

Students with a foreign background in Italian Initial Vocational Education and Training (IVET) and the access to Italian as Second Language

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Abstract

This paper is based on the results of a 2014–2015 quantitative survey on a sample of 1,840 foreign students and 1,835 Italian students, of which, 41% of the Italians and 35% of those of foreign origins interviewed were female. The overall age was between 14 and 24, and these students attended courses in the Initial Vocational Education and Training (IVET) system in six Italian Regions: Emilia-Romagna, Lazio, Lombardy, Sicily, Tuscany, and Veneto. Language is the central issue in the survey, both in relation to the construction of multicultural and transcultural identity, and as a bridge to combine localisms with the global dynamics of migration, in its "dialect" edition. Some conclusive reflections on the enhancement of multilingualism in the Initial Vocational Education and Training (IVET) system are proposed for the development of national strategies in order to strengthen intercultural teaching and curricula.

Keywords: young people of foreign origins in Italy; initial vocational education and training; Italian as second language.

Introduction

The main critical issue for Italy is the extreme heterogeneity of the drop-out rates in different regions, with a steep increase in the regions of South Italy: 37.1% of 18–24 years-old drop-out in upper secondary school reside in the South (in 2010–2011). The ISFOL¹ research on the outcomes of Initial Vocational Education and Training (IVET) in 2015 (“Occupati dalla formazione. Seconda indagine sugli esiti occupazionali dei qualificati nei percorsi di IeFP – Employment and Vocational Training: second survey on occupational outcomes of qualified young people” in IVET, ISFOL, 2014) reveals that the drop-out rates grow especially in the transition from the first to the second year of upper secondary school. In the ISFOL (2014) survey it is demonstrated that many of the young people who leave high schools are then “rescued” within the Vocational Training agencies, which provide curricula aiming at delivering qualifications in the IVET system (from 2010–11 the IVET offer delivered in the VET agencies concur to compulsory education). The IVET curricula delivered in the training agencies are particularly appealing for this peculiar audience, the drop out component, attracted by didactic styles connected with a “learning by doing” approach, and in need of support and accompanying strategies, is witnessed by those who have attended a IVET education path in the training agency (ISFOL, 2014) in terms of satisfaction and success. Moreover, three years after qualification, 50% of the qualified students in IVET delivered by the training agencies have already found their first job, thus performing better than the students that qualified from the education path delivered in schools: in this latter case the rate diminishes at 38%.

Context Data

As for the contextual data, we see that the IVET in the 2014–15 educational year has had a positive trend, with more than 316,000 students enrolled in the triennial courses, that amounts to the 11.3% of the total of the secondary cycle population (ISFOL, 2015).

The inclusive nature of the IVET – Initial Vocational Education and Training is evident, incomparable with the parallel segments of our education system: in the year 2013–2014, those students with foreign origins enrolled in IVET totaled 46,375, accounting for 16.9% of total enrolments in IVET (except Islands, where data are not available) (ISFOL, 2015). If we compare this data with that related to other educational pathways, we see that students with foreign origins in upper secondary school (general education) are only 6.6%, while in the technical and professional schools are 15.2% of total enrolments (ISFOL, 2015) (see Table 1).

Table 1: Students with foreign background in IVET pathways (I, II, III year), training year 2013–14 (v.a.; %).

	Students with foreign origins in training agencies I-III year (v.a.)	Total enrolments in the training agencies I-III year (v.a.)	Percentage of students with foreign origins enrolled in the training agencies	Students with foreign origins in the schools I-III year (v.a.)	Total enrolments in the school (general; technical; professional pathways) I-III year	Percentage of students with foreign origins enrolled in the school (general; technical; professional)	Total pupils with foreign origins enrolled in the training agencies + school (general;	Total students with foreign origins+ Italians in the training agencies and school	Percentage of students with foreign origins enrolled in the training agencies and in the

¹ ISFOL is a public institute of research on VET and Labor Market, supervised by the Italian Ministry of Labor.

