



**Proceedings of the 2nd International Conference
of the Journal Scuola Democratica**

REINVENTING EDUCATION

2-5 June 2021

VOLUME I

Citizenship, Work and The Global Age

ASSOCIAZIONE "PER SCUOLA DEMOCRATICA"

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Citizenship, Work and The Global Age

ASSOCIAZIONE "PER SCUOLA DEMOCRATICA"
Via Francesco Satolli, 30 – 00165 - Rome, Italy

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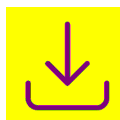
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***Title* Proceedings of the Second International Conference of the Journal “Scuola Democratica” – Reinventing Education VOLUME I Citizenship, Work and The Global Age**

This volume contains papers presented in the 2nd International Conference of the Journal “Scuola Democratica” which took place online on 2-5 June 2021. The Conference was devoted to the needs and prospects of Reinventing Education.

The challenges posed by the contemporary world have long required a rethinking of educational concepts, policies and practices. The question about education ‘for what’ as well as ‘how’ and ‘for whom’ has become unavoidable and yet it largely remained elusive due to a tenacious attachment to the ideas and routines of the past which are now far off the radical transformations required of educational systems. Scenarios, reflections and practices fostering the possibility of change towards the reinvention of the educational field as a driver of more general and global changes have been centerstage topics at the Conference. Multidisciplinary approach from experts from different disciplinary communities, including sociology, pedagogy, psychology, economics, architecture, political science has brought together researchers, decision makers and educators from all around the world to investigate constraints and opportunities for reinventing education.

The Conference has been an opportunity to present and discuss empirical and theoretical works from a variety of disciplines and fields covering education and thus promoting a trans- and inter-disciplinary discussion on urgent topics; to foster debates among experts and professionals; to diffuse research findings all over international scientific networks and practitioners’ mainstreams; to launch further strategies and networking alliances on local, national and international scale; to provide a new space for debate and evidences to educational policies. In this framework, more than 800 participants, including academics, educators, university students, had the opportunity to engage in a productive and fruitful dialogue based on research, analyses and critics, most of which have been published in this volume in their full version.

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Citizenship, Work and The Global Age

A Premise

What is education for? This philosophical question cannot be answered ignoring contributions from social and educational sciences. The growing focus on learning outcomes should have prompted discussion on the values and aims in defining policy objectives and developing accountability systems and evidence-based approaches. Whereas for years public discourse on education has most frequently been confined to a merely sector-based perspective, without addressing the relationship (i.e., interdependency and/or autonomy) with globalised societies or to face the new challenges of contemporary's world. The relationship between education and society and the issue of aims can be observed in a new context which has seen the weakening of the society-nation equation and the strengthening of global dimensions.

The crisis born of the pandemic is more and more global and multidimensional. It inevitably obliges to ask what the post-pandemic socio-economic scenarios could be and what challenges might emerge from the transformations of education and training systems and policies. Many researchers and observers think that the most relevant of these challenges is that of inequalities between and within countries. The medium-long term nature of many of these challenges poses a complex question: does the pandemic tend to widen or narrow the time-space horizons of people perceptions, rationalities, and decisions?

For decades, the field of education and training has witnessed continuous growth in globalization and internationalization: just think of the role of the large-scale assessment surveys and the increasing influence of international organisations. Phenomena and concepts such as policy mobility (lending and borrowing) or – within another field of research – policy learning, as well as global scaling up, global-local hybridization and policy assemblage might find a useful opportunity of debate and in-depth analysis in this stream. This might also be true of the related issue regarding how comparative research must be carried out and of the relationship between some government 'technologies' adopted in the latest cycle of policies – for example, quasi-market, evaluation, and autonomy of schools and universities – and the ever more criticized neo-liberal paradigm. In this framework, without any revival of the political or methodological nationalism, a critical rethinking of the national dimension, perhaps too hurriedly assumed to be 'obsolete', can be useful also for a comparative reflection. As to our continent we are in the presence not only of globalization of educational policies, but also of their Europeanisation, due to the extent of the European Commission's strategy and its Open Method of Coordination. Beyond the official distinction between formal, non-formal, and informal learning, it seems European initiatives and programmes shape a new policy world preparing the future of education, particularly through different expert networks, new ways of conceptualizing knowledge, and disseminating standards. On these issues there is no lack of reflections and research, some of which very critical indeed, whose results deserve to be broadly shared and discussed, too.

