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*Inclusive language in ELT:  
a project for a liaison interpreting class at  
the University of Padua*

Relatrice  
Prof. Fiona Clare Dalziel

Laureanda  
Federica Fabiano Di Gregorio  
n° matr.1238324 / LMLCC

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*A mamma e papà,  
che sono sempre presenti per tutti noi.*



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## INTRODUCTION

Interpreting has gained visibility over the past decades, and similarly, an increased awareness towards the topic of inclusion has been observed. The present thesis aims at demonstrating throughout its chapters the importance of interpreting, particularly liaison interpreting, in fostering inclusive practices, thanks to a project I carried out together with Professor Dalziel with a Liaison Interpreting class at the University of Padua. Students' help and participation in the activities proposed were fundamental to collect results on the topic, and to understand the level of awareness of inclusion among young people. The collected results helped in answering three research questions:

- How aware are MA language students following a course on Liaison Interpreting of the topic of inclusion and inclusive language?
- What activities can be proposed to fulfil the aim of increasing awareness and encouraging students to use inclusive language when practising Liaison Interpreting?
- How do students perceive the activities proposed?

The first chapter will focus on the topic of interpreting, providing different definitions of the term, and a brief overview of the modes of interpreting, in other words simultaneous and consecutive interpreting, and conference interpreting. The chapter will then move to liaison interpreting, the focus of the thesis. As will be argued, its definition is not simple, as it can be named in different ways, according to the contexts in which it is used. A description of its characteristics will be provided, along with the role of the interpreter working in a liaison context. Interpreters are required to possess different skills in order to master their profession, and both skills and competences will be described in detail, with particular attention to the relationship between language and culture, which play a relevant role in interpreting, as oral mediation connects people who speak different languages, but who also have different cultural backgrounds. Chapter 1 will then disclose the topic discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3, introducing

the different activities that can be proposed to future interpreters in order to acquire the above-mentioned skills and competences.

The second chapter is dedicated to the topic of inclusion and inclusive language. First of all, a definition of inclusion will be provided, along with an explanation of its importance within the society, in order to make everyone feel respected and part of the society itself. The second part of the chapter focuses on inclusive language and will provide its definition, some principles most guidelines recommend adhering to in order to put individuals at the centre and to promote respect and awareness, and finally, different useful strategies to avoid discrimination and discriminatory language. Particular emphasis is placed on the topic of gender, disability, and ethnicity, introducing some alternatives to be used instead of discriminatory or ableist terms. The chapter deals with English and Italian only, as these are the two working languages within the Liaison Interpreting course in question.

A great variety of sources were used to write the chapters, and some of them were particularly helpful, in particular in relation to the second chapter. Inclusion and inclusive language being relatively recent topics, online guidelines and articles were relevant in the research, as many universities and institutions have been trying to foster inclusion within their communities, promoting the use of inclusive language even outside their own contexts.

The third and last chapter aims at answering the three research questions defined at the beginning of the project, and it will discuss the importance of the use of inclusive language in interpreting, as it is argued inclusive practices can be fostered thanks to interpreting. The answers to the research questions will be addressed thanks to a description of the activities proposed in class to liaison interpreting students during the first semester of the 2021/2022 academic year, and after the analysis of the results obtained in the activities themselves. In the conclusion, such answers will be presented, along with a comment on the whole project and on the future of inclusive language in interpreting.



## CHAPTER 1

### INTERPRETING

As this thesis aims to investigate inclusive language within the context of a Liaison Interpreting course, this first chapter will outline the figure of the liaison interpreter, and it will provide a focus on the specific features of liaison interpreting, as well as on the skills required of every professional performing this position. Before focusing on Liaison interpreting, a brief overview of the different interpreting modes will be provided.

#### 1.1 Interpreting

Interpreting and interpreters have always been necessary within communities, since oral communication among people with different backgrounds would not have been possible without these figures (Takeda and Baigorri-Jalón, 2016:VIII-IX). An acceptable and convincing synonym for the term interpreting is *oral mediation*, as pointed out by Cotta-Ramusino (2005:56). A first definition of the term *interpreting* was given by Otto Kade (1968 in Pöchhacker, 2009:133) as

a form of translation (in the wider sense) in which (a) the source-language text is presented only once and thus cannot be reviewed or replayed, and (b) the target-language text is produced under time pressure, with little chance for correction and revision.

Interpreting is, as a matter of fact, the oral translation of a speech or a conversation between at least two participants, from a source language into a target language, which occurs simultaneously or as the speech is uttered by the speaker. As pointed out by Pöchhacker (2004:10), the main feature of interpreting is its immediacy, due to its link with communication; as a matter of fact, interpreters work at the speed of speech delivery, that is 100 to 200 words per minute (Gile, [1995] 2009:111), completely different from translators, who can work on a single word per hours. According to the Guidelines published by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO 13611, 2014), the verb *to interpret* conveys a simple meaning, which is the act of translating a spoken source language message into a spoken target language message, erroneously

excluding in this way sign language (Pöchhacker, 2004:10). As I will argue, interpreting is not a mere exchange of information and messages in different linguistic codes, it is not a literal translation of a communicative event, but it involves cultural competences (Katan, 1999:12-13). Interpreting requires the possession of linguistic competences and extra-linguistic competences, which also include psychological and pragmatic ones (Cotta-Ramusino, 2005:56), as well as gestures (Garwood, 2005:146). Therefore, comprehension and respect for both linguistic and cultural features connected with both speakers are an essential feature of oral mediation (Luka, 2005:203).

Before focusing on the competences required to master the profession, I will provide a brief overview of the interpreting profession. In the recent past, the presence of the professional figure of the interpreter has increased in various contexts. In the past, people were used to seeing interpreters in conferences or plenary sessions, particularly at the European Parliament, facilitating communication between members of different countries; today, the role of interpreters has changed and it is common to see them in offices, hospitals or legal settings (Way, 2016:1010), helping migrants or people who cannot understand the language of the country in which they live. People have become used to meeting these figures in different contexts, not only on formal occasions. The reason why the role of interpreters has received more exposure in the past years depends, on one hand, on the fact that oral mediation is not exclusive of important events such as UN conferences; in addition, it received visibility thanks to the media, which allowed spectators to acknowledge the efforts interpreters make to allow conversation among VIPs and hosts in television shows. The events of the past century played a major role in increasing interpreters' visibility, due to wars and peace processes, and the development of community interpreting to assure human rights in society (Baigorri-Jalón, 2015:19). As a consequence, more professional associations have been created in various contexts, and interpreting schools were founded (Angelelli, 2004:12; Baigorri-Jalón, 2015:19). On the other hand, conference mediation is not the only existing type of mediation, as we will see.

Oral mediation may be split in two major categories; simultaneous interpreting and consecutive interpreting.

The simultaneous mode consists in the real-time translation of a speech, and it is the preferred mode for multilingual conferences, usually with the help of technological devices. As pointed out by Setton (1999 in Seeber, 2015:85) and as it might seem from an external point of view, this mode is complex, since the simultaneous interpreter is required to perform various similar activities at the same time, such as listening to the speech, understanding it, translating it into the target language (Seeber, 2015:79-80, 82) or, as listed by Roy (1992:26), listening, interpreting, and speaking, resulting in overlapping talk. Simultaneous interpreting requires a specific soundproofed booth for the interpreter, placed inside the meeting room and responding to ISO standards (Seeber, 2015:89), by means of which the interpreter can follow the speech and look at the speakers<sup>1</sup>. In addition, headphones and microphones are needed, since the interpreter has to report the speech as is it delivered without being distracted by other sounds or voices, and since he/she does not sit near the speaker or the listener, microphones and earphones are a necessary instrument to be used also by these two figures<sup>2</sup>.

The growing impact of technology has changed simultaneous interpreting as interpreters can access online documents during the meeting or ask other colleagues for advice (Gile, [1995] 2009:111), and even if they are separated from the participants, especially during conferences, they can see the speakers giving their speech (Seeber, 2015:89-90). In simultaneous interpreting, there is no time for the interpreter to take complete notes, they can only note down numbers or names, that is to say parts of conversation difficult to be anticipated by the interpreter, since they go beyond language comprehension and can be expressed in different forms or ways (Seeber, 2015:85-86). One of the difficulties of being a simultaneous interpreter, among others shared by every professional in this field, is the difference in the syntax of the working languages; in fact, some languages,

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<sup>1</sup> European Union, (n.d.), *Interpreting and translating for Europe*, [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/en\\_print\\_2016.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/en_print_2016.pdf). Accessed 21/05/2022.

<sup>2</sup> AIIC, <https://aiic.org/site/world/conference/glossary>. Accessed 21/05/2022.

such as German, put the verb at the end of the sentence, and as a consequence, the interpreter has to wait for the speaker to finish the whole sentence before starting translating, or otherwise the information reported could be misunderstood or reported wrongly (Lattanzi, n.d.:10). From a different point of view, interpreters might anticipate the intended message<sup>3</sup>, but it is obviously risky, and usually it is not even possible to delay the interpreting performance, as the lag between the speech being uttered and the translation given by the interpreter presents a limited lag (2 to 4 seconds) to be respected (Seeber, 2015:86).

The other major category is consecutive interpreting: unlike simultaneous interpreting, and as the name suggests, consecutive interpreting is to be performed after the speaker has delivered their speech or part of it; therefore, the words are uttered by the speaker, and in the meantime the interpreter, who sits in the same room as the speaker, listens carefully and possibly takes notes, in order to report the information once the speech is finished (AIIC). Therefore, the main difference from simultaneous interpreting is the separation of speech comprehension from speech production, synchronous in the other mode (Gile, [1995] 2009:177). The speech to be translated can last few or several minutes, but it is preferable for the speaker to pause after a maximum of 15 minutes, in order to give the floor to the interpreter and to avoid miscomprehension among the audience, due to the long time lapse between the different parts of the speech being translated (Lattanzi, n.d.:6, 10). From Munday's point of view (2009:176), the time limit Lattanzi mentions is not so fixed; on the contrary, it is argued that the utterance the interpreter is required to translate can consist of a single word or can even last more than half an hour.

This interpreting mode allows the speaker to listen to the interpreter's performance, and to notice possible mistakes or omissions in the target-language output (if he/she can at least understand it), and can even lead to corrections or clarifications, to keep the audience's level of comprehension and attention high; precisely because of simultaneity, simultaneous interpreting instead does not

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<sup>3</sup> European Commission, *Simultaneous interpreting*, [https://ec.europa.eu/education/knowledge-centre-interpretation/conference-interpreting/simultaneous-interpreting\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/education/knowledge-centre-interpretation/conference-interpreting/simultaneous-interpreting_en). Accessed 30/04/2022.

allow the speaker to listen to the interpreter translating and he/she blindly trust the professional (Gile, [1995] 2009:41-42). In remembering the segments to be reproduced, the consecutive interpreter is advantaged by the opportunity to take notes as indications: this requires less short-term memory than that required of simultaneous interpreters. As a matter of fact, in consecutive interpreting, note-taking helps the interpreter in rendering the speech faithfully, without omissions, when the discourse is too dense to rely on memory (Munday, 2009:211). The amount of notes taken is personal and differs from professional to professional; as a matter of fact, Herbert (1952:15) states that interpreters should find their own way to write notes, since those written by other professionals may not be suited to them. Experience and short-term memory play a major role in this. Usually, notes do not match the speech exactly, but only a few words are written down, such as nouns and relevant verbs: as reported by Gile ([1995] 2009:177-179), grammatical words are omitted in notes. In addition, notes can include symbols or drawings, as well as abbreviations, and interpreters need to learn the specific techniques of note-taking, learning how to decode their own notes in order to take advantage of their effectiveness (Russell, Takeda, 2015:98-99).

It is argued that notes should be written in the target language (Herbert, 1952:38; Gile [1995] 2009:179), so that there is no need to translate notes when delivering the translation. However, Gile ([1995] 2009:179) points out that writing notes or finding equivalents in the target language when listening to the source language can be mentally tiring and challenging, and can lead to a loss of processing capacity. During the reformulation phase, or in other words, the phase in which the discourse is delivered by the interpreter, the professional renders the speech by retrieving information from their own memory and by looking at their notes; this advantage results in more time for the consecutive interpreter to think about the best linguistic choices in the rendering, and moreover they can rearrange the order of the elements included in the discourse or create logical links, given that the translation will be faithful (Gile, [1995] 2009:214-215). Pöchhacker (2004:18-19) makes a distinction between *classic consecutive* and *short consecutive*, the classic, being the mode allowing note-taking, and the short mode that used in liaison

situations, in which notes are not necessary or do not need to be too elaborate, since the interpreter has control over turn-taking (Munday, 2009:176; Sandrelli, [2001] 2014:177; Roy 2000 in Angelelli, 2004:18).

Before analysing the competences interpreters are required to possess, the following sections will provide an overview of the different types of interpreting, with particular attention on the focus of the dissertation, liaison interpreting. As a matter of fact, the two above-mentioned categories of simultaneous and consecutive interpreting, are further split into different categories: conference and liaison interpreting, the latter with sub-categories, such as diplomatic, court, medical and community interpreting (CTTIC).

### **1.1.1 Conference interpreting**

As the name suggests, conference interpreting is performed in conference settings, particularly in multilingual meetings, including press conferences, dinners and gatherings (Diriker, 2015:171-172). Interpreters working as conference interpreters can practice as freelancers or staff interpreters for institutions or organizations, for instance the European Council or Committee, or other European agencies<sup>4</sup>, and their role is to translate discourse from one language into another to facilitate comprehension among the involved parts. Conference interpreting allows both interpreting modes, that is to say, simultaneous and consecutive modes: the preferred mode is the simultaneous one, since, with simultaneity, the conference or the meeting will not go on for a long time as it would if the consecutive mode were used, as pauses are needed for the interpreter to translate the discourse, causing an extension in time (Diriker, 2015:171-172).

As mentioned in the previous section, simultaneous interpreting requires a special and technological booth for the interpreter; however, in smaller meetings in which the number of the participants is minimal, just one or two listeners, whispered interpreting can be preferred (Pöchhacker, 2004:19). It is also called by the French term *chuchotage*, and in this case the interpreter sits next to the participants and

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<sup>4</sup> European Commission, *Conference interpreting explained*, [https://ec.europa.eu/education/knowledge-centre-interpretation/conference-interpreting/conference-interpreting-explained\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/education/knowledge-centre-interpretation/conference-interpreting/conference-interpreting-explained_en). Accessed 30/04/2022

whispers the translation (AIIC). This mode can be challenging, since, even if whispering, the interpreter's voice can cover the speaker's voice and this may lead to misunderstandings and reduce the quality of the interpreting performance (Diriker, 2015:172, 178). In addition, the whispered interpretation can cause confusion to the speaker, since they can get distracted by the interpreter's voice (Pöllabauer, 2015:205-206).

An interesting type of interpretation used in conference settings is the so-called *relay interpreting*, which is a solution to problems in directionality: this mode is used when there are no available interpreters for a given combination of languages, and consequently, a third language called the *pivot language* is used as an intermediary. Two or more interpreters work jointly, one being the source for another interpreter to translate into the final target language (Diriker, 2015:174; Pöchhacker, 2004:21; Munday, 2009:220). Relay interpreting is usually used in simultaneous mode, with interpreters sitting in different booths, but however, it can also be used in consecutive interpreting, although the time dedicated to the whole meeting will be longer.

## 1.2 Liaison interpreting

According to the AITI (Associazione Italiana Traduttori e Interpreti), liaison interpreting:

[...] assicura la comprensione informale per piccoli gruppi di persone, con esclusione delle tecniche di interpretazione simultanea o consecutiva. La prestazione si intende per una sola combinazione linguistica (es. italiano verso inglese e viceversa).<sup>5</sup>

As reported in the quote, liaison interpreting is not suitable for the formal contexts listed for conference interpreting, but it is common in informal contexts. As a matter of fact, Sandrelli (2005:77) argues it can be named in different ways, depending on the work context it refers to: liaison interpreting can be used from public to private contexts, and it is often referred to as community interpreting (Hermans, 2009:94). Wadensjö (1998:49) defines community interpreting as

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<sup>5</sup> AITI, *Interpreti di trattativa*, <https://aiti.org/it/professione/condizioni-di-incarico/interpreti-di-trattativa>. Accessed 30/04/2022.

“interpreting carried out in face-to-face encounters between officials and laypeople, meeting for a particular purpose at a public institution” and argues the term liaison interpreting is a synonym. On the other hand, Bancroft (2015:217) states that the aim of community interpreting is to “give voice” to people unable to access services due to the fact they do not speak a certain language; however, he still argues that the term presents many synonyms, liaison interpreting among others, which have slightly different features, though, even if they are interchangeable. Schjoldager (1998:212-213) in her review article of Carr, Robert, Dofour, and Steyn’s book (1997), argues that liaison interpreting is used to refer to non-conference interpreting in general, in particular business interpreting. Other types of interpreting settings go under the name of community interpreting. On the other hand, Munday (2009:173, 181, 204) does not agree with the use of the term community interpreting in place of liaison interpreting, defining community interpreting as a social and institutional practice proper of multi-ethnic contexts, in which one of the represented parties is a person, whereas the other is an institution. He rather refers to liaison interpreting with the term *dialogue interpreting*, since liaison situations are face-to-face events and are dialogic interactions. Dialogue interpreting is, in fact, an interaction between two parties speaking different languages, mediated by an interpreter; for this reason, a fitting synonym is also *triangle interpreting* (Bancroft, 2015:217), *pas de trois* (Wadensjö 1998 in Angelelli, 2004:14) or *trialogo*, which would not be possible without the figure of the professional (Cotta-Ramusino, 2005:56), who is no longer a channel conveying information, but helps in co-constructing meanings (Wadensjö 1995 in Angelelli, 2004:18).

The relevance of liaison interpreting has witnessed an increase in the last decades, and as a matter of fact, it is argued that in the past it was performed by volunteers or non-professionals (Wadensjö, 1998:49; Garwood, 2005:145) and only for specific situations, such as meetings between business parties in business talks or international events (Riccardi, 2019:211). Liaison or community interpreting is usually performed in consecutive mode, and one of the most considerable differences between liaison and conference interpreting, is the length of the



utterance to be reported: while conference interpreters need to translate long speeches, the conversations in which liaison interpreters take part are more natural, and their interpreting contributions follow the rhythm of the dialogic exchange. In fact, the participants do not follow a firm framework when speaking, and often they tend to interrupt each other to ask questions, to react and to add interjections or comments (Sandrelli, 2005:77,78). In a way, liaison interpreting can be described as “a series of short consecutive interpretations” (Sandrelli, [2001] 2014:177), since the interpreter listens to the first party speaking, and when significant information is delivered, or when a significant pause is made, he/she starts to interpret, and this happens in both working languages. As far as directionality is concerned, that is to say, the working language direction of the interpretation, liaison interpreting is bilateral (Napier, 2015:129; Munday, 2009:204), thus the interpreter translates from the source language into the target language and vice versa, the target language becoming the source language depending on the party speaking (Pöchhacker, 2004:21).

The interaction taking place in liaison interpreting sessions can be both symmetrical and asymmetric: in fact, the parties involved often belong to different social positions, for instance, a dialogue between a professional and a migrant (Ozolins, 2015:321-322), or one speaker has more power than the other, and this happens in particular in court contexts (Sandrelli, 2005:78; Garwood, 2005:146; Mason, [1998] 2009:81; Pöchhacker, 2004:59; Luka, 2005:207). In other cases, the two parties have almost the same backgrounds (Gile, [1995] 2009:35) or have the same social status, and this is the case of business meetings, in which the participants share the same information about the branch in which they work (Sandrelli, 2005:78).

Due to the dialogic nature of the conversations held during liaison interpreting sessions, it is necessary for the interpreter to stipulate pauses within the speech, in other words, the professional can control the turn-taking routine and organize the interaction (Munday, 2009:176; Garwood, 2005:147), so that the speech segments to be translated are not too long (Gile [1995] 2009:263). In fact, if sentences tend

to be too long or convey difficult meaning units, the speaker needs to chunk information to allow the interpreter to process information and to translate (Chen, 2015:145), since they cannot take notes and the only reliable instrument for a successful mediation is their memory (Lattanzi, n.d.:10). In other cases, natural pauses, such as breathing pauses, can be used by the interpreter to start their translation, without forcibly interrupting the conversation. In addition to discourse organization in terms of turn-taking, interpreters may need to interrupt the interlocutor if they need clarifications on the content of the sentences or speech they have to translate, if repetition is needed or even if they do not understand terms and need an explanation (Mason, [1998] 2009:81; Bot, 2015:257).

Other situations in which the interpreter has the right to interrupt the speakers are listed by Ozolins (2015:323-324), who refers to the NRPSI (National Register of Public Service Interpreters), and include, apart from clarifications, reports on misunderstandings between the parties, alerts to “possible missed cultural reference or inference”, and possible disturbing elements limiting the professional in their interpreting process. Interruptions of other nature should be avoided, since the interaction would be spoiled (Gamal, [1998] 2009:65). When clarifications or additional information are needed, the interpreter always has to let the other party acknowledge the situation, in such a way that the speaker does not feel excluded by the exchange taking place in the language they do not understand.

As far as the seating arrangement is concerned, the interpreter is usually close to the interlocutors, in order to facilitate communication (Russell & Takeda, 2015:103-104). It is argued that, in triangle interpreting, the position of the three parties should remember a triangle, with the interpreter in a central position following the communication flow, so that everyone can see and listen to each other (Leeson, [1998] 2009:276, Gentile 1996 in Sandrelli, [2001] 2014:179-180; Wadensjö, 1998:50). However, as Clarity Interpreting<sup>6</sup> shows in its explanatory video, the correct position for the interpreter to sit is right next to the person in need, that is to say, the party who does not understand the societal language

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<sup>6</sup> Clarity interpreting, *Interpreter training* (part 1) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3wg-qZjMhU4>. Accessed 30/05/2022.

(Bancroft, 2015:217), so that distractions are limited and the message is emphasized. Moreover, the two participants feel more engaged rather than with the interpreter between the two of them.

Interpreters are required to use the first person when translating, since they are not invisible participants, on the contrary, they actively take part in the conversation, so that they become the voice of the speaker<sup>7</sup>, or, as pointed out by Duflou (2009:4), who cites the European Union website, “they identify with the speaker, [...] they present the speaker’s ideas and convictions with the same intensity and the same shades of meaning”; they take the perspective of the speaker (Sandrelli, 2005:78). As a matter of fact, interpreters only have to interpret and mediate the interaction between the parties, and they must avoid adding comments or personal viewpoints, and their contribution has to correspond to the speakers’ intentions; this allows to deliver the message accurately, reducing confusion. Interpreters should keep their neutrality throughout the entire meeting; obviously, maintaining the neutrality can be difficult, in particular in court or medical interpreting situations, in which sensitive topics are discussed and interactions are loaded with emotions (Garwood, 2005:154-155; Tomassini, 2005:117). However, interpreters are trained to deal with the stress arising from always interpreting in the first person, trying to avoid emotional traumas (Garwood, 2005:155; Ndong-Keller, 2015:344-345). If the third person was used instead of the singular “I”, interpreters should use the so-called “reporting mode” (Duflou, 2009:8), which consists in including reporting verbs after every utterance, for instance “Mr. X says / he notes..”, which do not allow communication to flow and may create misunderstandings. In addition, as argued by Martínez-Gómez (2015:423), the third person is typically used by non-professionals, who do not want to identify with the speakers’ assumptions and prefer to report the discourse from a detached perspective.

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<sup>7</sup> European Commission, *Simultaneous interpreting*, <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/ca288549-03e8-4ac2-903a-8cf4c5bd0f6c>. Accessed 30/05/2022.

As far as the content of speech is concerned, interpreters need to deliver it without additions or omissions: as reported by NAJIT (National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators) in its Code of Ethics (2002),

Source-language speech should be faithfully rendered into the target language by conserving all the elements of the original message while accommodating the syntactic and semantic patterns of the target language. The rendition should sound natural in the target language, and there should be no distortion of the original message through addition or omission, explanation or paraphrasing. All hedges, false starts and repetitions should be conveyed; [...] The register, the style and tone of the source language should be conserved.<sup>8</sup>

Gile ([1995] 2009:210) also states that deliberate omissions with an unaware audience are unethical; however, they can occur sometimes, due to processing time (Gile, [1995] 2009:175-176), or the interpreter may make use of the *omission tactic*. This tactic occurs when the interpreter decides to omit part of the speech in favour of other more important parts of the speech, and it depends on the processing capacity of the interpreter themselves. As a matter of fact, when the interpreter is close to saturation, they cannot rely on their memory at its most, and consequently, they risk losing parts of the speech before rendering them. For this reason, they decide to omit information considered irrelevant in favour of more relevant and valuable information. In other cases, Gile (2009:210) argues that interpreters may decide to omit or attenuate inappropriate utterances, but the whole practice is risky in different contexts, particularly in, where as it seems to be more frequent in liaison or diplomatic contexts.

### **1.3 The skills of the liaison interpreter**

Most of the competences this section will mention are shared by every interpreter performing the profession, but however, some skills and competences are specific of liaison interpreters, since their presence in delicate situations in everyday life of laypersons modify their interpreting modes.

Interpreters are professionals who act as channels; their presence allows the exchange to be balanced in both ways, since the conversation is reported

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<sup>8</sup> NAJIT, (2022). *Code of Ethics and Professional Responsibilities*, <https://najit.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/NAJITCodeofEthicsFINAL.pdf>.

accurately (Luka, 2005:204-206). The status of liaison interpreters, also known as social interpreters or linguistic and cultural mediators, differs from that of conference interpreters, since this profession has received visibility only in the recent past, due to higher migration rates and new necessities in new contexts (Tomassini, 2005:115-116; Bancroft, 2015:225-226). The same point of view is stressed by Cotta-Ramusino (2005:56), who argues that the mediator, or interpreter, is required to have cultural competences, among others. Baker (2009:XVI) also states that the role of interpreters is not that of linguistic mediators only, but it has expanded throughout history. By defining interpreters as cultural mediators, or intercultural mediators, new implications are introduced; as a matter of fact, this implies that they have a deep knowledge of culture and also of the branches in which they work, e.g., mental health care (Bot, 2015:258; Riccardi, 2019:206, 213-214; Séguinot 1995 in Katan, 1999:10-13).

Kaunzner (2005: 62) identifies five essential competences to be possessed by interpreters: linguistic competence, translation competence, both cultural and intercultural competences, communicative competence, and procedural competence. However, these are not the only ones required of interpreters, which include many other skills and competences, for instance, memory and the ability to cope with stress.

### **1.3.1 Linguistic competence**

Linguistic skills are obviously the first and most important feature of liaison interpreters, since they work with languages; they include competences such as in lexis and syntax. Interpreters' proficiency in their work languages is very high, and usually they reach high CEFR levels<sup>9</sup>, such as C1 or C2, that is to say, they are advanced learners. Liaison professionals usually work with their A and B languages, the A language being their mother tongue, and the B language the language in which they are perfectly fluent, so, their second language or a language in which they are highly proficient, both in comprehension and in

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<sup>9</sup> Erasmus University Rotterdam, *CEFR Levels*, <https://www.eur.nl/en/education/language-training-centre/cefr-levels>.

production (AIIC; Pöchhacker, 2004:21; Gile, [1995] 2009:219). Kaunzner (2005:62-63) argues that the role of interpreters is relevant for successful communication, and for this reason, language teaching in both work languages should be introduced for future interpreters and a constant in-depth analysis should be carried out in order to build conscious mediators. Effective language teaching should include not only grammar, but also modules on speech acts, register, language variations, turn-taking, and pragmatics; as a matter of fact, only with a deep knowledge of all the aspects of a language can high proficiency be reached, and along with proficiency, a high level of technicality. For this reason, it is relevant to possess a high lexical competence, to be increased with terminology specific of the different branches belonging to liaison interpreting, e.g. court interpreting and healthcare interpreting (Ballardini, 2005:172-173).

Along with linguistic skills there goes translation competence: in fact, being perfectly fluent both in their A language and in their B language, interpreters are able to switch between the two languages with ease, finding the effective linguistic choices when it comes to translating utterances. In case of saturation (Gile, 2009: ch. 7), this ability may fail, that is to say, their interpreting may fail due to the density of the speech or to the speech speed. In this case, synonyms, substitutions, and omissions of irrelevant information are more frequent (see Section 1.2). Gile (2009:22, ch. 3) introduces the concept of *fidelity*: when it comes to translating speech, interpreters need to decide whether to report the whole content, or if they want the rendition to be linguistic acceptable in the target language. In addition, fidelity regards the personality of the speaker, too. In fact, the interpreter should not only pay attention to the content and to the target language, but also to the speaker's intentions, and consequently they need to pay attention to register and possible sarcastic tones. The concept of fidelity is also mentioned in Pöchhacker (2004:141) and Munday (2009:188), and conveys the meaning of faithfulness in interpreting, without additions or omissions in the content.

Linguistic knowledge in interpreting also involves sociolinguist competence, which refers to the use of register, style, regional varieties and linguistic variations, forms of address, and accents (Piscitelli, 2004:2; Gile, 2009:196). The interpreter should be able, firstly, to understand and comprehend every aspect and the shades of meaning expressed by them; secondly, to render them in their complex. The knowledge of all the mentioned aspects, along with colloquial language, slang, jargon, swearing, and common sayings (Lee, 2015:187; Miguélez, 2014:5), allow the interpretation to be clear, effective, and successful.

Besides the linguistic competence, interpreters need communicative competence, which refers to their ability to maintain the conversation between the two parties without creating miscomprehensions, creating actually an adequate setting in which the interaction can flow thanks to the professional's contribution and rendition of both linguistic and extra-linguistic channels (Kaunzner, 2005:63; Sandrelli, 2005:78). Luka (2005:203-204) argues the communicative competence includes listening, comprehension, and expression.

Linguistic and communicative competence involve extra-linguistic competences: as mentioned before in this section, pragmatics is one of the important competences to acquire. Pragmatics is a study of how language is used, studies performative language, and it deals with meanings in context, that is to say, the discipline is not focused on semantic and literal meanings, but on the creation and understanding of contextually determined meanings (Cummins, 2019:6-9). As a matter of fact, utterances often do not convey a single and simple meaning, they actually convey a more complex meaning which is determined by the general context or by the context created by the speakers. Speech acts are part of the discipline; in fact they can be defined as utterances performing a social action: the literal meaning differs from the real meaning conveyed (Cummins, 2019:186-187). In terms of interpreting, pragmatics plays a subtle role, since it can be difficult to detect and to render in the target language; the only easily recognizable pragmatic patterns are the referential ones (Garzone & Viezzi, 2001:81-82).

It is argued (Gile, 2009:79) that laypersons often fail to notice the pragmatic meanings involved in the conversation, and this happens to professionals, too. However, if interpreters fail in identifying pragmatic patterns or pragmatic meanings, part of the conversation or the whole interaction can be hindered. The same occurs if the figure of the professional is able to detect pragmatic meanings, but then they are omitted in the rendition in the target language. In other cases, interpreters decide to “modify the pragmatic force of speech” (Lee, 2015:196), in order to render a message which conveys the same meaning but in a different tone: however, this is more frequent in court interpreting rather than in liaison interpreting, where the interpreter is required to transfer the message as it is uttered. Thus, the message has to be explicit and also to carry the same emotions as the original, even though it could create disagreement and even if it is loaded with emotions, such as aggression. Politeness strategies can create misunderstandings (Tomassini, 2005:123-124; Mason & Stewart, 2014:52-53).

Along with pragmatics, a good interpreter should be competent in kinesics and non-verbal language (Pöchhacker, 2004:127; Sandrelli, 2005:80). As a matter of fact, in spoken interactions, meanings are constructed also through non-verbal language and behaviours, gestures, body language (Krystallidou, 2017:259-260). Pöllabauer (2015:207) reports the importance of body language, as it often reflects the message conveyed by the speaker: the interpreter needs to render gestures and non-verbal signals in their interpretation, as they may be relevant for the conversation, can hide meanings, and can help creating an effective communication. In addition, by looking at body language, important information can be conveyed, both for the interpreter and for the parties involved: body posture and attitude can suggest if the parties understand the speech and can provide information on the feelings and emotions involved in the interaction, even if not explicitly expressed (Roat & Crezee, 2015:247).



### 1.3.2 Language and culture

Language is a system of communication, a system of sounds and words used to communicate<sup>10</sup>. Communication is an essential feature of interconnection, which affects almost every living creature in the world (Biscaldi & Matera, 2016:16). As pointed out by Balboni (2015:119-120), language is a code by which humans can communicate and share information, as well as emotions and stories, and it is performative, as already argued in Section 1.3.2. Language needs to be considered within the social context; as a matter of fact, Ahearn (2001:109-120) states that language is a social action. It is not a mere means to convey information, but it is rather a social construction in which all social agents act and interact to construct meanings. Hence, we have the term *agency* to refer to language: it can be described as “the socioculturally mediated capacity to act” (Ahearn, 2001:112), or, as argued by Biscaldi and Matera (2016:57), “the human ability to act in a conscious and responsible way within both social and cultural interactions, constraints and limits”. In other words and in the interpreting context, agency is the social action performed by interpreters in conveying messages and organizing interaction; the effect they have upon communication dynamics (Angelelli 2004 in Ozolins, 2015:327). Agency is the key factor that enables the interpreter to be an active participant in conversation, and not an invisible participant (Rudvin, 2015:434).