			I-III (%)		(v.a.)	al pathways I-III year (%)	technical; professional pathways I-III year (v.a.)	(general; technical; professional pathways) I-III year (v.a.)	school (general; technical; professional pathways) I-III year (%)
Total	22,836	119,445	19.1	23,539	155,321	15.2	46,375	274,766	16.9

Source: data elaborated by ISFOL (2015).

Turning our attention to the presence of non-Italian pupils in the school system, the availability of data collected annually from the 2001/2002 school year allows making some observations on the flows recorded in the last decade. The National Report 2013/2014 (Ministry of Education – MIUR ISMU, 2015) confirms a large increase of foreign students in the school population in the period 2001/02 – 2013/14 from 196,414 in the 2001/2002 school year (2.2% of the total school population) to 802,844 pupils with foreign origins in the 2013/2014 school year (9% of the total), although with a progressive deceleration from 2008/09 to date, in relation to the effects of the economic crisis in Italy (Ministry of Education – MIUR ISMU, 2015).

Generally, it is remarkable that foreign students enrolled between 2009/10 and 2013/14 grew by 19.2% compared with a decrease of -2.0% of Italian students and a decrease of -0.4% of the total school population (ISFOL, 2015) (see Table 2 below).

Table 2: School population by citizenship, school-year 2009/10, 2011/12 and 2013/14 (v.a.; %).

School year	Non Italian citizenship	Non Italian citizenship %	Italians	Total
2009/10	673,592	7.5	8,283,493	8,957,085
2011/12	755,939	8.4	8,204,227	8,960,166
2013/14	802,785	9.0	8,117,329	8,920,114

Source: data elaborated by ISFOL (2015).

Pupils with Romanian citizenship (154,621), Albanian (107,847) and Moroccan (101,176) are amongst the largest groups attending the Italian school in the school year 2013/14, then the group of Chinese origin students (39,211) follows, together with the Filipino group (24,839) (MIUR, 2015). Female pupils with a foreign background are 385,365, or 48% of all foreign students, a similar percentage is observed among native students (48.3%; MIUR, 2015).

Although in the Italian context some excellent practices in terms of the integration of pupils with foreign origins can be observed, nevertheless, international indicators are not satisfactory. An overview of the performance of foreign-born students is presented in the national report OECD PISA (2012) elaborated in Italy by INVALSI (an Institute of Research of the Italian Ministry of Education). From this data (representing 7.3% of immigrants, first and second-generation students) it is evident that the performance of immigrant students (first and second generation) are in all the observed disciplines – math, reading, science – lower than those of the natives, with marked geographical disparities between the South and North: with regard to the different levels of skills in mathematics, native students tend to have

significantly higher skills than those of students immigrants, with an average score of 490 against 442 seconds. Data confirms the orientation of the pupils with foreign origins to the technical and vocational training school, while only 20% of students with foreign origins choose high schools with liberal arts curriculum (*licei*) (MIUR, 2015).

Italians follow a radically different model of choice with an extreme polarization of the choices on liberal arts high school. Thus, 43.9% of Italian families choose high schools focused on humanities or science education; 33.4% technical schools; and only 18.9% vocational education. This data justifies concern of a kind of “segregation” of the school population with foreign origins in technical and professional schools, but it is also plausible to resize the data by reading it in relation to the aforementioned “polarization” of the choices, that is an extreme overrepresentation of liberal arts high schools among the Italian families, a peculiar phenomenon, if we compare the data representing school choices in higher secondary level with the other major European economies.

Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that the students with foreign origins born in Italy (so-called G2 – Second Generation) have chosen liberal arts high schools (*licei*) in percentage superior to other generations of students with foreign origins: 33.8% choose high school, while the choice of vocational schools falls to 29.8% against 39.8% for other generations of foreigners (MIUR, 2015), a sign of rebalancing in the distribution of educational choices among Italian students and foreign students.

