FOREIGN LANGUAGES AND FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION AS CRITICAL AND INTERCULTURAL EXPERIENCES

Paola Giorgis

Copyright 2018. Lexington Books. All rights reserved. May not be reproduced in any form without permission from the publisher, except fair uses permitted under U.S. or applicable copyright law.

EBSCO Publishing : eBook Collection (EBSCOhost) - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via
AN: 1924131 ; Paola Giorgis.; Meeting Foreignness : Foreign Languages and Foreign Language Education As Critical and Intercultural Experiences
Account: ns335141

Meeting Foreignness

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

Meeting Foreignness

Foreign Languages and Foreign Language Education as Critical and Intercultural Experiences

Paola Giorgis

LEXINGTON BOOKS
Lanham • Boulder • New York • London

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

The example presented at p. 5-6, some passages in 1.3. Languages, Identities, Migrations (in Part One), and in sections 1 and 6 (in Part Three) were published in "Linguistic and Cultural Diversities as Metaphors of the Urban Experience" (sections 1, 2, 3) within the chapter by the collective wom. an.ed "Identity and Diversity: the Educational Challenge in Urban Contexts" (Giorgis *et al.* 2017) and are reproduced by permission of SCSC by Springer, © 2017.

The introduction to 2.1. The Activities, as well as some passages in 2.1.3. *Intercultural Citizenship* (both in Part One), are a revised and extended version of a text forthcoming in *Taboo: Journal of Culture and Education* (Giorgis forthcoming). The Author wishes to thank Caddo Gap Press for allowing this reproduction.

The section 2.1.1. *Intercultural Grammar* is a revised and extended version of a text published online by the Center for Intercultural Dialogue. "Teaching EFL with a Hidden Agenda: Introducing Intercultural Awareness through a Grammar Lesson." November 24, 2015. http://centerforinterculturaldialogue.org/2015/11/24/teaching-efl-with-a-hidden-agenda-introducing-intercultural-awareness-through-a-grammar-lesson/ (Giorgis 2015). The Author wishes to thank CID for allowing this reproduction.

Published by Lexington Books
An imprint of The Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, Inc.
4501 Forbes Boulevard, Suite 200, Lanham, Maryland 20706
www.rowman.com

6 Tinworth Street, London SE11 5AL

Copyright © 2018 by The Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, Inc.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form or by any electronic or mechanical means, including information storage and retrieval systems, without written permission from the publisher, except by a reviewer who may quote passages in a review.

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Information Available

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

ISBN 978-1-4985-6050-4 (cloth : alk. paper)
ISBN 978-1-4985-6051-1 (electronic)

The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of American National Standard for Information Sciences—Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI/NISO Z39.48-1992.

Printed in the United States of America

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

To Alex,
a most generous and caring person

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

Everyone is someone else's foreigner.

—Proverb

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

Contents

Acknowledgments xi

Introduction: The Missing Link: Presenting What, How, from Where and to Whom xiii

Part One Within Praxis 1

1. The Context 1
   1.1. Made in Italies 1
   1.2. Native or Foreign? 7
   1.3. Languages, Identities, Migrations 9

2. The Educational Perspective 11
   2.1. The Activities 12
      2.1.1. Intercultural Grammar 14
      2.1.2. Intercultural Poetry 16
      2.1.3. Intercultural Citizenship 18
      2.1.4. A Comment on the Activities 26

Part Two Within Theory 29

1. Introduction: What's in a Word? 29

2. Foreign 30

3. Language 35
   3.1. mOther tongue 36
   3.2. Other Languages 37
   3.3. Language and Power 39

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

4. Education 44
4.1. Critical Pedagogies 46

5. Critical 48

6. Intercultural 51
6.1. Intercultural Education 53

7. Experience 54

Part Three Within Research 59

1. Introducing the Research Study 59

2. The Contexts 60

3. The Participants 62

4. Methodology and Data Collecting 62
4.1. General Considerations on Methodology 62
4.2. Data Collecting: Sampling 63
4.3. Some Issues Regarding Data Collecting 63
4.3.1. In/Out Issue 63
4.3.2. Objectivity/Subjectivity 64
4.3.3. Ethical Issues 64
4.4. Interviews and Back-talk Focus Groups 65
4.4.1. Motivation and Procedures 65
4.4.2. Theoretical References 66

5. Analysis of Data 66
5.1. Main Principles 67
5.1.1. Reflexivity 67
5.1.2. Text Construction and Rhetorical Figures 67
5.1.3. Dialogue Between the Data and the Framework 68
5.1.4. Triangulation and Accountability 68

6. The Findings 68

7. Discussion 72
7.1. On the Study 72
7.2. On the Research Methods 73

Part Four Meeting Foreignness. Foreign Language Education as a Critical (and) Intercultural Experience 79

1. Meeting Foreignness 79

2. Foreign Language Education as a Critical (and) Intercultural Experience 80

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

2.1. English and English Language Teaching 82
2.2. English as a Foreign Language and English as a Lingua Franca 83
2.3. English as a Lingua Franca and English Language Teaching. An Impossible Match? 84

3. Foreign Languages and the Intercultural 88

4. What's Next? 90
4.1. How to Do It 91

A Final Note The Bigger Picture. A Few Remarks on Some *fin-de-siècle* Fascinations 97

References 105

Index 115

About the Author 121

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

Acknowledgments

I wish to thank Wendy Leeds-Hurwitz for her insightful comments on the terms ‘Critical’ and ‘Intercultural,’ and for her constant and generous care; Fabio Targhetta for his accurate suggestions on the historical survey, and for his dear and precious friendship; the collective wom.an.ed (women’s studies in anthropology and education), with Giorgia Peano, Isabella Pescarmona, Rebecca Sansoé and Federica Setti for fruitful dialogue and hearty friendship, and in particular Isabella Pescarmona for her precise comments on John Dewey; Valeria Gennero, a funny friend and rigorous scholar (and *vice versa*) for her positive comments on “A Final Note,” and for all interesting discussions and gossip; Annick Grégoire, a committed professional and dear friend, for allowing me to utilize part of her speech to introduce the term ‘Education’; Shirley Steinberg for her accurate comments on “Critical Pedagogies,” her irresistible energy, and her much treasured Radical Friendship. While thanking all these scholars and friends, I take responsibility for all possible misinterpretations I made of their comments and suggestions. My gratitude also goes to Jana Hodges-Kluck at Lexington, Rowman & Littlefield for her great professional care and human support, as well as to the anonymous Reviewer for her/his generous comments and insightful suggestions. I also wish to thank Francesca Gobbo who, some years ago, trusted the complete foreigner I was to her, allowing me to develop my PhD research project with the utmost freedom. And it is with the deepest regret and sorrow that I wish to express my gratitude to the late Peter Praxmarer, an inspiring mentor and a much missed friend, whose passionate and compassionate conversation with life was too briskly interrupted.

My gratitude also goes to my students, who teach me every day what is relevant to learn.

Turin, May 2018

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

Introduction

The Missing Link

Presenting What, How, from Where and to Whom

This book will reflect on the concept of 'foreignness' from a special lens, that of foreign languages and Foreign Language Education.[1] The core assertion is that the experience of foreignness that foreign languages foreground opens up to a different apprehension of ourselves and the others which can be investigated within a critical and intercultural educational perspective. Therefore, this work aims at delineating a common track for Foreign Language Education, Intercultural Communication and Critical Pedagogies.

Along this path, I take two pronouncements by Claire J. Kramsch as guiding footsteps: "Foreign language education is the prime promoter of the foreign perspective" (2009, 192) and "The experience of the foreign always implies a reconsideration of the familiar" (5). Foreign languages favor the experience of foreignness at two levels: as an opportunity to become familiar with the unfamiliar (to meet the Other), and as a way to discover the unfamiliar within the familiar (to reapprehend the Self). These two levels are by no means opposite, but they rather nurture each other: according to Julia Kristeva, it is only by discovering "l'étranger qui nous habite" [the foreigner within ourselves] (1988, 9) that we can create our "condition ultime de notre être *avec* les autres" [the elemental condition to be *with* the others] (285).

Observing, reading, speaking about the world through *other* words overtly discloses the cultural and situated relation between the word and the world, unveiling the extent to which it is a relative construction, and opening up to different conceptualizations and worldviews. Therefore, Foreign Language Education is in the right place to foster a critical awareness of the many ways in which identity and alterity are represented, defined, as well as questioned or deconstructed in the multicultural and plurilingual contexts of our societies, promoting an intercultural perspective able to question the taken-for-granted of individual and collective identities, as well as of monocultural and

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

nationalist frameworks. This book then advocates that a critical and intercultural language education is particularly needed at times when prevailing narratives essentialize individuals and groups according to their linguacultural backgrounds, and capitalize on fear for their reactionary agendas.

Affirming that the knowledge of foreign languages allows communication between individuals from different mother tongues seems, at a first glance, a self-explanatory statement. However, it is not self-explanatory at all. Knowing one or more languages is not, by itself, a sufficient condition to entertain an adequate communication between interlocutors from different mother tongues. Even in one's own mother tongue linguistic competence is not the one-and-only skill to prevent misunderstandings or misinterpretations: the ambiguity and the multi-semantics of language, as well as the context, the intentions of the communication and of the interlocutor, are just some of the factors that highlight how also in one's own native language the message never passes from the addresser to the addressee in a direct and neutral way. Linguistic interaction is a co-constructed activity where several actors, elements and dynamics are involved, interconnected, and interdependent; conversation is a complex weave where all the threads have to interlace to create a participated design—and where, sometimes, threads might get loosened, lost or cut.

The whole pattern gets more entangled when different languages are involved, as communication between interlocutors from different languages is, according to Mike Byram "far more complex and difficult than mere communication of information" (2006, 112). Encountering foreign languages means encountering new ways of conceptualizing experience (*cf.* Sharifian and Palmer 2007) and therefore we need to integrate several competences—linguistic, communicative and (inter)cultural competences. Learning a foreign language is then much more than getting a tool to interact with the allophones; it rather means to develop a more holistic—and less instrumental—process able to combine linguistic, socio(inter)cultural and relational skills. At times of global and globalized interconnections, where communications, money and goods move fast while millions of people are subjects to new forms of restrictions and discriminations, foreign languages cannot simply present themselves as neutral tools for global communication—or, worse, for neo-colonial and neo-capitalist agendas of exploitation and (re)production of inequalities. More than twenty years ago now, Alistair Pennycook already stated that "No knowledge, no language and no pedagogy is ever neutral or apolitical" (1994, 301): consequently, Foreign Language Education can no longer linger in the comfort (and supposedly neutral) zone of the 4Fs (Food, Festival, Flags, Facts), but has to exploit its capability of foregrounding and

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

uncovering what is usually hidden or taken for granted in the folds of familiar languages and cultures to promote an attitude open to the world's diversity, taking a resolute step towards a committed intercultural approach (*cf.* Byram, Gribkova and Starkey 2002).

