Università degli Studi di Padova

Dipartimento di Studi Linguistici e Letterari

Corso di Laurea Magistrale in
Lingue Moderne per la Comunicazione e la Cooperazione Internazionale
Classe LM-38

Tesi di Laurea

Teaching and testing second language skills in the context of migration: evidence from Italy, Germany and the UK

Relatore
Prof. Elena Maria Duso

Laureando
Michela Mogetta
n° matr.1155512 / LMLCC

Anno Accademico 2018 / 2019

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION

It is a commonly held opinion that the integration of an immigrant into the host society must follow certain essential steps, one of which is learning the main language of the country.

The issue of language is only one of the aspects that fit into a very broad and complex social and political scenario that dominates the current debate on immigration. A debate that in recent years seems to divide the citizens, governments and institutions of the European Union and other developed countries into two distinct categories, on the one hand those that demand more restrictive policies for border control and immigration, and on the other hand those who are in favour of better policies for the reception and integration of new arrivals.

All this has sprung around 2012-2013 from the outbreak of what is known as the migration crisis, which intensified in 2015, when the European Union registered unprecedented inflows of asylum seekers.

Nevertheless, it seems useful to remember that the entire history of humanity was characterized by displacements of populations caused by the most varied motivations. The same countries that are now part of the European Union were countries of emigration until a few decades ago. And even more recent are the movements of people from the south of Europe to the countries of Central and Northern Europe.

There has therefore been a general turnaround in the countries of the EU which, with more or less delay, in the last decades have gone from being countries of emigration to countries of immigration. Perhaps it is precisely this recent turnaround that has left these countries perplexed in dealing with the changed features of the new immigration of the 21st century.

Despite the breadth of the debate, there still seems to be a great deal of confusion on the part of public opinion regarding the notions of refugees, asylum seekers, illegal immigrants, who are often not distinguished from other immigrants who regularly arrive through other migration channels, such as those for work or for family reunification. These are often fueled by fake news and erroneous numbers, which have led the most extreme sides to talk about an "invasion".

Among the hottest topics today are those related to the question of borders, the issue of ius soli or ius sanguinis, and racism. While this thesis is written, in Italy, many ships belonging to NGOs are detained off the southern Italian ports with migrants on board, waiting to be able to get around the new Italian policy of closed ports.

The purpose of this thesis is to explore one of the aspects related to immigration, which is that of language testing in the context of migration. This necessarily intertwines with all the language policies implemented and include aspects relating to the field of second language teaching and learning.

In fact, many of the language policies recently implemented in various countries of the EU tend in various ways to make the learning of the language of the host country a mandatory path. This is often done through the introduction of language tests related to the various stages of the migration process. This means that the possibility of reuniting with one's family, the possibility of requesting a permanent residence permit, or requesting citizenship is linked to the duty to pass a language test. Although the requirements are not the same in every country, one thing that they converge on is that the rules are becoming increasingly stringent.

This issue has raised many debates, albeit mostly in the academic field, which question the possible discriminatory use of the tests. Some scholars stand out particularly when it comes to questioning the ethics and fairness of language tests. I refer to Elana Shohamy, Tim McNamara, Nick Saville, Piet Van Avermaet. At the center of their interests lies the study from a critical point of view on the uses of language tests in the field of education and society, and their power in having entered into the ambit of policies aimed at controlling and limiting immigration (cfr. Shohamy, 2001, *The power of tests: A critical perspective of the uses of language tests;* McNamara, 2010, *The use of language tests in the service of policy: issues of validity;* Saville, 2009, *Language Assessment in the Management of International Migration: A Framework for Considering the Issues;* Van Avermaet and Rocca, 2011, *Language testing and access*). From a linguistic point of view, an interesting contribution is given by Lorenzo Rocca (2008) with *Percorsi per la certificazione linguistica in contesti di immigrazione. Definizione dell'utenza, specificazioni degli esami, prospettive future.*

It is clear from what has been said so far that the topic of language testing tends to range beyond the boundaries of applied linguistics. The Council of Europe realized this

too, and in partnership with the ALTE and the LAMI sub-group (Language Assessment for Migration and Integration) they pursue the aim of promoting and sharing good practice with regard to language learning, teaching and assessment. The result of this joint work is the *Language Tests for Access, Integration and Citizenship booklet: An Outline for Policy Makers* (2016) which provides a practical guide to policy makers with the aim of informing and guiding an ethical and non-discriminatory use of language testing. The Council of Europe itself contributed through a report from the Parliamentary Assembly on *Integration tests: helping or hindering integration?* (2013) to raise issues concerning the use of language tests in relation to the integration of migrants in the territory. The report highlights, among other things, a lack of studies on the impact of tests on the effective correlation between language and integration of migrants. Secondly, it states that the improvement of language skills is not due to the testing itself, but rather it is associated to what the state offers in relation to it.

For this reason, this dissertation aims to combine the topic of language testing in relation to the linguistic policies implemented, providing a more complete and detailed overview of the situation, in the belief that the two issues should be treated jointly.

The first chapter analyzes the current state of language policies in three countries, Italy, Germany and the United Kingdom. The chapter is structured in such a way that the analysis of each country starts with a brief and summary description of the country's migration and linguistic scene regarding the history of the country's migration and the current numbers of migrants. Secondly, an illustration of the language policies related to the teaching of the host country's language is given. Thirdly, a paragraph for each country outlines the features of the reception system for asylum seekers and refugees with reference to the linguistic initiatives. The decision to dedicate a separate paragraph to them is due to the fact that often linguistic policies for refugees and asylum seekers are different from those intended for other categories of immigrants. Finally, the analysis of each country concludes with an analysis of the linguistic requirements related to the migration process.

In the second chapter, the focus is on language testing in the context of migration. A brief introduction on the birth and history of the discipline is followed by an account of the current debate on the political use of language testing. The aim is to frame the branch of language testing within the migration context, thus providing a definition of the

profile of the users in question and also paying attention to the most vulnerable category made up of illiterate or poorly educated migrants. Subsequently, an account is given of the tools made available to the states by the European Union and of the institutions and organizations that deal with language testing in the context of migration. The second chapter concludes with an in-depth examination of the language testing situation in the Italian context, which serves to provide more detailed information on which the next chapter will be developed.

Finally, the third chapter illustrates the results of a qualitative research conducted during the writing of the dissertation. The study aims to investigate through the interview method the issue of language testing from the point of view of professionals working with migrants in the field of language teaching and testing.

CHAPTER 1 – Language policies for migrants in Italy, Germany and the United Kingdom

1.1 The case of Italy

1.1.1 The Italian migratory and linguistic scene

The issue of foreign immigration has entered the Italian social and political landscape following the Second World War, which had caused large movements of population and foreign arrivals on the national territory. It has become a significant phenomenon and has begun to take on a structural dimension since the 1970s, to the point that today it no longer seems possible to define Italy as a country of "recent" immigration (Colucci 2018: 12).

According to data provided by ISTAT (2018), as of 1 January 2018, 5,144,440 foreigners reside in Italy, that is 8.5% of the total resident population, and among these 3,714,934 are the non-EU citizens regularly present. The most represented countries are Morocco (443,147), Albania (430,340), China (309,110), Ukraine (235,245) and Philippines (161,609). Whereas work-related migration is at its lowest level, with 4.6% of new permits, on the other hand the growth of permits for reasons of asylum and humanitarian protection continues, setting a record of about 101,000 new releases and emerging as the second reason for entry after family reunification (38.5% of the total of new permits compared to 43.2% of permits for family reunification). The main countries of citizenship of asylum seekers are Nigeria, Pakistan and Bangladesh; together, these three countries cover more than 41% of incoming flows.

During 2017, the new permits released were 262,770, an increase of 16% over 2016. The slight growth is due both to the increase in incoming flows and to the decline in citizenship acquisitions during 2017, which decreased by 26.4% compared to the previous year. Women, who represent 48.3% of non-EU citizens, continue to decline: at 1 January 2018, 8,607 fewer permits were registered compared to 2017. The minors are 21.7% of

the population regularly present, with a greater incidence than that of the minors on the resident population in Italy, which is slightly above 16%.

The varied patterns of migratory flows that took place over the last few decades have helped shape the current Italian linguistic landscape. According to an ISTAT survey on linguistic diversity among foreign citizens (2014), Romanian is the most common language of origin among foreigners residing in Italy: it is indicated as a mother tongue by 21.9% of the foreign population aged from six years old, followed by Arabic, Albanian and Spanish. Italian is the fifth most popular mother tongue for foreigners, equal to 4.5% of the foreign population, and among minors one out of four is an Italian native speaker. However, 38.5% of foreigners over the age of six reported Italian as the predominant language in the family and, again, this concerns above all minors (47.3% against 36.8% of adults). Moreover, it emerges that foreign citizens who have indicated Italian as their mother tongue mostly belong to communities where the presence of second-generation immigrants is greater, such as the Albanians (16.8%), Moroccans (12.1%) and Romanians (11.1%).

About language training, it emerges from the same report (ISTAT 2014) that among the adults, only 17 foreigners out of 100 have attended Italian courses. Moreover, people of Arabic mother tongue follow courses more frequently than others (23%). The participation of foreigners in Italian language courses is usually associated with higher levels of education. Among foreigners aged 18 and over who have a university degree in their curriculum, 28.6% have attended Italian language courses in Italy, a percentage that drops to 13.4% among those who have no educational qualifications.

The incidence of people that struggle with learning the language rises with increasing age: the highest proportion is observed among the over 35s (69.9%), it declines considerably between the 16-25 age group (48.5%) and among children and young people under 15 (31.2%). The age of arrival in Italy also influences learning: among those who arrived before the age of 16, there are shares of over 70% of people who have no difficulty in reading and writing in Italian. On the other hand, more than half of the foreigners who entered Italy at the age of 35 or more have difficulty understanding and speaking. The greatest difficulties are registered regarding writing: 27.9% of foreigners say they have much or enough difficulty. Less frequent is the difficulty in reading in Italian, as just over a fifth (21.3%) reports having problems in understanding a written text. Conversation in

Italian understood both in the sense of understanding and knowing how to express oneself orally often does not create any problems. Over 60% are those who say they know how to express themselves very well in Italian and understand it just as well; these are contrasted by a share of 12% of persons that encounter difficulties. Considered jointly the four areas of writing, reading, expression and oral comprehension, 39.2% of foreigners declare that they have no difficulty with the Italian language, compared to 60.8% who manifest at least some.

1.1.2 Italian as a second language for migrants

In recent years the interest in the field of learning and teaching Italian as a second language (L2) has grown considerably. According to Balboni (2010), in Italy the interest in this topic was manifested for the first time in the seventies in the sociolinguistic field with two essays by Sobrero (1974) and Simone (1974). In the mid-eighties the massive arrival of immigrants from North Africa and China, then from the Balkans and Eastern Europe determined a presence of immigrants in the school with disruptive consequences in the daily life of the classes; this led consequently to the publication of an essay by Favaro on an analysis of the linguistic needs of immigrants in Milan (1984). In the second half of the 1980s, an increasing number of studies have focused on second language acquisition, both in terms of spontaneous acquisition and learning in formal contexts (Giacalone Ramat 1986, 1988; Bernini, Giacalone Ramat 1990).

However, it is in this moment that the topic has reached the maximum attention. This is due to the urgent need to rethink the educational offer and improve the tools available for the planning of language courses and for the structure of language tests. This need arises in part from the increase in the foreign population, and consequently the diversification of educational and linguistic needs, partly from the recent arrival of large flows of refugees and asylum seekers, which demands greater ability to adapt to new teaching environments.

Currently, the field of teaching Italian as a second language to migrants is extremely varied and heterogeneous as regards the offer of language courses, the actors involved, the quality of teaching and the profiles of learners (Minuz 2016). As for the actors involved in delivering language courses these can be public, private (in particular

vocational training centres) and NGOs or humanitarian and political organizations. The public institutions more often referred to when it comes to linguistic and cultural training are the CPIAs (Provincial Centres for Adult Education and Training), which in partnership with local associations offer courses aimed at obtaining the title attesting the achievement of a level not below the A2 level of knowledge of the Italian language. The CPIAs, created to replace the former CTPs (Permanent Territorial Centres), in addition to offering literacy courses and Italian language courses for foreigners, offer first-level and second-level education paths, providing the opportunity for beneficiaries to obtain a certification of the training course carried out. Enrollment in adult education courses (IDA) is generally free (or accessible) and can be done at any time of the year and also by foreigners who have not completed their education or who are not in possession of upper secondary education qualifications[1].

The panorama of social characteristics and profiles of immigrant learners is highly varied, which is due to the very characteristics of immigration to Italy. Although Italy has recently witnessed a relative consolidation and stabilization of flows, it is still affected by the many years in which it maintained an extremely fragmentary character (Maggini 2016). A study by Minuz and Borri (2017) conducted on a sample of Italian classes for illiterates highlighted two main categories of problems. On the one hand, all the classes considered were heterogeneous in terms of linguistic competence, literacy and linguistic background of the participants, showing heterogeneous characteristics also in the profiles of single students, with cases of learners with a pre-A1 level in written production and up to B1 in the oral competence. The second problem that emerged was the irregular attendance of the classes, even in the cases in which the learners showed great interest and motivation for learning.

The fact that immigrant profiles are distinguished by many variables is not exclusively typical of Italy. However, the recent wave of refugees and asylum seekers, in addition to influencing the size and configuration of the classes and the organization of teaching activities, has added new variables that together with the characteristics of the Italian reception system affects the conditions of learning. For instance, in the migration projects Italy is often only a transit country before arriving in other European countries. In addition, the type of reception received influences the learning environment, whether

---

[1] https://www.miur.gov.it/web/guest/istruzione-degli-adulti

it is ordinary or extraordinary, of first or second level reception (see paragraph 1.1.3). To this is added the uncertain length of permanence and the instability due to the long waiting times for the recognition of a legal status. For these and other reasons Minuz (2016: 13) refers to the current situation of teaching Italian to immigrants as a "teaching in limbo". Maggini (2016: 8) also notes that organizational and economic reasons have led to proposals for Italian courses that are homogeneous in terms of content and teaching's methods, when instead a targeted training is required, differentiated in methodologies and contents.

The recent introduction of the linguistic requirements for obtaining a residence permit (see section 1.1.4) has also had important effects on the entire landscape of Italian as a second language. In the first place, the demand for Italian courses has increased considerably and, although the test is limited to only a part of the immigrants, this influenced the entire educational offer, which has been crushed on the A2 level courses necessary for certification, with little attention both to previous levels and to higher levels (Minuz 2016). Secondly, the methods of conducting language assessment tests have revealed more than ever the significant presence of illiterate students or students with learning difficulties (Minuz and Borri 2017).

This last aspect, combined with the new awareness of having to pay attention to the social, sociolinguistic and psychological variables that influence language learning and teaching, has meant that the attention of linguists has focused on the elaboration of syllabi, based on the CEFR, for the preparation of courses, examinations, programmes with particular attention to the needs and characteristics of immigrants (Minuz 2014). Among these we find, for example, the syllabi for teaching Italian L2 prepared by the Certification Bodies, which start from the pre-A1 level, prior to the A1 level of the CEFR[2]. As part of a CVCL project (Centre for Language Evaluation and Certification), a syllabus and descriptors have been prepared for levels from literacy to A1, specific for illiterates or poorly educated immigrants (Borri et al. 2014). The same CVCL of the University for foreigners of Perugia, alongside the traditional CELI certificates for general Italian, offers CELI-*i* certificates from level A1 to B1, specific for immigrants in Italy (Rocca 2008). Likewise, the University for foreigners of Siena has recently introduced new improved

---

[2] http://www.integrazionemigranti.gov.it/Documenti-e-ricerche/SILLABOPreA1.pdf
University of Roma Tre, University for Foreigners of Perugia, University for Foreigners of Siena, Società Dante Alighieri

CILS certificates directly aimed at immigrants, at A1 and A2 level for integration and at B1 level for citizenship. The purpose of such tests is to ensure accessibility and social expendability to the evaluation process. For this reason, the contents of the tests refer to the domains and language use situations which are relevant for L2 immigrant learners. Consider the following example (1), taken from the new CILS-A2 level for integration[3]:

(1) Lo "Sportello informativo sull'immigrazione" è un servizio (0) __gratuito __ per i cittadini stranieri che hanno bisogno di informazioni e chiarimenti.
Allo Sportello lavorano i mediatori culturali iscritti al Registro Comunale. I mediatori (1) _____ tante lingue: polacco, ucraino, rumeno, arabo, bulgaro, moldavo, albanese. I mediatori ti (2) _____ a comprendere i documenti o a comunicare con gli (3) _____ pubblici, a compilare i moduli per le richieste di ricongiungimento (4) _____ e ti danno informazioni generali sui servizi del territorio.
Allo "Sportello informativo sull'immigrazione" (5) _____ anche persone che ti danno informazioni per l'assistenza sanitaria e l'iscrizione al servizio sanitario nazionale. I servizi dello sportello sono riservati ai cittadini stranieri residenti o lavoratori nel Comune di Latina e provincia.
(6) _____ di ricevimento:
Lunedì: 09:00 – 13:00
Martedì: 09:00 – 13:00/15:00 – 17:00
Giovedì: 09:00 – 13:00/15:00 – 17:00

Gratuito - cerchi - orario - producono – familiare – uffici - trovi – tempo - aiutano - parlano

On the one hand, the test aims at assessing the reading comprehension of nouns, adjectives and verbs by providing the test taker with a list of words to be selected. On the other hand, the choice of the topic "Immigrants Information Desk" clearly relates to a public domain and a language use situation in which migrants are most likely to find themselves.

Furthermore, as reported in Minuz (2014), some of the current studies deal with the development of diagnostic tools, useful for addressing the question of the diversity of the learners' profiles, such as the entry tests used in adult education facilities and the portfolio of languages developed by the Council of Europe. Whereas the former allows the level of linguistic-communicative competence to be defined both in terms of "know-how" and

---

[3] https://cils.unistrasi.it/189/359/Nuovi_A1-_A2_integrazione.htm

mastery of the linguistic system, the latter makes it possible to trace the development of this competence.

1.1.3 The reception of asylum seekers and refugees in Italy

The reception of asylum seekers is a legal obligation for the Member States of the European Union and is dictated by the *Directive 2013/33/EU* of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 (so-called *Reception Directive*) which establishes minimum standards for the reception of asylum seekers. In Italy, the common regulatory framework is implemented by Legislative Decree no. 142/2015 which establishes that the reception measures must be provided from the moment the will to request international protection is expressed.

The reception system outlined by the directive is structured in such a way that after a first aid and assistance phase, it is divided into an initial reception phase and a second reception phase, identifying, for each phase, different types of structures. Although the reception system is in continuous transformation and not always the path towards the second reception continues on the regular basis it is possible to outline the fundamental steps. Immediately after the landing and rescue operations, the migrants are collected in special hotspots located in places near where landings normally take place (Lampedusa, Pozzallo, Trapani, Taranto) and there they are subjected to health screening, pre-identified, photo-reported and informed, in a language understandable to the person, both on the legislation regarding immigration and asylum, and on the possibility of applying for international protection or requesting assisted return. The detention in the hotspots, which supposedly lasts a maximum of 48 hours, is followed, for those who do not request international protection, by the transfer to the CPR (Pre-removal detention centres), and for those who require international protection, from the transfer to the first reception centres, pending a place in the second reception system. The structures that function as first reception centres are the regional or inter-regional hubs, as well as centres that were previously used as CARA (Centres for Accommodation of Asylum Seekers) and CDA (Accomodation Centres). However, in the case of temporary unavailability of places in first reception and second reception facilities, the legislation provides for migrants to be distributed in CAS (Extraordinary Reception Centres). Although the activation of these

temporary centres is reserved for emergency cases of substantial and close arrivals of asylum seekers, they have actually come to host most of them. In 2017, in fact, the presence in the CAS compared to the total of the reception system was 80.8%[4], which underlines how the approach to immigration is still of an emergency nature. Finally, the second phase of reception starts with the transfer to the structures of the SPRAR, the protection system for asylum seekers and refugees, which until today has welcomed migrants who have formalized the request for international protection and lack the necessary means of subsistence.

This premise made on the Italian reception system is useful to introduce the SPRAR system, the national second reception system. The SPRAR is a structural network of local authorities that, by accessing the National Fund for Asylum Policies and Services (FNPSA) and in close collaboration with third sector organizations present in the area, carries out projects targeted towards international protection applicants, refugees, holders of subsidiary and humanitarian protection, and unaccompanied foreign minors. The peculiarities of the SPRAR system, considered "good practice" at European level, are that the individual territorial projects combine the "integrated reception" methodology, based on a complementary offer of services and on the construction of individualized integration paths, with the characteristics of the host territory, in order to create hosting projects based on the vocation, capacities and skills of local actors, and taking into account the resources, the welfare instruments and the social policy strategies of the territory itself (SPRAR 2018a).

In the SPRAR operating manual (2018b) for the activation and management of the territorial projects, the importance of learning the Italian language is recognized firstly as an essential condition for migrants to get in touch with the social context, and therefore to be able to access information, use the services, express needs and feel part of the social community. Secondly, it is considered a basic requirement for enrollment in professional training courses and access to the labour market. As such, learning the Italian language is a primary objective of the hosting project and is included in the reception agreement to be signed at the time of inclusion in the project, as a commitment to attend on a continuous basis the courses offered. On the other hand, with the signing of the reception agreement

---

[4] www.openpolis.it/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Centri-dItalia-2018.pdf
[last accessed 16.03.2019]

the local authority undertakes to guarantee the reception and to provide a series of other services. The territorial projects must therefore not only stimulate the motivation to learn but also guarantee the beneficiaries the access, usability and attendance of Italian language courses, on a structured and continuous basis, for a minimum number of ten hours per week, mapping the offer of courses existing on the territory and promoting their attendance. In cases where this external offer is found to be deficient or inadequate, it is necessary for the local authority to equip itself with internal courses, organizing classes of students not exceeding fifteen people, which also need to be adequate to the levels of schooling and learning of the beneficiaries, and preparing appropriate verification tools.

The SPRAR system has grown over the last few years, arriving in 2017 to receive 36,955 beneficiaries. Based on the data of the annual SPRAR report (2018a) all the projects analyzed guaranteed Italian language courses, which in 86% of cases provided a weekly number of hours exceeding ten hours. Approximately 90% of the projects carried out internal courses, provided in most cases by the same implementing body; 77.8% have resorted to external bodies, such as CPIAs and Adult Education Institutes and 28.3% relied on external courses organized by subjects of the SPRAR partnership, in particular by cultural associations, educational institutions, individual volunteers, job training agencies and language training agencies. Furthermore, in 2017, about 22,452 beneficiaries attended with continuity at least one Italian language course, most of which attended a basic course. In the same period of reference there were 8,042 beneficiaries that completed the courses and obtained a certificate of attendance, recognized at regional and/or national level. Finally, the analysis shows that in 50.4% of the projects, courses were also carried out in order to take the exam for the European certificate of knowledge of the Italian language. Specifically, of the 3,826 beneficiaries involved 52% obtained A2 level certificates, 39.2% obtained A1 level and 8.8% the B2 level certificates. The territorial project is also required to equip itself for an effective monitoring of the language progress of the beneficiaries. It must therefore provide for the elaboration of a tool to evaluate the acquired Italian skills, as well as for a booklet to record the linguistic skills and learning path of each beneficiary, the attendance of the classes and the level of learning achieved.

The learning of the Italian language is also one of the key interventions included in the individualized educational project (PEI), which consists of a personalized integrated

reception programme prepared as soon as the minor enters the reception structure and is based on the child's own needs, skills and interests. In addition to fulfilling compulsory education, the territorial project must guarantee minors access, usability and attendance of language courses for a minimum number of ten hours per week. From the SPRAR annual reports (2018a) it emerges that the projects guaranteed the beneficiaries ten or more hours of Italian language per week and, specifically, 3,028 are the minors who have attended Italian language learning courses.

The most recent innovations on the subject have been introduced by Decree-Law no. 113/2018, also known as *Salvini Decree* or *Security and Immigration Decree*, which, in addition to abolishing humanitarian protection, provides for the transformation of the SPRAR into a protection system for holders of international protection and for unaccompanied foreign minors. This means that the second reception is intended exclusively for those who have received a positive outcome of the asylum application and is thus holder of international or subsidiary protection and to unaccompanied foreign minors. Data show that in 2017 the percentage of applicants for international protection accepted in SPRAR programmes was 36.1%, while the holders of humanitarian protection were 36%. The changes introduced by the new decree are relevant from the moment in which a large part of the migrants is excluded from the opportunity of accessing the second reception and, consequently, from the opportunity of being included in an efficient reception and integration programme.

1.1.4 Language requirements for access and stay

With the entering into force of the law of 15 July 2009, n. 94 *Regulation on public security* the integration path has been institutionalized for the first time. In fact, it provides for two devices that introduce a correlation between entry and stay in Italy and knowledge of the Italian language: the integration agreement between the foreigner and the state and the test of knowledge of the Italian language for requesting the EU residence permit for long-term residents (Minuz 2012).

The integration agreement, issued by Presidential Decree 14/09/2011, No. 179 is a pact signed between the state, in the person of the Prefect, and the foreigner over the age of sixteen who presents for the first time the request for a residence permit with a duration

of one year or more. Its stipulation is a necessary condition for the issuing of the residence permit and has the duration of two years and can be extended by one. The agreement establishes a mutual commitment: the state guarantees the enjoyment of fundamental rights and equal social dignity and supports the process of integration of the foreign citizen; the foreigner, in turn, undertakes to pursue specific integration objectives. These include acquiring a knowledge of the Italian spoken language at least at level A2 of the Common European Framework of Reference for languages (CEFR), gaining sufficient knowledge of the fundamental principles of the Constitution, civic culture and civil life in Italy (with particular reference to the sectors of health, education, social services, labour and tax obligations), guaranteeing the education of minor children and complying with all fiscal codes and contributions. The agreement is not intended for those who are affected by illness or disabilities that severely limit self-sufficiency and language and cultural learning, those who are victims of trafficking, violence or exploitation and unaccompanied minors. Subscription may be required, yet not credit verification, for holders of such residence permits as for asylum request, subsidiary protection, humanitarian reasons or family reasons. The agreement is based on credits and upon signing it, the foreigner is assigned 16 credits corresponding to the A1 level of knowledge of the Italian spoken language and to the sufficient level of knowledge of civic culture and civil life in Italy. In order to confirm these credits and facilitate the process, the foreigner is guaranteed, within 90 days from the date of the subscription, the free of charge participation in a one-day training session on civic education and information about life in Italy. One month before the end of the two-year period the procedures for verifying the agreement are initiated and the foreigner is required to provide for the documentation necessary to obtain the recognition of the credits and, in the absence of documentation, the level of knowledge required is verified through a specific Italian language and culture test to be carried out at the Prefecture or also at the CPIAs. In order to consider the agreement fulfilled, the level of knowledge of the Italian language and civic culture and civil life in Italy must have been achieved within the set deadlines and the foreigner must have reached at least 30 credits through the performance of certain activities, which may include, for example, vocational education and training courses, educational qualifications, stipulation of a lease or purchase agreement for a home. In the

event of total loss of credits, the residence permit will be revoked, and the foreigner expelled from the territory of the State.

The test of knowledge of the Italian language is functional to the foreign citizen who has been legally living in Italy for more than five years for the release of the EC long-term residence permit. The modalities of execution are determined by the decree of the Minister of the Interior of 4 June 2010, in agreement with the Minister of Education, University and Research (MIUR). Following the text of the decree, the foreigner must possess a level of knowledge of the Italian language at level A2 of the CEFR that allows to understand frequently used sentences and expressions in current areas. It is in collaboration with the certification bodies (University of Roma Tre, University for Foreigners of Perugia, University for Foreigners of Siena, Società Dante Alighieri) that the content of the tests, the criteria for assigning the score and the duration of the test is established. According to the Vademecum, the A2 test lasts 60 minutes and is divided into three parts. These are articulated in oral comprehension, which involves listening to two audios, written comprehension, which requires the reading of two texts, and written interaction, based on the production of a text. In relation to that, Maggini (2016) points out that an oral interaction test was only introduced with a subsequent ministerial communication. This possibility is only given to those who are declared "functional illiterates" to replace the written interaction test, but as Maggini adds, paradoxically, functional illiterates are still required to overcome written comprehension. Once the test is sustained, in the event of a positive outcome and after having verified the existence of the other legal requirements the residence permit is issued. In the event of a negative outcome, the foreign citizen may request to repeat the test after 90 days from the date of the previous examination. Passing the Italian language test is not required for holders of international protection, for children under the age of fourteen and persons with severe language learning deficits. Other conditions for the exemption from the test include the possession of language certificates, attendance of an Italian language course (no less than level A2) at the CPIAs or having obtained recognition of the level A2 for the spoken language, in the context of the credits accrued for the integration agreement.