Language is argued to be tightly linked with the concept of culture, a “context of culture” (Malinowski 1935 in Katan, 1999:72). But what is culture? The anthropologist Fabietti (2015:18) describes it as a transmitted, learnt, and shared complex of ideas, symbols, behaviours, by which individuals have related with the surrounding world. Another possible definition of culture is given by Tylor (1832-1917) (in Riley, 2007:22): “culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom and any other capabilities acquired by man as a member of society”. Culture is a complex concept as depicted in Hall’s “iceberg model” (Katan, 2009:78): the visible part of the iceberg represents all the

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<sup>10</sup> Oxford Learner’s Dictionaries, *language*, <<https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/language?q=language>>. Accessed 30/05/2022.

cultural aspects, which are easily detectable by individuals living outside a given society, whereas the invisible part of the iceberg, that under water, stands for the practices, thoughts, relations, and ideas, which cannot be understood by outsiders, unless they study that culture and practices, or they live in that society to comprehend and use them. Many scholars have tried to give a definition of culture, but however, due to its complexity, the final result is a constellation of definitions. The essential features of culture are described by Spencer-Oatey and Franklin (2009:15): different types of regularities are a manifestation of culture; culture is characteristic of social groups, but within the given social group, individuals do not share the same cultural features; people behave and interpret behaviour on a cultural basis; interaction allows the acquisition and construction of culture. For these reasons, it is really important to acquire culture, along with language, otherwise interactions between speakers with different backgrounds would be difficult.

From an interpreting perspective, culture has little to do with arts or geography, two of the elements Hall (1990 in Katan, 2009: 77-78) places in the upper part of the iceberg, but it has more to do with gestures, attitudes, customs, traditions, communication, and thinking, many of the underwater aspects of a culture, as well as general knowledge (Seeber, 2015:88). Since interpreters work with languages in which they are highly proficient, it is inferable that they should have a deep knowledge of the cultures linked to their work languages. As a matter of fact, it is argued that a lack of knowledge of a culture linked to one of the work languages can create barriers to understanding, miscomprehensions, and distort the message conveyed (Bancroft, 2015:230). Pöchhacker (2004 in Morelli, 2017:85) claims that linguistic mediators, or interpreters, are also required to be cultural mediators, and therefore, to know the culture of the languages they speak, in order to guarantee the success of the interpreted interaction. Interpreters should reach high proficiency also in intercultural competences, that is to say, they should be highly sensitive to cultural issues and differences, and they should understand, and be able to reproduce and translate objective cultural elements, such as greeting norms or good manners, as well as subjective cultural aspects, for instance, attitudes,

justifications to given behaviours, and values attributed to objects or practices (Kaunzner, 2005:62-63).

In communication, in particular in liaison interpreting and similar situations, different approaches to culture may constitute a problem and create misinterpretations, mistakes, and misunderstandings. As reported by Cho, intercultural communication is essential in interpreting, and it can be defined after Hatim's definition (2020 in Cho, 2022:9); the two authors describe the term as the examination of communication and interactions between speakers of different languages, who also have different cultural backgrounds. For Cho (2022:2) "interpreting is [...] intercultural communication in itself", where issues concerning culture, language, and power intersect. Cultural competence for interpreters also involves the recognition and rendition of humour, which often differs from culture to culture (Munday, 2009:195-196).

### **1.3.3 Other skills**

Along with language proficiency, having cognitive and mental abilities, such as a good memory is a requirement interpreters need to fulfil in order to perform the profession (Pöchhacker, 2004:166). Liaison interpreters, in particular, are required to train their memory, since they are not allowed to take notes while listening, due to the dialogic nature of the interaction (Sandrelli [2001] 2014:177; Sandrelli, 2005:78). Baddeley (1992 in Pöchhacker, 2015:69) argues there are two different types of memory: long-term memory and working memory, the latter being the type that provides temporary storage (short-term memory) and executive control functions (used in the interpreting process). Gile (2009:167, 225) provides the general features of working memory, describing it as "a set of mechanisms or processes involved in the control, regulation and active maintenance of task-relevant information in the service of complex cognition", and claiming that working memory has a limited storage capacity, that saturates rapidly when the chunks are too long or convey too much information. It is argued by Gile (2009:166) that the information interpreters need to remember change depending on the situations they are involved in, and also the amount of information stored

in short-term memory can change, consequently, interpreters often cannot repeat short-term memory operations when interpreting. This links to another skill of interpreters; concentration, which is, like memory, a mental quality, but it requires a lot of effort to be maintained, causing fatigue (Pöchhacker, 2004:166; Seeber, 2015:82). Fatigue can lead to saturation and to a consequent loss of concentration, for this reason interpreting courses should train future professionals' ability to maintain concentration, both in listening and in production in both work languages (Sandrelli, 2014:174).

Interpreting situations are not always fatiguing from a linguistic or cognitive point of view; interpreters need to cope with stress, particularly when it comes to mediating in difficult situations or contexts, such as in court or in hospitals. Stress from this perspective is not as debated as cognitive stress, but however, it is argued that many interpreters report psychological traumas, due to tense, sensitive, and contentious contexts, in which life of people is discussed (Garwood, 2005:155; Lee, 2015:187). As reported by Ndongo-Keller (2015:337), community interpreters are those who suffer the most, since the contexts in which they perform their profession are really delicate, and the fact of personifying with victims or criminals, for instance, can be harmful for themselves. This is called *vicarious trauma* or *vicarious traumatization*, which derives precisely from the identification of interpreters with the individuals they get in touch with. Vicarious trauma consists in different symptoms and signs, such as social withdrawal or identity problems, among others. In order to avoid being unable to cope with stress or to suffer from vicarious trauma, there are just few solutions, which include psychoeducation, preparedness, and planning, along with a training in learning how to maintain detachment from the speaker and to cope with emotions (Ndongo-Keller, 2015:338, 342-344).

Precisely for the topics debated in interpreting sessions, interpreters are required to maintain a high level of confidentiality and impartiality, which are, along with accuracy, the three most important ethical principles for interpreters (AIIC in Diriker, 2015:180; Bancroft, 2015:228). Confidentiality involves the non-

disclosure of private documents or information the interpreter has acknowledged during the interpreting session or in its preparation. No exceptions are allowed, unless the disclosure is required by law or regulations<sup>11</sup>.

Impartiality is regulated by the NAJIT as follows:

Court interpreters and translators are to remain impartial and neutral in proceedings where they serve, and must maintain the appearance of impartiality and neutrality, avoiding unnecessary contact with the parties. Court interpreters and translators shall abstain from comment on matters in which they serve.<sup>12</sup>

Although this Canon is proper of court interpreting, the same principle applies also for community interpreters, as they are required to avoid showing personal comments or beliefs explicitly or in the rendition of the message or tone. Codes of ethics are present in every professional association of interpreters, and it is argued by Tseng (1992 in Mikkelson, 1996) that the stricter these codes are, the more power has the association, that is to say, the more valuable is the association itself and its members.

To conclude, as argued in this chapter, the skills and competences liaison interpreters need in their profession are many, and they can be summarized as:

- High proficiency in both work languages: vocabulary, grammar, syntax
- Sensitivity to register, humour, pragmatics, body and non-verbal language
- Deep knowledge of cultures linked to work languages
- Ability to co-ordinate talk and organize turn-taking
- Commitment in respecting ethical principles in Codes of Ethics
- Understanding and sensitivity
- Good memory and concentration
- Ability to cope with stress and emotions

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<sup>11</sup> García-Beyaert, et al., (n.d.). *Ethics and Standards for the Community Interpreter*, [https://www.academia.edu/25408254/ETHICS\\_AND\\_STANDARDS\\_for\\_The\\_Community\\_Interpreter\\_An\\_International\\_Training\\_Tool](https://www.academia.edu/25408254/ETHICS_AND_STANDARDS_for_The_Community_Interpreter_An_International_Training_Tool)

<sup>12</sup> NAJIT, (2022). *Code of Ethics and Professional Responsibilities*, <https://najit.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/NAJITCodeofEthicsFINAL.pdf>

#### **1.4 How can the interpreter acquire the skills**

The amount of training courses available for liaison interpreters has been increasing in the last two decades, as liaison interpreting has been recognized as a profession (Garwood, 2005:145; Riccardi, 2019:211). Training courses split into professional training, organized by professionals jointly with institutions, in which aspirant interpreters already have basic experience in interpreting; and basic training, which is carried out in academic contexts to teach basic notions in the field of interpreting and to develop practical and basic skills (Sandrelli, 2014:173-174). In this section the focus will be basic training, at university level.

One of the first skills to be taught in basic training courses is body positioning. As a matter of fact, it is argued that non-professionals, when they find themselves in interpreting situations, do not know the allowed movements, position, and which party they should face during the interaction (Cotta-Ramusino, 2005:57). For this reason, along with explanations from teachers or professionals, visual resources developed by professionals are fundamental to understand correct positioning and actions, in order to reach naturalness in this scope (Bao, 2015:404; Morelli, 2017:87).

Cognitive skills, such as good memory and good concentration, are marked qualities which are not present in every individual. However, also in this case training can help in increasing one's memory and in increasing concentration levels (Angelelli, 2017:42). Simple exercises repeated once a day can improve memory levels and help stimulating short- and long-term memory; for instance, an effective exercise could be the repetition of words and terms in a foreign language, knowing just the translation in English, or writing down words and reading and repeating them in different moments of the day.

As far as linguistic skills are concerned, language classes and translation classes are essential: in fact, thanks to this kind of courses, students have access to the main features of language, such as vocabulary, terminology, syntax, semantics, registers, and eventually language varieties (Sandrelli, 2014:178). As argued

before (see Section 1.3.1), in-depth knowledge of linguistic aspects allows interpreters to reach high proficiency and fluency in work languages, consequently, allows the process of translation to be performed smoothly. It is clear that basic training cannot prepare interpreters for specific branches or contexts teaching technical language or terminology proper of particular branch, but however, a smattering of the different areas involved in liaison interpreting are preferable, in order to build conscious mediators who can perform the profession in the branch they are more interested in. By presenting different topics and different situations of dialogue interpreting, students and aspirant interpreters can understand the responsibilities their role carries and reflect on the role itself and the ethical behaviour connected to it (Angelelli, 2017:42).

The ability to summarize is also required of interpreters: it is argued that liaison interpreters should report the message responding to the principle of fidelity and accuracy, (Gile, 2009: ch. 3), but however, Sandrelli ([2014:178, 182-182) claims that this specific ability is important. For this reason, activities to be proposed in class include oral summaries of short articles read aloud by the teacher, as well as identification of key ideas found in the article. Summarization is prohibited in most interpreting contexts, but it can be required in particular situations, for instance in cases of emergencies or when the dialogue exchange is too fast. If interpreters strictly comply to ethical codes, they could decide not to use the summarization mode, which obviously tries to convey the same meaning as the original, but due to the use of shorter sentences or synonyms, the real message could be distorted, even if slightly (Bancroft, 2015:227).

Specific language exercises for liaison interpreters include sight translation, the creation of glossaries, chunking, and simulations. Sight translation is the oral translation of a written text (Chen, 2015:144); this activity is really helpful, since it involves two different cognitive abilities at the same time, similar to interpreting processes (Pöchhacker, 2004:186). As a matter of fact, the written text is translated as it is read, and this allows to process information quickly and to translate the written input in a source language into an oral output in the target

language. This activity also allows students to practice chunking, so, to divide the text into smaller units in order to facilitate understanding and the production process (Chen, 2015:144-145). This may prepare the students to understand how to coordinate turns when it comes to liaison interpreting situations. Another useful activity to accomplish the goal of being able to organize turn-taking, is role-play and simulations (Pöchhacker, 2004:186-187). In this way, by acting not only as interpreters, but also as interactants, students understand when they have to stop to allow the other student performing as interpreter to translate their contribution. In addition, thanks to role-play and its clear scenario, as well as clearly defined roles, students can understand the dynamics of interpreting situations, and can improve their concentration skills in order not to be too redundant when conveying information, can learn how to handle interruptions or clarifications required by the interpreter or by the other party, and can have an overview of specific interpreting problems, such as poor hearing conditions or differences in pitch and speed. Their language creativity can be improved by such activities. (Kadrić, 2017:281; Sandrelli, 2014:185-187; Morelli, 2017:99).

Even though technological skills are not a basic requirement for interpreters right now, basic training approaches technology and computer skills, since students and future interpreters should know how to handle programs to create glossaries or helpful resources they can use when interpreting (Kaunzner, 2005:63). As a matter of fact, glossaries are a useful resource, since they can contain thousands of words, and the interpreters can use them in the preparation to interpreting sessions. Online glossaries are much more effective than paper glossaries, due to the fact that in most cases the computer automatically puts terms in alphabetical order, so it is easier to retrieve a needed term, rather than looking for it throughout the entire hand-written document. As argued by Castellano (1983 in Gile 2009:142), “a translator’s most important glossary is the store of terminology he has built up for himself”. I personally agree with this statement; in fact, glossaries can also be found online or can be created by other professionals for academic or professional use, but creating your own glossary is different, since you know your



weaknesses and strengths, so you can decide what terms or what language aspects to include.

Last, but not least, there are cultural competences, which include cultural codes and traditions (Luka, 2005:207). Interpreters' knowledge in cultures needs to be updated periodically, since significant changes occur from time to time, even if they are small and can go unnoticed. In order to internalize a foreign culture, spending time abroad in the target language country appears to be the best solution. However, if it is not possible, interpreters need to get in touch with members of the target culture, so that they can assimilate behaviours, attitudes, and subtle cultural differences by their proximity. In addition, audio and visual materials can be helpful, too. As argued by Bianchi (2005:107-108), movies are important instruments to be used in class, although common sense is necessary, since it is known, that many situations in movies are exaggerated and do not perfectly correspond to reality. However, movies or other visual materials offer a wide range of dialogic exchanges and socio-cultural situations, which can be observed and discussed with teachers, professionals, or with individuals belonging to target culture.

As pointed out in this chapter, training is essential for interpreters to succeed in their profession, and keeping updated is also an essential requirement. Language and culture change rapidly, and if these changes are not tracked by interpreters, the risk is to create miscomprehensions or convey distorted messages, as it will be argued in the next chapters.



## CHAPTER 2

### THE LANGUAGE OF INCLUSION

The focus of the first chapter was the modes of interpreting and the skills that interpreters, in particular liaison interpreters, are required to master, in order to perform the task needed for their profession. Sociocultural competence seen as sensitivity to social norms in the relationship with other people is clearly essential. This chapter will first provide an overview of what inclusion is; the second part of the chapter will be dedicated to inclusive language and the effective strategies and alternatives that can be used to avoid discriminatory behaviours and to be inclusive. The focus is on gender, disability, and ethnicity.

#### **2.1 Inclusion**

Contemporary society is permeated with a renewed interest in inclusion, since in the recent past, more and more discriminating situations have arisen in various contexts of everyday life, from schools to social media. According to the GDEIB Guidebook (Molefi et al., 2001:5) inclusion, or social inclusion, can be defined as

a dynamic state of feeling, belonging, and operating in which diversity is leveraged and valued to create a fair, healthy, and high-performing organization or community. An inclusive culture and environment ensure equitable access to resources and opportunities for all. It also enables individuals and groups to feel safe, respected, heard, engaged, motivated, and valued for who they are.

Social inclusion aims at creating an environment in which every individual feels recognized and safe, an environment in which no discrimination is allowed, and in which diversity is respected and promoted<sup>13</sup>. From a sociological perspective, social inclusion is a “collection of social practices” adopted by the different members of the society, and it is closely connected to the concept of social exclusion, in a society which is naturally stratified and mobile (Allman, 2013:1).

The first two Articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights declare that:

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<sup>13</sup> Actionaid, *Inclusione sociale: tra povertà e discriminazione*. <https://www.actionaid.it/informati/notizie/inclusione-sociale-in-bilancio-tra-povertà-e-discriminazione>. Accessed 3/07/2022.

#### Article 1

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

#### Article 2

Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty<sup>14</sup>.

As suggested, every human being is equal in dignity and rights (Cole, 2006:1), and this should lead to high mutual respect, and nobody should be offended, left behind or disrespected because of their characteristics or unique features. Diversity should be fostered, respected, protected, and supported instead of being obstructed. Every person has the right to be as equal as other people are, and everyone has the right to be part of the society at any time and in any situation. According to the OHSU<sup>15</sup> and the definition provided by the GDEIB Guidebook (Molefi et al., 2001:4), diversity includes a variety of features, such as age, colour, culture, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, marital status, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, language, appearance, education, job role, thinking style, and personality type.

The above-mentioned aspects of diversity do not relate to this concept only, but they also relate to that of inclusion (Hodkinson, 2011:181). In other words, it can be argued that every individual is unique, and that nothing about their own identity or way of being should be the object of discrimination or disrespectful behaviour. Everyone should be and feel included in the society, and feel equal, according to the principle of equity. As a matter of fact, equity promotes fairness by treating individuals in different ways, not in equal ways, depending on their needs, and taking into consideration circumstances (Molefi et al., 2001:5).

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<sup>14</sup> United Nations, *Universal Declaration on Human Rights*, <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>. Accessed 1/07/2022.

<sup>15</sup> OHSU Center for diversity, *Policies*, <https://www.ohsu.edu/center-for-diversity-inclusion/policies>. Accessed 4/07/2022.

The term inclusion is frequently interchanged with the term integration. Although the two terms seem to convey the exact same meaning, their interchangeability is controversial, due to subtle shades of meaning. In fact, even though both deal with the social exclusion issue, it is argued that integration conveys the idea that, for instance in migration contexts, the individual moving to another country needs to adapt to the social norms and to the social environment they find in the new country and society; whereas the term inclusion seems to be more complete, implying the concept of mutual influence and exchange (Parlare Civile, 2013). However, the use of the terms differs from country to country. As a matter of fact, Italy uses them as synonyms, whereas in English speaking countries the term inclusion is preferred, precisely for its wider meaning. As reported in the Press Release of the European Union Council on the subject of migration (Donner et al., 2004:19), “l’integrazione è un processo dinamico e bilaterale di adeguamento reciproco da parte di tutti gli immigrati e di tutti i residenti degli Stati membri”; and consequently, the term can replace inclusion, implying that both the individuals moving and the hosting society need to commit in adapting and in creating a social positive environment responding to the Article 21 of the *Carta dei diritti fondamentali dell’Unione Europea*<sup>16</sup>, which declares that every form of discrimination regarding race, sex, gender, skin colour, origin, language, religion, thinking style, and disability, among others, is forbidden.

According to Soresi (2020:28-37), the term integration in social sciences refers to an incomplete system, which can be improved by the introduction of new elements; both old and new elements present in the mentioned system have specific responsibilities and duties, and they work together to reach a common aim, which is the elimination of social exclusion and marginalization. On the other hand, Soresi (2020:28-37) points out that inclusion is different, since an inclusive context allows one to acknowledge and respect diversity and uniqueness, in addition it promotes different values, such as the value of freedom, of universal rights, non-violence, and trust.

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<sup>16</sup> Carta dei diritti fondamentali dell’Unione Europea, 364/01, Gazzetta ufficiale delle Comunità europee. 18 December 2000. [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/charter/pdf/text\\_it.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/charter/pdf/text_it.pdf). Accessed 4/06/2022.

History shows that inclusion and exclusion practices have been performed in different times in different ways, and inclusion and integration are still an issue in the contemporary society (Allman, 2013:11). Our society often fails to respect individuals, and also fails to educate its members on how to promote both respect and social inclusion, valuing differences as qualities and not as defects. Inclusion is about valuing differences and respecting uniqueness in individuals. Inclusion can be equated to respect, and unfortunately, respect for other people is not always a priority.

## **2.2 Inclusive language – some definitions and principles**

As already claimed in the first chapter of this thesis (see Section 1.3.2), language is a system of communication, and it helps interconnection and communication to take place (Burgers & Beukeboom, 2020:438-439). In addition, the performative nature of language has been stressed. As a matter of fact, language can be an instrument to give voice to humans' thoughts, but it can also be dangerous, since it can contribute to the creation and the spread of stereotypes, and to categorization, as we will see later in this chapter.

“Inclusive language puts our humanity at the center; it allows everyone to feel recognized, valued, invited and motivated to contribute at their highest level” (OHSU, 2021:2). By looking at the definition provided by the OHSU Center for Diversity and Inclusion, it can be argued that *inclusive language*, being an identity-affirming language, promotes respect for individuals, and even though it does not openly mention diversity, it is clear that one of its aims concerns the celebration of individuals' uniqueness and differences. As the name suggests, inclusive language does include everyone and tries to avoid every kind of exclusion, as well as the reinforcement of prejudices or stereotypes (Jakobsen, 2001: 34), and tries to give each member of the society equal value and dignity.

As claimed by Cole (2006:4), it is unlikely that the will to marginalize people is innate in individuals; according to Allman's analysis (2013:11), by which social exclusion is a phenomenon that can be date back in history, it is more likely that

feelings of marginalization arise due to the society itself, to the contexts in which people live, and due to poor education systems, which do not focus on inclusion and do not foster inclusive activities to make everyone felt accepted and equal to others.

In educational contexts, and also in everyday situations, individuals are frequently described and categorized by labels, which are usually adopted with a negative connotation. Labels are argued to be used both in relation to individuals (specific labels) and to groups or categories (generic labels). According to Burgers and Beukeboom (2020:439-441), the use of generic labels increases the danger of conveying stereotypes, since through this kind of labels, entire categories of individuals are defined as a whole, and they do not allow individuals to rise as such. It is desirable that people get rid of such labelling behaviours: they do not affirm one's identity, instead, they stigmatize the person they refer to and contribute to their depersonalization (Soresi, 2020: 68). In addition, labels and stereotypes in social contexts can contribute to the creation and increase of prejudices and discriminatory behaviours, as well as social exclusion behaviours (Burgers & Beukeboom, 2020:448-449).

Frequently, and mistakenly, the term inclusive language is used only in relation to gender; that is to say, it is associated to the gender discourse, and it is believed that using inclusive language means using alternatives for both male and female individuals, or using strategies to avoid being gender specific when speaking. Many important language institutions, such as the Real Academia Española<sup>17</sup> or the Italian Accademia della Crusca<sup>18</sup>, deal with the topic from a narrow point of view, taking into consideration gender issues only, ignoring other relevant themes. As a matter of fact, inclusive language tries to regulate other important issues; it also involves the spheres of disability and ethnicity, two delicate topics about which people have poor knowledge, topics which are poorly debated in the

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<sup>17</sup> Real Academia Española, (2020), *Informe de la Real Academia Española sobre el lenguaje inclusivo y cuestiones conexas*. [https://www.rae.es/sites/default/files/Informe\\_lenguaje\\_inclusivo.pdf](https://www.rae.es/sites/default/files/Informe_lenguaje_inclusivo.pdf). Accessed 12/07/2022.

<sup>18</sup> D'Achille, P. (2021). Un asterisco sul genere. *Accademia della Crusca*, <https://accademiadellacrusca.it/it/consulenza/un-asterisco-sul-genere/4018>. Accessed 12/07/2022.

educational context, and towards which too many prejudices and stereotypes are still present within the society.

The keyword when referring to inclusive language is identity-affirming; in fact, a person needs to be seen as an individual before being categorized according to the colour of their skin, their religion, their sexual orientation, or for the disability they have. Language is thought to have shaping properties; that is to say, the way in which people see and describe the surrounding world can be influenced by language itself (Blaska 1993 in Crocker & Smith, 2019:126). As a matter of fact, some scholars argue that languages shape their speakers' thoughts (Boroditsky, 2009); in particular, this is believed to happen with those languages whose nouns are characterized by a specific gender, such as Italian, Spanish or German, as grammatical gender is argued to affect the way in which people describe objects.

The OHSU Guidelines (2021:6) recommend the use of people-first language (PFL) in relation to every individual, in order to promote the recognition of their identities without the attributes which describe them, often erroneously. In some cases, but mostly in relation to disability, the use of identity-first language (IFL) is preferred, but this will be described later in this chapter. Both person-first language and identity-first language are specific choices which concern the topic of disability. It is necessary to highlight that there is no equivalent for gender and ethnicity. Instead, replacement terms or strategies to avoid using disrespectful terms can be found and used, in order to respect the identity of the individuals and to respect their own choices (see below). Thanks to PFL, IFL, and alternatives, discrimination by means of language can be avoided, and the aim of inclusive language is fulfilled.

Discrimination can be described as “the unfair or prejudicial treatment of people and groups based on characteristics such as race, gender, age or sexual orientation” (APA, 2019), and to create a more complete definition, I would add disability, too, since, as already pointed out, can be a factor of discrimination. As reported by Amnesty International (n.d.), one of the most famous non-profit



organizations fighting for human rights and against injustices, discrimination is harmful, since discriminated individuals cannot enjoy their rights in the same way other individuals can, and they are treated in a distinct way, which is usually not fair or does not follow the principle of equality. This behaviour may lead to abuses, restrictions, and stereotypes, which can be perpetuated through the wrong use of language or poor linguistic choices. In addition, social inclusion is endangered due to discriminatory feelings, and social exclusion instead finds its way through the society (Allman, 2013:5-6).

Inclusive language consists of choices that prevent individuals from feeling offended or insulted; choices that do not exclude nor stereotype people, individuals, or groups of people; choices that are aimed at including everyone as part of a single community, in which every individual is as valued as the other individuals belonging to that community. People's backgrounds may be different, but everyone has the right to have the same opportunities as others, and life should not be challenging only because of their unique features (Luker & McDonagh, 2010:2-5).

### **2.3 Strategies to avoid discrimination**

The use of inclusive language allows one to address people respectfully and responsibly, thanks to the absence of stereotypes or discriminatory views, and also thanks to its gender-neutral features. According to guidelines published by both governmental institutions, Inclusion Centers, and Universities, attention to the language used towards other individuals can affect the way in which people interact and interconnect with each other.

Since the present thesis deals both with the English language and the Italian language, the chapter will take into consideration principles and strategies belonging to both languages, for better accuracy. The main source is represented by the Inclusive Language Guidelines published by the OHSU Center for Diversity and Inclusion in 2021, since they seem to be the most complete and accurate guidelines. Along with this source, other sources have been used, in

particular, University and governmental guidelines, since these two entities seem to be more inclusion-oriented than workplaces, which are still working on it.

The following sections will focus on the different strategies people can use in order to avoid discrimination and to be more inclusive when speaking. First of all, some general principles to be kept in mind will be listed; then I will investigate effective strategies related to the three topics this thesis focuses on, which are Gender, Disability, and Ethnicity.

### **2.3.1 General principles to be inclusive**

Some simple general strategies may be enough to avoid spreading discriminatory behaviours and utterances. On one hand, individuals can decide to use specific terms and specific strategies when speaking with other individuals or when talking about them; on the other hand, inclusive language can be easily performed by avoiding using given terms or gender-specific utterances, and by changing the way in which an utterance is said. This section will provide an overview of the most common general suggestions and strategies used in workplaces, universities, and institutions to be as inclusive as possible in a responsible and conscious way (British Columbia, n.d.:4).

The OHSU Center's Inclusive Language Guidelines (2021:4-5) provides some general instructions and principles useful for any given situation, in order to carry on conversation or to address people respectfully, so that everyone is charged with equal dignity (The Law Society of BC, n.d.:1). The precondition before starting using inclusive language is to acknowledge diversity and respect it, along with trying to be as open-minded as possible by adopting multiple perspectives when referring to people or when talking to individuals (OHSU, 2021:4-5).

According to the OHSU Guidelines (OHSU, 2021:4-5), one of the most important principles when trying to be inclusive is asking people and individuals how they prefer to be addressed. In this way, their own identity is preserved and respected, and they can state the specific ways in which they want others to call them or refer

to them, avoiding misconceptions and unintentional disrespect. In addition, the simple action of asking could put individuals in closer contact, promoting a tighter relationship among identities (Parlare Civile, 2013), and showing a greater sensitivity towards the inclusion issue, granting communication to be effective and not spoiled by accidental discriminatory events. In the Guidelines, it is suggested to use People-first language, but for the reason listed in the previous section (see Section 1.3), before using PFL or IFL it is always better to ask the involved party what kind of language they prefer and identify with. Neither of the two choices should be considered the only alternative when addressing people; every individual is different, and putting the person or their attributes in the first place when speaking or referring to them, depends on them only (Ladau, 2021).

The second recommendation constituting the second general principle is to be specific. As already stated in the previous sections, generalization and categorization lead to prejudices and stereotypes, both positive and negative ones, which do not consider individuals' unique features and refuse to acknowledge individual identities (Soresi, 2020:68). Being specific means acknowledging that diversity can be equated to uniqueness, hence knowing that every individual has different characteristics, which makes them human, first of all, and worthy individuals, with dignity and rights as any other. Being specific, in every of the mentioned contexts (gender, disability, ethnicity, among others), allows one to be appropriate and to avoid discrimination and to avoid making individuals feel excluded (Wright,2019:3). This principle can be linked to another one, which suggests the avoidance of labels (OHSU, 2021:6-7); as claimed by Soresi (2020:68-69), labels lead to categorization and represent an obstacle to social inclusion, increasing and intensifying the detachment from one's identity and the identity of others, thus creating a contraposition between a person, people similar to them, and those individuals who are labelled. In addition, labels can be offensive, and the description implied in them can create biases against individuals or convey an incorrect or inappropriate description of the individual they are referred to. (OHSU, 2021:6).

The third general principle pointed out by OHSU (2021:4-5) recites “Be thoughtful and intentional”. As a matter of fact, unintentional utterances or ways to address individuals can be disrespectful and can be a synonym of poor interest in inclusion issues and poor education. On the other hand, intentional utterances show sensitivity to the topic, moreover they highlight individuals’ identities rather than their attributes, such as mental or physical attributes, or their race as their predominant feature (Tasmanian Government, 2020:3).

Kindness is an obvious characteristic of inclusive language, and those who try to use this kind of language need to be kind with the individual they have in front of them. Even though kindness often is absent in most communicative events, due to different unjustified reasons, it is important to start being kind when addressing to others, since kindness denotes sensitivity, empathy, and comprehension among individuals, in addition to the understanding of one’s unicity (Malti 2020 in Morgese, 2021). Kindness is a way to interconnection (Cousineau 2018 in Morgese, 2021); thus, it can be helpful to reach inclusion objectives.

As stated above, inclusive language is not about being gender inclusive only, yet, one principle to remember in order to be inclusive is that of the use of gender-neutral language (OHSU, 2021:7). As a matter of fact, in the English language there are a great number of solutions to avoid being gender-specific when not sure how to address an individual. First of all, the simplest solution is to refer to someone with their first name or surname, avoiding labels such as Mr., Madam, Mrs (BMA, 2016:10), since generic terms may be offensive and convey identities not corresponding to individuals’ selves. Other alternatives and strategies to avoid being gender-specific will be discussed in the gender designated section (see Section 2.3.2).

Last, but not least in the OHSU Guidelines (2021:6-7), it is recommended to use an asset-based language, which is a language that focuses on the strengths and positive characteristics of individuals instead of focusing on their deficits. In fact, deficits are not the main feature of an individual; before them there is the identity

of that person, which is far more important. In addition, even though it is be argued that a person cannot be seen without their deficits or unique characteristics (Liebowitz, 2015), highlighting them in a negative way is not the best option to define someone, since it may lead to the use of labels, which can lead to stereotypes and can be offensive, as pointed out before in this section. Using inclusive language allows to value every individual in the same way, no matter what their unique features are. On the contrary, their uniqueness is part of their identity and it should not be used to offend, denigrate or discriminate anyone.

The next sections focus on one topic at a time, considering English alternatives and strategies at first, then giving space to Italian strategies, since in most cases the two languages differ and so differ the alternatives to be used to ensure inclusion.

### **2.3.2 Gender – strategies and alternatives**

As everyone can understand from their personal experiences, sex and gender discourse are a personal concern, even though most cultures and societies present norms and expectations on how an individual should behave based on the sex they are given at birth. However, sex and gender are different concepts, and sometimes the gender of an individual does not correspond to their sex. As stated in the OHSU Guidelines (2021:16),

Sex is a label — most often male or female — that you're assigned at birth based on your genitals and chromosomes. [...] Gender is a social and legal status and a set of expectations from society about behaviors, characteristics and thoughts. Each culture has standards about the way that people should behave based on their gender, also generally masculine and feminine. Gender identity is how you feel inside and how you express your gender through your clothing, behavior and personal appearance. It's a feeling that begins very early in life.

Thus (NCTE, 2018:2), sex is assigned at birth, and it is completely different in meaning from the term sexuality, which concerns emotional and physical attraction. Gender is a social and cultural construct based on the biological differences between the two sexes (Valerio et al., n.d.:18), and, as a consequence, it responds to social norms, as clarified in the OHSU explanation.

Before listing the alternatives and strategies to be used to avoid gender bias, it is necessary to clarify some terms connected to gender in a brief overview. Gender identity is about one's sense of their gender; every individual has a sense of the gender they belong to, whether male, female, a combination of both, or none of the two. This feeling is deep and intimate, thus it may not be obvious to other people. Nonbinary people identify neither male nor female, whereas multigender or bigender individuals identify as both genders; agender individuals identify as neutral or genderless, whereas cisgender individuals identify with the gender they have been assigned. The term gender fluid is related to multigender people; as a matter of fact, being gender fluid means that the gender identity of the individuals changes over time (OHSU, 2021:19; Valerio et al., n.d.:18). Gender expression, as suggested by the name itself, is the external presentation of individuals' gender identity, through their name, appearance, pronouns, or voice. It concerns the ways in which individuals express their gender identity within the social context. (NCTE, 2018:2; OHSU, 2021:19; Valerio et al., n.d.: 9). Last, but not least, transgender; the term, used as an adjective and not as a noun for respect reasons, refers to individuals whose gender identity or gender expression does not correspond to the sex they were assigned at birth. It is assumed that transgender individuals undergo operations or take hormones to change their own bodies, but instead, the term is used as an umbrella term, that is to say, it refers to all those individuals whose description corresponds to the explanation above (NCTE, 2018:3; OHSU, 2021:19).

Therefore, gender and its related discourse is personal, and it requires to be respected and not minimized or used to offend individuals; in addition, gender needs to be considered not in a binary perspective, but beyond it, thus including "individuals whose identities might otherwise be unacknowledged or devalued" (NCTE, 2018:2).