The intercultural commitment of Foreign Language Education necessarily implies a critical reflection, as it works precisely in the direction of dismantling pre-given assumptions on individuals and groups, a practice which, in turn, inevitably questions the overt or hidden roots of these assumptions, hence addressing issues of power and inequalities. Since the 1990s, several scholars have been devoting their attention to the multifarious and complex relation between foreign languages and intercultural issues (Byram and Zarate 1997; Byram and Tost Planet 2000; Abdallah-Pretceille 2009; Kramsch 2009; Dervin and Liddicoat 2013; Sharifian and Jamarani 2013; Byrd Clark and Dervin 2014; Witte and Harden 2015; Holmes and Dervin 2016), sometimes considering it from the perspective of Critical Pedagogies (Phipps and Guilherme 2004; Norton and Toohey 2004; Dasli and Díaz 2017), or as the ideal site for a critical reflection on language and identity (Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004; Heller 2011; Block 2014 [2007]; Dervin and Risager 2015). Some of these works are mainly theoretical, others present interviews, case studies, written samples or foreign language diaries; their research addresses foreign/second/target language courses for adults, examines courses for university students, or offers instructions for pre- or in-training courses for future teachers. What I often find missing, though, is the integration of theoretical reflections with their application, particularly as regards classroom practice. In the specific context of the language class, it means to consider the *experience* of the foreign language from the learner's point of view, that is to apprehend what happens when linguistic interactions are enacted in a foreign language, when the unfamiliar and the different worldviews it brings forth impact on the students' perceptions and representations of their and others' identities, and how such an experience can be used in a critical and intercultural perspective. Therefore, I believe that the focus on the classroom practice is *the* key factor to be considered if we are interested in what education should be, and in what Critical Pedagogies urge it to be: the path to knowledge as a process towards awareness and transformation.

I define my position as that of a practitioner and a scholar. I am aware of the privilege of this double perspective, as it allows me to experience every day how far theory and practice are inextricably linked. Yet, it also brings along a sense of incompleteness, as what I often find lacking is precisely the *link* able to connect actual practices, theoretical reflections and research as an integrated and interdisciplinary process—that is, the *what* together with (and

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

through) the *how*. Therefore, the main intent of this contribution is to explore "The Missing Link" as the open space where Foreign Language Education, Critical Pedagogies and Intercultural Communication, as well as practice, theory and research meet, inform and shape one another as *one* process. I will do that by shuffling the traditional Table of Contents, starting from practices and examples of actual lessons where a critical approach to Foreign Language Education is combined with intercultural issues (Part One). I will present what happens between individuals when classroom activities are in progress, and how the condition of being in-between foregrounded by the foreign language reshapes the perception and the representation of individual and collective identities. I will then examine some theoretical backgrounds guiding and underpinning both practice and research (Part Two), in order to see what they can offer to those who desire to use or investigate the foreign language in the perspective of a critical and intercultural linguistic pedagogy. I will then present questions, methodology and findings of a qualitative research study on the same issues (Part Three), with the intent to show how research moves to-and-fro between practice and theory. Though these three parts are here necessarily presented as consequential, they are meant to be envisaged and read for what they really are, that is a constant, mutual and circular conversation: practices inform theoretical reflections, which in turn reformulate practices, which in turn inspire research, which in turn . . . etc. etc. etc. Such an integrated perspective will be evident in Part Four, where, recollecting all the threads, I will discuss the overall theme of Foreignness connected with foreign languages and Foreign Language Education, also examining some possible future developments.

Though it is sometimes disremembered, the dialogue between thought and action is intrinsic and cogent to human experience. In *The Human Condition* (1998 [1958]), Hannah Arendt defines *vita activa* as the combination of three fundamental human activities: labor, the biological process; work, the human artefact; and action, which marks the "human condition of plurality" (7). She laments that, in Western culture, *vita contemplativa* has often meant a disembodiment of the human condition from its most peculiar characteristic, plurality, causing its alienation from the world and a progressive impoverishment of the human experience. Therefore, as the human condition characterizes itself for being inevitably plural and in-the-world, she celebrates *vita activa* as the highest form of human activity, able to conjoin awareness (as opposed to thoughtlessness, which she defines as the loss of our common world) and action, meaning taking responsibility for the world we share and acknowledging our plurality. *Vita activa* then presupposes not only an active and conscious engagement, but also the recognition that action happens between, and

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

creates, relations, as it is through action that we manifest our identity (and our difference) to others. Therefore, if "to think what we are doing" (5) implies the recognition of the relation between thought and action, it also foregrounds the recognition of relations as specific to the human condition: "Action . . . always establishes relationships" (190).

The process which necessarily integrates thought and action defines the human condition and experience as plural and relational. Consequently, such a process should be particularly evident in a discipline which, by mission and definition, is applied, plural, and relational: Education. Indeed, more prominently than other experiences or fields, Education is (or should be) the ideal place where actual practices, theoretical reflections and research should combine, notably in the perspective of a transformation. Yet, it is not often the case. Teacher and researcher Jean Anyon put it bluntly: "the trend in education scholarship has been to separate theory and research" (Anyon *et al.* 2009, 1). On the one hand, she sustains, the critical works of great theorists, such as Marx, Freud, Derrida and Foucault, have offered educators critical insights, but often provide ready-made explanations which, not being situated, have a scarce impact on the realities they observe and aim to transform. On the other hand, focusing too much on the empirical data and problems fails to see the wider picture, risking to bring water to the conservative mill which dismiss theories as impractical and annoying accessories. So, how can all these elements "involve and invoke one another" (5)? According to Anyon, no fact is theory-free, and in every practice there is a theory waiting to be discovered; at the same time, theory nurtures the capacity to look deeper and beyond the fragment to get a more holistic vision of the complex net of relations (including power relations) and institutions which constitute communities and societies (2–15).

Plain evidence of the fact that theoretical reflections and practices are too often treated as different (and mutually indifferent) planets can be found by flicking through the titles and the tables of contents of the books dealing with one of the topics here discussed, Foreign Language Education. There, we can easily notice that they clearly address two separate categories of readers, the academics and the practitioners. The volumes talking to the academics discuss theories, and sometimes present case studies and findings to support the theories, but they do not usually involve or discuss actual classroom practices.[2] The volumes talking to the teachers deal with practical strategies on how to teach effectively—at their best, suggesting innovative teaching strategies; at their worst, promoting teaching as a kind of sub-field of entertainment. Both paths tend to treat theories and practices as two independent

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

worlds, as if practices were by no means or only accidentally connected with theoretical reflections, and *vice versa*. Such a neat division contributes to create borders and widen the gap not only between reflections and actions, but within people who work in the same field and often with the same intent. On the one hand, academics produce brilliant educational theories which frequently fail to grasp the complexity of the actual educational environment, a multilayered net of relations and a constant work-in-progress. On the other hand, teachers and practitioners feel they are left alone on the frontline, literally compressed between too many tasks and roles (educational, professional, ethical, social, relational, institutional, bureaucratic) to have time to reflect on their practice, and see the theory which breathes within it.

Therefore, in line with the integrated framework within which I envision this contribution, this book aims at building a bridge between these two groups of readers who are often addressed separately, hoping to be a part of a long-term conversation able to bring teachers, educators, practitioners and academics to work together in order to enable students to develop a critical and intercultural approach to languages which can cultivate a wider perspective on others, on the world, and on themselves too. At the same time, this book also wishes to present some guidelines for students, in particular, but not solely, those of Languages and Linguistics, offering some theoretical references and interdisciplinary suggestions with the intent to encourage them to think out of the box, see the interconnectedness between issues which are often treated separately, and connect languages with the wider world, in order to exhort them to take action and responsibility for it. Last but not least, this work does not intend to speak to the specialist only. For its holistic intents, its light architecture, and its linguistic choices, this contribution also has the ambition of speaking to a wider audience, that of people who are curious to know more about languages, and about how they shape our identities, our meanings and our lives. Because, as Eva Hoffman put it, "Each language modifies the other, crossbreeds with it, fertilizes it. Each language makes the other relative. Like everybody, I am the sum of my languages—the language of my family and childhood, and education and friendship, and love, and the larger, changing world" (1998, 273).

NOTES

1. See Part Four, *Meeting Foreignness*, for an articulated discussion on Foreign Language Education and Second Language Education.
2. These are obviously general statements, as there are research studies that are committed to practice, action and transformation (*cf.* Participatory Action Research, see Part Three) and practices which are constantly informed by theories. Yet, such

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

an integration is not always easy since there are entire systems that reinforce the separation—e.g., book distributors, conferences, etc. Among the latter, the only praiseworthy exception I know are the conferences and meetings organized by the Italian association Lend - Lingua e nuova didattica [Language and New Language Education] where researchers, teachers of all grades (from elementary to high school), academics, university professors, practitioners, and educators join together to discuss common issues regarding languages and language education. Furthermore, among the in-training courses organized by institutions and associations, those organized by Lend are, to my knowledge, the only ones free of charge, nor are they connected to any kind of commercial activity such as, e.g., the purchase of course books (see also Part Four for further discussion).

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

Part One

Within Praxis

In the *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Paulo Freire (2005 [1970]) sustains: "People will be truly critical if they live in the plenitude of the praxis, that is, if their action encompasses a critical reflection which increasingly organizes their thinking and thus leads them to move from a purely naive knowledge of reality to a higher level, one which enables them to perceive the *causes* of reality" (131). Moving towards such intent, this part deals with praxis, which is not only the practice or the action, but rather the combination of action and reflection towards a transformation.

1. THE CONTEXT

"If you make bread in a bakery, you are a baker. If you make bread in an art gallery, you are an artist. So, the context makes the difference." In a 2011 interview, Marina Abramović thus defines the context as where the action takes place and shapes the activity within it (Abramović 2011, 1:00). Therefore, it is important to know the frame within which praxis, the combination of action and theory towards awareness and transformation, actualizes itself. The coming lines are meant to offer a contextualization to help, in particular the foreign reader, collocate the practices which will be described in the following pages within the specific environment where they took place.