Finally, the afore-mentioned Security and Immigration Decree has introduced a new language requirement in order to obtain citizenship through residence or marriage, which is now subject to the achievement of no less than level B1 in Italian on the CEFR

assessment scale. Certification bodies have consequently adjusted to the current situation. For example, the University for foreigners of Siena has engaged in the development of an ad hoc B1 Certificate of Italian as a Foreign Language (*CILS B1 Cittadinanza*), which describes a more restricted area of linguistic competence and, therefore, its purpose is limited to become an Italian citizen[5].

1.2 The case of Germany

1.2.1 The German migratory and linguistic scene

In 1890, following the economic success that the industrial era guaranteed to Germany, the number of immigrants to the country began to exceed that of emigrants. However, the first migratory movements that were relevant to the transformation of Germany into an immigration country only began in the mid-twentieth century. It is in fact from the second post-war period that flows of ethnic Germans from the former Soviet Union, the so-called *aussiedler* and *spätaussiedler*, began to alternate with guest workers (*gastarbeiter*) attracted by the economic miracle and the increasing demand in construction and industry. Subsequent flows were characterized by the arrival of the families of the guest workers, who arrived through the channel of family reunification, by refugees fleeing from the war in Yugoslavia, and by Jews from the former Soviet Union, thanks to a law that made their immigration easier via a facilitated procedure (Borkert and Bosswick 2011). Today the migratory scene is dominated by high inflows of refugees and asylum seekers from Africa, Syria and other regions affected by humanitarian crises (Juran and Broer 2017). Although Germany was one of the first European countries to face huge migratory flows, it is only with the 2005 Immigration Law that the well-known formula "Germany is not a country of immigration" ("*Deutschland ist kein Einwanderungsland*" Kohl Helmut 1991) was abandoned to make room for recognition of immigration as a resource for global competition, which also led

---

[5] More information about the certificate is available at: https://cils.unistrasi.it/188/B1_CITTADINANZA.htm

to the acknowledgement of the importance of integrating the newcomers (Hübschmann 2015).

Today in Germany 19.3 million inhabitants (a quarter of the whole population) have a migrant background, which means that a person or one of his or her parents was born without German citizenship. At the end of 2017 there were 10.6 million foreigners in the country and they mostly came from Turkey (1,483,515), Poland (866,855), Syria (698,950), Italy (643,065) and Romania (622,780), whereas non-EU citizens alone accounted for almost six million[6]. Furthermore, according to data provided by the UNHCR (2018), Germany, with 198,300 asylum applications in 2017, is the second country in the world after the US in terms of number of asylum requests, while it is in the sixth place for the number of refugees hosted (970,400), who mostly come from Syria (496,700), Iraq (130,600), Afghanistan (104,400), Eritrea (49,300) and Iran (38,300).

As for the linguistic landscape of immigrants in Germany there are no official data regarding their mother tongue or their knowledge of German. In fact, there is a lot of information on the nationality of immigrants, but from this it is not possible to automatically derive the languages spoken. The lack of such information is also due to the complexity of taking into consideration the linguistic behaviors of the second or third generation naturalized immigrants who are effectively German citizens, yet still speak the language of their parents (Adler and Bayer 2018). However, in 2017 a question on which language is the most spoken in the households was included in the German national census[7]. It emerged that in 56% of the multi-persons households where there is at least one person with a migrant background German is the predominant language. It also emerged that the most common foreign language within families is Turkish (17%), followed by Russian (16%), Polish (9%) and Arabic (7%). Furthermore, whether German is the predominant language depends on the country of origin of the family members. For example, in households where all family members have Syrian origins, only 4% speak mainly German, whereas it is the predominant language in 62% of households where

---

[6]https://www.destatis.de/DE/Themen/Gesellschaft-Umwelt/Bevoelkerung/Migration-Integration/_inhalt.html

[7] With regard to that, it is interesting to notice that the question has been introduced just after a few years after that, in 2014, a controversial proposal by the CSU had created quite a stir in the public debate, as in a draft policy paper they said that immigrants that wanted to remain in Germany on a permanent basis should be obliged to speak German both in public and at home, within their family.
www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/csu-will-dass-migranten-zuhause-deutsch-sprechen-a-1006932.html

people originally come from Kazakhstan, probably because it is one of the main countries of origin of *aussiedler* and *spätaussiedler*[8].

Some information on the languages of asylum seekers and refugees is provided by a survey conducted by IAB and SOEP on a sample of refugees (Brücker et al. 2016). It emerges from the survey that most of the respondents (42%) are Arabic speakers. The linguistic bipartition of the countries of origin is also interesting; for example, among Syrians 78% speak Arabic and 20% kurdish-kurmanji; among the Afghans 76% speak Persian and 20% Pashto. The analysis of the sample also provides interesting data on illiteracy, from which it emerges a percentage of 9% of primary and functional illiterates, mostly Afghans and Kurdish native speakers from Iraq and Syria. As for the knowledge of German, it appears that upon arrival in Germany only a small percentage of immigrants already knew German, in particular refugees from Albania, Serbia and Kosovo (about 7%) or people with high levels of education. In general, at the time of the survey 16% of the interviewed declared that they could speak German well or very well, while 50% could not speak or speak it badly. Slightly higher percentages are found for writing and reading. From the analysis it is also possible to delineate some variables that influence the knowledge of German, such as gender belonging (one out of five men speaks well or very well against 8% of women), asylum status (greater knowledge of the language is observed when the status is recognized), stay time (8% of the immigrants who have stayed in the country for a year or less speak German well or very well against 27% of immigrants who have been in the country for 3 years) and the level of education (25% of people with a diploma or degree speak German very well).

1.2.2 German as a second language for migrants

The 2005 immigration law (*Zuwanderungsgesetz*), as well as recognizing Germany as a country of immigration, has established that the integration of immigrants into society must be a fundamental feature of German politics (Lochner 2018). It is with this law that the integration course has been introduced, which since then has been both the main instrument for immigrant integration policies and the centre of the linguistic offer. The motto that guided the introduction of the integration course is *fördern und fordern,*

---

[8] www.destatis.de/DE/Presse/Pressemitteilungen/2018/09/PD18_329_122.html

'promoting and demanding', which requires the state to commit to welcoming migrants and integrating them into the society, and immigrants to actively participate to the economic and social life of the country (vgl. Lochner 2018).

The Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) is the office in charge of the organization and administration of the integration course. Since its introduction in 2005 many adjustments have been made and it now offers a wide range of courses to meet the demand of people with different needs and profiles.

The general integration course addresses those who are already literate with the Latin writing system. It comprises a total of 600 teaching units for the language course, each unit lasting 45 minutes. The language course is divided into two teaching levels (*Basis-* and *Aufbausprachkurs*), which should allow also a beginner to reach the threshold of sufficiency determined at level B1 of the CEFR. To achieve this goal, important topics of everyday life in Germany are dealt with during the course, such as work, shopping, health and hygiene (Rhode and Stitteneder 2018). The courses are organized by a wide variety of actors throughout the territory, both public and private, in particular from adult education centres, private languages and vocational schools, educational institutions, professional training centres, initiative groups, church and unaffiliated organizations (Emn / Bamf 2018).

In February 2017, the BAMF introduced a new course for second-literacy learners aimed at those who are literate in a writing system different than Latin. This course lasts 300 hours more than the general course and begins with an intensive introductory course to the Latin writing system (Rhode 2018).

A third type of integration course is the literacy course, which lasts a total of 1,200 hours and is intended for immigrants who have no or little scholastic experience, thus addressing primary and functional illiterates (Rhode 2018).

There are also other types of special courses for women, parents, young adults and people with sensory or cognitive impairments. Special catch-up courses of 900 hours address migrants who have been living in Germany for a long time but have not yet had the opportunity to attend a structured language course and, finally, an intensive 400-hour course has been introduced for quick-learners and students with high levels of education and qualification (EMN / BAMF 2018).

In addition to the language course, the integration programme includes an orientation course which from 1 August 2016 has been extended from 60 to 100 hours (EMN / BAMF 2018) and aims to provide information on the German constitution, history and culture, as well as on the duties of citizens and on the social values of the German society (Rhode 2018).

Both courses end with an exam. The orientation course ends with the test *Leben in Deutschland*, which consists of 33 multiple choice questions and also represents a prerequisite for the acquisition of citizenship. The language course ends with the test *Deutsch Test für Zuwanderer (Dtz)*, a test developed by the Goethe-Institut in collaboration with telc Gmbh and specifically addressed to the needs of immigrants. The test consists of a written part of 100 minutes, during which it is necessary to perform listening and reading exercises and to write a brief statement. The oral part is to be performed in pairs and in about 10 minutes the participant must demonstrate that he or she can present himself or herself, can give information and interact with the examiner or with the other student. Being a graded language examination, if the test is passed, the participant receives a certificate attesting German proficiency at level A2 or B1 of the CEFR, the *Zertifikat Integrationskurs*. In cases after having attended the integration course the B1 level is not reached in the test, the BAMF allows the participant to repeat 300 hours of lessons and try the test again free of charge (Perlmann-Balme 2009).

The test described above and the language classes of the integration courses are based on the *Rahmencurriculum für Integrationskurse* developed by the Goethe-Institut on behalf of the Ministry of the Interior (BMI). This framework curriculum is built on the linguistic abilities, objectives and needs of immigrants and provides the learning objectives and possible contents for the integration courses (Perlmann-Balme 2009). Rather than defining a real educational programme, it aims to provide a repertoire of possibilities for linguistic action, which can direct the concrete educational choices and make them more effective (Bongo 2016). Its function is to identify those areas of communication and fields of linguistic action in which migrants wish to or should attain language proficiency. Through the analysis of needs, twelve specific fields of linguistic action have been outlined, such as relations with bureaucracy, work, job search, training and professional updating, and five general areas of linguistic action that are transversal to specific linguistic actions, such as theming of the migrant situation, expression of

feelings, attitudes and opinions, management of dissent and conflicts (Perlmann-Balme et al. 2009). On that premise, analogously to the Italian test (see section 1.1.3), it is not hard to find exercises that deal with topics expressively related to migration, such as in the next reading comprehension exercise (2) taken from a sample of the *Deutsch Test für Zuwanderer*[9] .

(2) Hilfe für Zuwanderer
Die Regierung des Landes Hessen will dafür sorgen, dass alle Personen, die Migranten bei der Integration helfen, besser zusammenarbeiten. Zwischen den Projekten in den verschiedenen Orten des Landes gab es bisher kaum Kommunikation. Bis heute haben in hessischen Gemeinden mehr als 800 Helfer Zuwanderer bei der Integration in die deutsche Gesellschaft unterstützt, ohne dafür Geld zu bekommen. Ab Januar wird das Land Hessen die Arbeit der Helfer erstmalig mit 500.000 Euro fördern. Zur Verteilung dieses Geldes wird eine Geschäftsstelle eröffnet. „Damit werden wir zwar die Arbeit der Integrationshelfer nicht ganz bezahlen können. Die Zusammenarbeit der zahlreichen örtlichen Hilfsprojekte wird aber sicher besser werden", sagte Staatssekretärin Silvia Plassmann am Montag in Kassel.

- Das Land Hessen gibt zukünftig eine halbe Million Euro für Integrationshelfer aus. Richtig/falsch?
- Das Ministerium möchte, dass
a) 800 Helfer mehr eingestellt werden.
b) die Arbeit der Helfer mehr Wirkung hat.
c) die Helfer für ihre Arbeit mehr Geld verdienen.

The text is about improving cooperation among persons that help migrants to integrate through a sum of money set out by the federal state of Hesse. Unlike the Italian example, the content does not provide an immediate spendable information for migrants. Nevertheless, it is very likely that the migrants are expected to understand a text built on a semantic domain which concerns them directly and that could be related to the general area of linguistic action defined as "theming of the migrant situation".

The integration course is completed by language courses for professional purposes. Among these initiatives there is the ESF-BAMF programme, funded for the period 2014-2020 and expired at the of 2017, which combined German lessons with professional

---

[9]

www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/DE/Downloads/Infothek/Integrationskurse/Kurstraeger/Sonstige/dtz_modellsatz_e_1_pdf.html

qualification and internship (EMN/BAMF 2018). It was launched as a pilot project and was so successful that, following the entry into force of the Ordinance on German Language Support for Professional Purposes (Deuföv) on 1 July 2016, the promotion of job-oriented language courses has become a national service offered regularly throughout the country. These vocational courses are organized and implemented by the BAMF and are built on the basis of integration courses. They have a modular structure, normally last 300 teaching units and aim to reach a level B2, C1 or C2 of the German language. There are also special courses aimed at those who are still in the middle of the recognition procedure, courses that focus on subject-specific contents and courses intended for those who have completed the integration course but have not reached the B1 level set for the participation in vocational courses. Other courses of this type are specifically addressed to the categories of asylum seekers and refugees and will be dealt with in the following paragraph.

The courses listed so far are widespread at federal level and are at the core of the language policies, yet they are not the only existing initiatives. In a survey conducted by Brücker et al. (2019) 51% of the immigrants interviewed in 2017 took part in other courses organized by the individual federal states, municipalities, charitable and voluntary organizations and other private individuals.

1.2.3 The reception of asylum seekers and refugees in Germany

A crucial moment as regards the arrival of refugees and asylum seekers in Germany is 2015, the year in which the number of asylum seekers reached a historical record for the country (Juran and Broer 2017). The political context is dominated by a *Wilkommenskultur*, carried out by the chancellor Angela Merkel, and Germany seems to be in the eyes of Europeans the model to be followed in terms of reception and integration. On the other hand, it is in this same period that increasingly restrictive measures are introduced through reform packages known as the *Asylpaket* I, the *Asylpacket* II and the 2016 *Integration Act*.

The current reception system is organized on a regional basis and each federal state manages its own reception centres. The migrants who upon arrival or immediately after apply for asylum to a state organization are registered and then distributed in the reception

centres of the various regions on the basis of a quota system that takes into account the availability of the structures, as well as the nationality of the subjects (Juran and Broer 2017). The asylum seekers then remain in the centres for up to six months or at least until a decision is made and for the first three months they have restricted mobility, as they have an obligation to stay in the centre that hosts them. During this time, they receive benefits for food, clothes, home and money, in the meantime the asylum procedure continues, until the date of the personal interview, decisive for obtaining protection. Finally, the Federal Office examines each application of asylum and according to the law applies where possible one of the four forms of protection - entitlement to asylum, refugee protection, subsidiary protection or ban on deportation - or rejects the request.

Germany follows an early intervention strategy, especially since 2015, when for the first time asylum seekers with good prospects of obtaining protection (asylum seekers from Eritrea, Iraq, Iran, Syria and Somalia), persons with a tolerated stay status and holders of a residence permit in accordance with section 25 subs. 5 of the Residence Act were granted the possibility to attend the integration course even before having obtained the status (Lochner 2018). Since the new Integration Act in force since 6 August 2016, participation can be mandatory, otherwise there may be a cut of the guaranteed benefits. For asylum seekers with uncertain prospects, access is instead subject to the availability of places.

In addition to the integration course, asylum seekers with good prospects and refugees can also access vocational language courses, normally addressed to all people with a migration background. These initiatives include the ESF-BAMF *Sprachkurs* and the *Berufsprachkurs* funded by the BMAS (Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs) starting from 2016. Furthermore, some short-term projects that connect language teaching with labour market integration are specifically dedicated to refugees and asylum seekers with good prospects to remain, such as those offered by the Federal Employment Agency (BA) as *Perf* (Perspectives for refugees) which aims at learning the German language, assessing skills and orientating in the labour market (Brücker et al. 2016). This programme is further differentiated into *Perf-W* (Perspective for females refugees), *PerjuF* (Perspectives for young refugees), and *Kompas* (competence assessment, early activation and language acquisition), which consists of a development of the *Perf* programmes and the BA Introductory course § 421 SGB III (Brücker et al. 2019).

For asylum seekers who have uncertain perspectives of remaining, because they originally come from a country with a low recognition rate, but which equally does not constitute a safe country of origin, the federal government guarantees an "initial orientation and learning German for asylum seekers" (EMN / BAMF 2018). Asylum seekers thus have the opportunity to participate voluntarily and free of charge in a course structured in six modules (which the individual can choose among eleven modules that include subjects such as work, shopping, health, school etc.) to be completed in 300 teaching units that can help them learn useful notions for everyday life in Germany, to be able to orient themselves and acquire the very first bases of the language.

The linguistic reception of refugees in Germany is also accompanied by innovative tools for smartphones, among which we find for example the *Ankommen App*, a free application developed by the BAMF in collaboration with the Goethe-Institut, the Federal Office, Bayerischer Rundfunk and the Federal Employment Agency. In addition to providing information on life in Germany, the asylum process and access to the labor market, it also contains an interactive course in basic German.

1.2.4 Language requirements for access and stay

In 2007, with a modification to the *Residence Act*, it is established that spouses or registered partners who want to reunite with their family in Germany must demonstrate a basic knowledge of the German language, at level A1 of the CEFR. With respect to this change, Germany has set up an integration programme from abroad delegating preparation and evaluation to the Goethe-Institut, which issues the *Start Deutsch I* certificate, which is one of the language tests recognized as proof of language competence (Goodman 2011). Behind the decision of establishing a linguistic prerequisite for access is probably the fact that family reunification is one of the main immigration channels to the country. In this regard, Goodman (2011: 236) considers that "new obligatory requirements at the pre-entry stage most clearly serve to limit immigration, specifically family-forming migrants" and that "the most salient effect of pre-entry integration and high pre-entry barriers is exclusion by way of self-selection, cost, and inability to fulfill requirements". A proof of this is given by the fact that only a certain category of migrants

must fulfill this requirement, that is, family members and, moreover, some categories are excluded, such as highly qualified workers.

Through this amendment the linguistic requirement has become necessary in each of the phases of the immigration process, starting from access to the country, to the request for a permanent residence permit, up to naturalization. To obtain these last two it is necessary to demonstrate at least level B1 of the CEFR. The proof of language for the residence permit is mandatory for migrants who are not citizens of an EU or EEA country or Switzerland. As for obtaining citizenship, sufficient knowledge (*ausreichende deutschkenntnisse*) is mandatory for "persons who are not children of at least one parent of German nationality, or where at least one parent has lived in Germany for at least eight years and has a permanent right of residence" (Alte Lami 2016: 54). Among the language proficiency tests valid for recognition is the completing of the integration course and therefore the passing of the *Deutsch Test für Zuwanderer (DTZ)*.

Regarding the effects of the introduction of language requirements, an INTEC study (Strik et al. 2010) shows that the number of requests for family reunification has decreased since the introduction of the language requirement for access to the country. As for the qualitative data, it emerges that immigrants themselves assess the effects of language testing policies for access, residence permits and naturalization as negative, and they include among the causes the stress and anxiety caused by the decisive impact that the results of these tests have on their lives. On the other hand, the "emancipatory effect" of the preparatory course emerges among the advantages, as well as the possibility for some women to find in the compulsory integration course an opportunity for socialization.

1.3 The case of the United Kingdom

1.3.1 The UK's migratory and linguistic scene

The fundamental feature that marks the history of immigration in the United Kingdom with respect to the German and Italian experience is to be found in its imperial past. First, with the *British Nationality Act* of 1948, all citizens of the British colonies and

Commonwealth countries were allowed to enter the United Kingdom and formally enjoy the same social, legal and political rights as the other subjects (Geddes and Scholten 2016). Starting from this date there was a notable increase in immigration in response to a greater demand for post-war work, which was also favored by a particularly generous welfare (Martellini 2017). However, this free migration regime lasted only a few years, as increasingly stringent measures were introduced with the *Commonwealth Immigrants Act* of 1962 and the *Immigration Act* of 1971 (Geddes and Scholten 2016). After two successive decades characterized by the decrease and stabilization of the flows, the turning point came in 1994, when the number of immigrants arriving began to exceed that of the emigrants, until reaching since 1998 a number constantly higher than 100,000 (Sturge 2018). Meanwhile, the characteristics of immigration had changed as a result of greater mobility and enlargement of the European Union, which had led to an increase in immigration from Eastern Europe and, as in the rest of Europe, new arrivals from Africa and Asia, and particularly from Ethiopia and Eritrea, Somalia, Congo, Iraq, and Afghanistan (Simpson 2015).

Secondly, the imperial dimension of the UK has influenced the formation of its multicultural model of integration. According to Martellini (2017), British colonization was mainly concerned with making the trade system of the countries within the Commonwealth uniform rather than dealing with internal relations with the indigenous peoples. The multicultural model that was originally developed in the colonies was later introjected within the country. This model places great emphasis on ethnic communities and immigrant associations and guarantees the concrete realization of the ways of life as prescribed by religious and traditional norms. However, contrary to the good intentions of who had supported it, the model ended up creating a high degree of social fragmentation and separatism. This has led in recent years to reconsidering new integration measures, which can contribute to the realization of a shared collective and national identity (Martellini 2017).

To date, around 6.2 million non-British nationals and 9.4 million foreign-born people live in the United Kingdom, with 36% of them concentrated in the metropolitan city of London (Sturge 2018). The most represented countries of birth for the foreign-born population are Poland (9.8%), India (8.8%), Pakistan (5.6%), Ireland (4.1%) and Romania (4.1%), with Poland also accounting for 16.4% of non-UK citizens living in the

UK (Rienzo and Vargas-Silva 2018). With 515,000 new arrivals in 2016, the United Kingdom is among the EU countries with the highest flows of foreign nationals and second only to Germany (Sturge 2018). Nonetheless, it emerges from the data provided by UNHCR (2018) that the number of asylum seekers is 6 and 3.8 times lower than in Germany and Italy respectively, amounting to 33,500 in 2017. In 2017, the main countries of origin for asylum applicants in the UK were Iran, Pakistan, Iraq, Bangladesh and Sudan (Blinder 2019). The data available usually distinguish between asylum seekers and resettled refugees, the latter being identified outside of the country and brought in the UK through government-led resettlement programmes. As for refugees the largest resettlement programme in the UK is now the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement scheme, through which 12,846 Syrians (half of whom were children) were resettled between January 2014 and June 2018 (Blinder 2019).

Data on the linguistic landscape are provided by the 2011 census in relation to England and Wales (Office for National Statistics 2013). It emerges from this that 8% of the population claimed to use a language other than English as their main language. The most spoken languages other than English are 88 and Polish is on the top of the list, accounting alone 1% of the total, followed by Punjabi, Urdu, Bengali and Gujarati. London, hosting a considerably higher percentage of foreigners than the percentage of the entire country, presents a share of languages other than English of 22.1%. The same census also provides data on the knowledge of the English language, from which it emerges that 863,000 people who declared not to have English as a main language speak English poorly or do not speak it at all. It also turns out that the groups with the lowest levels of proficiency in English are the speakers of gypsy languages, Pakistani Pahari (with Mirpuri and Potwari), Vietnamese and Cantonese Chinese.

1.3.2 English as a second language for migrants

At the heart of the linguistic measures aimed at immigrants in the United Kingdom is ESOL (English for speakers of other Languages), a branch of the ELT (English Language Teaching) born with the main objective of guaranteeing newcomers the possibility to learn the language mainly spoken in the host country (Simpson 2016). Before going into the explanation, it is necessary first of all to state that ESOL, although

sometimes with other names, is present in all countries where English is the dominant language, such as the United States, New Zealand, Australia (Simpson 2016). Secondly, even within the UK different ESOL strategies are pursued by England, Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland (Foster and Bolton 2018). Unlike the latter two, England and Northern Ireland have not yet developed a national ESOL strategy (Paget and Stevenson 2014). For this reason and also because an analysis of the four different situations would require more than a paragraph, the next part is mainly focused on England, even though sometimes circumstances are intertwined.

The ESOL first appeared in England and Wales under section 11 of the *Local Government Act* of 1966, which decided to respond to the increase in arrivals of new immigrants by introducing funding for language courses (Simpson 2015). The following two decades were characterized by an expansion of the provision of courses, which however remained informal and fragmented, although at the same time a more critical and activist approach was emerging among practitioners (Simpson 2015; Paget and Stevenson 2014).

The turning point came first in 1984, when ESOL became part of the ALBSU (Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Units) and later in 2001 with its entry under the umbrella of the *Skills for Life*, which consists of a strategy aimed at reducing the number of adults with low levels of basic skills, numeracy and literacy (Simpson 2015). With this step, ESOL was for the first time defined within a national standard and began to be centrally controlled through the Adult ESOL Core Curriculum, which still provides a reference framework for curriculum planning (Simpson 2015). Besides, this new collocation required teachers to be qualified and learners to obtain qualifications in turn based on the national curriculum (Paget and Stevenson 2014).

The presence of ESOL under the umbrella of the *Skills for Life* ended in 2009 and was replaced by a new approach, which involves the coordination of courses at the local level. However, this coupled with a cut in funding that prevents local authorities from effectively responding to the existing demand (Simpson 2015).

Paget and Stevenson (2014:10) through their research have highlighted a number of problems that characterize ESOL in England. These include the lack of a national strategy, which "has contributed to a poor understanding of the quality of provision, as well as a dearth of information for potential learners", but also long waiting lists to access

the courses and a gap between the demand for courses and the actual offer. This is mainly due to the lack of funding itself, which has more than halved over the period from 2009-2010 to 2016-2017 and which to date fully finances the course only for unemployed learners or those receiving certain types of benefits such as Job-seekers allowance, while other eligible classroom-based adult ESOL learning are only co-funded, thus making half of the cost fall on learners or providers (Foster and Bolton 2018). The question of funding is significant, and this is evident from the fact that participation in ESOL courses has dropped in parallel with the decrease in funding. In fact, if there were 179,000 participants in 2009-10, these decreased to 114,000 in 2016-17 (Foster and Bolton 2018). In response to the problems generated within the ESOL, movements involving practitioners, volunteers and students were born, such as the *Action for ESOL movement* active since 2010, which through the definition of the core principles of ESOL in its Manifesto provides a reference point for all the subjects involved[10]. A central role is also played by the National Institute for Adult and Continuing Education (NIACE) and the National Association for Teaching English and other Community Languages to Adults (NATECLA) (Simpson 2015).

The general structure of ESOL courses provides that migrants can access five different types of courses: Entry level 1, to Entry Level 3, Level 1 and Level 2 (the latter roughly equivalent to GCSE and to level C1 of the CEFR). Learners have the opportunity to train on three parts: speaking and listening, reading, and writing. Since 2014, a new suite of ESOL Skills for Life qualification accredited by the Ofqual (Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation) has been introduced, which allows learners to be accredited for all the skills or even just one of the three parts (Foster and Bolton 2018). Moreover, a list of secure English language tests (SELT) has been approved in response to the English language requirements for access, settlement and citizenship introduced over the last two decades (see section 1.3.4). The tests specially adapted for adult migrants that need to meet those requirements are the GESE and the IELTS Life Skills, which assess speaking and listening skills at level A1, A2 and B1 of the CEFR. The fact that only two out of four skills are assessed is what differentiate the English test from the German and the Italian tests for migrants. Taking as an example the A2 IELTS Life Skills test, it can be noted that the length is of only about 20 minutes. Furthermore,

---

[10] http://actionforesol.org/action-for-esol-manifesto

the listening and speaking parts are combined, which means that the comprehension of the listening input must be proved orally. Consider (3) below:

(3) Listen to the information. [Play CD.]
Listening script 1
F: Hi James, how are you?
M: I'm fine – but I'm hungry!
F: Me too, the sports class was really long today. Do you know when this place shuts?
M: At half past four but they stop serving food soon.
F: OK, well I'm just going out for a minute - I'll be straight back. I have to go to the bank and get some money though.
M: Well you'd better be quick or they'll be nothing left to eat!
F: Alright. I won't be long.

_____ (Candidate A), in the first recording, where are the students? A café, a study centre or a sports hall?
Thank you.
_____ (Candidate B), in the first recording, what time does the café close? [short pause] And where must the woman go before she eats?

The main providers of the courses are further education (FE) colleges, adult community colleges and independent training providers. In addition, a large number of initiatives provide ESOL voluntary or community-based classes (Paget and Stevenson 2014). For example, between 2012-13 and 2016 the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government funded six projects delivering community-based English language provision aimed at isolated adults with poor or no English skills (Foster and Bolton 2018). Furthermore, in January 2016, the then Prime Minister, David Cameron, announced a new £20 community fund to "help combat social isolation for some Muslim women" through English language classes[11].

As arises from what has been written so far, the field of ESOL is in continuous transformation. Research and surveys carried out over the years contribute to highlighting the problem of language learning and making recommendations and suggestions for improvement. For example, the Casey Review on Opportunity and Integration (2016) detected significant problems with funding of pre-entry and entry level classes, as well as disadvantages caused by poor English language proficiency, that is its being an obstacle

---

[11] https://www.gov.uk/government/news/passive-tolerance-of-separate-communities-must-end-says-pm

to integration and economic success. On the other hand, it highlighted how more than a quarter of ESOL course participants continue learning after the end of the courses and how the link between English level and employment rate is evident. The recommendations put forward by the review were received by the government, which in March 2018 published an integrated Communities Strategy green paper emphasizing in turn a series of proposals aimed at improving the system[12].

