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**Exploring plurilingual education practices and
language policies in migration: a case study
on Bangladeshi second generation children
attending Italian pre-school services**

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the linguistic plurilingual education of second-generation children with a migrant background in pre-school educational settings in Italy, focusing on the territory of Venice. Defined as a child born in a place in which their parents have migrated to, they often speak a language at home different from the local language, Italian. This thesis aims to investigate whether integrating migrant families, particularly from the Bangladeshi community, and their native language in the school environment could enhance the school experience for these children. The thesis will be thus divided into three parts; firstly, an overview of migration in Italy and its impact on education focusing on the Bangladeshi community in Venice; secondly, research conducted in a pre-school involving Bangladeshi children and their mothers and thirdly, proposals for plurilingual lessons in pre-school. The findings of the research highlight the benefits of including families and their L1 in pre-school, promoting better integration and future opportunities for these children.

INTRODUCTION

The present thesis aims to analyze the linguistic education of second generation children with migratory background enrolled in pre-school services, a very current and important phenomenon in Italy, especially in the province of Venice, the area this thesis will primarily focus on. A second generation child is defined as “a person who was born in and is residing in a country that at least one of their parents previously entered as a migrant” (Migration and Home Affairs, n.d.). The peculiarity of this new generation of children is that often the L1 spoken at home is the language of the country their parents emigrated from, which is different from the main language of the country they live, Italian in the case of this study (Favaro, G., 2010). The focus of this thesis will precisely be on language and the peculiar and unique linguistic repertoire of these children which begins to evolve and change when they start going to school (Favaro, G., 2010). School, which can become an obstacle for migrant families, as traditions, teaching methods and, especially languages, can differ. The present study, thus, aims at answering the research question of whether the inclusion inside the school environment of the mothers and families along with their L1 in contexts of migration could benefit both families and children for a better experience in education and for brighter future perspectives for this peculiar generation of children. For this purpose, the thesis will be divided in three parts. A first chapter will be dedicated to give an overview of the phenomenon of migration in Italy. The data from Italian National Statistics Institute will be displayed to narrate the phenomenon. Also, possible motives behind migration and how it is regulated in Italy nowadays will be laid out. Narrowing the focus, the following paragraph will present a specific community living in the territory of Venice, the Bangladeshi community. What follows then is a chapter dedicated to second generation children in education, explained using Italian national guidelines, especially the ones issued by the MIUR, the Italian Ministry of Education, Universities and Research, that give useful guidelines for foreign students in education. These will be compared to Bangladeshi policies, to show the differences in how education is led and, therefore, what obstacles these migrant families might encounter. To try answering the research question above mentioned, the second part of this thesis will be dedicated to a research carried out in six classes of a pre-school located in the province of Venice. In a first part of the research, ten

children from the Bangladeshi community and their mothers have been observed during a laboratory which consisted in bringing the mothers in the classrooms, watch a nursery rhyme in Bangla and do some activities. A second part of the research will be dedicated to observing the children in normal classroom activities with the teachers, to have the whole picture laid out and see how they behave without their mothers. For both mothers and children specific observation sheets were used to mark communicative acts. The data will then be analyzed in a following chapter, divided between the observations during the laboratory and the ones of normal school activities. The results, which will also be outlined in a dedicated chapter, gave positive feedback, showing the usefulness of bringing at school the children's mothers and their L1. Finally, having been analyzing plurilingual classes in a pre-school service, a final third part for this thesis was outlined. It consists of a proposal for a plurilingual lesson to carry out in pre-school education.

PART ONE

Migration and plurilingual education policies

1.1 Migration in Italy: a focus on the Bangladeshi community in the territory of Venice

1.1.1 Statistics, main communities and the Italian regulations

Migration nowadays is a very impending phenomenon challenging national dynamics all around the world. The focus of this first paragraph will be to shed some light on migration in Italy, how it is regulated and how it can be challenged. ISTAT, the Italian National Institute of Statistics, the first January of every year updates the main statistics regarding the Italian population, such as birth rates, families, marital unions, and also data concerning migration. As for foreign residents in Italy on January 1st, 2024, they are a total of 5.307.598. They are composed of 2.627.415 males and 2.680.183 females. Since the total population in Italy on January 1st, 2024, according to ISTAT as well, is of 58.989.749, it can be declared that a 9% of the total Italian population nowadays has migratory background. To give a detailed overview of all foreign residents in Italy and how they are distributed in the peninsula, Table 1 with all extrapolated ISTAT data was created on Excel. It is important to state that all the data taken from the ISTAT website are estimated. Areas of Italy divided into north-west, north-east, center, south and islands are highlighted in green. All regions, divided in the areas above mentioned, are highlighted in light blue. Finally, only Venice was inserted out of all the provinces of each region, since it is the one this thesis and the research will focus on. Concerning the territory this thesis will analyze; we can see that in the Veneto region there are a total of 504.958 foreign residents, the fourth out of twenty Italian regions with a bigger population of foreign residents, overcome only by Lombardia (1.216.906), Lazio (647.759) and Emilia-Romagna (564.793). Narrowing even more the focus to the province of Venice, there are 89.126 foreign residents in total. As for the main migrant communities nowadays, they are shaped and determined especially for the conflicts happening all around the world. As for a press note concerning migrant communities in Italy on January 1st, 2023, in fact, the Ukrainian community increased up to 66,5% compared to the previous year, from 230 thousand to over 383 thousand (Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali, 2023a). This due to the Russian-Ukrainian conflict which is happening from February 2022.

Table 1. Foreign residents on January 1st, 2024, according to ISTAT

Dataset:Stranieri residenti al 1° gennaio				
Tipo di indicatore demografico		popolazione al 1° gennaio		
Età		totale		
Selezione periodo		2024		
Sesso		maschi	femmine	totale
Territorio				
Italia		2627415	2680183	5307598
Nord-ovest		901363	913744	1815107
Piemonte		214031	219366	433397
Valle d'Aosta / Vallée d'Aoste		4069	4594	8663
Liguria		79010	77131	156141
Lombardia		604253	612653	1216906
Nord-est		632083	661691	1293774
Veneto		247561	257397	504958
Venezia		42937	46189	89126
Provincia autonoma Bolzano		26898	28598	55495
Provincia autonoma Trento		22863	24142	47005
Friuli-Venezia Giulia		59903	61619	121522
Emilia-Romagna		274858	289935	564793
Centro		633276	668020	1301296
Toscana		208646	221207	429853
Umbria		40959	48778	89737
Marche		64531	69416	133947
Lazio		319140	328619	647759
Sud		327955	316248	644203
Abruzzo		41586	45479	87065
Molise		7440	6333	13773
Campania		134963	130521	265484
Puglia		78012	71468	149480
Basilicata		14065	11923	25988
Calabria		51889	50524	102413
Isole		132738	120480	253218
Sicilia		107501	92839	200340
Sardegna		25237	27641	52878

Dati estratti il 01 set 2024 08:58 UTC (GMT) da I.Stat

It is essential to point out that, since the document above mentioned is dated January 1st, 2023, it does not take into account the recent Israel-Hamas conflict that began on October 7th, 2023 (Britannica, 2023). Together with the Ukrainian community, an increase was noticed in the community of Bangladesh (+7,7%), Perú (+6,9%) and Pakistan with an increase of 4,3% (Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali, 2023a). Moreover, 2022 has been so far the year with a record of residence permits issued for migrants, a total of 449.118, increased to the 85,9% compared to

the previous year. This increase was found especially for Ukrainians (+1.556,6%), due to the reason previously explained, also Peruvians (+77,4%), Bangladeshi (+53,6%) and Egyptians (+47%) (Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali, 2023a). Beyond residence permits, there has also been an increase in the acquisition of the Italian citizenship, specifically 194.071, an 87,5% more than the previous year. One third of this number is composed of people originally from Albania and Morocco, followed by non-EU India, Moldova, Egypt and Bangladesh (Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali, 2023a). Here it is believed essential to explain what the differences between residence permit and citizenship in the Italian soil are. According to the Italian Ministry of the Interior, a residence permit is a document issued by the police headquarters of the province in which the applicant resides. It gives the applicant the legal right to live in the Italian soil, it can last various months according to the purpose of the stay, which can be, among many, for leisure, to study, to work or for family reasons as well. If a resident has lived in Italy for over 5 years and has a regular and valid residence permit, they have the right to ask for a residence permit which in Italian is defined *Permesso di soggiorno UE per soggiornanti di lungo periodo*. Once it was defined as an unlimited residence permit, but now it has to be renewed every 10 years (Ministero dell'Interno *et al.*, 2022). This “unlimited” residence permit for many could seem like a sort of citizenship. Indeed, there are some rights which are recognized to both residence permits, and citizens, which are mainly civil and social rights. Civil rights guarantee individual freedoms like the freedom of speech, thought, faith and receive justice (Zanfrini, 2013a). Social rights, instead, protect the right to wealth, social well-being, and the protection from risks and unexpected events like an illness or the loss of a job (Zanfrini, 2013a). However, Zanfrini (2013a) continues by arguing that rights that are not guaranteed to people without a citizenship are the political ones, thus the right to vote and also to be elected to represent the state. Moreover, concerning citizenship, in Italy people receive it through the *jus sanguinis*, meaning that citizenship is passed down to the children born with parents that possess a citizenship. For migrants or people residing in Italy, but not born from parents with Italian citizenship, there is one main distinction:

“Citizens of other European Union Member States who have been lawfully resident in the territory of the Italian Republic for at least four years can apply for Italian citizenship, which may be granted by decree of the President of the Republic, on the proposal of the Minister of the Interior” (Ministero dell’Interno, 2024).

Whereas for non-EU citizens it can be granted by the same institutions but only after ten years of living lawfully in the Italian soil. There are, however, many exceptions for the time needed to acquire citizenship for example if you have Italian descendants, like grandparents who have Italian citizenship. This constitutes a great distinction between Italy and other EU nations, which give citizenship either through the *jus soli*, thus by being born in that nation, or the *jus domicili*, after living in that country for a certain time (Zanfrini, 2013a). Experts on this field also gave a name to this phenomenon happening in Italy: *denizenship*, which describes that status between citizen and foreigner, you live and work in a country but are denied to be recognized all rights as others through citizenship (Zanfrini, 2013a). Recently, an argument developed in Italy proposing to modify the laws for the acquisition of citizenship. In particular, these last months the debate has revolved around whether inserting the right for the *Jus scholae*. This would establish Italian citizenship for children with migratory background born in Italy, the so called second generation of migrants, or that moved in the country before twelve years of age that attended school in Italy for at least 5 years (Save the Children, 2024). This debate is surely the result of an increase of children born in Italy but with parents lacking citizenship because they migrated and still have not fulfilled the request of having lived in Italy for ten years. Without a citizenship, as we have seen, their children, even if born in Italy, are not citizens. This proposal of changing the laws for obtaining citizenship was done because it could really impact children that are not recognized as citizens in the place where they first saw the light (Save the Children, 2024). It could be argued that migration, especially in the last decades, has profoundly challenged the original concepts of nation and citizen and the fundamental rights that these words guarantee to people (Zanfrini, 2013b). A broader and probably also risky hypothesis proposed by Zanfrini (2013a) would be to redefine the concept of citizenship in a post-national or transnational logic, or even propose a multicultural citizenship, which would mean recognizing the identity of each individual in the modern global

society we live in nowadays, where borders between nations are slowly changing in meaning.

1.1.2 Bangladeshi history and possible reasons for migrating

For this next paragraph the focus will be narrowed to the specific community of Bangladeshi in Europe. Understanding the history of Bangladesh will be crucial to subsequently acknowledge the main reasons for the population's *diaspora*, as Della Puppa (2017) defines it. Bangladesh history began, in fact as being part of the Indian colony controlled by Great Britain. At the time its name was not Bangladesh, but it was part of Pakistan, which was itself divided into East Pakistan and West Pakistan as visible in Figure 1. The region of East Pakistan was known as Bengal, and its eastern part is what we know nowadays as Bangladesh (Della Puppa, 2017). As one might expect, "The geographic separation of the two wings of Pakistan by 2000 kilometres facilitated the formation of a separate Bengali identity" (Hossain, 2015, p. 373). Moreover, Della Puppa (2017) adds that even inside the Bengali region two distinct zones were developing due to different faiths; east with a majority of Muslim people (today's Bangladesh), whereas in the west part the Hindu religion prevailed. British rule, with the strategy of *divide et impera*, forced this division even more by separating geographically Bengal in two parts as Figure 2 shows (Della Puppa, 2017).

Figure 1. Division of Pakistan during British rule (Arnold, n.d.)



Figure 2. Religious division of Bengal during British rule (Della Puppa, 2017)



In 1947, after the Second World War, British colonizers gave independency to India, and subsequently, to the provinces of East and West Pakistan. On August 14th, 1947, two independent governments were divided: the Dominion of India and the Dominion of Pakistan, the latter including West and East Bengal (Arnold, n.d.). These two Dominion remained until the drafting of two Constitutions, which defined two republics: the Indian Republic in 1950 with a majority of Hindu people and, in 1956, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, where Muslim was the main faith. This division war highly suffered, almost on million lives were taken, many people moving from both East and West Pakistan to India and vice versa (Della Puppa, 2017). However, the situation did not improve after the Republics were defined. On the contrary, a general discontent was developing particularly in the Bengal region because they were governed by an elite group sited in West Pakistan which, as explained before, were 2000 kilometers apart. The dissatisfaction exasperated in 1952 after “West Pakistan’s (present-day Pakistan) imposition of Urdu as national language in East Pakistan, today’s Bangladesh, where Bengali was by far the most widely spoken language” (Hamid, 2019, p.1). Language can in fact be considered as a strong symbol holding together a nation’s identity. Therefore, being deprived of it, the population of East Pakistan on the 21st of February started a pacific protest by the University of Dhaka. Specifically, the protest was started by a group of Bangladeshi students belonging to the Language Movement. What began as a

pacific protest unfortunately turned into a violent protest, due to “amidst indiscriminate firing by government forces” (Hamid, 2019, p.1, 2). The five most famous names of “language martyrs” (Hamid, 2019, p. 2) are Salam, Barkat, Rafiq, Jabbar and Shafiur. To this day, February 21st, 1952, is declared as *Shaheed Dibosh*, meaning Language martyrs’ day. It is studied at school and remembered as the event that united the Bangladeshi population once for all (Della Puppa, 2017). Even UNESCO, at the General Conference of 1999, decided to declare February 21st as International Mother Language Day to honor the struggles of the Bangladeshi population. After February 21st, 1952, an independentist movement called the Awami League was formed which “led the autonomy movement in East Pakistan in the 1960s and later the independence war that created the present Bangladesh” (Hossain, 2015, p. 369). In fact, in 1970 at the national elections, East Pakistan supported the Awami League. As a consequence, the Pakistani forces tried to contrast this support militarily, which led millions of Bangladeshi people seeking protection in India. India supported the Bangladeshi population and, to honor the *Shaheed Dibosh*, declared ceasefire to Pakistan (Della Puppa, 2017). In 1971 East Pakistan, being liberated from the control of West Pakistan, declared its independence as People’s Republic of Bangladesh. Bangla-desh meaning, indeed, place of the people who speak Bangla, to remember what the population fought for (Della Puppa, 2017). Figure 3 shows Bangladesh today. This can be defined as the most striking event in Bangladeshi history to this day (Hossain, 2015). However, to this day, Bangladesh has not been able to gain political stability. The two main parties that dominate the political scenario are the Awami League, and the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP). These two parties are not able to cooperate for the nation’s sake for one main reason, as Hossain (2015) claims:

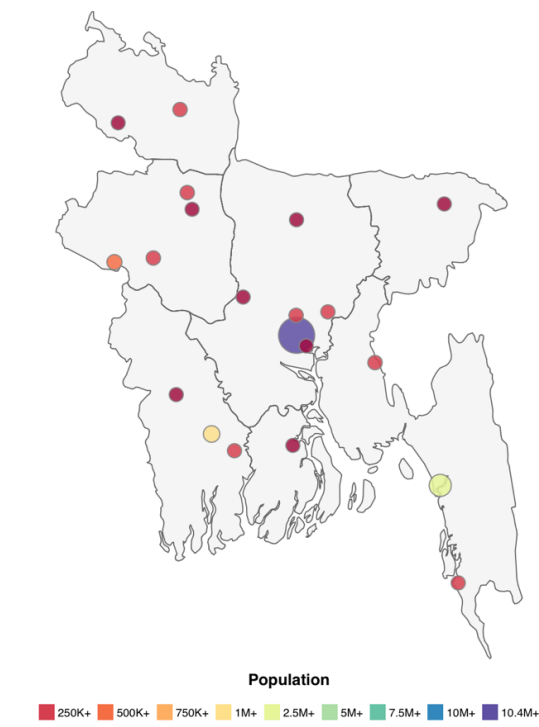
“[...] the Awami League claims its legitimacy for establishing hegemony over the polity because of the party’s leadership in the autonomy movement and later the independence war, while the BNP claims legitimacy as the defender of Muslim identity, culture and traditions and the country’s territorial integrity and sovereignty.” (p. 369).

