



Bilingual Education and Bilingualism

Preparing Teachers to Work with Multilingual Learners

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7 Approaches to Diversity: Tracing Multilingualism in Teacher Education in South Tyrol, Italy

Barbara Gross and Lynn Mastellotto

Lentius, profundius, suavius
Alexander Langer, 1994

Introduction

Despite a strong emphasis on Italian as the national majority language, Italy has always been a linguistically diverse country and is characterized today by an increasing focus on multilingual education. Alongside standard Italian (and its many dialects spoken throughout the country), four other regional languages are recognized as official languages across the country, namely German and Ladin in the Autonomous Province of Bolzano-South Tyrol, French in the Aosta Valley and Slovenian in Friuli-Venezia Giulia. Moreover, the statutory legislation of 1999 provided a legal basis for the protection of several minority languages in specific regions and provinces, even though they differ considerably in status from each other: Albanian (Arbëresh), Croatian (Molise), Franco-Provençal, Friulan, Greek (Griko), Occitan and Sardinian. Another feature of language diversity in Italy is the consolidated presence of English, which is officially recognized as the first foreign language in the Italian national curriculum, followed by additional foreign languages such as Spanish, French and Russian, which are also taught in Italian schools. Finally, the presence of heritage languages – the most widespread language of origin among migrants in Italy is Romanian (22%), followed by Arabic (13%), then Albanian (11%) and finally Spanish (7%) (ISTAT, 2014) – contributes to the superdiversity (Vertovec, 2006, 2007) in schools in Italy.

The status of specific languages and their presence in school curricula depend on national and regional language policies and how these are

implemented by educational institutions. This chapter seeks to shed light on the facets of multilingualism in education in Italy, with particular attention paid to South Tyrol, the northern Italian border territory, and how teacher education prepares future teachers for language diversity in schools there. For the purposes of this chapter, *multilingualism* includes majority and minority languages that are the languages of schooling, foreign languages taught in schools and heritage languages of children with a migrant background (see also Schroedler, this volume). In the context of South Tyrol, the focus on official languages (Italian, German and Ladin) and fostering these require much attention; consequently, migrant-induced multilingualism has not, to date, been a priority in the province. While German and Italian are official majority languages, Ladin, an ancient Romance language spoken in several valleys, enjoys an official minority status in the province. ‘Foreign language’ refers primarily to English (although other modern languages are also taught depending on the school curricula), and heritage languages include languages such as Albanian, Arabic and Urdu, the languages of the largest migrant groups in the province (ASTAT, 2018). Despite increasing language diversity, the ability to speak more than one language is not considered a prerequisite for teachers in Italy today except in those border regions where several languages have historically coexisted, and in contexts where language diversity is long established and is, consequently, recognized in school curricula. South Tyrol is such a case since German, Italian and Ladin are official languages; the province thus offers an interesting example of multilingual teacher education and highlights the challenges of institutionalizing multilingualism in terms of language competences in school policy and practices.

Teachers in South Tyrol are trained for service in the province’s schools through a program of initial teacher education offered at the Free University of Bozen-Bolzano through the Faculty of Education. A multilingual Master’s degree in primary teacher education (MEd) offers pre-service teachers modules in the three official languages of the province (German, Italian and Ladin), plus English as a foreign language (FL). Various courses in this program are taught either bilingually or use the second/foreign language (L2/L3) as the language of instruction in an effort to develop participants’ multilingual awareness and plurilingual competences. These initiatives are, however, limited by the official policy of language separation and the institutionalization of a monolingual habitus (Gogolin, 1994, 1997, 2002), which present obstacles to holistic multilingualism and cultural diversity, as will be examined below.

This chapter begins with an overview of language policies in education in Italy, then examines the specificities of teacher education program(s) with particular attention paid to the case of South Tyrol where multilingualism is mainly pursued through a system of structural monolingualism with three distinct educational authorities operating

independently (German language schools, Italian language schools, Ladin language schools), each with specific policies regarding language instruction and specific requirements regarding teachers' qualifications and their linguistic competences. The region's strong focus on its official languages and cultures in schooling, an effort to preserve and promote its particular language habitus, can be seen to hinder a wider recognition of language diversity, especially vis-à-vis migrant languages, signaling a fundamental tension between the local and global dimensions of multilingualism.

Schooling and Language Policies in Italy

The school system in Italy

In this section we present a brief description of the Italian school system in order to provide some contextualization of the norms and values in Italian education as well as how language policies and educational programs are implemented according to the various levels of schooling. The Italian education system is mainly a public system in which the State directly finances schools, known as state schools. The Italian education system consists of the following five levels: (1) early childhood education and care (ECEC); (2) primary education; (3) secondary education (lower and upper); (4) post-secondary education/higher education; and (5) adult education. The education system is guided by the principle of lifelong learning – the right to education and learning throughout one's whole lifecycle – which emerged as a concept in the 1960s and gained currency in the 1980s and 1990s through scientific research and through support from the OECD and UNESCO (Hutchins, 1969; OECD, 1973, 1975, 2001).

Over 90% of children in Italy attend state-funded schools for the period of compulsory education (Eurostat, 2018). Compulsory education in Italy (age 6–16) covers the entire first cycle of education (primary and lower secondary school) and two years of the second cycle (upper secondary) for a total of 10 years. Compulsory education in Italy is free. Almost every region in Italy has full enrolment for the ages of compulsory education and among younger children (age 3–5 years) at the preschool level (OECD, 2018).

