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**Teaching Italian as a
Second Language
to Adult Immigrant Learners**

Self-narration as Expression of Identity
and Instrument towards Integration

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*To my grandparents,
who have always believed in me*

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INTRODUCTION

“Learning another language is not only learning different words for the same things, but learning another way to think about things” (Flora Lewis).

In this academic paper I am going to deal with the teaching of Italian as a second language to adult immigrant learners, forced to move to Italy because of adverse circumstances. The choice of taking into considerations such subjects takes its inspiration from the internship I have done at a refugee shelter in the South Tyrolean city of Bolzano/Bozen. It was the temporary residence of a few hundred immigrants who were constantly attending language classes attempting to integrate within the local community. The fundamental role conferred to language will be discussed, especially in relation to narrations, perceptions and self-expression. It is by sharing one’s memories, thoughts, feelings and desires, indeed, that the initial quote finds its complete accomplishment, implying different visions of life through a new language, culture and system of beliefs.

In the first chapter, I am going to present a general overview of the phenomenon of migration, starting with a short introduction of the migratory events which have taken place in Italy during the last decades. In this phase, I am going to consider both departures of Italian citizens in search of better conditions and the arrivals of foreign people needing international protection, from the Eighties to the present days. Furthermore, the analysis focuses on the specific situation of the South Tyrolean province of Bolzano/Bozen, where the legislation about immigration and the Integration Agreement follow the model of the whole country with the addition of few singular features, especially in relation to the German language, as it is one of the official languages of the province.

The following two chapters deal with the peculiarities of the case in question, contemplating the context in all its elements. First of all, the contraposition and the relationship between the learner and the teacher will be analysed, highlighting the role of the educator as a facilitator, or a guide. In the following paragraphs, the learner will be considered from different perspectives. As a matter of fact, both the andragogic feature and the migratory background play an essential role in the language acquisition, implying several typical characteristics and potential obstacles to the learning process.

Similarly, in the third chapter the focus is set on the language itself and on teaching activities. After an accurate introduction to Italian as a second language, differing from a foreign language as far as several features are concerned, the functions of language and the skills to be developed will be explained, paying specific attention to those skills which require an active role of the participants and a sort of interaction between them. Then, the teaching practice will be examined, focusing on the planning of different didactic activities and the subdivision of the topics into learning units, teaching units or modules. Lastly, I find it noteworthy the role of technology when teaching a second language. Thus, the potentiality of the numerous technological devices currently in use is highlighted.

The fourth chapter, in turn, deeply analyses the role of self-narration and autobiographic activities. On one hand, the expression of own stories and feelings is strongly connected to the construction of self-identity, characterised by memories and emotions from the past, present impressions and future projects and desires. In this way, an essential role is played by motivation and affective factors which unavoidably influence not only the language acquisition but also, or even more, the narration of inner thoughts and feelings. On the other hand, self-narration activities will be examined from the perspective of their intrinsic power of integration, focusing on the significance of cultural elements in communicative events, being either verbal, non-verbal or inner beliefs.

Conversely, the second part of my thesis explores the topic from a more practical perspective, considering a realistic context of learners and a series of didactic activities to propose in order to satisfy their language needs. As a matter of fact, the fifth chapter presents a case study, including a questionnaire which has been submitted to a group of adult immigrant learners living in a refugee shelter in the outskirts of Bolzano/Bozen, in South Tyrol. The context will thus be examined, and a further consideration will be made about the perceptions of the participants, both of themselves, of the surrounding people and of the cultural elements which characterise the host community. In a similar way, the necessity of self-narration activities will be discussed, focusing on the related psychological aspects which undergo the learning process.

Lastly, the sixth chapter discloses a number of activities which could be proposed in order to face autobiographic events. They range from the oldest memories related to the participants' childhood and past life in their countries of origin, to the expression of future

projects and desires, passing through own considerations about their present life conditions. In this section, the focus will be set on such tasks which consider an active participation of the learners, who are required to become the narrators of their own lives and experiences, involving all the emotions and feelings which might be evoked by the stories.

To sum up, this dissertation investigates the necessity of self-narration activities when teaching Italian as a second language to adult immigrant learners. In other words, the learning process is assumed to be centred on the learner, focusing on the language needs and on the affective and psychological elements influencing the individual.

1. OVERVIEW OF THE CURRENT MIGRATION SITUATION

As stated by the European Commission website (https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/e-library/glossary/migration_en, consulted on 12/08/2019), migration is “the movement of a person or a group of persons, either across an international border (international migration), or within a State (internal migration). It is a population movement, encompassing any kind of movement of people, whatever its length, composition and causes”. In relation to the last premise, it is important to identify the reasons for migration. These can be economic, social, political or environmental; they determine the destiny of migrants in a new country, as follows: (Ramjathan-Keogh in Veriava, 2017, 130):

- Economic migration refers to moving for professional reasons, aiming to find a job or improve one’s career chances;
- Social migration refers to moving for a better quality of life or to join one’s family and friends;
- Political migration refers to moving because of political persecution or wars;
- Environmental migration refers to moving due to natural disasters.

Some of these represent a choice, probably through suffering but nonetheless a decision. By contrast, people who escape for political or environmental reasons are forced to migrate “because the circumstances in which they live have become unbearable; for instance, someone who moves due to war or famine” (Ramjathan-Keogh in Veriava, 2017, 131).

Focusing on Europe, I briefly examine the historical path and the current situation of immigration into this continent. This discussion provides an overview of the phenomenon, which constitutes the topic of the dissertation. First, it should be kept in mind that “Europe’s history has been shaped by migration”, due either to economic reasons or to political ones, such as persecutions and wars that have characterized the past centuries ([http://oecdobserver.org/news/archivestory.php/aid/337/Immigration in the European Union: problem or solution .html](http://oecdobserver.org/news/archivestory.php/aid/337/Immigration%20in%20the%20European%20Union:%20problem%20or%20solution.html), consulted on 20/03/2019). Nowadays, however, the European continent is dealing with large-scale immigration, which is a recent phenomenon, given that “the plight of thousands of migrants putting their lives in peril to cross the Mediterranean” is worsening daily

(https://ec.europa.eu/commission/priorities/migration_en, consulted on 18/02/2019). The number of refugees and asylum seekers has been risen sharply in recent years and the statistics are informative. However, the data analysed by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), (<https://www.unhcr.org/desperatejourneys/>, consulted on 10/03/2019), have demonstrated that the flow of immigrants into Europe is lessening. In 2018, the number of refugees and migrants crossing the Mediterranean to Europe was just under 117,000 people. However, the figure for the previous year showed that more than 172,000 people arrived in Europe via the Mediterranean Sea; in 2016, that number was far higher, at 363,000. Hence sea arrivals have dropped significantly in the last two years. Nonetheless, immigration remains a remarkable phenomenon as it involves the movement and search for settlement by hundreds of thousands of people. These political and economic choices remake the cultural and social context. After a general overview of the broad phenomenon of immigration, considering the arrivals across Europe and the main reasons behind the decision to move, I discuss the current situation of Italy and the presence of asylum seekers in this nation.

1.1. Introduction to migration in Italy

Similarly to the rest of Europe, Italy shows alarming trends in arrivals, although less than in previous years. The data, however, indicate that such reduction is not attributable to a potential decrease of departures from foreign countries; rather, the causes might be identified in “the implementation of cooperation agreements with African countries such as Libya” and the intensification of barriers at the northern borders of the country, towards Austria (<http://www.asylumineurope.org/news/21-03-2018/aida-2017-update-italy>, consulted on 25/03/2018).

To better understand the current situation, I briefly introduce the history of immigration to Italy. This is not a single event but rather the evolution of decades of migration phenomena, considering both emigration and immigration. First, when referring to migratory contexts, Italy has itself been a country of departure, from which mass emigration occurred during the late 19th and early 20th centuries (<http://www.european-emigration.com/it/>, consulted on 15/08/2019). Before the unification of Italy in 1861, Italian emigration was at a moderate level, involving almost exclusively neighbouring

countries. After that event, the “Italian diaspora” began, with a continuously increasing number of Italian inhabitants, mostly smallholders, moving to the rest of the world – mainly to North America but also to South America, Africa, Australia and other European countries (<http://www.european-emigration.com/it/>, consulted on 15/08/2019). Furthermore, Italy experienced a second mass migration between the second post-war period and 1973 (Sabbadini, in <https://www.lastampa.it/esteri/la-stampa-in-english/2018/01/27/news/italy-s-youth-part-of-european-brain-drain-1.33972634>, consulted on 18/08/2019), geared generally towards the Northern Europe and specifically to France, Germany and Belgium. A level of 30 million departing migrants was reached between the late 19th and late 20th centuries (<https://www.focus.it/cultura/storia/migranti-storia-emigrazione-italiana>, consulted on 18/08/2019). Lastly, Italy still constitutes not only a hosting country but a land of emigration, as it is experiencing a new kind of mass emigration, the “brain drain”. In recent years, more than half a million Italians have migrated to other countries, with a propensity for Germany and the United Kingdom (Sabbadini, in <https://www.lastampa.it/esteri/la-stampa-in-english/2018/01/27/news/italy-s-youth-part-of-european-brain-drain-1.33972634>, consulted on 18/08/2019). Although the trend does also affect older adults, most emigrants are young citizens aged 19 to 32, who move in search of better opportunities outside their country of origin. Overall, these facts outline the dual nature of Italy, representing on one hand the object of desire, the promised land for millions of foreigners; and on the other hand, a hostile place that lacks interest and opportunities for young natives.

I briefly discuss the emigration of Italian citizens and then focus on immigration to Italy. Enrico Pugliesi (in Lanni, <http://openmigration.org/en/analyses/immigration-to-italy-how-it-has-changed-over-the-last-half-century/>, consulted on 26/03/2018), stated that “the history of migrations to Italy began more than forty years ago”, with Tunisians arriving in Italy, followed by Asian and African populations who arrived with the aim of getting jobs and living a better life. Today, “people continue to move for many of the same reasons that have driven migrants throughout history: to seek new opportunities and to escape economic and political distress” (Colin, Cameron, Balarajan, 2011, 4). However, only at the beginning of the 1990s did this phenomenon acquire its current extent. Similar to the

European situation, currently Italy faces many arrivals by sea or, less frequently, via other borders.

To provide an overview of the immigration context, and to be able to plan and propose the most suitable didactic activities in the second part of such dissertation, I believe it is crucial to identify the identity of the newcomers and their main objectives. As stated by Federico Soda, director of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), “the nationality of migrants arriving to Italy is changing” and “the number of Western African migrants keeps increasing” (<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/who-are-the-migrants-arriving-in-italy>, consulted on 20/08/2018). There is a high percentage of Nigerian subjects, representing nearly 22% of the whole. They arrive for a wide range of different reasons, either economic, social or environmental (Furlanetto, in <https://www.ilsole24ore.com/art/perche-migranti-scappano-casa-loro-ACPcrai>, consulted on 15/09/2019). However, since 2017 the migratory context has seen an upswing of Asiatic citizens, specifically Pakistanis and Bangladeshis, in the top arrivals to Italy. The reasons behind their decision to leave are again poor economic conditions and the search for better conditions, as well as noteworthy cases of political distress. Furthermore, most newcomers are male individuals aged 26 or younger, mainly Muslims (<http://www.italy.iom.int/sites/default/files/news-documents/Migrants%20Study%20-%20FINAL%20ENG%20VERSION%20-%20ELEC.pdf>). There has been some change in the main objective of people moving to Italy: most aim for a stable residence and want their loved ones to join them in the country.

1.1.1. Applying for political asylum

Regarding the legislation and procedures that immigrant people must follow once arriving in Italy, this is a complex system that is constantly evolving. I outline a general framework of the processes and main conditions that can affect the outcome of such requests.

Once in the host country, newcomers in need of international protection have the right to apply for asylum, a form of protection which is “granted to people fleeing persecution or serious harm in their own country” (https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/asylum_en, consulted on 20/09/2019). It is subject to the recognition of a

person “as a refugee or as a beneficiary of subsidiary protection” (https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/asylum/refugee-status_en, consulted on 20/09/2019), involving the two main kinds of protection granted to immigrant people. It is essential to distinguish between them, since the reasons behind the application and conditions differ. As far as refugee status is concerned, a refugee is:

A person who, owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership of a particular social group, is outside the country of his, or her, nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail him-/herself of the protection of that country (https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/e-library/glossary/refugee_en, consulted on 20/09/2019).

By contrast, when refugee status is not recognized in the absence of the risk of personal persecution, but the applicant proves that he or she “would risk serious injury in the country of origin” (<https://openmigration.org/en/glossary-term/subsidiary-protection/>, consulted on 20/09/2019), subsidiary protection is granted. In both cases, international protection implies several benefits and guarantees for immigrants. These can be summarized in the following points (<https://www.asylumineurope.org/reports/country/italy/content-international-protection> (consulted on 20/09/2019):

- Status and residence: permits are granted for five years; after such period, if conditions remain favourable, they might be renewed and converted into long-term resident status.
- Family reunification: family members, including minor children, “who do not have an individual right to international protection, have the rights recognised to the sponsor” (<https://www.asylumineurope.org/reports/country/italy/content-international-protection/family-reunification/status-and-rights-family>, consulted on 20/09/2019). Such right was recognized also for beneficiaries of subsidiary protection only in 2014.

- Movement and mobility: people are allowed to freely circulate within the Italian territory. Moreover, whereas refugees are provided with five-year valid travel documents, beneficiaries of subsidiary protection receive travel permits.
- Housing: initially, asylum seekers are accommodated within reception centres and Protection System for Refugees and Asylum Seekers (SPRAR), which were renamed Protection System for Beneficiaries of International Protection and for Unaccompanied Foreign Minors (SIPROIMI). Once they receive international protection, they have access to second-line reception.
- Employment and education: refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection are allowed to access work; public employment; and, for minors, school.
- Social welfare and health care: regarding health care and social security, they are granted the same treatment as Italian citizens.

As a third kind of international protection, humanitarian protection is intended as “a form of protection for people who are not eligible for refugee status but cannot be removed from the country because of objective and serious personal situations” (<https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/news/controversial-decree-in-italy-to-abolish-humanitarian-protection-make-naturalised-citizens-less-equal>, consulted on 21/09/2019). During 2019, the Italian legislation in the field of immigration was subject to controversial changes, mainly linked to the rights of immigrants and the criteria for humanitarian protection permits. On 5th October 2019, the Salvini Decree proposed by the then Minister of the Interior, Matteo Salvini, came into effect. Among several modifications, the abolition of the humanitarian protection permit was crucial and was linked to its presumed abuse during earlier years. Instead, a “special case” permit has been introduced and granted “in cases of individual risk of persecution or torture, need for medical care and exceptional disasters in the country of origin” (<https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/news/italys-highest-court-rules-on-salvini-decree>, consulted on 21/09/2019).

Figure 1 depicts the statistics published by the Department of Civil Liberties and Immigration of the Ministry of Interior (http://www.libertacivilimmigrazione.dlci.interno.gov.it/sites/default/files/allegati/riepilogo_anno_2018.pdf). These figures illustrate that the granting of international protection

will certainly be subject to reduction, removing the high percentage of permits issued for humanitarian reasons during previous years; these figures reached 25% in 2017 and 21% in 2018.

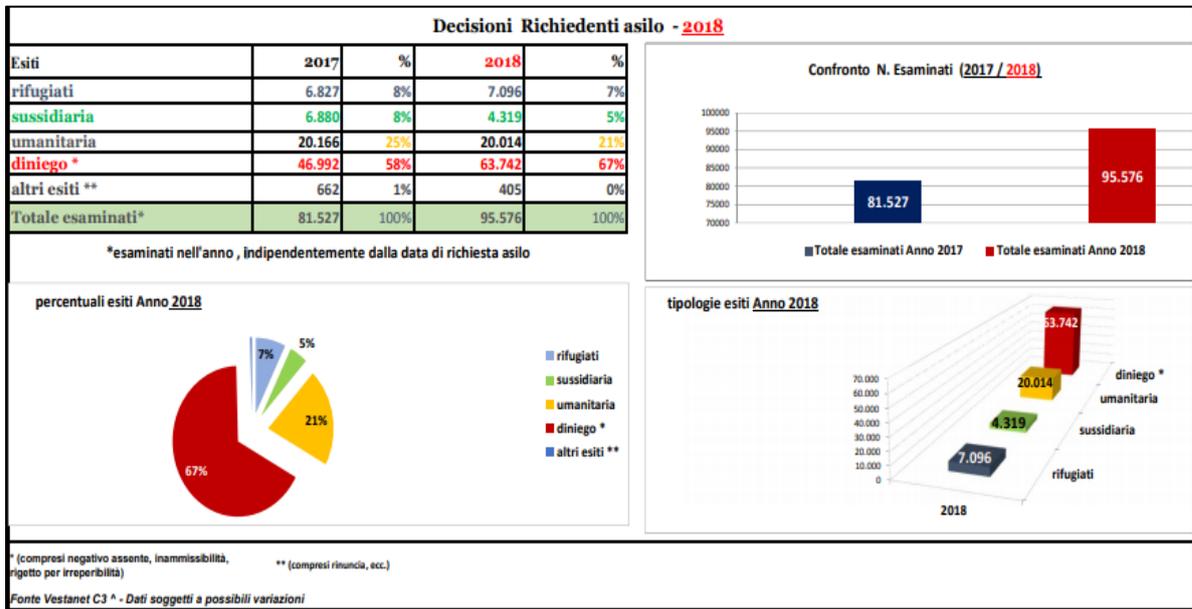


Figure 1: applications and granting of protection status in 2018

To conclude, sea arrivals to Italy during recent years have shown an evident decrease. Similarly, applications for international protection have diminished, with 53,596 applications in 2018 compared with many more than 130,000 applicants during 2017 (<http://www.integrazionemigranti.gov.it/Attualita/Notizie/Pagine/I-numeri-dell-asilo.aspx>, consulted on 21/09/2019). Hence, the future of immigration to Italy is unavoidably linked to political decisions, and the new Italian decrees are geared towards decreasing the arrivals and residence permits substantially. On the one hand, the first Salvini Decree imposed the abolishment of all permits that were granted for humanitarian reasons, to allow for more denials to applications for international protection. On the other hand, the new security decree (Decreto Sicurezza bis) proposed by the Minister of the Interior and approved on 5th August 2019 contemplates “denying NGO-run migrant-rescue ships access to Italian ports” (http://www.ansa.it/english/news/politics/2019/08/06/new-security-decree-wins-final-approval_6b1e4319-ee31-42e4-820d-865408ebe837.html, consulted on 22/09/2019), reinforcing the decision to close the Italian ports to migrants.

1.2. Immigration in the province of Bolzano/Bozen

Similar to the rest of Italy, South Tyrol has seen a great increase in immigration from other countries during recent decades. This started in the mid-1980s with the arrival of young men coming mostly from Morocco and Tunisia (Medda, Farkas, in <http://www.eurac.edu/en/research/autonomies/minrig/Documents/LISI/Regional%20Report%20-South%20Tyrol%20.pdf>). Later, at the beginning of 1990s, many families from the countries of former Yugoslavia and Albania made their appearance in the province of Bolzano/Bozen. The percentage has continued to rise during recent years, with almost 50,000 foreign citizens settled in South Tyrol, of whom more than 5000 live in Bolzano. However, only 0,9% of all asylum seekers are located in South Tyrol, according to the percentage of inhabitants in relation to the overall Italian population.

South Tyrol represents the main transit step towards migrants' final destination, mainly Austria, Germany or Northern Europe. Therefore, most people passing through South Tyrol have stopped there for a few days, leaving the country soon (http://www.provincia.bz.it/famiglia-sociale-comunita/integrazione/downloads/Provinz_Integration_18_IT_Einseitig.pdf). It is thus not surprising that only 1400 asylum seekers currently live in South Tyrol, hosted in more than 30 refugee shelters throughout the region (*Figure 2*).

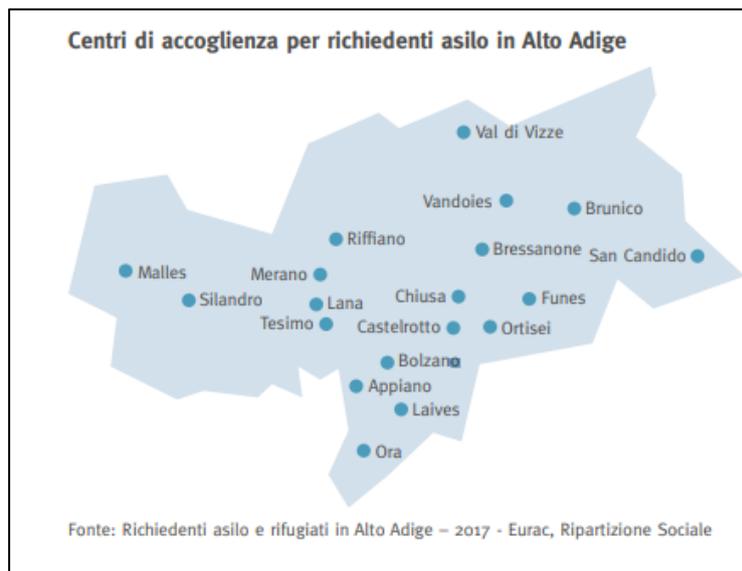


Figure 2: Refugee shelters in South Tyrol

Regarding the reception system, South Tyrol owns both first- and second-line reception centres. They are all managed by non-profit associations on behalf of the autonomous province of Bolzano in charge of welcoming and monitoring the guests ([http://www.provincia.bz.it/famiglia-sociale-comunita/integrazione/downloads/Provinz Integration 18 IT Einseitig.pdf](http://www.provincia.bz.it/famiglia-sociale-comunita/integrazione/downloads/Provinz_Integration_18_IT_Einseitig.pdf)). First receptions represent a temporary situation, usually for few months, and are characterized by the initial phase of medical exams and the necessary procedures to submit an asylum application. Later, all asylum seekers are allocated to different structures, usually for 15–20 months. At times, this period is longer due to the times needed for the outcomes of the applications.

In this dissertation, I consider subjects who have been living in second-line structures for a long time, mostly between 12 and 18 months. Therefore, such conditions should be taken into consideration as they psychologically affect people's lives and language acquisition.

1.3. Italian legislation and the knowledge of the Italian language

As stated by the Italian Ministry of the Interior (<http://www.libertaciviliimmigrazione.dlci.interno.gov.it/it/accordo-dintegrazione>, consulted on 22/09/2019), newly arrived immigrants who apply for a residence permit with a duration of more than one year should sign an agreement with the Italian State. This is called the Integration Agreement or *Accordo d'Integrazione*. It came into force on 10th March 2012. The agreement implies the achievement of specific integration objectives on the part of non-EU citizens, on one hand, and on the other hand the support of the government in relation to integration activities. It establishes both rights and duties for newcomers, requiring a demonstration of commitment towards a long-term residence permit. The key word of the agreement is the term "integration". The opening lines of the document ([http://www1.interno.gov.it/mininterno/export/sites/default/it/assets/files/22/0185_Accordo di Integrazione Inglese.pdf](http://www1.interno.gov.it/mininterno/export/sites/default/it/assets/files/22/0185_Accordo_di_Integrazione_Inglese.pdf)) state:

"Integration, meaning a process designed to promote the coexistence of Italian citizens and foreign nationals legally residing in the country, is based on mutual

commitment to participate in the economic, social and cultural life, under the values enshrined in the Italian Constitution”.

In particular, foreign nationals undertake, during the first two years, to (<http://www.integrazionemigranti.gov.it/en/latest-news/highlights/Pages/Integration-agreement.aspx>, consulted on 22/09/2019):

- Acquire a sufficient knowledge of the fundamental principles of the Italian Constitution, of the organisation and operation of public institutions and civil life in Italy, with particular reference to sectors as healthcare, education, social services and labour.
- Guarantee the fulfilment of the education obligations for minors.
- Discharge tax and contribution obligations.
- Acquire a knowledge of the spoken Italian language equal to at least level A2 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, issued by the Council of Europe.