Figure 3. Bangladesh in today's maps (WorldAtlas, n.d.)



This national instability in the last few decades lead many Bangladeshi people to move from the countryside to urban city centers. However, these cities became incapable to host too many people. Figure 4 taken from the World Population Review, shows the highest concentration of people in the territory, the highest being indeed the purple circle, which is Dhaka, the capital, with a population of 14.4 million people. This incapacity to host too many people led to another move, this time internationally (Della Puppa, 2017). It is thus, around the 80s that many Bangladeshis reached Europe to escape the instability in their home country (Della Puppa & Morad, 2019). A comparative analysis of Bangladeshi migrants into European countries showed, indeed, that the main factors leading Bangladeshi to migrate are “attain financial solvency, reduce/overcome debts, desire to improve income, and savings, the desire to escape poverty and unemployment at home, the desire to get out of debt” (Mannan & Krueger, 2002, p. 41). The main reason for Bangladeshi to choose precisely Europe to migrate is mainly due to the economic crisis of the first decade of this century, which impacted especially European countries, and led to an increase availability of labor work (Della Puppa & Morad, 2019).

Figure 4. Bangladesh population density map (World Population Review, 2024)



However, international migration for the Bangladeshi population, as well as many other migrant communities, must not be seen as a single event, just moving from Bangladesh to one country and establishing there. In today's globalized world it has to be seen as Della Puppa & King (2018) define *onward migration*, a plurality of migration paths. This is a phenomenon especially happening in Europe, with migrants coming from non-EU countries. The reason is that acquiring citizenship in one EU-country means possessing an EU citizenship. Thus, migrants can easily to any other European countries without coming across major difficulties (Della Puppa & Morad, 2019). The European Parliament, in fact, guarantees fundamental freedoms of EU citizens, one of them being the free movement of workers, describing the right of any EU citizen to work in another European Union country and be treated equally, without any discrimination (Kennedy, 2024). This is one of the many freedoms of European Union citizens. In the next paragraph, a more in-depth focalization on Italy will be made, highlighting reasons for Bangladeshi people to establish specifically in this European country, leading afterwards to focus on the Bangladeshi community in the territory of Venice, as it is where the research part took place.

1.1.3 The Bangladeshi community in Italy: the territory of Venice

It was around 1980s that a considerable amount Bangladeshi migrants arrived in the Italian territory. This was due to many restrictions imposed by other European Countries, which made it more difficult for migrants to reach certain European countries (Della Puppa & Morad, 2019). As previously explained, Europe was undergoing an economic crisis which led to an increase availability of labor work. Italy was no exception, since it offered “relatively good working and wage conditions by virtue of a growing labour market” (Della Puppa & Morad, 2019, p. 476). Migrating to Europe is not so cheap for migrants, especially compared to other parts of the world like the Middle East, therefore Bangladeshi migrating to Italy must have been not from the poorest classes. In fact, a survey from 2002 shows how migrants were mainly from Bangladeshi middle and upper-middle class, from families that had indeed the possibility to invest for migration. Table 2 taken from the survey shows, in fact, that the majority Bangladeshi had a high level of education. “This finding stands in sharp contrast to the general perception that most labor migrants are poorly educated or illiterate” (Mannan & Krueger, 2002, p. 39). Table 2 shows other data concerning Bangladeshi migrants such as age, marital status and household size. As for Italy specifically, Della Puppa & Morad (2019) confirm this data, claiming that the first generation of migrants arriving to Italy was mainly composed of “young bachelors” (p. 476) that decide to migrate in order to improve their social position. Improving their social status means downgrading to migrants, seen as a process through which young adults are made men. This is confirmed by some interviews carried out in Della Puppa & Morad (2019), such as the one of Mujib:

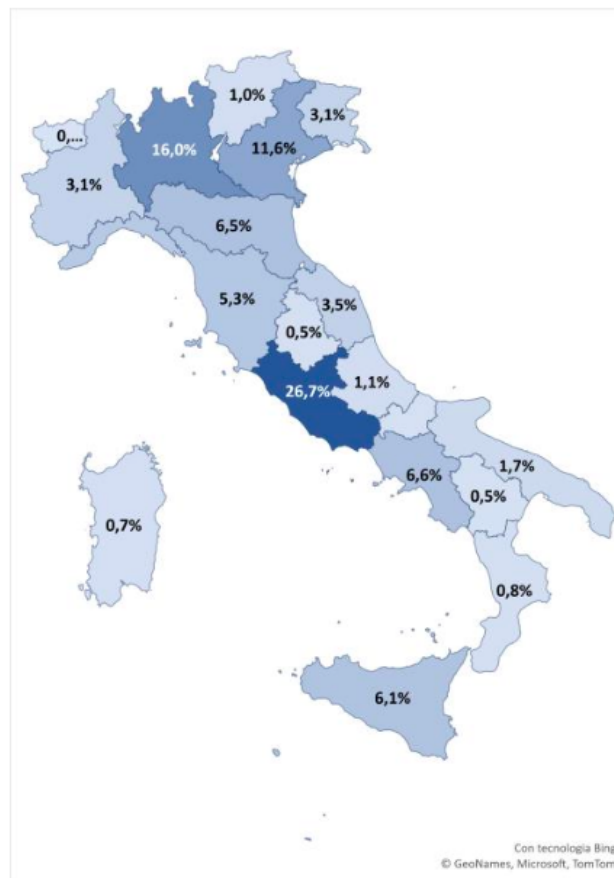
I left my country because I wanted to be someone, I wanted to establish my life totally with my trying. What is the aim of every man? [...] I had the desire to be a success a man, to be in a good position. I don't have the desire to be too rich; I just have the desire to be a success man from my own and not from my mother and father. (p. 477)

Table 2. Description of Bangladeshi migrants in European countries including Italy (Mannan & Krueger, 2002, p. 39)

Descriptions	Aspirant	Returnee
Age		
21-30	59.0	4.0
31-40	22.0	57.0
41-50	9.0	20.0
51-60	5.0	13.0
61-70	3.0	6.0
71 and above	2.0	0.0
Education Level		
No any formal education	10.0	17.0
SSC	30.0	17.0
HSC	56.0	55.0
Graduated	3.0	8.0
Post-graduated	1.0	3.0
Marital Status		
Married	61.0	20.0
Unmarried	37.0	77.0
Others	2.0	3.0
Household Size		
Upto-3	9.0	16.0
4-6	64.0	51.0
7-9	20.0	22.0
10 and above	7.0	11.0
Earning Person		
Parents	43.0	26.0
Sibling	29.0	62.0
Self	3.0	4.0
Spouse	18.0	5.0
Others	7.0	3.0

Bangladeshi coming to Italy, usually receive the residence permit, as was previously explained, which gives the migrant the legal right to live in the Italian soil (Ministero dell’Interno *et al.*, 2022). Moreover, specifically for Bangladeshi migrants, the Italian residence permit gives them an “element of class distinction” (Della Puppa & Morad, 2019, p. 478) giving them the opportunity to return to their home country to find someone to marry. The residence permit, in fact, allows them to marry women from a higher social status than theirs, this thanks indeed to the great importance being a migrant is considered in Bangladesh. It has so much distinction that there is a Bangladeshi word designed to define “those who went abroad” which is *probashi* (Della Puppa & Morad, 2019). Bangladeshi migrants usually decide Rome as their destination, being the capital the feel like they could find more opportunities there. In fact, as to January 1st, 2023, the Lazio region, holds the majority of Bangladeshi people, 26,7%. Only Rome itself hosts the 24,4% out of the 26,7%. (Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali, 2023a). Figure 5 shows the percentages of Bangladeshi people in each Italian region.

Figure 5. Overview of Bangladeshi population legally residing in Italy as to January 1st, 2023 (Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali, 2023a, p.3)



After Lazio, the regions with the highest presence of Bangladeshi people are Lombardy, with a 16% and Veneto, with 11,6% of Bangladeshi residents. Another striking information is that out of the whole Bangladeshi population, there is a great imbalance of gender presence; men account for the 72% whereas women the remaining 28%. Moreover, the age is very young; 57.8% is under 35 years old (Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali, 2023b). Both these facts could be connected to what was said before from Della Puppa & Morad (2019) about the importance of migration for young males to get prestige and improve in social status. As for the residence permits issued for Bangladeshi migrant, 44,5% are for family reasons, thus representing the main reason to migrate to Italy. Work is the second most important reason, with a 31,7% and finally, permits to being grant some kind of protection is the third main reason, with a 21,7% (Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali, 2023b). About working permits and thus, concerning employment, there is a gap between men and women, with a rate of

respectively 79,3% and 9,5%. And even more striking is the inactivity of women with an 87,2% (Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali, 2023b). All in all, the Bangladeshi community is one of the largest migrant communities in the Italian soil, and even more, as the Italian Ambassador to Bangladesh Antonio Alessandro claims:

“Italy is proud to host the largest Bangladeshi community in continental Europe. It contributes significantly to the well-being of Italy and is also an important source of remittances for Bangladesh with 1.2 billion euro transferred in 2022. [...] The last available figure is 175,000, but we consider around 200,000 with irregulars and recent arrivals”. (Ambasciata d’Italia Dhaka, 2024).

Remittance is “an amount of money you send to someone” (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.) meaning, in this particular context, the money Bangladeshi migrants send to their families. Narrowing our territory to the Veneto region, where the research of the following part of the thesis took place, Table 3 shows the presence of Bangladeshi people in the seven provinces. The Table was taken from a website that analyses data extrapolated from the Italian National Institute of Statistics (ISTAT). The province of Venice shows a higher incidence with a total of 10,622 Bangladeshi in its territory. It classifies as the biggest migrant community, as more than a half (53,4%) of Bangladeshi in the whole region of Veneto reside in the province of Venice (Tuttiitalia, 2023).

Table 3. Bangladeshi residents in the provinces of Veneto (Tuttiitalia, 2023).

<i>Province</i>	<i>Bangladeshi</i>			
	<i>males</i>	<i>females</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>%</i>
1. Venezia	6.785	3.837	10.622	53,4%
2. Vicenza	2.295	1.576	3.871	19,5%
3. Padova	1.541	777	2.318	11,7%
4. Treviso	1.305	776	2.081	10,5%
5. Treviso	566	225	791	4,0%
6. Belluno	97	13	110	0,6%
7. Rovigo	69	28	97	0,5%

Venice will be, in fact, our next focus, since the research carried out in the next part of the thesis concerned this territory. It is important to define that the municipality of Venice is a vast territory divided in 13 districts. To better show how the municipality is divided, a file Excel was extrapolated from the site of the Municipality of Venice and was adapted for the purposes of this paragraph. Represented in Table 4 the file Excel shows the totality of the residents divided into districts, which were purposely highlighted in different colors according to their position in the municipality, whether they are in the historic center, estuary or mainland. Another modification was the translation in English of all items except for the names of the districts. The totality of residents in the municipality to December 31st, 2023, is 252.340. (Città di Venezia, 2024a). This data was then compared with the one in Table 5 a file Excel which was extrapolated and modified similarly as it was done for Table 4. The difference is that it shows the number of foreign residents out of all residents of the municipality. It is essential to point out that the file Excel shows the whole foreign residents in the municipality, not only the Bangladeshi population. Foreign residents are, in fact, a total of 40.770, which, in proportion with all the residents, they make up more or less a 16%. Out of those 40.770 people the biggest community of migrant is the Bangladeshi with 8.261 people (Città di Venezia, 2024b). Having thoroughly elaborated all this data concerning Italy, the region of Veneto, and the territory of Venice, we have seen that the Veneto hosts a high concentration of migrants and, more specifically, of Bangladeshi migrants. The main location this community lives in is specifically the Venetian municipality. Reasons behind this location for migrants could be connected to what Della Puppa & Morad (2019) claim, which is that migrants often shifted to what was their initial destination Rome as we have previously seen, to places where there is more working availability. These places are mainly where industries are located, and the highest concentration in Italy is in the north. Therefore, the “industrial suburbs” (p. 478) of the north are the best places for migrants to find work, stabilize there and subsequently create their own families. This can be especially seen in Table 5 as the higher concentration in the municipality can be found in the mainland, location where the majority of industries with working availability can be found.

Table 4. Number of residents in the municipality of Venice (Città di Venezia, 2024a)

n°	districts	residents to Dec. 21st, 2023
1	S.Marco-Castello-S.Elena-Cannaregio	29.357
2	Dorsoduro-S.Polo-S.Croce-Giudecca	19.772
3	Lido-Malamocco-Alberoni	15.786
4	Pellestrina-S.Pietro in Volta	3.442
5	Murano-S.Erasmo	4.651
6	Burano-Mazzorbo-Torcello	2.385
7	Cavallino-Treporti (1)	
8	Favaro-Campalto	22.782
9	Carpenedo-Bissuola	36.774
10	Mestre Centro	50.194
11	Cipressina-Zelarino-Trivignano	15.154
12	Chirignago-Gazzera	23.858
13	Marghera-Catene-Malcontenta	28.185
Z O N E	HISTORIC CENTRE	49.129
	ESTUARY	26.264
	MAINLAND	176.947
	TOTAL	252.340
	<i>(1) : Autonomous since 02.04.1999</i>	

Table 5. Number of foreign residents in the municipality of Venice (Città di Venezia, 2024b)

n°	districts	residents to Dec. 31st, 2023
1	S.Marco-Castello-S.Elena-Cannaregio	2.893
2	Dorsoduro-S.Polo-S.Croce-Giudecca	1.777
3	Lido-Malamocco-Alberoni	1.137
4	Pellestrina-S.Pietro in Volta	78
5	Murano-S.Erasmo	207
6	Burano-Mazzorbo-Torcello	67
8	Favaro-Campalto	2264
9	Carpenedo-Bissuola	4.903
10	Mestre Centro	13.492
11	Cipressina-Zelarino-Trivignano	2.224
12	Chirignago-Gazzera	3.935
13	Marghera-Catene-Malcontenta	7.793
Z O N E	HISTORIC CENTRE	4.670
	ESTUARY	1.489
	MAINLAND	34.611
	TOTALE COMUNE	40.770

1.2 Background of the research: foreign children and education policies

1.2.1 Bilingualism, plurilingualism and multilingualism and their importance in children's education.

Before delving into the research which will occupy the central part of this thesis, it is of great importance to define some concepts which were essential for its construction. First of all, some important definitions will be delineated. Plurilingualism is one of those, and it is a concept that started to be discussed and analyzed thoroughly only starting from the second part of the previous century. It is indeed essential for the research that will be outlined in the next part of the thesis to understand what the differences between bilingualism, plurilingualism, multilingualism are, and their characteristics. First of all, according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, plurilingualism is “the dynamic and developing linguistic repertoire of an individual user/learner” (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 30), whereas multilingualism is “the knowledge of a number of languages, or the co-existence of different languages in a given society” (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 4). Moreover, an individual can be defined as plurilingual when the languages of their repertoire are at least three, whereas bilingual if the languages are only two. Places, such as nations, cities or schools, can be multilingual. Being in a multilingual context, however, does not implicitly mean that the people living in that context are plurilingual. It is fundamental to understand that bilingual and plurilingual individuals do not keep languages in separate compartments, instead, they possess a single repertoire and use all their competences according to the context. Cognini (2020) in fact, highlights that all linguistic systems in a person are simultaneously present in the brain. It is an ability of the speaker to “inhibit” (p. 25) any distractions, meaning other languages, that do not interfere. Here some situations in which languages may be switched, taken from the Council of Europe (2001, p. 4):

“Partners may switch from one language or dialect to another, exploiting the ability of each to express themselves in one language and to understand the other; or a person may call upon the knowledge of a number of languages to make sense of a text, written or even spoken, in a previously ‘unknown’

language, recognising words from a common international store in a new guise”.