For a long time, a binary use of language has prevailed over a gender-neutral and inclusive language; in addition, according to Marinucci (Sabatini et al., 1987:7) sexist language has been used for centuries, particularly in Italian, promoting the

use of masculine names and terms over the use of female alternatives, also without taking into consideration the identities of those people, who do not identify with the gender they have been assigned at birth. Male nouns and determiners have constituted the primary solution when referring to a single individual and to people in general, expressing in this way a society in which men are represented, whereas women and non-binary people remain invisible (Cavasino et al., 2017:5). The generic use of the masculine gender to include every individual is perceived as discriminatory rather than inclusive and neutral (European Parliament, 2018:7). As a result, in the last decades, more attention has been paid on trying to be more inclusive towards women and individuals belonging to the LGBTQ+ community in different aspects and situations of everyday life, and everyone can learn to use inclusive language thanks to numerous official guidelines.

According to the European Parliament (2018:3), gender neutrality in language is desirable in order to achieve gender equality and to promote social change. As a matter of fact, a gender-neutral, or gender-fair, language promotes respect, and its use might even “influence attitudes, behaviour and perceptions”, since, as claimed by scholars such as Boroditsky (2009), language influences the way we think. If such a view is accepted, thanks to a change in the language used, prejudices and stereotypes connected with gender might be reduced within the society (Cavasino et al, 2017:3-4). The use of an inclusive language attentive to the recognition of the identity of every individual, and aimed at eliminating asymmetries between men and women, will constitute a radical change in language systems themselves and also in people, but it will contribute to the recognition of the value of individuals, and it will create a better society, in which nobody is left behind only in relation to their gender.

The desirable shifts in languages do not concern every language in the same way; as a matter of fact, the two languages considered in this thesis present two different approaches and solutions towards these changes, due to different grammatical typologies (European Parliament, 2018:5). As far as English is

concerned, gender is not a distinctive category, that is to say, nouns, adjectives, and determiners do not present masculine or feminine inflections (Biber et al., 2013: 85). It is a natural gender language (European Parliament, 2018:5), and thus it already presents neutral alternatives to gender-specific nouns, or new terms can be created from existing words, for instance, instead of *chairman*, the more neutral term *chairperson* (or simply *chair*) could be used. The case of Italian is different, since every grammatical category is linked with the gender of the individual (or object) it refers to<sup>19</sup>, thus every noun has a grammatical gender, and personal pronouns match with reference nouns in gender (European parliament, 2018:5). Italian is, in fact, a grammatical gender language. For this reason, the creation of neutral alternatives is difficult or even impossible in Italian, and new strategies must be adopted, such as feminine equivalents when sure the interlocutor or the reference individual is a woman, or the use of indefinite pronouns and collective nouns (Cavasino et al., 2017:20). To recapitulate, the English language requires fewer changes connected with the gender issue, whereas Italian needs a reorganization of its own grammar.

In the next sections, some strategies and solution to avoid binary terms and gender discrimination will be presented, hoping they will represent a valid alternative to be adopted by more and more people in the near future. For each section, the first language to be considered is English.

### 2.3.2.1 Pronouns

One of the simplest solutions to avoid gender bias in English is the use of the pronoun *they* instead of the masculine *he* and the feminine *she* (Biber et al., 2013:86-87). Unlike the third person plural, by using the so-called *singular they*, verbs do not agree in number: in other words, when using the singular *they* and referring to an individual, verbs still go in the third person singular, and the same occurs with related pronouns, as indicated in the Longman Grammar (2013:87), in which a good example clarifies this use: *Nobody likes to admit that they entertain*

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<sup>19</sup> Treccani, (2012). *Genere e numero degli aggettivi*, [https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/genere-e-numero-degli-aggettivi\\_\(La-grammatica-italiana\)](https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/genere-e-numero-degli-aggettivi_(La-grammatica-italiana)). Accessed 10/07/2022.



*very little* [...]. In this way, there is no risk to refer to an individual inappropriately.

Another option to avoid being gender specific is the use of coordinated pronouns and determiners. According to this solution, the pronouns related to both genders should be used every time a pronoun is needed, thus using the formula *he or she* or *he/she*; however, this strategy is mostly used in academic contexts, and not in conversation, since utterances would become longer and repetitions would annoy the listener (McKay, 2019), or limit the readability of texts (European Parliament, 2018:7). In addition, this alternative is claimed not to consider non-binary individuals, since the above-mentioned formula focuses only on male and female people, without taking into consideration individuals who do not identify in these categories. For this reason, the first strategy is preferred, even though the use of singular *they* seems to be outdated to someone, whereas others consider this alternative a necessity and a solution that has been used in history (Devin-Norelle, 2022). However, a third alternative has replaced the previous ones; in order to be gender inclusive, the best option seems to be the use of the plural form, thus using the pronoun *they* and using verbs, pronouns, and determiners which agree in number (Kelly, 2020), as adopted in this thesis.

However, some individuals decide to use more than a single pronoun; some use the so-called *rolling pronouns*, or multiple pronouns (Pride Inclusion Programs, 2021:2). This means that different sets of pronouns can be used at the same time or in different moments when referring to or talking to an individual. As a matter of fact, often the individual identifies as nonbinary or genderfluid, thus their pronouns are *he* or *she*, but they also use *they* as identifying pronoun. It is claimed that the shifts in the pronouns use allows individuals to affirm their own identity and their connection with the gender they identify with, but it also allows them to recognize their genderfluid identity (LGBTQ Nation, 2022). Recently, many celebrities have embraced rolling pronouns, in order to give them more exposure and to make them more accessible to a larger audience (Devin-Norelle, 2022).

Obviously, no assumptions have to be made in relation to pronouns, so it is always preferable to ask for individuals' pronouns, always in a respectful way.

It could be argued that English presents the neutral pronoun *it*, which is seemingly a valid option to avoid gender bias and to avoid using both alternatives when not sure which pronoun to use. However, the neuter pronoun has a completely different use, which is restricted to a limited number of options. As a matter of fact, it can be used in relation to babies and animals, when the sex is not sure (Biber et al., 2013:88). However, it is offensive if employed to refer to human beings, and again, the best option is the use of the plural pronoun.

Two more alternatives can be listed. The first one promotes the use of nonbinary gender pronouns. These are particular forms of pronouns, created by the existing masculine and feminine forms, which allow to refer to individuals without associating a definite gender. These pronouns are *zie, hir, sie, ey, ve, tey, ze* (UW Milwaukee, n.d.), but the most popular are only *xe/xem* and *ze/zim* (Devin-Norelle, 2022). which need to be declined depending on the necessary grammar case, for instance, the sentence *Is this his/her pen?* would become *Is this zir pen?*. When using neutral pronouns, attention must be paid in relation to consistency, hence pronouns cannot be changed during conversation or in the written text, nor a shift from neutral pronouns and binary pronouns is accepted (University of Minnesota, n.d.), even though exceptions are present, as pointed out in the previous section concerning rolling pronouns. As a matter of fact, some individuals who use nonbinary pronouns may also use the pronoun *they*.

The second additional alternative is the use of the pronouns *who* and *one* as substitutes for gendered pronouns (Kelly, 2020; Warren, n.d.). However, this option is especially used when referring to a general individual instead of using the generic masculine. In most cases these pronouns require a rearrangement of the utterance, consequently, the speaker needs to think about what they are going to say and change the subject or object of the sentence. For instance, instead of saying *I do not want to meet the client, if he is arrogant, I do not want to meet a*

*client who is arrogant* could be said. Or, to cite Kelly's example (2020), *An entrepreneur in France pays more tax than he would in the Seychelles* can be rearranged as follows, *An entrepreneur in France pays more tax than one in the Seychelles*.

As far as Italian is concerned, the masculine prevails over feminine pronouns, and no gender-neutral pronouns are present in alternative to binary pronouns (Spinella, n.d.). The singular they or the inclusive pronoun they used in English cannot be simply translated into the Italian *loro*, which would be just a mere calque. A solution to avoid using gendered pronouns when addressing to an individual is the use of the address form *Lei*, the so-called "forma di cortesia", which allows to be respectful and to use related pronouns and adjectives. In this way, all related words are conjugated in the feminine form, but this is not considered to be disrespectful of people identifying with other genders, since this is part of the Italian grammar.

As already pointed out for English, Italian presents a parallel of the alternatives he/she, represented by the pronouns *lui/lei*, *egli/ella*, *essi/esse* (Parlamento europeo, 2018:12-13). However, this solution can be applied to written text only, otherwise the conversation would be weighed down by the presence of too many repetitions, and even in the case of texts, the consistent use of the two pronouns can limit the readability. In addition, it is clear that the use of the male and feminine pronouns give visibility to two genders only, which is indeed a good alternative to the use of generic masculine; but however, this solution does not take into consideration gender-fluid individuals, or agender people. Alternatively, in some cases pronouns can be omitted (as Italian is a pro-drop language (Świątek, 2012:2), if the meaning of the utterance does not change as in the following example: *Lui mi ha chiesto di uscire*, which can be simply changed as *Mi ha chiesto di uscire*.

Relative and indefinite pronouns can be used, such as *chi* and *chiunque* (Alemanno & Palumbo, 2020:32), which allow to maintain neutrality and to be

inclusive. However, these pronouns are mostly used to substitute nouns rather than other pronouns; so, the sentence *Gli studenti che partecipano al meeting devono collegarsi alle ore 9* can be rearranged as *Chi partecipa al meeting deve collegarsi alle ore 9*, or *Coloro che partecipano al meeting devono collegarsi alle ore 9*. In some cases, as shown here, the utterances need to be completely rearranged, and verbs and adjectives must be conjugated according to the new subject.

General usage guidelines highlight the importance of using individuals' chosen pronouns when referring to them, as a matter of respect and affirmation of one's identity. For this reason, the best practice before addressing to someone is to politely ask for the pronouns they use, in order to avoid being unintentionally disrespectful by assuming one's gender. However, respect must be shown also in the phase when the question is asked, since a direct approach could create unsafe or embarrassing situations. A gradual or private approach is desirable; hence the conversation could start by introducing oneself and expressing the pronouns to be used and asking how the other person can be addressed. Otherwise, a simpler solution to avoid being gender specific and to avoid asking for the pronouns at the beginning of the meeting is to use the name of the other person and to use the pronoun they, which is the most inclusive one, or to avoid using any pronouns at all, until the other person makes them clear (Devin-Norelle, 2022; OHSU, 2021:21).

Guidelines and authors who discuss the topic make it clear that the pronouns individuals use in their own respect are not their "preferred" pronouns; rather, they are the ones reflecting their own identity, thus they simply reflect their personality. It is also argued that mistakes may occur; in particular when the interlocutor is unknown, it may be easier to use the wrong pronoun. However, since mistakes can be corrected, it is just necessary to apologize without emphasizing the mistake and the difficulties one may have in using the correct pronoun, and simply correct oneself and carry on the conversation, paying more

attention the next time a pronoun is necessary (Devin-Norelle, 2022; Pride Inclusion Programs, 2021:3).

### 2.3.2.2 Strategies

Pronouns are not the only grammatical elements that can be changed or substituted to avoid gender bias and to be inclusive; in fact, there are other strategies, which concern nouns, in particular. In this section essential language will be introduced, as well as strategies to rearrange sentences. Paragraphs will be organized differently from the previous section: each topic will be discussed first in relation to English, and immediately after in relation to Italian, so that differences between the two languages can be clearer.

As for pronouns, it is very important to use the correct terms when referring to or talking to an individual, and it is desirable not to use offensive terms, even when a term is used without any offensive intention. As a matter of fact, since humans' sensitivity differs from individual to individual, terms considered not offensive by some, can have an impact on others and result as rude, disrespectful, and insulting. For this reason, the use of given terms, accepted by the majority of people, is the best solution, since they are free from stereotypes and prejudices, and they allow individuals to be educated (Valerio et al., n.d.:5).

The first terms people should eliminate when not sure about the gender of the individual in front of them or the reference individual are those terms implying the gender of that person. Therefore, terms such as *boy*, *girl*, *man*, *woman* should not be used, but instead terms like *individual* or *person* are preferable (LSA, 2016). In the same way, gendered terms in the plural form should be substituted by the plural forms of the two desirable alternatives. Another valid alternative could be *subject* (Cavasino et al., 2017:20), but maybe this option is more suitable for written texts, rather than conversation, and it is not frequently used. Similarly, honorifics should be changed along with the other changes in language. As a matter of fact, addressing to someone by saying *Mr.* or *Miss*, means that it has been assumed the gender of the individual addressed, but this could result in

disrespect. Therefore, the gender-neutral courtesy title could be used, and by introducing someone as *Mx.* (also: *Misc.*, or *Myr*) every gender identity is included (Devin-Norelle, 2022). Evidently, consistency in the use of pronouns is necessary as the conversation follows, or in the whole written text. However, the practice of using honorifics is slowly disappearing in favour of another practice already pointed out in relation to pronouns, which is the consistent use of individuals' full name or last name in order to avoid any kind of mistakes related to the wrong use of titles (European Parliament, 2018).

Another two terms to avoid are *man* and *mankind*. These two have been used to refer to all human beings, but they convey a sexist use of language and general masculine is no longer accepted as representative of all genders (British Columbia, n.d.:21). Alternatives are, for instance, *humanity* or *human beings* (LSA, 2016). These include all people, and do not focus on a single gender, but include every individual in the same way.

The situation for the Italian language is similar to that just described. As a matter of fact, terms like *ragazzo/a*, *uomo* and *donna* are widely used to refer to and to address individuals, but also in this case the best option to avoid gender bias is the use of neutral terms, such as *individuo/i*, *persona/e*, *soggetto/i* (Cavasino et al., 2017:20). These terms can be also defined as “termini opachi”, which means they do not express the gender of the individuals involved. And again, honorifics should be avoided. *Signore* and *signora*, just like *signorina*, whose use is disapproved since the 80s, are gendered titles, and in place of these it is better to use people's full name, as sign of respect (Parlamento Europeo, 2018; Sabatini et al., 1987:106). The situation differs in relation to the use of titles when presenting something to an audience: the expression *Signore e signori* is, in this case, accepted, since it includes both genders. However, although it has not been exhaustively discussed in Italy, this expression is not correct from an inclusive point of view, since it does not recognize those individuals, whose identity is nonbinary. Other countries, such as Germany with the airline company Lufthansa, has changed its way to address the audience by using a more neutral formula,

which can be translated as *Good morning / Good evening / Dear guests / Welcome on board*, to make everyone feel considered (Ochse, 2021).

Unlike English, the Italian language allows the use of *uomo* as a synonym for *umanità* or *genere umano* (Parlamento Europeo, 2018:11), since it is considered in the same way as idiomatic expressions, such as *il lavoro nobilita l'uomo*, in which the generic masculine is extended to all categories of individuals. However, things are changing, and more and more people are arguing the use of *uomo* is exclusive and does not reflect society, thus neutral terms are the only acceptable options (Giordano, 2022).

As far as nouns are concerned, English is sometimes simpler than Italian. As a matter of fact, some terms related to roles and professions remain the same both for male and female, for instance *lawyer* or *optician*, since English does not present any suffixes to express the gender of the professional (European Parliament, 2019:11). However, many other roles are stereotyped and gender marked; in fact, many contain the word *-man* or *-woman*, maybe because in the past determined jobs were specifically manly, whereas women were dedicated to other kinds of jobs. In order to follow the tendency to inclusion, these terms need to be changed into neutral ones, thus by eliminating the gender reference from them. The most explicative example concerns the term *chairman*, as mentioned in the first sections: the inclusive alternative results in *chair*, or even *chairperson* (European Parliament, 2018: 11; Hutto, 2021). In this way, the gender reference is completely eliminated, and the term can be used both in relation to men and to women, but also in relation to nonbinary or agender individuals. It is argued (European parliament, 2018:12) that the English language allows to create gender neutral terms for professions and occupations, so inclusion can be granted in most situations.

In other cases, along with the male noun for the profession, the female equivalent can be found as a marked form, as in the case of *actor/actress*, with the addition of a suffix. With such nouns, the common practice is to use the male or the female

alternative when the gender of the individual is known and relevant; otherwise, the male term is to be preferred, or the noun can be omitted by rearranging the sentence in a way that the subject does not coincide with the noun, but with pronouns and determiners, such as *those*. For instance: *Those who have studied abroad* instead of *Students/ Boys and girls who studied abroad*. However, marked forms do seem to be disappearing as in the case of *author*, now used to refer all writers.

The same happens with words and terms not referring to professionals, but to individuals and people in general, for instance with the term *husband/wife*, *mother/father*, or *freshman*. It is argued that such terms can be substituted by more neutral nouns, in order to be as more inclusive as possible, since individuals' gender should not be assumed, as well as their marital status or sexuality (Hutto, 2021). The general recommendation is to use the appropriate alternative when the gender of the person is relevant, otherwise it is desirable to use "parallel forms for all referents" (LSA, 2016). The above-mentioned cases can be substituted respectively by the neutral terms *spouse* or *partner*, *parent*, and *freshman* or *first year student*.

Italian allows one to simply change the suffix at the end of the names of profession and of the majority of words referring to individuals, so that each term has alternatives both for males and females. However, as it can be deduced, this solution does not include all gender identities, but at least it includes women. In fact, the Italian language has always been characterized by disparity between men and women, the first being represented in the language and the latter remaining invisible, highlighting a sexist use of language (Cavasino et al., 2017:5; Gheno, 2020). As a result, in a conversation or in written texts, when the gender of the reference individual is known and relevant, the appropriate term with the appropriate suffix should be used. As a matter of fact, by changing a simple single vowel at the end of words, a term can refer to the other gender without making any other changes (*allievo* → *allieva*). In other cases, other small changes are needed in order to create concordance between the gender of the individual and



that of the term (*professore* → *professoressa* / *rettore* → *rettrice*). However, it is important to point out that in some cases personal choices play a major role in the use of male or female terms; in fact, in relation to professions and titles, it is argued that some women prefer to be referred to and addressed with the male term (*sindaco* rather than *sindaca*), as for a long time the use of male terms has conveyed the idea of equality between the sexes, and also that of power, an idea that the female alternative did not convey. In addition, it is argued that the use of the female marked forms seem to amplify the differences between men and women, and are poorly approved within the society (Cavasino et al, 2017:5-6).

As for English, Italian presents some nouns which refer both to men and women and do not need to be changed in any way to create concordance in gender. These terms usually end in *-a* in their singular form, and their concordance is made explicit by the use of the corresponding article (*il custode/la custode*), or are simply preceded by the feminine article *la* also when they refer to male individuals (*la guida / la docente*) (Cavasino, 2017:13-18). However, these are not gender-neutral terms, and neutrality and inclusion cannot be granted by their use. Again, it should be remembered to use correct and appropriate alternative only when the gender of the reference individual is explicitly confirmed, otherwise, any assumptions in this regard should be avoided, and other strategies need to be adopted in order to include every individual in the discourse.

As far as the plural forms of nouns, both English and Italian present some strategies to avoid being gender specific. As already pointed out in relation to pronouns, in case of plural nouns both alternatives can be used, so that the whole utterance results more inclusive. But however, binarism is the limit. From this point of view, English is more inclusive, since most nouns, both in their singular and in their plural form are inclusive and do not denote a specific gender, such as *student*. On the other hand, most Italian terms in their plural form become masculine, thus when addressing to an audience, both masculine and feminine alternatives should be used (*studenti e studentesse* instead of *studenti* only), but in

the recent past, the language resorts to other strategies, since this one reduces the fluidity of utterances or of texts (Parlamento Europeo, 2018:12).

Italian can resort to collective terms (Parlamento Europeo, 2018:12), by which individuals are collected in a single whole, and these nouns are neither masculine nor feminine, since they denote the role or organization the individuals belong to (Cavasino et al., 2017:20). For instance, instead of referring to professors by using the term *docenti*, which is masculine, the appropriate alternative to be used is *personale docente*. In this way, every individual can feel included, whatever their gender identity is. However, as claimed by Cavasino et al (2017:20-21), this strategy needs particular attention, as such collective terms sometimes denote different entities rather than the one to be substituted, hence a misuse could lead to misunderstandings and could change the utterance (*rettore/i* cannot be substituted by the term *rettorato*, since it does not mean the performed role, but rectors' offices).

Another strategy English and Italian have in common to avoid using the generic masculine or pronouns, such as *who*, *chi*, and *coloro/chiunque* (Cavasino et al, 2017:20), is the use of the passive voice (Cavasino et al, 2017: 21; European Parliament, 2018:10; Parlamento Europeo, 2018:12). By using this kind of verbal form, the subject is no longer represented by the agent of the action, but by the direct or indirect object of the action (Biber et al., 2013:166-167). The truth is that this kind of constructions are usually to be avoided in conversation and are most likely to be found in academic writing or in written texts; however, as far as inclusive language is concerned, it allows to be neutral and not to be redundant due to the consistent use of nouns and pronouns throughout the utterances. For instance, the Italian sentence *Lo student/la studentessa deve compilare il modulo online* can be changed as *Il modulo deve essere compilato online*. As far as English is concerned, a fitting example could be the following sentence: instead of saying *The student needs to send his/her documents to this email*, *Documents need to be sent to this email* can be a good alternative in passive voice.

Similar to the previous strategy, is the use of the impersonal form (Cavasino et al, 2017:21), which can be used only in Italian, though. This allows to use the verb without a reference to a specific subject, thus the verb is to be used in the third singular person.<sup>20</sup> The use of a non-specific subject creates inclusive utterances that can be referred to everyone without specifically addressing to one gender or the other. For example, the impersonal variation of the sentence *Gli studenti trovano il materiale in Moodle* is *I materiali si trovano in Moodle*; or, to use a much general subject, instead of *Per superare l'esame lo studente deve studiare tre manuali*, the appropriate alternative is *Per superare l'esame si devono studiare tre manuali*, which could be also expressed as follows *Per superare l'esame è necessario studiare tre manuali*. However, this strategy has a limit, which is the burdening of texts and conversations, since the subject needs to be deducted from the context, and in some cases, this can create ambiguity and confusion if the form is used consistently along with passive voice (Vitiello, 2022). The best option could be to use alternately impersonal forms, passive voice, gender neutral terms and indefinite pronouns, so that the conversation does not result too heavy.

English and Italian have another two linked strategies in common, which are widespread in many different aspects of everyday life, as can be seen on social media, in advertisements, and also in online forms. This is the use of the second singular person, or, alternatively, the second plural person, the latter being clearer in Italian. And along with the use of *you, tu/voi* there is the use of the imperative form (Cavasino et al, 2017:21; European parliament, 2018:10; Vitiello, 2022). Both strategies allow one to be gender neutral, since the utterance is directly addressed to individuals, and everyone can identify in the subject as they feel, so that all gender identities are included. For instance: *Send your documents / Scrivi alla mail istituzionale / Avete ottenuto il massimo punteggio*. As argued before in this chapter, Italian also allows one to use the courtesy form in the third singular person *Lei*, however, it is clear that if the conversation starts and the second person is used, it is not possible to switch to the third person during the same

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<sup>20</sup> Treccani, (2012). *Impersonali, verbi*. [https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/verbi-impersonali\\_%28La-grammatica-italiana%29/](https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/verbi-impersonali_%28La-grammatica-italiana%29/). Accessed 20/07/2022.

conversation, and viceversa, since every communicative event should be consistent.

Inclusive strategies are a controversial topic as regards the Italian language, since many linguists, such as Vera Gheno, argue that language needs to reflect the changes the society is facing in relation to inclusion by changing the language itself, whereas other language institutions are reluctant to adopt changes and new strategies, and show some criticalities in using suggested alternatives, such as the schwa and the asterisk (D'Achille, 2021).

The schwa ə (*carə tuttə*), the asterisk (*car\* tutt\**), and the letter *u* (*caru tuttu*) used as suffixes, allow one to avoid the dichotomy male/female, creating neutral alternatives for terms, which would otherwise refer to men and women only, without taking into consideration other gender identities (Wolf 2020 in Gheno, 2020). Along with these three most frequent options, other suffix alternatives have been used, even though mostly in written texts. (Italiano Inclusivo, n.d., Gheno, 2020). These are, among others, the *x* (*carx tuttx*), the at sign @ (*car@ tutt@*), the underscore \_ (*car\_ tutt\_*), the elimination of the suffix (*car tutt*), and the assimilation of both suffixes (*carei tuttei*). However, none of these strategies seem to be appropriate, since they require an effort in pronouncing them, and sometimes they are difficult to pronounce.

The same happens for the asterisk. For this reason, the letter *u* and the schwa represent the best solutions. However, it is argued (Italiano Inclusivo, n.d.) that the *u* suffix, although suitable since it is generally not used to specify either the masculine or the feminine in any number (singular or plural), is too similar to the letter *o* from a phonetic point of view, and hence it could create an inclination for a gendered perception in favour of the masculine and male terms. In addition, the letter *u* does not present any plural alternative, unlike the schwa. As a matter of fact, ə presents a parallel, called in Italian *schwa lunga*, represented by the symbol ɜ: thanks to the presence of two different symbols with a similar pronunciation;

the schwa ə is used for singular forms, whereas the long schwa ɜ is to be used in relation to plural forms of nouns and adjectives.

The schwa has been selected as the most inclusive suffix, due to its position in the vowel phonetic chart provided by the IPA (International Phonetic Association)<sup>21</sup>, and considering the set of vowels used in the Italian language. In fact, Italian uses only 7 vowels out of 28, and the schwa is the most central one, and sounds different from every other used vowel in the official language. The same occurs for ɜ: it sounds similarly to the schwa, and Italian does not present any similar sounds. (See chart below).

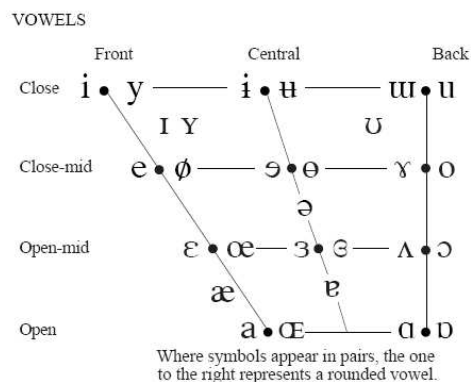


Figure 1: IPA - vowels

The schwa is easy to pronounce, in particular for English speakers, since most words in English contain this letter, such as the word *again* (the first a should be read as ə). For non-English speakers, the pronunciation should not be difficult too, since most people usually produce an indefinite sound when speaking, to think about what to say immediately after, and that is the schwa. Or, as one of my lecturers once said, it is the sound you make when someone punches you in the stomach! The long schwa is maybe slightly more difficult to pronounce and to understand, since it is pronounced like the schwa, but more open. Its sound can become clearer when looking at the chart: in fact, it is to be found between the ə and the two open a, and thus it results in a sound between the Italian open e and a.

<sup>21</sup> IPA (International Phonetic Association). <https://www.internationalphoneticassociation.org/content/ipa-vowels>. Accessed 26/07/2022.

The two alternatives are argued to be the best inclusive solution for the Italian language, which as stated before in this chapter, does not present gender-neutral terms. Language needs to reflect and to represent reality, and since today's society is opening towards a recognition of all gender identities and a creation of a more inclusive environment to make everyone feel accepted and equal, then language should change and create new alternatives to represent everyone in the society. Every individual has the right to be defined by language in every situation or environment, and binarism is a limit.

However, the Italian language institution Accademia della Crusca does not appear to be favourable to bringing changes about the Italian language to make it more inclusive. The Accademia is not against the recognition of gender identities and non-binary individuals, but it explains its reluctance in changing the language on a mere linguistic basis. Firstly, it is argued that natural gender and grammatical gender do not always correspond (D'Achille, 2021): that is to say, the gender of nouns and adjectives generally reflects the gender of the addressed individual. However, in some cases one grammatical gender prevails over the other, as happens for *guida*, which is a feminine term that refers both to men and women. Similarly, it is necessary to add the corresponding article to make some masculine terms refer to both genders, as in the case of *il/la soprano*. It is also argued that many nouns are neutral, since do not denote a specific gender with the suffixes (*cantante, presidente*).

Secondly, the Accademia supports the use of the generic masculine as it is a distinctive characteristic of the Italian language. As stated by D'Achille (2021) and Iacona (2022), using the plural masculine form of nouns does not imply that the audience or the reference individual are necessarily male; women are also included in the address, and so are non-binary people. If someone does not want to address an individual using the wrong pronoun because they are unsure of the grammatical gender to be used, then a simple solution recommended by the Accademia is to avoid using pronouns, adjectives, articles and participles that indicate the gender of that individual. Instead, what is to be preferred is the use of

the courtesy form or the second singular person, or the use of some of the strategies listed above in this section.

As far as the asterisk and the schwa are concerned, these are considered to be inappropriate by some scholars for the following reasons. The asterisk is argued to have no phonetic correspondence in Italian (and also in any other languages), as it is just a symbol; hence it could be used in written texts, but not in communicative events (Iacona, 2022). In addition, it is generally used to highlight a footnote, or a mistake to be corrected in a second moment, as well as in computer science (D'Achille, 2021). On the other hand, the schwa is considered a worse alternative. First of all, the letter is never used in its written form, nor in the languages that have this sound in their alphabet. Moreover, the capital schwa is not an existing symbol. The same happens with the long schwa  $\text{ɜ}$  as it is stated that it can be confused with the number 3. Secondly, the use of the long schwa (but also of the asterisk) for plural forms of nouns creates difficulties for those nouns whose plural form is different when referring to males and when to females (*redattori* and *redattrici*). As a matter of fact, asterisk and long schwa could work if plural nouns endings were *-i* for both genders (*student\**, *docentɜ*), but not in the case demonstrated by the previous example.

In conclusion, the Accademia della Crusca claims that the Italia language does not need to be forcibly changed to respond to the changes occurring in the society. It should be clear that the use of the generic masculine in Italian does not imply a recognition of the supremacy of men or the unwillingness to recognize all gender identities, but it is a feature of language itself and rather than discriminating; it allows one to include every individual without resorting to different strategies or new symbols. The generic masculine does not reflect a sexist language. However, as claimed by D'Achille (2021) “È senz'altro giusto, e anzi lodevole, quando parliamo o scriviamo, prestare attenzione alle scelte linguistiche relative al genere, evitando ogni forma di sessismo linguistico”. Precisely for this reason, some claim that new changes should be adopted within the language, in order to guarantee a language free from discriminatory terms, which allows every identity to be represented and valued (Italiano Inclusivo, n.d.).

### **2.3.2.3 A new approach to gender in Italian**

A new important revolution started in September 2022. As a matter of fact, on Sunday 11 September 2022 the Italian cultural institution Treccani announced important news in relation to inclusive language and the updated version of the Treccani dictionary (Il Post Libri, 2022). The dictionary's entries will be made up not only of masculine forms of nouns and adjectives as usual, but they will also introduce the related feminine forms. This is a great innovation, as it gives feminine forms the same importance as masculine forms, and fosters dignity for female nouns of professions and titles, which, as argued before in this chapter, tend to be rejected by society. In the same way, the dictionary will also include the male alternatives for nouns that are generally used only in their feminine form, such as *casalingo* and *casalinga*. Another innovative change the dictionary will include, concerns the use of *uomo* or *uomini*: in fact, when used to refer to people in general, the term will be substituted with the more inclusive *persona* or *essere umano*, to guarantee visibility also to women.

These changes can be considered the starting point for a cultural and linguistic change within society, and hopefully this will encourage other publishing houses to start adopting a more inclusive language in their publications. Unfortunately, the dictionary will not be available online and the paper copy will not be easily affordable, but again, this is a starting point for a change in future publications, and hopefully, more alternatives and strategies presented in this thesis will be adopted in the near future.

### **2.3.3 Disability**

Along with greater focus on gender discourse, society is also paying more attention to the disability topic. As a matter of fact, language is going into an inclusive direction, thanks to the use of vocabulary which allows every individual with a disability to be recognized and valued: a language that does not create cultural barriers (FIABA, 2021). Using an inclusive language from a disability point of view can be difficult; however, by using some of the recommendations



pointed out in the previous sections (see Sections 2.3.2.1 and 2.3.2.2) and appropriate vocabulary, along with a dose of sensibility, the success is guaranteed.

According to the United Nations<sup>22</sup>, the term *people with disabilities* is to be applied:

to all persons with disabilities including those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which, in interaction with various attitudinal and environmental barriers, hinders their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

However, it is argued that some kinds of disabilities may be considered as such in some contexts or societies, but not in others, depending on the perceptions linked to the condition. It is also argued (Palumbo & Veglia, 2021:8) that disability today is perceived differently from in the past; as a matter of fact, it is now recognized as the consequence or the result of three different factors: health conditions, personal conditions, and the environment. Thus, the term disability is no longer linked to physical or mental impairments only, but to the context and to the relationship it has with the surrounding environment. The first step to be inclusive is to consider the person who has a disability as a valuable individual. This seems to be a poor recommendation, however: in most cases the disability becomes the focus, whereas the individual is considered only in relation to the disability they have (USCA, n.d.). However, individuals do have an identity, and it has to be the focus. For this reason, the use of people-first language is promoted (OHSU, 2021:6).

Person-centered language, or person-first language, is a kind of language that allows people with disabilities to identify with the identity they have chosen, to identify with the person they have chosen to be, without finding themselves defined by labels or inaccurate descriptions other individuals use in their respect (Snow, 2001:1; Soresi, 2020: 68). People-first language, also called PFL (Ferrigon, 2019), is used in order to put the person before the disability and in order to avoid describing the individual only because of the disability they have.

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<sup>22</sup> United Nations, *FAQs*. <https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/enable/faqs.htm#definition>. Accessed 2/08/2022.

The focus in this case is on the individual, and not on the diagnosis or on the illness (Crocker & Smith, 2019:127). I would argue that person-first language is effective, since everyone should be recognized for their own identity first, and disability is not always necessary to be mentioned to describe an individual: disability is not the “primary defining characteristic of an individual (Ferrigon, 20019). That is to say, disability is not the main focus when talking to or referring to an individual.