1.3.3 The reception of asylum seekers and refugees in the UK

The attention towards the topic of asylum, refugees and asylum seekers grew considerably in the years 2001 to 2005, becoming a "political obsession" during the second New Labour government (Geddes and Scholten 2016: 34). In fact, the number of asylum seekers had peaked in 2002 with 84,132 claims. In 2014, following the introduction of more stringent controls, the number of asylum seekers was four times lower. Yet with the Mediterranean refugee crisis in 2015 also in the UK the issues of asylum, integration and reception of newcomers returned at the core of the public debate. However, the UK does not have a uniform policy for integration and, broadly speaking, only two groups have or had specific integration policies: people who have obtained refugee status and permanent residents who want to become British citizens (Geddes and Scholten 2016).

The reception system of refugees in the UK is structured on two levels. On the one hand there are refugees who apply for asylum after having entered the territory of the UK and receive the protection after having undergone the asylum procedure. On the other hand, there are refugees who come directly to the UK through one of the government-led resettlement programmes[13]. While the latter immediately receive support to access services and find work, for the former this support is not guaranteed. Or rather, not anymore. In fact, between 2008 and 2011, the government had funded a programme, the

---

[12] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/ 696993/Integrated_Communities_Strategy.pdf
[13] The Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Programme; The Gateway Protection Programme; The Mandate Scheme; The Vulnerable Children Resettlement Scheme from the Middle East and North Africa, Community Sponsorship Scheme

Refugee Integration and Employment Service, which helped those who had just been recognized as refugees by offering twelve months of support and a mentoring service so as to overcome the most critical barriers, such as entering the labour market. Since 2011, however, the government has no longer provided this kind of support (APPG 2017).

At the centre of the measures for the linguistic integration of refugees is to be found again the provision of ESOL classes. Therefore, in this case as well, England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland pursue different strategies. Scotland as well as having a national ESOL strategy, *Welcoming Our Learners: Scotland's ESOL Strategy 2015 - 2020*, adopted the *New Scots: Refugee Integration strategy 2018 to 2022[14]*, which builds on the previous strategy adopted for the period 2014-17. In Scotland refugees who have obtained a protection status are guaranteed free access to ESOL courses, whereas asylum seekers waiting for a decision are eligible for free ESOL courses, without having to wait a given period of time. In addition, they both could also receive support for the cost of travel and study. On the contrary, in England there is no specific entitlement for refugees to access courses. This means that the same criteria apply as for other migrants, except for the fact that compared to the latter, refugees do not have to fulfill the requirement to be resident in territory for at least three years. Asylum seekers can participate in the courses if they have waited more than six months to get a decision on their asylum claim and, in any case, their participation is not fully funded (Foster and Mackley 2017). As a result, the shortcomings identified by the report *Refugees Welcome?* (2017) are the same as those identified for ESOL courses in general, that is the cut to funding that leads to shortage of courses, long waiting lists, reduced hours of lessons and inability to meet the needs of refugees. These impediments seem to be even greater for women, due to the timing of the classes and the lack of childcare facilities that prevent them from attending classes normally. An exception is the funding, started in September 2016, of language courses for Syrian refugees arriving under the Syrian Vulnerable Resettlement Scheme (VPRS). This funding allows refugees to attend twelve hours of weekly classes for a period of up to six months.

Lastly, in addition to programmes activated at a national level, the demand for language classes is often satisfied by a large number of courses organized by charities,

---

[14] https://www.gov.scot/publications/new-scots-refugee-integration-strategy-2018-2022/

faith groups, community organizations and other non-profit organizations, often run by volunteers (APPG 2017).

1.3.4 Language requirements for access and stay

The British Nationality Act of 1981 already prescribed a requirement of sufficient knowledge of English, Scottish or Welsh in order to obtain citizenship. At first it was only a vague requirement, yet with the *Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act* of 2002 it became a standardized test, known as *Life in the UK* test (Goodman 2011; Simpson 2015). This test was officially introduced in November 2005 as a necessary requirement for all those who want to become British citizens, and since 2007 it has also been extended to those who apply for an indefinite leave to remain. The test is structured in 24 multiple choice questions to be performed on the computer in 45 minutes and in order to pass it, applicants must correctly answer at least 75% of the questions (Brooks 2013). Initially the test alone allowed future citizens to meet both the requirements necessary to obtain either citizenship or indefinite leave to remain, that is knowledge of the English language and knowledge of British culture and institutions (Brooks 2013). A study by Papp (2010, cited in Pochon Berger, Lenz 2014:23) on the *Life in the UK* test and on the materials available for preparation highlighted on the one hand that "the language ability tested does not provide adequate evidence of the test taker's ability to integrate into the host society" and that "the contents of the test furthermore do not correspond to the domain of relevant use in everyday social life", on the other hand that "the level of language proficiency of both tests and support materials is higher than the targeted level". However, since 2013 the rules have become more stringent and applicants are required to pass a test at level B1 of the CEFR in speaking and listening (corresponding to the ESOL Entry 3 level) separate from the civic test. Furthermore, if it was previously possible for migrants with a level below ESOL Entry Level 3 in English to attend a special ESOL and Citizenship course, this option was removed with the introduction of the new requirement (Paget and Stevenson 2014).

The framework of linguistic requirements for migrants is completed, firstly, by the introduction in 2009 of a system that awards points for the English language proficiency within the new points-based immigration system for non-EEA migrants. Secondly, a pre-

entry language requirement in speaking and listening at level A1 of the CEFR has been introduced in 2010 for spouses and partners who want to be reunited with their family members (Paget and Stevenson 2014). This has been extended in 2016 to an A2 level for those who after having resided for two years and a half in the UK want to further extend the permission. Finally, since 2015, a Secure English Language Test (SELT) service has been introduced which establishes that learners can carry out ESOL exams only in designated centres, making other tests not valid for naturalization. These providers are Trinity College London (in the UK only) and IELTS SELT Consortium (in the UK and abroad)[15]. The Trinity College London tests accepted are the GESE (Graded Examinations in Spoken English) and the IED (Integrated Skills in English), with the former assessing speaking and listening skills from level A1 to level B1 and hence being suitable for migrants wishing to apply for a further leave to remain, an indefinite leave to remain and for citizenship. The Cambridge English exams included on the list are IELTS for UKVI, which assesses all four language skills at levels B1 to C2 of the CEFR and the IELTS Life Skills, which assesses speaking and listening skills at CEFR level A1, A2 and B1, the A2 level being available only in the UK.

In the UK as well the issue of language requirements for access, residence and citizenship has been the subject of extensive debates. The introduction of increasingly restrictive language policies is in line with the European trend of the twenty-first century, as it is also the case in Italy, Germany and other European countries. It also falls within the scope of those measures that Fortier (2018:2) defines "Citizenisation" measures that are aimed at all those people who seek recognition of a residency and citizenship status and that increasingly include measures such as formal language and or citizenship tests. There are also internal factors that have influenced the introduction of these measures, such as the civil disturbances in Northern England in the summer of 2001, which are often referred to as the main cause of the introduction of more stringent measures. It is in fact following the riots that the Home Secretary David Blankett, the immigration minister Lord Rooker and MP for Keighley Ann Cryer began to propose linguistic requirements[16].

According to Simpson (2015) the obligation imposed on migrants to learn English is also connected to the position of English in the construction of national identity, and in

---

[15] https://www.gov.uk/government/news/changes-to-secure-english-language-test-providers-for-uk-visas
[16] https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1337901/Migrants-must-learn-English-in-Blunkett-plan.html

particular to the relationship established between the English language and the notion of "Britishness". In addition, Simpson (2015:202) adds, "the association of the national community with English is underpinned by a belief that in order for British society to be strong and stable, its population must share a common language". The above is also demonstrated by a report on British social attitudes which shows that almost every British citizen interviewed (95%) claimed that to be "truly British" one must be able to speak English[17]. Finally, Fortier (2018:1262) summarizes some of the reasons for which, according to her, UK has arrived at the introduction of linguistic requirements:

> It is this discursive policy and context of monolingual Britain as a 'natural' foundation of the nation and national identity, of English language as a 'natural' aspirational skill for everyone in the world, and of multilingualism as unnecessary if not undesirable for residents in Britain, that migrants are required to speak English.

---

[17] http://www.natcen.ac.uk/news-media/press-releases/2014/june/being-british-today/

CHAPTER 2 – Testing migrants' language skills

2.1 Language testing in the context of migration

2.1.1 An introduction to the history of language testing

Language testing is usually referred to as a branch of applied linguistics that has the purpose of measuring linguistic competence and has as main object the development, research and design of language tests.

Many authors match the birth of a modern approach of language testing with the publication in 1961 of *Language Testing* by Lado (Davies 2013; Spolsky 2017). Davies (2013) explains that Lado's vision was a structural one: language testing was used to control problems arising from learning new languages. These same problems could be foreseen on the basis of a systematic linguistic comparison between the linguistic structures of the first and the second language (Davies 2013).

Before that date there had been other traditional approaches to language testing, which focused on literacy skills and hinged mostly on translation activities, composition, understanding, and knowledge of grammatical structures (Spolsky 2017).

Spolsky (2017) identified some fundamental trends that have characterized the field of study of language testing and have contributed to its development as an academic field. The first trend was related to the field of psychometry and its attempt to counter the inevitable uncertainty of the tests, looking for ways to make them reliable and valid. In order to make the tests reliable, namely ensuring that the tests measure competence in a consistent and steady manner, statistical methods and objective items have been introduced. According to Spolsky, the search for reliability has consequently led to the development of large-scale industrial tests.

Regarding the industrialization of the process of assessing oral skills, he adds that one of the biggest developments is related to the growth of the importance of scales. This leads to understand the context in which the CEFR was born and how it became one of the most elaborate examples of this development.

As for the attempt to make the tests valid -i.e. tests whose contents are appropriate for the purposes they are intended for- the path is more tortuous. As a matter of fact, validity research has continued to dominate the literature on language testing in the subsequent years (Davies 2013).

The second trend identified by Spolsky (2017) is related to the integrative tests approach, which requires that language skills must necessarily be measured jointly rather than as isolated discrete-points of language. However, there are complications arising from considering language samples that are not suitable for an objective measurement and require human judgment, thus undermining reliability.

According to Davies (2013) in the seventies the sociolinguistic view of the language as intended for a purpose and always connected to the context resulted in a closer approach of the language testers to the integrative tests. This is also the third main trend identified by Spolsky (2017), which adds that the introduction in language testing of the sociolinguistic and communicative aspects of language brought about the need of both guaranteeing the authenticity of the tests and measuring the ability to perform in real-life situations.

These transitions are only a partial description of the developments in the academic field of language testing in the second half of the twentieth century. However, they are useful to highlight two fundamental points. First, they serve to introduce concepts that are still central to the language testing discourse, especially those of validity and reliability. Secondly, they allow us to understand how these concepts have been resumed and adapted to current reflections on language testing in the context of migration, which is increasingly focused on the political and social dimension, on fairness and in general on what Davies (2013) defines as the *doppelgänger* of validity, the ethical dimension.

2.1.2 The new debate in language testing: the political use of tests

In recent years, language testers have begun to increasingly worry about the impact and consequences that derive from the political use of tests and, secondly, to question their own role in the elaboration of these political instruments (Shohamy and McNamara 2009). These questions are part of a broader trend, dominated by numerous studies and academics that deal with the connection that has been established between the language

and the integration of migrants (cf. Strik 2013) or between the language, citizenship and the nation state, trying to understand whether language tests are actually used as a filter for controlling and limiting immigration (Goodman 2011, Shohamy 2009, Shohamy and McNamara 2009). Davies (2013) explains this shift through a metaphor: if from the Sixties the three questions that had guided the reflection were "how to test?", "what to test?" and "who are the testers?", the growing concern about the use of tests have led to question "why?" or "should we?".

Since test results often determine the possibility for people to reunite with their family, establish themselves and obtain citizenship, it is easy to understand the importance of investigating the impact of tests on the individuals involved in the process. According to Tracy (2017), although the consequences are not life-threatening, they can still lead to exclusion from health-related services, social, educational and work opportunities. Thus, given that tests could be used in a discriminatory way, unfairly denying the possibilities of particular groups, it becomes essential to ensure at least that tests are fair and appropriate for each category of individuals (Van Avermaet and Rocca 2011).

McNamara (2010) also strongly insists on the growing social and political importance of language tests. This is also related to the growing urgency of articulating and defending the implicit values of the tests. He argues (2010:20) that the constructs of the tests for immigrants are not properly addressed to practical communicative ability, but rather to assess compliance with a national ideology and to a set of socio-cultural values. "In summary, the construct of language proficiency in tests for immigration and citizenship is best understood in terms of ideology, not functional language proficiency."

Saville (2009) argues that to respond effectively to the challenges posed by language testing in the context of migration it is necessary to develop an interdisciplinary approach, identifying more precisely the role of the stakeholders involved, which are not exclusively language testers. He also believes that the starting point for the creation of a new and more suitable frame of reference should start from a clearer understanding of the migrant's journey. The journey is not only physical, in the sense of moving from one place to another, but also metaphorical, from one society, one culture, and one linguistic community to another. Through the frame he created, called "the journey to citizenship" (figure 1), he provides a model for describing the stages of the process ranging from

arrival in a country to the request for citizenship, with reference to the role of the language assessment.

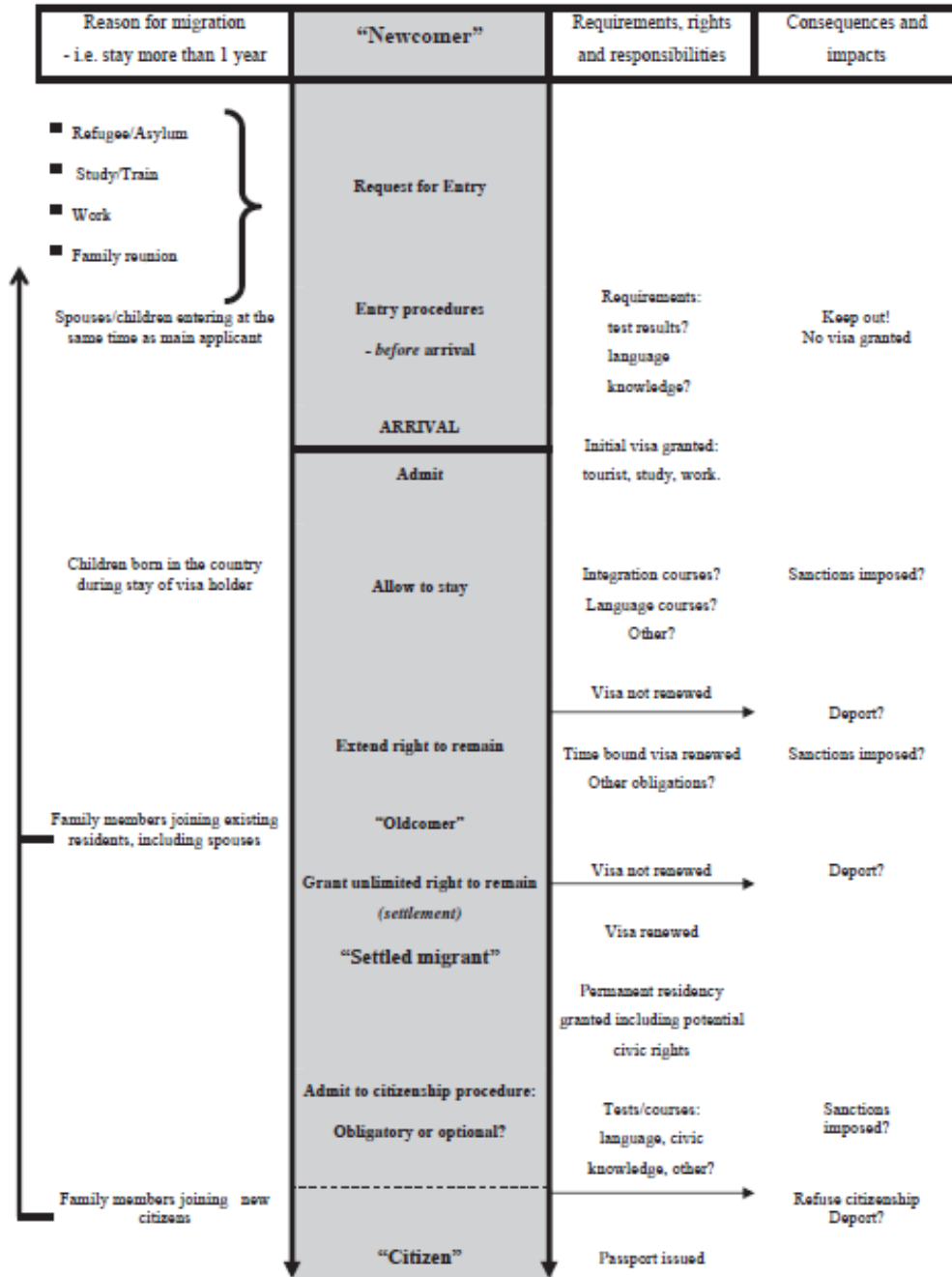| Reason for migration – i.e. stay more than 1 year	"Newcomer"	Requirements, rights and responsibilities	Consequences and impacts
■ Refugee/Asylum ■ Study/Train ■ Work ■ Family reunion	**Request for Entry**		
Spouses/children entering at the same time as main applicant	**Entry procedures** – *before* arrival	Requirements: test results? language knowledge?	Keep out! No visa granted
	ARRIVAL		
	Admit	Initial visa granted: tourist, study, work.	
Children born in the country during stay of visa holder	**Allow to stay**	Integration courses? Language courses? Other?	Sanctions imposed?
		Visa not renewed →	Deport?
	Extend right to remain	Time bound visa renewed Other obligations?	Sanctions imposed?
Family members joining existing residents, including spouses	**"Oldcomer"**		
	Grant unlimited right to remain *(settlement)*	Visa not renewed →	Deport?
	"Settled migrant"	Visa renewed	
		Permanent residency granted including potential civic rights	
	Admit to citizenship procedure: **Obligatory or optional?**	Tests/courses: language, civic knowledge, other?	Sanctions imposed?
Family members joining new citizens		→	Refuse citizenship Deport?
	"Citizen"	Passport issued	

Figure 1. The Journey to Citizenship (Saville 2009)

The model also includes the requirements, rights and responsibilities and finally the consequences and impacts of each stage of the process. The main purpose is precisely to allow dialogue between the different disciplines, including policy makers, academics and

practitioners. By bringing together the perspectives of these different groups, three dimensions can be identified within which to act: the political dimension, the socio-cultural dimension and the dimension of language teaching and assessment. As for the latter dimension, according to Saville, language testers should be able to face the challenges posed by immigration, for example by referring to appropriate validity theories and providing proof for them, or by developing and applying an impact theory and research methods.

Similarly, McNamara (2010) notes a certain isolation of the field of language testing compared to other fields of applied linguistics and other areas of human sciences and education. This is linked to the wide diffusion of a narrow view of the validity of a test, based on which the research should concentrate on the quality of the language test, preferring a focus on the technical aspects to assess the significance of the test constructs. On the other hand, however, McNamara notes that a broader view of validity is slowly emerging, which also includes research on the uses of tests, the social and political functions and the values included in the tests.

Furthermore, according to McNamara (2010) the validity theory recognized in the field of language testing is based on the same theories developed in the general field of measurement. Language testing, like other types of measurements, aims to evaluate the linguistic competence of individuals on the basis of a sample of evidence. Considering that the size of the sample is quite small, it seems clear that the evidence provided during the tests could potentially lead to erroneous conclusions about an individual's actual abilities. As McNamara (2010:10) puts it "at the heart of validity theory is a principle of doubt about the meaningfulness of test scores". The task of the test developers is therefore to minimize these doubts and make sure that the assessment is as fair as possible for everyone. In other words, a test for immigrants is valid when its content is appropriate for the purposes of the test itself, the results are significant for its recipients and, finally, when it does not create disadvantage towards certain groups (Alte Lami 2016).

Other key concepts for the validation of a test to be taken into consideration are reliability, practicality and impact. Reliability is a technical concept related to the constancy and stability of test results, both within the same test and subsequent tests. A reliable test is a test that guarantees the absence of measurement errors and provides objective results, which are repeatable over time (Alte Lami 2016).

Practicality instead deals with the presence of the right conditions to carry out the test and regards the numerous aspects that influence the performance of a test, from the necessary tools and technologies, to the security and confidentiality of the data.

Lastly, the impact of the test has to do with the effects and consequences of language tests. Often the term used when referring to the consequences of tests on teaching and learning is washback (Shohamy 2001). Impact instead is the term used to refer more broadly to the social consequences of tests on individuals and on society in general (McNamara 2010; Van Avermaet and Rocca 2011).

2.1.3 The development of a language test

Language testing differs from other areas of applied linguistics as it has a tangible and practical output, the language test. Although often it is considered a specialized and technically complex field, it is also largely informed by theoretical perspectives (McNamara 2010). As already seen in the previous paragraph, behind the field of language testing there is a rich and complex theory of validity concerning the way in which the test scores are or should be interpreted and used (McNamara 2010; Bachman 1990). The validation of a test consists of various aspects. Bachman (1990: 255) refers to one of these as construct validity, that is the extent to which performance in a test reflects the predictions made on the basis of a theory of abilities. In fact, the construction of a good language test must rely on a theory of communicative competence.

There are various types of models that provide a description of communicative competence. However, according to Rocca (2019), the one that has been mostly used in language testing - maybe sometimes in a too formal and standardized way - is the communicative language ability (CLA) model developed by Bachman (1990) and represented in Figure 2:
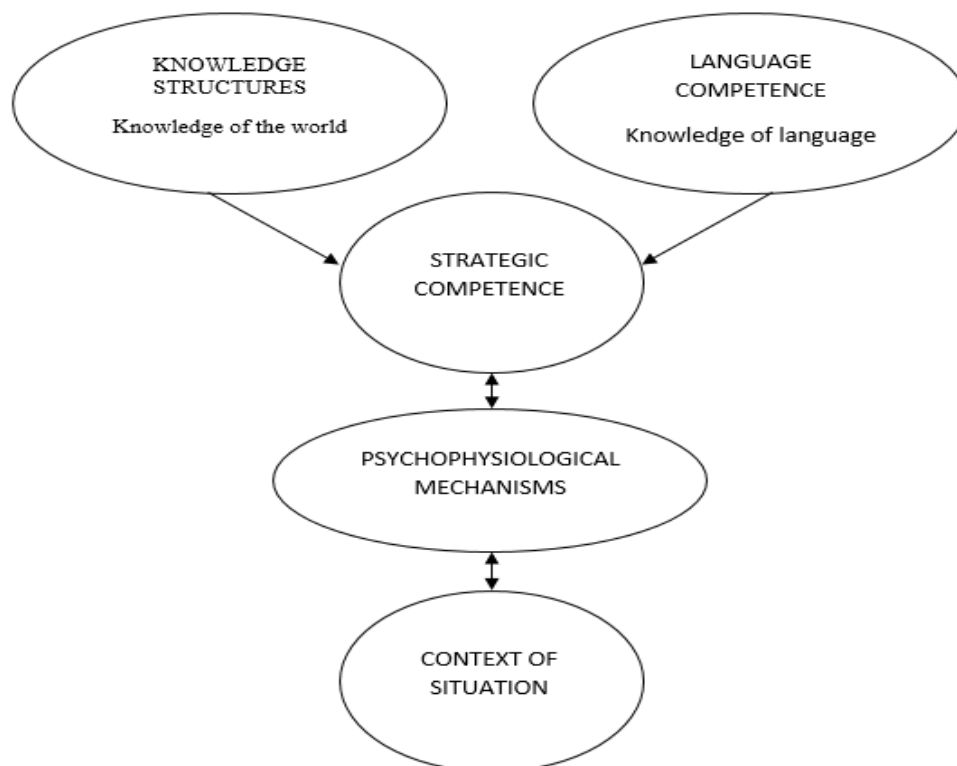
Figure 2. Components of communicative language ability (Bachman 1990:85)

Bachman (1990:84) describes the model as "consisting of both knowledge, or competence, and the capacity for implementing, or executing that competence in appropriate, contextualized communicative language use". The language competence comprises other sub-components organized hierarchically (Bachman 1990:87):

- Organizational competence, which includes grammatical competence (vocabulary, morphology, syntax, phonology and graphology) and textual competence (cohesion and rhetorical organization).
- Pragmatic competence, which includes illocutionary competence (ideational, manipulative, heuristic, and imaginative function) and sociolinguistic competence (sensitive to dialect, register and nature, cultural reference and figures of speech).

The same CEFR (2001: 13) is based on a general model of communicative language competence built by three components:

- Linguistic competence, which includes knowledge of the lexical, phonological and morpho-syntactic system;
- Socio-linguistic competence, which has to do with the ability to act linguistically within a socio-cultural context;
- Pragmatic competence, which refers to the functional use of language and other competences such as mastery of discourse, cohesion and coherence, the identification of text types and forms, irony, and parody.

The CEFR is built on an action-oriented approach and represents an ordered set of statements divided into six levels of proficiency based on the aspects of communication skills identified. In short, the CEFR provides a set of standards that respond to the current approach to the interpretation of test scores, based on which the scores are interpreted in relation to pre-determined standards of knowledge and skills. McNamara (2010) distinguishes this criterion-oriented approach from the previous norm-referenced approach, where the interpretation of the results occurred in reference to the performances of other individuals and, therefore, was always relative.

The way in which the standards are formulated is important because these represent the test construct on which the measurement and assessment of the linguistic competence is based. If McNamara (2010) introduces these arguments it is because he wants to point out how in reality the current language tests reflect less the theories of competence or communicative interaction of applied linguistics, but rather the political decisions that guide the formulation of these standards.

Standards and test constructs can therefore be thought of as potential statements about individual learners (McNamara 2010). The next step is normally the development of a scale based on the levels of competence. As such, the purpose of the language testing becomes that of categorizing the test takers within one of the pre-determined categories (McNamara 2010).

This categorization process is possible through various types of tests that aim to elicit samples of performance that allow to perform inferences about competence. In particular, according to Rocca (2008), in the second language testing not only inferences are made, but also predictions. The inference makes it possible to identify the general

ability from the particular performance. From this, a series of predictions are made on the concrete use of the language within specific contexts related to the everyday life of the target audience.

According to Bachman and Palmer (1996), the process of developing a test consists of three macro-phases that generally proceed in a linear way, even though decisions and activities carried out at previous stages can also be reconsidered, revised and repeated in the following stages. The process can be represented as in Figure 3:
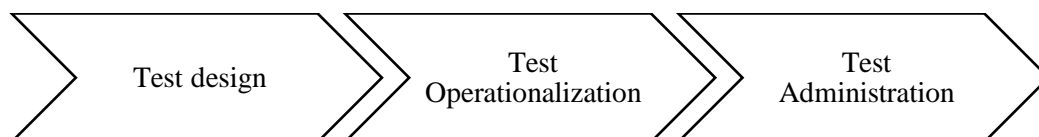

Figure 3. The stages of test development (Bachman and Palmer 1996)

Each phase involves a number of activities and decisions. In particular, the development of high-stake tests is a complex process, which may need constant revision (Bachman and Palmer 1996). Among the most important decisions to be taken in the first phase are those of defining the purpose of the test, outlining the general profile of the target users or identifying the situations to include in the test tasks, in which evidence can occur naturally (Bachman and Palmer 1996). It seems appropriate here to refer to one of the central and most difficult topics of language testing, which is guaranteeing the authenticity of the tests, although authentic performances are not easy to replicate in a test situation (McNamara 2010).

The decisions taken in the design phase feed into a set of test task specifications and help to track the actual organization of the test. Later, in the administration phase, the preliminary version is tested on a defined group of individuals that correspond to the target audience of the test.

This synthetic representation of the stages of test development may inaccurately lead to consider the process as being straightforward or undemanding. However, the number of decisions to make in each phase is very large and, moreover, some of them more than others affect the validity of the test. For example, one of the first activities to be performed in the design stage is the description of the profile of the target user of the test. The next paragraph deals with the issues that arise when considering the target group of migrants.

2.1.4 Determining the profiles of migrants

The first thing that emerges when defining the profile of a group of migrant learners is that it is characterized by an extreme heterogeneity. Migrants come from different countries, where they speak different languages and have different educational experiences. The reasons that led them to migrate affect their learning and determine different interlocutors and contexts in which they will have to use the second language, such as work, family or school. In addition, migrants differ in terms of cognitive profiles, and different motivation or predisposition to learning a language.

Esser (2006) identifies four factors that influence the second language acquisition at a social level: the family and migration biographies of the individual immigrants, the country of origin, the receiving country and the ethnic context. He also summarizes some of the most influential variables (Esser 2006: 97):

> The conditions of family and migration biography and those of the ethnic context prove particularly significant for second language acquisition, including in particular the age at migration (also that of the parents of immigrant children in relation to the latter's language acquisition), education, ethnic concentration and intra-ethnic relations – and in the latter context, above all, inter-group marriage. The other factors at work here include the duration of stay, prior contact with the second language in the country of origin, media contact with the society of origin and linguistic, spatial and social distances.