As far as the last point is concerned, promotion of the Italian language is performed by language courses, both inside the refugee shelters and around the city. At the end of the first two-year period, immigrants must pass an Italian language test, oral and written. The test is not mandatory for dependent children under 14 or “anyone who is affected by serious speech and language impairment” (<http://www.integrazionemigranti.gov.it/en/legal-framework/domestic-law/Pages/Eu-long-term-residence-permit.aspx>, consulted on 22/09/2019). As mentioned, immigrants are required to prove a level A2 for a residence permit, meaning a pre-intermediate knowledge of the second language. However, the final examination does not correspond directly with tests of competence in a foreign language, but it is rather structured according to immigrants’ needs. This test, together with activities such as social activities and volunteer work, contributes to the achievement of the 30 credits that are necessary for the residence permit. In this regard, I consider to be remarkable the fact that, only in South Tyrol region, the knowledge of the German language, as it is one of the official languages, might provide extra credits ([http://www.provincia.bz.it/famiglia-sociale-comunita/integrazione/downloads/Provinz Integration 18 IT Einseitig.pdf](http://www.provincia.bz.it/famiglia-sociale-comunita/integrazione/downloads/Provinz_Integration_18_IT_Einseitig.pdf)).

On the other hand, the State is required to work towards the well-being of refugees and their process of integration into the local community. Therefore, it:

- Ensures the enjoyment of fundamental rights and equal social status of people regardless of gender, race, language, religion, political orientation and personal and social status, preventing any form of racism and discrimination.
- Facilitates the access to any information helping foreign nationals to understand the main contents of the Italian Constitution and State legislation.
- Guarantees the compliance with the laws safeguarding employees, as well as full access to healthcare services and to compulsory education.
- Facilitates the process leading to the full integration of the person concerned through the adoption of any suitable initiative

([http://www1.interno.gov.it/mininterno/export/sites/default/it/assets/files/22/0185_Accordo di Integrazione Inglese.pdf](http://www1.interno.gov.it/mininterno/export/sites/default/it/assets/files/22/0185_Accordo_di_Integrazione_Inglese.pdf)).

To sum up, the Italian country has been for several decades the scene of both emigration and immigration phenomena. In relation with the current situation of immigration, it is essential to keep in mind the different reasons which lie behind thousands of people's decisions of moving to a host country. The outcomes of asylum applications, in turn, will be strictly connected to the potentiality of danger conferred to the country of origin, and might be either positive or negative, implying respectively the possibility of creating new lives in a favourable environment, or the obligation to go back to adverse lands and daily-life situations. In the first case, from the previous paragraphs it comes to light the need and the desire of reciprocal knowledge and integration for foreigners, that cannot be achieved without the learning of the Italian language, especially in its oral form. Furthermore, the South Tyrol region represents an even more unique case, due to the official role conferred to the German language as well, which might be taught both within the refugee shelters or at language courses organized by different associations around the cities.

2. THE KEY PLAYERS IN THE LEARNING PROCESS

Learning is a process that includes several parties, each of which plays an essential role alone but more so in relation to the other parties. First, the main player is the language learner, who should always seek appropriate strategies and cognitive processes for an active and productive learning process (Rubin, Joan, 1975, 45-48). In my research, I refer specifically to adult migrants who study Italian as a second language. I consider adult learners, who differ from young children because of their age, personality and motivation, but at the same time demand specific contents and methodological choices. Moreover, as far as the migrant feature is concerned, there is a range of peculiarities among this kind of learner, mainly characterised by the person's reasons for moving and a fragile personality, as well as the strong motivation that drives the language-learning process. Together with the learner, an opposite essential role is played by the teacher. He or she is an educator and a facilitator, whose essential duty is giving a sort of redemption to the learners, leading them to autonomously enter the new community using the language. The language itself is the final component in the learning process. Not only is it the object to be studied; it is also the necessary instrument to get to the learning objectives. Above all, it characterises the context surrounding the main actors, who are immersed in the Italian linguistic code and the related cultural system, filled with values, principles and beliefs.

2.1. Main features of adult learners

Similar to any human activity, language learning is not a stable and invariable process; there is a noticeable difference among adult and young learners. Age is one of the main factors to consider when planning a language course, since adults show specific learning styles, motivation and linguistic needs due to their cognitive and experiential traits (Bettoni in Minuz, 2005, 43). However, defining the concept of adulthood is itself complex. It refers to a multitude of factors, such as personal traits, maturity and social dimensions. Many scholars and authors have tried to define adulthood by referring to different aspects. As far as language learning is concerned, Balboni's theory is valid, considering the adult subject to be someone who has finished his or her compulsory educational path and aged 18 or older, and therefore, someone who takes most decisions autonomously – including new educational processes (Balboni, 2015, 97). Similarly, Serragiotto (in Caon, Balboni, 2008,

177) considers adult learners to be conscious of their choices, aiming to satisfy their expectations in spending their own time and money.

From such definitions, the learning process experienced by adult learners shows several peculiarities and differences from that of younger people. Both the motivation behind the learning experience and the way people encounter it differ. I briefly analyse these features, suggested by Malcolm Knowles (in Serragiotto, in Caon, Balboni 2008, 178), to provide a better overview of the main characteristics of the learning process:

- Learners' self- concept: when dealing with adults, the will of the person is essential. Unlike children, the adult learners themselves must decide to undertake a meaningful process, otherwise it would fail. The input should not affect the self-esteem or social image of the subjects by lessening their role in front of other people (Serragiotto in Caon, 2010, 219).
- Motivation: the desire for self-realisation is the driving force of the learning process. However, intrinsic motivation leads to meaningful acquisition, rather than mere learning of notions. Motivation must thus come from within the learners and "be based on their perception that what they are learning is of interest and of value to them" (McKay, Tom, 1999, 4).
- Need to know: learners should bear in mind the objectives and advantages of the learning process. They will be more receptive and committed to learning once they know the reason for their commitment.
- Readiness to learn: learners are willing to learn what they feel they need to know and do in order to deal with real-life situations. As stated by Knowles, learners show greater interest in activities that can immediately be applied to their day-to-day activities, rather than those which take longer for application of their knowledge.
- Orientation to learning: this is strongly linked to the previous characteristic, focusing on the benefits of the learning process for concrete application in a real-life context.
- Role of the learners' experience: past experiences play a central role in the educational process. People are likely to "bring with them expectations of how language classes should be organized and taught" (McKay, Tom, 1999, 3), since adults unavoidably compare new learning experiences to past similar situations. Moreover,

past learning experiences lay the foundations for new acquisition, which should be appropriate for the level of schooling of the learner. In addition, general knowledge of the world characterises adults in a deep way, affecting the reception of new input and their reliance on the teacher.

2.1.1. Teaching methodologies for adult learners

As suggested in the previous lines, it is essential for the educator to consider all the peculiarities of andragogy¹, when planning a lesson – or the entire language course. It is important to adopt language-teaching methods that are suitable for adult learners, who require activities and methodological choices that often differ from those designed for young learners (Balboni, 2015, 99). The table proposed by Serragiotto (in Luise, 2003a, 171) is helpful in this regard. It highlights the different characteristics of adults and children, including the motivation behind the learning process, the personal and educational traits, and the most appropriate teaching methodologies.

As far as the latter is concerned, the two suggested methodologies are the affective-humanistic approach and the notional-functional method. In both cases, students and their own needs and emotions are considered to be the primary focus of the learning process. The affective-humanistic method contemplates learners in their entirety, paying attention not only to the rational elements that identify them but above all to the emotional and affective aspects, which influence learners and the process of learning (Begotti, 2006, 26-27). The affective-humanistic method is based on integrating the cognitive and emotional processes, highlighting the essentiality of the affective aspects for learning acquisition (Cardona, in Caon, 2010, 27).

The notional-functional method relies on the communicative approach. Here, the object to be taught is constituted by notions and communicative functions, referring to a pragmatic perspective of real-life situations (Balboni, 2015, 42).

Choosing the most appropriate methodologies for adult learners requires a deep analysis of the learners' personal traits and needs. Inductive methods should be preferred over deductive ones, since adult learners need to face their competence and abilities in an

¹ The educator Malcolm Knowles defines the term “andragogy” as “the art and science of helping adults learn” (Knowles, 1980, 38).

autonomously way. Only through doing and self-evaluating their activities can they aim for successful language acquisition. Furthermore, adult learners appear to more prone to metalinguistics and abstract concepts. This suggests an approach that strongly differs from the one adopted for young learners, who need the concretization of concepts into tangible data.

Educators should pay particular attention to activities that would probably be suitable for young students with different needs and personal traits. Balboni (2015, 100-101) identified risky methodologies, where learners are asked to interact with peers; those which involve playful activities; and lastly those that consider a direct comparison with the teacher-judge. Regarding the former, the learner's self-concept or social image might be negatively affected by activities such as roleplays, dialogues or dramatization. In a similar way, during playful and childish activities, learners might make a fool of themselves and may feel ashamed in front of their peers. Begotti (2006, 28-29) highlighted the potentiality of ludic educational activities, thus implying play and spontaneity, as a means of reflecting on the language in an enjoyable and active way. What is important, however, is a clear explication of the methodologies and objectives of the ludic activities, which would otherwise be seen as a mere waste of time (Serragiotto, in Luise, 2003a, 176-177).

Lastly, Balboni advises against the direct judgement of the teacher, which would call into question the relationship between the two actors. Based on the andragogical approach of Knowles and Rogers (in Balboni, 2015, 99), the relationship between the learner and the educator can be perceived as one of equals. Thus, the role of the teacher would turn into a facilitator; this point is further explained in the following chapters.

Using a communicative approach means the participants are invited to involve their peers and share their thoughts and feelings with them. However, the involvement of the whole class should be limited to activities that require pair work, that is, a relationship between two peers. There is thus no fear of being judged by other classmates or the teacher (Serragiotto, in Luise, 2003a, 177).

2.2. Main features of migrant learners

A migrant is “a person who moves from one place to another, especially in order to find work or better living conditions” (Lexico, <https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/migrant>, consulted on 10/03/2019). As evident in the definition above, the migrant represents a kind of subject – and later a learner – who is unique and incomparable. Although there might be a set of elements associated with all learners of a second language, migrants exhibit their own peculiarities. They are characterized by a strong motivation related to their migratory background and to their future projects: the reasons for moving were explained in the previous chapter; in most cases, future projects are characterized by the desire for a stable residence. Therefore, the need to learn the language and get to know the new cultural system is urgent and tangible. As mentioned by Schutz (in Cotesta, 2002, 44-45), the strangers are destined for a double path, characterized by the comparison of different values and the loss of their familiar world. Therefore, the difficult position of the newcomers is evident. On the one hand, they cannot count on their previous reference system of values and beliefs; on the other hand, they cannot yet appropriate those of the new community. Immigrants are thus deprived of a social status and are marginalized, lacking a sense of membership in any social group.

Dealing with such sense of loneliness and marginalization given by the radical change in their life, I believe that the most relevant, but the most complex as well, duty of an educator is helping the learners of a second language to find their position in the new community. In other words, the learners should be driven towards the building of new relationships and the use of the local language not only to communicate but also as a means of social inclusion, self-promotion and self-realization (Maddii, 2004, 39). Through this perspective, language courses should be planned, keeping in mind that migrants experience an urgent need to learn the new linguistic code and be in contact with other people to regain a sense of membership.

Moreover, migrants differ from people who study a new language only for personal improvement and to increase in their cultural awareness. Migrants are immersed in the second language, placed unavoidably side-by-side with the spontaneous acquisition and formal learning of the tongue (Minuz, 2005, 37). Their motivation to learn is stronger, since success in learning is fundamental: only the language can help them to gain asylum and to

survive in everyday life. Thus, migrants perceive the social dimension of the language as more essential than morphological and syntactical rules. Although a correct formulation of sentences is desirable, priority is given to the ability to understand and make themselves understood by the surrounding people.

To conclude, migrant learners of Italian as a second language should be viewed from multiple perspectives. Their sense of membership must be found again and the troubled past experiences that led them to move and plan a stable establishment in the new country must be considered. Moreover, because of the urgency for contact with the local community, they need to see immediate results, which requires delaying structural elements in favor of factors that allow a relationship with natives and surrounding people. Social inclusion is more urgent than formal correctness.

2.2.1. Linguistic needs of immigrant learners of Italian as a second language

Any kind of learner has his or her own peculiarities, strategies and needs. We should identify the uniqueness of immigrants, who represent one of the most problematic and critical categories of learners. Regarding adult immigrants' needs, Serragiotto (in Caon, 2008, 181) recognised the urgency and criticalness of their satisfaction when settling in a new country. Both the primary needs aimed at the survival of the individual and their integration in the new community, through essential knowledge of the new language and cultural system, are important.

Although Serragiotto admits the difficulty of classifying immigrants' needs and the temporal sequence in which they emerge, he shows that they can be divided into macro areas. In turn, these indicate a series of needs to be satisfied. Before analysing such areas in detail, it is necessary to highlight that they are not permanently separated. Rather, they interact and need to be considered simultaneously when dealing with immigrant students (Serragiotto, in Caon, 2008, 182 - 183). The system of needs that characterise immigrant subjects can be summarised as follows:

- Reception and regularisation: immigrants need to find a place where they are heard and guided, to fulfil their duties for the regularisation of their stay and to obtain a residency permit. Regarding linguistic competence, as soon as they get to the new country they are asked to interact with natives, even if in a basic and superficial way.

- Work: this often represents the main reason for moving, thus it constitutes the main objective of most immigrants. The satisfaction of needs that concern this macro area might be the most powerful driving force behind their stay. Therefore, the awareness of the importance of learning the new language to communicate and the technical terms for the desired position is a key condition.
- Accommodation: immigrants first need temporary accommodation, usually at an immigrant shelter centre, where they feel safe. Later, such solution is bound to turn into stable residence, where the knowledge of home management is essential.
- Health and assistance: immigrants need to become familiar with the territory and its useful facilities. Again, the acquisition of the second language is fundamental, aimed at successful communication between the individual and people in charge of their assistance. Technical terms proper to the medical field should be known. In addition, knowledge of the territory, facilities and the healthcare system in the new country are strongly linked to education. This should not be considered only as the transmission of linguistic data but rather as an extension of all the culture and civilization in addition to words.
- Education: this macro area lies at the heart of my topic. It highlights the essential role of educational needs when dealing with immigrant subjects. It is a complex area, ranging from minimal level of literacy in the target language to a deeper education in the broadest sense of the term. Immigrants must identify and access language courses, where the learning of grammatical and morphological systems constitutes only one of the components of the repertoire necessary for stable establishment in the new country. Together with the linguistic codes, immigrants need to understand and absorb the cultural values of the new community, as well as the elements of non-verbal communication that distinguish the various communities and their ways of life. Moreover, subjects need to take professional courses related to the previous areas to increase their chance of finding a job and the resulting social integration. In both cases, whether dealing with language courses or professional ones, immigrants require the recognition of competence through certification and evidence.

- Socialization: immigrants need to interact and socialize with their peers, both natives and compatriots. It is thus essential to identify the social centres and increase their interpersonal relations. Individuals thus require the second language, the preferred means to communicate with other people and express themselves.

This general overview of immigrant learners' needs illustrates the essential role of linguistic competence, as well as cultural. These abilities are required to fulfil needs related to survival and to integration in the new community.

Maslow identified five fundamental needs according to a hierarchy of needs, or individual motivations that should be satisfied before the following ones (Serragiotto, in Caon, 2008, 183-184). The first level is biological and physiological needs, aimed at the physical survival of the individual. All effort would thus be spent on fulfilment of these needs – such as breathing, sustenance, shelter and clothing as the most evident. After satisfying basic life needs, immigrants need to guarantee their safety and security. Finding themselves in a new environment and subject to difficult conditions, it is fundamental for them to keep away from dangerous situations which might put their life and the fulfilment of their objectives at risk. Both physiological needs and the search for safety constitute basic needs, thus representing the basis of Maslow's hierarchy. These must be fulfilled before the higher needs.

Maslow dealt with the later psychological needs, split into belongingness and love needs and esteem needs. Both refer to the inner personality and emotional dimension of the individual. Regarding the former, a deep desire to be part of a group is demonstrated; subjects need to build strong relationships with their peers and to be accepted by other people with the aim of feeling part of a whole. Similarly, esteem needs consider the necessity of being appreciated by other people, aiming at the recognition of one's usefulness and autonomous competence. Only through fulfilling all these various needs can individuals aim at self-actualization, achieving their full potential (*Figure 3*).

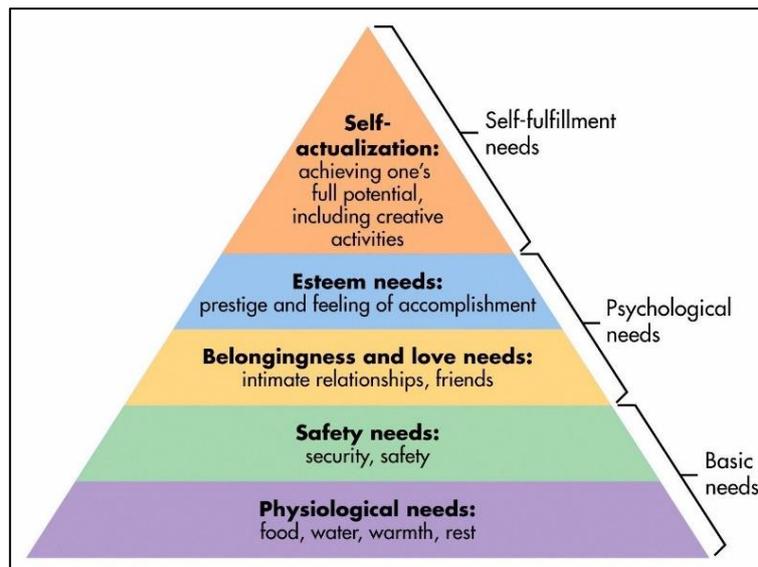


Figure 3: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Regarding the acquisition of new language, it is evident that initial literacy in the second language is a primary need. It allows individuals to express their feelings autonomously and to perform the basic communication needed to survive and guarantee their safety. By contrast, in the following steps the enhancement of the second language is required. This goal is higher, such as acceptance and self-actualization, and so are the requisites (Caon, 2008, 184). In the first steps, the relationship between the individual and the rest of the world is highlighted. In the last steps, the focus is on the subject in all his or her entirety, and his or her purpose in life.

Such distinction reminds us of the ethical perspective based on the goals of educational linguistics as theorised by Giovanni Freddi (in Balboni, 2015, 14-15). He suggested that constant relationships characterise all individuals and represent the driving force of education, especially regarding educational linguistics. He stated that the “pedagogical model of educational goals” is integrated with the “anthropological model of human relations”. Language is the means for achievement of such objectives and the basis of all human relations (Balboni, 1998, 19), as observed in the following goals:

- Culturalization: focusing on the relationship of “me and the community”, the subject aims for acceptance by native people and belonging within the new community, through acquiring new cultural models.

- Socialization: focusing on the relationship “me and you”, the main objective is communicating with other people. The wider the linguistic competence, the easier to build relationships.
- Self-promotion: focusing on the subject, the “I”, the individual aims for the creation of a personal identity. This includes the realisation of his or her life project and the self-fulfilment of all personal needs (Balboni, 2015, 15).

All the mentioned human relations, as well as the educational goals, interact and influence each other, allowing the self-realisation of individuals and their integration in the new community (Balboni, 1998, 20).

2.2.2. Obstacles to learning a second language

As mentioned in previous sections, immigrant learners are characterized by several elements that affect their process of learning and acquiring a second language. In this section, I briefly describe the main obstacles faced by refugees and migrant learners. The role of culture and related variables is discussed first, followed by a focus on the environment and resources that affect the motivation for learning the second language.

- Classroom diversity: in every classroom context, each learner is unique and has distinct experiences, feelings and values. Therefore, every student should be considered in this uniqueness, with his or her own talents and fragilities. In migratory contexts, such differences are even more evident and crucial, with the need for holding in high regard the cultural background. In such contexts the facilitators find themselves dealing with a diverse classroom, both multilingual and multi-ethnic, attended by people with a similar level of proficiency in Italian and schooling experience but influenced by different cultures, values and traditions. Didactic planning thus needs consideration on several levels, such as exploration, organization, education and methodology (Caon, 2006, 25). However, language classes are often multilevel. Here, diversity in the classroom derives from the coexistence of different levels of schooling and proficiency in the Italian language. In this case, the level of an activity can be varied by modifying one of the components, such as the materials or input, the task itself, or the performance level (McKay, Tom,

1999, 20-21). In general, the plurality of idioms, cultural values and learning experiences leads the participants to encounter diverse perspectives. A challenge for educators and facilitators is the ability to comprehend the cultural background of every student and allow them to coexist respectfully, avoiding the imposition of one culture over others. Intercultural competences can be developed to relativize opinions and the acceptance of different interpretations without judging.

- Culture and gender: as analysed in the previous paragraphs, culture plays a crucial role when dealing with teaching a second language, especially when the class is composed of immigrant learners from all over the world. Considering the multiplicity of cultures within the classroom, not only are the different value systems and traditions of learners important, but also the distance between them and the essence of Italian culture. The contact with a new cultural world entails a relativization of one's system and values, as they are a subjective perception and interpretation of norms, values and customs of a society (Caon, 2006, 18). In this way, the process of integration into the new society is fostered. This could happen, for example, regarding proxemics, that is the use of space in human interactions, and intimacy. Here, interpersonal distance is a culture-related element that varies according to one's own system of values, especially when dealing with different genders (Balboni, Caon, 2015, 64-65). In this case, the facilitator should be familiar with such differences and respect them when planning and proposing new didactic activities.
- Accommodation and resources: after the first aid and assistance operations, refugees are welcomed into accommodation centres during the phase of reception. Frequently, these buildings are large, with too many inhabitants. For example, immigrants living on the outskirts of Bolzano/Bozen were housed together as more than 400 people at the time of my case study. Such large numbers lead to a general dissatisfaction among the refugees, who are forced to share the insufficient facilities with hundreds of peers. The absence of a familiar context increases the negative feelings and mood of these people. Moreover, immigrants deal with a monotonous life in the accommodation centres: the daily routine is repetitive and often the language classes represent the only moments when they feel free to set aside their sense of loneliness and express themselves. Furthermore, resources such as printed

materials and technological devices present in the accommodation centres are sometimes obsolete or malfunctioning. This makes lesson planning and innovative activities hard or impossible. Lastly, the discontent is often exacerbated when the accommodation is far from the town centre. In this case, the opportunities for living in a city or meeting and interacting with local people are reduced, with a scarceness of those intersubjective resources which could foster the acquisition and learning of the second language (Caon, 2006, 19). There are also few stimuli, as discussed in the next section.

- Motivation: as analysed in the following chapters, motivation is crucial to drive the learning process. However, refugees sometimes struggle to find a reason to begin learning a second language. Frequently, the reason behind their commitment is extrinsic, since the Italian language represents an essential means for communication and integration with local people. Therefore, the greater the chances of contact with native people, the greater the desire to learn the new language and related cultural values. This is a long journey; however, the search for new opportunities and the possibility of integrating with people from other countries and with different cultural backgrounds should be a primary goal of all language courses.

2.3. The teacher's role and relationship with students

In any educational context, teachers play a fundamental role. They represent one of the elements of the learning process – in addition to the learner and the material being learnt. When dealing with second-language courses, the delicate context suggests an even more essential role of the teacher. He or she is not only a transmitter of knowledge but also serves as a reference point for the newcomers, who find themselves in a world without landmarks. Therefore, the relationship between the characters, based on feelings of trust and confidence, is important beyond the linguistic and academic elements. This relationship should constitute the basis of any educational context, considering education in the broadest sense of the word, referring to values and inner principles that should be shared. Moreover, when the learner is an adult, the characters should aim to create a cooperative peer relationship, where both parties can contribute to the educational programme. In this way, the personal experiences of students serve as stimuli for the

lessons, with the aim of captivating as many students as possible. The teacher is thus seen as a “director”, who lies behind the scene, allowing the interaction between the learner and the language learnt. Here the main actor is the learner, who performs under the guidance of the teacher in relation to the second language (Balboni, 2015, 104).

Hence, the ideal environment is student-centred, focusing on learners in all their being, from their personal traits to the strategies adopted, from the motivation that lies behind their learning process to their diverse learning styles. Here, the role of the teacher – traditionally considered the main actor of the learning process and responsible for the transmission of knowledge – changes drastically. Here the teacher assumes the role of facilitator, being the subject in charge of providing the atmosphere in which students can fulfil their potential. The planning of lessons should thus be based on analysis of the needs and abilities of students, through suitable techniques and methodologies. It is the students themselves who are required to investigate their needs, their strong and weak points. This process is aimed at autonomous discovery and language acquisition (Caon, 2010, VIII). The duty of the educator is thus to lead the learner in such research and discovery, creating a suitable context and atmosphere, and giving them the necessary means to achieve their objectives. Lastly, the teacher should experiment with new educational paths, through innovative technological means, that could be suitable and effective for specific learners (Serragiotto in Luise, 2003a, 174).

