about the kind of institutional support, they identified the needs that corresponded directly to the challenges they faced in their classrooms. These needs can be mapped across the three levels of Cerna's (2019) framework, as each type of support requires action at a different level of the system.

At the micro-level, FL teachers emphasised the need for permanent access to teaching assistants or additional support staff. They noted that even part-time assistance would significantly reduce classroom management pressures and allow more individualised attention to refugee students: "If we had teaching assistants to help with the refugee students, it

would take some of the pressure off. It's difficult to manage a class of mixed needs without extra hands."

At the meso-level, FL teachers called for high-quality, practical, trauma-informed training delivered by experts who could offer concrete classroom applications rather than purely theoretical knowledge. They prioritised training that would be conducted by a practitioner who had some experience teaching refugee students. Teachers also emphasised that theoretical workshops without practical strategies had limited value in their day-to-day work. Schools were also expected to establish professional learning communities and mental health support structures for FL teachers – resources that cannot be left to individual initiative.

At the macro-level, some teachers suggested that compensation should reflect the additional demands of teaching crisis-affected classrooms. This recommendation recognises that teaching refugee students requires sustained extra effort in lesson planning, differentiation, emotional support, and family communication. This work often extends beyond formal teaching hours. National policy frameworks need to mandate and fund these structures systematically, rather than leaving schools to respond as best they can with whatever resources happen to be available.

Table 2 shows the alignment between the research questions, themes, and Cerna's integrations levels while also presenting the key findings.

Table 2 Summary of Findings Themes Organised by Research Questions and Integration Level

Integration Level	Themes	Key Findings
RQ1: What specific difficulties do Czech foreign language teachers face in crisis-affected classrooms?		
Macro-level (Policy)	**2** Managing trauma and emotional needs in the classroom **3** Navigating cultural biases in teaching refugee students **5** Inconsistent institutional support across regions	No mandate for trauma-informed training; no requirements for bias-awareness or intercultural competence training; funding provided but no standards for equitable resource distribution.
Meso-level (Institutional)	**1b** Family communication barriers **4** Limited peer and professional network support **5** Inconsistent institutional support across regions	No translation services or multilingual platforms at school level; absence of peer support structures and collaboration time; variable leadership commitment; lack of teaching assistants; twelve of twenty-five participants received no refugee-related training.
Micro-level (Classroom)	**1a** Classroom language barriers **2** Managing trauma and emotional needs in the classroom	Triple language challenge (Czech, English/German/French, Ukrainian); need to balance content delivery, language support, and emotional safety simultaneously; recognising trauma symptoms without tools to respond; tension between emotional support and academic instruction.

Integration Level	Themes	Key Findings
RQ2: What pedagogical approaches do Czech foreign language teachers develop to meet the needs of refugee students?		
Primarily Micro-level (with meso/macro implications)	**6** Adapting pedagogical approaches	Teachers independently developed sophisticated strategies: differentiation (tiered assignments, flexible grouping, multiple demonstration modes); creative pedagogies (games, inquiry-based learning, gamification); collaborative approaches (peer tutoring, language buddies); language scaffolding; culturally responsive practices; emotional support strategies. Strategies emerged through individual trial-and-error rather than structured training – reflecting both teacher competence and systemic failure.
RQ3: What forms of institutional support do Czech foreign language teachers identify as necessary for effective teaching in crisis?		
Macro-level (Policy)	**7** Teachers' support needs	National policy must mandate and fund trauma-informed training; salary adjustments to recognise the additional demands of crisis-context teaching; national frameworks to ensure equitable support distribution across regions.
Meso-level (Institutional)	**7** Teachers' support needs	Schools to establish professional learning communities and structured peer collaboration; mental health support partnerships for teachers; systematic deployment of teaching assistants in classrooms with refugee students.
Micro-level (Classroom)	**7** Teachers' support needs	Teachers need coaching and just-in-time support rather than purely theoretical workshops; structured peer collaboration built into school schedules rather than reliant on voluntary participation.

Note. Themes 1a and 1b represent two analytically distinct sub-themes within Theme 1 (language barriers and communication challenges), separated here by their primary ecological level.

5 Discussion

The study explored how Czech foreign language teachers have experienced the rapid integration of Ukrainian refugee students into mainstream classrooms and what these experiences indicate regarding the gaps in policy, institutional design and professional support that are not adequately addressed in the existing literature. Three contributions emerge from this inquiry.