The diversity of migrants' characteristics must be taken into consideration when carrying out a needs analysis and when defining the purpose of the test. To say that the test is aimed at migrants is not sufficient (Alte Lami 2016). For example, groups of students and workers who need to undergo language tests often have uniform profiles and levels of education. As such, it is easier to obtain useful information about the competences and skills that they must tackle in the real world. Far different is the case of migrants who need to be tested for integration and migration purposes. These have very different profiles and consequently the detection of language needs becomes more complex. Therefore, the development of educational planning tools must consider both individual differences and the contexts of use of the L2 which are usually not contemplated or are marginal in language teaching, such as, for example, the relationship with public administrations (Borri et al. 2014).

50

According to Rocca (2008) the results guaranteed by an examination built on the basis of an analysis of the needs of the reference population allows to make inferences and predictions on the real ability of the candidates to interact linguistically in a specific context. Furthermore, the dimension of linguistic needs is intertwined with the motivational dimension. Motivation is a fundamental factor of learning and therefore must be supported and encouraged, whether linked to work or integration reasons or due to the desire for personal growth and cultural interests (Minuz 2013).

It is important to underline how the different profiles of immigrant learners intertwine with the problems related to adult learning, which has different characteristics with respect to learning by children and adolescents. Age affects neurologically and psycholinguistically on various aspects of adult learning. In the current state of research, the opinion on adulthood as a terminal phase of development, stable and continuous, is however more nuanced. The path and the order of acquisition of some morphological and syntactic aspects seem rather similar. Although children are favored in terms of the final outcome of learning, adults have greater cognitive maturity which allows faster initial learning (Minuz 2013). But age also affects in other ways, as past experiences, daily problems and future expectations are very different among children, adolescents and adults, each of whom occupies a different space in society (Minuz 2013).

Other factors that influence learning are internal factors, such as cognitive styles and emotional factors, and external factors, such as contexts of use, interlocutors or the communities to which migrants belong (Rocca 2008). This relates to what Minuz (2013: 48) calls "utilitarian approach to language". This means that, in adult classrooms, it would be appropriate to treat actions and contexts of use typical of the real world so as to provide the resources necessary to act in a pragmatically effective manner in different communicative contexts.

Therefore, the Education of Adults has set up appropriate learning models for adults and suggested suitable teaching styles and methods (Minuz 2013). For example, it is emphasized that learning activities should not be too scholastic. Activities should comply as much as possible with everyday problems and the learning path should be constantly negotiated. All this should be done considering the two key principles of the Education of Adults (Rocca 2008). First, adult education is continuous, and the goal of every learning path is the lifelong learning. Secondly, the adult, in an inversely proportional

manner to his or her level of education, is inclined to give feedback almost exclusively with reference to the problems that daily life places on him or her.

The peculiarity of migrants is that of also presenting variable internal profiles, or "jagged" profiles (Little 2008, Minuz and Borri 2017, Alte Lami 2016). For example, listening or oral skills could be significantly higher than written production skills. The fact that language proficiency is not distributed evenly over the various skills is to be considered by teachers in the preparation of language courses. On the part of policy makers and language testers this must be taken into account when language tests for migratory purposes require the achievement of a certain level of a linguistic scale. While many exams test all production and reception skills simultaneously, a solution for poorly educated migrants could be to test each skill separately. In this case, however, care should be taken, during language courses, not to neglect the skills not directly verified at the exam (Alte Lami 2016).

2.1.5 The issue of poorly educated and illiterate migrants

One of the most vulnerable categories of migrants reaching Europe is represented by those who had little or no formal education in their home country. Indeed, poor schooling, often linked to illiteracy, has a negative influence on second language acquisition.

In many cases, illiterate migrants come from places where writing is absent or used in few situations and tradition is mostly oral. On the contrary, in the extremely bureaucratic European society writing is the main means of almost all kinds of relationships. Adami (2008:4) talks about a real cultural shock affecting migrants, accompanied by "the major difficulty of switching from the realm of speech to that of script with virtually no transition". He also highlights how the growing centrality of writing has led to considering illiteracy as a "social ill".

The same definition of illiteracy is much more stringent to date (Minuz 2013). In the past, the common conception considered literates those who could proof they knew how to write their name. UNESCO has narrowed the definition of literate to those who can read and write, can understand what they read and can use both skills in relation to everyday life. The new definition has led to the identification of the category of

"functional illiterates", which includes those who master writing only in a superficial and insufficient way to participate in all the activities in which literacy is fundamental (Minuz 2013, Adami 2008). Finally, in the distinction between literates and illiterates, the case of "relapse into illiteracy" must also be considered, which concerns those who received schooling during childhood, but who lost reading and writing skills after leaving school.

In the case of illiterate migrants, Minuz (2013) recalls that there are two disciplines that come into play and must be reconciled, albeit sometimes with difficulty. On the one hand, the dimension of adult education, which includes the initial literacy of adults in L1, and on the other, the dimension of language teaching. Compared to literate migrants, primary illiterates have different resources for learning a foreign language. In fact, they can only rely on the oral language, they cannot use learning strategies, study methods and textual competences in their mother tongue, often they do not have metalinguistic skills and are not familiar with didactic activities and tests (Borri et al.2014; Adami 2008).

For these reasons it was necessary to prepare tools and courses aimed at the literacy of migrants in L2. For example, in Germany literacy courses have been introduced as part of the integration courses (see paragraph 1.2.2). In England, the Labour government introduced *Skills for life: the national strategy for improving adult literacy and numeracy skills*, which includes national standards and a national core curriculum for adult literacy and numeracy qualifications (Foster and Bolton 2018). In Italy, the CPIAs provide literacy and learning courses for the Italian language.

The problems of illiteracy also affect the area of testing and assessment. To take the example of Italy, there was a need to identify descriptors for a range of users at a level prior to the A1, which was suitable for the migration context and for poorly educated migrants. For this reason, a document has been prepared: *Italiano L2 in contesti migratori Sillabo e descrittori dall'alfabetizzazione all'A1* (Borri et al. 2014). In this way four groups of learners are identified based on alphabetic skills. Within each category there is a further distinction between levels of oral competence and the writing system of the source language (logographic, Latin, non-Latin alphabetic):

- Pre alfa A1: the users are pre-literates and slow learning illiterates whose mother tongue is not written or is not included among the language or the languages of the schooling system of their country of origin.

- Alfa A1: adults that are not able to read or write in their mother tongue and never attended school.
- Pre A1: adults that were taught to read and write in their mother tongue, but attended school for less than five year or have lost literacy competence after not using the skills acquired at school for many years.
- A1: adults that went to school and learned to read and write in their mother tongue.

With the aim of guaranteeing a formal recognition to adult immigrants with low schooling, A1 level exams specific for migrants have been developed by the certification bodies. An example is the exam prepared by the CVCL of the University for Foreigners of Perugia, the *CELI* impatto *i.* Rocca (2008) describes the project of this exam in *Percorsi per la certificazione linguistica in contesti di immigrazione*. Rocca explains that the function of the CELI impatto *i* is on the one hand to be a motivational incentive aimed at reaching the functional literacy threshold, on the other hand it wants to oppose the use of the certificate as a means of social exclusion, rather representing a means of inclusion, cohesion and integration. The tasks and items proposed as part of the test are intended to reproduce genres, text types and typical situations of interaction with which the immigrant habitually has to deal with. A fundamental step was that of identifying the repertoires for the use of the language in relation to a specific user, taking into consideration the generic descriptors of the CEFR, the materials for general Italian, as well as the materials produced by adult immigrants with poor schooling during the courses and handouts prepared by the teachers for these courses.

Compared to tests of higher levels, the duration is decidedly shorter and also the listening comprehension, the oral production and the oral interaction are merged into a single part. This is not only because of the need to reduce time, but also because the candidates in question, especially in the oral comprehension test, are probably not familiar with the use of cognitive abilities of memory and concentration, which are often developed in the school context.

The CELI Impatto test for general Italian includes a written production test, which consists of writing a postcard. This is not included in the test for migrants, as it is considered remote from the daily routine of the candidates, who hardly find themselves in the situation of having to write such a text. Instead, a written interaction test is required, in the form of filling in a form or a notice. The Figure 4 shows an example taken from CELI Impatto *i* of May 2008 (Rocca 2008):

ALLA QUESTURA DI _____ (1)

<u>MODULO UNICO</u>

NOME E COGNOME: _____ (2) _____ (3)

DATA DI NASCITA: GIORNO ____ (4)   MESE _____ (5)   ANNO _____ (6)
                  (IN NUMERI)   (IN LETTERE)   (IN NUMERI)

CITTADINANZA: _____ (7)

SESSO: _____ (8)

(UNA SOLA LETTERA)

COLORE OCCHI _____ (9)

ALTEZZA _____ (10) CM
       (IN NUMERI)

RESIDENTE A _____ (11) IN _____ (12) _____ (13) N. CIVICO ____ (14)
                                                (IN NUMERI)

STATO CIVILE _____ (15)

TELEFONO _____ (16)

PROFESSIONE _____ (17)

<u>CHIEDE</u>

IL RILASCIO DEL PASSAPORTO

SI ALLEGA:

1) N. 2 FOTOGRAFIE FIRMATE

2) COPIA DEL VERSAMENTO DI _____ (18) (euro _____ (19)) SUL C/C POSTALE

N. 4565   (IN NUMERI)   (IN LETTERE)

Firma leggibile

_____ (20)

(adatt. Modulo Unico per le richieste scaricabile dal sito della Polizia di Stato)

Figure 4. Written interaction task (CELI Impatto i May 2008, in Rocca 2008)

Rocca (2008) points out a few other features that distinguish the A1 test for migrants and the A1 test for general Italian. For example, the former test is entirely written in capital block letters, whereas the same is not envisaged for the general Italian test. Secondly, unlike the general Italian test, the test for migrants avoid polite forms. In addition, in the instructions, the candidates are addressed in the second person singular, rather than with the more commonly used infinitive. The differences between the two tests originate from the fact that the general Italian test is intended for absolute beginners that, however, attended school.

Tests at level A1 are being offered also in the UK and Germany. In Germany the *telc Deutsch A1 für Zuwanderer* assesses proficiency at level A1 and is specifically directed towards migrants. Like the Italian test, the German test assesses the written interaction skills through the task of filling out a form. However, as opposed to the Italian test, the German test foresees a written production part, in the form of a short text of about thirty words to write and a cloze test for the assessment of vocabulary and grammar. Figure 5 shows an example of cloze test in which the candidate is asked to choose the correct conjugation of a verb, to distinguish between the accusative and dative declination of the personal pronoun and between singular and plural forms of the nouns

Figure 5. Cloze test (Start Deutsch 1, Übungstest 1, www.telc.net)

Quite different is the case in the UK. The GESE grade 1 and grade 2 assess only listening and speaking skills at levels pre-A1 and A1, and the IELTS Life Skills for UK Visa and Immigration purposes assesses only speaking and listening skills at level A2.

2.2 Testing practice in the context of the European Union

The practice of testing in the EU is part of a broader language policy. To understand the functioning of testing at European level, it is necessary to retrace the main tools that come into play.

2.2.1 The CEFR and the European Language Portfolio

When it comes to teaching, learning, testing and assessing language skills it is inevitable to refer to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

The CEFR was officially adopted in 2001. Although initially it was intended as a reference tool to make language certificates comparable, with the intervention of John Trim, director of the project "Modern Languages", the functions of the framework were extended. First of all, the framework was extended to cover not only the assessment area but also the area of teaching and learning. Secondly, the CEFR began to be conceived as a tool for dialogue and co-operation between different countries, each with different teaching experiences (Coste 2007).

The main subject responsible for designing and organizing the project is the Council of Europe, which from the outset has attached fundamental importance to modern languages and to maintaining the great European heritage of linguistic and cultural diversity. This results in the major role attributed both to language learning and to plurilingualism as fundamental bases for intercultural communication, common understanding, democratic citizenship, and the fight against intolerance and racism (Van Avermaet and Rocca 2011, Little 2008). Having said this, it is easy to understand the link between language and immigration, where the first is conceived as an essential tool to overcome the obstacles that impede integration and social cohesion.

According to Little (2008) the CEFR is an excellent base from which to respond to the challenges of immigration. First, because it is a tool that encourages the development

of curricula, syllabi, materials and linguistic qualifications based on principles of transparency, cohesion and comparability. But above all, because it is a tool that intends to promote various forms of international collaboration, thus encouraging a common understanding that can intervene in the development of language arrangements. This is how the results of language learning can benefit at an international level.

Despite the good premises, over the years the CEFR has undergone various criticisms and proposals for improvements, some of which concern its use in the migratory context. According to Goullier (2007: 18) the ways in which the CEFR is used "have implications for social cohesion, access to employment, citizenship, mobility and mutual understanding in Europe". Some of the criticisms relate to the growing concern that the CEFR is becoming an instrument of control and limitation of immigration, in particular by referring to its wider use in the field of integration and citizenship tests (Tracy 2017, Strik 2013). Strik (2013: 5) maintains that the required standards are of an increasingly higher level and, furthermore, that "[the CEFR] was never established as a mechanism for establishing whether or not a certain language level was indicative of a level of integration. It is only a measure of linguistic ability".

The approach adopted by the CEFR is action-oriented, which means that communicative proficiency is defined in terms of language use (Little 2012). To describe this language use the descriptors used are based on what the learner "can do". These ultimately allow to identify six levels of language proficiency divided into three bands: level A (basic user), level B (independent user) and level C (proficient user). However, although the CEFR strongly claims not to be a prescriptive tool, many authors point out that CEFR is often used as a normative instrument and its levels of competence as rigid standards to be followed scrupulously (Coste 2007, Goullier 2007, Little 2012, Strik 2013). On the contrary, the fact that the CEFR was not specifically designed for the needs of migrants should be taken into consideration and for this reason it should be adapted and used with caution. Little (2008:10) states the following:

> the CEFR's proficiency levels were defined on the basis of teachers'
> judgements, and that the teachers involved were drawn from four educational
> domains: lower secondary, upper secondary, vocational, and adult. This helps to
> explain four closely related characteristics of the proficiency levels. First, they
> plot a trajectory of learning that reflects the structure and organization of
> European educational systems; secondly, they describe the kind of behavioural
> repertoire that learners need as temporary visitors to a foreign country rather than

as long-term residents; thirdly, at the lower levels (A1, A2, B1) their descriptors correspond closely to the typical content of foreign language textbooks; and fourthly, advanced language proficiency is inseparable from advanced levels of educational achievement and/or professional involvement. None of these characteristics is necessarily relevant to the needs of migrant language learners.

As it appears, the CEFR may not accurately respond to the needs of migrants, as they are a category that is strongly characterized by the diversity of the individuals who are part of it. In any case, the Council of Europe took this issue into consideration when, in conjunction with the launch of the CEFR, it also launched the European Language Portfolio (Little 2008). This is a personal document designed to encourage the autonomy of the learners, for the more general purpose of encouraging lifelong language learning. Because of its ability to match the diversified needs of individual learners, a specific version of the ELP was developed to support adult immigrants (Simpson 2012). The ELP is made up of three mandatory documents:

- a language passport, which allows to present an overview of the individual linguistic profile of the learner;
- a language biography, which allows to plan, monitor and evaluate the L2 language learning, favoring a reflective approach to learning and using the language;
- a dossier, which is used to collect the work done as proof of the progress made.

Finally, the CEFR has recently been integrated with the Companion Volume with New Descriptors (COE 2018), which has as main objective to enrich and expand the descriptive apparatus of the initial project. In particular, a new pre-A1 level is introduced which describes "a band of proficiency at which the learner has not yet acquired a generative capacity, but relies upon a repertoire of words and formulaic expressions" (COE 2018: 46).

2.2.2 The Linguistic Integration of Adult Migrants (LIAM)

In order to respond to the new challenges and obstacles posed by immigration and the need to satisfy the linguistic needs of a large and diverse group of individuals, the

Council of Europe has launched the Linguistic Integration of Adult Migrants (LIAM) project, coordinated by the Language Policy Unit in Strasbourg. The aim is to "help member states to develop inclusive language policies based on Council of Europe shared values: respect for human rights and the dignity of the person, democracy and the rule of law"[18]. The context in which this project arose is one in which the member states of the European Union show an ever greater tendency to subject migrants to language tests that correspond to the various phases of legal integration. Hence the need to identify good practices and share them with member states, as well as to promote fairness and transparency in the testing process.

The LIAM project is based on some principles that should guide the decisions of the subjects responsible for language policies. One of these principles calls for "defining required proficiency levels in a realistic and flexible manner that reflects the actual needs and capacities of migrants". This implies that in defining the learners' profiles it is not essential to refer to homogeneous levels of the CEFR, such as requiring the A2 level for all abilities. Another principle worth mentioning is the one that calls for "ensuring that formal tests, where used, conform to accepted standards of quality and are not misused to exclude migrants from society". Based on this principle the tests must be fair, impartial and reliable and, therefore, must be prepared by professionals. Moreover, in order to avoid the exclusion of migrants, alternative forms of assessment can be taken into consideration, such as the ELP[19].

The objective set by the LIAM project is pursued through the development of various types of tools that can help those involved in welcoming and integrating migrants. These include the *Guide to policy development and implementation*, designed to respond to the needs of policy makers, especially since they are not always experts in language teaching and evaluation (Beacco et al. 2014).

The lack of experience and qualifications on the part of those involved has also led to the development of a *Linguistic support for adult refugees: the Council of Europe toolkit* (COE 2017). The toolkit aims to provide a set of tools designed in particular for volunteers who accompany asylum seekers and adult refugees in the process of linguistic integration, as they are considered the most vulnerable subjects within the category of

---

[18] Council of Europe / Language Policy Unit (Strasbourg) - Project LIAM: www.coe.int/lang-migrants
[19] *Ibid.*

migrants. As discussed in the previous chapter, volunteers play a central role in the linguistic support of migrants. However, the fact that they do not have the necessary training (which includes language teaching, pedagogical, social and organizational training) adds to the problem of teaching in non-formal and poorly structured contexts (Fragai and Jafrancesco 2018). The toolkit aims to provide a solution to this increasingly frequent problem by providing 57 tools, organized in three macro-areas. The first part provides an introduction to general information, such as the provenance of refugees, the main migratory routes or the most widely spoken languages. The second part is dedicated to the most practical aspects and helps in the preparation and planning of the linguistic support activity. Finally, the third part contains useful tools for recommending activities to be carried out, such as for vocabulary learning, or tools designed to stimulate reflection on language learning.

2.2.3 The Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE)

With the aim of promoting equity and accuracy in the language ability assessment process at European level, associations have been established that bring together language testers from all over Europe. One of these is the Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE).

ALTE is a non-profit association of European institutions, with a participatory status at the Council of Europe. It was born in 1989 from an idea of the University of Cambridge and the University of Salamanca and has grown until counting today thirty-four members representing twenty-five European languages[20].

The birth of ALTE falls within a period during which international barriers between European states began to fall, consequently increasing the mobility of workers and the need to transfer qualifications from one country to another. In this context, ALTE lists its main objectives (1998: 6):

- to establish common levels of proficiency in order to promote the transnational recognition of certifications in Europe;

---

[20] https://www.alte.org/

- to establish common standards for all stages of the language-testing process: that is, for test development, task and item writing, test administration, marking and grading, reporting of test results, test analysis and reporting of findings;
- to collaborate on joint projects and in the exchange of ideas and know-how.

In 1994 the ALTE members adopted a *Codes of Practice*, a tool considered essential to define the standards to be followed in the production of examinations and to recognize the obligations under which they operate (ALTE 1998). The Code begins with the identification of the three categories of people involved in the process: examination developers, who build and administer the examinations, examination takers, the candidates who for some reason must undergo an examination, and the examination users, who select the examinations to submit to candidates for example to make a decision concerning them. Once the stakeholders have been defined, the Code identifies four areas of responsibility on which to operate in respect of the rights of test candidates: developing examinations, interpreting examination results, striving for fairness, informing examination takers (ALTE 1994).

Later, as the Code of Practice stated the principles but did not provide precise information on how to implement them, it has been supplemented by the document *Principles of Good Practice for ALTE Examinations*, which explains well how to apply these principles to language testing practices. Secondly, the Quality Management System dimension has been added, with the aim of establishing procedures and programmes to improve minimum standards that can enhance the quality of ALTE examinations (Van Avermaet et al. 2004). Now there are seventeen common quality standards to follow which cover all phases of the linguistic assessment process. Members who have met all standards and passed an auditing process can thus take advantage of the ALTE Q-mark quality indicator.

During the years of work and research in the field of testing, ALTE inevitably became interested in the topic of language assessment in the context of migration, citizenship and integration. Faced with the need to respond to a new scenario in which the governments of European countries are introducing language tests for migratory purposes, in 2002 ALTE created a specific group, the Language Assessment for Migration and Integration (Saville 2010).

The LAMI was created as a platform for exchanging and sharing professional experiences among those involved in language testing on issues related to the construction of tests and their use in the context of migration. The ultimate goal is to raise awareness of the relevant aspects, making sure that the tests and language certificates are developed on the basis of values such as professionalism and a socially responsible practice. Finally, it is the goal of the LAMI members to raise awareness of the impact of language testing policies (Saville 2010). All these issues are dealt with in LAMI position paper *Language tests for access, integration and citizenship: an outline for policy makers*, which aims at introducing policy makers to key concepts in language assessment and guiding their actions towards well-informed decisions about language policies.

2.3 The Italian language tests for migrants

The different existing initiatives, requirements, and language policies aimed at immigrants differs depending on their status, age or phase of the migration process in which they find themselves.

Looking at the Italian case, immigrants could be grouped into two macro-categories that include refugees, holders of international protection and asylum seekers on the one hand, and all other immigrants who arrived in Italy through other channels, such as for work or family reunification.

As regards the former, linguistic reception is mainly guaranteed by the SPRAR programmes, which can rely either on internal courses or external courses, for example at the CPIA or voluntary associations. As for the second macro-category, the CPIAs represent the fulcrum of initiatives for the linguistic integration.

The fundamental distinction between these two categories of migrants is that refugees and asylum seekers are exempt from having to prove a certain linguistic competence as instead are those who sign the integration agreement, who request a long stay residence permit and who apply for citizenship. This leads to different reasons that motivate the decision of taking a language test and different paths to embark on.

From the testing point of view, two possible paths can be identified. On the one hand there are the official language certificates provided by the Italian Certifying Bodies, i.e. University for foreigners of Perugia, University for foreigners of Siena, Dante

Alighieri Society, and Roma Tre University. On the other hand, there is the A2 test for the issuance of the EC residence permit for long-term residents to be carried out at CPIAs.

In the next paragraph, after a brief presentation of the syllabus for the A2 level of Italian as a second language - useful to understand what lies behind the A2 test of the Prefecture - I provide an overview of the A2 tests of the CPIAs and the Certifying Bodies.

2.3.1 The Italian L2 syllabus for the A2 level

The organisms responsible for developing the Italian test at A2 level to be carried out at the CPIAs are required to define the contents, the scoring criteria and the duration of the test based on the guidelines adopted by the certification bodies.

In this context, the reference syllabus for the levels of competence in Italian L2 provides a fundamental support in the development and preparation of the tests. This is based on the interpretation of the CEFR, which is integrated and adapted to the characteristics and needs of immigrants learning Italian as a second language.

The syllabus establishes that the development of the tests must be aimed at assessing the linguistic, socio-linguistic and pragmatic competence of a speaker. Furthermore, the CEFR invites the assessors to contextualise the linguistic-communicative actions required in the test within the contexts of use closest to the candidates; therefore, the descriptors of the A2 level need to be adapted to the relevant domains and contexts of use that are identified.

The starting point for doing that is the description of the profile of immigrants, which are assumed to learn the language in Italy and in a spontaneous learning context, rather than a guided one. The syllabus establishes which contents to include in the test, taking into consideration the domains of use, the skills, the linguistic forms and socio-communicative actions required of a learner at level A2.

The domains of use taken into consideration are the personal, public and occupational domains. The CEFR foresees a fourth domain, the educational domain, which is however left out in the case of immigrants, since it is believed that it is a sector in which they hardly find themselves to interact. Each domain is subsequently divided into seven different contexts of use: locations, institutions, persons, objects, events,

operations and texts. For example, the context of use of the texts has been classified according to the different domains in the following way (Table 1):

Domain	Context of use - text
Personal	Face-to-face conversations; Free newspapers Advertising Material Leaflets Email Broadcast spoken texts Messages Cooking recipes Menus
Public	Face-to-face conversations; Announcements and notices Labelling and packaging Brochures Tickets, timetables Notices and regulations Programmes Menus Communications from institutions (registered letters, fines, citations) Medical recipes
Occupational	Face-to-face conversations; Email Job interviews Notices Manuals Regulations Advertising Material Labelling and packaging Job Instructions Job offers Job applications Contracts Medical certificates Curricula vitae

Table 1. Context of use of texts (Sillabo di riferimento per i livelli di competenza in italiano L2)

The task performed in this case was to identify domains and contexts of use specific for immigrants.

Given that the CEFR does not present domains and contexts in connection with a specific level of competence, the subsequent task is to identify, on each occasion, input texts appropriate to the user profile.

As far as the skills required of a learner at level A2 are concerned, it is necessary to structure a test on the basis of the abilities to communicate, divided into production and reception activities, and then into written and spoken form. Each of the skills is divided into sub-abilities. For example, oral comprehension skill is described as follows (CEFR 2001:32):

> Can understand enough to be able to meet needs of a concrete type provided speech is clearly and slowly articulated. Can understand phrases and expressions related to areas of most immediate priority (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment) provided speech is clearly and slowly articulated.

A sub-ability, for example, is the oral comprehension of announcements and instructions (CEFR 2001:67).:

> Can catch the main point in short, clear, simple messages and announcements. Can understand simple directions relating to how to get from X to Y, by foot or public transport

It is believed that to build a coherent test it is necessary to reinforce certain abilities and sub-abilities to compensate others. For example, the specific weight of a task aimed at verifying the strictly grammatical competence must be compensated by another of greater specific weight aimed at measuring the communicative ability of the candidate.

Finally, linguistic forms and socio-communicative actions refer to the structures and functions that a person must control in order to be able to do what is reported in the descriptors. The abilities and sub-abilities of production and interaction (written and oral) were considered in determining the functions, in the belief that the speaker is able to understand what he or she is able to produce and not vice versa.

Few examples of actions that a learner must know how to perform at A2 level are:

- Introduce him/herself, talk about him/herself
- Greet and respond to greetings

- Search, ask and give information in everyday life situations
- Identify and briefly describe people, objects and places
- Tell about him/herself and ask about past events

Examples of linguistic structures in the case of verbs are:

- use of high frequency verbs, including the main reflexive (*lavarsi*, etc.) and modal verbs (*dovere*, *potere* and *volere*) appropriate to the domain and the communicative objective even if not correctly inflected regarding the person and the number.
- use of the Italian tenses *indicativo presente*, *passato prossimo*, *imperfetto*; of the conditional in fixed formulas of request (*vorrei*). In case of wrong selection of the verb tense, the placement of events/actions on a temporal level can be recovered from the context.

Several times the syllabus refers to the studies of acquisitional linguistics according to which in the initial stages the learners are pushed to act in an L2 above all by resorting to pragmatic principles and that only in the following phases they manage to control the morphosyntactic aspects of a language. It follows that the communicative effectiveness of the learner must be given more importance than the morpho-syntactic competence. Moreover, the formulation of a good test based on the CEFR must provide that the verification of the competences of certain structures takes place through action-oriented tasks. As such, the morphosyntactic competence of Italian L2 must emerge from the performance of specific linguistic actions and not from simple and traditional grammatical questions.

Furthermore, the morphological and syntactic skills could be verified through vocabulary-based tasks. In fact, the research seems to attribute to the vocabulary a great role in driving the morpho-syntactic competence. In this regard, the CEFR descriptors or the LIP frequency lists may be very useful, referring in particular to high-frequency words.

Finally, in the part concerning the contents to be included in the test, the syllabus also provides a guidance for the selection of the texts. The selection of texts must take

into consideration the kind of interactions in which the candidate is usually involved, and the text types must be chosen according to the skills and functions that the candidate is able to perform. For the A2 level the text types foreseen are limited to the descriptive, narrative, expository and regulatory types. The texts can also be classified on the basis of the channel used, the purpose and functions, the textual genre, as well as on the basis of the sender and the recipient. Other factors to consider are the linguistic complexity, the structure of the discourse, the physical presentation of the text, the length of the text, and the relevance for the learner. For example, the text type for written production tasks could include:

- notes with information or known topics
- notices to put on a bulletin board
- post cards
- personal letters with thanks and apologies;
- short and simple messages related to immediate needs;
- forms to fill out (enrollment in various types of courses; application for a residence permit, etc.);
- short statements.

