



MALMÖ UNIVERSITY
FACULTY OF CULTURE
AND SOCIETY

**Language as a means of socio-cultural integration: Perceptions of
Nigeria migrants in Malmo, Sweden.**

Paschal Chinaka Chikadibia Dabrinze

International Migration and Ethnic Relations

Bachelors Thesis 15 credits

Spring 2022: IM245L

Supervisor: Hilda Gustafsson

Word count: 11614

Abstract:

This bachelor's thesis is a qualitative exploratory study. The goal of this research is to learn more about the social integration of Nigerian immigrants in Malmo, Sweden. The study focuses on language because many prior studies have found it to be an important factor in social integration. Although there is a considerable body of studies on how language influences immigrant integration, most studies focus on the host society's perspective. There is less research on how immigrants themselves evaluate the function of language in their social integration. The four dimensions of the social integration theoretical framework proposed by Bosswick and Heckmann (2006) were used to explore how Nigerian immigrants in Malmo, Sweden, perceive language as shaping their social integration in their host country. Their perceptions of these social integration dimensions will aid in understanding how language affects their integration into Swedish society in Malmo. The information was gathered from fifteen Nigerian immigrants in semi-structured interviews. The findings reveal that participants value language in varying ways across the many theoretical dimensions of social integration.

Keywords: Social integration, language, Nigerian immigrants, Explorative Study, Qualitative Study.

Table of Contents

1.0 Introduction:	1
1.2 Aim and Research Question:	2
1.3 Significance of the Study:	2
1.4 Limitation of the Study:	3
1.5 Thesis Outline:	3
2.0 Theoretical Framework:	4
2.1 What is integration?.....	4
2.2 Social integration:.....	5
2.3 Structural Integration:.....	6
2.4 Cultural Integration:	7
2.5 Interactive Integration:	8
2.6 Identification Integration:.....	9
3.0 Literature Review:.....	9
3.1 Social integration of immigrants	9
3.2 Social Integration and Language:.....	10
3.3 Social integration of immigrants in Sweden:	12
3.4 Research gap and study contribution.....	14
4.0 Methodology and Methods:.....	14
4.1 Research Design:	14
4.2 Participants:	16
4.3 Data Collection and Presentation:	17
4.4 Data Analysis:	18
4.5 Interview Guide:.....	19
4.6 Reflexivity:.....	20
4.7 Reliability:.....	21
4.8 Validity:.....	21
4.9 Ethical Considerations:.....	22
5.0 Results and Analysis:	22
5.1. Structural Integration:.....	22
5.2 Cultural Integration	26
5.3. Interactive Integration:	27

5.4 Identification Integration..... 31

5.5 Some of the Responders' most prevalent expressions: 33

6 Discussions: 34

7 Conclusion:..... 35

List of References:..... 37

Appendices: 40

Appendix 1 letter of Consent..... 40

Appendix 2: Interview Questions..... 42

1.0 Introduction:

One of the essential integration criteria that immigrants must learn to properly integrate into mainstream society is the host language. Through interacting with others, the immigrant can easily interact with the host community, obtain vital information, and better understand the surrounding environment. Jandt (2004) defines language as "a set of symbols shared by a community to communicate meaning and experience."

Furthermore, language constitutes both a channel of regular communication and an asset, particularly within the context of the labor market and education. Additionally, language can act as a symbol of inclusion or exclusion and give rise to separation and discrimination. Also, according to a survey conducted in 2014 by the European Council on the linguistic integration of adult migrants (LIAM), the results showed a strong relationship between language and social integration. Besides, according to Bryman (2012), the level of proficiency in a language is often linked to both the success and failure of migrant integration.

Moreover, migrant integration is increasingly becoming a global phenomenon, and social integration refers to all that enables immigrants to become a part of and participate in the society in which they have arrived. According to Wiesbrock (2011), Sweden was one of the first countries to understand the significance of immigrant integration. So, before officially declaring a transition from immigration to integration policy, the Swedish government implemented integration measures more than 30 years before then.

Furthermore, two of the major hurdles to the successful integration of pupils with an immigrant background are socioeconomic hardship and linguistic problems. Schools and educational institutions can play an important role in assisting children from immigrant backgrounds to integrate into host communities (OECD, 2018). Moreover, this study claims that immigrants have a significant linguistic barrier when attempting to integrate into their new community (ibid). According to the study, if immigrants do not learn the host country's language, they risk being pushed out of the labor market or facing economic hardship, in addition to making it difficult for them to provide material resources or intangible assistance (ibid).

Additionally, integration is always beneficial to both the host society and the migrant. As such, many studies have researched how language has helped migrant integration. However, most of those researchers focused their studies on the perspective of the host society, and few of those studies explored immigrant perspectives. Moreover, in the previous research, the breadth of the backgrounds amongst the immigrants was so broad that it captured migrants from Africa, the Middle East, Asia, and Central America. On the contrary, in this thesis, I will concentrate on a particular migrant group, which is the Nigerian migrants in Malmo, Sweden.

1.2 Aim and Research Question:

This study aims to explore language as a means of socio-cultural integration. In particular, the study explores the Nigerian migrants' perception of their socio-cultural integration using language in Malmo, Sweden. The research explores the role of language as a mediating instrument for learning and interactions with different people and cultures from a socio-cultural perspective. Although this is a small-scale study in terms of investigating immigrants' perceptions of language and integration, it provides some intriguing insights into language as a means of socio-cultural integration among Nigerian immigrants.

The research question focuses on the following:

How do Nigerian immigrants in Malmo, Sweden perceive language as shaping their socio-cultural integration in their host society?

1.3 Significance of the Study:

The topic under study will be relevant to the students of International Migration and Ethnic Relations, Migration Agencies, policymakers, and other relevant government institutions to understand the perceptions of some Nigerian immigrants concerning language as a means of socio-cultural integration. Meanwhile, migrant integration is a contemporary issue discussed within the fields of international migration and ethnic studies, so this research will contribute in its way to the field.

1.4 Limitation of the Study:

One of the major limitations of this study is that, with its qualitative approach, the results or findings cannot be generalized and are not tested to determine whether they are due to chance or are statistically significant (Cresswell and Cresswell, 2018: p. 257).

Additionally, another limitation of this study is that only one city was selected out of several cities in Sweden and all the 15 Nigerian migrant participants are from Malmö city, so the research is based on participants' availability and accessibility. Also, the study is a bachelor's thesis, consequently limited by time and resources.

Moreover, another limitation of the study stems from the application of the snowball method in the participants' recruitment. This method created a gender imbalance in the sample population because the first few participants I contacted were males. Subsequently, I ended up having many male participants. However, females and males can generally have different perceptions of socio-cultural integration and may perceive how language shapes their socio-cultural integration differently. Therefore, male participants skewed gender representation in the study sample population, thereby delimiting the scope of the finding since it has not been possible to explore how gender relates to language as a means of socio-cultural integration.

1.5 Thesis Outline:

This thesis is divided into the following parts: Firstly, the theoretical framework introduces the general concepts of integration and social integration with emphasis on Bosswick and Heckmann's (2006) four dimensions of social integration. Secondly, a literature review that provides an overview of previous studies on the integration of immigrants in general, social integration and language, and previous literature on the social integration of migrants in Sweden will be reviewed in addition to the study gap and contributions. Finally, the chosen methodology and methods will be discussed, which include the research design, methods, data collection and presentation, the interview guide, reflexivity, reliability, and validity of the study, as well as ethical considerations. Additionally, the last section will be the results and analysis, which will be separated into the analysis of the interview conducted and the analysis of how the interview

relates to the four dimensions of social integration. Finally, a conclusion will be drawn based on the outcome of the study.

2.0 Theoretical Framework:

Below, I will begin by giving a working definition of the concept of integration and social integration to be used in this study. I will outline Bosswick and Heckmann's (2006) theory of four dimensions of social integration, namely, structural integration, cultural integration, interactive integration, and identification integration, and these will form the core theoretical foundation of this study. The four dimensions of social integration will help to elucidate what the various processes of social integration are all about and thus establish a good starting point for analysing language acquisition as a crucial condition for socio-cultural integration. Hopefully, this research will help the topic come to life and subsequently provide a bridge between the theoretical perspective of social integration and a more detailed viewpoint derived from the everyday lives of Nigerian immigrants in Malmö, Sweden, as it relates to language shaping their socio-cultural integration.