The equipping of the new generations with the tools – knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values – to live in a plural and interconnected world is delicate matter indeed in Europe. It is the issue at stake for the encounters – and at times clashes – between old and new visions and

forms of pluralism and secularism. Around this theme are developed educational policies and strongly heterogeneous curricula. Such topic is linked also to the variability in young people's competences and attitudes towards 'cultural otherness'.

Life-long learning is another question of notable importance at international level as it implies both a diverse temporal horizon for education and its link to the dimensions of work. And a different approach to the relationship between school and extra-scholastic (life-wide) learning is also implied. From this stems the necessity of greater investment for example in both the early years (ECEC) and the adult education. We might ask, however, how much has been done to achieve this goal, and whether it risks remaining a fascinating but largely unfinished project for a long time.

Within a general rethinking of the aims and the means at the disposal of education systems, many papers ask whether until now enough has been done to educate towards citizenship and democracy and whether various national educational systems have adopted this issue as their core mission.

A second group of questions derives from some crucial challenges – such as the dramatic deterioration of the biosphere, the climate, and the health – which impose both the necessity of rethinking this mission in a planetary context and redefining the 'citizenship' as a concept not merely national, but multi-level, that is ranging from global to local; and in our continent European, too. How deeply are our nations presently involved in the task of educating their citizens in terms of knowledge of global and trans-national issues? And are they striving to build a collective common consciousness in Europe? What help is being given in this sense by proposals elaborated and experiences promoted by international organizations or the EU?

Finally, starting from infant and primary schools, what weight does citizenship education have in schools, what approaches are adopted and what have shown to be the most effective? What didactics are applied and what seem to be the most promising experiences? To what extent are teachers prepared and motivated and students interested in it? Universities and adult education should also play a role in citizenship education. What proposals and significant experiences can be described and examined?

The Volume also includes contributions on the relationship between education and economic systems which is a classic subject of social science. During the twentieth century, the functionalist perspective established a close link between 'school for the masses' and the construction of individuals personalities conforming to values and social objectives. Professions have then become more and more specialized and therefore requiring ever more targeted skills. Hence, the insistence on the need to train future workers in technical and technological skills, as well as more recently in the 'soft skills' climate, increasingly necessary in certain sectors of the economy (Industry 4.0). The alliance between the functionalist perspective and the neoliberal visions finds its conceptual and practical pivot in the employability conceptual frame. On the other hand, since the 1970s, critical research has highlighted that formal education system contributes to the reproduction of inequalities, confirming and strengthening hierarchies and power relations between different actors of the economic system. These lines of investigation have underlined the weight of cultural and social capital in determining school performance, but also the inflation of educational credentials as a combined effect of mass schooling and changes in the economic system. In more recent times, the fragmentation of the educational and training systems, because of the

multiplication of public and private agencies in charge of training citizens, in addition to the explosion of the non-formal and informal as learning places (e.g., on the Internet), challenges the school to maintain its primacy as a place responsible for training workers. Moreover, it questions its ability to continue to represent a social elevator and / or a place of social justice.

The issue of the reproduction of inequalities and differential returns of educational qualifications fuels lively and stimulating interdisciplinary debates: economic stagnation, mass unemployment and job instability affect the inclusion of young generations in the labour market. Recently, in the context of lifelong learning policies, the relationship between training and work has become increasingly central, but the definition of the goals of these policies is not neutral: in the neoliberal mantra it is a question of guaranteeing the adaptability, employability and autonomy of each individual, so that one can occupy a place in society according to the dominant values. There is no shortage of critical voices about this individualistic and functionalist interpretation of the Lifelong Learning vision. On the other hand, even the supporters of neoliberal-inspired policies want an inclusive training offer (from a meritocratic perspective), as it is essential for recruiting resources and supporting flexible production systems focused on knowledge.

The attention of scholars focuses on the effects of the 'knowledge society' in the educational system of European countries. In this perspective, several studies have focused attention on the orientation processes that contribute to the reproduction of inequalities as the students from the lower classes tend to orient themselves, and are oriented by their teachers, towards the vocational paths, stigmatized within the educational systems.