On the other hand, some communities and also some scholars oppose the use of person-first language and prefer the use of identity-first language over it (Ferrigon, 2019). Identity-first language differs, since the focus is on the disability or disorder in the description of an individual. It is argued that this kind of language is preferable, because disability is part of the identity of the individual; that individual would not be the same without the disability they have (Liebowitz, 2015). In fact, some disabled communities prefer this kind of language over people-first language, for instance the Deaf community (Liebowitz, 2015). In addition, advocates of the use of identity-first language, argue that person-first language promotes respect, but at the same time it charges disability with a negative connotation by avoiding mentioning it in descriptions, and it also separates individuals from their disability (Ladau, 2021).

As a general recommendation (Ferrigon, 2019), it is not correct to assume how individuals want to be described or referred to, by simply adopting person-first language or identity-first language. The preferable solution is always to ask the individual their choice and preferences, in order to respect individuality and identity, since some individuals may decide for a kind of language or another, also in relation to the kind of disability they have, whether it is congenital or temporary. In fact, feelings towards disability may change depending on these factors. Language should never attempt to determine how an individual should feel or identify with; on the other hand, it should foster personal choices and identification, along with respect (Ladau, 2021). In addition, it should always be kept in mind that language has an impact and an effect on people, and therefore

poor or inappropriate linguistic choices, even if unintentional, may affect individuals' sensitivity (Crocker & Smith, 2019:128). Respect is the main principle to be followed in relation to inclusion and when using inclusive language. In fact, without respect and sensitivity to others' identities, the risk is to be offensive or discriminatory, causing a negative impact on people. Respect also allows one to be respected, too, since a healthy conversation can be led between two or more participants, who recognize each other's identities.

In relation to disability, a few more other principles are to be listed. Firstly, the disability is not to be included if it is not relevant in the context (IOWA, 2021). As stated before, disability is not the only feature that characterises an individual, and when addressing someone or referring to someone, the best option is never to highlight the disability at first. Individuals do have their own identity, and if it is not required by the context or by the conversation itself, disability may even not be mentioned. In addition, it is not a good practice to start a conversation by discussing the disability and the difficulties that may arise for people who do have some kind of disability. Individuals may not want to share their stories and experiences; thus, no uncomfortable questions should be asked, and no parallels with individuals who have the same disability should be made (OHSU, 2021:24). In general, no questions should be asked concerning an individual's condition or disability, visible or invisible, unless the person starts the topic (United Nations, 2022:21).

The second general principle, which was valid also in relation to gender, is to never make assumptions (United Nations, 2022:21). As a matter of fact, assumptions concerning both the kind of disability an individual may have, and the actions the person can or cannot do due to the disability or condition, are inappropriate, and could label individuals incorrectly. It is preferable to ask, if it is really important to know more about one's identity. In addition, it is important to refer to a disability with its appropriate vocabulary, sticking to medical diagnosis (NCDJ, 2021). Trying to describe an individual's condition with inappropriate terms may result in offensive language. Moreover, the language used, even though

unintentionally, may carry stereotypes and prejudices linked to labels, and thus create attitudinal barriers (United Nations, 2021:5).

As far as stereotypes are concerned, people with disabilities are often considered either to be heroes or people to feel compassion for. Yet neither are they burdens on the society, or do they live a less valuable life because of some *impairments* they may have (Snow, 2001:1; United Nations, 2021:5). The truth is different. They are people. They have their own identity independently from their condition and they should not be treated differently only because of the disability they have. They are not role models who teach people without disability how to face life and how to “rise after falling down”. Strength is one of their features, but it has not to be exaggerated, since everyone has the strength to live their everyday life. They are unique, but not in the sense that they are special or different from others. Everyone is unique, since every individual is irreplaceable, genuine, and, precisely, unique. (Soresi et al, 2016; Soresi, 2020:80). Like everyone else, they live their lives and make their own experiences, and feel emotions. Stereotypes increase the promotion of social exclusion for individuals with a disability, but if the concept on uniqueness as a common feature of all human beings is fostered within the society, the result can be nothing than the inclusion of every person as valuable members of the society, and the perception of people with disability would switch from *not normal* people to just people with their own identities and features (United Nations, 2021:5).

Similar to the concepts of people with disability as heroes, is the concept of them as victims, or people who suffer from an illness or condition. However, this is incorrect, too, since this perception implies that individuals with disabilities are vulnerable, and need to be helped or taken care of (UN Geneva, n.d.:2). This use of language is inappropriate and focuses on the negative aspects of people’s lives, which may even be absent. On the contrary, positive and empowering language should be used in their respect, since they may not excel in some activities or may not have some abilities, but they do have other skills, and the important is to focus on them.

The UN Geneva Guidelines (n.d.:3) include as a general principle the avoidance of euphemisms (LSA, 2016): as a matter of fact, the use of terms, such as *differently abled*, *disAbility*, or *people of all abilities* can be offensive, as they try to soften and deny the reality and the recognition of disabilities as part of the identities of individuals. Disabilities are not a feature that makes people different, it is a life condition (Arrigoni, 2012). In addition, it is argued that every individual is differently abled: some skills are owned by some, but other may have other skills rather than those.

Last, but not least, references to disabilities or illnesses or impairments should not be used in informal speech to refer to oneself or to other people, even though the intention is not to be offensive, but ironical (UN Geneva, n.d.:4). In fact, it is not appropriate to call someone (or oneself) disabled only because not able to do something, as well as it is inappropriate to say one has Alzheimer because they do not remember something. Incorrect usage leads to the creation of labels, and to the perpetuation of stereotypes. Disability-related terms should be used in relation to disability only and, as stated before, only when necessary as required by the context.

### **2.3.3.1 Disability – alternatives**

The disability topic presents similar strategies for avoiding using specific non inclusive constructions as we saw for gender. On the contrary, inclusive language in relation to disability consists of a wide vocabulary made up of alternatives for discriminating words, terms and expressions. In order to be as more inclusive as possible, it is recommended to follow the principles stated in Section 2.2.3, along with those general principles everyone should follow (see Section 2.3.1). In addition, the strategies proposed in relation to gender should be used also in relation to the disability vocabulary, so that a higher level of inclusion could be reached. In this section some alternatives will be listed, along with an explanation of their use and of their importance in the inclusion discourse. As for gender, English will be examined first, providing then parallel alternatives for Italian.

First of all, it is important to highlight that both in English and in Italian, disabilities and medical conditions are not a way in which people *are*, rather they need to be considered as something the individual *has* (British Columbia, n.d.:18). Disability is part of individuals' identities, but they are a characteristic, not their whole identity, and the person must be seen as such and not because of their disability (OHSU, 2021:24; Palumbo & Veglia, 2021:12). For this reason, the terms *disabled* or *handicapped* have been substituted by the more inclusive term *person with disability*, since they focused on individuals' limitations, whereas the appropriate term allows to put the person at the center. The same has occurred in the Italian language: *disabile* and *handicappato* are now considered to be offensive way to refer to an individual with disability, due to their negative connotation (NCDJ, 2021; Palumbo & Veglia, 2021:12). The Italian alternative is *persona con disabilità*, which is a calque from English, and it allows one to eliminate the dehumanization of those individuals, who have been identified only in relation to their condition. The debate on the use of people-first language and that of identity-first language is always open, and therefore both abandoned terms and their substitutions are used depending on the kind of language communities decide to adopt; however, when not sure what language to use, it is recommended to ask the concerned party, or to use people-first language.

In the same way, people who do not have any disabilities should be referred to as *people without disability*, not as *normal people* (UN Geneva, n.d.:5), since this exclusive term implies that individuals with disability are not normal, and this is offensive and mean. Italian follows the English example, and it is argued that it cannot be used the term *normale* or *normodotato* in relation to people without disabilities, for the same reason as above (Parlare Civile, 2013).

When referring to an individual with a specific disability, such as members of the Deaf community, the appropriate language to be used is *person who is deaf*, or in alternative, *person with hearing disability* (United Nations, 2022:19). As can be noticed, the term deaf is not used as a noun, but as an adjective. As a matter of fact, by defining disabilities as adjectives, the identity of the individual is in focus.

However, in this case the situation is slightly different. In fact, members of the Deaf community have adopted identity-first language, and thus the use of the term deaf as a noun to refer to a person is accepted<sup>23</sup>. On the other hand, when referring to a blind person, the most appropriate alternative is *person who is blind* or *blind person* (NCDJ, 2021). In some cases, it is argued the alternative *person with blindness* can be used, but it is less frequent than the other two options. However, also in this case, attention must be paid, since members of the Blind community distinguish between different levels of blindness, and the desirable solution is to refer to individuals on the basis of the level of blindness they have<sup>24</sup>.

As far as Italian is concerned, the situation is similar. As a matter of fact, both the term *sordo/a* and *cieco/a* should be used as adjectives, but they are still accepted as nouns by the same communities. In addition, the Italian Unione dei Ciechi e degli Ipovedenti<sup>25</sup> distinguishes two different levels of blindness, and again, the appropriate term should be used in relation to individuals, according to their sight level. Terms that are no longer allowed in their respect are *non udente / non vedente*, since they focus on the impairment without taking into consideration the levels of blindness and the individual themselves. As can be noticed, the two terms imply binarism, thus they refer to male or female individuals, and do not take into consideration non-binary people. For this reason, even though the use of these terms is allowed, I personally think that for a higher level of inclusion the options *persona cieca* and *persona sorda* are desirable, unless the gender of the individual is clearly stated, so that everyone can feel included in the community.

As a general rule, whenever referring to or addressing an individual with disability, the appropriate approach is to refer to them as a person *with* a disability, either physical or mental (United Nations, 2022:19). In the same way,

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<sup>23</sup> NAD, *Community and Culture – Frequently Asked Questions*. <https://www.nad.org/resources/american-sign-language/community-and-culture-frequently-asked-questions/>. Accessed 7/08/2022.

<sup>24</sup> AFB, *Low Vision and Legal Blindness Terms and Descriptions*. <https://www.afb.org/blindness-and-low-vision/eye-conditions/low-vision-and-legal-blindness-terms-and-descriptions>. Accessed 7/08/2022.

<sup>25</sup> Unione Italiana dei Ciechi e degli Ipovedenti ONLUS – APS, <https://www.uiciechi.it/>. Accessed 8/08/2022.

the Italian language uses the preposition *con*, as to define the disability the individual has. For instance, *person with autism / person with physical or intellectual disability / persona con autism / persona con disabilità fisica o mentale*. Otherwise, the verbs *to have* and *avere* are used, again, to denote that disability is a characteristic of the person, but not their whole identity. The same occurs when referring to the Down syndrome, as in the following examples: *person who has/with Down syndrome / persona che ha/con la syndrome di Down*.

Often disability is associated with the image of a person who uses a mobility equipment, in other words, a wheelchair, as this is the international symbol standing for accessibility in many contexts (FIABA, 2021). However, as investigated, disability has different forms. As far as inclusive language is concerned, individuals using a wheelchair should never be referred to as *people restricted to a wheelchair* or *wheelchair-bound*, as this definition implies that the individual is seen only in relation to the equipment they need, as it was something limiting their lives (NCDJ: 2021). On the other hand, a wheelchair allows individuals to move around and to have their own independence, in addition, the equipment is part of their personal space, but they also use other everyday objects, such as beds or chairs. Therefore, the most appropriate term to be used is *wheelchair user*, but also other alternatives can be appropriate, such as *person who uses a wheelchair* or *person who uses a mobility device*. Alternatively, the indication of the equipment used can also be omitted, by simply saying *person with a mobility disability*. All of these are accepted solutions.

In the same way, Italian rejects the use of such terms as *costretto* or *inchiodato su una carrozzina/sedia a rotelle*, as they focus on the negative aspects of life of individuals who use this equipment, who are, instead, free and independent (Parlare Civile, 2013). *Persona che si muove in sedia a rotelle* seems to be the most appropriate solution, along with the expression *persona che usa la sedia a rotelle* (Palumbo & Veglia, 2021:15).



When speaking about accessibility, as the word indicates by itself, it is inappropriate to refer to equipment, materials, or spaces to be used by people with disability as *special*, but as *accessible*, as they are created in order to make everyone enjoy situations and spaces, and to make everyone feel included and not different from others (IOWA, 2021:8) (*accessible handouts, accessible parking*). As an alternative, *tailored* can be used, as in *tailored assistance*, to indicate the personalization of contents or services, in order to make them more inclusive and suitable for every individual. In Italian, the use of the adjective *speciale* in relation to spaces or materials to be used by individuals who have disability is generally avoided, as stated before in this chapter, because these individuals are not special or not normal; they are people. Therefore, the adjective *accessibile* is desirable and mostly used, as in the case of *materiali accessibili* or *luogo accessibile*, without any more references to the individuals who are intended to use those materials or spaces, since they can be used by everyone indiscriminately (Tulli, 2012:38). Alternatively, the expression *dedicato a persone con disabilità* can be used, but in this way, it is clearly stated that something is intended for people with disability only, and I think this can be discriminatory in a way, since it implies the impossibility for these individuals to use or do something in other ways.

#### **2.3.4 Ethnicity**

Gender and Disability are two of the most delicate topics in today's society, and as explained in this chapter, language needs to reflect social changes through a change in its grammar and in its vocabulary. However, there is a third important and serious topic to be discussed: that of ethnicity, which includes the discourse on race, immigration, culture, and origin. It is a wide topic, but in this chapter the focus will be the alternatives and strategies people need to adopt in language in order to guarantee inclusion for all those people who are from a different country, or simply for those who have a "different" skin tone, who are discriminated only on the basis of having a dark or pale skin colour.

As argued by Jablonsky (2020:13-18, 141-143), people are united but also divided by skin colours, as it has influenced for centuries and still influences relationships

among humans and among different societies. In addition, the acknowledgement of differences between the skin tones of individuals has led to racist approaches, which has similarly led to the creation of stereotypes and prejudices still instilled in our society, but which need to be removed. Racism can be defined as “the process by which systems and policies, actions and attitudes create inequitable opportunities and outcomes for people based on race”<sup>26</sup>, and it is argued to be present even in language, revealing its presence through discriminatory and offensive language. According to Race Forward (2015:ii), “language matters, and we need more tools to move our race conversations forward in more accurate, fair, and productive ways”, hence, a language evolution and revolution is necessary.

The first step is the understanding of the difference between terms, such as race and ethnicity (IOWA, 2021:3); race is a social construct used to classify individuals based on their physical or biological characteristics. On the other hand, ethnicity refers to the totality of elements a person acquires by being part of a community, hence it refers to shared culture, beliefs, practices, and language. Ethnicity implies the concept of human communities as the result of historical and cultural phenomena (Parlare Civile, 2013). Race has a negative connotation, and it has been categorically eliminated when used in relation to people, in favour of the term ethnicity.

As pointed out for the first two topics, some general principles and good practices need to be followed to be inclusive in relation to ethnicity and culture, and the key word, as in the other cases, is respect. Respect is the fundamental principle in inclusion, and the precondition to learn how to be inclusive is to learn to respect others and to be open to any differences or unique characteristics individuals may have. Language needs to be respectful, and not to dehumanize anybody on the basis of their identity, and in this case, of their ethnicity. Nor should language create barriers in any way.

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<sup>26</sup> Australian Human Rights Commission, *What is Racism?*. <https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/race-discrimination/what-racism>. Accessed 15/08/2022.

Inclusive language in relation to ethnicity requires individuals to learn about new and different cultures, so that people's actions and practices can be understood in a new perspective (Tasmanian Government, 2020:6). In addition, the understanding of the different backgrounds people have and the related cultural norms, will help in reaching a greater openness towards new identities and in the comprehension of potential harmful or offensive terms not to be used in their respect. As a general rule, similarly to gender and disability, it is recommended to refer to the ethnicity of an individual only if it is necessary for the conversation and if relevant to the context (British Columbia, n.d.:9; Tasmanian Government, 2020:6); otherwise, individuals can be referred to in relation to their identities, but not highlighting their skin colour and ethnicity as their primary features. In the case when the ethnicity or origin needs to be included in the discourse, then it is suggested to be specific (CDC, 2022; OHSU, 2021:5), and not to assume one's origin only in relation to one's appearance. This allows one to avoid generalizations, which may lead to stereotypes. Moreover, when not sure about an individual's origin, the best practice is always to ask for clarification, so that no mistakes are made, and unintentional offences are avoided.

A second good practice linked to the avoidance of generalizations, is to avoid using collective terms to refer to individuals belonging to the same ethnicity or having the same origin, such as *the Asians* or *Hispanics*, in particular when using the term to refer to an action or to a feature considered to be shared by all members of the community (CDC, 2022; Tasmanian Government, 2020:6). This use of language may lead to labelling individuals and consequent stereotyping approaches. Instead, the origin should be introduced as an adjective to the noun referring to the individual, such as in the following example: *Asian person*. In this way, the attention is on the identity of the person themselves, on their identity, and the origin is included in the description in a way it does not imply the person is identified only in relation to it.

#### 2.3.4.1 Ethnicity – alternatives

As pointed out in relation to disability, the strategies mentioned in the gender dedicated section (2.3.2.1/2) should also be followed in relation to the ethnicity topic, as the identity of individuals needs to be the focus of every interaction. Therefore, a good practice is to keep in mind that binarism is a limit and every identity should be included. The first term considered in this section is *person of colour*, and the corresponding Italian expression *persona di colore*. These two terms have been widely used in the last decades to refer to individuals with a dark skin colour, but they are now considered to be discriminatory (Parlare Civile, 2013). As a matter of fact, every individual has a skin colour, which can be dark, pale, rosy, yellowish, or white, in case of people with albinism. So, the problem with this expression is the direct association of the word “colour” with people with dark skin, or people who are not white, which is a result of years of colonisations, in which white people considered themselves superior to black people, who had been enslaved and released. Therefore, even though the term seems to be appropriate and not offensive, the truth is that it discriminates and does not take into consideration that even white is a colour, hence everyone should be called *person of colour*, whatever their skin tone is.

English has created the descriptor *BIPOC*, which stands for Black, Indigenous and People of Colour. It is argued (OHSU, 2021:8), that such a descriptor has been embraced by many, but others do not feel recognized by it, as it does not consider different identities and other ethnicities. For this reason, another expression has been created, which is broader and includes a wider spectrum of ethnicities: *Black, Indigenous, Hispanic, Asian and other people of colour*. It can be argued that this expression is too long to be used in conversation, and thus the correct option is always to be as specific as possible and to identify individuals’ ethnicity correctly and accurately. Alternatives to substitute the expression *person of colour* / *persona di colore* are simple, as it is recommended, as mentioned, to be specific. Hence, people will be referred to as American Indian native, Arabian, Asian, African American, Hispanic, Pacific Islander, Russian (OHSU, 2021:10-12). And

in Italian, the recommendation is the same. It has to be remembered, the expression *coloured person* cannot be used, for the same reasons listed above.

As far as the terms *black* and Italian *nero*, the use in the two languages is similar. As a matter of fact, these are generally used as adjectives in front of nouns referring to individuals, as *black person / black man / ragazzo nero / popolazione nera* (Parlare Civile, 2013; USCA, n.d.:1). However, according to Guidelines (OHSU, 2021:10-12, Race Forward, 2015:15), adjectives denoting origin, nationality and tribe can also be used as nouns; the important is to capitalize the descriptor in order to give them visibility and to show respect and recognition (OHSU, 2021:10), and not to use it as a singular noun (*a Black*), as this use is considered offensive (IOWA, 2021:4). As far as Italian is concerned, *nero* used as a noun is allowed, but it is argued (Faloppa, 2012) it could create generalizations and superficial categorization. This is the reason why it is preferable to use them as adjectives, remembering that the colour of a person is to be specified only if relevant to the context, and without emphasizing it as a distinctive feature that makes people different.

Two terms that are forbidden both in English and in Italian are *nigger* and *negro*, since they are discriminatory and offensive, and they refer back to the period of racism and colonisations, when black people were white people's slaves (Parlare civile, 2013). They are considered offensive as they focus on the individual's skin colour, in order to highlight it and not to neutrally describe it. In addition, particularly in Italian, many expressions containing the term are used (*lavorare come un negro*, for instance), and this creates a negative label associated with the term itself (Faloppa, 2012).

As far origin is concerned, one more term needs to be considered, as the use of new alternatives has been promoted as substitutes of old terms. The term is *immigrant* and the corresponding Italian *immigrato*. In English, the term is often preceded by the adjective *illegal*, and this is why most guidelines reject the use of the expression; however, the use of the term *immigrant* is not incorrect, but it has

to be used by itself, and not in correspondence with defining adjectives. Alternatively, the more inclusive term *migrant* should be used, which has a more neutral connotation (CDC, 2022). In addition, it is highly recommended to avoid dehumanizing terms, such as *alien*, in relation to migrants, as they hide the identity of individuals (OHSU, 2021:15). In the same way, Italian allows the use of the term *immigrato*, but the tendency is to avoid using it in favour of the neutral *migrante*, as *immigrato* has been charged with a discriminatory connotation (Parlare Civile, 2013). As a general rule, it is recommended not to mention the migration background of people, unless it is relevant.

Language is an always changing system according to the changes occurring in society. It reflects these changes, and for this reason, language should evolve and be revolutionized in order to guarantee equality and equity, as well as the integration of people. Inclusion is not simple to reflect in language, but thanks to numerous strategies and a reorganization of language itself, every identity may soon find its identification and recognition both within the society and in language.

## CHAPTER 3

### THE IMPORTANCE OF INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE IN INTERPRETING AND THE CASE STUDY

The present chapter is dedicated to the project carried out at the University of Padua with a class of students, during the 2021-2022 academic year. The first part of the chapter will investigate the importance of using inclusive language in interpreting situations. The second part of the chapter will describe the project, its aims, and the activities proposed to the participants, along with the results and an analysis of how effective activities were, thanks to a collection of students' reflective papers, in which their impressions have been recorded.

#### **3.1 Inclusive language and interpreting**

As this thesis has tried to demonstrate, language needs to keep up with the changes society is facing, in particular as far as inclusion discourse is concerned. According to Vera Gheno (2020 in Longo, 2020), two directions can be distinguished in relation to the relationship between language and the changes within the society. The first one argues that society is the first to change by introducing new concepts, and then the language conforms to the changes by introducing new terms or by changing the meaning of existing terms. On the other hand, it is argued it can be language which influences the way reality is perceived, by focusing on elements or concepts which had not been noticed before.

Inclusion, as pointed out, values diversity and the inclusive community tries to create an environment, in which every individual has equal access to resources and opportunities, and where individuals are valued and respected (Molefi et al., 2001:5). In the recent past, great steps towards inclusion have been taken both by institutions and by people, acknowledging and recognizing the existence of different identities, acknowledging the limitations of binarism in language, and recognizing the need to use a new vocabulary aimed at identifying people accurately. The representation of identities is necessary, in order to make

everyone feel accepted and included within a society, which is often characterized by old stereotypes and prejudices, difficult to eliminate.

Interpreting, as explained in the first chapter, is the oral mediation of discourse from one source language into a target language, but it is not a mere exchange of information from one linguistic code into another (Katan, 1999:12-13). Interpreting is, in fact, a situation in which both language and cultural features are interconnected. Interpreting requires the interpreter not only to be highly proficient in both working languages, but also to have a deep knowledge of the cultures related to the languages, as well as other competences, such as pragmatic competence and sociolinguist competence. A successful interpreting situation can be achieved only when all these elements are combined, along with respect towards the speakers and sensitivity to a variety of topics.

As far as language competence is concerned, interpreters are required to possess a broad vocabulary of terms in both languages, and to know the two grammars in detail. For this reason, they need to be updated on the changes occurring in both languages, and in relation to inclusive language, they need to be aware of new terms in vocabulary, their new meanings, and also of the strategies used to avoid discriminatory or offensive utterances. Language courses can help in reaching this proficiency, but it is necessary for interpreters to keep track of the changes autonomously, thanks to informative websites and reliable sources, for instance institutions, such as the Italian Accademia della Crusca, or inclusion centers. However, as demonstrated in Section 2.3.2.2, the changes society adopts to be more inclusive are not always embraced by institutions as well, which could, on the contrary, reject them and promote the use of different alternatives, claiming that their adoption is impossible for grammatical reasons, as with the case of the schwa and the long schwa.

In relation to pragmatic and cultural competences, being proficient in these two helps interpreters to acknowledge that words have a meaning by themselves, but the way in which words are used, how language is performed, and the context



rotating around the communicative event, can have an impact on the participants, acting both as a shelter in which individuals can identify themselves, and as a weapon, which offends (Orrù, 2021). Language and words are forceful means capable of raising different kinds of emotions, and being able to use them in the most appropriate and correct ways, helps in reducing connected negative emotions, and to promote fairness among individuals. As pointed out in the previous chapter, inclusion, and so inclusive language, do not concern gender discourse only, but different aspects of everyday life can be included under the definition.

Interpreters' skills include, as a consequence, the ability to render utterances inclusive into the target language, as they work in multicultural communicative situations. As a matter of fact, conference interpreters are, by definition, mediators in conference settings in which multiple languages are used, and in which multiple cultures are involved. On the other hand, the communicative situations in which liaison interpreters take part are more intimate, but it can be argued that the intimacy of the situations, and the delicate topics debated during liaison sessions, may require a higher level of proficiency in the use of inclusive language, as generally such a setting involves two parties, who have different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. In the recent past, interpreting agencies have been moving towards the use of inclusive language, promoting courses for their interpreters, in order to guarantee fairness and inclusion in the communicative situations their interpreters take part to. For instance, the Italian Association of Translators and Interpreters (AITI), offers free courses to introduce its members to inclusive language and its use.<sup>27</sup>

However, the use of inclusive language in an interpreting situation can be controversial. As a matter of fact, according to the NAJIT's Code of Ethics (2002), interpreters should render utterances faithfully and avoid any kind of

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<sup>27</sup> AITI (Associazione Italiana Traduttori e Interpreti), (2022). *Comunicare (e tradurre) senza discriminare: linguaggio inclusivo e accessibile nel 2022*. <https://aiti.org/it/news-formazione-eventi/corsi-eventi/comunicare-e-tradurre-senza-discriminare-linguaggio-inclusivo-0>. Accessed 18/09/2022.

omissions. In addition, the utterances said in the source language should not be rephrased when rendered in the target language, in order to maintain the speaker's intentions (Sandrelli, 2005:78) and to observe the principle of *fidelity*, whose primary meaning is that of faithfulness in translation. On the other hand, as has been argued by Gile ([1995] 2009), fidelity is not only about the rendition of the whole content, but it also introduces interpreters' decision-making power, since they have to decide whether to report the whole content as it is uttered, maintaining the intentions of the speaker and using the corresponding words in the target language, or if the content should be linguistically acceptable, thus making some changes in the translation, risking changing the speaker's intentions due to the use of words that do not exactly correspond in the two languages. As a result, how should an interpreter behave, when one of the speakers does not use inclusive language in their discourse? This is the big question this section tries to give an answer to.

On one hand, it is clear that if speaker A does use inclusive language and inclusive terms when referring to individuals or addressing speaker B, the interpreter needs to use inclusive language in their rendition. On the contrary, if the speaker uses offensive and discriminatory terms on purpose, according to the principle of fidelity and on the general rules interpreters should follow, the rendition should contain the translation of those terms, and the speakers' intention and the performative character of the utterance should be kept. However, the question does not concern this kind of situation, but the case in which one of the speakers, or both, unintentionally uses non-inclusive language; in other words, when the speaker uses, for instance, binary terms instead of gender-neutral terms to address the other speaker without trying to be offensive or to discriminate, but only because they forget to use inclusive language. How should an interpreter deal with such a situation, or when they are not sure if the speaker is trying to use inclusive language, as maybe it is not detectable? Should they use non-inclusive language and risk hindering the conversation, or should they follow their code of ethics, and decide on their own to use inclusive language to avoid possible conflicts and to keep a relaxed environment?

To answer this question, I wrote to few interpreting agencies which work both with Italian and English; unfortunately, just the Managing Director (Milena Vegnaduzzo, Lexilab) of one of these agencies responded, and they forwarded my email to professionals working for the Lexilab agency, so that they could answer in more detail by presenting real examples. Again, unfortunately no professional contacted me and the question is still open. However, as much of research has been conducted to write the present thesis, even though I did not find the precise answer to the question, and although the answer is controversial, depending on the interpreting situation, I believe that, in the cases described above, the interpreter should try to be as neutral as possible, and they should use inclusive language to maintain a safe and respectful environment. Hence, if the interpreter is in doubt of the kind of language used by one of the speakers, I think the best option is to use inclusive terms and pronouns. Then, as interpreters are allowed to ask for clarifications by making sure also the other party is involved in the one-language exchange by explaining them the situation, I would recommend asking the non-inclusive speaker if they are intentionally or unintentionally using that kind of language, so that the interpreter can decide whether to continue using inclusive language, or to switch to non-inclusive language to render the speaker's intentions.

### **3.2 The project**

The project described in this chapter was presented to a group of students attending Professor Dalziel's Liaison Interpreting course at the University of Padua. All the activities took place during the first semester of their second year of master's degree, hence in the academic period from October 2021 to January 2022. The group consisted of a large number of students, around 100: this was unexpected, since the previous years the number of students attending the same course was smaller, according to Professor Dalziel, but this was helpful for our project, since more results were collected to understand whether the activities proposed were effective or not.

I attempted to answer three research questions thanks to the research and the project, each one connected with the different phases of the project:

- How aware are MA language students following a course on Liaison Interpreting of the topic of inclusion and inclusive language?
- What activities can be proposed to fulfil the aim of increasing awareness and encouraging students to use inclusive language when practising Liaison Interpreting?
- How do students perceive the activities proposed?

The initial plan for the project consisted in five different activities to be proposed in different moments during the course: a first questionnaire to answer the first research question; a glossary of inclusive terms and liaison simulations in relation to the second question; a reflective activity and a final questionnaire to complete the results and to answer the third research question. Unlike the initial organization of the activities, the reflective activity was not proposed to students in the planned way, but I personally presented the project to the class thanks to a PowerPoint presentation, and Professor Dalziel gave me access to the inclusion related parts of the reflective papers students wrote at the end of the course, since the final questionnaire did not receive as many responses as it was expected, and so the third research question could be answered in a more complete way.

### **3.2.1 The initial questionnaire**

The questionnaires created for the project respond to the definition given by Brown (2001 in Dörnyei, 2010:3-4), by which “Questionnaires are any written instruments that present respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they are to react either by writing out their answers or selecting from among existing answers.”. As a matter of fact, the questions used in the questionnaires were both open-ended questions and closed-ended questions, thus students were required both to give their opinion and to select answers among given options. Both questionnaires were created with Google forms<sup>28</sup>, they were anonymous, so that the data collected are completely anonymous.

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<sup>28</sup> Google forms, <https://docs.google.com/forms/u/0/>.

The opening questionnaire (Table 1 in the Appendix) was to be presented to students at the beginning of the Liaison Interpreting course, that is to say by the end of September, in correspondence with the start of the academic year. However, students were given it middle October; the previous classes were dedicated to an introduction to interpreting, its modes and the competences involved, advice and rules for a successful performance as interpreters, and other explanations involving a clarification on speech acts and activities to improve students' memory before simulations. The purpose of the questionnaire presented was understanding students' backgrounds in terms of their use of inclusive language, and a few factual questions were asked, in particular to know the languages spoken by students, even though focused only on English and Italian, since the Liaison Interpreting course concerned this language combination. Most students spoke Italian as their mother tongue, while for a minority of them Italian was not their first language, as it was English, Polish, Russian, Serbian, French, Romanian, or Albanian. The range of the participants' ages was quite small, in fact the majority was 22-25 years old, whereas some were older, up to 34 years old. As far as the gender of the sample is concerned, almost 93% was female, 7% was male and 1% preferred not to say.

The first section of the questionnaire introduced inclusive language in the title only, and students were asked to give their personal definition of the term before the actual definition was given, in order to check whether students were already familiar with the topic or not. Results were collected according to the instructions given by Dörnyei (2010:84-85, 92), in fact, each answer was converted into a numerical score, (1, 2, or 3), based on the information contained in the answer itself. Number 1 was given to the answers which defined inclusive language as a kind of language that is inclusive only to gender through the promotion of strategies to avoid binarism; those answers which grasped the meaning of inclusive language and tried to give a general definition of the expression, were given the number 2. Last, number 3 represented the answers of those students, who were not aware of the meaning of inclusive language. The collected results, once gathered in an excel file and gathered into a diagram for better understanding

(Figure 1), led to two different directions: on one hand, awareness on the topic was noticed. Most students gave complete answers or defined inclusive language as a non-discriminatory language, by which every person is valued, and nobody is offended on the basis of their gender, ethnicity, religion, and disability. However, many associated inclusive language with the gender discourse only, and did not take into consideration the other aspects this kind of language involves. On the other hand, a few people defined it as a simpler language that everyone can understand without any difficulties, thus it was assumed these students had never heard of the topic before.

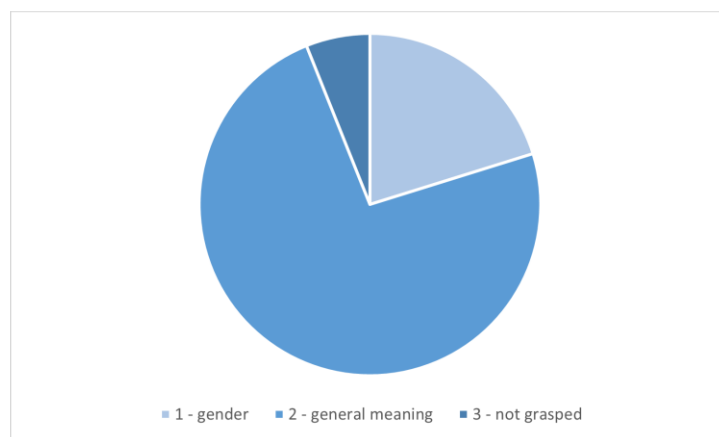


Figure 2: Inclusive language awareness

The second part of the questionnaire was introduced by the definition provided by the OHSU Guidelines (2021:3), in order to increase awareness on the topic. As a matter of fact, it had been assumed that part of the group of students could have been unaware of the correct definition and of the topics inclusive language deals with. In addition, without a clear understanding of the topic, the answers to the subsequent questions would have led to incorrect results and to a wrong answer to our first research question.