2.1 What is integration?

With regards to integration as a general sociological concept, Esser (2004, p. 26) viewed it as a social environment in which groups and individuals form interdependencies. He went further to state that two different, but interrelated aspects of system integration and social integration are affected by the general problem of integration. On the one hand, system integration involves the cohesion of the entire social system and extends the cohesion beyond different components of society (ibid). For instance, groups of functional subsystems or ethnic minorities. On the other hand, social integration involves the incorporation of individuals into an existing social system. Moreover, integration as a concept involves the stability of relationships amongst various components within a system-like whole, the borders of which separate it from the environment; in such a situation, the system is considered integrated (Bosswick and Heckmann, 2006, p.2). Likewise, from a sociological perspective, it refers to a durable or cooperative relationship within a social system (ibid).

Furthermore, in migration research, the integration of immigrants into the host community should be understood as a subset of social migration in which structural integration, cultural integration, interactive integration, and identification integration can be conceptualized or applied (Bosswick and Heckmann, 2006, p.3).

2.2 Social integration:

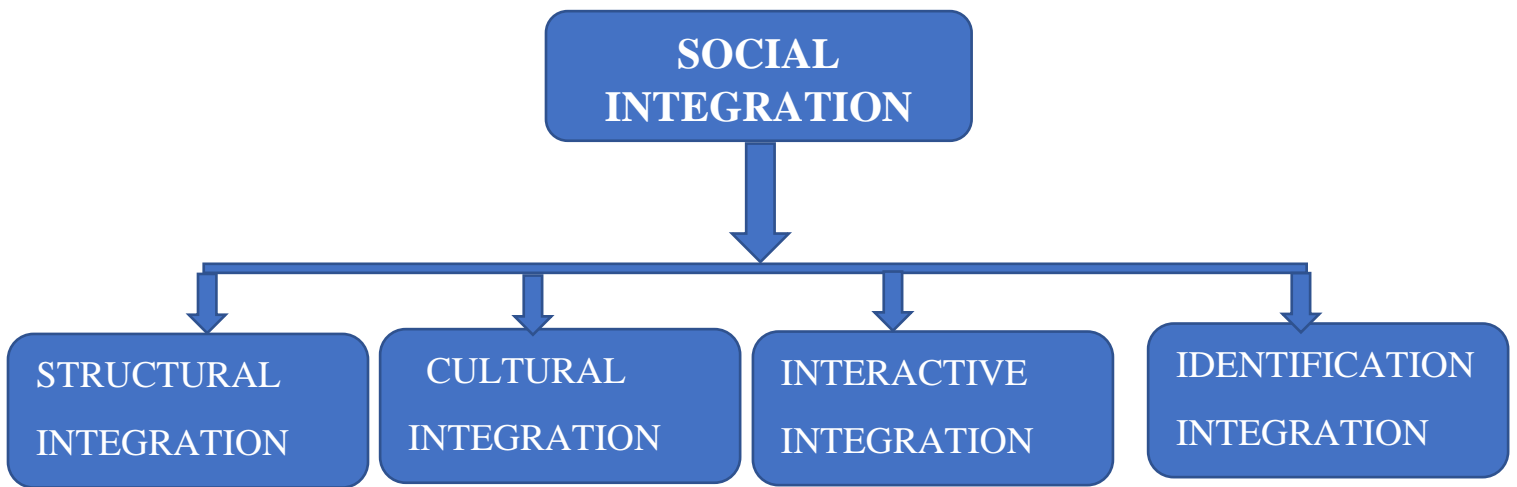
To construct a comprehensible and applicable framework, I have adhered to Bosswick and Heckmann's (2006) working definition of social integration, which is a process of building personal relationships with members of the host community and forming a feeling of identification and belonging with the host community. As well, in this process, immigrants can immerse themselves in the new society, gaining access to positions and acquiring new status in addition to learning about the host community's cultures and obligations.

Furthermore, social integration as an essential form of integration enables individuals to connect or interact with the members of the host community, which could be evidenced by their daily communication with other members of the community by socializing or making friends on the street or in the workplace (contrary to the natives) (ibid). However, on arrival in the host society, immigrants face various challenges and constraints such as language skills, uncertainty about their residency and immigration status, inadequate economic or time resources, in addition to constraints in accessing certain areas of social life. For example, participation in political activities like voting during elections. Thus, immigrants have been exposed to diverse cultures within the family, ethnic neighborhood, or country of origin, and these affect their beliefs, social preferences, and risk attitudes and can translate to different observed behaviors. For example, change in religion, gender role, political participation, and family ties (ibid).

Moreover, according to Bosswick and Heckmann (2006, p. 3), there exists some confusion about integration as a concept and as a field for migration studies. However, the following distinctions may be made when studying the relationship between a native population and incoming migrants. Firstly, the social integration of immigrants into the existing system of the host community; secondly, the consequences of social integration on the social structures of the receiving host

community; and finally, the consequences of social integration or non-integration or partial integration of the receiving host community (ibid.). Additionally, Bosswick and Heckmann (2006) have suggested that social integration be conceptualized as structural integration, cultural integration, interactive integration, and identification integration. Consequently, these concepts form the four basic dimensions of integration and are the basis for the operationalization of this study.

Bosswick and Heckmann's four dimensions of social integration are represented in the table below:



2.3 Structural Integration:

The ability to communicate in the host country's language is an important indicator that immigrants may structurally integrate into the host society. Structural integration refers to the

acquisition of rights and access to positions and status in the host society's main institutions by immigrants. For example, the housing system, education, and qualification systems, the labor market and economy, welfare state institutions in addition to the health system, and full political citizenship (Bosswick and Heckmann 2006, p.9). Moreover, cultural competencies are necessary to participate in the core institutions and to gain a position in the host society. Most immigrants come to the host country to improve their social status and life opportunities, which they feel that they cannot achieve in their home country, so they must integrate into the host society's main institutions. This integration takes place within the context of the national society. Besides, this integration is a process of adapting to national society—more specifically, into local and regional contexts (ibid.).

Furthermore, every society is reliant on its material infrastructure, which explains the relevance of economic institutions in societies, the importance of systems that prepare individuals for those institutions, such as the educational system, and the influence of a person's socioeconomic standing on their social status. Each member of society must acquire the essential cognitive, cultural, and social competencies to earn a position in society and play a role in its socioeconomic institutions and processes (ibid.).

Moreover, immigrants require access to the housing market and welfare state institutions in the host society. Besides, naturalization and citizenship are prerequisites for having at least a rudimentary impact on the political system: as citizens, immigrants become a segment of electorates that politicians cannot ignore. Immigrants who have gained citizenship are eligible to run for office, even so, immigrants can stay in their host country if they obtain citizenship, admittedly, citizenship is an important component in the development of a society (ibid)

2.4 Cultural Integration:

One of the essential integration criteria that immigrants must learn to properly integrate into mainstream culture is the host language. According to Jandt (2004), people naturally learn about a culture when they learn their host language. Cultural information, according to Redmond (1995), is general information about language, prevalent values, and customs that can be attributed to someone from another culture.

Moreover, immigrants can only claim rights and hold positions in their new society if they get accustomed to the culture's and society's core competencies. In this context, integration refers to immigrants' cognitive, behavioral, and attitude changes; this is referred to as cultural integration or acculturation. While cultural integration primarily affects immigrants and their children and grandchildren, it is also a collaborative, reciprocal process that affects the host community, which must learn new ways of interacting with immigrants and adjust to their demands (Bosswick and Heckmann 2006, p.10).

Furthermore, cultural integration does not imply that immigrants must abandon their native culture. Bicultural abilities and personalities benefit both the individual and the host society. However, for those immigrants and their children who arrive with little education and training, achieving the level of biculturalism and bilingualism required for adequate social mobility will be challenging. Biculturalism and bilingualism are both semi-biculturalism, and semi-bilingualism is not integration, and its practice results in the loss of an array of opportunities for immigrants (ibid).

2.5 Interactive Integration:

The acceptance and inclusion of immigrants into the host society's primary relationships and social networks are referred to as "interactive integration." Friendship, social networks, marriages, partnerships, and membership in voluntary organizations are all indicators of interactive integration (Bosswick and Heckmann 2006, p.10). Moreover, interactive integration requires certain key fundamentals of cultural integration, particularly communicative competencies (ibid.).

Additionally, interactive integration into the social structures of the ethnic colony serves as an assistant to immigrants in the first phase of the integration process—through the support and solidarity of family and co-ethnics, as well as their exchange of information and experiences. However, such integration may obstruct the immigrant's ability to form bonds with the host community and acquire the cultural and social capital required to compete in the host community's key institutions over time (ibid.).