1.1. Made in Italies

When I am abroad, I am always puzzled when I see restaurant signs offering 'Italian food,' as I ask myself what they mean. Indeed, what is 'Italian food'? 'Pizza' and 'pasta" are just generic terms which cannot describe to the fullest

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

the innumerable ways of assembling and preparing them. And besides ‘pizza’ and ‘pasta,’ what about the thousands of local dishes, and the hundreds of ways to cook, fry, boil, etc., every single vegetable, piece of meat or type of fish?

If Italian food is indeed a highly plural concept, so is the Italian language. How many Italian languages do we have in Italy? Let’s step back in history for a quick survey. Though with an ancient past, Italy as a united nation is quite young. All throughout history, Italy has always been the field of innumerable raids by strangers coming from both near and far-off lands. Some were invaders, others were tradesmen, travelers, refugees; some left, but others remained, and mixed blood, culture and language with local people. Still now, there are places in the northwest of Italy where people speak the same language (Patois) spoken in the French territories beyond the Alps, while in the northeast they speak Ladino, a mix of old Germanic and Italian languages, and in several areas in the center and south of Italy there are communities that have been speaking Albanian or Greek for centuries—evidence, if ever needed, that physical-geographical features such as mountains and sea have never been borders, but rather territories of encounter, exchange and mixing. When, after several wars of independence, in 1861 Italy became officially a unified nation, it was not much more than a political statement. And it was clear at the time too, as evidenced in the often reported statement of the intellectual, politician and patriot Marquis Massimo d’Azeglio, who, well aware of all the cultural differences which constituted the newly born nation, once said: “L’Italia è fatta, ora bisogna fare gli Italiani” [We have made Italy, and now we must make the Italians].

Not only the Italians, though; the Italian language too. At the time of the unification more than 90 percent of the population spoke only dialect—and almost 80 percent were full illiterate, though the percentage was in fact much higher, as the 1861 census considered literate those who could at least write their signature (Lastrucci 2006). The newly unified state promptly tried to fill in the linguistic gaps through the institution of compulsory public education. Yet, the evidence that dialects continued to be the main way to communicate for most Italians was dramatically evident when Italians coming from different regions had the first collective occasion to meet one other. In the carnage of World War I, the Italian trenches were traversed not only by rats and lice, but also by innumerable dialects, a fact which often created fatal misunderstandings, as the orders were imparted by northern generals in their own dialect to young men who came from different parts of the country and could only speak the dialect of their village.[1] Less than a decade later, in the ideological (re)construction of the glorious Italian past made by Fascism, dialects were considered the obsolete heritage of a poor, rural country which

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

was now turning into a modern, efficient, urban and aggressive nation. Fascist ideology fiercely advocated Italian language as the unifying factor of a young and strong nation which was stepping forth and claiming its colonialist share ("L'Italia reclama il suo posto al sole" [Italy claims for its place in the sun], said Mussolini), competing with other industrial and colonial nations of the time, such as France and Britain. Italian as the one and only national language was then imposed, a policy which is one of the most prominent signs of totalitarian regimes as a way to reinforce the weld nation-language (*cf.* Pavlenko 2006 on Nazi's harsh denigration of bilinguals). Such a strict one-language-only rule was applied, for example, to the punctilious renaming of villages, an imposition which often created surreal effects as local people could not (or refused to) pronounce the name of the place where they were born and lived. Rewriting history through geography is another predominant linguistic manifestation of the one-language policy of dictatorships, as when the Soviet regime renamed cities and villages to manifest and celebrate post-revolution ideology, or when the Nazis 'nordified' the names of the administrative districts to reinforce the Teutonic pride—*cf.* Klemperer (2000 [1947], 74–75). Karl Marx said that history repeats itself, first as tragedy and then as farce: this is the case of the Italian northern former separatist party, La Lega (founded in 1989 as The Northern League), which, besides inventing grotesque Celtic rites, has 'nordified' the names of villages and town according to the pronunciation or the (supposed) spelling in the local dialects.

It was though only after World War II that the Italian language underwent two major unifying factors: television broadcasting and internal migrations. Since the late 1950s, the national radio and TV broadcasting network (RAI Radiotelevisione Italiana) broadcasted a series of educational programs, the most famous of which was "Non è mai troppo tardi" [It is never too late] conducted by the epitomical and epoch-marking figure of *Maestro* [Teacher] Manzi, with the aim to teach a great number of adult illiterate Italians how to read, write and count. These programs had also a socializing effect: as the possession of an actual TV set was still a luxury, people went to the local bars and cafés to watch the program, so that learning was a collective endeavor. Besides the professedly educational programs, also entertainment programs vastly contributed to spread Italian as the national language. The internal migrations of the 1950s and 1960s, where farmers, craftsmen and fishermen from the south were transformed into workers to serve the factories of the north, did the rest: a cultural and a linguistic shock at first, but then cultures and languages managed to mix and mingle—albeit to a minor or major extent and with different outcomes. The baby boomers of the early 1960s, like myself, were the first generation to speak Italian instead of dialect as mother tongue. Parents encouraged children not to speak dialect as a sign of

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

emancipation from a rural, and often poor, background: speaking the Italian language was not a sign of nationalism, but rather the road to a better future.

So, now: is there a one-and-only Italian language? Yes, and no. Officially, Italian is defined as the national language of Italy, and the cultural agency Accademia della Crusca,[2] established in 1583, protects and studies the Italian language—and discusses fiercely before accepting neologisms. Yet, at the same time, the Italian language continues to be inevitably plural. Maybe most Italians[3] perceive themselves (and are perceived abroad) as strictly monolingual; however, they are not. When I ask my students how many languages they can speak, or know with different degrees of understanding, the answers are always inevitably plural. Apart from their Italian regional dialects, or their immigrant native languages, my students can, at different levels, speak or understand foreign languages such as English and French. Those who understand or speak dialects use them to communicate with some members of the family—and not only with senior members of the family such as grandparents, but also with parents or young siblings. In the last decades, dialects have often been vindicated by separatist groups as a sign of belonging to a specific local community, often in contrast with a national identity perceived as a dangerous mix of too many languages and cultures. Ironically, what these assumptions simply miss is the evidence that Italian dialects are often revived by non-native Italians: travelling across Italy, it is quite common to hear Italian dialects spoken by immigrants, who often learn dialect first and Italian only later—if ever.

Yet, the linguistic diversity which characterizes Italy is not only due to its past, but to its present too. Countries such as Great Britain and France have seen migrations coming from specific linguistic-cultural areas as a legacy of their colonial past, and though with different premises Germany too shows a rather similar characteristic of immigration known as 'predominant minority.' Conversely, in Italy migration is highly polycentric: according to the 2015 data of the Statistica Nazionale dei Comuni Italiani [The National Statistical Authority of the Italian Municipalities],[4] on the national territory there are 196 different nationalities, a feature that presents an extremely rich linguistic and cultural variety.

Within such a context, it is not surprising that scholars who since the 1990s have been studying the Italian linguistic landscape, speak of 'neo-multilinguismo' [new multilingualism] to acknowledge that Italy is, and has always been, multilingual. The Osservatorio Linguistico Permanente dell'Italiano Diffuso fra Stranieri e delle Lingue Immigrate in Italia [The Permanent Linguistic Observatory of the Italian Language among Foreigners and of the Immigrant Languages in Italy], set up by MIUR (Ministero Italiano dell'Educazione, Università e Ricerca [Italian Ministry of Education,

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

University and Research]) as a center of excellence within the Università per Stranieri di Siena [University for Foreigners of Siena] and coordinated by Massimo Vedovelli, has the main objective to monitor the changes that are affecting the Italian linguistic space also through the contact with immigrant languages. Within the Observatory, Monica Barni has extensively researched and published on the contact between different languages and dialects in different parts of Italy, showing that neoplurilingualism[5] is in constant evolution. Her studies, which investigate different geographical and social contexts (small towns and cities), show that the contacts and the relations between the new languages and the pre-existent linguistic configurations are greatly varied and multifaceted. The results demonstrate that small towns are more open in regard to social changes and more efficient in offering multilingual accessibility to public services, though they also reveal a stronger pressure towards linguistic integration, so that migrant languages are often confined to the private sphere of the family. On the opposite, cities show a greater variety of languages in public spaces, creating the opportunity for multilingual public displays and plurilingual interactions (Barni 2008, 217–42).

The public experience of multilingualism is a linguistic phenomenon known as 'linguistic landscape' (Barni and Extra 2008, 25–28). The dialogues we can hear in the streets, the ads we see on the buses, on the shop signs or on the food exhibited in the markets: languages speak to us and shape the geography we live in not as a simple background, but rather as a factual marker and constituent of the common spaces we live in. As it happened in the past, the languages which constitute the new multilingualism have often to do with the basic human activity of interaction, trade and commerce. In the examples on the next page, an optician advertises her/his business in several Italian dialects and languages of immigration (photos 1 and 2); in the shop sign, a male hairdresser's juxtaposes Chinese and Italian names (photo 3); a Chinese restaurant exposes a sign with a Chinese writing and the name "trattoria" which indicates the typical traditional Italian family-run, low-cost, good-quality restaurant (photo 4).

While photo 3 and 4 were taken in the center of Turin, a city in the northwest of Italy, photos 1 and 2 were taken in the periphery of a small town, evidence that indicates how far the new multilingualism and the mixing of languages are pervasive characteristics of the Italian landscape, not necessarily solely urban.

Yet, if linguistic diversity characterizes collective spaces and experiences, it also raises several questions and can expose contradictions when we move from the collective to the individual. One of my former students,[6] a girl from Morocco, could speak four languages: Arabic and French as her mother

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

Photo 1. An optician's (photo by the author).

Photo 2. An optician's (photo by the author).

Photo 3. A hairdresser's (photo by the author).

Photo 4. A *trattoria* (photo by the author).

tongues, Italian as the language she had to learn when she and her family migrated to Italy, and English, the language she learnt at school. One day, she told me she was learning a fifth tongue, a specific dialect from a village in Puglia, to communicate with her boyfriend's parents. They had migrated to the north of Italy in the 1970s, during one of the last waves of what is known as the 'internal immigration.' They had never learnt Italian: all through the years, they had tried to reduce as much as possible public contacts, offices

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

and affairs; for all these, the linguistic mediators had always been, as it often happens, their children. Their younger son still translated their conversations from Italian to dialect, and *vice versa*, both in formal (e.g., at the doctor's) and in informal conversations (e.g., with his girlfriend). The paradox was that she, a foreigner according to the Italian law (see next section 1.2), could speak fluent Italian, while her boyfriend's parents, formally Italian, could hardly speak a word of it. The story invites us to avoid overgeneralization when speaking of 'native' and 'foreigner.' Indeed, who is the 'foreigner' in this situation? Aren't there different levels and nuances of 'nativeness' and 'foreignness'? Then, who has the power to define the 'foreigner' as such? And on what grounds? These are all questions that lead us to the following section.