Students were asked if they used inclusive language, both in their mother tongue and in the other languages they speak, with particular attention to English. The answers revealed that, in relation to all the languages spoken by the group, the majority tended to use inclusive language according to the context or the situation in which they found themselves. However, the negative implication is that

inclusive language was not always used, in none of the languages. As a matter of fact, by having a closer look to the results, the situation in relation to Italian, the majority's first language, pointed out that inclusive language was mostly used depending on the context, hence used on given occasions. The situation is similar in relation to other languages, but surprisingly, as far as English is concerned, the results showed a marked usage not only depending on the context, but in every situation: 49 out of 104 respondents claimed they always use inclusive language when speaking English, against only 23 of them when speaking Italian. However, it was not asked if in this case the use of inclusive language concerned gender discourse only, or even other topics, but one of the possible reasons to such a disparity, could be that English has included the singular they and the use of the plural they in its grammar as inclusive pronouns, and more and more grammar books and English courses are teaching how to use them. As a matter of fact, half of the group stated they had attended university courses or classes which had dealt with the topic. In addition, inclusive strategies, such as those listed in Chapter 2 of this thesis (see Section 2.3.2) are frequently used on social media, TV programmes and events; thus, students may have heard of them by listening to English programmes.

In order to create fitting activities and to understand how deep students knew the inclusive language topic, one of the questions in the questionnaire concerned their awareness level about the strategies that can be adopted to avoid discrimination in language. A high percentage of students (40%) claimed they did not know any strategies, but the remaining part of the group, who were aware of at least one strategy, were asked to list them. Most of the strategies listed concerned gender and how to avoid being gender specific, such as the use of the schwa and the asterisk at the end of nouns, the use of the plural form of pronouns, who and one as substitutes of personal pronouns, the use of both male and female alternatives of nouns and pronouns, passive voice and the omission of gendered terms, the avoidance of general masculine, and also the use of given neutral terms. Some also mentioned racism and disability, listing as strategies the avoidance of ableist

insults or language and the avoidance of discriminatory expressions, as well as the general principle of not assuming one's identity.

The following question was directly linked to the present thesis, inclusive language in interpreting; as a matter of fact, students' opinions on the link between the two topics were necessary to understand how students would embrace the proposed activities, and to understand their inclination for the use of inclusive language in class. Almost every respondent considered inclusive language linked to interpreting, since interpreters work with different individuals and different identities, thus they need to be inclusive in order to respect both speakers involved and the other identities that may be mentioned during the conversation. In addition, interpreters should also respect the two cultures involved in the communicative event, as well as other cultures. It was also stated that inclusive language is necessary in interpreting, as discrimination and offence should be avoided, and the interpreter should avoid labels and use neutral words, so that inclusion can be granted. A few students mentioned the need for interpreters to report utterances using inclusive language even when one of the speakers uses a non-inclusive language. As pointed out previously in this chapter, interpreters should conform to the language the speaker uses, but when in doubt, a better solution is to start using inclusive language, and then ask the speaker for clarifications about the kind of language they intend to use throughout the conversation.

According to students' answers in relation to the ways in which interpreters can become more aware of non-discriminating strategies, they should attend university courses and specific courses held by professionals, so that the community of interpreters could share their own experience and advice, or do their own research thanks to the huge amount of information that can be found on the web, so that they can follow the inclusive language related trends. Others suggested that listening to and talking to people involved in the inclusion topic would be helpful to understand the terms and the strategies to be used to be more inclusive. I personally agree with the group of students, as it is necessary for



interpreters to listen to professionals sharing their experience, but it is also necessary to stay informed by reading academic articles on the topic, and by searching for the changes occurring in language, following the instructions given by reliable sources, such as interpreting agencies, inclusive organizations, and language institutions.

As far as the questionnaire is concerned, the third part presented to students was a quiz with closed-ended questions about inclusive terms. For each question students had to choose among three or more alternatives the option they believed to be the most inclusive one. In some other cases, in addition to given choices, they had the opportunity to write additional alternatives they considered more accurate and correct. Six questions were dedicated to English alternatives, and other four questions to Italian options, as subsequent interpreting simulations would have required them to translate from English into Italian and vice versa. All the questions presented tricky alternatives, that is to say, terms that are frequently or generally used to refer to individuals and identities, but which are not inclusive or present better alternatives. In addition, the questions tried to cover the three topics discussed in the thesis, so gender, disability, and ethnicity, as a prelude to following activities. The results will not be discussed in this section, as they will be discussed later in section 3.2.3, since they were reviewed with students during the PowerPoint presentation in class.

The questionnaire ended with an open question, in which students could write their own comments on the topic and on the quiz itself. Just few students took the opportunity to comment, and everyone agreed that inclusion and inclusive language is an interesting topic, which is poorly discussed in our society and in schools; as a matter of fact, they argued it should be taught in schools and in universities, and in relation to every language studied, in order to make people aware of inclusion issues. One person gave an intriguing answer, which I quote here:

I think inclusive language is important but I don't think it should change the Italian grammar too much, to the point where suffixes and desinances are considered offensive or discriminatory, the Italian language should adapt to

people's different needs and orientations, but it shouldn't be completely changed and turned into a whole other language system. Also, the change in the language should reflect a change in the culture, so in order to make the language change in a natural way that can be adopted by all the speakers a cultural change should also be made, in my opinion.

I appreciated this comment, as this person, who was aware of the topic and used inclusive language, even though in relation to gender only, spoke out her opinion, which is similar to D'Achille's perspective (2021). However, as argued in the second chapter, changes in language may be necessary in order to represent all individuals' identities, hence a reorganization of language and grammars is also necessary to fulfil the aim. In Section 3.2.5 this perspective will be returned to, as one question of the final questionnaire concerned exactly this topic.

### **3.2.2 The glossary**

After the initial questionnaire, a glossary (Table 2) of inclusive terms was created and given to students, so that they could memorize the terms, which they would have used in the following interpreting simulations. Glossaries are helpful tools in translation and interpreting, as they are collections of terms both in source language and in target language, and they help in the use of correct terms and expressions (Intertranslations, 2020). In addition, glossaries are generally specific and in fact provide key terminology to be used, in order to maintain consistency during the interpreting situation. As a matter of fact, according to Integro (2018), the use of glossaries allows interpreters (and translators) to be accurate in their translations, and also to be consistent, reducing the possibility of one single term being translated differently throughout the communicative situation. Furthermore, the use of glossaries improves translation also in speed; Integro refers to translation, but the same advantage can be found also in interpreting. In fact, without glossaries, it may take longer for interpreters to think about the appropriate term to use, whereas thanks to glossaries and the memorization of the terms contained in them, the correct translation immediately comes to their mind, so that they can make the discourse flow without pauses.

The glossary was initially not meant to have the same terms presented in the questionnaire, so that students could have a wider vocabulary on hand; however,

some of them were included anyway, as they had been presented as tricky questions. The glossary tried to cover all three topics discussed in the thesis, and in some cases, clarifications on the use of terms was necessary. The 32 items were presented, as the following simulations would not include all terms and a wider number of terms would have led to confusion, as students also had to learn other glossaries, in relation to other topics discussed in class with Professor Dalziel. Students were given the glossary immediately after the compilation of the questionnaire, so that they had an entire week to study it and memorize the terms before using them in class simulations.

I was happy with the created glossary, as I thought that, even if small, it was complete. However, after completing my research when writing the second chapter, I re-examined the glossary and noticed some mistakes, which could have been avoided. For instance, the use of schwa as inclusive Italian ending and, in relation to ethnicity, I should have written *persona nera*, and the use of *nera* as an adjective should have been clarified. And again, instead of the expression *undocumented migrant*, the more inclusive *migrant who is undocumented* should have been used (OHSU, 2021:15). Unfortunately, I did not acknowledge these mistakes before, and I did not correct the terms with the students, so that they could memorize appropriate alternatives; however, since students showed their interest in the topic of inclusion and inclusive language, and as resulted from the answers of the final questionnaire, some of them did their own research after the activities proposed, and I hope they managed to understand my mistakes and correct themselves, in order to use correct options also in everyday situations. Actually, after the glossary was delivered, one student wrote an email to Professor Dalziel, pointing out that the Accademia della Crusca had published an article in which the use of the schwa and that of the asterisk was rejected (D'Achille, 2021). I visited the link, but did not make any changes in the glossary; I just used the article to write the second chapter. However, it was satisfactory that this student had conducted their own research and was so interested that they wanted to help me with the thesis.

### **3.2.3 The PowerPoint presentation in class**

The third activity proposed was initially not planned, as a matter of fact, Professor Dalziel suggested that a presentation of the project would be interesting and helpful for students, as they could acknowledge the importance of their contributions, and know the project they were part of. Therefore, I prepared a PowerPoint presentation, which I showed on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> November 2021 to the students divided into two different groups coming to class in person or online on different times (Table 3). Before starting the presentation, Professor Dalziel presented her own slides introducing some strategies to avoid gender bias in English and explaining the importance of gender-neutralization in order to give visibility also to non-binary identities. After her presentation, she gave me the floor.

Firstly, the project and its aim were introduced, along with the plan of the activities Professor Dalziel and I were going to present to the group. Secondly, the focus shifted to inclusive language: in fact, students were provided again with the definition of inclusive language, in order to increase awareness on the topic and to recall the questionnaire. The second step consisted in illustrating some general theory on interpreting, which had already been introduced by Professor Dalziel during the first classes at the beginning of the Liaison Interpreting course, but which I considered to be appropriate to recap. As a matter of fact, I simply reminded students that interpreters should keep their neutrality in interpreting situations, and that no omissions and changes are allowed, in order to maintain the intentions of the speakers.

As far as inclusive language in interpreting is concerned, I suggested that inclusive language should be used only when it is used also by the speaker, or when in doubt, that is to say, when the utterance to be translated does not present pronouns or non-inclusive terms, but the utterance in the target language requires these elements to be used; in this case, the interpreter is recommended to use inclusive terms and pronouns, or inclusive strategies, in order not to offend or discriminate anyone. As argued before in this chapter, this topic is controversial,

but I feel this is the best solution along with asking for clarification. Students were also introduced to the general recommendations in the matter of inclusive language, and hence the use of gender-neutral terms, or male and female alternatives, the use of non-deficit based language, the use of People First Language, and the avoidance of labels and generalizations when referring to or addressing individuals. As previously mentioned, the PowerPoint presentation allowed me to review the results of the initial questionnaire, and to comment on the answers the students had given, explaining the mistakes and the reasons why other options were appropriate. The following paragraphs will comment on the results.

As far as the first question is concerned, the majority of the students gave the correct answer by choosing the most inclusive term among the options. However, a large part of the group thought that the term *differently abled student* was correct, even though it is discriminatory, as it is argued (UN Geneva, n.d.:1) that every individual had a variety of skills and abilities, which may differ from the abilities another individual has, thus everyone is differently abled. In relation to the second question, which concerned the inclusive term referred to a person who student a wheelchair, the correct answer was given almost by everyone (*wheelchair user*), and just few students opted for the ableist alternatives *restricted to a wheelchair* and *wheelchair bound*, since, as pointed out in the second chapter (see Section 2.3.3.1), the use of these terms implies that the individual is seen only in relation to the equipment, which is considered a limitation to their freedom, and their identity is in the background (NCDJ: 2021).

Question number 3 was one of the tricky questions; as a matter of fact, there were two correct options out of four options, and all students answered correctly by choosing one or the other alternative. However, it can be argued that the term *chair* is the only correct option, as the European Parliament (2018:11) claims that *chairperson* has been used in relation to women, thus it does not refer to both genders. But the Collins dictionary, for instance, does not point out this

difference<sup>29</sup>. The next question showed a lack of knowledge in the topic, but I had expected this, as I would have answered like the majority of the group if I had not carried out research. In fact, students deduced that the inclusive term referring to Latin American people was *Latin American*. It is correct, in a way, but it does not take into consideration the representation of all identities; hence, the term *Latinx* (to be read Latinex) is the most inclusive, since it is gender neutral.

In relation to the penultimate question in English, the results demonstrated that students were not aware of the term *special* to be non-inclusive. As a matter of fact, around the 30% of the group chose the two options which contained this adjective, considering it more inclusive than the adjective *tailored* (related to assistance for people with disability). During the presentation in class, it was explained that the adjective *special* is to be avoided when referring to something related to the disability topic, as disability does not make an individual special; on the contrary, every person is irreplaceable and unique, and every identity needs to be valued in the same way (Soresi, 2020:80). The last question demonstrated a sensitivity to the gender discourse and to the key issues related to the LGBTQ community. In fact, the majority of the respondents' answers were correct, indicating the term *LGBTQ(\*)* as the most inclusive one. A small percentage opted for the term *queer*, however, this term, as well as the other questionnaire option *homosexual people*, are not incorrect, but they should be used only in case the addressed person wants to be described by one or the other expression. Otherwise, the acronym is the best solution, even though it is argued that it is generally used within movements fighting for the rights of the people belonging to this community, and not outside of them, as it could push away those, who are not able to understand the meaning of the term (Valerio et al., n.d.:5).

In relation to the Italian part of the quiz, the first question covered an important issue, which has been discussed in section 2.3.4.1, and students were given the opportunity to choose between two given options, or to write their own

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<sup>29</sup> Collins, (2022). *What is the difference between chair, chairperson, chairman and chairwoman?*. <https://grammar.collinsdictionary.com/it/uso-dell-inglese/what-is-the-difference-between-chair-chairperson-chairman-and-chairwoman>. Accessed 7/09/2022.

alternatives. Most students indicated the expression *persona di colore* as the most inclusive; however, as pointed out, every individual has a skin colour, and from this perspective, everyone should be called *persona di colore*. Hence, it is not fair and it is discriminatory to associate the expression with people who have a dark skin colour (Parlare Civile, 2013). Other respondents opted for the term *nero/a*, which is correct, if used as an adjective. Others wrote down their own thoughts and inclusive terms, suggesting that specifying the origin of individuals is the best option, and I agree with these students. In fact, guidelines recommend being as specific as possible (OHSU, 2021:10-12). The second question demonstrated, as the last question for English, students' awareness on gender discourse, and a knowledge of terms related to the LGBTQ community. As a matter of fact, almost the totality of the group answered correctly and choose *persona transessuale* as the correct option, and only one student opted for the expression *il/la transessuale*. It was later explained, that the term *transessuale* needs to be used as an adjective, not as a noun, otherwise it is considered offensive.

The situation was different for the next item, which was another controversial question, as it also included a widely used term that is non-inclusive: most students chose the expression *non udente* as the best solution. But instead, it is discriminatory, as it focuses on the impairment and not on the identity of the individual, in addition, it does not take into consideration the levels of deafness of the individual. In addition, the term *sordomuto/a* is inappropriate, too, since it is true that in some cases deaf people have a limited vocabulary, but they use sign language and many of them can articulate words and sounds to be understood, hence this label needs to be avoided (Parlare Civile, 2013). The option *sordo/sorda* is definitely the appropriate one, both used as an adjective, and also as a noun, as the Deaf community prefers the use of Identity First Language, over the use of People First Language<sup>30</sup>.

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<sup>30</sup> NAD, *Community and Culture – Frequently Asked Questions*. <https://www.nad.org/resources/american-sign-language/community-and-culture-frequently-asked-questions/>. Accessed 7/08/2022.

The last question of the quiz concerned the inclusive term to refer to an individual who lives in the European Union, but who has not an Italian origin. Also in this case, a large part of the group agreed that the best option was *extracomunitario*, but the best solution is instead, *migrante*. As a matter of fact, the term *extracomunitario* has a negative connotation, and it generates a separation from oneself to the defined individual, causing social exclusion (Parlare Civile, 2013). *Migrante* is correct, as it simply describes the situation of the individual, in addition, it is not binary.

It is important to point out, that at the end of the initial questionnaire, one student wrote me an email to justify her answer to one of the questions of the quiz, the one concerning the most appropriate term in Italian for deaf people, and to offer her help, as she was part of the University Inclusion Office. She argued she had been told that, in relation to people, it is preferable to use terms, which do not present negations before the term itself. In fact, she explained that the term *non udente* was not appropriate, even though it is widely used as it seems to be non-offensive. However, she stated she had answered *sordomuto*, but as explained before in this section, this label is inappropriate, and such terms should be avoided in favour of the more inclusive *sordo/a*.

At the end of the presentation no questions were asked, and students were given the Inclusion Simulation discussed in the next section.

### **3.2.4 Interpreting simulations**

Simulations in the interpreting field are exercises, in which students become actors in a fake reality based on actual situations (Hierrezuelo García, n.d.:2). It is argued (Pöchhacker, 2004:186-187) that thanks to role-plays, students can understand the dynamics of interpreting, and they can improve their concentration and the skills required to interpreters, such as memory and stress management. In addition, simulations improve students' learning, as they have different roles and responsibilities; in fact, they can decide how to deal with a topic or with utterances, based on their own experience and learning, without the interference of



the professor. This enhances their problem-solving and also their critical thinking on how to maintain neutrality throughout the communicative situation (Kadric' 2011 in Pöchhacker, 2009:71), and, related to the topic of this thesis, on how to be as inclusive as possible in a variety of situations. Furthermore, simulations being realistic, students are more motivated to do their best, as they could find themselves in the same situations in everyday life or at work. According to Hierrezuelo García (n.d.:3), simulations can be divided into two different models: the first one, the convergent model, in which the steps and the objectives of the simulations are made clear by the teacher, and more attention lies in the process. The divergent model, on the contrary, allows students to freely organize the interaction, hence no steps or sequences are present.

The inclusions simulations presented to Liaison Interpreting students were jointly created by Professor Dalziel and me, and they respond to the convergent model introduced by Hierrezuelo García, as they presented a structure and students needed to follow the steps of conversation to perform the activity. When writing I tried to respect the structure of the dialogues I was presented when attending the Liaison Interpreting course during the previous academic year. Three dialogues were created, each one related to the three topics discussed in the second chapter; as a matter of fact, the first simulation concerned disability, the second one gender, and the third one ethnicity. All three dialogues are gathered in the Appendix (Table 4), and only the three introductions will be reported here.

- 1- The parent of a child with a disability (Italian-speaking) goes to talk to the head of the school (English-speaking) that their child will be moving to. The parent was not happy with the previous school and wants to make sure that this really is an inclusive school.
- 2- A non-binary student (Italian speaking) goes to the Inclusion Office (English speaking) at their university to complain about a professor's use of language and offensive views on gender.
- 3- The head of an Italian University Inclusion Office (Italian speaking) goes to speak to the head of an English-speaking University Inclusion Office.

Each dialogue presented the same structure, and hence a speaker attentive to inclusion issues, and another speaker rejecting inclusive terms or unable to use them. It was noted by students in their reflective papers that the sentences in these simulations were shorter than those they had to translate in other simulations. However, as we will see in more detail in the next sections, they were effective for our project.

In addition to inclusion simulations, students were also given a sight translation activity. As argued in the first chapter (see Section 1.4), sight translation involves different cognitive abilities, and allows to speed the process of translation and that of interpreting later, since the time to process information is limited (Pöchhacker, 2004:186). This activity was performed in class under the supervision of Professor Dalziel, and it was not planned for the project. Hence, I did not take part in the selection of texts to be presented, but it needed to be mentioned, and I agree that such an activity is important in interpreting training. In addition, I think it could have boosted students' interest in the inclusion topic.

### **3.2.5 The final questionnaire**

The final questionnaire (Table 5) created on Google Forms like the initial one, did not receive as many responses as the initial one, but more than half of the group responded (57 students), and this was enough to review the results of the project. In addition, having the opportunity to read students' reflective papers, compensated for the remaining absent responses.

Students were asked if the focus on Inclusive Language had increased their interest in the topic, and the majority of them confirmed this by giving a positive answer. The acknowledgement of some students being not so interested in the topic after the activities was discouraging, but fortunately, all the respondents agreed that the activities proposed had been effective in making them become more aware of the topic itself. In addition, as pointed out in Section 3.2.2, around half of the respondents declared they had done their own research or at least they had looked for additional information on the topic after the activities proposed, in

order to increase their own awareness on inclusion and inclusive language. As a matter of fact, 54 students out of 57 stated they had tried to use more inclusive language and inclusive terms in everyday situations.

The situation in relation to each spoken language was difficult to determine, as the number of students taking part in the questionnaire was low, but it can be noticed it has changed; in fact, initially, inclusive language was mainly used based on the context the respondents found themselves in. At the end of the course and after the activities, a positive attitude has been observed, as the majority of the answers concerning the different languages confirmed the willingness to be more inclusive, hence an effort in using inclusive language both in first language, in English, and also in the other languages students spoke. Students were also asked which strategies they felt more comfortable using in relation to gender, and two options were chosen by the majority. In fact, most students claimed they used given terms, such as those included in the inclusion glossary, and the second large group of respondents stated that changing the sentence avoiding specifying the gender of the individual is the best solution for them. Only 15 people claimed they are comfortable in using masculine and feminine alternatives, and the reason for such a discrepancy could be the difficulty in expressing both alternatives in communication, as utterances are weighed down by repetitions, and this option does not allow to include non-binary individuals in the conversation.

The last question of the questionnaire concerned students' opinion about the necessity or possibility for a change in the grammar of a language, in this case Italian, in order to be more inclusive and to guarantee inclusion for every identity. Many students were favourable towards changes in language, whereas others rejected the idea. In relation to the latter part of the group, it was argued that grammar does not need to change, and it has not to be changed, as it is a static element of language, and it would be difficult for people to learn a new grammar and its new related rules, as this would create hate and discomfort in people towards the group who has made the changes necessary. In addition, many claimed that a change in the vocabulary used could be enough, along with the

strategies they had been introduced to during the course, for instance changing the structure of an utterance. Therefore, attention must be paid to the way in which people speak, and it was also argued that grammar is not the key problem in the inclusion discourse; on the contrary, the society needs to be educated to inclusive language and to inclusion, so that the society itself can change. Only when a change in the society has occurred is a change in the language then possible.

The remaining part of the group can be divided into two different categories: the first one agreed that grammar needs to change and so the language; to the second category belonged those students who argued that a change in grammar is desirable, but only few aspects need to be changed, as strategies are enough to guarantee inclusion. In addition, the latter category claimed that changing the whole grammar of a language requires a lot of time, and people are not willing to learn new sets of rules. On the other hand, the first category argued that language and grammar naturally evolve as they reflect the evolution of the society, hence the Italian language should change into a non-gendered language, like English, with gender neutral nouns, neutral pronouns, and new inclusive terms. However, both categories agreed that grammar should not limit identity expression, and that education is the key, hence the society needs to be educated on inclusive language. Respect and awareness are two necessary key points, and once the society succeeds in being respectful and in acknowledging that all identities need to be represented by language, and that a non-discriminatory language should be used, then changes will occur both in language itself and in grammar, and this will first modify the contemporary society's mindset, and then future society's mindset.

### **3.2.6 The reflective papers**

The last activity I am going to describe was initially planned differently; in fact, a reflective activity was supposed to be presented to students after the inclusion simulations. However, such an activity was proposed after the simulations, but it concerned students' awareness on their own improvement in interpreting, and some of them just mentioned the inclusion glossary and another glossary they had

been given, which they claimed were helpful during the interpreting situations, as they could easily translate some terms and knew how to address speakers.

As a final task before the end of the course, Professor Dalziel asked students to write a paper, in which they had to reflect on their own experiences of Liaison Interpreting. Students were also asked to include in this paper their reflections on how Liaison Interpreting can be inclusive and foster inclusive practices. I was able to read all of them, as Professor Dalziel asked for students' permission. Not every paper mentioned inclusive language and inclusion, and hence some were not pertinent to my study. However, the majority of the students tried to write at least one sentence to explain why interpreting was important for them in relation to inclusive language, and to explain why interpreting can foster inclusive practices. Many also shared their own experiences.

It is possible that those students who did not mention inclusive language and inclusion in their papers, hence do not believe Liaison Interpreting can help in fostering inclusive practices, are the same students who do not agree that the grammar of a language should change in order to make language more inclusive. However, this is just an assumption, and it is satisfactory, that most students agree that Liaison Interpreting has a role in the promotion of inclusive language.

It was argued that respect is the key, along with awareness, delicacy, and responsibility. As a matter of fact, interpreting should foster respect towards both parties and towards external people, and interpreters should be aware of the power of words, and therefore they are responsible of the way in which words are uttered, along with the correct use of terms. Delicacy is another important feature to be possessed by interpreters, as they work in multicultural contexts, hence they need to be aware of the differences between cultures, along with the uniqueness of people, and they should be sensitive as they deal with delicate topic, especially in Liaison Interpreting sessions. Interpreters' role as bridges across cultures requires them to be aware that they co-construct meanings (Wadensjö 1995 in Angelelli, 2004:18), and for this reason, inappropriateness in the rendition of utterances may

interfere with the rendition of the speakers' intentions, and then with the whole conversation.

As argued above in this chapter, interpreters should keep their neutrality throughout the whole communicative situation and need to report utterances, even in case they contain offensive terms and discriminatory views. Hence, they should use inclusive language only when speakers use it. It was argued by many students that this part of interpreting was particularly difficult for them, as during the simulations they wanted to be as inclusive as possible in order to create a relaxed environment and make the party feel valued. However, as pointed out by one student, our simulations, which followed the convergent model, made them realize that the rendition of such terms and views was necessary, otherwise the whole conversation would have changed and the following sentences to be translated would have lost their importance and would not have had the same meaning. Students agreed that practice is necessary to create conscious interpreters, and realized that neutrality and detachment from the topics discussed in interpreting sessions are necessary, since empathy would compromise the whole session.

One student wrote “anyone who deals with language and its multiple expressions is somehow responsible of shaping the world that surrounds him/her” and I agree with them. In fact, the use of inclusive language by interpreters can have an impact on the participants, and can foster the elimination of labels, stereotypes, and prejudices through the appropriate word choice. In addition, it was pointed out that interpreters can become models or examples for non-experts, since the latter could learn from professionals how to use language, hence the use of inclusive language would be enhanced and fostered by such figures, as they use it in their sessions, and a greater awareness of culture diversity and inclusive practices would be promoted.

Other papers pointed out the linguistic differences between English and Italian, which created problems in being inclusive. In fact, as described in Chapter 2,

Italian requires more strategies to avoid discrimination and to be inclusive rather than English, even if only in relation to gender. However, many students agreed that the activities proposed in class were useful in making them understand the power of word choice, and also agreed that the new vocabulary presented was useful not only in relation to the activities and simulations, in which they managed to use given terms without thinking too much about the alternatives to be used, but also in relation to their everyday life. According to Likis (2021):

Using inclusive language requires a conscious decision. Once this choice is made, the pursuit of using the correct words takes time, effort, and dedication. It is not always a matter of simply replacing words with a more inclusive alternative. Careful attention must be paid to the context in which the word is being used to determine if an alternative is more appropriate.

As a matter of fact, inclusive language should be used consciously, not only because one term is more appropriate than another one. Obviously, it is desirable to use inclusive terms anytime it is possible. However, again, awareness is the key to a successful use of inclusive language and practices. Practice, perseverance, and willingness to change the general mindset are vital features for interpreters, who thanks to their efforts could promote inclusion starting from language itself.

It was argued by one student particularly attentive to the topic of inclusion, that Liaison Interpreting has often failed in fostering inclusion practices, as students were generally required to think quickly about translation solutions, and so to focus more on the content rather than on the way the content itself is conveyed. Hence, focus on inclusion and inclusive language has never found its place in Liaison Interpreting courses. However, inclusion is a relevant aspect of interpreting, and not only should professionals be taught how to be more inclusive, but awareness should be raised also in courses, as in this case study, in order to create conscious speakers who can respect every identity they come into contact with, and who are aware of the importance of inclusion. For this reason, it is fundamental, that more and more university and training courses focus on the topic.

Before heading to the conclusion of this thesis, I just want to say a word about the interpreting revision dialogues presented to students before their exam, which took place in mid-December. Professor Dalziel asked me to write some more dialogues to help students practice again the topic of inclusion with different simulations, as she had already done for the other topics discussed during the course. I wrote three dialogues, which were shorter than the ones presented in the simulation activity described in Section 3.2.4. One of the dialogues (Table 6) was selected and shortened by the Professor herself, as she was aware of the needs of her students and of the time dedicated to such revision dialogues. I am pleased that at least one of my dialogues had a role in helping students with their exam and with their training as future interpreters and as conscious speakers. In addition, I wrote one more dialogue to be used during exams. In this last dialogue, I tried to include all three inclusion related topics, so that students could use inclusive practices once again. The dialogue was improved by Professor Dalziel thanks to the addition of idiomatic expressions and new information (Table 7).



## CONCLUSION

This thesis has tried to demonstrate the importance of inclusive language in interpreting, in particular in Liaison Interpreting.

Interpreting is, in a few words, the simultaneous oral translation of a speech or a conversation between a minimum of two participants, from a source language into a target language. Interpreting can be divided into two categories, which are simultaneous interpreting and consecutive interpreting; Liaison Interpreting belongs to the latter category, as utterances are reported immediately after the speaker has spoken. This allows the interpreter to think a little longer about the rendition of words, pronouns, and terms; in addition, they can ask for clarifications, always making the other party acknowledge the reason of the clarification and the content of the dialogue carried out in the unknown language. Liaison Interpreting is generally used in informal contexts, and the number of the participants taking part in the communicative events is small: in fact, often only two speakers are involved. Liaison Interpreting is often used in community interpreting, and hence it gives voice to people who might not otherwise be able to access services or understand important situations, since they do not speak a certain language. These kinds of situations often concern delicate topics, for instance those of medical, legal, or migration fields. For this reason, delicacy, respect, and sensitivity are necessary to be successful interpreters. As pointed out, liaison interpreting follows the rhythm of the dialogic exchange, and thus interpreters do not have time to write down any notes and need to be able to stipulate pauses within the speech, or to take advantage of speakers' pauses to start their rendition.

It was argued that interpreters are required to possess different skills and competences in order to master their profession; first of all, language proficiency in all work languages. As a matter of fact, interpreters need to render the same content uttered in the source language into the target language, and by doing this, they need to “present the speaker’s ideas and convictions with the same intensity

and the same shades of meaning” (Duflou, 2009:4), without omitting anything, and without rephrasing utterances, as the meaning conveyed would not be exactly the same. Attenuation is in the same way avoided, since the speaker’s intentions would not be reported appropriately. In addition, language proficiency helps interpreters in using the correct and most appropriate terms and grammatical structures when translating, and thanks to this they can recognize humour and the pragmatic aspects of the language. Along with linguistic competence, interpreters must also be proficient in the cultures related to work languages, in order to avoid creating barriers to understanding and creating misunderstandings while translating. Interpreters are required to have many other skills, such as memory, but the two competences described above are the two most important ones in relation to the topic of this thesis.

As argued in the second chapter, the topic of inclusion has gained great visibility in the last few decades, in part due to the growing number of discriminatory events many individuals were witnessing and experiencing. Awareness of the topic has been increasing, and so the use of inclusive language, in particular among young people. Inclusion creates a safe environment for people in which they can feel recognized, valued, respected, and supported, so that they can feel part of the society; inclusive language aims at making it possible by putting humanity at the centre and promoting respect through the appropriate use of words, pronouns, and terms. Inclusive language is identity-affirming language, which values people and celebrates their uniqueness and differences without reinforcing stereotypes and prejudices, and avoiding discrimination based on features of individuals. Inclusive language concerns a variety of topics, and this thesis has tried to cover three of the most debated ones: gender, disability, and ethnicity.

Some of the most recommended principles to be inclusive were retrieved in different Guidelines, and it was argued that respect is the key. In addition, awareness needs to be raised in the society, so that everyone can become an active part of it and every identity gets respected. Asking individuals how they want to

be addressed is one of the most important principles to be followed, as both People First Language (PFL) and Identity First Language (IFL) are used within communities; when not sure of what kind of language should be used in relation to an individual, it is argued that it is preferable to use PFL, but then people's decision must be respected. Being specific is another important aspect of inclusion and of inclusive language. As a matter of fact, generalizations due to a lack of specificity lead to the perpetuation of stereotypes and prejudices, and create labels, which deny the recognition of individuals' identities and unique features. Another fundamental principle to remember is the avoidance of ableist-language, in favour of an asset-based language, so that the focus shifts from one's abilities, disabilities, or deficits to individuals' strengths and positive features.

Both languages taken into consideration, hence English and Italian, present many strategies to avoid discrimination and to foster the use of inclusive language. As far as gender is concerned, for instance, the use of both male and female alternatives, the use of gender-neutral nouns and pronouns, the reformulation of utterances in order to create gender-neutral renditions, and the use of particular symbols, such as the schwa, to avoid using binary terms. These are particularly relevant in Italian, which is a gendered language. In relation to disability, avoiding highlighting disability as the main characteristic of an individual is the first strategy to be used. In addition, it is desirable to use a language that denotes people with disability not as victims or heroes, but as individuals with their own unique characteristics. As for ethnicity, similarly to disability, the skin colour of an individual should not be mentioned if not needed by the context; otherwise, being specific is required, and it is important to be aware that some terms need to be used as adjectives, and not as nouns in order not to be discriminatory.

As far as the project is concerned, the third chapter described the different parts in which it was divided and by describing the activities in detail and explaining the results, it helped in answering our research questions clearly. As stated before in Section 3.2, each of the three different phases of the project was intended to

answer one of the three research questions, answers that will be described in the next paragraphs.

The questionnaire helped in answering the first research question “How aware are MA language students following a course on Liaison Interpreting of the topic of inclusion and inclusive language?”. As a matter of fact, the results showed that many students were already familiar with the topic, but in relation to gender discourse only, and not with disability and ethnicity discourse. Only a few of them were already aware of these two related topics. It was also noticed that some students were completely unaware of the topic, and hence the activities proposed have at least introduced them to the topic, and hopefully have increased their awareness and their willingness to use inclusive language. In relation to the different strategies used to avoid gender bias and discrimination, the majority of the group were aware of strategies concerning gender only, and hence the activities have helped them in coming into contact with and starting to use different alternatives and strategies to guarantee inclusion. The answers to the quiz revealed the group’s knowledge of inclusive terms, even though some tricky questions showed that some terms instilled in our society seem inclusive to most, although they are discriminatory in a subtle way. For instance, the Italian expression *non udente* is discriminatory, as it focuses on the impairment, but it is still widely used within society. In addition, students demonstrated an interest in the topic, and a willingness to learn more about it through the activities they were going to be proposed. The results showed that our society still lacks education on the topic, and more awareness needs to be raised among people.