A central finding concerns the distinctive position of FL teachers within refugee education. Unlike teachers of other subjects, who may rely on simplified Czech to facilitate communication, foreign language teachers must teach through an additional target language, such as English, German, or French, to students who are simultaneously acquiring Czech while maintaining Ukrainian as their first language. Operating across three linguistic systems creates what this study conceptualises as "a triple language challenge", an aspect that has received limited attention in the refugee education literature and that distinguishes the experiences reported here from the broader teacher unpreparedness documented in post-2015 European refugee contexts (Hauge et al., 2024; Koehler & Schneider, 2019; Pinson & Arnot, 2007).

A second important finding relates to professional isolation. While feelings of unpreparedness among teachers in small or rural schools were anticipated, participants described similar experiences in larger urban schools where multiple FL teachers worked within the same institution. In many cases, strategies developed through four years of working with refugee students remained individual practices rather than becoming shared professional knowledge, with teachers often working in parallel rather than in collaboration. Although professional isolation has been documented in teacher education and school improvement research, it has received comparatively limited attention within refugee education scholarship and has focused primarily on teacher-student dynamics and integration outcomes. Nevertheless, a similar pattern can be identified in Weinstein et al.'s (2007) work on post-conflict teachers, where professional loneliness intensified the emotional demands of working in crisis-affected settings. The present finding suggests that such isolation may also be an important feature of refugee-related teaching contexts and may hinder the development of collective professional knowledge within schools.

A third finding focuses on the applicability of Cerna's (2019) holistic framework for refugee integration. Participants' experiences reflected challenges across all ecological levels. At the macro level, policies facilitated enrolment but did not consistently ensure access to specialised training or equitable resources. At the meso level, schools differed widely in their provision of translation support, teaching assistants, and opportunities for professional collaboration. At the micro level, teachers had to navigate multilingual classrooms, respond to students' social-emotional needs, and adapt their pedagogical practices, often with limited preparation. These findings support ecological perspectives on refugee education (Sarid & Binhas, 2023). The present study suggests that foreign language teachers should be understood not only as implementers of integration policies and practices but also as participants within the ecological system whose own professional conditions shape integration outcomes. Teacher well-being, preparedness, and access to support appear to function as mediating conditions between policy intentions and classroom experiences, indicating that teacher support is a necessary condition for the delivery of the holistic classroom support envisaged by Cerna's framework.

The main findings of the study are in line with those documented in other European contexts, emphasising the value of cross-national consistency. The sense of unpreparedness running through almost all participants' accounts is consistent with studies from the United Kingdom (Pinson & Arnot, 2007), Germany (Koehler & Schneider, 2019), and Norway (Hauge et al., 2024). Also in Greece, Stathopoulou and Dassi (2020) found that 57.8% of Greek FL teachers had attended no training on teaching refugee students; the present study

reports a comparable picture, with only three of twenty-five participants having received any formal preparation. That this pattern holds across refugee-receiving contexts as different as Greece, Germany, and Czechia suggests that this issue is structural rather than specific to one country or crisis. What that structural quality points to, more precisely, is a long-standing gap in how initial teacher education across Europe has treated linguistic and cultural diversity: not as a core professional competency but as a specialised concern for particular contexts, to be addressed if and when those contexts arise. The recurrence of the same unpreparedness across such different national settings suggests that this curricular assumption has not been seriously revisited, even as refugee arrivals have become a more or less permanent feature of European educational life.

The regional inconsistency participants described, where working conditions depended less on national policy than on the extent to which a principal happened to be proactive, reflects what Koehler and Schneider (2019) found in Germany, where school-level leadership was the most significant variable in determining teacher support quality. Arar's (2020) framework of culturally responsive leadership provides a useful lens: the Prague teacher who described readily available teaching assistants and translation support, while noting that colleagues in other districts had none of these resources, was describing exactly the leadership differential that framework would predict. What the Czech case adds is that this disparity persisted for years, with limited evidence of systematic national efforts to reduce it. It suggests that the role of school leadership in determining refugee education outcomes may be particularly pronounced in systems where macro-level policy frameworks are permissive rather than prescriptive.