Literature Review and Conceptual Framework

The migration phenomenon has changed over the past years not only in the origin but also in the type of flows. In fact, from temporary and non-resident, migration has become increasingly more permanent. Immigration for the purpose of work, once the bulk of immigration fluxes, now coexists with immigration for the purpose of family reunification giving to the phenomenon of immigration a more permanent character (Ambrosini, 2004). In this transition from one phenomenon to another, the issue of social assimilation and school integration of children born in Italy or those newly arrived has become relevant.

Therefore, since the 1990s, it has been necessary to find a new framework with different categories and paradigms for the studies on immigration in Italy and in Europe. Immigration studies moved from the conceptual framework on the assimilation processes drafted by the Chicago School from the beginning of the Twentieth century, and then evolved into three models focusing on the family, cultural and social relationships. In the Chicago School’s conceptual framework, an ascendant *linear process* is identified with the abandonment of ethnic identity in favor of the acceptance of the host middle class values and style of life, with the acquisition of good education, a good vocational integration and a full acculturation; secondly, a *selective process* is described, when the migrant retains the original ethnic identity and it is also thanks to the strong ethnic and family ties that the young immigrant improves his social position; finally, a descendant process (the *downward assimilation* in Portes & Zhou, 1993), where the entry in the host society occurs only through access to marginal and deviant groups, where ethnicity becomes a stigma of discrimination, with this, early school leaving and an attitude of rejection towards the host culture is widespread.

The European debate started from the categories developed in North American theories, but it drifted in the direction of a deeper analysis not only of the integration dynamics, but also of the assimilation processes. The European debate has also focused on the relationships among

policies for active citizenship, education, training, work and the policies for migration. These issues have been rather neglected in American studies that tend to take for granted the institutional scenario of reference. European scholars have preferred to develop the debate on integration rather than assimilation, basing their analysis on a comparison of the integration contexts (Crul & Schneider, 2010) and then defining the integration process as an inclusive path in the main host country institutions and focusing on the ways these relationships with the economic, legal, cultural system are developed and their characteristics.

In Italy, moving from the scientific debate derived from the North American studies, an interpretative model of the integration in the host society was proposed, from the combination of two key variables: the economic integration and the cultural assimilation in the second generation (Ambrosini, 2004) (see Table 3 below).

Table 3: The economic integration and the cultural assimilation in the second generation.

Cultural assimilation	Economic integration	
	Low	High
Low	<i>Marginal assimilation:</i> young immigrants set in marginalized and discriminated communities, who develop oppositional feelings toward the host society and its rules	<i>Selective assimilation:</i> academic success and economic progress favoured by maintaining community ties and different cultural codes
High	<i>Anomic deceptive assimilation:</i> acquisition of western lifestyles, but in the absence of tools and opportunities to obtain the necessary means to have access to the corresponding consumption standards	<i>Classical linear assimilation:</i> cultural assimilation, with the abandonment of ancestral identity, which goes hand in hand with the economic and social advancement

Source: Ambrosini & Molina (eds.), (2004).

The table above shows that the new category introduced by Ambrosini & Molina (2004), in comparison with those adopted by Portes & Zhou (1993), is the *anomic or deceptive* assimilation, with an emphasis on consumptive and consumerist life style and not only on cultural and social opportunities.

In particular, in the field of sociology of education, the question of the inclusion of young immigrants in education and training courses is linked to the issues of identity and belonging: the definition of "second generation" given to the children of immigrants indicates that the immigrant status is inherited even if it is not lived in the first place, that is, it refers to the status of newcomer and therefore liable to discrimination, to have difficulties in the integration process, to be viewed with suspicion due to their ethnicity: all conditions that children would share with their fathers (Ambrosini, 2004). On the contrary, other authors insist on the fact that the young represent a new world in comparison with that of the fathers, as they hold values, attitudes, opinions similar to those experienced by young natives in the same age group, crossing over the identity of the native families and the values of the host communities. In this perspective, the contribution of Besozzi (2009) is particularly interesting, as she identifies the transnational identity as a characteristic trait of the "second generation":

children of migrants born in Italy or who have reached Italy in the school age. The so-called “second generation of migrants” share an identity with their peers in the native community which is suspended between the global and local dimensions, despite their different origins.