2.6 Identification Integration:

The sense of belonging of immigrants in the new society is referred to as identification integration. The immigrant's sense of belonging in the new society is referred to as identification integration. According to Bosswick and Heckmann (2006, p.10), it is impossible to engage in the main institutions of a host society without first acquiring the cultural competencies that enable these institutions to function. It is possible, however, to engage without connecting with these institutions' ideals or developing a sense of belonging to the host society. However, because of participation and acceptance, this sense of belonging may emerge later in the integration process. Furthermore, subjective inclusion in a new society—identification integration—is characterized by feelings of belonging to and identification with groups, particularly ethnic, regional, local, and/or national identification (ibid).

3.0 Literature Review:

The goal of this section is to provide an understanding of the academic context in which this research was conducted. As part of the literature review, academic books, and scholarly publications on the issue of language and social integration were reviewed. Firstly, research on the social integration of immigrants will be presented. Secondly, I will discuss some previous studies on non-European immigrants' social integration in Europe. Thirdly, previous research on the social integration of immigrants in Sweden will be presented, and finally, I will discuss what I perceive as a research gap, as well as how this project will try to fill the perceived gap.

3.1 Social integration of immigrants

Moreover, differences in preferences and beliefs lead to variations in observable behavior and preferences, which also the resilience of immigrants' native cultures has been documented in a significant body of literature. Giuliano (2007) in his study observed cultural influences on immigrants' living arrangements. According to another study, immigrants from countries with traditionally closer family relationships, low generalized trust, and low civil and political

participation in their destination countries are likewise less politically and socially active in their host society (Laurentsyeva and Venturini, 2017, p. 285). According to existing studies, the income disparity between immigrants and the native population narrows over time. However, the question remains whether the same pattern applies to social integration. With the acquisition of language skills, immigrants' limitations can change during their stay in a destination country (ibid). Original beliefs and preferences are more difficult to modify, and they may have a greater impact on social behavior than on economic behavior. This presents two critical issues. Firstly, how does immigrants' social integration change over time while they live in a host society? Secondly, can the destination countries' policies have an impact on this process? Several findings emerged from the review of the literature, according to Laurentsyeva and Venturini (2017, p. 286). On the one hand, despite controlling for observable basic factors such as age and education, there is a disparity between immigrant and native-born populations across several proxies of social integration. As they spend more time in their host society, immigrants' adaptabilities increase. Social integration, on the other hand, frequently lags behind economic participation, and the rate of integration varies depending on the proxies utilized. Certain measures can help immigrants integrate more quickly into society, having a stronger impact on more disadvantaged populations (ibid.). More research is needed, however, to understand the mediating channels of these effects.

3.2 Social Integration and Language:

Language and social integration are two strongly interrelated concepts. Without language, there can be no genuine social integration. That is why many feel that language is one of the most important social obstacles for most immigrants, particularly those who live in places where they do not speak the same language.

Moreover, research on the ethnolinguistic vitality, language use, and social integration of Albanian immigrants was conducted by two scholars, Nikos Gogona and Domna Michail, in 2015. This study focuses on the perspectives of two generations of immigrants about language learning and their impressions of the use of the host society's language. According to the survey, most first-generation Albanian immigrants who speak Greek have significant preferences for using the Greek language across all communication domains because they believe that language

is the most important factor in socialization in Greece and therefore an essential component of their identity development process (Gogonas and Michail, 2014).

According to Hochman and Davidov (2014), proficiency in the host country's language is a type of human capital. Understanding the language can help immigrants succeed economically and socially in Germany. The two scholars investigated first-generation immigrants' German language skills and national affiliation with Germany. This research focuses on immigrants' reactions to the new assimilation theory and the formation of the host culture, specifically the degree to which they accept the host society's cultural practices, such as learning the language and identifying with it (ibid). They suggest that language competence is viewed as a key cultural indicator that is linked to one's national group membership and identity. Additionally, they emphasize that language is a critical component of social integration for immigrants since it facilitates the integration of all other components. It is easier for immigrants to integrate into every element of the new society if they learn the language and are proficient in it (ibid).

According to de Vroome, Verkuyten, and Martinovic (2014), immigrants' national belonging is mostly determined by their language skills and social interactions with natives. These elements can help immigrants become more acquainted with the culture and customs of the host country. Furthermore, immigrants become more familiar with the majority culture through learning the language, making it easier for them to identify with the host society (de Vroome, Martinovic, and Verkuyten, 2014). Language tests, courses, and interviews are required for naturalization or settlement in several Western European countries (Goodman, 2012. p:659). Moreover, civic integration and effective participation in the community are required in Western European countries. They must also speak the host society's language to engage in the community (ibid).

According to van Tubergen and Kalmijn (2008, P: 169), some immigrants can communicate in the host country's language, while others struggle. Furthermore, they also noted that language proficiency is one of the most important factors in the economic success of immigrants. Moreover, according to their findings, immigrants who are more fluent in the language have the best probability of being accepted into core institutions with better positions, and they also note that language and economic and cultural adaptation are inextricably linked (ibid). Besides,

because they desire to acquire more incentives and chances in the new society, highly educated immigrants are more efficient in learning the language than less-educated immigrants (van Tubergen and Kalmijn, 2008. P: 173).

Moreover, because of the rising foreign migration in Switzerland, research shows that there is a language barrier in primary care. So, it was difficult for doctors in central Switzerland to give care to international migrants because they were unable to speak with the patients due to language problems (Jaeger, Pellaud, Laville, and Klauser, 2019). Additionally, according to Esser (2004), language deficits lead to disparities in terms of access to societal recognition, social contract, income, and education. He went on to say that, while these differences or inequalities are considerable, it is important to recognize that they are not only dictated by linguistic proficiency in the relevant host country's language.

Anna Maria Stadler (2016) conducted social integration research. She concentrated on how to integrate refugees successfully into German society. The author employed Hartmut Esser's (2001) sociological integration theory. Within German integration research, this is one of the most significant contemporary concepts (Stadler, 2016, p.6).

3.3 Social integration of immigrants in Sweden:

Integration is a policy and strategy objective for the Swedish government. The idea of integration is included in the social pillars of sustainable development in the Swedish sustainable development strategic plan. To put it another way, integration is one of the three essential components of the sustainable development idea that is a prerequisite for long-term development. As a result, one could argue that accomplishing the goals of Sweden's sustainable development model requires social cohesion and integration within society. This is particularly significant given the rising influx of immigrants into Sweden, which has resulted in a high level of cultural variety in the country (Regeringskansliet, 2003/4:14).

According to Milani (2008: p.30), Swedish language proficiency is one of the requirements for a successful integration process in Sweden. Additionally, language, according to the study, is a key component in naturalization. As a policy strategy, learning a language aids immigrants' integration into Swedish society (Rogova, 2014). In the study, the author identifies and examines integration issues in Sweden as well as how language learning as a policy strategy aids in the social integration of immigrants into Swedish society. By employing the four dimensions of social integration theory developed by Bosswick and Heckmann (2006), the author identifies and analyzes the obstacles to integration in Sweden as well as how language acquisition as a policy tool aids in the social integration of immigrants into Swedish society. In the same way, this theory will also be employed in the current study to determine how language aids in the four dimensions of social integration in Sweden.

Furthermore, according to Fakhri (2017), immigrants' lack of Swedish language skills is one of the most significant barriers to integration in Sweden. It is difficult for them to integrate into Swedish society, particularly in the labor market. Zainab Fakhri conducted a comparative study on female refugee integration. This study looks at the barriers that female refugees encounter entering the labor market and how the Swedish language can help them.

According to Awori (2019), integration requires proficiency in the country's language, and immigrants can create social and professional networks in the surrounding community if they can communicate in the language that residents prefer. In this study, the author concentrated on the experiences of non-European highly trained professional immigrants in Gothenburg, Sweden. This study looks at the problems that professional non-EU immigrants have in finding jobs that are connected to their profession and academic qualifications. According to the author, these difficulties stem from social-cultural disparities, language barriers, undervaluation of their qualifications and job experience, stringent national policies, discrimination, and limited social networks.

3.4 Research gap and study contribution

There is a broad research field that analyzes how language influences immigrant integration. However, most studies focus on the host society's perspective. There has been less research on how immigrants see language's importance in their social integration process. Furthermore, the diversity of backgrounds among immigrants has been less prevalent in prior surveys. A much earlier study on non-European immigrants' integration has focused on Asian, Middle Eastern, and African immigrants. In this bachelor thesis, I limited my scope to a more specific migrant group when exploring through 15 respondent interviews how Nigerian immigrants themselves experience how language shapes their integration in Malmo, Sweden.