The glossary and the inclusive simulations were effective in answering the second research question, “What activities can be proposed to fulfil the aim of increasing awareness and encouraging students to use inclusive language when practising Liaison Interpreting?”. In fact, as was demonstrated in the third chapter with the help of the reflective papers and of the answers to the final questionnaire, students claimed that the glossaries were effective, as they could learn new vocabulary to be used during simulations. Thanks to these, they could retrieve terms quickly,

without thinking too much about the translation during the interpreting situations, and it also increased their awareness by helping them in knowing the appropriate terms to use when referring to or addressing individuals. It encouraged them in using inclusive terms, even outside the academic context.

The simulations were effective too. As a matter of fact, some members of the group argued that they managed to translate discriminatory views and terms during the interpreting situations, as they were willing to adopt a more inclusive language to create a relaxed environment and to make speakers feel respected and valued, but they had difficulty in doing so. For instance, in the third simulation, the English speaker to be translated into Italian was not inclusive, using terms such as *sexual preferences* and *disabled students*. Therefore, their willingness to use inclusive terms, nouns, and pronouns, shows that they were aware of inclusive practices, and that they were encouraged to use them. This activity could have made them understand the importance of the use of inclusive language both in interpreting and in everyday situations.

In addition, the presentation in class appears to have been helpful, too, since the explanation of some principles to avoid discrimination, along with some recommendations about the use of inclusive language, has increased their awareness, and helped them in understanding their mistakes in terms of inclusive alternatives by making a recap of the questionnaire quiz.

The third research question “How do students perceived the activities proposed?” was answered thanks to the last two activities: the final questionnaire and the reflective papers, and it is connected to the answer to the second question. As a matter of fact, the majority of the students claimed the activities proposed were helpful in raising awareness and helped them using more inclusive language even outside the classroom. Some students argued that the grammar of a language should not be changed to guarantee inclusion, but the majority of them, instead, argued it is necessary, as language helps in changing the society’s mindset, and the use of a more inclusive language would result in a more inclusive society. In

addition, it was argued that interpreting fosters inclusive language and inclusive practices, as they had experienced on their own. In fact, using inclusive language in interpreting situations and in the academic context made them realize the importance of respect, awareness, and inclusive language in everyday life.

To conclude, it was satisfactory that the activities created and adopted together with Professor Dalziel were effective in students' opinions, and I hope inclusive practices will be fostered by students themselves, and that inclusive language will be used by the majority of them in the different situations they find themselves in, as inclusion needs to be promoted throughout society.

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## APPENDIX

**Table 1 – INITIAL QUESTIONNAIRE**

### **Inclusive Language and Interpreting**

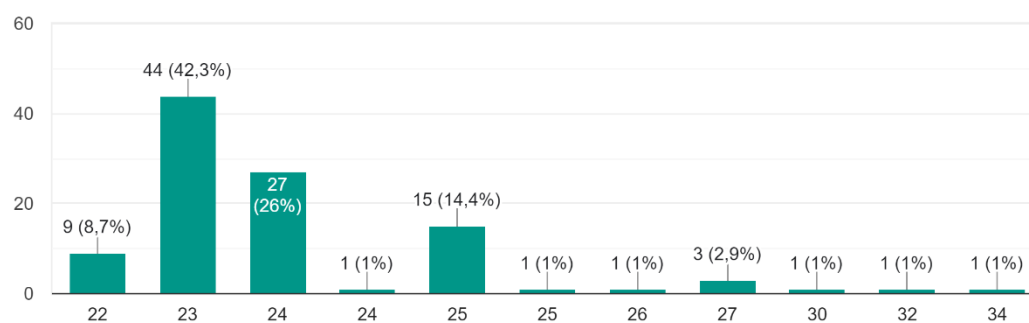
Good afternoon everyone! My name is Federica Fabiano Di Gregorio and I attended the Liaison Interpreting course last year. I am now writing my Master's dissertation on Inclusive Language in Language Teaching and Translation. My aim is to produce some classroom activities to help students to become more aware of these issues. In order to help me in my studies I would be grateful if you could fill in this short questionnaire. It is anonymous and it will take about 15 minutes to complete. It contains some general questions and then a quiz.

By completing the questionnaire, you agree that your responses will be used for study purposes. All personal information that is entered in this form will be treated as confidential and will remain completely anonymous. The information you give may be quoted anonymously. For any questions on the questionnaire or the project, please contact me at: [federica.fabianodigregorio@studenti.unipd.it](mailto:federica.fabianodigregorio@studenti.unipd.it)

Thank you for your time!

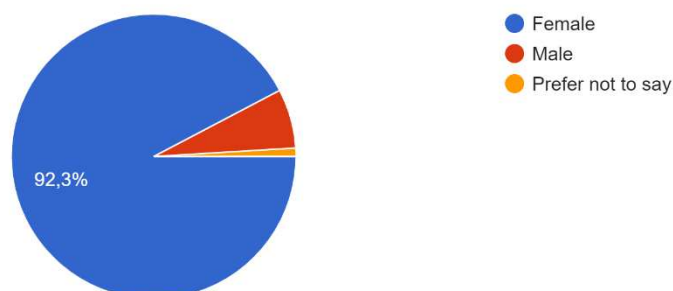
#### 1. Age

104 risposte



2. Gender (If your answer is "Altro", please, specify)

104 risposte



3. What is your first language? What other languages do you speak?

My first language is Italian. I also speak English, German and a tad Polish
Italian. I speak English, Spanish and French
My first language is Italian. I can speak English, Spanish and a bit of German.
Italian; I also speak English, German and Spanish
Italian. English and Russian
Italian, I also speak English and French
First language italian, also I speak english and russian
Italian, English, Spanish, German
Italian (first language), English, German
Italian + English, Russian, Chinese
1.English, 2.Spanish
Italian; English and Spanish
Italian. Spanish and English
My first language is Italian. I speak English, Spanish, and German.
Italian, I study also English and French
Romanian and Italian. I also study English, Russian and have studied French and German in highschool
Italian is my first language. I study English and Russian.
Albanian, Italian, French, English, Spanish, a bit of German
Italian. English, Spanish, Dutch
Italian. I also speak English and Russian
italian, french, english, spanish
Italian; English and French
Italian (first language), English, German, Spanish
Italian is my first. Then, I speak English and a bit of French and German
Italian, German, English
Italian (first language), English, French, Polish
Italian

First language: French other languages: English and Spanish
Italian (first) French English German LIS
Italian. Spanish, English
My first language is Italian Language. Now I study English and Russian.
Italian, I also speak English and German
Italian, English, Russian
My first language is Italian. I also speak English and Spanish
Italian, French, English
Italian, English, Spanish, French
Italian. English, Russian, Spanish
My first language is Italian, but I also speak English, Spanish and a little French.
French and English
My mothertongue is italian. I also speak Spanish and English
My first language is Italian. I also speak French and English, a bit of Spanish and Portuguese
Italian, English, Spanish, French, German
Italian (LM), English, German, French
My mother tongue is Italian and I also speak Spanish, English and a bit of French
Native Polish and Italian speaker, I study French and English
Italian. English, German and Spanish.
First language: Italian. Other languages: English, Spanish, French, Russian
Italian - English, Spanish and German
Italian; I also speak English, German and Spanish
Italian, English, Spanish, German
in order Italian, English, and Russian
Italian, English, French, Russian
Italian. English, Spanish and Russian
My mother tongue is Italian but I also speak Spanish, English and a little bit of French
Italian
My first language is Italian, I also speak English and Russian
Italian, English, French, Russian
Italian
first language: Italian. Other languages: French, Spanish, English, a bit of German
Italian. I speak also Spanish and English
Italian. I can also speak english, german and spanish
Russian - 1st; also speak English, Italian and German
first language: Italian, other languages: English, Russian, Spanish, German, Romanian
Italian. English, Spanish
italian, i speak english, russian, spanish, french and portuguese
English
Italian, English, German, French

Italian
Italian. English, Spanish
First language: Italian. I also speak Spanish, English and French
My first language is Italian. I am currently studying English and Spanish.
My first language is Italian. I speak also English and Russian
Italian. Other languages: English, Spanish, French
My first language is Serbian but I speak Italian, English and German as well.
First: Italian ; others: French, English, German
my first language is Italian but I also speak English and Spanish
English. German
Italian
Italian, English, German
Italian, English, German, French, Hungarian
My first language is Italian. I speak English, German and French
Italian; English, Spanish
Italian, I also speak Russian, English and a little French
First language is Italian, I also speak Albanian, English and Russian
Italian; dialetto veneto, dialetto salentino, English and Spanish
Italian
Italian
I speak Italian as first language but I can speak also English and French fluently. A bit of Russian too.
my first language is Italian. I speak English, German, French and Spanish
Ukrainian/Russian, Italian, English, German
Italian, English (a little bit Spanish and Russian)
My mother tongue is Italian but I can also speak English, Spanish, French and a little bit of Russian
English, Spanish
My first language is Italian. I speak English, Spanish and Russian.
First language: Italian. I speak also English and German.
My first language is Italian and I speak also French, English, Spanish and Dutch.
Italian
Italian, English, French
Italian. English and French
My first language is Italian. I also speak English and Spanish.
French
Polish, Italian, English, Portuguese
My first language is Italian. I speak two other languages, English and Spanish

**4. What does Inclusive Language mean? Write a short definition.**

Inclusive Language means a language that is not offensive or denigratory towards
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minorities of all kinds.
Used to avoid offences
A language that does not set fixed categories but that has terms with a wide meaning.
Language that everyone can understand
a language which avoids sexism, racism ecc
It means using a language that does not make any discrimination to some people.
In my opinion is using language and not left anyone behind, not discriminate anyone for any reason
Inclusive language means a language that includes both male and female
It means paying attention to talking in a way that includes everyone and doesn't assume anything about anyone (like gender identity, sexual orientation, religious orientation ecc...)
A language that does not discriminate or make distinctions
It refers to a language that include terms referring to the LGBTQ+ community as part of everyday lexic
Include language involves using a more neutral, "standard" language when referring to people regardless of their gender.
An inclusive language is a language that does not define or divide entities by genre.
I am not sure but I think it is a Language in which people include all genders without ruling out anyone.
It wants to avoid offense and wants to satisfy the idea of egalitarianism.
Inclusive Languages means using terms and non gender specific nouns or pronouns in order to include more people who do not identify themselves with "standard" nouns and pronouns and provide a rather neutral impression on what you are saying.
I think an inclusive language is a language whose terms follow the values of egalitarianism in order to avoid offences to people.
The importance of using the right (maybe uncommon) words to avoid any sort of discrimination
Linguaggio inclusivo
A language that should be understandable for everyone and doesn't discriminate anyone.
Language without limits, without gender or racial limitation
Inclusive Language is about employing certain choices in lexicon and specific words in order to be socially inclusive, meaning avoid offending people with certain identities, genders, etc.
Inclusive language acknowledges diversity, conveys respect to all people, is sensitive to differences, and promotes equal opportunities. It also respects and promotes all people as valued members of society.
Inclusive Language indicates the various methods to make the language more gender inclusive, which means not implying that an indefinite subject is male, female or binary. For example, one method in English is to use the pronouns they/them when referring to an unknown person.
A language through which nobody feels excluded or discriminated
Inclusive Language aims at communicating efficiently by avoiding expressions that express or imply ideas that are sexist, racist, or otherwise biased
An inclusive language is a language that doesn't discriminate anyone (especially when

it comes to gender)
Language about the field of migration, racism, discrimination etc
A language which takes into consideration cultural, sexual or other differences in a community
Maybe a language that is simpler, a language that is easier so everybody can understand it
A language that involves different sectors.
Inclusive Language means a language that is open to every difference or personality, it is something that does not leave anyone behind, and everybody can be represented by this kind of language
Inclusive Language is a language in which nobody is discriminated for their gender identity, sexual preferences, skin colour, race, religion and so on. In this language there are used many particular letters or marks, such as the asterisk, the number 3, the shwa (Ebrew letter)
It means to avoid sexist expressions as to promote a language that takes in consideration everyone
A language that recognises the presence of everybody as an equal participant in a communication.
An inclusive language is a language in which no one is left out
a language that does not exclude, that does not distinguish and that addresses at the same time both female and male and also other categories
Inclusive Language is a type of language that does not discriminate the speakers or the objects of discussion.
An Inclusive Language is one that I would describe as "neutral" because it provides for respecting people of all ethnicities, genders, and social classes using a positive and accurate register.
I think an Inclusive Language is a language that owns words that have a version both for female and male people. A language that does not use the male gender to generalize a concept, but use she/he, lei/lui, ella/él every time there is a need to communicate to a large audience and every time we do not need who we are referring to while speaking.
Inclusive language has been created and promoted to overcome all kinds of discrimination between people while speaking or writing. If we begin to use it, we could build a better world.
Very briefly: it means addressing the audience/people in general with respectful, no-offensive language, where linguistic choices reflect values such as equality and acceptance.
It is a language that changes some morphosyntactic features of a language, i.e., endings for genre specification, in order to make sure that everyone feels involved in a dialogue, or any oral or written form of communication, without considering or highlighting their genre.
Inclusive Language refers to a language that aims at not making feel anyone excluded on the basis of gender.
It is a language that tries to avoid expressions or words that might exclude particular groups of people
Inclusive Language is a kind of language used not to discriminate women and men. By using inclusive language, men and women feel that they have the same rights and are considered equal.

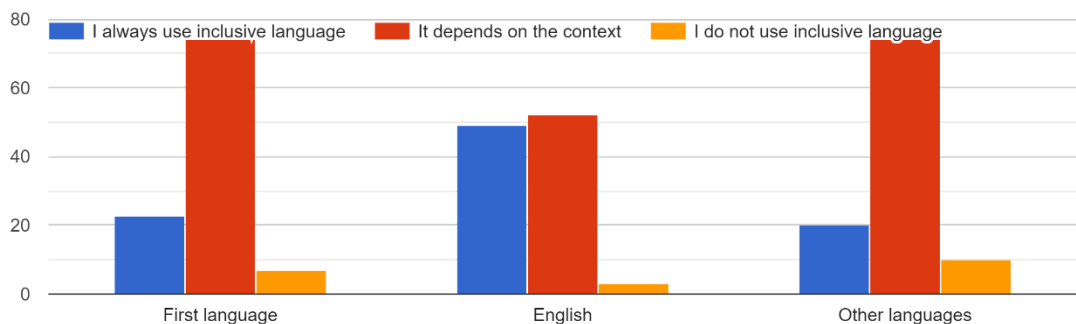
I would say that Inclusive Language is a language that aims to including people, so it avoids any kind of religious, racist or sexual prejudice
When you use words and expressions that equally refer to men, women, people who have migratory backgrounds, people with disabilities and further minorities, without discriminating any of them
It refers to the avoidance of sexist and/or offensive words, as well as the redefinition of pronouns and other ways to include people who differ from the binary gender system.
Inclusive Language involves using terms and expression that avoid conveying any kind of underlying discrimination and make people belonging to any social group feel included in the discourse.
A language without any gender discrimination
It is a language that avoids the use of terms or expressions that could make a group of people feel excluded; it promotes equality
Inclusive Language means the need to have and use in the same way terms which refer to all gender
It means using language in a way that does not discriminate or offend anybody intentionally or not.
A language that is politically correct and involves everyone.
I think Inclusive Language as a term is used to refer to a way of using the language without giving in to the discriminatory systems we are used to - e.g., using he/him as a standard pronoun, or even only he/she without recognizing the existence of non-binary people, using insults based on a disability or on an ethnic features or a behaviour, and so on
Inclusive language is a language that involves all people, regardless of their gender, race, etc. It aims to avoid offenses and it is not biased.
A language that tries not to discriminate any gender
Using the double form for masculine and feminine, not discriminating minority groups
A language in which everybody can identified themselves.
In my opinion Inclusive Language is a language which can be understood by everyone involved.
The language that respects and integrates all the cosset groups and doesn't emphasise any particular traits of a human being
Inclusive language means a language that doesn't leave out or discriminate groups of people or does not refer to them in a sexist, racist or discriminatory way.
A language conncted with inclusion, where nobody feels excluded from the discourse that does not discriminate anybody for any reason
Inclusive Language helps us to consider all people as equals.
Not cutting anyone out from your speeches and giving them the same importance
Inclusive Language means a language that is inclusive to all genders and sexual orientations, preventing discrimination in everyday life to people who identifies something other than cis- or female/male.
Inclusive language uses vocabulary that avoids exclusion and stereotyping and is free from descriptors; for this reason, it respects people
It is a language that tries not to offend anyone for example for it gender.
Is a language that respects and promotes all people as valued members of society
Inclusive language aims to avoid offense or discrimination of people

Inclusive language avoids offense and expressions that express sexist, racist, or otherwise biased, prejudiced ideas.
It aims at avoiding offense and fulfill the ideas of egalitarianism
It means using gender neutral forms in order to include both female and male people in the discourse
in my opinion, Inclusive Language means using a appropriate expression to consider all the differences that there are in our society. This means to recognise the diversity and uniqueness of everyone.
you should avoid gender and racial discrimination in your writing
Inclusive language is a language that avoids the use of expressions-words that exclude some groups of people
Inclusive language means make anyone feeling comfortable with its language and an integral part of it.
Inclusive language means not leaving out anyone, and make everyone feel involved in the sentence
From my point of view, Inclusive Language means describing people, objects and events in a way tha reflects reality, taking into account differences and nuances that characterise our life.
A language that avoids the use of some expressions or words that might be considered to exclude particular groups of people
expressions and words that do not exclude a particular group of people
Inclusive Language is a way of writing (and speaking) that makes everybody comfortable, this means that genre is not expressed and some alternative formulas are used (for example the use of "schwa" or "*" in Italian ore "they" in English)
Inclusive Language means a language that tries and encompasses everyone with no distinction. It is a non-discriminatory language
The language which does not leave anyone behind the other. So it is the language which includes all genders and categories. For this reason, it would be useful to know every category of people in the word, though we see that it is impossible. We should try to use the most general language possible.
A language that does not make assumptions about people's gender identity or sexual orientation
Inclusive language means that you want to include everyone in the conversation. Each person needs to be involved in the discussion/ announcement/topic regardless the gender/age and other factors.
In my opinion, an inclusive language avoids any type of discrimination regarding for example gender, class or culture. Every person should feel included in the language and part of the society. I think that in the modern society we should avoid the use of generic masculine and opt more for asterisk.
Inclusive language is a way to express things and ideas using a language that eliminates every type of discrimination.
It is a language that makes no difference between races or genre. A language that express egalitarianism and no prejudice. It should be used to conceive disability or any diversity
I think it should be a language that avoids every kind of discrimination
A language that respects and includes all communities, it is free from sexist, racist and other discriminatory language.

Inclusive Language is a language that involves everyone, with no kind of cultural, gender and/or religious difference.
It means to use a respectful language towards all genders, in order to include also people who might not reflect him-/herself specifically in the male or female gender.
In my opinion, Inclusive Language means using all the linguistic tools we have to represent all kinds of human beings.
A language that aims to avoid offense and try to include as possible
Language you use by paying attention to the terms in order to avoid hurting feelings
A language that can be representative of all kind of individualities
A language is inclusive when it is "politically correct", i.e. when it can turn to everybody without differences.
A gender neutral use of language
Language that doesn't hurt anyone by using inappropriate forms, words, expressions.
Inclusive Language means a language that is free of gender stereotypes

Inclusive language can be described as a respectful, identity-affirming language. It puts humanity at the center and allows everyone to feel recognized, valued, invited and motivated to contribute at their highest level [OHSU Inclusive Language Guide]. Inclusive language does not include gender discourse only, but includes ethnicity and disability, too.

5. Do you think you use inclusive language when speaking your first language? What about the other language/s you speak?



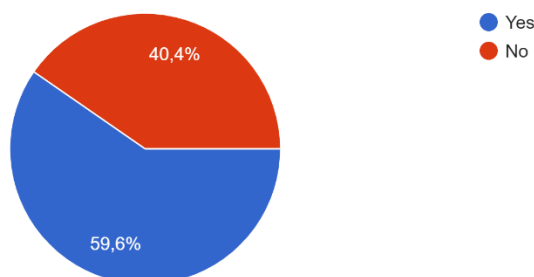
6. Have you been to any university courses/classes about this topic or courses/classes in which the topic was discussed? (If your answer is "Altro", please, specify)

104 risposte



7. Do you know or are you aware of any specific strategies to avoid discrimination by using inclusive language?

104 risposte



**8. If you answered YES to question 7, can you please list them.**

Using the schwa or the asterisk; specifying "male" or "female"; using the plural form.
Avoid using "maschile non marcato" in Italian
Try not to use female or male suffixes when talking to a heterogeneous group
For example, using the "*" in some words to not express gender.
using plural
using the schwa
In english, using the singular "they", in italian using the upside-down e (in writing)
For example not using gender pronouns when talking to someone/about someone you don't know
Using plurals rather than singular nouns; using more neutral word choices (e.g., "humankind" instead of "mankind")
Using * or the schwa
when speaking English, I always use "they, them" when talking about a single person, since I do not know whether they are male or female, or the gender in which they want to be identified.
Using non sexist nouns
avoiding terms such as "guys" for example

For example, for inclusion in gender, with languages like Spanish and Italian which have different grammatical ends for women and men, always list both of them.
In Italian I usually write the asterisk when I refer to both women and men
educate to equality of status, correct word choice depending on the context, express thoughts without pre-constructed social filters
In order to include everyone, we should avoid using expressions that equate “being a man” with “being human” and expressions that render woman invisible, but also behaviors that reflect or impose social prejudices and clichés towards men and women.
-using the pronouns they/them to refer to an unknown person -using the gender free alternative of a noun
In English: using the pronoun they, using the title (e.g. doctor, professor) instead of Mrs, Miss or Mr In German: using -Innen at the end of the noun (e.g. StudentInnen) includes all students no matter the gender or sexual orientation In Italian: using persona/e instead of using nouns which require the explicitation of the gender
Avoid using some offensive words or words with a negative and racist connotation
In written Italian language, the use of the "schwa" symbol at the end of a word that specify the gender
Use of *, 3 and shwa or avoiding the use of plural masculine, by changing the sentence
Using the plural instead of the pronouns "he" or "she"
gender neutral language, non racist or discriminatory language (for ex. knowing how to define disabilities)
Do not assume other people gender, or ethnicity. Generally speaking do not define people while you are talking on when you write and if you must do so try to be as general as possible or ask them.
for example, when writing, using the ə (schwa) or the *
Use of Ms instead of Mrs or Miss. Find new terminology for jobs carried out by women.
In German, they use the *Innen at the very end of a word to include both masculine and feminine genre, creating a neutral one. In English and also in some informal cases in Italian the schwa it is used at the end of a word to neutralize the genre.
1) avoiding expressions that reinforce gender stereotypes or which are gender-biased 2) using both feminine and masculine pronouns 3) using different words to refer to women and men 4) employing gender-neutral words 5) using plural pronouns or adjectives, like ‘they’, ‘their’ and ‘themselves’ as a shortcut for ‘he or she’, ‘his or her’ or ‘himself and herself’ 6) using the pronoun ‘one’ and the relative pronoun ‘who’ as substitutes for the masculine generic pronoun in the third-person ‘he’ 7) omitting the gendered word and using the passive voice
The use of schwa (in writing texts) The use of the plural form for nouns, that is generic. In this way you don't have to use feminine or masculine genus
In Italian, we can use both the masculine and the feminine word to refer to men and women, for example by saying "uomini e donne, ragazzi e ragazze" and also when

referring to their jobs ("avvocato e avvocatessa, dottore e dottoressa"). There is the use of signs such as * and @ to avoid using the neutral masculine, which I do not agree with In English there are many words where there was only the masculine (e.g. policeman) which have become inclusive by substituting 'man' with 'person' (e.g. policeperson).
In Italian: while writing, the use of the "schwa" symbol to include non-binary/queer people (or the asterisk); referring to people trying not to highlight a characteristic they have (e.g.: "persone con disabilità" instead of "disabile" or "persona nera" instead of "un nero/una nera").
In English: use of acronyms like BPOC/POC to refer to a wide community of non-white minorities; the use of "they/them" to refer to someone if we do not know with which gender they identify themselves.
In German: the use of present participles to avoid gendered words when talking about groups of people (e.g.: Studierenden - neutrum - instead of Studenten - masculine - or Studentin - feminine).
Gender neutral language, inclusion or visibility strategies
For example, in Italian it is possible to take into account the A. Sabatini essay about sexism in Italian language, where she explains how to avoid sexism expressions, or what V. Gheno has proposed in her last book as well.
ragazz*
Since Italian language always specify if the subject is male or female, linguists and also laymen are debating on how to overcome this situation. Some of the solutions are putting an * or a schwa at the end of the words in order to not chose a specific gender.
Think carefully about what we are going to say and find the rights words respecting and ingluing everyone.
I think that it is easier to use the English language in a gender-neutral way, by using the pronouns they/them, and as English do not have words ending with a gender-defining morpheme; in written Italian I try to use various symbols such as *, 3, or the "schwa" to avoid this same problem. In spoken Italian things are more difficult. I avoid ableist insults when I want to insult someone (growing up I hear a lot of "sei un handicappato" to say "sei un idiota" and that really isn't right).
-use of general nouns, schwa when writing,
Using the sign * in Italian at the end of adjs for instance
the asterik, the slash, repeating "cari e care"
Use the pronoun they, for example in English, or even loro in Italian, even if this proposal was rejected by the main language institution in Italy (Accademia la Crusca)
The schwa
The "schwa" or the * at the end of Italian words instead of the vocals a or o and plurals.
the schwa at the end of italian words
You can use "*" instead of using a or o at the end of a word to specify the genre of the word
Avoid gender assumptions, use they/them/theirs vs he/she him/her
For instance, we can try to use the plural form instead of using she/he
For example specifying both gender forms as in "studenti e studentesse..." or "he/she



will..."
to use the correspondent word to define someone's job (neutral, feminine, masculine) when needed. always refer to both sexes or also the neutral term avoid fixed expressions that are clearly discriminatory or sexist
partner instead of wife\husband.\ afroamerican instead of negro
You can avoid to specify the gender of the subject even with symbols like the schwa or *
Use general nouns instead of specific expressions (police officer rather than policeman); try to use both the feminine and masculine form of a word
Some of the strategies that can be used in Italian include the use of "schwa" or "*" to avoid expressing the genre, in English "they" is commonly used if we don't know the pronouns of a person. Most importantly, we should always pay attention to one's pronouns to avoid problems.
one way of being inclusive is to avoid the use of pronouns by means of impersonalization. When needed provide all the possible gender-marked pronouns
In spoken language the use of expressions like "studenti e studentesse" instead of simply "studenti", but many groups who do not identify in none of these categories will be left behind. In written language the use of * and schwa is spreading in particular on internet. However this cannot be shared in spoken language too, because it is impossible or, I would say, uncomprehensible and cacophonous to cut every word at the end.
In English, you use the pronoun they/them instead of he/she and him/her, in Italian you use gender neutral nouns (like "persone" instead of "ragazzi") and in writing, instead of writing "i" as the last vowel for plural nouns you either write an x or *, for example, ragazz*
The use of asterisk can be a way to avoid discrimination, since we do not specify a gender
the use of both genders in a phrase
About gender inclusive language. In English it is easier. In Italian we have to expand our sentences. Studentesse e studenti > students
I know the use of schwa or asterisk
- using the schwa - using the right pronouns
Avoid being gender specific
using both the female and male terminations
pronouns (it, them) or gender neutral nouns

### 9. How do you think Inclusive Language could relate to interpreting?

It is important to use Inclusive Language when interpreting, it is a form of respect towards the person I have in front of me.
Because in interpreting there are often different cultures that enter into contact
Interpreting means interacting with people and reporting their personal speech, so we as interpreters should know how to do that without discriminating the participants.
In the sense that the translator has to choose if he wants to translate literally or not

A translator must be very aware of what they are saying, in order to avoid offenses of any kind
I think it could relate because as in other speech acts, in interpreting it would be better to use an inclusive language.
-
Because the interpreter could use more neutral words
Because an interpreter is talking to many different people and using languages that don't necessarily have the same degree of inclusivity, so they need to adapt the content
Maybe by avoiding labelling genders, sexual orientation etc. while interpreting
I think also during interpreting, an interpreter should ask for any pronoun preferences to the interlocutors
I believe inclusive language plays a paramount role in interpreting, so that the speaker can feel at ease or not categorized into typical "male or female" schemes.
I don't know, maybe while interpreting it is important being aware of the fact that we are using an inclusive language or not. And how this can affect the people I'm interpreting
interpreters are related to inclusive language since they have to translate conversations in every type of situation
Inclusive language could relate to interpreting because in the exact moment you are translating something for someone else you have to be careful about what you are saying, in order not to offend anyone.
It is related to interpreting since it is the most neutral way of conveying the meaning.
When interpreting is really important using Inclusive Language in order to avoid that someone may feel him/her self discriminated or offended.
I think they are extremely connected since interpreting is a tool for expression
It is clearly a consequence of communication in languages, since interpreting means communicating in the best way.
-
because of the exchange of information
Translation (or rather, interpreting) has to be extremely adaptable, and social problems are very much present and a modern-day reality, so it should be taken into consideration in this field.
When interpreting we need to be aware of cultural shifts to better serve our community.
It relates to interpreting because the interpreter cannot infer the gender of the speaker or the person they are referring to. It could also have to do with their possible disabilities or their ethnicity
if interpreters are aware of the techniques of inclusive language the speakers should not feel discriminated
Interpreting deals with different cultures and linguistic behaviours, so it's easy to unwillingly use non-inclusive language and offend one of the clients
I think it should adapt to the target culture, which means that if the TC pays attention to inclusion issues, the translator should do the same and adapt the ST to the target culture
There can be various situations (debates, dialogues) about this topic
In order not to have problems in communication between people with cultural or other differences
As the interpreter has the task to transmit information, he/she has the responsibility to how he/she give it

The interpreter has to know the Inclusive Language, in order to make speakers feel respected and valued during the conversation.
We need to understand the different ways of using Inclusive Language for good interpretation
I think interpreters must be concerned about Inclusive Language, in order to respect the speakers
Interpreters should be aware of the inclusive language strategies as to make their listeners feel more comfortable while talking
I think that the interpreter should respect the use of the language of his client despite his/her personal opinions
I think that when interpreting one must be careful with the way in which they report the other person speech. Making an error (for exaple about the gender of the person speaking) may seem banal but it is actually a serious thing because as an interpreter you need to represent the speaker's identity accurately.
when you interprete you get in touch with different people, different for ethnicity, gender, culture. It is important to learn how to speak in a way that do not offend or discriminate others.
I think it is important for the interpreter to be aware of Inclusive Language in order to improve the translation
I think yes
I think it is important in interpreting because an interpreter does not know the people he/she is collaborating with and neither their sensibility concerning this matter.
While interpreting, it is essential to use Inclusive Language in order to avoid embarassing situations with your client and other participants.
To inteprete means also to mediate - it needs to be done in the most transparent, conciliating way in order to convey the right message without allowing the atmosphere to get "tense" and ambiguous. Two "angry" parties cannot communicate very well.
It is important that the interpreter is conscious about this issue in order to be able to report it in the other language in the way that culture means it, to maintain the intent of the speaker.
It is important that every category of people is aware of inclusive language, what is more interpreters work using languages so they should use inclusive language in the first place
I think that it would make the parts more comfortable and it would be a good way to express respect for each other
They are related because you are mediate between two or more people and it is important to make them feel they are on the same level and are equal.
I think the interpreter should use precise, accurate words in order not to offend the other culture
When interpreting, we have to use the inclusive Language to refer to a larger group of people, and it is important to do so even if sometimes it forces us to use longer and heavier sentences, which might be an obstacle to a right translation of a passage
While interpreting, the interpreter should pay attention to the use of inclusive language even if the person they are translating for does not pay attention to it. It is important not to offend anyone during the conversation.
I think it is always crucial to use inclusive language, but it is specifically relevant when interpreting between a genderless and gendered language.