The concept of transnationalism had already been mentioned in Anglo-Saxon studies (Glick Schiller, Bach, & Szanton Blanc, 1992; Portes, 2003), and it indicates a new theoretical paradigm where migrants and their children are not represented as passive subjects within the inclusion/exclusion dynamics of the host communities, but as active subjects able to take initiatives according to their ambitions, the family values, the supranational relational networks, thus determining the social and relational success for themselves and for their children. This ability to bind the native and destination contexts, the original and the adoptive cultures, indicate a chance for the second generation to take advantage from both the local and global belonging for their aim of social, economic, relational improvement.

The Eurydice Report (2004) on school integration of immigrant children in Europe states that two models are adopted in European countries: an integration model (with support provided within the morning hours or in dedicated afternoon hours) and the separation model (immigrant children are organized in separated classes for a short or a long term).

Italy has chosen an intercultural paradigm where immigrant children are integrated in ordinary classes, thus respecting the national post-unification tradition (post-1861) when different children from different regions of Italy, with different origins, experiences, dialects (Vertecchi, 2001) were integrated in the same class, with the aim of educating the “new Italian citizen”.

So today, children with foreign backgrounds are integrated in the same mainstream classes. Special measures are adopted depending on the strategies adopted by the Regional educational policies, for example, the number of children in the class is limited, educational activities to support the learning of Italian as a second language are added, or even artistic activities, for all children, native and foreign are foreseen, to support intercultural awareness.

In this political framework, an Italian scholar has defined intercultural education as: "the transformation of the educational context, through the implementation of communication processes between people with different cultural orientations, attitudes and lifestyles" (Besozzi, (ed.), 2005, p. 48).

Methodology of Research

Moving from the conceptual framework and the context above outlined, the field of survey has been defined as the analysis of the characteristics of the students with foreign origins participating in the system of initial vocational training.

The first version of the questionnaire was built on the basis of these research issues. The questionnaire then was subjected to a try-out test in order to verify the clarity of the questions, and the internal and external consistency.

The population of reference (pupils of foreign origin) in the training agencies was not known, as not all Italian Regions (responsible for the planning of the training activities, according to the Italian Constitution) keep the “foreign origins” variable when collecting data on the students attending initial vocational training courses. Thus, it was necessary to proceed to a

two-stage sampling strategy, with the training agency considered as unit of reference. The intersection and systematization of data has produced an initial 1968 database of certified training agencies, from which the first-stage sample was selected. Moreover, a reserve list has been extracted from the same database, in case the agencies from the main sample refuse to participate in the survey. The next step to a second-stage sampling has allowed the identification of the students to be interviewed, but since the target population was only partially known, it was not possible to build a pure probabilistic sample.

The research was carried out by ISFOL in 2014–2015 (Daniele, 2014; 2015a; 2015b); on students with foreign background in IVET: 124 vocational training institutions in Lombardy, Veneto, Emilia Romagna, Tuscany, Latium and Sicily were reached. 3675 questionnaires were retained for the analysis, of which 1840 were filled in by students with foreign backgrounds. Of this latter sub-sample, 149 pupils had a foreign parent and one parent born in Italy (8.1%); 488 were students born in Italy, from foreign parents – G2 (26.5%); 212 were pupils arrived in Italy when they were less than 6 years – G1.75 (11.5%); 541 were students that arrived in Italy when they were between 6 and 12 years – G1.5 (29.4%); 434 were students arrived in Italy when they were between 13 and 17 years – G1.25. Only 16 (0.9%) questionnaires were compiled by pupils arrived in Italy at the age of 18 or more – G1, (for the definition of G2; 1.5; G1.75; G2, see Rumbaut, 1997) this quota, being statistically not significant, it has not been considered in the detailed analysis (see Table 4).