2.3.2 The A2 level test of the CPIAs

The CPIAs (Provincial Centers for Adult Education) are centers established with the decree of the President of the Republic 263 of 29 October 2012. The CPIAs constitute a type of autonomous educational institution and are articulated into territorial service networks, normally on a provincial basis. The CPIAs allow the enrollment of Italian or foreign adults who have not completed the compulsory education or who do not hold the qualification attesting the completion of the Italian first cycle of education. Foreign adults -even those who obtained educational qualifications in their countries of origin- can enroll in the courses of literacy and learning of the Italian language.

As regards the didactic structure, the adult education paths are organized in:

- first level courses, aimed at obtaining the final qualification of the first cycle of education and the certification attesting the acquisition of the basic competences connected to the compulsory education;
- second level courses, aimed at obtaining a diploma in technical, professional and artistic education;
- courses of literacy and learning of the Italian language, aimed at obtaining a qualification attesting the attainment of a level of knowledge of the Italian language not lower than the A2 level of the CEFR.

In the region of Veneto, for instance, there are seven CPIAs, one for each province, and each of them has a central office and several associated offices located in the territory of the province[21].

In 2019, a decree from the Director General of the Regional Scholastic Office of Veneto has established the new regional technical structure of support (STR), composed of professors and directors of the CPIA of Veneto. Among the various tasks are the elaboration and monitoring of the A2 level tests for the issuing of long-term residence permits and for the verification of the Integration Agreement, and the preparation of shared models for the sessions of civic education. It also has a supporting role for the CIVIS project (Citizenship and Integration in Veneto of Foreign Immigrants), which, drawing on the AMIF fund (the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund) aims to implement activities of language training and civic education in the territory of the region for third country nationals legally residing in Italy and holders of international protection.

Regarding the organization of the tests, for the year 2019 seven exam sessions have been established which will be held on the same date and at the same time in all the different locations in the region. For each session the CPIA identifies the number of commissions based on the lists of candidates sent by the Prefectures. The commissions are composed of at least two Italian teachers and chaired by an exam president.

The test is built on the Vademecum, which contains technical-operational indications for the definition of the contents of the test, criteria for assigning the score and duration of the test and is drawn up on the basis of the Guidelines contained in the

---

[21] https://www.idaveneto.it/

Syllabus (par. 2.3.1). The test consists of two listening tests, three reading and two writing tests, for a total duration of one hour (Table 2):

LISTENING	READING SKILLS	WRITING
Section 1: Matching text - image	Section 1 and 2: binary-multiple choice questions	Task 1: written interaction (3 short texts)
Section 2: Multiple choice question with images	Section 3: Matching	Task 2: short text (Min. 30 max. 50 words)
Max. 35 points	Max. 35 points	Max. 30 points
60 minutes		

Table 2. Structure of the A2 level test of the CPIAs of Veneto

The oral test is exclusively foreseen for illiterate candidates and it replaces the reading and writing tests in the assessment. The evaluation of the illiteracy status is the responsibility of the commission and takes place either after the test is completed or by identifying possible illiterate candidates by completing a form that precedes the test.

In any case, the test in Veneto differs from the Vademecum in some points. First, some scoring criteria are changed. For example, the Vademecum establishes that the maximum score assigned to the written interaction test is 35 points and 30 points for listening, rather than vice versa. Secondly, some types of assessment are different. For example, compared to what was established by the Vademecum, the Veneto test does not include only one, but two written interaction tasks.

2.3.3 The test of the Certifying Bodies

The second type of Italian language test is related to the certification practice performed by the four Italian Certification Bodies: Dante Alighieri Society, University for Foreigners of Perugia, University for Foreigners of Siena and Roma Tre University.

All four certifications have been gathered since 2013 in the CLIQ association (Italian Quality Language Certification) which, by making the relationships between the

four bodies more solid, aims to improve the quality of the Italian language certification and align it with the standards defined by the CEFR.

The following table shows the types of tests available based on progressive levels:

	CELI – University for Foreigners of Perugia	CILS - University for Foreigners of Siena	PLIDA – Dante Alighieri Society	IT – Roma Tre Univeristy
A1	CELI Impatto CELI Impatto *i* (migrants)	CILS A1: - Children module - Teenager module - Integration module - Adult module	PLIDA A1 PLIDA A1 juniores	A1 – Cert.it
A2	CELI 1 CELI 1 a (teenagers) CELI 1 *i* (migrants)	CILS A2 - Children module - Teenager module - Integration module - Adult module	PLIDA A2 PLIDA A2 juniores	A2 - Cert.it
B1	CELI 2 CELI 2 a (teenagers) CELI 2 *i* (migrants) CIC Intermediate	CILS UNO CILS UNO Adolescents CILS ONE - Citizenship	PLIDA B1 PLIDA B1 juniores	B1 - Cert.it
B2	CELI 3	CILS DUE - B2	PLIDA B2 PLIDA B2 juniores	B2 - Cert.it

C1	CELI 4 CIC Advanced	CILS TRE	PLIDA C1	C1 - Cert.it
C2	CELI 5	CILS QUATTRO	PLIDA C2	C2 - Cert.it
OTHERS	DILS-PG I level DILS-PG II level	CILS - DIT		

From the table it can be seen that the University for Foreigners of Perugia and the University for Foreigners of Siena have developed tests aimed specifically at migrants, from A1 levels to B1 levels.

Taking the University for Foreigners of Perugia as an example, the preparation of exams addressed to immigrants was justified precisely to adequately respond to the needs of immigrants and to the increasingly frequent use of the tests for political purposes (Rocca 2008).

The University for Foreigners of Perugia is a central institution for the research and teaching activity in Italian as a second language, as well as the first to operate in the certification sector, beginning to issue certificates already in 1987. In particular, it is the Center for Evaluation and Linguistic Certification (CVCL) to be responsible for processing, producing and issuing language certificates.

In terms of know-how and theoretical-methodological approach, the certificates are closely linked to the CEFR. At the same time, the evaluation and assessment model refer to the multidimensional model of linguistic communication developed by Bachman (1990).

Certification exams consist of tests aimed at measuring linguistic competence regardless of curriculum. Each CELI exam is divided into four components (oral and written comprehension, oral and written production), which are evaluated in an integrated way through objective and subjective tests.

The path of development of tests aimed at immigrant users has actually begun with the CELI Impatto *i*. The need to give consistency and gradualness to the course led to the elaboration of CELI tests for immigrants of level A2 and B1 (CELI 1 *i* and CELI 2 *i*).

Compared to the CELI for the general Italian there is a considerable increased use of the web as source for the search of texts to be included in the various sections of the test. Frequently the e-mail text type is used in written production tasks and above all in written interaction tasks, for example as responses to announcements for job or accommodation. On a graphic level, an attempt has been made to guarantee as much authenticity as possible for the exam dossiers, for example through scans (Rocca 2008).

The following Table 3 summarizes the structure of a CELI 1 *i* test:

Written comprehension	Written production and interaction	Listening comprehension	Oral production and interaction
4 Sections	2 sections	3 sections	-
Matching Reconstruction Binary choice questions Cloze	Short text Informal mail	Matching Binary choice questions	Monologue Description Communication task
25 points	25 points	25 points	25 points
1 hour and 45 minutes		15 minutes	8/10 minutes

Table 3. Structure of CELI 1 i test

Here, too, there is a written comprehension test, which aims to test transversely the linguistic competence, rather than through specific tasks, as it is instead foreseen in the CELI tests of more advanced levels. Figure 6 shows an example of cloze test in which the items to be inserted are verbs, prepositions, adverbs, nouns, articles:

Alla Polizia Ferroviaria

OGGETTO: denuncia di furto

Buongiorno,

… (0) … Manolo Vegas, un cittadino peruviano arrivato in Italia 3 anni …(17)…. Abito a Roma in un appartamento vicino …(18)… fermata della metropolitana "Ottaviano".

Stamattina dovevo partire per motivi di lavoro: alle 8 ho …(19)… la metro e sono arrivato dopo mezz'ora nella stazione ferroviaria dove avevo il …(20)… per Firenze delle 9:15. Avevo un po' di tempo e ho pensato allora di …(21)… colazione.

Ero in …(22)… alla cassa per ordinare un caffè e un cornetto quando mi sono accorto di non avere più in tasca i soldi e i documenti!

…(23)… ladro purtroppo mi aveva rubato il portafoglio dove c'era la mia carta di identità, la …(24)… sanitaria, la carta di credito e circa 50 euro in contanti.

Dichiaro di non avere visto il ladro, ma …(25)… sicuro che il furto c'è stato mentre ero al bar di fronte al binario 4.

Se ritrovate i documenti vi prego …(26)… chiamarmi a qualsiasi ora al mio numero di cellulare: 319672099. Grazie.

Distinti saluti

Roma, 20 maggio 2016

Figure 6. Written comprehension test (CELI 1 i, May 2016)

The University for Foreigners of Siena has introduced the new A1 and A2 formats for integration and B1 for citizenship in 2019. The table 4 below shows the structure of the A2 level test:

Listening comprehension	Written comprehension	Written production	Oral production
2 sections	2 sections	2 sections	-
Multiple choice question V/F	Cloze Matching	image description short messages	role-play Monologue
20 minutes	30 minutes	40 minutes	10 minutes

Table 4. Structure of CILS A2 Integrazione test

The new test reduces the number of listening and reading tests from three to two. In this case, instead, the aim of the cloze test is not to assess the morpho-syntactic structures of the language, but rather to verify the comprehension of a descriptive text starting from the identification of the correct word to be selected from a given list.

In conclusion, the are some very evident differences between the test of the CPIAs and the test of the Certifying Bodies. Firstly, whereas the latter assesses all the four skills, the former does not foresee the oral production test. A second noticeable difference is the duration of the test. The test of the CPIAs takes sixty minutes, the CILS and CELI tests -excluding the oral production test- take one hour and a half and two hours respectively. This give grounds for the different structures of the tests. For example, the CELI 1 *i* includes more sections than the test of the CPIAs and, furthermore, the texts used for the oral and written comprehension are longer in terms of words.

These two issues do not exhaust the differences in terms of organizational structures of the two tests. However, apart from the technical aspects of the tests, one of the main aspects that is worth mentioning is the expendability of the two qualifications. Whereas the test of the CPIAs releases a qualification only valid for the issuing of the EU long term residence permit or the verification of the Integration Agreement, the test of the Certifying Bodies releases an officially recognized certificate that confirm the achievement of a certain level of communicative proficiency.

CHAPTER 3 - Language teaching and testing: the perspectives of the professionals

3.1 Introduction

In this third chapter, I will present the results of a qualitative research that I conducted with the aim of investigating the opinions of Italian professionals with experience in both teaching and testing migrants' language skills.

The idea of carrying out a research of this type arises first of all from the personal experience carried out in the last few years in Padua as an assistant in the teaching of Italian as a second language in various projects implemented by cooperatives and voluntary organizations. Secondly, the research was guided by the need of exploring the field of teaching and testing Italian as a second language to immigrants in Italy. In fact, during the research I noticed that there are few studies that deal with investigating the problems of teachers and language testers. Furthermore, the novelty of the contribution is also given by the most recent policy changes and makes it possible to keep track of the new issues that emerge and their impact on the stakeholders involved.

If on the one hand the aim was also to find a confirmation of what is already present in the literature, the ultimate aim is to investigate new issues, problems and solutions that can be treated exclusively by those who every day find themselves working in this area.

3.2 Methodology

The approach I chose for the research is a qualitative approach. This could be defined as "an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem", which allows the research to "honors an inductive style, a focus on individual meaning, and the importance of rendering the complexity of a situation "(Creswell 2014: 32).

The research method is that of the interview. Among the three interview formats identified by Patton (1990), namely informal conversational interview, interview guide approach and standardized open-ended interview, the method I chose is that of the

interview guide approach. This type of interview allows to outline a series of questions to be addressed during the interview, yet at the same time it allows a certain freedom in the wording and in the order of questions. This method stands halfway between the other two types of interviews. As such, the advantage is that it allows to preserve the informality of the conversation and a certain degree of flexibility in drawing information from the interviewee, leaving the possibility of dealing with new topics that were not included in the interview design. Secondly, it gives more systematic and coherent results, helping not to go off topic. One of the possible disadvantages of this method is the fact that at a later stage of the research, the comparison between the different interviews can be made more complicated by the different answers that the interviewees give to questions that are worded in different ways.

In the specific case of this research, the approach and the method chosen allowed to find the in-depth information necessary, at the same time leaving room for the interviewees to deal with the issues that most interest them, to raise new issues, and advance new proposals.

The sample of participants selected for the interview is very small. The interviewees are two teachers of Italian as a second language who are also experienced in the preparation for the language tests.

The first interviewee was with Nereo Turati. For twenty years he worked in the primary school as a teacher specialized in Psychomotor education. Later, he worked for twenty years at the CTP of Vicenza (now CPIA). Apart from being a teacher, he was also commissioner and organizer of the exam sessions. He took the CEDILS certification of competence in teaching Italian as a foreign language or second language and the qualification as examiner for the CILS. He taught courses for teachers and volunteers, which focused on the basic levels, and was a member of the technical committee of UCRIDA, which is responsible for the training of the newly recruited teachers of the CPIAs. For the last twelve years the interviewee has become interested in literacy, a subject on which he has written the two manuals *Leggi e scrivi. Percorsi e materiali didattici per l'insegnamento della lettura e della scrittura attraverso la lingua italiana ad adulti non madrelingua*.

The second interviewee was with Antonella Colaci. She is a young teacher and works in a cooperative in Padua with the role of coordinator of language training. Her

path towards becoming a qualified teacher started with a master's degree in Teaching Italian to foreigners at the University for foreigners of Perugia, where she also obtained del DILS-PG certificate and qualified as an examiner for the CELI exams. After that, she took another Master in Italian Teaching as a second language at the University of Padua. Since when she started working, she had different experiences: she worked in the University Language Centre (CLA), where she also prepared Chinese students to take a CELI exam, and as a facilitator in the public school. In the last few years she has been working in CAS and SPRAR projects, where she teaches Italian to young and adult migrants.

Both candidates have a wide and diversified experience in the teaching and testing of Italian as a second language, covering the two major branches provided when speaking of language policies for immigrants, that of the CPIA and the one of teaching to asylum seekers and refugees. Furthermore, both candidates showed great willingness and interest to participate in the interview, thus contributing to the reliability of the interview itself.

The interviews were conducted in June 2019. Both respondents agreed to record the interview, allowing me to conduct an informal conversation, followed by a transcript and a detailed and precise analysis of the information found. The interviews were conducted in Italian, as such the excerpts included in the findings have been translated into English. Both interviews lasted a little longer than one hour, which is a little longer than the time I had expected. In conducting the interview, the first candidate showed a high degree of autonomy in the speech and the guiding questions were reversed in order and adapted to the conversation. It turned out that beyond the information that I hoped to find, new insights emerged. The second interview instead was much more systematic. The wording of the guide questions has remained unchanged, whereas only the order of these have been adapted to the progress of the conversation. This ensured a more detailed and targeted response to the prepared guiding questions.

The types of questions are divided into three macro-categories whose purpose is, first of all, to define the profile of immigrant learners from the point of view of teachers and testers. Secondly, the questions addressed the characteristics of language testing in the context of migration. Finally, the respondents were asked about the effects and problems relating to language policies and current legislation both on teachers and on immigrants themselves.

The following Figure shows the questions that guided the conduct of the two interviews:

1. Initial questions to outline the figure of the interviewee

• What is the role covered? The qualifications and professional training? Previous job experiences in the field of language teaching and testing?

2. Variability of profiles

• A problem raised repeatedly in the literature is that of groups of immigrants with very heterogeneous profiles. Have you detected the same problem? Is there any variable that emerges in particular?

• Variability is a feature that also affects the individual profiles of migrant learners. That is, they have very different characteristics based on the macroabilities tested: written and oral reception, written and oral production and interaction.

- Do you agree with this statement?

- Are there any entry tests to check the skills? If so, how?

3. The motivations

• A large part of the current literature on language testing to date focuses on the ethics and fairness of tests. This is linked to the introduction of language requirements for integration, residence permit and citizenship. In reality the certification of the Italian L2 is born with another purpose: to provide an evidence of a linguistic-communicative competence and to have a social expendability.

- According to your experience, what are the main motivations that lead to take this learning path? Do the motivations influence the final test result?

4. The test for immigrants

• The introduction of specific tests for migrants is justified by the need to respond to their needs and ensure that they are able to communicate effectively in everyday life. For this reason, specific Italian L2 domains and contexts of use have been identified.

- What do you think about the introduction of language tests directly aimed at migrants?

5. The conduct of the test

• Literature often refers to some qualities that tests should have. Among these, for example, is reliability. That is, the tests should ensure consistent and stable results both within the same test and in subsequent administrations. Based on this principle there should not be any particularly critical areas compared to others.

- Despite the above, is it possible to identify particularly critical elements in the performance of the tests? In reference to particular tasks, or in reference to the various macro-skills tested?

6. The oral test

• As an examiner the criticality of your role is to administer oral production tests.

- What are the main critical points in the administration of an oral test? Are there any specific problems that immigrant users have compared to other users?

7. Technical aspects

• Some problems that emerged during my research concern some technical aspects. For example, the cost of the exams, the fact that there are few sessions available to carry out the test and in particular the places available are few compared to the existing demand.

8. What are the major issues related to language policies, with particular reference to the language requirements already in place and the new requirements and changes made by the Decree-Law no. 113/2018?

3.3 Findings

3.3.1 Definition of the profile of immigrant learners

Regarding the definition of the profiles of immigrants, both interviewees confirmed what was already expressed in the literature on the variability of the profiles of the learners. When asked if the variability of the profiles was actually a feature of the profile

of immigrants, and if this represented a problem, respondent A replied that the problem emerges when the school is not able to respond to the needs of the individual:

> "It's a problem in the sense that people come to school because they feel they have a problem and think that school can help them. So, the first point is to understand what the person expects. Because a person who has achieved good oral competence does not come to school to develop oral skills. The second point is to understand if the school is able to respond to the problem. Because if the school is not able to adequately respond to a need, it will tend to do multilevel classes."

According to the interviewee, multilevel classes should be considered a sort of environmental effect in which language activity develops. By this, he means that the multilevel class cannot be a choice or a natural phenomenon but a fallback due to an organizational deficit that emerges from different problems:

- the teachers are not able to develop an evaluation and therefore to recognize the levels of learners;

- the requests and needs of people are not taken into consideration, leaving them in the context of a generic language request;

- there is no money to differentiate the teachings and therefore the teachers.

Again, according to the interviewee A, the problem of multilevel classes could be solved by giving people the possibility to receive an answer based on their main need, starting from teaching skills that the teacher must develop:

> "In my opinion, the theme of the multilevel should push to carry out an effective positioning action. Therefore, it is necessary to have an effective assessment system that in any case highlights the critical aspects of the learners' profile. Once this is done, the material conditions need to be assessed that allow or prevent from making a proposal that fits the needs of learners. The third issue that comes into play concerns the competence of teachers [...] Therefore, it is necessary to understand why a group is multilevel. If it is not possible to do otherwise it is necessary to understand if different and co-present levels -that is different and co-present needs- can be maintained in the same class by combining collective moments, in which for example a global phase of the lesson is addressed to everyone, with moments in which the class is divided into small groups. But in this case other than multilevel it would be 'multi-teachers'."

As for the fact that migrants present variable internal profiles, interviewee A argues that this is the result of what happens outside the school context:

> "If a person has a differentiated profile, not so much for level, but for skills, which is different, you cannot respond effectively unless you start from the main

need. If there is a person who has reached A2 level and does not have autonomy in reading and writing, then he or she stops at level A2. Because even if he or she should progress we would be talking about a learning that takes place after-school, because the school does not provide that a person can take a B1 level course without knowing how to read and write properly. Therefore, there could be a development of orality and understanding in the course of life. So, with very long times and limited to sub-competences. "

To solve the problem of non-homogeneous profiles in the particular case of illiterates it is necessary to train teachers that have two main skills: they must be able to teach both reading and writing, and speaking and listening in Italian.

The interviewee also explains why the problem of non-homogeneous profiles in terms of skills should be solved in the case of illiterates. Indeed, social consequences may emerge:

"Since each of us socialize with people of their own kind... an adult - and adults always tend not to ever put their own limits and difficulties or shortcomings into play - will tend to attend culturally and linguistically lower people. This causes difficulty in progression and extension of skills. The result is that a person will lack vast skills, which are above all instrumental, but then also cognitive. "

Addressing the issue of illiteracy seems to be essential to contribute to the development of the person from the cognitive point of view:

"That is, to put it briefly, humanity has made the most significant progress when the writing system and when the press were born [...] Then, writing and reading had the same function, they activated unknown areas of the brain, as well as mental and psychological processes, which had always existed before but were not used. Thus, when illiterate people become autonomous in mastering these tools, they also develop more complex cognitive abilities and therefore become capable of reasoning in a more complex way and of dealing with more abstract and more complex themes. So, if we do not respond to this, we continue to insist on issues that are less important, or rather that are not the heart of the problem."

According to interviewee B, the issue of variability of profiles should not be considered as a problem, as it should be considered a characteristic that distinguishes classes of asylum seekers and refugees from classes such as of university students. Whereas the latter have more homogeneous profiles, classes of immigrant learners include people with different languages of origin, different motivations, different levels of previous education. Yet, differences in cognitive styles appear to be a characteristic of every type of language class:

"There is a huge difference, which is given a little by personal characteristics and by various origins. […] Usually we work on four levels which are the pre-A1 (or alpha A1), the A1, A2 and the B1. Despite trying to combine a certain level in a classroom the differences between users are many, and the reasons may be determined by different origins, different levels of previous education [...] in short, the range is wide. Beyond this there are completely different cognitive styles, but I believe it happens in any classroom and at any levels. The courses within the CAS and SPRAR are very peculiar because the reasons for learning the language can be varied; for some users the search for work means that the motivation is very high, for others instead the language class is an obligatory part of a project- because for example in the SPRAR is mandatory for participants to follow ten hours of lessons a week - and in this case instead, the motivation drops down".

Both respondents agree that the fundamental solution is to start from the main needs of the person. In fact, respondent B states:

"We do entry tests and try to predict all possible levels, which the presence of personnel allows of course [...] Then we try to understand what are the specific needs that occur within the class group and try to catalyze the energies in responding to these needs. After that it is clear that some users may have learning difficulties and learning disabilities; in this sense, post-traumatic stress disorders are also very widespread, which greatly increase the affective filter and make the language learning processes long, difficult and often circular. "

Regarding the fact that variability is a characteristic even at the individual level, interviewee B maintains that having different levels of competence in the four skills is an issue that concerns all students who decide to learn a foreign language. This issue is addressed in the certification process by ensuring the possibility of capitalization:

"[...] in the language certifications, in particular in the CELI which is the one I know best, there is the possibility of having actually two scores, one that is the sum of the scores of written production, oral comprehension and written comprehension, and another score that concerns exclusively oral production. So, actually, there are three scenarios when a person takes a test. He or she can pass both parts and immediately receives the certificate; he or she can only pass the part of the writing and capitalize that result for a year and repeat the oral or vice versa".

Respondent B adds that in this regard there is no predominance of one outcome over another, but that this depends very much on the candidate. If on the one hand oral competence can generally be considered the most developed, on the other hand in the testing phase the oral test is also the one that subjects the candidate to greater anxiety:

"Perhaps with a user of the CAS and SPRAR it is easier to immediately overcome the oral part, because they are much more accustomed to oral exchange, even those who have not had a previous schooling. The other thing to keep in mind, however, in this type of examination is the emotional load, because I have also seen people with a developed competence who could not say a word during the oral test; because in the first place they are not used to this kind of tests. Secondly, the fact that this type of tests indicates "University for foreigners ...", the fact that it is a university produces anxiety, so they usually provide -I decide to provide- training courses, just because they become aware of what the test is, do exercise and then the level of anxiety maybe in the test phase can be lowered a little. "

3.3.2 Entry tests for the initial assessment of competences

Regarding the initial assessment of competences, interviewee A explains that there are different ways of conducting entry tests. There are tests that are basically prepared by individual schools and individual teachers. He uses a progressive test, useful for overcoming the time matter, that is inevitably longer in the case of individual tests. The progressive test can in fact be administered in group form, leaving the person the chance to progress until he or she is able to do it. If there are students who have left the sheet blank because they are not literate or partially literate, then another type of test is required. This time, instead, it must be aimed at the aspect of literacy. In fact, as for the language, that of the illiterate is not an indistinct population, even the learning of the writing and reading foresees gradual phases and level of learning.

According to the interviewee B it is essential that the initial assessment tests are objective tests, in order to give a feedback that is professional. Respondent B also uses a gradual test, which ranges from pre-A1 to A2 level:

“I need it to understand with a certain speed in which of the classes I send the person. The more time I lose for the assessment, the less training time is spent for the person, so it is also useful that the assessment is quick. How to do that? With an objective test. As for my work in general, as I am set, but above all because the central service, the SPRAR, asks me to insert a certain type of material in the database. So I do an entry test for the level assignment, with an assessment obviously attached, and various intermediate tests, usually every two months, and an exit test."

3.3.3 The motivations

The second question concerns the motivations that push immigrants to carry out a language test, and whether these have an effect or not on the outcome of the test.

According to the interviewee B there are two main categories of motivations that push the candidates to take the test. On the one hand there are those who are very motivated to develop a linguistic competence and for them to take a certification test is the finishing line and the recognition of a long-lasting and hard-earned competence. Very often, those who have this perspective start with an A2 and in most cases also try the B1. On the other hand, there are those who do the test because it serves as documentation to be attached for the request of a document, or for access to certain job placement programmes. In fact, as of today employment agencies and all the work or social integration programs ask for a language certificate among the pre-requisites. So, the ultimate goal of the second category of motivations is to gain autonomy in the territory. Moreover, from November to today the feeling of anxiety has also increased. The immigrants feel that the rules are tightening, and many are therefore looking for as much documentation as possible to be presented eventually in a later phase of the migration process.

Interestingly, both respondents spoke of a strong desire for social redress as a push factor for immigrants to undertake courses in language training and to obtain language certificates. According to interviewee B, the desire for redress concerns the will of the migrant to demonstrate that his or her mental abilities are the same as everyone else's. Linked to the discourse of social redress, the A1 level test appears to be the most used for this type of personal stimulus, although at the bureaucratic level it serves no purpose:

> "And I must say that linked to the subject of social compensation, the A1 is the level of certificates most used for this type of personal stimulus. Because maybe there are users not literate in their mother tongue, who have never taken a pen in their hands, but who nonetheless want to demonstrate a path taken since they arrived in Italy until today. Certainly, to access an A2 beginning as an illiterate, it takes at least a year and a half or two of constant training and preparation. So, I have certified many people at A1 level. Although at the bureaucratic level these certificates are useless, the "I am worth too" principle applies. And 90% of those who obtain an A1 certificate try the A2. Not everyone passes it, because then again, the gap between an A1 and A2 is wide."

Respondent A to the question of what motivations lead people to attend courses responds by dividing people into two categories. On the one hand, there are poor people, who experience a feeling of precariousness, have few resources and do not expect a social climbing, which instead give importance to a permit that never expires, and now to Italian citizenship, to be mobile on the European territory.

"I asked a Senegalese student why she wants to become an Italian citizen, since her husband is already a citizen. She replies that in this way she can submit request for public housing, she can travel without problems etc .. she did not say that this way she can vote, have her say when they treat her badly because she is not an Italian citizen etc .. but so that she can have more advantages in the field of welfare or mobility."

On the other hand, there are those people who either already have their own businesses, entrepreneurial activities and therefore want to become Italian citizens so they also benefit from a tax point of view, from access to credit.

As for the desire for redress, interviewee A explains:

"There are people who say 'I want to become a citizen because I want to rebuild my background'; there are so many women who were doctors, teachers, nurses. Now I have an Indian woman who took the A2 exam, I asked her 'what did you do in India before coming here?' and she answered, "I taught in a high school, literature and language". She understands but struggles to talk. I asked her "but who do you speak Italian with?" and she replies, "with nobody, maybe sometimes at school with other parents and teachers". So, for example, when she said "I am a teacher in my country", I completed the sentence "and in Italy I am worthless". These people who have this desire for compensation, they have the desire to become citizens. Because they can recover the past experience, they have a project of improvement, they need to have the Italian citizenship, so they feel facilitated, favored and part of something. In reality, it is a pious allusion, here in fact we have the *citizenships* (my emphasis)."

Respondent A also discusses the problem of courses being abandoned before being completed. Sometimes it is an issue related to lifestyle, work, schedules, illnesses of children, or asylum seekers being tossed. But there are also aspects of merit about what the teacher does.

"It is therefore not due to the bad will of the people. That is not the responsibility of the individual, it is more complex. If you ask an illiterate who comes to do the differentiated test "why have you been here for six or seven years and haven't gone to school?", he replies "I work in a tannery, when I get home in the evening I'm tired". What do you want to say? Of course! We have no courses on Saturdays, Sundays, during the summer, the service is built on the school

timetable, not on people's needs. The courses can be in the morning or in the evening, but from Monday to Friday, sometimes just on Friday mornings, because then in the evening the personnel would not remain."