1.2. Native or Foreign?

The Italian Law on Citizenship is based on *ius sanguinis* (n. 91/1992). Such a norm is typical of countries of emigration, as Italy had always traditionally been: citizenship goes with blood lineage (*sanguinis* = blood) as it is intended to help emigrants maintain the link with the motherland. Yet, with the transformation of Italy from a land of emigration to a land of immigration, such a rule has come to expose the paradox that individuals who are born abroad, who have never been to Italy, nor know a single word in Italian, are legally Italian citizens, while minors born in Italy from an immigrant family, who attend Italian schools and speak Italian are not considered Italian citizens by law. In an attempt to recognize what Italy has become in the last decades, in October 2015, amidst fierce debates, the Camera[7] approved *ius soli* and *ius culturae,* rules meant to link citizenship for minors to the permanent residence of at least one of the parents and to school attendance. The law lingered long in Senato for final deliberation to become again a hot topic in hot 2017 summer, when center and far-right politicians campaigned against it, maliciously linking it to immigration and terrorism. In turn, center-left parliamentarians, who had previously advocated an acceleration for the passage of the act, became more cautious (and divided), fearing the reaction of the public opinion on an issue which becomes particularly sensitive during summer, when many landings of immigrants take place on the Italian coasts. The debate became so violent that a woman MP was physically attacked and injured in Parliament (June 2017).

While the politicians were still debating, three rappers, Tommy Kuti (of Nigerian origins), Laioung (of Sierra Leone–Italian origins), and Amir Issaa (of Egyptian-Italian origins) accepted the invitation of one of the major Italian newspapers, *La Repubblica*, to write a sixteen-bar rap verse to explain

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

what it means to be born or have grown up in Italy and not be considered as Italian citizens. The three artists managed to combine civil protest and denunciation with a good dose of irony, attaining great success and collecting many visualizations and likes.[8] The same national newspaper widely campaigned for *ius soli*, with several articles and videos. In one of these, provocatively entitled "Ehi, lo sai che (non) sei italiano?" [Hey, do you know you are—not—Italian?], some children with an immigrant background were interviewed on their preferences on food, sports, their habits, their dream job, etc., showing no difference from their Italian-born peers (Santerini 2017). In September 2017, even the usually quite cautious and conservative CEI (Conferenza Episcopale Italiana [Italian Episcopal Conference], the permanent assembly of the Italian Bishops) strongly advocated the necessity of passing *ius soli* as an act of integration to promote the dignity of human beings and the full and active participation to public life of individuals born in Italy. Also teachers widely campaigned for *ius soli*, launching an online petition (MCE 2017) and promoting a hunger strike. As educators, they exposed the paradox that while they (we) are institutionally asked to promote the students' active citizenship and participation, in our school classes there are students who are not recognized as citizens, so that, instead of being granted equal opportunities, some students are, to inversely paraphrase Orwell, less equals than others. Notwithstanding all these social and cultural mobilizations, the center-left did not manage to reach the majority to pass the law as it had to face the new populist and anti-immigrant waves. So, while society was moving forward, politics could not keep pace with it and stayed behind. Moreover, dissent to *ius soli* turned violent, again: on December 6th the far-right movement Forza Nuova [New Force] held up a masked demonstration in front of the *La Repubblica* establishment declaring war to the newspaper, which, in their words, betrayed the true Italians by promoting *ius soli*, invasion and ethnic replacement, while they championed themselves as the defenders of Italianness and *Patria*.[9] On December 23rd, down to the wire of the parliamentary term, part of the center-left (still: only 2/3) tried a last attempt to pass the law; yet, due to the lack of cohesion and intent within the center-left party, and the absence of the representatives of the other parties, the law failed to pass—the law came too late and too close to the next elections, was the bitter comment of one of the center-left parliamentarians. In an extreme attempt, the movement #italianisenzacittadinanza [italians without citizenship] addressed directly to the Head of the State, Mr. Sergio Mattarella. The letter they wrote is significantly dated December 27th, as it explicitly refers to the 70th anniversary of the Italian Constitution which is both the birthmark of the Italian democratic state after the Fascist Regime, and the symbol of reconciliation after the civil war which had divided Italy at the end of World War II. The letter quotes several articles of the Italian Constitution which affirm that it is peculiar duty of the

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

Italian Republic to promote equality among all citizens removing all the obstacles which hinder or limit such equality, in order to favor the full development of the person and her/his participation in the social, economic and political organization of the nation. Then, referring to Hannah Arendt (who defined citizenship as 'the right to have rights'), the letter demands the recognition of the new citizens as a new social category in line with the pronouncements of the Italian Constitution and with the objectives of a democratic and inclusive nation. In his Christmas Speech, Pope Francis took up the argument again (he had already addressed it in August 2017): linking the holy family's peregrination to contemporary migrations, he strongly advocated for *ius soli*—it is to be noted that his intervention raised several negative comments in the Vatican hierarchies which defined his speech more political than religious. Despite all these efforts from some sectors of the civil society and of influential religious representatives, at the end of 2017 (and of the parliamentary term) more than 800,000 of Italian-born kids and adolescents were still waiting to be recognized as Italian citizens (Sironi 2017, 21).

1.3. Languages, Identities, Migrations

In the contexts of migrations, linguistic interactions highlight the complex relations existing between languages and the sense of belonging to specific groups and communities as, besides individual identities, language defines collective identities too. Languages are primary components of identity construction, as well as synergetic elements of affiliations and representations which shape and are shaped by new contacts:

> Migration is certainly a social phenomenon in which language acts as a catalyst, shaping forms of identity and providing a focal point for the reformulation of identities. In this sense, the linguistic issue assumes a central position because it encompasses the issues surrounding learning the language of the host communities in order to survive and integrate socially and professionally; and because contact with new languages and cultures brings to the fore the individual cultural and linguistic identity of all the communities within a given area (Barni 2008, 217).

Due to the promiscuous nature of languages, the process of linguistic crossbreeding has always existed but what is striking now is its scale, brought forth by global migrations, and its widespread in particular in two environments, the urban contexts and the trans-territorial communications (e.g., the Internet). These multiple and multiplied contacts have denaturalized the essentialist link 'one person = one language = one nation' which has shaped language ideologies since the emergence of the Nation-States, showing that "The traditional idea of 'a language,' then, is an ideological artefact with

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

very considerable power—operating as a major ingredient in the apparatus of modern governmentality—it is played out in a wide variety of domains (education, immigration, high and popular culture, etc.)" (Blommaert and Rampton 2012, 10–11). Instead, "a much more differentiated account of the organization of communicative practices emerges, centring on genres, activities and relationships that are enacted in ways that are often missed by both official and common sense accounts" (11).

Theoretical reflections and empirical research are thus interrogated by the multiple ways in which people take on different linguistic forms as they align or disaffiliate with different groups at different moments and stages of their lives. Consequently, they are asked to investigate how individuals reshape their identities according to the linguistic repertoires and resources they wish to (or can) access or adopt to signal their adherence to specific groups, how they (try to) opt in and out of these groups, how they perform or play with linguistic signs of group belonging, and how they develop particular trajectories of group identification throughout their lives (12).

Therefore, contexts of migrations widely contribute to foreground and often remodulate the complex relation between language and individual and collective identities. Indeed, even more evidently than in the native language, the impact of a target/second language on individual and collective identities reveals that language 'expertise' (language proficiency), 'affiliation' (affective connection to a language) and 'inheritance' (the language inherited from the family or a community) are by no means necessarily connected—as, for example, "one can inherit a language or a dialect, but feel no affiliation towards it nor have expertise in it" (Block 2014 [2007], 47)—or permanent, as the relationships between language and identity can greatly vary during lifetime. Thus, migrations highlight the dynamic connection between the language and the assumed or attributed identities of each person or group, often showing painful discrepancies between the two, as "for many immigrants and children of immigrants in countries where immigrations is a relatively new phenomenon, there is the grating experience of presenting an acceptable multimodal [linguistic] package . . . but still being positioned as a 'foreign' by those who conform to the default assumed racial phenotype and overall physical appearance of the host community" (49).

Moreover, it is in multicultural contexts in particular where language(s) and language interactions manifest asymmetrical status of power. Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004) sustain: "the fact that languages—and language ideologies—are anything but neutral is especially visible in multilingual societies, where some languages and identity options are, in unforgettable Orwellian words, 'more equal than others'" (3) as "markers of identity, but

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

also sites of resistance, empowerment, solidarity, or discrimination" (4). And they continue:

> the relationship between language and identity . . . [is] mutually constitutive in at least two ways. On the one hand, languages, or rather particular discourses within them, supply the terms and other linguistic means with which identities are constructed and negotiated. On the other, ideologies of language and identity guide ways in which individuals use linguistic resources to index their identities and to evaluate the use of linguistic resources by others (14).

Connections, disconnections and gaps between language and identity, as well as the ideologies of language involved, express themselves both at an individual and collective level, and widely interrogate not only sociolinguistics, but practitioners too. In such contexts where both individuals and groups have an extremely dynamic relationship with the language(s) they speak/encounter/adopt, teachers and educators are asked to interrogate their practice, reformulating their proceedings and reorienting their goals. Indeed, in contexts where languages constantly meet and mix, what is the place, and the task, of language education, and in particular of Foreign Language Education?

2. THE EDUCATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

All through my teaching years I have had the opportunity to notice how adolescent students shape and reshape groups according to multiple changing variables. These movements of in- and out-group creation are often related to different youth (sub) cultures: music, in particular hip hop, explicit codes regarding clothing and hairstyles, or special ritual gestures. Yet, besides all different manifestations, the signals of new affiliations have something in common: they are linguistically marked by the adoption, or the mixing,[10] of different languages. By adopting and mixing different languages, adolescents from different linguacultural backgrounds manifest their will (or need) to explore identities and voices, or to dismantle old belongings to create (and mark) new ones. Such explorations are crossing (or, more often, ignoring) borders of ethnic or national belonging, as they travel across changeable new areas that adolescents create, reverse and recreate according to their purposes, desires or needs: they create spaces for intimate dialogues or share common interests and passions; they speak back and perform counter-acts of power against teachers and adults; they explore and/or perform new identities.