4.0 Methodology and Methods:

In this part of the study, I will focus on the methodology, which comprises the application of a variety of tools that employ different types of inquiry (Bryman, 2012: p. 56). This consists of the research design, choice of the interview, data collection, and its process and interpretation, Additionally, validity, reliability, the generalizability of the findings, and ethical considerations will be discussed.

4.1 Research Design:

The study will be applying the philosophical viewpoint based on constructivism, which asserts knowledge is subjective and contextual (Moses and Knusten, 2012: p.200). In other words, knowledge is a social construction that can change depending on the circumstances.

Epistemologically, I aim to explore how the subject matters in this context, language, and socio-cultural integration, are conceptualized and socially constructed and consequently aid the study in the possible production of new knowledge. Hence, the aim of my study is not to seek objective and universal truth but rather the exploration of the ontological approach of constructivism, which, according to Moses and Knusten (2012: p.199), postulates that the world appears different to people and varies contextually. In other words, things are created by the mind rather than discovered and therefore do not exist separately from the mind. Consequently, the perception of Nigerian migrants in this context is expected to reflect individual experiences, beliefs, and circumstances.

The study will employ a qualitative research method. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), it gives an in-depth understanding of human perceptions, and it aims to investigate the how and why. So, it will be more effective and efficient in exploring and understanding how language has shaped the socio-cultural integration of Nigerian migrants in Malmo because of its flexibility when studying human behavior in its natural context (ibid).

Qualitative research is critical for understanding socially constructed concepts or phenomena by humans in interaction with their environment (Cresswell and Cresswel 2018, p. 257). For example, in a natural setting, the qualitative researcher tends to gather information at the site where participants experience the problem or issues being researched. Consequently, the qualitative research method is applicable for this study because it helps to explore Nigerian migrants' perceptions or experiences and interactions with their social world.

The research will be a case study, and according to Yin (2003, p. 23), case study research is a method that seeks to explore and investigate current real-life events and practices through a detailed contextual analysis of the limited number of events or experiences, especially when the context of the phenomenon is not clear. Consequently, the case study method will enable me to explore and investigate a specific migrant community, the case study of Nigerian migrants, which forms part of the larger migrant community.

Furthermore, because the thesis will be exploratory, it is beneficial to investigate a problem that has yet to be researched or is unclear. According to Stebbins (2001), qualitative exploratory research is conducted to gain a better understanding of an existing phenomenon but is not intended to provide conclusive results. Moreover, it focuses on the in-depth inquiry of the

proposed research question by the means of semi-structured interviews, and the researcher applies the medium to identify issues for future research (ibid.).

Therefore, this method will help understand the Nigerian migrants' perception of socio-cultural integration through language in Malmo, Sweden. Furthermore, the exploration will be guided by the four-dimension theory of social integration (Bosswick and Heckmann, 2006).

4.2 Participants:

I have set some criteria for eligibility to be qualified to participate in the interview. To start with, the participants must be Nigerian migrants living in Malmo, Sweden, and they must have spent at least two years in Sweden and be enrolled in a language school or privately studying Swedish. This was done to guarantee that they have a suitable amount of time to practice using the Swedish language. Furthermore, the length of their stay in Sweden would allow them to compare their daily lives before and after the language course. Finally, they must be 18 years of age or older.

To select my participants, I had access to the Nigerian association resident in Malmo. The association is a group that every Nigerian living in Malmo belongs to. I was able to recruit seven participants from the group whom I interviewed one-on-one. Additionally, the snowball sampling method was applied in which the initial participants linked me to five other participants. According to Naderifar, Goli, and Ghaljaie (2017), Snowballing is a way of identifying a research sample in which existing respondents recruit new participants. The remaining 3 participants were recruited through the various social media platforms I belonged to. (Facebook and WhatsApp) and the interview was done digitally via WhatsApp calls.

Participants were provided with the option of choosing a convenient location and time. This was done to guarantee that the interviewees were at ease in the environment. A tape recorder was used to record all the interviews for the seven respondents interviewed one-on-one. An audio recording has the advantage of providing "a permanent record that is fairly complete in terms of speech that occurs." (D

4.3 Data Collection and Presentation:

Interviews were used as a means of accumulating data. Interviews are perceived as a relevant method in the data collection of variables such as irregularity and vulnerable people on the move along with others (Fedyuk and Zentai, 2018). Thus, allowing the possibility to obtain knowledge on the topic and the possibility to obtain knowledge that would have remained unknown if other methods, for instance, surveys were applied. The semi-structured interviews helped in expanding my research agenda. Fedyuk and Zentai (2018) incorporate omitted elements into the research while gaining new perspectives on the research topic (Fedyuk and Zentai 2018).

Data collection involves information gathering during my studies to enhance research planning and estimation, and data was collected with the help of interviews. According to Fedyuk and Zentai (2018), interviews are a key method when it comes to the broader qualitative study toolkit and most especially when it comes to migration studies. They went further to argue that in qualitative research and migration research, in particular, the interview method is one of the major methods of information gathering because interviews have the great potential to explain the multidimensional links of universal connectivity, especially when it is applied to the changing reflection on the contextual links constituting the very foundation of migration research, the role of the respondents and researcher, and the power of knowledge production.

Moreover, in various types of research, interviews have been applied to improve qualitative insight. Of course, when it comes to migration studies have proved to be an indispensable method when studying vulnerable populations like migrants both documented and undocumented (Fedyuk and Zentai). Consequently, I am studying an immigrant population which is the Nigerian migrants in Malmo, Sweden. The interview method will be useful in data collection. In other words, interviews as a tool of data collection are used especially when studying vulnerable populations like migrants (Fedyuk and Zentai). Above all, for my study, I employed semi-structured interviews as a means of data collection and with the help of questions formulated in advance, I was able to conduct a semi-structured interview that was open-ended that allowed for the voices and perspectives of the interviewees to be reflected (Creswell and Creswell, 2018: p.263)

Moreover, According to Fedyuk and Zentai (2018), semi-structured interviews entail questions that are not rigidly structured but more open and guided by the research problems or interest which invariably allows room for further discussions, especially on connected issues thereby making the study more exploratory. In other words, I will ask selected participants questions that are open-ended within the context of their perceived experiences on how language has shaped their socio-cultural integration in Malmo, Sweden, and give space for further discussion on related issues. To this effect, I had to go over the consent letter with the interviewees before doing the interviews to make sure they knew what the study was all about. I emphasized to them the need to protect confidential information. Signing the consent letter was made explicit as not being binding. This implies that individuals have the option to terminate their involvement at any time. All the respondents participating in the study signed the consent letter.

4.4 Data Analysis:

Analysing the data entailed reviewing the processed data generated during the interviews, which were in written and audio format, relating it to the research question, and using it to conclude. In other words, data analysis involves a critical evaluation of the information generated during the interview process. Consequently, employing a reflexive approach, I examined if the data already processed answers the research question (Fedyuk and Zentai). Also, I checked whether there was any need to readjust the original research design and if there was a need for more clarification from the respondents. It follows that the original design was not readjusted. However, issues that needed more clarification were addressed.

The data were analysed using the inductive content analysis method. This is a technique for analysing data and determining what themes emerge and how they are related, as well as evaluating concerns that are there but not evident. According to Bell (2006), content analysis is a research approach for inferring reproducible and meaningful context from data. Denscombe (2010) goes on to say that inductive data analysis tends to deal with issues that range from specific to general. He was attempting to illustrate that a more generalized explanation of the subject was reached through a careful review of the data obtained. This was also true in this study since the extensive questions asked during the interview served as a foundation for obtaining a

broad picture of Nigerian immigrants' perceptions of language as a means of socio-cultural integration. Inductive analysis, according to Punch and Oancea (2014), inductive data analysis is frequently employed for the systematic investigation of similarities to build concepts or themes.

Listening to the recorded audiotapes was the initial step in the data analysis. Two audio recorders were available. I had to listen to one of the tapes words for word and transcribe it. According to Kvale (1996, p.88), transcription is the process of preparing interview data for analysis. Listening to audiotapes and putting them down in text was part of the transcription process. After that, I had to listen to both tapes together to make sure that I understood what was being recorded. The information was then organized into categories based on the main themes that arose from the interviews.

4.5 Interview Guide:

First and foremost, the interview guide was drafted based on the four dimensions of socio-cultural integration under investigation. These four dimensions of integration are anchored on Bosswick and Heckmann's (2006) theory of social integration, which includes the structural, cultural, interactive, and identification dimensions.