Within these uneven institutional conditions, some teachers nevertheless developed highly adaptive classroom practices. Those who used peer tutoring, incorporated Ukrainian cultural content, and prioritised communication over grammatical accuracy were, in practice, enacting culturally responsive pedagogy as described by Gay (2010) and Ladson-Billings (1995), even without using that terminology. That these practices emerged from improvisation rather than preparation speaks as much to systemic failure as to individual resourcefulness. The persistence of bias in the fourth year of the crisis was unexpected. Some participants still viewed Ukrainian students as temporary or unlikely to integrate successfully – a stance that may affect classroom interactions regardless of intent. This is consistent with what Gay (2010) identifies as the gap between cultural awareness and cultural responsiveness: without structured reflection and dedicated training, awareness tends to remain exactly that and may coexist with deficit assumptions about the students it is intended to support.

A notable absence concerns institutional responses that the refugee education literature identifies as effective. Comparable contexts, including Germany and Poland, document schools deploying Ukrainian-speaking teachers, cultural assistants and bilingual staff (Ćwirynkało et al., 2024; Demeshkant & Kozak, 2025; Nazaruk et al., 2024). Czech schools did this less consistently, and participants continued to identify these resources as unmet needs four years into the crisis. This raises the question of why responses developed elsewhere remained uneven in the Czech case despite the passage of several years.

Taken together, the findings contribute a carefully documented Central European case to a growing body of evidence suggesting that the educational integration of refugee students is shaped by systemic conditions as much as by individual teacher efforts. In addition

to documenting challenges that mirror those found in other European contexts, the study offers three specific contributions: the conceptualisation of a triple language challenge in foreign language classrooms, the identification of professional isolation as a persistent feature of refugee-related teaching even within larger schools, and the proposition that teacher support occupies a central role within ecological models of refugee integration.

Four years after the arrival of large numbers of Ukrainian refugees, many participants described a transition from emergency response to a more permanent educational reality. Yet support structures often remain characterised by short-term adaptations rather than long-term institutional planning. The findings indicate that system-wide capacity building is now more crucial than crisis management. Initial teacher education programmes may benefit from incorporating preparations for linguistically and culturally diverse classrooms as a core component rather than a specialised option. Participants' experiences also point to the potential value of trauma-informed professional development, structured opportunities for peer collaboration, and greater access to teaching assistants and language-support personnel. Finally, the findings suggest the importance of reducing regional disparities in support provision so that educational opportunities for refugee students and working conditions for teachers are less dependent on local circumstances. Collectively, these measures may strengthen schools' ability to respond effectively to future refugee arrivals while supporting both teacher well-being and student integration.

5.1 Study Limitations

The study has several limitations. Its sample of fifteen interviews and two focus groups is not sufficient for generalisation to all FL teachers working with displaced children in Czechia. The focus on high-concentration regions provides valuable insight but limits applicability to other contexts. Online data collection may have affected focus group interaction, and the reliance on self-reported data may reflect teachers' stress, burnout or exhaustion. Because the study focuses only on FL teachers, it offers a partial view of educational challenges in crisis settings. Comparative research across other educational systems would provide further insight.

ORCID
Natalia Dombinskaya https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7125-8696

References

Agirdag, O., Van Houtte, M., & Van Avermaet, P. (2012). Ethnic school segregation and self-esteem: The role of teacher–pupil relationships. *Urban Education*, *47*(6), 1135–1159. https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085912452154

Aguirresarobe, A. H. (2022). Is national identity in crisis? An assessment of national imaginations in the early 2020s. *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism*, *22*(1), 14–27. https://doi.org/10.1111/sena.12359

April, D., D'Addio, A. C., Kubacka, K., & Smith, W. C. (2018). *Issues of cultural diversity, migration, and displacement in teacher education programmes. Background paper prepared for the 2019 Global Education Monitoring Report: Migration, displacement and education: Building bridges, not walls.* UNESCO. https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000266076

Arar, K. (2020). *School leadership for refugees' education: Social justice leadership for immigrant, migrants and refugees* (1st ed.). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429021770

Arnot, M., & Pinson, H. (2005). *The education of asylum-seeker and refugee children: A study of LEA and school values, policies and practices.* University of Cambridge, Faculty of Education. https://www.academia.edu/104173722/A_Study_of_LEA_and_School_Values_Policies_and_Practices

Bačáková, M. (2011). Developing inclusive educational practices for refugee children in the Czech Republic. *Intercultural Education*, *22*(2), 163–165. https://doi.org/10.1080/14675986.2011.567073

Barbour, R. (2018). *Doing focus groups* (2nd ed.). SAGE Publications. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781526441836

Bloomberg, L. D. (2023). *Completing your qualitative dissertation: A road map from beginning to end*. Sage Publications.