3.3.4 Testing migrants' language skills

As for the introduction of specific tests for migrant users, the interviewees have different opinions. According to interviewee A there should be no tests directly aimed at immigrants and justifies what he said as follows:

> "An immigrant person is still a person. It is a person with a field of experience and knowledge limited by the fact of not having enough acquisitions of what the living environment reserves, since the living environment is limited. But from the linguistic point of view there are some basic knowledge that one should have. Reading for example. One must be able to read anything. It lies in his or her freedom of choice, in the appeal of certain contents with respect to his or her cultural and mental framework. But it's like saying "I can drive a car but I don't drive a Fiat, I only drive a Citroën". It wouldn't make much sense."

However, according to interviewee A, although adapting the content to an immigrant user is not necessary, the lexical choice is still very important:

> "I prefer a more narrative or descriptive approach to texts. For example, at the end of the second volume I wrote -where people are already a little literate and where they can work a little more on the structure of the sentence- I didn't talk about the weather, or about what people do in their spare time, or about means of transport or how the doctor's office works. No! I talk about why fish costs more than meat? Is the tap water good to drink? Why do people go to the supermarket and buy so much plastic? We should talk a little more about these things... For example, since there is a unit on the 'sci-sce' sounds […] I included a text whose title is "the fish festival in Termoli". I put Termoli because it's a simple word, with no complex sound; and then because one day I happened to read an article that talked about the fish festival in Termoli [...]. First, we talk about a festival where you do not eat meat and it's already a little bit different, we talk about fish. Then we talk about what you do during a festival... you eat, you dance and then you play if there are games for children or adults. Then the festival of Termoli struck me for another thing, that is because in the end the unsold fried fish is distributed free to the unemployed. Which is a nice thing. So, for example a linguist would never have written such a text, because a linguist thinks that the topics for immigrants are work, family, leisure time, home. But later, at a certain point, when a person has a minimum of equipment, why do you always have to force them into those niche themes? That is, they are people too, they eat, they go shopping."

Respondent B explains that the introduction of specific tests for immigrants is justified by the fact that they are adapted to the type of user. The linguistic form is in fact the same level as in the standard test. However, the contents are adapted to the level of vocabulary and communicative situations typical of an adult migrant (the same happens for example in the case of tests for adolescents). In the standard tests, which are those chosen most by university students, the type of texts chosen can change. They are of various types and can be taken, for example for the highest levels, from magazines, radio programs or television programs. Certificates for immigrants obviously contain many more forms to fill in, they contain a language that is more usable at a daily level, therefore communicative situations in the post office, at the supermarket, at the police station. This actually happens also in the tests of the CPIAs.

The same applies to the oral test: the communicative situations in which the candidates are put are balanced according to the type of user.

> "For example, regarding the A1, consider that the A1 immigrant test begins with a series of instructions to which the candidate must give immediate feedback. For example, 'It's hot, open the window'; or there are some pens on the table and the examiner asks 'can you write your name with a red pen?'. Instead, the standard A1 test starts from a presentation, then from a monologue […]. It is obvious then that even the photographs used and the traces of the role-plays that are used are adapted to the situation. Therefore, the user's daily background is taken into account. "

However, immigrants could also choose to try standard tests. For example, there are far fewer A1 sessions for immigrants in a calendar year, precisely because it is less expendable at various levels. This depends on the urgency that a user has, because for example a reception project is running out or because he or she has to present the documentation.

Respondent B also comments on the major differences that distinguish the tests of the prefectures from the tests of the certifying bodies, where the former are considered to be much simpler by both respondents:

> "One of the things that stands out first is that the tests of the prefectures, even if they serve for integration into the territory and for the request of the long stay residence permit, do not include the oral production test. So, the tests of the prefecture include reading and listening comprehension, written production - especially the filling of forms. So compared to official certificates they are much simpler. What is more, although they certify -they should certify- an A2 level, the tests of the prefectures- according to me, for the experiences I have, for the

studies I have done - they are closer to an A1 + than to an A2. […] Then consider that the four certificates of the certifying bodies are part of the ALTE consortium, which is a European consortium of all European languages, which controls the standards."

While the prefecture tests serve exclusively to gain credits for the integration agreement or the long-stay permit, the language tests of the certifying bodies are more spendable in the labor market and are also valid abroad. For this reason, interviewee B claims to push also the users who would need only the prefecture test to carry out the certification tests instead.

"After that I also happened to meet, during my professional experience, people who, due to a low level or because they had the urgency to take the exam or for other bureaucratic issues, did the test of the CPIAs. The structure is more or less the same because they have this division into three parts. But they are not an A2, they are simpler. The compilation of forms is always present on the test of the prefecture; which is a good test for an A2 level, but in my opinion, it is not enough to give an assessment of an overall level of competence of a person asking for a long-stay residence permit. So maybe I happen to push people to do that test when I see that they could not pass a CELI or CILS A2 test."

According to respondent B the evaluation method is also very different:

"That of the prefecture is much more elementary, and even more subjective. I do imagine that they too have rating scales to apply. After that, for example, they correct by hand and not with the optical reader as it happens for the tests of the certifying bodies".

When interviewee B was asked if it was possible to identify particularly critical elements in the performance of the tests, in reference to particular tasks, or in reference to the various macro-skills tested, she replied that it depends very much on the individual characteristics of each user. Because for example it is possible that a certain test for someone is of an insurmountable difficulty, for others it is of more immediate understanding; for this reason, within the certifications, different types of exercises are used, so that all the cognitive and learning styles, and all the abilities, are supported. In any case, the cloze test appears to be the most difficult exercise for everyone as it requires the simultaneous use of different types of brain areas:

"[when carrying out a cloze test] you must be able to read perfectly, because you just have to read a word instead of another to fail. You need to be able to contextualize every single entry within the whole text. But I have to tell you the truth, I recommend everyone to do it last. Because in any case, even at the level

of minutes which one needs to complete the test, I have seen candidates who have finished the time of all the writing test (one hour and a half) just trying to complete the cloze."

Respondent B replied to the question relating to the oral test that the role of the examiner is different according to the certifying bodies. The CELI is the only one in which the examiners can immediately give a score to the oral part, so it is directly evaluated the day of the oral test and the score is given by the examiners who are on the spot. As far as CILS and PLIDA are concerned, the audio is recorded and sent to the University of Siena or Dante and then evaluated.

"This changes things a lot. A little because the oral test is the most anxious and the presence of a recorder on the table can inhibit much more than the personal contact of the examiner. It is clear that it is more risky to give preferential treatment. But in any case, it is an evaluation that must meet objective criteria and when we have a candidate in front of us we always have the reference scales ahead. After that it is also true that the CELI examiners do a great deal of training, so we too must meet standards and are in fact very controlled. But the fact that there is not a tape recorder on the table that collects the oral test is a little less anxious for those who take the test."

I asked interviewee B if specific problems existed that immigrants might have compared to other users, perhaps for being less accustomed to performing a test. She answered that one of the problems, and one of the reasons for which very long courses of preparation are done, is in fact the first impact with the exam.

"Even just the idea of reading the questions and texts in a dossier and having to put the answers in a separate sheet - consider that only on the compilation of the answer sheet I do at least six hours of training. That is very, very difficult to explain and before it becomes an automatism it takes a lot of exercise. In fact, one of the problems in the test administration phase is the fact that many people raise their hands to say 'I was wrong to fill in...' and unfortunately there is nothing you can do there, because then the answers are given on sheets that are not normal sheets of paper, they are papers that then are inserted into an optical reader. So once one fills it wrongly, it is very difficult to correct it. The certifying body - in this case I talk about the CELI because it is what I know best- sends in the folder some reserve sheets, but very few; because this is a skill that is tested, the understanding of instructions."

3.3.5 Critical issues concerning technical aspects

The two candidates gave conflicting answers to the question concerning the technical aspects and the problems related to the performance of the tests from the point of view of costs, schedules and locations, due however to the very diversity of the CPIAs and language certification tests.

According to the interviewee B the sessions are many, practically one a month. Furthermore, the CELI, for example, following the introduction of the B1 requirement for citizenship, provided for many more sessions for the B1 exam, even going to modify by means of a notice a calendar of tests that had already been established. Respondent B also talks about the question of price and says that standard sessions and CELI immigration sessions have very different prices: if a standard CELI A1 costs more than 100 Euro, a CELI A1 for immigrants has a price of about 30 Euro, which is a much more affordable price for a person from a CAS for example. That also proves the fact that the whole test is adapted to the needs of the user. Moreover, compared to the prefecture tests, the CELI exam foresees capitalization. Another advantage of capitalization, apart from not having to repeat the whole test, is that the cost for repeating one single part is lower. For this reason, interviewee B disagrees with the choice recently made by the University for Foreigners of Siena of removing the possibility of capitalization.

According to interviewee A, when they started the testing activity, there were large requests and sessions with 120-140 people. The commission was divided into sub-commissions that dealt with groups of twenty-five students, with two teachers for each group. Recently, however, things have changed:

"In 2014-15 a circular arrives saying that the funds made available by the prefectures are halved. Teachers from two automatically became one. So, in the last four years the ratio is 1 to 25. In the last three years I stopped being a commissioner and I began to take care of the organization, every time it's hard to find someone that accept to be part of the commission. Because as this is an additional activity, and as the teaching staff is getting older, you cannot ask 60-years old people to do an additional activity at 17.50 Euro per hour. In September I retire and no one wants to take my place. The school does not open its doors to young people. The precarious workers we have are at least forty-years-old. All these aspects mean that when we do tests, the people who evaluate immigrants

have a certain kind of attitude and disposition. Many are not even very willing to
go into the complexity of the thing."

Another technical aspect mentioned is related to the evaluation. First of all, the
score to reach for the A2 is 80/100, and already it is a problem. He compares this issue to
the fact that for example the score to reach in order to pass the Italian high school final
exam is of 60/100. In the second place, many of the people responsible for the assessment
are too strict in his opinion in attributing the scores and do not take into account the
general framework.

Finally, a third question raised by respondent A has to do with a rule concerning
illiterates which states that if a person makes a declaration of functional illiteracy, he or
she can access a differentiated test:

> "A crowd of people came to Verona with the letter from the lawyer who said that
> their clients were functional illiterates. How do you know if one is telling the
> truth or not? You should propose a specific test for illiterates, something that can
> be done in a small page in no more than ten minutes […] Instead they don't do it.
> They have introduced the rule that the person can access the differentiated test
> on the third attempt. In other words, he or she must take the test three times. And
> since the distance between one session and another is ninety days (i.e. from three
> months to nine months), this means that in the meantime a person could even
> lose the residence permit, because it expires. People thus become constantly
> dependent on someone's will, on someone's decision. "

3.3.3 Language policies

The last part of the interview is dedicated to investigating the impact of the language
policies and requirements on the context of second language teaching and testing, with
particular attention to the most recent changes introduced with Decree-Law no. 113/2018.

Respondent A during the interview raises a series of problems relating to the current
legislation. First, he comments on how the introduction of the A2 test has a basic problem.
In fact, although the requirements of the A2 are common throughout Italy (reading,
writing, speaking and listening), the tests are not the same in all the provinces. The
actualization and implementation of these assessment procedures do not follow a general
outline.

> "If you go for a driving license exam, in one province or another, the tests are the
> same, but not for the A2 test. If you live in Veneto, the procedure to follow is set

by the technical structure of the school office. In Rome and Bologna they are different. The same applies to the civic training session. They are not only handled differently depending on the money the police headquarters have. That is, if they have the money, they do the mono-language, through a teacher or a mediator. Otherwise they put the CD in a classroom with a computer, which doesn't work much."

According to interviewee A, making national legislation and leaving it to the discretion of local structures leads to a profound inequality of treatment. For example, in a survey by the Ministry of the Interior it was seen that the percentage of failures in the test was much higher in Veneto than in other regions, such as Lombardy or Lazio. Then, often the result of a test can be influenced by the type of administration, if it is more globalist, or more zealous and attentive to the law.

Respondent A also comments on the introduction of the language requirement for citizenship, claiming that in fact it was "a bit nonsense" that there was a requirement for the residence permit, but not for citizenship. However, this should be accompanied by a wider development of linguistic services, because he believes that there can be no language acquisition aimed at an effective improvement of the socio-economic conditions of people, if one does not start from the beginning, i.e. from the activation of real campaigns that at institutional level provide the tools, knowledge and social value of this acquisition process:

"The linguistic requirement, considered so abstractly, we could also say that it is right. Banal common sense says that to become an Italian citizen you have to learn the language. If, however, you do not put in place a campaign to develop services, people will remain still. For example, the ministerial decree of 4 June 2010 expressly provides that the prefects, together with the territorial immigration councils [...] had to take action to circulate all the information, also about the preparation for the A2 tests. This part of the legislation has been totally disregarded, because there has been, that I know, at least here in Veneto, no prefecture that has ever done any action of information [...].

An information campaign is therefore lacking that make immigrants aware of their possibilities or of their duties:

"I've always asked the question 'how many of you know how the test works?'; now many know it, but how do they know? Word of mouth, not because there was someone at the institutional level who explained how to do things. The examples can be found on the website of IDA Veneto, UCRIDA, but do you think it is so straightforward to go to look up to IdaVeneto.it? "

It is important that the informative action is carried out by the authority, rather than by the individual teachers of the CPIAs, as it normally happens. The reason behind this is that information is basically determined by its source:

"If the prefecture says 'such a day a simulation of the A2 test will take place at such time, at this place...' you are sure that dozens of people come. But if someone else says so, four or five people come. I mean, I've spent years going around mosques doing the test simulation. Because there was no other way; dozens and dozens of people came to the exam who knew nothing. So, we were losing every time forty minutes explaining and giving examples and there were people who punctually got it wrong, because it was the first time. Because then at the beginning there is no time to do all the examples like you would do in class. […] Now I'll have to do the same thing with the B1 for citizenship. No one knows what it is and up until two months ago we didn't even know it. The CILS has developed the first test in April, a month earlier! In Val Chiampo, the tannery area, do you know how many Indians are there? How many Sikhs are there? […]. The high part of Vicenza is an area of difficult road conditions. There are so many elevations and the immigrants are all split up in the little towns. Do you think these people are informed of what they have to do? No, they know nothing, because they live in places where there are 30-40 families, where there is not even a school. At this point the only possibility is to go to places of prayer and prepare for the tests there. The initiative will be mine and someone else's [...]".

According to the respondent A the aim of the linguistic policy should be to ensure that all people involved in the situation -the migrants, the teachers, the ata staff, the janitors and so on- are convinced of what they do, that is that what they do makes sense to improve their lives.

His concern is often directed towards the issue of illiteracy. In this regard, he maintains that there is no awareness at the administrative level, as also at the academic level, that "those who arrive as illiterates can learn to speak and understand but cannot learn to read and write without going to school". He adds that sometimes there are people who would be entitled to become Italian citizens to all effects, even though they cannot read or write:

He gives the example of one of his students:

"Take Ahua, a Senegalese woman with three children, the oldest of whom is about to enter high school, her husband works, why shouldn't they both become Italian citizens? Because she has the original sin, in her country she only went to school for three years. Common sense should tell that she should go to school again. That is, an education campaign for adults should be made. But she does not need education, because she has three children, has her own routines, but needs to have cultural stimuli for example. That is to say, we need to contaminate these populations with interesting proposals, for example she might be interested

in a computer course, or cooking classes, tailoring workshops, where one can also speak. For example, we do not have a model of language learning by doing. These things are done sporadically by volunteers, the state is not responsible for this in person."

Beyond the question of information, and beyond political and cultural initiatives of the state, according to the interviewee A there is also lack of literacy campaigns and research on teaching methods for illiterates. Thirdly, there is also a lack of research on the CPIAs, which in terms of language learning are rich of information.

The interviewee takes the example of the civic courses, which this year include 250 hours for a course for illiterates. The time required to complete so many hours is of at least three years. The problem that the interviewee poses is whether there are actually teachers who are able to run a three-year course for illiterates. In fact, "goodwill is not enough to manage a course of such a duration"; it is necessary for the teacher to be trained and to put in place a targeted teaching method. The current situation is that in normal language courses different teachers choose different orientations on different bases, but more or less there are prevailing models compared to others. But for literacy this is not the case, as there is no model that is offered in a conscious way. The consequence is that "teachers follow the course and end up boring the students, which sooner or later end up dropping the classes".

The reason behind these shortcomings would seem to stem from the lack of investment in intentional policy and the lack of a systematic activity.

"the introduction of the tests simply meant to put a filter on the quantity of people, not on quality. The A2 of certification tests is not the same as the A2 of tests for immigrants. The request that is made to the candidates is incomparable. The integration agreement provided some forms of recognition, yet we didn't see anything. If instead of an A2 you have a certified B1 to get permission for long-staying they do not give you a bonus, for example a tax reduction, as is done with the number of children. This does not encourage people to move forward […] What remains is a state intervention aimed at putting people to the test, which should basically do what? Not to demonstrate a linguistic competence, but a readiness, on the one hand, to immediately comply with the legislation, that is, they must recognize the authority of the state; on the other hand, to show goodwill, that is 'despite all the problems I have and the things to do I go to school, I ask permission from work [...]. The sense of the thing is that it did not actually bring any benefit to the increase in school enrollment, it was absolutely irrelevant. I'm talking about the experience I did, which I see in my school […]. There has been no significant spillover, surely someone has come, but the

dynamics of arrival at the school service are totally different and largely depend on the availability of teachers. Last time a Pakistani friend of mine called me and asked me if we do the summer courses. I've been waiting since June 5 for a reply from the director, to which I asked if we could start the courses. He has not answered yet. I asked for it three times. In my opinion he didn't answer because he doesn't want to do it. The friend says "What should I do? My wife, my sister, my sister-in-law came here a year ago and they told me it was too late and there was no availability."

Still on the lack of studies on the subject, the second problem according to respondent A is that while there is both acquisitional linguistics, as a field of study aimed at explaining how a person learns a language, and a field of study that focuses on how a person learns to read and write, yet these two fields are not integrated.

"As to how one learns to read and write and therefore how to teach reading and writing there is no such attention. Those who work in literacy courses are therefore teachers who try to recycle the work they did with the children. The acquisition of reading and writing in the developmental age does have some common aspects, yet it is profoundly different. Also because the mother-tongue child is not the same subject as the foreign adult who is not a native speaker. Then we must also see what language the migrant speaks. […] For one who starts with Chinese and has to study Italian is complicated. It is not like the Senegalese that may have heard French somehow, or even speaks it a little. So, there is also a difference regarding the language origins. Does anyone take care of these things? Nobody."

Important studies have been done in the past. One of these is a 1956 UNESCO research by an interdisciplinary team led by an American psychologist, William S. Gray. This research deals with the problem of language origins in the acquisition of reading and writing skills, it compares different languages and concludes by saying that the mental processes involved in reading and writing are universal. Another important contribution is that of Dehaene, who published the book "Reading in the brain", which by studying the areas that are activated in reading in French by speakers of different languages, also concludes that speakers of different languages are all made at the same way.

By citing these studies interviewee A wants to make people reflect on the fact that that the problem has emerged long time ago, but today the reflections made at the time have not been brought forward. The problem can be attributed to the fact that academic knowledge is compartmentalized. Often the combined use of language teaching models and psychological models to explain how a person learns to read are confined only in cases of a person with learning difficulties, but not in cases of common learners. The

solution that the interviewee practices, and proposes, is rather that of combining a language teaching model, such as the Balboni model, with all the various references, for example to Krashen, with a psychological model. The interviewee refers in particular to the hierarchical and evolutionary model of Uta Frith, a German psychologist transplanted to Great Britain who is the elaborator of this model that explains the progression of learning, reading, and writing from zero up to competence, identifying a hierarchical path made up of four levels crossed by each individual who learns to read and write.

In essence, the interviewee claims that it is necessary to begin to distinguish the process of literacy of children from that of foreign native speakers. Moreover, he points out that he does not want to diminish the importance of language teaching with what he has been saying. Language teaching models still give a fundamental contribution, yet they should be integrated with psychological models that allow to understand what the actions are, the type of perceptions, the type of elaboration that one should have, as well as the attention towards the didactic material, and towards the activities that are undertaken. In order to do this, therefore, one must be able to know how to abandon one's belonging.

It also contributes to this the fact that there is no precise training course for those who assume the function of teacher of Italian as a second language. Among his colleagues, there are few teachers who have attended specific courses. This is because there is no obligation to have some form of training certificate and the simple fact of being Italian seems sufficient as a qualification[22]. Previous experience as a teacher can be useful, other times instead many teachers who are fond of their teaching method do not give up or question their method and therefore bend learners to the method they have always used:

> "So, most people - I find it morally reprehensible - adopt a teaching system that I would define as "syncretic ", that is, they take a piece from here and a piece from there, put it together, then add something to it […]. But we stop there, at a practice. But if we go and see why this is done, why not in another way, for example. Have you seen if this thing works? What answers did you get? What do these people think about "gioca Jouer"? It is a practice that is also

---

[22] Regarding the lack of a precise path for the training of teachers of Italian for foreigners it can be said that an attempt of systematization is taking place. A number of master's degrees were born for teaching Italian to foreigners, with some of them focusing more precisely on teaching Italian as a second language. In addition, there are also certificates that attest the competence in teaching Italian to foreigners (DITALS of the University for Foreigners of Siena, DILS-PG of the University for Foreigners of Perugia and CEDILS of the Ca' Foscari University of Venice). So I believe that in saying this the interviewee mainly refers to the lack of training courses for teachers dealing both with literacy and Italian as a second language.

thoughtlessly offered to people in their 50s to learn verbs in the infinitive form. Putting together the playful aspect with the didactic aspect. Because since it works for children who go to summer camps it is not clear why it should not work with adults."

Moreover, the interviewee complains of a disproportionate use of social and recreational activities, which can in some ways be stimulating with a certain type of audience. Yet the cost-benefit ratio is not favorable, because there is a basic problem, namely that a motivated person learns the basics of a language in a time that varies from six or seven months to a year. In the same way, a motivated person does not achieve independence in reading and writing if not after three years of work.

"We speak then of a lifelong learning, which as such should be permanently fed, therefore through intended policies. This is not what happens now in Italy, and one can guess it from the high rate of illiteracy of return, due for example to the lack of a policy to support reading."

Respondent B states that things for those who work in the migrants' reception system have changed dramatically since the introduction of the decree:

"From November to today it is as if we were living two different lives. They have changed at an incredible speed. I have been pulled out of the CAS overnight, luckily the cooperative I work with also has a SPRAR, so all the hours I spent at the CAS could be replaced. […] But four operators of the CAS had to leave".

The new provisions seem to have very rapid negative effects at various levels on the situation of immigrants. Attending language courses was in fact an opportunity to move in the territory:

"The fact that they can't get a language training means also that I can't buy bus tickets to go to school for any of them. And we have a structure of thirty people in a little town on the outskirts of Padua. This means that people are practically confined there."

According to interviewee B, this problem will also affect the CPIAs:

"So far they have lived off the tuition we paid every September. But since September I don't know how many users they will have. Because as long as they were in the project -both SPRAR or CAS project with no difference- we supported all the expenses related to language training, for the purchase of books, even the stationery and the backpack, as well as the language certificates. These were always and all at our expense […]. Now this remains the same for the SPRAR, while on the CAS it is completely deleted. So, in short, the situation is not at all rosy."

The consequences seem to be strong also in terms of job-search. This also has an impact on the safety of the individuals and at their emotional level:

"Many have fled since November. From day to night they left the facility, without telling us anything, because despite all the things you can tell them, they escape secretly because they think that you are the rules of that country, you are the Ministry [...] So it is you who have decided, you who have put in new rules, it is the cooperative that is bad, the cooperative that no longer pays the subscription. This is a serious problem, also on the emotional level"

Although the major problems concern the CAS, even the SPRAR has not been spared:

"[...] with the new decree the possibility of getting humanitarian protections has been canceled. And it is a huge problem, not only for those who come and go to the commission - the commissions that go well are much less, because before there was the humanitarian who covered at least for two years [...] but the real problem is for those who arrived with the humanitarian protection and now have to renew the permit. The only solution for those who have to renew a humanitarian permit is to be able to transform the residence permit into a residence permit for work reasons. This assumes that the person must find a contract of employment, must have a passport - because before those who had the humanitarian protection could do either the passport or the travel document. The passport is issued by the consular authorities, whereas the travel document was issued by the police, but both had exactly the same purpose and were equivalent as documents. Now they have also removed the possibility of converting the travel document into a residence permit for work reasons. So, the situation is dramatic for those who have the humanitarian protection with a travel document, and as there were people whose permit expired in February or March we really had to jump through hoops […] Then, at the same time, the possibility of being registered with the municipal registry office was canceled."

The SPRAR managed by the cooperative for which the interviewee B works will be standing until December 2020 and future prospects are still uncertain, due to the rapid pace at which things change. Besides the holders of humanitarian protection, also asylum seekers can no longer join the SPRAR. Only holders of subsidiary protection and asylum can enter, yet they are much less present in the territory. "The only thing that they cannot touch for now are the minors, for the rest there could also be the possibility that the SPRARs become projects in some way intended only for minors". Among other things, another negative fact is that all the assisted voluntary repatriation programmes are without money, and that was one of the last possibilities for those with no prospects of remaining:

"It is very likely that these people end up on the street, sometimes in the hands clandestine activities or other types of mafias. Many try to escape to France or Germany - I speak mostly of applicants, because those who have a status somehow or other can deal with the situation"

Finally, respondent B maintains that the new changes introduced with the decree not only had side effects on the people working in the reception system, but have also contributed to make migrants feel more vulnerable and unsafe.

CONCLUSION

This dissertation aims to investigate the issue of language testing in the context of migration. To do this, the language policies implemented in Italy, Germany and the United Kingdom have been taken into consideration. Although there are common indications and regulations coming from the European Union, and although language testing has become a mandatory requirement in each of these countries, the policies implemented so far present substantial differences. Beyond a judgment on which system is the best among those seen, the objective is rather to suggest that improvements can and should still be made. A point from which to start is precisely to confront with other experiences and take inspiration from those that seem to provide the best results.

A second step would be to strive towards the best solution by referring to the recommendations provided by the Council of Europe and the associations that are part of it, which have recently taken on the commitment to guide the actors involved towards a more fair and ethical use of language tests.

This aim is shared also at academic level by scholars and experts in language testing who investigate the political dimension of the tests, increasingly used for purposes other than assessing linguistic competence, with the hidden intent of controlling and limiting immigration.

Further research is needed to investigate the correlation between language learning and migrant integration in the host country. In fact, this study has not come to give a conclusive judgment on the obligatory nature of language tests, although an answer would be necessary. There is a sort of paradox behind it. On the one hand, it may seem right and almost natural to say that learning the language of a country can be a key factor of integration not only on the social level, but also on the economic and political level. Moreover, the advantages of language testing cannot be denied, as they are useful for structuring learning and providing proof of a competence achieved. On the other hand, making the path mandatory, thus linking the migration process to a linguistic requirement, may seem ethically controversial.

This thesis has rather taken the current state of things as a fact, analyzed its problems and tried to understand what the gaps are and what the aspects that should be improved.

From the point of view of testing, it can be said that the research must continue to be committed to making the tests valid and reliable, thus avoiding discriminatory and exclusionary use. As far as that is concerned, it seems that some progress has been made. However, the issue of the linguistic offer that precedes the tests seems to be more urgent.

Since the results of the tests have become so important to the lives of individuals it is right, and indeed a duty, to provide adequate means to prepare for them.

There is therefore a need to innovate and improve linguistic initiatives. If these were actually adapted to the needs and demands of the learners, then their motivation would grow considerably. And if language learning becomes something that a person wants to do, and feels that is able to do, then the best results for everyone are guaranteed. If adequate means are given to learn the language and if it is also taught to recognize its importance, then in this case also the preparation and carrying out of a test could be experienced with less anxiety.

This should be done primarily by ensuring accessibility and sustainability of language courses. Then other initiatives could be increased, which provide cultural stimuli and are interesting and useful. Furthermore, all those involved should be given the opportunity to be clearly informed about the opportunities that exist.

The role played by teachers in this sense is very important. In fact, through their work they can significantly determine the results that learners will achieve. For this reason, second language teachers should be constantly trained and be able to put in place targeted teaching methods based on the models provided by the research.

In this regard we have seen, at least in the Italian case, that there is still much to do with regard to the illiterate or poorly educated learners. In fact, the findings reveal the need to deepen the search for a model that is able to combine aspects of language teaching with the psychological aspects that are activated when an adult learns to read and write in a language that is not his or her mother tongue. Meanwhile, existing resources should be used for training the teachers that decide to take this path.

In conclusion, language testing in the context of migration is an issue that crosses various boundaries, raising problems and criticalities in all the people involved, from immigrants themselves, to teachers, linguists, language testers, and policy makers. Despite this, I hope this present study has succeeded in providing as clear and comprehensive a description as possible.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Adami, H. (2008). *The Role of Literacy in the Acculturation Process of Migrants*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.