As a foreign language teacher, the cross-linguistic practices of my students attracted my attention for several reasons. First, they highlighted the dynamic

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

relationship between language and identity, showing how the use of different languages can shuffle and reframe such a relation from an individual and collective point of view, opening (or closing) to new identity reformulations and/or new group affiliations. Then, by so doing, these practices foregrounded how far identities are constructed and situated, in contrast with prevailing narratives which define and box in individuals and groups according to their linguacultural backgrounds, often to serve conservative if not reactionary agendas. Finally, I envisaged a peculiar link, if not a mutual metaphor, between these linguistic practices and adolescence itself, as they are both liminal territories for the experimentation of new identity configurations. And it is precisely the condition of liminality that they share which began interrogating my practice—and, in turn, eventually inspired and guided my PhD research study in the years 2010–2012 (see Part Three). I started asking myself what I could learn from my students' linguistic practices, and what I could offer back. What my students were doing by jumping on-off and mixing languages was a spontaneous, bottom-up activity. Yet, as a language educator, I wanted to try to make such a mixing of languages a conscious and committed *experience in diversity*. So, within the institutional and educational duty of teaching 'the foreign language,' I began to reorient and widen its mission. I initiated considering the foreign language class as a *critical* and *intercultural* space to help develop "critical intercultural beings capable of actively engaging in a dialogue that transcends boundaries—real and imagined" (Dasli and Díaz 2017, 11), and challenge perceptions and representations taken for granted. Here are a few examples of the activities I have realized within such a perspective: some of the activities were carried out before my research study (they actually inspired it), while others derived from it, further evidence of the intrinsic relation between practice, theory and research.

2.1. The Activities

All the activities[11] carried out with the students had a double intent: to utilize the foreign language for intercultural aims, and the intercultural approach for the foreign language, with the one major comprehensive purpose of developing the students' critical awareness on language(s). The first intent was to use the foreignness that foreign languages foreground to reflect on pre-given assumptions on languages and cultures—one's own included. Exercises were therefore structured to initiate from the students' knowledge to lead them by degrees out of their familiar comfort zone, and stimulate doubts, questions and discussions able to open up to new perspectives. Such a practice is also advocated by the publication of the Council of Europe, *Developing Intercultural Competence through Education* (Huber and Reynolds 2014), which

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

invites teachers to "provide opportunities for challenging one's assumptions through comparison and analysis" (29), to help students reflect "back . . . so that they may question their own practices, values and beliefs" (30), and reminds educators that "comparison, analysis and experience need to be accompanied by time and space for reflection and the development of critical awareness and understanding" (*ibidem*). During these activities I viewed the classroom as an ethnographic field, where students were encouraged to become researchers of languages and cultures, and sometimes invited to produce short auto-ethnographies as an opportunity for reflexivity.

The second intent was to offer meaningful and contextualized activities to elicit students to use the foreign language to communicate and exchange ideas and opinions: diverting the target from the 'English Language lesson' allowed students to feel less judged and more relaxed in using the language. The fact that English was a language *foreign* to all students presented several advantages. First of all, it put all students, both native Italian and non-native Italian, in the same condition of disadvantage—or, better, disadvantage in access to language repertoire depended on factors which had nothing to do with national or ethnic descent. Then, as it is often reported in literature (Kramsch 2009; Witte and Harden 2015), by detaching students from their mother tongue, the experience of a foreign language can allow them to develop a meta-linguistic awareness of how far linguistic and cultural features are situated and constructed, "opening up linguistic and intercultural spaces, that is, the de-familiarization and alienation of the familiar, taken-for-granted ways of talking, thinking, feeling and behaving" (Witte 2015, 20). I have also sustained elsewhere (Giorgis 2013a) that the new linguistic and symbolic territory opened up by the foreign language decenters students from their usual self, allowing them to explore new identities; moreover, by separating the students' personal and social self, the foreign language often consents them to recollect and report in a freer and less emotional way ideas, opinions, personal stories and events.

Three last notes for teachers. The first regards themselves: by helping students develop a critical awareness, teachers are inevitably drawn to reflect on their educational practice and, paraphrasing Freire (1998), understand that they can be(come) not only cultural workers, but *intercultural workers*. Such a stance can broaden the understanding of their professional identity, offering new perspectives and motivations to their practice. The second regards their teaching: though these activities were carried out with high school students, they can be easily adapted for younger students, for example introducing more visual elements such as drawings, or engaging pupils in role-playing activities, creative writing, etc. The third, suggests a further extension: the foreign language class is in the best position to work on the separation from

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

the familiar, and thus favor a critical consideration of what we take for granted; yet, the backbone which sustains these activities can be applied to other subjects as well—is not Music *an*-other language too? or Math? or the Arts? And what about Literature, that, by allowing us to access the inner life of characters, makes their thoughts literally readable and thus creates a different perspective on how we see things, and ourselves too? There are indeed so many examples, publications, and studies that show how all school subjects can be used in a critical and intercultural perspective, provided they stimulate critical thinking and challenge pre-given assumptions and certainties. But let's turn now to the foreign language class to see how it can work there.

2.1.1. Intercultural Grammar

(Vocational High School with an Art Curricula; 3rd year; students' age: 16–17)

This two-lesson unit[12] shows that we can introduce a reflection on diversity even by using what is generally considered as the epitome of norms, Grammar.

The classroom where I realized this activity was composed of twenty-five students, the majority of Italian origins, a couple of students from Morocco, another three from Romania, and two from Peru. Most of the students of Italian origin came from families who had experienced migration, belonging to the third generation of what is known in Italy as the 'internal immigration,' a phenomenon which, from approximately the 1950s to the 1970s, moved families and workforce from the south of Italy to the industries of the north (*cf.* 1.1 Made in Italies). In this classroom, there had been no episodes of intolerance between groups from different nationalities or ethnicities. Actually, the most marginalized student was an Italian girl coming from a small village in the mountains nearby the city. Her naive and rural style contrasted with the urban attitudes, clothing and behavior of her peers, both of Italian and of non-Italian origins. Thus, the motivation to structure a unit with intercultural features did not come from any urgency to address a specific problem, but rather from the opportunity to make students aware that, in one way or another, we are all migrants.

In the students' book, the Unit on the Simple Past began with a reading in which a teenager was speaking about the adult he most admired: his grandfather, an Irish emigrant to the US. In three short paragraphs he explained why he liked him and drew a general outline of his life using the Simple Past. After reading and commenting on these paragraphs by only referring to the grammar structure, I invited my students to go home and write three short paragraphs with the same pattern: identifying an adult they admired, the reason why they admired her/him, and some information about her/his life. The

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

three paragraphs had to be written on a separate piece of paper with no name on it. As I expected, students came out with stories about their grandparents or aunts/uncles—apparently, parents are not generally much appreciated by this age group, while grandparents or other significant relatives are. The overt assignment, then, was 'practice the Simple Past,' and not 'tell the class your family history.' Therefore, students focused on grammar, but they were actually working on several other issues: discovering or recollecting family stories, interviewing uncles, listening to their grandfathers, etc.

The following lesson, I collected all the anonymous papers, shuffled them, invited each student to pick up a story randomly, and then read it to her/his classmates. So, it happened that an Italian student read the story of a Romanian aunt, or a girl from Peru read the story of an old couple from the south of Italy. While still focusing on the grammar structure (the use of the Simple Past for regular and irregular verbs), students began realizing that something else was emerging: all the stories they were telling and listening to were migration stories. Some recurring characteristics surfaced: how migrants tend to settle in the same neighborhoods, how they felt perceived by the natives, the problems they encountered, the strategies they adopted to integrate, etc. But some differences emerged too. I invited students to avoid highlighting only similarities between cultures or migration patterns, but rather to read critically in between the lines and patterns, as well as to reflect on what these differences could tell us about broader issues. As in a study by Norton and Toohey (2004) with adult newcomers to Canada "traditional language learning activities such as a grammar lesson can be organized in such a way as to explore larger questions of identity and possibility . . . exciting opportunities for linking the microstructures of the text with the macrostructures of society" (6).

In our work too, differences in the micro-context opened up to wider issues. Gender difference, for example, emerged as a significant factor: in Italy, the internal migration of the 1950s and 1970s had mainly involved male workers who were later followed by their families, while the immigrations of the 1990s (at least in the city where I live) often saw women coming first, and alone, to work as caregivers. That difference reflected a pivotal change in the broader society, which had moved from an industrial to a post-industrial pattern, from the production of goods to that of services, from rather structured and guaranteed work contracts, to the plethora of unstructured and non-guaranteed jobs of today. Differences in societies mean differences in socialization, too: working in a factory meant being with other fellow workers, a situation which offered the opportunity to confront, blend and share cultures, opinions, languages, dialects, food, ideas. Conversely, caregiving is a solitary and often silent, or even silenced, work, with little (if

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

any) opportunity for socializing or connecting with the wider society. From the students' reflections on their family stories, there emerged discourses on gender, and on how different was the society met by the former immigrants compared to that met by the newcomers, as well as on how new migrations can cast a light on some repressed memories and stories of older migrations (*cf.* Gobbo 2007). That led to a critical view on how intercultural interactions are, first and foremost, an opportunity to consider our own stories and observe what we take for granted from a different perspective.

2.1.2. Intercultural Poetry

(Vocational High School with an Art Curricula; 4th year, students' age: 17–18).

In our English Program, we had studied the structure of Poetry and the Rhetorical Figures, examining and analyzing several English poems by authors of the past (e.g., Shakespeare) as well as by contemporary ones. Yet, I wanted to involve students more directly valuing their resources and knowledge—and, at the same time, I wanted to use Poetry for intercultural aims. The Intercultural Poetry Lab was meant to favor a critical awareness at three levels:

- linguistic: to find out differences but also correspondences between languages (sounds, vocabulary, etc.);
- aesthetic: to examine the stylistic ways and choices writers use to convey images and emotions, and to describe situations;
- intercultural: to realize how Poetry can be profitably used for intercultural activities, as it engages with questions which travel across specific cultural belongings.