Language shapes out way of thinking and speaking to other people
I think that when interpreting, the interpreter should use a language which is inclusive maybe even when the speaker does not, especially when very sensitive topic are being discussed
for example we can use distinct words which refers to the specific gender
Maybe the interpreter could transform the sentence by not specifying the gender of the subjects.
It is strictly relate, If I am going to be an interpreter I have to translate a discourse to other people in general, so it has to be as polite and inclusive as possible.
Especially in En>It interpreting pronouns are especially tricky, and it is up to the interpreter to decide how to solve these issues. However, if the speakers use non-inclusive language, the interpreter should think about how they want to approach their work ethics
It is necessary to not offend by not interpreting correctly
Yes
it affects the way the interpreter translates sentences
Changing or adapting the translation
By simplifying what you are saying while interpreting, saying that thing ina way everyone can understand
knowing including language strategies and how to translate some constructions could help the interpreter be correct
when interpreting it's important to keep in mind inclusive language in both languages.
Interpreter must use Inclusive Language as to prevent discriminations of any kind (ratial or gender issues)
you must try to be as much inclusive as possibile when interpreting from one language into other and one culture into another
I believe that interpreters have to do with different cultures.
Using both versions in languages like Italian, making everyone feel involved
It could be helpful to interpreters that do not want to discriminate their client and want to create an inclusive atmosphere.
it could be helpful to avoid situations in which someone might feel discriminate
Also the interpreters should pay attention, when translating, to use an Inclusive Language.
an interpreter can often find himself translating sentences in which inclusive language is not used and vice versa
Avoid discriminatory language and respect the client
You can try to avoid he/she pronouns using they
When we interpret we need to be quick, so using an inclusive language could be, actually, a strategy to stay neutral and don't offend anyone.
It could be useful for general interest topics or insitutional discussions
It is important to avoid any misunderstanding between the speakers or to offend anyone involved
by using neutral language when it's possible.
When we interpretate we must know how to use the correct words
Inclusive language can be considered essential for interpreting too because everyone

should be careful not to offend or discriminate any of the listener \ speaker
it could relate by making everyone feel included in the conversation.
When an interpreter has to translate an expression, they have to consider how the expression is related to the real world and especially to their interlocutors (whether it is representative of a group's identity and the interlocutor belongs to the group)
As it is described as a respectful, identity-affirming language, it is relate to interpreting because it has to respect both parts.
I believe it is important to be inclusive while interpreting so that nobody feels left out and everyboso is represented.
In interperiting we must be very careful to use an inclusive language, in Italian especially, where the genre is always expressed both in nouns and verbs
Yes
Interpreters should know how in every language he/she speaks the Inclusive Language is performed. Is it more common to use expressions like "he/she" or "they" or "something else"?
It could be useful not to make people feel discriminated
The interpreter needs always to be clear, transaprent and inclusive.
Interpreting generally involves two parts in the conversation besides the one of the interpreter. When the interpreter translates, he/she should be aware of the pronouns used by the two parts.
it is useful because it does not offend others
As I said before, we have to be careful since there could be misunderstanding
Interpreters should use an inclusive language because they can't know the people they're talking to. These people could belong to some minorities and they shouldn't feel judged by the way of speaking of other people, especially of a linguistics expert as an interpreter.
It is fundamental to use it while interpreting, in order to not creat misunderstandings.
I think Inclusive language can relate to interpreting thanks to terminology, in order to avoid discrimination.
Yes, because there might be contexts and situations which require the use of inclusive language, for example due to the presence of nonbinary people.
Inclusive Language could relate to interpreting because sometimes, it can happen that the interpreter do not include all the participants when they interpret, for example by translating "students" with "studenti" and not with "studenti e studentesse".
I think that it is important in interpreting in order to explain the usage of offensive terms to the foreign indivual.
You need to explain the other interlocutor if he/she's using offensive language and change it
In terms of suitability
interpreting from a language to another means we have to adapt the language
It can be an element to to into account when translating from a language to another, and it can be tricky to translate in some languages.
Interpreter must be careful while translating, they should always take into account inclusive language, even when the speaker may not be using it.
I think Inclusive Language is related to interpreting because we should be careful when we translate from one language to another in order to avoid stereotypes

**10. How do you think interpreters can be more aware of non-discriminating strategies?**

Attending specific courses, held by professionals.
By knowing different cultures
By being taught and trained at university.
By listening to people who may be considered 'different'
Researches, books
By following some courses about this topic.
attending seminars held by professionals
putting more attention on this topic
Paying attentiono to how language is evolving to be more inclusive, and what is actually being used by native speakers
Yes, I think they should be taught better
They could watch videos, reading articles that talk about the language we should all use to avoid even unintentional discrimination
They should attend courses on inclusive language, so that they can have a more complex background on the topic; then, they'll have tu put into practive what they've acquired.
Attendo Attending courses about that.
by reading articles about inclusive language
by reading and studying some articles about this topic
By attening specific courses and learing more on the topic
I think that a course on this subject could be very interesting!
While translating, they should be careful and use strategies to introduce inclusive words
Yes
-
studying new ways of relate to linguistic problems
By using certain strategies and possessing a varied of lexicon of what words to use and what to avoid
By offering them constant formation and specific training courses
Maybe more classes on the topic, at least when they are still studying to become interpreters. If they are not, maybe they could inform on the internet about the various strategies
Trying to follow all the news regarding the changes and evolution of the language
By attending inslusive language-oriented courses
Formation courses
By studying and inform themselves about the subject (news, newspapers..) and talking directly with people involved
By studying, reading, travelling
I don't know

They should pay attention to the everyday two languages development.
We need to understand the different ways of using Inclusive Language for good interpretation
By studying more about the topic in the work languages. They have to be aware of the strategies and to understand when it is necessary to use them.
By reading lots of academic articles and books about this topic
By sharing experiences and advices within the community of interpreters
I think this is a really hot topic right now, a Google search is a good way to start and learn more about these topic, then they might want to learn more by attending courses related to the topic or reading accademic papers
they should try to pay great attention to what they are saying all the time. at the beginning it might be quite complicated and requires a lot of effort, but becomes more and more automatic
By studying and keeping themselves updated
Through readings and studies of modern manuals that deal with this issue but also by surfing a lot on the internet, especially in the social world where inclusiveness is a prioprity.
I think there is a huge need to study the best strategies to be non-discriminating, especially because I am aware of the fact that it is not automatic not to be, neither when speaking our fist language
Trying to pay attention to the language they use while working. They can start using it in their daily life to become more familiar with it while interpreting.
It would be useful to focus part of an interpreter training specifically on the topic.
They could make some researches about how this issue is seen in the culture of the language he/she translates and learn the inclusive language they use.
They should study and learn about inclusive language strategies
They have to inform themselves on the problem and on the best strategies in order to not discriminate no one
I think that interpreters can learn these strategies by listening to videos on this topic and discussing with otger colleague about possible strategies.
Interpreters can be more aware of non-discriminating strategies by attending specific courses that deal with the main practices related to Inclusive Language in their activity.
Interpreters should try to refer to everyone without discriminating. They could memorize the non-discriminating translations of words which might be non-inclusive in a language so that they are still able to interpret efficiently and effectively, but also being inclusive
Adding at least one class about inclusive language strategies
I believe that the only way of becoming more aware of these strategies is to study them and to do our utmost to be always up to date on the most recent discussions on this topic, which is widely debated in the academic discourses.
Maybe practicing
I'm not sure, maybe they should try keep up with the evolution of language and see what terms and expressions are usually used by people who use an inclusive language to discuss them
learning and reading text, materials related to this topic and field

Interpreters could participate to seminars which talk about this issue.
By always keep them updated and reading a lot
Inclusive Language should be part of the interpreter's formation, so as to avoid mistakes, diplomatic problems, and be respectful of their clients.
There should be a guideline
There should be some formation
by using them in real life
I don't know
There could be courses or teachings with this purpose
Study the culture of the country of the language, compare it with other inclusive languages
I think that some good ways of being more aware of non discriminating strategies could be: keeping up to date with the latest evolutions of the language related to inclusion, looking for courses, articles etc
they should learn how to relate and connect to people in different contexts. they must include everybody when translating orally, and get to know better the different spectrums of gender for example, as to prevent people from feeling excluded
they should read and deepen they information about this topic
I don't know
By knowing the morphology of both languages and using neutral versions
Be aware of some specific strategies to avoid this type of discrimination.
They should learn these strategies before
Interpreters should be generic
Through studies and training courses that allows them to find out more on this specific subject and learn a vocabulary that is inclusive
Read dissertations or books about that topic
They study them
by practising and improving their skills
I think this topic should be more discussed in classes and training courses
they should always study by themselves and also to look at the world around themselves to realise how it has evolved. they should also be interested in the cultures they are translating.
by studying the appropriate terminology
Listen to some specific context in which is frequent to use discriminatory words
They should study and always be informed about trends in terms of inclusive language
by reading articles on inclusive strategies, or by listening to conferences about these topics.
I think that practise and a deep knowledge of the world (lifestules and habits) may be the best way possible to become aware of non-discriminating strategies
Be informed, practice
They should be more informed
Interpreters should be informed of all the strategies about inclusive language and practice them also in their everyday life. This way, when at work, they are aware of it



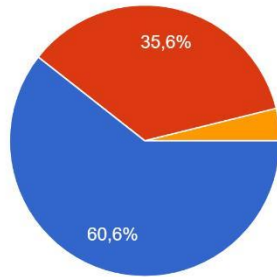
As for everybody else, to inform oneself is the most important way to understand a problem and its different solutions
By reading and listening a lot both in their mother tongue and in the foreign language they interpret to. Listening to podcasts or reading twitter and social network is the best way to keep in contact with global reality.
By educating themselves and reading about the linguistic strategies used by discriminated people
This topic needs to be spread more. There should be conferences about it. People needs to know more in order to act for the cause
they should ask for the pronouns that the two parts usually use.
learning about the subject
Reading articles and being careful when listening
The use of masculine and feminine nouns, adjectives and so on
Interpreters must respect the person who have in front and respect his/her feelings and background.
I think they can read something about it.
By getting information about the topic, reading articles about the issue of gender identities, inequalities, etc.
For example, they could use both plural forms
interpreters can be more aware of non-discriminating strategies by studying them.
Delving further into these kind of strategies, also by getting further information on the Internet and be prepared for each specific context you work in
By learning strategies
adapting the language
By adding new automatisms in their practice in this regard
-
Interpreters should be more aware of non-discriminating strategies because it is a very important change in translation studies. They should pay attention when they translate, so they can improve with practice

### Quiz time

With the following sentences or contexts, you have to choose the option that, in your opinion, is most inclusive. The results will not be published, but I will take your answers into consideration in order to produce my classroom activities.

11. Which of the following is more inclusive?

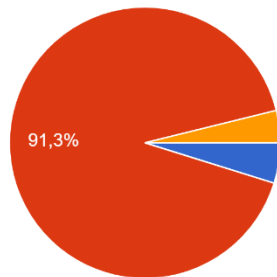
104 risposte



- student with disability
- differently-abled student
- disabled student

12. A student uses a wheelchair. They are

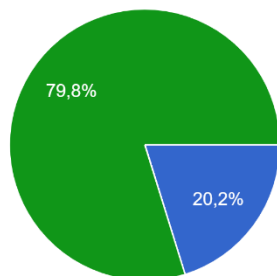
104 risposte



- restricted to a wheelchair
- a wheelchair user
- wheelchair bound

13. A widely-accepted gender-neutral term for the president of a company is:

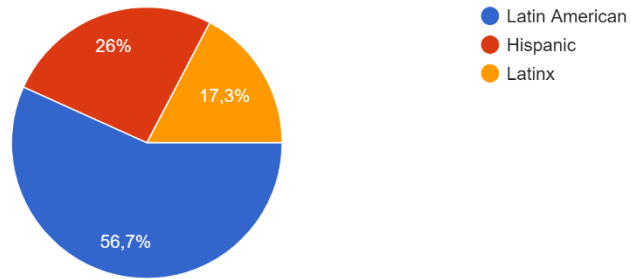
104 risposte



- chair
- chairman
- chairwoman
- chairperson

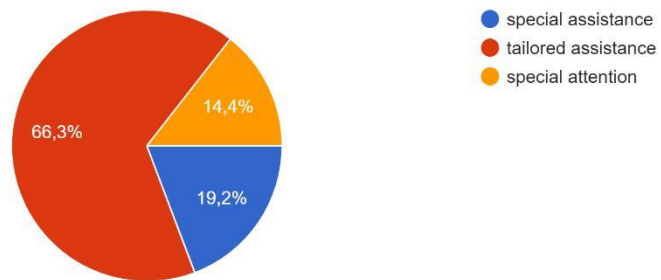
14. Which term is the most inclusive when referring to Latin American people?

104 risposte



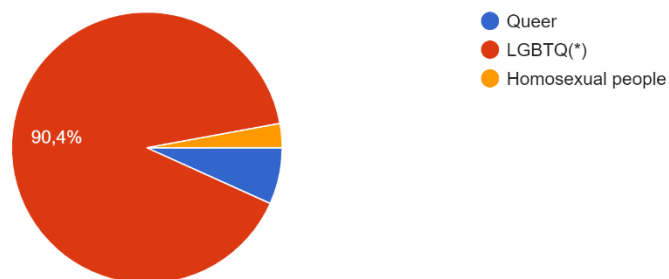
15. The University Inclusion Service offers:

104 risposte

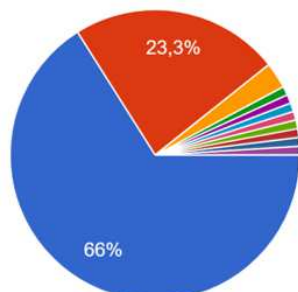


16. Which of the following terms is the most inclusive one?

104 risposte



17. In italiano, indica quale tra i seguenti termini proposti o un termine da te suggerito ritieni più inclusivo.

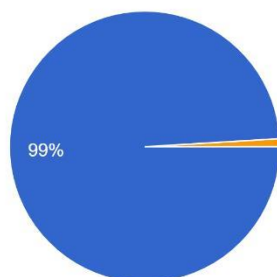


- persona di colore
- nero/a
- persona
- persona africana
- Ritengo che persona di colore ossa es...
- ragazzo/a di origini africane
- nero o, dipende dal contesto, persona...
- "persona di colore"
- persona di origine senegalese/nigeriana/ indiana
- Specificare la provenienza (es: originario del Sudafrica)
- Penso che il termine nero/a sia corretto, anche se, sfortunatamente, negli anni ha assunto una connotazione sempre più negativa

\*nero o, dipende dal contesto, persona appartenente ad un gruppo sociale razzializzato  
 \*\*Ritengo che persona di colore possa essere più inclusivo perché si riferisce a tutti, anche i bianchi caucasici, non solo ai neri.

18. Quale tra questi termini è il più inclusivo e appropriato?

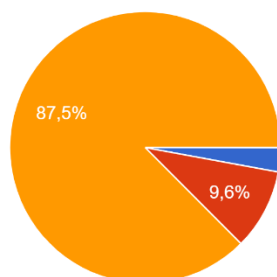
104 risposte



- persona transessuale
- il/la trans
- il/la transessuale

19. Durante un colloquio devi introdurre all'interlocutore una persona con disabilità uditiva. Come la definisci?

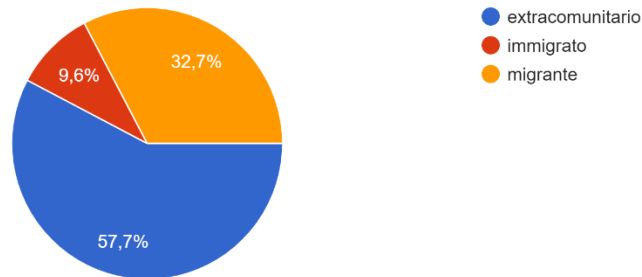
104 risposte



- sordomuto/a
- sordo/a
- non udente

20. Quale tra i seguenti termini è bene usare in riferimento ad una persona non italiana residente all'interno dell'Unione Europea?

104 risposte



**21. Do you have any more comments?**

I think that this is an important topic that we must think about
inclusive language should be taught in primary and secondary schools and institutes like universities as soon as possible.
Interesting topic! I've just realize I'd like to know more about it.
No
I think it is a very big topic, and there is still a lot to do to improve our society
Nope
no
Sometimes, expecially for speakers who are not mothertongue, it is difficult to distinguish between acceptable and inclusive terms and unacceptable ones. I think this topic should be studied everytime a person learns another language.
I think inclusive language is important but I don't think it should change the Italian grammar too much, to the point where suffixes and desinances are considered offensive or discriminatory, the Italian language should adapt to people's different needs and orientations, but it shouldn't be completely changed and turned into a whole other language system. Also, the change in the language should reflect a change in the culture, so in order to make the language change in a natural way that can be adopted by all the speakers a cultural change should also be made, in my opinion.
No
No, but I think Inclusive Language is a very interesting topic. Thank you!

## Table 2 – INCLUSION GLOSSARY

IT > EN

### GENDER

Identità di genere – gender identity

Inclusive pronoun → they

**In italiano: utilizzare la schwa ə** esempio: sei andatə al concerto?

Matricola – first-year student (not “freshman”)

Non binario – Non-binary

Omonegatività – Homonegativity (non utilizzare “omofobia/homofobia”)

Orientamento sessuale – sexual orientation

Partner – partner/spouse (to be used in opposition to “moglie/marito”  
“wife/husband”)

Persona gay – gay / gay person

Persona transessuale – Transgender person

Presidente di un’azienda – chair

Studiante/studentessa – student

Transizione – transition

Umanità – humankind

### IMMIGRATION/ETHNICITY

Black person – nero/a

Famiglia multietnica - mixed-status family

Migrante – migrant

Migrante irregolare - Undocumented migrant

Nome proprio – first name (invece di “nome di battesimo”)

Persona multietnica – dual heritage person / nonwhite person

### DISABILITY

Accessibile a persone in sedia a rotelle – wheelchair-accessible

Assistenza specifica– tailored assistance

Dispositivi specifici – accommodations/supports

Esigenze legate alla disabilità – functional needs → activities addressing the functional needs of people with disability

Formazione inclusiva – Inclusive education

Persona cieca – blind person / person with limited vision

Persona con disabilità – person with disability

Persona con la sindrome di down – person with Down syndrome

Persona in sedia a rotelle – wheelchair user

Persona sorda – deaf person

Risorse accessibili - Accessible resources

Ufficio inclusione – Inclusion office

**Table 3 – POWERPOINT PRESENTATION**



## *THE PROJECT*

- Aims at helping students to become more aware of inclusion and inclusive language
- It comprehends five different activities:
  - Questionnaire
  - Inclusion Glossary
  - Inclusion Liaison simulation
  - Reflective activity
  - Post-activities questionnaire



## *WHAT IS INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE?*

- Inclusive language can be described as a respectful, identity-affirming language. It puts humanity at the center and allows everyone to feel recognized, valued, invited and motivated to contribute at their highest level [OHSU Inclusive Language Guide]. Inclusive language does not include gender discourse only, but includes ethnicity and disability, too.
- Non-discriminatory language

## *INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE IN LIAISON INTERPRETING*

- Interpreters → neutral and impartial
- No omissions/changes when conveying information → use Inclusive Language only when the speaker uses it or when in doubt

### Use:

- gender-neutral terms or male/female
- non-deficit based language
- People First Language

### Avoid:

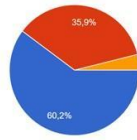
- labels
- generalization
- offensive terms

Be respectful

# QUIZ TIME

## ANSWERS AND COMMENTS

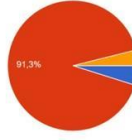
11. Which of the following is more inclusive?



● student with disability  
● differently-abled student  
● disabled student

Answer: student with disability

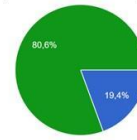
12. A student uses a wheelchair. They are



● restricted to a wheelchair  
● a wheelchair user  
● wheelchair bound

Answer: a wheelchair user

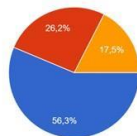
13. A widely-accepted gender-neutral term for the president of a company is:



● chair  
● chairman  
● chairwoman  
● chairperson

Answer: chair

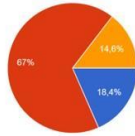
14. Which term is the most inclusive when referring to Latin American people?



● Latin American  
● Hispanic  
● Latinx

Answer: Latinx

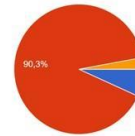
15. The University Inclusion Service offers:



● special assistance  
● tailored assistance  
● special attention

Answer: tailored assistance

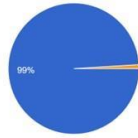
16. Which of the following terms is the most inclusive one?



● Queer  
● LGBTQ(\*)  
● Homosexual people

Answer: LGBTQ(\*)

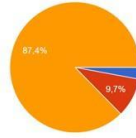
18. Quale tra questi termini è il più inclusivo e appropriato?



● persona transessuale  
● il/la trans  
● il/la transessuale

Answer: persona transessuale

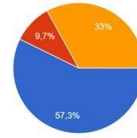
19. Durante un colloquio devi introdurre all'interlocutore una persona con disabilità uditiva. Come la definisci?



● sordomuto/a  
● sordo/a  
● non udente

Answer: sordo/a

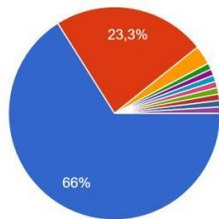
20. Quale tra i seguenti termini è bene usare in riferimento ad una persona non italiana residente all'interno dell'Unione Europea?



● extracomunitario  
● immigrato  
● migrante

Answer: migrante

17. In italiano, indica quale tra i seguenti termini proposti o un termine da te suggerito ritieni più inclusivo.



● persona di colore  
● nero/a  
● persona  
● persona africana  
● Ritengo che persona di colore ossia es...  
● ragazzo/a di origini africane  
● nero o, dipende dal contesto, persona...  
● "persona di colore"  
● persona di origine senegalese/nigeriana/indiana  
● Specificare la provenienza (es: originario del Sudafrica)  
● Penso che il termine nero/a sia corretto, anche se, sfortunatamente, negli anni ha assunto una connotazione sempre più negativa

\*nero o, dipende dal contesto, persona appartenente ad un gruppo sociale razzializzato  
\*\*Ritengo che persona di colore possa essere più inclusivo perché si riferisce a tutti, anche i bianchi caucasici, non solo ai neri.

Answer: nero/a, oppure specificare la provenienza

## *SITOGRAFIA*

- [https://www.unipd.it/sites/unipd.it/files/2018/People%20First%20Language\\_.pdf](https://www.unipd.it/sites/unipd.it/files/2018/People%20First%20Language_.pdf)
- <https://ncj.org/style-guide/>
- <https://www.queensu.ca/styleguide/inclusivelanguage>
- [https://www.ohsu.edu/sites/default/files/2021-03/OHSU%20Inclusive%20Language%20Guide\\_031521.pdf](https://www.ohsu.edu/sites/default/files/2021-03/OHSU%20Inclusive%20Language%20Guide_031521.pdf)
- <https://www.unige.ch/eng/education/academic-writing-guidelines>
- <http://www.parlarecivile.it/home.aspx>
- [https://www.sinapsi.unina.it/LGBT\\_guida\\_termini](https://www.sinapsi.unina.it/LGBT_guida_termini)
- <https://accademiadellacrusca.it/it/consulenza/un-asterisco-sul-genere/4018>
- <https://www.unipd.it/sites/unipd.it/files/2018/Le%20parole%20delle%20disabilita%20e%20inclusion e.pdf>

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME!

## Table 4 – INCLUSION SIMULATIONS

### Inclusion simulation 1

*The parent of a child with a disability (Italian-speaking) goes to talk to the head of the school (English-speaking) that their child will be moving to. The parent was not happy with the previous school and wants to make sure that this really is an inclusive school.*

\*barriere architettoniche - mobility barriers

I: Buongiorno, avrei bisogno di parlare con la preside della scuola.

E: Good morning, yes, I am the head of the school. Please, take a seat.

I: Grazie mille.

E: How can I help you?

I: Vorrei iscrivere mio figlio in questa scuola, ma voglio prima assicurarmi che la scuola offra un'assistenza specifica per ragazzi e ragazze con disabilità.

E: Well, I am sure that you will find that you've come to the right place.

I: Lo spero veramente. Vede, nella scuola precedente erano presenti barriere architettoniche e la formazione non era affatto inclusiva.

E: I see. I'm sorry about this. May I ask you what kind of disability your child has?

I: Certo, è un bambino con dislessia. Inoltre ha una disabilità fisica e quindi ha la necessità di utilizzare la sedia a rotelle.

E: Well, every class in this school is wheelchair accessible. And in addition, our teachers always create accessible resources and handouts for every student, whatever their needs.

I: Sono davvero contento sia così. E per quanto riguarda i compagni e le compagne di scuola? Viene insegnato loro il rispetto e l'inclusione?

E: Yes, absolutely. One hour a week of classes is dedicated to inclusion and issues regarding civic duty and civic responsibility.

I: Mi sembra una bella iniziativa, se veramente prendete sul serio queste cose.

E: We do indeed. You see, our school is committed to making every student feel at home, to feel part of one single community. This is how they learn to respect others.

I: Perfetto. Dovrebbe essere lo stesso in tutte le scuole

E: Yes, that goes without saying.

I: Ma purtroppo ho dovuto far cambiare scuola a mio figlio perché i ragazzi e le ragazze si rivolgevano a lui offendendolo, lo escludevano e lo prendevano in giro.

E: In these cases, it is up to staff to intervene and take a stand.

I: Beh, nell'altra scuola il corpo docente non interveniva. Inaccettabile.

E: I am sorry that such behaviour is still present in our society. The Inclusion Office and I make sure everyone feels accepted, respected and fully integrated. Nobody is left behind.

I: La ringrazio molto.

## **Inclusion simulation 2**

*A non-binary student (Italian speaking) goes to the Inclusion Office (English speaking) at their university to complain about a professor's use of language and offensive views on gender.*

*Inspired by: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/oct/28/sussex-professor-kathleen-stock-resigns-after-transgender-rights-row>*

I: Buongiorno.

E: Sorry to have kept you waiting. What can I do for you?

I: Ho chiesto l'aiuto di un'amica come interprete perché si tratta di una situazione molto delicata.

E: That's fine. Could you tell me what the problem is?

I: Vorrei denunciare il comportamento inappropriato e offensivo da parte di una docente nei miei confronti.

E: Ah I see, this is quite a serious issue then.

I: Sì infatti. Ho terminato poco fa un colloquio con tale professoressa, la quale ha dimostrato avere un atteggiamento discriminatorio.

E: Can you go on?

I: Le ho chiesto di utilizzare il pronome plurale, "they", nei miei confronti, in quanto mi identifico come persona "non binary", ma non ha voluto darmi ascolto.

E: Maybe this professor did not do that on purpose. This is not a justification, but maybe she just saw you and used the same pronoun she would normally use for male students.

I: No, non è così. Dopo la mia richiesta mi ha fissato per qualche secondo e ha aggiunto "Io vedo un ragazzo davanti a me", e ha continuato a parlarmi utilizzando il pronome maschile.

E: Did she say anything else that bothered you? To the best of my knowledge, we have had no such allegations up till now.

I: Sì, mi ha anche detto che i trans sono solo una moda, si può essere solo uomo o donna in base a come si nasce. Non si può affermare una cosa simile, è discriminazione.

E: Ok, so let's see what we can do. First of all, you need to tell me the name of this lecturer so that the Inclusion Office can proceed.

I: E poi cosa succederà? L'ha fatto con me e può succedere ancora con molte altre persone.

E: We will warn her, since discrimination can even lead to justified dismissal.

I: E cosa può fare l'università per il nostro futuro?

E: Well, the Inclusion Office is planning to organize some seminars and projects to raise awareness among all teachers and students about inclusion.

I: La ringrazio, spero non accada più nulla di simile.



### **Inclusion simulation 3**

*The head of an Italian University Inclusion Office (Italian speaking) goes to speak to the head of an English-speaking University Inclusion Office.*

I: Buongiorno, sono la responsabile dell'Ufficio inclusione dell'Università di Padova.

E: Hello. How can I be of help?

I: Vorrei parlare con il o la responsabile di questa università.

E: Yes, I am the head. I was waiting for you. Please, let me know what we can do for you.

I: Avrei intenzione di creare un progetto sul linguaggio inclusivo rivolto agli studenti e alle studentesse del nostro ateneo. Il progetto coinvolgerebbe anche il corpo docente.

E: That sounds great, but I don't quite understand why the project is aimed at lecturers too.

I: Beh, perché l'educazione inclusiva coinvolge ogni persona, inoltre professori e professoressa sono dei modelli all'interno della nostra Università.

E: Well, our lecturers already use inclusive language, and they are tolerant towards racial minorities, disabled students and students who have different sexual preferences.

I: Innanzitutto, lei non ha affatto utilizzato un linguaggio inclusivo, quindi come può avere la certezza che anche all'interno del corpo docente questo venga utilizzato?

E: Actually, I'm quite sure they use it. Nobody has ever reported any disrespectful behaviour.

I: Beh, non ci metterei la mano sul fuoco.

E: Well now I think you are being a little disrespectful.

I: Mi scuso. Volevo solamente dire che questo non significa che non accadano episodi di discriminazione.

E: And how do you think we can collaborate on your project?

I: Guardi, io ora provvederò a creare il progetto e delle risorse e non appena sarà pronto tornerò e ne parleremo insieme.

E: Fine, but just make sure that the resources you create are also accessible for dyslexic students. I know there are few of them enrolled here.

I: Si dice studenti con dislessia.

E: I beg your pardon.

I: Comunque quando il progetto sarà terminato lei sarà la prima persona a cui lo illustrerò, perché è necessario che il personale dell'Ufficio Inclusione sia a conoscenza del linguaggio inclusivo.

E: Ok, I'll look forward to hearing from you then.

## Table 5 – FINAL QUESTIONNAIRE

### Inclusive Language and Interpreting

Hello everyone! I am Federica Fabiano Di Gregorio and first of all, I want to thank you for your participation in the activities on inclusive interpreting proposed during the Liaison Interpreting course.

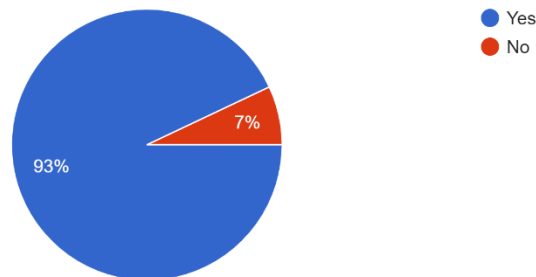
The following questionnaire is the final part of my research project and it will last no longer than 5 minutes to complete.

All personal information that is entered in this form will be treated as confidential and will remain completely anonymous. The information you give will only be quoted anonymously.

Once again, thank you very much for contributing to the realization of my Master's dissertation.

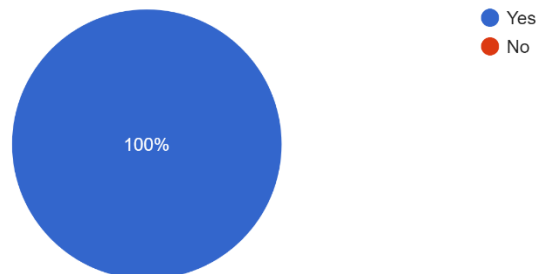
1. After this brief focus on Inclusive Language, are you more interested in the topic?

57 risposte



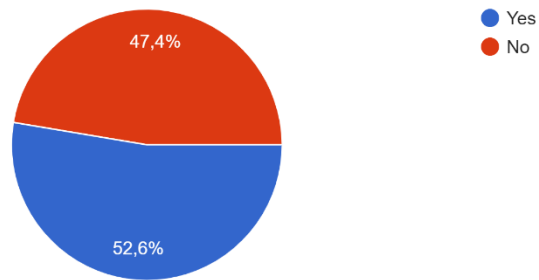
2. Do you think the activities proposed (Questionnaire, Glossary, PPT Presentation in class, Liaison Simulations, Reflection) helped you to become more aware of the topic?

57 risposte



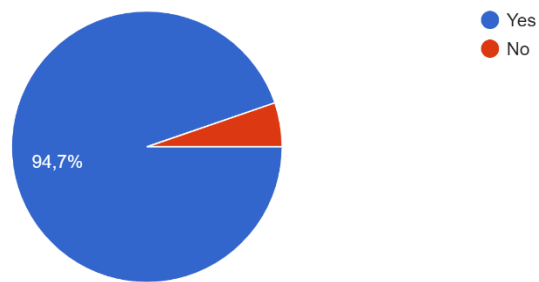
3. After the activities, did you look for other research or information on the topic on your own?

57 risposte

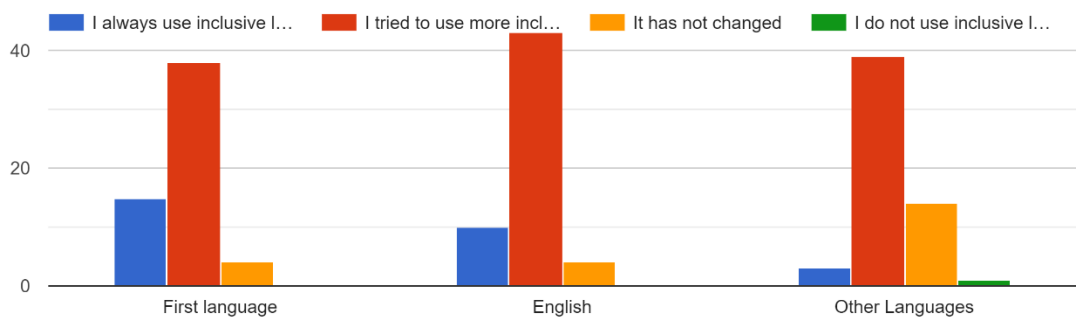


4. Have you tried to use more inclusive language in everyday situations?

57 risposte

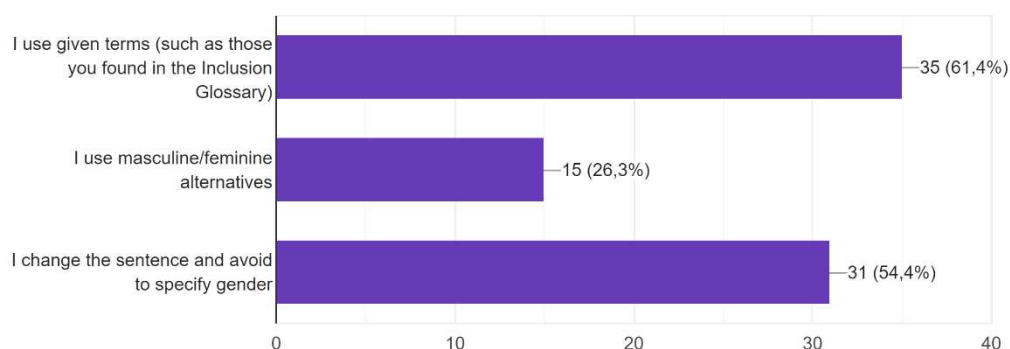


5. How much do you think the use of inclusive language in the languages you speak has changed after the activities ?



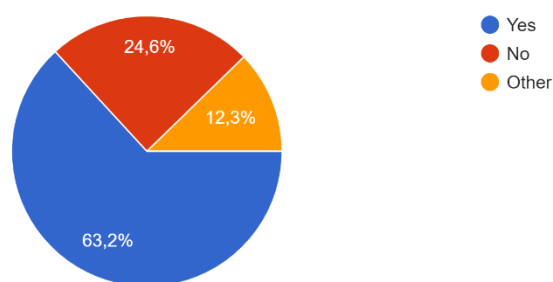
6. As for gender, which of the following strategies do you feel more comfortable with?