Adler, A., Beyer, R. (2018). Languages and language policies in Germany/Sprachen und Sprachenpolitik in Deutschland. In: Stickel G. (2018): *National language institutions and national languages. Contributions to the EFNIL Conference 2017 in Mannheim*. Budapest: Research Institute for Linguistics, Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

ALTE (1994). *Code of Practice*.

ALTE (1998). *Alte handbook of European Language Examinations and Examination Systems*. Cambridge: University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate.

ALTE LAMI (2016). *Language Tests for Access, Integration and Citizenship: An Outline for Policy Makers*. Cambridge: Association of Language Testers in Europe on behalf of Council of Europe.

APPGR (2017). *Refugees Welcome? The Experience of New Refugees in the UK*. A Report by the All Party Parliamentary Group of Refugees, London: UK Government.

Bachman, L. F. (1990). *Fundamental considerations in language testing*. Oxford university press.

Bachman, L. F., & Palmer, A. S. (1996). *Language testing in practice: Designing and developing useful language tests* (Vol. 1). Oxford University Press.

Balboni, P. E. (2010). Storia dell'insegnamento dell'italiano L2, in Mezzadri, M. (eds), *Le lingue dell'educazione in un mondo senza frontiere*. Perugia. Guerra Editore: 83-98.

Beacco, J. C., Little, D., & Hedges, C. (2014). *Linguistic integration of adult migrants: Guide to policy development and implementation*. Council of Europe.

Blinder S. (2019). Migration to the UK: Asylum and Refugees. *Migration Observatory briefing*. COMPAS: University of Oxford.

Bongo, G. (2016). Integrazione linguistica dei migranti in Germania: presupposti e pratiche. *RISE, Rivista Internazionale di Studi Europei, 2*(4), 19-25.

Borkert, M., Bosswick, W. (2011). "The Case of Germany". In: Zincone, Giovanna, Rinus Penninx, Maren Borkert: *Migration Policymaking in Europe: the Dynamics of Actors and Contexts in Past and Present*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam Univ. Press (IMISCOe Research), 95-127.

Borri A., Minuz F., Rocca L., Sola C. (2014). *Italiano L2 in contesti migratori. Sillabo e descrittori dall'alfabetizzazione all'A1*. Torino: Loescher.

Brooks, Thom (2013). *The 'life in the United Kingdom' citizenship test: is it unfit for purpose?*. Durham University: Durham.

Brücker, H., Croisier, J., Kosyakova, Y., Kröger, H., Pietrantuono, G., Rother, N., & Schupp, J. (2019). Geflüchtete machen Fortschritte bei Sprache und Beschäftigung. *DIW-Wochenbericht, 86*(4), 55-70.

Brücker, H., Rother, N., Schupp, J. (eds.) (2017). *IAB-BAMF-SOEP-Befragung von Geflüchteten 2016: Studiendesign, Feldergebnisse sowie Analysen zu schulischer wie beruflicher Qualifikation, Sprachkenntnissen sowie kognitiven Potenzialen.* Forschungsbericht 30, Nürnberg: Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge.

Casey, L. (2016). *The Casey Review: A review into opportunity and integration*. London: Department for Communities and Local Government.

COE (2017). *Supporto linguistico per rifugiati adulti: Toolkit del Consiglio d'Europa*. Council of Europe.

COE (2018). *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume with New Descriptors.* Strasbourg. Language Policy Programme. Education Policy Division. Education Department. Council of Europe.

Colucci, M. (2018). *Storia dell'immigrazione straniera in Italia. Dal 1945 ai nostri giorni*. Roma: Carocci

Coste, D. (2007). *Contextualising uses of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*. In F. Goullier, The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and the development of language policies: Challenges and responsibilities, 40–49. Strasbourg: Council of Europe. http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Forum07_webdocs_EN.asp#TopOfPage

Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research Design Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA Sage.

Davies, A. (2013). Fifty Years of Language Assessment. In A. J. Kunnan (ed.), *The Companion to Language Assessment*, First edition, Vol. III Malden, MA: Wiley, pp. 3 – 21.

EMN/BAMF – Europäisches Migrationsnetzwerk/Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge (2018). *Migration, Integration, Asyl. Politische Entwicklungen in Deutschland 2017. Jährlicher Bericht der deutschen nationalen Kontaktstelle für das Europäische Migrationsnetzwerk (EMN)*. Nürnberg: Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge.

Esser, H. (2006). Migration, Language and Integration. *AKI Research Review 4.* Berlin: Social Science Research Center Berlin (WZB).

Favaro, G., Brambilla, M. (1984). L'analisi dei bisogni linguistici dei gruppi etnici a Milano, in Demetrio, D. (eds), *Immigrazione straniera e interventi formativi*. Milano. Franco Angeli: 105-173.

Fortier, A. M. (2018). On (not) speaking English: colonial legacies in language requirements for British citizenship. *Sociology*, 52(6), 1254-1269.

Foster, D., & Bolton, P. (2018). *Adult ESOL in England*. House of Commons Library. London: HMSO.

Foster, D., & Mackley, A. (2017). *English language teaching for refugees*. House of Commons Library. Briefing paper 7905. London: HMSO

Fragai, E., Jafrancesco, E. (2018). Italiano L2 a rifugiati: il Toolkit del Consiglio d'Europa. *LinguaInAzione. ILSA Italiano L2 in classe. Rivista digitale semestrale per l'insegnamento dell'Italiano LS/L2, 2*: 42-53.

Geddes, A., & Scholten, P. (2016). *The politics of migration and immigration in Europe*. Sage.

Giacalone Ramat, A. eds. (1986). *L'apprendimento spontaneo di una seconda lingua*. Bologna: Il Mulino.

Giacalone Ramat, A. eds. (1988). *L'italiano fra le altre lingue: strategie di acquisizione*. Bologna: Il Mulino.

Goodman, S. W. (2011). Controlling Immigration through Language and Country Knowledge Requirements. *West European Politics, 34* (2), 235-255.

Goullier, Francis. 2007. *The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and the development of language policies: Challenges and responsibilities*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe. http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Forum07_webdocs_EN.asp#TopOf-Page

Hübschmann, Z. (2015). *Migrant Integration Programs: The Case of Germany*. Ginevra: Global Migration centre (GMC).

Juran, S., Broer, P. N. (2017). A profile of Germany's refugee populations. *Population and Development Review, 43*(1), 149-157.

Lazenby Simpson, B. (2012). *European Language Portfolio for adult migrant learning the language of the host country: A guide for teachers*.

Little, D. (2008) *The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages and the development of policies for the integration of adult migrants*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.

Little, D. (2012) *The linguistic integration of adult migrants and the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.

Lochner, S. (2018). *Fördern Integrationskurse den gesellschaftlichen Zusammenhalt?* Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung.

Maggini, M. (2016). Editoriale. *InSegno, Italiano L2 in classe, Rivista semestrale dell'italiano come lingua seconda/straniera, 2*: 7-10.

Martinelli, C. (2017). Il modello di integrazione della Gran Bretagna. In Feroni, G. C., e Federico, V. (Eds.) *Società multiculturali e percorsi di integrazione: Francia, Germania, Regno Unito ed Italia a confronto (Vol. 195)*. Firenze: Firenze University Press; 9-36

McNamara, T. (2010). The use of language tests in the service of policy: issues of validity. *Revue française de linguistique appliquée, vol. xv,(1)*, 7-23. https://www.cairn.info/revue-revue-francaise-de-linguistique-appliquee-2010-1-page-7.htm.

Minuz, F. (2012). Insegnare ad adulti immigrati, in Italia, oggi. *Italiano L2 in classe. Rivista quadrimestrale per l'insegnamento dell'italiano come lingua seconda, 1*: 7-11.

Minuz, F. (2013). *Italiano L2 e alfabetizzazione in età adulta*. Carocci editore: Roma.

Minuz, F. (2014). La didattica dell'italiano in contesti migratori. *Gentes, 1*(1): 107-112.

Minuz, F. (2016). Insegnamento dell'italiano agli adulti tra vecchie e nuove migrazioni. *InSegno, Italiano L2 in classe, Rivista semestrale dell'italiano come lingua seconda/straniera, 2*: 11-16.

Minuz, F. and Borri, A. (2017). Literacy and language teaching: tools, implementation and impact. *Italiano LinguaDue 8*(2): 220-231.

Paget, A., & Stevenson, N. (2014). On Speaking Terms: Making ESOL Policy work better for migrants and wider society. *Demos*.

Patton, M.Q. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods* (2nd ed.). Newbury Park, CA: Sage

Perlmann-Balme, M., Plassmann, S., Zeidler, B. (2009). *Deutschtest für Zuwanderer A2-B1: Prüfungsziele, Testbeschreibung*. Cornelsen.

Pochon-Berger, E., & Lenz, P. (2014). *Language requirements and language testing for immigration and integration purposes: A synthesis of academic literature*. Institut of Multilingualism.

Rienzo, C. and Vargas-Silva, C. (2018). Migrants in the UK: An Overview. *Migration Observatory briefing*. COMPAS: University of Oxford.

Rocca, L. (2008). *Percorsi per la certificazione linguistica in contesti di immigrazione. Definizione dell'utenza – Specificazioni degli esami – Prospettive future*. Perugia: Guerra.

Saville, N. (2009). Language Assessment in the Management of International Migration: A Framework for Considering the Issues. *Language Assessment Quarterly, 6*(1), 17-29.

Saville, N. (2010). *Il contributo dell'ALTE nel quadro della cooperazione internazionale: l'esperienza del LAMI. Valutazione Linguistica ed Integrazione nel contesto italiano: Atti del Convegno LAMI*. Rome, May 2010. Language Assessment for Integration in the Italian Context: Proceedings, 25-27.

Shohamy, E. (2001). *The power of tests: A critical perspective of the uses of language tests*. London: Longman.

Shohamy, E. (2009). Language tests for immigrants: Why language? Why tests? Why citizenship? In G. Hogan-Brun, C. Mar-Molinero & P. Stevenson (eds), *Discourses on language and integration: critical perspectives on language testing regimes in Europe*. Amsterdam: Benjamins, 45-59.

Shohamy, E. and McNamara, T. (2009). Language tests for citizenship, immigration, and asylum. *Language Assessment Quarterly 6*(1), 1–5.

Simone, R. (1974). Il problema dell'educazione linguistica degli immigrati. *La Ricerca, 2*: 1-7.

Simpson, J. (2015). English language learning for adult migrants in superdiverse Britain. In J. Simpson, & A. Whiteside (Eds.), *Adult language education and migration.* Oxon: Routledge; 200-213.

Simpson, J. (2016). English for speakers of other languages: Language, education and migration. In G. Hall (Ed.), *The routledge handbook of english language teaching.* Oxon: Routledge; 177-190

Sobrero, A. (1974). Il cambio linguistico nell'acculturazione dell'immigrato: nuovi problemi di glottodidattica, in Vv. Aa., *Bilinguismo e diglossia in Italia*. Pisa. Pacini: 137-148.

Spolsky, B. (2017). History of Language Testing. In: Shohamy E., Or I., May S. (eds) *Language Testing and Assessment. Encyclopedia of Language and Education* (3rd ed.). Springer: Cham. 375-384.

SPRAR (2018a). *Rapporto annuale SPRAR. Sistema di protezione per richiedenti asilo e rifugiati.*

SPRAR (2018b). *Manuale operativo per l'attivazione e la gestione di servizi di accoglienza e integrazione per richiedenti e titolari di protezione internazionale.*

Strik, T. (2013). *Integration tests: Helping or hindering integration?* Report of the Committee on Migration, Refugees, and Displaced Persons. Strasbourg: Council of Europe, Parliamentary Assembly, Doc. 13361.

Strik, T., Böcker, A., Luiten, M., Van Oers, R. (2010). *The INTECT Project: Synthesis Report – Integration and Naturalisation tests: the new way to European Citizenship*. Nimega: Centre for Migration Law, Radbund University Nijmegen.

Sturge, G. (2018) *Migration Statistics*. House of Commons Library Briefing Paper, No: SN06077, 1-39.

Tracy, R. (2017). *Language testing in the context of migration.* The linguistic integration of adult migrants. Some lessons from research, 45-56.

UNCHR (2018) *Global trends. Forced displacement in 2017*. Geneva: UNCHR.

Van Avermaet, P. and Rocca, L. (2011). Language testing and access, in Galaczi, E D and Weir, C J (2011) *Exploring Language Frameworks: Proceedings of the ALTE Kraków Conference, July 2011, Studies in Language Testing volume 36,* Cambridge: UCLES/Cambridge University Press, 11-44.

Van Avermaet, P., Kuijper, H. & Saville, N. (2004). *A Code of Practice and Quality Management System for International Language Examinations*. Language Assessment Quarterly, 1(2-3), 137-150.

WEBSITE RESOURCES

ISTAT (2014). Diversità linguistiche tra i cittadini stranieri. Retrieved March 10, 2019, from https://www.istat.it/it/archivio/129285.

ISTAT (2018). Cittadini non comunitari: presenza, nuovi ingressi e acquisizioni di cittadinanza. Retrieved March 10, 2019, from https://www.istat.it/it/files//2018/11/Report_cittadini_non_comunitari.pdf.

Reimann, A. (2014, December 6). Die CSU spielt Migranten-Polizei. *Spiegel.de*. Retrieved March 21, 2019, from www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/csu-will-dass-migranten-zuhause-deutsch-sprechen-a-1006932.html

Bevölkerung. Migration und Integration. *Destatis.de*. Retrieved March 23, 2019, from www.destatis.de/DE/Themen/Gesellschaft-Umwelt/Bevoelkerung/Migration-Integration/_inhalt.html

Manuale operativo per l'attivazione e la gestione di servizi di accoglienza integrata in favore di richiedenti e titolari di protezione internazionale e umanitaria. Retrieved March 15, 2019, from https://www.sprar.it/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/SPRAR-Manuale-Operativo-2018-08.pdf

Miur. Istruzione degli adulti. Retrieved March 18, 2019, from https://www.miur.gov.it/web/guest/istruzione-degli-adulti

Cils, Università per stranieri di Siena. Retrieved March 12, 2019 from .https://cils.unistrasi.it/188/B1_CITTADINANZA.htm

Office for National Statistics (2013) Detailed analysis – English language proficiency in England and Wales main language and general health characteristics. Retrieved 28 April, 2019 from: www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171776_325471.pdf

'Passive tolerance' of separate communities must end, says PM. *Gov.uk*. Retrieved 25 April, 2019 from https://www.gov.uk/government/news/passive-tolerance-of-separate-communities-must-end-says-pm

Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper. Retrieved 30 April, 2019, from https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/696993/Integrated_Communities_Strategy.pdf

Changes to Secure English Language Test Providers for UK Visas. *Gov.uk*. Retrieved 30 April, 2019, from https://www.gov.uk/government/news/changes-to-secure-english-language-test-providers-for-uk-visas

Syal Rajeev (2001, August 19) Migrants must learn English in Blunkett plan. *telegraph.co.uk.* Retrieved 02 May, 2019, from https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1337901/Migrants-must-learn-English-in-Blunkett-plan.html

Being British Today. *Natcen.ac.uk*. Retrieved 02 May, 2019, from http://www.natcen.ac.uk/news-media/press-releases/2014/june/being-british-today/

Action for ESOL Manifesto. *Actionforesol.org*. Retrieved 04 May, 2019, from http://actionforesol.org/action-for-esol-manifesto

New Scots: refugee integration strategy 2018 to 2022. *Gov.scot*. Retrieved 05 May, 2019, from https://www.gov.scot/publications/new-scots-refugee-integration-strategy-2018-2022/

DTZ Modellsatz. *Bamf.de*. Retrieved 28 March 2019, from http://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/DE/Downloads/Infothek/Integrationskurse/Kurstraeger/Sonstige/dtz_modellsatz_e_1_pdf.html

Council of Europe/Language Policy Unit (Strasbourg) - Project LIAM. Retrieved 10 June, 2019, from www.coe.int/lang-migrants

RIASSUNTO IN ITALIANO

Imparare la lingua del paese ospitante è generalmente riconosciuto come uno dei requisiti fondamentali per l'integrazione degli immigrati nella società che li accoglie. Per questo motivo le politiche linguistiche spesso mirano a favorire l'apprendimento da parte dei nuovi arrivati della lingua maggiormente parlata nel paese d'arrivo. Tuttavia, quello che si sta verificando nei paesi dell'Unione Europea, ma anche in altri paesi come il Nord America, l'Australia o la Nuova Zelanda, è che di fronte a crescenti flussi migratori crescono anche i requisiti linguistici che accompagnano il percorso migratorio. Questo avviene attraverso l'imposizione di test che misurano la competenza linguistica da dover superare per poter ottenere la cittadinanza, il permesso di soggiorno, e in alcuni casi persino l'ingresso nei paesi, specie quando si parla di ricongiungimento familiare.

Sebbene si possa generalmente affermare che parlare la lingua del paese in cui si vive sia un motore per l'integrazione non solo sociale, ma anche politica e economica, è altrettanto vero che nel momento in cui si decide di rendere questo apprendimento obbligatorio diventa indispensabile interrogarsi su vari aspetti. Innanzitutto, bisogna andare oltre una generica informazione e studiare la correlazione tra l'apprendimento linguistico e l'integrazione. In secondo luogo, bisogna tenere in considerazione l'impatto che un test di lingua ha sugli individui, sul loro apprendimento linguistico, su chi insegna.

Dal momento in cui i test di lingua hanno cominciato ad essere usati per fini politici, è cresciuto nell'ambito del testing linguistico l'interesse ad interrogarsi sull'eticità, sulla giustizia e sulla validità dei test. Il campo del testing linguistico spazia così dai confini della linguistica applicata e va ad intrecciarsi con la sociologia, la politica e il diritto. Tra gli studiosi che se ne occupano si trovano Elana Shohamy, Tim McNamara, Nick Saville, Piet Van Avermaet e Lorenzo Rocca. Attraverso le loro pubblicazioni questi accademici si interrogano sul rapporto tra lingua e cittadinanza, tra lingua e nazione, e su come i test siano diventati di fatto degli strumenti di controllo e limitazione dell'immigrazione. L'obiettivo ultimo è quindi diventato quello di fare in modo che i test non vengano usati in modo discriminatorio.

Questo tema si colloca all'interno di uno scenario sociale e politico molto ampio e complesso che domina l'attuale e fervente dibattito sull'immigrazione. Un dibattito che negli ultimi anni sembra dividere le popolazioni, i governi e le istituzioni dei paesi sviluppati in due categorie ben distinte, da un lato quelli che auspicano politiche più restrittive e severe per il controllo delle frontiere e dell'immigrazione, dall'altro quelli che si fanno portatori di migliori politiche di accoglienza e integrazione dei nuovi arrivati.

Sebbene il tema dell'immigrazione sia un tema largamente trattato, sembra facile notare una certa confusione dell'opinione pubblica. False notizie e falsi numeri dilagano nei social network portando i lati più estremi a parlare in termini di "invasione", aggiungendo carne al fuoco del razzismo e della discriminazione.

L'obiettivo di questa tesi è dapprima quello di far luce su un piccolo aspetto di questo grande dibattito, che è quello riguardante le politiche linguistiche per l'integrazione degli immigrati. Più precisamente, l'obiettivo è quello di esaminare aspetti del testing linguistico in contesto migratorio. Questo si intreccia necessariamente all'insieme delle politiche linguistiche messe in atto e che includono anche aspetti relativi all'insegnamento della lingua del paese come lingua seconda per stranieri.

Per fare ciò si è cercato di delineare, nel primo capitolo, un quadro chiaro e completo del contesto migratorio e linguistico di tre paesi diversi, Italia, Germania e Regno Unito. Per ogni singolo paese vengono forniti dati aggiornati alla situazione reperiti da fonti affidabili e vengono descritte le politiche e i requisiti linguistici. Per ogni paese un paragrafo è dedicato alle iniziative rivolte a richiedenti asilo e rifugiati, spesso diverse rispetto a quelle di altre categorie di immigrati.

Nel secondo capitolo si parla del testing linguistico in contesto migratorio. Vengono trattati dunque alcuni degli aspetti centrali dello sviluppo di un test lingua in relazione ad un'utenza ben circoscritta. Viene inoltre fornita una descrizione più dettagliata dei test di lingua italiana più comunemente usati in contesto migratorio.

Nel terzo capitolo vengono presentati i risultati di una ricerca qualitativa condotta durante la stesura della tesi. Lo studio si propone di investigare attraverso il metodo dell'intervista la tematica del testing linguistico dal punto di vista dei professionisti che lavorano nell'ambito della formazione linguistica degli immigrati e della loro preparazione ai test.

In Italia il tema dell'immigrazione straniera ha fatto il suo ingresso nello scenario sociale e politico con la fine della seconda guerra mondiale ed il fenomeno migratorio ha assunto una dimensione strutturale a partire dagli anni Settanta. Ad oggi la popolazione straniera ammonta a circa l'8,5% del totale della popolazione residente e tra i primi cinque paesi di provenienza si trovano il Marocco, l'Albania, la Cina, l'Ucraina e le Filippine. Inoltre, dallo scoppio della crisi migratoria in Italia sono aumentati i rilasci di permessi di soggiorno per motivi d'asilo e protezione umanitaria, dove ai primi tre posti si trovano stranieri proveniente da Nigeria, Pakistan e Bangladesh.

Il cambiamento del panorama linguistico determinato dal nuovo contesto migratorio ha portato negli ultimi anni ad un crescente interesse nei confronti dell'insegnamento dell'italiano come lingua seconda. Al momento, questo tipo di insegnamento è un ambito caratterizzato da estrema eterogeneità in termini di offerta di corsi di lingua, attori coinvolti, qualità dell'insegnamento e profilo degli apprendenti. In particolare, si occupano dei corsi di lingua enti pubblici, privati, e organizzazioni umanitarie e politiche. Ruolo fondamentale è quello svolto dai CPIA (Centri Provinciali per l'Istruzione degli Adulti), nati per sostituire i vecchi CTP (Centri Territoriali Permanenti), e che si occupano di tre percorsi principali: corsi di alfabetizzazione funzionale, corsi finalizzati al conseguimento del diploma di primo o di secondo livello, e corsi d'integrazione linguistica per stranieri.

Per i richiedenti asilo ed i titolari di protezione internazionale le cose funzionano in modo diverso. Il sistema d'accoglienza italiano è diviso in due fasi che seguono una primissima fase di assistenza e soccorso: la fase di prima accoglienza in hub regionali o interregionali e la fase di seconda accoglienza negli SPRAR. Tuttavia, nel caso di temporanea indisponibilità di posti nei centri di prima accoglienza o di seconda accoglienza, la normativa prevede che i migranti vengano distribuiti nei CAS (Centri di Accoglienza Straordinaria), cosa che in realtà avviene nella maggior parte dei casi. Riuscire ad entrare negli SPRAR è tuttavia una grande opportunità, questi rappresentano infatti il fiore all'occhiello del sistema d'accoglienza italiana e sono considerati buona pratica a livello europeo. Il sistema SPRAR è infati costituito da una rete di Enti locali che realizzano dei progetti che coniugano la metodologia dell'accoglienza integrata con le caratteristiche del territorio ospitante. Lo SPRAR riconosce e valorizza l'importanza dell'apprendimento della lingua italiana includendolo nel patto di accoglienza da

sottoscrivere al momento dell'inserimento del progetto. In questo modo i beneficiari si impegnano a frequentare con continuità i corsi, mentre L'Ente erogatore si impegna a garantire l'accesso, la fruibilità e la frequenza dei corsi di lingua italiana per un numero minimo di dieci ore settimanali.

Il sistema SPRAR tuttavia ha subito di recente delle modifiche dovute all'introduzione del decreto-legge n. 113 del 2018 che, oltre ad abolire la protezione umanitaria, prevede la trasformazione degli SPRAR in un Sistema di protezione per titolari di protezione internazionale e per minori stranieri non accompagnati, escludendo così anche i richiedenti asilo dalla possibilità di partecipare al progetto.

Il decreto-legge appena menzionato ha introdotto inoltre l'obbligo, per chi volesse diventare cittadino italiano, di superare un test di conoscenza della lingua italiana di livello B1 secondo i parametri stabiliti dal Quadro Comune Europeo di Riferimento per le Lingue. Questo non è il primo requisito che lega l'apprendimento linguistico al percorso migratorio. Infatti, altri due dispositivi sono previsti dalla legge del 15 luglio 2009, n. 94 "Disposizioni in materia di sicurezza pubblica": l'accordo di integrazione tra lo straniero e lo stato e il test di conoscenza della lingua italiana per chi richiede il permesso di soggiorno UE per soggiornanti di lungo periodo. Entrambi i dispositivi prevedono infatti l'impegno da parte degli immigrati ad acquisire un livello di conoscenza della lingua italiana a livello A2. In entrambi i casi varie sono le modalità di verifica della conoscenza linguistica richiesta. Le modalità principali tuttavia sono due e sono il test di lingua da effettuare presso le prefetture o i CPIA e l'ottenimento di un certificato linguistico presso uno dei quattro enti di certificazione linguistica italiani (Università degli Studi di Roma Tre, Università per stranieri di Perugia, Università per stranieri di Siena, Società Dante Alighieri).

In Germania il numero degli immigrati ha cominciato a superare quello degli emigrati nell'ultimo decennio dell'Ottocento. Tuttavia, anche in questo caso, i movimenti più rilevanti hanno cominciato a verificarsi nel secondo dopoguerra con l'arrivo dei tedeschi etnici (*aussiedler*) dai territori dell'ex Unione Sovietica, dei lavoratori stagionali (*gastarbeiter*) e dei rifugiati dalla guerra in Jugoslavia. Ad oggi 19,3 milioni di abitanti, ovvero un quarto della popolazione della Germania, ha un passato migratorio. Alla fine del 2017 il numero di stranieri ammontava a 10,6 milioni, per lo più provenienti da Turchia, Polonia, Siria, Italia e Romania.

Ovviamente, anche la Germania si trova oggi ad affrontare un ingente flusso di richiedenti asilo e rifugiati dall'Asia e dall'Africa. Infatti, nel 2017 con 198,300 richieste d'asilo il paese si è conquistato il secondo posto nella classifica mondiale per numero di richieste, seconda solo agli Stati Uniti. Inoltre, si trova al sesto posto mondiale per numero di rifugiati ospitati, provenienti principalmente da Siria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Eritrea e Iran.

Il sistema di accoglienza e d'integrazione tedesco sembra essere quello più strutturato. Questo perché tutte le iniziative d'integrazione e linguistiche ruotano attorno ad un'unica modalità, che è quella del corso d'integrazione introdotto dalla Legge sull'immigrazione del 2005, che consiste in un corso di lingua ed uno di orientamento nella società tedesca. A partire dalla sua introduzione, l'Ufficio federale tedesco per la migrazione e i rifugiati (BAMF), responsabile per l'organizzazione e l'amministrazione dei corsi d'integrazione, ha cercato di migliorare l'offerta integrandola con nuove modalità per rispondere ai bisogni di persone con esigenze e bisogni diversi. Vengono forniti così corsi di lingua generale per adulti già alfabetizzati nel sistema latino, corsi per persone alfabetizzate in un sistema alfabetico diverso dal latino e corsi di alfabetizzazione per adulti con scarsa o senza scolarizzazione. A questi si aggiungono corsi per donne, genitori, adolescenti, per persone con deficit cognitivi e corsi intensivi per persone altamente scolarizzate.

In linea generale, lo scopo del corso d'integrazione è quello di raggiungere il livello B1 nella lingua tedesca, da verificare alla fine del corso attraverso il *Deutsch Test für Zuwanderer* (dtz). Il test è sviluppato dal Goethe Institut in collaborazione con Telc Gmbh ed è costruito sui bisogni specifici dei migranti. È inoltre un test di tipo progressivo, che permette di certificare, in base al risultato raggiunto, un livello A2 o B1 secondo i parametri del QCER.

Per quanto riguarda il sistema d'accoglienza di richiedenti asilo e rifugiati i Germania, questo è organizzato su base regionale ed ogni stato federale gestisce i propri centri d'accoglienza nel quale i migranti vengono distribuiti in base ad un sistema di quote. Quanto alla loro accoglienza linguistica la Germania segue dal 2015 una strategia d'intervento preventiva in base al quale consente ad esempio a richiedenti asilo con buone prospettive di ottenere lo status di frequentare il corso d'integrazione ancora prima d'aver ottenuto la protezione. Possibilità che può inoltre essere resa obbligatoria in base a quanto stabilito dalla Legge sull'Immigrazione del 2016. Per i richiedenti asilo con prospettive

incerte la partecipazione al corso d'integrazione è consentita a seconda della disponibilità di posti. Viene inoltre garantito loro la possibilità di partecipare in forma volontaria ad un corso iniziale di orientamento e apprendimento della lingua tedesca.