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Language Education and Citizenship

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ABSTRACT: *The contribution aims to reflect on the role of school as a 'citizenization' agent in multilingual and multicultural societies. One of the tasks entrusted to schools by Italian constitution is to remove the obstacles that stand in the way of the free exercise of the rights and duties of citizenship and democracy. Of these, one of the first and «the most terrible (because it is the most hidden and concealed)» (De Mauro, 1995) is the inability to use words: «to control written communication, to have full access to the information» (ibid.). In the Italian school system, for historical and political reasons, this task has been interpreted from a monolingual point of view, both as adherence to a language as a closed, non-variable system of forms and structures – whereas the objective should be the ability to move with variable and multiple tools within a complex linguistic space – and as the offer of a single language, Italian, considering the plurilingualism, widespread for centuries throughout Italy, as an obstacle. This attitude towards language and language education has remained constant even when pupils of foreign origin have entered the school system. Their condition of plurilingualism was seen as an impediment to learning both the Italian language and the other school subjects. Thus, the new and complex plurilingual context has not been tackled as a challenge to reformulate the principles of democratic language education (GISCEL, 1975), and to reaffirm the centrality and transversality of language education itself, in the construction of people who think and operate actively in society, and for the construction of a truly inclusive school. Instead, the Italian school system has continued to adopt occasional and not structural policies in response to emergencies, or has gone after more or less transitory fashions, not making «educational research a field of experimental investigation and consequent action» (Ambel, 2018). In the last decades, however, both from a scientific perspective and through language policy recommendations and the proposal of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Council of Europe, 2001 and 2018), it has emerged that respecting language diversity is a fundamental element of a just and equitable society. Many studies have demonstrated that the right to use one's own language is a decisive component in a person's intellectual and emotional development (Byalistok et al. 2008; Costa et al., 2014) and that the combination of the individual benefits and the educational benefits of plurilingualism has the potential to decrease social and economic inequalities and to increase the economic wellbeing of societies (Gazzola, Wickström, 2016).*

KEYWORDS: *Language Education, Plurilingualism, Language Policy, Italian Language, Foreign Languages*

Introduction

The aim of the present paper is to reflect on the role of education as a 'citizenization' agent in multilingual and multicultural societies.

Citizenship is a factor of crucial importance for healthy democracies: it has been recognized as not only reducible to a legal status, but involving a multiplicity of cultural, social, political and economic dimensions as well and is nowadays a more and more contested and uncertain issue, that obviously challenges education. Various recent studies decline 'citizenship' in various ways and suggest different ways to improve it at school: focusing on Civic Education, on political literacy, on the teaching of Citizenship and Constitution, and present experiences and empowering practices, in some schools and in some different cities throughout Italy.

The objective of the present contribution is to start further upstream and focus on the conditions of possibility for the exercise of active citizenship.

1. Language, citizenship and democratic language education

De Mauro, starting from the *Ten GISCEL theses for linguistic democratic education* (GISCEL, 1975) and throughout his all life, warned us that «among the most terrible obstacles (because, more hidden and concealed) that limit the possibility of participating in national life and that would be the task of the Republic to remove stands and excel the inability to control written communication, to fully access the information necessary to live and, sometimes, survive, therefore to build an adequate critical equipment and a real ability to understand and control what happens around» (De Mauro, 1995, 39).

«Without the alphabet, no democracy. Without the alphabet, only underdevelopment» (ibidem) citing again De Mauro's words, words that already Gramsci and Don Milani used. With Don Milani, Pasolini and Rodari, De Mauro underlined the importance of the ability to use words in different contexts as a form of social redemption and guarantee of democracy (Ambel, 2018). With them De Mauro shared «a capacity for creative protest, exercised on the terrain of the most obvious everyday life» (Ambel, 2018), that is, the capacity to construct proposals and to «find and follow new, better, more human paths» (De Mauro, 1982). Proposals that, however, have not been adopted, paths that have not been followed.

In fact, it seems incredible to have to underline decades after the writings, interventions, inventions, proposals, protests, and hopes of these scholars, that illiteracy, defined as «the set of limits of the development process... critical points, unachieved objectives, deficient tools to make effective a process of linguistic-communicative

development of individuals and the community» (Ambel, 2018), should be fought as the most dangerous obstacle to citizenship.