Cognigni (2020) also contributed to this field by shedding some light on plurilingualism by giving an overview of how the concept has changed throughout the decades. She explains how, during the first decades of the last century, plurilingualism was associated with mental illnesses such as schizophrenia, this surely due to the absence of studies on the field. Even concerning bilingualism Carbonara & Scibetta (2020) highlight that it was considered as a deviation, that it was seen normal only to consider a single language as the linguistic repertoire of a person. Throughout the second part of the century, however, the field was examined more thoroughly, and new, more dynamic definitions were elaborated, with plurilingualism being recognized as a person who has any kind of knowledge about more than one language, not seen as something negative anymore. These definitions, however, focused mainly on proficiency, but a step was made to recognize that it is not only about the level of skillfulness, but a continuum in which, apart from proficiency, other extra linguistic characteristics such as cultural and psychological aspects must be taken into consideration. Cognigni (2020) continues by adding that there can surely be a natural predisposition to plurilingualism, but there are certainly other external factors like the social and cultural context the person is immersed in. Grosjean (2022) in fact, expands these concepts defining that bilinguals gain language knowledge across their lifespan for different purposes, in different contexts, with different people, and so on. Mind that he defines bilinguals in a more generalized way:

“As those who use two or more languages (or dialects) in their everyday lives. [...] I insist on two or more languages in my definition as some people use more than two languages regularly. If one wants to be specific regarding a particular person, one can specify exactly how many languages they use on a regular basis using words like “trilingual” “quadrilingual” “quintilingual” etc.” (p. 11)

Thus, he defines bilinguals as speakers of two or more languages when the number is not specified, he does not contemplate the word plurilingual. He also contributed to defining bilingual skills by illustrating eight. Language proficiency, and language

use are the most important ones. Then it is also essential to know at what time of his/her life the speaker became a bilingual. Fundamental it is also to analyze this person's language skills (speaking, writing listening and reading). Another is language function, thus "which language is used, when, for what and with whom" (Grosjean, 2022, p. 12). Other factors are language mode, choosing which language to use based on the context and the interlocutor, and language dominance, being aware of which language is dominantly used by the speaker. Finally, it is essential to acknowledge whether the bilingualism also implies biculturalism, which is not something that automatically coexist with bilingualism (Grosjean, 2022). Going back to the CEFR document above cited, it aims are to promote a scheme of language proficiency at all levels, and it is recognized in all European countries. Moreover, it also tries to make way for a plurilingual and intercultural education with a whole separate document dedicated to this specific field. After all, linguistic diversity has been highlighted since the treaty of Maastricht in 1992, in which importance was being given to the promotion of multilingualism in Europe (Carbonara & Scibetta, 2020). The *Guide for the development and implementation of curricula for Plurilingual and Intercultural Education* was published with the purpose of giving advice for the creation of plurilingual and intercultural curricula, to recognize and enhance all students' language need, giving them equals opportunities in education (Council of Europe, 2016). Plurilingual and intercultural education is considered important for pupils because firstly, it makes pupils aware of their linguistic repertoires, enabling them to use their linguistic potential fully and secondly, outside their personal level, it makes them more empathic towards differences in languages and cultures, essential in the multilingual and multicultural societies we live in nowadays (Council of Europe, 2016). Cognigni (2020) also highlights these and other important factors by asking why one should promote plurilingualism. She answers by giving three important aspects that are improved with plurilingualism. Firstly, it increases the metalinguistic ability, enabling the plurilingual person to reflect about the mechanisms of languages and their structures. Secondly, she claims plurilinguals have the ability of "selective attention" (p. 42), meaning they are much more capable of focusing on something without distractions than monolinguals. Finally, Cognigni (2020) claims that plurilingualism should be promoted because people become more empathic at a communicative level, understanding the needs of the interlocutor and changing

language of any aspect of it according to their needs. Returning to the Council of Europe (2016), two other important definitions are also introduced which are strictly connected with plurilingualism. The first is pluriculturalism, which is the affinity with more than a single group and their respective cultures. Contrary to what Grosjean (2022) argues about bilinguals and biculturalism, the Council of Europe (2016) claims that pluriculturalism goes together with the plurilingual competence, as language and the culture in which it is present cannot go separate ways. The second is interculturality, which means growing awareness and respect towards other cultures. These are fundamental because they often intertwine with the concept of pluriculturalism.

1.2.2 Plurilingual education: how it is applied in Europe

Now having defined some important concepts, a further step will be analyzing some concrete examples of plurilingual education at European level. First of all, the European commission found multilingualism as such an important factor in each person's life that it was made part of the European "Pillar of Social Rights" (European Union, 2018) which is composed of eight "competences needed for personal fulfilment, health, employability and social inclusion helps to strengthen Europe's resilience in a time of rapid and profound change" (ibid). one of these competences is precisely the multilingual competence. As it states in the document of the European Union (2018):

"This competence defines the ability to use different languages appropriately and effectively for communication. It broadly shares the main skill dimensions of literacy: it is based on the ability to understand, express and interpret concepts, thoughts, feelings, facts and opinions [...] in an appropriate range of societal and cultural contexts according to one's wants or needs. Languages competences integrate a historical dimension and intercultural competences."

Mind that the European Union uses multilingualism to address both concrete places but also people's repertoire as well. This was a first premise that had to be made to acknowledge the privileged position multilingualism occupies in the society for the European Union. Another document that must be mentioned is the FREPA document. As its acronym says, the Framework of Reference for Pluralistic

Approaches gives a set of tools for teachers to correctly apply a pluralistic approach in their teaching (Candelier *et al.*, 2012). Particularly, it defines four approaches: awakening to languages, intercomprehension between related languages, intercultural approach, and finally, integrated didactic approach to languages. Awakening to languages is an approach in which the student come into contact with “the language(s) of education and any other language which is in the process of being learnt [...] it is not limited to these “learnt” languages, and integrates all sorts of other linguistic varieties [...], without exclusion of any kind.” (Council of Europe, 2024). The student is encouraged to confront many languages, ones she/he knows or does not know, studies or does not study, with the purpose of reflecting upon language diversity and promoting openness and curiosity towards languages at school (Cognigni, 2020). With the approach of intercomprehension between languages, instead, the learner starts from a language she/he knows and will confront it with other languages belonging to the same linguistic family (Council of Europe, 2024). It works with using a language already learnt to learn a new one by grasping similarities and differences and coming to an understanding (Candelier *et al.*, 2012). Cognigni (2020) defines the *principle of proximity* (p. 133, trad. ing.) arguing that the process of intercomprehension is more efficient if the language family of the new language is the same as the languages already known by the student. Thirdly, the FREPA defines the intercultural approach, which is similar as the latter, but instead of the language, it exploits cultural similarities as a basis for understanding other cultures (Council of Europe, 2024). Finally, the FREPA analyses the integrated didactic approach to languages. It should help students to create more awareness on the languages learnt at school by creating links between them. It limits its range at the languages learnt in the school curriculum. Its ultimate purpose is indeed making the students realize the similarities between languages, as can be the case of English and German, to make them more autonomous in their learning process at school (Cognigni, 2020). It is also worth mentioning another approach called translanguaging. It is basically a mechanism used by plurilingual speakers, which tap into their whole linguistic repertoire, using what they need according to the situation (Cognigni, 2020). In the education field it is mainly used to avoid marginalization of students speaking minority languages, and moreover, to empower plurilingual students to use all their linguistic repertoire and, on the other hand, promoting empathy towards linguistic diversity. With these premises many

projects have been carried out, a first example is *L'AltRoparlante*. It is a project created and carried out in four Italian schools, initially born “to integrate in the curriculum the languages of origin of students with migratory background” (Carbonara & Scibetta, 2020, p. 18, trad. ing.). Its ultimate purpose is, giving all students the power to know their entire repertoire and exploit it resourcefully. Interesting is how Carbonara & Scibetta (2020) explain this project by comparing the verbs *study* and *learn*. They claim, in fact, that students can *study* a language which is included in the curriculum, with its grammar and lexicon, but they can also *learn*, for example, that in Chinese words are read backwards compared to Italian, and that some word in unknown languages are similar to words we know, etc. This helps in both ways for migrant students to feel more integrated, and for the others to acquire awareness and respect for diversity. Still concerning migrant families, another project that especially contributed to formulating this research is Mother Tongues, a social enterprise based in Ireland. It organizes workshops with parents and children with a migration background to shed light on the importance of the mother tongue of these children, together with the language of the place in which they live, their L2, which in their case is English. These workshops have shown how empowering is for both children and parents, to have a space beyond home to employ their mother tongue, meeting other people who are in the same situation and even have the same mother tongue, enabling the creation of small communities (Mother Tongues, 2023). This project contributed more than others to the formulation of some thoughts and questions that lead to the creation of a research question that will be explored in the next part of the thesis. Similarly to Mother Tongues is the project NEW ABC (Networking the Educational World: Across Boundaries for Community-building) which aims “at enhancing the inclusion of refugee and migrant children and young people into host societies through education” (NEW ABC, 2020). What this project did was creating nine “pilot actions” with thirteen partners from nine European countries, which are innovative good practices to face challenges that both children and teacher find in the education field. Some examples taken by a pilot action is the activity of the Flower of Languages which will be further explained since it will be used as an activity in Part Three of this thesis. Another one is, for example, *Plurilingual fairytales* which promotes plurilingualism by watching a video in which a fairytale is told in an unknown language, with signs and pictures to give hints of the storyline. After, the

children together with the teacher discuss about the meaning of the story and try to write it down in the school language. Finally, as homework assignment, the children will ask their family members to tell them fairytales in their language/dialect and then write them down and film a video similar to the one shown in class. All videos will then be shown to all classmates (Andorno, *et al.*, 2020).

1.2.3 Foreign students in Italy and the nation's policies concerning their education

With the advent of ever-increasing migration fluxes, the phenomenon of foreign children residing in Italy is nowadays well established. Here are some data concerning, more generally, foreign students in Italian education in the years 2021/2022. Table 6. shows how much in the last thirty years the number of foreign students has increased. Much more specific is instead Table 7 which shows all students enrolled in the Italian education system in 2021/2022 and divides them between foreign students in red, and students with Italian citizenship in blue. Therefore, we can see that the Lombardia, Emilia Romagna and Veneto, host the largest number of foreign children in their school systems. This data is confirmed by the data shown in Table 1 in the previous chapter, in which it is visible how these regions are the ones that host most of the foreign population in Italy. According to data published by the Italian National Statistics Institute, foreign children enrolled in pre-primary education up to January 2023 are 1.319.456, which is more or less half a million more children from 2022, 10,6% more than the previous year. This evidence is also backed up by the fact that study-related residence permits, as for January 2023, increased by +230,5%. If in 2021 only 59 Bangladeshi obtained this type of permit, as of 2022 they were 195. (Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali, 2023b). Particularly focusing on second generation children, the main participants of the present research, they are children “born in and [...] residing in a country that at least one of their parents previously entered as a migrant” (Migration and Home Affairs, n.d.) as already defined. As of today, the number of second generation children constitutes the highest number out of children with migratory background, 67,5%, and it is continuously growing, as it was one percentage less the year before (MIUR Statistica e Studi, 2022).

Table 6. Foreign students enrolled in the Italian school system over the years (MIUR Statistica e Studi, 2022, p. 9)

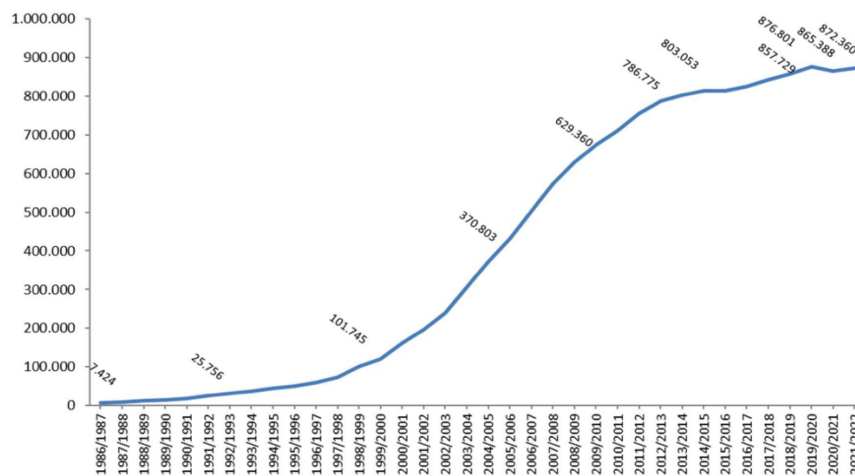
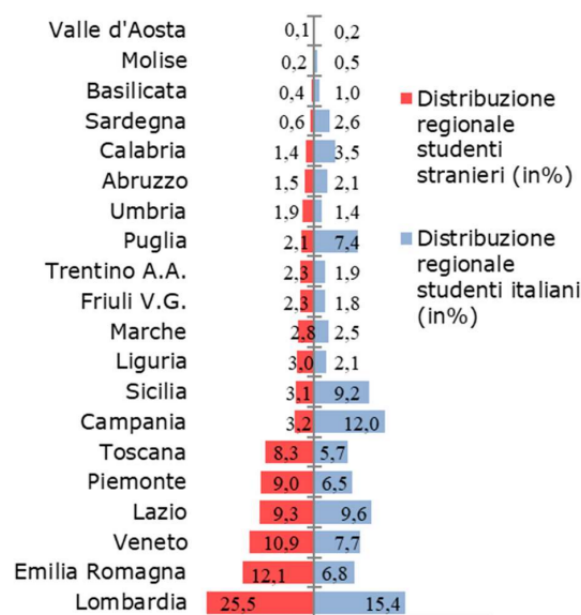


Table 7. Foreign students vs students with Italian citizenship enrolled in the Italian school system in 2021/2022 in each region (MIUR Statistica e Studi, 2022, p. 15).



The main aspect this thesis focuses on is, indeed, the peculiar linguistic repertoire of these second generation children even highlighted by the Italian Ministry of Education in a document published in 2014, as the most significant obstacle that can interfere with the children's education journey (MIUR, 2014). Italian, the main language used at school, is usually their L2, if they even speak it. In fact, as Favaro

(2013) explains, some foreign children, even if born in Italy, are monolingual and their L1 is the language of their migrant parents. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance for these children to not assume that their being born in Italy automatically translates in Italian being in their repertoire at all. Instead, an education model with Italian in the perspective of an L2 should be realized (Tonioli, 2021). Second generation children enrolled in pre-primary education experience some detachment, or at least feel that there are some differences between the family environment and the social environment, and this will undoubtedly affect their personality. It would be beneficial for them if all these differences they encounter in their everyday life could be positively integrated in the formation of their character (Celentin, 2021). With all these premises some documents will be now presented, highlighting guidelines given for education services, with a particular attention on foreign children and their education. The Ministry of Education, main institution for Italian Education, issued a document in 2012 still valid as of today, in which indications for pre-primary and primary education were outlined. In its premises, the document addresses the importance of interculture in today's school system, which enables all children to recognize their own identity and respect the one of others. It claims that now "Italian has become the common language of every child born in Italy, without distinction of citizenship, Italian or foreign" (MIUR, 2012, p. 4) clearly addressing also to second generation children. The document continues by adding that in this multicultural environment in which Italian schools are now immersed, it is important to try avoiding marginalizations, which "risk impeding to many the full exercise of their citizenship" (p. 4, trad. ing.). It is in fact a right guaranteed by the Italian Constitution, article 34, that "The school is open to everyone" (Senato della Repubblica, 1947, trad. ing.). And even in more generally, as article 3 highlights, all people are equal, "with no distinction of sex, race, language, religion, political preference, and personal and social condition" (Senato della Repubblica, 1947, trad. ing.). The Ministry of Education also gives much importance to an alliance that has to be built between teachers and the families, as to support each other in providing a good education for the children (MIUR, 2012). This is particularly important with second generation children, and it will be demonstrated in the research carried out in the present study. Focusing on the pre-school part of the document, the chapter starts by stating that children are our future and the main reason to improve our world. It continues by adding that

every child is unique thanks to the diversity of places in which they belong, especially foreign students as one might deduct. Subsequently the document is mainly dedicated to defining five “fields of experience” (p. 18, trad. ing.) to be explored in this education stage: *the self and the other - body and movement – images, sounds, colors - dialogues and words* - and finally - *world’s knowledge*. As for the fields in which promotion of diversity can take place there is, for example, *the self and the other*. Pre-primary education should take this opportunity to be directed towards making children realize they are unique, and they should welcome their peers’ uniqueness. These are the years, as also Celentin (2021) claims, in which children mold their personality, therefore, an education towards acknowledging the self and what we differ from others with a positive attitude is more than essential. *Dialogues and words* could also be a field of experience in which plurilingualism can be promoted. Children who come from plurilingual background can encounter the differences between languages, their sounds their meanings and can start to acquire metalinguistic competences about the functions of different languages. The Italian Ministry of Public Instruction also contributed to trying to safeguard children with migration background in a document published in October 2007. The document opens with a message from Fioroni Giuseppe, the president of public instruction at the time addressed directly to all teachers. He claimed that foreign students are now a clear and concrete presence in the Italian schools and that it can really be a positive opportunity for change if schools are equipped to take this opportunity. The document then defined some principles that every school should respect, one being universalism, which remarks what the MIUR (2012) document says: the recognition that education is a right for each child, even the ones without Italian citizenship. Another principle that should be respected for foreign children is being put in public schools together with other children, avoiding casting them in separate places and cultivate a distance to differences instead of inclusion towards them. Then there is interculture, meaning the schools should promote positive confrontation between cultures (Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione, 2007). Moreover, when welcoming the children, teachers should be interest in their persona history especially linguistically speaking, building a bridge with the families and using resources like linguistic mediators. Then the curricula should be organized including not only the FL present in the curriculum, as could be English, but also the mother tongues spoken by foreign students. It is indeed a

right of each human to keep their mother tongue, as we have seen expressed in the European Union's document of 2018, and as also Audrey Azoulay, General director of UNESCO says:

“The scientific studies are clear: learning in one's mother tongue is essential to success at school. This boosts self-esteem, awakens curiosity from an early age, and facilitates cognitive development.” (...) “Advocating multilingualism in schools also means preserving and promoting linguistic plurality, especially with regard to languages which have only a few remaining speakers.”