To sum up, the relationship between the two active elements of the learning process should be as communicative as possible. It requires explication of the proposed didactic activities, the methodologies used to address them, and clear objectives for the various tasks. The effectiveness of the activities and the positive atmosphere within the classroom are affected by the success of such training contracts and the consideration of the individuality of each learner (Serragiotto in Luise, 2003a, 174). Furthermore, I believe that when dealing with language teaching it is crucial for the teachers, who represent a partner in the learning process, to analyse and consider the peculiarities of the learners. They should know the personal circumstances, the learning experience and what it entails, and the motivation behind the decision to learn and which establishes the objectives of the learning process.

3. TEACHING ITALIAN AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

As discussed in the previous chapter, the language-learning process is characterized by three main parties: 1) the learner, who performs an active role through the autonomous adoption of strategies; 2) the teacher, who is considered to be a facilitator and a mentor to create a suitable environment for learners to apply their competences (Balboni in Caon, 2010, 9), and 3) the language itself. As latter represents the object of the learning process and can be considered from several perspectives (Balboni, 2015, 119-120):

- language as a tool of communication to achieve the learner's objectives, from a pragmatic perspective;
- language as the expression of a social relationship, from a sociolinguistic perspective;
- language as the symbol of belonging to a specific group, whether geographic, social or professional;
- language as the totality of linguistic forms;
- language as the expression of a culture, from an ethnolinguistic perspective;
- language as an instrument of thought;
- language as a tool of expression.

Given the complexity of the language, I focus on the learning of a second language (SL). This is not to be confused with the foreign language (FL). These ideas are examined in depth in the following paragraphs.

3.1. Italian as a second language and as a foreign language

In recent decades, researchers have examined the teaching and learning of Italian as a second language. The necessity of discussing and investigating it, indeed, started to grow during the Balkan wars and later with the emigration from China, Northern Africa and Bangladesh in the 1980s and 1990s (Caon, in Maraschio, Caon, 2011, 103). Initially, this was a new field and it has often been confused with the learning of Italian as foreign language. The two concepts are discussed here, highlighting the main differences between them.

Saville-Troike (in Saville-Troike, Barto, 2012, 4) stated that a second language is "an official or societally dominant language needed for education, employment, and other basic purposes [...] often acquired by minority group members or immigrants who speak

another language natively". Pallotti (in Caon, in Maraschio, Caon, 2011, 96) added that a second language is "a language that is learnt after the native one in a country where it is an official language"². Such definitions indicate that a second language is characterised by continuous stimuli, identifiable in the learner's everyday life, representing the means of communication with their surrounding world. Therefore, the linguistic input for their learning process is often brought by the students themselves, recalling real-life situations (Serragiotto, 2009, 35). The objectives are related to daily communication needs, either personal or professional.

By contrast, a foreign language is a language that is "not widely used in the learners' immediate social context which might be used for future travel or other cross-cultural communication situations, or studied as a curricular requirement or elective in school, but with no immediate or necessary practical application" (Saville-Troike, Barto, 2012, 4). In this case, the surrounding world is not influential, and the only linguistic input is presented by the teacher (Caon in Maraschio, Caon, 2011, 96).

These points reveal the main difference between the two objects of the learning process. However, researchers have identified several features that help not only to distinguish them but also to highlight certain considerations when teaching a second language and planning appropriate didactic activities. The focus here is on the main characteristics that differ, as identified and outlined by Balboni (2015, 228-230):

- Presence in the environment: whereas a second language is present in the country where it is studied, a foreign language is spoken only in scholastic contexts.
- Selection and grades of inputs: the learners of a second language are immersed in the language itself, choosing their own linguistic inputs through a process of spontaneous learning. By contrast, for a foreign language, the educator takes control of the lesson and chooses the inputs, materials and methodologies.
- Role of the teacher: the teacher of a foreign language represents the ideal model of the speaker of a foreign language. Conversely, the structures and the terminology

² Translated from the original Italian quote: "una lingua appresa dopo la prima (...) nel paese dove essa viene parlata abitualmente".

used by the teacher of a second language are often considered to be too formal when compared to everyday life.

- Didactic activities and methodologies: the unrealistic simulations during didactic activities in a foreign language are replaced by real-life situations when speaking a second language. The use of the second language is thus an authentic communicative necessity.
- Lesson planning and observance of the syllabus: as revealed by the origin of the linguistic inputs of the two learning processes, when dealing with learners of a foreign language, the teacher can schedule a syllabus and remain faithful to it when planning a lesson. By contrast, since the input in second-language learning is mainly external, the facilitator must face several topics related to the learners' surrounding world, according to their real and authentic necessities.
- Testing and evaluation: Teachers of a foreign language are conscious of their teaching objects and objectives and can thus establish what must be evaluated and how to do so, through specific evaluation parameters. By contrast, learning a second language usually implies spontaneous acquisition, which means the educator must put aside formal testing in favour of analysis and continuous feedback from the learners' productions.
- Use of technological devices: again, the difference here is given by the linguistic input of the process. For foreign language, the only way to offer authentic material is to use technological devices to present real-life situations as interpreted by native speakers, who carry their own social and cultural features. By contrast, while teaching a second language, the facilitator is already offering an authentic model, so that the essential role of technology is limited. In this regard, although I recognize the need for technological tools when teaching a foreign language, I believe that nowadays they provide excellent support for teaching second languages too. They give learners the opportunity to receive new stimuli and to express themselves in different ways, communicating with distant people as they would with their peers in person.

To sum up, teaching Italian as a second language is a unique and burdensome task. It requires specific academic contexts and appropriate development of teachers, who differ

from teachers who present Italian as a foreign language or as a native language. Their objectives should be considered from an integration-oriented perspective. The peculiarity of the learners and their characteristics is also important. I discussed in the previous chapter how every immigrant learner exhibits specific personal traits, including not only their mother tongue but also their personal encyclopaedia and knowledge of the world. This is made up of ideas from schooling and relationships and especially cultural elements, which affect learning acquisition and influence the learner's way of thinking and facing their new environment (Caon in Maraschio, Caon, 2011, 101).

3.2. The functions of language

At the beginning of the 20th century, language started to be considered and studied by researchers. The earliest were the German philosophers Bühler and Cassirer. Language was considered not only as form but also as action, focusing on the language in use from a socio-pragmatic perspective (Balboni, 2018, 69). The focus has since moved to knowledge of what do to with language competence, aiming for the use and production of language in social contexts, and accomplishing language functions in communicative goals.

I consider the integrated functional model which includes the static model proposed by Jakobson. He identified six elements that determine the goal of communicative acts and therefore the functions that are performed. I also consider Halliday's dynamic model, which is "a pragmatic roadmap that all children follow in building their ability to communicate" (Balboni, 2018, 70). The components of this model were analysed and discussed by Balboni (2015, 125-127), as follows:

- Personal function: the language focuses on the sender; it is used to express the sender's individuality and personality through the expression of feelings, thoughts and emotions. This function is linked with the emotive and affective world of the learner, and its realization is essential for self-expression. I consider the accomplishment of the personal function to be one of the main objectives of the proposed didactic activities. The construction of self-identity through narration is feasible only by talking about one's deepest thoughts and feelings.

- Interpersonal/interactional function: related to the personal function, the interpersonal function focuses on the language used in the interaction between peers and the establishment (or ending) of an interpersonal relationship, through sociolinguistic rules. Again, the interpersonal function is essential for the purposes of this essay. Self-expression tasks are presumably more efficient when individuality is shared with an interlocutor, either active or passive.
- Regulatory-instrumental function: the learner uses language to satisfy his or her needs with reference to the interlocutor – for example, through instructions, suggestions or orders. However, the regulatory-instrumental function and the choice of expressions used are affected by sociocultural rules. This can lead to interactional problems due to different cultural values referring to hierarchy (Balboni, Caon, 2015, 84).

The functions of language discussed above were considered by Halliday (in Balboni, 2018, 70) to be the “basic functions which are developed to grant survival”. By contrast, the following functions are considered in relation with the world around the learner:

- Referential function: this includes both a representational function, aimed at describing something, and a heuristic one, aiming at wondering and hypothesizing. These two functions were proposed by Halliday. That is, the language is used to describe, explain and investigate the surrounding world. The communicative acts achieved through realizing the referential function are characterized by objective perspectives and a denotative vocabulary, without any personal or emotional involvement. These points imply great difficulties for the learners (Balboni, 2015, 126).
- Metalinguistic function: language is used to talk about language itself, analysing its mechanisms and peculiarities.
- Poetic and imaginative function: related to the stylistic features of texts, considers that “the form of the message is the core of the message” (Balboni, 2018, 70). The language uses figures of speech to produce associations and effects or to create imaginary worlds and situations (Balboni, 2015, 127).

All the functions of language just described, according to Balboni (2018, 71), can be applied to the model of social interaction (Freddi in Balboni, 2015, 14-15). This model underscores socio-pragmatic competence, where each individual might be in relation either with him-herself (me), the others (you), and the world. Such relations are established by the language through various functions. The personal function relates an individual to himself or herself. By contrast, the relationship between “me” and “you” is achievable through developing interpersonal and regulatory-instrumental functions. The referential function, related to the real world; the poetic and imaginative function, linked to the imaginary world; and the metalinguistic function, where the focus is on the language itself – all correspond to the relationship between “me” and “the world” (Balboni, 2018, 71).

All things considered, when dealing with language education, “*all the functions must be developed in a balanced way*” (Balboni, 2018, 72). One of the main objectives of the learning process is the establishment and maintenance of relationships that follow the me/you/world model. These relate the subject firstly with him or herself and then with peers and the surrounding world, either real or imaginary.

3.3. Developing language skills

As far as communicative competence is concerned, people’s mental representations are transformed into real communicative acts through the mastery and development of language skills. These include both the cognitive dimension and processes related to the mother language, and the semiotic dimension, where linguistic codes differ from culture to culture (Balboni, 2015, 127). It is necessary to distinguish between receptive and productive skills. The former is related to comprehension, either oral or written, including the passive reception and understanding of new language items (<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/receptive-skills>, consulted on 18/08/2019). Productive skills refer to the active ability to produce language, which is developed by following the linear process of producing a text that includes the phases of conceptualization, referring to an inferred general idea, planning, referring to the structure of the paragraphs, and realization, referring to the actual development (Balboni, 2015, 175).

Language skills can also be classified into two groups. First, the primary skills relate to the knowledge of what to do with language competence, which include monologues and listening comprehension in an oral modality, and reading and writing of the written form. Second, integrated skills relate to textual manipulation and include dictation, note-taking, summarizing, paraphrasing and translating. Dialogue performs an ambivalent role: it is considered an integrated skill, similar to the textual manipulation (<https://www.itals.it/nozion/noziof.htm>, consulted on 10/08/2019), but also refers to a commonly ability in learning a second language and is thus partly a primary skill (Balboni, 2015, 128).

In the next section, I briefly describe the skills that need to be mastered to achieve communicative objectives. I analyse their various roles in learning a second language and dealing with self-expression and in the construction of identity in particular.

3.3.1. Interaction skills: dialogues

Considering that oral interaction arises through receptive and productive skills, the map of mastery of language skills proposed by Balboni (2015, 128) is informative. Dialogue is located in the middle, symbolizing the union and integration of receptive and productive skills through an oral modality. Dialogue implies the ability to speak and comprehend at the same time, and it is the basis of the communicative approach (Balboni, 2015, 182 - 183). Moreover, the interaction occurs in real time. Thus, the interlocutors are required to select and convey in a short time the most appropriate verbal messages for a specific context, conscious of various factors that affect the communication. These include the social and cultural conventions related to the situation, the relationship and intentions of the communicative act, and the ability to negotiate meanings to achieve one's objectives. Brumfit (in Negri, 2013, 94 – 95) stated that:

We co-operate with each other when we use language for an agreed purpose, [...] To do this successfully, speakers and writers perform an unconscious guessing game because they have to establish what the agreed goals are [...] as well as how much knowledge, or past experience, or understanding, is shared.

The ability to interact arguably represents the most relevant skill in the contemporary world. At a higher level, it relates to autobiographic activities and the construction of a self-

identity. During the process of self-narration, the speaker expressed his or her thoughts and feelings to an interlocutor, who first listens and comprehends, and then gives voice to his or her own narrations and memories. Here an awareness of the context and objectives are essential; the negotiation of meanings – and other intercultural competences – are key to successful communicative events.

Lastly, among the most innovative and efficient didactic activities and methodologies adopted for developing interaction skills, role-play or role-taking, as well as various kinds of interviews and debates, are noteworthy. Here, the interlocutors simulate communicative acts according to the context, sharing their own thoughts and emotions and receiving feedback.

3.3.2. Productive skills: monologues and writing

Similar to interaction skills, productive skills are developed and consolidated when people deal with activities that imply self-narration and expressing one's feelings, thoughts and future goals. Krashen's stated that "learners' productive ability will arise naturally from receptive knowledge" (in Richards, <https://www.cambridge.org/elt/blog/2015/08/27/bridging-gap-receptive-productive-competence/>), which implies minimum struggle while developing speaking and writing skills. However, I deem those struggles essential and great effort is needed to allow learners to "express themselves concisely, coherently, and in a manner that suits all audiences and occasions" (Carrasquillo, 1994, 133). Only by strengthening productive skills can students face communicative acts without risking failure, which would increase their feelings of anxiety and frustration.

Students are requested to follow the linear process of conceptualization – planning – realization for language production. This process transforms initial abstract concepts into an authentic text, either oral (as in monologues) or written. The process passes through a phase of structuring and planning (Balboni, 2015, 175-176). In the following paragraphs, I introduce productive skills and the related final products.

- Monologue: this is a brief oral production about a topic that was assigned and has been reflected on (Balboni, 2015, 176). Such premise is essential to limit the impact of feelings of anxiety and poor self-confidence on the self-image and the social

position of the learner. Oral monologues usually imply the presence of interlocutors. Unlike in dialogue, where the interaction between participants is substantial, interlocutors of monologues restrict themselves to listening to the speaker and assuming a passive role. Regarding related methodologies and activities, I consider the techniques of autobiography, narration of a past events, video-making, and video-letters to be the most effective. They keep the focus on self-narration and the manifestation of one's own feelings.

- Written production: according to Negri (2013, 100), written production can be particularly useful for learners to increase their motivation and self-confidence. The permanence of written productions can provide concrete evidence of the learner's language competence and progress, triggering a process of gratification and increasing of their self-confidence. They can also act as a monitor for reflecting on the language later on (Angelino, in Dolci, Celentin, 2000, 39-40). In addition, the complexity of written productions is emphasized by the coexistence of three main elements: a cognitive component; research and obtaining of specific information related to the decision of what to write and the content of the text; and language proficiency, related to how a text is written and its formal accuracy (Balboni, 2015, 179). Lastly, among the different compositions, the author identifies descriptions, relations, narrations, letters, regulatory texts and definitions. To pursue my interest in self-narration by developing written productive skills, I examine autobiographies, diary entries, short messages on Post-it, descriptions, informal letters, interior monologues, narrations and brochures.

3.3.3. Receptive skills: listening and reading

The development of receptive skills assumes a minor role in the self-narration practice. Nonetheless, these skills should be discussed and analysed in this context as they represent the second half of the learning-process regarding the acquisition of a second language. As mentioned, receptive skills are abilities related to understanding and comprehension. In other words, they involve a "psycholinguistic guessing game" (Goodman, in Balboni, 2015,

159) that originates in the cognitive processes proper of the expectancy grammar³, in the knowledge of the world and in the ability to construct meaning as well (Balboni, 2015, 159-163). Furthermore, comprehension plays a fundamental role in learning a second language. It represents a necessary step towards integration (Negri, 2013, 98). Understanding written texts and pieces of information, such as native speakers' monologues, leads the learner to feel self-confident being an active part of the host community.

Despite the differences in form between the two receptive skills, I consider them from the same perspective, that is, comprehension ability in its broad sense. According to Chamot and O'Malley (in Carrasquillo, 1994, 132), comprehending a text requires both attentional factors and the adoption of several cognitive strategies necessary for making "sense of the incoming information". Therefore, just as the learner must actively develop receptive skills, the same applies to productive skills, making use of the most appropriate learning strategies. Regarding the activities proposed in the following chapters, comprehension skills involving skimming and scanning are mainly used to produce authentic examples of self-narration texts. Similarly, listening comprehension is not an end in itself but is rather aimed at oral interactions based on the expression and sharing of thoughts and emotions.

3.3.4. Textual manipulation

Lastly, to present an overview of the skills developed in learning a language, in this section I discuss the skills belonging to a certain group of textual manipulation. They are located between productive and receptive skills and are suited to learning in an academic context (Balboni, 2015, 188-191).

- Dictation: this skill implies transforming an oral text into a written one. It requires a self-evaluation of one's own competence and progress, without external judgements.

³ "Expectancy grammar" is a concept introduced by John W. Oller in 1979. It refers to "a psychologically real system that sequentially orders linguistic elements in time and in relation to extralinguistic elements in meaningful ways" (Oller, in Cummins, Swain, 2014, 142).

- Note-taking: this is the production of short linguistic messages through the ability to scan and listen for information, aimed at the learner's autonomy.
- Summarizing: this is a cognitively complex process that implies deep comprehension of the source text in order to produce a shorter one. The learner must recognize and preserve the noteworthy elements.
- Paraphrasing: this skill refers to the creation of a target text that is similar to a source text in meaning and structure but not lexically or morpho-syntactically. Developing paraphrasing skills is considered essential when producing linguistic messages in a second or foreign language.
- Translating: it is the production of a new text that should include the same words as the source, but in another language. What is fundamental is that the learner should keep account of not only the linguistic elements but also the contextual and cultural references, reflecting on the language itself and on the distance between different cultural worlds.

To sum up, language education is characterized by the development of various skills, all of which play a fundamental role in the learning process. However, regarding the self-narration process and all related activities aimed at the expression of oneself, the facilitator should mainly focus on productive skills and the language produced by the learners. It is mostly by developing speaking and writing skills, and perhaps even more through interaction skills, that the subjects can succeed in narrating their own stories and expressing their feelings.

3.4. Lesson planning and the structure of learning units

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, while teaching a second language, facilitators should consider that linguistic input is identifiable not only inside the classroom but also beyond it, in real-life situations and communicative events. Therefore, planning a lesson in Italian as a second language represents a challenge for teachers, who must consider and accept unexpected events. However, lesson planning is a crucial duty of the teacher as it transforms the contents of the syllabus into modules, teaching units or acquisition units.

The teaching module is “a *procedure* that deals to determine certain sections that are autonomous, complete within themselves, certifiable, able to be accredited” (Balboni, 2010, 45). It cannot be universally applied, especially when dealing with teaching a new language, as it interrupts a uniform process (Balboni, in Serragiotto, 2009, 88). However, it is often necessary in contexts where the participation of learners is constantly evolving, as in the temporary classes of learners within refugee shelters, where new arrivals and unexpected leavings occur often. Regarding the activities proposed in the following chapters, I consider the whole process of self-narration as the result of different modules. I discuss this aspect in the last chapter. In this way, every theme of interest is covered and each section is complete within itself and autonomous. At the same time, it can be linearly linked to the other sections, following a temporary logical thread.

Furthermore, the same didactic activities constitute only a part of the teaching unit, as they mostly correspond to the synthesis phase of the acquisition unit. To discuss and analyse their function, I briefly explain the theories and considerations that lie behind such definitions. Among the most influential theoretical sciences, Gestalt psychology⁴ considers perception as a sequence of three consequential phases: globality, analysis and synthesis. These three stages are exhaustively discussed by Balboni (2010, 44), who states that “acquisition occurs through a global perception at first, followed by a phase of analysis, and it ends with a synthesis, where the mind fixes what it has observed and analysed”.

The above-mentioned phases represent the cornerstone of the teaching unit. This complex linguistic-communicative unit is usually structured in the following phases: 1) motivation, 2) sequence of acquisition units (globality – analysis – synthesis), 3) testing and evaluation, and 4) potential supplementary activities (Balboni, 2013, 19). They are briefly described below.

- Motivation: it is the basis of acquisition. Through techniques of elicitation, through brainstorming a topic at the beginning of a lesson and activating the expectancy grammar to put forward their hypotheses, learners find a personal reason to start the process of language acquisition (Balboni, 2015, 155-156).

⁴ Encyclopaedia Britannica (<https://www.britannica.com/science/Gestalt-psychology>, consulted on 10/03/2019) defines “Gestalt psychology” as the “school of psychology founded in the 20th century that provided the foundation for the modern study of perception”.

- **Globality:** it refers to the first contact with the text. In this initial phase, “engaging a text (a dialogue, a poem, an advertisement, etc.) the didactic activities must be directed initially towards its global comprehension” (Balboni, 2010, 44). Here, the learner is mainly driven by the right hemisphere of the brain, focusing on the overall meaning of the input.
- **Analysis:** the comprehension becomes increasingly more detailed; the left side of the brain drives the learner towards the formulation and analysis of their hypotheses. It also deals with pragmatic, morphological, lexical and cultural aspects of the text and its context (Balboni, 2010, 44).
- **Synthesis and reflection:** the learners autonomously synthesize and systematise the objectives of the unit. They are driven by guided reflection with the aim of turning the language into language acquisition and actively reusing the acquired material (Balboni, in Dolci, Celentin, 2000, 20). In this way, learners identify the applicability of the material to daily life, conscious that acquisition is not an end in itself (Serragiotto, in Serragiotto, 2004, 76) but is rather directed to effective use in communicative events.
- **Testing and evaluation:** the linguistic, pragmatic and cultural objectives are tested, as is the progress of every learner (Balboni, 2015, 156).
- **Supplementary activities:** different texts might be proposed to prove the authenticity of what has been learnt (Balboni, 2015, 157).

The syllabus and topics to be covered can be split in different ways, considering the different sections as a part of the whole teaching process or as complete and autonomous modules. In my dissertation, I focus on activities that belong to the synthesis phase, where learners are invited to reflect on and systematise the objectives of the unit. They reuse the language and newly acquired elements to produce additional authentic texts. The whole learning process is thus structured into autonomous thematic modules, which are further organized in a several teaching units based on the sequence of acquisition units (Balboni, 2015, 158).

3.4.1. The use of technology

Starting in the 1960s, with the introduction of video resources, record players and language laboratories, language teaching has been strongly affected by the use of technology. It is seen as a facilitator or even as a necessary tool to provide a reaction between the learner's mind and the language itself (Freddi in Balboni, 2015, 26-27). Nowadays, technological devices have surpassed their initial accessory role in the learning process and have assumed an essential role, especially when people learn a second or foreign language. They have changed learning styles and teaching methodologies as well as interactions among students and the relationship between teachers and learners (Caruso, in Lamarra, Diadori, Caruso (eds.), 2015, 100).

Furthermore, I deem the main difference from the first use and introduction of technological tools to be the fact that many separate functions proper of different devices are currently fused together within a single instrument, mainly a computer (Balboni, 2015, 58). Therefore, the concept of "multimedia" assumes a new interpretation, implying the use of a "combination of moving and still pictures, sound, music, and words, especially in computers or entertainment" (<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/multimedia>, consulted on 20/08/2019). Thus, the educators are able to bring real language into the classroom through effective communicative situations. In this way, they provide not only linguistic elements but also cultural and extralinguistic references. This strengthens the relationship between the learner and the target language and culture, and the learner's understanding of social and ethical values pertinent to the host country (Caruso, in Lamarra, Diadori, Caruso (eds.), 2015, 101). For example, audio-visual aids allow deep comprehension and memorization of the input through different channels and development of language skills and socio-pragmatic competence. At the same time, they transmit vast cultural and intercultural elements (Cardona, in Serragiotto, 2009, 103-104). What matters is that the various inputs, whether written texts or audio files, or iconographic stills and video sequences, are authentic and related to different topics of public interest, in tune with daily reality (Ambroso, Tamponi, in Caon, 2010, 115).

In general, computers – especially the World Wide Web – are considered not only excellent tools for developing receptive skills and intercultural knowledge but actual

windows on the world. They allow students to actively participate and communicate with other people through e-mails, videos, video-letters or forums (Celentin, in Dolci, Celentin, 212-213). The web creates a suitable environment for communication between learners, whether a one-to-one relationship or interaction between several participants (Caruso, in Lamarra, Diadori, Caruso (eds.), 2015, 102). In both cases, the focus is on learners and their ability to communicate and express themselves to other people.

Ultimately, it is essential to highlight the role of teachers in choosing the most appropriate technological devices and the kind of inputs they want to present to their learners. On one hand, the use of multimedia implies autonomy for the learners, who are invited to act and cooperate in a borderless world, sharing their thoughts and feelings not only with those close to them but also with distant and perhaps unknown people. On the other hand, the learning process must be guided and facilitated by the teachers. They must select comprehension texts and related tasks and activities that are linguistically and culturally suitable for the class, as well as being exciting and motivating. They need to respect the learners' needs and interests and pay specific attention to the involvement of affective factors (Caruso, in Lamarra, Diadori, Caruso (eds.), 2015, 116).

4. NARRATION AS A MEANS OF INTEGRATION AND CONSTRUCTION OF IDENTITY

In considering the peculiarities of adult learners with a migratory background, I deem self-narration activities to be essential for them to establish themselves in the new land. It can help in preserving their identity and values while reorganizing and adapting their lives according to the cultural values of the host country. On one hand, the participants are invited to act either in real or simulated communicative events, expressing their deepest thoughts and emotions and expressing their personalities and narratives. On the other hand, through sharing their stories immigrants can build new relationships, link different accounts and perspectives, and establish a climate that favours the integration of participants with their peers who have had similar experiences and also with natives. Therefore, in the following paragraphs I introduce the concept of autobiography and the innumerable variables which affect self-narration activities. The discussion highlights the importance of favouring positive psychological factors and of identifying the cultural elements that should be understood and recognized when actively listening to others' stories and experiences.

4.1. Narration and autobiography to construct self-identity

Since self-narration plays a fundamental role in allowing the expression of the learners' inner opinions and emotions, I find it essential to identify the meaning and implications of autobiographic activities. First, autobiography is "the construction of a world, that world of subjective experience that we create through our memories"⁵ (Portis, in Valastro, in M@gm@, http://www.analisiqualitativa.com/magma/0801/articolo_28.htm, 2010). Such construction should not be static, fixed on a specific place at a certain moment, but rather dynamic – a constantly evolving path, characterized by the succession and transformation of multiple self-identities by the speaker. The changing traits of identities "can *only* be understood as process, as 'being' or 'becoming'" and are "never a final or settled matter" (Jenkins, in Spencer-Oatey, 2009, 160). This point becomes evident if the main aim of self-narration is viewed as building a bridge that links past events with the present life, putting

⁵ Translation from the original Italian quote: "[...] la costruzione di un mondo, il mondo dell'esperienza soggettiva, il mondo che creiamo con i nostri ricordi" (Portis, in Valastro, in M@gm@, http://www.analisiqualitativa.com/magma/0801/articolo_28.htm, 2010, consulted on 13/07/2019).

the pieces together, and shaping one's own moods, feelings and thoughts through memories and experiences (Amoruso, in Amoruso, D'Agostino, Jaralla (eds.), 2015, 250-252). This need to connect the two temporal dimensions is more urgent when the participants have migratory backgrounds and are thus characterized by the coexistence of two worlds: the suffering world left behind, recalled by memories and narrations, and the world under construction of present moments and future wishes and hopes (Chinnici, in Amoruso, D'Agostino, Jaralla (eds.), 2015, 191). Through autobiographic activities, the narrator can define himself or herself. They can outline the patchwork of social identities which characterise the individual, digging deep into their souls, expressing their fears and joys and recognizing the uniqueness and unrepeatability of their stories and life experiences.

Second, autobiographic activities, in the form of dialogues and narrations, are responsible for the co-construction of identity. This means that self-identity is influenced and defined by the construction of the identity of the "other". Such a process is feasible only through the development of the relational skill of actively listening to others' words, when the interlocutor is able to recall their own memories, observing with awareness their own life experience and identifying their essence in stories told by the "other" (Jaralla, in Amoruso, D'Agostino, Jaralla (eds.), 2015, 233-235). Thus, the sharing of stories and emotions, requiring a positive mood of trust and comprehension, allows a reciprocal exchange and an encounter with features which might either resemble or differ from oneself. In both cases, it shapes the personal traits of the listener. Self-narration activities act as an exercise in front of the mirror: the interlocutors symbolize the mirror in which the participants see their reflections, recognizing themselves in the "other". They are open to multiple possible interpretations of the surrounding world and themselves, influenced by feelings and emotions in the stories of their peers (Amoruso, D'Agostino, Jaralla (eds.), 2015, 38).

Therefore, to construct their self-identity, it is fundamental for learners to consider the multiplicity and mutability of their own identity while also conceptualizing the "other". This enables them to identify the "self", conscious of the need to finding oneself in others' words, silences and facial expressions.

4.2. The role of emotions in second-language learning

Before the Second World War, teaching styles were not influenced by psychology's emphasis on cognitive factors. In the 1970s and 1980s, the affective dimension of language learning began to be considered as an object for research. Nowadays, successful language acquisition is deemed to be possible only through the coexistence of cognitive and affective factors (that is, sentiments and emotions that intrinsically influence the process).

Although emotions have long been considered the opposite of rational and cognitive aspects (Balboni, 2015, 86), they are currently seen as the response of the mind to external pressure. Johnmarshall Reeve (in MacIntyre, Gregersen, 2012, 194) stated that "emotions are short-lived, feeling arousal-purposive-expressive phenomena that help us adapt to the opportunities and challenges we face during important life events." This multi-dimensional definition of the phenomenon indicates that emotions are strongly linked to the context and what one expects to face.

Furthermore, emotions might be either positive, facilitating a successful learning process, or negative, representing an obstacle to learning acquisition. Of interest is that emotions represent a state of mind quite common in language learning, especially in foreign and second-language classes, and that "ambivalent emotion is prevalent in language learning" (MacIntyre, in MacIntyre, Gregersen, 2012, 198). Hence, the role of teachers should include the investigation and reinforcement of positive emotions, such as "joy, interest, contentment, pride, and love" (Frederickson, in MacIntyre, Gregersen, 2012, 197), and the overcoming of negative sentiments that can affect and block learning acquisition. The teacher should plan lessons and activities that do not risk activating negative emotions when a person learns a second or foreign language.

I briefly discuss both positive and negative emotions here, although I focus more on the latter – since fear and anxiety can strongly affect self-narration practices, especially among people with a migratory background who live a temporary situation and seek new relationships. First, it is interesting to note that diverse positive emotions can all "broaden people's momentary thought-action repertoires and build their enduring personal resources" (Frederickson, in MacIntyre, Gregersen, 2012, 197). Hence these emotions broaden people's attention and thinking as they search for new experiences in learning; at the same time, such emotions foster health and well-being (Frederickson, in MacIntyre,

Gregersen, 2012, 198). By contrast, negative emotions represent an obstacle for language learning, especially when it includes activities which invite learners to open their hearts and speak freely, sharing their stories and expressing their thoughts and feelings. Negative emotions have been shown to disrupt language learning and might negatively affect the production of language messages and the use of communication strategies (Horwitz E, Horwitz M, Cope, 1986, 126).

In dealing with second-language communication, the individual's self-concept is unavoidably challenged because of fear and anxiety related to the learning process (Horwitz E, Horwitz M, Cope, 1986, 128). Notably, when talking about negative emotions, researchers mainly refer to fear and anxiety; these states often coexist and affect the learning process. Fear goes beyond a worry about negative judgements or reactions and refers here particularly to the fear of assimilation. As studied and discussed by Richard Clément (in Heinzmann, 2013, 20-21), an individual might be driven either by integrativeness or fear of assimilation. In the first case, the learner is attracted by the second language and thus the affinity towards the learning process and the relative community is strong. Fear of assimilation refers to the social distance identified by John Schumann (in Ellis, 1994, 231), concerning the "extent to which individual learners become members of the target-language group and, therefore, achieve contact with them".

Second, anxiety is "a psychological construct, commonly described by psychologists as a state of apprehension, a vague fear that is only indirectly associated with an object" (Hilgard, Atkinson, Atkinson, in Scovel, 1991, 18). Language anxiety constitutes a specific type of anxiety; it is a complex and multidimensional phenomenon widespread in language classrooms and especially when learning a second language (Horwitz, Horwitz, Cope, in Young, 1991, 427). Language anxiety can be related to different sources, either associated with the learner and their own sentiments and beliefs; with teachers and potential interactions with them; or with instructional practice, meaning the classroom procedures and language testing (Young, 1991, 427). Despite the multiplicity of reasons that lie behind anxious feelings and reactions, the common result is a psychological block in learning a language.

Anxiety contributes to Krashen's psychological principle of the affective filter, which "makes the individual unreceptive to language input" (Horwitz, Horwitz, Cope, 1986, 127). According to the American linguist, the affective filter is a mechanism of self-defence. It is

activated by anxiety-related situations and activities which might undermine the ideal self of individuals, especially their self-image, self-esteem and self-confidence (Balboni, 2015, 48-50). Hence, when people have a strong affective filter, their language acquisition is conditioned and blocked by affective variables. Even if the learners “understand the message, the input will not reach that part of the brain responsible for language acquisition, or the language acquisition device” (Stevick, in Krashen, 1982, 31). Therefore, although the person is exposed to the input, the input will successively rebound and not be transformed into intake, which prevents the registration and acquisition of the language.

To sum up, when teaching a second language, the teacher should consider that affective factors are strongly related to the cognitive ones. Language acquisition cannot occur without the involvement of both positive and negative emotions. Whereas positive emotions lead to successful learning processes, favouring the memorization and the transformation of inputs into intakes, negative sentiments activate the affective filter, implying a constant association of such emotions with the stimuli and thus impeding language acquisition. Teachers play a fundamental role as they should be able to provide comprehensible inputs in low-anxiety contexts, aiming for a serene atmosphere.

In this dissertation, I consider emotional involvement to be both the reason and the objective of the self-narration activities I propose. Participants are constantly invited to reflect on their own feelings and share them; at the same time, such tasks unavoidably evoke several emotions. This is why the teacher should recognize and manage the effect that negative feelings could have on language acquisition, by making the learning context as ideal as possible.

4.3. Motivation

As stated by Ushioda (in Griffiths, 2009, 19), “motivation concerns what moves a person”; the word derives from the Latin verb *movere*. A person is motivated “to make certain choices, to engage in action, and to persist in action”. Motivation is essential for achieving success in many human endeavours, and language learning might be one of them as it requires much motivation.

Unlike other subjects, language learning is not only the acquisition of notions and skills but also involves the sociocultural environment, with its related way of life and set of

values. Furthermore, it is even more complex when the target language is a second language rather than a foreign one. In this case, the learner inevitably identifies “with members of another ethnolinguistic group” and adopts “very subtle aspects of their behaviour, including their distinctive style of speech and their language” (Gardner and Lambert in Ushioda, in Griffiths, 2009, 20). This is because second-language learning is necessarily linked to the need for communicating, socialising and building relationships with other people. The aim is to become a member of the new community and to integrate in their cultural system.

Motivation has been shown to comprise various components, all of which have their own functions and are essential in unique ways. In this section, I briefly examine each constituent to provide an understanding of the driving force of the language-learning process. The first distinction is between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation, which differ regarding the nature of the input – either external or internal:

- Extrinsic motivation: this term refers to “doing something as a means to some separable outcome, such as gaining a qualification, getting a job, pleasing the teacher, or avoiding punishment” (Ryan and Deci in Ushioda in Griffiths, 2009, 21). In our case, compulsory schooling might be considered an external factor, since migrants are affected by the dual nature of hospitality, which involves both rights and duties.
- Intrinsic motivation: this is contrasted with extrinsic motivation. It is defined as “doing something as an end in itself, for its own self-sustaining pleasurable rewards of enjoyment, interest, challenge, or skill and knowledge development” (Ryan and Deci in Ushioda in Griffiths, 2009, 21). As discussed below, this is the most effective and durable kind of motivation.

Two additional components of motivation, linked to the previous ones, have been empirically studied. These are integrative motivation and instrumentality, which refer to the driving force of the learning process linked to predetermined goals:

- Instrumental motivation: it “is related to the potential pragmatic gains of L2 proficiency, such as getting a better job or a higher salary” (Dörnyei, 1994, 274). This type is focused on the practical value and advantages of the learning process. It might

be considered a component of extrinsic rather than intrinsic motivation, since external factors positively affect the learning process.

- Integrative motivation: it is the driving force of the learning process. It aims for an integrative orientation (Gardner, in Dörnyei, 2009, 23) and reflects “a sincere and personal interest in the target language, people, and culture” (Gardner and Lambert, in Ushioda, in Griffiths, 2009, 20), towards a social-integrative purpose. Therefore, learning a second language “implies an openness to, and respect for other cultural groups and ways of life” (Gardner, in Dörnyei, 2009, 22 -23). The person aims at integration into both communities. In my opinion, this motivation is essential when dealing with migrants and their second-language learning process. They display a strong need and deep desire to be considered part of the new community and to feel a new sense of membership.

I also investigate the origins of motivation in learning, focusing on the tri-polar model of Balboni (2015, 83-85). This model considers three main factors that can activate the motivation behind the learning process:

- Duty: it is related to the perception of what one must do and the obligation to learn, which can easily evolve into a sense of duty. It is common in traditional teaching situations where the interest in the studied subject is not sufficiently developed. However, duty does not imply the deep language acquisition that is “the product of a subconscious process” (<http://www.sk.com.br/sk-krash.html>, consulted on 12/02/2018), but rather only language learning. The latter is “the product of formal instruction and it comprises a conscious process which results in conscious knowledge 'about' the language, for example knowledge of grammar rules” (<http://www.sk.com.br/sk-krash.html>, consulted on 12/01/2018). Hence, the learnt material remains in short-term memory and is then forgotten.
- Need: it is connected to personal expectations or objectives that need to be satisfied. The learner should be aware of his or her own goals and of the efforts that their satisfaction would require. Once they are completed, the interest and related motivation would decrease markedly (Balboni in Caon, 2006, 17).

- Pleasure: it is considered to be “the determinant factor for a meaningful acquisition to take place, in terms of stability and duration” (Balboni in Caon, 2006, 18) and is linked to the personal interest of the individual. This component is the only one that can activate and continuously regenerate the motivation which drives the learning process. It refers not only to the pleasant feeling of the subject but also to the satisfaction and gratification given by the fulfilment of personal objectives. Balboni discussed several kinds of pleasure, linked to daily methodological choices. Among these are pleasure in learning for the sake of learning, pleasure in overcoming challenges, pleasure in variety, pleasure in systematizing and understanding, and pleasure in playing games (in Caruso, 2015, 25).

The three factors mentioned above, which sustain motivation, were depicted as a triangle (*Figure 4*), in which ““pleasure” was at the apex because it was considered the factor that was the most stable over time and the strongest in sustaining the learning effort” (Balboni, 2010, 20). Later this was changed to a circular geometrical figure, showing a continuum of duty, pleasure and need (*Figure 5*).

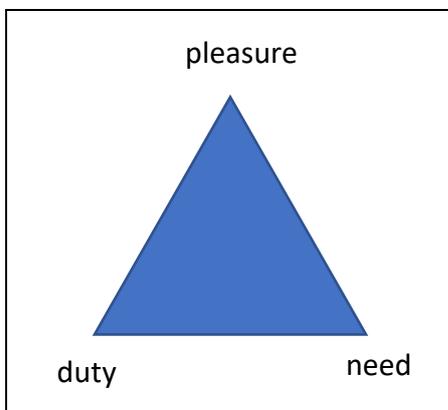


Figure 4: Tri-polar motivation model (triangle)

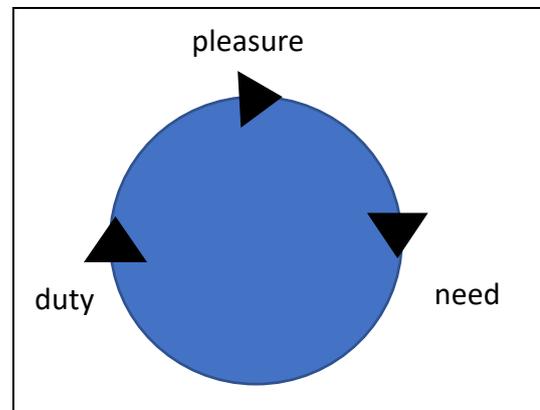


Figure 5: Tri-polar motivation model (circle)

Lastly, according to the stimulus appraisal theory of Schumann and Scherer (in Kaplan, 2010, 145), motivation can be reduced to appraisal dimensions because it is linked to the input provided by the teacher and their methodological choices. Research showed that “learners make evaluations of stimulus situations occurring along several parameters” (Kaplan, 2010, 145), summarized as follows:

- novelty: a new input clearly captivates the learner more than a known one;
- pleasantness: the more the learner is attracted by the stimulus, the greater his or her motivation to learn;
- goal or need significance: the input should aim at satisfying the learners' goals and answering their needs;
- coping potential: the stimulus must be characterized by the right complexity. On one hand, input that is too simple would not sufficiently stimulate the learner; on the other hand, excessive complexity would discourage the student and hamper thought;
- self-image and social image: the input should not affect the self-esteem and social image of the learner, who would otherwise activate the affective filter.

4.4. Self-narration as a means of integration

As discussed at the beginning of the chapter, self-narration activities deal with the expression and sharing of one's own stories, opinions and feelings. These actions are crucial in determining the centrality of the learners' needs and desires. On the one hand, the participants are unwilling to lose or forget their own self-identity, conscious of their emotional and relational wealth. On the other hand, they are open to comparison and change, aiming for a slow process of integration within the new context – which is “inhabited” by cultural values and codes that differ from the immigrant's original ones (Delle Donne, 1997, 79).

For immigrants, their openness is crucial, since the construction of their identity and the sharing of the elements which contribute to it inevitably lead to instances of reciprocal knowledge and efforts to integrate themselves within the classroom and host country. As I discuss in the following paragraphs, according to Kim's model of intercultural adaptation (in Dolci, in Caon, Balboni, 2008, 110-111), communicative competence allows successful integration and the potential identification of immigrant people with the host community. This provides them the possibility of feeling part of the target society. However, the active role of interlocutors is also important, since integration “can only be freely chosen and successfully pursued by non-dominant groups when the dominant society is open and inclusive in its orientation towards cultural diversity” (Berry, in Spencer-Oatey, Franklin,

2009, 166). Therefore, the need to develop relational skills is evident, aimed at successful interaction within intercultural communicative events.

4.4.1. Cultural and intercultural aspects in second-language learning

Despite the complexity of defining the term “culture”, anthropologist Hofstede (1991, 4) proposed the following definition, which I consider highly appropriate: “*Culture* is a catchword for all those patterns of thinking, feeling, and acting” that “lie within the social environments in which one grew up and collected one’s life experiences”.

According to this definition, culture is the totality of ways of life and how they are intrinsically and reciprocally connected with language. Indeed, culture is necessary for language teaching, to contextualize the linguistic system – which is not an artificial element (Celentin, Serragiotto, in Dolci, Celentin, 2000, 110-111). Hence, one should analyse and consider the potential similarities and differences between the source culture and the target one. One of the main objectives of language teaching, indeed, should be the learners’ process of acculturation to the target culture, conscious of and respecting the diversities yet without losing their personal or cultural identity.

However, the encounter among diverse cultures often leads to intercultural difficulties. Implicit cultural variables may undermine communication and potential harmony. Regarding such problems, Balboni (in Caon, Balboni, 2008, 124-125) identified a model of intercultural communicative competence, starting with a communicative competence model, divided into three categories: language, extra-linguistic codes and cultural values. All of these might be responsible for misunderstandings and unsuccessful communicative acts. I focus here on features which are strongly related to culture and the intercultural context, putting the verbal language aside temporarily. However, regarding critical linguistic issues, I would like to highlight that language is always to be considered in its context. In the socio-pragmatic dimension, language in use is characterised and affected by several features which vary among cultures. These features include ways of relating to others to achieve respectful and thus successful communicative events (Balboni, in Caon, Balboni, 2008, 127-128).

Extra-linguistic codes refer to the conscious – or more frequently, unconscious – use of body language and the communicative function of objects. Several unintentional

behaviours are often taken for granted and considered natural and universal, whereas they are related to personal and cultural worlds. This leads to misunderstandings and intercultural problems. Extra-linguistic competence is made up of kinesics, proxemics, and objectemics and vestemics. I briefly analyse these cultural codes, to provide a better overview of the main intercultural misunderstandings:

- Kinesics: this term refers to body language, including body movements, postures, facial expressions, eye contact, smells and noises and, above all, gestures. Gestures represent one of the main characteristics of communication events involving Italian people. Therefore, when acting in intercultural contexts, people need the knowledge on one hand, and a conscious use of gestures on the other hand. Body language communicates despite the speaker's will, unconsciously expressing and revealing something about the speaker (Balboni, Caon, 2015, 54-55).
- Proxemics: this refers to the use of physical space, including the distance between interlocutors and their positioning in relation to each other. Again, the tolerable distance is determined by cultural norms, which can mean people involuntarily endanger the intimacy of others. The interlocutors should keep themselves at arm's length, considering not only their physical positioning but also that physical contact is often seen as an unnecessary intrusion. The use of proxemics in relation to communication between men and women is particularly important, especially when interacting with Muslim communities. In this case, close attention should be paid to potential signals of disagreement, to avoid embarrassment and detachment (Celentin, Serragiotto, in Dolci, Celentin, 2000, 116).
- Objectemics and vestemics: these terms refer to objects and clothes unconsciously conferred with the power of conveying messages, either social, religious or ethnic. They can communicate various features of participants, such as their prosperity, social class, and respect for the interlocutor. Since the meaning and value of these objects vary from culture to culture, the speakers should consider the message and the concept of themselves they want to communicate (Balboni, Caon, 2015, 68).

To sum up, considering that non-verbal visual elements are noticed before auditory ones (Balboni, in Caon, Balboni, 2008, 129), I deem that knowledge and awareness regarding the

messages that interlocutors would like to convey through extra-linguistic codes, especially their body language and belongings, are crucial. Furthermore, such awareness remains central within intercultural communicative events. The meaning and “grammars” of such codes are cultural rather than natural, and thus misunderstanding is a particularly risky consequence.

In a similar way, the “software of the mind” introduced by Hofstede (in Balboni, in Caon, Balboni, 2008, 124-125) is constituted by cultural factors which affect communication. According to Balboni and Caon (in <https://www.immi.se/intercultural/nr35/balboni.html>, consulted on 05/09/2019), “we are unaware of the existence of many cultural values, which we consider natural and therefore shared by all potential interlocutors”. Hence, intercultural contexts lead to different cultural identities coexisting and confronting each other (Malizia, 2005, 24-25). Among the multiplicity of cultural values and beliefs, researchers have identified certain crucial ones. They include the following topics (Balboni, in Caon, Balboni, 2008, 131-133):

- the concept of time, especially referring to punctuality;
- the concept of space and the dyad between private and public;
- hierarchy, respect, status;
- the concept of family and belonging groups;
- the personal concept of loyalty and fair play;
- the concept of knowledge and learning;
- values referring to well-being or to sexual and religious areas;
- “metaphors we live by” (Lakoff, Johnson, in Balboni, Caon, 2015).

To conclude, multiculturalism and interculturalism characterise the context of language classes that include people from different countries of origin. Therefore, learners might use different linguistic and extra-linguistic codes, and above all that each learner is intrinsically determined by his or her own cultural values. The role of the teacher should be central for limiting and avoiding critical intercultural problems, with awareness of the coexistence of diverse perspectives and conceptions of the surrounding world. To cope with such issues and to allow the adequate cohabitation of multiple culture-related elements, intercultural communicative competence and the necessary relational competences should be developed. These topics are discussed in the next section.

4.4.2. Intercultural communication competence and relational skills

As discussed above, “intercultural communication is governed by competence groups, respectively verbal, non-verbal and cultural, and is realised in the context of communicative events governed by grammars which contain both universal elements and local cultural elements” (Balboni, Caon, in <https://www.immi.se/intercultural/nr35/balboni.html>, consulted on 05/09/2019). This point indicated the need to develop an intercultural communication competence. Such competence was defined by Chen and Starosta (in Spencer-Oatey, Franklin, 2009, 52) as “the ability to negotiate cultural meanings and to execute appropriately affective communication behaviours that recognise the interactants’ multiple identities in a specific environment”.

What is significant and peculiar to intercultural contexts is the need to master behavioural abilities or relational skills that allow the participant to face intercultural problems and situations and to act in the world. This point emerges from the model of intercultural communication competence proposed by Balboni (in Balboni, Caon, in <https://www.immi.se/intercultural/nr35/balboni.html>, consulted on 10/08/2019), illustrated in *Figure 6*.

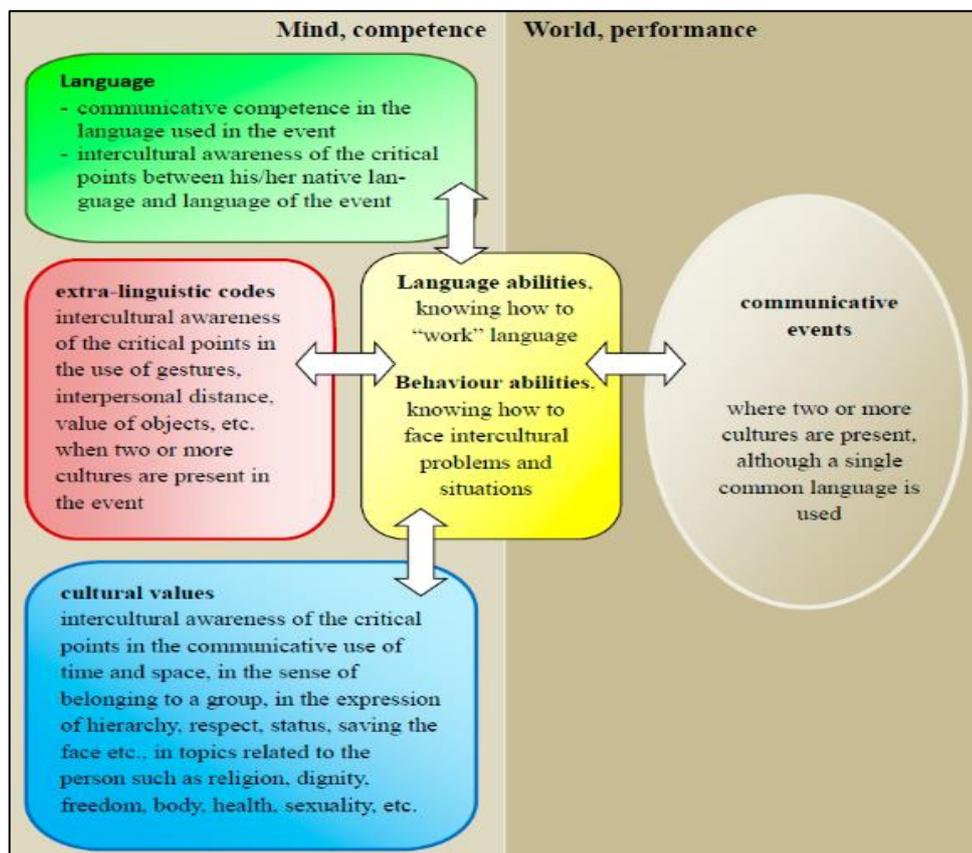


Figure 6: Balboni's model of intercultural communication competence

As far as relational skills are concerned, their central role in all kinds of communicative events is evident. These skills lead to successful and respectful interactions. However, they are even more crucial when coping with multiple cultural backgrounds and unconscious natural values. According to Balboni and Caon (2015, 145-147), potential misunderstandings and criticalities due to cultural differences can be overcome by developing the following relational skills:

- Knowing how to observe decentralising oneself: this implies detachment and emotive estrangement from one's living situation. It surpasses the concept of ethnocentrism, which often affects one's perspective, and recognizes otherness.
- Knowing how to relativize one's own values and ideas, conscious of the partiality of one's own viewpoint in trying to interpret reality.
- Knowing how to suspend judgement: such relational skill is indispensable when encountering the "other", especially when the other has a different "software of the mind" and a different system of cultural values. Successful communication requires direct knowledge, going beyond the concepts of stereotypes and prejudices, whether cultural, economic or ethno-geographic. Stereotypes imply the generalisation, classification and judgement of individuals, considering them to be inferior human beings (Malizia, 2005, 29).
- Knowing how to actively listen: this refers to the ability to understand the interlocutor's behaviours, conscious of the central role of personal experience and the implicit meanings of one's messages. It implies reciprocal knowledge and learning, investigating the reasons behind actions and words, and providing feedback.
- Knowing how to understand emotions: comprehending another person's feelings and needs is linked to the ability to imagine oneself in that person's place. This is achieved through empathic and exotopic⁶ attitudes, by recognizing the features which characterize and distinguish the interlocutors.

⁶ According to Balboni and Caon (2015, 154-155), "empathy" refers to the ability to understand and share the feelings of the "other". Conversely, "exotopia" is the ability to recognize oneself as different from the "other".

- Knowing how to negotiate meaning: this is the union of the previous skills, the arrival point. It implies both the attribution of meaning to behaviours and the co-constructing of “a communicative exchange that [...] makes explicit those implicit cultural components that often create communicative problems in the intercultural sphere” (Caon, in Lobasso *et al.*, 2018, 102-103).

One of the main objectives of my dissertation is to offer the possibility of developing an adequate intercultural communication competence, through several didactic activities in which relational skills play a fundamental role. People with a migratory background face a great challenge in adapting to unfamiliar cultures, since they frequently perceive a sort of hostility from the host country and feeling themselves to be strangers in the new land. At the same time, they feel distant from their past life (Delle Donne, 1997, 65-66). Therefore, to achieve integration, much efforts is needed from all parties towards the mastery of relational skills. People must actively listen to others' inner thoughts and feelings and try to understand different viewpoints and experiences through first-hand knowledge. In addition, these relational skills should be developed by Italian people who are interested in the successful integration of immigrants. They should aim to discover the newcomers' stories and biographies as well as their current emotions and their future wishes and projects.

5. CASE STUDY

In this chapter, I enter the focus of my thesis, with a practical application of the theoretical context discussed in the previous chapters. Therefore, I propose a questionnaire to a group of selected participants. It is constituted by adult learners of Italian as a second language with a migratory background and currently experiencing a temporary situation of precariousness and wait in Italy. Furthermore, the level of proficiency of the Italian language of the participants is mainly pre-intermediate (A2 - B1 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages), meaning that different topics and activities can be faced, although requiring an adequate use of linguistic structures and extra-linguistic references.

5.1. Objectives of the research

As explained in the next sections, the aim of my research is to identify the language needs of the selected learners, in order to suggest a few didactic activities that might satisfy the emerged needs. Thus, I focus on the necessity of expressing their own experience and feelings, a need that is often neglected in favour of the transmission of linguistic structures and formula with the purpose of satisfying the basic needs. Conversely, here the focus is set not only on the language itself, but on the psychological and affective dimensions influencing the language-learning process as well. Lastly, the learners' necessity and desire of narrating and sharing their stories and their deepest emotions are analysed.

5.2. Context of the research

As introduced in the previous paragraphs, in the proposed questionnaire I examine a particular case study of Italian as a second-language learners, referring to several people I have met during my internship with an association aiming at taking care of people with a migratory background, either men, women, or children.

As suggested by the initial part of the questionnaire, including the personal data of the participants, the target of my research is constituted by thirty-four male asylum seekers coming from thirteen different countries. All of them come from either the African

continent or the Asian one, with a high percentage of the formers, as we may see in *Figure 7*.

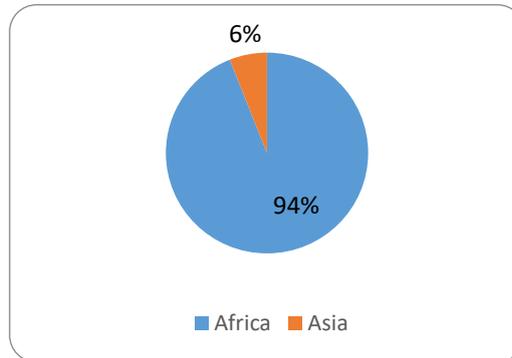


Figure 7: Countries of origin

All the participants temporarily live in a shelter for refugees and asylum seekers in the South Tyrolean city of Bolzano/Bozen. They have been selected from different classes, choosing only students at a waystage (A2) or pre-intermediate level (B1) of proficiency of the Italian language, but with different learning strategies, personalities and motivation. Moreover, most of the students participating are aged under 30, with the highest peak of people between 20 and 30 years old. As we may see in the following table, only the 18% of participants is above 30, with an absent representation of people over 41 (*Figure 8*). This is highly representative of the general migration flows, since the statistics prove that most of the asylum seekers in the European Union during the last years were aged less than 35 years old ([https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Asylum_statistics#Age and gender of first-time applicants](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Asylum_statistics#Age_and_gender_of_first-time_applicants), consulted on 30/08/2019).

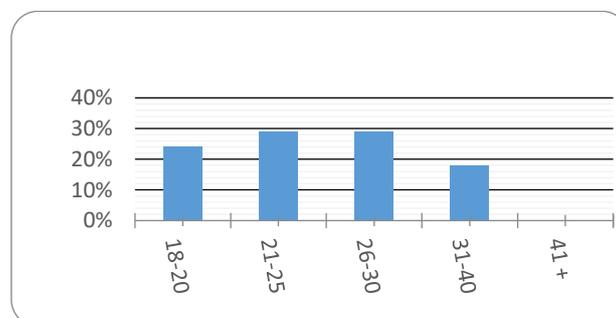


Figure 8: Age

Another important factor to keep in mind when selecting the most appropriate didactic activities is certainly the mother tongue of the students. By analysing the questionnaire, it comes to light that English and French-speaking people are almost balanced, with a slight predominance of the formers. On the contrary, other languages are only barely represented, with a 9% of the whole amount (*Figure 9*). However, it should be highlighted that not all the participants have an excellent competence in their official language, due to the fact that they are used to frequently interact with people from the same country using their dialects.

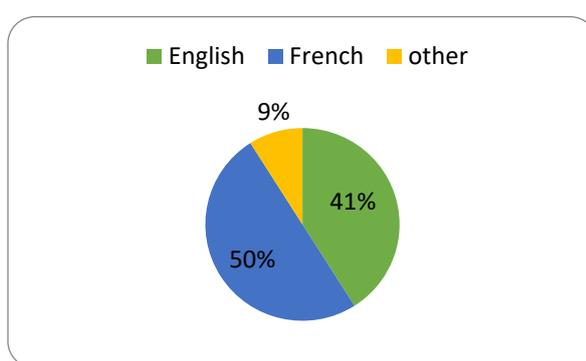


Figure 9: Mother tongue

5.3. Methodological choices

The present study is a primary research, since it takes into consideration the data that I have personally collected and compared, in order to get an overview of the language needs which are proper to immigrants. Moreover, it is a psychometric-quantitative research, dealing with hard and quantifiable data concerning the psychological aspects. Lastly, a specific point in time is considered, thus referring to a cross-sectional research.

The research has been developed through a questionnaire, a suitable instrument to collect quantifiable data that need to be compared; it allows the researcher to have a general overview of different topics in a short time and at extremely low costs. Furthermore, as far as the structure of the questionnaire is concerned, I have chosen thirty-four queries, interchanging multiple choice questions and the likert scaling method, towards an analysis that tries to be as objective as possible. Facing multiple choice questions, “respondents are offered a set of answers they have to choose from” (<https://research-methodology.net/research-methods/survey-method/questionnaires-2/>,

consulted on 15/08/2019). Therefore, I deem them to be the best way to collect more technical data, such as the language experience and future projects. In fact, they give to the participants the same framework of reference, avoiding any kind of ambiguity that could emerge from open-ended questions. On the other hand, they show some lacks, since they do not consider a spontaneous expression of the participants' feelings. Therefore, to allow the participants to express their emotions and opinions, "measuring attitudes by asking people to respond to a series of statements about a topic, in terms of the extent to which they agree with them, and so tapping into the cognitive and affective components of attitudes" (<https://www.simplypsychology.org/likert-scale.html>, consulted on 15/08/2019), I have opted for scaling questions. Lastly, as further discussed in the following paragraphs, the questionnaire on learners' needs is divided into topics, in order to categorise the different subjects of interest. In this way, the understanding and the coherence along the research are facilitated, as well as the following analysis of data.

5.3.1. Questionnaire structure and content

<p style="text-align: center;">NEEDS ANALYSIS OF SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNERS WITH A MIGRATORY BACKGROUND</p> <p>Name and surname (facultative):</p> <p>Age:</p> <p>Sex: m <input type="checkbox"/> f <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Country:</p> <p>Spoken languages:</p> <p>Date:</p> <p>Questionnaire objectives: The aim is to identify the linguistic needs of the analysed learners, in order to allow the teacher to realize a didactic course focused on the fulfilment of such needs.</p> <p>Instructions: Please pay attention while reading the following questions and put a cross on the left of the chosen answer.</p>
--

A. LEARNER'S ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

1. I have been studying Italian for:

- Less than 6 months
- More than 6 months (included) but less than one year
- 1 year
- 2 years or more

2. In my country I have been studying:

- never
- less than 6 years
- more than 6 years (included) but less than 12 years
- 12 years or more

3. In language classes what I most enjoy is:

- talking during dialogues, role-plays or authentic conversations
- reading books or authentic material
- listening to audio files or songs
- writing letters, e-mails or short messages

4. I find it more difficult:

- to speak Italian fluently
- to practice reading comprehension
- to practice listening comprehension
- To write in Italian

B. SELF-PERCEPTION

5. I keep thinking that the other students are better at languages than I am

STRONGLY AGREE NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE DISAGREE

6. I keep thinking that my classmates are smarter than I am

STRONGLY AGREE NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE DISAGREE

7. I find it easy to speak Italian

STRONGLY AGREE NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE DISAGREE

8. I worry about making mistakes in language classes	STRONGLY AGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	DISAGREE
9. It embarrasses me to speak Italian in front of other students	STRONGLY AGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	DISAGREE
<i>C. <u>PERCEPTION OF YOUR OWN CULTURE AND OTHER CULTURES</u></i>			
10. I think that my own culture and religion are better than others	STRONGLY AGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	DISAGREE
11. I am proud to be Senegalese/Gambian/Pakistani...	STRONGLY AGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	DISAGREE
12. I think that Italian culture and traditions are different from mine	STRONGLY AGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	DISAGREE
13. I am worried about losing my personal identity	STRONGLY AGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	DISAGREE
14. I am worried about forgetting my own culture and traditions	STRONGLY AGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	DISAGREE
<i>D. <u>RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHERS</u></i>			
15. I have a lot of friends	STRONGLY AGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	DISAGREE
16. I enjoy being alone	STRONGLY AGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	DISAGREE
17. I trust my teacher	STRONGLY AGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	DISAGREE
18. I fit in with my classmates	STRONGLY AGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	DISAGREE

19. I am afraid that other students will laugh at me when I speak a foreign language

STRONGLY AGREE

NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE

DISAGREE

E. MOTIVATION

20. I study Italian for professional reasons

STRONGLY AGREE

NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE

DISAGREE

21. I like Italian language and culture

STRONGLY AGREE

NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE

DISAGREE

22. I am forced to study but I do not like it

STRONGLY AGREE

NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE

DISAGREE

23. I would like to learn Italian in order to feel less “different”

STRONGLY AGREE

NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE

DISAGREE

24. I would like to learn Italian in order to communicate with native people and integrate myself into the Italian community

STRONGLY AGREE

NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE

DISAGREE

25. I study Italian because I would like to be able to share my experience and express my feelings

STRONGLY AGREE

NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE

DISAGREE

F. SELF-NARRATION

26. I find it interesting to discover the culture and traditions of other countries

STRONGLY AGREE

NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE

DISAGREE

27. I find it interesting to listen to other people’s experience

STRONGLY AGREE

NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE

DISAGREE

28. I feel ashamed when I am asked to talk about my experience

STRONGLY AGREE

NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE

DISAGREE

29. I identify myself with my classmates' narrations

STRONGLY AGREE

NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE

DISAGREE

30. I always listen when my friends are talking

STRONGLY AGREE

NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE

DISAGREE

31. I feel sorry when other people do not listen to what I am saying

STRONGLY AGREE

NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE

DISAGREE

Note: in the following questions you can choose either one or more answers

32. I like sharing my thoughts and feelings with:

- my friends
- my classmates
- people I don't know

33. When somebody asks me to talk about my country it makes me:

- happy
- angry
- sad
- other: _____

G. FUTURE MIGRATION PROJECTS

34. In the future I would like to:

- stay in Italy forever
- go to another country
- go back to my country

Thank you!

As already mentioned in the previous paragraphs, the questionnaire is divided into seven different topics, in order to deal with all the elements that I consider essentials for the analysis of language needs and the following planning of didactic activities. In this section, I briefly describe the subjects of interest.

- a. Learner's academic experience: referring to the past schooling experience of the participants. In order to identify the activities which could best satisfy the language needs of the participants, a further investigation of their attitudes towards the language skills is required.
- b. Self-perception: referring to the level of self-esteem and self-confidence of the students. Dealing with self-narration, it is highly important to evaluate psychological aspects which might condition the expression of the participants' thoughts and feelings.
- c. Perception of one's culture and others' cultures: referring to the awareness of different cultural systems and the relativization of one's culture-related values. In a multilingual and multicultural context, it is essential to promote a conscious and respectful atmosphere among students from different countries and with different cultures, values and traditions.
- d. Relationship with others: referring to the personality of the subjects. The focus is set on the relationship with teachers and classmates, as the main requisite for expressing oneself is without a doubt trustiness.
- e. Motivation: referring to the different components of motivation that lie behind the learning process. Extrinsic, intrinsic, instrumental and integrative motivations are investigated.
- f. Self-narration: referring to the possibility and the desire of the participants of exposing themselves. A particular attention is paid to the feelings that might emerge when recalling a troubled experience. It represents the focus of my analysis.
- g. Future migration projects: referring to the future objectives of the participants. Such topic is constituted by a single question, since it supplements the motivation section and allow us to have a clearer overview of the examined context.

5.4. Results and data analysis

In this chapter, I carefully analyse the data collected through the questionnaire. I preserve the subdivision under topics that allows the reader to better understand and outline the outcomes, in order to draw the right conclusions. The collected data are depicted through tables and graphics, thus facilitating the comprehension.

5.4.1. Learner's academic experience

In the first section, I attempt to contextualise my research, focusing on the needs of the participants, their competences and their perception of language skills.

Question 1: Italian SL learning experience

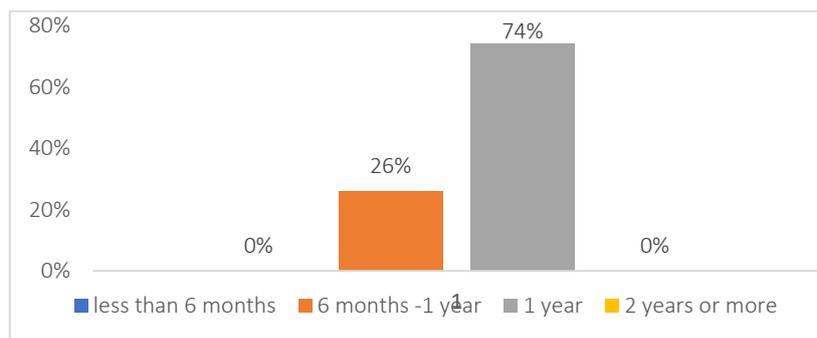


Figure 10: Italian L2 learning experience

By *Figure 10*, it is noticeable that all the participants have been studied Italian for a slightly short period of time, included between 6 months and 2 years. Therefore, they do not show an excellent competence in the second language, especially regarding to its linguistic and cultural complexity. However, they demonstrate a pre-intermediate level of proficiency of the language, perhaps due to the constant attendance to language classes. Furthermore, the long period of time spent in the refugee shelter carries along feelings of exhaustion, anxiety and distrust.

Question 2: literacy

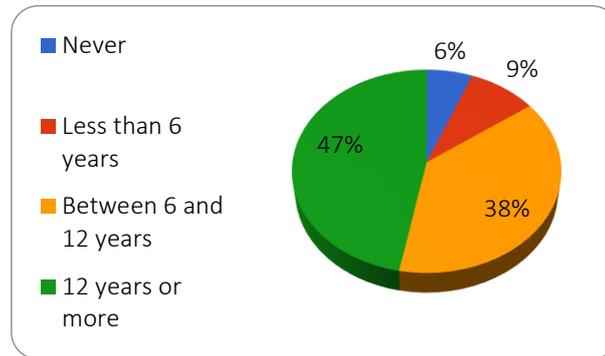


Figure 11: Literacy

The participants of this research appear to be mostly literate, since almost half of them (47%) boast at least 12 years of academic experience, followed by a 38% of people who have attended school in their country for a period of time included between 6 and 12 years (Figure 11). On the other hand, only the 9% of the students have quit their studies after a short time, whereas a 6% of them have never studied before. This last percentage is unsurprisingly low, since only students belonging to the highest courses at school have been selected.

Question 3 - 4: language skills

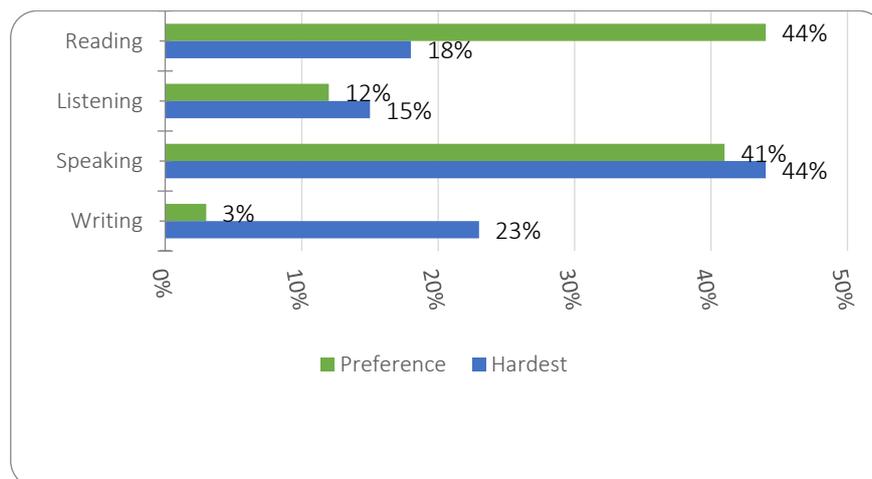


Figure 12: Language skills

Dealing with language skills, it is noteworthy the distinction between those skills that the participants would like to develop during language classes, and the ones they consider to be the most difficult (*Figure 12*). In this regard, it should be kept in mind that learners are characterised by different learning styles, preferring either auditory or visual activities, and thus perceiving different levels of complexity facing the same tasks. As far as the direction of communication is concerned, it comes to light that productive activities, such as speaking (44%) and writing (23%), are perceived as requiring a greater effort than receptive ones, such as reading (18%) and listening (15%). Conversely, there is not a clear preference of ones over the others. Moreover, the chosen method of communication might be either spoken or written, since the favourite activities result to involve both speaking and reading skills at a similar level. In the end, as far as the perceived complexity of different kind of tasks is concerned, reading activities appear to be the favourite ones because of the perceived simplicity, as we can notice by the low 18% of responses concerning the complexity of the tasks. On the contrary, speaking skills are the favourite ones in the 41% of the responses but, at the same time, the hardest ones. In my opinion, such results prove the complexity of production activities but, contemporaneously, the need of the participants to be able to speak fluently. As a matter of fact, one of the main objectives of the learners is to be able to communicate with natives and integrate themselves into the local community. Moreover, succeeding in communicating and making themselves understood might be a good source of self-esteem for the participants, and thus speaking skills should be developed even more than others.

5.4.2. Self-perception

Question 5: I keep thinking that the other students are better at languages than I am

AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE
6	18	10
18%	53%	29%

Question 6: I keep thinking that my classmates are smarter than I am

AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE
3	14	17
9%	41%	50%

The first two questions of section B refer to the self-perception of the participants in relation to their classmates. By analysing the results, it comes to light a higher predominance of neutrality and disagree in response to sentences written in a negative form and asking thus an answer diametrically opposed to most of the following questions. Therefore, if on the one hand the neutrality of question number 5 suggests a recognition of the peers' aptitudes, on the other hand it is later confirmed by question number 6, with half of disagree answers, that respondents are certain of their own intelligence and aptitude.

Question 7: I find it easy to speak Italian

AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE
11	14	9
32%	41%	27%

Examining the answers to question number 7, the unexpected response from most of the participants is the lacking difficulty when learning Italian as a second language. What is significant here is the great majority of English-speaking individuals highlighting a sort of complexity. Once again, it comes to light the closeness between the French and Italian language and the opposite difficulty felt by Anglophones when learning a Romance language.

Questions 8: I worry about making mistakes in language classes

AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE
16	9	9
47%	26%	27%

Question 9: It embarrasses me to speak Italian in front of other students

AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE
9	11	14
27%	32%	41%

Both questions refer to communication apprehension, one of the components of foreign language anxiety “arising from learners’ inability to adequately express mature thoughts and ideas” (Horwitz et al., in Ellis, Shintani, 2014, 244). However, whereas question number 8 highlights the fear of making mistakes, with the 47% of affirmative answers, the following one focuses on the ability to speak in front of a public. Here the negative response highlights the familiarity among classmates and the absence of fear facing the judgement by other people. As far as foreign and second language anxiety is concerned, it is usually linked to personality traits, showing an evident distinction between introverted and extroverted learners.

After a careful analysis of the section about self-perception, it comes to light a target with a high self-esteem, referring to “a psychological and social phenomenon in which an individual evaluates his/her competence and own self according to some values, which may result in different emotional states, and which becomes developmentally stable but is still open to variation depending on personal circumstances” (Rubio, 2007, 5). In a similar way, the participants feel now quite confident when learning Italian as a second language, especially those whose mother tongue is a Romance language with several features close to the target one. In both cases it should be taken into account the time spent in Italy by the participants, since “how learners feel about themselves and about language learning is likely to be different at different points in the language learning process” (Horwitz in Rubio, 2007, ix). Lastly, it results evident the extroverted character of most respondents, who tend to be rather self-confident. In other words, they are aware of their own limits, but they do not fear the judgement by the surrounding people.

5.4.3. Perception of one's culture and other's cultures

Question 10: I think that my own culture and religion are better than others

AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE
6	9	19
18%	26%	56%

In question number 10, most of the participants tend to disagree (56%) with the sentence, aware of the equality of different cultures and religions. In my opinion, such response is a clear signal of the intelligence and maturity of the learners, who have learnt to know other cultures, traditions and values in a respectful manner. Even though the questionnaire deals with reliable data, I firmly believe that neutral answers do not express a feeling of superiority, but rather a strong attachment to one's culture and religion and the refusal of considering it inferior to others.

Question 11: I am proud to be Senegalese/Gambian/Pakistani...

AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE
24	6	4
70%	18%	12%

The attachment felt by the participants towards their origins is reconfirmed by question number 11, where most of respondents declare to be proud of their origins. The response proves a strong bond to their past life, but it also highlights a feeling of proudness in relation both to their own traditions and to their personal experience.

Question 12: I think that Italian culture and traditions are different from mine

AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE
21	10	3
62%	29%	9%

After a period of time spent in Italy, learners prove their awareness of the differences between their own culture and the Italian one, knowing the diversity of beliefs, traditions and way of life. Contrary to question number 10, here the participants are not asked to express their personal opinion, but rather to recognise the distinguishing features between distant societies. What is significant here is that the respondents who disagree or do not take a clear position are mostly Christians, thus feeling a greater closeness between their own culture and the target one.

Question 13: I am worried about losing my personal identity

AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE
10	10	14
29%	30%	41%

Question number 13 results to be rather ambiguous. As a matter of fact, the responses do not show an evident predominance, but only a slightly higher percentage of disagree answers. In my opinion, personal identity refers to an abstract concept which is hard to be completely understood. However, the predominance of disagree responses might outline a target who is not afraid of the change, even despite the lacking will of doing without their personal identity shown by other answers.

Question 14: I am worried about forgetting my own culture and traditions

AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE
10	10	14
29%	30%	41%

In a similar way, the participants do not appear to be particularly apprehensive about forgetting their own culture and traditions. Analysing the answers to question number 14, the majority of respondents do not exhibit such anxiety, showing themselves strongly close to their origins and inner values.

Summarizing, from this section it comes out a noteworthy maturity and sensitivity of the participants. They are able to recognize not only the difference but also the equality between different cultures and religions, even though they keep feeling strongly attached to their origins and their past life. Furthermore, it comes to light the lack of resistance to the change they will unavoidably face, wishful for maintaining their personal identity but from a multicultural perspective. In the end, the proudness of the subjects could be considered as the key to success in self-narration activities, proving the willingness to tell their own experience and to express their feelings and emotions.

5.4.4. Relationship with others

Question 15: I have a lot of friends

AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE
16	13	5
47%	38%	15%

When asked about the relationship with other people, most of the respondents have proved to have lots of friends, either in Italy or in their country of origin. I believe that it is highly important for them to have the possibility to confide to and express their own feelings and worries to somebody, either to many friends, such as in the case of the agree responses, or to few trustworthy people, such as in the neutral ones.

Question 16: I enjoy being alone

AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE
6	13	15
18%	38%	44%

Contrary to the previous one, question number 16 deals with loneliness and the wish of the respondents of being alone, without the interference of other people. Confirming the response given to question number 15, the learners disagree and prove to be clearly sociable and friendly, enjoying the presence of the surrounding people and disliking the loneliness given by their absence.

Question 17: I trust my teacher

AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE
31	3	0
91%	9%	0

In any academic context the trust in the teachers is essential, since they should be considered not only as a source of notions, but also a model of values, principles and manners. Moreover, teachers should be seen as mentors, able to listen to worries and thoughts. As far as immigrant learners is concerned, I deem this role to be even more essential, since their background is full of troubles, losses and suffering. It is why I think the response given to question number 17 is highly significant, proving complete trust in the figure of the educator, considered as a good listener and confidant.

Question 18: I fit in with my classmates

AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE
19	11	4
56%	32%	12%

In addition to the relationship with the educator, it is essential to focus on the general atmosphere that prevails in the classroom. The responses to question number 18, referring to the relationship and the perception of the classmates, show a high percentage of positive answers, suggesting a serene and harmonious mood within the school context.

Question 19: I am afraid that other students will laugh at me when I speak a foreign language

AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE
6	8	20
18%	23%	59%

Similarly to the previous sentences, question number 19 proves the sense of freedom and the opportunity of dialoguing without being fooled. Once again, the majority of

answers of disagree to the negative sentence prove a serene atmosphere. Thus, most of the learners feel free to express their thoughts and emotions.

As analysed in these paragraphs, section D deals with the relationship between the participants and people around them. The results outline a peaceful atmosphere among the main characters of the second-language learning process. The respondents appear to be rather extraverts, gaining their greatest energy from the external world and willing interaction with their many friends (Oxford, 2003, 5). Moreover, it is greatly admirable the complete trust in the figure of the teacher, considered as a key point in the self-narration process, and the familiarity with their classmates. In my opinion, being able to create a sense of trust, friendship and serenity within the classroom is the point of departure for a successful learning process, especially when it tries to involve activities of self-narration, where the trust in the surrounding people is essential for the students to feel free to talk.

5.4.5. Motivation

As far as motivation is concerned, it should be taken into account the different elements constituting it. As already mentioned above, the extrinsic motivation is linked to external pressures and benefits, whereas the intrinsic one is the response to an inner desire (Gardner and Lambert in Daloiso, 2007, 9). Moreover, as far as second-language learning is concerned, it is fundamental the dyad instrumental-integrative motivation. On one hand, the instrumental motivation refers to a positive return from a professional perspective, on the other hand the coexistence and integration of different cultures is the aim of the integrative component of motivation. I briefly analyse how such components prove to be essential in the learning process, with the aim of a successful language acquisition.

Question 20: I study Italian for professional reasons

AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE
21	9	4
62%	26%	12%

From the responses to question number 20, the great majority of learners tend to consider the Italian learning process to be an excellent means to get a job and satisfy their will of economic self-sufficiency. Moreover, having a job might be seen as a challenge to themselves and a demonstration of responsibility and willingness for the surrounding people. The nature of motivation driving the participants, in this case, is both extrinsic and instrumental, because of the external outcome of a job.

Question 21: I like Italian language and culture

AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE
27	5	2
79%	15%	6%

In a different way, sentence number 21 refers to the intrinsic motivation that drives the second-language learners. It is far more efficient than the extrinsic one, as it is not linked to external factors but only to the inner forces of the individual. The responses to the question prove that the learning process is driven not only by external pressures, but is also based on pleasure, assuring a stable and durable acquisition. Here the focus is set mostly on the Italian culture, considered to be more interesting than formal and morphological aspect of the language. However, there is a strong connection between the target culture and the language by which it is conveyed.

Question 22: I am forced to study but I do not like it

AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE
10	4	20
29%	12%	59%

Opposite to the previous question, here the learning process is seen only as a duty, moved by extrinsic factors that do not stimulate the interest of the learner. As discussed in the first chapter, immigrants have both rights and duties, and the acquisition of the second language is a key point of their obligations. However, the responses deny the absence of need and pleasure factors besides duty.

Question 23: I would like to learn Italian in order to feel less “different”

AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE
22	9	3
65%	26%	9%

A strong sense of willpower prevails, and two main data emerge. On one hand, it comes to light the sense of diversity felt by the respondents, aware of the required effort in order to delete all the prejudices and be accepted by the natives. On the other hand, they are aware of the importance of the Italian language as a means of integration into the local community. Therefore, it comes out the force of the integrative motivation, aimed at the integration with a different way of life and a different language, being characterized by cultural meanings itself. In a similar way, in the following question it is explicit the wish of being part of the new community through the Italian learning process, but also the need that drives the participants to learn the new language in order to accomplish basic purposes such as communicating with surrounding people.

Question 24: I would like to learn Italian in order to communicate with native people and integrate myself into the Italian community

AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE
28	4	2
82%	12%	6%

Question 25: I study Italian because I would like to be able to share my experience and express my feelings

AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE
28	5	1
82%	15%	3%

The last question of the section is probably the most interesting when handling with self-narration and the necessity of the participants to express their own feelings. The 82% of responses agree with the sentence, proving once again the necessity of talking felt by

the learners. Not only do they aim to communicate, but also to share their experience and express their emotions. In this case, the need is not driven by external pressures, but rather by the inner desire of narrating themselves, telling their past stories, present life and future desires.

As far as motivation is concerned, we can assume that all the components are present in the second-language learning process. First of all, the instrumental motivation is discussed, with a high percentage of participants considering the local language as a key element to get a job and succeed in their career. Later, the integrative motivation aims at the assimilation of the immigrants into the local community, thus it represents one of the main goals of their learning process, trying to smooth over the differences between the newcomers and the natives and working towards an intercultural reality. It should not be forgotten, then, that a component of extrinsic motivation, is present as well. However, what means here is that duty is not the greatest source of motivation for learning, as it does not consider a deep language acquisition, but rather a superficial learning. Lastly, the most fundamental type of motivation, which is the only one that would last in time and assure a consistent acquisition, is the intrinsic one, based on the pleasure to learn something new and an inner desire. In my opinion, the learners' wish of expressing their own feelings and telling their past experience is not to be considered a need, based on external goals, but it is rather linked to pleasure, being an inner desire of sharing.

5.4.6. Self-narration

This section gets to the heart of my research, analysing the potential need and desire of the students of sharing their own feelings and thoughts but also of actively listening to their classmates talking, in a respectful way and without any prejudices.

Question 26: I find it interesting to discover the culture and traditions of other countries

AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE
23	10	1
68%	29%	3%

Here the participants show a great curiosity and interest in discovering other cultures and traditions, probably different from their own but not for this less respectable. The respondents are fascinated by the “other” and tend to be open-minded, desirous of discovering the differences in the world. Once again, it is noteworthy the fact that learners do not consider their own culture to be the only one to be accepted, but they are aware of other ways of life, other values and beliefs and determined to learn about them.

Question 27: I find it interesting to listen to other people’s experience

AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE
26	5	3
76%	15%	9%

In a similar way, in question number 27 the respondents prove to be rather interested in other people’s experiences, perhaps looking for common features among different stories. Not only comes to light the curiosity in discovering other experiences but, above all, the desire of getting in touch with other people through their stories, and the need of finding something in common among them, a similar indelible sign on their soul. In order to get to their aim, participants are asked to use active listening techniques, focusing on the speaker and the message itself, open to intercultural differences and respecting diversity.

Question 28: I feel ashamed when I am asked to talk about my experience

AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE
6	12	16
18%	35%	47%

Question number 28 refers again to the proudness felt by the participants when sharing their experiences. The responses show the absence of a feeling of shame when talking about their own life. The escape from their homeland is not considered a source of shame, but rather an inevitable choice that characterizes their life. In my opinion, such feeling is

fostered by the fact that the troubled experience represents a thread that links all the characters and their stories.

Question 29: I identify myself with my classmates' narrations

AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE
11	18	5
32%	53%	15%

What is significant by analysing the responses to question number 29, investigating the possibility of a self-recognition in other people's words, is the majority of neutral responses. In other words, a great majority tend to agree to the statement but only in part. It comes to light that the participants might find lots of common features in their mates' narrations, but they do not completely identify with them. Thus, they are desiring to preserve the uniqueness of their own stories and experiences, with different but not distant feelings and emotions which deserve to be kept separated and not grouped in with those of other people.

Question 30: I always listen when my friends are talking

AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE
20	12	2
59%	35%	6%

Most of the participants agree with the fact that they carefully listen when their mates are talking. Not only do the responses show the maturity and adulthood of the learners, but also their desire of discovering other stories and participating to the experience of their peers.

In a similar way, in question number 31 they prove to feel sorry when other people do not listen to them when expressing their thoughts and opinions. Once again, it is highlighted the fundamental role of active listening, both from the point of view of the speaker and from the listener's perspective. Therefore, the individuals have an active role in the communication process, as they are asked to interact and listen with a prejudiceless ear.

Question 31: I feel sorry when other people do not listen to what I am saying

AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE
16	13	5
47%	38%	15%

Summarising, second-language learners show themselves to be particularly interested in discovering other worlds, cultures and traditions. It is certainly a healthy interest, probably motivated by the inner desire of the participants of finding common features with their classmates. Moreover, listening to other stories might be a means for justifying their choices and events, feeling understood by their peers.

Furthermore, I should focus on the fundamental role of active listening, as it is the key point for a successful intercultural communication, without any stereotypes and prejudices. The listening should be reciprocal, as it is proved by the responses to questions number 30 and 31, where the participants show a double desire of listening and being listened.

Lastly, in my opinion self-narration is an essential means to communicate with people, in order to prove their uniqueness and to be known for what they really are, and not just as a member of their ethnic group, with the same background and same desires of their peers. I believe that self-narration activities could easily make the second-language learners feel more self-confident. Learners have actually proved their need to let off steam and share their emotions with somebody, with the aim of lightening their heart and soul.

In order to outline a more detailed overview of the self-narration need and desire, I would like to focus on the favourite addressee of the stories, as it is particularly important to consider the listening component. As stated by Roman Jakobson, indeed, in order to have a successful communication all the factors that constitute the functions of language are required, among which the addressee, or receiver, plays an essential role (Fiorani, 2002, 18-19).

Question 32: addressee of their narration

Friends	25	64%
Mates	6	15%
People I do not know	5	13%
Nobody	2	5%
God	1	3%

As it comes to light by analysing the responses to question number 32, the participants unsurprisingly prefer to talk with their friends (64%), considered to be the best listeners because of the strong relationship and the reciprocal knowledge. Conversely, what is significant is the low consideration of the classmates (15%) as good listeners, since the responses prove them to be at a similar level of strangers (13%). In my opinion, this is because they have not known each other for a long time, and they do not completely trust their mates. Sharing feelings and emotions is an intimate activity indeed, requiring strong relationships in addition to common features that might facilitate the communication. Furthermore, it is noteworthy the added “nobody” option, representing an interesting but worrisome case of people who do not trust anybody and keep all their emotions and thoughts in. It is a very low percentage, only the 5% of the participants, but it should be a stimulus of reflection on the sorrowful situation they find themselves in. Lastly, the response “God” proves once again the deep faith of some immigrant learners, who consider God to be the perfect listener to their troubles and feeling and an excellent confidant. In the end, it should be mentioned that the percentages have been analysed over a sample of 39 responses instead of 34 as the previous ones, since a few respondents have chosen more than one answer.

Question 33: feelings talking about one’s country

Happy	17	50%
Angry	3	9%
Sad	14	41%

In addition, a further reflection on one’s feelings when asked to talk about one’s country is examined. A fundamental role is played by the related traditions and ways of life and,

above all, by the emotions, troubles and thoughts related to the country of origin. Beyond a very low percentage of people who feel angry, either with the interviewer or with the situation itself, there is a similar percentage of happy feelings and sad ones. As far as the formers are concerned, it might be a sign of proudness, recalling the previous answers, but also the desire of talking about one's origins, families and lands. Such practice is frequently linked to bureaucracy, where the right answer has the power to allow them to stay on the Italian territory. However, during language classes they might feel free of describing the real context, characterized by all the emotions and thoughts evoked by the memory. Alongside, negative feelings are related to past troubles and the left loved ones. I deem them to be as important as the positive ones. Therefore, the duty of the educators should involve the leading to self-expression and sharing of emotions, with the aim of venting the learners' frustration.

5.4.7. Future migration projects

Question 34: future projects

Staying in Italy forever	27	79%
Going to another country	2	6%
Back to their country	5	15%

Lastly, the future migration projects of the participants are significant, since they allow the reader to better understand the context. It results that a great majority of the respondents (79%) have an inner desire of staying in Italy forever, either by themselves or with the loved ones through the family reunification. Conversely, only the 6% wants to leave to another country, proving a very positive feedback to the Italian situation. In the end, the 15% of the learners are uniquely looking for an economic improvement for a successive return to their country, where better perspectives are awaiting them. I think that the responses to question number 34 might be seen as a sign of good hospitality of the Italian community and a favourable condition to create a future symbol of redemption.

5.5. Conclusion

Aiming at outlining a clear overview of Italian as a second-language learners and the need or possibility of facing self-narration activities, I would like to summarize the previous data analysis. First of all, the subjects of the research are thirty-four foreign people coming mainly from Western Africa and who have been stayed in Italy for a period between 6 months and 2 years. The group results to be characterised by a quite high self-esteem and self-confidence, both in the learning process and with the classmates. In my opinion, it is not to be considered as a sign of arrogance, but rather as a means to survive to the troubles of life and to the prejudices of the surrounding people. Moreover, they exhibit a very strong attachment to their origins, their people and countries, highlighting an exceptional proudness of their traditions, as members of an ethnic group, but also of their stories, in their uniqueness and exceptionality. Once again, the second-language learners do not show arrogance or superiority, considering all the cultures at the same level, even though they prove to be rather coherent in their beliefs. As far as the relationship with other people is concerned, the participants are quite extroverted and sociable, showing to enjoy the company of other people, either good friends or only classmates. It is why it has been outlined a positive mood among the classmates and a sense of harmony inside the classroom. Moreover, it is significant the relationship with the teacher, who is considered not only an educator or a facilitator, but also a good listener and a true reference figure. In my opinion, one of the most essential points when dealing with the learning process is the motivation that lies behind, thus it is admirable to notice that in this case all types of motivation are present, creating an adequate premise for a successful acquisition. First of all, they are led by an intrinsic motivation, characterised by an inner desire to learn a new language, indispensable for the integration into the local community. External factors play their role as well, as they must justify their choices and survive in a new world, where the right of a job is linked to the duty of learning the language. I believe that all these components are essential, and even though the intrinsic motivation is the only one that will be stable and durable, the essential thing here is that the participants are extremely motivated to learn the new language and discover the new culture without stereotypes and prejudices. This is even more important when the future projects of the students are characterized by a durable permanence in our country, since the language will be the

greatest help for the integration and self-realisation. Lastly, I have centred the focus of my research, since self-narration appears to be not only a pleasant activity for the participants, who enjoy talking about themselves to anybody, especially to people who are considered friends, but also a necessary exercise. The learners of Italian as a second language have an urgent need of sharing their thoughts and feelings and of being understood, expressing their past, present and future stories and all the related emotions. In relation with this, the reciprocity of the conversation is fundamental, as the students are not only demanding to be listened, but they also consider themselves to be good listeners to their mates' stories.

6. PROPOSED DIDACTIC ACTIVITIES

As already discussed in the previous chapter, this part of my dissertation is the least theoretical one. It aims at suggesting a series of didactic activities in order to answer to the linguistic and cognitive needs of immigrant learners of Italian as a second language. Therefore, bearing in mind the peculiarities of the context, its components, and the results of the analysed questionnaire, I propose several didactic activities. Therefore, the following tasks aim at satisfying the language needs emerged, considering small classes of adult immigrant learners at a A2-B1 level of proficiency of Italian as a second language. The main objectives that characterize all the different tasks are the expression of oneself and the reflection on one's feelings. Thus, not only are the learners requested to share their emotions, future objectives and desires, but they are also tactfully invited to express their old memories, recalling either their past life in their country of origin and the troubled journey towards Italy. In this regard, the greatest purpose of this path is to drive the participants to actively construct their identity through narration practices. In this way, the first phase of self-expression is followed by the sharing of one's stories with the "other".

The proposed activities are structured according the temporal sequence past, present, and future. In other words, the whole experience of life of the participants is discussed, beginning from their childhood and projecting themselves into the future. As far as the realisation of the modules, teachers are free to either follow the whole path or to choose a single topic, according to the learners' needs.

I briefly analyse the main topics covered by the suggested activities. They are a selection of subjects that I deem to be the most appropriate for my purpose, focusing on the route to the construction of identities. Lastly, the following tasks should be part of a larger learning unit, as they represent the final synthesis and reflection step (Balboni, 2015, 153).

- My story and my childhood: referring to the past experiences of the participants, including their childhood and their deepest relationships with the left loved ones. It is unavoidably linked with the country of origin of the learners, their families and the dearest ones.
- My journey: referring to the transitory phase of travelling. It links the past life of the participants to the present one, as well as their own nation to the Italian land, and

their old memories to their current experiences. The journey is considered as a complete process, from the decision of leaving to the objectives and consequences of the emigration. Thus, the travel itself is the connector between such essential steps.

- Current feelings and prejudices: referring to the present life of the learners, involving their feelings and impressions of their new life in Italy. This module deals with others' reactions and the emotions evoked by them. Furthermore, once again the focus is set on the crucial role of integration and the necessity of developing intercultural competences, in order to suspend judgement and avoid stereotypes and prejudices.
- Hope, wishes and projects: referring to the future life of the participants. To conclude the sequence, the learners are invited to reflect on their own future. They should thus express their wishes and desires and, at the same time, reflect on those objectives that still appear to be distant and nearly unobtainable.

Furthermore, I believe that the expression of the self and the construction of the identity is strongly linked to two more topics. The familiar context and the country of origin, indeed, play a fundamental role. Therefore, I suggest two extra units, which might be faced either separately or included in the past experience of the participants.

- My family: referring to the family members and the relationships existing between them. The protagonists' identity has been forged by the loved ones among others, through spoken and unspoken words, and through education and intimacy.

- My country: referring to the country of origin of the participants. On one hand, the memories related to the foreign country are investigated. On the other hand, the focus is set on the learners' feelings towards the new land, counterposing the sense of nationalism for the own state and the effort of constructing a new Italian identity.

Following the sequential structure explained in the previous lines, the suggested didactic activities are proposed in the next section. They are presented using the Italian language and later commented.

6.1. My story and my childhood

As introduced at the beginning of the chapter, this first topic covers the past experience of the participants. Therefore, the learners are invited to present themselves orally in an autobiographic way. Then, joyful events and memories from the past are discussed, from the childhood on. In this section the five senses play a fundamental role and they are strongly connected with memories. Whereas at the beginning the single sense of hearing is used, through a radio interview, later the learners focus on the visual and iconic input of photographs, source of memories and emotions. In the end, all the senses are gathering in the sensory diary written by the participants themselves. Moreover, dealing with the first topic learners are requested to refer both to an extended public, and to themselves, narrating a past event in the form of memory.

Learning objectives	<p><u>-Skills objectives:</u></p> <p>To develop interactional skills to simulate dialogues and interviews;</p> <p>to develop writing skills to write an autobiography;</p> <p>to develop speaking skills to introduce oneself and to talk about past events;</p> <p>to develop writing skills to write a diary entry.</p> <p>- <u>Grammatical objectives:</u></p> <p>to develop the use of past tenses, comparing the <i>passato prossimo</i> and the <i>imperfetto</i>.</p> <p>- <u>Lexical objectives:</u></p> <p>to review the vocabulary related to descriptions.</p> <p>- <u>Functional objectives:</u></p> <p>personal function;</p> <p>interpersonal function;</p> <p>referential function;</p> <p>poetic and imaginative function.</p>
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	<p>- <u>Cultural objectives</u>: the genre of autobiography.</p> <p>- <u>Intercultural objectives</u>: to know how to observe; to know how to actively listen; to know how to suspend judgement.</p>
Duration	3 hours.
Participants	Adult learners at level A2 – B1.
Materials	Recording device, pictures, examples of diary entries, smartphones and Whatsapp.

6.1.1. Activity 1: “Chi c’è alla radio?”

- *Realization*

Crea la tua autobiografia! Dopo aver riflettuto assieme sul significato e le caratteristiche del genere autobiografico, cerca di stilare un breve testo descrivendo brevemente la tua vita, aiutandoti con le domande guida preparate dall’insegnante:

- Quando e dove sei nato?
- Sei andato a scuola? Per quanti anni?
- Quanti fratelli avevi?
- Dove sei vissuto?
- Che lavori hai fatto?
- Cosa facevi nel tempo libero?

Ora, realizza un’intervista radiofonica: simulando un dialogo alla radio, in cui tu ricopri il ruolo del presentatore, poni al tuo compagno le stesse domande (se te ne vengono in mente altre, non esitare ad aggiungerle). Saranno sufficienti un registratore o un telefonino; il pubblico, infatti, non dovrà vedere, ma solamente ascoltare la conversazione. Una volta terminata l’intervista, invertite i ruoli.



- *Observations*

The first activity is characterized by different phases with the same aim: realizing the participants’ autobiography. In order to avoid the potential disorientation caused by a broad open-ended question, the learners are provided with a list of questions to follow during the narration. The focus is set on the past throughout the whole narration. Furthermore, the written and personal form of the initial phase makes way for a dialogic oral activity, the radio interview. The two subjects are invited to interact towards the

discovery of the “other”, developing both their ability of self-narrating and the competence of actively listening.

I consider such activity a good starting point, as it sensibly introduces the participants to the world of self-narration. Furthermore, the conversation is carried on by two peers. Thus, the task represents a means of reciprocal knowledge, allowing the class to establish a relaxed and empathetic mood.

6.1.2. Activity 2: “Foto, immagini e parole”

- *Realization*

Porta in classe una fotografia del tuo passato. Può essere una vecchia istantanea, una foto dal tuo telefono o, eventualmente, un’immagine presa da internet.

In seguito, condividila con il resto della classe, raccontando ciò che stava accadendo nel momento in cui quella foto è stata scattata. Descrivi l’immagine, i soggetti e gli ambienti. Poi, narra gli avvenimenti e prova ad esprimere i tuoi sentimenti nella maniera più oggettiva possibile, servendoti di indizi, colori e particolari.

Ora, metti da parte le parole: invia ad un compagno o un amico un messaggio su Whatsapp, utilizzando solamente le *emoticons* più adatte a rappresentare le emozioni che hai provato riguardando la fotografia e ripensando a ciò che è rappresentato.



- *Observations*

Through this activity, the learners try to recall their memories through an iconic source, either a personal picture or an image representing their past life. In this way, familiar subjects and environments are introduced to the rest of the class, describing the distant everyday routine of the past. The reflection on one’s feelings and remembrances is the major objective of this activity, since every picture, when appropriately examined, can bring back memories. What Casagrande (2019, 424) states, indeed, is that all the pictures can be examined in two different ways. On one hand, a denotative perspective refers to the analysis of physical and descriptive elements. On the other hand, a connotative perspective leads the speaker to focus on the deep meanings and memories related to the represented pictures. Sharing one’s thoughts and emotions is a key point. In other words, learners are free to give a voice to their own stories, thus lightening their load. In this activity, emotions play a fundamental role and characterise the different phases. The first

step requires a greater effort, as personal feelings should be rendered through an objective description of the environment. Hence, colours and physical details are essential, since they vary according to the emotions evoked by the picture. Later, the focus is set uniquely on the emotions. At this stage, learners are invited to use technological devices and the emoticons that by now belong to our daily life.

6.1.3. Activity 3: “Un diario sensoriale”

- *Realization*

Ripensa ad un momento significativo della tua infanzia. Ora, dividi il foglio in 5 colonne, una per ciascun senso (vista, udito, olfatto, tatto, gusto). Prova a scrivere ciò che ti viene in mente rievocando tale episodio, differenziando i ricordi a seconda della categoria a cui essi appartengono. Una volta completate tutte le colonne, scrivi una pagina di diario, raccontando quel momento impresso nella tua mente attraverso tutti e cinque i sensi.

Ricorda! Inizia il tuo racconto scritto con la formula “Caro diario...” e mantieni sempre la prima persona singolare (io).



- *Observations*

This activity is deemed to be one of the most effective dealing with memories and past experiences. The participants are invited to recall a significant episode of their past life, perhaps a joyful moment. All the five human senses are used, hiding memories behind sounds, smells, sights, touch and tastes. In this way, each sense evokes different feelings and emotions.

Successively, the second phase of the activity is even more introspective. The addressee of the writing exercise, indeed, is the author him-herself, embodied by the inanimate diary. However, such instrument is subject to a process of personification, since it represents the ideal “listener” to the writer’s thoughts. Therefore, writing a personal diary might be considered as a practice of talking to oneself, feeling free to express one’s feelings, thoughts and opinions. In this way, the monologue of the learner assumes the characteristics of a dialogue between more participants. Such introspective feature is highlighted, once again, by using the first person, thus narrating the learner’s own point of view.

6.2. My journey

Handling with the topic of the undertaken journey is extremely problematic. In order to limit the evocation of awful memories related to the travel, the following activities focus on the symbolic values of the journey and consider the dyad before and after. In this way, the subject is covered from a not-so-intense perspective, avoiding recalling the odyssey of the voyage itself and the old wounds. The suggested activities characterise the synthesis phase of a whole teaching unit. The previous tasks should include the vision of the movie “Il viaggio di Yao”, in order to reflect on the reasons behind the main characters’ decisions and their secret wishes. In this way, a sort of parallelism and identification of the participants with the characters of the movie is fostered. The cinematographic product, indeed, is engaging by its nature, and it aims to the encounter of different worlds through the identification of the spectator with the fictional main characters (Triolo in Luise, 2003, 80).

Learning objectives	<p><u>-Skills objectives:</u></p> <p>To develop interactional skills to simulate dialogues;</p> <p>to develop writing skills to write a letter about the near past and the present life;</p> <p>to develop speaking skills to express one’s thoughts and reflections;</p> <p>to develop listening skills for gist and for specific information.</p> <p><u>- Grammatical objectives:</u></p> <p>to develop the use of subordinating connectives to use subordinating clauses;</p> <p>to develop the use of the cause-effect relationship.</p>
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	<p>- <u>Lexical objectives</u>: to learn the vocabulary related to personal feelings and mood.</p> <p>- <u>Functional objectives</u>: personal function; interpersonal function; referential function; metalinguistic function; poetic and imaginative function.</p> <p>- <u>Cultural objectives</u>: movie “Il Viaggio di Yao”; culture related objects.</p> <p>- <u>Intercultural objectives</u>: to know how to observe; to know how to actively listen; to know how to suspend judgement.</p>
Duration	4 hours.
Participants	Adult learners at level A2 - B1.
Materials	Laptop, projector, dvd of the movie “Il Viaggio di Yao”, post-its, personal objects/photographs, camera.

6.2.1. Activity 1: “Cos’è il viaggio?”

- *Realization*

Ripensando al tuo viaggio verso l’Italia, qual è il primo termine che ti viene in mente da poter associare alla parola “viaggio”? Scrivila su di un post-it; poi, attaccalo ai muri della classe e rifletti osservando quelli dei tuoi compagni.



- *Observations*

At the beginning of the learning unit, the topic of the journey is introduced. Then, the learners are asked to reflect on their own experience and try to give a meaning to the word “journey”. The goal of this task is not a mere definition, but rather a positioning of the broad term within a context, referring to their personal experience. In other words, emotions are evoked, and memories strongly resurface. However, sharing personal feelings might create a sense of familiarity among the members of the class. As a matter of fact, observing and reflecting on their mates’ associations might perhaps lead the participants towards the belief of being understood and accompanied during the process of self-expression.

6.2.2. Activity 2: “Perché viaggi?”

- *Realization*

Qualsiasi tipo di viaggio, da quello ricreativo a quello dettato da spiacevoli cause di forza maggiore, sono caratterizzati da due elementi fondamentali: la ragione per la quale si affronta, e l’obiettivo del viaggio stesso. Tali elementi sono strettamente collegati.

Durante la visione del film “Il Viaggio di Yao”, cerca di prestare attenzione alle domande chiave del protagonista. Ti renderai conto di come anche nella filmografia questi due elementi siano ricorrenti e rappresentino spesso il fulcro dell’intera narrazione.

Ora lavora in coppia: prova a identificare questi due elementi nella tua esperienza personale e condividi oralmente i tuoi pensieri con un tuo compagno.



- *Observations*

Whereas the previous activity involved a personal work followed by a group sharing, in this one the suggested methodology is the peer work. Hence, the action occurs within a positive context, characterised by a sense of intimacy with the interlocutor. Moreover, the risk of being judged from the whole class and the teacher him-herself lessens (Serragiotto, 2004, 117-118). Once again, the participants are exhorted to reflect on their personal journey and express the reasons that lie behind their choice of leaving, as well as their expectations derived from that decision. The sharing of different answers might lead to the discovery of the different reasons lying behind migrations. Conversely, perhaps it comes to light the fact that the expectations and the main objectives of different journeys are frequently common to the subjects. Such activity is introduced by the vision of the movie “Il Viaggio di Yao”. The whole narration revolves around two key questions: “Perché hai affrontato questo viaggio da solo?” and “Che rappresento io per te?”, reminding both to the reason of the journey and the main goal, the object of desire. In the end, this activity gives the possibility to the learner of expressing themselves, feeling free of telling the truth and with no fear of being judged for their accounts, as it happens for their official reports instead.

6.2.3. Activity 3: “Cosa c’è nel tuo bagaglio?”

- *Realization*

Ripensa a ciò che hai portato con te durante il lungo viaggio verso l’Italia. Probabilmente hai scelto con cura cosa mettere nel tuo bagaglio: un oggetto, una fotografia, un simbolo. Prendine uno e rifletti: perché l’hai ritenuto così importante da volerlo accanto a te anche a migliaia di chilometri da casa? Che significato ha per te tale oggetto?

Con il supporto dell’insegnante fotografa un oggetto presente nel tuo bagaglio e realizza una mostra fotografica assieme ai tuoi compagni. Poi, scrivi una breve didascalia, in cui descrivi concisamente ciò che vi è raffigurato e il valore simbolico dell’oggetto.



- *Observations*

In this activity, the focus is set on the loved ones and on those objects able to maintain the relationship even at huge distances. The learners are invited to metaphorically go back to their departure and the choice of putting specific objects into their luggage. Perhaps, there is a particular reason lying behind all decisions. Hence, each object included in the suitcase is conferred with a value, a symbolic meaning, and it is linked to different memories. The first step requires a great effort, since the participants should make the hard election of the most significant element, either a physical object or a picture. Later, the personal experience is interchanged with a collective activity, through the realization of a photography exhibition. Although iconography plays a fundamental role, the written language is present as well, acting as a backdrop for the pictures. During this activity, the participants are exhorted to reflect on the strong symbolic meaning they unconsciously attribute to apparently empty objects, filling them with values, feelings and memories.

6.2.4. Activity 4: “Caro amico ti scrivo...”

- *Realization*

Scrivi una lettera ad un amico, un familiare o una persona a te vicina per confidarti e condividere i tuoi pensieri.

Racconta il tuo arrivo in Italia, le aspettative realizzate o infrante e la tua vita attuale, soffermandoti sui sentimenti che provi o hai provato.

Ricorda! La lettera informale inizia sempre con caro/a, mentre per chiuderla puoi utilizzare le forme di congedo più comuni (a presto, ci sentiamo, e così via).



- *Observations*

In the last activity of the unit, the participants further develop their written skills, writing an imaginary letter to a friend, a relative or a dear one, including the account of the first contact with the Italian land and their own current mood. The style is informal, looking alike a piece of conversation, a sort of dialogue between the two interlocutors. Once again, the focus is set on the feelings, the perception and the emotions referring to the current situation and, at the same time, it is discussed the first impression about the “promised land”, frequently unlike immigrants’ expectations. During this activity, learners are free to choose their own addressee, aiming to the authentic expression of their own thoughts and feelings, simulating a sort of account of their present experience to those people who belong to their past life.

This modality might also be substituted by writing an e-mail, according to the technological possibilities of the subjects. In this case, the content is the same, but the form, as well as opening and closing phrases, need a further explanation.

- Examples

Bolzano 07-12-2017

Caro fratello

Ciao mio fratello, come vai?
 Per me, sto bene. Ti scrivo questa lettera dalle mie notizie.
 Sono in Italia, sono arrivato da Dubai negli Emirati.
 La mia prima volta qui, ero felice: Io ho fatto conoscenza di molte persone. Io ho visto tante cose, come la cultura italiana, la scuola italiana, è tanti amici.
 Adesso, vado a scuola e parlo un po' la lingua italiana a causa dei miei insegnanti. Ma sono preoccupato per i miei documenti qui sono in ritardo, Io non ho ancora nessun documento. Io non posso lavorare. Perché loro dicono che senza documento non posso lavorare. L'Italia è diversa da come l'avevo immaginata perché Io pensavo che Italia era facile ma non è facile. Ciao fra ci vediamo a un'altra volta, ti piace.

Souleymane Hamed

Figure 13: Hamed's letter to his brother

Bolzano, 07 Dic / 2017

Caro: Assane, come stai tutto bene io sto bene grazie

Sono arrivato in Bolzano, Italia 7 mesi fa.
 La prima volta ho fatto mi hanno preso le impronte digitali. Ho visto un bello ho fatto scuola, eccetera.
 Ero contento quando sono arrivato, perché non sono molto della matematica. Ho visto i bambini a scuola per imparare la lingua per comunicare con le persone italiane.
 Mi sono sentito perché ho una buona maestra Sr Chiara (Martina) solo. Ho sentito però sono preoccupato di avere gli documenti.
 L'Italia è diversa da come l'avevo immaginata perché, come ho visto la televisione uguale.

Souleymane
 Grazie Assane

Figure 14: Souleymane's letter to his friend Assane

6.3. Current feelings and prejudices

The third module deals with the present life of the participants and their desire of acceptance and integration, despite common stereotypes and prejudices. The focus is set on the recognition of prejudicial behaviours and the expression of one's reactions. Moreover, the learners are invited to overturn the situation, changing their own perspective and attempting to understand the "other"'s point of view, feelings and thoughts. The main objective of the following tasks is the developing of intercultural competences and empathy, expressing one's emotions and attempting to figure out the reasons behind barely understandable behaviours as well.

Learning objectives	<p><u>-Skills objectives:</u></p> <p>To develop interactional skills to simulate dialogues and role-taking activities;</p> <p>to develop skimming/scanning reading skills;</p> <p>to develop speaking skills to talk about feelings and emotions through dramatization;</p> <p>to develop speaking skills to realize a shared video;</p> <p>to develop writing skills to write an internal monologue.</p> <p><u>- Lexical objectives:</u></p> <p>to learn the use of vocabulary related to feelings, emotions and impressions;</p> <p>to learn the vocabulary related to the web.</p> <p><u>- Functional objectives:</u></p> <p>personal function;</p> <p>interpersonal function;</p> <p>poetic and imaginative function.</p> <p><u>- Cultural objectives:</u></p> <p>prejudice;</p> <p>aspects of non-verbal communication.</p>
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	<p>- <u>Intercultural objectives</u>:</p> <p>to know how to observe;</p> <p>to know how to actively listen;</p> <p>to know how to suspend judgement;</p> <p>to know and reflect on aspects of non-verbal communication.</p>
Duration	3 hours.
Participants	Adult learners at level A2-B1.
Materials	Text of the poem "Aprimi, fratello!", construction papers, laptop and <i>Youtube</i> , video camera.

6.3.1. Activity 1: “Accoglienza e integrazione”

- *Realization*

Dopo aver letto ed esaminato la poesia “Aprimi, fratello!”, dell’autore camerunense René Philombe, rifletti sul tema centrale della stessa, ovvero il desiderio di accoglienza, di fraternità e tolleranza prive di pregiudizi.

Ora ripensa a episodi di vita quotidiana, in cui hai incontrato persone “locali”, cittadini italiani, e rifletti sulle seguenti domande:

- Quali sensazioni hai provato?
- Tu come ti sei posto nei loro confronti?
- Le loro reazioni sono state positive o negative?
- Il tuo desiderio di accoglienza e integrazione, come descritto nel testo poetico, viene solitamente soddisfatto?

Realizza in forma scritta una sorta di monologo interiore, cercando risposte e osservazioni alle domande poste. Rifletti inoltre su eventuali differenze extra-linguistiche (gesti, espressioni, posture) che potrebbero aver influito sulle vostre azioni e sulle reazioni delle persone di fronte a te.



- *Observations*

This module begins with the reading of a particularly significant poem written by the Cameroonian poet René Philombe, “Aprimi fratello!”, originally entitled “L’homme qui te ressemble”. In my opinion, it extraordinarily represents the common desire of being welcomed and accepted, regardless of which the country of origin or the skin colour is. After a first contact with the poetic text, the participants are invited to reflect on their personal experience in contact with local people. In this way, the impressions of the natives’ behaviours and attitudes are discussed, as well as the emotions given by the fulfilment or failure of the participants’ own desire of acceptance and integration. The methodology involves a sort of internal monologue, where the participants act as the protagonists of a fiction text and the “character is consciously reflecting to him/herself on a specific issue” (Bräuer, 2001, 108). In this way, the learners assume to be interiorly talking to themselves. However, thoughts, experiences and feelings are down in black and white. Furthermore, it is significant the reflection on the aspects of non-verbal communication and the problems that the differences between cultures can carry along. They frequently occur when meeting people from other countries, with other cultural systems and behaviours that are often erroneously considered to be natural and universal (Balboni, Caon, 2015, 53-54).

6.3.2. Activity 2: “Il pregiudizio”

- *Realization*

Rifletti: cosa s'intende con il termine “pregiudizio”? Discutine in classe con i tuoi compagni e unite le vostre idee alla ricerca della definizione più appropriata.

Ora leggi la spiegazione che il sito www.dizionari.corriere.it propone sotto la voce “pregiudizio”: esso è un “giudizio basato su opinioni precostituite e su stati d'animo irrazionali, anziché sull'esperienza e sulla conoscenza diretta”. Si avvicina alla tua prima idea?

Ti è mai capitato di essere mal giudicato solamente a causa di un pregiudizio?

Rifletti e crea il tuo slogan contro stereotipi e pregiudizi.



- *Observations*

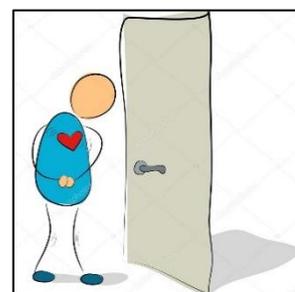
Once again, the participants handle with prejudices and stereotypes. Firstly, they are asked to make an attempt to define and understand a prejudice. The etymology of the term is discussed, highlighting the meaning of the two components: *pre-*, meaning before, and *-judice*, referring to a judgement. The learners should thus reflect on the importance of the reciprocal knowledge, considered as the basis for an unbiased relationship. Consequently, the learners are requested to analyse the prejudicial behaviours they have witnessed. The discussion should make them reflect on the frequent negative attitudes given by the absence of knowledge, despite personal and individual reasons. In the end, the participants are asked to face such prejudices and actively fight against them, creating their own slogan against stereotypes and prejudices. The common objective, indeed, should be a world of knowledge, tolerance and integration.

6.3.3. Activity 3: “Approcci e punti di vista”

- *Realization*

Role-taking: immagina di ritrovarti a parlare con un cittadino italiano, dapprima un giovane ragazzo trentenne e poi un anziano signore “all’antica”. Che sentimenti proveresti? Cosa diresti loro? Quali sarebbero le loro reazioni? E in quale dei due casi il tuo interlocutore ti sembra più bendisposto verso di te? Simula l’episodio assieme al tuo compagno e riflettete insieme.

Ora, la situazione cambia: i ruoli sono invertiti e lo “straniero” è l’“altro”. Le tue reazioni sarebbero simili oppure opposte a quelle del tuo interlocutore nel primo caso? Cosa ti sentiresti di dire all’altra persona? Ragiona e motiva le tue scelte.



- *Observations*

In this activity, the focus is set on empathy and the intercultural competence of putting oneself in someone else’s shoes. At the beginning of the exercise the participants are free of expressing their own feelings and impressions about the natives’ reactions and attitudes, similarly to the first task of the unit. In this way, they should try to understand the reasons that lie behind such behaviours, either correct or not. At the same time, the diversity in the mentality of different generations and their consequent attitudes are discussed. In the end, the learners are asked to take the part of the “local” citizen, facing a stranger man, and try to hypothesize their possible approach. I firmly believe that empathy is one of the most crucial competences that need to be achieved, trying to understand the others’ behaviours from a different point of view. Such activity considers an active participation of the subjects, as they become the main actors of a role-taking, meaning a series of partly guided actions where the protagonists put themselves into somebody else’s shoes or only into an imaginary situation (<https://www.italy.it/nozion/nozr.htm>, consulted on 04/08/2019). This

kind of activities are deemed to be particularly efficient for the development of both communicative and socio-pragmatic competences. However, a specific attention should be paid to the psychological aspects that characterise the learning process. Several tasks, involving the exposition of oneself, could affect the self-esteem and the social image of the participants. Hence, when proposing these activities the objectives of the tasks should be carefully explained and a positive mood within the classroom should be established (Begotti, 2006, 25).

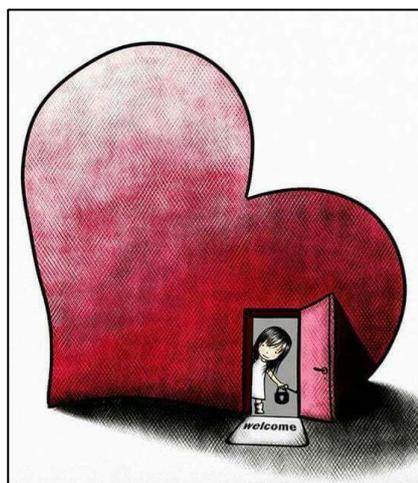
6.3.4. Activity 4: “Come ti senti oggi?”

- *Realization*

Come ti senti oggi?

Con l'aiuto dell'insegnante tu ed i tuoi compagni realizzate un video in cui, a turno, descrivete il vostro stato d'animo attuale con un solo aggettivo (ad esempio: “oggi mi sento *felice/preoccupato/arrabbiato...*”). Una volta concluso il giro, tornate davanti alla telecamera ed aggiungete alcuni dettagli, dando una motivazione ai vostri sentimenti ed accennando a possibili persone coinvolte.

Ora, riguardate il video collettivo, soffermandovi sulle espressioni facciali, nonché sui gesti e le posture vostre e dei vostri compagni. Riflettete sul possibile legame tra tali aspetti e i vostri sentimenti. Infine, potete eventualmente caricare il video su *Youtube*, condividendolo con l'ampio pubblico virtuale.



- *Observations*

In the last activity of the unit, once again the focus is set on the feelings and the emotions felt by the participants. The task is constituted by different parts. The first phase is more impulsive, since the students are asked to express the first adjective crossing their minds. Conversely, in the second part of the activity the learners are invited to deeply reflect on their current mood and the sentiments they are feeling. Hence, they should investigate the reasons behind such emotions and their main features. Later, it is discussed and analysed the relationship between the inner feelings and the unconscious extra-linguistic messages

conveyed by facial expressions, gestures and postures. A further reflection on the importance of such codes and on the inevitability of communicating with the whole body is requested. In the end, the motivation might be increased by the pleasure of sharing the final video product on the web, involving a large virtual audience through the use of modern technological devices.

6.4. Hope, wishes and projects

Dealing with the topic of hope, wishes and projects, the participants are invited to reflect on their expectations for the future. At the beginning the focus is set on the expression of one's desires, highlighting the essential role of will and hope. In the following activities, in turn, the discussion is based on near and distant projects.

Moreover, the expression and sharing of one's dreams and objectives might give the participants the impression of being listened and the strengthening of their hope of seeing them fulfilled.

Learning objectives	<p>-Skills objectives:</p> <p>To develop interactional skills to simulate dialogues and debates;</p> <p>to develop speaking skills to talk about opinions, wishes and projects;</p> <p>to develop writing skills to draft a list of priorities;</p> <p>to develop listening skills to listen for gist and for specific information.</p> <p>- Grammatical objectives:</p> <p>to develop the use of the conditional form <i>vorrei</i> to express a desire.</p> <p>- Lexical objectives:</p> <p>to learn the use of vocabulary related to opinions and projects for the future.</p> <p>- Functional objectives:</p> <p>personal function;</p> <p>interpersonal function;</p> <p>regulatory-instrumental function</p> <p>poetic and imaginative function.</p> <p>- Cultural objectives:</p> <p>Italian songs and music genres;</p> <p>traditions and popular superstitions;</p>
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	<p>horoscope.</p> <p>- <u>Intercultural objectives</u>:</p> <p>to know how to actively listen;</p> <p>to know how to suspend judgement;</p> <p>to know how to understand emotions.</p>
Duration	2-3 hours.
Participants	Adult learners at level A2-B1.
Materials	Laptop, video on Youtube, horoscope sections.