Borg, S. (2006). The distinctive characteristics of foreign language teachers. *Language Teaching Research*, *10*(1), 3–31. https://doi.org/10.1191/1362168806lr182

Brunzell, T., Stokes, H., & Waters, L. (2016). Trauma-informed positive education: Using positive psychology to strengthen vulnerable students. *Contemporary School Psychology*, *20*, 63–83. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40688-015-0070-x

Bryman, A. (2012). *Social research methods* (4th ed.). Oxford University Press.

Bunar, N. (Ed.). (2018). *Education: Hope for newcomers in Europe*. Education International. https://download.ei-ie.org/Docs/WebDepot/2018_Education_Hope_EN.pdf

Byram, M. (2021). *Teaching and assessing intercultural communicative competence: Revisited* (2nd ed.). Multilingual Matters. https://doi.org/10.2307/jj.22730614

Cerna, L. (2019). *Refugee education: Integration models and practices in OECD countries* (OECD Education Working Papers No. 203). OECD Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1787/a3251a00-en

Crosby, S. D., Howell, P., & Thomas, M. S. (2018). Social justice education through trauma-informed teaching. *Middle School Journal, 49*(4), 15–23. https://doi.org/10.1080/00940771.2018.1488470

Council of the European Union. (2019). Council recommendation of 22 May 2019 on a comprehensive approach to the teaching and learning of languages. *Official Journal of the European Union, C189*, 15–22. https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32019H0605%2801%29

Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2023). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches* (5th ed.). SAGE Publications.

Cummins, J. (2000). *Language, power and pedagogy: Bilingual children in the crossfire*. Multilingual Matters. https://doi.org/10.2307/jj.27195459

Česká školní inspekce. (2023). *Integrace a vzdělávání dětí a žáků s nedostatečnou znalostí vyučovacího jazyka se specifickým zřetelem k integraci a vzdělávání dětí a žáků z Ukrajiny: Tematická zpráva* [Integration and education of children with insufficient knowledge of the language of instruction, with particular regard to children from Ukraine: Thematic report]. https://www.csicr.cz/cz/Dokumenty/Tematicke-zpravy/Tematicka-zprava-%E2%80%93-Integrace-a-vzdelavani-deti-a-z

Ćwirynkało, K., Parchomiuk, M., Bartnikowska, U., Antoszewska, B., & Barzykowski, K. (2024). Assessing Polish teachers' competencies in working with Ukrainian refugee students: A comparative study across different contexts. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, *101*, 102005. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2024.102005

Demeshkant, N., & Kozak, V. (2025). Adaptation of refugee children in Polish schools: Teacher-parent collaboration as a strategy for overcoming challenges. *Multidisciplinary Journal of School Education*, *14*(1), 198–219. https://doi.org/10.35765/mjse.2025.1427.09

Dogutas, A. (2024). Exploring the educational frontier: teachers' perceptions of refugees in Turkey. *Intercultural Education*, *35*(4), 362–384. https://doi.org/10.1080/14675986.2024.2380978

Dryden-Peterson, S. (2016). Refugee education: The crossroads of globalization. *Educational Researcher*, *45*(9), 473–482. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X16683398

European Commission, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, & Public Policy and Management Institute (PPMI). (2017). *Preparing teachers for diversity: The role of initial teacher education: Final report*. Publications Office of the European Union. https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2766/637002

European Commission. (2018). *Boosting teacher quality: pathways to effective policies.* Publications Office of the European Union. https://doi.org/10.2766/069297

European Commission/EACEA/ Eurydice. (2019). *Integrating students from migrant backgrounds into schools in Europe: National policies and measures.* Publications Office of the European Union. https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2797/819077

European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice. (2023*). Key data on teaching languages at school in Europe – 2023 edition* (Eurydice report). Publications Office of the European Union. https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2797/881892

European Commission: Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture. (2024). *The inclusion of displaced children from Ukraine in EU education systems: 2023–2024.* Publications Office of the European Union. https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2766/881892

Finnish National Agency for Education. (2022). *National core curriculum for early childhood education and care 2022*. https://www.oph.fi/sites/default/files/documents/National%20core%20curriculum%20for%20ECEC%202022.pdf

Flick, U. (2023*). An introduction to qualitative research* (7th ed.). Sage publications.