The first section of the interview primarily focused on the respondents' basic information. For example, country of origin, occupation, and the year of arrival in Sweden. After the introductory questions, the interview guide's focal point was the interviewees' perception of how language has shaped their socio-cultural integration through the lens of these four dimensions of integration.

The first question will be to tell me a bit about your background.

Firstly, in the structural integration dimension, the interviewee was asked how learning the Swedish language through Swedish for immigrants (SFI) or self-learning had helped them to enter the main Swedish institutions, and the questions asked were:

-What is your experience of learning Swedish in a language school?

-Did it help to integrate into the labor market?

Furthermore, in cultural integration, the interviewee was asked if the Swedish language helped in the adaptation of Swedish culture. For example, what are your thoughts on Swedish culture? Do you engage in it in any way? Additionally, in the interactive integration dimension, the interviewees' social lives will be interrogated. The following questions were asked: Describe your social life. Do you interact with the native Swedes in any way?

Finally, this section is meant to interrogate the identification integration dimension, and questions were asked about whether speaking the Swedish language increases their sense of belongingness to the host society and what life has been like after acquiring the language. The questions were: Do you feel Swedish? Do you feel attached to Swedish society? Especially, the respondents' perception of language for integration and what hindrances or obstacles they encounter for their inability to speak the Swedish language. The interview was conducted face-to-face where possible; otherwise, it was conducted digitally.

4.6 Reflexivity:

Since I belong to the group I am studying, I examined my beliefs, judgments, and practices during the research process and examined how they influenced the study since constructivism supports subjective knowledge (Moses and Knutsen, 2019: p.199). Additionally, according to Moses and Knutsen (2019: p.179), in a situation where the researcher belongs to the same national or ethnic background as the individual or group that is being studied, it will be assumed that the researcher shares the same perspective and social position as the research, and this position helps to access more accurate and intimate information or knowledge. Consequently, as an insider, my position as it affects substantive and practical aspects of the study was taken into consideration.

Personal biases were considered in the study, according to Cresswell and Cresswell (2018). Qualitative research is inherently interpretive, particularly from a constructivist perspective (2018, p.219). As a result, a description of the research function and reflexivity is required, as well as an explanation of previous experiences and how they have influenced my capacity to

analyse data (ibid.). Admittedly, my background as a Nigerian immigrant in Malmo, as well as my personal experiences with the subject, may have impacted how I interpreted the data.

4.7 Reliability:

Considering the scope and small nature of the study, it is almost impossible to achieve reliability. According to Walliman (2010: p. 103), reliability ensures that the interviews and information are reliable in a way that materials and data are measured accurately, authentic, and interpreted with high levels of precision. In other words, reliability will be the concept that will be used to test and evaluate the authenticity and accuracy of my study. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), accuracy questions whether the data and materials are measured and read correctly; authenticity ensures that the materials are not forged but real or undeniable; and precision ensures that the study's replicability is not subject to arbitrary and subjective interpretations. Therefore, with the quality of the sources of my materials, which are mainly data or information derived from the interviews, I cannot guarantee high reliability and replicability will be difficult. However, I strived for credibility in the study.

4.8 Validity:

Validity ensures searching for the answer in the right way and place, and as I applied a qualitative research method, external validity will be more debatable in this type of research and implies that if the outcome could apply to other situations, or in other words if the result could be generalizable (Walliman 2010: p. 103). Moreso, the study seeks to understand how language could be used as a means of socio-cultural integration, using Nigerian migrants in Malmo, Sweden as a case study. From the foregoing, one can see that the sample population or representative is very low as compared to the total population of migrants. Consequently, the external validity will be very low, and the outcome cannot be generalized (ibid.). Meanwhile, the purpose of the research is not to generalize but to explore and understand a human phenomenon.

4.9 Ethical Considerations:

When conducting research, it is critical to address the ethical considerations involved. Consequently, I conducted qualitative research and face-to-face interviews with vulnerable participants. It became my responsibility to ensure that respondents had the right to choose whether to participate in the study, while also maintaining their confidentiality and anonymity throughout the process. In the same way, conduct honest and credible research reporting without deceiving the reader. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018: p.287), the researcher is obligated to respect the desires, values, needs, and rights of the respondents. In other words, as a researcher, I am expected to carry out my research work with a high level of honesty and integrity while upholding informed consent, privacy, and confidentiality. Moreover, in any research study, it is important to protect human subjects through the application of relevant ethical principles (Mohd Arifin, 2018). However, the consideration of ethical concerns becomes more pertinent when carrying out face-to-face interviews with participants considered vulnerable groups like migrants (ibid.). Furthermore, personal information was written on paper, and the interviews were recorded and afterward transcribed. However, the participants were duly informed through the consent letter that the transcribed data and audio recordings would be destroyed later.

5.0 Results and Analysis:

5.1. Structural Integration:

According to Bosswick and Heckmann (2016), the first step in integrating into society is to join the main institutions. All the interviewees participated actively in the language school to gain employment and integrate into society. Moreso, most respondents said that taking a language course did not assist them to understand the labor market. Most acquire jobs on their own, and their work allows them to become more integrated into society. The respondents discussed their views on language learning and language schools.

They all complained that the language school, particularly the SFI, does not assist them in learning about the labor market or finding work. Some respondents stated that the intensive courses were valuable to them and that they benefited from them. Many respondents claimed that because SFI classes are lengthy and time-consuming, they have lost interest in studying the language. Most respondents chose an intensive course that aided them in learning the language rapidly and in obtaining employment.

Furthermore, respondent B, meanwhile, expressed dissatisfaction with SFI. He believes that language schools are ineffective but that intensive classes are quite beneficial. He agreed that he got his job because of the intensive course where he learned Swedish (Male Respondent).

However, respondent C had a different story to tell. He skipped the SFI. He studied the Swedish language to be admitted to the university for his bachelor's degree. He took a language course in high school that was designed specifically for students interested in studying Swedish at the university level. This training aided him in certain ways because he is currently a university student doing his bachelor's program in Swedish (Male Respondent).

Additionally, Respondent D credited her admission to the core institution entirely to his effort and determination in learning the language and finding work. She has never attended a language school. Respondent D began her account of language learning by mentioning that she has Swedish-speaking children here. So, she needs to attend to the doctor and school because of her children, which forced her to learn Swedish, because there were numerous occasions when she was unable to communicate in English. Though she agrees that everyone here can speak English, she admits that it is difficult for certain people to do so. She gave her perspective on finding work. She believes she was given the chance. She believes that because she speaks Swedish, she was allowed to educate medical students. At work, she communicates in Swedish. She mostly teaches medical students from Sweden, and they are all Swedish. As a result, Swedish is required in her employment, which aids her entry into the main institution. (Female Respondent)

Moreover, the interviewees who arrived in Sweden at a very young age recounted their language school experiences. According to Respondent E, studying the language was important at the time, although schools used varied approaches. Because of her Swedish lover, she stated she was determined to learn the language. She wanted to communicate with her spouse, so she decided to learn the Swedish language. In her own words:

“I inspired myself to learn the language. The school, on the other hand, was not very helpful; they did not push; the demands were low; there was no incentive; the expectations were very low”

(Respondent E, male)

In the early 80s, the language schools' study methods were different from those of today's language schools. During the interview, however, both old (respondents D and E) and new immigrants (respondents B and C) indicated that language school did not assist them in finding jobs or learning about integration. Another Nigerian immigrant spoke about how important the Swedish language is in Sweden. A 67-year-old Nigerian woman who immigrated to Sweden as early as the early 80s stated that people did not comprehend English as well as they do now, and it was difficult to integrate into society by speaking just English then.

“Language, in my opinion, is everything. At work, I noticed a difference. Most Europeans who learned Swedish did so because they were living in Sweden. But there were a lot of Nigerians here at the time, and they were like, “No, no, I’m perfectly OK. I’m fluent in English.” I noticed a difference in how they fit into the organization. They were unable to interact properly with their coworkers and society at large”. (Respondent F, male)

Many respondents said that most people in Sweden now speak English. However, the oldest residents acknowledged that communicating in English thirty years ago was difficult. Interviewee G related another event from her workplace, this time involving her English-speaking employer and two Swedish coworkers. They cannot communicate with each other, which was an issue. Even though she hails from an English-speaking country, she believes that knowing Swedish is necessary for finding work and integrating. She said that a person who only spoke English would not be fully welcomed into Swedish society.

Furthermore, many respondents indicated that speaking Swedish at work makes it easier to understand Swedish people and aids their integration into society. Nowadays, native English speakers are more interested in speaking Swedish at work, and they believe that learning and speaking Swedish is important.