Active participation of the family in all initiatives of the school should be auspicial as well, especially for them to understand the Italian school system which might be different to what they were used to in their country of origin (Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione, 2007). Another document always published by the MIUR in 2014 highlighted second generation children as being the “most significant transformation” (MIUR, 2014, p. 4, trad. ing.) in the Italian school system. Here the important step that has been made is acknowledging that foreign students cannot fall into a common category, instead, there is a multiplicity of situations and background these students can live. Some examples given are children without Italian citizenship, children born from parents who speak two different languages, non-accompanied minors, adopted children, and so on the categories continue (MIUR 2014). There is, finally, another document much more recent published after the Covid-19 pandemic, which, translated in English is called Intercultural Orientation, published in March 2022 by the Italian national observatory for the integration of foreign students and intercultural education after acknowledging that the pandemic might have aggravated some fragile situations, such as the ones of some children with migratory background. This is highlighted by the Ministry of Education in a document published in 2024, acknowledging that out of all foreign children, only 79% attend pre-primary education in the years 2021/2022 (MIUR Ufficio di Statistica, 2024). It is also claimed that nowadays some definitions are no longer valid for this phenomenon that is continuously growing. We already saw that in another directive by the Ministry of education, some light among the differences between foreign students with citizenship, without citizenship, bilinguals, adopted children, and so on. The current document claims that if together with the number of foreign children (876.801 nowadays, as previously seen) also

adopted children, children with parents with different nationalities, or children who received citizenship from migratory situations were added, the number would increase to almost two million children. For this reason, it seems best to define all these children as generally coming from migratory backgrounds (Osservatorio Nazionale per l'integrazione degli alunni stranieri e l'Educazione Interculturale, 2024). Then the document continues by remarking some essential principles, the most important being the right to education for every minor, and the creation of protocols to accompany children in the process of integration in the nation. The document also gave importance to new arrivals, especially in the beginning, as they might feel disorientated. For this reason, there should always be the figure of the linguistic mediator with them. Also families are seen as essential and would be best to involve them in the education of the children. It is also essential for the schools to make connections with the universities to train both teachers and school personnel to raise awareness and acknowledgement of plurilingualism (Osservatorio nazionale per l'integrazione degli alunni stranieri e l'educazione interculturale, 2024). Keeping the focus on plurilingual education in Italy but focusing more on the Italian pre-school environment, researchers who particularly contributed to analyzing this field will be mentioned. Firstly, Dalosio (2023) argues that, introducing foreign languages in the school environment has to be something well-structured, especially in pre-primary education, if we want it to be successful, not only on a linguistic level, but also cognitively and affectively. It is in fact, particularly important to keep track on bilingual children in pre-primary, because those years, from three to six of age, are the most critical ones concerning their linguistic awareness, but also to grow curiosity and a positive attitude towards languages, especially about the L2 which is usually the language of the school. Without that the children will almost surely encounter obstacles in their education (Celentin, 2021). Celentin (2021) also gives an overview about plurilingualism in Italian education and she comes to the conclusion that Italy has always had bilinguals in its education system. Italian has in fact, always been the official language, but teachers were confronted with children speaking dialects at home, which was, then more than now, their L1. Knowing this one could claim that nowadays the situation is different, but with some similarities; they are always children that at home speak a language that differs from the official national language used for education. For these reasons now linguistic education must be

seen as a “transversal trait of the education generally understood” (Celentin, 2021, p. 95, trad. ing.). Moreover, she agrees with Dalosio (2023) in saying that linguistic education in pre-school is something that has to be neither implicit nor improvised. Celentin (2021) contributed to the field of plurilingual education by conducting research in the Italian municipality of Brescia, since the high presence of migrants was demanding changes in the education strategies. Therefore, the administration of Brescia wanted to train pre-school teachers for this challenge they were embarking on. This research wanted in fact to tackle some issues. The first was analyzing what the teachers thought was mainly obstacles integration of foreign students in the class. The survey describes “understanding the assignment of the teacher” (p. 102, trad. ing.) as the main obstacle for integration. Teachers also explained that this distress also interferes in the pupils’ “construction of identity inside the social group of their peers” (p. 102, trad. ing.). Another issue was the lack of awareness of a proper linguistic education at pre-school, which we have previously seen being essential at this age. The only linguistic supports of the school were, in fact, flyers for foreign families. Teachers trained in the field of L2 are very few and linguistic mediators even if present, are not used as a valid resource for migrant families. This research clearly showed that there is not enough awareness of plurilingualism in pre-school education and the resources that should be used to guarantee pupils a “democratic education” (p. 95). It can be clearly visible then, how the main pillars of education in Italy throughout the years have promoted awareness towards the phenomenon of foreign students, including second generation children, and has tried to contribute to an efficient inclusion of these children.

1.2.4 Pre-primary education and the Bangladeshi community in the territory of Venice: some contributions

Narrowing more the focus on Italian pre-primary education but adding the final component of this thesis’ research which is the Bangladeshi community in the territory of Venice, a project that encouraged to focus this research specifically on this migrant community is one called *DIMMI – Disabled Migrant Minors: Representation of Disabilities and Communication Difficulties in Bengali Children. A Case Study*. It was included as part of the research program 2018-2020 of

Fondazione Alsos, “a private, not-for-profit institution that fosters and supports research, education and knowledge-spreading activities, with high social impact” (Fondazione Alsos, n.d.). DIMMI was one on the project granted an 18-month Research Fellowship. It was created by Valeria Tonioli after acknowledging a major issue which was affecting children of foreign origin in the territory of Venice. Particularly, the fact that “85% of the children who use neuropsychiatric services are of foreign origin, and 75% of them come from Bangladesh. At the same time, ongoing research shows the need to systematically address the issue of disability in children of foreign origin” (Tonioli, n.d.). The issue of not being enough research concerning bilingual migrant children is also raised in this project, also acknowledging that often teachers nowadays have still not enough tools and preparation to deal with these children. With this premises, Valeria Tonioli created a project whose objectives, among many others, were to investigate the linguistic repertoires of these children and the linguistic inputs they receive at home and how this might affect their school experience. They also analyzed teachers, parents and every worker involved in the children’s education to see what their perspectives on multilingualism and second language teaching were and, finally, they developed lessons for pre-school using Italian as L2 (Tonioli, n.d.). Another project carried out in the territory of Venice was concerning the linguistic education and the representation of disabilities in migrant families with Bangladeshi origin (Tonioli, n.d.). Here, through some focus groups Bangladeshi mothers expressed their difficulties with the education of their children and they asked for some help because they did not know what to do. Also, another important thing which was highlighted in this research was that the mothers were not used to educate their children alone, their education was left to other components of the families. Something that was also highlighted in another research concerning Bangladeshi children in the territory of Venice. It was always carried by Tonioli Valeria with the premise that:

“Neuropsychiatrists believe that these pupils do not have any neurodevelopmental disorder but rather that they lack exposure to quality L1 (mother tongue), L2 (second language), or other language input, both at home and in social contexts.” (Tonioli, 2022, p. 270)

A research project under the name of *Tell Me* was thus carried from October 2018 to March 2020 with the purposes of analyzing the languages used by the children at school and at home, the parents' attitude about their children's education and even the teachers' thoughts about these children in the school environment. Tonioli Valeria carried out the research with semi-structured interviews with both parents and teachers and a COLT schedule for the observation of children both at home and at school. The results highlighted that for mothers the children's education is something that back in Bangladesh is taken care of outside the parents' sphere, instead, from people like sisters, mothers in law and cousins, something also highlighted in Tonioli (2022). The process of migration, however, did not provide those family network anymore, mothers were now alone with their children. Here is what one mother, in fact, claims:

“[Quote 1] In Bangladesh, children play together, they are always together and other persons in the society are responsible for children's education. They have the opportunity to speak. Here it is not possible, my child is always alone”. (p. 278).

Moreover, parents expressed that they consider English a very important language for their children's future, something that will be seen was also highlighted in this thesis' research. Concerning teachers, the scarce knowledge of Italian as L2 was highlighted, especially by these quotes:

“[Quote 6] I can't believe that she can't speak Italian. She was born in Italy. Is it possible? [...]” (p. 279).

“[Quote 8] We know that in order to communicate and learn a language, it is important to have the opportunity to practice it. We can do something at school, but we are not trained to teach a second language [...]” (p. 280).

This lack of knowledge was also highlighted in Celentin (2021) before, when she underlined the lack of linguistic supports in the school. The main result of the COLT schedules of Tonioli (2022), finally, showed how the children almost only responded to solicitations, and mainly non-verbally, something which will be analyzed in the present research as well. Finally, another project concerning Bangladeshi children in pre-primary education which is worth mentioning is

F.A.M.I. "V.O.C.I. - Vivere Oggi Cittadini in Italia" co-financed by the European Union and pioneered by the municipality of Venice. Its purpose was offering people with migrant background the opportunity to study Italian as an L2 but also learning about civic education (Città di Venezia, 2022). One of the many works carried out for this project was the development of Italian as L2 and the promotion of plurilingualism in pre-school services. Thus, a didactic unit was created to be tested in pre-school education. Created by Valeria Tonioli, this document gives five didactic unit which correspond to the five "fields of experience" to be explored in this education stage: *the self and the other - body and movement – images, sounds, colors - dialogues and words* - and finally - *world's knowledge* (MIUR, 2012). All five units were structured according to the GAS model, from global activities, then the analysis of some linguistic elements to a final synthesis with reflections (Tonioli *et al.*, n.d.). This document, together with all others above mentioned in the previous sections and their authors, helped not only to shape the concept of plurilingualism in education, particularly in pre-primary contexts, but also contributed to the construction of the research presented on in the following chapter.

1.2.5 What Bangladesh may differ from Italy in pre-primary education: dissimilar expectations

Here some characteristics of Bangladeshi education will be outlined to see what might be the main difficulties families encounter when enrolling their children in the Italian school system. Firstly, it is fundamental to acknowledge that Bangladesh education system has been highly influenced from British India, being part of a former British colony (Mousumi & Kusakabe, 2021). During the British dominance in fact, there were two schools of thought, which mainly concerned with issues of language and culture. On one hand the Orientalists which supported Indian-based education, on the other hand the Anglicists, which supported English culture seen as superior to the Indian. They supported the British view of having to educate the uncivilized with the introduction of their education model and the Christian religion (Mousumi & Kusakabe, 2021). Even during the dominance of West Pakistan, although 98% of Bangladeshi people spoke Bangla, the Urdu language was established as the official language, even in education (Hamid, 2019). It was only after the Independence of 1971, when the *Constitution of the People's Republic of*

Bangladesh was created in which is stated that “The state language of the Republic is Bangla” (Legislative and Parliamentary Affairs Division Ministry of Law & Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, 2019). This resulted in the almost exclusive use of Bangla in the education field, English was taught bus secondary to Bangla, until grade 12 (Mousumi & Kusakabe, 2021). To give an overview of the Bangladeshi school system as of today, Table 8, a document issued by the Ministry of Education will be here displayed. As we have previously seen, still nowadays there is great political and economic instability in the territory with the Awamy League and the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) which cannot reach a common ground of understanding (Hossain, 2015). For these reasons, as of today, there are three different education fields: “the vernacular general education, English medium schools, and faith-based madrasa” (Mousumi & Kusakabe, 2021, p. 7).

Table 8. Education structure of Bangladesh (Ministry of Education, 2007).

Age	Grade															
26+																
25+	XX							Ph D (Engr)	Ph D (Medical)							
24+	XIX				Ph.D	PostMBBS Dipl					Ph D in Edu.					
23+	XVIII				M.Phil	M.Phil(Medical)										
22+	XVII	MA/MSc/MCom/MSS/MBA			LLM	MBBS BDS	MSc (Engr)	MSc (Agr)	MBA	M.Ed & MA (Edn)	MA (LSc)					
21+	XVI	Bachelor (Hons)	Masters (Prel)	LLB (Hons)	BSc. Eng BSc. Agr BSc. Text BSc. Leath	BSc Eng	BSc (Tech Edn)	BBA	B.Ed % Dip. Ed	BP ED	Dip. (LSc)	Kamil				
20+	XV		Bachelor (Pass)													
19+	XIV															
18+	XIII															
17+	XII	Secondary	Examination		HSC	Diploma (Engr)	HSC Vocational	C in Edu	C in Agri	Diploma in Comm	Diploma in Nursing	Alim				
16+	XI		Higher Secondary Education													
15+	X		Examination	SSC	TRADE Certificate/ SSC Vocational								ARTISAN COURSE e.g. CERAMICS			
14+	IX		Secondary Education													
13+	VIII	JUNIOR SECONDARY EDUCATION										Dakhil				
12+	VII															
11+	VI															
10+	V															
9+	IV	PRIMARY EDUCATION										Ebtedayee				
8+	III															
7+	II															
6+	I															
5+		PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION														
4+																
3+																

It is important to highlight that English, even if not officially a state language recognized in Bangladesh, it still invests the importance of being the language of the former colonizers. It is, in fact, an important language in higher education, not affordable for everyone in the state. Elites in Bangladesh feel that a good education for their children should be English based (Mousumi & Kusakabe, 2021). This is very important to acknowledge as in Italian education, especially pre-primary and primary, English is not given as much importance as in Bangladesh. As Della Puppa & Morad (2019) claim, one of the dissatisfactions of Bangladeshi families in enrolling their children in the Italian school system:

“[...] is the impossibility of educating and socializing children in the English language. English is not a language of common knowledge in Italy, which is a significant concern for Bangladeshi parents who are clearly more oriented towards a globalized and cosmopolitan dimension than the Italian population”. (p. 481)

Focusing now on pre-primary education, in Bangladeshi education it only lasts one year, first major difference with the Italian pre-primary service which lasts from the age of three to six. This could be one of the reasons for poor attendance at school, simply because they do not know that pre-primary in Italy lasts for three years. The main purpose of pre-primary education in Bangladesh is doing:

“[...] activities that are aimed at inspiring children to learn and to go to school and for cultivating their finer senses, grooming them to be tolerant to others and for infusing in them the ideas about discipline necessary for their subsequent formal education” (Mousumi & Kusakabe, 2021, p. 18).

In the purposes, we can find some similarities, which can be for example being tolerant with others, as we have already seen that also pre-primary Italian education as MIUR (2012) states how every child is unique, and the education shall embrace the uniqueness. However, Italian pre-primary education stops at defining the five “fields of experience” as we have seen in the previous paragraph and outlines some instructions of a didactic based on playful activities (MIUR, 2012). Pre-primary schools in Italy do not display of handbooks or copybooks to be given to children. On the contrary, as can be seen from the following extracts taken from two

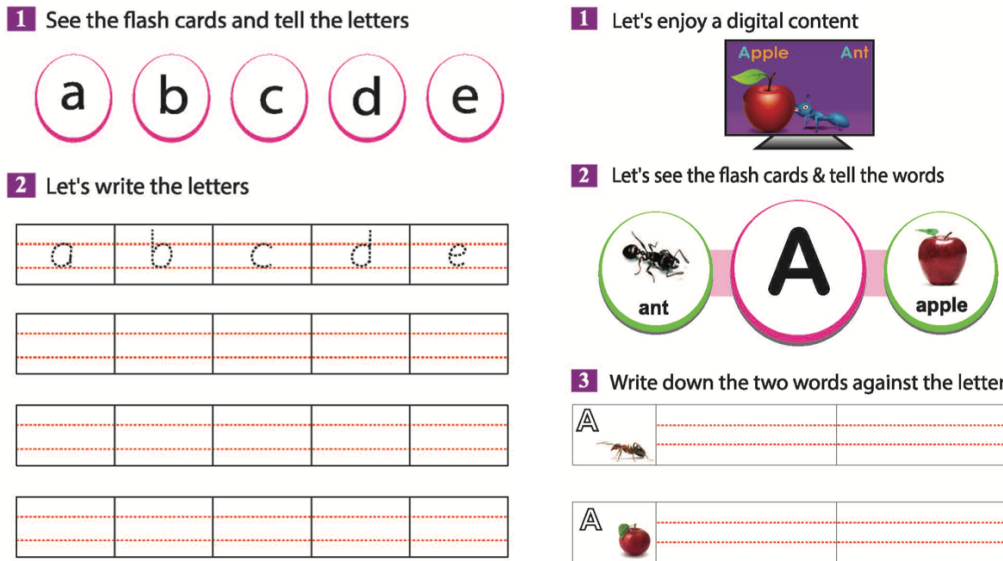
Bangladeshi pre-primary books, the situation is different. Figure 6 shows the index of a pre-primary 1st term book, as we can see, children are already expected to know two different alphabets and in only one semester, they will be required to learn up to five subjects.