In this classroom, the majority of the students were native Italians (from several different regions), a girl was from Morocco, and two other girls from Romania. I told them to go home and, in case, ask for their parents or relatives' help to find a short poem, a lullaby, or a song which belonged to their tradition, write it down in their own language or dialect, and bring it to school. The next lesson the students came back with poems or songs in several Italian dialects (from the areas of Venice, Naples and Puglia), with an Arabic lullaby and with two poems in Romanian. One by one, they read aloud their song or poem, and then they wrote them on the board while their classmates copied it. While poems and songs were read aloud, we began noticing and appreciating the sound and the rhythm, and how words fitted in with them. When all songs and poems were copied, we made a rough translation in Italian, just to be sure that everyone could understand the general meaning.

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

At this point, we began highlighting differences and similarities on how different languages expressed emotions, desires, longing: the Arabic lullaby alternated lines of hope and despair for the baby's future life, while the Neapolitan love poem expressed longing for a past love. We thought about other lullabies we knew from different languages and cultures, and found out some common patterns, as lullabies often combine very gentle and hypnotic sounds (after all, they are meant to make the baby fall asleep) with very sad and bleak contents, where reference to death is very frequent. As for the Neapolitan love song, we noticed how longing for a past love is a key theme in most love songs, and we began comparing how this feeling was conveyed in other poems and songs, noticing similarities and differences. The next step was to translate the poems and the songs into English, and this is where things got complicated. While doing this activity, students began saying they were not happy with how their original poems or songs came out in English, so we used this dissatisfaction to reflect on translation as a condition of being in-between where you lose something, but you can also gain something else (*cf*. Eco 2003). Therefore, while realizing we were losing something, we began appreciating what we were gaining: the new combinations of sound-word-meaning offered new insights and perspectives not only on each poem and song, but on our own perception and positioning in relation to them. Poetry in different languages then became an occasion to reflect on words in general, and on our own language(s) and dialect(s) from the perspective of different languages (i.e., to make the familiar unfamiliar); to see how contents and style are closely entwined, and how this relation changes as we change of the language used; to observe how this change impacts on our perception of both style and content; to realize that moving from one language to another means a pro-active acceptance of being in-between, a condition which can guide us in many aspects of our lives—e. g., to express our points of view while relating and understanding those of others in interpersonal and intercultural communication. Such an exercise made it clear that translation is not so much *about* words, but it rather necessarily involves a reflexivity on *how* words shape our meanings, our cultural conceptualizations and our emotions. Therefore, reflecting on *other* words is a task which engages us to reflect on *our own* words: unveiling how much is cultural and situated in the folds of what we consider 'natural' and taken for granted in our language, translation invites us to explore the differences not only between languages, but within the same language too—a process which makes each language its own meta-language (Eco 2003), and translation an intercultural practice (Giorgis 2016b).

The students' feedback at the end of the laboratory was quite revealing as it showed their reflections on words and languages. I present here some of

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

their comments—they were published on the school blog with the students' full names after their consent, but are here reported only with their initials: "Abbiamo scoperto come si possono scrivere poesie in lingue e dialetti diversi" [We discovered how poems can be written in different dialects and languages] (N. R.); "Abbiamo compreso meglio la struttura dell'inglese attraverso la comparazione con le altre lingue" [We understood better the structure of the English language by comparing it with other languages] (C. L. T.); "Abbiamo notato come da una lingua all'altra, benché il contenuto rimanesse lo stesso, i suoni e i ritmi cambiassero, e come questi cambiamenti modificassero la poesia stessa" [We noticed how, though the content remains the same, sounds and rhythms changed from one language to another, and how these changes ultimately modified the poem itself] (I. Y.); "Abbiamo imparato a leggere la poesia nelle canzoni, e a comprendere perché viene utilizzata una parola invece di un'altra" [We learned how to read poetry into songs, and to understand why one word is used instead of another] (E. D. V.).

2.1.3. Intercultural Citizenship

(High School of Arts, 5th year; students' age 18–19)

This project[13] was part of an interdisciplinary work on Plural Citizenship developed with the colleague of Philosophy. The project aimed at developing an intercultural awareness in the students as a process of becoming 'citizens of the world'—individuals who are conscious of all the diversities which constitute our common world, of the challenges and the opportunities that these diversities bring forth, and of how we can deal with them. I developed my part of the project from the intercultural perspective of approaching Otherness and Diversity from one's own otherness and diversity. This section was linked to the subsequent part, a historical analysis of the 20th-century genocides presented by the Philosophy teacher, where ethnic mass crimes were introduced as linked to the lack of recognition and the de-humanization of the Other. The project then followed up with some encounters with refugees and asylum seekers, and it involved a reflection on how globalization and neo-capitalistic agendas are creating new forms of injustices and discriminations.

As the discussion was to be held in English—a non-native language for all the students—I prepared a set of words and expressions which I gave students in advance to facilitate their interventions. These words and expressions were mainly terms describing identity traits (e.g., personality adjectives), or locutions related to giving or asking for opinions, expressing agreement or disagreement, etc. (e.g., "I think that . . . ," "In my opinion . . . ," "What do you think about . . . ?"). During the lessons, I also proposed a series of questions inviting students to reflect upon them, and/or to bring forth questions of

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

their own. Indeed, the activity was not aimed at offering answers, but rather at eliciting questions and doubts, and problematizing the taken for granted.

- Stage 1. TED Talk: vision of the TED talk *The Danger of a Single Story* (2009) by the Nigerian author Chimamanda Adichie with reflection and discussion on the 'danger of a single story'—i.e., how 'a single story' not only frames the others, but ourselves too;
- Stage 2. Multiple Me: starting from a track line of words on the different perception and representation of how individual identity profiles change according to the situation, context, interlocutors, age, gender, intention, expectations, etc. several questions and reflections arose: how many identities and cultures do we belong to/affiliate with? how do we perceive or represent our own identity, as well as others', according to the language we use?;
- Stage 3. The Stereotypes: a) how 'others' see 'us' (videos on stereotypes on Italians): reflection and discussion: are 'we' like this? do 'we' recognize ourselves in these portraits? b) how 'we' see 'the others' (video on overturning the perspective); the creation and reproduction of stereotypes by the media: reflection and discussion;
- Stage 4. Multiple Others: the Other as the bearer of multiple identities and belongings; diversity as a multidirectional, situated and relational construct;
- Stage 5. Intercultural Communication: how to educate and develop an effective intercultural communication: reflexivity, awareness, decentering, flexibility; using problems, misunderstandings, misinterpretations, etc. as resources; learning from failure.

- Stage 1. TED Talk

In *The Danger of a Single Story*, the Nigerian writer Chimamanda Adichie reminds us of the importance of not framing others into one single story, which in turn demands that we ourselves are not to be framed either—both by others and by ourselves too. Stereotypes are precisely 'the single story': Adichie sustains that it is not that stereotypes are wrong, but they are partial, so they can just tell a part of the whole story of an individual. Adichie's talk had a great impact on the students: during her talk, I looked at their faces, and they were totally captured by what she was saying. As it always happens when a person tells an unfeigned story, I realized how adolescents have a special radar for authenticity and a profound hunger for truth and dignity—and, with a sting, I also felt how often we adults fail to nurture that hunger. At the end of the video, students were deeply touched, but they were smiling too, as when someone is approaching a new form of awareness and knowledge.

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

For the next lesson, they were asked to prepare a framework for a discussion on what is 'the danger of a single story,' starting from a series of questions I wrote on the blackboard. But some of them also watched the video again at home, often showing it to their parents and friends.

- Stage 2. Multiple Me

During the next lesson, the discussion was very vibrant and all students actively participated in the debate. Everybody had something to say on 'the danger of a single story,' and also the students who were less proficient in English contributed. Most interventions revolved around the consideration that taking things for granted for others also means taking things for granted for ourselves. This debate led us to discuss the Multiple Me: who I am in different contexts, with different people, or with the same people in different contexts, and we considered differences of gender, interlocutors, expectations, intentions, etc. and how they impact on our interactions with others. For example, a girl who plays rugby in two different teams reflected on her different traits of identity according to the team she plays with, as in one team she is the eldest (a point of reference for the others, she gives suggestions and advice), while in the other she is the youngest, and so she has to listen to and obey her elder teammates. Another girl declared how differently she perceives herself, and is perceived, by her mother, her boyfriend and her friends—and also noted that much depends on *which* friends she is with.

Many other examples were brought forth, all highlighting reflections on the situated and multiple quality of the identity traits. A usually quite introvert student suddenly spoke so openly about her migrant origins that not only her classmates were surprised, but herself too. She then reflected on the fact that speaking in a language (English) which was foreign to all made her feel protected and, at the same time, empowered. Discussion was then focused on how identity can be remodulated according to the language used, and how sharing another language with a special friend or relative can signal and celebrate a particular relationship. Some students said, for example, that they happen to speak dialect with some of their relatives to create an intimate space to discuss about their private matters, and a girl said she talks in English on Skype with her uncle living in Australia to confide her secrets to him, to maintain their special link and, at the same time, to prevent her mother understanding what she says.

Roles, contexts, people we are with, language used, then emerged as some of the elements which reveal how far our identity is situated. As a last example of how context define us, I invited my students to take me out of the school context, and visualize me in the middle of a basket ground or a rugby field—I voluntarily named two contexts familiar to my sporty students, in

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

particular to those who were not so good in English. I then invited them to consider that we all have something we are good at and something that for us is difficult or impossible, in order to make them aware that even power is relative and situated. Students found it really funny to imagine their English teacher in the middle of a rugby field, and so the lesson ended on a light tone. Yet, at the same time, we realized that by explicitly addressing (and subverting) status of power, we had been considering how far each person is an individual made up of several stories and experiences, and cannot be framed into one single identity definition. With this in mind, in the next lesson we were ready to move on to the further step: the stereotypes.