Forghani-Arani, N., Cerna, L., & Bannon, M. (2019). *The lives of teachers in diverse classrooms* (OECD Education Working Papers No. 198). OECD Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1787/8c26fee5-en

Frazier, T., Rosenstein, S., Elkoin, O., Marushchenko, O., Rudzynska, N., & Drozhzhina, T. (2025). Voices of teachers: A qualitative analysis of the feasibility and qualitative perceptions of impact of SEE Learning on the well-being of Ukrainian classrooms before and during war. *Conflict and Health*, *19*, 47. https://doi.org/10.1186/s13031-025-00688-8

Gagné, A., Schmidt, C., & Markus, P. (2017). Teaching about refugees: developing culturally responsive educators in contexts of politicised transnationalism. *Intercultural Education*, *28*(5), 429–446. https://doi.org/10.1080/14675986.2017.1336409

García, M. U., Apaolaza-Llorente, D., Saez, I. A., & Mondragón, N. I. (2024). Educational inclusion for migrants and refugees through language learning: difficulties, challenges and ways forward. *Brazilian Journal of Development, 10*(1), 1646–1659. https://doi.org/10.34117/bjdv10n1-105

Gay, G. (2010). *Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research, and practice* (2nd ed.). Teachers College Press.

Glock, S., Krolak-Schwerdt, S., Klapproth, F., & Böhmer, M. (2013). Beyond judgment bias: How students' ethnicity and academic profile consistency influence teachers' tracking judgments. *Social Psychology of Education, 16*(4), 555–573. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11218-013-9227-5

Gray, L. M., Wong-Wylie, G., Rempel, G. R., & Cook, K. (2020). Expanding qualitative research interviewing strategies: Zoom video communications. *The Qualitative Report, 25*(5), 1292–1301. https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2020.4212

Guo, Q., Yang, B., Xiao, L., & Xie, C. (2024). Foreign language learning and the development of global competence in different cultures. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, *101*, 102013. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2024.102013

Hatch, J. A. (2023*). Doing qualitative research in educational settings* (2nd ed.). State University of New York Press.

Hauge, H. A., Eide, K., & Kjelaas, I. (2024). Biding time with close strangers: Teachers' sensemaking of newly arrived refugee youths' educational aspirations in the Norwegian context. *Cogent Education*, *11*(1), 2398683. https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2024.2398683

Hlado, P., Lojdová, K., Obrovská, J., Šeďová, K., Lintner, T., Fico, M., & Stupak, O. (2024). "The schools try, but…": A holistic perspective on the social adaptation of Ukrainian refugee students in Czech schools. *Learning, Culture and Social Interaction*, *48*, 100854. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lcsi.2024.100854

Jiang, B. (2025). Enhancing digital literacy in foreign language teaching in Chinese universities: Insights from a systematic review. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *154,* 104845. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2024.104845

Klimová, B., Pikhart, M., Fronckova, K., Sanchez-Stockhammer, C., Stukalina, Y., Iruskieta, M., Okumuş Dağdeler, K., Lejot, E., Parmaxi, A., Bartolomé Rodríguez, R., & Pareja-Lora, A. (2023). Analysis of foreign language teachers' attitudes towards digital teaching in the European Union countries. *Sustainable Multilingualism*, *17*(1), 1–16. https://doi.org/10.2478/sm-2023-0018

Koehler, C., & Schneider, J. (2019). Young refugees in education: the particular challenges of school systems in Europe. *Comparative Migration Studies*, *7*, 28 https://doi.org/10.1186/s40878-019-0129-3

Kramsch, C. (1993*). Context and culture in language teaching*. Oxford University Press.

