Integration through language learning

How do participants experience the Red Cross language practice program in terms of integration?

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IV
Abstract

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The study has explored the experiences of the participants while attending the Red Cross Norwegian Training Program with a specific focus on how this program has provided opportunities to the participants to adapt into the Norwegian society. The current study is based on qualitative data collected from twelve individual interviews and two focus group interviews with immigrants who currently attend the Red Cross Norwegian Training Program. The thesis is based on framework of Diaz’s Model of Integration and Nelson & Prilleltensky’s Prevention of psychological and social problems and Promotion of well-being. I have also used Urie Bronfenbrenner’s ecological model of human development to present three types of prevention and promotion. The study adopts a thematic analysis and the experiences of the participants will be discussed with regards to previous challenges, their own sense of improvements in language and what this means for their integration as well as remaining challenges faced by the informants. Based on the findings of the current study, social network, employment, and better mental health appear as the most important aspects of this training program along with the language learning process itself, in terms of integration.
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Introduction

Since the late 1960’s there has been a strong engagement in relation to migration to Norway (Kumar & Viken, 2010). A statistical report from 2015 shows that approximately 805 000 people live in Norway with immigrant background, and that this constitutes 16% of the total population in the country (IMDi, 2015). The largest groups of immigrants come from Poland, Lithuania, Somalia, Sweden, Pakistan and Iraq (IMDi, 2015). Immigrants are coming to Norway on the basis of work permit, family reunion, as asylum seekers and as refugees. As a result of immigration, societies become multicultural (Blokland & Eijk, 2009) and immigrants may face a number of different challenges in their process of adapting into a new society (Iversen, Sveaass & Morken, 2012).

Integration of immigrants has for many years been an important issue on the political agenda in Norway (NOU, 2011:2014). Integration is about how immigrants can be part of the host society. There has been an ongoing discussion as to what are the conditions for the constructive integration of immigrants and what strategies are the best for obtaining integration in a society. According to Ager & Strang (2008) being able to speak the language of the host country is identified as central to the integration process. Johnston (2015) said that language is the key to integration. Integration of immigrants is seen as essential to ensure social cohesion and to achieve the government’s goal of making Norway to “the most inclusive society in the world” (NOU, 2011:2014).

In Norway, language cafes and conversation groups are increasingly becoming an option for language learning and such programs may well be important ways to support integration (Johnston, 2015). There are language cafés in libraries all around Norway where participants are learning the language and through this also expanding their social networks (Johnston, 2015). The language cafés are also arranged by the Red Cross in Norway and all these initiatives are very well visited. This shows that language learning plays an important role in the lives of the immigrants and hopefully in their adaptation into a new society.

Red Cross took an initiative in 2011 and started a Norwegian Training Program (NTP) for the immigrants living in Norway. The main objective of this program is to promote integration. The NTP is a free offer, open to everyone who wants Norwegian language practice that focuses on verbal practice and not on the written practice. Volunteers working for the Red Cross are conducting this program. This is explained in further detail in the background section. Thanks to the Red Cross for making this research possible and for providing me the opportunity to explore the experiences of immigrants who attend the NTP. The purpose of such kinds of programs such as (the NTP & the language cafes) is to
introduce the newcomers to the Norwegian language and enable them to enter the labour market (Hagelund, 2005). Moreover, the foreign language training program provides opportunities to the newcomers to be successfully integrated (Hagelund, 2005).

**Purpose of the Research**

The objective of my project is not to evaluate the language skills of the participants but to understand the experiences of the immigrants in terms of integration into the Norwegian society, based on their participation in the training program. This will be explored by looking into the experiences of those immigrants who are currently attending the NTP. And finally, I am very interested in knowing more about how the actual participants are reacting to this program, what aspects of the program they find important and meaningful and whether it helps them in feeling more “at home” or part of the community where they now live. This is something that may also be of interest to know about, for those who actually run this program, i.e. Red Cross and its staff of engaged volunteers. The whole research process was initiated, developed and conducted by me. This to underline that it is not an evaluation of the training program but rather a way of learning more about how participants experience such programs in terms of integration.

**The Empirical Study**

The participants in the study are the immigrants who currently attend the NTP. I have conducted twelve individual interviews and two focus group interviews. My master thesis is based on the framework of Diaz’s Model of Integration and Nelson & Prilleltensky’s Prevention of psychological and social problems and Promotion of well-being. In addition, I have used Urie Bronfenbrenner’s ecological model of human development to present three types of prevention and promotion. Braun and Clarke’s thematic analysis is used for the analysis of the data obtained as part of this study.

**Thesis Structure**

In the following chapter the background of this study will be briefly explained. I will then explain a description of the theoretical perspective used in the analysis. The chapter on design and methodology begins with the epistemological approach and the results are then presented, followed by a discussion and policy implications along with limitations and further research. Finally a conclusion is presented.
Background

Field of Interest and the Research Interest

I have always been interested in the integration process of immigrants living in Norway and their challenges in the Norwegian society. I was thus very fortunate to come across the Red Cross and learn about this project. Based on the information I received about this training program I found that this could be a useful project to look into as an example of what I have wanted to study. The knowledge interest is how participants experience the Norwegian Training Program in relation to their integration process in the Norwegian society. The reason I am interested in exploring this study, and why I am especially motivated to conduct this study is that I have an immigrant background myself and I can understand the importance of Norwegian language to integrate into the Norwegian society. And at this point, my interest is in the usefulness of this kind of language training and how this constitute a practical approach for integration, based on the experiences of those who are attending this program.

Language Acquisition, Employment and Integration

One of the biggest challenges for immigrants in a new country as already referred to, is to learn the language of the host country. There are at all times, different ways in which language is acquired, for example formal training through language courses and by everyday practice. But in this study language acquisition through active training (NTP) is obtained through verbal practice.

Employment may be regraded as the most important integration arena in the community, and the Red Cross believes that the key to employment and social inclusion lies in language skills (Nisse & Johannesen, 2015). Being able to speak the main language of the host community is consistently identified as central to the integration process. As I have mentioned earlier, Red Cross started this program in 2011 and it has, as will be described below, in few years become extremely popular among immigrants.

Presentation of the Red Cross

Those who in fact are trainers are persons who voluntarily and freely engage in this work and this service would not have been possible without the volunteers who conduct the NTP. It is vital for them to ensure that the quality is good and that the participants experience the training as relevant and meaningful. Language training takes place twice a week i.e. Tuesdays and Saturdays at different points in time, such as morning, afternoon and evenings.
and in different places or locations in Oslo (Nisse & Johannesen, 2015). The volunteers do not register the names of the participants but they register the language (mother tongue), gender, age and the total number of participants. In 2014 the total number of participants were 4000 and people with 80 different languages participated in the Norwegian Training Program. The total number of participants who attended the NTP from the period January 2015 to June 2015 was 4176 with approximately equal number of men and women (Red Cross, 2015). The age group ranged from 17 to 80 years and people from 76 different languages (mother tongue) participated in that period (Red Cross, 2015). Participants are immigrant workers, asylum seekers, Au pairs, persons who cannot read and write, the so-called "paperless" or undocumented persons, students and academics (Red Cross, 2015). The participants are divided into three levels according to their language level by the volunteers i.e. the basic level, the intermediate level and the higher level, also called level1, level 2 and level 3 respectively (Red Cross, 2015). They do not have any specific syllabus but they train their participants according to their level of knowledge with the Norwegian language.

The training is held in such a way that the volunteers and the participants sit around the table and talk about different topics such as current affairs, issues based on the media, actual political questions or personal topics etc. Each group of five or six participants has one volunteer. The volunteers use different materials to train their participants for example folders with pictures and themes for different tasks and games like memory and quiz card, newspaper and clock models, words and expression/phrases cards, board games and boxes with contents. In order to create a nice atmosphere, the volunteers serve coffee, tea and biscuits to the participants.

**Theoretical Framework**

The study of integration has increased over the last fifty years in line with the ongoing migration of people in the world (Diaz, 1993). Social science has a long tradition of theoretical and empirical research in the area of the integration of individuals and groups into the larger societies (Diaz, 1993). In culturally heterogenous societies people are confronted with acculturation issues (Simon, 2004). John W. Berry's Social-Psychological Model (1997) offers four different strategies of acculturation and explains how societies become “culturally plural” and form different “cultural groups” as a result of immigration. According to Berry (1997), the four different acculturation strategies are the following:

*Integration* occurs when the individual maintains balance between cultural integrity and the participation in the majority group of the society. *Assimilation* occurs when the
individual does not want to maintain their cultural identity and adapts a new identity of the majority group of the new country. Separation is defined as when the individual wants to retain his or her own cultural identity and avoids interaction with the dominant group of the society. It is opposite to assimilation. Marginalization happens when there is a lack of both in- and out-group relations, which leads to neither maintenance of their cultural identity nor participation in the new society of the dominant group (Berry, 1997).

José Alberto Diaz’s theory of integration (1993) has been a good approach for my research study due to its greater focus on different dimensions of integration as compared to Berry’s theory of acculturation strategies (1997). Diaz’s theory (1993) emphasises integration as a process with different dimensions and that different dimensions need to contribute collectively to achieve integration. Thus, there will be a need for integration on many different aspects of life and to integrate in one dimension does not necessarily means one is fully integrated into society. This theory can hopefully contribute to a better understanding of this study.

According to Diaz (1993), “Integration is achieved when migrants become a working part of their adopted society, take on many of its attitudes and behavior patterns, and participate freely in its activities, but at the same time retain a measure of their original cultural identity and ethnicity” (p.16).

Diaz (1993) presented five different dimensions of integration, that is, communicative integration, structural integration, political integration, social integration and personal integration. Out of which communicative integration is particular relevant here, as the most fundamental condition for all the succeeding phases is Communicative integration. Communicative integration can be seen as a basic set of skills that makes possible access to other dimensions of integration. According to this view communicative integration is the starting point from where one can build other dimensions of integration further. Following are the different dimensions of integration presented by Diaz:

**Communicative Integration**

Communicative integration is the participation of the immigrants in the communicative structure of the host society. Diaz has identified this phase of integration into two relevant variables i.e. to learn the language of the host country and consumption of mass media (Diaz, 1993). Communicative integration, in this study, can be relevant to see, firstly how participants learn the Norwegian language through the NTP and their experiences in order to integrate in the Norwegian society. Secondly mass media consumption which can be
relevant to see whether participants learn Norwegian through reading newspaper, watching TV, listening to the radio.