- Stage 3. Multiple Me Stereotyping—per *via negativa*

One of the most important (and dangerous) characteristic of stereotypes is that they are invisible. We take for granted, or assume as an undisputed and undisputable truth, what at its best is a simplified and partial reading of complex stories, and at its worst a deliberate construction to perpetuate discrimination, prejudice and injustice. And, of course, the most invisible stereotypes are the ones that regard the 'group' we belong to or associate with. For this reason, I decided to work with the students per *via negativa*—that is, instead of starting by presenting stereotypes on other nationalities and ethnic groups, I began offering stereotypes on Italians, as the class was formed by Italian-born students, except for a girl born in Egypt (but with Italian citizenship, as her father was an Italian-Tunisian). It is to be noted, again, that the overall adjective 'Italian' does not describe well the diversified reality of most Italian school classes, as many students come from different regional and linguistic backgrounds. The web offers great examples on stereotypes, and some of them are really funny, as they work on exaggeration not only to get a smile, but sometimes also to make people reflect on the mechanisms of stereotyping. (Incidentally, that offered us also the opportunity to revise the rhetorical figures we had previously studied, noticing how exaggeration can sometimes be so amplified and paradoxical to become a caricature, and therefore convey the opposite meaning.) Here are some examples I presented to my students:

— "Italian Stereotypes" (2015): in this video a young man with a huge black mustache enacts all the most stereotypical male Italian activities: he eats spaghetti and drinks red wine, handles a woman with a macho attitude, etc., while typical traditional Italian music, the *tarantella*, is playing in the background;

— "Boopa-dee Bappa-dee": this is an episode from *Family Guy* (2013), a famous politically incorrect cartoon with often explicit contents. In this episode, the Griffins are in Italy (6:30), and this is the occasion to serve

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

some other stereotypes: men kissing each other, scenes of jealousy, and connections with Mafia;
- "McStroke": this is another episode (2008) from the same series. Here, there are men constantly shouting and gesturing at each other, others are cutting the queue line, and Peter Griffin, the main character, wants to buy some *salami* but gets involved in an animated discussion with the Italian mustached butcher;
- "Italian Stereotypes" (2014): in this video, two young men, one German and one from the US, discuss Italian stereotypes. Starting from their own experiences in Italy, they reinforce some of them (e.g., the food culture, *espresso*, etc.) and call into questions others (they generously acknowledge, for example, that not all Italians are connected with Mafia);
- "10 Common Italian Stereotypes that Are actually True" (Neuman 2015): the title of this text-and-video is quite eloquent, as all most common stereotypes on Italians are here listed and confirmed: Italians love *pasta*, *mamma*, football and the Opera. And they are always late.

Then, on the whiteboard, I wrote a list of the ten most common stereotypes of Italians I found on the web—e.g., Italians always wear sunglasses; Italians only wear Prada, Gucci and Armani; Italians are all connected with Mafia; Italians eat pizza and pasta every day; etc. While watching the videos and, later, reading the stereotypes, the students' reactions were quite loud and similar: "I am not like that!" "I am never late!" "I do not shout all the time!" "I don't like pasta," "It's not me!" Indeed, it's not me. So, we reflected on these words, taking them one by one: it-is-not-me. Who is 'me'? How many 'me-s' make 'I'? We then discussed how stereotypes often use words such as 'all,' 'always,' 'every,' terms connected with concepts of wholeness and timelessness presented as given and undisputable statements which fail to register complex and fluid individual diversities, framing them instead into a general and fixed portrait. Yet, if stereotypes do not grasp individual diversities, they sometimes have a little truth in them—or, at least, one we can indulge in. When we read the stereotype: "All Italian men are mama's boys," female students flared up with: "Hey, prof, this is true!" and started teasing the boys. One male student admitted gravely that no girl can cook like his mother, while another proudly said that he prepared all his meals himself. That raised several other discussions on other stereotypes—gender stereotypes. Why did young men state proudly that they can cook their meals themselves, while young women did not even consider that activity worth mentioning, as they themselves take it for granted? And why, while famous TV competitions present only male diva-chefs, everyday plain cooking is still considered a female activity? What are the explicit or implicit gender stereotypes? Again,

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

we realized that stereotypes are precisely what we don't usually see, like fish can't see water. So, if we are not happy with the stereotypes that define 'us,' how do we deal with the stereotypes that define 'the others'?

- Stage 4. Multiple Others

To introduce the topic of how 'we' frame 'the others' into stereotypes, I showed my students the silent video of a dark-skinned young man who, on Saint Valentine's Day, walks across Milan with a bunch of red roses in his hands. He passes several couples, and they all refuse his flowers with a brisk gesture of the hand. He enters a restaurant, and both a waiter and a customer do the same. Then, the young man finally reaches a table where a girl is waiting for him, and he offers the bunch of roses to her. The video is very interesting, as it overturns expectations: the young man is not a flower vendor, but a lover who is bringing flowers to his girlfriend.[14] Students were really impressed by the video, precisely because it dismantles a stereotype by showing something unexpected which, at the same time, depicts the typical scene of a young man offering flowers to a girl. All along the video, we are led to view this young man as a flower vendor, not as a young man in love. Would our expectations have been the same if the young man with a bunch of flowers had been white? At this point, a girl with Neapolitan origin uncovered her forearm and compared her skin tone with that of her friend with African heritage, exclaiming that she was darker than her. Her spontaneous gesture and utterance made us reflect on how skin color is often a way to label and box in a person, signaling our incapability of seeing her/his as an individual beyond her/his supposed ethnic descent, and as a person with multiple identity traits. Another girl then suggested a video which presented a similar pattern to the one we just saw: a black man is walking behind a white woman who gets frightened by his presence; so, she starts rushing and is almost run over by a car, but she is eventually saved by the man himself. Here, again, expectations were overturned: the black man is not an assailant, but a savior. I then invited my students to reflect on how media are often responsible for (re)producing stereotypes on the 'others.' We discussed several examples from the headlines. For example, in Italy when car accidents are caused by non-Italian people, the news often emphasize their nationality instead of focusing on the reasons why the accident occurred. When people from foreign nationalities or ethnicities are involved, the media report crimes or misbehaviors not highlighting individual responsibility, but rather ascribing the misconduct to the belonging to a certain nationality, community or culture. Dervin (2017) sustains that, in such a way, stereotype replaces individual responsibility by putting the stress on the action ("He made that because of his culture," 83) and by apparently exonerating the actor ("It's not really him, it's his culture," *ibidem*). Yet, by

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

so doing, the stereotype is actually twice reinforced: by identifying a person with a whole culture, and by identifying the deed (or the crime) with the culture rather than with the person. Terry Eagleton puts it very clearly: "To see everything as relative to culture is to turn culture into an absolute" (2016, 42), while, commenting on van Dijk, Dervin adds: "especially media discourses contribute to the spread, reproduction and acceptance of prejudice—even if people do not have experience the 'other'" (2017, 83). As my students came from different Italian regions, I also invited them to reflect how stereotypes are hard to eradicate not only between nations, but also within. When the Italian media report of a Sicilian fake blind man who drives a car, he is often presented as the typical southern fraudster who has produced false declaration of disability to receive a state pension; while a public officer in Liguria who clocks in and then goes canoeing is just a bad egg, not representative of the industrious and honest North. Reflecting on the examples from the media, students said that stereotypes present people as a whole 'other,' instead of presenting people for what they (we) are: individuals with multiple (and sometimes contrasting) belongings, attitudes, and stories. Students concluded that stereotypes put labels which simplify the complexity of us all.

- Stage 5. Intercultural Communication

During the next lessons we met the group of refugees. They worked with an intercultural association that offers them a path to autonomy—it offers Italian language classes, helps them integrate into working activities, and provides housing facilities. Some of these refugees also receive training to go to schools and work with students to promote intercultural understanding and offer a de-stereotyped image of the refugee. One of the refugees who came to visit us with some educators of the association was Amara. She told us that she had to leave her country for political reasons as her family is involved in activism against the government.[15] Students were impressed by the contrast between the image of destitute migrants usually offered by the media and this elegant, cultivated and witty woman who was now speaking to them. She did not provide many details about the difficulties she had to face to arrive in Italy, or about the problems she initially encountered when she finally arrived in the country. She preferred to offer us a lesson of her local language; students really enjoyed it, and liked to trace similarities and differences with Italian, with their own native languages, and with English. We then discussed the importance of languages to travel, and considered the reasons why people travel. Amara highlighted the distinction between travelling and moving, which made us reflect on whether people can choose to move or have to move from one country to another. Choice was then foregrounded as the topic of discussion and became the link with the following lesson when one of the

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

educators carried out a very effective activity. He put a sticker at each of the four corners of the classroom: on the sticker put at the first corner it was written "both parents-families from this area/region"; at the second corner, "only one parent from this area/region"; at the third, "both parents-families from other areas/regions in Italy"; at the fourth, "one or both parents-families from other countries." He then invited students and us teachers (other teachers were there too) to walk to the corner which best defined her/his origins. It was very interesting to see how the majority of the participants went to the third corner, some to the second and the fourth, and only two moved to the first. Such a simple exercise showed us visually that our origins are multiple, and that, one way or another, we are all migrants. Ourselves in the present, our parents or grandparents in the past, move or have moved from one place to another driven by the same motivations: to look for a better future, to escape from totalitarianisms, to flee from war and poverty, to create better opportunities for the next generations.

The meetings with the refugees marked the end of our seminar. Therefore, we were then ready to rewind it to see whether there were still points to debate, or ones that we could simply let go. We reflected on what we had learnt, and how the path we had been walking together could help us to understand ourselves better, and to communicate better with others. We agreed that intercultural communication begins with ourselves, when we are ready to question ourselves first and challenge stereotyped visions, perceptions and representations that regard ourselves as well as others; intercultural communication then occurs when we are mutually curious, generous and caring. Consequently, intercultural communication is not a practice we can learn from a list or from a book, as it involves complex dynamics which can have positive outcomes, or may result in a fiasco for many different reasons and causes. The concept of failure has to be taken into account in discourses on intercultural communication as an opportunity to reconsider the context or the situation from another perspective, to grasp other meanings and, at the same time, to learn about ourselves too.

There is indeed a wide range of literature on the importance of failure and of cultural *gaffes* as fundamental events in intercultural studies: anthropologist Setti remarks that "sperimentare la *gaffe*, l'equivoco o la 'figuraccia' ironicamente, è un processo fondamentale per gli etnografi affinché imparino dagli 'altri'" [experimenting ironically *gaffe*, misinterpretation or presenting a poor figure is a fundamental process for ethnographers to be able to learn from the "others"] (2015, 100). With these considerations in mind, at the end of the seminar I presented my students with a quote from the performance artist Marina Abramović. In her beautifully striking autobiography (2016),

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

she gives a definition of failure which, to me, sounds as the most constructive attitude to an intercultural approach (and to life in general, actually):

> Failures are very important. . . . If you experiment, you have to fail. By definition, experimenting means going to territories where you have never been, where failure is very possible. How can you know you're going to succeed? Having the courage to face the unknown is important. I love to live in *the spaces in between*, the places where you leave the comfort of your home and your habits behind and make yourself completely open to change (155, italics mine).