Ladson-Billings, G. (1995). Toward a theory of culturally relevant pedagogy. *American Educational Research Journal*, *32*(3), 465–491. https://doi.org/10.2307/1163320

Lintner, T., Diviák, T., Šeďová, K., & Hlado, P. (2023). Ukrainian refugees struggling to integrate into Czech school social networks. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, *10*, 409. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-023-01880-y

Lintner, T., Diviák, T., Šeďová, K., & Obrovská, J. (2025). Revisiting Ukrainian refugees struggling to integrate into Czech school social networks. *Social Psychology of Education*, *28*, 174. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11218-025-10134-5

Lunina, S., & Jurgilė, V. (2025). Loneliness, lack of support, and educational challenges: teachers' experiences working with refugee children. *Frontiers in Education*, *9*, 1473612. https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2024.1473612

MacNevin, J. (2012). Learning the way: Teaching and learning with and for youth from refugee backgrounds on Prince Edward Island. *Canadian Journal of Education*, *35*(3), 48–63. https://cje-rce.ca/index.php/cje-rce/article/view/1074

Menegale, M. (2024). Global challenges in language education: Rethinking curricula for foreign language classrooms in the digital era. *EL.LE*, *13*(3), 235–260. https://doi.org/10.30687/ELLE/2280-6792/2024/03/001

Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic. (2025). *Základní informace k ukrajinské problematice v regionálním školství: Rychlý výběr z dat jarních výkazů k 31. 3. 2025* [Basic information on the Ukrainian issue in regional education: Quick selection from spring report data as of March 31, 2025]. https://edu.gov.cz/zakladni-informace-k-ukrajinske-problematice-v-regionalnim-skolstvi

Morgan, D. L. (1988). *Focus groups as qualitative research*. Sage Publications.

Morgan, D. L. (1997). *Focus groups as qualitative research* (2nd ed.). SAGE Publications. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781412984287

Naidoo, L. (2013). Refugee action support: An interventionist pedagogy for supporting refugee students' learning in greater Western Sydney secondary schools. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 17(5), 449–461. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2012.683048

Nazaruk, S., Ruszkowska, M., Budnyk, O., Dąbrowska, I., & Sokołowska, B. (2024). Experiences of the Polish teachers of primary schools in working with war refugee students from Ukraine – selected problems, limitations and implications for pedagogical practice. *Education 3–13*, *54*(3), 623–636. https://doi.org/10.1080/03004279.2024.2336968

Nghi, T. T., & Hue, N. T. T. (2024). The impact of professional development on EFL teacher motivation, self-efficacy, and job satisfaction: A mixed-methods study. *Tạp Chí Khoa Học và Công Nghệ Đại Học Công Nghệ Đồng Nai*, *3*, 112–123. https://scholar.dlu.edu.vn/thuvienso/bitstream/DLU123456789/272796/1/CTv187S032024112.pdf

OECD. (2015). *Immigrant Students at School: Easing the Journey towards Integration,* (OECD Reviews of Migrant Education). OECD Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264249509-en

OECD. (2020a). *Foreign language teachers as ambassadors of multilingualism and international exchange: Evidence from TALIS 2018* (Teaching in Focus No. 33). OECD Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1787/808f11a4-en

OECD. (2020b). TALIS 2018 Results (Volume II): *Teachers and school leaders as valued professionals*. OECD Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1787/19cf08df-en

OECD. (2023). *Education at a glance 2023: OECD indicators*. OECD Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1787/e13bef63-en

OECD. (2025). *Results from TALIS 2024: The state of teaching.* OECD Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1787/90df6235-en

Pinson, H., & Arnot, M. (2007). Sociology of education and the wasteland of refugee education research. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, *28*(3), 399–407. https://doi.org/10.1080/01425690701253612

Public Policy and Management Institute (PPMI). (2017). *Preparing teachers for diversity: The role of initial teacher education. Final report to DG Education, Youth, Sport and Culture of the European Commission. Publications Office of the European Union.* https://doi.org/10.2766/637002

Preissová Krejčí, A., Macková, L., & Cholodová, U. (2023). Trauma dětských válečných uprchlíků z Ukrajiny v kontextu vzdělávání [The trauma of child war refugees from Ukraine in the context of education]. *Studia Paedagogica*, *28*(1), 35–59. https://doi.org/10.5817/SP2023-1-2

Salmons, J. E. (2022). *Doing qualitative research online* (2nd ed.). Sage Publications.

Sarid, A., & Binhas, A. (2023). Educational leadership for migrant and refugee education: Challenges and dilemmas in the Israeli context. *Journal of Educational Administration*, *61*(4), 423–438. https://doi.org/10.1108/JEA-10-2022-0180

Seidman, I. (2019). *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education and the social sciences* (5th ed.). Teachers College Press.