Table 4: Students with a foreign background interviewed, according to the migratory generation.

	Sample size	%
Students with a foreign parent and one parent born in Italy	149	8.1
Italian foreign students born in Italy G2.0	488	26.5
Students arrived in Italy when they were less than 6 years G1.75	212	11.5
Students arrived in Italy when they were between 6 and 12 years G1.5	541	29.4
Students arrived in Italy when they were between 13 and 17 years G1.25	434	23.6
Students arrived in Italy at the age of 18 or more – G1*	16	0.9
Total	1840	100

*This quota, being statistically not significant, it has not been considered in the detailed analysis.

Source: data elaborated by ISFOL (2015).

The core topics were: family situation and the migratory pathway; studies and training; satisfaction with the choice of VET and integration within the training centers; prospects and expectations regarding employment; linguistic and social integration outside the training context. The questionnaires were administered by ISFOL during the months of April-June 2013. The survey was financed by the Italian Ministry of Labor.

Results and Discussion

As stated above, the issue of the presence of foreign-born students, linked to the theme of the quality of the general education, has been present in the Italian scientific literature since the early 1990s. Less attention has been paid to the presence of foreign students in vocational training and education, not only in relation to the performance of pupils with foreign backgrounds, but also with regard to the integration, identity and belonging to the peer group in the training centres.

The term integration, therefore, refers also to the possibility of participation in a community, thereby “recognizing a full existence active and conscious – not without conflict – of the subjects to integrate” (Besozzi, Colombo, (eds.), 2012, p. 9). Thus, the question of integration, affiliation, personal identity formation, social and cultural development of the new citizens is relevant from the dual point of view of the relations between individuals and between them and the larger society.

Against this background, the general hypothesis that motivates this article is that the identity and cultural belonging is dynamically determined through the relationship with those who have a similar linguistic and cultural origin, but also with the new groups met in the country of destination. The relational dimension brings up a new paradigm concerning cultural identity, linked to the exchange with the various human, spatial and temporal contexts.

The wide diffusion of Italian as a “lingua franca” for those who has arrived in Italy from school age, but also for newcomers, has been growing since the early Nineties. In fact, the term of "Italian as second language" does not represent anymore the extensive and widespread use of this language made by the young people with foreign origin in the exchanges with the natives, but also in inter-ethnic relationships.

Italian has become actually a "second mother tongue", visited and practiced, next to the maternal language of origin. Italian, in fact assumes an important place in the construction of the identity for adults and young people, in the exchanges and in the narration of the personal or family migration. The Italian language then looks like:

- “The language of “survival” for the adults newly arrived in Italy;
- the language of work and exchanges for those who reside here since longer;
- the language “to certify” for those who demand the release of the residence permit;
- the language “of the children” for foreign families, whose children every day bring at home new terms, new meanings and stories.”²

The context has therefore become very complex and diversified: the needs related to acquisition of Italian on behalf of the newly arrived adults and children, coexist with the needs to refine the language, to better the mastery and quality of expression in the workplace and in everyday situations, improving vocabulary, syntax, oral expression and writing. These needs are linked to the expression of the self and the strengthening of the social roles of the adult or young adult (student, citizen, user, patient, etc.).

Table 5 shows that the percentage of students with foreign background attending Italian courses as second language tends to increase with the age at arrival (from 14.4% to 70.6%). Worryingly, 21.9% of young people arrived in Italy between 13 and 17 years old report not having attended any Italian course. An alarm bell is ringing for this generation of students near to becoming full citizens at the age of 18 (see Table 5).