And yet we still need to remember the art. 3 in the Italian Constitution itself: «All citizens have equal social dignity and are equal before the law, without distinction of sex, race, language, religion, political opinion, personal and social conditions. It is the duty of the Republic to remove those obstacles of an economic and social nature which, by limiting the freedom and equality of citizens, prevent the full development of the human person and the effective participation of all workers in the political, economic and social organization of the country». In this article after stating that the principle of equality is at the heart of the Charter, strongly and clearly is stated that one of the main objectives of the State is to eliminate the obstacles that prevent all citizens from enjoying equal social dignity and attributes to public institutions the role of removing these obstacles that prevent the exercise of rights and duties.

Certainly as far as language(s) are concerned, it is mainly the school that should take charge of providing all citizens with the tools for the full exercise of their citizenship, bridging the initial contextual socio-economic-cultural gaps, fighting illiteracy and fostering literacy, promoting the linguistic, expressive, communicative, cultural development at individual and societal level and even more designing and developing a project for such development, a project to promote plurilingualism in the broadest sense, to enlarge the linguistic space at the individual and societal level.

2. Language education at school

All the surveys, as we will see, continue to paint a picture of a national school and a country marked by profound differences and inequalities in results and conditions: between subjects, between types of school, between north and south, between regions, between schools and sites in the same territory, between boys and girls, between Italians and first- and second-generation immigrants, between social strata, even (unfortunately) between the first stage of schooling and subsequent stages (which are gradually becoming more and more unsatisfactory).

This picture also applies to literacy in the language(s). De Mauro warned us on this problem since 1975 when the *Ten GISCEL theses* (GISCEL, 1975) were published. «Giving children all the uses of language, all the opportunities that a language gives us» (Ambel, 2017), i.e., seeing languages as tools and resources for social redemption and political participation, is the aim of the *democratic language education* promoted by GISCEL (GISCEL, 2007; De Mauro, 2018).

The concrete proposal and precise educational indications contained in the *Ten GISCEL theses* have remained unheard (GISCEL, 2007). Instead, an inability or unwillingness to notice the centrality of linguistic

facts, in the social life, in the life of a community has prevailed both in the school and in the Italian intellectual culture, as De Mauro himself acknowledges, such as the inability «in connection with this, to see, to understand, to perceive the educational centrality of linguistic abilities» (2018: 12). The strategicity of the competence in languages for building future citizen has been and is still ignored, considered irrelevant and has never been the objective of a coherent, structured and consistent language policy intervention, paradoxically in a country like Italy that is historically plurilingual (Vedovelli, 2010).

Furthermore, in the Italian school system, for historical and political reasons (De Mauro, 2007), language education has been interpreted from a monolingual point of view, both as adherence to a language as a closed, non-variable system of forms and structures – whereas the objective should be the ability to move with variable and multiple tools within a complex linguistic space – and as the offer of a single language, Italian, considering the plurilingualism, widespread for centuries throughout Italy at individual and societal level, as an obstacle (De Mauro, 2007).

The results of the lack of a structured, coherent and consistent policy, aimed not only at promoting single projects in response to emergencies (such as the arrival of immigrant students in schools), and of this monolingual and normative vision, is evident if we analyze the ways in which the constellation of languages with which a learner may come into contact are managed and not reflected upon in the school context.

We can affirm that in Italy more than the question of the language (Italian for Italians), there is a question of languages, because the lack of literacy regards the whole constellation of languages with which a learner may come into contact. In the present contribution, we will only focus on the languages of education (Council of Europe, 2009), that are taught or learned at school: Italian and foreign languages.

Let's start with Italian language. Various data sources highlight the problems that still exist in literacy in Italian languages.

First and foremost are the results of the INVALSI tests, which are much discussed, often inappropriately and only when they are published and (Sobrero, 2020). For many years now, the INVALSI itself has been denouncing, with mountains of data that very few have read, the low level of students' Italian skills, which, paradoxically, becomes more marked in secondary schools from the end of primary school onwards.