The difficulty in introducing play in pre-primary services in Bangladesh is also highlighted by Akter *et al.* (2021) which conducted a research to analyze the use of play in pre-primary classes in Bangladesh. The results showed that the use of play is not completely in agreement with the education system on and the main reason is the lack of experience of the teachers. Another reason is the fact that the classrooms are not equipped for play times and are shared with other levels of education. If in Italian pre-primary education children have a first-time approach with letters, in Bangladeshi education at pre-primary children are already expected to learn how to read and write. As can be seen in Figure 7. activities done in pre-primary and Bangladesh are those that in Italy are usually done in the first year of primary schools. This can surely impact a lot the families that enroll children in pre-primary education in Italy, as it might seem that their children are not learning anything with play-based activities, and consequently, it does not seem to them of great importance their children attendance at school. This is another reason why it is of vital importance of the parents to be included in the school environment to have a complete understanding of how the system works and why it is very important for their children to attend school.

Figure 6. Index of Bangladeshi pre-primary book (Kobita et al., 2019, p.1)

Contents (সূচিপত্র)		
SL. No.	Subject	Page No
1.	বাংলা	1-70
2.	English	71-129
3.	Mathematics	130-253
4.	Introduction to the Environment	254-264
5.	Co-curricular Activities	265-284

Figure 7. Example of activities in pre-primary book (Kobita et al., 2019, pp.77, 97)



1.2.6 Research and migrants: The RISE Manifesto

Before delving into the second part of this work, which represents the core of this thesis, it was found essential to point out how the whole project of the laboratory and, subsequently how the research was faced. What really shaped the way of working in the project of this research was, in fact, a manifesto published by Tania Canas, a RISE member, found as a really inspiring and thought-provoking piece. RISE is an organization based in Melbourne, Australia, which has the peculiarity of being managed by refugees, survivors and ex-detainees, hence its name (Piazzoli & Kir Cullen, 2021). It was founded in 2010 by an ex-detainee held hostage multiple times in detention camps and it is, indeed, the first organization exclusively held by people with this kind of background (RISE: Refugee Survivors and ex-detainees, n.d.). The main concern for RISE is “the abolition of Australia’s cruel refugee policies including mandatory detention and as well as global policies that adversely impact on our members” (RISE: Refugee Survivors and ex-detainees, n.d.). However, what really impacted the perspective taken to embark on this research was a manifesto published by one of its members, Tania Canas, specifically the RISE Arts Director. The title of the manifesto, quite self-explanatory is: “10 things you need to consider if you are an artist – not of the refugee and asylum seeker community – looking to work with our community” (Canas, 2015, p.1). Before

delving into the main characteristics of this manifesto, it is essential to state that the research carried out in this thesis did not involve neither refugees nor asylum seekers. Instead, it involved migrant families with Bangladeshi background. Refugees, asylum seekers and migrants, however, share some similarities and differ to one another for some specific legal differences. Refugees are people who flee from their country of origin “for reasons of feared persecution, conflict, generalized violence, or other circumstances that have seriously disturbed public order and, as a result, require international protection” (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2024). This usually happens whenever the danger for people is too big and their government will not or often does not have the resources to help these people, so their only chance is to flee to a safer country (Amnesty International, 2024). Asylum seekers, instead, are again, like refugees, people who seek safety from some type of danger in another country, but are still not recognize as refugees, they are waiting to be accepted as refugees (Amnesty International, 2024). Concerning migrants, there is no definition which is worldwide accepted, however the majority of organizations like the United Nations and Amnesty International, define migrants as people living outside their country of origin which cannot be defined as refugees or asylum seekers. These people might flee their country for better life opportunities, thus, to study or to work, but also for poverty or political issues. Between migrant and refugee there is a very fine line, as some people may not be defined as refugees, but could encounter some kind of danger returning in their home country (Amnesty International, 2024). For all these reasons, the RISE manifesto resonated also for migrants and was indeed found right as a kind of self-reflection preceding the research. The manifesto was divided by Tania Canas into ten major points and is directed to “artists approaching us in order to find participants for their next project” (Canas, 2015, p.1). Throughout the years, she realized how too many times the people from the RISE organizations were used for projects, but researchers did not approach humanly to these people. Thus, the manifesto was born as a protest to these situations. The statements of the manifesto have to be seen as the lens through which the research was carried out. It is worth noticing that throughout the whole manifesto Tania Canas uses the first-person plural. This because she, as all the other members of the RISE organizations, are themselves refugees, asylum seekers ore ex-detainees, therefore, she addresses to herself as well. Here, some of the statements will be presented and commented.

1. Process not product

We are not a resource to feed into your next artistic project. You may be talented at your particular craft but do not assume that this automatically translates to an ethical, responsible and self-determining process.

This first statement highlights how whoever wants to work with refugees and asylum seekers need to focus more on how to carry out their project or research rather than on how the product will come out. Which automatically connects to the second statement which claims that researchers need to analyze the real intentions behind their work.

2. Critically interrogate your intentions

Our struggle is not an opportunity, or our bodies' a currency, by which to build your career. Rather than merely focusing on the 'other' ('where do I find refugees'... etc). Subject your own intention to critical, reflexive analysis. What is your motivation to work with this particular subject matter?

3. Realize your own privilege

What biases and intentions, even if you consider these 'good' intentions, do you carry with you?

Other than analyzing intentions, it is important to admit whether there might be some biases that could influence the direction of our work. These could be political, religious, or even personal backgrounds that might influence our work.

6. It is not a safe space just because you say it is

This requires long term grass-roots work, solidarity and commitment.

Researchers might think that because they are doing some work concerning a particular issue, that people should trust them no matter what. However, trust has to be built, especially with people that might not understand your language, know your culture and customs. For this particular research, previous work in the same pre-school, concerning Bangladeshi families and children had already been done, and this surely helped building a trust alliance and proceeding with the research.

7. Do not expect us to be grateful

We are not your next interesting arts project. Our community are not sitting waiting for our struggle to be acknowledged by your individual consciousness nor highlighted through your art practice.

This seventh statement is intertwined with the previous one. As researchers do not have to take for granted trust, they also should not expect gratitude. Many researchers, as also explained by Tania Canas, might suffer from the white knight syndrome. Cambridge Dictionary defines a white knight as “a person of thing that helps someone who is in a difficult situation”. Researchers should not feel a sense of superiority of being the one coming to rescue people, and subsequently, should not expect people to be grateful for their work.

8. Do not reduce us to an issue

We are whole humans with various experiences, knowledge and skills. We can speak on many things; do not reduce us to one narrative.

Finally, it is of the utmost importance for the sake of the people you are working with for your project, to not reduce them just to what you ask to them. Even if they have experienced some difficulties being refugees and asylum seekers or are still experiencing some problematics being in a new country, as might be the issue of the language for this research, it is important to not make everything revolve around that particular issue, people are so much more than their struggles.

PART TWO

From theory to practice: inside a plurilingual pre-school service

2.1 The research

2.1.1 Research question

The research presented in the current part of the thesis was inspired after acknowledging previous research already done in the field of plurilingual education and second generation children, already outlined in section 1.2 of the previous Chapter (see particularly section 2.1.1). Second generation children with a migratory background enrolled in pre-school services nowadays find themselves in a peculiar situation, particularly linguistically speaking. Recent studies have, in fact, proved that sometimes children with migrant background in Italy are not native speakers of Italian, therefore it is not something automatic after having been born there (Bonifacci, 2018). So, even though they are born in Italy, their first language might not be Italian, but it's often the language of the country their parents emigrated from (Favaro, G., 2010). This can start to be an issue when the children enter pre-school; they are introduced in a new environment where Italian is the only language of instruction used by the teachers and their first language is not only absent, but also unknown to the teachers that cannot communicate with them. These difficulties in understanding the children often result in marginalization, which can lead to more issues later in their school career (Favaro, G., 2013). With this perspective, the research carried out in this thesis aimed to answer the question of whether the inclusion of the mothers and families of preschoolers in contexts of migration, along with their first language, could benefit both families and children for a better experience in education and for brighter future perspectives for this peculiar generation of children.

2.1.2 Context

This research was structured after having been invited to participate to a laboratory inside of a pre-school in the territory of Venice. This laboratory was created as part of a project called CHANGES – Cultural Heritage Active Innovation of Sustainable Society. The project is founded by the Italian NRRP, National Recovery and Resilience Plan Unit, a mission created by the European Union which aims to help

all members to recover from the damage caused by the pandemic crisis of 2020 (MIUR, 2020b). It is divided in 7 missions, all shared by the European Union. Mission 4, entitled Education and Research, is the one that inspired the creation of the project CHANGES. This project recognizes the great cultural heritage Italy possesses and how the country fails to exploit its full potential. With 9 Spoke, this project hopes to relaunch Italy's economy through its cultural heritage (MIUR, 2020a). Spoke n.9, Cultural Resources for Sustainable Tourism (CREST), will be the focus, as the laboratory for this research was founded as part of it. The objective of this Spoke specifically is to protect all traditions and the identity of each Italian territory, and simultaneously integrate all local communities present in our territory. (Università Ca' Foscari Venezia, 2020). The laboratory created thanks to this consisted in focusing on an expanding community in the Territory of Venice, the Bangladeshi community. The purpose was to focus on Bangladeshi children in pre-school services, and the laboratory consisted in bringing the mothers of these children inside their classes and do some activities concerning Bangla, the mothers' and children's L1, and learning about Bangladeshi culture with them. I was proposed to participate to this laboratory and observe the children and mothers and how they behave in this peculiar situation they were invited to be in. The laboratory was conducted in the pre-school Nerina Volpin, based in Venice, more precisely in the neighborhood of Marghera. This school was selected because it is located in a very plurilingual environment in the city of Venice. Communities of migrants have formed during the last decades and are now well established in this area, especially a community of Bangladeshi origins, hence the focus on Bangladeshi mothers and their children. As a consequence, schools at all levels have become more and more a heterogeneous and plurilingual context, in which children and their families have different nationalities and come from very different backgrounds. Nerina Volpin is one of these schools, with 6 classes and a total of 126 children between three and six years old and, as the 2022-2025 educational offer of the school states, all belonging to very different social, linguistic and cultural realities. All six classes and all children present the days of the laboratory participated to all the activities proposed. However, for the research the observation was specifically focused on Bangladeshi children and the mothers who agreed to participate to the laboratory. Together with the laboratory, I asked to participate also to lessons to get a wider

perspective. The teachers accepted my proposal; therefore, I was able to observe also ordinary lessons but exclusively in section D for four lessons.

2.1.3 Participants

For the purpose of this research, which we remind was to analyze how inclusion of the mothers of preschoolers in contexts of migration could benefit both parties, eleven Bangladeshi children and nine of their mothers were observed throughout the whole laboratory. The number of mothers and children are uneven because throughout the research it was decided to observe all Bangladeshi children, not only the ones whose mothers were present. This because the Bangladeshi community in Marghera is well established, and mothers knew all the other Bangladeshi children in the class and vice versa. Therefore, it became interesting to observe other Bangladeshi children, as it was thought their observation could contribute to the research as well. Participants were also the teachers, two in each class, as some of them contributed to this research sharing spontaneous reflections and thoughts after each laboratory. As for the people who contributed to the success of this laboratory, we have professor Valeria Tonioli, a research grant holder for the project CREST, who guided children, mothers, and teachers throughout the laboratory, Giulia Ferro, research grant holder for the aforementioned project as well, Selina Akter, linguistic and cultural mediator for the Municipality of Venice, Social Emergency Response, Inclusion, and Mediation Office in the Social Cohesion Area, and myself, as a master's degree student, observer for my research. Since part of this research was concentrated on minors, I was preventively authorized by the Municipality of Venice to attend the school activities and laboratory to gather all information about the children and their mothers needed for my research objectives. Video and audio recordings were not allowed; therefore, this research relies exclusively on information taken during the time inside the classes.

2.1.4 Methodology

For this research multiple instruments were adapted and used to collect as diverse data as possible. Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching schedules (Nunan, 1992) were readapted to specifically analyze the aims of the research. A

first schedule, visible in Table 9, concerned Bangladeshi children, the second COLT schedule, Table 10, was for the mothers and their interactions, and the third schedule, Table 11, was used to analyze the children during ordinary lessons. All shown and explained in the following paragraph. Together with the three COLT schedules, a logbook was kept as a way to record and keep track of important reflections outside the COLT schedules. In fact, notes were taken every day after the lessons and kept there. These were about considerations that I as the researcher made, but also reflections of teachers, mothers and the children were captured. This was found essential as being this a qualitative research, it can result to be subjective and limited, lacking the objectivity a quantitative research has. Therefore, to adopt multiple perspectives beyond the researcher's, triangulation with reflections of teachers, mothers and children was found useful and a way for the research to be more reliable. In the beginning as the researcher, I wanted to be non-interventionist and just a mere observer, however, I ended up using the method of participant observation (Bryman, 2016), as the environment required it. As for the observations made during ordinary lessons,

The data will be shown and analyzed in the following chapter which will be divided in data collected during the laboratory and the one collected during normal lessons.

2.1.5 Instruments to collect data

Table 9. shows the first schedule used, which concerned Bangladeshi children. What was analyzed is whether they understood inputs, if they responded to those input verbally or non-verbally, and, if verbally, which language did they use, to who did they talked, how and why. The second COLT schedule for the mothers, seen in Table 10. aimed to analyze their will to participate to the lessons, their interventions and to whom they were directed. A third schedule was used to analyze the children during ordinary lessons. The COLT schedule for this part of the research, represented in Table 11. also aimed to analyze Bangladeshi children language production and is similar to the first schedule about the children. The only difference is that the mother is not present as an option.

Table 9. Children COLT schedule laboratory

Children observation schedule (laboratory)

Context: _____

The input is given by	Kind of input	Language of the input	Reaction of the child	The child responds
The mother	About the activity	Bangla	Excited/motivated	Verbally
A teacher	Question to the children	Italian	Shy/intimidated/careless	Non-verbally
Other	Other	English	Does not understand the input	Does not respond
		No language		

If he/she responds verbally:

The child uses	The language is	Reasons for speaking	The child speaks to	Attitude while speaking
Bangla	Solicited	The activity	The mother	Confident/motivated
Italian	Spontaneous	Other topics	A teacher	Shy/afraid
English			Other classmates	

Table 10. Mother COLT schedule

Mother interaction schedule

Context: _____

The mother speaks to	She speaks in	Her intervention is	If with the children, she speaks with
A teacher	Bangla	Solicited by the teachers	Her child
The children	Italian	Solicited by the children	Another child from Bangladesh
	English	Spontaneous	Another child not from Bangladesh
			All children

Attitude when she intervenes:

She is willing to speak	She is anxious and avoids speaking	She asks support from the teachers and collaborate with them for the activity	She invites the children to speak in their mother tongue (directly or indirectly)
1	1	1	1
2	2	2	2
3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4
5	5	5	5

1= never

5= always

Table 11. Children COLT schedule ordinary lessons

Children observation schedule (ordinary lessons)

Context: _____

Input given by	Reaction of the child	Kind of input	The child responds
A teacher	Confident/motivated	Direct question	Verbally
Other classmates	Shy/careless	Talking to the class	Non-verbally
Other		Other	Does not respond

If he/she responds verbally:

The child uses	The language is	The child speaks to	Attitude while speaking
Bangla	Solicited	A teacher	Confident/motivated
Italian	Spontaneous	Other classmates	Shy/afraid
English			

2.1.6 Organization of the research study

For this research study, all data was taken inside the classrooms, during the laboratory and ordinary lessons. Concerning the laboratory, it was carried out in all six classes and lasted more or less one hour. The first ten minutes were dedicated to present Valeria Tonioli, Giulia Ferro, Selina Akter, myself, and the mothers that accepted to participate each day. Then the children were asked what they thought we were going to do, which was doing some activities in Bangla with the help of some of their classmates' mothers. Afterwards a video would be put which contained a Bangla nursery rhyme. After watching it a couple times, the children were asked to do the same activities the children in the video were doing; color the picture of a mango, that was shown in the video, and then create their own flower necklace, which the children in the video showed some pictures of the laboratory are shown in the Appendix. During this whole time, I, as the researcher, helped the kids with the activities and simultaneously, with a notebook and my COLT schedules, wrote down as much data as I could capture, as I was not allowed to record any of the children and mothers. After each lesson, I stayed in the classroom some time more to capture some reflections that the teachers, the mothers or the children did, to put them in my logbook. As for the ordinary lessons in section D,

unlike the laboratory, I was able to be more of a mere observer, as I just sat on a corner observing the lessons the teacher carried out. I went to attend four ordinary morning lessons and stayed inside the class for about one and a half hour every time. Every morning the routine was almost the same: these is the call of the registry, then the teacher reads a book or puts on some songs, and then there the half-morning break, when the children can eat a snack. For both laboratory and ordinary lesson data, I revised all the schedules after every lesson. For the laboratory I was also able to write down some personal reflections in my logbook, together with other reflections from the participants. This was not possible for ordinary lessons for a question of timing, since I attended the laboratory immediately after the ordinary lessons, therefore I had no time to talk with the teachers and write reflections in a logbook. For every entry, to respect the privacy of the participants, I used the first letter of the name for the children and numbers for mothers and teachers, whereas for the professor, researcher and linguistic mediator, who gave permission to be named in this research, they will be mentioned. Finally, for the classes, which are originally divided by color, letters of the alphabet are used.