**Social Integration**

Integration is the process of becoming part of the social life in the host society. One of the most important dimensions of integration is social integration. It is the reconstruction of the social life of the immigrants with the new society and the participation of the minority group relations with the majority society but not with the immigrant community (Diaz, 1993). This can be relevant to see how participants in the current study, link the language with social integration, directly or indirectly.

**Structural Integration**

Structural integration is the process of participation of the immigrants in the occupational system and economical life of the host society (Diaz, 1993). In an organized social life, the economic life and the labor market are the most important dimensions, in which the integration of immigrants takes place into the host society. The higher the level of participation of immigrants in the occupational rank the higher the structural integrated a person is (Diaz, 1993). Furthermore, it will be interesting to study the experiences of the participants in the current study how language learning is helping them to integrate in other dimensions of integration such as structural integration.

**Personal Integration**

Personal integration is the personal satisfaction and success of the immigrants with their personal life into the new society (Diaz, 1993). It will be interesting to see how participants feel regarding their lives in the Norwegian society as a result of attending the language learning program.

**Political Integration**

Political integration is the participation of the immigrants to the elections, social organizations and political mobilization of the host country. Changing the citizenship to get the native citizenship of the host country is also an indicator of the political integration. It is actually the choice of the immigrants to change the citizenship in order to increase the benefits from political and legal rights (Diaz, 1993). The current study has no data material to be able to look at participation of immigrants in the elections, political parties or changing
their citizenship as a result of attending the language training program. Therefore, I exclude political integration from the study.

The utility of Diaz’s theory is that these multiple dimensions of the integration process provide a comprehensive way to broadly define the integration process and how the NTP is helping the participants to integrate in the Norwegian society.

**Nelson & Prilleltensky’s Perspective of Prevention & Promotion (Well-being)**

As migration may be a risk factor in relation to developing mental health problems (Kumar & Viken, 2010), I will explore the concept of prevention of mental and social problems related to migration. Being unable to speak the language of the host country leads to difficulties to adapt into a new host society (Alberdi & Nørregaard, 2002). Establishing good relations with others is based on an ability to communicate but poor language skills make such relationships difficult (Alberdi & Nørregaard, 2002). This shows that migration itself is not necessarily responsible for the risk for mental and social health issues for immigrants, but lack of language skills, could be one of the risk factors. Poor adaptation to the host society can have an impact on mental health of the refugees which can, in turn, effect the integration process (Bhugra, Graig, & Bhui, 2010; Hauff & Vaglum, 1997; Virta, Sam, & Westin, 2004). Relevant to the discussion of ways in which immigrants integrate into a society and develop ties with the new community, are aspects related to the promotion of health and well-being as well as prevention of illness or psychological distress. I have used another perspective to highlight this discussion as Diaz’s theory does not directly focus on prevention and promotion in relation to health. Theoretical thinking about prevention and promotion can be seen as a complementary perspective to Diaz’s theory of integration. The perspective of prevention and promotion can be relevant in the current study, in order to understand the participants’ experience of a relationship (or no relationship) between ”participation in the NTP” and ”better mental and social health”. The concepts of prevention and promotion reflect the value of health and are used to promote well-being and prevent psychosocial problems (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010). Different levels of prevention and promotion (well-being) will be explained further in detail below.

Prevention is an important part of community psychology work. Prevention can be divided into three types; primary, secondary and tertiary prevention (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010). Primary prevention is aimed at the general population, with the aim of reducing the risk of a problem (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010). Secondary prevention is directed against a specific risk group, to prevent the tendency for problems to develop further (Nelson &
Finally there is tertiary prevention, which is aimed at individuals who already have a problem, to be rehabilitated, and prevent recurrence (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010).

Moreover, Nelson and Prilleltensky (2010) divide well-being into three levels; personal well-being, relational well-being and collective well-being. On a personal level, well-being involves perceived control over their own lives, confidence, and positive identity (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010). Relational well-being means to enter into positive and supportive social relationships, and participation in "community" (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010). On a collective level well-being means to have access to resources such as job opportunities, education and a safe environment. These three levels can be considered to be similar with some of the dimensions of Diaz’s theory such as personal well-being with personal integration, relational well-being with social integration and collective well-being with communicative and structural integration. It will be interesting to see how the concept of prevention and promotion can be relevant to the current study. These perspectives are valuable to understand how the NTP can be relevant in order to prevent psychological and social problems and promote well-being of the participants. It is important to note that the three forms of well-being are relevant to the individual’s development across all systems that are part of the ecological model (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010).

Ecological Levels

To have a better understanding of the concept of prevention and promotion I will present Urie Bronfenbrenner’s ecological model of human development that consists of three different levels, that is, micro-level, meso-level and macro-level (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, 1994). Urie Bronfenbrenner’s ecological model of human development must be understood on the basis of the systems human beings live in. The systems are divided into several levels; often as micro-systems, meso-systems and macro-systems, which are interrelated. That is, all systems, including the individual himself, are always in mutual influence on one another. Micro-system is the individual’s immediate sphere, which includes close family, social networks, and persons with direct influence on the individual. Meso-system is comprised of organizations and institutions individuals spend a lot of time in, such as schools, work or sports teams. Outside this is macro-system consisting of the political system, shared norms and values (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, 1994). The principle of prevention and promotion can be applied at different ecological levels. Micro-level prevention seeks to promote personal well-
being, whereas meso-level prevention seeks to promote relational well-being and macro-level prevention seeks to promote collective well-being (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010). This can be relevant to understand how the NTP works for the participants in a new society in a broader spectrum.

**Design and Methodology**

**Epistemology**

This is a qualitative study based on the semi-structured individual interviews and the focus group interviews. The thesis is positioned within a Social Constructivist approach in order to explore the research question. This approach seems more capable of capturing the different constructions of their experiences with the training program and the influence this has had on their life situations and perceptions. This approach argues that the individual experiences are not a direct reflection of the surroundings, but an interpretation of these (Burr, 1995). Social Constructionism is the theory about how people perceive and understand the world and how this understanding is relative to their historical/contexual and cultural backgrounds. The ways of understanding are not specific to particular culture and periods of history but they are products of that culture and history (Burr, 1995).

**Criteria of Recruitment**

The main criteria for participation in this study was that the participants currently attend the NTP. The participants are from all age groups, both men and women are included and from different countries. I wanted participants from all the three levels of the NTP for individual interviews. The criteria for the focus group interview were the same except for that the participants had to belong to the NTP level 2 & 3 and not from level 1 due to the challenges related to communicating in group, in Norwegian.

**Recruitment**

In qualitative researching non-probability sampling techniques, which is also called, non-representative sampling, is used. Concretely the following ways of gathering data were chosen. Convenience sampling and criterion sampling techniques are used in the current study and it took place at two different stages. The first step was convenience sampling and the second one was criterion sampling. Convenience sampling is a type of non-probability sampling method that relies on data collection from population members who are
conveniently available to participate in the study (Mertens, 2005). This was done in the following way. A brief presentation of the study was given by the researcher at all the places where the NTP occurs i.e. Deichmansk Library at Akersgata, Deichmansk Library at Majurstuen and Red Cross Office at Christian Krohgsgata. The information letter (see appendix 2) was distributed to the participants at the NTP where there was written, contact information about me (the researcher) and thereafter, those participants, who were interested to participate in the interviews, took contact with me through e-mail and cell phone.

The second sampling strategy was criterion sampling. This is a strategy that involves selection based on a predetermined criterion of importance (Patton, 2002) and criterion sampling can only be used where informants have willingly provided their contact information (Patton, 2002). Criterion sampling is stage 2 in this study where those participants were recruited who already had provided their contact information and my goal was to conduct interviews with participants from of all the three levels of the NTP. This was done in the following way. I noted down the information of those participants who took contact with me through e-mail and cellphone as in convenience sampling. The information was collected in a table. Then I selected the participants based on the predetermined criterion required. As the criteria was to select the participants from all the three levels in the individual interviews and the criteria to select the participants for the focus group interviews was from level 2 and level 3. Then I selected four participants from each level for the individual interviews and sixteen participants from the level 2 and the level 3 for the focus group interviews. The reason that the participants were recruited from the level 2 and the level 3 in focus group interviews was that the participants were able to explain more about their experiences as compare to the participants from level 1.

The Sample

There were eight female and four male participants who participated in the individual interviews. Whereas, in the first focus group interview, there were eight participants, four were female and four were male. In the second focus group interview there were five participants, two were female and three were male. The participants recruited for the focus groups were different from the individual interviews. The age of the participants in the individual interviews were from 26 to 39 and their countries of origin were France, China, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, India, Serbia, Ukraine, Germany and Italy. The participants were selected from all the three levels of the NTP i.e. level 1, level 2 and level 3 of the NTP. The level 1 is the beginner level or the basic level and the participants either cannot speak a word of
Norwegian or can speak few words (Red Cross, 2015). The level 2 is the intermediate level of the NTP and the participants can put together simple sentences (Red Cross, 2015). Whereas, the level 3 is the advanced level or the higher level of the NTP and the participants can lead a simple conversation and discussion (Red Cross, 2015). The period of stay of the participants in Norway was minimum three months and maximum six years.

For ethical reasons the age and background of the participants in focus group interviews were not asked and the interviews started with the main questions right away and the sessions were held in Norwegian language according to the participant’s wish. Except for one individual interview, all other interviews were held in Red Cross offices and the rooms were booked at Red Cross office with the coordination of Project Manager of the NTP.

Interview Schedule

The interviews were conducted and transcribed in the period of November and December 2015. Some of the interviews were conducted in Norwegian and some of the interviews were conducted in English. There was a person in one of the focus groups that needed translation in Urdu and since I speak Urdu this was possible to do. I gave her a brief summary of what was said and also assisted her when she wanted to speak. An audio-recorder device was used to record the interviews, and notes were taken in order to record any significant points and emerging themes from the interviews.

Qualitative Interviewing

Qualitative interviewing is one of the most widely used methods in qualitative research (Mason, 2002). For my study the use of a semi-structured qualitative interview was a suitable methodological approach as I was interested in understanding the participant’s views and experiences in relation to language training and integration into the Norwegian society. The data was collected through twelve semi-structured individual interviews and two focus group interviews.