Nel 2007, con una modifica alla legge sul soggiorno, viene stabilito che gli individui che vogliano ricongiungersi con la propria famiglia in Germania debbano dimostrare una conoscenza base della lingua tedesca, a livello A1 del QCER. Tramite questo emendamento il requisito linguistico è diventato necessario in ognuna delle fasi del processo d'immigrazione, a partire dall'accesso al Paese, alla richiesta del permesso di soggiorno permanente, fino alla naturalizzazione. Per ottenere queste ultime due è necessario dimostrare almeno il livello B1 del QCER, cosa che può essere fatta attraverso il superamento del test conclusivo del corso d'integrazione.

Nel Regno Unito la storia della migrazione è fortemente influenzata dal suo passato da colonizzatore. Per tutta la prima metà del Novecento infatti tutti i cittadini delle colonie britanniche e dei paesi del Commonwealth potevano entrare liberamente nel Regno Unito e godere degli stessi diritti sociali, legali e politici degli altri cittadini. Questo regime migratorio libero però cominciò a stringersi nella seconda metà del Novecento, con disposizioni e leggi che avevano l'obiettivo di contrastare il crescente arrivo di immigrati. Il passato coloniale del Regno Unito ha influito anche sulla riproduzione nel paese di un modello d'integrazione degli stranieri di tipo multiculturale, che garantisce la libertà alle comunità etniche di vivere secondo le proprie tradizioni religiose e culturali. Un modello, tuttavia, che avendo in realtà creato un alto grado di separatismo e frammentazione sociale, ha dovuto subire negli ultimi anni un ripensamento.

Il numero degli immigrati superò quello degli emigrati per la prima volta nel 1994, quasi un secolo dopo rispetto alla Germania. Ad oggi vivono nel Regno Unito 6,2 milioni di cittadini non britannici e 9,4 milioni di persone nate all'estero, per lo più provenienti da Polonia, India, Pakistan, Irlanda e Romania. Sebbene da un lato il Regno Unito sia stato nel 2016 il secondo paese in Unione Europea per l'arrivo di stranieri, seconda solo alla Germania, la posizione in classifica decresce in termini di richiedenti asilo e rifugiati (principalmente provenienti da Iran, Pakistan, Iraq, Bangladesh and Sudan), con numeri quasi quattro volte inferiori rispetto a quelli contati dall'Italia e sei volte inferiori rispetto a quelli della Germania.

L'integrazione linguistica degli immigrati adulti nel Regno Unito avviene principalmente tramite tutte le iniziative che riguardano l'ESOL (*English for Speakers of other countries*). L'ESOL è presente in tutti i paesi in cui l'inglese è lingua predominante, ed anche all'interno dello stesso Regno Unito vengono attuate strategie diverse in Inghilterra, in Irlanda del Nord, in Galles e in Scozia. Mentre le ultime due hanno sviluppato una strategia ESOL nazionale, l'Inghilterra e l'Irlanda del Nord non hanno fatto altrettanto.

Dal 2001 fino al 2009 l'ESOL in Inghilterra era stato incluso sotto l'ala delle *Skills for Life*, una strategia messa in atto con lo scopo di ridurre il numero di adulti con scarse competenze di base e scarsa alfabetizzazione. In questo modo l'ESOL fu inserito per la prima volta all'interno di uno standard nazionale e controllato centralmente da un curriculum nazionale, l'Adult ESOL Core Curriculum. Tuttavia, nel 2009 la presenza dell'ESOL nell'ambito di Skills for Life venne rimpiazzata da un nuovo approccio che prevede il coordinamento dei corsi a livello locale. Allo stesso tempo, il passaggio è stato accompagnato da un taglio decisivo dei finanziamenti che allo stato attuale impedisce alle autorità locali di rispondere efficacemente alla domanda esistente. La problematicità di questo aspetto è evidente se si guarda il drastico calo dei partecipanti ai corsi ESOL avvenuto tra il biennio 2009-10 e il biennio 2016-17. È in risposta a tali questioni che sono nati movimenti di professionisti, volontari e studenti, come ad esempio *Action for ESOL movement*, che si impegnano a sollevare le criticità connesse ai cambiamenti avvenuti nell'ambito dell'ESOL, con il fine ultimo di migliorare le opportunità educative dei migranti adulti e difendere il lavoro degli insegnanti e dei professionisti coinvolti.

Il Regno Unito non dispone di una politica d'integrazione uniforme e pertanto non sembra possibile delineare con precisione i tratti della strategia attuata. Infatti, le iniziative finora messe in atto sono state temporanee e indirizzate a determinate categorie di migranti. Un esempio di questa discontinuità ci è fornito dalla situazione dei richiedenti asilo e rifugiati. Il sistema d'accoglienza nel Regno Unito è strutturato su due livelli. Da un lato ci sono i richiedenti asilo che presentano la domanda dopo essere entrati nel Regno Unito e ricevono la protezione dopo essere stati sottoposti alla procedura di riconoscimento dello status di rifugiati. Dall'altro lato ci sono i rifugiati che arrivano direttamente nel paese attraverso uno dei programmi di reinsediamento previsti dal governo. Mentre gli ultimi ricevono sistematicamente supporto fin dal loro arrivo, per i

primi non avviene altrettanto. O meglio non più. Infatti, nel 2008 il governo aveva finanziato il programma *Refugee Integration and Employment Service*, che però non è più previsto dal 2011.

Quanto all'accoglienza linguistica di richiedenti asilo e rifugiati le iniziative ricadono nell'ambito dell'ESOL. Anche in questo caso ci sono differenze a seconda dei diversi paesi del Regno Unito. Ad esempio, in Scozia è stato di recente adottata la *New Scots: Refugee Integration strategy 2018 to 2022*, che garantisce ai rifugiati titolari di uno status la partecipazione gratuita ai corsi ESOL e ai richiedenti asilo in attesa di una decisione la possibilità di essere ammessi ai corsi gratuiti senza dover aspettare un determinato periodo di tempo. In Inghilterra, diversamente, i rifugiati non hanno nessun diritto specifico di accedere ai corsi, nel senso che vengono applicati gli stessi criteri di ammissibilità che valgono per tutti.

Anche il Regno Unito prevede dei requisiti linguistici da soddisfare nelle varie fasi del percorso migratorio. Dal 2010 viene richiesto a coniugi e familiari che vogliano entrare nel Regno Unito per ricongiungimento familiare un livello A1 di competenza orale in inglese. Requisito che è stato esteso successivamente all'A2 per chi dopo due e anni e mezzo di residenza nel Regno Unito voglia estendere ulteriormente il permesso. Fino al 2013, per ottenere la cittadinanza e il permesso di soggiorno a tempo indeterminato era necessario superare il test *Life in the UK*, che permetteva di soddisfare entrambi i requisiti di conoscenza della lingua inglese e conoscenza della cultura e delle istituzioni britanniche. Dal 2013 invece è stato reso obbligatorio un test separato per il requisito linguistico, da documentare attraverso un certificato di livello B1 nella produzione e ricezione orale secondo i parametri del QCER (corrispondente all'ESOL Entry Level 3).

Il secondo capitolo si sviluppa attorno al tema del language testing nel contesto migratorio. Per far ciò è stata data una breve introduzione del language testing come branca della linguistica applicata che ha lo scopo di misurare la competenza linguistica e che ha come oggetto la ricerca, lo sviluppo e il disegno dei test di lingua.

Fin dalla nascita dell'approccio moderno al language testing agli inizi degli anni Sessanta, il campo di studi ha attraversato varie fasi, tutte accomunate da una continua ricerca sulla validità e affidabilità dei test. Una ricerca che continua fino ad oggi e che è andata ad intersecarsi ai nuovi aspetti che dominano l'attuale dibattito sul language

testing. L'uso sempre più politico dei test ha fatto sì che aumentasse in ambito accademico e tra i language testers la necessità di esplorare l'impatto e le conseguenze che i test hanno su chi è chiamato a svolgerli, ma anche sugli attori coinvolti nell'intero processo e sull'insegnamento della lingua in generale. Perciò rientrano tra i nuovi aspetti che compongono il dibattito sul language testing la dimensione sociale, etica e politica dei test, la loro equità e la loro sostenibilità.

Il fine politico dei test è evidente quando si parla di testing linguistico in contesto migratorio. I language testers hanno quindi visto uno spostarsi del loro ruolo da creatori di strumenti per la misurazione linguistica a creatori di strumenti usati per decidere se una persona abbia o meno il diritto di accedere in un paese, di richiedere il permesso di soggiorno o diventare cittadino. I test sarebbero diventati così degli strumenti che piuttosto che valutare una competenza comunicativa, valutano il rispetto dell'ideologia nazionale e i valori socio-culturali di un paese.

Dal momento in cui non spetta ai language testers stabilire le regole, il loro obiettivo diventa quello di fare in modo che i test non vengano usati in modo discriminatorio facendo sì invece che questi siano giusti ed appropriati ad ogni categoria di individuo. Occorre per questo garantire l'affidabilità del test, ovvero garantire l'oggettività, la costanza e la stabilità dei risultati sia nell'ambito dello stesso test che in test successivi. Un test deve essere praticabile, sia in fase di progettazione che di amministrazione, nel senso che devono essere fornite le condizioni adatte in un'ottica di sostenibilità, accessibilità e trasparenza. Deve infine essere garantita la validità, ovvero il contenuto del test deve essere appropriato per gli scopi del test, i risultati devono essere significativi e non devono creare svantaggi ai danni di determinati gruppi.

La validazione è una fase molto complessa dello sviluppo di un test e interessa vari aspetti. Uno di questi è la validità del costrutto, ovvero la misura in cui un test riflette le predizioni fatte sulla base di una teoria delle abilità. Infatti, dietro un valido test di lingua si deve trovare una solida teoria di competenza comunicativa.

Esistono molti modelli di competenza comunicativa. Tuttavia, quello principalmente usato è il modello di Bachman (1990) conosciuto come CLA (*Communicative Language Ability*). Un modello che descrive la competenza comunicativa come la capacità di unire la conoscenza del mondo e la competenza

linguistica e di attivare allo stesso tempo la competenza strategica che permette di valutare le situazioni comunicative ed usare la lingua in maniera appropriata al contesto.

Inoltre, anche lo stesso QCER si basa su un modello di competenza comunicativa costruito sulla base di tre componenti principali: competenza linguistica, socio-linguistica e pragmatica. Il QCER sulla base degli aspetti di abilità comunicativa individuati organizza una scala di sei livelli progressivi. Il costrutto del test allora è rappresentato proprio dalla serie di standard pre-determinati di conoscenza e capacità su cui poi si baserà la misurazione e valutazione della competenza. Una critica che viene sollevata riguardo la validazione del costrutto del test è proprio il fatto che oggi questi sembrano riflettere meno le teorie di competenza o interazione comunicativa della linguistica applicata, quanto piuttosto le decisioni politiche che guidano la formulazione di questi standard.

Nel corso dello sviluppo di un test sono molte le decisioni da prendere che possono influenzare la validità del test finale. Secondo Bachman e Palmer (1996) le tre fasi principali sono quelle della progettazione del test, dell'operazionalizzazione e dell'amministrazione. Nella prima fase vengono prese decisioni che riguardano lo scopo del test o la definizione del profilo degli utenti o la definizione delle situazioni da includere nelle prove. Le decisioni prese confluiranno nella seconda fase in un set di specificazioni che aiuteranno nello strutturare il test. Infine, la versione preliminare del test verrà testata nella fase di amministrazione su un gruppo di individui corrispondente al target d'utenza.

Quanto alla definizione del profilo di un'utenza composta da migranti il primo fattore da tenere in considerazione è l'estrema eterogeneità che li caratterizza. Tra le variabili di diversità si riscontrano le diverse provenienze e profili linguistici, i diversi livelli di scolarizzazione pregressa, diverse ragioni che hanno portato a migrare, diverse motivazioni e diversi stili cognitivi. La variabilità sembra riguardare anche i profili interni dei singoli individui. Vengono definiti "profili frastagliati" quelli relativi ai singoli apprendenti la quale competenza linguistica non è distribuita uniformemente tra le varie capacità. Questi aspetti si intrecciano inoltre alle caratteristiche dell'apprendimento in età adulta. L'età influisce infatti sia a livello neurologico che psico-linguistico nell'apprendimento di una seconda lingua. Motivo per cui il campo dell'Educazione degli

Adulti ha dovuto individuare modelli d'apprendimento e di insegnamento appropriati ad un pubblico adulto.

Questi aspetti determinano la difficoltà di individuare i bisogni linguistici e la definizione dello scopo del test. Ciononostante, è una sfida che va accolta se si vogliono effettivamente fare inferenze e predizioni sulla reale abilità dei candidati di interagire linguisticamente in contesti specifici. Ed è ovviamente anche un insieme di aspetti da tenere in considerazione nei percorsi che preparano alla formazione linguistica e allo svolgimento di un test.

Per la delicatezza della situazione e la difficoltà di gestirla si è deciso di dedicare un paragrafo specifico riguardante gli apprendenti analfabeti o con scarsa scolarizzazione. Questi migranti spesso provengono da paesi in cui la scrittura è usata in poche situazioni e la comunicazione avviene principalmente in modo orale. L'impatto con la società europea è quindi molto forte. La scrittura ricopre infatti un ruolo sempre più importante e la stessa definizione di analfabetismo ad oggi è diventata molto più stringente. In base a questa gli alfabetizzati sono coloro che sanno leggere e scrivere e sanno capire quanto letto ed usare entrambe le competenze nella vita quotidiana. Si è quindi creata una nuova categoria di "analfabeti funzionali" per definire coloro che padroneggiano lettura e scrittura in maniera solo superficiale.

La difficoltà di gestire il problema dell'analfabetismo è data dal dover coniugare nello stesso momento due discipline, da un lato l'alfabetizzazione degli adulti e dall'altro la glottodidattica. Dal punto di vista dell'insegnamento, i paesi analizzati nel primo capitolo hanno tutti cercato di affrontare il problema attraverso la predisposizione di corsi di lingua seconda per analfabeti. Dal punto di vista della misurazione linguistica esistono invece dei sillabi e descrittori che delineano i profili linguistici di livello precedente all'A1. Ad esempio, il sillabo *Italiano L2 in contesti migratori Sillabo e descrittori dall'alfabetizzazione all'A1* (Borri et al. 2014). Gli stessi test di certificazione di livello A1 dovrebbero rappresentare un metodo utile per il riconoscimento formale dell'apprendimento conseguito da parte degli immigrati con scarsa scolarizzazione e del raggiungimento della soglia dell'alfabetizzazione funzionale.

La seconda parte del secondo capitolo serve a delineare le istituzioni, gli strumenti e le politiche linguistiche messe in atto in ambito dell'Unione Europea per quanto riguarda il testing linguistico in contesto migratorio.

Il primo elemento a cui far riferimento è sicuramente il Quadro Comune Europeo di Riferimento per le Lingue. Inizialmente pensato per rendere comparabili i certificati linguistici, il QCER è stato poi esteso all'area dell'apprendimento e insegnamento delle lingue, divenendo ora strumento di dialogo e co-operazione tra paesi diversi.

Responsabile del progetto è stato il Consiglio d'Europa, che da sempre attribuisce grande importanza all'apprendimento linguistico e il plurilinguismo come chiavi per la comunicazione interculturale, la democrazia e il contrasto di razzismo e discriminazione. Sebbene il Quadro possa essere uno strumento molto utile per rispondere alle sfide poste dall'immigrazione, incoraggiando trasparenza, coesione e comparabilità, d'altra parte non mancano le preoccupazioni di chi vede nel suo utilizzo nei test per l'integrazione e la cittadinanza uno strumento per controllare e limitare l'immigrazione.

Vari sono gli studiosi che ricordano che il QCER non è stato pensato come strumento per misurare l'integrazione linguistica e che quindi gli standard andrebbero usati con cautela e adattati alle situazioni. Il Consiglio d'Europa ha tenuto il fatto in considerazione quando ha deciso di lanciare una versione del Portfolio Linguistico Europeo adattata agli immigrati adulti, in modo tale da rispondere alle diverse necessità dei singoli apprendenti ed incoraggiando un apprendimento autonomo.

Nel tempo sono stati creati nuovi progetti sempre nell'ambito del Consiglio d'Europa. Il progetto Integrazione Linguistica dei Migranti Adulti (ILMA) nasce con l'obiettivo di aiutare gli stati membri a sviluppare politiche linguistiche inclusive sulla base dei valori condivisi del Consiglio d'Europa.

Anche l'ALTE, l'Associazione Europea degli Esaminatori Linguistici, si è interessata negli ultimi anni al tema del testing in contesto migratorio. Per questo nel 2002 creò il gruppo LAMI (*Language Assessment for Migration and Integration*) con lo scopo di creare una piattaforma per lo scambio e la condivisione di esperienze professionali nell'ambito del testing linguistico in contesto migratorio.

La terza parte del secondo capitolo approfondisce il tema del testing linguistico nel contesto italiano, con l'obiettivo di fornire un contesto dettagliato di quanto poi verrà trattato nella fase sperimentale della tesi. In Italia due sono le principali strade percorribili in termini di testing e certificazione linguistica.

In primo luogo, ci sono i test di livello A2 da svolgere presso le Prefetture o i CPIA. I soggetti responsabili del loro sviluppo sono dovuti a definire i contenuti e i criteri di

valutazione del test sulla base delle linee guida fornite dagli enti certificatori italiani. A questo scopo il sillabo di riferimento per i livelli di competenza in italiano L2 fornisce un supporto indispensabile. Il sillabo è adattato ai bisogni degli immigrati e lo fa stabilendo i contenuti da includere nel test, tenendo in considerazione i domini d'uso, le abilità, le forme linguistiche e le azioni socio-comunicative richieste ad un apprendente di livello A2. Il tutto viene fatto tenendo in considerazione i parametri forniti dal QCER, che vengono interpretati e integrati al contesto di apprendimento della lingua italiana come lingua seconda per immigrati.

I CPIA sono i Centri Provinciali per l'Istruzione per gli adulti, sono una tipologia di istituzione scolastica autonoma e sono articolati in reti territoriali di servizio. In Veneto, ad occuparsi dell'elaborazione e monitoraggio delle prove per i test di lingua italiana per il permesso di soggiorno di lungo periodo e per la Verifica dell'Accordo di Integrazione è la Struttura Tecnica Regionale istituita nel 2011 (e ricostituita nel 2019).

Il test è strutturato a partire dal Vademecum redatto sulla base delle linee guida contenute nel Sillabo e si compone di due prove di ascolto, tre di lettura e due di scrittura, per una durata totale di sessanta minuti. Per i soli candidati analfabeti è prevista una prova integrativa orale che integra il Test A2 e sostituisce nella valutazione le prove di lettura e scrittura.

La seconda tipologia di test di lingua italiana è relativa alla pratica certificatoria garantita dai quattro Enti Certificatori italiani: Società Dante Alighieri, Università per Stranieri di Perugia, Università per Stranieri di Siena e Università degli Studi Roma Tre.

Tra queste, l'Università per stranieri di Perugia e l'università per stranieri di Siena hanno predisposto degli esami specifici per l'utenza degli immigrati, dai livelli A1 ai livelli B1.

Una prima differenza rispetto ai test dei CPIA i test di certificazione valutano tutte le competenze, compresa quella orale. Il tempo fornito per completare il test è più lungo, allo stesso tempo i test di certificazione contengono testi più lunghi e più prove da effettuare. Infine, rispetto ai CPIA gli enti certificatori rilasciano un certificato riconosciuto ufficialmente che certifica il raggiungimento di un determinato livello di competenza comunicativa.

Il terzo capitolo della tesi riporta i risultati di una ricerca qualitativa condotta con lo scopo di indagare le opinioni di professionisti che lavorano nell'ambito della preparazione e del testing linguistico dei migranti.

L'approccio scelto è stato quello dell'intervista guidata, un approccio che si trova a metà strada tra l'intervista informale e quella invece basata su domande standardizzate a risposta aperta. Questo approccio ha consentito la conservazione di un certo grado di flessibilità nel trarre informazioni dagli intervistati, permettendo allo stesso tempo di non andare troppo fuori argomento.

Il campione di intervistati è ridotto, ma comunque è stato scelto sulla base di un'approvata esperienza e qualificazione nell'ambito dell'insegnamento dell'italiano come lingua seconda. Il primo intervistato è Nereo Turati, insegnante in procinto di andare in pensione che lavora presso il CPIA di Vicenza. Nel corso della sua carriera è stato commissario e organizzatore delle sessioni d'esame presso i CPIA, ed è inoltre qualificato come esaminatore CILS. Il suo maggior interesse però è nell'alfabetizzazione in italiano L2 di immigrati adulti, sul quale ha scritto anche due manuali[23].

La seconda intervistata è Antonella Colaci, giovane insegnante che al momento svolge il ruolo di coordinatrice della formazione linguistica presso una cooperativa padovana. Il suo percorso di formazione include una laurea in Didattica della Lingua Italiana per Straniera presso l'Università per Stranieri di Perugia, dove ha anche ottenuto la certificazione DILS-PG e la qualificazione di esaminatrice CELI. Ha inoltre ottenuto un master in didattica dell'italiano come L2 presso l'Università degli Studi di Padova. Ha avuto esperienze lavorative presso il Centro Linguistico d'Ateneo e come facilitatrice nella scuola dell'obbligo, prima di cominciare a lavorare negli ultimi anni come insegnante di italiano per migranti nell'ambito dei CAS e degli SPRAR.

L'intervista si è snodata lungo tre categorie principali. La prima parte ha lo scopo di definire il profilo dell'utenza degli immigrati dal punto di vista degli intervistati. La seconda indaga le caratteristiche del testing linguistico in ambito migratorio. L'ultima parte invece concerne le politiche linguistiche e i loro effetti sull'insegnamento e l'apprendimento.

---

[23] Leggi e Scrivi. Percorsi e materiali didattici per l'insegnamento della lettura e della scrittura attraverso la lingua italiana ad adulti non madrelingua. I e II volume

Per quanto riguarda la definizione del profilo di un'utenza di immigrati gli intervistati sono d'accordo sul fatto che i loro profili nel contesto di una classe siano estremamente variegati. Secondo il primo intervistato le classi multilivello sono un ripiegamento dovuto a diversi problemi, quali la mancata capacità di sviluppare una valutazione iniziale, la mancata presa in considerazione dei bisogni e necessità individuali e la mancanza di soldi che non permette di differenziare gli insegnamenti. Secondo la seconda intervistata nonostante si cerchi di creare delle classi omogenee le variabili da considerare sono molte e vanno dalla diversa lingua d'origine, di scolarizzazione pregressa, diversi stili cognitivi e motivazioni. Per entrambi gli intervistati la situazione di classi non omogenee si deve affrontare effettuando un'attenta analisi dei bisogni e degli aspetti critici dei singoli apprendenti.

Secondo il primo intervistato partire dal bisogno principale è la risposta anche al problema di apprendenti con un profilo frastagliato in termini di competenze. La seconda intervistata, invece, spiega che questo problema può essere affrontato in fase di testing attraverso la possibilità di capitalizzazione.

In ogni caso, entrambi gli intervistati reputano fondamentale condurre una valutazione iniziale delle competenze, attraverso dei test oggettivi. Entrambi utilizzano inoltre dei test progressivi che consentono una valutazione iniziale più rapida

Dall'intervista emerge che per quanto riguarda richiedenti asilo e rifugiati le principali categorie di motivazioni che spingono ad effettuare un percorso di apprendimento e certificazione riguardano da un lato la volontà di sviluppare una competenza linguistica e vederla riconosciuta da un attestato, dall'altro lato la motivazione è legata alla necessità di un attestato di lingua, sempre più richiesto da agenzie interinali e programmi di inserimento lavorativo. Il percorso di certificazione può inoltre essere obbligatorio durante il percorso migratorio. Anche in questo caso si distinguono due principali categorie, da un lato le persone che vivono un sentimento di precarietà e contano su permesso indeterminato per poter ottenere benefici dal punto di vista del welfare e della mobilità. Dall'altra parte ci sono quelle persone che ad esempio hanno già delle attività e ne hanno bisogno per ottenere benefici dal punto di vista fiscale o di accesso al credito. Infine, entrambi gli intervistati parlano di un forte spirito di rivalsa che spinge gli immigrati ad intraprendere un percorso di apprendimento linguistico che possa portarli a recuperare il background pregresso.

Riguardo l'introduzione di test per migranti gli intervistati hanno opinioni contrastanti. La seconda intervistata sostiene che i contenuti, il lessico e le situazioni comunicative siano effettivamente adattati alla tipologia d'utenza. Secondo il primo intervistato sebbene in alcune situazioni possa essere giusto adattare il lessico, l'adattamento dei contenuti circoscrive gli apprendenti nell'ambito di determinati argomenti senza lasciare loro la possibilità di scegliere liberamente le situazioni comunicative in cui muoversi.

Riguardo la differenza tra i test dei CPIA e i test di certificazione linguistica entrambi gli intervistati concordano sul fatto che i primi siano decisamente più semplici rispetto agli ultimi. In primo luogo, perché manca la parte di produzione orale. In secondo luogo, perché anche a livello di forma linguistica ed esercizi da svolgere i test dei CPIA sono più vicini ad un livello A1. Anche il metodo di valutazione è più informale, e probabilmente anche più soggettivo. D'altra parte, mentre i test dei CPIA servono esclusivamente ai fini del rilascio del permesso di soggiorno e alla verifica dei crediti dell'accordo d'integrazione, i test di certificazione sono spendibili sul mercato del lavoro e a livello internazionale.

Alla domanda relativa agli aspetti tecnici e alle problematiche relative allo svolgimento dei test i due candidati hanno dato delle risposte contrastanti, dovute però alla diversità stesse dei test dei CPIA e di quelli delle certificazioni linguistiche. La seconda intervistata sostiene che il numero di sessioni disponibili sono molte. Elenca tra gli aspetti positivi la capitalizzazione e il costo ridotto dei test per immigrati. Il primo intervistato riferisce invece di un taglio di fondi che ha determinato il dimezzamento del personale, oltre che della poca disponibilità di alcuni insegnanti di partecipare alla commissione d'esame, il che influisce poi anche sul loro atteggiamento in fase di esame.

Per quanto riguarda le politiche linguistiche il primo intervistato individua una serie di problematiche. La prima riguarda il fatto che sebbene i requisiti per il superamento del test A2 dei CPIA siano comuni in tutta Italia, l'attualizzazione di queste procedure variano tra diverse province, determinando delle disparità di trattamento anche profonde. Quanto al recente inserimento del requisito di livello B1 per l'ottenimento della cittadinanza egli sostiene che la problematica emerge dal momento in cui questo non è stato accompagnato da un ampliamo dell'offerta dei servizi linguistici. Ciò che lui ritiene indispensabile è una campagna informativa effettuata da parte dell'autorità che renda gli

interessati consapevoli delle proprie opportunità e possibilità. Lamenta inoltre la mancanza di investimenti pensati e voluti e di iniziative alternative ai corsi di lingua, che forniscano degli stimoli culturali o anche dei modelli di educazione linguistica attraverso il fare, che per ora sono svolti sporadicamente da volontari. Tuttavia, l'aspetto probabilmente più critico secondo l'intervistato riguarda la questione degli immigrati analfabeti o scarsamente scolarizzati. Mancano a suo avviso campagne di alfabetizzazione e ricerche sui metodi d'insegnamento per analfabeti. Ciò si collega alla mancanza di insegnanti che siano in grado di gestire corsi per analfabeti che devono o vogliono imparare la lingua italiana, a cui contribuisce il fatto che non esistano dei percorsi formativi indirizzati alla preparazione di insegnanti di questo tipo.

Il secondo intervistato si concentra invece sui cambiamenti avvenuti di recente a seguito del nuovo decreto. A tale proposito sostiene che le cose siano cambiate in maniera molto rapida. Le sue ore di lezione agli utenti del CAS sono state cancellate, in quanto non è più prevista per loro una formazione linguistica. Questa è ancora disponibile per gli utenti degli SPRAR. Il problema in questo caso è che il progetto non è più accessibile né ai titolari della protezione umanitaria -a causa della cancellazione di questa forma di protezione- né ai richiedenti asilo. Quindi è un problema sia per chi lavora nell'ambito di questi progetti che per gli immigrati che vi partecipano.

Sulla base di quanto emerge da questo studio si può concludere che sebbene ci si stia movendo a riguardo molti sono gli aspetti da approfondire e da migliorare. La tesi non ha dato un giudizio finale su quanto sia giusto il fatto di rendere il test di lingua un percorso obbligatorio. Ciò che si può affermare piuttosto è che dal momento in cui questi requisiti ci sono, e dal momento in cui potrebbero effettivamente servire come stimolo per intraprendere un sempre utile apprendimento linguistico, occorre fare in modo di garantire iniziative linguistiche che siano sostenibili e accessibili a tutti coloro che sono coinvolti. Altrettanto indispensabile per questo obiettivo è che si continui ad impegnarsi verso lo sviluppo di test validi, affidabili e non discriminatori.