² National Observatory of the integration of foreign students – Osservatorio nazionale per l'integrazione degli alunni stranieri e per l'intercultura, p. 3.

Table 5: Students who have attended Italian as second language courses (%).

	Migratory generation			
	Italian foreign students born in Italy G2.0	Students arrived in Italy when they were less than 6 years G1.75	Students arrived in Italy when they were between 6 and 12 years G1.5	Students arrived in Italy when they were between 13 and 17 years G1.25
Yes, organized by the school that I attended before the CFP	21.2	10.8	33.9	49.0
Yes, organized by the CFP that I attend now	3.6	1.8	2.0	10.4
Yes, organized by associations or other bodies	6.1	1.8	4.7	11.2
No, I have not attended any courses	56.2	79.6	54.9	21.9
No answer	12.9	6.0	4.5	7.5
Total	100	100	100	100

Source: data elaborated by ISFOL (2015).

The questionnaire contained a question about the knowledge of Italian (speaking, reading and writing competence), a self-assessed measure which can give the representation of the perceived easiness in the everyday use of Italian. In the comparison between pupils with foreign background and Italians, as far as speaking and reading is concerned, there is no great difference: in both cases more than 90% of Italians and students with foreign origins declare to be good or very good, it is so evident that the students with foreign origins have reached the level of native children. More distance is recorded for writing: 8.2% of the students with a foreign background say they are poor or very poor in writing, compared with 3.1% of the Italian sample. If we consider into details this data, it is remarkable that 15.8% of the 1.25 Generation arrived aged between 13 and 17 years old (6.9% of G1.5; 3.9% of G1.75; 5.6 of G2.0) affirms to be poor or very poor: the question should be posed whether this generation will be able to bridge this important gap after the age of 18 without focused initiatives to avoid their permanent exclusion from an active and full citizenship.

Multilingualism is also a relevant issue. Italian educators are giving growing attention to this matter, considering that multilingualism could, on one side, enrich the curriculum of the monolingual students giving them more instruments in an intercultural world, on the other, valorize the migratory history of the foreign students, who are otherwise made invisible in their specificity. The foreign students, compared to Italian students, claim more frequently to know at least one other language besides Italian and in 31.5% of cases, even three languages. For Italians the second language indicated is predominantly English, while for students with foreign background, it is their mother tongue (Figure 1).