Semi-structured Individual Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were carried out separately with each participant and it allowed an opportunity for the researcher to ask questions, which encouraged interviewees to talk about their personal views (Willig, 2008). This form of interviewing technique allowed the researcher to establish rapport with each interviewee as it provided a more informal conversational style due to the open-ended nature of the questions. An interview is a
conversation that has a structure and a purpose and through conversation we get to know people’s experiences (Kvale, 1996). A semi-structured interview design allowed the researcher the flexibility to steer the interview in a direction to obtain data that was relevant to the research question of this study. An interview guide was developed that consisted of questions based on the research question (Willig, 2008). The interview guide consisted of roughly 40 open-ended questions, each of which was related to the research questions (see appendix 4). The topic of the research was briefly discussed with each interviewee prior to starting the interview, in order to provide an opportunity for the interviewee to get familiar with what will be discussed and provide detailed responses. The duration of interviews was from one hour to one hour and thirty minutes each and they were recorded using an audio-recorder device. Interview data was fully transcribed and analyzed for interpretation.

Focus Group Interviews

Interviews that are done in groups are often called Focus Groups. This is a method for collecting of qualitative data, which includes group of people gathered for a discussion on the topics or themes you want to investigate (Wilkinson, 2014). It can be described as a semi-structured group session held in an informal setting with the purpose of gathering information (McLafferty, 2004). An advantage of this type of interview is its suitability to study how participant’s views and opinions are constructed, expressed, defended and sometimes modified through discussion and debate with other (Wilkinson, 2014). There are three major components of focus group research as a method devoted to data collection, interaction as a source of data and the active role of the researcher in creating group discussion for data collection (McLafferty, 2004). In the current study, two focus group interviews were conducted after I had completed twelve individual interviews. The focus group interviews were conducted in this study, in order to get the detailed information about the topic of the research. Unlike individual interviews, focus group interviews, in this study, resulted in collecting more detailed information and different point of views of the participants with examples. Focus group interviews, gave me the advantage of being able to observe more detailed interaction among the participants on the topic as compared to the individual interviews where I obtained more comprehensive information. The participants started discussing the relevant topics with examples one topic after another. One of the advantages of focus group is that it produces the concentrated amount of data on precisely about the research topic (Morgan, 1997) and in this study, I was able to collect data more in depth and I
got a better understanding of the themes as compared to what I had obtained from the individual interviews and this will be further presented with the results.

According to Wilkinson (2014) it is in fact a common misconception that people will withhold information about sensitive subjects in a group context. In the current study, however, focus group interviews further contributed to additional perspectives and views that did not emerge in the individual interviews. In fact, group context facilitated extradition of views that were not available in individual interviews. A combination of individual interviews and focus group interviews in the current study, thus, have contributed to more informed findings than would not have been possible with only individual interviews.

As Kvale (2007) suggests, a focus group should consists of between six and ten people. On this background, I invited eight participants in the first focus group and eight in the second, whereas in the second group only five of them turned up. McLafferty (2004) suggests that smaller groups are easier to manage as compared to the bigger groups and I have also experienced that my second group was easier to handle than the first one.

In the focus group interviews, due to ethical considerations, personal/introduction questions were not asked and I right away jumped on to the main questions of the research. The questions were asked from the same interview guide as I used for individual interviews. Both the focus group interviews were held at the Red Cross Office and both the interviews were headed without any assistant. Moreover, it was my first time experience to conduct focus group interviews and as a moderator I faced a few challenges to handle the group interviews as few of the participants were shy and my role as a moderator was to encourage all the participants to talk and involve them in a discussion, facilitating interaction among members and cover important topics and questions related to the research (McLafferty, 2004).

Mason (2002) emphasizes that it requires a lot of planning before implementing a qualitative interview. Proper preparation and efficient planning are essential steps for obtaining high quality data (Wilkinson, 2014). Therefore, I introduced some rules for the group before I proceeded with focus group interviews. I started the focus group interviews by saying that this should be pleasant experience for everyone and everyone should treat each other with respect. I underlined the importance of the participants, being confident in each other and that there were no right or wrong answers. Finally, the participants were encouraged and felt free to disagree and share different thoughts on the subjects discussed and also provide the group with concrete examples.
Ethical and Methodological Considerations

Qualitative researching raises several ethical issues, and some of these issues will be discussed using Brinkmann & Kvale’s (2005) terms of micro-ethics and macro-ethics. Ethics at micro-level refers to the relationship within interview situation, such as, informed consent, confidentiality of the informants and researcher’s role in the study including consequences of the participation in a research project, whereas ethics at macro-level refers to the relations to society and culture at large (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2005). In regard to macro-ethics, the social and ideological consequences of this study as a practice of knowledge production should be considered. In this respect, the study aims to shed a light on the experiences of immigrants in the Norwegian society after coming to Norway during the NTP. It is very important that the researcher is sensitive to ethical issues throughout the whole research process. In regard to micro-ethics, in the current study, the research began after an ethical clearance and approval had been received from NSD (Norwegian Centre for Research Data) (see appendix 1 for the NSD approval). Prior to the interviews, participants were provided with an informed consent letter (see appendix 3 for the consent form) with information and a full explanation of the study and its aims. Participants were informed about their right to withdraw at the time before the interviews had started, and that they were able to withdraw at any point during or after the interview. Also, they were informed at the start of the interview that if they were unsure about any of the questions or felt uncomfortable answering them, then they could ask for clarification or pass questions. They were fully informed about the date, time and location of the interview schedules, and they were asked to contact the researcher by email and cell-phone if they had any question. The participants anonymity and data confidentiality were ensured as the interviews were saved onto an encrypted password protected laptop and these interviews will be deleted once the thesis is submitted. Recordings from the audio-recording device will be deleted and the recordings were not shared with anybody. An audio-recorder device may potentially have made it difficult for participants to respond as openly as they would have done so otherwise. Thus, the researcher ensured anonymity by stating at the start of the interview that interviewee names would not be used both during the interviews and in the data analysis, and instead they were assigned an alphabetical letter for the purpose of data analysis.

In a study positioned within social constructionism it is essential that the researcher also analyzes his or her role (Willig, 2001). Reflexivity relates to epistemology, researcher’s position, research practice and reporting (Willig, 2001). Throughout the research process, reflexivity requires an awareness of the researcher’s contribution to the construction of
knowledge, as well as recognition that it is impossible to remain “outside” of the study (Willig, 2001). Reflexivity is therefore about to reflect on how the researcher’s values, experiences, interests, beliefs, wider aims in life and social identities have shaped the research (Willig, 2001). In the current study, I have experienced that my background as an ethnic minority in Norway gave me some advantages in connection with the participants in the interviews. It appeared that the participants placed me as having some of the same experiences in learning a new language. This could have had an influence on how the participants interacted with me and on what and how they expressed opinions and experiences in interviews. For example, I have also been through the same process myself when I moved to Norway few years ago and I know how important it is to learn the language in order to integrate in a new society. I have tried to be reflexive in relation to how my choices and personal presence during the research process have influenced my findings. I believe that the researcher’s influence on the results is inevitable in the context of research, and I have throughout the process laid emphasis on being explicit on my own bias and what consequences they can get.

**Thematic Analysis**

The analysis is thematic and based on Braun and Clarke (2006). Thematic analysis (TA) is a systematic method widely used in qualitative research for identifying, analyzing and reporting themes and developed on the basis of the data obtained (Braun & Clarke, 2006). TA is suitable for my study because it allows the flexibility in the analysis as it captures the themes about the data in relation to the research question and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set. In TA there is no hard and fast rule to consider specific data as a theme but I have chosen those themes, which can answer my research question and interest. TA can be used both as an inductive (data driven) approach and deductive (theory driven) approach. In the current study, I have used a data driven approach. Furthermore, by using TA one can either utilize a rich description of the entire data set or a detailed account of one particular aspect or theme. I have chosen an approach where I am using a rich description of the entire data set because it answers my research question. In this study, TA is used within the epistemology of social constructionism as it is used to find the subjective and valid views and experiences of the individuals based on their cultural and historical background.

I followed the six stages of TA proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). The first step in Braun and Clarke’s (2006) guide involves becoming familiar with the data and I started the
analysis process by reading my transcribed data material repeatedly. The second part of the analysis includes the re-reading of the data material and generating an initial list of ideas, that is, codes, about what is in the data and what is interesting about them (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Every time I constructed a new code I wrote it down on a sheet next to it, so that I could easily see if an already constructed code matched with the data extract. With a view to make the codes and write the suggested codes down on the paper to see whether it fits to the available data. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), the third phase of the analysis, results in a collection of themes and sub-themes. Different codes combined to form overarching themes and it is usually helpful at this phase to use visual representations to help and sort the different codes into themes. I therefore, conducted a new revision of the theme and sub-themes and derived a thematic map, and removed the codes so that the thematic map only consisted of the themes and their relationships with each other. In the fourth stage I reviewed the themes and checked whether the themes relate to the data and generated a thematic map. I have generated three overarching themes with a variety of sub-themes mentioned. In the fifth stage I defined and named the themes and in the sixth stage, I produced this thesis presenting the result of my analysis.

All the interviews were transcribed by me and the initial encoding process was done with the help of a software program called NVivo. All the data was moved into NVivo and it is very convenient to make codes and themes in it. This software is helpful in terms of structuring and organizing the data material. I also used a pen and a paper to have an overview of the themes. The analysis process involved a continuous movement back and forth between the different steps and I particularly jumped much back and forth between steps three and six. I marked all data according to my selected research questions and I spent a lot of time to cut the quotes in and out of the various documents in the light of every new idea for compositions of data and potential themes. During this process I had several conversations with my supervisors, where we discussed both the data material, which referred to several themes. Based on the analysis, three main themes were identified, that is, previous challenges, improvements and remaining challenges. Additionally, another topic of research was identified where participants talked about the reflections of the study and the suggestions to the Red Cross for future. Citations have been chosen when these seem useful for the purpose of illustrating important points and describing or highlighting the essence of the current themes and sub-themes. Extracts have also been included to display nuances within the themes. Respondents were randomly assigned an alphabetical letter to maintain
anonymity. I selected citations from the interviews done with the informants at all levels of the NTP in the section presenting “previous challenges”, whereas, I selected citations from the interviews only from level 2 and level 3 of the NTP in the other two main themes, that is, “improvements” and “remaining challenges” and then I analyzed the data and presented the results.