2.2 Analysis of data collected

2.2.1 Analysis of the laboratory data

2.2.1.1 Analysis of Children COLT schedules

A total of 45 schemes concerning the children were collected during the laboratory. To present all raw data collected Table 12. was created, which is a sample of the COLT schedules used during the laboratory. Inside each box is written the number of times that that box was underlined, thus, each time that phenomenon presented itself during the laboratory.

Table 12. Analysis of Children’s COLT schedules

Children observation schedule (laboratory)

The input is given by	Kind of input	Language of the input	Reaction of the child	The child responds
The mother <i>5 times</i>	About the activity <i>28 times</i>	Bangla <i>9 times</i>	Excited/motivated <i>37 times</i>	Verbally <i>31 times</i>
A teacher <i>31 times</i>	Question to the children <i>14 times</i>	Italian <i>26 times</i>	Shy/intimidated/careless <i>8 times</i>	Non-verbally <i>14 times</i>
Other <i>9 times</i>	Other <i>3 times</i>	English /	Does not understand the input /	Does not respond /
		No language <i>10 times</i>		

If he/she responds verbally:

The child uses	The language is	Reasons for speaking	The child speaks to	Attitude while speaking
Bangla <i>5 times</i>	Solicited <i>9 times</i>	The activity <i>31 times</i>	The mother <i>2 times</i>	Confident/motivated <i>29 times</i>
Italian <i>22 times</i>	Spontaneous <i>22 times</i>	Other topics /	A teacher <i>25 times</i>	Shy/afraid <i>2 times</i>
English <i>2 times</i>			Other classmates <i>2 times</i>	

2.2.1.2 Analysis of Mothers' COLT schedules

Concerning the mother's interactions during the laboratory, 42 schedules were totally collected. As for the Children's COLT schedules analyzed in the previous paragraph, Table 13 was created to group all data collected during the laboratory. A sample like Table 10

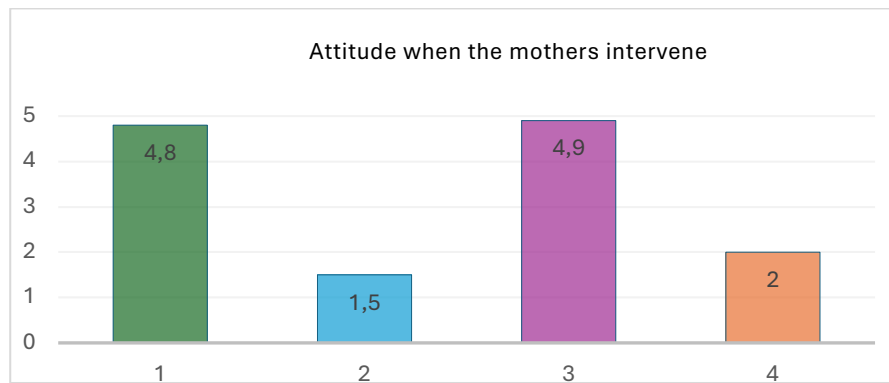
Table 13. Analysis of mothers' COLT schedules (first section)

Mother interaction scheme

The mother speaks to	She speaks in	Her intervention is	If with the children, she speaks with
A teacher <i>14 times</i>	Bangla <i>14 times</i>	Solicited by the teachers <i>12 times</i>	Her child <i>16 times</i>
The children <i>28 times</i>	Italian <i>27 times</i>	Solicited by the children <i>/</i>	Another child from Bangladesh <i>1 time</i>
	English <i>1 time</i>	Spontaneous <i>30 times</i>	Another child not from Bangladesh <i>3 times</i>
			All children <i>8 times</i>

As for the second section of Table 10, an Excel graphic was made to put the results for each voice of the table. To each of the four section of the table the arithmetic mean was made to see collectively how the attitude of the mothers was throughout the laboratory. The order of each result, from 1 to 5, follows the order of the original Mother COLT schedule on Table 10, being: (1) she is willing to speak; (2) she is anxious and avoids speaking; (3) she asks support from the teachers and collaborate; (4) she invites the children to speak in their mother tongue (directly or indirectly).

Table 14. Analysis of mothers' COLT schedules (second section)



1= never
5=always

2.2.1.3 Analysis of the logbook

This paragraph is dedicated to all logbook entries divided in reflections and thoughts formulated by the researcher, teachers, mothers and children. Not after every lesson there was the time and environment to do some reflections, this is why not every entry has reflections of all the participants above mentioned. Some reflections were repeated multiple times in different logbook entries. To avoid repetitions, each reflection will be put just once.

[Logbook, class A]

Researcher: *when the video was put, you could visibly see among the children who was Bangladeshi and who was not, they looked surprised, happy, were enchanted by the video and looked a lot at their mothers, as if to have some reassurance, probably because an activity like that had never happened. The children look at their mothers a lot. If they sing, also the children sing. M does not speak with the teachers or me, he just communicates with the mother using some words in Bangla. He doesn't speak if he can help it.*

Mother 1, 2, 3: *In the end the mothers say they were happy to finally see how it works and what their children do at school.*

Teachers 1, 2: *The teachers tell us that it was good for them to come, so they can see and rely on the teachers more.*

Children: *In the end the teachers ask to the children what they were going to tell their mothers*

A Bangladeshi child said: “è stato bello, io lo racconto alla mia mamma perché questa è proprio la MIA lingua!” (translated: I will tell everything to my mom, because this is MY language!). This to demonstrate how much this type of activities could impact the children and, in some way, empower them.

[Logbook, class B]

Researcher: *today there was only Z's mother, she did not really participate a lot, probably because she was a bit intimidated being the only mother, she spoke just with Z and a couple other Bangla children, with the class only when she was asked to do so. I also noticed that the mother spoke in Bangla to Z when me and the teacher were not looking at her and did not pay much attention, but whenever we were looking at her, she spoke in Italian saying words like: “brava Z, bellissimo Z” (Translated: “good Z, so beautiful Z”) as if she wanted us to know that she spoke in Italian to her daughter.*

[Logbook, class C]

Researcher: *there was a moment in which the teachers spoke with the mother about kindergarten in Bangladesh and the differences with Italy. The mother looked very interested and wanted to hear more. There was also A's sister, 13 years old. So, the teachers asked some questions to her too. She said that A usually does not speak at home, but if he does, he uses Italian.*

Mother 5: *asked the languages they use with A, she said that they prefer showing him videos in English at home.*

[Logbook, class D]

Researcher: *S was really talkative, which the teachers found surprising. Whenever she intervened, especially in the first part of the lesson, she stood up and went towards the teacher and spoke, after she came back to her place, she looked at her mother. She visibly wanted her mother to see that she intervened. A, another child observed, is really good with Bangla, we asked her dad when she came to pick her up and said that he teaches her sometimes at home. The teachers encouraged him to continue as it is very important for them to know their mother tongue. S' mother struggled intervening during the lesson, one of the reasons could be that she was alone and also that she is not well integrated in the Bangladeshi community in Marghera.*

Teacher 7, 8: *they tell me that they try to encourage the parents to speak with their children in Bangla, but they say it's like they feel a bit intimidated at school as if it was not correct to speak in Bangla inside an Italian school.*

Other: *At the restaurant, we talk with some men from Bangladesh, and they said that now their little children do not learn a lot of Bangla because they live here and, apart from home, they do not hear the language, so they feel like it's useless for them to learn it well. They said they prefer to let them watch English cartoons.*

[Logbook, class E]

Researcher: *R during the whole two activities, laughs, looks at his mother, is happy and very motivated to speak and do the activity to please his mother.*

Mother 7: *she told to a teacher: “a casa parla sempre, anche italiano, quando arriva a scuola sempre (fa segno della bocca chiusa)” (translated: at home she always speaks, at school she never does).*

[Logbook, class F]

Researcher: *The mother is extremely collaborative, much more than any other mother so far. The peculiarity never seen in other classes, is that this mother does not focus only on her own child or other Bangladeshi children she knows, but she helps every child independently. Also, she asked the mediator to translate in Italian the video. It denotes a sensibility for not understanding something. She spoke almost exclusively in Italian; she used Bangla only when her child started crying during the end of the laboratory when the mother had to leave.*

Teacher 11, 12: *Towards the end of the activity, the linguistic mediator formed a little group with some Bangladeshi children, and she started to talk with them. The children responded to Selina, they were excited, couldn't wait to talk with her. After this brief mother, the teachers were very surprised, especially concerning one Bangladeshi girl that had never spoken with them, the teacher thought that she had some kind of cognitive issues but realized that the girl had no problem in speaking at all. They said that maybe she felt safer with Selina as she spoke Bangla as herself. They thanked Selina a lot because they realized that the child did not have any cognitive issue at all.*

2.2.2 Analysis of ordinary lessons data

For the ordinary lessons, four lessons were observed in section D. Being in that class three Bangla children, this part of the analysis relies only on those three children. Following the pattern of the other COLT schedules analyzed, Table 15 was created to collect the results of 33 schedules in total.

Table 15. Analysis of Children's COLT schedules of ordinary lessonsChildren observation schedule (ordinary lessons)

Input given by	Reaction of the child	Kind of input	The child responds
A teacher <i>23 times</i>	Confident/motivated <i>20 times</i>	Direct question <i>15 times</i>	Verbally <i>24 times</i>
Other classmates <i>6 times</i>	Shy/careless <i>13 times</i>	Talking to the class <i>10 times</i>	Non-verbally <i>6 times</i>
Other <i>4 times</i>		Other <i>8 times</i>	Does not respond <i>3 times</i>

If he/she responds verbally:

The child uses	The language is	The child speaks to	Attitude while speaking
Bangla <i>/</i>	Solicited <i>9 times</i>	A teacher <i>17 times</i>	Confident/motivated <i>16 times</i>
Italian <i>24 times</i>	Spontaneous <i>15 times</i>	Other classmates <i>7 times</i>	Shy/afraid <i>8 times</i>
English <i>/</i>			

2.3 Results

2.3.1 Results of the laboratory data

2.3.1.1 Results of Children COLT schedules

In this section Table 12 will be commented to highlight the major results that come out from the analysis of the data. What will be done is confront and combine two or more of the data extrapolated in the analysis section to see what are the main combinations that happened during the laboratory. For each statement an example of an entry of a COLT schedule will be given. Since it is essential for the purpose of the research to know what language the children and mothers use, Italian and Bangla will be used and when necessary, English translations will be provided by me. As can be seen from Table 12, the majority of inputs given by the children are by teachers, concerning the laboratory activities and were input using the Italian language. Here an example of an entry:

Entry 1: [4th entry, section C] *Teacher 5 looks at A's drawing ad asks him: "Cosa disegni? Una bocca?"* (Translated: "What are you drawing? A mouth?"). *A nods.*

Combining the times the children responded non-verbally and the input given to them, the data collected showed that the majority of times the children responded non-verbally, occurred mostly when the input was a direct question to them, as can be seen in Entry 1. Data also showed that the children reacted to the inputs expressing excitement and motivation for the majority of times, especially when answers were verbal:

Entry 2: [6th entry, section D] *dr. Valeria Tonioli explains how in the video the kids are doing a necklace with flowers, S stands up, goes towards Valeria and says "Come questa"* (Translated: "Like this one") *pointing at Valeria's t-shirt that has flowers.*

Even if this could be a very subjective perception, in Entry 2 the motivation could easily be depicted by S standing up and going towards Valeria, something that S never did during normal lessons, which will be analyzed in a following chapter.

Whereas, whenever they expressed being shy or careless it was especially when teachers asked them direct questions in Italian:

Entry 3: [2nd entry, section B] *Valeria asks “Z anche tu parli Bangla?”* (Translation: “Z do you speak Bangla too?”). *Z shakes her head.*

This was also the case of the majority of non-verbal answers, as already mentioned and demonstrated with Entry 1. Data that stands out is that the children always understood the input and answered whether it was verbally or not. This was inferred because the “does not understand the input” and “does not answer” were never underlined in any entry:

Entry 4: [2nd entry, section F] *Teacher 12 asks the children if they want to eat the mango and A says “Si, ovvio”* (Translated: “yes, obviously”).

Entry 5: [3rd entry, section A]: *The Bangla nursery rhyme starts. H, M and T smile, laugh and look at their mothers.*

Like in Entry 5, even though there’s not verbal answer, it was clear that the children understood the input and wanted their mother to know it.

Even when the input was not verbal, but simply an action or a gesture, the children always had a reaction:

Entry 6: [1st entry, section A]: *Mothers 1, 2, 3 enter inside the classroom, H sees T’s mother and says to T “guarda Tusha, c’è mamma!”* (Translated: “look Tusha, there’s your mom!”)

Entry 7: [11th entry, section D] *Teachers 7 and 8 are giving mango pictures to color; S receives it and says: “lo mangio io”* (Translated: “I eat it”).

As for when they responded verbally, the majority of answers were spontaneous, therefore not forced by a direct question or by talking directly to the child:

Entry 8: [2nd entry, section E] *During the nursery rhyme in the video, mangos are shown, R looks at his mother and says: “আমা”* (Translated: ama, mango in Bangla).

The few solicited answers were found out to be mostly direct Italian questions that required an Italian answer:

Entry 9: [3rd entry, section B] *Teacher 3 asks Z “di che colore facciamo il mango?”* (Translated: “which color do we use to color the mango?”) *Z answers “arancione”* (Translated: “orange”).

However, the remaining solicited answers are mainly the mothers telling their child what to do or say to the teachers, which was found very interesting

Entry 10: [7th entry, section B] *Z finishes coloring. Her mother says to her “Maestra, finito”, Z goes to the teacher and repeats “maestra, finito”* (Translated: “Teacher, finish”).

Another striking result is that the children always used the language according to the input and the person they were speaking to. That is to say, Italian if the input is Italian, Bangla if the input was Bangla. Italian and Bangla were mixed only when the Bangla word was one everybody was repeating or learning, therefore coherent with the context:

Entry 11: [3rd entry, section C] *Valeria is explaining what the children are doing in the video, A intervenes and says “Mangiano anche l’am”* (Translated: “They also eat mango”). She used the word mango in Bangla because the teachers were repeating it.

Entry 12: [8th entry, section B] *Zara says to another classmates from Bangladesh who stopped coloring the mango “you still haven’t finished” in Bangla.*

English was put in the COLT schedule as it was thought be a valid option, especially as can be seen in the logbook entry of section C, when the mother says they prefer putting videos in English at home. In fact, some English was detected, mainly basic words, especially colors and phrases they listen to in videos on the Internet:

Entry 12: [5th entry, section D] *After watching the video, S says “I like!” putting her thumb up.*

Entry 13: [9th entry, section B] *Zara looks at her flower necklace, looks at another girl and says “pink”, pointing at the pink flower necklace.*

This was also highlighted in previous research such as Tonioli (2022), analyzed in the second part of this thesis.

2.3.1.2 Results of Mothers' COLT schedules

Similarly to the previous paragraph, here results that come from the mothers' COLT schedules will be outlined. For each inference obtained by extrapolating some results, an example of an entry that demonstrates that statement will be given.

Out of the 42 schedules, the data analyzed showed that for the majority of times the mothers speak with the children:

Entry 14: [4th entry, section B] *I am looking at Z coloring, her mother says "bella tua, bella" (Translated: "beautiful, yours is beautiful") pointing to Zara's work*

Out of all the children they speak mostly with their own child, especially during the second part of the laboratory, when they had to divide in groups to do the practical activities, the majority of the mothers sat next to their child and helped them:

Entry 15: [5th entry, section D] *S wants her mother to write her name in the flower, her mother writes it and says "mio nome" (Translated: "my name") pointing to the name.*

What was found striking is that, although they speak mostly with their children, the language they use more frequently is Italian. This is visible in both Entry 14 and 15. Instead, Bangla was used by the mother throughout the laboratory especially because solicited by the teachers:

Entry 16: [3rd entry, section A] *after watching the video for the first time, the linguistic mediator ask mother 1, 2, 3 to say some words about the video. They do not say any word but wait for the mediator to speak. After being asked again, they said there was "fiori" and "uva" in Italian. Teachers 1 and 2 solicit the mothers to say those things in their mother tongue, only then they say them in Bangla.*

Bangla was also used especially when the mothers were alone with their children, and nobody was observing or listening to their interactions.

Entry 17: [7th section B] *Zara and her mother are alone coloring; the mother says to Z "shundor" (Translated: "beautiful" in Bangla).*

As previously seen, solicitation to speak were made exclusively by the teachers. However, the majority of the interactions of the mothers were overall spontaneous, especially with the children:

Entry 18: [3rd entry, section F] *a child does something wrong in her flower, the mother says “sisi, giusto, non importa” (Translated: “yes right, it does not matter”).*

As far as the second section of the COLT schedule is concerned, as can be seen from Table 14, for the first column, which corresponded to the voice *She is willing to speak*, the analysis showed a 4,8 out of 5. This because overall, as can be seen also from the analysis of the first section of the schedule, their interactions were spontaneous, apart from some solicitations, as seen in Entry 16.