“Although the working language at my business is technically English, I solely speak Swedish there (laugh). I work with fellow Swedes, and they all communicate in Swedish. As a result, I was frequently self-conscious when speaking English. So, during our working hours at the university, we went over to Swedish early” (Respondent G, male)

In Malmo, respondent H works as a nurse. She believes she may have gone into medicine if it hadn't been for the Swedish language.

“My professional training includes a section of the exam that assesses how patients feel about my language, and my patients have reported that they feel secure around me since they understand Swedish.” (Respondent H, female)

Two of the respondents, however, claimed that learning Swedish is not required for employment. They believe that without learning Swedish, newcomers can find employment in Malmo. They both believe it is dependent on the work. They believe that if a person is looking for professional work, such as that of a doctor, engineer, or designer, then Swedish may be required, but that if the job is not professional, the language is not required. However, both respondents felt that knowing Swedish is necessary for living in Sweden. Language is not important in a job, but it is crucial in life. Interviewee I stated that she does not feel the language will help her find work.

“If you're a professional, I don't think Swedish matters. If you're in Germany and don't speak the language, forget it. You will not be hired. However, I don't get the idea that they care much about language here in Malmo. There are very few locations where you will be considered for a job if you do not speak Swedish. So, I don't think it would have been difficult for me to acquire a job if I had not learned the language; it would not be that different for me” (Respondent I, male)

Respondent Q, another participant, indicated that knowing Swedish is not required to acquire a job in Malmo. Anyone looking for a job that requires schooling might look for work in English. However, if they wish to work in a café, a school, or something similar, they will need to learn Swedish. However, many respondents indicated that surviving in Sweden without knowing Swedish was tough. They believe that learning Swedish will make it easier for them to integrate

into society. Some of the responders talked about their past experiences in Sweden and how they overcame obstacles. One responder described her challenges at work because of her lack of knowledge of the Swedish language when she first arrived in Sweden.

“For the first three years, I worked while studying Swedish. I work in a sales outfit, and a colleague spoke to me in Swedish, which I couldn't understand. I missed a few key points and opportunities. Due to a lack of Swedish language skills, that opportunity was missed. It caused me mental distress. Because I couldn't comprehend the language, I missed out on an opportunity and money. It disturbed me greatly. Learning a language was therefore critical for me now”
(Respondent R, male)

5.2 Cultural Integration

Immigrants, according to Bosswick and Heckmann (2006) must assert their rights and assume their place in society. It can be obtained if they are familiar with the culture and society (ibid). Most responders are enthusiastic about various Swedish cultures. They prefer to read Swedish newspapers, novels, and television programs. Most people like to read Swedish local newspapers every day. Those studying the language believe that viewing Swedish television shows or listening to the radio will help them better comprehend Swedish culture. People with children are particularly interested in children's programs, while others love Swedish drama, films, and music. Moreover, because they now speak Swedish, all the responders are interested in learning more about Swedish culture. Three separate respondents made the following assertions.

“I occasionally watch television, and right now I'm watching Kulturnyheter, a Swedish television program. It is a cultural news program. It's a fascinating program. This program, according to my neighbor, accurately reflects Swedish culture. Every week, I read a Swedish newspaper that is delivered to my house” (Respondent S, male)

“I am a university student and I study my program in Swedish. When I think of Swedish culture, I recall Håkan Hellström (a Swedish musician). Knowing the language assisted me in

understanding Swedish music and musicians. As a result, I use music to define Swedish culture”
(Respondent T, male)

However, not everyone who responded follows Swedish culture daily. Respondent J stated that she watches a few Swedish television shows. But, for the most part, she believes that television shows are not entertaining. She knows Swedish but does not find it fascinating, so she chooses to watch TV shows from her own country.

5.3. Interactive Integration:

Communication skills, according to Bosswick and Heckmann (2006) are essential for social integration. Interaction helps immigrants feel welcomed in their new environment. Immigrants must learn the language and use it with natives before beginning cultural integration. Many respondents discussed how they interacted with Swedish society when they first arrived in Sweden. To improve their language skills, all the respondents used the talking technique. Few respondents said they only engage with their coworkers at work, and even fewer said they hang out with them after work.

“My coworkers periodically invite me to their homes for certain occasions, such as Easter. I communicate with them in Swedish”. (Interviewee L)

Likewise, a few interviewees indicated that they go out with their Swedish coworkers after work and engage in other activities, such as coffee and chatting (Fika), game nights, or visiting various locations. They believe that if they speak Swedish to them, the Swedes will understand them better. They believe that if someone speaks their language (Swedish), that person would easily integrate into their community and become one of them (Swedes). The majority of those interviewed felt that speaking Swedish makes it easier for them to understand Swedish people.

Additionally, several interviewees indicated that they participate in a variety of social media groups and strive to engage with Swedes. Other respondents stated they talk with their neighbors; a few said they used språkcafe, and a few said they tried to communicate in the grocery shop,

which proved to be beneficial. Many respondents indicated that their profession made it possible for them to integrate. When they acquired work, they were able to meet new people and communicate in Swedish, which aided their integration; nonetheless, speaking Swedish is required for employment. As a result, every respondent agreed that language was crucial to their social integration. Many responders explored several new approaches to integrating into society as illustrated by the following quote from Interviewee N.

“I obtained my driver's license. Because my driving license was not converted to Swedish, I opted to get a new one and do everything in Swedish. And once I acquired my driver's license, I felt completely integrated. Because I didn't even understand the system for driving in Sweden, it is so different here. They are not at all like Nigerians. The rules are completely different, as are the signs. This was quite beneficial to the integration process”. (Interviewee N)

Another participant is a highly social person. She speaks Swedish fluently and attends exercise sessions where she connects with many Swedes. She frequently meets Swedish folks for lunch, walks with them, and socializes with them. Another respondent believes that if she improves her Swedish, she will be able to interact with more people in the future. She believes she can do many things that she is now unable to accomplish. She stated that she frequently wants to assist people on the street but is unable to do so since she does not speak Swedish fluently.

Furthermore, a respondent described her experiences as a newcomer to Sweden who couldn't communicate in Swedish:

“Because I didn't speak Swedish, I had some difficulties. You may feel foolish at times. You have the feeling of a child. The cultural roots are something you are unaware of. You also lack the words necessary to express yourself. When I went to see a friend, his son asked his mother, “Is this lady foolish?” “Yes, that's exactly how I feel,” I realized later. I felt foolish.” (Interviewee M)

Some other participant feels the same way about not understanding the language:

“Natives think you're stupid if you don't speak their language (laugh). For some reason, it's as if you don't lack understanding of the subject but don't know how to convey it, and others assume

you don't know anything about the subject because of it. So, when you know the language, that's a major difference". (Interviewee O)

One interviewee stated that if her Swedish improves, she will be able to perform many things she currently cannot:

"I believe I will be able to interact with others more, even in the public. I occasionally wish to assist someone on the street, but I am unable to do so because I do not speak Swedish fluently"
(interviewee k)

Moreover, other interviewees, on the other hand, have different perspectives on engaging with Swedes. They believe that because of the language barrier, they can easily communicate with Swedes in Swedish, but if they must pick between going out and interacting with other immigrants, they will choose the latter. Two Nigerian women, both of whom had lived in Malmo for a long time, claimed the same thing. They believe that if you are an immigrant, most of your friends will be immigrants as well. A participant was asked how frequently they interact with people from Sweden. "Poorly," she responded. "This is just completely impossible," said another respondent. One responder indicated that she had more international friends than Swedes. Besides, most respondents stated that they only connect with Swedes at work and that they do not interact with Swedes outside of work. Even though she speaks Swedish, one of the respondents indicated that she had no social life because she had no one with whom she could communicate or socialize.

Furthermore, according to a respondent with a Swedish partner, she solely interacts with her husband:

"Because my hubby is Swedish, we naturally interact. Apart from that, I'm not sure how I feel about it (paused)... If I could select whom I spend my free time with, I would always prefer non-Swedes (Laughs)".

When they were asked about their interactions with Swedes during the interview, they revealed some more fascinating information. Many respondents indicated that the Swedish people are cold, antisocial, and reserved, making interaction impossible. Another male participant who defines Swedish culture in this way—*I suppose I can sum it up by stating they're unsociable.* Another female participant believes that Swedish people are cold and unsociable, and they do not talk much.