And yet, in the best Italian tradition, the problems, thus ignored, have been left (or allowed) to fester in the general lack of interest. This was also the case for the expert report commissioned by the Ministers of Labour and Social policies, and of Education, University and Research in 2013. The Commission of experts analyzed the results of the OECD's Programme for International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC), which measures (by administering sample-based tests) the level of those competences that are considered essential for the full

participation of adult citizens in today's labour market and social life. In particular, PIAAC measures, for adults aged 16-65, the level of key competences such as basic literacy or literacy (LIT), defined as «the ability to understand, evaluate, use and engage with written texts to participate in society, achieve one's goals, and develop one's knowledge and potential» (PIAAC, 2013, 2).

The 2013 expert report on PIAAC results, based on the survey conducted in 2011-2012 in 24 OCSE countries, in one of the last documents commissioned by Italian Ministries in which data-driven policies and strategic actions to increase formal education and training, combating drop-outs and promoting lifelong learning are suggested.

As the expert report states, the PIAAC survey highlights the strong relationship between levels of skills possessed by adults and their approach to and participation in civic and social life. Italy is at the bottom of the general ranking of the participating countries, it is last in literacy.

As the PIAAC survey highlight, results in literacy do not improve with the progression of education level: «in Italy, for each level of education, average results are much lower than the OECD average, and with very limited differences between one level and another. Even worse are the results for Italians with the highest level of formal education, who are significantly behind the OECD average [...] More analytically, the performance level of young Italians (16-29 years old) with tertiary education is all within level 3; this means that they are not able to search, integrate, interpret and synthesize information from complex, multiple, possibly discontinuous texts, nor to make complex inferences and evaluate evidence through reasoning (characteristics of levels 4 and 5). A young Japanese, Finnish, Dutch or Australian with upper secondary education performs better than a young Italian graduate» (PIAAC, 2013, 4).

The PIAAC results are in line with the PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) results based on a survey which measures 15-year-old school pupils' scholastic performance on mathematics, science, and reading. In 2018, Italy scored below the OECD average in reading: «77% of students attained at least Level 2 proficiency in reading (OECD average: 77%). At a minimum, these students can identify the main idea in a text of moderate length, find information based on explicit, though sometimes complex criteria, and can reflect on the purpose and form of texts when explicitly directed to do so» (OECD, 2018, 4).

Even those who do not (rightly) want to rely entirely on surveys that use different methodologies, techniques, tools, refer to different population samples, and analyze the results in different ways, are forced to note that all the survey results show that the question of language is always present in our country and how urgent it is to address it in a systematic way.

Similar results are provided by surveys of students' proficiency in foreign languages, the languages taught at school. Incidentally, we should remember that we are among the European countries with the most limited language provision at school: in practice, in Italy only English is offered, with the exception of one more language in upper secondary schools, for two years (Extra, Yagmur, 2012).

Starting from 2017, the system for assessing students' English language receptive skills at three key moments of their schooling career – at the end of primary school (Grade 5), at the end of lower secondary school (Grade 8) and at the end of upper secondary school (Grade 13) – was completed by INVALSI, the *National Institute for the Evaluation of the Education and Training System*. All Italian school students have the opportunity to test their English listening and reading skills in relation to the internationally recognized criteria of the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (Council of Europe, 2001, 2018).

The results of the 2019 INVALSI tests of English show that problems come from afar and paradoxically grow as school levels rise, just as the differences among territories grow. The Italian primary school students do well in the English tests, but in the last year of upper secondary school (Grade 13) in the reading test, only 51.8% of Italian school students reach level B2 (the target prescribed for the end of upper secondary school) and 10.6% do not even reach level B1, i.e., they have a very low level of competence after 13 years of schooling. In the listening test, only 35.0% of Italian school students reach level B2 and 25.2% i.e., one student out of four does not reach level B1. In some regions of the South there is a greater number of students with very low levels of achievement in English (INVALSI, 2019).