As for the second voice of Table 14, which depicted whether the mothers were anxious or avoided speaking, the result is a 1,5 out of 5, meaning they did not show much anxiety or disorientation during the laboratory. This is coherent to the result of the first column, in which their high will to participate was depicted.

The third column, instead, aimed to analyze whether the mothers were willing to collaborate with the teachers for the realization of the activities. This particular voice reached the highest score with a 4,9 out of 5. During the activities, whenever they were asked to help, they did, also when not asked:

Entry 19: [5th entry, section F] *Y finishes his drawing, the mother says “Finito Y? Bravo, lasciare qua” (Translated: “Finished Y? Good, leave it here”) and indicates the table where all the other drawings were. Y puts the drawing on the table.*

To conclude, the fourth voice was put with the purpose of seeing whether the mothers responded positively to the aim of the laboratory, which was bringing the Bangla language at school. The result is a 2 out of 5, meaning that the mothers did not invite the children to speak Bangla much, even when they spoke with their children. this result also corresponds to what was already presented in the first section of the schedule, especially in Entry 14 and 16.

2.3.1.3 Results of the logbook

The logbook resulted being a good resource to compare the data of the COLT schedules. Being the schedules exclusively filled by myself, they could result to be very subjective without any other source of feedback. The logbook was the way of comparing my results to the thoughts of especially teachers and mothers and see if they were complementary.

Entry 20: [Class A] *when the video was put, you could visibly see among the children who was Bangladeshi and who was not, they looked surprised, happy.*

This was reflected also in the COLT schedule results, for example in Entry 5, as it was pointed out that the children's responses were mainly of excitement and motivation. Also, this thought of a Bangladeshi child confirmed this result:

Entry 21: [Class A] *in the end the teachers ask to the children what they were going to tell their mothers. A Bangladeshi child said: "è stato bello, io lo racconto alla mia mamma perché questa è proprio la MIA lingua!" (Translated: "I will tell everything to my mom, because this is MY language!").*

This emphasis of the *MY language* expresses the excitement the children showed during the laboratory.

As far as the mothers are concerned, whenever they were asked if they liked the laboratory by the linguistic mediator, they expressed how happy they were to see how the school works and what their children do at school. This was confirmed by a conversation made in class C:

Entry 22: [class C] *there was a moment in which the teachers spoke with the mother about kindergarten in Bangladesh and the differences with Italy. The mother looked very interested and wanted to hear more. So, a conversation was built up around confronting Bangladeshi education and Italian education.*

Teachers also expressed the importance of this kind of activities for the children and mothers:

Entry 25: [class A] *the teachers tell us that it was good for the mothers to come, so they can see and rely on the teachers more.*

Concerning the language, in the results of the mother's COLT schedules it was pointed out that the majority of the interactions they made were in Italian, this was confirmed in the logbook:

Entry 23: [class B] *the mother spoke in Bangla to Z when me and the teacher were not looking at her and did not pay much attention, but whenever we were looking at her, she spoke in Italian.*

Also the teachers highlighted this issue they have been facing at school:

Entry 24: [class D] *teachers try to encourage the parents to speak with their children in Bangla, but they say it's like the parents feel a bit intimidated at school as if it was not correct to speak in Bangla inside an Italian school.*

Here it was thought essential to share a reflection that was captured outside the school, from a group of Bangladeshi dads. When they were asked whether they speak Bangla to their kids they answered:

Entry 25: [outside the school] *the dads said their little children do not learn a lot of Bangla because they live here and, apart from home, they do not hear the language, so they feel like it's useless for them to learn it well. They said they prefer to let them watch English cartoons.*

English which we saw in the children colt schedules in Entry 12 for example.

As for the main purpose that originally drove this research, which was demonstrating that these second generation children do not have cognitive issues, but just have different timing compared to other children, the following entry taken from the last day of laboratory in class F is an excellent example:

Entry 26: [class F] *Towards the end of the activity, the linguistic mediator formed a little group with some Bangladeshi children, and she started to talk with them. The children responded to Selina, they were excited, couldn't wait to talk with her. After this brief mother, the teachers were very surprised, especially concerning one Bangladeshi girl that had never spoken with them, the teacher thought that she had some kind of cognitive issues but realized that the girl had no problem in speaking at all. They said that maybe she felt safer with Selina as she spoke Bangla as herself. They thanked Selina a lot because they realized that the child did not have any cognitive issue at all.*

2.3.2 Results of ordinary lessons data

This last paragraph of the results chapter aims to analyze the results of the COLT schedules of the ordinary lessons data, already showed in Table 15. It is essential to remind that this data was collected only in section D, as I was allowed to follow ordinary lessons in the class only. Therefore, the results here reported rely on six participants: three children and teachers 7 and 8 and me as the observer.

As can be seen in the data analyzed in Table 15, out of the 33 schedules the majority of inputs were given by the teachers:

Entry 27: *Teacher 8 and other classmates are singing. S does not sing. Teacher 8 asks S why she is not sing, if she is tired. S nods.*

As for the laboratory data, the children showed a certain confident and motivation in their answers, whether they were spontaneous or solicited:

Entry 28: *Teacher 8 is calling the register, and she calls a boy whose name starts with A. S stands up and says “con A” (Translated: “with A”) and points to a poster that had the letter A drawn.*

However, shyness was depicted in much more communicative acts than during the laboratory:

Entry 29: *Teacher 7 asks A if he wants to tell the class what he did yesterday, he looks at the classmates, shakes his head and sits down.*

Entry 30: *Teacher 7 is calling the register, she calls S. She stands up, puts his name on the board and goes back to her seat, saying nothing to the teacher.*

Mostly the children answered thanks to direct questions to them or to the class,

Entry 31: *Teacher 8 says she is going to prepare the snack, bread with jam, S says “A me piace maestra” (Translated: “Teacher, I like it”).*

As during the ordinary lessons, the children also responded mostly verbally, but different is the data of the language used, which is exclusively Italian. Before starting the observations, Bangla was thought to be a valid option to see whether between Bangladeshi children they spoke Bangla, but the observations showed they do not.

Something which was not depicted in the laboratory, but during ordinary lessons happened, is that the option “did not respond to the input” was marked:

Entry 32: *teacher 8 asks E to go to the window and see what the weather is like. E looks at her and does not understand.*

As for their communicative acts, their language was mainly spontaneous. However, there was much more solicitation from the teachers for them to speak than during the laboratory:

Entry 33: *Teacher 8 asks E, if he wants a slice of apple, he nods. But the teacher insists for him to say it with words. Only then he says yes.*

For this it is essential to mention that the teachers knew that I was observing three kids specifically, therefore they were a little biased and asked them much more questions than to the other children.

PART THREE

Three proposals for plurilingual lessons in pre-school education

3.1 First lesson

3.1.1 Background of the first lesson

For the third and last part of this thesis, three proposals for lessons to be carried out in Italian pre-school services will be outlined. But before delving into the description of each of the lesson, some premises will be made, highlighting the main inspirations that allowed to shape the lessons the way that it will be presented. Firstly, the Italian national indications concerning the curriculum of pre-schools and primary education published in 2012 was an essential tool to understand what the expected “field of experiences” are, as defined in the text, meaning what the children should tackle during their experience at school. In particular, this text defines that interculture is a key word inside many classrooms nowadays, and it is the way through which the children are able to recognize their own identity and the one of others. On one hand, this is considered as a great enrichment in the education field, that can teach children about differences and how they can coexist, but, on the other hand there is a great risk of marginalization of many children, due to a lack of resources to give them a valid education experience (MIUR, 2012). The Italian Ministry of Education then defines 5 fields that each child should experience in their pre-school education. Particularly, the first lesson that will follow was constructed focusing on the field named *The self and the other*. It defines how, during pre-school years, the child progressively develops their own identity, they become aware of their bodies, their personality. The child realizes he can be similar but also different to their peers, that they can be welcomed but also excluded, that they can themselves welcome and exclude (MIUR 2012). Duty of the teachers and the community would be to guide them to the right direction. Beyond national guidelines, it was also found essential to look at a broader landscape, thus, to European guidelines. For this lesson the European portfolio for pre-primary educators was found a very useful source of inspiration. It is a guide for teachers that nowadays experience working in plurilingual and intercultural environments, but lack in resources to deal with such situations. It gives a lot of questions teachers should reflect on as a self-analysis, and this was really useful to reflect upon the lesson I was going to structure. The portfolio specifically “breaks down the professional skills associated with children’s linguistic and cultural development into four domains” (European Centre for Modern Languages of the Council of


Europe, 2015, p. 8). Among those skills, the lesson focused on “creating a favorable learning environment for children” (p. 8), particularly the second point “organizing activities on the theme of languages and diversity” (p. 52). Some of the questions in this section of the portfolio helped me analyze myself before structuring the lessons. The questions were the following:

“How can I contribute to making children want to discover other cultures and languages? [...] How can I help make children understand the need to be respectful of linguistic and cultural diversity? [...] How can I help plurilingual children to establish connections between the different languages that they speak or learn?” (European Centre for Modern Languages of the Council of Europe, 2015, p. 54, 55, 56).

According to the first question, to make children wanting to discover other cultures and languages, this lesson proposes to show children short stories that might give a hint to what diversity can look like, but in a funny way. For this purpose, in fact, a short story by Bernard Friot and Magali Le Huche published in 2014 entitled “Gli invitati” (“the guests” in English) was used. In this book the protagonist Elena, is a goat and has nine rooms and invites nine of her friends to pass the summer there with her. Each of her friends a different animal with different needs, preferences and personalities. For this reason, Elena likes to décor each room according to what the preferences and needs of each guest are. The result is a house with so much diversity inside. Concerning the following two questions, which deal with the need to be respectful and how to establish connections between the diversity of language the encounter at school, the lesson proposes to use the Flower of Languages outlined in the handbook wrote in 2020 by the NEW ABC members entitled *Teacher training and family involvement in pluralistic approaches to language education*. It gives 2 preliminary activities to which 14 activities follow. They all aim to use a pluralistic approach to language education. The Flower of Languages is one of the preliminary that precisely aims to stimulate curiosity towards languages (Andorno *et al.*, 2020). It is an activity which was readapted from the FREPA (Candelier *et al.*, 2012). Table 16 taken from the handbook, shows the steps to successfully create the flower. This activity will be taken as inspiration for the second part of the lesson but will be used a bit differently. All will be explained when the lesson will be outlined in the following paragraph. Finally, concerning all lessons generally, they will be

structured following Balboni (2002) structure of a didactic unit, divided into globality, analysis and synthesis, with a section for motivation in the beginning as well. These lessons here displayed do not aim at answering fully to what the Italian Ministry of Education asks, or to the questions posed by the portfolio, not even to make the children fully understand meticulously what the broader meaning of each activity is. We need to be reminded the recipients' ages goes from three to five years old, and the following lesson can only represent a single piece of a puzzle that has to be completed throughout years of teaching.

Table 16. The Flower of Languages guide (Andorno, *et al.*, 2020)



Step-by-step directions:

Step 1: Each child receives a circle of cardboard on which he/she writes his/her name and draws himself/herself.

Step 2: Each child receives cards with the shape of petals: on each one he/she writes the name of his interlocutor, draws him/her and writes the languages he/she uses with him/her (listening and speaking).

Step 3: Children are asked to start with their own family members and then to represent the languages spoken with other interlocutors in other contexts of the child's social life (school, shops, playground, sports, street...).

Step 4: The petals are as many as he/she will ask to represent his/her interlocutors and his/her languages, dialects or linguistic varieties.

Step 5: Children glue the petals around the center.

Step 6: All the language flowers are pasted on a poster or on a wall, to offer food for thought on the multilingualism of the classroom.

3.1.2 First lesson: School, sweet school.

Time: the duration is two hours in total for both first and second part. To make the lesson lighter for children, the two parts can be done separately in two different days.

Materials: a cardboard of a house, colors, the book *Gli invitati* by Bernard Friot and Magali Le Huche, petals and circles to form flowers.

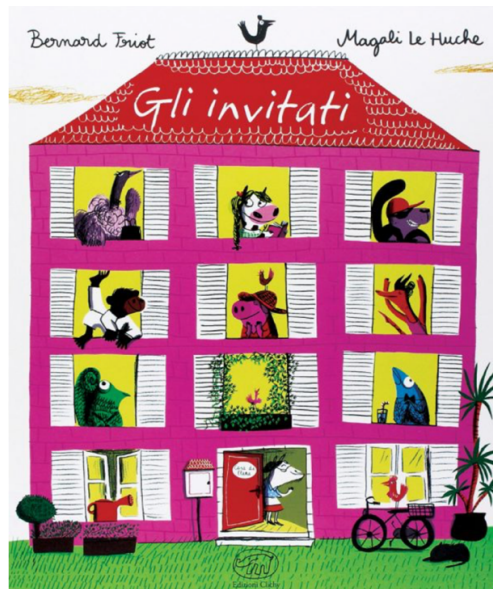
Even though the lessons would ideally take place in an Italian pre-school, for the sake of this thesis they will be described in English.

PART ONE

MOTIVATION (10 minutes)

Children are in a circle; the teachers show a cardboard of a house previously prepared. It is very similar to the cover picture of the book that will be read in the globality section of the lesson, which is represented in Figure 8. The house represented has to have as many windows as there are children in the class, and everything has to be plain white. The children look at it and teachers, to rise the curiosity, ask what they think they are going to do with it.

Figure 8. Cover picture of *Gli invitati* by Bernard Friot and Magali Le Huche



GLOBALITY (15 minutes)

The teachers put aside the cardboard, telling the children they will use it later, and present the book “Gli invitati” by Bernard Friot and Magali Le Huche. Teachers read the story. As every animal of the story is presented, the teachers try to draw attention on the differences between the rooms of each animal, and how for example a fish, a cow and a monkey, that all come from different habitats and speak in many different languages, are able to live together in the same house.

ANALYSIS (30 minutes)

After reading the book, the teachers now bring the cardboard again in the center of the circle. they explain how this house will be a representation of the class, each window will represent their own room, and all together they live in the same house as they do every day in the class. So, the teachers give instructions to the children: each of them will décor one window with a representation of what makes them unique compared to the others, just like the animals in the book. Examples might be the flag of their country of origin, they favorite meal of that country, or anything that can represent them according to the children. It would be nice if the teachers could help each child in choosing what to draw in their window.

SYNTHESIS (10 minutes)

Teachers, then take pictures of each child, and all together try to guess which windows belong to whom and attach to finish the project of the cardboard with a little guess game. This first part ends with a simple reflection with the children, observing the cardboard completed and noticing how every window is different and unique from the others.

PART TWO

MOTIVATION (5 minutes)

Present to all the children flower cardboard but with loose petals, that will need to be glued afterwards. Teachers say to the kids that their house has a very big garden with lots of flowers and it is their duty to take care of them.

ANALYSIS (30 minutes)

As according to The Flower of Languages (NEW ABC, 2020) every child will have a circle in which they draw their own face. Every petal will represent how the children communicate with other classmates. If with three children they can speak only Italian they will draw the Italian flag, if two kids know Italian but also Spanish, they will draw both flags. This can be a way to raise awareness about the linguistic diversity of their class. It can be both a way to know different ways in which they can communicate with their classmates and also make people who speak the same languages which are not Italian aware that they can use that language as a source of communication among each other. This I think is something the children need to know, as I noticed during my laboratory that children belonging to the same

communities outside school only spoke Italian with each other inside school. This activity can be an opportunity to show the children the importance of using their mother tongue even if different from Italian.

SYNTHESIS (20 minutes)

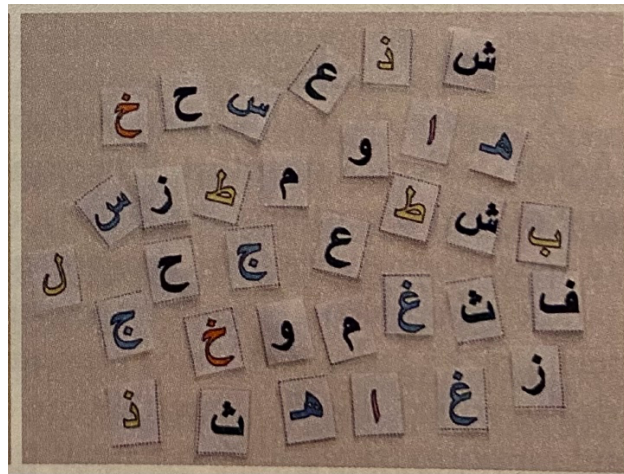
Teachers will finally explain that each child, in order to take care of their garden, they will need to take care of their flower practicing what is represented inside of them, thus getting closer to our classmates, exploring what is different from us. To conclude a final reflection could be showing the children how beautiful their house is, and that even though they all come from different places, they can live together. However, to take care of our house it and of the beautiful garden that surrounds it, each of us need to get to know our classmates and their uniqueness. Only in this way we can keep a beautiful house and a beautiful garden.