“The Swedish people are socially calm and silent, with little engagement with immigrants. I've been in this country for nearly eight years. And I don't think I can think of a single Swedish individual with whom we are close friends. We've been living side by side with the Swedish family for almost three years. But other than saying hello to each other, we didn't have any interaction” (interviewee S)

Other participants answered that Swedish people are reserved and that making friends with them, even if you speak Swedish, is difficult. It was difficult for her to make friends here. People are more cautious. It's also critical to know how to approach individuals. According to one respondent:

“Interaction with them is difficult. Making friends with them is quite difficult. They are shy. Unless you are working with them, it takes time to get to know them. Nonetheless, they are reserved”. (Interviewee J)

Additionally, another new immigrant to Sweden (Respondent R) stated that he is learning the language to integrate into society. He contacted a government agency to inquire and asked if he could speak English, but the attendant declined. He struggled to communicate since he had to think about what to say.

5.4 Identification Integration

All the interviewees had different perspectives about belonging. Most respondents experience a sense of belonging when speaking Swedish, and only a minority believe they will feel a sense of belonging once they have mastered the language. However, a prevalent perspective among these respondents is that speaking Swedish makes them feel more connected to Swedish society. They feel that acquiring the Swedish language helps them feel more at home. All the interviewees are fluent in English, but they believe that speaking English in Sweden will make them feel like an outsider. When an immigrant learns Swedish and relates to other people in that language, society considers them a member of the community, giving them a sense of belonging. According to one respondent:

“Although everyone speaks excellent English, whenever they speak Swedish with me, however, it feels different. When people speak in their native language, they are considerably more likely to be open to you. It's a completely different experience” (interviewee JKL)

One participant described how she engaged with Swedish in a group setting. She asserted

“When you're in a group and most of the people speak Swedish, they'll all speak Swedish. Even if everyone communicates in English, they will eventually turn to Swedish. You'll be seated alone at the table, feeling isolated”. (Interviewee AB)

Furthermore, Respondent CC asserted that,

“If you don't speak Swedish and don't understand what's going on, you'll be instantly excluded”.

When a new immigrant residing in southern Malmo speaks Swedish, she feels at home. She has lived in Malmo for the past 2 years.

“I spoke up in the grocery, and despite my poor Swedish, everyone comprehended what I was searching for, which made me delighted and made me feel more positive. That day, I had the impression that if I learned Swedish and spoke it fluently, this could be my home”. (Interviewee CD)

Some other participant believes that she struggles with a sense of belonging. However, she believes that speaking fluent Swedish will greatly assist her in feeling a sense of belonging in the future. (Interviewee DD). However, while some respondents think that speaking Swedish gives them a sense of belonging, others claim that it does not. They believe that, despite speaking Swedish, they lack a sense of belonging, because they believe that knowing Swedish alone is insufficient to feel at home. Here are some quotes from people who don't feel like they belong because of their language:

“I can communicate in Swedish, but I don't believe it offers me a sense of belonging. It still comes down to several other factors, such as your origins and cultural differences. “No, I don't feel that”. I say”. (Interviewee CK)

“I don't think I'll ever feel fully at home here, no matter how much Swedish I try to speak. When I speak Swedish with other Swedish people, such as in class, we talk throughout school hours. And I'm still not sure where I fit in, because our class includes both Swedes and immigrants. There is a big difference”. (Interviewee BK)

“I don't think language gives you a sense of belonging. Even though you speak decent Swedish, it still comes down to several other factors, such as your origins and cultural differences. So, I don't feel any sense of belonging”. (Interviewee BF)

Language, according to one respondent (XY), does not give one a sense of belonging in the host society. He argued that naturalization or citizenship is more crucial for a sense of belonging.

5.5 Some of the Responders' most prevalent expressions:

Several of the respondents stressed the term "confident" to express their experiences after acquiring the language. They believe that speaking Swedish helps them feel more at ease. Those who are new to Sweden and are having difficulty integrating felt that if they could speak Swedish better, they would feel more at ease and be able to integrate more readily. Understanding Swedish is also required for greater possibilities, according to some respondents, who believe that knowing Swedish puts them in a better position at work.

"I feel confident now that I can communicate in Swedish and understand what is going on around me." (Interviewee DC)

"I believe that if I speak fluent Swedish, I will be able to apply for more jobs and will be able to interact with the Swedish people more easily since I will understand their sense of humor (laugh). I also believe I will be much more confident than I am now". (ZO, the interviewee)

"I gain confidence when I study Swedish. I was able to attend job interviews, and converse with colleagues or even strangers. Because I have high linguistic competence, I feel more confident". (Interviewee BK)

"I have more confidence communicating in Swedish and I can converse for two hours in Swedish; it's not a problem for me (lol). And, of course, pursuing a career in Sweden would have been doable. It will aid me in realizing my ambition." (Interviewee OBJ)

Some participants stated that knowing Swedish helps them obtain "better prospects." They believe it is because of the Swedish language, they are now in a better position at work.

Because of my Swedish proficiency, I had better prospects. (Interviewee BZ)

Speaking and understanding Swedish gives you better prospects in a work environment.

(Interviewee BYE)

"Better prospect" and "confidence" are the most useful linguistic terms for these responders. They have better prospects in the workplace, which falls under the structural integration dimension, and when they say confident, they suggest that the language helps them interact better, which falls under the interactive integration dimension.

6 Discussions:

The interviews revealed that respondents value language in various ways about numerous theoretical dimensions of social integration. According to these respondents, language helps them enter the main social institutions in the structural dimension. Most respondents stated that they were employed because of their Swedish language proficiency. As a result, language assists them in this structural dimension. The language was also thought to be significant for the cultural dimension, as it helped respondents grasp Swedish culture through watching TV programs. Because they speak Swedish, many of the respondents can follow Swedish culture through interactions at events. In this cultural context, language is beneficial to these Nigerian immigrants.

Additionally, language appears to work differently for the respondents when it comes to the interactive dimension. Some argue that language enables them to communicate with others and to be accepted by the host society. However, they believe that even if they could communicate in Swedish, there would always be a barrier. Immigrants prefer to interact with fellow immigrants or citizens of their home country. They also believe that Swedes prefer to interact with fellow Swedes rather than immigrants. As a result, respondents only view the language as partially integrated into this interactive integration dimension.

Moreover, the identification dimension has some differences. When speaking the language, some respondents feel a sense of belonging, while others do not. Some of the respondents are struggling with the language and believe that speaking fluent Swedish will help them feel more at home in the future. Some believe that naturalization, but not language, can provide a sense of belonging. Consequently, one could argue that language does not entirely assist them in the identification integration dimension.

Furthermore, the results of the interviews demonstrate that the respondents had various perspectives on how language affects their social integration. Most of them believe that learning a language improves their job prospects and makes them feel safer and at ease in Swedish culture. As a result, language is regarded as one of the most important structural elements, and it also aids in the acquisition of Swedish cultural knowledge. They are easily integrated into the basic institutions of society and culture thanks to the language. While some respondents indicated that speaking Swedish helps them engage with Swedes, others claimed that other barriers make it difficult to integrate with the Swedish people.

Finally, some interviewees believe that when they communicate, language provides them with a sense of belonging, but the majority do not. It follows that, in the interaction and identification dimensions, the language does not help so much, according to these respondents. The study's key contribution is to better understand how language helps in shaping these four aspects of Bosswick and Heckmann's social integration dimension for Nigerian immigrants in Malmo.

7 Conclusion:

The purpose of this thesis is to explore how Nigerian migrants in Malmo, Sweden, perceive that language shaped their social integration in Malmo, Sweden. The social integration of Nigerian migrants will make a substantial contribution to Swedish society. Nigerian immigrants play an important role in this city, and their integration into society will be reflected in the areas of social interaction, cultural awareness, sense of belonging, and access to basic institutions. I conducted fifteen semi-structured interviews with Nigerian immigrants in Malmo, using Bosswick and Heckmann's four dimensions of social integration theory. The relevance of language in the social

integration process received varied results in the study. While many previous types of research have shown that language is important for immigrants' social integration, my findings suggest that respondents' experiences with language in the social integration process are varied. Some respondents indicated that language aided them, while others reported that it did not. Most of them, on the other hand, believe that knowing Swedish is necessary for living in Sweden.

Finally, some respondents believe that language is an important aspect of successful integration. When they speak Swedish, they feel more at ease, and it affords them more options at work. In both structural and cultural dimensions, language can have an impact on Nigerian immigrants. However, some respondents claim that it does not "completely" influence their integration within the interaction and identification dimensions. When they speak Swedish, for example, few of the respondents feel at home. As a result, contrary to prior studies on the value of language, some of the respondents in this study do not believe that language has an impact on their social integration in their new home country. As a result, even if they attempt to learn Swedish, they do not believe it will aid their integration into society. Even if they speak fluent Swedish, some Nigerian immigrants prefer to connect with other ethnic groups rather than Swedes, according to the study.