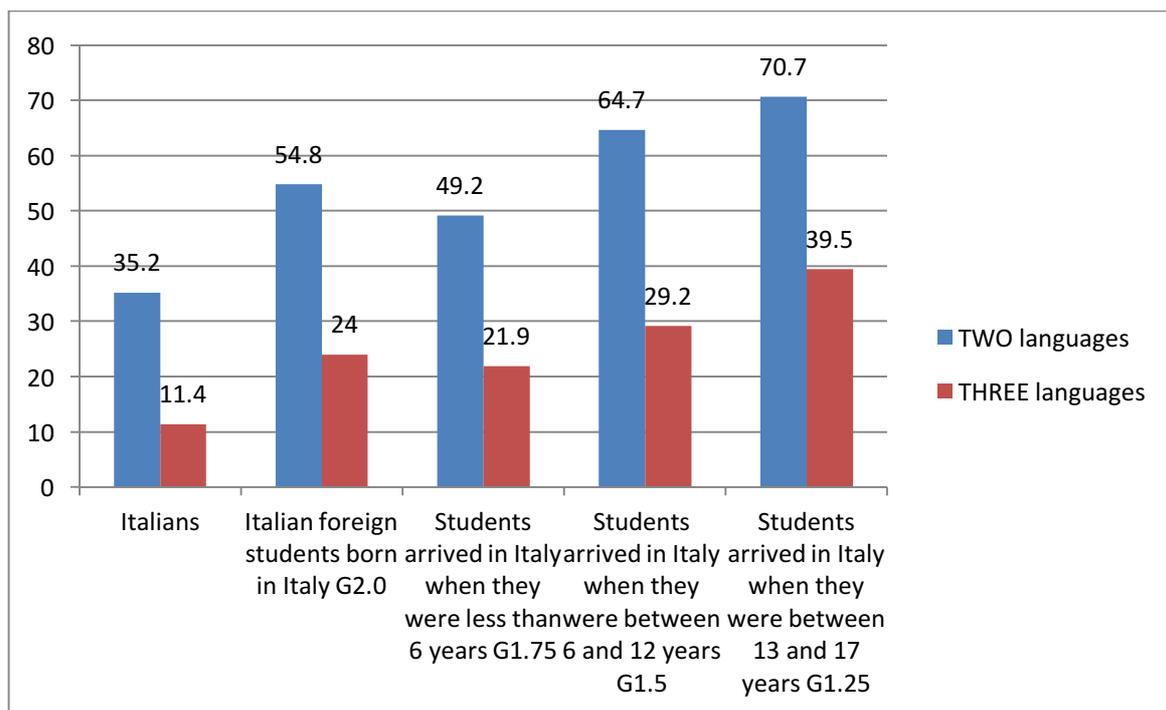


Figure 1: Multilingualism: comparison among Italians and foreign students*; migratory generations (Rumbaut, 1997); in %.

* Only valid responses "very good" and "fair" (in a scale of four values) to the question: can you speak, read or write a foreign language (Italian included in "two" or "three" languages). Source: data elaborated by ISFOL (2015).

The analysis of the use of the language in everyday situations gives counter-intuitive results: Italian is the first language used by foreigners in relationships between peers, and this also applies to the most recent generations that arrived in Italy, but it is even more relevant that several generations of foreign boys and girls use Italian more frequently than the Italians, who (for 20.5% of the Italian sample), in many regions, prefer to use a dialect instead of Italian in their relationships with peers and within the family. Thus, in some regions the Italian language has become a vehicular language for the relationships within institutions, even schools and training centers. It is then possible to observe the presence of both intercultural and globalization dynamics and forces related to localism, which are still very strong and rooted in all Italian regions (Table 6).

Table 6: Italian (and dialect) in everyday life (1st choice; %).

	Italians	G 2.0	G1.75	G1.5	G1.25
Italian	79.5	82.3	87.4	78.3	67.2
Foreign language	1.4	15.0	10.1	19.4	31.8
Italian dialect	19.1	2.7	2.5	2.3	1.0
Total	100	100	100	100	100
v.a.	1835	488	212	541	434

Source: data elaborated by ISFOL (2015)

The scene is completely different considering the language used in the relationships with family members: for the students with foreign backgrounds, their mother tongue becomes the first language spoken, even for the generations born in Italy (G 2.0) who still keep the mother tongue as the language which underlines their belonging to the native community. Similarly, in a symmetrical perspective, for the Italian students, in one case out of five, it is the dialect – the language of identity – that is dominant in domestic relationships within the family (Table 7).

Table 7: First Language spoken in family relationships (1st choice; %).

	Italians	G 2.0	G1.75	G1.5	G1.25
Italian	78.5	39.2	42.5	30.3	19.0
Foreign language	0.6	59.9	57.5	69.3	80.8
Italian dialect	20.9	0.9	-	0.4	0.2
Total	100	100	100	100	100
v.a.	1835	488	212	541	434

Source: data elaborated by ISFOL (2015)

Conclusion

The above considerations, drawn from the results of research conducted by ISFOL, including the context analysis carried out through the interviews with directors, teachers and tutors of the training centers, lead us to present some concluding remarks in the field of strengthening of Italian as second language and the enhancement of a multilingual presence in the classroom as a cultural enrichment factor:

a) First, it seems necessary to move from spontaneous and scattered interventions to a systematic and formal plan to develop the provision of Italian as second language at regional and national level in primary education and for adults in the workplace. This plan should take into account regional specificities and promote collaboration between institutions that already have accumulated significant experience in the field, like in the case of the Adult Learning Centers, or the courses financed by the European Fund for the Integration-EFI, and the initiatives promoted by the non-governmental organizations with quality standards at European levels.