Results

In the above section I have described how I have analyzed the data and in the following I will present what I have found in the results. In this study the participants have shared their experiences based on their participation in a language training program. Different themes and sub-themes were identified during the data analysis, and I have presented them in such a way that it shows those challenges that the participants were faced before they joined the NTP and then the improvements they have experienced as a result of attending the NTP. Lastly I have mentioned the remaining challenges they are still facing also after the NTP. Under the three main themes, further sub-themes were identified, for example, not knowing the language, lack of social life, economic instability and psychological distress lie under theme I, that is, previous challenges. Moreover, practical use of the language, social network, in terms of employment and in relation to psychological health lie under theme II, that is, improvements. Furthermore, language proficiency, social network but not friends, economic uncertainty and mental health issues lie under theme III, that is, remaining challenges.

Following are the results presented through main themes and sub-themes, which I have identified during the analysis.

Theme I: Previous Challenges

In this section, I will highlight those issues that the informants described about the period before they started the language training and how this affected their life, mentally and socially. The participants described their experiences and challenges when they came to Norway and they could not speak the language. All of the themes in this study are interlinked to each other. The challenges they faced before joining the NTP are, not knowing the language, lack of social life, economic instability and psychological distress.

Not Knowing the Language

The majority of the participants experienced that not knowing the language of the host country was one of the foremost challenge after coming to Norway. Many of the participants
stated that language is a key for integration in a new society and if they know the language it would be easier to overcome the other challenges. The quotation below describes the situation of participant “C” that how did he feel when he came to Norway and could not speak the language.

I want to share my experience of first time going to REMA1000 for grocery. I bought something and then that lady cashier asked me whether I need a bag. I did not understand what that lady said but I shook my head and paid. After that I said to that lady cashier: How I am going to carry this?...... I thought everyone got bags and why not me and then she said that I asked you and you shook your head. Then I said I did not understand but yes I need two bags. Afterwards I told my wife that I am not going for grocery next time because I felt unsure and uncomfortable.

Quotation 1: Focus group interview, Participant ”C”

In quotation 1 the participant expresses his feelings of how embarrassing it was for him by not to know the language when he went grocery shopping for the first time. This could be an example of how the participant avoided the situation due to lack of proper language skills. Therefore, a fear to make more mistakes caused an avoiding strategy to hide ones inability to master the language and that could not be the case if he would have tried to handle the situation with the required language skills. Another quotation describes a similar situation for participant “Z” when she came to Norway.

I could not speak the Norwegian language and it was embarrassing for me. I used to take so long time to make a sentence I felt retarded. I think it was something in my mind because I can read so much faster but I could not speak at that time.

Quotation 2: Individual interview, participant “Z”

Another obstacle participant ”Z” is struggling with everyday language usage, that made her feel frustrated and feeling outside the society due to her inability to communicate like everybody else in the environment around her. This feeling of frustration which lead to experiencing anger were common for most of the participants in this study. Another participant with much of the same kind of challenge as participant ”Z”, was participant ”Y” and she described that passing the Norwegian requirements for entrance to higher education was not sufficient for her to communicate within the student environment and the university she was studying at.

Before I joined the Norwegian Training Program I could not speak Norwegian, even though I study at the university in Norwegian and passed the entire Norwegian language test at higher level to get admission in the university. I went two years to the university but it did not go well because I could not speak the language. I had a bad experience at the university and with my classmates because I was not able to communicate. Academically I had no problem with Norwegian language but I had
trouble in communicating in Norwegian language. I felt very uncomfortable to speak before I joined program. I had basic Norwegian knowledge but I could not use it. I have lived six years in Norway and felt outside of my comfort zone. I felt so isolated because I did not have any friends. The reason was that I could not utter a single sentence in Norwegian language.

**Quotation 3, Focus group interview, participant “Y”**

The above citation shows that lack of verbal communication skills, despite language tests had been passed, made her unable to participate fully in her everyday environments. This suggests that it is not necessarily enough to be able to understand and write the Norwegian language. Thus, one needs to be able to communicate verbally in an everyday context. The participant “Y”'s lack of communication skills for everyday usage among her classmates, at least, contributed to her feeling of isolation, as she did not have the required language skills to make social relationships to the other students at her University.

In quotation 4, participant “T” talked about her experience in an individual interview of not understanding Norwegian language when Norwegian people talk to each other. She said that: “When they [Norwegian people] talk Norwegian with each other at that time I could not understand”. As the other quotations in this subtheme also suggest, the above quotation is an example that not being able to speak a language fluently can be a contribution to a feeling of isolation and being apart from the native speakers. This can possibly make a challenge for ones self-esteem and create a feeling of not measuring up to the standards among the native speakers in society.

**Lack of Social Life**

Lack of social life is another factor, which affected the participants after coming to Norway. The interviews indicate that most of the participants had almost no social life before they joined the NTP. Most of them discussed that they left their family and friends and when they came to Norway they had neither jobs nor friends. The participants referred to their loneliness as the participant “A” said in quotation 5 in an individual interview that “When I came to Norway I did not know anyone here”. Similarly participant “Q” said in an individual interview in quotation 6 that “I did not have social network before I joined the NTP”.

**Economic Instability**

Without sufficient Norwegian language skills, it can be difficult for immigrants to get a job. Although many of them have higher education, they see that their language skills are not good enough in professional life. The majority of the informant’s main focus was to get a
job, and without language skills, it seems difficult to get a job in Norway. In the quotation below the participant told about the importance of language to get a job and he said that:

I think language is important [to get a job] for example, I have 25 years work experience in finance in my home country, and I try to find work in many different places here in Norway. First I tried to find a job in my industry but it was not easy to find when one cannot speak Norwegian. Afterwards I tried to find a job in restaurants, in shops, in bakery but I did not get job.

Quotation 7, Focus group interview, participant “S”

The participant experienced that language is important to get a job, and although he has 25 years work experience from his home country, it was difficult for him to get a job in Norway. This participant shows a will to work hard to get any kind of job and he tried to take every possible job available, but experienced to fail in the application process due to his lack of Norwegian language skills. This shows the importance of language for the job opportunities in Norway. Another participant was asked about his employment situation before he joined the NTP where he replied that:

I did not have any job before I joined the NTP, the reason was that along with language issue I did not know how to write CV and application in Norwegian and it is also important to know the Norwegian job environment.

Quotation 8, Focus group interview, participant “F”

The quotation 8 indicates that not only language is important to apply for a job in Norway but Norwegian job application process is also necessary. This quotation suggests, in other words, that language skills in itself is not neccesarily sufficient to get a job, but that the language skills need to be complemented by additional social resources such as how to write a CV and an application letter according to norwegian standards in working life.

Psychological Distress

Majority of the participants spoke of challenges with poor mental health. Some of the participants stated explicitly their symptoms of psychological distress. Examples of symptoms were depression, loneliness and isolation. The reason of psychological distress for most of the informants was inability to communicate with the society as participant “M” said in quotation 9 in an individual interview that “I have been living in Norway for two years and in the beginning it was very difficult for me, I used to be depressed because I could not speak Norwegian language”. This is an example of an explicit attribution to lack of language skills as a source of depression. It can, according to this, be seen as an indication of how strong the feeling of inability in knowing the language can affect one’s mental health.
Another participant talked about her fellow participant at the NTP, and how this woman had felt before she joined the NTP, she said:

I know a lady here who lived in refugee center and she had no residence permit. She lived alone in a very small room and she has neither family nor friends here [Norway]. She told me that she is living in a small room and has no one here. She had a small mobile phone without any numbers, without facebook app. She had poor mental health and suffered from different mental illnesses.

**Quotation: 10, Focus group interview, participant “P”**

This participant shows a concern for another person in even more difficult life situation. The quotation shows the situation of a refugee woman and how migration affected her mental health, as she was being lonely in a new country without any social connection and lack of well-being.

The above theme shows that the participants faced lot of challenges before they joined the NTP. The results show that lack of language skills made it difficult for the participants to communicate in daily life activities and resulted in frustration and isolation. Moreover, the quotations show that lack of language skills lead to lack of social network and less job opportunities in the Norwegian society.

**Theme II: Improvements**

Overall, the participants expressed that they had experienced different stages of improved integration in the Norwegian society, during the course of attendance in the NTP. To start with learning the language is the key. As a consequence of improved language skills the communication becomes easier and makes it easier to adapt into the Norwegian society. The participants emphasized that there are very obvious improvements in their lives after joining the NTP. This section includes, the main experiences and the meaningful changes that the informants describe and relate to attending the NTP in terms of practical use of the language, social network, employment, and in relation to improved mental health.

**Practical Use of the Language**

The use of language is very important for daily life activities such as engage in children’s schoolwork, to communicate with Norwegian people, to get a doctor appointment, to rent accommodation, to go to any office e.g. NAV, Tax office and for grocery. To use the language it is important to practice it so that one can improve one’s communication skills as
This sub-theme shows what are the improvements experienced by the participants after joining the NTP and learning the Norwegian language. When asked about the improvements after attending the NTP participant “B” said the following in quotation 11 in a focus group interview “Now I go for grocery and my language is improved”. This indicates that a daily life activity such as grocery becomes much easier when one has the language skills. Participant “R” in quotation 12 in a focus group interview said that “I have children and now [after joining the NTP] I can help my kids with homework”. This is another example of a better use of language in daily activities. The participation in the NTP enabled her to understand and contribute to her children’s schoolwork something which was very meaningful to her as a mother. The participant “Y” said in quotation 13 that after joining the NTP she has improved her communication skills:

I took one semester break from the university to improve my verbal skills in Norwegian language. I searched on internet and joined language cafes, from where I came to know about the Norwegian Training Program by Red Cross. So I am here to learn to speak and to communicate, to learn how to use the language verbally. Communication is very important but now I can communicate in Norwegian and I have gained my confidence and will join university again in the next semester.

**Quotation 13, Focus group interview, participant “Y”**

The advantage with the NTP seems to be that it allows the participant to practice the language. This made her able to try different expressions and set her in a position where she felt able to experiment with the language. This shows that the NTP provides the participants with the opportunity to learn through communication since it is a spoken language practice and not written language practice. It is an active way of learning the language and the participants get a chance to be involved.