FIG. 1. 2019 tests results in Italian and English (reading): primary schools and upper secondary schools

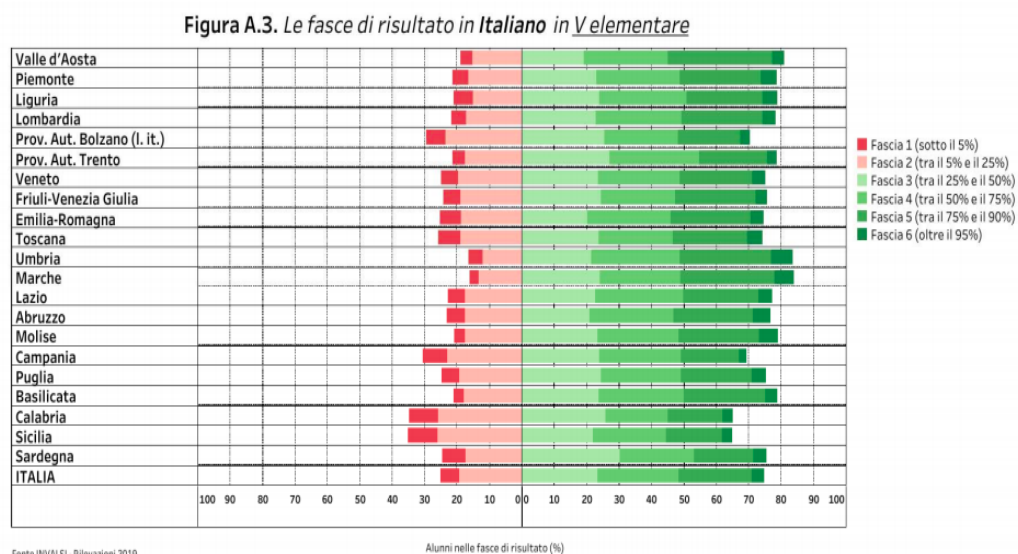
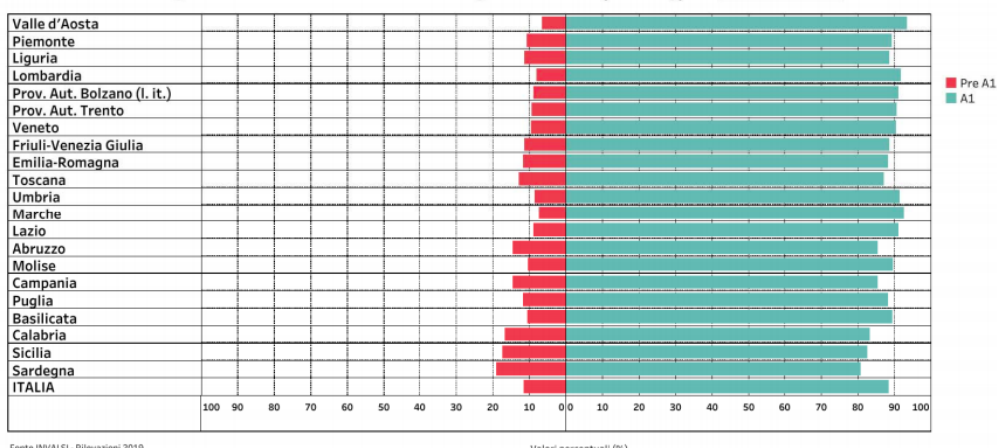
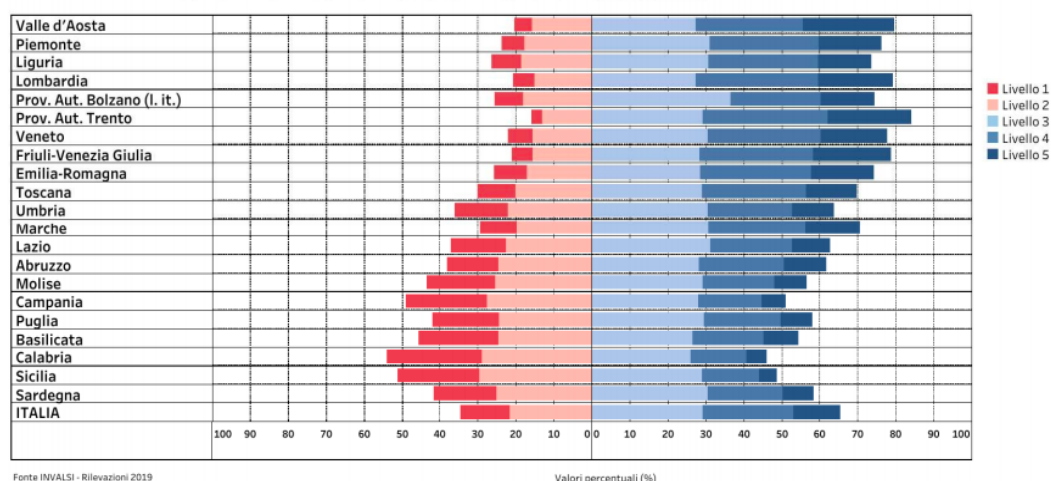