b) Secondly, it seems necessary not only to develop a training offer for the achievement of the A2 level (corresponding to the beginner's level in the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages – CEFR*) in Italian as second language (this certificate is necessary to get the residence permit for long-term residents), but also to develop devices and teaching methods to reach the most vulnerable users, those who are illiterate or with low literacy. It is necessary to develop learning content related to everyday situations. Also, it should no longer be delayed in the development of content that meet even the highest levels of Italian language command (B1, B2, C1, C2, in the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages – CEFR*) for those who already received a tertiary education in their own country.

c) An alarm bell sounds for the foreign students that arrived in Italy that are aged 13 to 17 years: in 15.8% of cases they claim to have little or no expertise in writing in Italian. This

circumstance can seriously impair their ability as citizens and workers in the absence of specific interventions for this group. Similarly, the argument can be extended to newly arrived pupils, whatever their age on arrival. In fact, comparative research, analyzing PIAAC data (Alieva Aigul, 2014), has demonstrated the limited usefulness of the model of “segregation” through the transit of newly arrived pupils in “special” classes before their introduction in general classes. Instead, the model of immediate “integration” in general classes, as it is in Italy, seems to give better results in terms of performance of the second generation. Nevertheless, it is also true that today this practice is based mostly on the informal capacity of learning and the adaptation of pupils of foreign origins, and it is supported by competences, as well informal, in terms of multicultural pedagogy and teaching methods, acquired by the teachers on the field. The provision of Italian as a second language should be, on the contrary, individualized, and organized in 6–8 hours of teaching per week with teachers with specific preparation (Aluffi Pentini, 1995). Moreover, for foreign-born students compensatory measures also should be considered: for example, the recognition of the level of command in the mother-tongue and the recognition of "credits" for incoming students from foreign school systems.

d) “The right to education can only be fully exercised if the learners master the specific linguistic rules that are applied in schools and are necessary for access to knowledge. (. . .) In this context, particular attention should be paid, right from the outset of schooling, to the acquisition of the language of schooling, which, as both a specific school subject and a medium of instruction in the other subjects, plays a crucial role in providing access to knowledge and cognitive development” (Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the importance of competences in the language(s) of schooling for equity and quality in education and for educational success (CM/Rec(2014)5), pg. 4). It is really relevant to make students acquire a good understanding of the "micro-languages", the specialized languages related to each discipline: “every school subject (history, art, mathematics, etc., including the language of schooling as a specific subject) uses its own specific forms of oral and written expression: students should master these forms in order to successfully participate in school activities” (ibidem, p. 4). It is therefore important that teachers are aware of their role as facilitators of learning, and that they are supported in this role. In the 2014 Recommendation of the Council of Europe on the importance of competences in the language(s) of schooling, some operational runways are suggested for those responsible for educational contents and programs to promote effective consideration of the linguistic dimensions in the various school subjects by:

1. “Making explicit the specific linguistic norms and competences which learners must be able to master in individual school subjects;
2. making explicit in the programmes and curricula the learning modalities that should allow all learners, and in particular the most vulnerable among them, to be exposed to diversified language-learning situations in order to develop their cognitive and linguistic capacities;
3. highlighting, in the programmes, convergences in the linguistic dimensions of the various subjects, in such a way as to reinforce the effectiveness of the educational project;
4. recalling, in the programmes for the language of schooling as a specific school subject, the special place which this language holds because of its cross-cutting effect on all the learning processes conducted in that language;
5. encouraging authors of educational materials to ensure that such materials explicitly take account of the linguistic dimensions of the different subjects;

6. continuing and extending research in this field.” (ibidem, p. 7).

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