This research has contributed to a better understanding of how Nigerian immigrants in Malmo perceive the language has shaped their socio-cultural integration. However, more research on a larger scale is needed to gain a better understanding of the issue, such as the socio-cultural integration of Nigerian immigrants from other cities in Sweden or other countries. Because I received such many male responses, future research should investigate gender differences in perceptions of how language shaped their social integration.

List of References:

- Awori, J. (2019) *Challenges of Professional Integration Experiences of Non-EU Highly Skilled Professional Immigrants in Gothenburg, Sweden*. Master's Thesis. Gothenburg, Sweden.
- Bell, J. (2006). Doing your research project. *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 37(5), pp.813-813.
- Bosswick, W., and Heckmann, F. (2007). Integration of Immigrants: *Contribution of local and regional authorities*. pp. 2-35.
- Bryman, A. (2012) *Social research methods*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bryman, A. and Bell, E. (2007) *Business research methods*. Oxford University Press.
- Creswell, J., W. and Creswell, J., D. (2018) *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. 5th ed. Los Angeles: SAGE, pp.1-7.
- de Vroome, T., Martinovic, B. and Verkuyten, M. (2014) The integration paradox: Level of education and immigrants' attitudes towards natives and the host society. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, 20(2), pp.166-175.
- Denscombe, M. (2010) *EBOOK: The Good Research Guide: For Small-Scale Social Research Projects*. Open University Press.
- Denscombe, M. (2003) *EBOOK: The Good Research Guide: For Small-Scale Social Research Projects*. Open University Press.
- Esser, H. (2004) Does the "New" Immigration Require a "New" Theory of Intergenerational Integration? *International Migration Review*, 38(3), pp.1126-1159.
- Fakih, Z. (2017) *Labour Market Integration of Female Refugees: A comparative study of the Swedish and Norwegian labor markets*. Master Thesis. University of Gothenburg. Online: Available at: <http://hdl.handle.net/2077/54490> [Accessed 19 April 2022].
- Fedyuk, O. and Zentai, V. (2018) The Interview in Migration Studies: A Step towards a Dialogue and Knowledge Co-production? *IMISCOE Research Series*, pp.171-188.
- Gherghina, S., Plopeanu, A. and Necula, C. (2020) The Impact of Socio-Cultural Integration on Return Intentions: Evidence from a Survey on Romanian Migrants. *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies*, 18(4), pp.515-528.
- Giuliano, P. (2007) Living Arrangements in Western Europe: Does Cultural Origin Matter? *Journal of the European Economic Association*, 5(5), pp.927-952.

- Gogonas, N. and Michail, D. (2014) Ethnolinguistic vitality, language use and social integration amongst Albanian immigrants in Greece. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 36(2), pp.198-211.
- Goodman, S. (2012) Fortifying Citizenship: Policy Strategies for Civic Integration in Western Europe. *World Politics*, 64(4), pp.659-698.
- Hochman, O. and Davidov, E. (2014) Relations between Second-Language Proficiency and National Identification: The Case of Immigrants in Germany. *European Sociological Review*, 30(3), pp.344-359.
- Jaeger, F., Pellaud, N., Laville, B. and Klauser, P. (2019) Barriers to and solutions for addressing insufficient professional interpreter use in primary healthcare. *BMC Health Services Research*, 19(1).
- Jandt, F. (2004) *An introduction to intercultural communication*. 4th Edition. Sage Publications.
- Kvale, S. (1996). *InterViews: An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Laurentsyeva, N. and Venturini, A. (2017) The Social Integration of Immigrants and the Role of Policy-A Literature Review. *Inter-economics*, 52(5), pp.285-292.
- Milani, T. (2008) Language testing and citizenship: A language ideological debate in Sweden. *Language in Society: Cambridge University Press* Vol. 37, No. 1. (pp. 27- 59).
- Mohd Arifin, S., R. (2018). Ethical Considerations in Qualitative Study: *International Journal of Care Scholars*, 1(2), 30–33.
- Moses, J., W., and Knutsen, T., L. (2019) *Ways of knowing: Competing Methodologies in Social and Political Research*. 3rd ed. London: Red Globe Press.
- Naderifar, M., Goli, H. and Ghaljaie, F. (2017) Snowball Sampling: A Purposeful Method of Sampling in Qualitative Research. *Strides in Development of Medical Education*, 14(3).
- OECD (2018) The resilience of students with an immigrant background: Factors that shape well-being, OECD Publishing, Paris.
- Punch, K., and Oancea, A. (2014). *Introduction to research methods in education*. 4th edition. Singapore: SAGE Publications.
- Regeringskansliet. (2003/4) A Summary of Government Communication 2003/04:129. In A Swedish Strategy for Sustainable Development – Economic, Social and Environmental. P.14
- Raymond, M. (1995) *Interpersonal Communication Readings in Theory and Research*. San Diego, California: Harcourt College Publisher.

Rogova, L. (2014) *The Key to Integration. A Study of Language as a Policy Strategy for Social Integration of Immigrants in Sweden*. Master of Science in Welfare Policies and Management. Lund University.

Stadler, A. (2016) *The challenged nation-state: How to successfully integrate refugees into German society*. Master's Thesis. Uppsala University.

Stebbins, R. (2001) *Exploratory research in the social sciences*. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications.

Van Tubergen, F., and Kalmijn, M. (2008) Language Proficiency and Usage Among Immigrants in the Netherlands: Incentives or Opportunities? *European Sociological Review*, 25(2), pp.169-182.

Walliman, N. (2010) *Research methods: The Basics*. 1st ed. London: Routledge.

Wiesbrock, A. (2011) The Integration of Immigrants in Sweden: A Model for the European Union? *International Migration*, 49(4), pp.48-66

Yin, R. (2003) *Case study research* 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 Letter of Consent



MALMÖ UNIVERSITY

**FACULTY OF CULTURE
AND SOCIETY**

Consent for Participation in a Research Interview

Topic: Language as a Means of Socio-Cultural Integration: A Perception of Nigeria Migrants in Malmo, Sweden.

I agree to participate in a bachelor thesis led by Paschal Dabrinze from the faculty of culture and society, Malmo University Sweden. The purpose of this document is to specify the terms of my participation in the research through being interviewed.

Firstly, I have been given sufficient information about this research project. The purpose of my participation as an interviewee in this project has been explained to me and is clear.

Secondly, my participation as an interviewee in this bachelor thesis is voluntary. Moreover, I have understood that I can withdraw at any time

Thirdly, Participation involves being interviewed by Paschal Dabrinze from Malmo University Sweden. The interview will last approximately one hour. I allow Paschal Dabrinze to take written notes and video record our discussions during the interview. However, he will delete the recording after the data have been transcribed.

Fourthly. I have the right not to answer any of the questions. If I feel uncomfortable in any way during the interview session, I have the right to withdraw from the interview.

Fifthly, I have been given the information that, if I wish so, the researcher will not identify me by name or function in any reports using information obtained from this interview, and that my confidentiality as a participant in this study will remain secure. In all cases, subsequent uses of records and data will be subject to standard data use policies at the

EUI (Data Protection Policy)

Sixthly, I have read and understood the points and statements of this form. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

Finally. I have been given a copy of this consent form co-signed by Paschal Dabrinze.

Participant's Signature Date

Signature Date

Paschal C.C. Dabrinze

Signature Date

For further information, please contact: paschal.dabrinze@fusyd.net

Appendix 2: Interview Questions

Interview Questions

Basic Information: The purpose of these four questions is to get the basic information about the immigrant to know something about them.

Question:

-Tell me a bit about your background?

1. Structural integration: The purpose of these questions is to know their experiences in accessing the main institutions in Sweden.

Questions:

-What is your experience in learning Swedish in the language school?

-Did it help to integrate into the labor market?

2. Cultural integration: The purpose of these questions is to know how language helps they engage in the culture

- What are your thoughts on Swedish culture?

- Do you engage in it in any way?

3. Interactive integration

The purpose of these questions is to know how they interact and socially involved with the host society.

-Describe your social life?

-Do you interact with the native Swedes in any way?

4. Identification integration: The purpose of these questions is to know about the sense of belongingness when they speak Swedish.

- Do you feel Swedish?

-Do you feel part of society?

-Do you feel at home