3.2 *Second lesson*

3.2.1 *Background of the second lesson*

The following second lesson was inspired starting from the approach awakening to languages, which we remind by recalling the FREPA being an approach which takes into considerations all languages that are present in the children's lives, not only the ones of the school curriculum, but also languages that children might speak at home (Council of Europe, 2024). The second thing that inspired this lesson was a story found on the book *Talen op een Kier: Talensensibilisering voor het basisonderwijs*, which translated from Dutch means a book for language sensibilization for primary education. This story was also published in the FREPA site of the Council of Europe and was therefore taken and adapted for the purposes of the lesson. In pre-primary the curriculum in Italy does not comprehend learning how to read or write, but just a first approach to letters, this lesson was designed specifically working on letters of the alphabet. The tale of the book, which was taken as inspiration, in fact, deals with a monster which eats all sorts of letters, one day his belly was so full that he spat out all letters in the cave, all children are in his cave and look for the letters of the alphabets and put them inside bags, each with the letter of the alphabet. By doing this game, the children will be able to discriminate letters from one alphabet to the other and can become aware of the multilingualism of their environment (Jonckheere *et al.*, 2009). Moreover, another inspiration of this lesson has been one of the activities shown in Cognigni (2020), one called "Arabic memory" (p. 111 trad. ing.). It is a game that has to be done after a previous introduction to the alphabet. The game consists in two sets of Arabic alphabets which are given to the children. an example of alphabet is shown in Figure 9. Each child takes one letter randomly and tries to find their "letter partner", the other child with the same letter as them. Together they go the teacher and pronounce its sound together. (Cognigni, 2020). Teachers who proposed this game showed how the children were able to discriminate the sounds, proving that it is more than possible to educate on plurilingualism at pre-school level (Cognigni, 2020). Finally, another aspect that tries to promote this lesson is the inclusion of the parents inside the school as they would ideally be invited to help pronounce the sounds of the alphabet of the language.

Figure 9. Example of alphabet memory with the Arabic letters (Cognigni, 2020).



3.2.2 Second lesson: The Lettermonster

Time: the lesson would ideally last 70 minutes. It can be divided in two parts: globality analysis in one, and synthesis in another.

Materials: four sets of cards, two representing the letters of one alphabet, other two representing another alphabet, four jars, a monster puppet.

The following lesson is recommended for 5-year-old children attending the last year of pre-school. This because there is going to be an approach with letter, something that could be difficult to work on with younger children. An alternative could be a memory with images that depict the first sound of each letter, so that the children work with images but teachers can also work with sounds.

MOTIVATION (15 minutes)

Before the beginning of the lessons, the teachers change a bit the display of the class putting all desks in one angle of the class, forming a sort of cave with some sheets on the desks if they can, or some paper painted in grey, the structure has to give the impression of a big cave. It will be the cave of the Lettermonster. When all children arrive in the class, the teachers will explain that that night a big monster flew to their class and found it the perfect place for its cave. The teachers let the children explore the cave, then they ask them to form a circle.

GLOBALITY (15 minutes)

The teachers tell this story, adapted from the story of the letter monster written by Jonckheere, S., *et al.*, (2009):

In a land far away lives a monster, he is not dangerous or scary, he is a big creature that really likes humans, especially children. But the things that he loves the most are all the languages humans use to speak, he is really fascinated by how many languages are used all around the world, from Italian, to Chinese, from Bangladeshi to Arab, they all seem so amazing to our Lettermonster.

Here the teachers could ask some questions like: “How many languages do you think exist around the world?” and “Which languages do you know?”

However, our monster was a little bit sad because he was not able to speak all those languages, and he really wanted to! So, one day he thought: “What if I steal all letters from all around the world? In this way I will learn all alphabets and I will be able to speak like human beings!”. So, he began his journey, flying to many places all around the world and stealing as many letters as he could. Big, small, thick and thin, he took every single letter. After many hours of flying, he felt very tired, so he found our class, transformed it into his cave, and fell asleep. This morning, he left again to steal other letters, and he left the ones he already stole here in the cave! He carefully hid each letter so that it would be very difficult for us to find them. Before you came here, us teachers thought we could give a hand to the Lettermonster to learn some letters, but especially you since he really likes children. Do you think we can help the monster?

ANALYSIS (20 minutes)

The main activity would then be a treasure hunt of all the letters that the teachers previously hid all around the class. They should hide all letters from two different alphabets, one would be the one used for the language at school here I will use with the Latin alphabet as an example, and the other can vary depending on the languages the children speak. If, for example, there are 5 kids who speak Arabic, the Arabic alphabet would be the other one, here I will continue with the example of Arabic. The letters of the two alphabets should be written in two different colors, to help

the children wonder and make hypothesis concerning a distinction. So, the treasure hunt starts, all children take all letters they find and put them in a desk. They should then start questioning why they are in two different colors, and children who know Arabic, together with an adult Arabic speaker, which could be one of the children's parents, explain together with the teachers, that some of the letters do not belong to the alphabet the children know, but another, which is called Arabic. Arabic children will then recognize the letters and sounds of their mother tongue and hopefully will be very motivated, together with the adult, to show their classmates how the letters are pronounced. Here the tip given in Cognigni (2020) which consists in associating some sounds to animal sounds if they are similar could be used to help the children memorize the sounds. While they go through each letter, after trying to pronounce the sounds, they will put all letters in a jar. The same thing will be done with the Latin alphabet, which will be put as well on a separate jar after pronouncing each letter.

SYNTHESIS (20 minutes)

To revise all sounds learned, after putting all letter in the two jars, the teachers propose the memory game previously presented taken from Cognigni (2020). They will take another set of alphabet previously printed and put on a similar jar as the other two. All children will then be divided in two groups, one will take a letter in the first jar, and the other group from the other jar. They will try to find their “partner” which would be the other children with the same letter. They will then go to a teacher, pronounce together the sound of the letter and go and take another letter, and so on, until the letters are over. This should be done separately for the two alphabets. Now the teachers say that they are ready to teach all sounds to the Lettermonster once he comes back. It would be nice, for example at the end of the lessons, or while the class goes to have lunch, to find a monster puppet, put it in the class, and tell the children the Lettermonster has come back to the cave, and that now they can teach him all letters. They now could take one letter each out of the jar and teach them to the Lettermonster.

3.3 Third lesson

3.3.1 Background of the third lesson

The third lesson was outlined inspired to one of the five fields of experience already mentioned and created by the MIUR (2012). The specific field which was taken for this lesson is *body and movement* to try and learn parts of the body with a plurilingual perspective. It was created with the premise to show the children how all humans are the same, even if all parts of the body are named differently, they always represent the same thing. For the lesson the first activity was inspired by an image taken by Tonioli *et al* (n.d.) which will be also used in the lesson. Then the main activity will revolve around a song called *Head, shoulders, knees and toes*, to approach in a funny way to the parts of the body. It was thought to use a song since it can be easier to memorize lexicon through a melody. Specifically the song chosen can also easily be adapted to any language which is perfect for what was proposed after listening to the song, which is making a video using a language spoken by a minority in the class. Finally, the last activity was taken by Arumí Ribas, M. *et al.*, (2024) called the plurilingual puzzle, but adapted by printing puzzles with body parts, with the word of the body part in the languages the children used to make the video earlier. Putting the word, even though the children are not able to read or write, it was found useful as well since it was also done for the laboratory observed for this thesis and the children were very curious to see all different shapes of the words in different languages. Also, for this lesson the proposal is to invite parents of the children who are mother tongue in the language the teachers intend to make the video and the following puzzle activity.

3.3.2 Third lesson: Our body

Time: the duration is ideally one hour, but the part of the video making could last more time, depending on how much time the children together with the linguistic mediator or the parents need to adapt the song.

Materials: Figure 10 printed in A3, a computer and projector to show the video and sheets to form puzzle like in Figure 12.

MOTIVATION (10 minutes)

The teachers show images of children, such as the ones presented in Figure 10, that can be found in Tonioli *et al.*, (n.d., p. 3). Put the figures of the bodies in a board and ask the children to name all parts of the body they know. Plurilingual children could also be encouraged to tell the parts of the body in other languages they know.

Figure 10. Parts of the body Tonioli *et al.*, (n.d., p. 3).



GLOBALITY (15 minutes)

The teachers put on the Italian version of the famous song *Head, shoulders, knees and toes*. It is a song quite famous in Italy, usually used in Italian pre-schools in its English version to have a first approach with the foreign language English. I propose that the children listen to the Italian version present in the YouTube page CoComelon Italiano – Canzoni per Bambini published in 2021. The children then are invited to dance it together following the movements of the animals. It was chosen specifically this YouTube video because the song goes faster each time the song is repeated, so it becomes more and more difficult but also funnier for the children to follow. After listening to it for three or four times, the children should have learned it, since the melody is very simple.

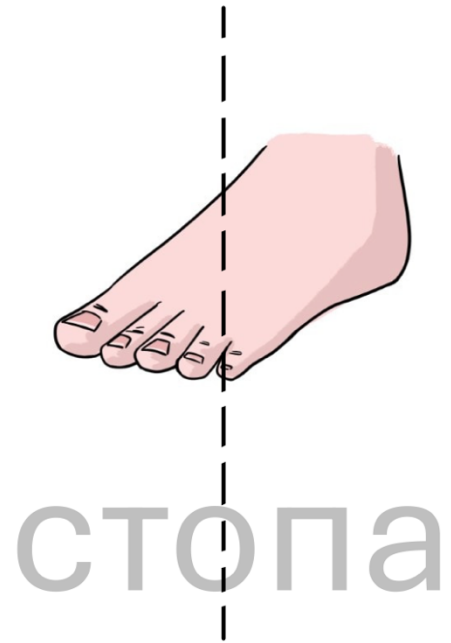
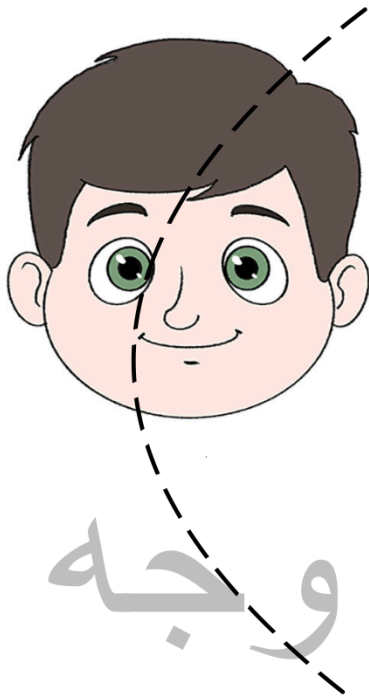
ANALYSIS (20 minutes)

Record videos where the words are said in the language used by plurilingual children at home, it could be any language since they all fit in the melody of the song. So firstly, helped by the linguistic mediator or even a parent who would have previously been invited to come, the children learn how these parts of the body are called in this other language. Then together they will try to put them in the melody of the song. Finally, a teacher, with previous consent of the parents, will record the children singing the song with the words of the new language. After the creation of the video, the linguistic mediator together with the children, can expand the lexicon adding also how to say more body parts, maybe the once that were mentioned in the motivation section but are not present in the song.

SYNTHESIS (15 minuti)

Inspired by the pre-school activity illustrated by Arumí Ribas, M. *et al.*, (2024) as a final synthesis activity it is here proposed the plurilingual puzzle. It consists in printing in A4 sheets the pictures of various part of the body already mentioned and learned in the previous parts of the lesson and the corresponding word in the language the children are introduced to (the one used to previously make the video). These sheets are cut in two pieces and mixed all together. the children will have to find the right couple of sheets and then color the word present under the picture. Some examples were created in Figure 11. Children, like it was noted in the laboratory used for the research, will be curious of the strange ways in which the various languages have different alphabets, and it could be a way to approach with the meaning of alphabets and how they differ around the world. This lesson could in fact be done previous to the second one presented in this chapter, so as to arise curiosity over alphabets. Then the second lesson could be done with the alphabet of language used for this lesson.

Figure 11. Plurilingual puzzles – examples with Arab and Ukrainian.



CONCLUSION

The goal of the present thesis has been to answer the research question of whether the inclusion inside the school environment of the mothers and families of second generation children, along with their mother tongues, which live in contexts of migration could benefit both families and children for brighter future perspectives for this peculiar generation of children. Around this research question the thesis was build divided in three sections. The first one, entitled *Migration and Plurilingual Education Policies*, dealt with the theoretical background of the two main aspects of this thesis: migration and plurilingual education. In fact, a first chapter was dedicated to migration policies, with a focus on Bangladesh and the possible reasons for their diaspora in Europe, particularly focusing on Italy and their community in the territory of Venice. A second chapter was centered around education policies in Europe and specifically Italy, especially concerning plurilingualism and multilingualism and pre-school services, which was the setting of the research. The second section of the thesis can be defined as the heart of this study, as it presents the research carried out in a pre-school in Marghera, a neighborhood in the municipality of Venice. The research was qualitative and based on observations and the compilation of COLT schedules that were shown in subchapter 2.1.5 specifically in Tables 9, 10 and 11. Observations took place in both a laboratory which promoted the Bangla language and the presence of the mothers inside the school environment, and, to make the research more complete, also observations during ordinary lessons were made. COLT schedules were made for both children and mothers, since the research question aimed at analyzing both. A logbook was also kept throughout the whole laboratory to triangulate the results with comments from both pre-school teachers and the Bangladeshi mothers who attended the laboratory. The research showed a positive impact in both mothers and children, especially highlighted by some entries and striking results. Firstly, it was seen how the children's answers were mainly spontaneous, denoting the excitement and positive attitude of the children doing the laboratory. Secondly, concerning the language, the Bangla language was used, especially with the mothers which was also one of the objectives of the research; showing mothers that their L1 can be valorized in the school as well. Still concerning mothers, whenever they were asked about the laboratory, they expressed happiness in being included in the school

environment, and also relief in seeing what their children do at school, which was found of extreme importance since it was shown in the first section of the thesis being much distant to what children do in pre-primary in Bangladesh. Finally, also teachers show their satisfaction in the laboratory, claiming that it was good for the mothers to come to the school and, moreover, telling us that the children were seen much more motivated and involved in the class, all this confirming the positive impact the research shows. One suggestion that can be done for future research concerning this particular field is to analyze what are the factors that make mothers use the language of the school rather than their mother tongue and vice versa. This could be one step forward in analyzing thoughts and beliefs of the mothers, but also to work with them in acknowledging the importance of their mother tongue for them and their children, even in migration contexts where the language might seem useless. Finally, the last section of this research showed some proposals for lessons to be carried out in pre-schools to valorize the children's plurilingualism at school. They were all inspired by other research and handbooks created for plurilingual education and were adapted for the purposes of each lesson.

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Appendix

Concerning the laboratory attended for the research outlined in part two of this thesis, some details concerning what was done will be here shown. Firstly, here is the nursery rhyme projected to the children:

AYE (AY) CHELERA, AYE (AY) MEYERA FUL TULITE JAI

Venite bambini, venite bambine, andiamo a raccogliere i fiori

FULER MALA GOLAIIDIE / MAMAR BARI JAI

Mettiamo al collo una collana di fiori / andiamo a casa dello zio

AYE (AY) CHELERA, AYE (AY) MEYERA FUL TULITE JAI

Venite bambini, venite bambine, andiamo a raccogliere i fiori

FULER MALA GOLAIIDIE / MAMAR BARI JAI

Mettiamo al collo una collana di fiori / andiamo a casa dello zio

JHORER DINE MAMAR DESHE AM KURATE SHUK

Nei giorni di temporale è bello raccogliere i manghi nel paese dello zio

PAKA JAMER MOODHUR ROSHE RONGHIN KORI MOK

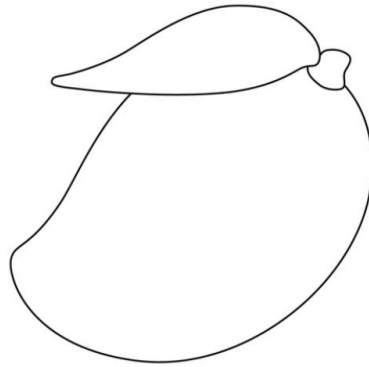
Con il dolce succo del frutto JAM maturo ci coloriamo la bocca.

JHORER DINE MAMAR DESHE AM KURATE SHUK

Nei giorni di temporale è bello raccogliere i manghi nel paese dello zio

This was the sheet created by Valeria Tonioli which was given to the teachers in case they wanted to reuse the nursery rhyme in the future.

Then the mango that was given to the students, as can be seen, had mango written both in Italian (and English, as some children cared to highlight) and in Bangladeshi. Children were really interested in the letter and how they differ and almost everyone ended up coloring the words as well.



আম
MANGO

Finally, here two pictures taken during the activities:



