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Towards More Gender Inclusion in Language Teaching: Italian FL/SL Textbooks as a Case Study

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Abstract

This research explores the perceptions of Italian FL/SL teachers regarding the use of gender-inclusive language in textbooks, focusing on how these views impact their teaching practices. The motivation stems from the growing sensitivity among students to gender issues and the need for fair representation in educational materials. Following an analysis of nine textbooks conducted by the author and inspired by previous studies, this research employs a questionnaire addressed to 62 interviewees including teachers and a small group of Ca' Foscari students aimed at collecting data and answering the research questions, that are, how teachers of Italian for foreigners can make language teaching more inclusive from a gender perspective through the Italian FL/SL textbooks; and if it is possible according to the teachers to introduce the use of the neutral vowel *schwa* in Italian FL/SL textbooks. The qualitative analysis results demonstrate that inclusive strategies encompass linguistic redundancy in instructions, as well as the use of neutral terms; the teaching of inclusive job titles and the neutral vowel *schwa* as sociolinguistic elements; and the breaking of gender stereotypes in linguistic input. This thesis thus contributes to the research on gender-based language teaching and lays the basis for future research, such as how gender-based language teaching strategies may vary according to students' age or teaching context (FL or SL). Furthermore, the author suggests deepening the exploration of the relationship between students' language learning motivation and gender representation in foreign languages. To conclude, the author invites researchers to modify the questionnaire and submit it to another pilot test.

Keywords: Italian FL/SL; textbooks; language teaching; inclusive strategies; teachers; gender studies.

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1. Introduction

"Es muy machista". This was the reaction of an Italian FL student upon learning that in Italian there is no neutral word to define both brothers and sisters. Yet, for a native Italian speaker, it is normal to define both brothers and sisters as *fratelli* (brothers), as he or she has been used to this since childhood, perceiving it as normal. This made the author understand how the perception of a studied language varies starting from one's mother tongue or other known languages; and in a constantly evolving contemporary society, it is important to pay attention to the use of language depending on the audience.

In Italian, like other Romance languages, there are two grammatical genders —masculine and feminine— which in the case of animate beings corresponds to the sex of the person or animal in question. The case of *fratelli* which may includes both brothers and sisters is called *maschile non marcato*, which does not imply reference to male people but can also include women (Thornton 2021). The *maschile non marcato* is also used in the *participio passato* followed by the auxiliary *essere* or adjectives, for instance, in sentences like *Maria e Pietro sono stanchi* or *mamma e papà sono usciti*. Furthermore, the sentence *stasera verranno da me alcuni amici* does not imply that the company will be exclusively male, whereas in the case of *alcune amiche*, it would only be women (D'Achille 2021).

Hence, in the Italian language certain grammatical rules cannot be eradicated and lack alternative forms to increase the visibility of the female gender. However, the reaction of the student mentioned did not go unnoticed and he was not the only one to have demonstrated a certain sensitivity to gender issues in language.

At the end of the '80s, the feminist Alba Sabatini published a series of recommendations for a non-sexist use of the Italian language (1987), and over the years these recommendations have become the foundations of gender studies applied to linguistics and language teaching.

The author of this thesis, as a teacher of Italian FL/SL herself, decided to delve into the studies of gender-inclusive language applied to this specific context, given that it is both research applicable to her job and a contribution to future research.

1.1 Research Purpose

The purpose of this study was to explore how teachers of Italian FL/SL can make the language more gender inclusive through textbooks. Although it is not their responsibility to edit textbooks, these can be adapted according to their needs, and teachers' direct experiences can be a valuable contribution to improving textbooks.

Despite the textbook represents a combination of language and images, the author decided to focus exclusively on the language, specifically on the following questions:

1. How the instructions are formulated. Hence, how the class is addressed;
2. How job titles are taught. From this last question comes the exposure to a certain type of input that may be linked to job titles, such as dialogues and texts for greater linguistic and cultural acquisition.

Considering the evolution of linguistic practices, the author decided to introduce among the questions a hypothetical introduction of the neutral vowel *schwa*, which has become popular on social media and one of the strategies aimed at avoiding the use of the unmarked masculine, but also for greater visibility and representation of non-binary people. Due to the greater gender sensitivity in some countries, like the United States, the author thus decided to include it in the research precisely because it involves teaching Italian to foreigners, and not to native speakers.

Aware that the use of *schwa* probably represents more limitations than opportunities, the author created an online questionnaire to be completed by Italian teachers who work in different contexts and with various types of learners, and a small group of Ca' Foscari students of the course *Didattica dell'italiano L1, L2, LS*, who are asked to

1. Reformulate instructions to be more gender inclusive;
2. Indicate what type of job titles addressed to women are taught;
3. Identify the gender stereotype in the inputs and propose changes; and
4. Reflect on the hypothetical introduction of *schwa* in textbooks, specifically in instructions.

1.2 Thesis Structure

Including this introductory chapter (considered Chapter 1), this thesis is divided into seven chapters, followed by the appendix containing the questionnaire sent to the teachers.

Chapter 2 illustrates the most important points of the literature review, starting from gender linguistic studies in general, and then focusing on recent research on gender-inclusive language in Italian FL/SL textbooks. Although Alma Sabatini (1987) represents the foundation of research on gender-inclusive language in Italy, the author's true inspiration was Sara Sabatini (not related) who

analysed two Italian FL/SL courses for her thesis (2020) and provided suggestions for more inclusive rewritings. Initially, the author of this thesis wanted to limit the study to providing an analysis similar to Sabatini's, but then she preferred to complete the research by involving other teachers.

Chapter 3 represents an attempt to make some textbooks more gender inclusive, drawing on Sabatini's (2020) thesis. Specifically, the author selected a sample of nine textbooks from two famous publishing houses, namely Alma Edizioni and Edilingua Edizioni. The textbooks were chosen according to the age and level of the students, including books for immigrants and university students. Rather than a complete analysis of the books, the author analysed the teaching units freely available on the websites of the respective publishing houses, specifically considering the wording of the instructions, the inputs, and the job titles where present. This chapter also includes two other books that attracted the author's attention, namely *Femminile Plurale* by Loescher Editore and the course *Dai!* by Casa delle Lingue. A particularity of these textbooks is that they aim to be inclusive, and have proven to be an excellent example for future publications.

Chapter 4 resumes the literature review and delves into the theme of emerging inclusive language. Starting from examples abroad, the chapter deals with the use of the neutral vowel *schwa*, which would represent an inclusive alternative to the unmarked masculine. Furthermore, it has become the neutral vowel representative of the non-binary community. The spokesperson for this new trend is the sociolinguist Vera Gheno, who however seems alone against an army of opposing linguists. Although it would represent a threat to the Italian language, the use of *schwa* has also reached the teaching of the Italian language, specifically in English-speaking countries, where non-binary representation is particularly felt. There is also no shortage of moments of curiosity and experimentation, which led the author to introduce *schwa* into the research.

Chapter 5 represents the real beginning of the research project. In this chapter the research questions are explained, which are

1. How can teachers of Italian for foreigners make language teaching more inclusive from a gender perspective through the Italian FL/SL textbooks? and
2. According to the teachers, is it possible to introduce the use, and therefore the teaching, of *schwa* in Italian FL/SL textbooks?

The author hypothesised the results of the analysis of the data obtained from the questionnaire, which were partly disproved. To collect data, a questionnaire was created and sent to teachers. Since research of this type has never been carried out, the questionnaire was created *ex-novo* and subjected to multiple modifications, and underwent a pilot test. The questionnaire was then distributed online via social groups and the author's LinkedIn network. The administration lasted

about a month and obtained responses from 62 teachers. After evaluating the problems that emerged from the administration of the questionnaire, such as superfluous and repetitive questions, and the limited number of participants and homogeneous sample, the author opted for a qualitative analysis.

Chapter 6 provides the results of the qualitative analysis of the responses and a discussion, followed by the comparison with the hypotheses and the identification of the research limitations. To facilitate analysis, the data were grouped in line with the research questions and were categorised according to the nature of the response.

Finally, Chapter 7 presents the conclusions, enforced with the author's remarks and recommendations for future research.

2. Literature Review

This first chapter briefly illustrates how and in what way the need to use more inclusive language with respect to gender visibility and identity arose. Due to the breadth of the topic in various nuances, it was decided to limit it to a brief introduction, starting from the feminist activism in the United States up to the pioneering work of Alma Sabatini (1987) in Italy, and then moving towards the Italian language teaching.

According to previous research,[1] it would seem that foreign learners are more sensitive to issues of gender identity in the language, leading teachers to ask themselves how they can run Italian FL/SL lessons through textbooks and possibly additional teaching activities. Of fundamental importance for the purposes of this chapter is to understand what changes can be made without distorting the language.

2.1 Gender-Inclusive Language: A Brief Overview

If we consult the word "gender" in the dictionary, the following definitions can be find:

> Gender is the state of being male or female in relation to the social and cultural roles that are considered appropriate for men and women.
> In grammar, the gender of a noun, pronoun, or adjective is whether it is masculine, feminine, or neuter. A word's gender can affect its form and behaviour.[2]

The researchers Lakoff, Thorne, and Henley (cit. in Pavlenko & Piller 2008) analysed the relationship between language and gender through the notions of difference and dominance, and the notion of deficit. In the deficit framework, women were viewed as inferior language users and as «*the muted group*» who speaks a «*powerless language*» (Lakoff 1975; Thorne & Henley 1975 cit. in Pavlenko & Piller 2008, 57). In the dominance framework, women were seen as linguistically oppressed and dominated by men, who

> Took the upper hand in conversation and crowded women into a smaller and less significant space on the linguistic floor by several means: by their interruptions and

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1   Paciotti (2020) & Galli (2022)
2   Definition from Collins COBUILD Advanced Learner's Dictionary. Copyright © HarperCollins Publishers
     https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/gender

overlaps (Zimmerman & West 1975, West & Zimmerman 1983); by failing to take up women's conversational gambits (Fishman 1983); by volume of words (Swacker 1975, Spender 1980); or by their semantic derogation of women. (Bergvall 1999, 277)

Linked to the issue of sexist features in language, we find the relatively old debate on the relationship between language and thought concerning the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis, *«plays a role in shaping our thoughts, in modifying our perception and in creating reality is irrefutable»* (Hussein 2012, 645), and *«according to this linguistic theory, language not only reflects the thinking pattern but also actively influences it in the cultural sphere, more so than in grammar»* (Carloni 2017, 4), *«as language is closely interlinked with society it therefore cannot exist prelinguistically»* (Luck 2020, 20).

Following feminist activism in the United States, the Equal Rights Amendment was approved by the Senate in 1971, but ratified only in 2020 and, despite decades of activism, which continues to the present day, it has not yet been included in the Constitution. In 1973, a pivotal study tried to advance the debates, put feminist linguistic contentions to the test, and question how the generic use of "man" shapes understanding, namely, Sandra L. Bem and Daryl J. Bem's *Does Sex-biased Job Advertising "Aid and Abet" Sex Discrimination?* (Luck 2020, 23), in which they *«have assessed the impact of sex-biased job advertisements, finding that sex-unbiased advertisements encourage more high school females to apply for male-related jobs»* (Martyna 1980, 487). In the 1970s similar legislative action was taken in the United Kingdom, The Sex Discrimination Act (1975), which was intended to *«make certain types of sex discrimination and marriage-based discrimination illegal»* and to work *«towards the elimination of such discrimination and the promotion of equal opportunities between men and women in general; and for related purposes»* (Ludbrook 2022, 21). Under the Sex Discrimination Act, the legal attention to removing gender bias in the workplace also had important repercussions on the use of language. In particular, employers were required to make it clear that jobs were open to both men and women. This led to the widespread use of gender-neutral terms in the workplace like professions suffixed as -man/-woman, for example, salesman, and -woman became salesperson. In addition, the common feminine marker -ess (waitress, authoress, actress) was increasingly dropped and replaced by gender neutral terms, such as waiting staff or writer (ibid.). Ludbrook points out that these terms have lost the distinction of being intrinsically masculine and are increasingly used to refer to the person who performs this action, regardless of gender identity.

The awareness that there is a close connection between language and gender, and therefore between language and identification has also expanded abroad, also reaching Italy.

All scholars and researchers interested in gender inclusion in the Italian language cannot help but base their contribution on Alma Sabatini, who is considered the pioneer of the inclusion path in Italy, following the feminist studies developed in the 1960s in the United States, dealing with the manifestation of sexual difference in language (Fiorentino 2022). She wrote in 1987 *Il sessismo della lingua italiana e Raccomandazioni per un uso non sessista della lingua italiana*, provoking «*the beginning of a series of questions, of reprimands, of uncertainties and reactions that have remained valid in society over time*» (Nitti 2021, 11).

According to Sabatini social rules are assimilated through language, and they act as a filter of the vision of the world and of the people around us. Specifically, in the Italian language linguistic forms are carriers of ideologies and prejudices addressed to women, and are so deep-rooted that they are not recognised (Sabatini 1987). In particular, Sabatini noted sexist forms of language in grammatical and structural dissymmetrical and discriminatory levels compared to women; use of lexemes, phrases, and stereotyped and reductive images of women (ivi, 20). In her research, she particularly focuses on the language of the press and the wording of job advertisements. Finally, she concludes her work with recommendations, which since their publication have been invaluable to linguists and institutions interested in gender-inclusive language. She divides her recommendations into macro-categories, namely 1) sexist linguistic forms to avoid and alternative forms; and 2) agents: titles, positions, professions, and trades. Here some common examples:[3]

Unmarked Masculine	
Ordinary non-inclusive use	Recommended use
I diritti dell'uomo	I diritti umani I diritti della persona
I bambini	I bambini e le bambine
I fratelli	Fratelli e sorelle
Gli insegnanti	Insegnanti
La fratellenza	La solidarietà
Carla, Maria, Francesca, Giacomo e Sandra sono arrivati	Carla, Maria, Francesca, Giacomo e Sandra sono arrivate

Table 1: Some examples of unmarked masculine and related recommendations.

The problem with the Italian language is that there is no neutral gender to refer to uncertain, generic situations, or mixed groups consisting of both males and females. In all these cases, therefore, it is necessary the masculine gender. In other words, the unmarked masculine (*maschile non marcato*) in Italian is a well-established linguistic mechanism and the necessary consequence of the lack of a

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3   For further examples and explications, please consider pages 97-120 from Sabatini (1987, op. Cit).

third neutral gender (Cettolin 2020; Catarinella et al. 2023). The tendency is to designate men or women indifferently, even if this term is usually grammatically masculine. This tendency thus prefers "epicene" ones to feminine designations, a term used for animal names, such as *pesce* or *aquila* (Lepschy A L., Lepschy G., & Sanson 2001). Animal substantives can have only one grammatical gender in Italian with no immediate semantic reference to their sex. In this case, the semantic trait must be explicitly added, for instance, *la tigre maschio*, *il leopardo femmina*. Nevertheless, the issue becomes complicated for animate humans (Carloni 2017). In the case of job titles, «*many of these nouns*» like *farmacista*, *dentista*, or *fiorista*, «*end in -a for etymological reasons, but this ending is not a marker of the feminine*» (Sulis & Gheno 2022, 157).

Sabatini then suggests alternative forms that reflect the norms of Italian grammar, for instance, using a neutral word (*persona*), the splitting, and avoiding the article when the word is both masculine and feminine. The last example, however, would seem like a gamble. In fact, Professors Cardinaletti and Giusti (1991) acknowledge a daring proposal by Sabatini, which is not so much linguistic as it is ideological, that is, to make plural agreement feminine when the majority within a group of people is female. However, this proposal is not widely accepted, as it disrupts grammatical concord. Cardinaletti and Giusti suggest the following example sentence, which can bypass the issue: *Carla, Maria, Francesca, e Sandra, insieme a Giacomo, sono arrivate stamattina* (Ivi, 183). In this case, the sentence is grammatically acceptable, in contrast to Sabatini's proposal.

Agent Names	
Ordinary non-inclusive use	Recommended use
La studentessa, le studentesse	La studente, le studenti
L'avvocato / l'avvocatessa	L'avvocata
Il sindaco / La donna sindaco / Il sindaco donna	La sindaca
L'ingegnere	L'ingegnera
Il soprano Maria Rossi	La soprano Maria Rossi

Table 2: Some examples of titles, positions, professions, trades and related recommendations.

The words that define a person who carries out a specific profession or function are called "agent names" (*agentivi*). The *agentivi* proposed by Sabatini indicate a profession considered prestigious or an important institutional role because, unlike all agent names which refer to more modest jobs and which have both the feminine and masculine forms, for this subgroup, the speakers still have many doubts about the acceptability of the female form (Fusco 2019; Castenetto 2020). Why? First of all because until a few decades ago women did not carry out these jobs. Over time, even if women began to have access to new professions and institutional roles previously reserved for men,

the language did not evolve at the same rate. Furthermore, it was thought to be scandalous that women could do those types of jobs. For this reason, the masculine form of titles began to be used for women too. Initially, it was an accepted trend, because it eliminated the habit of indicating the sex of the person practising the profession. The use of the masculine was therefore considered grammatically correct, even if there were not and still are not morphological restrictions on the formation of the feminine nouns of agents, given that they are perfectly compatible with the mechanisms of word formation of the Italian (Castenetto 2020, 82).

The purpose of the recommendations presented in Sabatini's contribution is thus to propose alternatives that are compatible with the language system in order to avoid certain sexist forms in the Italian language, thereby providing linguistic visibility to women and ensuring linguistic equality (Sabatini 1987). Anticipating the reflection on Migliorini, despite the dynamic structure of language continuously evolves, the majority of people tend to be cautious and are concerned about linguistic changes, as they can disturb established habits. In contrast, it is important to emphasise that speakers play an active as well as passive role in shaping language, although many of the changes encountered are not truly "spontaneous" but are clearly the result of specific socio-political actions. Alma Sabatini cites Bruno Migliorini, who states that «*a new term is often judged as ugly simply because it is new, meaning it conflicts with purity, continuity, and tradition*» (Sabatini 1987, 98 [translated by the author]): in many cases, though, it is the absence of new terms that leads to incorrectness and linguistic discord, such as when one has to adapt adjectives or past participles and use masculine titles when referring to women (ibid.). Alma Sabatini was a feminist, and her linguistic proposals reflect a different perspective that, starting from women, highlights aspects that have so far been overlooked by the traditional patriarchal viewpoint (ivi, 99).

According to Robustelli (2024) in the same years and in contrast with Alma Sabatini, scholar Patrizia Violi published the volume *L'infinito singolare. Considerazioni sulle differenze sessuali nel linguaggio* (1986). Her work begins with the premise that sexual difference is an essential aspect of our experience and life, influencing every area of our activity. As stated by Violi, «*the pervasiveness of sexual difference raises the question 1) whether language is "neutral" and sexual difference emerges only from the speakers' use of language, or 2) whether it is symbolised within language itself, in a way that has yet to be deciphered*» (Violi 1986, 9 cit. in Robustelli 2024, 193). Following this second hypothesis, the linguistic category of grammatical gender would be connected to the extralinguistic reality of sexual difference. The difference between the sexes in modes of speech depends on this fact, thereby demonstrating the inadequacy of language towards women. Women are indeed confined to the status of "object" and are unable to attain the position of "subject" except through the male form (Arcangeli 2021), and as a counterpart (Simi 2015).

Language is, therefore, androcentric: it is the form used by male individuals that is presented as the norm; the female form is always perceived as a "*parasitic language*" and as a "*derivative form*" compared to the universal subject (Violi 1986, 35 cit. in Ferrato 2016, 8; Simi 2015, 6); and masculinity is «*more common than femininity*» (Bailey et al. 2019, 1 cit. in Azzalini 2022, 19).

However, as Violi herself points out, this is a controversial interpretation: grammatical gender can also be understood in terms of arbitrariness, meaning it may be considered the result of purely linguistic causes and forces. The two approaches —the semiotic reflection on the possible presence of sexual differences in language, and feminist linguistics aimed at denouncing and changing the sexist characteristics and use of language— did not merge (Robustelli 2024). While Violi's study nourished the discussion in the academic world, the activity of Alma Sabatini remained restricted to the feminist circuit, but suddenly became known to the general public thanks to her best work, which is still the reference point for studies on linguistic sexism in Italy (ivi, 194).

Sabatini's ideology established the foundation for later gender studies, and this inspiration also reached some scholars of Ca' Foscari University of Venice. Professors Anna Cardinaletti and Giuliana Giusti previously mentioned joined forces to contemplate the profound commitment that led the Italian activist to bring forth issues related to the Italian language. Starting from a perspective that views language not merely as a tool for communication but also, primarily, as a tool for perceiving and categorising reality (Cardinaletti & Giusti 1991), it becomes crucial that its usage is not only correct in the normative-prescriptive sense but also fair, and non-discriminatory towards any social group. Cardinaletti and Giusti assert that Sabatini directs her focus particularly towards the educational system, as it is during the formative years in school that individuals permanently shape their perception of reality, and thus, they can be more significantly influenced by stereotypes (ivi, 173). Taking into account Sabatini's publication, in the essay by Cardinaletti and Giusti, three specific aspects are analysed, namely the use of the unmarked masculine form, the morphological rules for forming the feminine, and the agreement rules.

When considering the unmarked masculine form, Cardinaletti and Giusti ponder whether its use serves to denote a general collective, or if it is actually perceived as something ambiguous (ivi, 179). The ambiguity and the difficulty of assigning the correct interpretation to a term prove to be obstacles to communication, highlighting the role of social expectations and the resulting stereotypical beliefs. One solution that Cardinaletti and Giusti draw from Sabatini's work is the use of redundancy, that is, explicitly specifying the feminine reference. In this case, redundancy can be tolerated as it serves a specific purpose, namely disambiguating and facilitating communication. Therefore, forms like *gli studenti e le studentesse* rather than *gli studenti* do not violate the economy of language but ensure reference to the feminine. Another issue concerns the use of masculine terms

for female referents. This is closely linked to socio-cultural factors, particularly the fact that women have only recently started entering certain professions (ivi, 180). In this phenomenon, multiple variations can be observed, and this occurs primarily for particularly prestigious roles, such as *ministro* (minister) or *dirigente* (executive), followed by the word *donna* (woman) (ivi, 181). Another common occurrence is the addition of the suffix "-essa," as seen in *studentessa*, while Sabatini suggests the neutral form *studente* preceded by the feminine article (*la studente*). Lastly, a proposal based on grammatical symmetry involves simply replacing the masculine final vowel "-o" with the feminine final vowel "-a," a practice already common in words like *maestro* and *maestra* (ivi, 182).

Regarding the specific use of the suffix "-essa", it is important to consider its origin. The suffix "-essa" «*derives from the Greek "-issa" and originally designated the wife of a man in a certain occupation*» (Merkel, Maas, Frommelt 2012, 313). From Cortelazzo's essay (1995) we know that three Venetian words, namely, *dogaressa* (doge's wife), *dotoressa* (with a *t*), and *impiraressa* (pearl stringer), summarise the main values and the double origin of the suffix "-essa": on the one hand , in fact, indicates an ambiguous status between "wife of the titled" and "bearer of the title", as in *principessa*, *contessa*, *duchessa*, etc., on the other hand, it indicates an activity, such as *dottoressa*, *professoressa*, or *studentessa*. Cortelazzo therefore wonders why there is such a strong fury against the suffix "-essa", the use of which is limited to the Venetian, Friulian, and Istrian dialects (ivi, 50). He thus hypothesises that "-essa" transferred the negative meaning when it designated the wife of the holder of the office, such as *pretora* attested as "wife of the magistrate, of the podestà" and then defined as "female magistrate who serves at a magistrate's court", with a derogatory or joking connotation (Battaglia 1961 cit. in Cortelazzo 1995, 51).

Cortelazzo concludes his considerations by defining language as history, that is, something that cannot be ignored or changed at will. He then recommends leaving "-essa" with the double meaning (neutral and negative) acquired and justified by his sociolinguistic evolution. Finally, he quotes Luca Serianni, who in turn reprises a quote from Romanelli:

> *Dottoressa* is the common form of doctor today for the feminine: *dottora* was proposed as opposed to *dottoressa*, because *dottoressa* and know-it-all are more or less synonymous (Romanelli 1910: 13), but today the effect would be the opposite, as *dottora* would be ironic or derogatory. (Serianni 1988 cit. in Cortelazzo 1995, 52 [translated by the author])

In Lepschy A. L., Lepschy, G. and Sanson (2001) we find that the term *dottoressa* has been used predominantly negatively and mockingly to indicate pedantic and presumptuous women. Fanfani (1855) gives the definition "*sacciuta*, and *salamistra* woman," and for *dottora* "*dottoressa*, *salamistra*, and it is said of a woman who wants to be a know-it-all and put her mouth into what does not concern her" (cit. in Lepschy A. L., Lepschy, G. and Sanson 2001, 17). Rigutini-Fanfani (1875) describes a *dottoressa* as "woman who wants to be known, who wants to appear learned"; and *dottora* "the same as *dottoressa*, and it is said of a woman who wants to make herself known and keep her mouth on everything" (cit. in Lepschy A. L., Lepschy, G. and Sanson 2001, 17).

Regarding *professoressa* and *studentessa*, Lepschy A. L., Lepschy, G. and Sanson (2001) report that *professoressa*, according to the dictionaries, has been attested since 1897, while *studentessa* since 1907. Nineteenth-century dictionaries instead give *professora* instead of *professoressa*. Rigutini-Fanfani (1880) notes under the entry *professora*, as "feminine of *professore*", but she would be used more often as a joke, that is, "she wants to be a *professora*, but she knows nothing". The term *studentessa*, however, is missing from nineteenth-century dictionaries; those that give *studente* sometimes indicate that it is a masculine noun, sometimes they do not specify the grammatical gender and leave open the possibility of considering it common, that is, *il studente* and *la studente* (cit. in Lepschy A. L., Lepschy, G. and Sanson 2001, 18).

In her essay, Elizabeth Burr (2003) takes into consideration the interventions of Raffaele Simone (1987) and Ada Valentini (1987) published in *Italiano & Oltre* II, regarding the use of job titles. Burr reprises a quote from Simone, who states that linguistic reforms have never been successful and that it is futile to insist on the termination of female job titles, like *avvocata* instead of *avvocatessa* (Simone 1987, 100 cit. in Burr 2003, 1). Furthermore, Burr is amazed by Valentini's reaction, who defines Sabatini's recommendations as forced neologisms (Burr 2003, 1), without being aware of the fact that actually her recommendations are unoriginal (ivi, 2). In fact, Burr reports some studies done before 1987, including Fochi (1966), Satta (1971), and Gabrielli (1976).

These studies, then, indicate a historical precedent for female job titles, challenging the notion that such terms are contemporary inventions or artificial constructs.

If *avvocata* and *avvocato*, and *architetta* and *architetto* function exactly like *sarta* and *sarto*, on the *ingegnere-ingegnera* couple (like *infermiere* and *infermiera*) there is more resistance because the words with ending "-e" in Italian could be both masculine and feminine, but in many cases, they form a feminine of their own, also because the two genders can correspond to two very different meanings, such as *massaggiatore/massaggiatrice* couple who scandalously penalises the feminine (Coletti 2021). It is precise because of this multiplicity of solutions for the female motion of male nouns in "-e" that the speakers sometimes remain uncertain, overcome by perplexity, adding

linguistic questions to cultural ones, like, 'if a woman is a *muratore*, she will be a *muratrice* like *scrittrice* or *muratora* like *tintora*?' (ivi, 215).

Italian has also a group of masculine nouns ending in "–a", such as *atleta*, *poeta*, and *dentista*. Thus, despite most feminine words ending in "–a", this vowel does not always imply a feminine grammatical gender (Carloni 2017). It often provokes negative reactions from speakers due to a lack of knowledge of the Italian language and its history, which reveals that the grammatical and lexical morphemes are of different origins (Nitti 2021).

In light of the above, it is important to consider that Sabatini's suggestions are not directives but rather invitations to reflect on language usage, which, in the majority of cases, can certainly be implemented. Cardinaletti and Giusti aimed to revisit what Sabatini proposed over thirty years ago and continue an ongoing ideological struggle.

After years, Giuliana Giusti proudly states that linguistics at Ca' Foscari has made its contribution to reopening a discussion involving multiple stakeholders within and outside universities. This has been achieved through conferences, publications, staff training courses, teachings within degree programs, and outreach training activities (Giusti 2018). In 2008, the CPO (Equal Opportunities Committee) of Ca' Foscari University, in collaboration with other universities, organized the conference *Mi fai male* (You Hurt Me) on the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women (November 25, 2008) (ivi, 359). In the context of this thesis, attention will be directed solely towards the second part, which pertains to the linguistic aspect, specifically the contributions of Anna M. Thornton, who explains in her presentation *Designare le donne*, there is often a strong demand for linguistic behavioral norms in our society. Even at the highest levels of various professions, there is a lack of widespread linguistic education that should ideally be a goal of compulsory education, enabling more conscious choices. Frequently, behind the self-designation in the masculine form, there is a fear of making a grammatical error and being judged negatively for it (Thornton 2009). A common expression is "*suona male*" (it sounds weird), but Thornton, as a linguist, questions whether this means it is ungrammatical, that is, it violates a grammatical rule of the Italian language, or if it signifies something else (ivi, 119). However, we must also consider within what limits the requirement for agreement between the gender of the designated person and the gender of the noun that designates them apply. In Italian, the use of nouns that match the gender of the referent varies depending on the words used. For example, agreement between the gender of the noun phrase and the person designated is strict in some cases, like when using pronouns or nouns such as *sorella/fratello* (sister/brother), optional in others such as nouns like *ministro/ministra* (minister), and impossible in certain cases, like nouns such as *vittima* (victim) (ivi, 126). It is crucial to emphasise that there is

not a strict grammatical rule to follow; there exists an area of grammar where there is uncertainty, a space for individual choices (ivi, 127). Even just within the context of declaring one's profession or function in a biography or on a business card, we observe variation in how women are designated. According to Thornton, several factors explain this variation, with one of the most recognised being that of prestige. There are word pairs in which both the masculine and feminine forms are in use, but the feminine typically denotes functions of lower prestige, especially in political contexts. The most common example is the pair *segretario/segretaria* (secretary) (ivi, 128), where normally *segretario* refers to a man working for a political party, while *segretaria* alludes to office work, such as being an assistant to an executive. However, if we consult the Treccani Encyclopedia, the definition of *segretario* is much broader:

> **2.** (f.-*a*) L'impiegato che in un ufficio, in una azienda, in una società, svolge incarichi di fiducia di vario tipo per conto di un superiore: *il s. del direttore*; *il s. particolare del ministro*; *il s. privato del presidente della Repubblica*; *fare da s. a qualcuno.*[4]

In Treccani Encyclopedia, the word s*egretaria* is not explicitly explained, but is simply considered the feminine form of *segretario* (f.-*a*). However, consulting another source, Garzanti Linguistica, provides the following definition for the word *segretaria*:

> Femminile di *segretario*: *la segretaria di una scuola, del direttore*; *la segretaria del partito, del sindacato.*[5]

These two examples demonstrate that there is no distinction in meaning, only in gender, and that the perceived "prestige" associated with them is purely ideological and patriarchal. Another factor is time, in other words, how long certain words have existed. Some have been around since ancient times, originating from Latin, while others are much more recent, coined in the late 19th and late 20th centuries (Thornton 2009). Yet, despite some words being formally recognised, there is still hesitation in using them. Nevertheless, the dynamics of events are clear: over time, if a word becomes widespread in usage, if using it becomes normal, its *suonare male* or negative connotations can fade away. It is only by using these words that they will lose the negative or low-prestige connotations that perhaps some still associate with them. A century ago, it was challenging to be referred to as *dottoressa*. Today, for some, it may be challenging to be called *ministra* or *podologa* (ivi, 132).

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4   Definition n° 2 from Treccani Encyclopedia https://www.treccani.it/vocabolario/segretario
5   Definition from Garzanti Linguistica https://www.garzantilinguistica.it/ricerca/?q=%20femminile%20di%20segret-ario

In 2020, Thornton explored the issue of job titles with Paolo D'Achille, with whom she wondered how to designate women who execute jobs previously conducted only by men, such as *falegname* (carpenter). The word *falegname* means "a craftsman who works with wood, making or repairing fixtures, furniture and other furnishing objects", unlike what one might think of as "who makes wood". This lack of morphosemantic transparency could perhaps lead some speakers to no longer recognise the component elements of the compound, and to consider *falegname* an agent noun in "-e" from which to form a feminine in "-a", *la falegnama*, which has become a form attested as *falegnamessa*, albeit very rarely (ivi, 64). Strictly speaking, *falegname* should not have different forms for the two genders (ivi, 65).

The following presentations from the conference *Mi fai male*, especially those by Ursula Doleschal (*Linee guida e uguaglianza linguistica*) and Orsola Fornara (*Il linguaggio non sessista in Italia. Posizioni istituzionali e pratiche d'uso)*,[6] partially revisit the earlier presentation and also refer, in this context, to Alma Sabatini's proposals. They emphasise that alternatives are possible and that usage, particularly acceptance, is influenced by an ideology related to patriarchy.

To conclude, on the 150th anniversary of the foundation of Ca' Foscari University of Venice in 2018, the conference *Language, Gender, and Hate Speech*[7] was aimed at examining the role of the Italian language in shaping gender identities, adopting a comparative approach, considering Italian and other languages that have received more extensive study. Moreover, scholars employed an interdisciplinary perspective by integrating insights from the social and cognitive sciences. The conference was in line with contemporary research trends focusing on linguistic accessibility, linguistic inclusivity, and the construction of identities (Giusti 2018, 364), and it sought to initiate connections and build a multidisciplinary network between communication scholars and practitioners (ibid.).

More recent research (Castenetto 2020; Cettolin 2020; Fiorentino 2022; Poggi 2022) has justified how the topic of female visibility in language is still relevant.

From Castenetto's research (2020) on the use of female agents, it emerges that the people interviewed prefer to avoid the feminisation of titles due to their "ugliness", and because they consider the masculine to be a neutral gender without any reference to the person who carries them out.

Cettolin (2020) adds another linguistic problem relating to *agentivi*, that is, the lack of awareness of the functioning mechanisms of the language. In fact, speakers often do not know how to use

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6   In Giusti G., Regazzoni S. (a cura di), 2009. *Mi fai male... con le parole,* Atti del convegno, 18-20 novembre 2008, Libreria Editrice Cafoscarina, Venezia.

7   The contribution of scholars involved during the conference are collected here: Giusti, G., & Iannàccaro, G. (2020). *Language, gender and hate speech. A multidisciplinary approach*. Quaderni del comitato unico di garanzia Cà Foscari Venezia, 1.

specific words, and thus wondering about gender phenomena in the language. To promote linguistic change, it is suggested to take into account the continuous search and obsession for grammatical rules by Italian people and work towards the acquisition of a new linguistic awareness that allows us to identify words such as *avvocata*, *ingegnera*, or *sindaca* not so much as politically correct, but rather as linguistically correct. Furthermore, her research also covered the use of the unmarked masculine, specifically how its use obscures female audiences. Also in this case, the results confirmed previous studies, namely, 1) there is a risk that the unmarked masculine is interpreted as specific rather than generic, especially by male individuals; 2) the unmarked masculine is not truly generic and inclusive; a respectful form of this gender is, rather, splitting, which gives equal visibility to both sexes; and 3) splitting has different effects depending on the sex of the speakers. In fact, women seem to pay more attention to the linguistic form used and to the issue of female representation (ivi, 75-76).

What Castenetto (2020) and Cettolin (2020) reported goes hand in hand with what Robustelli (2012) had stated, according to which the speakers interviewed for her research who adhere to this extended use of the masculine gender resort to motivations substantially attributable to 1) uncertainty with respect to the correctness of the female form; 2) alleged "ugliness"; and 3) supposed "neutrality" of the male gender. Robustelli explains that it is important to remember that the possibility of forming female names is guaranteed by those same mechanisms of formation of the new words that enter the Italian language every year, whose possible "ugliness" does not prevent them from enriching the lexicon (ivi, 5).

> The hesitation towards new feminine forms can, if anything, be motivated by the recent nature of these forms compared to the masculine ones that have already come into use, and therefore by the need for that lexical acclimatization that is normally required for new formations. (ibid. [translated by the author])

There are therefore no grammatical obstacles. Notwithstanding, the Italian language offers different possibilities. It allows gender differences indeed to be expressed with full respect, allowing the use of masculine, feminine, and mixed forms, avoiding stereotypes (Fusco 2012 cit. in Nitti 2021, 11).

Fiorentino (2022) suggests that what has no name does not exist or is invisible, emphasising the importance of using and promoting feminine professional titles for women, otherwise, their presence in traditionally male professions will remain invisible. Furthermore, she states that languages change and evolve continuously because they are cultural products, so even if some

names of female professions did not exist in the past this should not constitute an obstacle to change and the introduction of new words, given that languages they are historical-natural objects and are destined to evolve (ivi, 161).

The language indeed changes when the speakers change it, but as Poggi (2022) admits, a push is also needed. The point is always the close correlation that exists between language, thought, and social reality. Language cannot be changed to change thought, because generalised linguistic uses cannot be established if these are not also accompanied by a change in thought and society. In her essay, she analysed linguistic strategies of *femminilizzazione* (use of splitting) and *neutralizzazione* (use of neutral words), which received not only strong criticism but also real reactions of hatred from public opinion. These reactions are not understandable as purely linguistic or syntactic issues. The only explanation, however, is that language is an instrument of power, evidently even for those who deny that it is (ivi, 7).

It is important to consider that the issue of gender inclusion in language represents a topic that has been widely treated and studied from different aspects taking into consideration the variety of languages. For the purposes of this thesis, it was fundamental to mention the US situation, which would seem to be the starting point of the gender issue, but from the next chapters, only the gender-inclusive language in the Italian language will be taken into consideration, albeit with some reference to other languages, both from other families and similar.

The various interventions and studies that were held at the Ca' Foscari University of Venice make it clear how important education in gender-inclusive language is starting from the institutions.

School, in fact, would represent one of the first areas in which identity training courses for girls and boys are activated. However, a dominant school model which, rather than acting as a driver of social change, tends to reiterate, and therefore legitimise, an imaginary of the feminine and the masculine that is highly deficient and limiting for both girls and boys. Therefore, the need to introduce an educational action in schools that truly promotes more equitable educational models and allows us to overcome sexist stereotypes starting from textbooks clearly emerges (Biemmi, 2019a), as they are «*an important tool for social change and should be one of the foci of an education policy aimed at achieving gender equality*» (idem 2015, 816).

2.2 Previous Research on Italian FL/SL Textbooks

In Italy, sexist stereotypes in society are formed above all at school, where contents, methods, and languages reproduce traditional asymmetries and fail to address inequalities. Textbooks sanction

female absence from culture and school communication uses a strictly male lexical and morphosyntactic system (Ercolini 2010).

In 1998, the POLITE Project (Equal Opportunities in Textbooks) was founded, the outcome of which was to develop a «*self-regulation code for publishers so that the gender perspective becomes an orientation criterion in the drafting of future textbooks*» (Biemmi 2019a, 3 [translated by the author]). This Code is accompanied by a document that identifies the characteristics of a textbook that is attentive to gender identity, that is, 1) avoiding sexism and sexist stereotypes; 2) providing balanced representations of differences; 3) promoting training in a culture of gender difference; 4) rethink the language, and 5) update and adapt the choice of illustrations (Ivi, 4). According to Biemmi (2019b), it is precisely the language that is «*the biggest obstacle to the identification process of girls*» (Biemmi 2019b, 50 [translated by the author]).

Educational projects aimed at teaching respect for differences and gender identity have therefore increased. An example is the national conference *Educating for Differences*, held in 2014 in Rome. The conference was followed by controversies that defined this initiative as a threatening promotion of gender theory that would disorientate students (Marotta & Monaco 2016).

Yet, it seems that the opposite is what confuses learners. During her experience in London as a teacher of Italian FL, Paciotti (2020) carried out research on her students' opinions regarding the issue of gender in textbooks. Regardless of their level of language proficiency, many students have developed their critical thinking on gender issues. For instance, even at basic levels, English-speaking learners' discovery of the use of the unmarked masculine portrays the Italian language as sexist. Another example concerns some agents who exclude the possibility that some professions are practiced by women. Even, in advanced-level classes cultural discussions can develop regarding the linguistic choices within the textbooks (ivi, 14).

Likewise, Galli (2022) who teaches Italian FL in Canada decided to reflect on how it could be possible to employ a more gender-equal language in an Italian course, in a country where there is «*attention to a gender unbiased language is at the centre of academic institutions and government policie*s» (ivi, 1142). She suggests explaining the inclusion of language in the syllabi and pointing out some cultural and lexical differences between Italian and English. Furthermore, she proposes an exercise in which the students are asked to participate in a discussion board replying in Italian using a language that is as neutral as possible. Another crucial aspect is the cultural reading materials, for instance, incorporating some texts focused on the difference between the feminine and the masculine forms of the same nouns (ivi, 1145).

It would seem, therefore, that foreign learners of Italian as a foreign language, especially adults, may be more sensitive to the issue of gender representation than Italian native speakers, although

there is no empirical data to support this claim. It is essential, then, to lay the foundations for gender inclusion starting with young learners.

Scaglioso and Del Chierico (2022) were interested in textbooks addressed to foreign children living in Italy and children studying Italian abroad, arguing that «*the process of language acquisition is intertwined with a path of self-realization*» (ivi, 310 [translated by the author]) made up of transmission of knowledge that is not distorted and respects diversity. For their research they analysed six Italian FL/SL textbooks from different publishers published from 2005 to 2014, taking into consideration the Polite Project Code (1998) as a point of reference. Specifically, they verified 1) the syntactic placement of some lexical units with respect to the verbs with which they occur in the sentence; 2) the association of professions and trades with the sex of the referent; 3) the type of adjectives referring to the two sexes; and 4) the use of the unmarked masculine in instructions addressed to students. The analysis revealed that the textbooks have not been updated with respect to the indications from a gender perspective, therefore suggesting greater attention to following the new editing indications (ivi, 322).

Other scholars have been interested in the analysis of textbooks addressed to Italian FL learners. Vučenović (2022) based her research on the analysis of four textbooks used at the Faculty of Philology of the University of Banja Luka (Bosnia and Herzegovina), namely, *Qui Italia* (2002, Le Monnier), *Chiaro* (2010, Alma Edizioni), *Facilissimo* (2014, Alma Edizioni), and *Via del Corso* (2018, Edilingua). Taking into account Alma Sabatini's recommendations, specifically the case of the unmarked masculine, the analysis shows that language policies are mainly based on a prescriptive model, in which the masculine gender is considered neutral. Due to a patriarchal culture, language policies in textbooks help maintain and justify a male-centred world view (ivi, 238). Vučenović specifically illustrates the cases of *Facilissimo* and *Chiaro* by Alma Edizioni, in which the section on professions, some female terms are used alongside generic male terms, especially if they are historically male prestigious professions. This shows that even educational institutions censor women's roles through language, maintaining the patriarchal hierarchy. Nevertheless, she believes that this preference for the generic masculine is not always intentional, but often an automatic reproduction of learned unconscious norms (ivi, 239).

Another contribution that deserves to be taken into consideration is Sara Sabatini's dissertation (2022), as well as the first inspiration for this current research. Alongside a detailed analysis of examples extracted from a sample of textbooks published in Italy, Sabatini provided rewriting proposals, «*proposing educational interventions aimed at a representation of Italian society in which the theme of gender culture is central and still problematic*» (Sabatini & Mori 2020 [translated by the author]). For her research, Sabatini decided to analyse the courses *Nuovo*

Espresso by Alma Edizioni and *Nuovo Contatto* by Loescher, covering all levels of the CEFR, for a total of eleven textbooks. The choice of these two courses was motivated by several relevant factors: 1) both courses were published between 2013 and 2019, allowing the analysis of the evolution of stereotyped narratives and anachronistic linguistic uses over time; 2) the range of levels offered by both courses made it possible to verify whether the presence of discriminatory language and gender stereotypes varies with the advancement of learning levels, from elementary levels (A1-B1) to advanced levels (B2-C2), and whether at higher levels these issues are used to promote sociolinguistic reflection and the deconstruction of stereotypes; 3) both courses are recognised and widely used internationally and nationally; and 4) the Loescher and Alma Edizioni publishing houses adhere to the 2011 AIE Self-Regulation Code,[8] which suggests greater respect for the indications of inclusive representation in their school textbooks (ivi, 16-17). In particular, she focused on specific aspects which were classified as follows: 1) analysis of instructions; 2) analysis of the exercises and readings; 3) job titles; 4) representation of girls; 5) representation of women in the workplace; 6) representation of women in the family and domestic domain; 7) representation of women in the sporting domain; and 8) considerations on the image of women in textbooks. Considering the objective of this thesis, only some of Sabatini's analyses are taken into account, in particular 1), 2), 3) that correspond to Chapter 3 of Sabatini's dissertation. In this chapter, she proposes rewriting using the following strategies: elision of articles, use of prepositional phrases, reformulations, and above all, splitting (ivi, 49).

Regarding job titles, it is important to remember that when Italian FL/SL students acquire agreement between grammatical gender and sex/gender of the referent, this can automatically be applied to job titles likewise. Therefore, the inconsistency whereby some professions in textbooks are proposed as masculine, despite referring to women, should be explained. Integrating an inclusive language into textbooks thus does not represent a difficulty from the point of view of teaching practice, «*as the use of inclusive choices from a gender perspective is based on respect for grammatical rules without any interference with language teaching strategies*» (ivi, 50 [translated by the author]).

To conclude, Sabatini demonstrated how the teaching of Italian FL/SL still presents the residues of a discriminatory attitude towards the female gender both from a linguistic point of view and in the social and cultural representation of women, including not only the linguistic aspect (ivi, 54) but also sociolinguistic, which outlines gender prejudices and stereotypes. She also confirmed her initial hypothesis regarding the difference between basic and advanced levels. In the case of levels C1 and C2, in fact, there is less linguistic discrimination, although still present. However, metalinguistic

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8   See https://www.aie.it/Portals/38/Allegati/CodicePolite.pdf

reflection has not been adequately developed (ivi, 55). Regarding the sociocultural aspect, Sabatini found sexist and stereotyped examples in both the basic and advanced levels. Hopefully, those who teach will be able to fill the gaps in the expectations of gender education, where the textbooks have not been revised (ivi, 56).

Last, but not least, for the purposes of this review chapter, it is appropriate to mention Simona Frabotta, teacher of Italian FL at the University of Málaga and administrator of the social page *Parliamo in genere. Il sessimo nell'aula di italiano L2/LS*.[9] On May 15, 2023, she held a webinar[10] at Scuola Leonardo Da Vinci in Milan, in which she showed some examples of linguistic sexism in Italian FL/SL textbooks. In addition to what was discussed in previous research, Frabotta also illustrated other sexist aspects of the language, including misogynistic discourse, which represents uncomfortable or offensive situations for women, found for example in the book *Nuova grammatica pratica della lingua italiana* (Alma) and *Nuovo Contatto* (Loescher).

Frabotta, therefore, recommends 1) being aware and possibly making changes in textbooks, also involving the class with cultural reflections; 2) using job titles correctly and increasing the visibility of women in all professions; 3) employing alternative forms to the unmarked masculine, such as splitting, or neutral words; 4) avoiding misogynistic discourses, creating additional materials that break stereotypes.

In 2023 Frabotta also published a research in which she analysed *Qui Italia* by Le Monnier (2007), specifically the dissymmetries relating to the unmarked masculine and the job titles, trying to suggest possible more inclusive alternatives. Except for the use of male-rooted terms, such as *fratellanza* or *paternità*, and the use of the modifier *-donna* accompanied by a male professional name —in contrast with Vučenović's research (2022)—, the textbooks has numerous sexist examples in the language, including the titles, exercises, explanatory tables, or adapted or authentic texts (ivi, 142). Frabotta confirms the results of previous research on the presence of examples of masculine agents with female referents for prestigious professions (Vučenović 2022; Sabatini 2022), but claims that all the forms of linguistic sexism examined can be easily overcome by following the morphological rules that guide the formation of the feminine and masculine of the agents. These rules work perfectly in the Italian linguistic system and, if applied correctly, make the language clearer and simpler, as well as defuse the omnipresent masculine (ivi, 143).

Taking into account the research mentioned in this chapter, in the next chapter a selection of textbooks is analysed to verify whether the proposed measures have been taken into consideration over time.

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9   Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/share/aTqvTwr6qpftcDVV/
10 Available on Youtube: https://youtu.be/WNCUCPOmQaA?feature=shared
    Note from the author: I want to thank Scuola Leonardo Da Vinci for sending me the slides of the webinar.

3. Current Situation of Italian FL/SL Textbooks

In this chapter, inspired by the analyses previously carried out by other scholars,[11] the UDs of nine textbooks are analysed based on the publishing house, the linguistic level, the typology (general, university students, immigrants), and the age of the students (children, adolescents, adults). It is important to consider that the units for the analysis were chosen based on their free availability from publishing houses. Therefore, they were analysed as a whole, considering their organisation. In some cases, the UDs also contain interesting data relating to job titles, but in most cases, only instructions were considered. The only UD I own is that of *Nuovissimo Progetto Italiano 3* that was kindly passed to me by other teachers.

In addition, it was decided to include two other textbooks published by two publishing houses that prioritise inclusion as their primary objective.

3.1 Analysis of a Selection of Textbooks: Alma and Edilingua

Based on previous studies, a linguistic analysis will be conducted of a sample of UDs taken from Italian FL/SL textbooks of different levels and for different students (children, teenagers, university students, and general and immigrant adults). The aim of the analysis is to identify the language models used, with particular attention to the extensive use of the masculine in instructions and the teaching of job titles, where they are present. The recently published and most widely used textbooks in FL/SL Italian courses will be taken into consideration, with the aim of highlighting the main trend of Italian textbooks for foreigners.

It is important to consider that the analysis focused on a small number of examples and cannot, therefore, be considered complete or exhaustive.

3.1.1 Alma Edizioni

Alma Edizioni is a publishing house located in Florence and founded in 1994, which in just a few years has become a leader in the publishing of Italian FL/SL in Italy and around the world, an exclusive partner of the Dante Alighieri Society, and part of the German Hueber Verlag group. Its textbooks are adopted in the main Italian institutions, universities, and schools in more than eighty

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11 Vučenović (2020); Sabatini & Mori (2020); Frabotta (2023)

countries.[12] The Alma Edizioni catalogue is made up of over two hundred products designed for adults, teenagers, and children and divided into various series.

In addition, Alma Edizioni promotes hundreds of educational workshops around the world, such as training days, webinars, and online events, with the remote participation of thousands of teachers from all over the world.

Some textbooks that were analysed previously (Vučenović 2022; Sabatini 2022), presented some linguistic gaps from a gender perspective. It was therefore decided to analyse others, namely:

➢ *Ambarabà 5* (2011), for children in the fifth grade of primary school, both for multicultural classes in Italy and Italian FL classes abroad;
➢ *Italiano di base Pre-A1/A2* [2016] (2022), suitable for adult migrant learners;
➢ *Universitalia 2.0 A1/A2* (2018), addressed to university students;
➢ *Dieci B1* (2021), and *Dieci B2* (2022), for adult learners.

Ambarabà 5 **(2011), unit 1**

Unit 1 of *Ambarabà 5* has as communicative function talking about memories, which therefore implies the use of the *imperfetto indicativo*. This is a very short unit, so the collected data is limited. Most instructions are directed at the individual student, but there are some references to the rest of the class, who are however identified as *compagno*, *compagno di banco*, *compagni*, and *amici*. Therefore, the use of the unmarked masculine language emerges that obscures the presence of girls in the class.
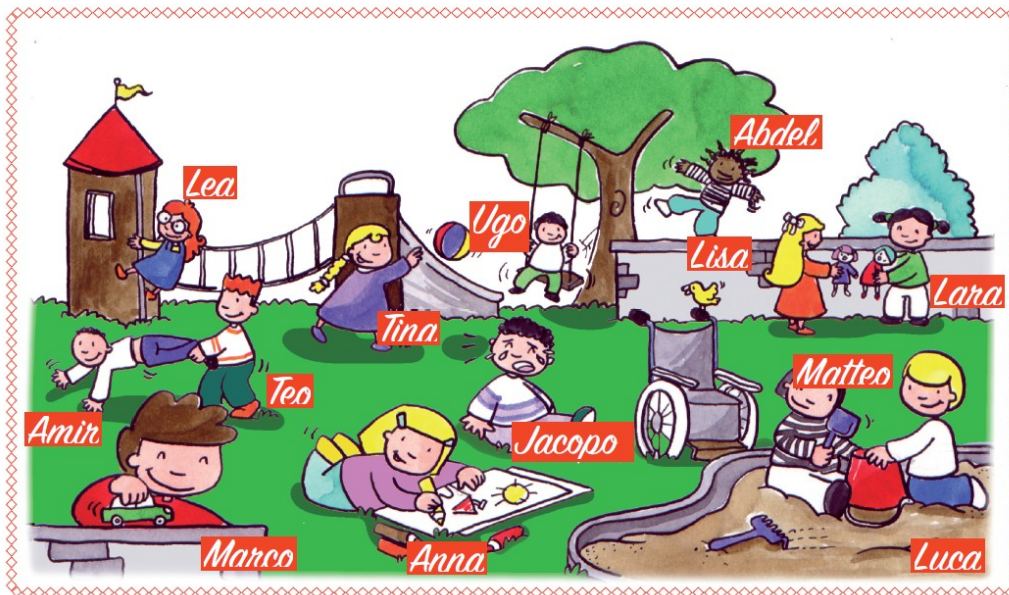

4 Descrivi come era un tuo compagno di classe in prima elementare. Il tuo compagno di banco indovina chi è. Poi vi scambiate di ruolo.

Figure 1: *Ambarabà 5*, exercise 4 page 8.

Che cosa facevano i nostri amici durante la ricreazione? Guarda la foto per un minuto, poi chiudi il libro e rispondi alle domande del tuo compagno. La volta dopo fa' tu le domande.

Che cosa faceva Marco?   Giocava con le macchinine.

Figure 2: *Ambarabà 5*, exercise 5 page 9.

Che cosa fanno oggi i nostri amici durante la ricreazione? Guarda la foto per un minuto, poi chiudi il libro e scrivi sul quaderno le risposte alle domande del tuo compagno. La volta dopo fa' tu le domande.

Che cosa fa Marco?   Suona la chitarra.

Figure 3: *Ambarabà 5*, exercise 6 page 9.

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7 🔵 **Ascolta e indica chi parla.**

● **Domanda per pensare**
Come eri a 6 anni? Come sei diventato? Che cosa hai imparato dai tuoi compagni?

Figure 4: *Ambarabà 5*, exercise 7 page 10.

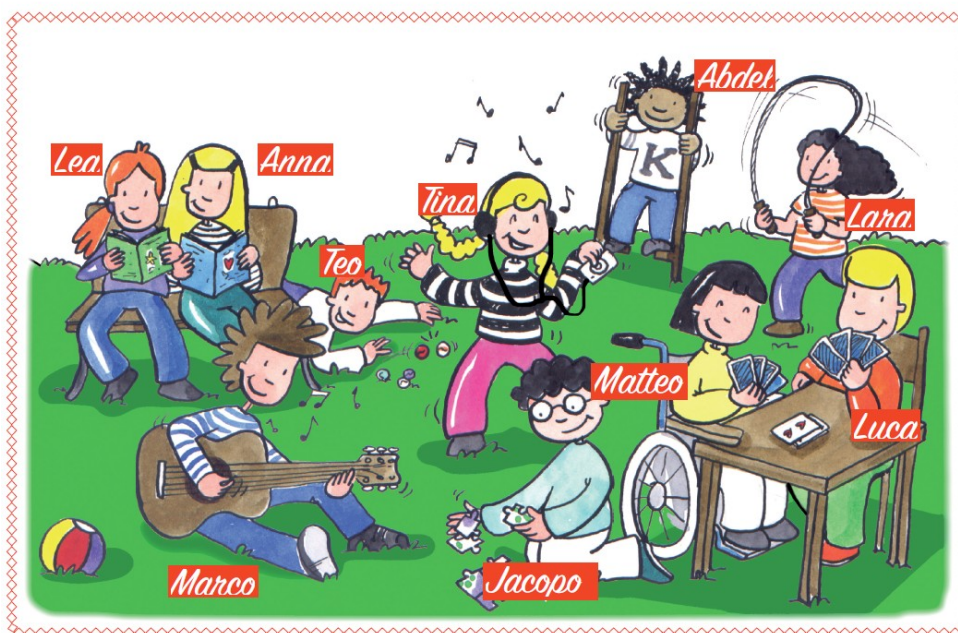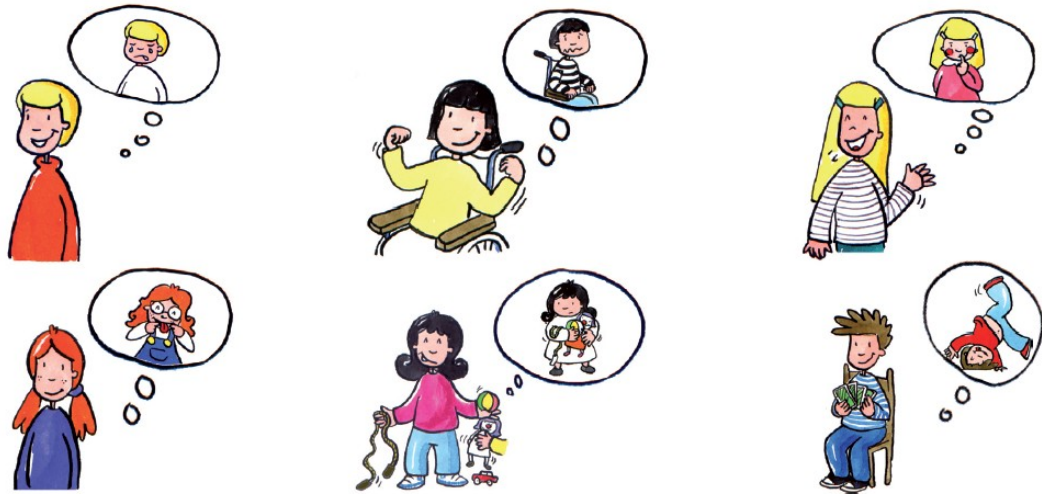|	**Analysed expression**	**Inclusive expression to be preferred**
Fig. 1	Descrivi come era **un tuo compagno** di classe in prima elementare. **Il tuo compagno di banco** indovina chi è. Poi vi scambiate di ruolo.	Descrivi come era **un tuo compagno o una tua compagna** di classe in prima elementare. **La persona vicina a te** indovina chi è. Poi vi scambiate di ruolo.
Fig. 2	Che cosa facevano **i nostri amici** durante la ricreazione? Guarda la foto per un minuto, poi chiudi il libro e rispondi alle domande **del tuo compagno**. La volta dopo fa' tu le domande.	Che cosa facevano **i nostri amici e le nostre amiche** durante la ricreazione? Guarda la foto per un minuto, poi chiudi il libro e rispondi alle domande **del tuo compagno o della tua compagna**. La volta dopo fa' tu le domande.
Fig. 3	Che cosa fanno oggi **i nostri amici** durante la ricreazione? Guarda la foto per un minuto, poi chiudi il libro e scrivi sul quaderno le risposte alle domande **del tuo compagno**. La volta dopo fa' tu le domande.	Che cosa fanno oggi **i nostri amici e le nostre amiche** durante la ricreazione? Guarda la foto per un minuto, poi chiudi il libro e rispondi alle domande **del tuo compagno o della tua compagna**. La volta dopo fa' tu le domande.
Fig. 4	Domanda per pensare Come eri a 6 anni? Come sei **diventato**? Che cosa hai imparato **dai tuoi compagni**?	Domanda per pensare Come eri a 6 anni? Come sei **diventato/a**? Che cosa hai imparato **dai tuoi compagni e dalle tue compagne**? Domanda per pensare Come eri a 6 anni? Come sei **adesso**? Che cosa hai imparato **dai tuoi compagni e dalle tue compagne**?

Table 3: Proposals for inclusive rewriting in *Ambarabà 5*.

From the rewritings, the strategy of *femminilizzazione* mainly emerges, through which female visibility is guaranteed alongside the male visibility (Galeandro 2021). In all the data collected, in fact, the unmarked masculine is widely used and it can be avoided by making the female counterpart explicit, as recommended by Sabatini (1987, 104).

In Fig. 1 there is also an example of *neutralizzazione* (*La persona vicina a te*), that is «*the elimination of gender information*» (Sabatini 2022). By using the word *persona*, in fact, the instruction remains partially generic, avoiding the risk of excluding girls.

In Fig. 4 the problem of the *participio passato* within the *passato prossimo* also emerged. The *participio passato*, in the case in which the auxiliary is the verb *essere*, must agree with gender and number, or when the pronoun precedes the verb. In agreement with the other instructions, also in this case the unmarked masculine was used, and therefore the masculine *participio*. Sabatini suggested «avoiding assigning the past participle to the masculine, when the nouns are predominantly feminine. In this case, it is suggested to agree with the largely majority gender or with the gender of the last noun in the series» (Sabatini 1987, 105 [translated by the author]). However, this proposal is not applicable, first of all because we do not know how many boys and girls there are in the class; and because a grammatically correct norm would not be respected (Cardinaletti & Giusti 1991). For this reason it was decided to use the splitting method and therefore divide the last vowel of the verb (*Come sei diventato/a?*). Another alternative that does not imply the use of the verb, and which therefore guarantees greater inclusion is the question *come sei adesso?*. Since *adesso* is an adverb, and consequently does not agree in gender and number, it remains unchanged and neutral from the point of view of meaning.

Italiano di base Pre-A1/A2 (2022), unit 4

Unit 4 of *Italiano di base Pre-A1/A2* is particularly interesting because, in addition to providing data relating to instructions, it is also a specific unit aimed at teaching job titles. Furthermore, some stereotypes may emerge.

Compared to the analysed unit of *Ambarabà 5*, the *Italiano di base Pre-A1/A2* unit, in addition to being longer, also includes a section dedicated to phonetics, further exercises, and a section on civic education, since it deals with a textbook for immigrants living in Italy. Given the repetitiveness of the data, only a few relevant examples are provided.

LAVORA

COMPLETA CON QUESTE PAROLE, COME NELL'ESEMPIO.

√ BADANTE   CUOCA   CAMERIERE   CASALINGA   MEDICO   IMPIEGATO

INFERMIERA   INSEGNANTE   MURATORE   OPERAIO   IDRAULICO   COMMESSA

A. _____   B. _____   C. _____   D. _____
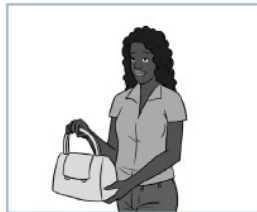
E. _____   F. _____   G. _____   H. _____

I. _____   L. _____   M. ___BADANTE___   N. _____

CONTROLLA CON UN COMPAGNO.

Figure 5: *Italiano di base Pre-A1/A2*, exercise 2, page 87.

14 **PARLA**

A COPPIE, DESCRIVI A UN COMPAGNO IL TUO ORARIO DI LAVORO.

Figure 6: *Italiano di base Pre-A1/A2*, exercise 14, page 92.

Figure 7: *Italiano di base Pre-A1/A2*, exercise 5, page 99 (from exercise book).

	Analysed expression	**Inclusive expression to be preferred**
Fig. 5	Controlla con **un compagno**.	Controlla con **un compagno o una compagna**. Controlla con **un'altra persona**. Controllate **in coppia**.
Fig. 6	A coppie, descrivi **a un compagno il tuo orario di lavoro**.	A coppie, descrivete **il vostro orario di lavoro**.

Table 4: Proposals for inclusive rewriting in *Italiano di base Pre-A1/A2*.

In this unit, the unmarked masculine is constantly present in instructions that involve pair work (*parla con un compagno, controlla con un compagno, intervista un compagno*). Italian classes for immigrants are often much less heterogeneous than in other contexts. If the class were for men only, the instructions could be suitable, but if the class were mixed it would be appropriate to make some modifications, such as those shown in Table 4.
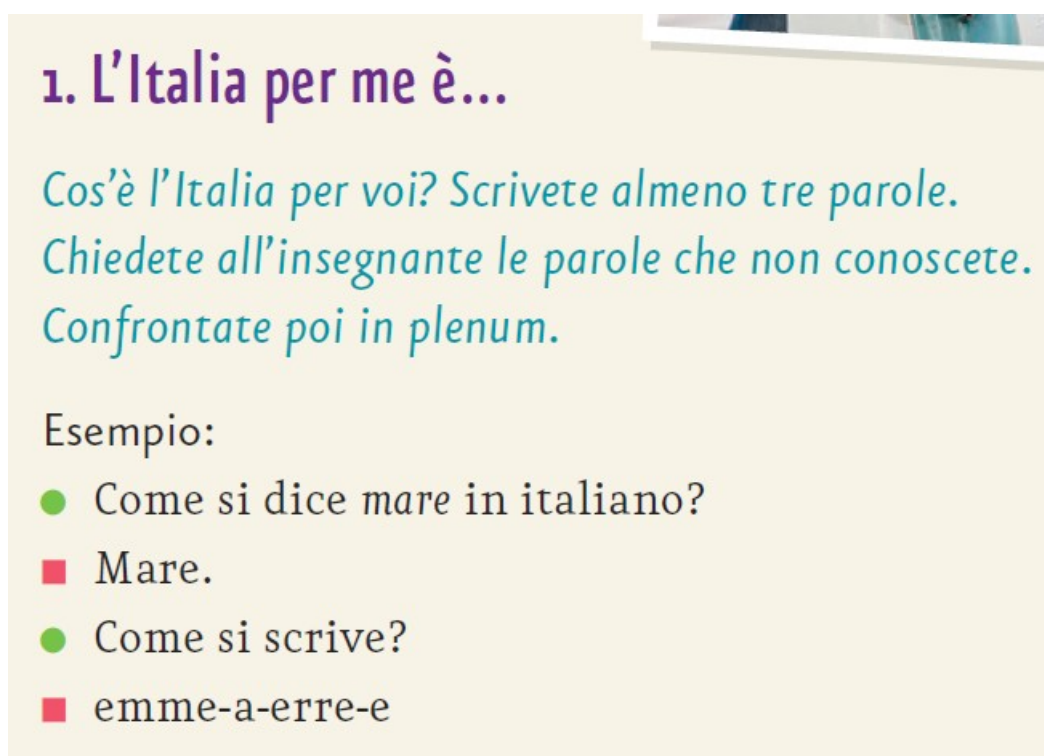
In the case of Fig. 5, there can be multiple variants, i.e. both *femminilizzazione* and *neutralizzazione* can be applied. Fig. 6 presents a good attempt at *neutralizzazione*, which however failed in the second part of the instruction. The instruction, in fact, begins with a neutral word (*coppia*) and then uses the unmarked masculine again (*compagno*).

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Regarding the job titles introduced in exercise 2 (Fig. 5), some are stereotyped, for example *infermiera* and *casalinga*, in contrast to the male counterparts *medico* and *impiegato*. Nonetheless, *badante*, who is normally associated with immigrant women, in this exercise is instead depicted by a man, thus breaking a stereotype.

Exercise 5 on page 99 was not included in the table because it represents an excellent example of breaking a gender stereotype related to work. In this case, there is a father who, in addition to carrying out a subordinate job normally attributed to women, has a part-time schedule that allows him to take care of his children. Considering that textbooks for immigrants usually feature many more gender stereotypes, this example can be considered a positive twist. Unfortunately, this is an isolated example within the unit.

***Universitalia 2.0 A1/A2* (2018), unit 1**

The unit analysed is the first of a textbook for university students at a basic level. Students then learn about nouns and the distinction between masculine and feminine through the use of endings. Also in this case the data collected is repetitive.

Figure 8: *Universitalia 2.0 A1/A2*, exercise 1, page 7.

5. Presentazioni

Cosa dicono i ragazzi qui sotto? Seguite l'esempio.

Sono di Como, ma abito a Parigi.   Sono di Verona e abito a Verona.

> **Provenienza e residenza**
> essere di + città
> abitare a + città

1

MARIA
Roma/Monaco

2

LUIGI
Napoli/Napoli

3

CHIARA
Torino/Firenze

4

CARLA
Venezia/Bologna

5

RICCARDO
Milano/Londra

E tu?

_____

_____

Figure 9: *Universitalia 2.0 A1/A2*, exercise 5, page 9.

7. Mi chiamo

Presentatevi al vostro vicino. Usate i verbi del punto 4 e le espressioni del punto 6.

Mi chiamo…

Figure 10: *Universitalia 2.0 A1/A2*, exercise 7, page 10.

8. Ritorno al testo

a. Leggete il dialogo al punto 2b un'altra volta e sottolineate le domande.

b. Scegliete le domande che secondo voi si usano per fare conoscenza e confrontate con un compagno.

1. Che cosa studi? _____   2. _____
3. _____   4. _____

Figure 11: *Universitalia 2.0 A1/A2*, exercise 8, page 10.

18. Ritorno al testo

a. Cercate nei post e nei testi sotto alle fotografie le forme dei verbi mancanti e scrivetele nella tabella.

Verbi regolari al presente (singolare)			
	studiare	vivere	sentire
io		vivo	
tu	studi	vivi	senti
lui/lei			sente

b. Adesso intervistate una persona della classe e poi presentatela a un altro compagno.
Domandate nome, città, anni, studio, motivi per cui studia l'italiano.

Figure 12: *Universitalia 2.0 A1/A2*, exercise 18, page 15.

c. Provate in coppia a completare la regola.

L'articolo determinativo (singolare)		
	maschile	femminile
davanti a vocale		
davanti a consonante		
davanti a **s** + consonante		

Figure 13: *Universitalia 2.0 A1/A2*, from exercise 19, page 15.

20. Esercizio

A questo punto conoscete diverse parole italiane: scrivete su un foglio quelle che vi ricordate, avete 3 minuti di tempo. Scambiate il foglio con il vostro vicino e mettete gli articoli determinativi. Controllate poi con un compagno diverso.

Figure 14: *Universitalia 2.0 A1/A2*, exercise 20, page 15.

b. In gruppi di quattro: confrontate i moduli. Perché studiate l'italiano? Quale città avete scelto? Quale tipo di corso? Perché?

c. Adesso in plenum. Confrontate i risultati e fate una statistica della classe. Quali sono i tre motivi più frequenti? Quale città ha vinto?

Figure 15: *Universitalia 2.0 A1/A2*, from *Progetto* section, page 16.

	Analysed expression	Inclusive expression to be preferred
Fig. 9	Cosa dicono **i ragazzi** qui sotto? Seguite l'esempio.	Cosa dicono **i ragazzi e le ragazze** qui sotto? Seguite l'esempio. Cosa dicono **le persone** qui sotto? Seguite l'esempio.
Fig. 10	Presentatevi **al vostro vicino**. Usate i verbi del punto 4 e le espressioni del punto 6.	Presentatevi **alla persona vicina a voi**. Usate i verbi del punto 4 e le espressioni del punto 6.
Fig. 11	Scegliete le domande che secondo voi si usano per fare conoscenza e **confrontate con un compagno**.	Scegliete le domande che secondo voi si usano per fare conoscenza e **confrontatele a coppie**.
Fig. 12	Adesso intervistate una persona della classe e poi presentatela a **un altro compagno**.	Adesso intervistate una persona della classe e poi presentatela a **un altro compagno o un'altra compagna**. Adesso intervistate una persona della classe e poi presentatela a **un'altra**.
Fig. 14	A questo punto conoscete diverse parole italiane: scrivete su un foglio quelle che vi, ricordate, avete 3 minuti di tempo. Scambiate il foglio con **il vostro vicino** e mettete gli articoli determinativi. Controllate poi con **un compagno diverso**.	A questo punto conoscete diverse parole italiane: scrivete su un foglio quelle che vi, ricordate, avete 3 minuti di tempo. Scambiate il foglio con **la persona vicina a voi** e mettete gli articoli determinativi. Controllate poi con **una persona diversa**.

Table 5: Proposals for inclusive rewriting in *Universitalia 2.0 A1/A2*.

This unit contains examples of lack of inclusion, and even in this case the rewrites propose both *femminilizzazione* and *neutralizzazione* strategies.

Starting from Fig. 9, since the photos included in the exercise represent both boys and girls in equal numbers, it would have been appropriate to balance the instruction by adding *le ragazze*. Otherwise, it would have been enough to use a neutral word like *persone*. The use of the neutral word *persona* would also have been effective in other cases —Fig. 10, 12, and 14— in place of *vicino* or *compagno*. Fig. 12 shows an initial attempt at inclusive language, and then the use of *compagno*. In this case, using *persona* again would have been repetitive in the Italian language. Therefore, it is suggested to *femminilizzare* the instruction by adding *un'altra compagna*, or *neutralizzare* by making the word *persona* implicit (*un'altra* instead of *un'altra persona*). A final example of *neutralizzazione* is found in Fig. 10, where the word *coppie* is used instead of *compagno*.

Despite these changes, unit 1 of *Universitalia 2.0 A1/A2* also contains many examples of inclusive instructions. In fact, the very first instruction contains the expression *in plenum* to indicate

the whole class. In point C of exercise 18 the word neutral *coppia* is used. Finally, the last points of the *Progetto* section contain both *in gruppo* and *in plenum* to indicate class involvement.

To conclude, therefore, this unit still has some gaps in linguistic inclusion, but at the same time, words and expressions have been used to indicate couple and group activities. This is reassuring even if not all instructions are inclusive. This choice is probably due to the desire to avoid too many repetitions.

Dieci B1 (2021), unit 0-1

Although there are still some examples of unmarked masculine, the introductory unit and the first unit of *Dieci B1* contain some excellent examples of gender-inclusive language. Below are some examples of inclusive instructions and instructions to be further improved.

COMINCIAMO

a   In piccoli gruppi. Leggete la filastrocca. Secondo voi con quali sinonimi è possibile sostituire le parole <u>sottolineate</u>? Provate a trovare sinonimi in rima con le parole blu.

Ci sono parole per gli amici:
"Buongiorno, buon anno, siate <u>contenti</u>",
parole belle e parole buone
per ogni sorta di <u>esseri umani</u>.
La più cattiva di tutta la terra
è una parola che odio: "<u>il conflitto</u>".

Gianni Rodari, Filastrocca delle parole

b   Adesso pensate a qualche parola, espressione o frase "bella e buona" per tutta la classe e questo nuovo inizio di corso. Poi andate alla lavagna e scrivetene alcune, o scrivetele tutte.

Figure 16: *Dieci B1*, introductive exercise, page 11.

GIOCO Una "gara di italiano"

Gioca contro un compagno (o forma un piccolo gruppo e gioca contro un'altra squadra).

A turno, lanciate il dado e svolgete il compito.
Se la risposta è giusta, conquistate la casella.
Se è sbagliata, tornate alla casella precedente. Se non siete d'accordo sulla soluzione, chiamate l'insegnante.

Figure 17: *Dieci B1*, second introductive exercise, page 12.

a *In piccoli gruppi. Quanta cultura italiana conoscete?*
   Cercate di scrivere, per ogni categoria, 3 titoli o nomi.
   Vince il gruppo che allo STOP dell'insegnante ha completato più categorie.

canzoni	film	libri	artisti
1.	1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.	3.

b *C'è un titolo o un nome del punto **a** particolarmente importante per te, perché ti ricorda una persona, un'esperienza,*
   un momento della vita significativi? Parlane con i compagni.

Figure 18: *Dieci B1*, introductive unit 1 exercise, page 15.

1 ASCOLTARE Storia di una canzone

1a *In coppia. Conoscete "Bella ciao"? Leggete la prima*
       parte del testo e poi rispondete alla domanda. Sono
       possibili più soluzioni.

> *Una mattina mi sono alzato*
> *o bella, ciao!*
> *Bella, ciao! Bella, ciao, ciao, ciao!*
> *Una mattina mi sono alzato*
> *e ho trovato l'invasor.*

Che tipo di canzone è "Bella ciao"?
○ una canzone d'amore
○ una canzone popolare (un canto tradizionale)
○ una canzone per bambini / una ninna nanna
○ un canto di libertà
○ una canzone ecologista
○ un canto di Natale

Figure 19: *Dieci B1*, exercise 1, page 16.

3 PARLARE La mia serie preferita

Di solito guardi le serie? Ne guardavi una da bambino
o da ragazzo? Ce n'è una di adesso o una del passato
che preferisci? Di che cosa parla e perché ti piace?
Parlane con due compagni.

Figure 20: *Dieci B1*, exercise 3, page 21.

	Analysed expression	**Inclusive expression to be preferred**
Fig. 17	Gioca contro **un compagno** (o forma un piccolo gruppo e gioca contro un'altra squadra).	Gioca contro **un compagno o una compagna** (o forma un piccolo gruppo e gioca contro un'altra squadra). Gioca contro **un'altra persona** (o forma un piccolo gruppo e gioca contro un'altra squadra). **Partecipate insieme a una sfida** (o forma un piccolo gruppo e gioca contro un'altra squadra).
Fig. 18	C'è un titolo o un nome del punto *a* particolarmente importante per te, perché ti ricorda una persona, un'esperienza, un momento della vita signicativi? Parlane **con i com-**	C'è un titolo o un nome del punto *a* particolarmente importante per te, perché ti ricorda una persona, un'esperienza, un momento della vita signicativi? Parlane **con i compagni e le com-**

	pagni.	**pagne**. C'è un titolo o un nome del punto *a* particolarmente importante per te, perché ti ricorda una persona, un'esperienza, un momento della vita signicativi? Parlane **con la classe**. C'è un titolo o un nome del punto *a* particolarmente importante per te, perché ti ricorda una persona, un'esperienza, un momento della vita signicativi? Parlatene **insieme**.
Fig. 20	Di solito guardi le serie? Ne guardavi una **da bambino o da ragazzo**? Ce n'è una di adesso o una del passato che preferisci? Di che cosa parla e perché ti piace? Parlane **con due compagni**.	Di solito guardi le serie? **Durante la tua infanzia** ne guardavi una? Ce n'è una di adesso o una del passato che preferisci? Di che cosa parla e perché ti piace? Parlatene **in gruppi da tre**.

Table 6: Proposals for inclusive rewriting in *Dieci B1*.

As previously mentioned, compared to the first three textbooks analysed, *Dieci B1* has proven to be an excellent textbook to propose to an Italian FL class, and the changes that could be made are minimal and quite repetitive. Table 6 illustrates some of them.

All items contain the unmarked masculine, both in the singular and in the plural forms, and with the variants *bambino* and *ragazzo*. In addition to the strategy of *femminilizzazione* and *neutralizzazione*, reformulations have also been proposed that completely change the sentence, while maintaining the original meaning, namely:

➢ Gioca contro un compagno → Partecipate insieme a una sfida

➢ Parlane con i compagni → Parlatene insieme

➢ Ne guardavi una da bambino o da ragazzo? → Durante la tua infanzia ne guardavi una?

➢ Parlane con due compagni → Parlatene in gruppi da tre

Also in this case, it is hypothesised that the poor inclusion in some instructions is due to the desire to avoid too many repetitions. However, the proposals illustrated in Table 6 have demonstrated other valid reformulations.

Dieci B2 **(2022), unit 1**

Being part of the same *Dieci* series, the textbook for level B2 presents the same type of instructions, both inclusive and with some gaps. During the analysis of Unit 1, however, two previously unnoticed interesting examples were found, which deserve to be included below.

Nell'audio lui racconta una sua avventura in Puglia di quando era giovane.
Lavorate in coppia: studente A e B. Aiutandosi con le parole della lista, A prova a raccontare a B la stessa avventura.
Se necessario, prima ascoltate il racconto.

moto   trullo   officina   albergo   soldi

Figure 21: *Dieci B2*, exercise 3c, page 17.

3 **PARLARE**   **Senza biglietto**

In gruppi di 3. Dividetevi i ruoli, leggete le vostre istruzioni e fate un dialogo.

PASSEGGERO/A Hai avuto un problema e sei dovuto/a salire sul treno con un amico / un'amica senza biglietto. Quando incontri il controllore / la controllora, spiega la situazione: non vuoi pagare la multa e sei pronto/a a litigare per difendere le tue ragioni.

PASSEGGERO/A Hai avuto un problema e sei dovuto/a salire sul treno con un amico / un'amica senza biglietto. Quando incontri il controllore / la controllora, spiega la situazione per non dover pagare la multa. Non ti piace litigare, cerchi sempre una mediazione.

CONTROLLORE/A Due persone sono salite sul treno senza biglietto. Tu sei inflessibile e ne vai fiero/a: chi non ha il biglietto deve pagare la multa, sempre e comunque. In questi casi la penale è alta: non ci sono eccezioni.

Figure 22: *Dieci B2*, exercise 3, page 21.

The exercises shown in Figures 21 and 22 represent two excellent examples of gender-inclusive language.

In the first case, in addition to the use of the neutral word *coppia*, the word *studente* is also used. It might seem like a solely masculine word, but as Sabatini (1987, 112) explained, the word *studente* is actually neutral and changes its meaning depending on the article used (*il* or *la*). No article was used in the proposed exercise, which makes the word *studente* absolutely inclusive.

The second exercise is a role-play, in which all the explanations of the roles and actions present strategies to make women visible too. In fact, all the words that change based on gender have a forward slash and a feminine ending (i.e. *passeggero/a*; *sei dovuto/a salire*) or the feminine word (i.e. *un amico/un'amica*).

To sum up, while there are gaps in linguistic inclusion across the textbooks analysed, notable efforts have been made towards gender-inclusive language. Strategies like *femminilizzazione* and *neutralizzazione* are effectively employed to ensure both male and female visibility. Textbooks like *Dieci B1* and *B2* are noteworthy for their consistent use of inclusive language, setting a positive example for educational materials. Notwithstanding, further efforts are needed across all levels to avoid defaulting to unmarked masculine forms and to promote balanced gender representation.

3.1.2 Edilingua Edizioni

Edilingua Edizioni,[13] founded by T. Marin and S. Magnelli, is a world-leading publishing house founded in 1996 in Rome, with a complete catalogue of textbooks and supplementary books, which are having an excellent and growing response in over eighty countries.

One of Edilingua's aims is educational innovation through new approaches and methodologies, producing quality teaching material that is updated and modern, useful and practical, pleasant and easy to use; and that puts students and teachers at ease, encouraging acquisition.

Vučenović (2022) analysed *Via del Corso* (2018, Edilingua) for her research. Even though it is a recent textbook, she still identified some inclusive gaps. It was therefore decided to analyse even more recent ones to check if there have been significant improvements. The textbooks that were taken into consideration are the following:

➢ *Nuovo Progetto Italiano Junior 3* (2024), for teenagers, B1 level;
➢ *Nuovo Senza Frontiere 1* (2023), suitable for adult migrant learners, A1 level;
➢ *Nuovissimo Progetto Italiano 3* (2020), and *Nuovissimo Progetto Italiano 4* (2022) addressed to adult learners, C1 and C2 levels.

Nuovo Progetto Italiano Junior 3 (2024), unit 2

What immediately emerges from a previous skimming analysis is the high number of inclusive instructions. In fact, there are many exercises to be done in pairs, and the neutral word *coppia* is always used. Furthermore, this unit is particularly interesting because it contains some exercises regarding job titles.

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13 See https://www.edilingua.it/it-it/Documento.aspx?ElementID=ec9f4e0d-dfca-4b4c-8582-6b74455caa09&Action=First

1 Lavorate in coppia. Osservate le foto: qual è, secondo voi, la professione più interessante? E quella più difficile? Poi confrontatevi con le altre coppie.

impiegata

avvocato

chef

influencer

medico

istruttore di palestra

Figure 23: *Nuovo Progetto Italiano Junior 3*, exercise 1, page 21.

3 Sei Ⓐ : scusati con Ⓑ nelle seguenti situazioni: Sei Ⓑ : rispondi alle scuse di Ⓐ.

- Arrivi in ritardo a un vostro appuntamento.
- Hai dimenticato che ieri era il suo compleanno.
- Hai perso un libro che ti aveva prestato.
- Per sbaglio cancelli una foto dal suo cellulare.
- Mentre cammini distratto per strada gli/le vai addosso.

Figure 24: *Nuovo Progetto Italiano Junior 3*, exercise 3, page 25.

1 Leggete i testi : quali di questi personaggi si sono laureati e in che cosa? Chi ammirate di più e perché?

Gabriele Muccino (regista)
Mi sono iscritto alla facoltà di Lettere alla Sapienza di Roma; non perché volevo fare l'insegnante, ma perché c'erano materie che mi piacevano. Ma per seguire la mia passione, il cinema, ho dovuto abbandonare gli studi.

Penélope Cruz (attrice)
Sono diventata attrice molto giovane. Ammiro altri attori, ma ancor di più ammiro i medici: vorrei anch'io essere capace di salvare vite umane, aiutare i malati. Ma non credo che sarei riuscita a finire Medicina...

Samantha Cristoforetti (astronauta)
Mi sono laureata in Ingegneria aerospaziale a pieni voti. Lo spazio mi appassiona, ma forse sarei potuta diventare fotografa o cuoca: due hobby che erano i miei passatempi anche nella Stazione spaziale!

Damiano David (cantante)
Già alle elementari sognavo di diventare una rockstar, l'avevo scritto anche nel tema d'italiano! Quindi, ho seguito la mia passione fin da giovanissimo, ma sarei potuto diventare anche un fashion blogger, magari dopo aver seguito un corso universitario.

Timothée Chalamet (attore)
Dopo il liceo mi sono iscritto ad Antropologia culturale all'Università Columbia. Ma dopo appena un anno mi sono dovuto dedicare alla recitazione. Se mi mancano gli studi? Sì, un giorno spero di poterli concludere.

Checco Zalone (attore)
Mi sono laureato in Giurisprudenza: da piccolo sognavo di diventare avvocato, ma poi ho capito che fare l'avvocato non è divertente. Invece, fare l'attore mi diverte molto. Spero di far divertire anche chi mi viene a vedere al cinema!

Figure 25: *Nuovo Progetto Italiano Junior 3*, exercise 1, page 26.

2 Chi…? Abbinate le professioni alle definizioni.

a. commesso/a   b. cuoco/a   c. grafico/a   d. cameriere/a   e. veterinario/a   f. operaio/a

1. ☐ …cura gli animali
2. ☐ …disegna libri, riviste, pubblicità ecc. al computer
3. ☐ …lavora in un negozio (ad esempio, di abbigliamento)
4. ☐ …prende le ordinazioni e serve i clienti al tavolo, al bar o al ristorante
5. ☐ …fa un lavoro manuale e spesso faticoso
6. ☐ …è esperto/a nell'arte del cucinare

Figure 26: *Nuovo Progetto Italiano Junior 3*, exercise 2, page 31.

The four exercises taken from unit 2 are an excellent example of gender linguistic inclusion. In the first exercise, as previously mentioned, the neutral words *coppia/coppie* are used, including thus both girls and boys.

Exercise 3 on page 25 uses a similar strategy to that found in Dieci B2 by Alma Edizioni. In this case, however, the word *studente* is omitted, thus identifying the students simply with the letters A or B, thus making the instruction equally inclusive.

The other two exercises deal specifically with job titles. Exercise 1 on page 26 contains interviews with famous people, and what makes it inclusive is the presence of Samantha Cristoforetti, an astronaut. Whereas older textbooks include stereotyped professions, in this case, a job that is normally attributed only to men has been included, thus ensuring inclusion. Finally, exercise 2 on page 31 proposes some job titles specifying both the masculine and the feminine, both in the names and in the sentences.

Nuovo Progetto Italiano Junior 3 has therefore proven to be linguistically inclusive from a gender perspective.

Nuovo Senza Frontiere 1 (2023), unit 1

Like *Italiano di Base Pre-A1/A2* by Alma Edizioni, *Nuovo Senza Frontiere 1* is addressed to immigrants living in Italy. Overall, the instructions in Unit 1 contain both the unmarked masculine and mixed forms (both unmarked masculine and examples of *neutralizzazione*). Therefore, it is necessary to intervene and propose rewrites.

4. Presentazioni. In gruppi di tre, lo Studente A chiede allo Studente B il nome dello Studente C. Conoscete tutte e tre le persone del gruppo e poi dite i nomi alla classe.

A Come si chiama lei/lui?

B È ..../ Si chiama ....

C Piacere!

A Piacere!

Figure 27: *Nuovo Senza Frontiere 1*, exercise 4, page 11.

6. Chiedi a un tuo compagno come si chiama, come nell'esempio.

Studente A: Come ti chiami?

Studente B: Mi chiamo Munir Mohammed.

Studente A: Come? Munir...?

Studente B: Di cognome Munir e di nome Mohammed: *emme* come Milano, *o* come Otranto, *acca* come hotel, *a* come Ancona, *emme* come Milano, *emme* come Milano, *e* come Empoli, *di* come Domodossola.

Figure 28: *Nuovo Senza Frontiere 1*, exercise 6, page 11.

5. Conosci i compagni e le compagne del corso di italiano. In coppia, create due dialoghi come quello tra Anna e Amal nell'attività 1, pagina 13.

▸ Lo Studente A chiede allo Studente B come si chiama, di dov'è, dove abita.
▸ Lo Studente B risponde e poi chiede ad A.

Figure 29: *Nuovo Senza Frontiere 1*, exercise 5, page 14.

	Analysed expression	Inclusive expression to be preferred
Fig. 27	Presentazioni. In gruppi di tre, **lo Studente A** chiede **allo Studente B** il nome **dello Studente C**. Conoscete tutte e tre le persone del gruppo e poi dite i nomi alla classe.	Presentazioni. In gruppi di tre, **Studente A** chiede **a Studente B** il nome **di Studente C**. Conoscete tutte e tre le persone del gruppo e poi dite i nomi alla classe. Presentazioni. In gruppi di tre, **A** chiede a **B** il nome di **C**. Conoscete tutte e tre le persone del gruppo e poi dite i nomi alla classe.
Fig. 28	Chiedi a **un tuo compagno** come si chiama, come nell'esempio. Studente A: […] Studente B: [...]	Chiedi a **un tuo compagno o una tua compagna** come si chiama, come nell'esempio. Studente A: […] Studente B: [...]
Fig. 29	Conosci i compagni e le compagne del corso di italiano. In coppia, create due dialoghi come quello tra Anna e Amal nell'attività 1, pagina 13. • **Lo Studente A** chiede **allo Studente B** come si chiama, di dov'è, dove abita. • **Lo Studente B** risponde e poi chiede ad A.	Conosci i compagni e le compagne del corso di italiano. In coppia, create due dialoghi come quello tra Anna e Amal nell'attività 1, pagina 13. • **Studente A** chiede a **Studente B** come si chiama, di dov'è, dove abita. • **Studente B** risponde e poi chiede ad A. • **A** chiede a **B** come si chiama, di dov'è, dove abita. • **B** risponde e poi chiede ad A.

Table 7: Proposals for inclusive rewriting in *Nuovo Senza Frontiere 1*.

The analysed unit therefore showed predominantly mixed instructions which could however be completely inclusive.

Fig. 27 begins with a neutral word (*gruppi*), then uses the unmarked masculine (*studente* and the masculine article), and then uses a neutral word again (*persone*). As in *Dieci B2*, it would have been enough to omit the article to make the word *studente* more neutral and thus inclusive. Otherwise, the *Nuovo Progetto Italiano Junior 3* strategy of omitting the word *studente* altogether may be considered. Surprisingly, in Fig. 28 the neutral word *studente* is used, but the instruction begins with the unmarked masculine *un tuo compagno*. It is therefore recommended to add *o una tua compagna*. Finally, in Fig. 29 the word *studente* is again preceded by the article, making it an unmarked masculine. At the beginning of the instruction, however, both a strategy of *femminilizzazione* by adding *le compagne* to *i compagni* and of *neutralizzazione* through the word *coppia* are employed.

The unit taken from *Nuovo Senza Frontiere 1* has thus shown as both inclusive and non-inclusive. There are many attempts at inclusion through instructions, which however are not always respected, thus favouring the use of the unmarked masculine. Nevertheless, even in this case, the choice is hypothesised to make the instructions more varied, even if there is a risk of non-inclusion.

Nuovissimo Progetto Italiano 3 (2020) and *Nuovissimo Progetto Italiano 4* (2022)

For this last analysis, it was decided to combine the two volumes of *Nuovissimo Progetto Italiano* since in both cases the instructions are addressed either to the individual student or imply work in pairs, explained through the use of the neutral word *coppia*. They are therefore two excellent examples of linguistically inclusive textbooks from a gender perspective, at least at advanced levels.

Notwithstanding, it is appropriate to include two particular exercises from unit 10 of *Nuovissimo Progetto Italiano 3* that specifically deal with the woman-work combination.

Figure 30: *Nuovissimo Progetto Italiano 3*, exercise 2, page 63.

Figure 31: *Nuovissimo Progetto Italiano 3*, exercise 1, page 66.

In the two exercises, the cultural rather than linguistic component is evident. In fact, the exercises are aimed at making the students consider some cultural aspects, which in the case of the second exercise also influence language. In the exercise on page 63, it is necessary to pay attention to the instructions. Is it inclusive to say *lavoratore* and *donna lavoratrice*?

The use of the modifier *donna*, in fact, before or after the job titles is considered non-inclusive (Sabatini 1987). As Sabatini (1987, 26) explains, the use of the modifier *donna* before or after the basic noun (masculine title) creates dissimilarities. In fact, there is no case in which *uomo* is placed before or postponed to the women's title. *La donna sindaco* in fact derives from the phrase "the woman who has the function of mayor," just as the *sindaco donna* derives from the phrase "the mayor who is a woman."

The following exercise, instead, aims to reflect on the feminine forms of some job titles, specifically those that indicate prestigious jobs. This suggests that sociolinguistic reflection is addressed at advanced levels.

To sum up, across the analysed textbooks, there are varying levels of gender inclusivity in language use. *Nuovo Progetto Italiano Junior 3* garnered attention for its consistent use of neutral terms and inclusive job titles. *Nuovo Senza Frontiere 1* shows mixed results, often reverting to unmarked masculine forms despite attempts at neutralisation. *Nuovissimo Progetto Italiano 3* and *4* demonstrate strong inclusivity, especially at advanced levels, and address cultural implications of gendered language. These findings highlight both the progress and the ongoing need for attention to gender-inclusive language in educational materials.

3.2 The Case of *Femminile Plurale* by Loescher Editore and *Dai!* by Casa delle Lingue

While many publishing houses are moving towards greater inclusivity, there are some that have made gender inclusion their focus. This subchapter takes into consideration two publishing houses, namely, Loescher Editore and Casa delle Lingue, in particular *Femminile Plurale* and *Dai!*, which represent a perfect example of inclusion in language teaching.

Loescher Editore[14] is a historic Italian publishing house, based in Turin, which has been publishing textbooks for middle and high schools for 160 years. It has also recently expanded its catalogue with Italian FL/SL textbooks and for adult education. Loescher has dedicated a section of its website to the promotion of gender equality, offering examples and activities to do in class to

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14 See https://www.loescher.it/chi-siamo

1) Give prominence, in anthologies, to female authors and voices marginalised by the "canon" of authors; 2) propose, in Italian grammar and other languages, exercises that do not suggest dominant models or outdated stereotypes, linked to fixed family, work, or ethnic roles; 3) and enhance, in the textbooks of all subjects, the history of female figures in the various fields of culture, not as appendices or optional insights, but from a fully inclusive perspective, as a fundamental part of the discussion. (Loescher, *Insegnare la parità di genere, la pluralità, l'inclusività e educare per prevenire la violenza sulle donne* [translated by the author])[15]

The textbook that was decided to take into consideration is *Femminile Plurale* (2024),[16] which is an Italian SL course for women in collaboration with the ITAMA[17] association that has been teaching Italian to immigrant women for years. *Femminile Plurale* was born from the need to adapt the Italian language course to real needs and every-day contexts. In the webinar presenting the textbook available on Loescher's website,[18] it was explained that women represent 53% of immigrant people in Italy and that they find themselves in a disadvantageous situation compared to language teaching literature, as they are both migrants and women. It was thus essential to fill these gaps, specifically by developing oral production and interaction skills compared to male migrants; and through the understanding of Italian cultural codes. *Femminile Plurale* is therefore addressed to women with poor education, who thus need to reach an A1 level, and who by culture prefer to participate in Italian courses for women only. In the webinar is also explained that the strengths of this textbook are first of all the presence of some topics which, to be treated, require a certain female sensitivity representing by the strength of the gynoecium; it is graphically more beautiful, therefore guaranteeing greater acquisition of the language, as beauty awakens our brains, and what is beautiful is more remembered because it is something pleasant; and the playful aspect, which entertains and unites the class.

Although this textbook deserves a complete consultation, only a few examples that can be linked to the previous analyses are illustrated below.

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15 https://www.loescher.it/parita?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=risorse_parita&fb-clid=IwAR1jl3CMZcnZNnawC3fB9sQ3a-UPKhJSSo7birPNlrp_TjcFhpXRfhkYdxk
16 I thank the Loescher staff for sending me the digital textbook.
17 https://www.italianopermamme.org/
18 Femminile Plurale's page and webinar https://www.loescher.it/dettaglio/opera/O_35120/Femminile-plurale#

16 Ascolta l'audio e scegli le professioni che senti.

T23

1 ☐ commessa

2 ☐ architetta

3 ☐ avvocata

4 ☐ parrucchiera

5 ☐ impiegata

6 ☐ insegnante

7 ☐ sarta

8 ☐ musicista

9 ☐ casalinga

Figure 32: *Femminile Plurale*, exercise 16, page 66.

15 Da quale specialista vai? Guarda le immagini, leggi e rispondi alle domande.

ginecologa — dermatologo — dentista — ortopedico

otorino — pediatra — medica di base
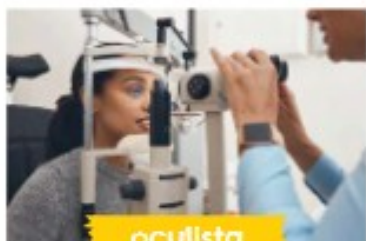
oculista — ecografista — cardiologo

1 Dove vai per curare una gamba rotta? Vado dall' _____

2 Dove vai per un'ecografia? Vado dall' _____

3 Dove vai per una visita agli occhi? Vado dall' _____

4 Dove vai per una visita al cuore? Vado dal _____

5 Dove vai per una visita alla pelle? Vado dal _____

6 Dove vai per una visita alle orecchie? Vado dall' _____

7 Dove vai per una visita allo stomaco? Vado dalla _____

8 Dove vai se aspetti un bambino? Vado dalla _____

9 Dove vai se tuo figlio sta male? Vado dal _____

10 Dove vai se ti fanno male i denti? Vado dal _____

Figure 33: *Femminile Plurale*, exercise 15, page 90.

2 **Scrivi i nomi delle professioni dell'elenco sotto alle immagini corrispondenti.**

sarta • insegnante • ingegnera • infermiera • cuoca • estetista • dentista • mediatrice • ostetrica • commessa • cameriera • casalinga • badante • parrucchiera • imprenditrice

1 .... 2 .... 3 ....

4 .... 5 .... 6 ....

7 .... 8 .... 9 ....

10 .... 11 .... 12 ....

13 .... 14 .... 15 ....

Quali altre professioni conosci? ....

....

Figure 34: *Femminile Plurale*, exercise 2, page 133.

51

Figure 35: *Femminile Plurale*, exercise 3, page 134.

In addition to the instructions that, for obvious reasons, are female-addressed only, the exercises are adapted from an inclusive perspective and against gender stereotypes. Unlike other textbooks for migrants in which women's jobs are limited to *badante* or *casalinga*, in *Femminile Plurale* there is a series of jobs, including those that are normally attributed to men. Furthermore, Sabatini's Recommendations (1987, 116) are taken into consideration. In fact, students learn words such as *architetta*, *avvocata*, *medica*, and *ingegnera*.

Despite the still basic level, cultural reflection activities are proposed to the students, such as the one on page 134, which is an attempt to break a gender stereotype.

Thus, *Femminile Plurale* successfully fills the gaps left by traditional language teaching materials by addressing the specific needs of immigrant women. Its inclusive and sensitive approach, combined with engaging and culturally relevant content, makes it an effective tool for teaching Italian to this demographic. The textbook not only supports language learning but also promotes gender equality and empowerment through thoughtful content and instructional design.

Casa delle Lingue,[19] on the other hand, is a publishing house based in Barcelona (Spain) and is part of the Difusión Research Center,[20] which deals with the publication of textbooks for Spanish FL/SL. In addition to the drafting of innovative and quality textbooks, Casa delle Lingue also offers visits to teaching centres, educational consultancy, and teacher training. The course that deserves to be taken into consideration is *Dai!* in which «*the topics, activities, and games proposed are inclusive and promote the development of intercultural skills*» [translated by the author].[21]

On 23 February 2024, Clarissa Zambiasi held a webinar[22] presenting *Dai! 1* and *Dai! 2*, in which she reiterated inclusiveness as a strong point of the course. As explained in the webinar, the first

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19 https://www.cdl-edizioni.com/chi-siamo/
20 https://difusion.com/
21 https://www.cdl-edizioni.com/categoria-prodotto/corsi-di-lingua/dai/
22 https://youtu.be/lsHPNZm5d0o?feature=shared

element of inclusiveness is found in the use of inclusive language that gives visibility to both genders (through *femminilizzazione*) and neutral words, such as *coppia*. Furthermore, much importance is given to job titles.

Although it is not relevant to the thesis, it is important to add that the course editors *Dai!* have contributed to making textbooks inclusive also through examples of diversity by gender. In fact, photos of famous Italian people, both men and women, have been included. A novelty introduced in *Dai!* is the examples of diversity in gender and sexual orientation. For instance, same-sex couples and queer people are represented in the sample texts as input. Inclusivity in *Dai!* does not only concern gender but also ethnic diversity, as it represents the Italian reality. Photos of people with a migratory background, or famous people, such as Ghali and Mahmood, were thus included. Other examples concern the diversity of disabilities, exemplified through the photos of Bebe Vio and Andrea Bocelli; and diversity by culture and languages, which includes the use of local languages or dialects.

Hence, by incorporating a wide range of representations and using inclusive language, these textbooks provide a more accurate and relatable depiction of contemporary Italian society.
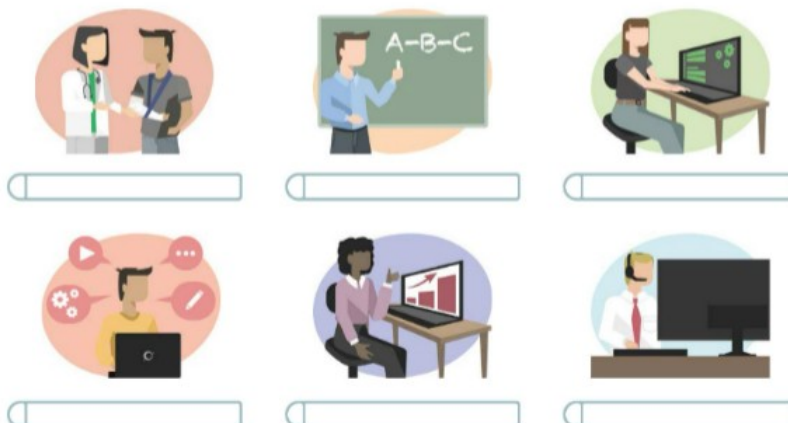

Figure 36: *Dai! 1*, page 34.

3. COLLEGHE E COLLEGHI DI LAVORO

A. Secondo te, dove lavorano queste coppie di colleghe e colleghi? Abbina un luogo di lavoro ad ogni coppia.

in un ospedale | in un ristorante | in una banca
in un centro commerciale | in una farmacia | in una scuola primaria

1 Sonia e Patrizia
Siamo farmaciste...

2 Aldo e Cinzia
Siamo impiegati...

3 Stefano e Paola
Facciamo i maestri...

4 Lisa e Sandra
Noi siamo medici...

5 Antonio e Linda
Siamo commessi...

6 Franca e Roberto
Siamo cuochi ...

B. Un programma radiofonico parla della relazione con i colleghi di lavoro e chiede ai radioascoltatori qual è il loro collega migliore. Ascolta i messaggi e verifica le tue ipotesi al punto A.

C. In gruppo. Che lavoro fate? Dove lavorate? Annotate le professioni e i luoghi di lavoro dei compagni: avete professioni in comune?

- *Che lavoro fai?*
- *Faccio la giornalista. E tu?*

LE NOSTRE PAROLE

Scrivi le professioni che si possono svolgere nei seguenti luoghi di lavoro e le professioni delle persone che conosoci.

SCUOLA	OSPEDALE	CENTRO COMMERCIALE	PERSONE CHE CONOSCI
impiegato/a			

Figure 37: *Dai! 1*, page 35.

PROFESSIONI

architetto/a	freelance creativo/a	cantante
impiegato/a	addetto/a al servizio clienti	insegnante
commesso/a	addetto/a alle vendite	infermiere/a
cuoco/a	imprenditore/imprenditrice	attore/attrice
maestro/a	sceneggiatore/sceneggiatrice	ristoratore/ristoratrice
sarto/a	medico	programmatore/programmatrice
esperto/a in marketing digitale	atleta	farmacista
	stilista	giornalista
	regista	receptionist

Figure 38: *Dai! 1*, page 39.

Although the course deserves a complete analysis, three excerpts from *Dai! 1* unit 2 were chosen for the thesis.

Unit 2 is aimed at introducing job titles. Immediately noticeable is the inclusive wording of the instructions, which includes the neutral words *coppia*, *classe*, and *gruppo*. In very few cases the

unmarked masculine is used, for instance, *colleghi*, *il loro collega*, and *compagni,* but in extremely fewer numbers than in other textbooks.

As for job titles, there is a large representation of women, and all names are inflected in both masculine and feminine, including prestigious jobs that are normally only masculine.

Hence, *Dai! 1* Unit 2 exemplifies a strong commitment to inclusivity through its careful use of neutral terms and balanced gender representation in job titles. This approach ensures that male and female roles are equally visible, challenging traditional gender norms and promoting gender equality.

In conclusion, this subchapter took into consideration two publishing houses, Loescher Editore and Casa delle Lingue that created inclusive Italian teaching materials. The focus is on their flagship textbooks, *Femminile Plurale* and *Dai!*, which exemplify gender inclusivity.

3.3 Final Considerations

The content of this chapter has attempted to carry forward a state-art concerning the analysis of examples extracted from a sample of textbooks published in Italy, while at the same time providing rewriting proposals according to the methodology used by Sara Sabatini for her dissertation (2020). In this case, however, it was decided to take into consideration textbooks that were different from each other not only in terms of level but also in terms of type of learners, albeit from the same publishing houses. Unlike Sabatini's research which covers various aspects, including the representation of girls and women in sports, for this research, it was decided to focus on instructions, job titles, and how these influence the example texts by creating gender stereotypes. Unlike the courses *Nuovo Espresso* and *Nuovo Contatto* analysed by Sabatini, the UDs taken into consideration for this research still showed some gaps, but also many examples of good linguistic gender inclusion.

If in the previous subchapters the UDs were divided according to their publishing house, here are some final reflections as a whole.

Considering the wording of the instructions —which represents the most collected data— the following considerations emerged:

➢ The textbooks that have shown greater inclusiveness in the instructions are *Nuovo Progetto Italiano Junior 3* and *Nuovissimo Progetto Italiano*;

Mixed instructions, which thus present both inclusive and non-inclusive strategies, are the most employed and were found in particular in the UDs of *Italiano di base Pre-A1/A2*, *Nuovo Senza Frontiere 1*, and *Universitalia 2.0 A1/A2*. *Dieci* contains some mixed instructions, but overall it proved to be very inclusive.

➢ The only textbook that has proven to still be non-inclusive is *Ambarabà 5*, through the constant use of the unmarked masculine.

It would therefore seem that the most used method regardless of the publishing house is the mixed one. There are many hypothesised reasons. Perhaps one prefers a language that better reflects that of native speakers, or one has preferred to avoid monotonous instructions, and thus make them more varied by alternating between the use of the unmarked masculine and strategies of *femminilizzazione* and *neutralizzazione*.

The textbook that is recommended to be adapted is *Ambarabà 5*. The UD is very short, hence it was not possible to collect an adequate amount of data. Nonetheless what emerges is that the use of the unmarked masculine is still overused. Compared to the other textbooks analysed, the *Ambarabà* course is the oldest, but it also seems to be the one most adopted by teachers of Italian FL/SL (as emerges from the various Facebook groups and the number of loans made in libraries). It would therefore seem that the *Ambarabà* course is highly appreciated, perhaps for its attractive graphics, perhaps for the activities it offers. Given its widespread use, it is recommended to update the instructions, maintaining all the other positive aspects that characterise it.

Unfortunately, the UDs do not provide sufficient data regarding the teaching of job titles. The only textbooks to consider are in fact *Italiano di base Pre-A1/A2*, *Nuovo Progetto Italiano Junior 3*, and partly *Nuovissimo Progetto Italiano 3*.

In a textbook for immigrants, there is never a shortage of *badante* as a job title, which however in *Italiano di base Pre-A1/A2* is associated with the image of a man, providing an attempt of a stereotype break. Nevertheless, in that exercise, all the other job titles, as well as being stereotyped, do not present both the male and female versions, as was done in *Nuovo Progetto Italiano Junior 3* in one of the exercises analysed instead.

Nuovissimo Progetto Italiano 3 presents a different situation. Although the instructions are inclusive, in one that was analysed there is a reference to the job titles, or rather, to the distinction between a working man and a woman. Although the "-tore/-trice" rule (Sabatini 1987, 25) in *lavoratore/lavoratrice* is correctly followed, the word *donna*, which is not recommended by Sabatini (Ivi, 26), has been added to *lavoratrice*. One wonders, and hypothesises, whether this choice is dictated by a desire to make students reflect on the women/work issue, as an introduction

to the following exercise, or whether it is intended to represent the language of the average Italian, albeit not inclusive.

Job titles often create gender stereotypes, which in the case of language courses can be reflected in the input within textbooks, such as example sentences, dialogues, or even authentic texts. The inputs that contributed to breaking these stereotypes can be found in *Italiano di base Pre-A1/A2* and *Nuovo Progetto Italiano Junior 3*. In the dialogue on page 99 taken from *Italiano di base Pre-A1/A2* workbook, the two people talk about work, and surprisingly the woman's husband has a "woman" job. In fact, he works in a dental office, but not as a dentist, but rather as a clerk, a role that is normally attributed to women. Furthermore, he works part-time hours, thus having time to spend with his children. In *Nuovo Progetto Italiano Junior 3* there are interviews with famous people, including Samantha Cristoforetti. Her presence in this UD is crucial, as she breaks the stereotype of women who are not interested in science and therefore do not do STEM jobs. Moreover, considering that *Nuovo Progetto Italiano Junior 3* is for teenagers, this type of exercise is fundamental for creating one's identity beyond gender.

In addition to the analysis of a sample of UDs, it was appropriate, as well as interesting, to take into consideration *Femminile Plurale* by Loescher Editore and *Dai!* of Casa delle Lingue. Although they are considerably different and are addressed to distinct learners, they are two examples of inclusive textbooks, whose publishing houses have inclusivity as their mission. *Femminile Plurale*, as can be understood from the title, is a textbook for a class of women only. Inclusion is not primarily found in the instructions, but in the teaching of job titles which helps students understand that women can be housewives, but also *architette*, *avvocate*, and much more. *Dai!*, on the contrary, it is intended for everyone, or rather, *tutti e tutte*. This textbook embodies inclusiveness at 360° and would represent an interesting starting point for further research, but for this thesis, the attention was only paid to the formulation of instructions and the teaching of job titles.

To conclude, these two textbooks, as well as the analysis of the others, have shown that the Italian language is advantageous as it is considerably varied and gives the possibility of saying the same concept but in a different way. From the analyses, it emerged that there are no obstacles to linguistic inclusion and that perhaps it is much easier to use words such as *coppia* and *gruppo* to execute activities between peers. Hence, the examples of inclusive language found do not seem to make the instructions weighty, nor do they make them more complex to understand. As regards job titles, it would be enough to respect and enforce Italian grammatical rules. Yet, it appears that applying Sabatini's recommendations remains challenging, perhaps not within the classroom, but rather outside of it. The courses for advanced levels are an excellent opportunity to reflect on these sociolinguistic phenomena, which would seem to be the main protagonists of continuous debates

between linguists. Gender linguistic inclusion, in fact, is no longer limited to the visibility of women. This highly relevant topic is illustrated in the next chapter.

4. Beyond the Rules: The Emerging Gender-Inclusive Language in Everyday Life and in Classroom

In the previous chapter, an analysis was made of a sample of Italian FL/SL textbooks, chosen based on the type of learners, their level, and their age, as well as for being, in addition to being recent, widely adopted in Italian courses. For the analyses, a specific account was taken of how the instructions were formulated and how the job titles were introduced. However, it would seem that recently students' sensitivity regarding their gender identity, and thus representation in everyday life, has gone beyond female visibility (Galli 2022; 2023).

While for some languages, specifically English and Swedish, the use of the inclusive and non-binary pronouns "singular *they*" and "*hen*" has been approved, regarding the Italian language —particularly the use of the neutral vowel "*schwa*"— the debate remains intensely contested (§4.2).

Concerning the teaching context, as explained by some scholars[23] —specifically in the case of Italian FL/SL— it was appropriate to be aware of the fact that some speakers, especially Anglophones and Spanish speakers, pay a significant amount of attention to gender inclusion also in the classroom, not only a clear distinction between masculine and feminine but also the visibility and identification of non-binary people through language.

For this reason, it was decided to consider some studies regarding both the teaching of Spanish and Italian FL/SL for a comparison between two similar languages.

4.1 *They*, *Hen*, and *Elle*: The Case of English, Swedish, and Spanish

As explained in the chapter dedicated to the Literature Review, the first inclusive communication strategies of the English language mainly consist of neutralising female job titles. However, another strategy is linked to the use of pronouns, specifically in the expression of the feminine pronoun as well as the masculine in cases of generic singular reference (i.e. *he/she*, *(s)he*, read *he or she*) (Giusti 2022). Although gender representation also occurs through pronouns in Italian, in English they are used in a more pervasive way, creating redundancy in speech (ivi, 12). In order to avoid the redundant use of "*he/she*", the use of the "singular *they*" was presented as an inclusive strategy, accepted as an epicene pronoun since the first witnessed phases of the English language (Giusti

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23 Paciotti (2020); Galli (2022); Frabotta (2023)

2020, 12; Bodine 1975, 129 cit. in Hord 2016, 11), and recently to refer to people of gender non-binary (Giusti 2020, 12).

Hord (2016) quotes Dennis Baron, whose book *Grammar and Gender* was one of the first to explore the history of the movement towards neutral language, providing an overview of the intersections of grammar and gender, and includes a history of the English language. Baron talks about the development of the English language and states that the search for an epicene pronoun is not new, rather that «*the lack of such a pronoun in English has been a concern to grammarians and word coiners from some two hundred years*» (Baron 1986, 198 cit. in Hord 2016, 11). Baron then explains that the first epicene pronouns in English were created not because of any political movement for the inclusion of women (or queer people), but because grammarians desired a pronoun that would be linguistically efficient and grammatically correct without having to reference gender (ivi, 12). It is thus a minimal variation of the referential property of "*they*", which previously referred to a generic human being or one whose gender was not specified, and can now refer to specific human beings who manifest their own fluid identity (Giusti 2022, 13).

Regarding the use of pronouns, the English language is in a similar situation to the Swedish one, although in this second case, it would seem that the neutral inclusive pronoun was born only recently.

In Swedish the gender system, starting from a traditional Indo-European system with the three genders —male, female, and neutral— has changed over time to the point where today it presents an opposition between only two values, namely "common" and neutral, except for the third-singular-person pronouns (Thornton 2022). In fact, Swedish presents the forms 1) "*hon*" for human referents of female sex, 2) "*han*" for human referents of male and generic sex, 3) "*den*" for inanimate referents of common gender, and 4) "*det*" for inanimate referents of neutral gender.[24] As in the case of the pronoun "*they*" in English, the proposal to adopt the new pronoun "*hen*" emerged for Swedish, first only as an indefinite or generic reference, but later as a specific reference to individuals of non-binary identity, in contrast with the use of "*han*" as generic pronoun (Thornton 2022, 43) first mentioned in the mid-1960s (Hord 2016, 11), then suggested again by linguist Hans Karlgren in 1994 (Rothschild 2012, cit. in Hord 2016, 11); and eventually re-introduced in the early 2000s by transgender people (ivi, 11).

Unlike the singular pronoun "*they*" which might confuse speakers, "*hen*" is unique in its form, while resembling both masculine and feminine third-person pronouns, making it easily recognisable. Despite its success, Hord cites Milles, who nevertheless recognises the difficulty in

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24 Here some examples: 1) *Hon bor i Stockholm* (she lives in Stockholm); 2) *Han är min bror* (he is my brother); 3) *Jag såg en katt. Den var svart* (I saw a cat. It was black); 4) *Det är kallt* (it is cold). The author found these sentences on ChatGPT.

introducing a new pronoun into a language and the distrust of linguistic authorities (Milles 2011, 28 cit. in Hord 2016, 12). Notwithstanding, Thornton (2022) cites Ledin & Lyngfelt (2013) who offer an accurate and detailed classification of the contexts of use in which "*hen*" is encountered in a corpus including different types of texts, such as blogs, daily press, and papers, thus demonstrating that the largely prevalent use is not the specific one for referring to non-binary people, but the generic or indefinite one (ivi, 44).

A different situation from the previous ones is that of the Spanish language. In this case, it is not just a matter of using pronouns in an alternative and innovative way, but of applying other strategies to a language that, like Italian, shows an even more complex gender distinction in grammar than languages like English.

Starting with pronouns, Ben Papadopoulos (2022) explains that non-binary, trans, and other gender non-conforming Spanish-speaking people around the world use the pronouns "*ellx*" and "*elle*", which correspond to the English "*they*", to resolve the impossibility of expressing gender neutrality in the language, given that every word that refers to people must be masculine or feminine. Feminist linguists have long argued that using masculine as the default linguistic gender makes women invisible and have proposed that masculine and feminine forms be represented together, for example by saying "*amigos y amigas*" instead of just "*amigos*" (ivi, 41), therefore using the feminisation strategy.

Gender-inclusive linguistic reforms thus extend through the invention of new methods to express non-binary gender identities, with words such as "*amigxs*" and "*amigues*" (ivi, 41). Although the Real Academia Española rejects gender-inclusive Spanish (Papadopoulos 2022, 41; Guerrero-Salazar 2020, 217), many more universities and other institutions legitimise its use as linguistically valid (Papadopoulos 2022, 41), and speakers' adoption increases (ibid.) especially through the use of new technologies and social networks (Guerrero-Salazar 2020, 217).

Another proposal is the at sign (e.g. *amig@s*), which could be perceived as an orthographic combination of the masculine (o) and feminine (a) gender morphemes (Uwe Kjær Nissen 2002, 271 cit. in Papadopoulos 2022, 42).

What emerges, however, is that the vowel "*e*" is the only one that can be pronounced, and thus it can be employed in spoken language, unlike x and @ (Giammatteo 2020, 188). Furthermore, it is the only one that is gender morpheme existing in the language, unlike other vowel proposals such as "*i*" and "*u*" (Papadopoulos 2022, 43). In fact, "*e*" is almost always a common gender morpheme that can be prescriptively assigned to the male or female gender, as in the word "*estudiante*" which can refer to both a male and female person (Eisenberg 1985, 195 cited in Papadopoulos 2022, 43).

Despite the efficiency of the "*e*" vowel, the Real Academia Española is not the only institution to have rejected it. In fact, there is no shortage of criticism from linguists. José María Gil (2020) lists a series of negative aspects about the use of the new inclusive language:

1. It wants to promote a necessary conceptual change, a change in mental patterns that hinder the equal consideration of the sexes but focuses on morphology.

2. Try to emphasise the necessary gender equality, which, of course, must occur in all social groups. However, this is a morphological change limited to educated speakers with a high level of grammatical awareness.

3. It presents itself as a cutting-edge change, but it resurrects and reheats the strong, already refuted, version of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis.

4. It wants to contribute to the solution of serious and complex problems of exclusion and violence, but it is based on a naive simplification of the relationship between language and thought.

5. Seeks to promote inclusion and tolerance, but contributes to censorship and linguistic surveillance. In fact, it promotes the idea that the default use of the masculine morpheme "*o*" is sexist.

6. It exalts freedom and difference but falls into the false hypothesis of linguistic determinism, according to which the lexicon and grammar of the language we speak create an iron structure for thoughts that we can produce.

7. The planned use of the morpheme "*e*" has the merit of making visible the urgent need for gender equality. And he does it, moreover, in poetic terms. The reason for this is that it pleases, provokes, and scandalises. In already familiar words, the planned use of the morpheme "*e*" draws attention to the "message as such".

(Jakobson 1988, 358 cit. in José María Gil 2020, 80 [translated by the author])

Guerrero-Salazar (2020, 217) admits that, in any case, the use of new inclusive language represents a reality and goes hand in hand with social changes. Nonetheless, José María Gil (2020, 81) fears that the proposal to impose the morpheme "*e*" or any of its variants in educational texts, academic writing, public administration, and even everyday language could constitute a threat and will lose all poetic potential.

To sum up, it is clear, then, that the use of a more inclusive language has been on the one hand positively accepted (in the case of neutral pronouns in English and Swedish) and on the other hand created a division, especially in the case of Spanish. This last case was even more complex since it is a Romance language with a strong gender distinction in its grammar. The strategies of

feminisation and neutralisation can thus be used in both Italian and Spanish as they are similar, but which strategy was employed to make the Italian language even more inclusive? What were the consequences?

4.2 *Buongiorno a tuttə e benvenutə*: *Schwa* or Not *Schwa*? The Case of Italian

Alongside the previous languages briefly illustrated, a new phenomenon concerning gender-inclusive language has also spread in Italy. This new trend was born in 2015 thanks to the media and the web (Robustelli 2024), and in particular when Luca Boschetto had the idea of writing an article[25] on using the *schwa* (ə) (Cavallo, Lugli, Prearo 2021; Scialpi 2022; Kenda 2022; Robustelli 2024) to replace the binary male and female vowels. By definition,

> The term *schwa* originates from the name of a written Hebrew diacritic marker called *shewā* ("null") and often transcribed by a superscript *e*, which indicates a phenomenon in Hebrew where an unstressed vowel is reduced in pronunciation. As a concept, the schwa is considered to be a "reduced" vowel, spoken with less intensity than a full, stressed vowel and lacking the distinctive qualities. (Zeidan, 2023)

Since the vowel *schwa* does not exist in the Italian language, «*both as a phoneme and as an exponent of a third gender value, therefore represents a "voluntary" linguistic change*» (Thornton 2022, 46). Although the idea originated with Luca Boschetto, Thornton affirms that the introduction of *schwa* into Italian was thus born in socio-culturally marginal environments, such as queer communities (ivi, 48), and only recently has it found champions in figures who have great visibility in the media, and cultural agencies, such as the publishing house Effequ[26] that does not have a dominant position in the Italian publishing panorama (ibid.).

Nevertheless, the *schwa* was not the only proposal. In fact, some alternatives have been introduced, such as the vowel "*u*", the asterisk *, and the at sign as in Spanish @ (Fiorentino 2022). However, these last two proposals are useful in the orthographic system, but problematic for pronunciation (ivi, 165), thus making the vowels more preferable.

Although it all came from the idea of Boschetto (2015), the true spokesperson of the new inclusive linguistic movement is Vera Gheno, sociolinguist, translator, and researcher at the University of Florence.[27] In fact, she sustains a possible reform of the neuter that would replace "feminised" phrases such as "*uomini e donne sono sempre benvenuti e benvenute*", and would allow

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25 The article is available here: https://italianoinclusivo.it/nascita/
26 https://www.effequ.it/

an objectively neutral morphological ending to be introduced into Italian: the short *schwa* for the singular (ə) and the long *schwa* for the plural (ɜ). In this way, not only would the no-binary community be represented, but the androcentric vision would be overcome by eliminating the use of the unmarked masculine (Galeandro 2021). The Effequ publishing house, however, opted for a single sign ə for both the singular and the plural (Gheno 2022, 117 cit. in Kenda 2022, 215).

As regards the vowel "*u*", although it has the advantage of being pronounced, it has disadvantages compared to the *schwa*. The "*u*", in fact, although it is not a vowel linked to gender in the Italian language, it is for some dialects, in particular the masculine one. For this reason, Vera Gheno chose the *schwa* as the best solution (Cavallo, Lugli, Prearo 2021).

Below are the exemplified proposals:

Singular			
Grammar Case	Male	Female	Inclusive
Regular Nouns	maestro	maestra	maestrə
Irregular Nouns	pittore	pittrice	pittorə
Determinative Articles	il/lo	la	lə
Indeterminative Articles	un/uno	una	unə
Articulated Prepositions	del/dello	della	dellə
Personal Pronouns	lui	lei	ləi
Plural			
Regular Nouns	maestri	maestre	maestrɜ
Irregular Nouns	pittori	pittrici	pittorɜ
Determinative Articles	i/gli	le	lɜ
Articulated Prepositions	dei/degli	delle	dellɜ

Table 8: Proposals for inclusive rewriting by Luca Boschetto.[28]

Beyond the academic field, the emerging inclusive language has also been embraced and used by Alice Orrù, a freelance content designer and copywriter who works with inclusive languages and digital accessibility. On her website,[29] she reiterates multiple times in articles (Orrù 2020a; 2020b) her goal of making her texts and translations more linguistically inclusive.

Finally, it is appropriate to mention Michela Murgia (Cabras 1972 - Rome 2023)[30] a writer and activist, who with Chiara Tagliaferri wrote *Morgana. L'uomo ricco sono io* published by

Mondadori (2021). A peculiarity of this essay is that within it the authors have inserted the neutral vowel *schwa* (Federici 2024, 5). Furthermore, Murgia was criticised for using *schwa* in a newspaper article (Redazione Adnkronos 2021 cited in Róbertsdóttir 2022, 12).

Nonetheless, is *schwa* really the best solution? Are there any limits to its use?

4.2.1 Limits

Although *schwa* has been promoted as a solution to make the Italian language even more inclusive, there is no shortage of criticism from some linguists in opposition to Luca Boschetto and Vera Gheno's ideas. The linguistic scientific community has reacted on several occasions with various essays which reveal positions that are generally unfavourable. The arguments against the use of *schwa* exposed by linguists are completely legitimate, they provide authoritative reasons and give space to pertinent reflections on the difficulties in its use (Kenda 2022).

To begin with, it is not a question of a formally instituted linguistic reform, but of «*pressures that come from below, from those who speak and use the language daily*» (Acanfora 2022 [translated by the author]).

Cecilia Robustelli (2021a), supposes that eliminating grammatical endings and introducing *schwa* to have the possibility of communicating with other genders does not take into account the fact that it can have critical consequences on the understanding of speech languages. In fact, grammatical gender has the function of triggering an agreement between articles, nouns, adjectives, and past participles and of allowing comprehensible communication between speakers. Furthermore, grammatical gender in Italian has the principle of being assigned to human beings based on the person's sex and not on gender (Robustelli 2021a, 13). Moreover,

> Maintaining *tout court* that in Italian the grammatical gender, divided into masculine and feminine, must be eliminated because it reflects the gender binary inherent in our heterosexual society, and therefore reflects an imbalance of power, attributes to the grammatical gender a function that on the linguistically is foreign to it. (ibid. [translated by the author])

Paraphrasing the idea of Robustelli (2021a), stating that grammatical gender in Italian must be eliminated because it manifests an imbalance of power, attributes to grammatical gender a function that, from a linguistic point of view, does not belong to it. In other words, grammatical gender has a

purely syntactic function and does not necessarily reflect the power dynamics of society. Hence, believing that the Italian language is exclusive because it does not express all the possible identities and thinking of making it more inclusive simply by replacing grammatical endings with ə is an idea that met criticism.

Simona Galeandro (2021) argues that the use of *schwa* is at odds with the process of feminisation. She fears, in fact, that instead of making the language more inclusive it could once again hide the feminine (ivi, 72).

The harshest criticisms come from Andrea De Benedetti[31] and Massimo Arcangeli,[32] university teachers and linguists who showed their disagreement with Boschetto and Gheno's proposals.

Arcangeli even launched a petition in 2022 entitled "*Lo schwa (ə)? No, grazie. Pro lingua nostra*",[33] expressing a motivation in highly provocative language:

> We are faced with a dangerous drift, passed off as a desire for inclusiveness by incompetent linguistic experts, who would like to reform Italian with the sound of schwa. The promoters of yet another madness, banned under the banner of political correctness, although aware that the use of the upside-down "e" could never be systematically applied to the Italian language, preach unacceptable rules, with the risk of causing serious damage even for those suffering from dyslexia and other neuroatypical disorders. (From *Lo schwa (ə)? No, grazie. Pro lingua nostra* [translated by the author])

He was not lenient even in his 2022 book "*La lingua scəma. Contro lo schwa (e altri animali)*", in which he explains all the reasons why the *schwa* and other gender inclusion strategies should not be applied. To begin with, it is a use that violates «*the orthographic and phono-morphological rules of Italian*» and is useless given that «*in Italian there are useful ambigenre words*» (ivi, 18 [translated by the author]). He then complains that speaking respectfully does not mean «*demanding that the linguistic norms of an entire national community submit to the arrogance of those who, intending to modify them, promote the generalisation of unacceptable and aberrant uses*» (ivi, 29-30 [translated by the author]). Additionally, he also refers to job titles, such as *sindaca* and *ministra*, stating that even names of this type have been assimilated with difficulty, despite being «*grammatically flawless*» (ivi, 58 [translated by the author]). The use of *schwa*, therefore, can only be worse. Finally, he also refers to job titles ending in "-tore": variants such as direttorə, pittorə, autorə, and

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31 https://my.unint.eu/web/a.debenedetti/~/43909/biografia
32 https://web.unica.it/unica/page/it/massimo_arcangeli
33 https://www.change.org/p/lo-schwa-%C9%99-no-grazie-pro-lingua-nostra

lettorə, «*wrecking consolidated forms such as direttrice, pittrice, autrice, and lettrice*» (ivi, 59 [translated by the author]).

Andrea De Benedetti explains his reasons against the use of *schwa* in the Italian language through his book "*Così non schwa. Limiti ed eccessi del linguaggio inclusivo*", also published in 2022. Although against its side, he expresses his opinions in a more "picturesque":

> In the case of *schwa*, we are faced with one of those great works that profoundly change the linguistic landscape and the habits of speakers, like a tunnel that joins two adjacent valleys or a bridge that connects an island to the mainland. For the inhabitants of the island that bridge could represent a turning point. (De Benedetti 2022, 41-42 [translated by the author])

The inhabitants of "that island", however, would represent only a small minority of the entire population, from whom the grammatical rules of the Italian language would thus be subtracted, «*acquired in a free and spontaneous way by every native speaker*» (De Santis 2022 [translated by the author]). Furthermore, within the community, there may be people with other difficulties, for instance, dyslexics, deaf and blind people, but above all foreigners and people from culturally disadvantaged families, and the elderly (De Benedetti 2022). Hence, it is appropriate to ask ourselves who is excluded and evaluate the consequences of experiments that «*go beyond militant use and personal written communication*» (De Santis 2022 [translated by the author]). Galeandro (2021) also agrees that

> The limitations of the introduction of *schwa* are multiple, ranging from the difficulty of its pronunciation to the inability to present itself as an effective language of inclusiveness. An inclusive language, in fact, is not a language that involves the exclusion of women and the implicit confirmation of male bias, on the other hand, it would be equally exclusive to people characterised by ADHD. Reading and understanding the schwa would be difficult for them and would cause further integration difficulties if a proposal of this type reached the institutional environment. (Galeandro 2021, 72 [translated by the author])

Moreover, De Santis (2022) and D'Achille (cit. in Kenda 2022, 217) fear that the use of *schwa* could have consequences in public discourse and the political sphere. Furthermore, Nicole Zunino

publishes an article[34] on the website The Password (2023) in which she cites Protocol No. 265/2023 of Accademia della Crusca regarding gender-inclusive language, following the recommendations of Alma Sabatini (1987), but excluding graphic signs that do not have correspondence in speech like the asterisk. It also excludes the *schwa* and insists on saying that the unmarked masculine plural is the best tool to represent all orientations, as it serves to include and not to override.

Finally, De Benedetti refers to school. In fact, he wonders if *schwa* is used within a community and is not comparable with the spontaneous language spoken by the majority of Italian people, how could it be implanted? «*Teaching how to pronounce it at school?*» (De Benedetti 2022, 44 [translated by the author]). Thus, he invites the readers to think about school and what could happen:

> Imagine a teacher who one day has to correct a paper or an exam full of *schwa* and asterisks. Are the "right" to self-represent and the conscious use of a linguistic device not contemplated by the grammars worth more, or are the grammars themselves and the shared language model legitimised by the use they propose worth more? (De Benedetti 2022, 70 [translated by the author])

In summary, the use of emerging gender-inclusive language has created considerable amount of controversy. First of all, *schwa* is not part of the Italian vowel system, except in some dialects of central and southern Italy (Fiorentino 2022); and other linguists have expressed other reasons:

➢ it is a trend born on the internet and without imposition from official institutions;

➢ it is applied by a marginal group of the population and is thus not sufficiently known;

➢ it causes misunderstanding of the text and goes against Italian grammatical rules;

➢ instead of being veritably inclusive, it once again hides the feminine, ruining all the work done by female linguists in the past;

➢ it may cause problems for other minorities, such as dyslexic and blind people and foreigners; and people with difficulties, such as the elderly and people with a low level of education.

It is hypothesised, however, that the use of *schwa* has also brought benefits to gender representation.

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34 https://thepasswordunito.wordpress.com/2023/11/08/il-femminile-secondo-laccademia-della-crusca-si-parla-di-schwa-maschile-plurale-inclusivo-e-se-la-lingua-puo-condizionare-la-percezione-della-realta/

4.2.2 Opportunities

Considering the limits exposed in the previous subchapter, the counterparts proposed by Luca Boschetto and Vera Gheno are illustrated here.

➢ it is a trend born on the internet and without imposition from official institutions: this statement is difficult to contradict. As Luca Boschetto states on the *Italiano Inclusivo* website,[35] the idea came from him after considering the changes made in English (the singular *they*). Nevertheless, according to Vera Gheno, the *schwa* was employed to translate the plural into "-e" of Portuguese and Spanish. It was thus dictated by a precise translation need: «*a non-existent inclusive form for the official Portuguese norm, translated with an experimental solution into Italian*» (Gheno 2021, 175 [translated by the author]). The author thus hypothesises that, while it is true that it was not imposed by official institutions, it was still a valid alternative that allowed to translation of something equally unofficial.

➢ it is applied by a marginal group of the population and is thus not sufficiently known: even this limit cannot be contradicted, just think of the people who do not constantly use social media or who are simply poorly informed. Luca Boschetto, however, has published a list[36] of those who have adopted the *schwa*. In addition to the previously mentioned Effequ publishing house, Mondadori has also used the *schwa* for translation issues. A couple of articles are also mentioned, including one published on the Treccani website,[37] and two comics authors (Sio and Zerocalcare). These examples are however limiting since not all people read novels or comics. Nonetheless, Boschetto also mentions the Municipality of Castelfranco Emilia, which uses the *schwa* in its Facebook posts.[38] This is just an example of institutional communication, but it would be interesting to know if other Municipalities have also joined this new type of language to address citizens.

➢ it causes misunderstanding of the text and goes against Italian grammatical rules: in contrast, Vera Gheno states that the *schwa* has little impact on the texts (Gheno 2021, 176). As far as grammar is concerned, it would seem that there are no contradictions.

➢ it may cause problems for other minorities, such as dyslexic and blind people: in his defence, Luca Boschetto writes on his website that no one would dare to remove the Italian alphabet the letters that normally cause dyslexic people. Vera Gheno adds that if «*the schwa is not read by*

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35 https://italianoinclusivo.it/nascita/
36 https://italianoinclusivo.it/chi-lo-usa/
37 https://www.treccani.it/magazine/chiasmo/extra/IUSS_Giordano_Alcalde.html
38 https://www.facebook.com/cittadicastelfrancoemilia/photos/a.1038946972872021/3329635780469784/

reading software aloud for the visually impaired and blind, we need to take note of it and modify the reading software» (Gheno 2021, 192 [translated by the author]).

It would seem, then, that the opportunities offered by the use of *schwa* are somewhat limited.

4.2.3 Further Considerations

In the previous subchapters, evident indignation emerged towards the proposals of Luca Boschetto and Vera Gheno. The latter, however, clarifies that the use of *schwa* is an inclusive solution «*of a completely experimental nature, and far from being able to aspire to become the norm in any way*» (Gheno 2022, 28 [translated by the author]), and she also tries to use it as little as possible, although she is the main promoter, favouring other alternatives (ivi, 33).

Unlike Massimo Arcangeli and Andrea De Benedetti who did not show a middle ground, the other scholars are still in favour of experimentation.

For instance, Robustelli (2021b) proposes to limit the use of the *schwa* to opening greetings, such as "*buongiorno a tuttə*", explaining that

> Experimenting with the language can be fun as long as you limit yourself to the lexical level and do it in a small group and are aware of using a kind of jargon, an identity language within the group itself. Instead, it is dangerous to intervene in the language system, even more so if the repercussions that such intervention can cause and its consequences on the level of communication are not foreseen. (Robustelli 2021b [translated by the author])

In favour of experimentation but in defence of feminisation, Galeandro (2021) states that

> The *schwa* represents the new starting point, whether it is applied or not. This does not mean that further proposals aimed at introducing a neuter into Italian should be branded negatively without any critical reading of the phenomenon. We reiterate that the process of neutralisation should come secondarily to that of feminisation, progressively allowing the modelling of external reality that is primarily inclined to recognise the female identity. (Galeandro 2021, 72 [translated by the author])

Marazzini (2023) complains about the fact that, although the *schwa* is considered an experiment, it was also employed for the minutes of competition. The neutral vowel *schwa* was therefore introduced into a bureaucratic and institutional text, hence proving itself to be «*the most distant from extemporaneous innovations and the most alien from experimentation*» (ivi, 18 [translated by the author]) the use of which has proven inconsistent.

Acanfora (2022) admits that

> The real problem is not listening to a need clearly expressed by a part of the population, but minimising such requests by claiming that it is not possible to distort a language just because a minority does not feel represented by it. (Acanfora 2022 [translated by the author])

For Acanfora, this thus implies that the majority of the population believes it does not matter if the minority is not linguistically represented, thereby dismissing possible alternatives that could be adopted in cases where schwa cannot be used (ibid.). It is appropriate to include that «*there are people who wish to make Italian less sexist*» (Cavallo, Lugli, Prearo 2021, 31 [translated by the author]), the use of *schwa* by some people cannot be «*considered something "external" to normal dynamics of functioning of a language*» (Thornton 2022, 50 [translated by the author]), and that «*the sole denial of the existence of this necessity and univocal criticism will certainly not succeed in silencing the user*» (Kenda 2022, 217 [translated by the author]).

To conclude, Gheno adds that «*perhaps we have to live with the idea that the linguistic research of non-binary people and those who would like a less unbalanced use of the language should be respected, even if not necessarily shared*» (Gheno 2021, 193 [translated by the author]) and supposes that «*if today's pre-adolescent generations maintain the sense of fluidity that they exhibit now, they will be the ones to find a solution that had never been thought of*» (ivi, 194 [translated by the author]).

4.3 Gender-Inclusion in Foreign/Second Language Teaching

As Giuliana Fiorentino (2022) states,

> While the Accademia della Crusca has shown reluctance towards considering inclusive solutions, in many other countries the theme of inclusiveness and respect for

subjectivities are also central from a linguistic point of view. (Fiorentino 2022, 167 [translated by the author])

In fact, considering the experiences of teaching Italian in Anglophone countries (Paciotti 2020; Galli 2022) and what Frabotta (2023) explained in her webinar regarding Spaniard students, it has become appropriate, if not essential, not to neglect the idea of using the new language inclusive of gender even in the classroom.

The problem thus arises of how to structure the lessons, and possibly how the textbook could be written. In Chapter 3, a sample of current textbooks was analysed, many of which demonstrated a high level of linguistic genre inclusion.

The inclusion strategies used concern both feminisation and neutralisation. The latter regards the use of neutral words, such as *classe*, *coppia*, and *gruppo*, which do not specify gender, thus making them inclusive. The issue changes when we turn to the individual student, who identifies himself or herself as neither male nor female. This is where the emerging inclusive language would become relevant, especially if it is a class of young students. In the following subchapters, the teaching proposals of scholars interested in inclusive teaching in Spanish are taken into consideration; and those of Sara Galli & Mohammad J. Jamali (2023) regarding Italian taught to English-speaking students. The aim is to verify whether the new inclusive language is used in the teaching proposals.

4.3.1 Inspiration from Related Languages: Gender-Inclusive Language in Spanish FL/SL Classroom

This subchapter takes into consideration some papers relating to the teaching of a foreign language from a gender-inclusive perspective. Spanish was chosen as an example because, in addition to the fact that Spanish speakers pay more attention to gender issues and thus it is assumed that the strategies are also applied in the classroom, it is the language that most resembles Italian and thus it can be inspirational. The studies of Parra & Serafini (2022), Gutiérrez Conde (2022), and Santiago Alonso (2023) have been taken into consideration below.

Parra & Serafini's proposals (2022) aim to:

a) contribute to the Spanish FL curriculum with the theme of diversity of identities and subjectivities that seek to make themselves visible through inclusive language in the Spanish-speaking world; b) promote critical reflection regarding different perspectives

and positions on inclusive language; and c) open a space for the development of students' transcultural competences based on sociolinguistic, socio-historical and sociopolitical contextualization exercises of inclusive language. (ivi, 7-8 [translated by the author])

Parra & Serafini consider the activities and materials they created as a starting point and a first guide for teachers who wish to include this topic in their lessons. They also argue that the activities can be used both in Spanish teaching contexts such as FL or SL, and can be adapted to different levels of instruction (ibid.).

To start, Parra & Serafini (2022) suggest an exercise at the beginning of the course in which the use of inclusive language in interactions between teachers and students is agreed, considered a good opportunity for students to learn the options that Spanish offers and for those who do not identify with the binary to be able to choose their form of address in the learning language, which must be respected by teachers and peers. Parra & Serafini also add that «*the uses of inclusive language that will be accepted or not accepted in written exercises, tasks and assessments must also be made explicit*» (ivi, 9 [translated by the author]).

One activity that can be highly productive is to ask students how they use inclusive language in their native language and, if they use it, when, and where. Starting from personal use, this conversation can also generate interesting reflections on inclusive language in different languages (ibid.). The scholars, then, recommend an activity inspired by the model of Morales-Vidal & Cassany (2020, cit. in Parra & Serafini 2020, 9), according to which students conduct a critical analysis of the representation of genders and non-binary identities, and on the possible use of inclusive language in their textbooks, as well as research projects on authentic texts (ivi, 10) and podcasts (ivi, 12). Another good activity, primarily for advanced students, consists of building a socio-historical chronology of the nominal morphology of Spanish with a focus on the gender category «*that allows them to establish a contextualised and critical knowledge base on this topic*» (ivi, 11 [translated by the author]), and the debate (ivi, 12).

Due to the lack of teaching materials to address the issue of the inclusive Spanish language, Gutiérrez Conde (2022) believes it is appropriate to propose specific activities in the classroom. She underlines, however, that «*in no case is the objective for the student to use inclusive linguistic alternatives such as the morphemes -@, -x or -e, but to make known a phenomenon that he will encounter and which may or may not interest him in his social life*» (ivi, 7 [translated by the author]). She also believes that this type of activity will only be addressed to C1-C2 levels, «*because it is the moment in which the learners have mastered most of the structures of the*

language and this allows them to carry out adequate metalinguistic reflection» (ivi, 8 [translated by the author]).

Gutiérrez Conde thus proposes to divide the activity into four parts: 1) a written exercise of grammatical awareness regarding the generic masculine and the problems it can pose; 2) the presentation of inclusive forms through real materials, working on oral skills, both comprehension and production; 3) the demonstration of the problems that these solutions cause in the linguistic system based on a series of inductive activities; and 4) a debate in which students reflect on problems and possible solutions (ibid.).

Finally, Santiago Alonso (2023) proposes as a first activity the viewing of some videos that explain «*the different problems that the Spanish language must face to give visibility and inclusive space to each Spanish native speaker*» (Santiago Alonso 2023, 196 [translated by the author]). Starting from this input, students are invited to gain awareness, reflect, and question the limits of the Spanish grammatical gender system. For this activity, there is also a homework assignment, that is, an investigation into the different positions of some linguists regarding these problems, which students share and debate in the next lesson. To conclude, as also proposed by Parra & Serafini (2022), students compare the uses of inclusive language in Spanish with those of their native language (ibid.).

The following points plainly emerge from the activities proposed by Spanish FL/SL teaching scholars:

➤ since there are no perfectly inclusive textbooks, the proposed activities are created *ad hoc*;

➤ most of the proposed activities are all addressed to an advanced level class and have no grammatical objective but sociolinguistic and communicative ones;

➤ the use of gender-inclusive language must be explicitly accepted or not by both the class and the teacher. In the case of Gutiérrez Conde's activity, for instance, the use of inclusive endings is not permitted.

Considering these conclusions, the paper by Sara Galli and Mohammad J. Jamali (2023) regarding the teaching of Italian to English speakers is taken into account. The following subchapter aims to verify whether the lessons are organised similarly to those of Spanish FL/SL.

4.3.2 Teaching Inclusive Italian to Foreigners: Sara Galli & Mohammad J. Jamali's Proposals

Galli and Jamali (2023) posed the problem of responding to students who wanted to use more inclusive writing in class. This happens foremost in higher-level language courses, when students master a higher level of confidence in producing Italian texts. When it comes to learning a language with two grammatical genders, «*picking a pronoun is particularly challenging for non-binary students who speak genderless languages natively, in which inclusive language is a less complicated matter*» (ivi, 366). So far, "*ləi*" seems to be the only Italian no-binary pronoun some people have used on various social media platforms. However, Galli and Jamali propose an alternative, for instance, using the feminine form, and next, the masculine one. As they explain,

> Such flexibility in switching between the two genders to refer to one particular individual is a good solution for people who are gender non-binary. Furthermore, communicating in this manner is functional both in written and oral speech as it does not violate any phono-morphological rules of Italian. (ibid.)

As Galli and Jamali affirm, there still are textbooks that «*use the masculine form as neutral or do not allow strategies or symbols for genderless writing*» (ivi, 368). They also noticed that many textbooks «*do not consider the reality of today's society, where some individuals do not identify themselves following the traditional binary categorization*» (ibid.). For this reason, they created some teaching material for their workshops and classes that teachers can use. They suggest the following activities:

> The first one is assumed to refrain from forcing students to identify necessarily with a conventional binary system. When we need to explain or verify the use of adjectives, e.g., the qualifying ones, we can decide to use objects in our examples instead of people since Italian is a gendered language. In this way, we will not create confusion by overlapping the notion of grammatical gender with the gender expression of individuals. This method can be adopted to explain classifiers and teach tenses that require agreement, e.g., the "*passato prossimo*". A second change to implement in Italian teaching materials is using examples that reflect reality nowadays. That means, instead of being given for granted that a person named Mario will decide to use singular

masculine pronouns, we should insert in our examples the case in which Mario could identify themselves as a non-binary individual. (ibid.)

In the following pages (368-372) Galli and Jamali propose four activities divided by level —basic, intermediate, and advanced— which share a common purpose, that is, the reflection on gender bias in the Italian language (for basic and intermediate levels), and on the possible strategies to be applied to make the Italian language more neutral (for advanced levels).

It is interesting to note that in activity 4.3 on page 371 for levels B2/C1 they propose an inclusive rewriting activity, allowing the use of asterisks and *schwa* (*car* student**; *carə studentə*), but also encouraging the use of neutralisation (*la classe è invitata* instead of *gli studenti sono tutti invitati*) or reformulation strategies (*i saggi dovranno essere inviati* instead of *gli studenti dovranno inviare i saggi*). This activity hence demonstrates a level of tolerance towards the new inclusive language while still aiming to prioritise the most grammatically correct and widely accepted forms in the authentic Italian language.

Galli and Jamali finally admit that not many courses teach students to use the strategies they propose, nor allow them to explore their linguistic curiosity. They thus hope that their article will be a benefit to teachers of Italian FL/SL who wish to design their courses in a more gender-inclusive way (ivi, 372).

Comparing the teaching proposals of Spanish FL/SL, it is clear that Galli and Jamali also recommend creating *ad hoc* activities due to the absence of adequate textbooks. The activities aim to increase linguistic awareness through socio-cultural reflection for both Spanish and Italian. It is important to note that only for advanced levels, Galli and Jamali have permitted the use of inclusive endings, such as asterisk or *schwa*, unlike Gutiérrez Conde.

In summary, it is clear that if teachers want to incorporate emerging gender-inclusive language into their lessons, they will need to create activities that are not currently available in textbooks. Scholars agree that teaching the new gender-inclusive language is best suited for advanced-level classes and should be approached as a sociolinguistic element (Parra & Serafini 2020; Gutiérrez Conde 2022; Santiago Alonso 2023). Another important consideration is that the new gender-inclusive language should not be imposed: its use must be agreed upon between the teacher and the class and must be a shared choice, which must however leave more space for inclusive strategies, both in Spanish and in Italian, which do not distort the authentic language.

Following this, a consideration was included in the paper written by Carlo Guastalla (2020) regarding the hypothetical introduction of the *schwa* in the instructions of Italian FL/SL textbooks. Lastly, the chapter concludes with the author's final considerations.

4.3.3 The Use of *Schwa* in the Instructions of Italian FL/SL Textbooks: An Experiment by Carlo Guastalla

Carlo Guastalla, trainer for teachers of Italian FL/SL, and publisher at Alma Edizioni, as well as teacher of Italian FL/SL,[39] posed the issue of how to write textbook instructions more inclusive. In his paper (2020) he admits that he has always used the unmarked masculine, not thinking that it was discriminatory towards female students (ivi, 68). Having learned of Vera Gheno's proposals through an article published in La Falla,[40] he showed a keen interest in the new methods proposed to avoid the unmarked masculine (Ivi, 69). For this reason, he explains that «*even just for fun*» he tried to analyse «*the effectiveness and adaptability of the schwa for a hypothetical course with inclusive and non-discriminatory instructions*» (ivi, 70). This was the result:

Lavora con unə compagnə;

Prendi il foglio dellə tuə compagnə;

Chiedi allə tuə insegnante.

Lavorate tuttɜ insieme;

Lɜ studentɜ A leggono la domanda 1, lɜ studentɜ B rispondono (ibid.).

He admits it is amusing and specifies that it is not because it is "*una scemenza*", but because it is a sign and a sound that Italian people are not used to (ibid.). Guastalla states that

> *Schwa* or whatever, if it enters linguistic use, will do so by making its way and will become the norm only if its need is deeply felt by a critical mass of speakers. It will be born and live only if it becomes everyone's […] In the meantime, we will continue to question ourselves but also to express ourselves in the way we deem, in each context, to be the most effective possible. (ivi, 71 [translated by the author])

It is evident from the paper that the editor's objective is not to introduce *schwa* into textbook instructions but rather to emphasise the importance of experimenting with language alongside the changes in society. In light of this, what are the opinions of other Italian FL/SL teachers on this matter?

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39 https://www.linkedin.com/in/carlo-guastalla-b6984a38/
40 LO SCHWA TRA FANTASIA E NORMA - La Falla (cassero.it)

4.4 Final Considerations

This chapter continues the Literature Review that provides a brief overview of gender inclusion in the Italian language. In recent years, everyday language has undergone a radical change due to the continuous struggles of the non-binary community's representation, especially on social platforms. A leading advocate of this new trend is Vera Gheno, a sociolinguist who supports the use of emerging inclusive language despite the opposition of the majority of Italian linguists. Although the vast majority of Italian linguists oppose the use of *schwa* (the only pronounceable and neutral inclusive alternative) the possibility of conducting research is not denied, as it is a sociolinguistic event.

Concerning language teaching and considering that the situation of the Spanish language is similar to the Italian one, some studies regarding the use of inclusive language in Spanish FL/SL class were taken into consideration. These studies have found that inclusive language is primarily a topic for advanced levels, but it is crucial to have agreement between teachers and students on how to address them in class. A similar study by Sara Galli and Mohammad J. Jamali in 2023 found the same situation for Italian FL/SL.

Finally, Carlo Guastalla's article supports the idea that, while a language cannot be completely changed, it is important to consider experimenting with it in light of current social changes.

For this reason, the experiment by Guastalla, even if done just for fun, served as inspiration alongside Sara Sabatini's thesis (2020) for this current research, which thus combines both the teaching of the inclusive Italian language following the strategies of feminisation and neutralisation, but taking into account the fact that teaching Italian to foreigners is not like teaching it to native speakers. What seems obvious and "fair" for a native Italian speaker may not be the same for a foreign student.

The author of this thesis thus decided to directly ask other teachers how they would make Italian FL/SL textbooks more inclusive from a gender perspective with the awareness that foreign speakers may be more sensitive regarding the topic.

5. The Research Project

From a theoretical perspective, an overview of how the conception of "gender-inclusive language" has changed in the Italian language has been provided in the previous chapters. From greater visibility and representation of the female gender through communicative strategies of feminisation, as well as neutralisation and reformulation of discourse, in recent years there has been a shift towards representing people who identify themselves as neither male nor female.

From a practical perspective, theoretical concepts are manifested in language teaching. When foreigners, whose mother tongue has no gender differences in grammar, decide to study Italian, they immediately notice the marked gender contrast between masculine and feminine, and the relative scarcity of the latter in the language, although the simplicity in making the Italian language more equal from a gender perspective has emerged from theoretical studies. Furthermore, some countries, compared to Italy, pay more attention to the representation of the non-binary gender for greater equity.

Given this premise, the research project is inspired on the one hand by Sara Sabatini's thesis (2020) in which she analysed the level of linguistic inclusion of gender in Italian FL/SL textbooks, proposing rewritings; and on the other by Carlo Guastalla's paper (2020) in which he experimented with the use of *schwa* in the exercise instructions.

Proceeding, the following will be discussed: 1) the research questions, 2) the questionnaire design, 3) the participants, and 4) the analysis of the data obtained from the administration.

5.1 Research Questions

In light of previous studies on the language used in Italian FL/SL textbooks, the following research question arose: *How can teachers of Italian for foreigners make language teaching more inclusive from a gender perspective through the Italian FL/SL textbooks?*

From this question arose the need not to limit the analysis of the most recent and most used textbooks illustrated in Chapter 3, but also to give voice to other Italian FL/SL teachers and aspiring ones. Furthermore, given the emerging trend towards the use of a new neutral vowel (the ə), it was decided to include it in the research and to ask the teachers interviewed what they thought about it and whether or not it is a good idea to include it in the instructions of Italian FL/SL textbooks, with

the awareness that although it is not an Italian vowel, it has nevertheless entered daily use by a group of people, and it cannot be excluded that one day the situation may change.

The second research question is thus *According to the teachers, is it possible to introduce the use, and therefore the teaching, of schwa in Italian FL/SL textbooks?*

Based on the research questions, hypotheses were formulated about the research results. The research process is illustrated below, from the creation of the questionnaire to its administration, and the results obtained will be analysed, with some precautions and limitations found.

5.2 Research Hypotheses

The author formulated the following hypotheses, which emerged during the piloting and modification of the questionnaire, namely:

➢ Italian FL/SL teachers prefer to contrast the use of the extended masculine by using both the extended or slash word pairs and the collectives in the case of pair or group activities, in other words, they would use both feminisation strategies and neutral words;

➢ They would use less stereotyped inputs, but male teachers may partially perceive the gender stereotype;

➢ Italian FL/SL do not use job titles such as *ingegnera* and *medica*, and therefore they do not employ them in the classroom. However, some of them would attempt to teach inclusive job titles following Italian grammatical rules instead of the common usage that implies the limited visibility of women through prestigious job titles, which are usually masculine;

➢ Most of the teachers are against the use of *schwa* in the classroom because 1) it is unnecessary and 2) it is not part of the Italian vowel sounds, confirming the limits listed in §4.2.1;

➢ Younger teachers care more about the issue of gender inclusion;

➢ Younger teachers do not exclude the use of *schwa* in class, at least in writing;

➢ Even those who are against the use of *schwa* in instructions are still in favour of its introduction as a sociolinguistic element for advanced-level classes.

5.3 Methods

For the purposes of the research it was decided to create and administer an online questionnaire, asking the interviewees the following:

➢ Revise instructions taken from a selection of textbooks to make them inclusive from a gender perspective;

➢ Choose job titles attributed to women;

➢ Modify stereotypical examples or inputs related to professions;

➢ Reflect on the use of the new inclusive language and its feasibility in teaching Italian FL/L2, and any limitations.

➢ The questionnaire was diffused through social channels (Whatsapp groups, Facebook, etc...). The research does not target Italian FL/SL textbooks' editors, students of Italian FL/SL, or teachers of other subjects.

5.4 The Questionnaire

This subchapter explains the research instrument, from its creation to the pilot testing, to then make modifications and formulate further hypotheses on the results.

5.4.1 Questionnaire Creation and Design

In order to evaluate the degree of linguistic inclusiveness in terms of the gender of Italian FL/SL teachers and aspiring teachers, it was decided to use an online questionnaire (Google Form) to involve a broad audience, and to simplify and accelerate the distribution.

Since the questionnaire was created almost completely anew, it was appropriate to wonder further guiding questions that could be linked to the main research question. Focusing on the method, the following questions emerged:

➢ Through a reformulation?

➢ Using longer sentences that include both masculine and feminine?

➢ Including female professional names (*avvocata*, *architetta*, *ingegnera*...)?

➢ By modifying stereotyped exercises/examples/inputs relating to the professions carried out by men and women?

➢ Using the emerging inclusive language?

Furthermore, it was crucial to take into account whether female teachers and male teachers act in the same way; and if they act in a certain way regardless of age and teaching experience; regardless of the age, nationality, and language level of the students; and if the same measures occur in the same way both in writing and speaking. The questions and variables asked facilitated the objectives

to be achieved and what was expected from the interviewees. Hence, the questionnaire was initially divided into 8 sections:

Section 1 - Introduction of the questionnaire and objectives

Section 2 - Teacher's details
Q1: Age
Q2: Gender
Q3: Use of gender-inclusive language outside the classroom
Q4: Optional, more explanatory, and linked to Q3
Q5: Teaching experience. Those without teaching experience skip sections 3 and 4.

Section 3 - Information about teachers' classes, reserved for those who already have teaching experience
Q1: Context (FL/SL)
Q2: Nationality of students
Q3: Age (children, adolescents...)
Q4: Gender (male/female classes)
Q5: Level
Q6: Use of inclusive language in the classroom
Q7: Textbooks used, linguistically inclusive or not?

This last question is of fundamental importance since we enter the most operational phase. In particular, teachers have three alternative answers available that connect to different sections:

➢ *Sì, sono inclusivi e secondo me non hanno bisogno di modifiche*: those who select this answer will go to Section 4, an extra section without questions, in which they are asked to list the titles and publishers of the inclusive textbooks adopted. The data collected will not serve as the result of the questionnaire, but as advice to be included in this thesis.

➢ *No, non sono inclusivi e farei delle modifiche*: those who select this answer will move to Section 5.

➢ *No, non sono inclusivi, ma li lascerei così*: with this answer, teachers go directly to the end of the questionnaire and send the answers.

Section 4 - It is reserved for those who answered *Sì, sono inclusivi e secondo me non hanno bisogno di modifiche* in the last question of the previous section.

Section 5 - "Try to make the textbooks more inclusive"

From this section onwards, only people who have selected the answers *Sì, sono inclusivi e secondo me non hanno bisogno di modifiche*/*No, non sono inclusivi e farei delle modifiche* in the last question of Section 3 will participate. Specifically, they will be asked to observe ten screenshots taken from a selection of Italian FL/SL textbooks and to evaluate whether the instructions and job titles are inclusive and whether the texts and example sentences are stereotyped from a gender perspective taking into consideration job titles. If the assignments were not inclusive for them and the examples were stereotyped, they would be asked to make changes.

The screenshots were taken from the following textbooks, chosen taking into account 1) the variety of the target (children, teenagers, general adults, immigrants) and 2) the presence of stereotyped and few inclusive elements:

- *Ambarabà 1*, Alma Edizioni
- *Espresso Ragazzi 1*, Alma Edizioni
- *Grammatica pratica italiana A1-B2*, Alma Edizioni
- *Arrivederci 1*, Edilingua Edizioni
- *Al dente A1*, Casa delle Lingue
- *Bravissimo! 1*, Casa delle Lingue
- *Facile A1*, Nina Edizioni

Section 6 - Job titles addressed to women.

This section is inspired by another questionnaire found on the Facebook group *Parliamo in genere. Il sessismo nell'italiano L2/LS* administered by Simona Frabotta. The questionnaire[41] was posted by the teacher Elena Nieddu in view of her speech at the ASSIT conference held on 3 November 2023, concerning gender inclusive language. Specifically, the questionnaire was aimed at investigating how Italian FL/SL teachers address the issue of gender-based linguistic inclusiveness in the classroom concerning feminine job titles and non-binary people (Nieddu 2023). Hence, Section 6 includes two questions:

Q1: choice of job titles attributed to women outside the classroom

Q2: teaching of professional names.

Section 7 - Use of ə (*schwa*)

___
41 The questionnaire in available here: https://www.facebook.com/groups/1689163071232896/permalink/2855227554626436/

This section is certainly the most delicate, as it represents on the one hand a risky choice that distorts the Italian language and the habits of the majority of native speakers, on the other hand, a challenge for those who do not approve of its use. The questions were elaborated as follows:

Q1: statements regarding the use of ə that can be linked to language teaching

Q2: use of ə in instructions

Q3: optional, more explanatory, and linked to Q2

Q4: choice of instructions that imply in-pair or in-group activities

Q5: comment or reflection regarding a hypothetical introduction of the ə in the teaching of Italian FL/SL.

Therefore, this section is aimed at answering the second research question and reflecting on its feasibility and its limits.

Section 8 - Final considerations (optional)

This section contains a single open question that offers the opportunity to provide general comments or reflections on the questionnaire topic.

5.4.2 Pilot Testing

Once the questionnaire was structured, before spreading it and collecting the responses, it was decided to subject it to a pilot survey to check that there were no errors, improve the clarity and wording of the instructions, time the completion, and finalise the layout (Dörnyei & Csizér 2012). Before sending the questionnaire to interested people, the general information from Section 1 (Q1 and Q2) was moved to the last section, as in the example provided by Zoltán Dörnyei and Kata Csizér in *How to Design and Analyze Surveys in Second Language Acquisition Research* (ivi, 91).

The survey was sent on March 26, 2024 and carried out on 10 people, 9 women and one man of various ages who, in addition to being trusted, have a linguistic/humanistic education. Specifically they are:

➢ an Italian FL teacher with experience at university and remotely, aged 20-29;

➢ an English teacher with experience in schools of all levels, aged 30-39;

➢ a language teacher (English and French) and for SEN students with experience in schools of all levels, and with further training in teaching Italian FL/SL, aged 40-49;

➢ an Italian FL teacher with remote experience, aged 40-49;

➢ a Ca' Foscari student and English and support teacher with experience in primary school, aged 20-29;

➢ a Master's graduated in Language Sciences at Ca' Foscari, aged 20-29 years;

➢ a Master's graduated in International Relations with a linguistic background, aged 20-29;

➢ a PhD student in Translation, aged 30-39;

➢ a Literature teacher with experience at secondary school, aged 40-49;

➢ and an Italian FL/SL teacher with over ten years of experience, aged 50+.

Four of the interviewees provided suggestions without submitting the form, while the remaining six submitted the form, allowing to view their answers and formulate hypotheses.

5.4.3 Results and Modifications Made

All the interviewees found the questionnaire overall understandable, as well as interesting and contemporary. However, two of them remarked that not everyone might know what "gender-inclusive language" means and how texts might be stereotyped, referring in particular to Section 5 where they are asked to identify non-inclusion and stereotyping. To resolve this gap, the introduction of the questionnaire has been clarified, in which the objectives are explained:

Pre-piloting	Post-piloting
La mia ricerca riguarderà in particolare i seguenti quesiti: • La formulazione delle consegne rivolte alla classe; • L'insegnamento dei nomi di professione rivolti alle donne; • L'ipotetica introduzione dell'uso della ə (*schwa*) nelle consegne.	La mia ricerca riguarderà in particolare i seguenti quesiti: • La formulazione delle consegne rivolte alla classe, in particolare il contrasto fra l'uso del maschile esteso e l'uso di espressioni che coinvolgono anche il femminile; • L'insegnamento dei nomi di professione rivolti alle donne e la conseguente creazione di stereotipi di genere negli esercizi, nei testi e nelle frasi d'esempio relativi al mondo del lavoro; • L'ipotetica introduzione dell'uso della ə (*schwa*) nelle consegne.

Table 9: Pre-piloting and Post-piloting questionnaire's introduction.

After this clarification, there should no longer be any doubts about completing Section 5.

Another observation that was provided concerns the division of the age groups of the class. Although it is not exactly a mistake, one person among those interviewed observed that the group of young adults and adults is too broad and that, from direct experience as a teacher, there are differences within it. Therefore, the choice was to further divide it into two bands. Additionally, an

interviewee might have difficulty choosing, for example, between children and preadolescents if teaching a class of 10-year-old students. To resolve this further problem it was decided to add a year to the next band. The result of the changes is the following:

Pre-piloting	Post-piloting
• bambini (3-10 anni) • preadolescenti (10-12) • adolescenti (12-18) • giovani adulti e adulti (18-65) • pensionati (oltre i 65 anni)	• bambini (3-10 anni) • preadolescenti (11-12) • adolescenti (13-18) • giovani adulti (19-35) • adulti (36-65) • pensionati (oltre i 65 anni)

Table 10: Pre-piloting and Post-piloting students' ages.

Another doubt that emerged during the compilation concerns the statements included in Q1 of Section 7. One of the interviewees, in fact, wondered according to which criteria those statements had been chosen since the assignment was simply *Seleziona le affermazioni che approvi riguardo alla schwa (ə)*. For this reason, it was appropriate to specify that the statements reported are from the linguists Andrea De Benedetti and Massimo Arcangeli (against the use of the *schwa*) and the sociolinguist Vera Gheno (in favour of the use of the *schwa*). Since the considerations of linguists and the sociolinguist are broad and extend across multiple sectors, for this research only the statements that seemed most connected to language teaching were selected. Furthermore, in order not to influence the choice of answers, the statements were left anonymous.

Pre-piloting	Post-piloting
Seleziona le affermazioni che approvi riguardo alla schwa (ə):	Qui di seguito troverai alcune considerazioni espresse da esperti del settore riguardanti l'uso della ə che mi sono sembrate collegabili alla glottodidattica. Seleziona le affermazioni che approvi:

Table 11: Pre-piloting and Post-piloting Q1 Section 7.

Another consideration is compile time. Since it was not certain, the interviewees completed the questionnaire without knowing how many minutes they would need.

After completing it, one of the interviewees noted that the questionnaire was longer than expected, but she also understood the need for it to be so. One piece of advice she gave was to include the duration of the compilation in the introduction so that during the administration the new

interviewees would choose a free and quiet moment of the day to respond more efficiently. For this reason, the other interviewees were asked how long it had taken them to compile, and the answer was around 10/15 minutes. This data was thus included in the introduction.

The most important and complex modification regards Q7 of Section 3, which concerns the textbooks adopted by teachers. This question included the following solutions:

➤ *Sì, sono inclusivi e secondo me non hanno bisogno di modifiche*: those who selected this answer would have gone to Section 4, an extra section without questions, in which they were asked to list the titles and publishers of the inclusive textbooks adopted. The dynamics of this response remained unchanged;

➤ *No, non sono inclusivi e farei delle modifiche*: those who selected this answer would go to Section 5, which contains the 10 screenshots taken from the selected textbooks;

➤ *No, non sono inclusivi, ma li lascerei così*: initially after giving this answer the questionnaire would be finished. However, since one of the interviewees selected this answer and consequently did not provide further data, the need to delve deeper into this answer arose. For this reason, it was decided to add a further section in which the interviewees are asked to give a reason. Furthermore, instead of finishing the questionnaire, those who select this answer will continue completing it like the other interviewees.

Finally, this question has been moved to Section 5, in order to allow all interviewees to first give an opinion about the screenshots provided.

Hence, overall the layout of the questionnaire was modified as follows:

Pre-piloting	Post-piloting
Section 1 - Introduction of the questionnaire and objectives	Section 1 - Introduction of the questionnaire and objectives
Section 2 - Teacher's details	Section 2 - Teacher's details
Section 3 - Information about teachers' classes, reserved for those who already have teaching experience Q7: Textbooks used, linguistically inclusive or not?	Section 3 - Information about teachers' classes, reserved for those who already have teaching experience Q7: Textbooks used, linguistically inclusive or not? → moved to the next section
Section 4 - Advice Reserved for those who answered the last question in the previous section *Sì, sono inclusivi e secondo me non hanno bisogno di modifiche.*	Section 4 - Try to make the textbooks more inclusive + Q: Textbooks used, linguistically inclusive or not?

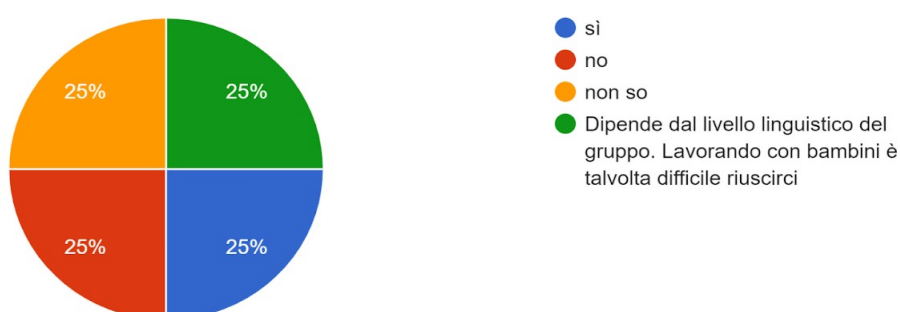| Section 5 - Try to make the textbooks more inclusive	Section 5 - Tell me your opinion Reserved for those who selected the answer in the previous section *No, non sono inclusivi, ma li lascerei così*
Section 6 - Job titles addressed to women	Section 6 - Advice Reserved for those who answered the last question in the previous section *Sì, sono inclusivi e secondo me non hanno bisogno di modifiche*
Section 7 – The use of ə (*schwa*)	Section 7 - Job titles addressed to women
Section 8 – Final considerations	Section 8 - The use of ə (*schwa*)
	Section 9 – Final considerations

Table 12: Overall Pre-piloting and Post-piloting.

5.4.4 Responses and Hypotheses

In addition to having contributed to the improvement of the questionnaire, some of the people hired for the piloting provided useful answers for formulating hypotheses at the end of the survey. Overall, the interviewees try to use inclusive language as much as possible, however, when it comes to using it in class the answers are conflicting and uneven. The following graph shows that using inclusive language in the classroom is not always easy or obvious. In fact, as one person pointed out, this can depend on language level and age.

9) Usi/useresti un linguaggio inclusivo di genere a prescindere dalla nazionalità, dall'età e dal livello delle tue studentesse e dei tuoi studenti?

4 risposte

- sì
- no
- non so
- Dipende dal livello linguistico del gruppo. Lavorando con bambini è talvolta difficile riuscirci
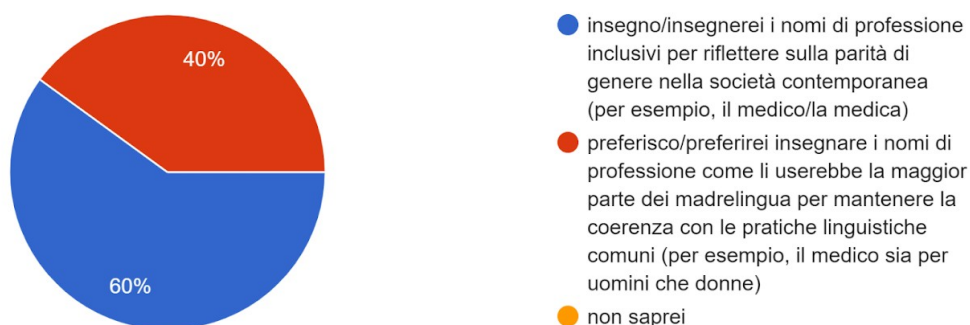
Graph 1: Piloting Q9 answers.

As regards the section in which they are asked to identify the lack of inclusion and, if necessary, modify the instructions, all the participating used both the expression "*lavora in coppia/in gruppo*" and the slashed version (*compagno/a*) to avoid the extended masculine. However, in the part dedicated to gender stereotypes related to the world of work, the only man interviewed did not always identify the stereotypes like the female interviewees. This data is an interesting element that invites further investigation into how female and male teachers act.

Proceeding to the next section relating to job titles attributed to women, the following phenomena can be noted:

➢ the term *avvocatessa* is preferable to *avvocata*;

➢ so far, the terms *avvocato* and *avvocata* are equal;

➢ the term *sindaca* is widely used;

➢ the term *ministra* has also become commonplace;

➢ the terms *ingegnera*, *la presidente*, *studentessa*, and *dottoressa* all agree;

➢ the terms not used by anyone are *presidente donna*, *donna presidente*, *la studente*, *la medico*, *medico donna*, and *medica*.

14) Nelle tue lezioni di italiano LS/L2 insegni/insegneresti i nomi di professione inclusivi o come li userebbe la maggior parte dei madrelingua?

5 risposte

- 🔵 insegno/insegnerei i nomi di professione inclusivi per riflettere sulla parità di genere nella società contemporanea (per esempio, il medico/la medica)
- 🔴 preferisco/preferirei insegnare i nomi di professione come li userebbe la maggior parte dei madrelingua per mantenere la coerenza con le pratiche linguistiche comuni (per esempio, il medico sia per uomini che donne)
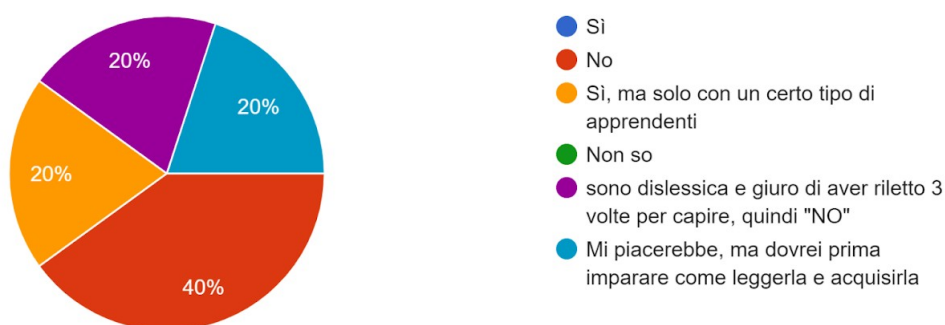- 🟠 non saprei

Graph 2: Piloting Q14 answers.

As for teaching job titles in class, more than half of teachers use or would use inclusive ones, while 40% prefer or would prefer to teach those used by most native speakers.

Continuing to the section relating to *schwa*, everyone agrees that its use is not necessary, since in Italian there are other ways to be more inclusive, using extended or collective expressions (as was also demonstrated in the section with the screenshots of the textbooks). Overall, the interviewees

seemed to agree more with the statements of De Benedetti and Arcangeli. The only statement by Gheno that seems to be partially convincing is the fact that the *schwa* can be pronounced, but it is hypothesised that for Italian people this is still a difficulty, since it is not present in our language. This is confirmed by the following graph:

16) Se tu dovessi creare un manuale da zero, scriveresti delle consegne di questo tipo? "Lavora con unə compagnə. Lə studentə A legge la prima colonna, lə studentə B la seconda".
5 risposte

- ● Sì
- ● No
- ● Sì, ma solo con un certo tipo di apprendenti
- ● Non so
- ● sono dislessica e giuro di aver riletto 3 volte per capire, quindi "NO"
- ● Mi piacerebbe, ma dovrei prima imparare come leggerla e acquisirla

Graph 3: Piloting Q16 answers.

Only one person would be in favour of the use of *schwa* in instructions, against the majority who are against it. The difficulties that have emerged specifically concern dyslexia and the inability to read this vowel sound.

The open answers given to the question are interesting: *Hai qualche commento o riflessione riguardante a un'ipotetica introduzione della ə nella didattica dell'italiano LS/L2?*

"*Introdurla quando e se mai diventerà una norma, ragionando anche sull'uso degli articoli. Se non sanno gli italiani quali articoli usare quando la parola termina con la "ə", come può saperlo una persona straniera? Creerebbe solo confusione in questo momento*".

"*Potrebbe avere un effetto negativo sull'identità dei bambini e creare inutile confusione o sentimenti di unicità che vanno poi ad incidere sulle loro scelte future*".

"*La trovo sicuramente più efficiente dell' asterisco e più corta di altre espressioni che diventano a volte ridondanti*".

"*Credo che sarebbe efficace se introdotta fin dalla prima alfabetizzazione, ma risulterebbe di difficile comprensione per chi è già avviato negli studi*".

"*Non penso che l'uso della schwa sia una soluzione. Penso che sia necessario riformulare il linguaggio per poter riformulare il pensiero e la realtà che ci circonda*".

Based on these last answers, overall the hypotheses regarding the final outcome of the administration are as follows:

➤ Formulation of instructions: teachers of Italian FL/SL prefer to contrast the use of the extended masculine by using both the extended or barred forms and the collectives in the case of pair or group activities;

➤ Gender stereotypes linked to job titles: compared to women, men partially perceive the stereotype;

➤ Inclusive job titles: while some names are commonly used, others such as *ingegnera* and *medica* are still seldom or not used at all, and therefore are not employed in the classroom;

➤ Using *schwa* in the classroom: most teachers are against it because 1) it is unnecessary and 2) it is not part of the Italian vowel sounds.

5.4.5 Further Modifications and Hypotheses

After piloting, the questionnaire was subjected to further revision to optimise data collection and the use of graphs:

Post-piloting	Definitve layout
Section 1 - Introduction of the questionnaire and objectives	Section 1 - Introduction of the questionnaire and objectives
Section 2 - Teacher's details Q1, Q2, Q3	Section 2 - Teacher's details Q1, Q2, Q3
Section 3 - Information about teachers' classes, reserved for those who already have teaching experience Q4, Q5, Q6, Q7, Q8, Q9	Section 3 - Information about teachers' classes, reserved for those who already have teaching experience Q4, Q5, Q6, Q7, Q8, ~~Q9~~

Table 13: Definitive Section 3 layout.

Also in the post-piloting Q9, *Usi/useresti un linguaggio inclusivo di genere a prescindere dalla nazionalità, dall'età e dal livello delle tue studentesse e dei tuoi studenti?* had been kept in the section reserved for experienced teachers. However, since the questionnaire is also addressed to aspiring teachers, it was appropriate to find a solution to include them in the data collection. For this reason, another section was created.

Section 4 - Try to make the textbooks more inclusive QA-L, Q10	Section 4 – An inclusive language for *tuttə*? Q9
Section 5 - Tell me your opinion Reserved for those who selected the answer in the previous section *No, non sono inclusivi, ma li lascerei così* Q11	Section 5 - Try to make the textbooks more inclusive QA-L, Q10

Table 14: Definitive Sections 4-5 layout.

Section 4 of the post-piloting then became Section 5 in which another doubt arose: how could the new teachers respond to Q10 *Secondo te, i manuali che hai adottato per le tue lezioni sono linguisticamente inclusivi dal punto di vista del genere? Faresti qualche modifica?*

Having no experience yet, they have not yet had the opportunity to use any textbooks for their lessons, but perhaps they already know some thanks to Teaching Italian FL/SL courses or by reputation. For this reason, the question has undergone a minimal modification: *Secondo te, i manuali che hai adottato per le tue lezioni o i manuali che conosci sono linguisticamente inclusivi dal punto di vista del genere? Faresti qualche modifica?*

To solve the problem of ambiguous answers, the *Non so* option has been added.

Section 6 - Advice Reserved for those who answered the last question in the previous section *Sì, sono inclusivi e secondo me non hanno bisogno di modifiche* Q12	Section 6 - Tell me your opinion Reserved for those who selected the answer in the previous section *No, non sono inclusivi, ma li lascerei così* Q11
Section 7 - Job titles addressed to women Q13, Q14	Section 7 - Advice Reserved for those who answered the last question in the previous section *Sì, sono inclusivi e secondo me non hanno bisogno di modifiche* Q12
Section 8 - The use of ə (*schwa*)	Section 8 - Job titles addressed to women

Q15, Q16, Q17, Q18	~~Q13~~ → Q13A-H Q14
Section 9 - Final considerations Opinioni facoltative Q19, Q20	Section 9 - The use of ə (*schwa*) Q15, Q16, ~~Q17~~ → Q17A-Q17B Q18
	Section 10 - Final considerations Opinioni facoltative Q19, Q20

Table 15: Definitive Sections 6-10 layout.

Upon reaching Section 8, and Q13 in particular, the problem of the graph arose. The graph was too long and the text was too small, making it difficult to visualise the data. For this reason, it was decided to divide the professional names into categories. The same procedure concerns Q17 of Section 9.

Overall, then, the questionnaire is divided into 10 sections which contain 20 questions, with other optional and more conversational ones. By improving the questionnaire, especially taking into account new teachers, and thus the younger ones, new hypotheses have also emerged regarding this group of teachers, specifically the use of *schwa*:

➢ Younger teachers care more about the issue of gender inclusion;

➢ Younger teachers do not exclude the use of *schwa* in class, at least in writing;

➢ Even those who are against the use of *schwa* in instructions are still in favour of its introduction as a sociolinguistic element for advanced-level classes.

5.5 Questionnaire Administration

Once the definitive version of the questionnaire was completed, administration began on 19 April 2024. Social channels and marketplaces were used to broadcast the questionnaire, specifically:

➢ 4 student WhatsApp groups from Ca' Foscari University;

➢ 2 Whatsapp groups of Italian FL teachers who work via marketplace (Preply[42] and italki[43]);

➢ 3 Facebook groups for Italian FL/SL teachers;[44]

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42 https://preply.com/it/
43 https://www.italki.com/it
44 https://www.facebook.com/groups/insegnanti.ita/ https://www.facebook.com/groups/163807447857/ https://www.-facebook.com/groups/1689163071232896/
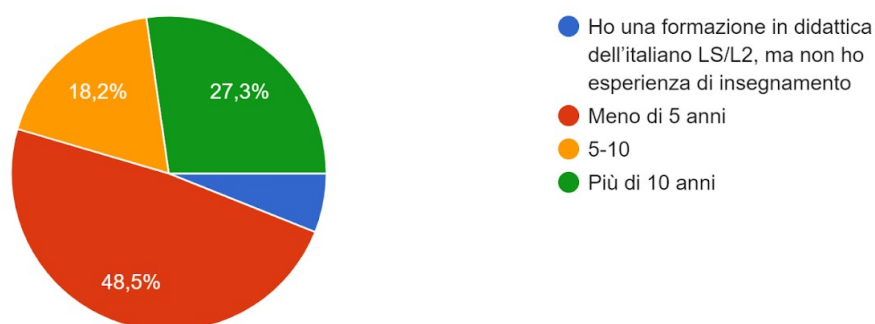
➢ A student Facebook group of the Master's degree course in Language Sciences at Ca' Foscari University;[45]

➢ The LinkedIn network.

After approximately 24 hours, the responses collected reached 33, demonstrating the effectiveness of the diffusion through the chosen tools. Although it is too early to make a general judgment on the results, at the moment the graphs do not show a completely heterogeneous sample.

3) Qual è la tua esperienza come insegnante di italiano LS/L2?
33 risposte

● Ho una formazione in didattica dell'italiano LS/L2, ma non ho esperienza di insegnamento
● Meno di 5 anni
● 5-10
● Più di 10 anni

Graph 4: Teaching experience.

In fact, the majority of the interviewees have been working as teachers for less than 5 years and only a small group includes people with no experience in teaching Italian. Considering that the people without experience who could have answered are from the university course *Scienze del Linguaggio* at Ca' Foscari University, it is assumed that 1) despite having attended the course and taken the exam *Didattica dell'Italiano LS/ L2*, the interest seems to be more oriented towards the teaching of foreign languages; and that 2) there is minimal interest in gender inclusivity in language.

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45 https://www.facebook.com/groups/149114565234396/

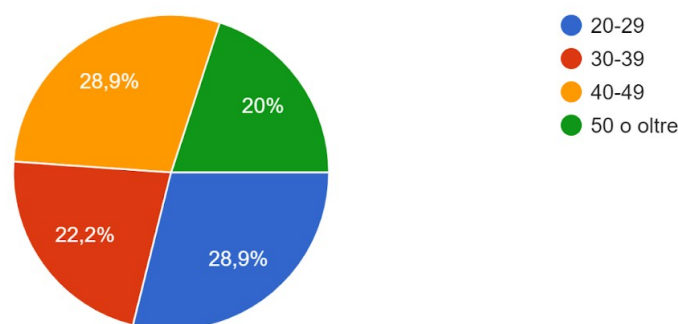20) Ti identifichi come...
33 risposte
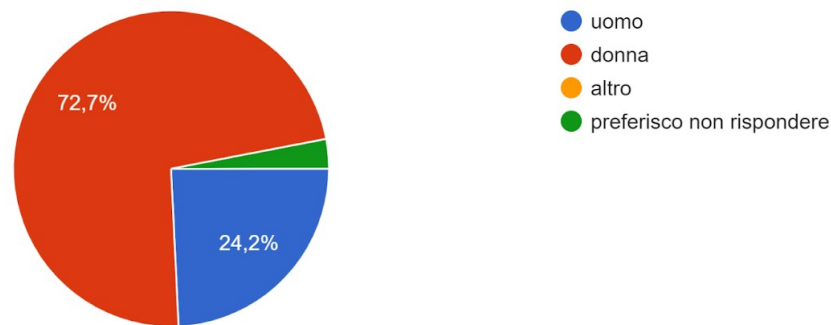
Graph 5: Teachers' gender.

Another factor that makes the sample still too homogeneous is the greater presence of women, compared to approximately 24% of men.

The only data that made the sample more heterogeneous is the age group, as can be seen from the graph:

19) Quanti anni hai?
45 risposte

Graph 6: Teachers' age.

As anticipated, the gender and experience of the interviewees remain the most homogeneous variables. However, considering the experience, an interesting fact could already be noticed. On 22 April 2024, the only people who admitted having only training in teaching Italian FL/SL but no experience were only 4, and they provided very different answers. Some of them are provided below:

➢ Q9 *Usi/useresti un linguaggio inclusivo di genere a prescindere dalla nazionalità, dall'età e dal livello delle tue studentesse e dei tuoi studenti?*: two of them answered "*sì*", against the other two who answered "*no*";

➢ Q14 *Nelle tue lezioni di italiano LS/L2 insegni/insegneresti i nomi di professione inclusivi o come li userebbe la maggior parte dei madrelingua?*: two responded "*Preferisco/preferirei insegnare i nomi di professione come li userebbe la maggior parte dei madrelingua per mantenere la coerenza con le pratiche linguistiche comuni (per esempio, il medico sia per uomini che donne)*", one person "*Insegno/insegnerei i nomi di professione inclusivi per riflettere sulla parità di genere nella società contemporanea (per esempio, il medico/la medica)*", and yet another provided a further answer among those provided, namely that it would act according to the age of the learners ("*Se piccoli insegnerei come la maggior parte della gente dice, se più adulti insegnerei 'la medica' avvisando del perché lo faccio e anche delle altre opzioni*");

➢ Q16 *Se tu dovessi creare un manuale da zero, scriveresti delle consegne di questo tipo? "Lavora con unə compagnə. Lə studentə A legge la prima colonna, lə studentə B la seconda"*: two people answered "*no*", one "*sì*" and the other "*Sì, ma solo con un certo tipo di apprendenti*";

➢ Q18 *Hai qualche commento o riflessione riguardante a un'ipotetica introduzione della ə nella didattica dell'italiano LS/L2?*: although it was a mandatory question, two people preferred to insert a symbol to avoid an answer (probably difficult to give), while the other two provided two contrasting answers: 1) "*Da evitare assolutamente perché porterebbe ad uno svilimento della lingua a favore di una moda effimera*", 2) "*Dato che sono all'inizio non ho grandi consigli, ma la curiosità di vedere un ambiente scolastico più inclusivo e per ottenerlo ritengo che non ci sia altra via se non i tentativi*";

➢ Q19 and Q20 (age and gender): the inexperienced people who contributed to the data collection are specifically a man over 50 years old, a woman aged 30-39, and two women aged 20-29. These latest data make it clear that, so far, the lack of experience in teaching Italian FL/SL perhaps does not influence the use of gender-inclusive language in the classroom, since people can resume studies even after having held other jobs or taught other subjects or languages, hence over the years.

On April 29, the number of survey responses reached 51, demonstrating a drastic decrease in the response rate. In order to shorten the survey duration, it was decided to send an email with the questionnaire link attached to the Cooperativa Tempo Libero of Brescia (which is also responsible for seeking Italian SL teachers to be included for short-term placements in schools) and the CPIA of Brescia and Venice. These institutions were chosen to increase the number of responses and better involve teachers working in the SL context, as most responses were from FL teachers.

Due to the few responses received, it was decided to resend the questionnaire on May 6th to the LinkedIn network, this time through private message and only to male Italian FL/SL teachers, due to the low percentage compared to women. In total, 14 teachers were contacted, but only 4 filled out the questionnaire.

5.6 Participants

The administration ended on May 22, 2024, with a total of 62 responses received. The final sample consists of 47 women and 13 men, plus two people who preferred not to specify, with an age falling within the 30-49 range.

The majority of interviewees have been teaching for less than 5 years in a FL context, especially young adults, and adults with an Italian level between A1 and A2. The classes are mainly mixed or individual in the case of remote lessons.
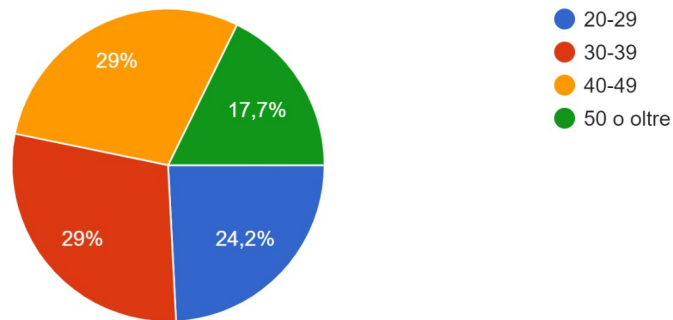
20) Ti identifichi come...
62 risposte

- uomo
- donna
- altro
- preferisco non rispondere

75,8%

21%
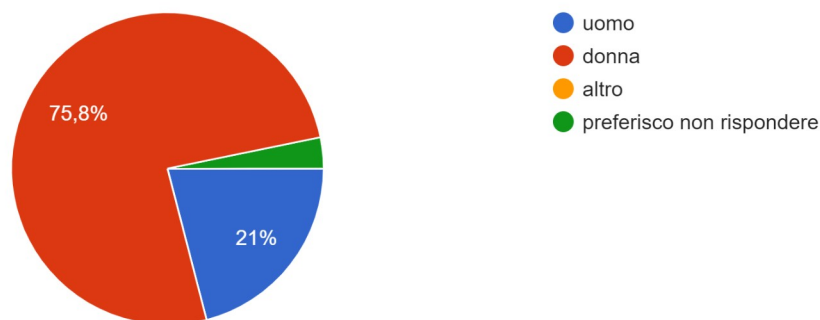
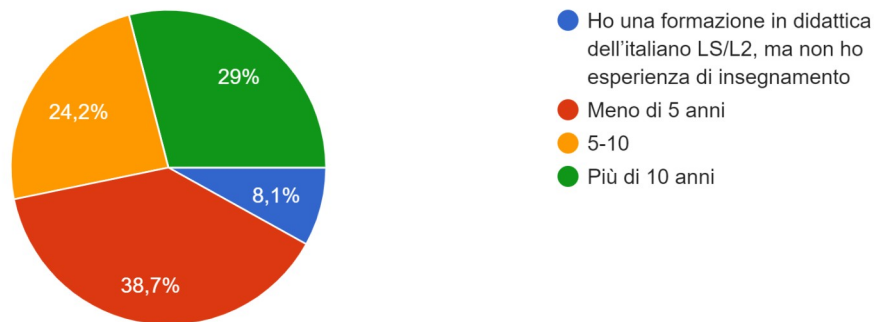Graph 7: Definitive teachers' gender.

19) Quanti anni hai?

62 risposte

Graph 8: Definitive teachers' age.

3) Qual è la tua esperienza come insegnante di italiano LS/L2?
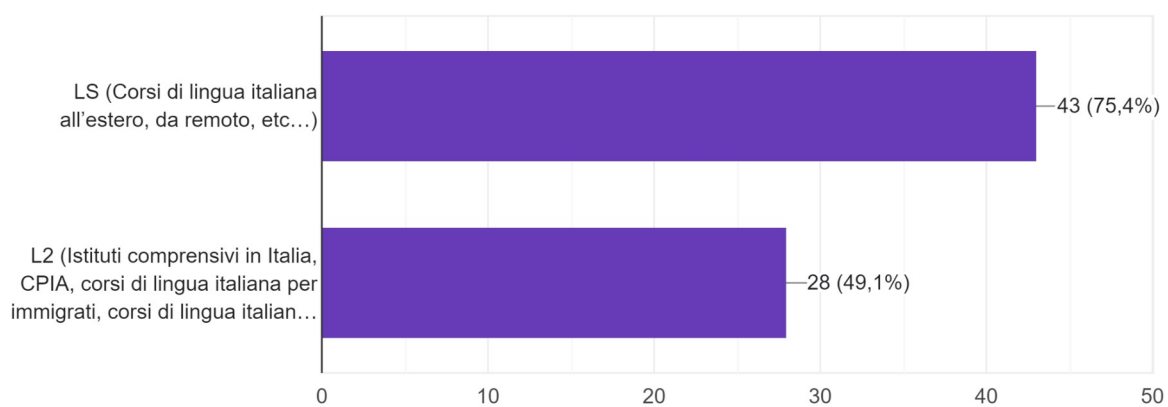
62 risposte

Graph 9: Definitive teachers' experience.

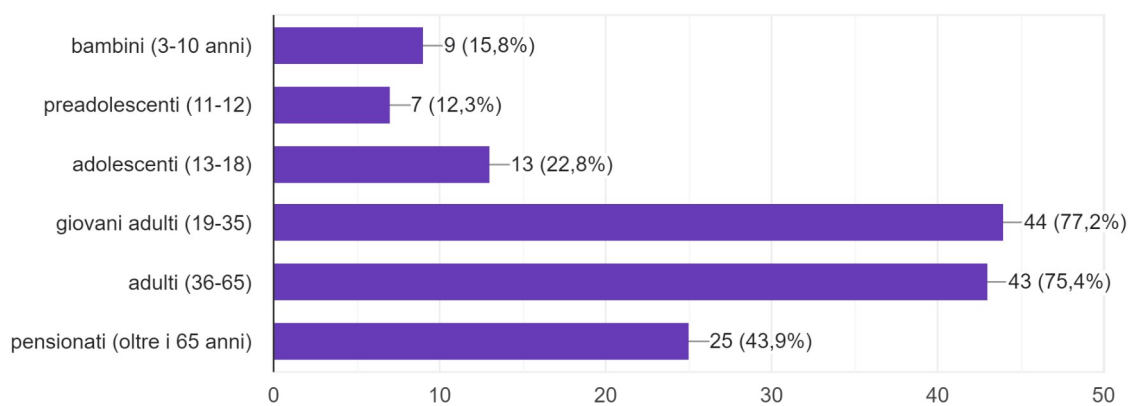## 4) In quale contesto insegni e/o hai insegnato?

57 risposte

Graph 10: Teaching context.

6) Le tue classi sono composte da:

57 risposte

Graph 11: Students' age.

7) Le tue classi sono:

57 risposte
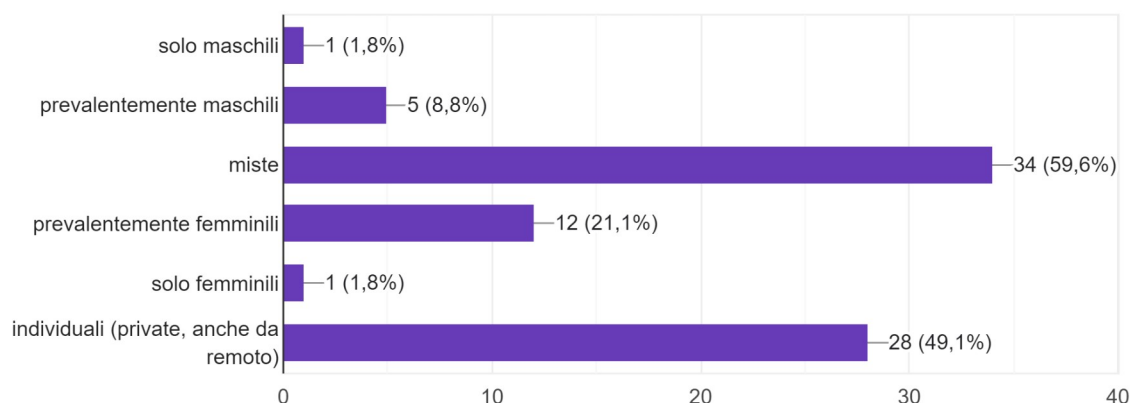
Graph 12: Students' gender.

8) Qual è il livello linguistico della tua classe?

57 risposte
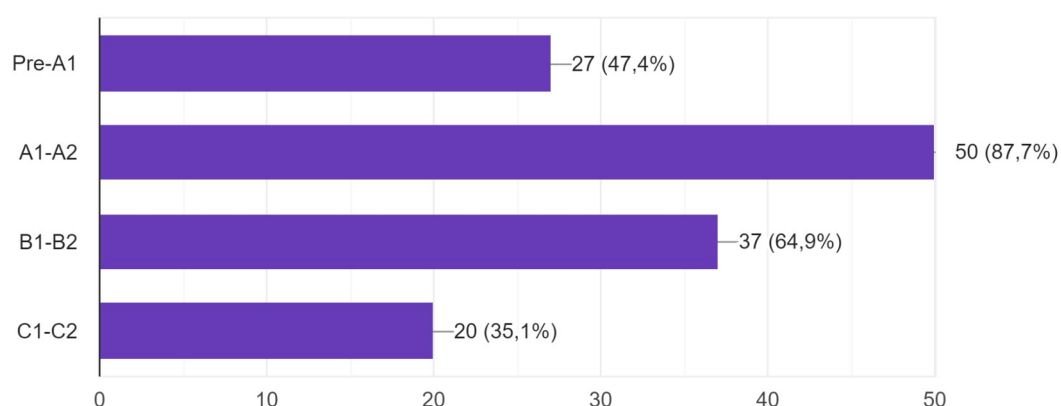
Graph 13: Students' level.

5.7 Qualitative Analysis

Initially, the type of questionnaire chosen required that the data collected be both quantitative and qualitative. Regarding the quantitative analysis, it was decided to consider the variables listed in §5.4.1 used to create the questionnaire. Nevertheless, the following issues emerged: 1) the number of participants was too limited; 2) the limited number of male teachers compared to the number of female teachers would have created a gap in considering the gender variable; and 3) some multiple-

choice questions reported the same result as the open-ended questions, thus demonstrating the repetitiveness and uselessness of some questions.

Hence, due to these limitations, which are better explained in the Results and Discussion chapter, it was finally decided to opt for a qualitative analysis. Specifically, the following questions were subjected to analysis:

➢ Section 5, where teachers are asked to identify missing inclusions in textbooks;

➢ Question 14 Section 8: *Nelle tue lezioni di italiano LS/L2 insegni/insegneresti i nomi di professione inclusivi o come li userebbe la maggior parte dei madrelingua?*

➢ Question 16 Section 9: *Se tu dovessi creare un manuale da zero, scriveresti delle consegne di questo tipo? "Lavora con unə compagnə. Lə studentə A legge la prima colonna, lə studentə B la seconda".*

➢ Question 18 Section 9, in which teachers are asked to reflect on the hypothetical use of the *schwa*.

Specifically, Section 5 (modifying non-inclusive exercises) and question 14 (concerning teaching job titles) serve to answer the first research question, while questions 16 (regarding using *schwa* in instructions) and 18 (reflection on *schwa* usage) answer the second. The responses were collected and analysed according to different categories:

➢ The responses to Section 5 relating to the formulation of the instructions were catalogued based on the inclusiveness strategies proposed by the teachers, specifically:

    1) linguistic redundancy (feminisation strategies);

    2) use of neutral words;

    3) use of the emerging inclusive language;

    4) mixed strategies; and

    5) other strategies that do not fit into the previous categories when present.

➢ The responses to Section 5 relating to the teaching of job titles were catalogued based on the identification of the gender stereotype and the proposed strategies, specifically:

    1) greater visibility for women;

    2) identification of stereotyped jobs;

    3) job titles recommended by Alma Sabatini; and

    4) other reflections that do not fit into the previous categories when present.

➢ Responses to Section 5 regarding stereotyped input were categorised based on

    1) identification and

    2) failure to identify the stereotype.

➢ Responses to Q14 were categorised into

1) inclusive teaching;

2) non-inclusive teaching;

3) mixed teaching with cultural reflection; and

4) teaching according to age and class level.

➢ Responses to Q16 were categorised into

1) absolute acceptance;

2) conditional acceptance;

3) absolute refusal; and

4) uncertainty.

➢ To conclude, responses to Q18 were categorised into

1) approval of the use of *schwa*;

2) use of *schwa* as a sociolinguistic element for advanced levels;

3) inappropriate use of *schwa* for classes with low education;

4) rejection of *schwa*; and

5) other responses that do not fit into the previous categories.

As suggested by the author's co-supervisor, in order to provide a broader and more complete analysis, in addition to the categories listed, the participants' characteristics were also considered (see §5.6).

The next chapter illustrates the research results and their discussion, as well as the weaknesses and limitations of the research methodology.

6. Results and Discussion

This chapter illustrates the results and discussion of the qualitative analysis of the data obtained from the questionnaire administration, which is further complemented by teachers' characteristics to provide a comprehensive overview of the findings. The subchapters are divided according to the research questions and are followed by concluding reflections regarding the research limitations.

6.1 RQ1: How can teachers of Italian for foreigners make language teaching more inclusive from a gender perspective through the Italian FL/SL textbooks?

To answer the first research question, the answers relating to Section 5 and question Q14 were analysed. The subchapters are divided based on the type of intervention made by the teachers. Hence, first, the answers given to the wording of the instructions are analysed, then to the exercises relating to job titles, and finally to the stereotyped inputs. Subsequently, the answers to Q14 are analysed, which links to the job titles and stereotyped inputs in Section 5. It is important to consider that, for the analysis of the data collected from Section 5, only the answers given open-ended questions are considered, therefore the sample is not represented by all the teachers who participated in the questionnaire (62). Furthermore, some teachers were able to choose more options, such as both teaching contexts and characteristics of their students, thus changing the total number of the sub-sample considered.

To conclude, although the modification section was addressed to those who identified a lack of inclusion, some of the other teachers also wanted to provide answers and reflections that the author still found interesting and useful for a more detailed analysis.

6.1.1 Formulation of Instructions

In Section 5, teachers were asked to identify the lack of gender linguistic inclusion in the instructions. From the data collected it emerged that depending on the age of the students to whom the textbook is addressed and the exercise as a whole (including pictures), some strategies are chosen rather than others. These strategies include linguistic redundancy, the use of neutral words, as well as mixed strategies that include both. Furthermore, from the data, the author was not able to

make hypotheses on how the characteristics of teachers and their students could be related to the type of strategy chosen.
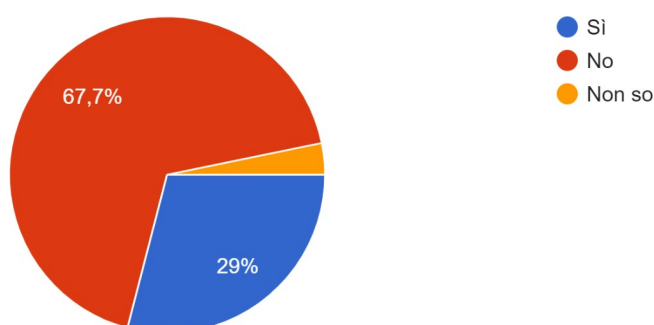
Below are the screenshots taken from the selected textbooks and the answers divided into categories (see §5.7).

Figure 39: *Ambarabà 1*, p. 8.

Graph 14: answers to *Ambarabà 1*.

The first screenshot is taken from *Ambarabà 1* published by Alma Edizioni (2007). In Chapter 3, volume 5 was analysed which highlighted the absence of linguistic gender inclusion. Considering the lack of gender linguistic inclusion in volume 5, thus at a higher level, the situation could only be the same for volume 1. The instruction was identified as non-inclusive by 67.7% of teachers. Unlike what the author would have expected (if she had participated in the questionnaire), 29% did not identify the lack of inclusion, and only a small percentage, 3.2%, decided to not provide an answer.

Each multiple-choice question is followed by an optional question that offers teachers the opportunity to modify the instruction just examined. 40 teachers responded to this first opportunity

to provide a possible change. The responses to the assignments, as well as those that follow, were divided into main categories, namely, 1) linguistic redundancy; 2) neutral words; 3) use of emerging inclusive language; and 4) mixed strategies. In order to have a broader vision, the answers were inserted in a table divided into the main categories and based on the teachers' personal data. Hence, the author took into account 1) teachers' gender; 2) teachers' age; 3) the teaching experience; 4) the teaching context; 5) students' age; 6) the type of class; and 7) the linguistic level of the class (see §5.6).

For each screenshot, as well as for the other data aimed at answering the research questions, there are two tables: 1) one divided into categories based on the nature of the response and with some examples that represent the main trend; and 2) the other one that includes the characteristics of the teachers and their students. In this last case, only the strongest tendency is considered, except the teacher's gender variable. In this case, both genders (and those who did not provide an answer) are inserted in the table. As male teachers represent a minority, their absence in the strongest trend would have been obvious.

Question: *Secondo te, questa consegna è inclusiva dal punto di vista del genere? Se no, che modifiche faresti?*

Answers Categories	Main Trend
Linguistic redundancy	*Lavoro con un compagno/una compagna. Scopri quanti anni hanno le bambine/i bambini.* *Mettere femminile e maschile, eventualmente mettere le poche forme neutre (es. chi fa x, chi fa y) quando possibile (qui non si riesce).* *La frase che utilizzerei attualmente, anche se non è la formulazione migliore, è questa: Lavora con il tuo compagno/la tua compagna. Scopri quanti anni hanno i bambini e le bambine (non utilizzo lo schwa in classe. Dopo averne valutato i pro e i contro in questo momento tendo a utilizzare il raddoppio, anche se non è la soluzione più economica. Ma siccome l'italiano è comunque una lingua con i generi, penso che il raddoppio possa facilitare le e gli apprendenti).* *Essendo un testo per bambini, userei l'espressione di entrambi i generi (con un compagno/ una compagna) ecc.* *I bambini e le bambine.* *Lavora con una/un compagna/o. Quanti anni hanno i bambini e le bambine?* *Questione spinosa... Forse per chiarezza della consegna tenderei alla ridondanza: compagno/ compagna; i bambini e le bambine. Schwa e asterisco sui livelli bassi non credo sarebbero una buona soluzione.*

	Lavora con un compagno/a.
	Direi, "lavora con un compagno o una compagna", la parola "bambini" la lascerei, per via del maschile generico.
	Il maschile qua include sia il maschile che il femminile. Comunque io nelle consegne se gli studenti sono femmine uso direttamente "compagna", se no uso "compagno/a".
	Lavora in coppia, al posto di "con un compagno". Non saprei come cambiare "i bambini".
Neutral words	*Lavora con una persona della tua classe. Scopri quanti anni hanno i soggetti in figura.*
	Sostituirei Lavora con un compagno con Lavora in coppia.
	Lavora con la persona seduta accanto a te.
	Lavorate a coppie.
	Lavora con un'altra persona.
	Nella consegna, "lavora con un compagno" dovrebbe essere sostituito con "lavorate insieme".
Emerging inclusive language	*Compagnə bambinə.*
	Compagn*
	Lo standard minimo di inclusività che mi aspetto: - Lavora con un compagno o una compagna. Scopri quanti anni hanno i bambini e le bambine. Lo standard di inclusività che vorrei: - Lavora con unə compagnə. Scopri quanti anni hanno lə bambinə. - Lavora con un compagnu. Scopri quanti anni hanno lu bambinu.
Mixed strategies	*Invece di "compagno" scriverei "chi hai vicino/alla tua destra/ alla tua sinistra". Invece di "bambini" scriverei "le persone qui sotto" o almeno "i bambini e le bambine".*
	Un compagno o una compagna / lavorate in coppia. (non ritengo che "i bambini" sia un problema).
	Modificherei la consegna affinché non fosse al maschile. Ad esempio: "Lavora con un tuo compagno o una tua compagna. Scopri quanti anni hanno le persone in fila (oppure: le bambine e i bambini in fila)".
	Con un compagno o compagna/ i bambini = queste persone.
	Svolgi questo lavoro a coppie. Scopri quanti anni hanno i bambini e le bambine del disegno. Una volta fai tu le domande e poi invece vi scambiate i ruoli e tu rispondi.
	Lavora in coppia. scopri quanti anni hanno i bambini e le bambine.
	Lavora con la classe. Scopri quanti anni hanno i bambini e le bambine.
Other answer	*Aggiungerei il femminile alla consegna. Modificherei il disegno variando di più le*

				persone.

Table 16.1: Language inclusive strategies for *Ambarabà 1* instructions.

Participants Categories	Linguistic redundancy	Neutral words	Emerging inclusive language	Mixed strategies
Teachers' gender	15 women 4 men	9 woman 1 man	3 woman 1 man	6 woman 1 man
Teachers' age	30-39 (10 out of 19)	40-49 (4 out of 10)	20-29 (2 out of 4)	30-39 (4 out of 7)
Teaching experience	Less than 5 years (7 out of 19) and more than ten years (6 out of 19)	Less than 5 years (5 out of 10)	Less than 5 years (3 out of 4)	Less than 5 years (3 out of 7)
Teaching context	Both FL and SL	FL (8 out of 11)	FL (3 out of 5)	SL (4 out of 6)
Students' age	Young adult (16 out of 47) and adult (11 out of 47)	Young adults (7 out of 23) and adults (9 out of 23)	Young adults (3 out of 11) and adults (3 out of 11)	Young adults (3 out of 10) and adults (3 out of 10)
Type of class	Mixed (15 out of 28)	Mixed (4 out of 14), predominantly female (4 out of 14), and individual (4 out of 14)	Individual (3 out of 5)	Mixed (3 out of 6)
Linguistic level	PreA1 (10 out of 40), A1-A2 (16 out of 40), and B1-B2 (10 out of 40)	A1-A2 (9 out of 26) and B1-B2 (9 out of 26)	A1-A2 (4 out of 11)	A1-A2 (5 out of 10)

Table 16.2: Language inclusive strategies for *Ambarabà 1* instructions.

From the analysis of the data, most teachers would use language redundancy as an inclusive strategy, although one participant admitted that "*non è la soluzione più economica*". 8 teachers would use neutral words, such as *coppia* and *persona*. Surprisingly, 4 teachers would opt for the use of emergent inclusive language, both *schwa* and asterisk, as well as the vowel "u". Although there are three distinct categories, the data analysis also revealed mixed responses, with teachers using both linguistic redundancy and neutral words, for instance, "*Invece di 'compagno' scriverei 'chi hai vicino/alla tua destra/ alla tua sinistra'. Invece di 'bambini' scriverei 'le persone qui sotto' o almeno 'i bambini e le bambine'*". Other examples include "*Lavora con un tuo compagno o una tua compagna. Scopri quanti anni hanno le persone in fila*". It is interesting to note that for some

teachers it would be better to accompany the word *compagno* with *compagna*, but they do not consider the word *bambini* non-inclusive (3 answers). Other possible strategies concern the reformulation of the sentence, such as "*lavorate insieme*", or "*lavora con chi hai vicino/alla tua destra/alla tua sinistra*". A final suggestion concerns the image, even if it is not the subject of the thesis. A teacher suggests modifying the image, but it is not clear what (s)he means, given that the number of girls represented is the same as the number of boys.

Considering the categories,

➢   Linguistic redundancy: represents the most used strategy by teachers (19 out of 40), regardless of gender, experience, and teaching context. This data seems consistent with the fact that the book in question is intended for children. At this age, the clear and explicit use of masculine and feminine forms seems to play a fundamental role in language learning. Furthermore, the fact that this strategy is used for language levels from PreA1 (10) to B1-B2 (10), indicates that linguistic redundancy is not only useful in the early levels of learning but is perceived as necessary to guide students even in intermediate levels.

➢   Neutral words: the use of neutral words, such as *coppia*, *persona*, and *classe*, is less widespread than linguistic redundancy (10 out of 40). The linguistic level ranges from A1-A2 and B1-B2 (both 9 out of 17). It would therefore seem that this strategy is not used for the PreA1 level, suggesting that this practice is introduced when students already have a certain mastery of the Italian language.

➢   Emerging inclusive language: since the use of the neutral vowel *schwa* and other inclusive symbols is still being tested, it is not among the most proposed strategies. Nevertheless, despite the limitations listed in §4.2.1, it would seem that a small group of teachers (4) do not exclude its use in class, even in the case of a textbook for primary school children. It is interesting to note, however, that none of these teachers work with children. This could be linked to the difficulty of introducing new linguistic forms such as the *schwa* in contexts where the fundamental grammatical structures are still being learned. Nonetheless, it is not clear why they proposed this strategy in a textbook for children. Another fact that emerges is that this group of teachers works with all linguistic levels, and probably introduces the issue of linguistic gender equality also as a sociolinguistic element.

➢   Mixed strategies: these strategies, which combine elements of linguistic redundancy, neutral words, and, in some cases, emergent forms such as the *schwa*, are used by 7 out of 40 teachers. The teachers who adopt this approach are predominantly women (6 out of 7) and work mainly with young adults (3 out of 10) and adults (3 out of 10) at A1-A2 levels (5 out of 10), in mixed classes in an SL context.

Figure 40: *Espresso ragazzi 1*, p. 13

B. Secondo te, questa consegna è inclusiva dal punto di vista del genere?
62 risposte

- Sì
- No
- Non so

61,3%

32,3%

Graph 15: answers to *Espresso ragazzi 1*.

The second screenshot is taken from *Espresso ragazzi 1* published by Alma Edizioni (2015). The instruction was identified as non-inclusive by 61.3% of teachers, 32.3% did not identify the lack of inclusion, and only a small percentage, 6.5%, decided not to provide an answer.

Answers Categories	Main Trend
Linguistic redundancy	*Lo studente/la studentessa.* *Compagno o compagna / studente-ssa.* *Compagna/compagno (studentessa/studente).*

	Compagno/a, studente/studentessa.
Neutral words	*Evitare di usare molti nomi maschili (studente). Per esempio: la persona a, la persona b.* *Lavorate in coppia (A e B). A non legge...* *"Lavora in coppia" + "Studente A" invece di "Lo studente A".* *Scegli una persona della tua classe con cui lavorare. Sarete A e B. A non legge la parte di B. B non legge la parte di A. B chiede le informazioni ad A.* *Sostituirei "Lavora con un compagno" con "Lavora in coppia"; invece di "lo studente A/B" userei solo "A/B" come se fossero nomi propri.* *Lavora con un'altra persona.* *Lavorate in coppia, studente a e b. A non legge... b non legge...*
Emerging inclusive language	*Cambierei un compagno e lo studente con unə compagnə e lə studentə oppure con un compagnu e lu studentu.* *Userei la schwa.*
Mixed strategies	*Mettere femminile e maschile, eventualmente mettere le poche forme neutre (es. chi legge A non legge B).* *Schwa o includerei anche il femminile per parole come studente.* *Lavora con un compagno/una compagna. Lo/la studente A, lo/la studente B. Oppure metterei anche tutto al femminile.* *Lavorate insieme invece che lavora con un compagno. Mentre per quanto riguarda la scelta della parola "studente A" o "studente B" sono molto in discussione in quanto scrivere student* non mi piace personalmente, piuttosto scriverei studente/studentessa anche se non è totalmente inclusivo.* *Direi, "lavora con un compagno o una compagna", poi al posto di "lo studente", magari direi "la persona A,B".* *Compagn*, cambierei anche studente ma non saprei come senza complicate troppo il testo.* *Uso del maschile e del femminile; uso di "persona".* *Modificherei la consegna affinché non fosse al maschile, usando entrambi i generi o eventualmente la schwa, se fosse stata integrata in classe.* *Lavora in coppia. Inoltre, "studente" è maschile singolare, è come dare per scontato che gli studenti siano maschi.* *"Svolgi questo lavoro in coppia". Il resto del testo lo lascerei uguale.* *Ammettendo che tutti sappiano che studente può considerarsi invariabile (in*

	opposizione al "vecchio" studentessa) direi di sì. A mio avviso, a prescindere dalla parola STUDENTE, la consegna è formulata in modo un po' prolisso e quindi non subito chiaro.

Table 17.1: Language inclusive strategies for *Espresso ragazzi 1* instructions.

Participants Categories	Linguistic redundancy	Neutral words	Emerging inclusive language	Mixed strategies
Teachers' gender	5 women 2 men	8 women 2 men 1 no answered	2 women	9 women 2 men
Teachers' age	30-39 (5 out of 8)	40-49 (5 out of 11)	20-29 (2)	40-49 (5 out of 11)
Teaching experience	More than 10 years (4 out of 8)	Less than 5 years (6 out of 11)	No experience (1) and less than 5 years (1)	Less than 5 years (4 out of 11)
Teaching context	FL (8 out of 11)	Both FL and SL	FL (1)	Both FL and SL
Students' age	Young adult (7 out of 20)	Young adults (7 out of 26) and adults (10 out of 26)	Pre-teens (1) and teenagers (1)[46]	Adults (8 out of 24)
Type of class	Mixed (8 out of 12)	Mixed (5 out of 17) and individual (6 out of 17)	Mixed (1)	Mixed (4 out of 11) and individual (4 out of 11)
Linguistic level	A1-A2 (7 out of 13)	A1-A2 (11 out of 29)	PreA1 (1) and A1-A2 (1)[47]	A1-A2 (7out of 21) and B1-B2 (6 out of 21)

Table 17.2: Language inclusive strategies for *Espresso ragazzi 1* instructions.

Taking into account the redundancy strategy without including the responses to the mixed strategies, and comparing the results of *Ambarabà* and *Espresso ragazzi*, it emerges that the most chosen strategy for *Espresso ragazzi* is rather the use of neutral words (11 out of 31). The author hypothesises that probably in the case of teaching children, teachers prefer to insist on the difference between masculine and feminine to accustom them to the concordance of gender in nouns and adjectives (although this did not happen in *Ambarabà* course). Only two teachers opted for the use of emergent inclusive language, while others (11) suggested mixed strategies, which include both linguistic redundancy and the use of neutral words, as well as *schwa* or the asterisk.

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46 The same teacher.
47 The same teacher.

Among the mixed strategies, some interesting answers emerge. A teacher, for instance, proposed writing the instruction entirely feminine. This strategy probably refers to the one recently adopted by the University of Trento, where the so-called "overextended feminine" rule was used in the university regulations, causing an uproar in the media (Federici 2024).

Finally, it is appropriate to focus on the word *studente*, which has led to conflicting considerations. Apart from the last answer which links to Alma Sabatini's Recommendations (1987), other teachers had doubts. For instance, one teacher states that (s)he would write 1) "*studente/studentessa anche se non è totalmente inclusivo*", yet another would change 2) "*studente ma non saprei come senza complicate troppo il testo*". The doubts relating to statement (1) probably concern a hypothetical presence of non-binary students within the class, which would make the linguistic redundancy, according to the teacher, not completely inclusive. Regarding statement (2), however, the difficulty is not clear, as the same teacher stated that (s)he would use the asterisk as an ending in the word *compagno*. It is thus interesting to note how the strategies and possible difficulties in making the instructions more inclusive change depending on the words.

Considering the categories,

➤ Linguistic redundancy: a drastic difference between the results of *Ambarabà* and *Espresso ragazzi* can be noticed. In the latter case the number of teachers who proposed this strategy seems more balanced. The teachers who proposed it are in fact 8 out of 32. However, it seems that there are more differences within the subgroup, in which there is only a majority.

➤ Neutral words: the use of neutral words is almost as widespread as linguistic redundancy (11 out of 32). Although this strategy covers all linguistic levels, the predominant one would seem to be A1-A2 (11 out of 29) as in the case of redundancy (7 out of 13). In addition to commonly used words, such as *coppia* and *persona*, some teachers also proposed omitting the word *studente* and leaving A and B as identifiers, or as one teacher proposed "*come se fossero nomi propri*".

➤ Emerging inclusive language: unlike the results obtained by *Ambarabà*, in this case, only two teachers responded, both women aged 20-29, one of whom had no experience (leading to the assumption that she was a student at Ca' Foscari). Thus, considering only the experienced teacher, the author was able to understand that she was the same one who proposed the *schwa* for *Ambarabà*. What captures the author's attention is that the teacher in question teaches only in an SL context, to pre-adolescents and adolescents with PreA1 and A1-A2 levels. Hence, she teaches students who, in addition to having a probably disadvantaged background, also have linguistic bases that are yet to be consolidated. However, since no data can verify the author's hypothesis, it would seem that the teacher's choices are based on a strong ideological component.

➤ Mixed strategies: these strategies were chosen by 11 out of 32 teachers, so the same result as for neutral words. The other categories also appear to be similar to those previously analysed.

Figure 41: *Bravissimo! 1*, p. 49

C. Secondo te, questa consegna è inclusiva dal punto di vista del genere?
62 risposte
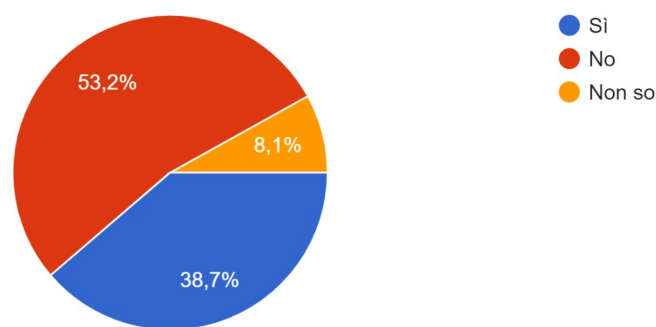
Graph 16: answers to *Bravissimo! 1*.

The third screenshot is taken from *Bravissimo! 1* published by Casa delle Lingue (2013). The instruction was identified as non-inclusive by 53.2% of teachers, 38.7% did not identify the lack of inclusion, and only a small percentage, 8.1%, decided not to provide an answer.

Answers Categories	Main Trend
Linguistic redundancy	*Del tuo insegnante o della tua insegnante / compagni/e.*
Neutral words	*Sostituirei "Con l'aiuto del tuo insegnante e dei tuoi compagni" con "Con l'aiuto della classe".* *Il "tuo" insegnante fa capire che si parla di un insegnante uomo quando sarebbe stato sufficiente scrivere "con l'aiuto dell'insegnante"; stessa cosa per i "tuoi" compagni. Si possono usare alternative inclusive come: con l'aiuto dell'insegnante e della classe...*
Mixed strategies	*"Con l'aiuto dell'insegnante e dei compagnǝ" oppure "con l'aiuto dellu insegnante e dellu compagnu".* *Con l'aiuto dell'insegnante e dei compagni (non cambierei in "dei tuoi compagni e delle tue compagne" perché la ritengo una costruzione forzata e poco efficiente).* *Con l'aiuto del/la tuo/a insegnante, "tuoi compagni" lo lascio per il maschile generico.* *Tu* insegnante e compagn* o tua/tuo insegnante compagni/e.* *Con l'aiuto del/la tuo/a insegnante e dei/delle tuoi/tue compagne. Oppure metterei tutto al femminile (ogni tanto lo faccio, giusto per bilanciare).*
Other answers	*Aggiungerei luoghi/strade intitolate anche a donne.* *Metterei qualche nome di via dedicata a un personaggio femminile.* *Metterei almeno un nome femminile (per esempio via Sibilla Aleramo).*

Table 18.1: Language inclusive strategies for *Bravissimo! 1* instructions.

Participants Categories	Linguistic redundancy	Neutral words	Mixed strategies
Teachers' gender	2 women	7 women 1 men	6 women
Teachers' age	30-39 (1) 40-49 (1)	30-39 (3 out of 8)	20-29 (3 out of 6)
Teaching experience	More than 10 years (2)	5-10 (3 out of 8) and more than 10 years (3 out of 8)	Less than 5 years (3 out of 6)
Teaching context	Both FL and SL	FL (7 out of 11)	FL (4 out of 7)
Students' age	Young adults (2 out of 4)	Young adults (6 out of 19) and adults (8 out of 19)	Adults (4 out of 13)

Type of class	Mixed (2 out of 3)	Mixed (3 out of 12), predominantly female (4 out of 12), and individual (3 out of 12)	Mixed (3 out of 8) and individual (3 out of 8)
Linguistic level	A1-A2 (2 out of 3)	A1-A2 (8 out of 21) B1-B2 (6 out of 21)	A1-A2 (4 out of 11)

Table 18.2: Language inclusive strategies for *Bravissimo! 1* instructions.

Due to the repetitiveness of the type of instruction, the number of teachers who proposed strategies was only 19. The strongest tendency can be expressed with this response: "*Il 'tuo' insegnante fa capire che si parla di un insegnante uomo quando sarebbe stato sufficiente scrivere 'con l'aiuto dell'insegnante'; stessa cosa per i 'tuoi' compagni. Si possono usare alternative inclusive come: con l'aiuto dell'insegnante e della classe*", thus demonstrating the effectiveness of neutral words. As in the case of the word *studente*, the word *insegnante* can be both masculine and feminine, thus to avoid the unmarked masculine it would be sufficient to omit the masculine personal adjective "*tuo*". Only 4 teachers would instead have used linguistic redundancy, thus writing *del tuo insegnante* and *della tua insegnante*.

Furthermore, 3 teachers gave a different answer from their colleagues and not related to the question. According to them, it would have been better to include the names of women on the streets. In this case, therefore, their intervention should not be made on the instructions, but on the input. Notwithstanding, the author believes that what the teachers were asked to do was not actually understood. Moreover, since no teacher proposed strategies related to emerging inclusive language, it was not necessary to include a dedicated column.

What is actually interesting about this exercise is that it is taken from a textbook published by Casa delle Lingue, of which the analysis of his latest course *Dai!* was provided (§3.2). What emerges is that the attention to inclusiveness is recent and that older textbooks present some gaps.

Considering the categories,

➢ Linguistic redundancy: this is the strategy used by the fewest teachers, only 2 out of 16.

➢ Neutral words: this seems to be the most popular strategy (8 out of 16), represented by the elimination of the personal pronoun *tuo*, which makes *insegnante* more neutral and inclusive. The characteristics of teachers who would propose the use of neutral words are many, especially considering their students. In fact, they teach both young adults (6 out of 19) and adults (8 out of 19); with levels A1-A2 (8 out of 19) and B1-B2 (6 out of 19); in mixed classes (3 out of 12), predominantly female (4 out of 12), and individual (3 out of 12). This variety suggests that this is the most effective strategy for different types of students.

➢ Mixed strategies: like the use of neutral words, mixed strategies have also been widely used. Specifically, the author noted a heterogeneous distribution in the category related to the age of the students. Although they were chosen mainly by teachers who teach adults (4 out of 13), this category also includes teachers who work with children (1 out of 13), pre-adolescents (3 out of 13), adolescents (3 out of 13), and retired people (2 out of 13). As in the case of the use of neutral words in different types of classes, mixed strategies also cover more types of students (in this case different in age). Among these strategies, it is interesting to note that while the interviewees agree on making *insegnante* inclusive, some (2 out of 6) would leave the masculine *compagno* unmarked. Finally, within this strategy, 2 teachers would also propose the emerging inclusive language.
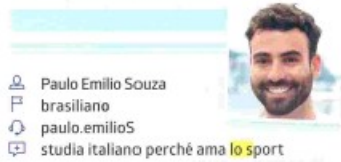

Figure 42: *Al dente A1*, p. 26

Graph 17: answers to *Al dente A1*.

The fourth screenshot is taken from *Al dente A1* published by Casa delle Lingue (2017). The instruction was identified as non-inclusive by 54.8% of teachers, 43.5% did not identify the lack of inclusion, and only a small percentage, 1.6%, decided not to provide an answer.

Answers Categories	Main Trend
Linguistic redundancy	*Di alcuni studenti e studentesse; con un/a compagno/a.* *Alcuni/e studenti. Con un compagno/a.* *Di questi studenti e di queste studentesse.* *Compagno/compagna.* *Aggiungerei "studenti e studentesse".* *Compagno/a.*
Neutral words	*Discenti d'italiano Leggi e osserva le schede di presentazione di discenti di italiano. Poi, con l'aiuto di un membro della tua classe, trova le seguenti informazioni.* *"Lavorate in coppia" al posto di "con un compagno".* *Sostituirei "di alcuni studenti di italiano" con "di alcune persone che studiano l'italiano" e "con un compagno" con "in coppia".* *Persone che studiano l'italiano nel mondo.*

	Cercherei delle soluzioni usando nomi collettivi o giri di parole, per esempio "Chi studia italiano?" Invece di "Studenti di italiano".
Emerging inclusive language	*Schwa.* *Compagnə.* *Compagn*.* *"Leggi e osserva le schede di presentazione di alcunə studentə di italiano. Poi, con unə compagnə, trova..." oppure "di alcunu studentu / con un compagnu" Questa consegna sarebbe nel mondo che vorrei, invece ciò che mi aspetto è almeno un binarismo di genere: di alcuni studenti e alcune studentesse.*
Mixed strategies	*"Studenti" lo lascio, in entrambi i casi, cambio "con un compagno o una compagna".* *Modificherei la consegna affinché non fosse al maschile, usando entrambi i generi o eventualmente la schwa, se fosse stata integrata in classe.*
Other strategies	*Si potrebbe fare meglio includendo più nazionalità con tratti somatici più diversi.*

Table 19.1: Language inclusive strategies for *Al dente A1* instructions.

Participants Categories	Linguistic redundancy	Neutral words	Emerging inclusive language	Mixed strategies
Teachers' gender	8 women 4 men	9 women 1 man	3 women 1 man	2 women
Teachers' age	30-39 (6 out of 12)	40-49 (5 out of 10)	20-29 (2 out of 4)	20-29 (1) 30-39 (1)
Teaching experience	More than 10 years (5 out of 12)	Less than 5 years (6 out of 10)	Less than 5 years (3 out of 4)	No teaching experience (2)
Teaching context	Both FL and SL	Both FL and SL	FL (3 out of 5)	/
Students' age	Young adults (10 out of 35) and adults (10 out of 35)	Young adults (6 out of 17) and adults (7 out of 17)	Young adults (3 out of 11) and adults (3 out of 11)	/
Type of class	Mixed (11 out of 18)	Mixed (4 out of 13) and individual (5 out of 13)	Individual (3 out of 5)	/
Linguistic level	A1-A2 (11 out of 22)	A1-A2 (9 out of 24) B1-B2 (8 out of	A1-A2 (4 out of 11)	/

		24)		

Table 19.2: Language inclusive strategies for *Al dente A1* instructions.

For this exercise, 12 teachers proposed linguistic redundancy. Unlike the previous exercise, in this case, photographs were added, specifically of two women and two men. The author hypothesises, thus, that in this case, the teachers preferred to use linguistic redundancy, given the visual presence of both female and male students.

Likewise, the use of neutral words was proposed (10 responses), and 4 proposals for an emerging inclusive strategy. Interestingly, mixed strategies are proposed by two students from Ca' Foscari. So far, this trend differs most from the previous exercises. Since they do not yet have experience teaching Italian to foreigners, the author could not collect further data.

Among the proposals for using neutral words, an interesting one stands out, namely "*leggi e osserva le schede di presentazione di discenti di italiano. Poi, con l'aiuto di un membro della tua classe, trova le seguenti informazioni*". In this case, the teacher used the word *discente* (pl. *discenti*) and *membro*. While the word *discente* works like the words *studente* and *insegnante*, the word *membro* represents an exception. It is, in fact, an exclusively masculine word that means "each person who is part of a group". Although it may seem like an unmarked masculine on the part of the students, it is actually an excellent inclusive alternative.

What emerges is an answer different from the others, namely "*si potrebbe fare meglio includendo più nazionalità con tratti somatici più diversi*". In this case, the teacher does not propose linguistic inclusion based on gender, but rather related to nationalities. Nevertheless, considering that *Al dente* course is addressed to students of Italian FL, the nationalities chosen for this exercise —American, Brazilian, German, and Russian— are more than suitable.

Considering the categories,

➢ Linguistic redundancy: this is the most chosen strategy for this exercise (12 out of 28), including teachers with different years of experience (mainly more than 10), in both teaching contexts, and with students of different ages and levels (although remaining in the adult age group with a basic level). The balance of photographs by gender may have influenced the choice.

➢ Neutral words: this is the second most chosen strategy (10 out of 28), reaffirming its effectiveness. In this case, it was selected by teachers with less than 5 years of experience (6 out of 10) who work in a balanced way both in mixed (4 out of 13) and individual classes (5 out of 13). In this case, however, they also teach at intermediate levels, unlike those who chose linguistic redundancy (8 out of 24).

➢ Emerging inclusive language: the answers to this category are always 4 and they are always the same teachers, confirming a consistency in the answers regardless of the type of textbook proposed.

➢ Mixed strategies: unlike the previous exercises, in this case, the choices were clearer, leaving almost no space for mixed strategies, which were chosen by only 2 people.

The first part aimed at answering the first research question includes one screenshot taken from a textbook for children, one for teenagers, and two for general adults of Section 5, in which teachers were asked to identify the lack of inclusion in the instructions and to propose inclusive strategies.

What emerges from graphs 14, 15, 16, and 17 is that the lack of inclusion was not identified by all teachers. In fact, only over half defined the instructions as non-inclusive (67.7%, 61.3%, 53.2%, and 54.8%), few teachers were unable to provide an answer (3.2%, 6.5%, 8.1%, and 1.6%), while the rest defined the instructions as inclusive (29%, 32.3%, 38.7%, and 43.5%). These percentages indicate that depending on the exercise proposed, teachers change their minds about the answer to give, and gender inclusion is not always perceived in the same way. The author also noted that some words are considered less inclusive than others and vice versa. For example, in *Ambarabà* some teachers considered *bambini* inclusive despite the unmarked masculine. The same can be noted in *Espresso ragazzi*, *Bravissimo!* and *Al dente*, where words such as *studenti* and *compagni* were considered inclusive by some teachers and non-inclusive by others, even alternating as in the following examples from *Al dente*: 1) "*compagno/compagna* and *compagno/a*" (here the teachers did not change *studente*; and 2) "*di questi studenti e di queste studentesse*" (here the teacher did not change *compagno*.

Furthermore, it would seem that depending on the age of the students (children rather than adults) and the exercise as a whole (with or without pictures), some strategies are chosen rather than others. Considering the use of the emerging inclusive language, regardless of the type of textbook, a maximum of 4 teachers would propose only the use of the *schwa* as an inclusive strategy, or also the asterisk or the vowel "u", despite the limits identified in §4.2.1. The teachers on questions are really different: only one (aged 20-29) works exclusively in the SL context with students between 11 and 18 years old at preA1 and A2 levels; another one (aged 20-29) works with the same type of students, but also in the FL context. The other two work only in the FL context, specifically a man aged 40-49 who teaches all ages —except children— and at all levels; and a woman aged 30-39 who teaches adults at all levels in the FL context. The latter, in particular, is in favour of the asterisk rather than the *schwa*, as it emerges from other answers she provided. These data suggest that the teacher's and the class's characteristics do not particularly influence certain responses.

Notwithstanding, comparing the Tables 16.2, 17.2, 18.2, and 19.2, this would seem to be the main trend: regardless of the textbook, 1) teachers who would use linguistic redundancy are women

aged 30-39 and with more than 10 years of experience, and they teach young adults in mixed classes and FL context. The preference for linguistic redundancy could be linked to their type of class, which includes both boys and girls, and the consequent desire to represent them linguistically in the same way; 2) differently, teachers who would use neutral words also offer individual lessons. Also in this case the students are mostly young adults and adults and have a linguistic level A1-A2. These would appear to be the only constant variables.

To conclude this first part of the analysis, from these data, it is not possible for the author to make deeper hypotheses on how the characteristics of teachers and their students could be related to the type of strategy chosen. So far, with a few minor exceptions, it would seem that the variables are irrelevant. Rather, it would seem that the strategies change based on the proposed textbook.

6.1.2 The Teaching of Job Titles

Continuing in Section 5, teachers were asked to identify whether job titles in exercises are inclusive and to provide any proposals. From the data collected it emerged that male teachers did not perceive gender stereotypes related to the workplace, confirming the author's hypothesis (see §5.2). Furthermore, from the data, the author was not able to make hypotheses on how other characteristics of teachers and their students could be related to the type of answers provided.

Below are the screenshots taken from the selected textbooks and the answers divided into categories, namely 1) greater visibility for women; 2) identification of stereotyped jobs; 3) job titles recommended by Alma Sabatini; and 4) other reflections that do not fit into the previous categories.

Figure 43: *Espresso ragazzi 1*, p. 24

E. Secondo te, i nomi di professione presenti in questo esercizio sono inclusivi dal punto di vista del genere?

62 risposte

Graph 18: answers to *Espresso Ragazzi 1*.

The fifth screenshot is taken from *Espresso ragazzi 1* (2015). The job titles were identified as non-inclusive by 38.7% of teachers, 48.4% did not identify the lack of inclusion, and 12.9% decided not to provide an answer.

Question: *Secondo te, i nomi di professione presenti in questo esercizio sono inclusivi dal punto di*

vista del genere? Se no, che modifiche faresti?

Answers Categories	Main Trend
Greater visibility for women	*Specificherei entrambe le forme (il cuoco- la cuoca, il/la farmacista, ecc.).* *Questo esercizio potrebbe essere ottimo per mostrare la declinazione dei generi! Commesso/-a, farmacista, cuoco/-a, insegnante, giornalista, casalinga/-o.*
Identification of stereotyped jobs	*Eviterei la casalinga perché comunica una visione un po' troppo tradizionalista della donna al giorno d'oggi. Eviterei di usare medico che non si può declinare al femminile e proporrei piuttosto dottore/dottoressa.* *Partendo dal presupposto che tutti possono fare qualsiasi lavoro, e può esserci un casalingo o una chef, in questo esercizio lo scopo è quello di imparare vocaboli, e la scelta di associare una persona di sesso F o M a una professione potrebbe essere vista come casuale. Il problema per me sorge nel momento in cui si parla di alcune professioni, come la casalinga, che da sempre viene vissuta e concepita solo come occupazione femminile.* *Userei esempi di lavori prestigiosi anche per le donne.* *Eliminerei casalinga, la trovo antiquata come "professione".* *Eviterei proprio di proporre casalinga come occupazione, considerando la sempre minore rilevanza come occupazione esclusiva di una donna.*
Job titles recommended by Alma Sabatini	*Medica.*
Other reflections	*Sostituirei "medico" con "dottoressa".* *Vorrei specificare, i nomi fanno riferimento alle foto quindi il genere viene definito da queste, che scrivano "commesso/a" non ha senso qua perché nella foto c'è un uomo quindi potrebbe essere anche fuorviante per lo studente, giusto definire commesso visto che c'è un uomo nella foto, e così per tutte le altre foto ovviamente. Direi forse che ci sono più stereotipi di genere, tipo casalinga che è una donna. Se proprio si volesse evitare, si potrebbe mettere nelle foto sia un uomo sia una donna che fanno quella professione e mettere le didascalie "casalinga/o".* *Non ci sono lavori più umili.* *Nei mestieri insegno sia la forma maschile che quella femminile, e spiego che in italiano alcuni impieghi si usano al maschile, raccontando che ci sono molte persone contro, chiedendo anche il parere degli studenti.* *Qua siccome per ogni professione c'è una foto e in ogni foto una persona con un'espressione di genere codificata, non ci vedo particolari problemi.* *Per una maggiore completezza ci potrebbe essere un box per "medica" ma è davvero poco usato e non penso che si faccia un torto alla lingua a non includerlo.*

Table 20.1: Language inclusive strategies and reflections for *Espresso Ragazzi 1*.

Participants Categories	Greater visibility for women	Identification of stereotyped jobs	Job titles recommended by Alma Sabatini	Other reflections
Teachers' gender	4 women 1 man 1 no answered	10 women	1 woman 1 man	8 women
Teachers' age	30-39 (4 out of 6)	20-29 (3 out of 10) 40-49 (3 out of 10)	40-49 (1) 50+ (1)	20-29 (4 out of 8)
Teaching experience	Less than 5 years (3 out of 6)	More than 10 years (4 out of 10)	5-10 (1) More than 10 years (1)	5-10 (3 out of 8)
Teaching context	Both FL and SL	FL (9 out of 12)	FL (3 out of 4)	FL (4 out of 6)
Students' age	Young adults (6 out of 18) and adults (5 out of 18)	Young adults (8 out of 26) and adults (9 out of 26)	Young adults (2 out of 7)	Adults (5 out of 13)
Type of class	Mixed (6 out of 11)	Mixed (6 out of 15) and individual (8 out of 15)	Predominantly male (1), mixed (1), and predominantly female (1)[48]	Mixed (3 out of 8) and individuals (4 out of 8)
Linguistic level	A1-A2 (6 out of 13)	All levels	A1-A2 (2 out of 5)	All levels

Table 20.2: Language inclusive strategies and reflections for *Espresso Ragazzi 1*.

From this first exercise relating to job titles, a clear difference emerges with the identification of the inclusive gap: 48.4% of teachers consider job titles inclusive from a gender perspective, i.e. the majority compared to those who identified the inclusive gap (38.7%) and those who were unable to provide an answer (12.9%). Consequently, the optional answers are fewer in number than those provided for the formulation of the instructions.

Only 2 teachers proposed job titles as Alma Sabatini recommended (1987), in this case, *medica* instead of the unmarked masculine *medico*. An answer included in the "other answers" category mentions the word *medica*, specifically stating that "*per una maggiore completezza ci potrebbe essere un box per 'medica ma è davvero poco usato e non penso che si faccia un torto alla lingua a non includerlo*". In other words, introducing *medica* would be an additional action, but according to the teacher, it would not be strictly necessary, given that native speakers rarely use it.

The following graph shows that 20 out of 62 teachers use the word *medica* in their everyday life. Notwithstanding, considering that only 2 of them would teach it to their students suggests that

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48 One teacher works in two type of class.

teachers prefer to teach the words used by most native speakers, without considering the level of inclusiveness and their own habits.

13.G) Nella tua vita quotidiana, quale di questi termini usi per parlare di una donna che svolge le seguenti professioni?
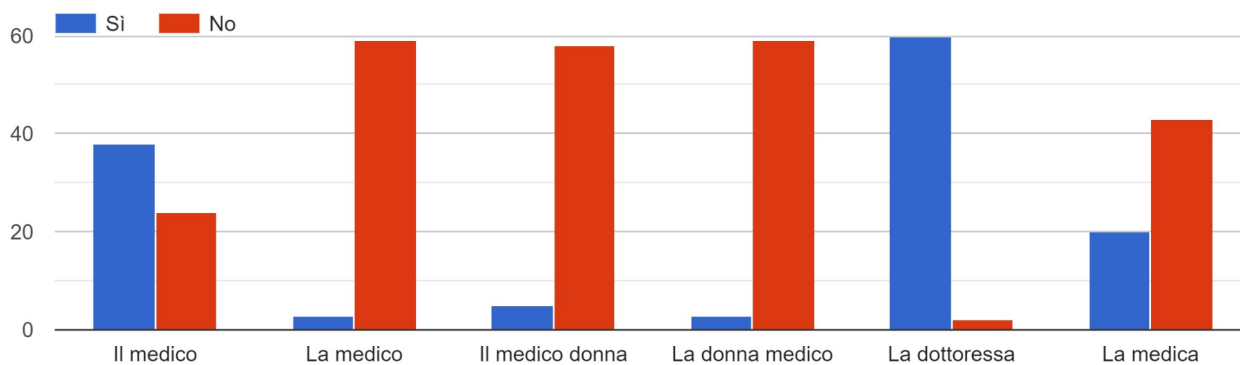
Graph 19: answers to job titles addressed to women. Here the "yes" answers out of 62: Il medico (38); La medico (3); Il medico donna (4); La donna medico (3); La dottoressa (60); La medica (20).

From Graph 19 it clearly emerges that the female equivalent of *medico* is *dottoressa*, as has been suggested by 3 teachers. In particular, one teacher proposed avoiding the use of "*medico che non si può declinare al femminile e proporrei piuttosto dottore/dottoressa*". From this answer, it is interesting to note that, according to the teacher, *medico* cannot be declined in the feminine form. The author therefore wonders why according to the teacher it is a question of possibility.

In the first category —which can be matched with linguistic redundancy in instructions— 6 answers were included, provided by teachers who would have encompassed both the masculine and feminine forms in the exercise. Nevertheless, the word *medica* is not mentioned, which is instead made explicit as Alma Sabatini recommended (1987).

As regards gender stereotypes derived from job titles, 9 teachers (including one who proposed introducing *medica*) would remove the example of *casalinga* because "*comunica una visione un po' troppo tradizionalista della donna al giorno d'oggi, da sempre viene vissuta e concepita solo come occupazione femminile*", it is "*antiquata come professione*", and is increasingly less relevant "*come occupazione esclusiva di una donna*". In fact, a teacher wonders why professions such as *casalinga* and *insegnante* are always female, unlike more prestigious professions associated with men. In fact, two teachers propose to reverse the stereotypes, making *casalinga* masculine (*casalingo*). Regarding the "*troppo tradizionalista*" and "*antiquata*" vision of *casalinga*, it is worth

considering that such statements seem to ignore the reality of many families who have migrated to Italy, where most women, if not all, are actually housewives. On the other hand, the course in question, *Espresso Ragazzi*, is intended for a FL context, so this consideration was probably taken into account. Indeed, the teachers who provided these answers teach only in a FL context.

Regarding other reflections, in addition to the use of *dottoressa*, a teacher states that "*non ci sono lavori più umili*", and another refers to the discrepancy in the representation of binary genders: "*se diamo per scontato che il loro aspetto fisico rispecchi il loro genere allora sì i nomi sono inclusivi. Se invece vogliamo dare il beneficio del dubbio del fatto che il genere non corrisponda a come appari allora no*". Other two carried out a reflection related to the photographs used in the exercise: 1) "*i nomi fanno riferimento alle foto quindi il genere viene definito da queste, che scrivano 'commesso/a' non ha senso qua perché nella foto c'è un uomo quindi potrebbe essere anche fuorviante per lo studente, giusto definire commesso visto che c'è un uomo nella foto, e così per tutte le altre foto ovviamente. Direi forse che ci sono più stereotipi di genere, tipo casalinga che è una donna. Se proprio si volesse evitare, si potrebbe mettere nelle foto sia un uomo sia una donna che fanno quella professione e mettere le didascalie 'casalinga/o'*"; and 2) "*qua siccome per ogni professione c'è una foto e in ogni foto una persona con un'espressione di genere codificata, non ci vedo particolari problemi*". These two statements demonstrate the importance of the relationship between language and image in the educational context. However, if in case (1) the proposal is to balance the visual representation of men and women in the work context, in case (2) no representation problem is identified since the job title coincides with the proposed image.

Finally, a teacher offers a linguistic reflection: "*nei mestieri insegno sia la forma maschile che quella femminile, e spiego che in italiano alcuni impieghi si usano al maschile, raccontando che ci sono molte persone contro, chiedendo anche il parere degli studenti*". In this case, the sociolinguistic component emerges, aimed at making students reflect on the use of certain job titles.

Considering the categories,

➢ Greater visibility for women: this strategy was chosen by 6 out of 26 teachers who work in both FL and SL contexts. For this exercise in particular, it would seem to be the least effective strategy due to the presence of a photograph for each job title, as 2 teachers pointed out.

➢ Identification of stereotyped jobs: this is the category to which more women responded (10 out of 26) and the stereotype identified is that relating to the figure of the housewife. As the author had hypothesised (see §5.2), male teachers did not perceive the stereotype. It is interesting to note that the teachers who most detected the stereotype teach in FL contexts (9 out of 12), compared to 3 out of 12 who teach in SL contexts. With this data, the author hypothesises that those who teach in SL

contexts could identify more easily with their female students, who are often housewives. Hence, not including housewives in textbooks might be discriminatory toward some categories of students.

➢ Job titles recommended by Alma Sabatini: only two answers belong to this category. One answer caught the author's attention, which was given by a man. Thus, it would seem that although the stereotype has not been identified, the teacher is aware that *medica* is grammatically correct.

➢ Other reflections: the answers to this category cover several aspects. 1) as mentioned, 2 teachers noted the relationship between photograph and job title, thus considering the exercise appropriate; 2) other 3 teachers proposed the use of *dottoressa* instead of *medico*, since it is the most used and feminine version, although not of *medico* but rather *dottore*; 3) 1 teacher mentioned the possibility of using a box to explain *medica*, but does not consider it necessary; 4) 1 teacher takes advantage of the lesson on job titles to give space to cultural reflections; and 5) 1 teacher noted that "*non ci sono lavori più umili*". While this is an interesting perspective, it does not seem directly related to the main topic, and the author might be unclear on the criteria by which a job is defined as "*umile*" (humble).

Alla scoperta

4 Completate ora la tabella con i nomi di professioni.

maschile	femminile
l'impiegato	l'impiegata
....	la cuoca
il segretario	....
....	la cameriera
....	la direttrice
il medico	il medico
l'assistente	....
il cantante	....
....	la giornalista

! La maggior parte dei nomi di professioni ha una forma maschile e una femminile. Ci sono però professioni che hanno solo la forma maschile:
Mario fa il medico.
Lucia fa il medico.

▶ *Qualche consiglio*

Imparate sempre i sostantivi con il loro articolo determinativo.

Figure 44: *Arrivederci 1*, p. 27

F. Secondo te, i nomi di professione presenti in questo esercizio sono inclusivi dal punto di vista del genere?
62 risposte
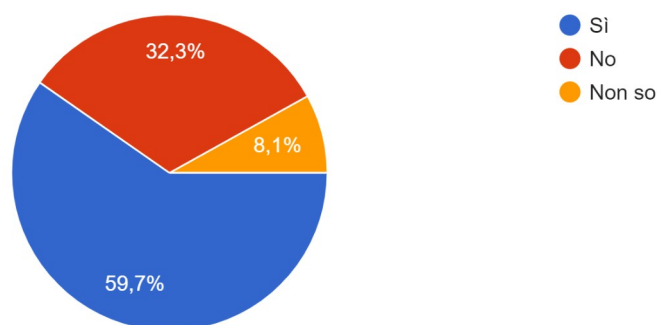
Graph 20: answers to *Arrivederci 1*.

The sixth screenshot is taken from *Arrivederci 1* by Edilingua Edizioni (2014). The job titles were identified as non-inclusive by 32.3% of teachers, 59.7% did not identify the lack of inclusion, and 8.1% decided not to provide an answer.

Answers Categories	Main Trend
Greater visibility for women	No answers
Identification of stereotyped jobs	No answers
Job titles recommended by Alma Sabatini	*Nel riquadro rosa cambierei quell'indicazione obsoleta.* *Trovo che si provi anche a superare gli stereotipi di genere, per esempio con "il segretario". Vero che alcune professioni non hanno il femminile ma, personalmente, sarebbe quasi giusto introdurle partendo proprio dai libri di testo, "la medica" suona male perché ancora non si usa, ma non si usava nemmeno "la ministra", "la sindaca" che oggi invece sono abbastanza diffusi.* *Professioni come medico o architetto hanno anche la forma femminile.* *Partito bene, ma il riquadro se lo potevano anche risparmiare! Io avrei scritto piuttosto che alcuni nomi di professione sono tradizionalmente al solo maschile, ma che recentemente si stanno affermando forme come la medica.* *A livello grammaticale italiano (per la grammatica di oggi) sono corretti, ma non sono*

	inclusivi in quanto non è presente nessuna opzione per un genere neutro.
	Il box sulla destra si poteva fare diversamente, indicando che è stato a lungo così ma adesso ci sono anche altre soluzioni.
Other reflections	*Proporrei dottore/dottoressa al posto di medico, però è anche vero che la lingua italiana permette questa possibilità e quindi spiegherei alla classe che effettivamente alcuni nomi di professioni in italiano non prevedono ancora purtroppo la controparte femminile.*
	A me non dispiace chiamare medico la mia dottoressa.
	L'uso di "medica" non è ancora così diffuso per inserirlo in un manuale ma l'insegnante può lavorarci con esercizi integrativi.
	A seconda della tipologia di studenti (e del livello), forse farei presente che le generazioni più giovani cominciano a usare "la medica" per le donne che esercitano la professione medica.
	Metterei il femminile medica e nel riquadro spiegherei che potrebbero imbattersi in nomi di professioni usati solo al maschile, ma che si tratta di un retaggio culturale che si sta modificando.
	Ho ancora difficoltà con medico/medica.

Table 21.1: Language inclusive strategies and reflections for *Arrivederci 1*.

Participants Categories	Job titles recommended by Alma Sabatini	Other reflections
Teachers' gender	7 women 4 men	8 women 1 no answered
Teachers' age	30-39 (4 out of 11) 40-49 (4 out of 11)	30-39 (5 out of 9)
Teaching experience	Less than 5 years (4 out of 11) and more than 10 years (4 out of 11)	5-10 (3 out of 9) More than 10 years (3 out of 9)
Teaching context	Both FL and SL	Both FL and SL
Students' age	Young adults (8 out of 26)	Young adults (6 out of 18) and adults (7 out of 18)
Type of class	Mixed (9 out of 13)	Individual (7 out of 17)
Linguistic level	A1-A2 (9 out of 18)	All levels

Table 21.2: Language inclusive strategies and reflections for *Arrivederci 1*.

Unlike the previous exercise, in the exercise taken from *Arrivederci 1*, the students are asked to complete the table with both male and female job titles. Hence, due to the presence of feminine

names, the author hypothesises that this is the reason why 59.7% of teachers considered this exercise inclusive. 32.3% provided reflections, which however are closely similar to those of the previous exercise, reiterating the introduction of the term *medica* and the possible sociolinguistic reflection.

Considering the categories (except the first two, as the author collected no data),

➢ Job titles recommended by Alma Sabatini: surprisingly, the answers that fall into this category are 11 out of 20, about half, unlike the previous exercise in which the author collected only 2 answers. Since the job title in question is still *medico*, the author cannot understand why in the first case it was not changed as proposed by Sabatini, even though the photo depicted a woman, while in this exercise 11 teachers proposed *medica* and a different explanation in the information box. Moreover, considering that half of the teachers work with A1-A2 levels (9 out of 18), the author hypothesises that the teachers who answered this category teach/would teach the word *medica* as a grammatically accepted feminine version and not as a sociolinguistic element for the higher levels.

➢ Other reflections: 9 out of 20 teachers answered opposing Alma Sabatini's recommendations. Specifically, 1) teachers' disinterest or difficulty in using the word *medica*; 2) the introduction of *medica* as a sociolinguistic element; and 3) the use of the alternative *dottore* and its feminine declination *dottoressa*. Unlike the previous category, no men provided an answer, and teachers work with students covering all levels.

Figure 45: *Nuovo Facile A1*, p. 41

G. Secondo te, i nomi di professione presenti in questo esercizio sono inclusivi dal punto di vista del genere?

62 risposte
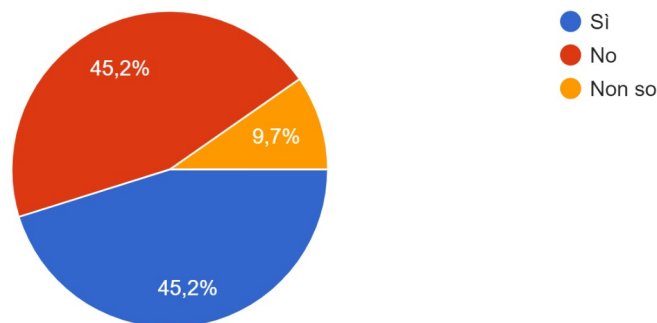
Graph 21: answers to *Nuovo Facile A1*.

The seventh screenshot is taken from *Nuovo Facile 1* by Nina Edizioni (2018). The job titles were equally identified both as non-inclusive and inclusive by 45.2% of teachers, and 9.7% decided not to provide an answer.

In this case, due to the presence of responses that include both the identification of the stereotype and the choice to use *medica*, the author has inserted an additional category (mixed strategies).

Answers Categories	Main Trend
Greater visibility for women	*Aggiungerei più professioni al femminile.* *Di nuovo c'è associazione con lavoro-genere. Lo cambierei. Un idraulico o un macellaio donne? Un cassiere uomo? Perché ci sono cinque uomini e tre donne? Perché non parità?*
Identification of stereotyped jobs	*Entrambi i generi sono associati a professioni tradizionali e stereotipate per quel genere.* *Professioni troppo stereotipate (non solo per genere, ma anche in ambito migratorio).* *A differenza del caso al punto E qui le professioni sembrano ricalcare stereotipi di genere, cambierei l'attività diversificando questo aspetto, anche da un punto di vista di nomi propri che potrebbero rendere l'attività anche un po' razzista.*
Job titles recommended by Alma Sabatini	*Chiara fa la medica.*
Mixed answers	*Chiara fa la medica. Poi a parte il medico trovo che le professioni siano molto stereotipate.* *Meno stereotipi; usare "la medica" o "la dottoressa".*
Other reflections	*Se si guarda l'obiettivo dell'esercizio di imparare nuovi vocaboli, la scelta di abbinare una professione ad una F o un M è casuale. Tuttavia non credo che sia casuale che la professione del muratore venga data ad un uomo, e quella della parruchiera ad una donna per esempio.* *Chiara è dottoressa.* *Perché i lavori umili sono svolti solo da extracomunitari?*

Table 22.1: Language inclusive strategies and reflections for *Nuovo Facile A1*.

Participants Categories	Greater visibility for women	Identification of stereotyped jobs	Job titles recommended by Alma Sabatini	Mixed answers	Other reflections
Teachers' gender	2 women	10 women 1 man	1 woman 1 man	3 women 1 man	3 women 1 man
Teachers' age	20-29 (1) 30-39 (1)	30-39 (7 out of 11)	40-49 (2)	All ages	40-49 (2 out of 4)
Teaching experience	Less than 5 years (1) 5-10 (1)	Less than 5 years (5 out of 11)	5-10 (1) More than 10 years (1)	More than 10 years (3 out of 4)	Less than 5 years (2 out of 4), more than

				10 years (2 out of 4)
Teaching context	FL (2 out of 3)	Both FL and SL	FL (2)	SL (3 out of 5)	FL (3 out of 4)
Students' age	Young adults (2 out of 8), adults (2 out of 8), and retired people (2 out of 8)	Young adults (9 out of 24) and adults (7 out of 24)	Teenagers (2) and young adults (2)	Adults (3 out of 12)	Young adults (3 out of 9) and adults (3 out of 9)
Type of class	Individual (2)	Mixed (8 out of 17)	Mixed (2 out of 3)	Predominantly male (1), predominantly female (1), mixed (1), and individual (1)	Individual (2 out of 4)
Linguistic level	All levels	A1-A2 (9 out of 23)	A1-A2 (2 out of 4)	All levels except preA1	A1-A2 (3 out of 10) B1-B2 (3 out of 10)

Table 22.2: Language inclusive strategies and reflections for *Nuovo Facile A1*.

In *Nuovo Facile 1*, the teacher variables seem once again different from the previous exercises. The only data that seems unchanged is the number of female teachers who identified the stereotype (10 out of 19). In this exercise, unlike the one taken from *Espresso ragazzi*, 1 man provided an answer, regardless demonstrating that women identify job stereotypes more than men. However, in this category, another type of stereotype was also identified, namely that relating to immigrants (2 out of 11).

Figure 46: *Grammatica pratica italiana A1-B2*, p. 29

H. Secondo te, i nomi di professione presenti in questo esercizio sono inclusivi dal punto di vista del genere?

62 risposte

Graph 22: answers to *Grammatica pratica italiana A1-B2*.

The eighth screenshot is taken from *Grammatica pratica italiana A1-B2* by Alma Edizioni (2006). The job titles were identified as non-inclusive by 74.2% of teachers, 21% did not identify the lack of inclusion, and 4.8% decided not to provide an answer.

Like the previous exercise, in this case the author added the "mixed strategies" category. Also, she excluded the "Alma Sabatini category" as she collected no data.

Answers Categories	Main Trend
Greater visibility for women	*Metterei la versione maschile e femminile di ogni professione.* *Ne metterei metà al femminile.*
Identification of stereotyped jobs	*Non va bene che l'unico ruolo femminile sia la casalinga.*
Job titles recommended by Alma Sabatini	No answers
Mixed strategies	*È evidente il contrasto tra la scelta di utilizzare tutti i termini al maschile e poi usare "casalinga". Eliminerei questa voce o renderei al femminile o al maschile/femminile le altre.* *Intanto eliminerei la casalinga, la trovo molto discriminante e le professioni sono tutte al maschile, ne aggiungerei alcune al femminile.* *Aggiungerei l'articolo maschile e femminile in parole come "barista, cantante". L'unica "professione" al femminile è quella della casalinga, come se le donne potessero fare solo quello. Per questo motivo, aggiungerei altre professioni al femminile.* *Il casalingo > tutti maschili oppure un mix di maschile e femminile.* *Metterei qualche professione al femminile (oltre alla casalinga) e qualche professione con un genere neutro, mettendo l'articolo lə oppure lu.*

Table 23.1: Language inclusive strategies and reflections for *Grammatica pratica italiana A1-B2*.

Participants Categories	Greater visibility for women	Identification of stereotyped jobs	Mixed strategies
Teachers' gender	21 women 8 men 1 no answered	6 women	5 women
Teachers' age	All ages except more than 50 years	30-39 (4 out of 6)	20-29 (2 out of 5)
Teaching experience	Less than 5 years (16 out of 28)	More than 10 years (3 out of 6)	5-10 (2 out of 5) and more than 10 years (2 out of 5)
Teaching context	Both FL and SL	Both FL and SL	FL (4 out of 6)
Students' age	Young adults (20 out of 72) and adults (22	Young adults (5 out of 12)	Adults (4 out of 14)

	out of 72)		
Type of class	Mixed (16 out of 32) and individual (13 out of 32)	Mixed (4 out of 8)	Individual (3 out of 7)
Linguistic level	All levels	A1-A2 (4 out of 9)	A1-A2 (5 out of 16)

Table 23.2: Language inclusive strategies and reflections for *Grammatica pratica italiana A1-B2*.

Unlike the previous exercises relating to job titles, in this case, the lack of inclusiveness is evident, and as many as 74.2% of teachers considered this exercise non-inclusive. Nonetheless, the truly interesting fact is represented by the 13 teachers who instead considered this exercise inclusive (8 women, 4 men, and one teacher did not specify).

Considering those who identified the lack of inclusion, the vast majority proposed increasing female visibility by 1) including both versions or 2) including half masculine and half feminine job titles. Due to the high number of responses, the characteristics of the teachers are homogeneous, demonstrating that the variables do not influence one's choice.

Although 8 out of 13 male teachers proposed greater female visibility in this exercise, none of them identified the gender stereotype. On the contrary, 6 female teachers pointed to the word *casalinga*, the only job title attributed to women in the exercise taken from *Grammatica pratica italiana*. Furthermore, 5 other teachers provided answers that included multiple strategies, including 1) balancing masculine and feminine job titles; 2) adding feminine job titles; 3) instead, inserting only masculine job titles; and 4) adding articles, including inclusive ones.

The author collected other data, including that of 2 teachers who noted that this exercise is taken from an outdated textbook. For the research, the author deliberately chose dated textbooks knowing that she would find inclusive gaps and allow teachers to propose changes. If the author had chosen more recent and inclusive textbooks (like the ones analysed in Chapter 3) she would not have been able to answer the first research question.

The second part aimed at answering the first research question includes one screenshot taken from a textbook for teenagers, two for general adults, and one for immigrants were included in Section 5, in which teachers were asked to identify whether job titles were inclusive and to propose inclusive strategies, as well as reflections.

What emerges from graphs 18, 20, and 21 is that the lack of inclusion was not identified by all teachers. In fact, only less than half defined job titles as non-inclusive (38.7%, 32.3%, and 45.2%),

some teachers were unable to provide an answer (12.9%, 8.1%, and 9.7%), while the majority defined the instructions as inclusive (48.4%, 59.7%, and 45.2%).

As with the previous exercises in which teachers were asked to change the instructions, likewise, these percentages indicate that, depending on the exercise proposed, teachers change their minds on the answer to give, and gender inclusion is not always perceived in the same way. From the analysis of the data, the only stable trend remains that relating to the identification of the gender stereotype, which was not perceived by male teachers. Hence, this is the only variable that influenced the answers.

The job titles that teachers were able to mainly provide answers about were *casalinga* and *medico*. In the case of *Grammatica pratica italiana*, in fact, only one female example was included and the term *casalinga* was chosen, which provoked outrage. In the other examples, however, in addition to the masculine terms, also the feminine ones were inserted. In these cases, the term *medico* has always been included, addressed to women likewise. Nonetheless, only a few teachers proposed changing it to *medica*, and this is linked to Graph 19 which shows that the term *dottoressa* is the most used (60 responses) followed by *medico* (38 responses). As mentioned, 20 teachers use *medica* commonly, but would not use it in the classroom. Considering that the total number of teachers is 62 and in this case they could select more than one answer, probably in some cases both *dottoressa* and *medica* were selected, used depending on the context.

6.1.3 Stereotyped Input

Section 5 ends with two final screenshots. In this case, teachers were asked to identify whether the input was stereotyped relating to gender-based job titles. From the data collected it emerged that male teachers did not perceive gender stereotypes related to the workplace, confirming the author's hypothesis (see §5.2) and the results discussed in §6.1.2. Likewise, from the data, the author was not able to make hypotheses on how other characteristics of teachers and their students could be related to the type of answers provided.

Below are the screenshots taken from the selected textbooks and the answers divided into two categories, namely 1) stereotype identification; and 2) no stereotype identification.

I. Secondo te, questo testo è stereotipato dal punto di vista del genere?
62 risposte
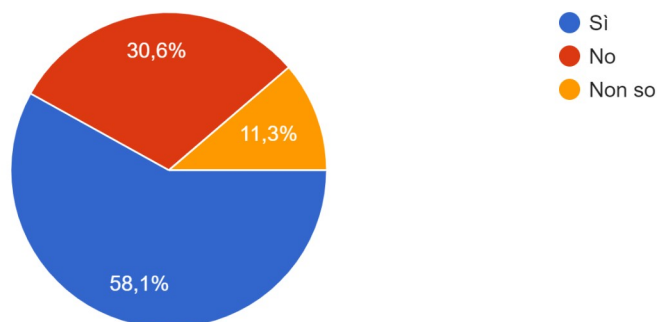
Graph 23: answers to *Espresso ragazzi 1*.

The ninth screenshot is taken from *Espresso ragazzi 1* (2015). The input was identified as stereotyped by 58.1% of teachers, 30.6% did not identify the stereotype, and 11.3% decided not to provide an answer.

Question: *Secondo te, questo testo è stereotipato dal punto di vista del genere? Se sì, che modifiche faresti?*

Answers Categories	Main Trend
Stereotype identification	*Darei altri lavori alle madri, non solo quelli che per stereotipo sono considerati "femminili".* *Riscriverei il dialogo completamente con professioni più realistiche.* *Modificherei le professioni dei genitori, usando mestieri di pari livello, o entrambi lavori indipendenti, o subordinati...ecc..* *Eliminerei la parte "Mia madre non lavora Sta a casa".* *La casalinga è altamente antiquata come menzione.* *Darei più varietà ai mestieri, la mamma segretaria e casalinga ormai è uno standard che appartiene al passato.* *Metterei dei lavori diversi rispetto a segretaria, insegnante e casalinga per le madri, dei lavori un po' meno stereotipati. Ad esempio al posto di scrivere che la madre di Anna è segretaria in uno studio per un architetto, metterei che lei è un'architetta.* *Sostituirei la segretaria con l'impiegata*

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	Mescolerei le carte: madre cuoca e padre insegnante, oppure madre giornalista e padre casalingo (ma purtroppo è poco credibile).
No stereotype identification	*Casalinga è un lavoro.* *Se intendete "casalinga", esistono molte casalinghe nella vita reale e eliminarle dal libro non sarebbe giusto nei loro confronti.* *È (purtroppo) realistico; andrebbe bene se accompagnato da una riflessione su genere e professioni.* *Marco non dovrebbe vergognarsi di dire che la mamma è casalinga! Dà un messaggio negativo.*

Table 24.1: Stereotype identification in *Espresso ragazzi 1*.

Participants Categories	Stereotype identification	No stereotype identification
Teachers' gender	23 women 1 man 1 no answered	3 women 1 man
Teachers' age	All ages except more than 50 years	20-29 (2 out of 4)
Teaching experience	All are involved, including 2 with no teaching experience	All are involved, including no teaching experience
Teaching context	Both FL and SL	Both FL and SL
Students' age	All ages except children and pre-teens	Young adults (3 out of 10) and adults (3 out of 10)
Type of class	Mixed (13 out of 36) and individual (15 out of 36)	Mixed (2 out of 5) and individual (2 out of 5)
Linguistic level	All levels	PreA1 (3 out of 9) and A1-A2 (3 out of 9)

Table 24.2: Stereotype identification in *Espresso ragazzi 1*.

As mentioned, Graph 23 shows that just over half of the teachers (58.1%) considered the dialogue stereotyped. 25 of these teachers expressed their reflections regarding the gender stereotype, identified through the job titles attributed to fathers (*giornalista, cuoco, farmacista*) and mothers (*segretaria, insegnante, casalinga*). Regarding the latter, the teachers considered them stereotypical as they were subordinate, and suggested eliminating the phrase "*mia madre non lavora, sta a casa*". This category includes teachers with different characteristics who work with various types of students. The only variable that creates differences in participants is once again the gender of the teachers.

Nevertheless, 4 teachers who did not consider the stereotyped dialogue still left conflicting reflections, including the fact that "*casalinga è un lavoro*", which should not be removed from the textbooks. This reflection is confirmed by the others, as "*esistono molte casalinghe nella vita reale e eliminarle dal libro non sarebbe giusto nei loro confronti* and that *Marco non dovrebbe vergognarsi di dire che la mamma è casalinga! Dà un messaggio negativo*". Finally, one teacher admits that "*è (purtroppo) realistico*" and that "*andrebbe bene se accompagnato da una riflessione su genere e professioni*". Despite the author having defined this category as "no stereotype identification", it seems that the answers highlight a different stereotype, namely the one linked to the social prestige of being a housewife.

Possessivi e articoli

Mio marito è albanese.
Túa sorella non viene con noi.
Signora Rossi, **Suo** figlio è tornato?
Questa è Anna, **suo** padre è Mario.
Dov'è Sergio? **Sua** nonna sta male.
Nostra nipote va all'università.
Vostro zio è in America?

I **miei genitori** sono in pensione.
I **suoi figli** vivono lontano.
Signora, dove sono **le Sue** figlie?

La sua nonna materna è di Roma
Il mio zio di Napoli arriva domani.

Ciao Anna! Dov'è **il tuo papà**?
La nostra mamma non lavora.

La tua sorellina va a scuola?
Il mio cuginetto ha 3 anni.

Il loro fratello ha 3 anni.
I **loro** fratelli sono ingegneri.

※ *Normalmente **non** usiamo **mai** l'articolo prima di aggettivi possessivi che si riferiscono a sostantivi singolari che indicano persone della famiglia: padre, madre, nonno, nonna, zio, zia, fratello, sorella, cugino, cugina, ecc.*

※ *Usiamo l'articolo con:*

a) *i nomi di famiglia al plurale: genitori, figli, figlie, nipoti, mariti, mogli, ecc.*

b) *i nomi di famiglia determinati: nonna materna, zio di Napoli, ecc.*

c) *i nomi di famiglia colloquiali: papà, mamma, ecc.*

d) *i nomi di famiglia alterati: sorellina, fratellino, cuginetto, ecc.*

e) *l'aggettivo possessivo loro (singolare e plurale).*

Figure 48: *Grammatica pratica italiana A1-B2*, p. 52

L. Secondo te, questi esempi sono stereotipati dal punto di vista del genere?
62 risposte

- Sì
- No
- Non so

66,1% 11,3% 22,6%
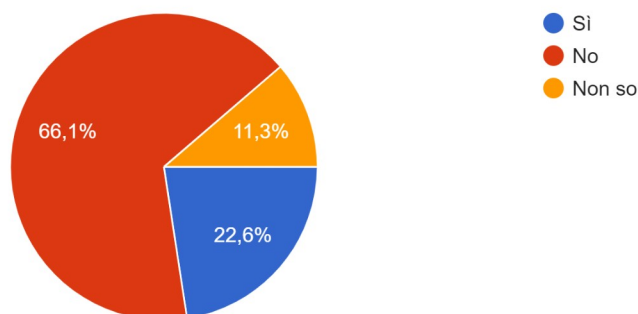
Graph 24: answers to *Grammatica pratica italiana A1-B2*.

The last screenshot is taken from *Grammatica pratica italiana A1-B2*. The input was identified as stereotyped by 22.6% of teachers, 66.1% did not identify the stereotype, and 11.3% decided not to provide an answer.

Answers Categories	Main Trend
Stereotype identification	*I maschi lavorano come ingegneri, la mamma non lavora. Cambierei il tipo di frasi in modo da non includere stereotipi, come "Le mie sorelle lavorano come ingegneri", "Mio zio non lavora".* *"Signore, dove sono le sue figlie?" al posto di signora, dato che già c'era un esempio sulla maternità. Se si lascia l'esempio "la nostra mamma non lavora", allora metterei "i loro fratelli sono educatori". Nel senso che se si lascia un esempio stereotipato, allora ne metterei un altro che va a scardinare gli stereotipi di genere.*
No stereotype identification	No answers

Table 25.1: Stereotype identification in *Grammatica pratica italiana A1-B2*.

Participants Categories	Stereotype identification
Teachers' gender	12 women 1 man
Teachers' age	30-39 (6 out of 13)
Teaching experience	Less than 5 years (6 out of 13)
Teaching context	Both FL and SL

Students' age	Young adults (8 out of 30) and adults (9 out of 30)
Type of class	Mixed (7 out of 21) and individual (11 out of 21)
Linguistic level	All levels

Table 25.2: Stereotype identification in *Grammatica pratica italiana A1-B2*.

Figure 48 shows the last stereotyped input, as well as the last of the 10 screenshots entered in Section 5 of the questionnaire.

Unlike the previous dialogue, only 22.6% of teachers considered the example sentences selected from *Grammatica pratica italiana* to be stereotyped, compared to 66.1% who did not identify any stereotype. Moreover, only 13 teachers added reflections, including proposals to exchange the stereotype, for instance, "*le mie sorelle lavorano come ingegneri*", or "*mio zio non lavora*".

The author finds it unclear why 58.1% of teachers considered the dialogue in Figure 47 to be stereotyped, while only 22.6% considered the last sentences in Figure 48 to be stereotyped.

Probably, because in the dialogue taken from *Espresso ragazzi* the job titles are few and in pairs (Mina, Anna, and Marco talk about their parents), so a difference between the jobs could be more evident. On the contrary, the examples provided by *Grammatica pratica italiana* are in the form of a list that presents an alternation of male and female subjects, thus the stereotype may be noticed only if the reader pays more attention to the individual sentences.

Having reached the end of the screenshot analysis, it seems that job titles had less impact than the wording of the instructions. To fully understand this difference, the author decided to examine the answers to Q14.

6.1.4 Inclusive or Commonly Used Job Titles?

To answer the first research question, the author decided to also analyse the answers to Q14 which concerns the choice of job titles taught in class. Although this is a multiple-choice question, the author has arranged the possibility of adding other answers to the predefined ones, in order to identify various answer possibilities. In a similar manner, the answers were catalogued, specifically the following: 1) inclusive teaching; 2) non-inclusive teaching; 3) mixed teaching with reflection; and 4) teaching according to age and level. In this case, all participants provided an answer, as Q14 is a mandatory question, and in Table 26.1 the author inserted the all answers collected.

14) Nelle tue lezioni di italiano LS/L2 insegni/insegneresti i nomi di professione inclusivi o come li userebbe la maggior parte dei madrelingua?

62 risposte
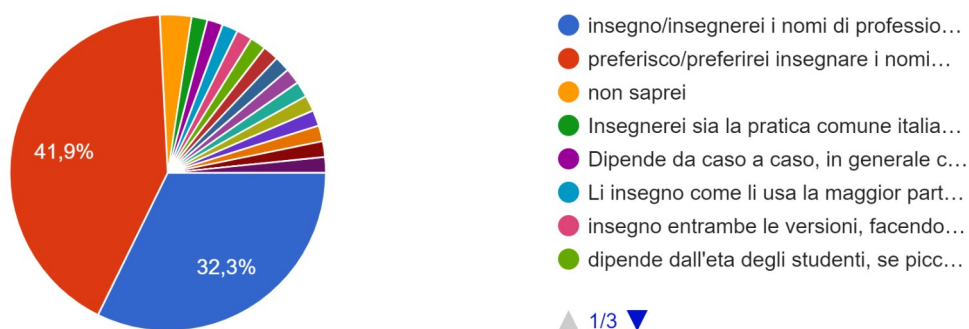
Graph 25: answers to the teaching methods of job titles.

According to Graph 25, 32.3% of teachers teach or would teach inclusive job titles;[49] 41.9% teach or would teach job titles in line with the habits of most native speakers; 3.2% did not provide any response. In addition, the remaining number of teachers provided additional responses.

Question: *Nelle tue lezioni di italiano LS/L2 insegni/insegneresti i nomi di professione inclusivi o come li userebbe la maggior parte dei madrelingua?*

Categories	Answers
Inclusive teaching	*Insegno/insegnerei i nomi di professione inclusivi per riflettere sulla parità di genere nella società contemporanea (per esempio, il medico/la medica).* (x20)
Non-inclusive teaching	*Preferisco/preferirei insegnare i nomi di professione come li userebbe la maggior parte dei madrelingua per mantenere la coerenza con le pratiche linguistiche comuni (per esempio, il medico sia per uomini che donne).* (x26) *Non confonderei ulteriormente le idee a discenti stranieri.*
Mixed teaching with reflection	*Insegnerei sia la pratica comune italiana sia un modo per rendere i nomi più inclusivi.* *In realtà quando insegno prima insegno i nomi come li userebbe la maggior parte dei madrelingua e come sono utilizzati nei testi che uso ma poi faccio sempre un appunto/ragionamento in cui rivedo tutte le parole dal punto di vista della parità di genere. Così lo studente ha tutto e può decidere quale usare.* *Un mix delle due cose - faccio riflettere sulla parità di genere nella società contemporanea ma presento le varie forme.* *Insegnerei i nomi di professione inclusivi e espliciterei anche il fatto che esistono persone che non li usano, facendo una riflessione sulla parità di genere.*

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49 By "inclusive job titles", the author means those feminine job titles recommended by Alma Sabatini (1987).

	Insegno i termini inclusivi, ma presento anche l'uso non inclusivo.
	Insegno i nomi di professione al femminile (non direi inclusivi, perché il femminile esisteva da prima e non è stato inventato da pochi anni) avvisando gli studenti che siamo in un periodo di cambiamento e che bisogna sempre accertarsi che alla persona con cui usiamo i nome di professione vada bene un termine o ne preferisca un altro (non ho ancora conosciuto una donna che si faccia chiamare medica).
	Insegno entrambe le versioni, facendo capire la mentalità sottostante alle pratiche linguistiche comuni.
Teaching according to age and level	*Dipende dall'eta degli studenti, se piccoli insegnerei come la maggior parte della gente dice, se più adulti insegnerei "la medica" avvisando del perché lo faccio e anche delle altre opzioni.*
	Li insegno come li usa la maggior parte dei madrelingua e aggiungo alcune nozioni sul dibattito in corso, a seconda del livello. Questo riguarda principalmente termini come "medica, avvocata e architetta" che sono davvero meno comuni, in particolare il primo. Non vedo problemi nell'insegnare termini come "ingegnera o la presidente" semmai faccio notare che sono in circolazione altre formule ma che non le ritengo corrette).
	Dipende da caso a caso, in generale cerco di seguire l'evoluzione naturale della lingua senza applicare modifiche ideologiche.
	A seconda del livello, adotto uno dei due approcci (ma faccio sempre notare, se posso, che nella società è in atto un cambiamento).
	Dal B1 in su o con persone mediamente istruite già nel paese di provenienza, dedico proprio delle lezioni apposite. Con i livelli troppo bassi "sì e no". Spiego loro che la questione è "complicata": per es. insegno medico e medica, che è giusto e si dice così, ma anche che ancora non è usato da tutti e i cambiamenti richiedono tempo e abitudine. (Comunque, proprio la settimana scorsa, ho cambiato le immagini di alcune professioni per degli studenti maschi, pre A1.)

Table 26.1: Categorised answers to Q14.

Participants Categories	Inclusive teaching	Non-inclusive teaching	Mixed teaching with reflections	Teaching according to age and level
Teachers' gender	15 women 5 men	21 women 6 men	5 women 1 man 1 no answered	4 women 1 man
Teachers' age	30-39 (9 out of 20) 40-49 (7 out of 20)	20-29 (8 out of 27) More than 50 years (8 out of 27)	30-39 (3 out of 7)	20-29 (2 out of5)
Teaching experience	Less than 5 years (7 out of 20),	Less than 5 years (11 out of	Less than 5 years (3 out of 7)	Less than 5 years (2 out of 5), more than 10 years

	more than 10 years (8 out of 20)	27)		(2 out of 5)
Teaching context	Both FL and SL	FL (20 out of 30)	Both FL and SL	Both FL and SL
Students' age	Young adults (16 out of 48) and adults (12 out of 48)	Young adults (18 out of 58) and adults (20 out of 58)	Young adults (6 out of 14) and adults (6 out of 14)	Adults (3 out of 7)
Type of class	Mixed (16 out of 25)	Mixed (11 put of 33) and individual (14 out of 33)	Mixed (5 out of 8) and individual (4 out of 8)	Individual (3 out of 8)
Linguistic level	A1-A2 (18 out of 38)	A1-A2 (22 out of 63) B1-B2 (18 out of 63)	All levels except C1-C2	B1-B2 (4 out of 9)

Table 26.2: Categorised answers to Q14.

From Graph 25 it is clear that the majority of teachers (41.9%) teach or would teach job titles according to the common habits of native speakers, and one of these teachers states that it would avoid confusing students. On the contrary, 32.3% of teachers teach or would teach inclusive job titles, or as one teacher suggests "*nomi di professione al femminile*".

In addition to the 3.2% of teachers who were unable to answer, other 12 provided further reflections which were divided into "mixed teaching" and "teaching according to age and level". Regardless of each teacher's answers, this demonstrates that some teachers prefer to be flexible and adapt teaching depending on the type of students.

Regarding the "mixed methodology", 7 teachers admitted that they teach both common practice and more inclusive usage, with the addition of sociolinguistic reflection. An interesting reflection from a teacher is that in this way "*lo studente ha tutto e può decidere quale usare*".

Other 5 teachers explained that they act differently depending on age and level. Generally, they tend to teach the most inclusive practices to adults with more education and at a level of B1 and above, while they prefer to teach the most common practices to younger students and at a basic level. Among these teachers, one replied that "*dipende da caso a caso*" and that in general, (s)he tries to "*seguire l'evoluzione naturale della lingua senza applicare modifiche ideologiche*". This statement is relevant, as —the author hypothesises— teaching practices relating to gender linguistic inclusion are perhaps more linked to the ideology of teachers and students.

6.1.5 Answering to RQ1

Regarding the characteristics of the teachers and their students, it would seem that these did not influence the answers. In fact, from the data collection, the author never identified the same trend in the categories. The only homogeneous variable was that of the gender of the teachers concerning the identification of gender stereotypes. In this case, the author was able to verify her hypothesis regarding the lack of identification by male teachers. Notwithstanding, it is important to consider that the number of male teachers represents only a small part of the participants (13 out of 62), so this statement cannot be applied to the entire population.

Despite this limitation, the author was able to answer to RQ1. From the analysis conducted on the answers provided by teachers regarding the formulation of instructions and the teaching of job titles, it emerges that gender inclusive language occurs above all through a better formulation of instructions, both through the specification of the feminine and through the use of neutral words that include every member of the class.

Hence, the most inclusive language teaching through textbooks occurs precisely when teachers address the classroom. Almost no teachers have considered the possibility of using emerging inclusive language. The author hypothesises that probably 1) so far teachers have not needed it; 2) they do not want to use it; 3) or perhaps they do not know how to employ it in classroom. The use of the emerging inclusive language connects to the second research question, the answers to which will be analysed in the next subchapter.

Taking into account the exercises on job titles, the one that was considered least inclusive was the one taken from *Grammatica pratica italiana A1-B2* (see Question H), in which in the list of professions only one was female, and that was *casalinga*. Notwithstanding, from the analysis of the other exercises it emerges that the lack of inclusion is not caused by the use of the unmarked masculine, but rather by the lack of feminine examples. Hence, if a woman is represented and the job title given to her is, for instance, *medico*, for most teachers this is not considered a lack of inclusion.

Nevertheless, as regards the proposed stereotyped inputs (see Questions I and L), perhaps it would have been appropriate to add others to have more detailed data.

6.2 RQ2: According to the teachers, is it possible to introduce the use, and therefore the teaching, of *schwa* in Italian FL/SL textbooks?

In order to answer the second research question, the author decided to analyse the answers given to Q16 and Q18 of the questionnaire. Q16 is a multiple-choice question with the possibility of adding another answer so that the results will be both predefined and personal answers depending on the teacher. Q18, on the other hand, is an open-ended question, which offers the possibility of expressing a more detailed opinion regarding the hypothetical introduction of *schwa* in the teaching of Italian FL/SL. Since these are two mandatory questions, the author has collected 62 answers for each question.

6.2.1 The Use of *Schwa* in Instructions

Q16 concerns the hypothetical introduction of *schwa* within the instructions of the Italian FL/SL textbooks. The data clearly show a general rejection of the use of *schwa* in instructions. Notwithstanding, other teachers provided interesting responses that highlighted various facets of this phenomenon.

The responses were categorised as follows: 1) absolute refusal; 2) conditional acceptance; 3) uncertainty; and 4) absolute acceptance.

16) Se tu dovessi creare un manuale da zero, scriveresti delle consegne di questo tipo? "Lavora con unə compagnə. Lə studentə A legge la prima colonna, lə studentə B la seconda".
62 risposte
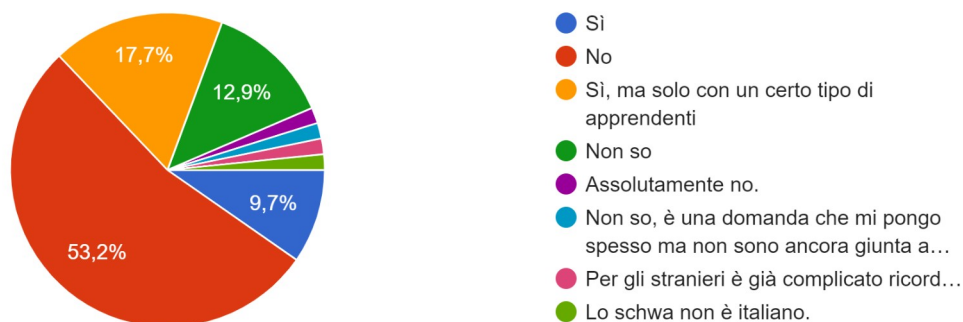
Graph 26: answers to Q16.

According to Graph 26, 9.7% of teachers would use *schwa* in instructions; 53.2% would not use *schwa* in instructions; 17.7% would use *schwa* in instructions according to the characteristics of their students; and 12.9% did not provide any response. In addition, the remaining number of teachers provided additional responses.

Categories	Answers
Absolute refusal	*No* (x33) *Assolutamente no.* *Per gli stranieri è già complicato ricordare le desinenze normali, piuttosto varierei le cosegne usando alle volte compagna/compagno o con l'astersico che trovo più neutro. Oppure usando compagna o compagno.* *Lo schwa non è italiano.*
Conditional acceptance	*Sì, ma solo con un certo tipo di apprendenti.* (x11)
Uncertainty	*Non so* (x8) *Non so, è una domanda che mi pongo spesso ma non sono ancora giunta a una conclusione.*
Absolute acceptance	*Sì* (x6)

Table 27.1: Categorised answers to Q16.

Participants Categories	Absolute refusal	Conditional acceptance	Uncertainty	Absolute acceptance
Teachers' gender	23 women 11 men 2 no answered	11 women	8 women 1 man	5 women 1 man
Teachers' age	30-39 (12 out of 36) 40-49 (13 out of 36)	All are involved, except 40-49	20-29 (3 out of 9) More than 50 years (3 out of 9)	40-49 (3 out of 6)
Teaching experience	All are involved, including 3 with no teaching experience	Less than 5 years (6 out of 11)	Less than 5 years (5 out of 9)	Less than 5 years (3 out of 6)
Teaching context	FL (26 out of 38)	Both FL and SL	FL (8 out of 13)	FL (4 out of 5)

Students' age	Young adults (27 out of 79) and adults (27 out of 79)	Young adults (6 out of 17) and adults (5 out of 17)	Young adults (7 out of 28) and adults (8 out of 28)	Young adults (3 out of 13) and adults (3 out of 13)
Type of class	Mixed (19 out of 45) and individual (16 out of 45)	Mixed (7 out of 16)	Mixed (5 out of 13) and individual (7 out of 13)	Mixed (3 out of 6) and individual (2 out of 6)
Linguistic level	A1-A2 (31 out of 80)	A1-A2 (9 out of 21)	A1-A2 (8 out of 24) B1-B2 (7 out of 24)	A1-A2 (3 out of 10) B1-B2 (3 out of 10)

Table 27.2: Categorised answers to Q16.

From Graph 26 it clearly emerges that more than half of the teachers (53.2%) oppose the introduction of *schwa* in instructions. Considering that 3 others expressed a further negative response, the percentage increases. One teacher specified that (s)he would rather use linguistic redundancy, or the asterisk instead, considered more neutral by the teacher who provided the answer.

Responses regarding the use of *schwa* with a specific type of students (11 out of 62) and those indicating uncertainty (9 out of 62) are almost equal. The smallest percentage (9.7%, 6 out of 62) comes from teachers who would use *schwa* in the classroom.

Looking at Table 27.2, the author noted that teachers who would use *schwa*, who showed uncertainty, or who would use it according to certain conditions, have been teaching for less than 5 years. Although this is not a certain fact, the author hypothesises that perhaps those who have recently started working as teachers of Italian FL/SL are more open to innovation than those with more consolidated teaching experience. Another possibility is that they do not have enough experience to notice the implications that this kind of teaching choice could have on their learners' language production and interaction. However, the "Absolute refusal" category also includes Ca' Foscari students, thus denying this hypothesis.

Regarding the teaching context, teachers who would use *schwa* under certain conditions work in both FL and SL. In this last case, the author hypothesises that this condition could be dictated by the presence of immigrant students who could have additional difficulties compared to other students.

In order to answer these hypotheses, it was also necessary to analyse the responses to question Q18.

6.2.2 Teachers' Remarks on The Use of *Schwa*

Q18 is the last question of the questionnaire chosen to analyse the data reported by the administration. This is a mandatory open-ended question that asks teachers to express further reflections regarding the hypothetical use of *schwa*.

From the analysis of the answers given to Q16, the author was able to confirm the teachers' refusal (36 out of 62) concerns the use of *schwa* in Italian FL/SL textbooks, specifically in the instructions. The characteristics of the teachers who showed total disapproval seem to vary from different perspectives. In particular, gender and teaching experience (including Ca' Foscari students) do not seem to influence the choice. As for the other characteristics, these seem to go hand in hand with those of the other answers. As no significant differences were found between the teachers, the author thus hypothesises that it is, in part, an ideological issue, but also a desire to preserve the Italian language without distorting it.

In order to find the main reasons, in Table 28.1, connected to Q18, the author has inserted the main answers that respond to the rejection of *schwa* (together with the other answers). As they represent the majority of the participants and the data collected was sufficient to confirm author's hypothesis, no variables are taken into account. However, for a better analysis of those who, on the contrary, are in favour or have provided different reflections, the author has collected the variables and inserted the main trends in Table 28.2.

The categories are therefore divided as follows: 1) approval of the use of *schwa*; 2) *schwa* as a sociolinguistic element for higher levels; 3) *schwa* inappropriate for classes with low education; 4) refusal to use *schwa*; and 5) other reflections.

The question is the following: *Hai qualche commento o riflessione riguardante a un'ipotetica introduzione della ə nella didattica dell'italiano LS/L2?*

Categories	Answers
Approval of the use of *schwa*	*Credo che debba essere introdotta in un corso di italiano LS/L2 anche se non si è d'accordo con il suo utilizzo perché è probabile che lu studentu la vedano scritta da qualche parte. Oltre alla schwa introdurrei anche l'asterisco, e la u (in quanto opzioni che utilizzo nella mia quotidianità e nella mia cerchia sociale).*
	Sarebbe un passo molto importante non solo per l'educazione linguistica, ma anche per quella civica.
	Credo che non ci sia nulla di male, fa parte dell'evoluzione della lingua, che c'è

	sempre stata.
	È da studiare ma sarebbe da fare in tutti gli ordini di scuola.
Sc*hwa* as a sociolinguistic element for higher levels	*Lo schwa non è parte dell'italiano e inserirlo nei manuali non avrebbe nessun senso. Se ne può parlare a lezione, si possono fare delle lezioni dedicate al tema ma inserire qualcosa che non esiste in Italiano, che nessuno pronuncia o che tanti non sanno pronunciare, è pura follia (da abruzzese so come si pronuncia ma abruzzese e italiano sono due cose ben distinte). Siamo insegnanti di italiano e sarebbe bello se fossimo coscienti, noi in primis, che il maschile come genere grammaticale non marcato non ha nulla di discriminatorio. Lo schwa è un simbolo che può essere usato sui social o sugli striscioni di una manifestazione ma cercare di inserirlo sui manuali è sconfortante. Vuol dire che noi insegnanti non sappiamo come funziona la nostra lingua, non siamo in grado di spiegarla e ci pieghiamo al dogma che "la lingua discrimina". La lingua non discrimina, sono le persone che lo fanno. Mi scuso per il lungo commento ma credo sia importante parlare di questo.*
	Siccome lavoro prevalentemente con madrelingua inglese, inserire il concetto del genere e dell'accordo è un passo fondamentale e non immediato. Nella mia pratica di insegnamento, utilizzo i due generi nel livello elementare, variando il più possibile e dando sempre il femminile delle professioni, etc. Al livello intermedio comincio ad introdurre l'idea che ci sono sperimentazioni in corso e di solito presento testi scritti che utilizzano lo schwa, l'asterisco e altro, ma non lo faccio nelle consegne. Al livello avanzato, di nuovo, discutiamo di queste tematiche ad un livello più approfondito, ma finora nel linguaggio che utilizzo per rivolgermi a e agli studenti io utilizzo i due generi (con le accortezze di cui sopra).
	Sono favorevole all'introduzione per quanto riguarda il rispetto delle identità non binarie ma non lo trovo un sistema utile per sostituire il maschile sovraesteso che non ritengo sessista non più di quanto ritengo che lo sia il "Lei" di cortesia. Inoltre si tratta di una precisa scelta linguistica che al momento è fatta da una piccolissima parte dei parlanti. Ne parlo volentieri con gli studenti ma non la adotto e non la insegno in alternativa alle opzioni praticate. Ritengo però che sia importante parlarne.
	Potrebbe essere inserita nei materiali di studio L2/LS, ma per ora credo solo come approfondimento sociolinguistico per livelli avanzati. Non escludo che in futuro possa essere integrata anche nella scrittura delle consegne e nei testi, ma dovrebbe seguire un uso più ampio e accettato della schwa nella comunità linguistica italiana.
	Penso che sarebbe interessante utilizzarla o almeno riflettere sul suo utilizzo a partire dal livello b1.
***Schwa* inappropriate for classes with low education**	*Questo genere di riflessione linguistica è importante e va fatta, con le dovute cautele e tempistiche. Ma nei casi di bassa scolarizzazione o di background culturale ancora poco attento alla parità di genere, rischia veramente di mandare in confusione gli - e a volte soprattutto LE- apprendenti. Un'introduzione morbida, lavorando ai fianchi, forse è sufficiente. Io insegno medica e avvocata, ma anche professoressa e dottoressa o muratrice, perché nei contesti lavorativi che frequenteranno, molto probabilmente,*

	potrebbero essere corrett*, o pres* in giro, e non hanno gli strumenti linguistici per discuterne. Di recente ho insegnato anche saldatrice (come femminile di saldatore). Molte persone grideranno allo scandalo, ma se lo hanno trovato sui corsi di formazione o su internet, certo non mi metto a fare una crociata. Si chiama sopravvivenza. La loro e la mia. *Lavorando con studenti con bassissima scolarizzazione (molti analfabeti anche nella loro LM) trovo difficile la sua applicazione nel mio ambiente, ma ritengo che possa avere un uso più esteso nell'insegnamento dell'italiano all'estero o con apprendenti più scolarizzati.* *Non vedo i tempi maturi per usarla nei testi per apprendenti dei CPIA.*
Refusal to use *schwa* (some examples of 25 answers)	*La schwa non è né un suono né un simbolo italiano. L'idea alla base di chi ne promuove l'uso è encomiabile, ma questo forse non è il modo migliore per diffonderla. Genere grammaticale e genere sociale non corrispondono alla stessa cosa. Inoltre, il modo in cui molti sostenitori di questa scelta linguistica vogliono imporre la stessa sugli altri fa emergere una triste ironia. Le lingue cambiano ed evolvono naturalmente. Se l'uso della schwa si estendesse un giorno nelle strade di tutta Italia sarebbe auspicabile rivedere i dizionari e i manuali. Ma fino ad allora, fino a che il suo uso rimane costretto ad una fetta sociale molto specifica, non vedo nessun motivo linguistico, sociale o politico per introdurla in una classe di italiano LS/L2.* *Non mi piace, quando lo vedo nei testi, il più delle volte genera confusione. Sono donna e non mi sono mai sentita "dimenticata" - "non considerata" per il fatto di leggere "parla con il tuo compagno" o espressioni simili. L'educazione e la gentilezza fanno molto. Sicuramente nella quotidianità mi sembra giusto introdurre Avvocatessa o Ingegnera, o usare espressioni "lavorate in gruppi di 2", ma senza stravolgere la grammatica italiana.* *Crea difficoltà ai dislessici. In molte lingue, genere e numero non esistono: per fare un passo avanti bisognerebbe prendere spunto da quelle lingue, eliminando tanti preconcetti. L'utilizzo attuale della schwa non ha un vero e proprio senso, crea solo confusione. Spesso ho letto frasi come "quellə compagnə" al posto di "quei compagni/quelle compagne", quindi con una sottospecie di articolo femminile plurale. Rendere inclusivo significa davvero trasformare tutto in femminile plurale?* *Forse potrebbe creare confusione per chi si approccia alla lingua per la prima volta. Inoltre, io per prima non saprei come pronunciarla all'interno di un contesto italiano.* *Penso che basti estendere le frasi includendo nomi maschili e femminili senza introdurre la schwa.* *Sono totalmente contrario a qualsiasi modifica alla lingua italiana che venga introdotta dall'alto, tantopiù per ragioni politiche. Le lingue si evolvono naturalmente.* *Da evitare assolutamente perché porterebbe ad uno svilimento della lingua a favore di una moda effimera.*

	Non credo che la schwa possa avere un'influenza negativa sulla comprensione; credo che possa essere un po' difficile pronunciarla per alcune nazionalità; io uso la schwa nel mio dialetto ma nonostante questo non mi sento ancora sicuro della pronuncia.
	Personalmente sono a favore dell'introduzione della ə nell'italiano contemporaneo, sia a livello scritto che orale. Tuttavia, credo che possano essere adottate altre soluzioni alternative a questa per rispondere alla necessità di essere inclusivi.
	Dato che sono all'inizio non ho grandi consigli, ma la curiosità di vedere un ambiente scolastico più inclusivo e per ottenerlo ritengo che non ci sia altra via se non i tentativi.
Other reflections	È un tema interessante, giusto, ma complesso. Per me è più un problema lo stereotipo di genere (mamma casalinga) che la desinenza al maschile e che vedo più complicata da cambiare.
	Personalmente preferisco utilizzare altri accorgimenti, ma non giudico chi la utilizza e se dovesse affermarsi ulteriormente potrei valutare l'ipotesi di utilizzarla a mia volta.
	È un argomento che mi crea divisione. Da un lato mi sembra di "sciupare" la lingua ma dall'altra penso che sia giusto includere tutti.
	Mi chiedo come usare la ə per distinguere parole come "visitatori" e "visitatrici". È una complicazione.

Table 28.1: Categorised answers to Q18.

The author collected 25 responses related to the rejection of *schwa*. In Table 28.1, some of them have been included that, according to the author, best represent the main reasons, namely, 1) *schwa* is not an Italian vowel; 2) it could confuse both students and teachers. The latter, moreover, would not know how to pronounce it; 3) there are other ways to make the language more inclusive from a gender perspective; and 4) it distorts the Italian language only for a restricted group of users (politically correct).

Despite the limitations identified by most teachers, a small portion would accept the use of *schwa*, and others provided further detailed reflections, thus positioning themselves somewhere between absolute rejection and absolute acceptance.

Participants Categories	Approval of the use of *schwa*	*Schwa* as a sociolinguistic element for higher levels	*Schwa* inappropriate for classes with low education	Other reflections
Teachers'	4 women	4 women	3 women	5 women

gender		1 no answered		2 men
Teachers' age	20-29 (2 out of 4)	All ages are involved	20-29 (1) 30-39 (1) More than 50 years (1)	30-39 (5 out of 7)
Teaching experience	Less than 5 years (3 out of 4)	More than 10 years (4 out of 5)	Less than 5 years	Less than 5 years (3 out of 7) 5-10 (3 out of 7)
Teaching context	FL (3 out of 5)	Both FL and SL	SL	FL (5 out of 7)
Students' age	Young adults (3 out of 10) and adults (3 out of 10)	Adults (5 out of 13)	Young adults (2 out of 4)	Young adults (5 out of 17) and adults (6 out of 17)
Type of class	Mixed (3 out of 5)	Predominantly female (4 out of 11)	Predominantly male (2 out of 4)	Individual (5 out of 9)
Linguistic level	A1-A2 (3 out of 6)	A1-A2 (5 out of 14) B1-B2 (5 out of 14)	PreA1 (3 out of 7)	A1-A2 (5 out of 18) B1-B2 (6 out of 18)

Table 28.2: Categorised answers to Q18.

As shown in Table 28.2, 4 teachers are in favour of its use in class, as "*lu studentu la vedano scritta da qualche parte*". The same teacher, who as you can see used the vowel "u", also added that (s)he would also introduce the asterisk and the "u".

The other teachers say that "*sarebbe un passo molto importante non solo per l'educazione linguistica, ma anche per quella civica*", that there is nothing wrong with it as "*fa parte dell'evoluzione della lingua, che c'è sempre stata*"; and that "*è da studiare ma sarebbe da fare in tutti gli ordini di scuola*", thus including native Italian speaking students.

These 4 teachers are all women, mostly aged 20-29 and with less than 5 years of experience. They work mostly in FL context in mixed classes with young adult and adult students, with an A1-A2 level. The author immediately noticed that the people who provided this type of response were not all the same ones who proposed using *schwa* in the instructions (see §6.1.1). For instance, the only male teacher who suggested the use of *schwa* for *Ambarabà*, in Q18 provided an answer falling into the "other reflections" category. In fact, he does not believe that "*la schwa possa avere un'influenza negativa sulla comprensione*", but "*non mi sento ancora sicuro della pronuncia*". Hence, from the previous results and this statement on the one hand it emerges that schwa may not have a negative influence in written instructions, but on the other hand one of the limitations emerges, that is, the possible difficulty in pronouncing it by the teachers.

Besides, in Table 27.2 (see §6.2.1), the teachers who would write an instruction with *schwa* are 6. Then, also in this case a numerical difference emerges in the answers, as well as in the age of the teachers and partly in the type of class and linguistic level of the students. In light of these differences, the author hypothesises that, as in the case of the teacher who in *Ambarabà* proposed the use of *schwa* but then admitted that he would have had difficulty pronouncing it, also, in this case, the teachers probably provided a more in-depth reflection that also highlighted the limits of the use of *schwa*.

The 4 teachers represent a drastic minority, as other teachers who were not completely against it nevertheless found limits. For instance, 3 teachers who teach Italian to immigrants underlined the additional difficulty that the use of *schwa* may cause, both on a linguistic and sociocultural level. One of them, in fact, believes that "*possa avere un uso più esteso nell'insegnamento dell'italiano all'estero o con apprendenti più scolarizzati*". Other 5 teachers, rather, would introduce *schwa* as a sociolinguistic element, in accordance with other scholars (Parra & Serafini 2022; Gutiérrez Conde 2022; Santiago Alonso 2023).

Finally, other 7 teachers expressed further reflections that do not fall into the previous categories. In general, these teachers do not oppose the use of *schwa*, but they still believe that there may be difficulties (both for the class and for the teacher) and that there are other ways to be inclusive, as was illustrated in §6.1.

6.2.3 Answering to RQ2

From the analysis executed on the answers provided by teachers regarding the hypothetical introduction of *schwa* in Italian FL/SL textbooks, it thus emerges that most teachers would not use it and that rather it would be more appropriate to introduce it as a sociolinguistic element at higher level classes, as proposed by other scholars (see §4.3).

Hence, this result reiterates that the most inclusive language teaching through textbooks occurs by employing the most common practices analysed in §6.1. The results connected to RQ2 therefore reiterated the answers to RQ1, favouring inclusion through strategies that do not distort the Italian language. Apart from a few opposing teachers, others have understood the importance of the research, although the use of *schwa* as a common practice is divergent from reality.

Regarding the characteristics of teachers and their students, it would seem that these did not particularly influence the answers. In fact, from the data collection, the author rarely identified the same trend in the categories, also comparing the answers aimed at answering RQ1. Despite this

limitation, the author was able to answer RQ2 and verify the hypotheses formulated in §5.2. In the next subchapter, a detailed comparison is provided.

6.3 Comparing Hypotheses and Results

Based on the results obtained, in this subchapter a comparison is made with the hypotheses supported in §5.2:

Hypotheses	Results
Italian FL/SL teachers prefer to contrast the use of the extended masculine by using both the extended or slash word pairs and the collectives in the case of pair or group activities, in other words, they would use both feminisation strategies and neutral words.	Italian FL/SL teachers choose strategies depending on the learners and the type of exercises. If the class consists of children, it seems that teachers favour feminisation strategies, thereby making instruction redundant; while in other cases they prefer to use neutral words. Furthermore, if the exercises contain images or photographs, the strategies change based on what has been illustrated.
Italian FL/SL teachers would use less stereotyped inputs, but male teachers may partially perceive the gender stereotype.	Italian FL/SL teachers would use less stereotyped input. Nevertheless, from the analysis of the data, it emerged that stereotypes are not always identified through language. Male teachers did not perceive the gender stereotypes, but also many female teachers did not.
Italian FL/SL do not use job titles such as *ingegnera* and *medica*, and therefore they do not employ them in the classroom. However, some of them would attempt to teach inclusive job titles following Italian grammatical rules instead of the common usage that implies the limited visibility of women through prestigious job titles, which are usually masculine.	Italian FL/SL teachers prefer to teach job titles as they are used by most native speakers. Nonetheless, some of them propose to introduce inclusive job titles considering the age and level of the students as a sociolinguistic element.
Italian FL/SL teachers oppose the use of *schwa* in	Most of the teachers oppose the use of *schwa* in the

the classroom because 1) it is unnecessary and 2) it is not part of the Italian vowel sounds.	classroom because 1) it is unnecessary and 2) it is not part of the Italian vowel sounds. Moreover, some teachers are afraid of serious difficulties is pronounce it and in introducing it to particular kinds of students (such as immigrants).
Younger teachers care more about the issue of gender inclusion, and do not exclude the use of *schwa* in class, at least in writing.	Teachers' age is an element that did not influence the results.
Teachers who oppose the use of *schwa* in instructions are still in favour of its introduction as a sociolinguistic element for advanced-level classes.	Some teachers absolute oppose the use of *schwa,* while others consider its introduction as a sociolinguistic element for higher-level classes.

Table 29: Comparing hypotheses and results.

As shown in Table 29, the author's initial hypotheses were only partially confirmed. For instance, concerning the use of female job titles, it would seem that teachers prefer to teach common practices, and only some would introduce both practices as sociolinguistic reflection. Furthermore, it would seem that the stereotype does not occur through an unmarked use of the masculine, but rather through the lack of female presence in the working context.

Regarding the use of *schwa*, the majority of teachers oppose its use, and only a small part would introduce it as a sociocultural element, highlighting the difference between FL and SL contexts and students' levels. The collected responses are thus in line with the limits listed in §4.2.1 and the teaching proposals illustrated in §4.3. What teachers agree on are strategies to make the language more inclusive without distorting it. Although both feminisation strategies and the use of neutral words are equally accepted, the author found that some are preferred over others depending on the students and the exercise as a whole.

Overall, variables related to specific teachers' characteristics, such as gender, age, and teaching experience, proved to be irrelevant.

Despite all these findings, this research presents several limitations that are illustrated in the following subchapter.

6.4 Methodological Weaknesses and Limitations

The findings of this research contribute to the broader discourse on gender-inclusive language in the field of foreign/second language teaching (FL/SL), specifically in Italian FL/SL. Namely, the research contributes to understanding some of the strategies that teachers could adopt in order to model more gender-inclusive language, starting from the textbook: the most fundamental tool for the acquisition of both the learning language and its prevalent culture. Notwithstanding, certain aspects of the research face limitations, as follows:

1. Absence of previous studies: gender studies within the field of foreign language teaching are relatively recent, and at the research stage of the study the author was unable to find research based on other teachers' experiences, but instead only on scholars' personal teaching experiences followed by suggestions. This limited the possibility of referencing studies when creating the questionnaire.

2. A questionnaire created *ex-novo* and in advance: as mentioned previously, the lack of reference studies affected the creation of the questionnaire. Although it underwent a pilot test, the final questionnaire retained some questions for the data analysis that were determined to be irrelevant or superfluous in answering the research questions, for instance, Q15 (see Appendix) provided the same responses obtained from Q18. This created a limitation in terms of the time taken for participants to complete the questionnaire and the number of participants who completed it. In addition, the questionnaire was created before the bibliography used for the literature review was complete. For instance, if the author of this study, who contributed to Nieddu's research by answering her questionnaire (see §5.4.1), had been able to read the conference proceedings beforehand, not only would she have had a further basis for this thesis, but she could also have modelled her questionnaire on Nieddu's, which proved to be effective. Another essay that was read after the creation and administration of the questionnaire was that of Galli & Jamali (2023): as explained in §4.3.2, the choice to use emergent inclusive language should not be imposed in classroom. However, it is important for teachers to listen to the students' requests therein, and reach a consensus on the appropriate language in each case. Given this premise, the research is limited in that the questionnaire did not include a line of questions relating to this aspect. In fact, in the answers provided by the teachers, the possibility of using *schwa* in case it had been requested by the students did not emerge.

3. The author's inexperience: unlike other students of *Scienze del Linguaggio* at Ca' Foscari University, the author has not taken the exams *Methodology of Research in Language*

Teaching and Learning and *Pedagogia Sperimentale*, which would have been beneficial for writing an experimental thesis like this. These two courses would have afforded the author greater theoretical competencies and fewer challenges in creating the questionnaire and analysing the data, as well as support in identifying the variables with more effective, precise, and rapid means. Despite the author having read other research and theses, this gap presented serious difficulties in conducting the research.

4. A politically correct research approach: although initially posed as a study on language teaching, the findings of this research have proven to be more socially oriented, despite the data having answered the research questions. There was no shortage of criticism from participants; some, in fact, responded in kind to the final optional question of the questionnaire, in which they were asked to provide concluding opinions (see Appendix). One participant commented "*è un questionario politicamente orientato, che non tiene conto di chi è decisamente profondamente avverso all'uso di forme diverse dal maschile generico; ho l'impressione che l'impostazione del questionario sia volta a confermare il bias dell'autrice o dell'autore e non sia una genuina richiesta di informazioni. In questo modo penso che attirerà un pubblico non rappresentativo della maggioranza degli insegnanti*"; and another "*sono contrario a qualsiasi intervento dall'alto, in particolare per ragioni politiche, sulla lingua italiana. La lingua riflette la società e non si deve modificare la lingua per modificare la società ma semmai il contrario. Non mi piacciono i tentativi di manipolare la società ed il mercato da questo punto di vista*". These observations are related to *schwa* and, although they represent a small portion of the questionnaire participants, the author considered it important to give equal consideration to the responses that represent the minority, especially in view of possible future research. In light of the literature review and the limitation (2), it would have been better to study the use of *schwa* and language inclusion as a sociolinguistic element only, without replicating the concluded experiment of Carlo Guastalla (2020).

5. The number of participants: although the number was sufficient for the qualitative analysis, a higher number would have provided further useful data for the research and better represented the population.

7. Conclusions

This work aims to contribute to the limited body of research on gender inclusion in language teaching, particularly in Italian FL/SL. This research focuses on examining the strategies of Italian FL/SL teachers in relation to textbooks, specifically exploring the language used for instructions, conveying job titles, and stereotypical input. Two main research questions and hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The first research question (RQ1) related to Sara Sabatini's dissertation (2022) and Chapter 3 of this current dissertation on inclusive strategies and rewritings. This question was designed to anticipate strategies that teachers might already use, such as feminisation and the use of neutral words, as well as inclusive job titles and avoiding stereotypical inputs. Nevertheless, this hypothesis was only partially confirmed as they returned diverse responses from teachers.

The second research question (RQ2) was designed to investigate a hypothetical introduction of the neutral vowel *schwa* into textbook instructions, and was related to Carlo Guastalla's experiment (2020). However, the associated hypothesis assumed that teachers would reject this hypothetical use and see *schwa* as a sociolinguistic phenomenon that should be taught at higher levels. This hypothesis was confirmed by the results, which revealed a strong rejection of *schwa* in instructions.

According to the data, the first hypothesis related to RQ1 and regarding the feminisation strategy and neutral-word use was found to be correct. The results of the questionnaire revealed that teachers prefer to express both masculine and feminine terms or use neutral words instead of the unmarked masculine. However, this finding varied depending on the age of the students and the type of exercise proposed. In fact, when dealing with children, teachers seemed to prefer feminisation strategies to neutral word use, and in exercises with pictures, teachers selected strategies based on visual input.

Regarding job titles, contrary to the first hypothesis, teachers were found to prefer to introduce inclusive use as a sociolinguistic element only. The limited stereotypical input associated with job titles did not allow the author to obtain enough data to confirm the hypothesis. Nevertheless, the idea of equalising job titles or even eliminating the word *casalinga* altogether was widespread among participants. However, it should be noted that this result is influenced by the majority of female teachers, and it is possible that the result may have been different if more male teachers had participated.

Although the analysis in Chapter 3 showed greater linguistic inclusion in textbooks compared to Sabatini's analysis (2022), more than half of the teachers admitted that the textbooks they adopted and used in the classroom are not inclusive and need to be updated, as shown in the graphic below.
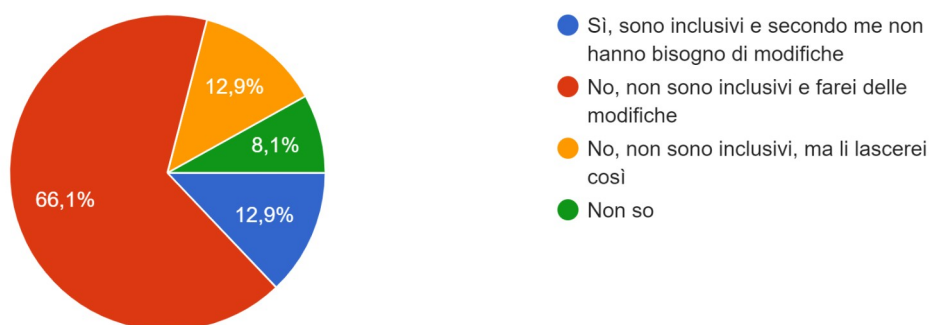
Graph 27: answers regarding teachers' textbooks.

Nevertheless, 7 participants indicated titles of textbooks they use and consider inclusive (see Appendix, Q12), which included the courses *Nuovissimo Progetto Italiano* and *Dieci*, confirming the author's analysis in Chapter 3.

The conclusions of this work continue with the author's closing remarks and recommendations for future research.

7.1 Closing Remarks

This thesis initially arose from a desire to explore the idea that languages are perceived differently by native speakers compared to non-native learners. For the author, a teacher of Italian to non-native Italian learners, it was interesting to overcome the assumption that the language of Italian is perceived equally by native speakers and by those who choose to learn Italian as a foreign or second language.

In fact, strategies such as linguistic redundancy are relatively new in the author's own teaching practice, and it has been difficult to challenge the long-held habits of using gender-appropriate language, in particular the unmarked masculine. As for the use of *schwa* or other inclusive methods

by the author, presently this is limited to social media and with people who know (or approve of the use of) the emerging inclusive language.

The author has been teaching Italian FL/SL since 2020, when the Covid-19 pandemic forced teachers and learners around the world into the virtual classroom. Using teaching materials available online, the author gave almost exclusively one-to-one lessons. This situation required adapting instructions to the specific needs of each learner. However, in such an environment it felt unnatural to have the student read the instructions on their own, so the author would typically explain the activities in her own words; as a result, many of her students have become indifferent to written instructions.

The circumstances are different in a literacy workshop setting, organised by schools and the social organisation for which the author worked. There, although students always read the instructions—as they are used to doing in class—they do not notice if there is a lack of gender inclusion in the language. This may be due to their immersion in the Italian language context or the fact that their culture of origin might often be more patriarchal than Italian culture.

As far as the author's experience teaching job titles, she has so far been limited to translating students' job titles into Italian. Furthermore, when working with school-aged students in a SL context, the focus of instruction is usually on understanding texts. However, in cases where job title learning exercises were specifically included, the author has recently had the opportunity to explain that certain terms are used more frequently than others, and that more recently adopted broader terms are still relatively unknown among native Italian speakers. This approach is consistent with some suggestions from the teachers interviewed for this study.

As for stereotyped input, especially when teaching school-age students, the author attempts to break gender stereotypes through readings or dictation of phrases such as "*la mamma lavora, il papà cucina*".

Finally, regarding the use of *schwa*, the author has thus far only discussed it with her intermediate-level adult students, thus reinforcing its limited use as a sociolinguistic element.

The author's direct experience supports the identified potential difficulties in using gender-inclusive language during teaching. This research was thus not a position statement, but rather an acknowledgment of the limitations and difficulties faced by FL/SL language teachers currently. Notwithstanding, the thesis contributes to worthwhile research on the subject of gender-inclusive language. For this reason, the following section provides a series of recommendations for possible future research.

7.2 Recommendations for Future Research

Despite the limitations explored in §6.4, there are several opportunities for future research to extend the value of the study's findings.

First, in order to delve deeper into the first research question of this thesis by taking certain variables into account, researchers could reuse the questionnaire created by the author. In particular, considering the responses from this research, the author suggests using as variables 1) the age of the students, 2) the FL/SL context; and 3) the teachers' experience. Nevertheless, it would be advisable to avoid the issue of *schwa* use in instructions because 1) it may be unfamiliar to some teachers and 2) it is believed that the data obtained from this research is more than sufficient without including this matter. Rather, exploration of the use of *schwa* is recommended in the classroom setting as a sociolinguistic phenomenon, alongside other teaching activities that have already been tested (see §4.3).

Secondly, there is an opportunity to conduct a further pilot test to make further modifications, for instance removing superfluous questions, and optimise future research.

Thirdly, considering the reflections of some participants in this study, an avenue for further exploration could be on the representation of immigrants in Italy, both in Italian FL and SL textbooks. However, in this scenario, it would be necessary to create a questionnaire *ex-novo*, so there is the possibility of introducing similar limitations to the research in this respect.

Lastly, instead of conducting research by interviewing teachers, it could be more productive to take a new perspective by directly interviewing students, discovering, for instance, how gender inclusion can influence motivation in studying certain foreign languages. In this scenario, previous research on motivation and new research on gender-inclusive language could be combined. This research would be beneficial in the context of Italian FL students. This choice is determined by the fact that those who learn a language in an SL context do so out of necessity (for instance, immigrants living in Italy). On the contrary, many people who decide to learn a foreign language abroad do so out of a personal interest and therefore have more choice. Hence, the author assumes that the motivations of students in an FL context may be more varied than those learning the language in an SL context.

It is important to consider that these are merely recommendations based on the author's hypotheses, and it is hoped they will provide useful ideas for future research.

Appendix: The Questionnaire

Il linguaggio inclusivo di genere nei manuali di italiano LS/L2

Gentile collega,
innanzitutto ti ringrazio per aver deciso di dedicare il tuo tempo al questionario che trovi di seguito.

Sono una laureanda in Scienze del Linguaggio presso Università Ca' Foscari Venezia e sto conducendo un'indagine per la mia tesi in Didattica dell'italiano LS/L2, in particolare sul *linguaggio inclusivo di genere nei manuali di italiano LS/L2*. Il questionario è indirizzato a insegnanti che attualmente insegnano italiano a stranieri o che lo hanno fatto in passato, ma anche a studenti di didattica dell'italiano LS/L2 che ancora non hanno esperienza.

La mia ricerca riguarderà in particolare i seguenti quesiti:

- La formulazione delle consegne rivolte alla classe, in particolare il contrasto fra l'uso del maschile esteso e l'uso di espressioni che coinvolgono anche il femminile;
- L'insegnamento dei nomi di professione rivolti alle donne e la conseguente creazione di stereotipi di genere negli esercizi, nei testi e nelle frasi d'esempio relativi al mondo del lavoro;
- L'ipotetica introduzione dell'uso della ə (*schwa*) nelle consegne.

I dati raccolti serviranno esclusivamente a scopo statistico e le risposte che riceverò saranno in forma anonima, non dovrai condividere né il tuo nome né il tuo indirizzo email. Non ci sono risposte giuste o sbagliate, ciò che è importante per me è la tua sincera opinione, mantenendo comunque un linguaggio rispettoso.
A parte qualche eccezione, sono quasi tutte domande a risposta multipla e ti ci vorranno circa 15 minuti per completarle.
Sperando che la mia ricerca abbia suscitato il tuo interesse, ti ringrazio per la collaborazione.

Un caro saluto,
Marianna Chilelli

* Indica una domanda obbligatoria

Per iniziare...

1. 1) Nella tua vita quotidiana usi un linguaggio inclusivo di genere? *

Contrassegna solo un ovale.

	1	2	3	4	5	
mai	○	○	○	○	○	sempre

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2. 2) Se lo usi, in quale modo e in quali contesti?

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

3. 3) Qual è la tua esperienza come insegnante di italiano LS/L2? *

    Contrassegna solo un ovale.

    ◯ Ho una formazione in didattica dell'italiano LS/L2, ma non ho esperienza di insegnamento   *Passa alla domanda 9.*

    ◯ Meno di 5 anni

    ◯ 5-10

    ◯ Più di 10 anni

    La tua esperienza di insegnamento e le tue classi

4. 4) In quale contesto insegni e/o hai insegnato? *

    Seleziona tutte le voci applicabili.

    ☐ LS (Corsi di lingua italiana all'estero, da remoto, etc…)

    ☐ L2 (Istituti comprensivi in Italia, CPIA, corsi di lingua italiana per immigrati, corsi di lingua italiana per studenti Erasmus, etc…)

5. 5) Mediamente, qual è la nazionalità dei tuoi studenti e delle tue studentesse? *

    _____

6. 6) Le tue classi sono composte da: *

    Seleziona tutte le voci applicabili.

    ☐ bambini (3-10 anni)
    ☐ preadolescenti (11-12)
    ☐ adolescenti (13-18)
    ☐ giovani adulti (19-35)
    ☐ adulti (36-65)
    ☐ pensionati (oltre i 65 anni)

7. 7) Le tue classi sono: *

    Seleziona tutte le voci applicabili.

    ☐ solo maschili
    ☐ prevalentemente maschili
    ☐ miste
    ☐ prevalentemente femminili
    ☐ solo femminili
    ☐ individuali (private, anche da remoto)

8. 8) Qual è il livello linguistico della tua classe? *

    Seleziona tutte le voci applicabili.

    ☐ Pre-A1
    ☐ A1-A2
    ☐ B1-B2
    ☐ C1-C2

Un linguaggio inclusivo per tuttə?

9. 9) Usi/useresti un linguaggio inclusivo di genere a prescindere dalla nazionalità,   *
    dall'età e dal livello delle tue studentesse e dei tuoi studenti?

    Contrassegna solo un ovale.

    ◯ sì
    ◯ no
    ◯ Altro: _____

Prova a rendere i manuali più inclusivi

In questa sezione troverai 10 screenshot presi da alcuni manuali di italiano LS/L2. In particolare, ti verrà chiesto di porre attenzione alle consegne, agli esercizi riguardanti i nomi di professione, e ai testi d'esempio stereotipati (sempre relativi ai nomi di professione). I manuali variano a seconda del tipo di apprendenti (bambini, ragazzi, adulti generici, immigrati).
Ribadisco che non vi è nessuna risposta giusta o sbagliata.
Buon lavoro!

10. A. Secondo te, questa consegna è inclusiva dal punto di vista del genere? *

Contrassegna solo un ovale.

◯ Sì

◯ No

◯ Non so

11. Se no, che modifiche faresti?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

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12. B. Secondo te, questa consegna è inclusiva dal punto di vista del genere? *

7 ASCOLTARE **Come si scrive?**
Lavora con un compagno (studente A e studente B). Ascoltate il dialogo.
Lo studente A <u>non</u> legge la parte dello studente B. Lo studente B <u>non</u> legge la parte dello studente A.
Lo studente B chiede le informazioni allo studente A, come nel modello. Poi lo studente A fa le domande. Eccetera.

- ■ Come ti chiami?
- ▼ Tommaso Ridolfi.
- ■ Come si scrive?
- ▼ TI - O - EMME - EMME - A - ESSE - O, ERRE - I - D - O - ELLE - EFFE - I.
- ■ Qual è il tuo indirizzo e-mail?
- ▼ tommaso@gmail.it

Ciao!

E 5

Contrassegna solo un ovale.

◯ Sì

◯ No

◯ Non so

13. Se no, che modifiche faresti?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

14.   C. Secondo te, questa consegna è inclusiva dal punto di vista del genere? *

Contrassegna solo un ovale.

◯ Sì

◯ No

◯ Non so

15.   Se no, che modifiche faresti?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

16. D. Secondo te, questa consegna è inclusiva dal punto di vista del genere? *
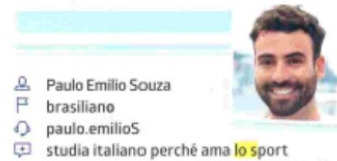
6. Studenti d'italiano

A. Leggi e osserva le schede di presentazione di alcuni studenti di italiano. Poi, con un compagno, trova le seguenti informazioni.

► La nazionalità di Paulo: _____
► Il motivo di studio di Janet: _____

► Il nome del ragazzo russo: _____
► Il contatto Skype di Ingrid: _____

   Janet Davis
   statunitense (americana)
   janet_janet93
   studia italiano perché ama il cinema

   Paulo Emilio Souza
   brasiliano
   paulo.emilioS
   studia italiano perché ama lo sport

   Ingrid Schuster
   tedesca
   ingrid.shuster
   studia italiano perché ama l'arte

   Boris Petrov
   russo
   borispet
   studia italiano perché ama la musica

Contrassegna solo un ovale.

◯ Sì

◯ No

◯ Non so

17. Se no, che modifiche faresti?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

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18. E. Secondo te, i nomi di professione presenti in questo esercizio sono inclusivi dal *
punto di vista del genere?

6 **ESERCIZIO** Occupazioni
Abbina le occupazioni alle immagini, come negli esempi.

Contrassegna solo un ovale.

- ◯ Sì
- ◯ No
- ◯ Non so

19. Se no, che modifiche faresti?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

20. F. Secondo te, i nomi di professione presenti in questo esercizio sono inclusivi dal   *
punto di vista del genere?

Alla scoperta

4 Completate ora la tabella con i nomi di professioni.

maschile	femminile
l'impiegato	l'impiegata
....	la cuoca
il segretario	....
....	la cameriera
....	la direttrice
il medico	il medico
l'assistente	....
il cantante	....
....	la giornalista

! La maggior parte dei nomi di
professioni ha una forma
maschile e una femminile.
Ci sono però professioni che
hanno solo la forma maschile:
Mario fa il medico.
Lucia fa il medico.

▶ *Qualche consiglio*

Imparare sempre i sostantivi con
il loro articolo determinativo.

Contrassegna solo un ovale.

◯ Sì

◯ No

◯ Non so

21. Se no, che modifiche faresti?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

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22. G. Secondo te, i nomi di professione presenti in questo esercizio sono inclusivi dal   *
punto di vista del genere?

2 / CHE LAVORO FA? GUARDA LE IMMAGINI E COLLEGA

Chiara fa il medico

Hamed fa il benzinaio

Luca fa il macellaio

Maria fa la parrucchiera

Paolo fa il muratore

Silvia fa la cassiera

GAS

Franco fa l'idraulico

Mustafa fa l'operaio

Contrassegna solo un ovale.

◯ Sì

◯ No

◯ Non so

23. Se no, che modifiche faresti?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

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24. H. Secondo te, i nomi di professione presenti in questo esercizio sono inclusivi   *
dal punto di vista del genere?

ESERCIZI

I **I mestieri. Cosa fanno queste persone?**
Unisci a ogni mestiere la frase corretta.

1) il postino
2) il commesso
3) lo spazzino
4) il barista
5) il pittore
6) il cantante
7) l'infermiere
8) il cuoco
9) il militare
10) la casalinga
11) l'impiegato
12) l'ingegnere
13) lo scrittore

a) scrive libri
b) lavora in casa
c) canta le canzoni
d) pulisce le strade
e) porta la posta
f) prepara da mangiare
g) lavora in ufficio
h) serve i clienti di un negozio
i) lavora in un ospedale
l) progetta macchine
m) lavora nel bar
n) dipinge quadri
o) esegue gli ordini

Contrassegna solo un ovale.

◯ Sì

◯ No

◯ Non so

25. Se no, che modifiche faresti?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

26. I. Secondo te, questo testo è stereotipato dal punto di vista del genere? *

Mina	Anna, tu non sei di Roma, no?
Anna	No, sono di Firenze, ma adesso abito a Roma perché mio padre e mia madre sono qui.
Mina	Lavorano a Roma?
Anna	Sì.
Mina	E che lavoro fanno?
Anna	Mio padre fa il giornalista in un'agenzia. Mia madre fa la segretaria, lavora in uno studio per un architetto. E i tuoi genitori?
Mina	Mio padre lavora in un ristorante. È cuoco. Mia madre fa l'insegnante di inglese in una scuola privata. ... Marco, come sei silenzioso! I tuoi genitori lavorano? Che fanno?
Marco	Ehm... Mia madre non lavora. Sta a casa, è casalinga. E mio padre è farmacista.

Contrassegna solo un ovale.

◯ Sì

◯ No

◯ Non so

27. Se sì, che modifiche faresti?

_____

_____

_____

_____

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28. L. Secondo te, questi esempi sono stereotipati dal punto di vista del genere? *

Possessivi e articoli

Mio marito è albanese.
Tua sorella non viene con noi.
Signora Rossi, Suo figlio è tornato?
Questa è Anna, suo padre è Mario.
Dov'è Sergio? Sua nonna sta male.
Nostra nipote va all'università.
Vostro zio è in America?

Normalmente non usiamo mai l'articolo prima di aggettivi possessivi che si riferiscono a sostantivi singolari che indicano persone della famiglia: padre, madre, nonno, nonna, zio, zia, fratello, sorella, cugino, cugina, ecc.

I miei genitori sono in pensione.
I suoi figli vivono lontano.
Signora, dove sono le Sue figlie?

La sua nonna materna è di Roma
Il mio zio di Napoli arriva domani.

Ciao Anna! Dov'è il tuo papà ?
La nostra mamma non lavora.

La tua sorellina va a scuola?
Il mio cuginetto ha 3 anni.

Il loro fratello ha 3 anni.
I loro fratelli sono ingegneri.

Usiamo l'articolo con:

a) i nomi di famiglia al plurale: genitori, figli, figlie, nipoti, mariti, mogli, ecc.

b) i nomi di famiglia determinati: nonna materna, zio di Napoli, ecc.

c) i nomi di famiglia colloquiali: papà, mamma, ecc.

d) i nomi di famiglia alterati: sorellina, fratellino, cuginetto, ecc.

e) l'aggettivo possessivo loro (singolare e plurale).

Contrassegna solo un ovale.

◯ Sì

◯ No

◯ Non so

29. Se sì, che modifiche faresti?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

30. 10) Secondo te, i manuali che hai adottato per le tue lezioni o i manuali che   *
conosci sono linguisticamente inclusivi dal punto di vista del genere? Faresti
qualche modifica?

Contrassegna solo un ovale.

⬭ Sì, sono inclusivi e secondo me non hanno bisogno di modifiche
Passa alla domanda 32.

⬭ No, non sono inclusivi e farei delle modifiche   *Passa alla domanda 33.*

⬭ No, non sono inclusivi, ma li lascerei così   *Passa alla domanda 31.*

⬭ Non so   *Passa alla domanda 33.*

Dimmi la tua opinione

Sentiti libero/a di dare le tue motivazioni alla domanda precedente.

31. 11) Perché non faresti nessuna modifica? *

Seleziona tutte le voci applicabili.

☐ Non saprei in che modo modificarli
☐ Non mi interessa l'inclusione linguistica di genere
☐ La lingua italiana è fatta così e non c'è motivo di modificarla
☐ Altro: _____

Passa alla domanda 33.

Un consiglio da parte tua

32. 12) Elenca i titoli e le case editrici dei manuali che usi e che hai trovato inclusivi   *
dal punto di vista del genere.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Passa alla domanda 33.

Avvocato donna, avvocata o avvocatessa?

Cosa usi per parlare di una **donna** che svolge le seguenti professioni?

33.   13.A) Nella tua vita quotidiana, quale di questi termini usi per parlare di   *
       una **donna** che svolge le seguenti professioni?

Seleziona tutte le voci applicabili.

	Sì	No
L'avvocato	☐	☐
L'avvocato donna	☐	☐
La donna avvocato	☐	☐
L'avvocatessa	☐	☐
L'avvocata	☐	☐

34.   13.B) Nella tua vita quotidiana, quale di questi termini usi per parlare di   *
       una **donna** che svolge le seguenti professioni?

Seleziona tutte le voci applicabili.

	Sì	No
L'architetto	☐	☐
L'architetto donna	☐	☐
La donna architetto	☐	☐
L'architetta	☐	☐

35. 13.C) Nella tua vita quotidiana, quale di questi termini usi per parlare di   *
una **donna** che svolge le seguenti professioni?

Seleziona tutte le voci applicabili.

	Sì	No
Il sindaco	☐	☐
La sindaco	☐	☐
Il sindaco donna	☐	☐
La donna sindaco	☐	☐
La sindaca	☐	☐

36. 13.D) Nella tua vita quotidiana, quale di questi termini usi per parlare di   *
una **donna** che svolge le seguenti professioni?

Seleziona tutte le voci applicabili.

	Sì	No
Il ministro	☐	☐
La ministro	☐	☐
Il ministro donna	☐	☐
La donna ministro	☐	☐
La ministra	☐	☐

37. 13.E) Nella tua vita quotidiana, quale di questi termini usi per parlare di   *
     una **donna** che svolge le seguenti professioni?

Seleziona tutte le voci applicabili.

	Sì	No
L'ingegnere	☐	☐
L'ingegnere donna	☐	☐
La donna ingegnere	☐	☐
L'ingegnera	☐	☐

38. 13.F) Nella tua vita quotidiana, quale di questi termini usi per parlare di   *
     una **donna** che svolge le seguenti professioni?

Seleziona tutte le voci applicabili.

	Sì	No
Il presidente	☐	☐
La presidente	☐	☐
Il presidente donna	☐	☐
La donna presidente	☐	☐
La presidentessa	☐	☐

39. 13.G) Nella tua vita quotidiana, quale di questi termini usi per parlare di una **donna** che svolge le seguenti professioni?   *

Seleziona tutte le voci applicabili.

	Sì	No
Il medico	☐	☐
La medico	☐	☐
Il medico donna	☐	☐
La donna medico	☐	☐
La dottoressa	☐	☐
La medica	☐	☐

40. 13.H) Nella tua vita quotidiana, quale di questi termini usi per parlare di una **donna** che svolge le seguenti professioni?   *

Seleziona tutte le voci applicabili.

	Sì	No
La studente	☐	☐
La studentessa	☐	☐

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41.   14) Nelle tue lezioni di italiano LS/L2 insegni/insegneresti i nomi di professione   *
       inclusivi o come li userebbe la maggior parte dei madrelingua?

       Contrassegna solo un ovale.

       ( ) insegno/insegnerei i nomi di professione inclusivi per riflettere sulla parità di
       genere nella società contemporanea (per esempio, il medico/la medica)

       ( ) preferisco/preferirei insegnare i nomi di professione come li userebbe la maggior
       parte dei madrelingua per mantenere la coerenza con le pratiche linguistiche comuni
       (per esempio, il medico sia per uomini che donne)

       ( ) non saprei

       ( ) Altro: _____

Ciao a tuttə e benvenutə in questa nuova lezione di italiano!

Se sei una persona che normalmente naviga sui social avrai sicuramente notato tra le
lettere dell'alfabeto latino anche una nuova vocale: la ə.
Oltre a essere un suono vocalico presente in alcune lingue, tra cui l'inglese, è diventato
anche un nuovo simbolo inclusivo, sia per mitigare il maschile esteso sia per rivolgerci alle
persone non binarie, perlomeno nella comunicazione scritta.
Sembrerebbe quindi che la ə sia entrata a far parte della quotidianità, o comunque sui
social, che spesso vengono utilizzati dagli apprendenti per immergersi nell'italiano
autentico anche fuori dall'aula.
Ma se la ə entrasse anche nell'aula di italiano LS/L2?

42.   15) Qui di seguito troverai alcune considerazioni espresse da esperti del settore *
       riguardanti l'uso della ə che mi sono sembrate collegabili alla glottodidattica.
       Seleziona le affermazioni che approvi:

       Seleziona tutte le voci applicabili.

       [ ] L'uso della schwa ha uno scarso impatto negativo sulla comprensione dei testi.
       [ ] Rispetto ad altri simboli inclusivi, la schwa, essendo un suono vocalico, ha il
       vantaggio di essere pronunciata.
       [ ] Al posto di usare la schwa basterebbe formulare espressioni estese (per esempio, gli
       studenti e le studentesse) oppure usare parole collettive (per esempio, la classe).
       [ ] L'uso della schwa rappresenta una difficoltà per dislessici, sordi e ciechi, stranieri,
       individui di bassa alfabetizzazione, anziani.
       [ ] Per utilizzare la schwa serve prima di tutto un'impalcatura (la scuola).
       [ ] La schwa rappresenta una svolta positiva per un gruppo ristretto di parlanti, in quanto
       è un segno e un suono che nella lingua italiana non esiste, se non in alcuni dialetti.
       Penalizza, quindi, chi non la conosce.

43. 16) Se tu dovessi creare un manuale da zero, scriveresti delle consegne di   *
    questo tipo? "*Lavora con unə compagnə. Lə studentə A legge la prima colonna,
    lə studentə B la seconda*".

    Contrassegna solo un ovale.

    ◯ Sì
    ◯ No
    ◯ Sì, ma solo con un certo tipo di apprendenti
    ◯ Non so
    ◯ Altro: _____

44. Se nella domanda precedente hai risposto *Sì/Sì, ma solo con un certo tipo di
    apprendenti*, come la leggeresti rivolgendoti alla classe?

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

45. 17.A) Quale di queste consegne useresti? *

    Seleziona tutte le voci applicabili.

    ☐ Parlane con un compagno
    ☐ Parlane con un/una compagno/a
    ☐ Parlane con una/un compagna/o
    ☐ Parlane con un compagno o una compagna
    ☐ Parlane con una compagna o un compagno
    ☐ Parlatene in coppia
    ☐ Parlane con un* compagn*
    ☐ Altro: _____

46. 17.B) Quale di queste consegne useresti? *

Seleziona tutte le voci applicabili.

☐ Parlane con i tuoi compagni
☐ Parlane con i tuoi/le tue compagni/e
☐ Parlane con le tue/i tuoi compagne/i
☐ Parlane con i tuoi compagni e le tue compagne
☐ Parlane con le tue compagne e i tuoi compagni
☐ Parlane con il resto della classe
☐ Parlane con lɜ tuɜ compagnɜ

☐ Altro: _____

47. 18) Hai qualche commento o riflessione riguardante a un'ipotetica introduzione   *
della ə nella didattica dell'italiano LS/L2?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Ancora un piccolo sforzo...

48. Hai qualche commento o riflessione generale riguardante il tema del
questionario?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

49.   19) Quanti anni hai? *

Contrassegna solo un ovale.

○ 20-29

○ 30-39

○ 40-49

○ 50 o oltre

50.   20) Ti identifichi come... *

Contrassegna solo un ovale.

○ uomo

○ donna

○ altro

○ preferisco non rispondere

Analysed Textbooks

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