6.4.1. Activity 1: “Speranze e desideri”

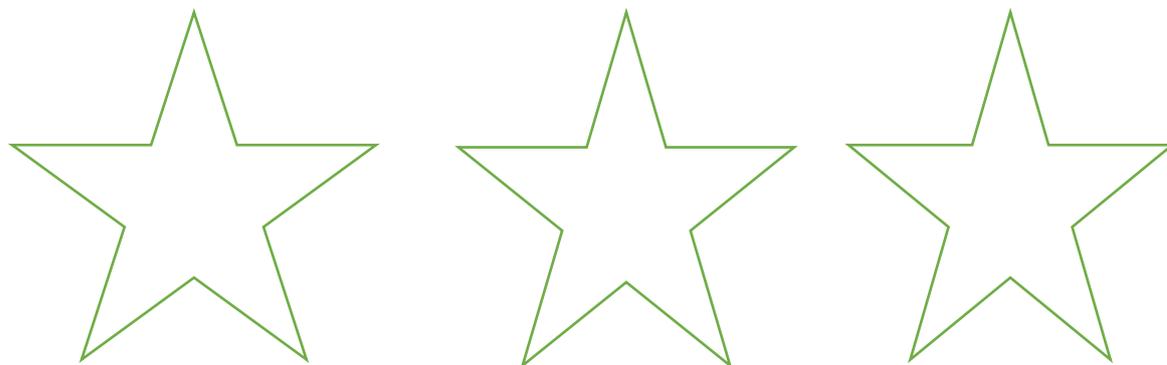
- *Realization*

Un po' di cultura...

In Italia, la notte tra il 10 e l'11 agosto è detta “Notte di San Lorenzo”: una notte un po' speciale, in cui le persone osservano il cielo per vedere una stella cadente. Una volta avvistata, è tradizione esprimere un desiderio.

Dopo aver ascoltato il famoso brano del gruppo musicale *Lùnapop* “Vorrei”, osserva come il cantante esprime i suoi desideri, la speranza che ciò a cui più aspira si realizzi, ripetendo il verbo “vorrei”. In modo simile, esprimi tre desideri e scrivilli sulle stelle poste qua sotto, ricordando che il condizionale “vorrei” può essere seguito sia da un nome (ad esempio “vorrei un cane”), sia dal verbo all'infinito (ad esempio “vorrei viaggiare”).

Ora, scegline uno e scambialo con un tuo compagno; discutete e provate a fornirvi a vicenda alcuni consigli e suggerimenti affinché i vostri desideri si possano realizzare.



- *Observations*

This activity is introduced by different cultural references: firstly, the explanation of Saint Lawrence night, the night of the shooting stars, and later the Italian song “Vorrei”. The task aims at sharing one’s desires and the consequent awareness of common aspirations. The prevailing feelings is hope, as well as the will of believing in better conditions even when it means trusting beliefs and superstitions. The learners are invited to reflect on their future, sharing their own desires. By doing it, the conditional form of the verb *vorrei* is reinforced. However, the main objective of the activity is not grammatical,

but it rather involves the ability of expressing one's inner deeper wishes. After a first phase of inner reflection, the participants are invited to write their personal desires and to share them with their classmates. The relationship between peers is fostered, through the discovery of others' thoughts and hopes and perhaps common desires. Furthermore, the attempt of giving suggestions and advice to the peers is deemed to be beneficial both for oneself and for the interlocutor.

6.4.2. Activity 2: “Che progetti hai?”

- *Realization*

Chiudi gli occhi ed immagina te stesso domani, l’anno prossimo e fra 10 anni.

Ora rifletti: cosa vedi? Dove sei? Chi c’è insieme a te? Quali oggetti ti circondano? Cosa provi?

Condividi le risposte con i tuoi compagni e poni loro le stesse domande.

Individuate quindi eventuali punti in comune e discrepanze, specialmente per quanto riguarda i vostri progetti a lungo termine.



- *Observations*

In this second phase of the unit, the learners move towards the reflection and discovery of their future projects, both related to the near future (the day after), and to a more distant, and sometimes unpredictable, future, such as the year after or even ten years after. Students are exhorted to think about their future from different perspectives, mixing thus the rational projects and desires and the imaginative component. In this regard, the participants are thus allowed to distance themselves for a moment from their real-life conditions and perhaps to exaggerate towards unrealistic situations. Following a first step of inner reflection, the students should develop their oral abilities, describing their imaginary picture following the list of suggested questions. Later, the ideas and projects of the peers are investigated, finding out potential common thoughts and discussing them. Such activity is strongly linked to the unit referring to the journey. In that case, the aim of the subjects’ decision of leaving played an essential role, representing something that is worth fighting for. In a similar way, in this task it is the achievement of future objectives that represents the key for all the efforts, actions and attitudes which fill the participants’ daily life.

6.4.3. Activity 3: “Oroscopo e priorità”

- *Realization*

Dopo aver letto alcuni estratti di oroscopi presenti nei quotidiani, nelle riviste oppure online, osserva come vengono spesso affrontati tre temi principali:

- lavoro;
- amore;
- salute.

Ora rifletti su quale di questi elementi consideri più importante per il tuo futuro, realizzando una scaletta delle priorità e spiegando i motivi delle tue scelte, creando una sorta di dibattito con i tuoi compagni.



- *Observations*

In the last activity of the unit, the participants are invited to ponder their priorities, choosing among a selection of aspects, all of which are rather important in their life. In this way, the learners can focus on one context at a time, resizing thus their expectations and increasing the possibility of succeeding in one single field, concentrating most of their efforts towards the fulfilment of their own desires. The task is introduced by the reading and analysis of horoscope section. Once again, culture is intersected with superstitions and beliefs. They might be an efficient way for enriching one’s knowledge of the Italian cultural world, perhaps from a careless and flippant perspective. Furthermore, the final discussion and debate among peers develop speaking and interaction skills, aiming at the expression of one’s opinions in an argumentative way.

6.5. My family

As introduced at the beginning of the chapter, the last two topics are two extra units, since they do not properly refer to a self-narration process in the strict sense. However, I consider them to be a necessary conclusion to the path, dealing with elements which are highly responsible for the construction of the identity of the participants.

As far as family is concerned, not only the learners' own families are discussed, paying attention to the unspoken words among their components, but also the typical families representing their countries, traditions and culture. Such activity aims at comparing and understanding other worlds and their peculiarities.

Learning objectives	<p><u>-Skills objectives:</u></p> <p>To develop interactional skills to simulate dialogues;</p> <p>to develop writing skills to write a text about one's family and relatives;</p> <p>to develop speaking skills to talk about typical families of one's countries.</p> <p><u>- Grammatical objectives:</u></p> <p>to review the use of possessive and qualifying adjectives.</p> <p><u>- Lexical objectives:</u></p> <p>to review family-related words;</p> <p>to learn the use of vocabulary related to the new forms of families.</p> <p><u>- Functional objectives:</u></p> <p>personal function;</p> <p>interpersonal function;</p> <p>referential function</p> <p>poetic and imaginative function.</p> <p><u>- Cultural objectives:</u></p> <p>typical Italian families;</p>
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	<p>famous artworks;</p> <p>comparison between Italy and other countries in relation to families.</p> <p>- <u>Intercultural objectives</u>:</p> <p>to know how to observe;</p> <p>to know how to actively listen;</p> <p>to know how to suspend judgement.</p>
Duration	3 hours.
Participants	Adult learners at level A2 – B1.
Materials	Laptop, video camera or smartphone, artworks.

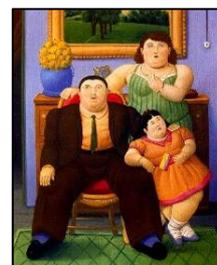
6.5.1. Activity 1: “Famiglia e relazioni”

- *Realization*

Dopo aver osservato e discusso varie opere d’arte ritraenti tipi di famiglie diverse, tra cui la famiglia tradizionale e quella multiculturale, o ancora la famiglia omogenitoriale e quella monogenitoriale, esponi la tua idea di “famiglia”.

Ora, disegna o incolla una foto della tua famiglia. Poi, scrivi un testo, aiutandoti con le seguenti domande:

- Da quante persone è costituita la tua famiglia?
- Descrivi i membri della tua famiglia: nome, aspetto, un pregio e un difetto.
- La tua è una famiglia tradizionale o innovativa?
- Dove si trova ora la tua famiglia?
- Che rapporto hai con i membri della tua famiglia?
- Ora che sei in Italia, cosa diresti alla tua famiglia?



- *Observations*

The initial input is given by different artworks, since they have the power of leading the participants towards a process of self-identification and the consequent recall of past feelings and emotions linked to their own familiar situation (http://www.repubblica.it/2007/05/sezioni/scienza_e_tecnologia/emozioni-quadro/emozioni-quadro/emozioni-quadro.html, consulted on 05/08/2019). Hence, the learners are asked to reflect on their own families after considering various paintings representing the concept of family from different perspectives. Firstly, the module begins with a written activity, where the participants should describe their own families following the suggested questions. It should be kept in mind, however, that the considered target of learners proves a pre-intermediate level of proficiency of the Italian language. Therefore, few attentions are paid to the basic vocabulary related to the family, as it should be already acquired. Conversely, the focus is set on the relationships between the learners and the other members of their families and personal remarks about the loved ones are

commented. However, the main objective of such activity is to give the participants the opportunity to express the unspoken words towards their own family components.

6.5.2. Activity 2: “Ciak...famiglia!”

- *Realization*

Realizza il tuo video!

Con l’ausilio di una videocamera, o di un telefono cellulare, crea un video in cui parli delle famiglie tipiche del tuo Paese, soffermandoti su componenti e caratteristiche peculiari delle stesse. Poi, confrontalo con i racconti dei tuoi compagni e con la situazione attuale italiana.



- *Observations*

As introduced at the beginning of the chapter, in this activity the participants are requested to move their attention towards the typical family units of their countries. In this way, a cultural aspect is discussed, and the intercultural competence should be developed. The learners are invited to compare their answers with their mates’ ones, aiming to relativize something that perhaps has been considered to be universal for years.

The methodology utilized for such activity is the video-making. As a matter of fact, the realization of the learners’ own video through technology is psychologically relevant, since it develops both their social competences, leading them to express themselves in front of other people and speak in public, and their cognitive ones, through an increasing creativity and participation (Fratter in Dolci, Celentin, 2000, 193-194).

6.6. My country

In the last unit, “My country”, the participants complete their process of construction of identity by building a bridge from their country of origin to the Italian land, from their own culture and traditions to the new ones. On one hand, the power of roots is recognized; on the other hand, a chance is given to the present and future. In this module, an essential role is played by artistic expressions, such as music, drawing and painting. In this way, words are accompanied by the universal language of art, allowing a complete process of self-expression. In this regard, I find particularly significant the quote written by the author Tiziano Terzani, stating: “We are not only what we eat and the air we breathe. We are also the stories that we heard; the fairy tales with which we got sleeping when we were children, we are the books we have read, the music we have listened to and the emotions that a painting, a statue, a poem have given us”⁷.

Learning objectives	<p><u>-Skills objectives:</u></p> <p>To develop interactional skills to simulate dialogues;</p> <p>to develop speaking skills to express feelings related to one’s culture and tradition;</p> <p>to develop speaking skills to speak through technological means;</p> <p>to develop writing skills to write a brochure;</p> <p>to develop reading skills to share one’s and others’ productions.</p> <p><u>- Grammatical objectives:</u></p> <p>to review the use of present tenses;</p> <p>to develop the use of linking verbs.</p>
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⁷ Translated from the original Italian quote: ““Noi non siamo solo quello che mangiamo e l'aria che respiriamo. Siamo anche le storie che abbiamo sentito, le favole con cui ci hanno addormentato da bambini, i libri che abbiamo letto, la musica che abbiamo ascoltato e le emozioni che un quadro, una statua, una poesia ci hanno dato [...]” (<http://www.arteinsieme.net/renzo/index.php?m=42&det=7147>, consulted on 06/08/2019).

	<p>- <u>Lexical objectives</u>:</p> <p>to learn the vocabulary related to tourism and brochures;</p> <p>to review the vocabulary related to feelings and emotions.</p> <p>- <u>Functional objectives</u>:</p> <p>personal function;</p> <p>interpersonal function;</p> <p>referential function;</p> <p>metalinguistic function;</p> <p>poetic and imaginative function.</p> <p>- <u>Cultural objectives</u>:</p> <p>touristic products;</p> <p>cultural aspects of the country of origin: geography, climate, language, religion, traditions, sport, food and flag;</p> <p>cultural aspects of other countries;</p> <p>traditional music;</p> <p>Italian flag and sense of nationalism.</p> <p>- <u>Intercultural objectives</u>:</p> <p>to know how to observe;</p> <p>to know how to actively listen;</p> <p>to know how to suspend judgement.</p>
Duration	3 hours.
Participants	Adult learners at level A2 – B1.
Materials	Laptop and internet connection, construction papers, tempera, brushes, water containers, potential recyclable materials.

6.6.1. Activity 1: “Musica e cultura”

- *Realization*

Ripensando al tuo Paese, ci sarà sicuramente una canzone o semplicemente una melodia che riecheggia nella tua mente. Condividila con la classe, facendoti aiutare nella ricerca dall’insegnante. Tale brano è legato alle tradizioni del tuo Paese? Rifletti e confrontati oralmente con i tuoi compagni, descrivendo le sensazioni e le emozioni che ti suscitava in passato e focalizzandoti su ciò che provi riascoltandolo ora.

Extra...

Se lo desideri, riunisci i tuoi connazionali e insieme realizzate semplici strumenti con materiale di riciclo, provando poi ad intonare le melodie che avete scelto nella fase precedente.



- *Observations*

Once again, this activity leads the participants to recall their past life and the memories related to their countries of origin through cultural expressions, especially musical ones. Similarly to the sensory diary proposed in the previous sections, in this activity the hearing plays a fundamental role. It is through the ear that the melody goes through the whole body and old memories and feelings can resurface. Moreover, sharing the chosen melodies with peers allow the learners to make significant features of their own countries known. At the same time, the participants are exhorted to actively listen to their mates’ memories and develop their intercultural competence. Intercultural education through music is seen as a comparison between different identities, both personal, or individual, and social, or collective. (Disoteo in Disoteo, Ritter, Tasselli, 2001, 22). Therefore, this activity is deemed to be efficient in constructing and comparing self-identities.

6.6.2. Activity 2: “Brochure di classe”

- *Realization*

Completa un diagramma a ragno contenente alcuni elementi caratteristici del tuo Paese di origine:

- Geografia e clima;
- Lingue parlate;
- Religioni praticate;
- Cultura, tradizioni e folklore;
- Sport praticati;
- Cibi tipici.

Ora, confrontati con i tuoi connazionali all’interno della classe, unite le vostre idee e provate a realizzare una brochure sul vostro Paese, descrivendo con vari aggettivi gli elementi analizzati. Poi, delineate gli aspetti che più ritenete positivi della vostra nazione.

Ricorda! Nella brochure è fondamentale l’elemento iconografico: cercate delle immagini del vostro Paese e integrate il testo scritto.

Infine, condividetela con il resto della classe e confrontatevi con quelle proposte da persone di diversa provenienza.



- *Observations*

This activity aims at the sharing of one’s past world from a cultural perspective. What is significant, indeed, is the awareness of those cultural customs and traditions that characterise a country besides physical and touchable elements. Keeping in mind such premise, the participants are requested to reflect on their own country of origin and compare the main features with their mates’ narrations, realizing that different people

carry different values and cultural experiences. A brochure is defined as “a form of printed promotional material designed to communicate with existing or potential tourists” (in Molina, Esteban, 2006, 1041) and carries along a positive connotation. By attempting to creating their own brochure, learners are thus exhorted to put aside for an instant the negative connotations related to their country of origin, such as war, persecutions and so on. Therefore, the focus is set on the positive and charming features, spotting a sense of pride in the students’ words. In the end, once again interculturality plays a fundamental role, through the reciprocal discovery of different traditions and cultural expressions, either similar or distant to the personal ones.

6.6.3. Activity 3: “Ti senti italiano?”

- *Realization*

Prendi carta e penna e, senza riflettere troppo, realizza una mappa del mondo.

Adesso confronta la tua rappresentazione con quella dei tuoi compagni: probabilmente sarà diversa, specialmente per quanto riguarda dimensioni e proporzioni. Perché credi ci sia tale differenza?

Dipingi ora la tua bandiera e rifletti sui sentimenti che provi nel farlo. Ti senti ancora appartenente alla tua nazione o ti senti ormai un po' italiano? Medita sulle seguenti domande e realizza una video lettera da inviare ad altri studenti stranieri:

- Ti senti un po' italiano?
- Ti senti più italiano o più nigeriano/senegalese/bengalese...?
- Hai contatti con i tuoi cari rimasti nel tuo Paese?
- Ti informi regolarmente su ciò che accade nel tuo Paese di origine?
- L'Italia è simile o diversa da come te l'eri immaginata?
- Porteresti in Italia i tuoi familiari o preferiresti tornare a vivere nel tuo Paese?
- Cosa ti piace dell'Italia?
- Cosa ti manca del tuo Paese?



- *Observations*

The last activity begins with a graphic representation of the world, towards the consciousness of subjectivity and relativity. What is significant, is that everyone depicts the continents from a personal point of view, so that dimensions and distances vary according to the perspective (Chistolini, 2001, 66-67).

Later, the sense of belonging either to the country of origin or to the new one is investigated. The participants are invited to paint their own flag, symbol of nationality, and to reflect on the emotions they feel. In this phase they express themselves only through artistic expressions, putting aside the words for a moment. In the end, they are requested to ponder on their relationship with both the nations they belong to somehow, switching between nostalgic feelings towards their homeland and the gratitude to the host country. As a far as the methodology is concerned, the participants are required to share their thoughts with other students through a video letter, that is an oral production uploaded on the web or sent to unknown addressees (Balboni, 2015, 182). Such technique is extremely interesting, since it deals with technology and its ability of putting the participants in contact with unknown people.

- *Examples*



Figure 15: Nigerian and other flags



Figure 16: Senegalese flag



Figure 17: Guinean and other flags

6.7 Conclusions

To sum up, this chapter is meant to be a kind of handbook, open to new ideas and stimuli, for those facilitators who have their learner's feelings close to their heart. As already discussed, I firmly believe that the process of self-narration and expression of one's thoughts and feelings is crucial for the well-being and the integration of immigrant learners. Therefore, planning these didactic activities I have neglected those basic needs which are usually the cornerstone of the syllabi, such as the physiological and safety ones, (Serragiotto in Caon, Balboni, 2008, 183 – 186), to make way for those needs which aim at the self-fulfilment and are often set aside.

Considering the various activities suggested, all the skills should be developed through different forms. However, a greater attention has been paid to productive skills, which lead the participants to actively express their own thoughts and feelings. Moreover, different means and methodologies have been contemplated. Not only have several distinct inputs been proposed, such as movies, songs, pictures and so on, but also different outputs, such as the diary entry, the radio interview, the video letter and the dramatization. In this regard, several technological devices have been used, reflecting the importance of such instruments in our daily life. Furthermore, the intercultural context has unavoidably led to the development of those intercultural competences that are pivotal for the achievement of a respectful and sharing mood.

In conclusion, in this chapter several didactic activities have been proposed, using a familiar language and avoiding the complexity of linguistic structures. The linguistic and cultural needs of the participants have been taken into account, as well as their context and potential diversities. Moreover, the modules and the relative tasks have been thought up according to the temporal sequence before - now - after, aiming to a process of self-actualization through narration. In this way, the same importance has been given to past memories, to present feelings and impressions, and to future objectives.

CONCLUSION

In this academic paper, I have attempted to explore the complex world of migration in the Italian country. This thesis has shown that the phenomenon is increasingly widespread both in the European and in the Italian context. However, the reader should consider the evolving nature of the events and, in a similar way, the changing political choices regarding immigration to those states that overlook the Mediterranean Sea.

After a general and historical overview of the phenomenon, the focus has been set on teaching Italian as a second language. I have tried to highlight the difficulties that teachers, and at greater extent learners, have to overcome when dealing with another language, as well as other cultural systems and codes. Adult immigrant learners, indeed, exhibit several peculiarities which have been analysed from a double perspective. On one hand, andragogical teaching strongly differ from the pedagogical one, dealing with developed personalities that require specific tasks and attitudes. On the other hand, people with a migratory background have been demonstrated to be fragile but, at the same time, characterized by an extremely strong motivation to learn, aiming at a better future.

Furthermore, the main objective of this dissertation was to investigate the language needs of adult immigrant learners of Italian as a second language. Consequently, my intention was to prove contemporaneously the strong necessity and the intense desire of undertaking self-narration activities. By analysing the questionnaire proposed to several adults living in a refugee shelter in Bolzano/Bozen, this thesis has shown how self-confidence is a common feature among the participants, who show a deep sense of pride of their own culture and countries of origins. In a similar way, past experiences are not intended to be hidden behind feelings of shame, but they rather represent the result of conscious decisions. Therefore, the intention of expressing themselves, sharing their own thoughts and feelings, constitutes an essential component of the intrinsic motivation lying behind the second-language learning process.

In this regard, a familiar context proves to be fundamental; it is only by deeming the surrounding people to be good listeners, indeed, that self-narration activities can be efficient. Moreover, the participants have shown their desire of sharing their stories with different people, mainly loved ones and trustworthy people. An honest sense of curiosity

as then been demonstrated, highlighting the necessity of an equilibrate relationship. In other words, to an autobiographic narration should correspond different experiences to be discovered, in order to identify oneself with other stories, opinions and emotions. From my dissertation it comes to light the urgency of recalling and reliving one's memories, sharing the load with the "other", who is considered contemporaneously similar and extremely different from oneself.

Lastly, I have considered the necessity of expressing one's current feelings living in the Italian country and future objectives as well. In the first case, the participants might identify themselves with their peers, due to a deep sense of powerlessness that equates them. Therefore, it has emerged an imminent necessity of learning the second language, in order to communicate with natives and to feel integrated into the host community. In this regard, self-narration activities have proved to foster integration, both among foreigners and towards the local community. As far as the future perception is concerned, instead, it has come out that a high percentage of participants is willing to remain in the Italian country, thus increasing the need to learn the second language. However, a few people have expressed their desire of leaving the country.

Dealing with self-narration activities, I have discussed the different functions of language and the skills that should be developed. In this regard, I have considered the language in use, focusing on the communicative aspects of the language rather than its formal elements. In other words, when expressing oneself and sharing one's story and emotions, the participants are going to act in communicative events. Therefore, the personal and interactional functions of the language should be mostly developed, as well as those productive skills which aim at the active speech of the learners. Furthermore, among the main objectives of autobiographic activities, including the sharing of one's inner feelings and experiences, it is significant the role of cultural and intercultural competences. Through one's stories, the speakers might thus be able to construct their own identity. At the same time, autobiographic tasks foster the co-construction of one's identity together with the listeners. In this way, different stories are open to various interpretations, and the inference of the narrations told by the "other" shape a new, mature, identity.

Lastly, self-narration activities, especially regarding people with a migratory background, carry affective factors along. As discussed in this dissertation, such elements

can be either positive, such as joy or interest, or negative, such as fear and anxiety. It is the teacher, thus, who should act as a facilitator and foster the development of a certain kind of tasks, paying specific attention not to activating the affective filter.

Responding to the theoretical context previously analysed, a selection of didactic activities involving the self-expression of the participants have been proposed. The structure of the whole path follows the temporal sequence before – now – after. As mentioned above, indeed, the personality of the learners is affected both by past experiences, present situations and future projects. Therefore, the whole life-experience of the participants should be included, starting with a retroactive prospective towards the considerations about the future. All the suggested activities represent the final phase of teaching units, since they imply a reuse of the language and a stage of reflection, both one oneself and on the linguistic elements. Such tasks have been mostly tested on the participants, allowing me to identify any possible weak point and, at the same time, to prove the efficacy of such activities in relation to the self-expression and sharing of one's feelings in order to construct a self-identity.

To conclude, the potentiality of self-narration activities as a means of integration have been investigated. They result to be efficient both regarding foreign peers and the local community, aiming at the identification and relativization of one's cultural values.

However, I believe that the planning of autobiographic activities aiming to the integration into the host community would deserve further research. I deem, indeed, a reciprocal knowledge and sharing of one's thoughts to be the starting point for the establishment of a society where different cultures might be free to coexist and interact.

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