Figura A.5. I livelli di risultato in Inglese-lettura (reading) in *V* elementare

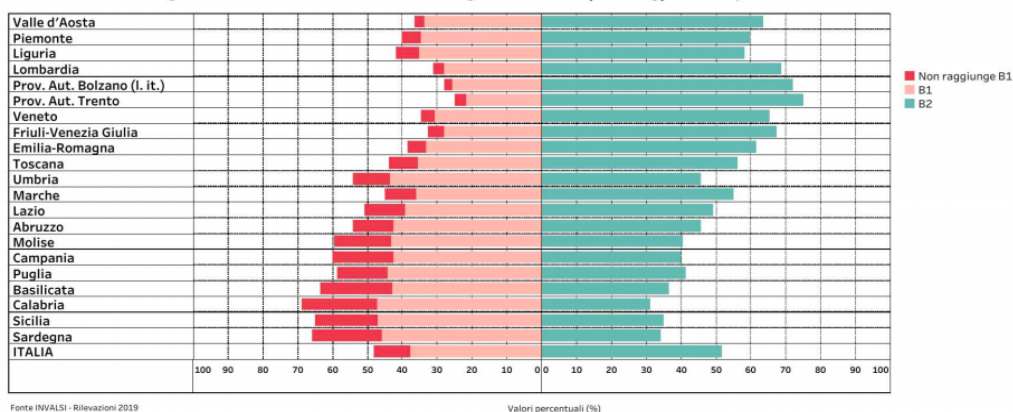
Fonte INVALSI - Rilevazioni 2019

Valori percentuali (%)

Figura A.13. I livelli di risultato in Italiano in *V* superiore

Fonte INVALSI - Rilevazioni 2019

Valori percentuali (%)

Figura A.15. I livelli di risultato in Inglese-lettura (reading) in *V* superiore

Fonte INVALSI - Rilevazioni 2019

Valori percentuali (%)

Source: INVALSI open (2021)

If we compare the results curves in Italian and English tests (Fig. 1), we see that they are the same for both competences in Italian and English. The differences are small in primary school, growing in upper

secondary school. The lack of competence in Italian and English grow as school levels rise, just as the differences among territories grow.

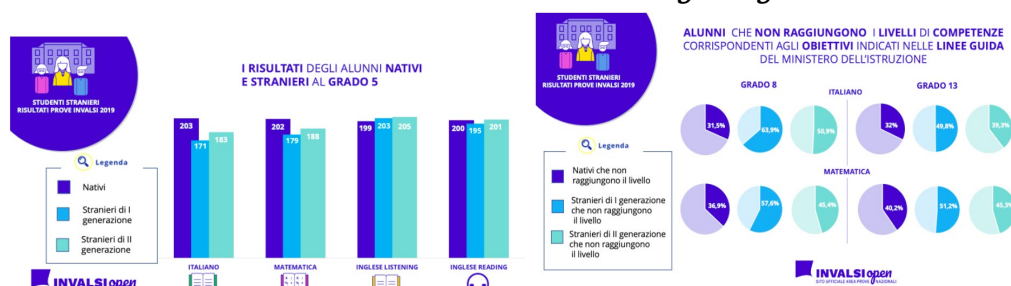
The attitude of neglect towards languages and language education has remained constant even when pupils of foreign origin have entered the school system. Their condition of plurilingualism of origin was seen as an impediment to learning both the Italian language and the other school subjects. But this does not mean that measures have been taken at national level to support the learning of the Italian language by pupils of foreign origin, but mainly emergency initiatives, fragmented, in the hands of teachers and school managers who had to deal with the emergency (Barni, 2012).