Şeker, B. D., & Sirkeci, I. (2015). Challenges for refugee children at school in Eastern Turkey. *Economics and Sociology*, *8*(4), 122–133. https://doi.org/10.14254/2071-789X.2015/8-4/9

Sidhu, R. K., & Taylor, S. (2009). The trials and tribulations of partnerships in refugee settlement services in Australia. *Journal of Education Policy*, *24*(6), 655–672. https://doi.org/10.1080/02680930802669326

Sprietsma, M. (2013). Discrimination in grading: Experimental evidence from primary school teachers. *Empirical Economics*, *45*(1), 523–538. https://doi.org/10.1007/s00181-012-0609-x

Stathopoulou, M., & Dassi, P. (2020). Teaching languages to students from refugee and migrant backgrounds around Europe: Exploring difficulties and teachers' beliefs. *International Online Journal of Education and Teaching (IOJET)*, *7*(1), 60–82. https://iojet.org/index.php/IOJET/article/view/792

Stewart, D. W., & Shamdasani, P. N. (2014). *Focus groups: Theory and practice* (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications.

Sun, X., & Zhu, P. (2023). Implementing project-based language teaching to develop EFL high school students' key competences. *Sustainability, 15*(2), 1658. https://doi.org/10.3390/su15021658

Šeďová, K., Obrovská, J., Hlado, P., Lojdová, K., Machovcová, K., Stupak, O., & intner, T. (2025). They usually look happy: approaches to the adaptation of Ukrainian refugees in Czech schools. *Pedagogy, Culture & Society, 33*(5), 1553–1574. https://doi.org/10.1080/14681366.2024.2362965

Tashakkori, A., Johnson, R. B., & Teddlie, C. (2021). *Foundations of mixed methods research: Integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches in the social and behavioral sciences* (2nd ed.). SAGE Publications.

UNESCO. (2025). *Languages matter: Global guidance on multilingual education*. UNESCO. https://www.unesco.org/sdg4education2030/en/articles/new-unesco-report-calls-multilingual-education-unlock-learning-and-inclusion

UNHCR. (2025). *Ukraine situation: Regional refugee response plan 2025–2026* [Regional refugee response plan document]. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. https://www.unhcr.org/ukraine-response-2025-2026

UNICEF. (2014). *No lost generation: Protecting the futures of children affected by the crisis in Syria.* [Technical report]. https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/1313820/1930_1390306570_no-lost-generation-strategic-overview-january-2014-rv.pdf

UNICEF. (2024, February 15). *Leaders in education reaffirm commitment to increasing access to quality education for Ukraine's refugee children*. https://www.unicef.org/eca/press-releases/leaders-education-reaffirm-commitment-increasing-access-quality-education-ukraines

UNICEF. (2025). *Refugee response in Czechia 2022–2025: Joint results and lasting impact*. https://www.unicef.org/eca/reports/unicef-refugee-response-czechia-20222025

Uyar, T., & Erozan, F. (2024). English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers' voice: English as an international language in Cyprus context. *SAGE Open*, *14*(3), 1–13. https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440241271170

Vaughn, S., Schumm, J. S., & Sinagub, J. M. (1996*). Focus group interviews in education and psychology.* SAGE Publications. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781452243641

Weinstein, H. M., Freedman, S. W., & Hughson, H. (2007). School voices: Challenges facing education systems after identity-based conflicts. *Education, Citizenship and Social Justice*, *2*(1), 41–71. https://doi.org/10.1177/1746197907072128

Wiseman, A. W., & Galegher, E. (2019). Teacher preparation, classroom pedagogy, and the refugee crisis in national education systems. In A. W. Wiseman, L. Damaschke-Deitrick, E. Galegher, & M. F. Park (Eds.), *Comparative perspectives on refugee youth education: Dreams and realities in educational systems worldwide* (pp. 75–101). Routledge.

Wissink, I. B., & de Haan, M. (2013). Teachers' and parental attribution for school performance of ethnic majority and minority children. *International Journal of Higher Education*, *2*(4), 65–76. http://dx.doi.org/10.5430/ijhe.v2n4p65

World Bank. (2025, April 21). *Teachers.* https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/teachers