57 risposte



7. Do you think it is appropriate, in order to use inclusive language, to change the grammar of a language? For instance, Italian?

57 risposte



**8. Please, explain your answer to question n.7.**

I think it's necessary to change the grammar because the grammar is what people look up to
I think the language must reflect the evolution of our society, so it must evolve too.
I don't think we need to change the grammar of a language because we just need to be careful when we are speaking
I agree that inclusive language is of utmost importance. I also think that changing one language's grammar is a very long path. By the way I think it is important to change some aspects of it (such as, introducing feminine alternatives for each noun)
In Italian, it is often possible to change the grammar and the structure while still conveying the message so this could be a valid alternative in order to use inclusive language more often.
I do not think it is necessary to change the whole Italian grammar in order to use a more inclusive language. Nowadays there are several strategies to include people who do not identify themselves as male or female, such as the schwa. I argue that it is more important to educate people to inclusive language.
I think it is a complex and difficult task to carry on but we can try to create a more

neutral grammar
I believe that people think that a language does not evolve, and any small change seems a big deal. Changing some aspects of Italian grammar can make the language more inclusive and make people feel less discriminated, at least from a linguistic point of view.
Because grammar is fixed and there are other ways to get around it
I just do not agree with the use of "Ə" or "*" or other options. Often people who do not consider themselves as male or female are also against these choices. I think that the latest trend of being politically correct at all costs is trying too desperately to make changes where they are not needed, forgetting about far more important issues as far as inclusivity is concerned.
I think it is not appropriate because the grammar of a language is not the key problem of inclusion, so it is not necessary to change it
Yes because in order to avoid the gender, sometimes I have to change the sentence
Language must change in order to adapt to the people who use it. So I think it should be natural for languages to change.
It is a gendered language so we must change its grammar so to use inclusive language.
Because a change in language will change a mindset for future generations in our society
I think that respecting other people and avoid them feeling hurt is the most important thing when using inclusive language, but I think this can be done without changing the grammar.
I don't think that the grammar of a language should be changed in order to be inclusive:
Ad esempio cambiare il plurale generico al maschile
Yes, because for example in Italian it is unavoidable to not indicate a gender in some sentences.
In my opinion, using gender-fair and inclusive language also helps reduce gender stereotyping, promotes social change and contributes to achieving gender equality. Since language is fluid, meanings and connotations of words can change rapidly. In other words, I think that language can and should reflect the complexity of society.
I think that it would be awesome to start using a more inclusive language with perhaps a more inclusive grammar, I do not think that imposed grammar rules might actually help towards this direction, as languages are constantly changing by themselves. I think that discussions about the nature of a language and measures taken based on these discussions might be a healthier way to approach the question and change the way a language is used.
I think that in some cases grammar should be changed in order to use inclusive language, but in some other cases it wouldn't be necessary, if an alternative is possibile (changing the structure of the sentence, using a synonym etc.). However I also think that language as a reflection of society should change together with society in order to better describe it, so a more inclusive language as a result of a more aware society would be a great achievement. So maybe we should start changing the grammar in order to change the general mindset.
To change the grammar of a language after all these years may be a risk for the

speakers, they could have some important difficulties to deal with. I think that it is possible to use the inclusive language applying it to the language and without changing the last one.
I believe that some grammatical changes should be done in order to make everyone else feel more included. For example, the feminine form of the verb should be implied too while talking about a mixed group of people (e.g. "sono andati/e" and not just "sono andati").
I think it is difficult to change a language for this purposes
I think that, if it is necessary, we can change rules of a language, in order to be more inclusive in different contexts of everyday life
It Is importante to be aware to feel confortable other without changing grammar rules
I think it depends on the change, how the change would influence the grammar and if it will be useful and easy to understand
I would love for everyone to be able to be able to express themselves as the gender they identify with, and in languages like English this is easily possibile. Italian, unfortunately, doesn't allow it, for now. I've seen many comments lately on twitter concerning the use of ə and I must admit that I was disappointed in realizing how many people are against it. The reason is usually that one can't change the entire grammar of a language just to "make happy" a minority. Italy is wayyy behind in such matters, and as long as people only care about feathering their own nest no change will be possible. But since language is in constant change maybe in a few years we will introduce gender neutral terms or such.
Because language should reflect society and its changes.
i think that neutral pronouns sound be added in italian too
Language is dinamic and it changes to represent everything in the reality we live. So if there is the necessity for some people to identify themselves it is fair to change and to adapt the language to the new realities.
I think new terms and grammatical constructions need to be created in order to use inclusive language
I think it is enough to pay more attention or just to specify the gender when referring to a female person
Changing lexical features is affordable but changing grammar is something really difficult and it doesn't take 1 year or 2. Moreover I don't think that changing grammar will solve problems in terms of respect to "different" people; on the contrary imposing a change so strong would plump a sentiment of hate and discomfort. I believe that changing lexicon is enough and conforming is a process that everyone should adopt in order to leave without conflict.
Other than the use of inclusive terms, I think it is necessary to adapt grammar as well because it's important that the language evolves as well as the society in which we all live
In order to improve inclusive language the use of grammar is important
The forms that exist in language can be changed. If there is a possibility, why shouldn't we use it. It would make people feel more okay with the way they are. Grammar changes all the time and it can be seen in a very short period of time (especially in Italian). Language is alive as it should reflect reality as it is and the old grammar forms are not fully suitable for times we live right now.

I am not sure I have understood what it is meant by 'grammar' in the previous question.
Grammar is a set of established rules constituting the stable structure/Basis to a language. Of course, a language is supposed to change and evolve as a living being. However, I don't think it to be necessary nor "right" to change those rules (a language doesn't change arbitrarily when one or a group of many decide to - it's a natural, spontaneous process) since the issue can be addressed differently, i.e. greater lexical awareness and, first and foremost, respect for others. That will show in our use of language.
In order to foster inclusive practices, grammar should be the first aspect of a language to be changed, as well its morphology. If we really want to change the way people feel included, we should start from the roots of a language. People then would feel more forced to adapt accordingly.
Because it is fundamental to respect other people's life and choices
Maybe use a different pronoun (not "lui" or "lei") to avoid specifying the gender
I believe that fusional languages, for example Italian, give too much prominence to people's gender, as if sex were the only way to recognize and "classify" people. Thus, if such languages underwent some kind of change in grammar, maybe they would be more inclusive.
It is just necessary to pay attention to the specific words
If needed and if it helps being more inclusive I do not think that would be unappropriate.
I think that changing the grammar of a language could be useful and would not interfere with the identity of that language.
I think that a change is needed since as well as the language itself also the grammar should improved and adapt to the society's changes. The change is also needed in order to give the possibility to everyone to express themselves completely and they must not be limited by the grammar.
It would be better to eliminate the use of the generical masculine typical of the Italian language.
If necessary, language should change in order to be more inclusive.
I think that changing the grammar of a language could be a solution as people could be more aware of the problematic.
I'm not sure grammar can be "changed" in the sense that someone decides it needs to be changed and used differently by everyone from a given moment on. I do think (and hope) there will be some changes and people will become more inclusive in the way they speak and use language, but I think it's a process which will take time. Also, I think it'll be kind of "spontaneous", in the sense that more and more people will eventually start to use inclusive language and the rest will come naturally.
In the beginning I used to think that changing grammar was a step forward for a more inclusive language. However, I start thinking that replacing grammar elements (for example with schwa, which people don't know how to utter) doesn't mean to recognize and include people.
I think that using inclusive language and respecting people (not only in terms of acts/actions, but also while speaking) is very important. For this reason, inclusive language should be treated as a section of the language and. in this respect, there



should be rules to be observed or changed in a language in order to be inclusive.
.
I think it is appropriate to change the grammar of a language in order to use inclusive language, for example using the schwa
I think it is appropriate since the social impact of inclusive language has a much more noble aim than the "preservation" of old grammatical rules that, in any case, would change over time.

## Table 6 – REVISION INCLUSION DIALOGUE

*This dialogue takes place in zoom between the tutor of three students with disability in Italy and a university inclusion officer from an Erasmus partner university.*

T: Tutor / I: Inclusion officer

A: Buongiorno

B: Good morning. Can you hear me?

A: Sì, molto bene. Vorrei chiedere delle informazioni riguardo i servizi offerti dalla sua università.

B: Sure, do you have any particular needs?

A: Sì, sono il tutor di alcuni ragazzi e ragazze con disabilità, quindi volevo sapere se l'università offre una formazione inclusiva.

B: Well, we try to be as inclusive as possible and to respect the functional needs of our students.

A: Benissimo.

B: Could you please be more specific? Do your students have physical disabilities?

A: Allora, uno di loro è un ragazzo in sedia a rotelle, un altro è un ragazzo cieco mentre l'ultima è una ragazza con la sindrome di Down.

B: Ok. Well, all our rooms are wheelchair-accessible and so are many of the desks.

A: Benissimo, sono contento/a.

B: In the labs students can find different accommodations to improve the study process.

A: Bellissima iniziativa.

B: In addition, lecturers provide tailored assistance during office hours for students who need more time to study.

A: Non potrei essere più felice. Credo lo saranno anche i miei studenti e la studentessa appena li informerò.

B: We always try to make every student feel accepted and included.

A: Se solo tutte le università e le scuole fossero così attente alla questione!

B: Oh, I forgot to tell you that the Inclusion office is open 5/7, and the people working there is ready to help students whatever their needs.

A: Fantastico.

**Table 7 – LIAISON TEST ON INCLUSION**

*The parent of a student with disability is speaking to the head of the Inclusion Office at a British university. In this case the speakers are careful to be gender inclusive.*

**A: Parent (Italian speaking)**

**B: Head of Inclusion Office**

A: Buongiorno.

B: Good morning. How can I help you?

A: Ho un appuntamento con la direttrice di questo ufficio.

B: Yes, that's me. My name is Bella Holmes. I was expecting you. Please take a seat.

A: Ah bene, volevo chiederle alcune informazioni riguardo la formazione inclusiva della vostra università.

B: Sure. Do you have any particular requests?

A: Sì- Mia figlia è una ragazza con disabilità fisica, utilizza la sedia a rotelle.

B: Ok, so as you can see, there are no mobility barriers inside this building.

A: Benissimo, quindi tutte le aule sono accessibili con la sedia a rotelle?

B: Sure, every room is provided with a ramp, and in addition students with disabilities can use the lift to reach the different floors.

A: Perfetto. E per quanto riguarda i banchi? Sono previsti dispositivi specifici?

B: In every room there is one desk for wheelchair users.

A: Vorrei sapere se le lezioni sono sviluppate in relazione alle esigenze legate alla disabilità degli studenti e delle studentesse.

B: Lecturers create accessible resources both in classes and in labs. And once a week they provide tailored assistance during office hours.

A: Mi sembra una buona idea. Nel caso ci siano chiusure dovute alla pandemia, questi materiali e risorse saranno disponibili online?

B: Certainly. Last year there were no complaints. I mean about the university online teaching platform.

A: Molto bene. Sono attivi dei servizi per l'inclusione?

B: Yes, this University Inclusion Office is open 5 days a week, and students can either talk directly to office workers, in person or online, or contact them via email.

A: Ma l'ufficio inclusione pone attenzione solo alle studentesse o agli studenti con disabilità o tratta anche altre tematiche?

B: Absolutely. Our employees are ready to help our students with all kinds of requests: bullying, racism, homonegativity, discrimination ...

A: Mi sembra ottimo. Purtroppo mia figlia ha avuto fin da piccola problemi con le compagne ed i compagni.

B: May I ask you what kinds of problems she faced? You can get it off your chest!

A: Veniva discriminata a causa della carnagione scura e per il fatto che ha una disabilità fisica.

B: I am so sorry about this.

A: Fortunatamente lei è una ragazza forte e ha saputo affrontare la situazione al meglio.

B: We fight for equality and for inclusion, no one should be left behind.

A: La penso proprio come lei.

B: Disability should not lead to discrimination and nor should ethnicity or sexual orientation.

A: Purtroppo molte persone hanno ancora una considerazione diversa.

B: I know. Do you have any more questions?

A: Per il momento no, la ringrazio molto per le informazioni.

B: You are welcome. You can come with your daughter whenever you want to have a tour of the campus.

A: Grazie mille, sarà lei la nostra guida?

B: I am not sure, maybe one of the students doing part-time work will show you the main parts of the university. And you can ask them more questions.

A: Perfetto, a presto allora. Grazie ancora.



## RIASSUNTO IN ITALIANO

Con la presente tesi dal titolo *Inclusive language in ELT: a project for a liaison interpreting class at the University of Padua* si è cercato di dimostrare l'importanza dell'utilizzo del linguaggio inclusivo e di promuovere lo stesso nell'ambito dell'interpretariato, attraverso un progetto condotto con la partecipazione di un gruppo di studenti e studentesse frequentanti il corso di Liaison Interpreting con la Professoressa Fiona Dalziel.

Il primo capitolo ha delineato dapprima le caratteristiche principali dell'interpretariato, anche detto mediazione orale e culturale. Infatti, per interpretariato si intende proprio la traduzione di un discorso da una lingua di partenza ad una lingua d'arrivo, ma non dal mero punto di vista linguistico, bensì anche dal punto di vista culturale e tenendo conto degli aspetti pragmatici della lingua. Sono state delineate le categorie in cui la mediazione orale si divide, ossia mediazione simultanea e consecutiva; la prima, utilizzata per lo più in eventi multilingue, in cui la traduzione avviene simultaneamente al discorso pronunciato, la seconda, utilizzata anch'essa in eventi multilingue, che prevede la traduzione di discorsi lunghi fino ad un massimo di 15 minuti, e la possibilità di utilizzo di appunti per ricordare al meglio i dettagli. Una sub-categoria della modalità consecutiva è l'interpretariato di trattativa (*liaison interpreting*), utilizzato per piccoli gruppi di persone, solitamente due, in contesti informali, quali ad esempio incontri asimmetrici tra un individuo e una persona appartenente all'ambito medico, legale, oppure un membro di una qualche istituzione.

Nel caso della mediazione di trattativa, la conversazione segue un ritmo dialogico, e proprio per questo motivo gli enunciati da tradurre solitamente sono relativamente brevi, e l'interprete, che interagisce con le parti e contribuisce nella costruzione di significati, deve saper approfittare delle pause tra una frase e l'altra per conferire il proprio contributo. Tali pause possono anche essere utilizzate per chiedere chiarimenti linguistici o culturali, con la sola condizione di rendere

partecipe della situazione anche l'altra parte non coinvolta nello scambio di informazioni.

Il contenuto della conversazione, secondo il codice etico dell'interpretariato, deve essere sempre reso nella sua interezza nella lingua d'arrivo, evitando omissioni, spiegazioni aggiuntive e riformulazioni, in quanto queste potrebbero modificarne il significato e modificare le intenzioni espresse originariamente dal parlante della lingua di arrivo. Infatti, all'interprete è richiesta la massima neutralità, anche nel caso in cui gli argomenti trattati feriscano la sua sensibilità personale, e tale neutralità è una tra le abilità e competenze richieste per padroneggiare la professione, insieme a competenza linguistica e culturale nelle lingue di lavoro, competenza comunicativa, memoria, riservatezza e controllo dello stress dovuto alla presenza di estranei e agli argomenti affrontati.

Per lo scopo di questa tesi, è di particolare interesse la competenza linguistica e culturale. Infatti, all'interprete si richiede, ovviamente, una profonda conoscenza della lingua in tutte le sue caratteristiche, quindi lessico, terminologia, grammatica e sintassi, ma si richiede anche una particolare sensibilità verso il registro comunicativo, e quindi attenzione alla pragmatica della lingua e alle sfumature di significato dovute a ironia o umorismo, non sempre facilmente rilevabili. Inoltre, la conoscenza delle culture relative alle lingue di lavoro permette di evitare incomprensioni, barriere comunicative, e di evitare inoltre l'alterazione del messaggio trasmesso. Al fine di ottenere tali competenze, la soluzione più efficace prevede la frequenza di corsi mirati tenuti da professionisti del settore, di modo che la condivisione di esperienze, raccomandazioni e suggerimenti possa aiutare i/le futuri/e interpreti.

A livello universitario, si è visto come diverse attività possano aiutare allo scopo, come anche allo scopo di promuovere il linguaggio inclusivo tra individui che si accingono alla professione. Tra queste, l'utilizzo di glossari, semplici esercizi mirati alla stimolazione della memoria a breve e lungo termine, traduzioni a vista che permettono di processare velocemente le informazioni e di velocizzare quindi



la traduzione, e simulazioni. Queste ultime risultano particolarmente efficaci, in quanto attraverso la simulazione di situazioni reali, l'interprete interagisce con le parti coinvolte e comprende al meglio il suo ruolo nella conversazione. Risulta chiaro, comunque, che all'interprete è richiesta una costante preparazione, ed è inoltre richiesto un costante aggiornamento in ambito linguistico e culturale, poiché entrambi gli elementi si modificano rapidamente nel corso del tempo, e una preparazione superficiale o non al passo con i tempi può essere causa di fraintendimenti o scarsa comprensione tra le parti.

Il secondo capitolo si concentra sull'importanza dell'inclusione all'interno della società e sull'utilizzo del linguaggio inclusivo all'interno della stessa, volto a favorire proprio l'inclusione di tutte le identità individuali. L'inclusione viene definita come uno stato in cui viene conferito valore alla diversità per creare una comunità giusta e sana; un ambiente in cui ogni individuo ha pari accesso alle risorse e pari opportunità, un ambiente che consente alle persone di sentirsi sicure, rispettate, coinvolte, valorizzate. Ognuno, infatti, è libero di esprimere la sua individualità, e tale individualità non dovrebbe e non deve diventare oggetto di atteggiamenti discriminatori o irrispettosi nei confronti dell'individuo stesso.

Il linguaggio inclusivo è stato definito come un linguaggio che pone l'individuo al centro, e per l'appunto consente agli individui di sentirsi riconosciuti ed essere rispettati. La parola chiave, infatti, in relazione al linguaggio inclusivo è: rispetto. Rispetto verso l'individuo, rispetto verso la sua identità, rispetto verso le sue scelte in ambito linguistico. Mediante l'utilizzo di tale tipologia di linguaggio è possibile evitare qualsiasi tipo di esclusione sociale, che generalmente avviene attraverso la propagazione di stereotipi e pregiudizi, dovuti ad un utilizzo inappropriato della lingua. Etichette e termini discriminatori causano infatti tale diffusione, ed impediscono così la crescita della società verso la creazione di un ambiente inclusivo. Erroneamente, si ritiene che il linguaggio inclusivo coinvolga solamente la sfera del genere; tuttavia, oltre al rispetto delle identità di genere, questo linguaggio coinvolge anche le sfere della disabilità e dell'appartenenza etnica.

Alcuni accorgimenti sono necessari al fine di utilizzare al meglio il linguaggio inclusivo, e molte linee guida presentano raccomandazioni e principi generali in merito: la loro interiorizzazione consente una maggiore consapevolezza e quindi un cosciente utilizzo della lingua. Per prima cosa, come si può facilmente dedurre, è necessario essere consapevoli della diversità e saper rispettare il prossimo. Il primo principio menzionato nel secondo capitolo prevede il rispetto delle modalità e dei termini con cui gli individui vogliono ci si riferisca loro, di modo che la loro identità venga riconosciuta e rispettata. L'individuo, la sua identità, infatti, deve essere posto al centro, salvo alcuni casi che verranno commentati successivamente. Per lo stesso motivo, è necessario essere specifici nei termini utilizzati, in quanto un termine inappropriato potrebbe risultare irrispettoso o discriminatorio. Ultimo, ma non per importanza, preferire l'utilizzo di un linguaggio basato sulle abilità e sulle forze di un individuo è preferibile rispetto ad un linguaggio che si focalizza invece sui deficit.

La seconda parte del capitolo si è concentrata sulle diverse strategie ed alternative che le lingue offrono per evitare atteggiamenti discriminatori. Il focus sono l'italiano e l'inglese, in quanto lingue d'interesse poiché utilizzate all'interno del corso di Liaison Interpreting, e le sfere d'azione del linguaggio inclusivo, quali genere, disabilità ed appartenenza etnica. Per ogni categoria sono stati elencati i termini da evitare e le alternative più appropriate, oltre ad alcune delle strategie più efficaci per evitare etichette discriminatorie o la perpetuazione di stereotipi legati alla costruzione linguistica del discorso. Ad esempio, per quanto riguarda le alternative relative al genere, è preferibile utilizzare, in inglese, il pronome *they* invece dei pronomi binari; in italiano invece, il pronome plurale non può essere utilizzato come sostituzione dei binari *lui/lei*, e per questo motivo spesso si ricorre alla semplice forma di cortesia, oppure a strategie che rivoluzionano l'organizzazione della frase in cui è necessario introdurre il pronome. Un'altra soluzione appare essere l'omissione del pronome stesso, ovviamente con la conseguente riorganizzazione della struttura della frase. In linea generale, comunque, è sempre opportuno riferirsi agli individui con il pronome con il quale

la loro identità viene rispettata; di conseguenza è necessario rispettare le loro scelte.

In relazione a sostantivi e termini legati al genere, alcuni cambiamenti sono necessari: infatti, invece di termini che specificano il genere della persona, è bene utilizzare termini neutri, come *person* o *individual* in inglese, e i corrispondenti *persona* e *individuo* in italiano. Allo stesso modo, *mankind* o *uomini* utilizzati in riferimento alla totalità degli esseri umani sono da evitare, preferendo l'utilizzo di termini quali *humanity*, *human beings*, *umanità*, *esseri umani* e *genere umano*. Per quanto riguarda invece termini legati principalmente alle professioni, di cui solitamente viene privilegiata la voce maschile, specie in italiano, viene richiesto di utilizzare anche il corrispondente femminile, in modo da conferire dignità al termine e alla persona che svolge il ruolo descritto dal termine stesso; quindi, insieme a *sindaco* si troverà *sindaca*, ad esempio.

Un caso controverso è presentato dall'utilizzo della schwa (ə) e dell'asterisco (\*). In un'ottica inclusiva, il loro utilizzo, specialmente quello della schwa, è consigliato e raccomandato da parte dei linguisti, come ad esempio Vera Gheno. Dall'altra parte, istituzioni linguistiche come l'Accademia della Crusca rifiutano l'introduzione di tali simboli all'interno della lingua, in quanto ritenuti inadatti da un punto di vista fonetico, e inopportuni, sostenendo che la lingua italiana presenta già delle modalità inclusive (il maschile generico ad esempio, in cui vengono incluse tutte le identità mediante un semplice suffisso), e che il loro utilizzo sarebbe inadeguato per alcune tipologie di sostantivi che presentano forme plurali maschili e femminili differenti (la schwa potrebbe essere utilizzata per termini il cui plurale maschile o femminile differisce solo per la desinenza finale *i* oppure *e* come nel caso di *alunnz*, ma non nel caso di *redattori* – *redattrici*).

Per quanto riguarda la disabilità e le alternative appropriate, innanzitutto è necessario utilizzare le strategie menzionate in relazione al genere, in modo da evitare termini sessisti. È inoltre opportuno, anche in questo caso, rispettare le

scelte linguistiche degli individui interessati. Infatti, in relazione alla disabilità vi sono due scuole di pensiero: la prima, che preferisce l'utilizzo del *people-first language*, ovvero un linguaggio che pone al centro la persona e la sua identità, evitando di focalizzarsi sulla disabilità; la seconda, che invece preferisce l'uso dell'*identity-first language*, che descrive l'individuo in relazione alla disabilità, in quanto questa è ritenuta caratteristica integrante della persona. Entrambi i linguaggi sono appropriati, ma è necessario conoscere le preferenze linguistiche degli individui, prima di approcciarsi a questi utilizzando uno o l'altro; infatti, la comunità dei sordi, ad esempio, adotta l'*identity-first language*.

Generalmente, comunque, si evita di porre il focus sulla disabilità, e si raccomanda in modo particolare di accennare alla disabilità se strettamente legata e necessaria al contesto, in quanto il focus va posto alla persona stessa e alla sua identità. Un ulteriore accorgimento richiede di evitare eufemismi in relazione a persone con disabilità: quindi termini che si riferiscono alla persona come ad un eroe o ad una vittima che soffre di una determinata patologia. Si raccomanda invece l'utilizzo di un linguaggio positivo, che descriva le condizioni in modo oggettivo. Allo stesso modo, si deve evitare l'aggettivo *speciale* o *normale* (l'ultimo in relazione a persone che non hanno disabilità) a favore di aggettivi come *tailored* o *accessibile*, poiché ognuno è diverso e unico; ognuno ha la propria identità.

Si è visto quindi, come per riferirsi ad una persona con disabilità, sia in italiano che in inglese si utilizzi l'espressione *with disability* / *con disabilità* e il verbo avere, in quanto questo denota che la disabilità è una caratteristica propria dell'individuo, ma non comprende la sua totale identità. Inoltre, in riferimento a persone in sedia a rotelle, è bene evitare espressioni che definiscano l'individuo solamente in relazione al mezzo o che indichino negativamente il legame tra l'individuo e il mezzo, in quanto tale attrezzatura permette agli individui di muoversi liberamente ed in maniera indipendente; quindi, espressioni come *wheelchair user* o *persona che si muove in sedia a rotelle* sono preferibili.

L'appartenenza etnica è stato l'ultimo argomento trattato all'interno del secondo capitolo. Come nel caso della disabilità, il primo accorgimento riguarda l'attenzione verso la tematica del genere, e quindi l'utilizzo delle strategie sopraelencate. In secondo luogo, si richiede di evitare supposizioni riguardo l'etnia di un individuo basate solamente sul suo aspetto, in quanto ciò potrebbe favorire etichette, stereotipi e generalizzazioni inappropriate. A questo proposito, si devono evitare anche termini collettivi in riferimento a individui appartenenti alla stessa etnia, preferendo l'uso di aggettivi che rimandano all'origine rispetto a sostantivi. Ad esempio, *Asian person*, o *persona asiatica*. La soluzione migliore, comunque, è essere specifici.

Il termine più discusso è *person of colour / persona di colore*. Queste due espressioni sembrano infatti appropriate dal punto di vista inclusivo, in realtà sono discriminatorie. Infatti, si sostiene che ogni persona abbia una carnagione con un colore, sia questa più roseo o più scura; di conseguenza, non è opportuno riferirsi con questa espressione solo alle persone nere. È preferibile, invece, l'utilizzo del termine *black / nero* come aggettivo, che rispecchia la realtà. Sono ovviamente da evitare termini come *nigger* e *negro*, che rimandano al periodo coloniale di schiavitù e sono termini razzisti.

Con il terzo ed ultimo capitolo è stato descritto il progetto svolto all'interno del corso di Liaison Interpreting tenuto dalla Professoressa Dalziel all'Università di Padova, progetto che ha avuto luogo nel periodo Settembre 2021 – Gennaio 2022. Attraverso l'analisi delle attività svolte con gli studenti e le studentesse, si è cercato di rispondere alle domande di ricerca poste prima dell'inizio del progetto, e si è anche cercato di sottolineare l'importanza dell'interpretariato come promotore di pratiche inclusive, tra cui il linguaggio inclusivo stesso.

È stata sottolineata la copresenza di due correnti relative a linguaggio e società: la prima mostra come il linguaggio spesso influenzi la società, quindi come cambiamenti linguistici poi si riflettano sulla società stessa; la seconda, al contrario, mostra come spesso il linguaggio si conformi ai cambiamenti che

avvengono proprio all'interno della società. Di conseguenza, si può dedurre come un utilizzo più consistente di termini inclusivi all'interno della lingua potrebbe cambiare naturalmente la mentalità generale della società, favorendo così la promozione di un ambiente inclusivo. Dal punto di vista della mediazione orale, all'interprete si richiede appunto un costante aggiornamento, in modo da avere la consapevolezza dei cambiamenti che avvengono nelle lingue di lavoro e nelle società relative alle lingue. Inoltre, come si è visto, il ruolo dell'interprete richiede neutralità, imparzialità e inclusività, ma queste tre caratteristiche spesso si scontrano tra loro. Infatti, è possibile che in alcune situazioni interpretative uno dei due parlanti non utilizzi volontariamente un linguaggio inclusivo: in questo caso, per il principio della fedeltà, l'interprete utilizzerà a sua volta termini non inclusivi, per rispettare le intenzioni del parlante. È stato sollevato il caso in cui il parlante utilizzi involontariamente un linguaggio discriminatorio: in questo caso, spetta all'interprete decidere se rispettare il codice etico e modificare le affermazioni utilizzando termini inclusivi ed evitando conflitti, o se essere fedele a quanto detto, creando così possibili scontri o malesseri. La soluzione migliore per risolvere il problema è apparsa essere molto semplice: chiedere. Poiché l'interprete può chiedere chiarimenti durante le pause del discorso, è bene chiedere al parlante in questione se preferisce utilizzare termini più inclusivi o se invece vuole continuare sulla stessa scia.

Per quanto riguarda il progetto, sono state descritte ed analizzate le varie attività svolte. La prima attività proposta al gruppo studenti è stata un questionario anonimo, realizzato con Google Forms. In seguito alle prime domande generali riguardanti genere, età e lingue parlate, sono state poste domande più pertinenti all'argomento della tesi, come la richiesta di fornire una breve definizione di *inclusive language*, per rilevare la conoscenza pregressa dell'argomento. Successivamente, è stata fornita la definizione oggettiva, ed è stato chiesto ai rispondenti di dichiarare il loro utilizzo di linguaggio inclusivo nelle varie lingue da loro parlate, di elencare alcune delle strategie da loro conosciute per evitare un linguaggio discriminatorio, e di fornire una motivazione per cui il linguaggio inclusivo è collegato alla mediazione orale. Nella maggior parte dei casi nelle

varie domande è stata notata una conoscenza dell'argomento solamente in relazione al genere. Per la terza parte del questionario è stato creato un quiz, con domande sia in italiano che in inglese, per conoscere il livello di consapevolezza del gruppo.

Un glossario di termini inclusivi è stato presentato come seconda attività, per essere studiato e interiorizzato in vista della terza attività pianificata, ossia le simulazioni. Queste sono state precedute da una presentazione PowerPoint esposta da me personalmente alla classe in Novembre 2022, in cui è stato inizialmente presentato il progetto e ripreso l'argomento linguaggio inclusivo. In seguito, sono state esposte le risposte al quiz e le relative spiegazioni riguardo i termini più appropriati da utilizzare. I testi delle simulazioni sono stati scritti congiuntamente dalla Professoressa Dalziel e da me, e si è cercato di inserire in ognuno i termini inclusivi presenti nel glossario, e una parte meno inclusiva, per cui il gruppo ha dovuto tradurre termini discriminatori.

La penultima attività è stata nuovamente un questionario, grazie al quale è stata compresa l'efficacia delle attività proposte, soprattutto in relazione all'incremento della consapevolezza del gruppo rispetto all'argomento. Purtroppo, il questionario ha ricevuto solamente poco più della metà delle risposte in confronto al primo, ma tale mancanza è stata compensata dalla lettura dei testi di riflessione inviati dagli studenti e dalle studentesse alla Professoressa prima del termine del corso, e ai quali ho avuto accesso previo consenso del gruppo. Il questionario ha dimostrato come l'atteggiamento nei confronti del linguaggio inclusivo si sia modificato rispetto al primo questionario: infatti, gran parte del gruppo ha affermato di utilizzare maggiormente termini e pratiche inclusive in tutte le lingue parlate. Una domanda in particolare ha riscosso invece pareri contrastanti: è stato chiesto se, dal loro punto di vista, modificare la grammatica di una lingua come l'italiano al fine di garantire l'inclusione è auspicabile. Una parte del gruppo ha risposto positivamente e ha affermato che modificare la grammatica è necessario allo scopo, e che la lingua evolve naturalmente riflettendo l'evoluzione della società; una seconda parte ha affermato che alcune delle strategie presentate durante il

corso sono sufficienti, e ha inoltre affermato che modificare la grammatica richiede tempi lunghi; la terza parte del gruppo si è dimostrata invece contraria, affermando come la grammatica sia un elemento statico della lingua, e che alcune modifiche nel vocabolario sono sufficienti.

Per quanto riguarda i testi di riflessione, è risultato che il rispetto e la consapevolezza sono gli aspetti chiave in relazione all'inclusione, necessari all'interprete dato il suo ruolo di mediatore tra lingue e culture. Il gruppo ha sostenuto inoltre, che l'interpretariato di trattativa può essere promotore di pratiche inclusive, in quanto l'utilizzo di termini inclusivi da parte dell'interprete può diventare esempio per non professionisti del settore, e corsi mirati possono aumentare la consapevolezza dei/delle futuri/e interpreti, e della società stessa.

In conclusione, le attività proposte sono state efficaci per avvicinare gli studenti e le studentesse alla sfera dell'inclusione e del linguaggio inclusivo non solo dal punto di vista del genere, ma anche dal punto di vista della disabilità e dell'appartenenza etnica. Dato l'interesse manifestato per l'argomento, e la volontà del gruppo verso l'utilizzo di termini e pratiche inclusive anche al di fuori dell'ambito accademico, è auspicabile che tali pratiche vengano promosse dagli studenti stessi e dalle studentesse stesse in differenti ambiti quotidiani, così da aumentare la consapevolezza tra parlanti e creare così un ambiente inclusivo all'interno del quale ogni identità può trovare il suo posto. Fortunatamente, la società stessa si sta muovendo verso una direzione più inclusiva, come abbiamo visto per il caso Treccani, il cui vocabolario in pubblicazione ad Ottobre 2022 presenterà le voci femminili di sostantivi ed aggettivi accanto alle voci maschili, per dare dignità alle forme femminili dei termini.

L'evoluzione di lingua e società è necessaria. L'inclusione è fondamentale. Il rispetto è imprescindibile.