Education at all levels in Italy is open to everyone – Italian citizens as well as foreign minors from EU and non-EU countries. The principle of inclusion has guided Italian educational policy since the 1970s: pupils with disabilities and special educational needs (SEN), those with social and economic disadvantages and those from migrant backgrounds are integrated into mainstream schooling from pre-primary to higher education and supported through a collaboration between schools, the regional school office, local school authorities and local health authorities.¹ When

circumstances warrant, pedagogical interventions focus on the development of individualized learning plans (IPE), flexible teaching and learning methodologies, the implementation of special linguistic support and the presence of support teachers.

Language policies and language education in Italy

Italy's linguistic and policy landscape

The Italian Constitution of 1948 does not actually recognize Italian as the official majority language, yet Art. 3 and Art. 6 guarantee the protection of linguistic minorities, thus implying the existence of a majority language. The assumed status of Italian as a majority language received no explicit legal reference until 1999 with Law 482 Art.1, which gave official recognition to the status of Standard Italian (a direct descendant of Tuscan) as the national majority language. A number of other languages, colloquially known as dialects – understood here to mean autonomous language systems of Romance origin and for the most part evolutions of Vulgar Latin – are spoken across the country, alongside or instead of Standard Italian. In some cases, these dialects represent the first language of the speakers. Other Italian languages belong to Indo-European branches, such as Cimbrian, Arbëresh, Slavomolisano and Griko, while other non-indigenous languages (notably Romanian, Arabic, Albanian and Spanish) are spoken by a substantial number of citizens: Romanian by approximately 800,000, Arabic by 475,000, Albanian by 380,000 and Spanish by 255,000 (ISTAT, 2014), due to immigration over the past 30 years.

In Italy, 12 languages are officially recognized as linguistic minorities: Albanian, Catalan, German, Greek, Slovene, Croatian, French, Franco-Provençal, Friulian, Ladin, Occitan and Sardinian. Zuanelli Sonino (1984) classifies these minority languages in geographic terms as either ‘linguistic peninsulas’, that is, portions of territory that are contiguous with the borders of other nations where that same language or variety of the same language is spoken (e.g. German in South Tyrol, which shares a border with Austria) or, alternatively, as ‘linguistic islands’ since the languages spoken there are isolated or cut off from the parent family (e.g. the case of the Albanian speaking communities in southern Italy). The 1999 statutory legislation provided the legal basis for the explicit protection of these minority languages in various regions and provinces across Italy. Although Articles 3 and 6 of the Italian Constitution guarantee protection and equal status for all linguistic minorities in Italy, it is only in some of the special statute areas (*a statuto speciale*) that such protection and parity is formally implemented: in South Tyrol for German and Ladin, in Aosta Valley for French and in Friuli-Venezia Giulia for Slovene. These four languages are recognized as official languages in their specific administrative regions. The protection and promotion of the linguistic

patrimony in the autonomous regions of Sicily and Sardinia, and in other parts of Italy, is less systematically defined.

It may be observed that although Italy had not yet ratified the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, the statutory legislation of 1999 ensured an orientation towards European language policies (Vacca, 2017) and, in line with this conceptualization, it failed to include migrant languages. Indeed, as pointed out by Nic Craith (2006), the efforts of the European Union were limited to regional minority languages and neglected the need for protection of migrant non-European languages. Even when attempts for a more inclusive approach that also recognizes migrant languages were made, the repercussions of these language policies are still observable across Europe. In Italy, for example, in recent years, the linguistic landscape has been changing due to new migratory flows, resulting in the presence of over 5 million resident immigrants (who reside in Italy but are citizens of another country), or 8.5% of the national population (Varisco, 2018). In this new context of linguistic pluralism, not all immigrant languages enjoy equal status or recognition in legislative frameworks. Vedovelli's (2004) distinction between 'immigrated languages' (*lingue immigrate*) and 'migrant languages' (*lingue migranti*) underscores an important dimension of this new reality. The former refers to immigrants who have been in a country for several years, have a stable migration project, are often employed and have a family, and whose language enjoys higher visibility and more embeddedness in the national linguistic and legal landscape, in terms of both a greater presence in society and in policy frameworks (e.g. Albanian). 'Migrant languages' refer to the language of recently arrived asylum seekers, who are often without a stable migration plan or employment or a family, and whose language has no legal status in Italy (e.g. Arabic). This distinction is important to bear in mind when considering language education policies and practices throughout Italy.

Language education in Italy

The education system in Italy ensures that minority languages are taught and it recognizes the right of those belonging to such minorities to learn their first language within the respective territory. That being said, approaches vary widely. The four minority languages with official status in their administrative regions – German and Ladin in South Tyrol, French in Aosta Valley, Slovene in Friuli-Venezia Giulia – are supported by clear educational policies and formalized curricula, whereas other minority language education (i.e. for minority languages with an unofficial status) is not as systematically implemented. For example, modules inserted in the school syllabi in Piedmont teach the Occitan language and culture, experimental bilingual projects in Albanian and Italian have been implemented in schools in Calabria, Puglia and Molise, and immersion programs in Friulian-Italian, Slovene-Italian and German-Italian have been present in Friuli since the late 1980s, but all these are ad hoc programs.

Another dimension of multilingualism in Italy is additional/foreign language education. This gained more visibility in Italy following the Presidency conclusions (2002) of enhancing linguistic diversity throughout Europe by developing the plurilingual competences (L1 and two L2s) of EU citizens, which marked an important moment in the ‘multilingual turn’ in education (Conteh & Meier, 2014). In Italy, this multilingual turn has evolved in two specific directions: firstly, the expansion in the teaching of additional/foreign languages in the first and second cycles of education; and secondly, the use of a language other than Italian as the vehicular language for teaching subjects in schools. With regard to the former, pupils in Italy begin learning a foreign language as a compulsory subject from the first year of primary school (age 6) under Law 53/2003 which provided for compulsory teaching of English as a foreign language (EFL). Additionally, students in Italy are required to reach at least a B2 level on the Global Scale of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) by the end of upper secondary education (age 19) in the foreign language (INDIRE, 2018).

With regard to the second trend in multilingual education – languages other than Italian as the medium of instruction – a content and language integrated approach to teaching has moved from the margins of experimentation to the mainstream of compulsory education. Since its conception in the 1990s, content and language integrated learning (CLIL) has become increasingly popular as a form of bilingual education in Europe and in Asia (Cenoz *et al.*, 2014) with similar content-based instructional (CBI) approaches in Australia and North America (Lin, 2016). It is most commonly known as a ‘dual focused educational approach in which an additional language is used for the learning and teaching of both content *and* language’ (Coyle *et al.*, 2010: 1, emphasis in original). In other words, with CLIL, school subjects such as geography, science or art are taught through the medium of an additional language; in South Tyrol, the target language of instruction can be the L2 (either Italian or German, depending on the school context) or the L3/L4, which is English (L4 in the Ladin school context). CLIL is promoted by the Council of Europe (CoE) and the European Commission (EC) as an innovative and efficient means to develop plurilingual competence by improving language awareness and language learning. CLIL is also understood as a means of building intercultural communication skills among emergent bilinguals (García *et al.*, 2008), by allowing them more contact with the target language than traditional foreign language courses would offer. This rich linguistic landscape in Italy presents opportunities and challenges for teacher education, as will be examined below.

Teacher Education in Italy

According to Eurydice (2018a), the focus of education and training in Europe is on ‘smart, sustainable and inclusive growth’. The reform of the

Italian education system ‘The Good School’ (*La buona Scuola*, implemented as Law 107 in July 2015; Gazzetta Ufficiale, 2015; see also Eurydice, 2018c) referred to this European vision and aimed at improving the quality of the Italian school system by emphasizing the promotion of multilingualism and the inclusion of linguistically and culturally diverse students as one of its aims. Promoting linguistic diversity is thus seen as coherent with the objectives set by the EC and its principles regarding inclusion, equality, interculturality and language learning. However, a broad definition of inclusion deriving from Universal Design for Learning (Meyer *et al.*, 2014) – an instructional framework that recognizes the uniqueness of each learner and the impact of the learning environment on the development of individual abilities – is implemented unevenly in education in Italy. In theory, teachers are trained to deal with classroom diversity on a full spectrum, be it with regard to disabilities, special educational needs or differences in skills, culture and language; however, a focus on language diversity is not always the case.

In the following sections we discuss teacher training for kindergarten and primary school teachers separately from secondary teachers’ education, as each complies with different criteria.

Teacher training for kindergarten and primary school teachers

Teacher training for kindergarten and primary schools in Italy depends on national and regional policies; at the national level, it is regulated by a national law (DM 10 September 2010, No. 249, Initial Teacher Education; Gazzetta Ufficiale, 2010). In Italy, both kindergarten and primary school teachers need a Master’s degree in education, which is offered as a five-year degree program (*laurea magistrale a ciclo unico*) to those who pass a compulsory written entrance exam following secondary school. This degree program includes traineeship activities that are required to get a permanent contract as a teacher. The courses provide future teachers with subject-related competences; in fact, upon completion, teachers may teach all subjects including English (see below) in primary education after having obtained the teaching qualification.

Future teachers not only acquire educational knowledge in the fields of pedagogy, didactics, psychology, sociology and anthropology, but also knowledge about how to plan lessons for heterogeneous student bodies, for example regarding age, different linguistic and cultural backgrounds and special educational needs. The successful completion of both a thesis (either an empirical study or theoretical work) and a report based on traineeship experiences, presented in an oral examination before a committee, qualifies MEd students to teach at kindergarten and primary school level; hence, no further qualification or examination – such as in-service preparation – is necessary (Eurydice, 2018b).

In Italy, to teach English as a subject, kindergarten and primary school teachers have to obtain the necessary qualification, which is either offered through a special university qualification for in-service teachers not already specialized in teaching EFL, or is incorporated into the teacher training program for kindergarten and primary school teachers.

According to the Ministry of Education, University and Research (MIUR, 2018a), the language training plan (*piano formazione lingue*) foresees that in-service primary school teachers will acquire adequate linguistic and methodological training – as a consequence of compulsory teaching of EFL from Year 1, as described above. The language training plan (*piano formazione lingue*) is divided into a linguistic-communicative and a methodological-didactic training. The former is aimed at reaching a B1 CEFR proficiency level (CoE, 2001). This is considered the minimum level of competence that teachers need to be able to teach EFL in primary schools in Italy. Pre-service teachers obtain the qualification to teach English through completion of the Master's degree in primary education.² To teach languages other than English, for example the recognized minority languages and other official languages mentioned above, there are no specialized general national guidelines, and this is treated differently in the regions concerned. For example, in South Tyrol, all graduates of the German language Master's degree in primary education can also teach German as L2 in Italian language primary schools, and vice versa.

Although language learning for all European citizens is a priority (Karatsiori, 2016) and national guidelines and a training plan for languages exist, currently there is no well-defined competence profile for language teachers of second or foreign languages in Italy.

Teacher training for lower and upper secondary school teachers

In Italy, to become a secondary school teacher, a Master's degree and an additional pedagogical/didactical qualification are needed. People who are specialized in a subject – that is, who possess a Master's degree or a second-level *Diploma Accademico* – need a further qualification to obtain a permanent employment contract as a teacher at the secondary school level. In 2018 and 2019, initial teacher education at the secondary level and its evaluation criteria were revised according to state government regulations.³ The focus in the training of secondary school teachers is not only on pedagogy and didactics, but also on general competences; for example, on ICT, languages (competences in English as well as the use of CLIL) and the integration of students with special educational needs. Teachers have to have a first degree and to have obtained – with some exceptions – 24 university credits (ECTS) in anthropological and psycho-pedagogical disciplines and in teaching methodologies (in Italy, 1 ECTS corresponds to 25 working hours, which includes contact hours within lectures and

seminars plus individual self-study). The final oral exam to earn a teaching qualification verifies the knowledge of a European foreign language at a minimum B2 level (CEFR).

Regarding further in-service language teacher training, various training measures on the use of CLIL methodology and the inclusion of linguistic and cultural diversity in heterogeneous classrooms are offered on a national basis by the Ministry of Education, University and Research (MIUR, 2018b), or through regional initiatives by local school authorities. The latter vary widely and reflect the linguistic and cultural landscape of the particular contexts.

Methodology

In the following, we present one Italian province – South Tyrol – as an example of measures to prepare future teachers for dealing with linguistically diverse students. A policy document analysis as well as an analysis of official university documents, websites, modules and course descriptions and study plans have been conducted to show the implemented measures. The authors of this chapter are involved in research and teaching in multilingual and intercultural teacher education, bringing pedagogical and linguistic expertise to both these roles. In terms of teacher education, the authors focus on initial training for pre-service teachers, with a special focus on course content to prepare them for multilingual classrooms.

The South Tyrolean Case

Language policies and linguistic separation in South Tyrolean schools

The autonomous province of South Tyrol in northern Italy has historically been a highly contested border territory. It represents a complex situation wherein a minoritized majority (Italian speakers) and a majoritized minority (German speakers) live side by side; its specific linguistic situation comprises 65.3% German speakers, 27.4% Italian speakers, 4.1% Ladin speakers and 8.6% speakers of other first languages (ASTAT, 2015). At the time of Italian Unification in 1861, the region was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and remained so until 1919, when the region south of the Brenner Pass was annexed to the Kingdom of Italy. Subsequently, attempts to assimilate German speakers under Fascism (1920–1945) resulted in ethnic cleansing of the German speaking minority through assimilation to Italian or forced migration to Austria or Germany.⁴ The use of the German language was prohibited in official public offices and on all public inscriptions, and the Italianization of the territory was enforced. The latter included policies of unilingual Italian education for all children starting school (*Riforma Gentile*, October

1923), leading to a dissolution of all German language schools and dismissal of German speaking teachers (Mastellotto & Zanin, 2021). During World War II, between 1943 and 1945, the region was occupied by the Nazis and German schools were reopened. Finally, with the 1946 Paris Agreement, known as the De Gasperi-Gruber Agreement, protection was guaranteed for linguistic minorities in South Tyrol. This legislative framework was subsequently enshrined in the 1948 Italian Constitution which recognized a special autonomy status for the region. Rising tensions and violence in the 1950s led to the 1972 ‘Paket’ or Second Autonomy Statute – a formal agreement between the Italian and Austrian governments: the latter formally renounced claims on South Tyrol in return for legal guarantees for linguistic communities within the territory. This consociational model of political organization through a power-sharing agreement (PSA), implemented in policies and institutional practices, continues to the present day (Mastellotto & Zanin, 2021).⁵

The legislative framework in South Tyrol ensures equal rights for the speakers of the three official languages, German, Italian and Ladin, with a special protection for the German language group. Based on the Second Autonomy Statute, the proportionality law came into force in 1976 and provided for an equal distribution of public sector positions according to the size of the language groups. As jobs in the public sector are distributed according to the declaration of an individual’s first language, and given one’s right to receive instruction in one’s own first language (see, for example, Steininger, 2012), schooling was guaranteed in the language of each distinct linguistic group: from kindergarten to the end of upper secondary school in the German and Italian system, and from kindergarten to the end of lower secondary school in the Ladin system.

Free choice of school applies as a general rule since parents can enroll their children in the linguistic school of their choice regardless of their first language. Each school authority, however, has the right to assess the linguistic proficiency of applicants and can refuse admission if it is deemed too weak to ‘usefully’ follow lessons; parents can appeal to regional administrative tribunals on cases of exclusion (Mastellotto & Zanin, 2021). Given this freedom of choice, some parents choose the school system in the ‘other’ language (i.e. the family’s L2), especially in the largest city, Bozen-Bolzano, which is characterized by the highest rate of linguistic diversity. However, this is not the norm throughout the region since children are usually enrolled in the school of their first language.

In addition to the three official languages, there are also migrant-background students with other first languages who make up about 10% of students in the region. Many children with a migrant background attend Italian language schools in the region – in fact, in Italian language primary schools, 25% of enrolled students have a migrant background, while

in German language schools, only 8% do (ASTAT, 2015). This uneven distribution is linked to the demographic distribution of migrants in South Tyrol (ASTAT, 2018), the majority of whom settle in the larger cities (Bolzano, Merano) where most of the Italian language schools are located. Moreover, migrants are increasingly learning Italian first and German at a later date.

It is clear that in South Tyrol a strong emphasis is placed on the development of a multilingual society through a focus on its official languages. In fact, an assimilation approach for students whose first language is something other than the official languages of the region is the normative practice in public schools. This is seen as a strategy for strengthening social cohesion, interaction and participation (Medda-Windischer & Carlà, 2013) and for preserving the monolingual habitus (Gogolin, 1994, 1997, 2002) of the region. The educational norms and practices in place that favor language separation are based on assumptions about the role of language in shaping national culture; they reproduce the myth of homogeneity in language and culture for the purpose of creating a coherent nation state (Gross, 2019; Mastellotto & Zanin, 2021). This political agenda is especially marked in South Tyrol given the history of conflicts and tensions that have defined this border territory for the past 100 years.

Multilingual education in South Tyrol

The principle of monolingual instruction through separate schools has one notable exception – the Ladin language schools – which are plurilingual and follow a parity approach for language use in education. An equal number of hours of instruction are conducted in German and Italian – meaning that some course components are taught in German and others in Italian – with Ladin used as an auxiliary language in school. Additionally, two hours per week are dedicated to the Ladin language and culture, and English is taught as a foreign language from the first year onwards.

In German and Italian language schools, the so-called second language (German L2 in Italian language schools and Italian L2 in German language schools) is taught from Year 1 onwards. According to regional guidelines, Italian language primary schools (Provincia Autonoma di Bolzano, 2015) have at least six hours of German second language instruction per week in Years 1 and 2 and five and a half hours in Years 3–5, while German language primary schools (Autonome Provinz Bozen, 2009) have at least one hour of Italian second language instruction per week in Year 1, four hours in Years 2 and 3 and five hours in Years 4 and 5. However, these are the minimum number of hours required (displayed in Tables 7.1, 7.2 and 7.3) and, given the autonomy granted to schools, schools are free to increase the number of second language instruction hours.

Table 7.1 Total minimum number of language hours in German language primary schools divided by year group

German language primary school	Years				
	1	2	3	4	5
German (L1)	204	170	170	136	136
Italian (L2)	34	136	136	170	170
English (L3)	/	/	/	68	68

Note: L1, L2 and L3 refer to the status given to languages within the school system and not to pupils' individual language repertoires.

Table 7.2 Total minimum number of language hours in Italian language primary schools divided by year group

Italian language primary school	Years				
	1	2	3	4	5
Italian (L1)	170	170	153	153	153
German (L2)	204	204	187	187	187
English (L3)	51	51	85	85	85

Note: L1, L2 and L3 refer to the status given to languages within the school system and not to pupils' individual language repertoires.

Table 7.3 Total minimum number of language hours in Ladin language primary schools divided by year group

Ladin language primary school	Years				
	1	2	3	4	5
German	170	170	170	136	136
Italian	170	170	170	136	136
Ladin	68	68	68	68	68
English	/	/	/	68	68

Note: In this context, Ladin is the official L1 and German or Italian can be the second and/or third language. English is learnt as a foreign language.

Currently, the opportunity to increase the number of second language instruction hours is mainly exploited in Italian language schools and through the implementation of experimental language projects (Gross, 2019). This results in up to 13 hours per week of classes with German as the language of instruction, including classes that adopt a CLIL (Coyle *et al.*, 2010) approach. These experimental projects consist of a curricular-based increase in the use of the so-called second language, mainly by teaching disciplinary subjects – for example geography, history, sports or maths – partially in the other language. In these cases, both the

German speaking L2 teacher as well as the Italian speaking subject teacher are present as co-teachers in class for an increased number of school hours.

Moreover, depending on the L2 teachers' efforts and possibilities, exchanges and partnerships with children from the other (that is the German language or Italian language) school system can be organized to create opportunities for contact with the other language group. However, Baur and Videsott (2012) have shown that, to date, this has had little take-up in German speaking primary and lower secondary schools. Another option for enhanced multilingual language learning in the province of Bozen-Bolzano is the possibility of attending the fourth year of upper secondary school (Year 12) in the school system of the other language group.

While the Ladin school model has established itself in terms of language learning by successfully creating fluent speakers of more than one language, students from German schools are much less successful in learning Italian L2 and vice versa – Italian students also appear to be less successful in learning their L2, German. This is evident when considering the numbers of those who succeed in obtaining a language certificate in their second language (e.g. ASTAT, 2015). In the 13 years of schooling for those who complete upper secondary school, there are at least 1962 hours of German L2 teaching in Italian language schools (Provincia Autonoma di Bolzano, 2010, 2015) and at least 1607 hours of L2 Italian in most German language schools (Autonome Provinz Bozen, 2009, 2010). In addition, pupils in South Tyrol study English from Year 1 in Italian schools and from Year 4 in German schools. Even though second language learning is promoted in the South Tyrolean school system, the outcomes of secondary school graduates are not yet satisfactory.

In terms of the CEFR (CoE, 2001), students should reach a B2 level in their L2 by the end of upper secondary school. According to a study conducted by Abel and Vettori (2017) in 2014/2015, only 21.7% reached this predefined objective in German language schools and 13.8% of students in Italian language schools. Many researchers (e.g. Baur, 2006; Gross, 2019; Mastellotto & Zanin, 2021) state that a major difficulty in reaching this aim is the lack of encounters with the other language group because of the divided school system. The ideology of maintaining a monolingual habitus (Gogolin, 1994, 1997, 2002) through separate school systems results in a lack of multilingual interaction across the region: residents are divided geographically into cultural and linguistic groupings which vary between urban and rural areas; thus students have limited opportunities for translanguaging exchange in curricular and extra-curricular contexts. In recent years there has been a sensitization to the need for language learning among teachers and also among families and society, which is reflected in an increased demand for more institutionalized contacts with the other language group. Although some first attempts were made to create a unified school for German language and Italian language speakers, difficulties in achieving this objective persist.

Although primary and secondary education are divided by linguistic groups, tertiary education in South Tyrol is not. The Free University of Bozen-Bolzano follows a trilingual language policy (German, Italian and English) across its faculties, with most degree courses adopting a parity approach requiring students to study in all three languages (Alber & Palermo, 2012). In the following section, the language specifications for the Faculty of Education and the primary teacher education degree course are discussed.

Multilingual teacher education in South Tyrol

The policy of language separation in South Tyrol means that initial training prepares teachers for service in one of the three distinct school systems: German language schools, Italian language schools or Ladin plurilingual schools. To work in these schools, teachers must be ‘mother tongue speakers’ of the main language of instruction, as prescribed by Art. 1 of the legislative decree No. 555/1947. This means that German L1 speakers can teach in the region’s German language schools, while Italian L1 speakers can work in the Italian language schools and Ladin speakers can work in the Ladin schools; language proficiency is determined by successful completion of the MEd and language certification exams. The only exception is for the teaching of EFL in South Tyrolean schools where no ‘mother tongue’ status is required.

Clearly, the issue of ‘mother tongue proficiency’ is not uncontroversial, as noted in scholarly literature from the fields of sociolinguistics, second language acquisition and foreign language teaching concerning the debate over the teachers’ identity and the professional competences of native speakers (NS) versus non-native speakers (NNS) in teaching FLs (Braine, 1999; Davies, 2003; Houghton *et al.*, 2018; Medgyes, 1994; Murdoch, 1994; Ricento, 2005). However, in the context of South Tyrol, the status of languages takes on a particular inflection given the history of conflict in the region. Guaranteeing native-language teachers a role in the separate but parallel schools of the province is a way of guarding against the expulsion of teachers, the dissolution of linguistic schools and a return to unilingual education as occurred under Fascism in Italy. A system of separate schools managed by independent educational authorities (each with its own Inspectorate) and staffed by teachers with specific linguistic qualifications is part of the consociational political model which ensures an equal distribution of power among the distinct linguistic-cultural groups of the region (Mastellotto & Zanin, 2021).

*Pre-service teacher education*⁶

Since the founding of the Free University of Bozen-Bolzano in 1997, the Faculty of Education located in Brixen-Bressanone has prepared teachers for service in the province’s state and non-state schools through

a program of post-secondary initial teacher training. The current five-year Master's degree in primary education qualifies graduates to teach in both preschools (ages 3–6) and primary schools (ages 6–11). In addition, graduates are qualified to teach EFL on condition that they attain a B2-level certification (CEFR) in English. Furthermore, those who study in the Italian section of the degree course are qualified to teach Italian L2 in the province of Bolzano and those who study in the German section can teach German L2. This value-added qualification makes graduates extremely employable; in fact, approximately 86% of graduates find employment within one year after graduation (AlmaLaurea, 2019).

The Master's in primary education comprises 300 credits (European Credit Transfer System, ECTS) and includes courses ranging from disciplinary didactics (the teaching of specific subject areas such as mathematics, science, history and geography, foreign languages, music and art, sports), to developmental psychology, literacy training, comparative educational systems, inclusive pedagogy, educational legislative frameworks and methodologies for teaching young learners. Additionally, in each year of study, students complete a school-based practicum for a total of 45 ECTS earned through internships over five years. These school placements alternate between preschool and primary school, giving teacher-trainees concrete experience of working with young learners at both levels of education.

Given the multilingual mission of the Free University of Bozen-Bolzano, teacher-students wishing to enroll in the Faculty of Education (as in all faculties) must demonstrate language competences at point of entry and point of exit. To be admitted to the Italian or German section of the MEd, they must have the following minimum levels of linguistic competence (described according to the CEFR): *Italian section* – C1 in Italian (L1) and B2 in the L2 (German or English); *German section* – C1 in German (L1) and B2 in the L2 (Italian or English). To be admitted to the *Ladin section*, the following minimum levels of linguistic competence are required: C1 in L1 (Italian or German), B1 in L2 (Italian or German), B2 in Ladin; alternatively, B2 in L1 (Italian or German), B2 in L2 (Italian or German) and B2 in Ladin is also acceptable.

Teacher-trainees can improve their language competences through a range of general language courses offered through the Free University of Bozen-Bolzano Language Centre. In order to support teacher-trainees in further developing their academic and specialist language competences, 30 credits of the total 300 ECTS for the MEd are completed through disciplinary study in the L2, including in subjects such as anthropology, psychology, pedagogy of inclusion and didactics of sports education. Although the goal is to produce plurilingual graduates who can work in the multilingual context of South Tyrol, the degree course structure maintains the practice of separating pre-service teachers according to their main language of use through three distinct enrollment groups: German, Italian and Ladin. Teacher-trainees attend courses in these separate streams with limited

opportunities for integrated learning over the five years of study. Hence, the language separation is reproduced in the teacher education program in alignment with the provincial language policy guidelines for schools. This separation impacts the way the teacher education program addresses linguistic and cultural diversity in schools and multilingualism in the region.

Measures to encourage multilingualism and language diversity

An exception to the linguistic separation within the teacher education program is the ‘Pedagogy of inclusion’ module in which an experimental bilingual approach (Italian-German) seeks to integrate students in a single unified class. This compulsory module for all pre-service teachers includes a lecture on ‘Intercultural pedagogy’ and on ‘Pedagogy and didactics of inclusion’ and corresponding seminars. Students get a total of 11 ECTS for this module. The aim is to recognize the diversity within diversity in a society characterized by superdiversity (Vertovec, 2006, 2007). Moreover, it is aimed at the development of multilingual awareness – that is, to put the language difference at the center of the educational enterprise (García, 2008) – among pre-service teachers, and tries to sensitize teachers to the growing linguistic diversity as well as its challenges and benefits for individual linguistic repertoires and lifelong language learning. Specifically, this means that students of the German, Italian and Latin sections attend the courses together and that one German speaking lecturer and one Italian speaking lecturer are present in classes. The language is not only used to transmit the theoretical and practical content, but there is also room for a linguistic comparison (hence the cultivation of metalinguistic awareness), and other approaches to educational science and its practical application are discussed. In addition, this approach to course design creates a previously almost unknown contact between the students of the different sections in discussions and group activities. This example of a ‘multilingual habitus’ in which participants experience lived linguistic diversity in teacher education has positive effects on their preparation for linguistically and culturally diverse classrooms. Activities carried out at university empowers them to use this multilingual awareness in their future teaching.

Other MEd modules use a CLIL approach by teaching disciplinary content in the L2 (e.g. sports education, anthropology of education, childhood neuropsychiatry, methods of esthetic research) in order to help develop teacher-trainees’ plurilingual competences and, again, their multilingual awareness. In these modules, unlike in the previous example, the sections are kept separate and only the contents are partly taught in the other language. There is also only one lecturer present at a time. In these modules, the focus is on fostering their language skills and, hence, to be able to communicate with pupils who speak this specific language, as well as the integration of language and content.

A further attempt to develop teacher-trainees’ translingual skills through a more holistic approach to multilingualism is the recent

development of an optional massive open online course (MOOC), ‘Teacher education for multilingual classrooms’, which provides content in all four languages (German, Italian, English and Ladin) and requires students’ participation in plurilingual forums.⁷ The MOOC represents an institutional curriculum innovation in two ways: (1) it circumvents limitations imposed by a policy-driven practice that divides students into linguistic groupings, enabling them to experiment with multilingual learning in a flexible online environment that fosters translanguaging practices in course work and in virtual learning networks; (2) it moves beyond English-medium instruction (EMI) by delivering plurilingual modules (Italian, German, Ladin, English) which integrate disciplinary content and language learning in the higher education curriculum (ICLHE). The MOOC thus offers an integrative strategy for initial teacher education, filling a gap in the formal curriculum through technology-assisted curricula that facilitate engagement in a plurilingual and collaborative learning community (Mastellotto & Zanin, 2021).

To enhance their linguistic and intercultural competences, students are also encouraged to spend a period of study abroad during their MEd through one of over 30 mobility programs that the Free University of Bozen-Bolzano has signed with foreign institutions, including Erasmus, Free Mover, Swiss Mobility, bilateral agreements and specific dual/joint degrees. In 2018/2019, 32 students from the MEd program participated in the Erasmus exchange. The majority of this group (19 students) studied in Germany, six students in Austria, five students in Spain and two students in Hungary (data provided by the International Relations Office, Free University of Bozen-Bolzano). The strong preference for German speaking countries (78% of students) is, in part, due to the similarity in course offerings between host and home institutions as well as the language of instruction. The policy of trilingualism for all Free University of Bozen-Bolzano students puts pressure on them to use study-abroad periods to consolidate their linguistic competences in the official languages of study (German, Italian, English). In light of this, exposure to other languages and cultures is more limited. The Faculty of Education could seek further integrative measures through curricular and co-curricular activities to provide future teachers in South Tyrol with additional practice in developing translanguaging competences and intercultural awareness, key skills needed to manage the complexity arising from diversity in the territory, due to its history of cultural and linguistic heterogeneity and to contemporary migratory flows.

At present, too little attention is paid to migration-related multilingualism in teacher education and training since most measures relate to the promotion of autochthonous languages and of English as a FL. The promotion of these languages seems to be so central in the described inclusive school system, which includes children with a migration background and children with disabilities and learning difficulties but at the same time

separates for language groups (i.e. in the frame of an exclusion within inclusion), that the valorization of other – less prestigious – languages of children with a migration background barely have a proper place within educational systems (see also Gross, 2019), including teacher education. This omission is partly due to the narrow definition of ‘inclusion’ informing current educational policy in Italy where the cultural and linguistic diversity of learners is not fully recognized as a dimension of special educational needs.⁸ Italy is a leader in Europe and the world in inclusive educational policies linked to a ‘narrow’ interpretation of inclusion, but it is found lacking when considering the provision of learning support for situations linked to a broader definition of the term. A focus on how new heritage languages (i.e. those that have no legal status as ‘minority languages’ in Italy) linked to more recent migratory flows are shaping language diversity in schools and how best to prepare teachers to help children from migratory backgrounds integrate at the psycho-emotional, sociolinguistic and academic levels is a challenge for education in Italy today. Inclusive education, in this broad sense, is recognized as a crucial step in a society moving towards social justice.

Conclusion

This chapter has sought to present an overview of teacher education in Italy and the extent to which multilingualism is present in schools and is addressed in pre-service training. The specific context of South Tyrol was analyzed as an example of a multilingual border region where several languages are actively taught in schools (German, Italian, Ladin and English), albeit through a structural approach that largely preserves the monolingual habitus of the province’s distinct linguistic and cultural groups. Finally, the chapter concluded with a consideration of the program of initial teacher training in the Faculty of Education at the Free University of Bolzano in order to illustrate how tertiary curricula delivered through multilingual modules help to develop students’ language competences in the main languages of the region. This model offers innovation in pedagogical and linguistic education, on the one hand, while replicating the structural separation of students into linguistic groupings according to their main language; the consequence of this linguistic division is a reduction in opportunities for genuine multilingual learning and exchange.

It is clear that a linguistically segregated approach to education runs counter to pedagogical theories that favor an integrated approach to language learning (Duarte & Günther-van der Meij, 2018) and, moreover, that such an approach has not favored the language development of young people in South Tyrol, according to the performance results indicated above (Abel & Vettori, 2017). For these reasons, the authors believe that a broader and more flexible vision of multilingualism is needed in South

Tyrol in order to better prepare teachers for the linguistic superdiversity (Duarte & Gogolin, 2013, 2017; Vertovec, 2006, 2007) they will encounter in today's classrooms, one that recognizes not only high-status standard languages but regional, local and minority languages, as well as recent migrant languages, in the curriculum. The institutionalization of a multilingual habitus in which students' rich linguistic repertoires are seen as a resource for the whole class, as an advantage not an obstacle to learning, would enable greater capacity building in schools and in society.

Cultivating a 'multilingual mindset' (Ibrahim, 2019) in schools requires shifting from monolingual paradigms – dismantling such notions as the 'one teacher, one language' approach (ideal native-speaker model of teaching foreign language) and such practices as linguistically divided classes – to embrace a more holistic model of multilingualism which recognizes language diversity and encourages flexible translanguaging practices (Mastellotto & Zanin, 2021). Given the structural approach to language education in South Tyrolean schools, a multilingual mindset is nurtured mainly through integrative measures at present. These involve the creative inclusion of multilingual projects and initiatives, as discussed above, as a way to introduce multilingualism in pedagogical practice even within institutional contexts where monolingual ideology persists.

Another way of cultivating a multilingual mindset is through the recognition of pre-service teachers' own lived experience of multilingualism and interculturality, treating their language identity as a resource for teaching and learning. The recruitment of a more heterogeneous group of pre-service teachers who reflect real school diversity would be another way of institutionalizing multilingualism by embedding linguistic and cultural diversity in schools (see Gross & Atanasoska, forthcoming). As newly qualified teachers will play a fundamental role in promoting democracy, equity, multilingualism, interculturalism, lifelong learning and active citizenship, greater attention to language diversity and intercultural communication in their training better prepares them for these responsibilities. A first step in this direction is the cooperation of student teachers of diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds which can occur online (see, for example, the MOOC described above) or within innovative lectures and seminars that break with the monolingual model. In ever more diverse societies, this broader multilingual awareness should not remain limited to experimental modules on the margins of the curriculum but must become central to the core teacher education program.

Notes

- (1) Inclusion for pupils with disabilities began with Law 118/1971, which granted all children the right to be educated in common classes, and with Law 517/1977, which abolished special schools. For more information on policies of inclusion in Italy, see EASNIE (2018): <https://www.european-agency.org/country-information/italy/legislation-and-policy>.

- (2) In addition, in South Tyrol, pre-service teachers have to pass a separate language certification exam at B2 level to teach English at primary school level.
- (3) Please see the respective state government regulations: D.Lgs. 13 April 2017, No. 59: Reform of the initial teacher education for teaching at secondary level; and DM 14 December 2017, No. 984: Evaluation criteria and procedures in the third year of the FIT program; see also https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/initial-education-teachers-working-early-childhood-and-school-education-38_en and MIUR (2019).
- (4) Beginning in 1922, the Fascist attempts to 'Italianize' the territory culminated in a 1941 agreement with Germany, the 'Option': the German population was given the 'option' of assimilation to Italian or forced migration to Austria or Germany; about 86% of the German speaking population opted for the German Reich, but only a small part left South Tyrol.
- (5) For further information on power-sharing arrangements (PSA) and consociational democratic models, see Jakala *et al.* (2018).
- (6) Due to limitations of space, this article does not address in-service teacher education programs at the Free University of Bozen-Bolzano.
- (7) Initially developed as part of an Erasmus+ KA2 Project – 'Multilingual Higher Education: Best Practices for Teacher Training in the European Border Regions' (MHEEB, 2017–2019) through a strategic partnership between the Free University of Bolzano (Italy), Tartu University, Narva College (Estonia), Pädagogische Hochschule Freiburg (Germany) and University of Primorska (Slovenia), the MOOC is accessible at the following link: <https://sisu.ut.ee/multilingual/avaleht>.
- (8) Scholars generally distinguish between 'narrow' and 'broad' definitions of inclusion (see Ainscow & Sandill, 2010; Ainscow *et al.*, 2006; Armstrong *et al.*, 2011; D'Alessio, 2013; Watkins *et al.*, 2009). Narrow definitions focus on students with disabilities or special educational needs (SEN), their presence in mainstream schools and the support they need to participate in and succeed in learning. Broad definitions, instead, are about school systems and school communities and their commitment and capacity to welcome all students and take into consideration individual differences in designing learning situations able to grant participation and effective learning processes for all (see Demo, 2018).

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