**Social Network**

Social network is building up relationships with other people. The NTP not only provides opportunity for the participants to learn the language but it is also a great platform where immigrants come and meet people and make connections. Participants in this study suggest that due to the NTP they have got a social network. For example, participant ”X” said in quotation 14 in an individual interview that: “I have got friends and I think this is because of Norwegian training program and it also increases my confidence level”. This can be an indication of an additional advantage that extends the positive outcome of attending the NTP than not just a concern for the better language acquisition.
Furthermore, participant "W" stated in the same manner in quotation 15 in a focus group interview that “I have got some friends from Norwegian training Red Cross and we usually meet in cafes to speak Norwegian together and we cycle in the city”. The quotation shows that the NTP is helping them not only with building up a social network but also with the opportunity to share common interests and experiences. Another participant said that:

I got network from the NTP and I have them as my facebook friends. The NTP is a great opportunity to get to know people. I always look forward to come to the NTP because I can not sit at home as I only work part time. The NTP is a motivation for me, not only to learn the language but also to get to know people because I am very social and the NTP get me out of my house.

**Quotation 16, Focus group interview, participant “O”**

The above quotation indicates that participant "O" has a motivation for learning the language tied to the opportunity the NTP offers in meeting other people. This contributes to a social arena, which can be part of satisfying needs for social contact. A positive social arena gives a chance for making social contacts, something that can be transferred to the world outside of the NTP. Similarly another participant said that:

I have got not only network but people we meet we exchange information about Norwegian language, Norwegian culture and Norwegian sports. We have made a facebook page where we plan different social activities like skiing and football etc. In this way we connect with people and be part of the Norwegian culture and Norwegian society. It is a way to integrate.

**Quotation 17, Focus group interview, participant “U”**

The above quotation indicates that the NTP plays a significant role in providing the participants with a common shared interest in learning the language and becoming integrated in society. This becomes visible in the quotation above, through the exchanges of information about the Norwegian language, culture and sport. It will in this way, be possible for the participants to recognize that they are in the same situation.

**In Terms of Employment**

Employment is one of the core domains of integration (Ager & Strang, 2008). When a person has a job, then he/she get to meet people where he or she works and meet people of the same kind of profession where they learn the Norwegian working environment and Norwegian culture. Participant ”G” talked about how he got job after attending the NTP. He said that:
I got NAV job applying course and then I got accounting course. After that I got internship and it was three months and then I got 100% job in accounting. It was not possible to get a job without NAV courses and without language I could not get NAV course.

Quotation 18, Focus group interview, participant “G”

The above quotation indicates that language learning increased the ability to successfully complete courses through NAV, which in turn, could be assumed to increase the job opportunities for this participant. This shows that language learning indirectly helped this participant to get a job.

In Relation to Psychological Health

Migration can contribute both positively and negatively towards immigrants (Kumar & Viken, 2010). Traumatic events such as war experiences, negative life events such as economical problems, social conflicts and acculturation problems can lead to mental health issues (Kumar & Viken, 2010). There were many participants who said that due to the NTP their mental health was improved as many of the participants said that being new in Norway, leaving everyone back home is not easy. Most of the participants said that an active social life can allow them to participate fully in the society and prevent them from being isolated and marginalized. That can be possible by learning the Norwegian language which can increase the employment opportunities which in turn leads to sense of satisfaction, self confidence and well-being. One of the participants described the situation of her fellow participant who told her situation in the previous challenges as well that how did she recovered and improved her mental health after joining the NTP:

But now she got residence permit. She knew a lady working in the Red Cross who referred her to the Norwegian Training Program. Then she joined the Norwegian Training program where we met. But after she joined the Norwegian Training Program she got better. She got contact numbers in her phonebook and she got busy with this language training, although it was only 2 to 3 days a week but she got mentally better.

Quotation 19, Focus group interview, participant “P”

The above quotation shows that after joining the NTP her mental condition was recovered and she experienced a positive change in her life. Although she had suffered a lot after migration but she got busy with language learning. Afterwards, the phonebook in her cell phone was full of contacts, which shows that she got social network and this might also have supported her in recovering from psychological distress.
The above theme shows the participants’s experiences of improvements in their lives after joining the NTP and how the use of the Norwegian language helped them to integrate in the Norwegian society. The theme explicitly shows how learning the Norwegian helped them to communicate with the host society and how making social network made it easier to prevent isolation and loneliness. In addition to that, language learning also helped the participants to get jobs and increased self confidence.

**Theme III: Remaining Challenges**

Although many of the challenges of participants in the NTP were reduced after joining this program but still there were some remaining challenges, which have been identified during analysis of the data. These are language proficiency, social network but not friends, economic uncertainty and mental health issues.

**Language Proficiency**

Many of the participants stated earlier that language is necessary to get a job, but still many of the participants discussed their experiences that inspite of learning the language, it is very difficult to get a job. Although they can speak Norwegian, even then it seems very difficult to get jobs. One of the reasons, the participants mentioned, was that they need to learn the Norwegian language at higher level with fluency and accuracy. The higher the position they apply for, the higher their written and verbal language skills are required. One of the participants talked about his situation that:

I can not work here in Norway if I did not know the language. Language is very important to get a job. I am a civil engineer and I need to learn the language on higher level to get a job and if I was a person without education, then I would have worked anywhere else such as cleaning assistant. I think I know good enough language to work in a grocery store but since I am a civil engineer I need to learn higher level of Norwegian to enter in working life. I need more language skills because it is only language which is obstacle but I have the knowledge and I know my job but if I do not know the language then I can not work.

**Quotation: 20, Individual interview, participant ”E”**

The above citation may indicate that those immigrants who have higher educational background from their home country need to get language proficiency in order to apply for higher ranked jobs and those with lower educational background can apply for lower ranked jobs and they do not need as developed language proficiency. Also many immigrants who
come with high level educational background going into low level jobs here, thereby probably needing less time to learn the language due to academic skills.

Some of the participants said that along with language proficiency, higher educational background is also important to get a good job in order to integrate in a new society. Along with language learning the participants also talked about immigrants who come from European countries to Norway, that they get their education recognized from NOKUT, whereas, those participants who come from African and South Asian countries do not get their education recognized. This may also prevent them from getting further education in order to get a good job here in Norway. One of the participants who belonged to one of these regions talked about her education which is not recognized in Norway and she said:

I have a master’s degree from my home country but it is not recognized here in Norway that is why I had to start from Bachelor level. I need higher language skills to start education and to work here in Norway.

Quotation: 21, Individual interview, participant ”F”

This shows that she has to put effort to work hard in order to get recognized higher education so that in future she can participate in working life in Norway. She also needed to learn the Norwegian language to apply for the admission in the university in Norway. This indicates that language proficiency is not only needed to apply for the job but it is also required to apply for higher education. There are few requirements to get admission in Norwegian universities. There are three levels of Norwegian Language test, that is, Norwegian test 1, Norwegian test 2 and Norwegian test 3. In order to get admission in the university people with immigrant’s background are required to clear all the three test of Norwegian language and then pass the Bergen’s Test. The above quotation indicates that language is necessary to get education and education is necessary to get a good and stable job in order to integrate in a society.

Furthermore, a few of the participants mentioned that for language acquisition along with the NTP they sometimes watch TV, listen to the radio or read newspaper but they stated that language is often difficult to understand through TV or radio because of the use of different dialects.

Social Network but not Friends

Some of the participants argued that it is not easy to get friends through the NTP that is why they would rather call it social network or social connections but not friends. The
reason they mentioned was the cultural differences among them. Some of the participants said it takes time to adapt into a new society and they mentioned that although they have got social connections through the NTP but still they cannot consider them as their friends. For example participant "K" said in quotation 22 in an individual interview that “I got network on Norwegian Training Program but not friends because it takes a long time to make friends”. This indicates that even though the NTP facilitates social contact among the participants, some participants find that they needed more social contact over time to make friends and a sustainable social network than the NTP could offer through courses in itself. This could possibly indicate that time is important for establishing lasting social relationships, and that the NTP could provide a start in making social contact, but that one needs to do more effort on ones own to succeed at this task. Another participant said a similar kind of statement that:

I do not have Norwegian friends and people I meet at the NTP are not my friends either. I would rather call them people I know but we sometimes go out at café together and I feel more confident because I know them.

Quotation: 23, Individual interview, participant ”V”

This shows that although participant ”V” do not consider them as his friends but he feels that he has feeling of belongingness and affiliation with other participants whenever they meet outside the NTP.

Some of the participants mentioned that although the NTP is helping them to make social network but still some of the participants faced some kind of prejudice and they said that it becomes difficult to integrate in a society if majority group is not welcoming and accepting the diversity. They said that integration is a two way process and society has to accept the immigrants to promote integration. The participants said that the NTP is not directly helping them to make Norwegian friends but it is providing them a platform where they learn how to communicate in Norwegian. The participant ”J” said that:

It is good to have Norwegian friends but I do not have Norwegian friends. I need to work here to get Norwegian friends because I do not know how to communicate with the Norwegian people here. What are their interests and how to mingle with them. Because I can not see Norwegian people outside as much they always busy with their own stuff so I think job is important to get into contact with Norwegian people and then its easier to mingle with them and socialize. At the NTP people are from different countries so I do not get any chance to meet the Norwegian people here. Even at the Norwegian course people are from different countries. So I have friends from other countries but I do not know any Norwegian except from the Norwegian trainers or Norwegian teachers and off course they can not be my friends.
Quotation: 24, Focus group interview, participant ”J”

The above citation indicates that the participants who attend the NTP meet people from different countries and they do not get chance to meet Norwegian people except for their Norwegian trainers at the NTP or Norwegian teachers from their respective courses. That is why it seems difficult to make Norwegian friends at this situation and they also say that they think that it is difficult to communicate with Norwegian people. Therefore, it is important to work with them so that they get to know how to communicate with them and have greater understanding of Norwegian culture and Norwegian people. According to the participant, to get familiar with Norwegian work environment is also important to socialize with Norwegian people. Another participant also agreed to his opinion that:

I agree that it is difficult to get Norwegian friends, as I had a Norwegian neighbour and we used to say only “Hi” but I came to know that if you have same interest then it is easier to communicate with Norwegian people.

Quotation: 25, Focus group interview, participant ”C”

The participant in the above quotation responds to a question about the NTP and friends that although it is difficult to make Norwegian friends but if you have same interests then it might be easier. Common interests can be seen as, for example if you work with them (Norwegian people) in a same place or if you have same hobbies, for example cycling, skiing etc.

Economic Uncertainty

The study shows that there are many participants, who are already working and use English language in their jobs and since most of these jobs are contractual, that is why, when their contracts expire they need the Norwegian Language to apply for the other jobs. As one of the participants said that:

I use English language at my job. May be in future I do not have this job and I need to be perfect in language to find a job or may be do something different. May be I study further because the education I might have less scope in future. I would like to be teacher in future and may be work as a voluntary in the NTP to help other people coming to Norway who are new.

Quotation: 26, Individual interview, participant ”D”

The participant in the above citation shows that there is a kind of economic uncertainty, although she has a job and she is working. But it is a contractual job and she uses English language at work. She has to learn the Norwegian language at higher level so that she will be capable for another job opportunity in future.
Mental Health Issues

Another remaining challenge for many of the participants was related to their continuous poor mental health. Although the NTP had helped many of the participants in social network and increased the opportunity for inclusion and integration in society, many participants still faced challenges with isolation, loneliness, feeling of depression and feeling of discrimination. Challenges with poor mental health seemed to be mainly related to unemployment. The participants who were unemployed complained more about their life challenges than those who were employed. One of the participants is still complaining that she is suffering from psychological distress and she said that:

I am very lonely here and it is important to learn the language because I feel like I am retarded or an alien when I could not speak Norwegian. Norwegian language is working language here and to get a job, it is important to learn the language. My boyfriend works a lot and I hardly see him because most of the time he is out of country and I have no one to interact with in Norwegian language. In Norway, I have no family, no friends and I feel like I am outsider here. I speak English with my boyfriend because he most of the time is at work and when he come home we have only few hours and then we speak English. Sometimes when I try to speak Norwegian with him I speak so slow that it becomes frustrating for him and he switches over to English again. I am quite depressed here and I have got an appointment to psychologist as well. I did not know that depression is so common in Norway.

Quotation: 27, Individual interview, participant "Z"

The situation described above indicates that although she attends the NTP and is in the process of learning the language she still has some psychological issues. This shows that the participant neither has a job nor any other activity to do. The only thing she is doing is learning the Norwegian language. She described the importance of the Norwegian language in Norway in regards to job opportunities and communication skills with the society, lack of which can be assumed to lead to loneliness and mental health problems. Another participant talked about her situation during summer holidays and that period when everything was closed and she said:

I was sick I had depression in the summer because there were holidays and everything was closed both Norwegian course and Norwegian training. My boyfriend used to be at work all the day and I used to be at home and I am not the kind of person who sits at home. I used to be at home all the day and I did not have anything to do. It was very difficult situation. We get motivation [from the NTP] to get out. It helps and prevents ill health.

Quotation: 28, Individual interview, participant "L"
This quotation indicates that the participant "L" had neither job nor friends. Even though the NTP helped her establish some social connections, but it was not sufficient to help her pursue a more stable and robust social network. It is therefore possible to say that the NTP helped this participant to achieve a certain degree of social contacts, but these social contacts was not in itself sufficient to represent a complete solution to the participants problem of loneliness and isolation which could be assumed to lead to mental health problems.

The above theme shows some of the remaining challenges the participants are still facing after joining the NTP. Language proficiency where participants need to learn the Norwegian language at higher level to get stable jobs and to communicate with ethnic Norwegian, which, still seems quite difficult. Moreover, this theme shows why some of the participants are still suffering from mental health issues although they attend the NTP.

**Participants Reflections over the NTP and Suggestions for the Red Cross**

In addition to the three themes above another topic of research was identified where participants talk about the reflections over the NTP and suggestions for the Red Cross. As most of the participants said, Norwegian language courses alone are not sufficient but the combination of both language course and language practice is an ideal combination. A few of the participants said that they attended both language course and the NTP, where language course helps them to learn the grammar and vocabulary and the NTP help them to practice it verbally. A few of the participants said that they are learning the grammar portion at home via internet and attend the NTP, as most of the Norwegian courses are paid courses and the majority of the participants being unemployed sees it quite expensive. By asking a question by the researcher that how do you describe the NTP in one sentence, the participants, in this study, came with different examples. As the participant "O" said in quotation 29 that "The NTP is a short cut to integration and to achieve the goals". Whereas, participant "V" said in quotation 30 that "It is a life-west when you are drowning specially for the people suffering from depression". Participant "W" said in quotation 31 that "The Norwegian Training Program is a key to integrate into the Norwegian society". More of the positive experiences were that participant "X" said in quotation 32 that "I do not think I would have been able to speak Norwegian as early as I do now" and participant "A" in quotation 33 said that "The Norwegian training program shows the way like a google map application on your phone". The above quotations show how important the NTP is for the participants and some of them used words like google map and life west as metaphor to describe the value of the NTP in their lives. The participants said that although one can learn the language in schools and
universities but the NTP is an alternative way of learning the language. It is an active way of acquiring a new language and the participants get a chance to involve themselves actively in the use of the language. Since it is a verbal training held in group discussions, people are potentially more engaged and they participate more than they would have done if they had been in a learning situation, in a classroom of a school or a university where the teachers focus more on grammar than on verbal practice.

Although the majority of the participants are satisfied with the NTP, however they mentioned few suggestions to the Red Cross for this program. For example, participant ”Q” said that:

I do not have any negative experience but I have few suggestions to the Red Cross that the people are continuously coming to Norway and they have to learn the Norwegian language. It is not always we get seats in the NTP. Last time I was sent back home after standing in long queue at number 75. Due to lack of space people have to come 45 minutes before the NTP starts.

**Quotation: 34, Individual interview, participant ”Q”**

Another participant said that:

I tried sometimes in Saturdays but I went crazy because it was a long long queue and people were there since morning. So I used to go at the NTP on Tuesdays, since it is very close to my job so I leave my work at 5 pm and join the NTP right after my work.

**Quotation: 35, Individual interview, participant ”T”**

These two quotations show high motivation level and their will to attend the training even though it is difficult to get inside and in fact have a seat at the training. There are a lot of people who attend this program especially on Saturdays, so that people who are working can easily attend this program. So as mentioned earlier, a lot of people queue up on such days, and there may not always be room for all. Furthermore, a few of the participants suggested the Red Cross could introduce one more level, as in the current study, majority of the participants had a higher educational background. For example participant ”U” in quotation 36 said that ”I want that the NTP introduces one more level in their program, that is, level 4 so that career oriented people can continue after level 3”. Moreover, participant “F” suggested in quotation 37 that ”I want the NTP to help participants in the preparation for Norwegian Test 3 and Bergen’s Test”. As mentioned earlier that language proficiency is necessary for the immigrants for applying a higher ranked job or to get admission in the universities in Norway. Therefore, many participants suggested that it would be a great support if the NTP can help them in the preparation for Norwegian Test 3 or Bergen’s Test.
Many participants complained that they did not know about the NTP even after living for many years here in Norway. Some of the participants also said that they came to know about the NTP through language cafes and they want Red Cross to advertise this program, similarly, as they do for language cafes. So that immigrants can easily access this facility and learn the Norwegian language after arriving to Norway, as many of the immigrants come every year to Norway and language is the foremost priority for most of the immigrants.

**Discussion**

This study has examined the experiences of the participants while attending the NTP and in what ways this language program may be helping participants to integrate into the Norwegian society. The results were presented through three main themes: Previous challenges, Improvements and Remaining challenges. I will first take a review of the findings of the analysis and then I will present the results in the light of theory presented by Diaz, Nelson & Prilleltensky. On the basis of the results, the following aspects are identified and these are Language aspect, Social aspect, Employment aspect and Health aspect.

**Language Aspect**

The participants in the current study discussed the importance of learning the language of the host country and how learning through communication helped them to participate in the Norwegian society. Diaz (1993) said that the immigrants learn the language of the host country in order to integrate into a new society. The participants in this study, explained the challenges they faced when they came to Norway and did not know the language. The participants expressed that as a result of attending the NTP they are able to use the language in their practical everyday life such as grocery, shopping and helping their children with homework, going to general physician and going to NAV office etc. The participants suggested that they have improved their communication skills, through which they are able to communicate with other people and make social connections through practical use of the language. As part of their reflections of the remaining challenges, the participants discussed that language at higher level is needed. The other variable in Diaz’s theory of communicative integration is mass media consumption. The results did not indicate that the participants learned the Norwegian through mass media consumption, although a few
of them have mentioned that they sometimes watch TV, listen to radio but it is not always easy to understand the language because of their different dialects.

Moreover, the findings indicate that as a result of language acquisition the participants develop a higher level of confidence and are able to communicate with other people in Norwegian, something which leads to achieved feeling of efficacy. Psychological acculturation is a change in the psychology of the individual (Berry, 1997) whereas personal integration is the personal satisfaction and success of immigrants with their personal life into the new society (Diaz, 1993). One of the good examples from the results was about a mother who could not help her children with their homework but after language acquisition she was able to help her children and it was a great feeling of achievement for her. There are also indicators that show that the participants show personal satisfaction regarding their lives in the Norwegian society more generally after attending the NTP. So to summarize, in this study, most of the participants said that they have gained higher self-confidence and self-efficacy as a result of attending the NTP. As Searle & Ward (1990) said that psychological adaptation includes a sense of well-being and satisfaction with regard to different aspects of one’s life in the country of origin, and in the larger society.

Diaz (1993) has in this theory presented different dimensions of integration and all the dimensions of integration are important but communicative integration present itself as most fundamental condition for all the succeeding phases of integration. The respondents in this study also emphasized that language is the most fundamental dimension for integration process and the language is very important as a start in the integration process and language is a key to integration but learning the language in itself will not necessarily get you fully integrated in the Norwegian society. In addition, it is required to develop a social network, become familiar with the Norwegian culture and society to achieve a better integration. For this, a stable job is important and this can serve as a tool to integrate in the Norwegian society. As Diaz (1993) said in his definition of integration, integration is achieved when migrants become a working part of their adopted society, take on many of its attitudes and behavior patterns, and participate freely in its activities. As discussed earlier, the main purpose of such kind of language programs like the NTP is to achieve better integration and the Red Cross sees employment as the most important integration arena in the community, and believes that the key to employment and social inclusion is in language skills (Nisse & Johannesen, 2015). The participants in this study also emphasized that the main purpose to learn the language of the host society is to get a job in order to integrate in the Norwegian society. Similarly, Tomas (2011) narrated in his article about the importance of the language
of the host country that English language proficiency is a necessary requirement for full participation of immigrants in the US society and language plays a vital role in the integration of immigrants. This shows that language learning is very important for immigrants in a new society.

Social Aspect

The social aspect of the NTP appears to be an important aspect for many participants. The results show that along with language acquisition the participants get social network while attending the NTP. This is the platform where the immigrants come and meet people and the NTP motivates participants to get out of their house, meet other people and get cultural understanding during discussion. As, in the previous challenges, most of the participants reported that they felt lonely and isolated because of lack of communication skills. But after joining the NTP they started communicating with the people without any hesitation, as they knew that all of them are at the same level. Most of the participants said that they have got friends during the NTP, whereas, in the remaining challenges some of the participants said that they have got social network but not friends because it takes time to make friends.

Social integration results in building up new relationship with the host society. According to Diaz (1993) social integration is the process of integration where immigrants build up a new relationship with the majority group but not with the minority group. Whereas, in this study, in the remaining challenges, many of the participants said that it is not easy to make Norwegian friends while it is easy to make friends from minority group. Although, the NTP gives opportunities to immigrants to mingle with people but only with those people who belong to the minority group not from the host society. The reason is that all those people who attend the NTP to practice the language are from minority group themselves. This program gives them opportunity to meet other people, as most of them have neither family nor friends here in Norway. The informants in this study constructed their experiences that such kind of programs are connecting them with other participants and expand network. This shows that attending the language program greatly increases participant’s interaction with individuals of the minority group and the participants get connections with other people. Most of the participants expressed that due to the common interest such as learning the language, among the participants in the NTP it became easier to make friends and exchange the useful information about the Norwegian culture and society such as skiing, cycling and christmas events etc. which lead to their increased self confidence.
and improved quality of life by preventing them from loneliness and isolation. Furthermore, Hauff & Vaglum (1997) said that the reconstruction of social network is perhaps the most important effort that migrants can make to improve their quality of life. Similarly Nelson & Prilleltensky (2010) said that relational well-being plays an important role to tie to the community life. The results indicated that through contributing to a positive social arena such as the NTP has done, the participants got an opportunity to make social contacts which lead to a better adaptation to a new country and also helped them to satify their social needs. This shows that the successful pursuit of the integration strategy predicts both good psychological and sociocultural adaptation where psychological adaptation involves psychological and physical well-being (Simon, 2004) and sociocultural adaptation refers to how well the person manages daily life in the new cultural context (Simon, 2004). Although the results did not clearly state whether it was sufficient to have contact with people from minority group to better connect with people with a majority group, but it can be assumed that it can be a start to make social connections. Where, Diaz (1993) theory of social integration does not directly support the results of the social aspects of this study. Therefore, it can be assumed that according to the results, the NTP is indirectly helping the participants with making connection with people from the majority group through learning the Norwegian language.

Furthermore, there are some other important aspects, which were discussed by a few of the participants in the current study. Integration is considered to be the most successful strategy with regards to adaptation of immigrants in a new society (Simon, 2004). There was a discussion among the participants in this study, that integration is a two way process and it cannot be one sided. Simon (2004) also said that integration is not a one-way process and it requires a mutual accommodation. It should be active participation of both the immigrants and the host society. If the host society is not welcoming and does not accept the immigrants then it becomes difficult for the immigrants to integrate (Simon, 2004). A few of the participants mentioned that it seems difficult to make Norwegian friends and have contact with them. In addition they mentioned that it becomes difficult for them to integrate if the host community do not accept them. As Berry (1997) also says that the integration strategy can only be pursued in societies that are explicitly multicultural, in which certain preconditions are established. These preconditions are acceptance of the value of a society of cultural diversity, low levels of prejudice, positive mutual attitudes among cultural groups and a sense of attachment of the larger society by all groups (Berry, 1997). So there is a two way process of integration, where the NTP is giving opportunity to the participants to learn the language. Moreover, the participants expect a positive attitude from the host society.
where a few of them, in this study, have experienced prejudice because of their appearance. Therefore, it is advised that immigrant’s duty is to work for basic Norwegian values and learn Norwegian, while majority group should give clear space among themselves for immigrant’s particular behavior and values (Wikan, 1995).

**Employment Aspect**

Diaz (1993) said that structural integration is the process of participation of the immigrants in the occupational system and economical life of the host society (Diaz, 1993). Immigrant’s structural integration is supported through economical and educational opportunities (Diaz, 1993). The findings show that the participants experienced challenges in relation to job opportunities and the reason was lack of Norwegian language skills. As in the previous challenges the participants faced economic instability where some of the participants had jobs and some of the participants did not have jobs. Those who had jobs were those who either had contractual jobs or use English language in their work. However, in the improvement section, the participants said that as a result of attending the NTP, many of them got jobs after learning the Norwegian language. In the remaining challenges, it was found that few of the participants are still facing economic uncertainty because most of the participants, in this study, have high educational background. Where higher ranked jobs require language proficiency that is why participants need to learn language at higher level in order to get jobs and have economic stability. As Diaz (1993) also said that immigrant’s structural integration is supported through both economical and educational opportunities (Diaz, 1993). A few of the participants emphasized that language is also needed for those who wants to get higher education from Norway as NOKUT did not recognize their education from their home country. Participation of immigrants in every aspect of the new host society, including employment is very important for the existence of successful integration of multicultural societies (Aycan & Berry, 1996). This leads to psychological well-being and adaptation of migrating individuals to the multicultural societies (Aycan & Berry, 1996). As the findings indicated, in this study, the participants who were working were more satisfied with their life in the new country, Norway, as compared to the participants who did not work. Similarly, Starr and Roberts (1982) also found that better adapted immigrants were those who reported being more satisfied with their employment conditions and involvement in every aspect of Canadian life is conditioned by immigrant’s performance in the labour market (Aycan & Berry, 1996). Moreover, Ekroll (2015) said that work and education are essential to integrate in the Norwegian society. The results indicate
that language learning improves chances to get work and native language proficiency plays a
central role in the integration of the immigrant in the new labor market and his/her ability to
narrow economic gaps with the natives (Amit & Bar-Lev, 2014). The results in this study
suggest that the many participants have obtained work after joining the NTP and rest have the
hope to get work after learning the Norwegian as most of the participants have higher
educational background with recognised degrees from NOKUT Norway. This shows that the
main hurdle is the Norwegian language for the participants to get the jobs in Norway as most
of the participants said that they know their work, but not the Norwegian language in the
previous challenges.

Health Aspect

Immigrants and refugees are exposed to various stresses in the home country, during
the migration and after arriving in Norway (Kumar & Viken, 2010). Surveys also show that
local communities that are poorly integrated socially have an increased frequency of mental
health problems (Kumar & Viken, 2010). The current study could give an indication that
loneliness and lack of social network as a factor that contribute to a more rapid occurrence of
poor mental health. In order to prevent poor mental health it is advisable to adapt to the host
society as soon as possible, where, poor language skills make it difficult to adapt into a new
society (Iversen et al., 2012) that’s why language learning can be considered to play an
important role in primary prevention of immigrants in Norway. As many of the participants,
in this study addressed, their poor mental health is an issue of great importance to them and
they considered it as one of the challenges after coming to Norway. The results could indicate
that the majority of the participants suffered from different types of mental illnesses before
they joined the NTP, out of which many of them expressed that they have recovered and were
feeling better after joining the NTP. Furthermore, I want to add one important thing that
language learning itself is not directly helping the participants to prevent poor mental health
but as a result of language acquisition, the participants are able to make social network and
get jobs, which prevent them from loneliness and isolation. They get opportunities to apply
for the jobs, make friends and achieve higher confidence level. But few of them are still
complaining that they have feeling of depression. The point here is to be noted that the results
suggested that those participants, who are still struggling and did not get jobs are the
participants who are still complaining about their mental illnesses, in the remaining
challenges.
Bronfenbrenner’s ecological model of human development can be assumed to be relevant, in this way, to give a better overview of the possibilities of prevention and promotion built into the NTP. The concept of prevention and promotion can be relevant to the current study in such a way that the NTP can be seen as a primary prevention program since it is open for all immigrants who need to practice verbal Norwegian language. The three forms of well-being can also be related to one another, for example, access to education such as the NTP (collective well-being) can be thought as important for the development of positive identity (personal well-being). The participation of immigrants in the NTP and supportive social relationships from the NTP can contribute to an extended social network, which, in turn, can help promoting experience with positive and supportive social connections (relational well-being). Collective values (well-being) can thus be seen to complement individual aims, for the attainment of personal objectives that requires the presence of social resources (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010). The absence of social resources will according to this, not make it possible to pursue personal, relational and collective well-being. For example, the NTP can be seen as a resource at the macro-level which can promote well-being at all the levels. In addition to the assumed primary level prevention effects on the macro-level, it can be a possibility that participation in the NTP helps promoting all kinds of well-being, including personal, relational and collective well-being. According to this, it can also be assumed that the support from the NTP could be a contribution to preventing mental and social health problems and promote integration and well-being. Moreover, John et al., (2013) have written in Guidelines for Prevention in Psychology that preventive services aim at better health and well-being of individuals, reduce the mental health issues and promote health and well-being in a society. So the NTP can be considered to be a preliminary program, which can be seen as a macro-level primary prevention program. Since, the results suggest that the NTP could contribute in the prevention of poor mental health, we can say that the NTP possibly could play a role in promoting well-being of the society and integration will in this way be an essential element for the well-being of the individual in the Norwegian society.

Overall the results support Diaz’s theory of integration but there are some of the discrepancies between Diaz’s theory of integration and the results of the current study which I have already discussed above, such as mass media consumption, social integration and political integration. As the results indicate that language itself is not sufficient for the participants to integrate into the Norwegian society but the language opens the doors for the
participants to integrate in the Norwegian society in different dimensions. Language makes access to other dimensions of integration and that is why language is considered the key to other dimensions of integration.