If we analyze again the results of the INVALSI tests (Figure 2), we can see that in the 2019 tests, students of foreign origin generally got lower scores than natives (INVALSI open, 2020). Their main problems are in Italian. At the end of the first cycle of studies, in fifth grade, first-generation foreign students are behind in Italian with a score of 171, about 30 points behind their native peers (203). Results in the population of second-generation immigrant students are only slightly more promising, even though these children were born and have always lived in Italy.

As recognized by INVALSI itself (ibid.), mastery of the Italian language influences not only the results of the Italian test, but also the mathematics test both for first and for second-generation immigrants, although to a lesser extent.

On the other hand, the same results of the 2019 test highlight that English is the subject in which first- and second-generation immigrant students demonstrate the most advanced skills, and furthermore outperform natives in the school grades following primary school.

FIG. 2. 2019 INVALSI Test Results: native and foreign origin students



These results have been neglected, but are illuminating for at least two reasons:

1. As recent research has shown, children from multilingual backgrounds are more likely to learn other languages (see Garraffa *et al.*, 2020 for a review). Furthermore, many studies had already demonstrated that the right to use one's own language is a decisive component in a person's intellectual and emotional development (Byalistok *et al.* 2008; Costa *et al.*, 2014).

2. It is profoundly wrong and unjust to assess the Italian language competence of students of foreign origin with the same tools with which we assess the competence of Italian students. We should not forget that Italian is a foreign language for students of foreign origin, and it is not their home language even if they were born in Italy. When Italian and foreign origin students are both assessed in foreign language learning, it is evident that student of foreign origin, with a plurilingual background, perform even better than natives.

Conclusion

As we have seen, unfortunately the new and complex plurilingual context in Italy has not been tackled as a challenge to reformulate the principles of democratic language education (GISCEL, 1975), and to reaffirm the centrality and transversality of language education itself in the construction of people who think and operate actively in society, and for the construction of a truly inclusive school.

Instead, in the field of language education, the Italian school system has continued to adopt occasional and not structural policies in response to emergencies, or has gone after more or less transitory fashions, not making «educational research a field of experimental investigation and consequent action» (Ambel, 2018).

The «unmissable opportunity» (Vedovelli, 2010, 44-45) that the arrival of our new fellow citizens and their languages had offered us has been missed. It could instead have been «a unique opportunity to define the fundamental objectives of a language policy that promotes the knowledge of foreign languages and that, consequently, by addressing the central critical point of the level of literacy in our society, promotes its general linguistic-communicative and cultural (and let us be allowed also economic-productive) development» (ibid.).

This is particularly regrettable because one of the founding values of the European Union is respect for the richness of cultural and linguistic diversity, and the European institutions have been recommending the promotion of multi- and plurilingualism for years. The EU's commitment to multilingualism, through decisions, recommendations and actions aiming at its management and promotion includes its language education policy that considers languages as commodities for employability, mobility and economic growth because «in today's interconnected world, the ability to speak multiple languages and communicate across linguistic divides are critical competences» (Dendrinou, 2018) and that the combination of the individual benefits and the educational benefits of plurilingualism has the potential to decrease social and economic inequalities and to increase the economic wellbeing of societies (Gazzola, Wickström, 2016). Furthermore «languages not only play a key role in the everyday life of the European

Union, but are also fundamental for respecting cultural and linguistic diversity» (Franke, 2017), a fundamental element of a just and equitable society.

The proposal for a *Council Recommendation on a comprehensive approach to the teaching and learning of languages*¹ in 2019 sets goals and priorities which are likely to impact language education in the EU in the years to come and invites Member states to invest in the initial and continuing education of language teachers and school leaders so that they are prepared for linguistic diversity in the classroom and that they encourage research in and use of innovative, inclusive and multilingual pedagogies, such as «moving away from the monolingual paradigm in education, and recognizing that semiotics is at the centre of all subject areas» (Dendrinis, 2018, 25). *Rethinking language education and linguistic diversity in schools* (European Commission, 2018), re-thinking the traditional way of teaching and learning languages, both for monolingual and multilingual learners is the proposal and the challenge launched a group of experts invited by the European Commission to outline the new educational recommendations. A challenge and a proposal that were at the core of *The Ten GISCEL Theses for democratic language education* 46 years ago.

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¹ [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32019H0605\(02\)&from=EN](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32019H0605(02)&from=EN)

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