Policy Implications

Based on the findings in this study, all the participants seemed eager to continue this program at the Red Cross and the recommendation based on this would be that the government should support this kind of training. The study suggests that this form of training seems beneficial for the well-being of the participants, and hopefully for the community at large. Most of the participants had positive experiences, and some of them suggested the improvements Red Cross could further do. Due to the popularity of the program and easy access to the program there are long queues outside the places where it is held and they have to come almost 45 minutes before the training start so that they get inside but the participants are sent back when the rooms get full. When the rooms become full they send the rest of the participants back home, even though they have been waiting there for 45 to 60 minutes. Last Saturday before Christmas holidays in December 2015, 70 participants were sent back due to lack of space in the NTP. This shows the high motivation level of the participants to attend the NTP and further a suggestion would be to arrange more space at least for 100 more participants for the NTP. The NTP is not advertised and majority of the participants came to know about this program through language cafes. They want that Red Cross advertise this program so that it would be easier for immigrants who are new in Norway to learn the language. But the Red Cross argues and says that it is not possible to advertise about this program because they already have enough participants and due to lack of capacity they cannot advertise. Furthermore, the NTP can also focus on building the relationships with the host community as the NTP is indirectly helping but not directly. The remaining difficulty in building relationship with people from the majority population could be seen as a continuing challenge that not has been possible for the NTP to solve for the participants. Better solutions to this challenge could be a call for improvements to work in other ways or with different methods, either by the NTP itself or through other intervention programs.

Limitations and further research

Several limitations of this study need to be pointed out. For example, there may have been a lack of diversity among the participants in the sample. Despite the fact that the
participants belonged to different regions in the world, but most of the participants in the study belong to highly educated background. Only few of them did not have higher education, the rest had professional education. Hence, based on my experience I would recommend that in a similar study it would be better if there is more diversity in the sample. Although it was a good decision to take two focus group interviews after conducting twelve individual interviews, since in the focus group interviews we had more deep conversation as compared to the individual interviews, however there were some flaws in the focus group, which could be avoided in future. For example, it would have been better if I had an assistant with me to conduct focus group interviews so that the assistant could manage other things such as an assistant could help me in arrangement of drinks and welcoming the participants.

It is a hope that this study may provide a basis for further discussion and research to be carried out around this area so that the knowledge gained from this research can be used to meet the need for more language training programs in line with the NTP. Finally, a recommendation for future research on these issues is to contribute towards for instance, to test the language skills of the participants or how do the volunteers work with the participants in the NTP. For example, some participants suggested that the NTP should establish a fourth level for the most ambitious and carrier oriented participants. Another suggestion was if the NTP could provide help taking the Bergen’s test and the Norwegian test at level 3. Regarding the volunteers work, some participants emphasised that the lack of test of language skills made it hard to place participants at the right level. This possible misfit of level, made it hard for the volunteer workers and other participants in the group to train with suitable progression.

**Conclusion**

The study focused on the experiences of immigrants who participated in the NTP. Diaz’s theory of integration served as a framework for studying how the participants have experienced the NTP in terms of integration into the Norwegian society. The results suggest that the program promotes the attainment of linguistic competence and provides a key opportunity for the participants to attain proficiency in speaking Norwegian, and that most of the participants explained that this had improved their experiences of living, which lead to the integration process in the Norwegian society. The study also suggests that participation had important consequences for social relationships, and many described this as a way out of isolation. Furthermore the study shows that the NTP has helped the immigrants who
participated in this program to integrate into the Norwegian society in different aspects. Based on the findings of this study, the NTP seems to be beneficial to improve the communication skills, which can contribute to promote integration in terms of better employment opportunities, social network and better mental health.


Appendix: 1

TILBAKEMELDING PÅ MELDING OM BEHANDLING AV PERSONOPPLYSNINGER

Vi viser til melding om behandling av personopplysninger, mottatt 21.09.2015. Meldingen gjelder prosjektet:

44784  Effekten av Norsk Trening (Språkopplæring i regi av Røde Kors)
Behandlingsansvarlig  Universitetet i Oslo, ved institusjonens øverste leder
Døgning ansvarlig  Nora Sveaas
Student  Farnaz Nazir Chauhdy

Personvernombudet har vurdert prosjektet, og finner at behandlingen av personopplysninger vil være regulert av § 7-27 i personopplysningsforskriften. Personvernombudet tilrår at prosjektet gjennomføres.

Personvernombudets tilråding forutsetter at prosjektet gjennomføres i tråd med opplysningene gitt i meldeskjemaet, korrespondanse med ombudet, ombudets kommentarer samt personopplysningsloven og helseregisterloven med forskrifter. Behandlingen av personopplysninger kan settes i gang.


Personvernombudet vil ved prosjektets avslutning, 15.05.2016, rette en henvendelse angående status for behandlingen av personopplysninger.

Vennlig hilsen

Vigdis Namtveldt Kvalheim

Marianne Høgetveit Myhren

Kontaktperson: Marianne Høgetveit Myhren tlf: 56 58 25 29

Vedlegg: Prosjektvurdering

Dokumentet er elektronisk produsert og godkjent ved NSDs rutiner for elektronisk godkjenning.
Appendix: 2 - Information letter

Name: Farnaz Nazir Chauhdry
Masters in Cultural and Societal Psychology
Psychology Department
University of Oslo.

Cell phone number: 0047-96739810
E-mail address: farnazchauhdry@gmail.com
Forespørsel om deltakelse i forskningsprosjektet

«EFFEK TEN AV NORSKTRENING»

Av: Farnaz Nazir Chauhdry
Psykologisk institutt; Universitetet i Oslo

Bakgrunn og formål

Hei, jeg inviterer deg til å delta i et forskningsprosjekt angående norsktrening. Dette er et program som ble startet av Røde Kors og er et gratis norsktrening program som startet opp i 2011. Det er et tilbud til personer med innvandrerbakgrunn som bor i Norge og som ønsker å forbedre sine muntlige språkferdigheter. Det dreier seg om et norsktrenings program, men ikke norskkurs i vanlig forstand. Hovedmålet med dette programmet er å bidra til økt integrering.

Jeg er interessert i følgende:

- Hva er erfaringene til deltakerne etter å ha deltatt i denne treningen? Erfares norsktrening som nyttig og i så fall på hvilken måte? Hvis ikke, hvordan kan det gjøres bedre?
- Hvordan kan bedre muligheter til å praktisere norsk og hjelpe innvandrere til å delta i det norske samfunnet med henblikk på integreringsprosessen?

Prosjektet er min avsluttende masteroppgave i kultur og samfunnspykologi ved Psykologisk institutt på Universitetet i Oslo.

Hva innebærer deltakelse i studien?

Jeg skal gjennomføre 15 individuelle intervjuer og vil rekuttere 5 personer for fokusgruppe. Intervjuet vil vare i ca. 1,5 time. Intervjuene vil bli foretatt i Røde Kors lokaler. Jeg søker deltakere som går på norsktrening og som er interessert i å dele sine erfaringer og hvor nyttig norsktreningen er i forhold til integrering.

Kriterier for deltakelse i prosjektet

- Du må være deltaker på norsktreningen hos Røde Kors
- Du kan være fra nivå 1, 2 og 3
- Jeg ønsker å snakke med både kvinner og menn.
- Jeg søker deltakere i alle aldre.
- Jeg søker deltakere fra forskjellige land.

Hva skjer med informasjonen du gir meg?

skal avsluttes i mai 2016. Alle deltakerne vil bli anonymisert i oppgaven, slik at det ikke skal være mulig å gjenkjenne personen på noen som helst måte etter publikasjon.
Ved oppmøte til intervjuet ønsker jeg at du underskrive en samtykkeerklæring som både bekrefter at du har blitt informert om hva studien innebærer, at du har fått oppgitt hvilke rettigheter du har og at du er villig til å delta.

**Frivillig deltakelse**

Det er frivillig å delta i studien, og du kan når som helst trekke ditt samtykke uten å oppgi noen grunn. Dersom du trekker deg, vil alle opplysninger om deg bli slettet med en gang.
Dersom du er interessert i å delta eller har spørsmål angående studien, kan du kontakte meg ved å sende en SMS eller ring til
Mob: 96739840
eller send mail til
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Mvh
Farnaz Nazir Chauhdry
Veileder:
Nora Sveaass
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Studien er meldt til Personvernombudet for forskning, Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste AS.
Samtykke til deltaking i studien

Jeg har mottatt informasjon om studien, og er villig til å delta

________________________________________________________________________

(Signert av prosjektdeltaker, dato)
Appendix: 4 - Interview Guide

Introduction Questions

1. What is your name?
2. What is your age?
3. What is your mother tongue?
4. What is your occupation?
5. How long have you been in Norway?
6. How long have you taken this Norwegian Training?

Questions relevant to the topic

1. Do you go to Norwegian course as well?
2. Did you attend other Norwegian Courses?
3. What is the difference between other Norwegian courses and the present Norwegian training?
4. How do you think you learn language best/ what seems to be the best way for you to learn?
5. Why are you in Norwegian Training?
6. How were you informed about this opportunity?
7. What language do you speak at home?
8. How long have you been here in Norway? How is life in Norway for you?
9. Do you practice Norwegian language at home?
10. Do you prefer to speak your mother tongue or Norwegian at home, with friends? When do you speak Norwegian and when is your mother tongue the preferred alternative?
11. Could you understand and speak Norwegian Language before you participated in the training or did you learn Norwegian Language from this Training?
12. Do you have kids who go to school with whom you can speak Norwegian to?
13. Which language are you teaching to your children at home?
14. Is the Norwegian Training useful? Do you think you have improved your language skills?
15. What is your opinion about quality of the Norwegian Training?

16. What are the opinions of your other fellow participants?

17. What are your experiences regarding the training; is it useful or not?

18. What is the practical utility of this training in relation to work and social network?

19. Do you think this training will be useful with regard to applying for a job in future?

20. Is it easier to get friends here when you have Norwegian language skills? And what are your experiences so far?

21. Is it positive in terms of health? How do you consider Norwegian training in relation to your general situation in Norway?

22. Do you think that this training program helps to increase your self-confidence and your participation in social gatherings?

23. And how do you think it may be useful in relation to integration of yourself and your family/children?

24. What is your opinion about integration? Is it important for you to integrate in a new society? What is the most important tool for integration according to you?

25. What are the challenges of integration and how to overcome these challenges?

26. Do you have some ideas to change the Norwegian Training Program or you are satisfied the way they train?

27. What do you think of this way of learning the Norwegian language?

28. What is the impact of learning the Norwegian in this way?

29. Do you want this offer to be continued?

30. Can you briefly describe what does Norwegian training program means for you?

**End-up Questions**

1. Is there anything more you would like to add?
2. Is there anything you want me to edit/delete?
3. How do you experience the interview?
4. How do you feel after the interview?