Intercultural communication is indeed the experiment of a mutual relation in *the spaces in between*: there are some practices and even some procedures which can be followed, but at the end of the day what really makes it work is our availability to explore new territories, to leave certainties behind (and maybe most of all those which regard ourselves), to explore new territories, to be open to change, to encounter new questions, doubts and, on good days, even solutions. Yet, this experiment has no guarantee of a happy end: therefore, we should also permit ourselves to be ready to deal with our impotence and frustration, and, in case, be ready to encompass failure without seeing it as the end but rather as a different starting point. Thus, we also started to consider failure, distressing as it is, from a difference perspective, that is as an occasion for a critical reflection and for learning something about ourselves, in a way that it can paradoxically be transformed into some form of empowerment. And by critically observing failure not as the conventionalized opposite of success but rather as a different form of accomplishment, I think we added another critical little piece to our challenging and dismantling the pre-given assumptions and labels that societal norms and expectations put on us all.

2.1.4. A Comment on the Activities

In the last years, I have been carrying out several activities such as those described above, presenting them to students either in an indirect way or per *via negativa*, that is from the opposite end. In my experience, this is an effective educational approach as it allows students to follow their own path of research and it makes them the protagonists of their learning. Through analysis and comparison, students can realize by themselves the relations, the similarities and the differences between things and dynamics: knowledge comes from a personal—though guided—critical reflection, and then becomes part of the person's experience. Such an unconventional approach can sometimes confuse students, as school assignments are usually characterized by a specific one-way quality. Therefore, I have to plan carefully all steps of the activity to help students move out of their comfort zone by degrees; yet, I also have to be flexible, considering and developing suggestions or objec-

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

tions that the students might advance during the lesson. Thus, these activities also evidence the very clear and simple notion that any lesson is always and primarily a dialogue and a co-constructed activity.

The main concern of all the activities is the development of critical awareness also in the perspective of a pro-active transformation as advocated by Critical Pedagogies and Participatory Action Research (see Part Two and Part Three). Yet, critical awareness is a process which demands much time, and results might not be seen or expected in the short run. Besides being an individual lifelong process, critical awareness is a very personal one: not only do some people need more time to reflect, compare, and critically evaluate facts, elements and dynamics, but a critical approach begins with problematizing one's own ideas and opinions, an endeavor which may be uncomfortable for many. In our activities, some students immediately engage in seeing things from a different perspective, while others are more reluctant to exit from their comfort zone, or simply need more time. My task is that of mediating several different standpoints, accompanying students along new paths of reflection and facilitating a discussion respectful of different points of view. During this process, foreign language is not only a means: as critical awareness implies reconsidering what we take for granted from a different perspective, saying things in a different language helps students see things differently—and themselves too: some students notice that they feel more open and confident in expressing their opinions in a non–mother tongue. Linguistic achievements are also part of the goal as, while students make connections and distinctions, and express their point of view, they exercise and improve the foreign language. A final note: this kind of activity requires much school time, it often competes with institutional programs waiting to be accomplished, or is suddenly interrupted by the school bell announcing the next lesson. Such a basic consideration leads to bear in mind that in the perspective of a critical and intercultural approach to Foreign Language Education, several steps should be made—for example, curricula should be reconsidered, school time should become more flexible, and teachers' pre-service training, as well as in-service teacher training programs, should not only focus on new entertaining teaching methods, but be braver, and also address critical and theoretical issues.

NOTES

1. The young soldiers came from the poorest regions in Italy, and many were from the south. Most of them were farmers or craftsmen who had never left their villages before. They were significantly dubbed "carne da cannone" (literally: "flesh for cannon" = cannon fodder).

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

2. Website: http://www.accademiadellacrusca.it/en/.

3. By now, it should be clear that the general definition of 'Italians' is an oversimplification of the complex and mixed heterogeneity of ethnic, cultural and linguistic threads that constitutes Italy. Such historical evidence is maliciously dismissed by two opposite narrations: that of the extreme right-wing parties (that vindicate a true, native, unique Italian-*ness* which, simply, has never existed), and that of the separatist parties (which instead ground their ideology in a pure and mythical local-*ness* which, in turn, has never existed).

4. Source: http://www.comuni-italiani.it/statistiche/stranieri/.

5. I take from the European Documents the difference between 'multilingualism' and 'plurilingualism': the first indicates the presence, within a certain geographical area, of more than one variety of language; the latter refers to languages not as objects, but from the point of view of those who speak them, and it refers to the speaker's linguistic repertoires (*cf. From Linguistic Diversity to Plurilingual Education: Guide for the Development of Language Education Policies in Europe*, 2007).

6. The example here presented, some parts in 1.3 in this section, and some parts in section 1 and 6 in Part Three were published in "Linguistic and Cultural Diversities as Metaphors of the Urban Experience" (sections 1, 2, 3) within the chapter by the collective wom.an.ed "Identity and Diversity: the Educational Challenge in Urban Contexts" (Giorgis *et al.* 2017) and are reproduced by permission of SCSC by Springer, © 2017.

7. Camera (Low Chamber) and Senato (High Chamber) are the two branches of the Italian parliamentary system.

8. The whole project and the videos are visible in Bitti 2017.

9. On the word 'Patria' (= Nation) see Conclusion.

10. See Ben Rampton's seminal book *Crossing: Language and Ethnicity among Adolescents* (1995) for a full discussion on the difference between code switching and language crossing.

11. This introduction to the Activities as well as some parts of 2.1.3 are revised and extended versions of a text for *Taboo: The Journal of Culture and Education* (Giorgis forthcoming).

12. This text is a revised and extended version of the online publication at Center for Intercultural Dialogue (Giorgis 2015).

13. Please note that some parts of the general framework had been designed by the collective wom.an.ed to be used as a workshop during a conference, while all specific activities in English were designed and developed by the author.

14. "Viva l'amore, abbasso i pregiudizi" [Long live love, down with prejudices], YouTube video, 0:54. Published February 13, 2015 by Vamurri. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cl437zT62X4&feature=youtu.be.

15. Name has been changed and no other reference is given here to protect the woman's identity.

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

Part Two

Within Theory

"Power, Government, War, Law, Punishment, and a Thousand other Things, had no terms, wherein that Language could express them, which made the Difficulty almost insuperable, to give my Master any Conception of what I meant" (Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*, 2003 [1726], 225). Speaking to the much civilized Master of the Houuyhnhnms, Gulliver finds it difficult to explain the meaning of some words as his host cannot conceptualize what they stand for. This part will precisely address words, the roots from which their meanings originate and some of the theories they have generated, and also examine whether and how their progeny is consistent with their primary source.

1. INTRODUCTION: WHAT'S IN A WORD?

This part presents the theoretical backgrounds which substantiate the practices afore presented and underpin the study research which is illustrated in Part Three. Ideas and meanings are defined by and shared through words, so I decided to track back the roots of the words that constitute the backbone of this book, analyzing and considering each word separately—foreign, language, education, critical, intercultural, experience. I begin with the etymological definition[1] of each of these words, as I believe that the path which leads backwards to the origin of a word is a very interesting and often an illuminating one. We tend to forget or overlook where words come from, whilst it is in their beginning that words can reveal their innermost meaning—and sometimes their ends too. I will then furnish each word with some specifications, presenting and discussing a very personal selection of theoretical references, experiences or examples. I am aware that several scholarly references will be left out; yet, as one of the ambitions of this book is also to address to

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

a wider audience, I tried to make informative and evocative what is usually the most erudite part of a text, the theoretical framework, with the intent to stimulate the curiosity of the non-professional reader for words and themes.

2. FOREIGN

> Definition: of, from, in, or characteristic of a country or language other than one's own; strange and unfamiliar; not belonging to.
>
> Origin: from the Latin *fŏris* (f. noun) = door—of a room, a temple and, in a figurative sense, entrance, passage, access; and *fŏrīs* (adv. and prep.) = from the outside; outside.
>
> —from OED

The root of the word indicates the spatial quality of something or someone who is or comes from out of doors, from the outside. Yet, the same root also refers to a liminal space: in Latin, *fŏris* means 'door,' a spatial element which separates, but also connects what/who is 'in' and what/who is 'out.' Therefore, the original root of the word does not refer to a static condition, but rather to a dynamic one.

My applied understanding of the word 'foreign' and of the concept of 'foreignness' mainly derives from three main authors: Julia Kristeva, Claire J. Kramsch and Jonathan Swift—who, not surprisingly, experienced themselves different forms of 'foreignness.'[2] I believe that, despite being far in time, references, and theoretical elaborations, these authors provide a comprehensive conceptual framework able to delineate the experience of the encounter with whom, or what, is not 'familiar.'

In her seminal work *Étrangers à nous-mêmes* [Foreigners to Ourselves] (1998), Kristeva presents an accurate discussion of how the concept of l'*étrangeté* (foreignness) has been interpreted, used, and manipulated through the centuries in philosophy, history, religion, literature and politics. She addresses the foreignness of the foreign considering several aspects, such as the condition of the exile, the rise of the Nation-States, the themes of exclusion and inclusion, nationalisms and universalism, human rights and the rights of citizenship—between them, "une cicatrice" [a scar] (142), the foreigner. All through her detailed account, Kristeva interrogates herself (and the reader) on who is the foreigner and, by spirals getting more and more concentric, she finally returns to the very beginning of her inquiry and reaffirms her philosophical pronouncement: foreignness does not primarily regard the

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

other, but the self. Foreignness exposes the paradoxical human condition: we can become ourselves only if we become others to ourselves. Therefore, while we, the readers, think we are reading a learned scrutiny on otherness, Kristeva is actually showing us a mirror—the foreigner is us, the hidden face of our own identity, "notre troublante altérité" [our own troublesome alterity] (284). Kristeva sustains that foreignness begins in the self when the conscious apprehension of one's own difference arises, and is realized when we understand that we are all foreigners. Awareness thus plays a fundamental role, as the pivotal process when our own otherness manifests to ourselves. Discussing Freud's theory of the *Unheimlich*, Kristeva grounds her philosophical reflection on foreignness in psychoanalysis, which she views as a journey into one's own and the other's foreignness leading to an ethics of respect for what is "inconciliable" [irreconcilable] (269). Yet, by no means Kristeva confines the movement of consciousness to the inner world but pushes such awareness into the outer world, as it is only by acknowledging our own otherness that we can create the conditions to be with others. Therefore, besides her multi-layered analysis of the concept of foreignness, Kristeva's work can help contemporary readers to read contemporary complexity for at least two reasons. Kristeva affirms that we should never try to fix or objectify the foreignness of the foreigner, thus challenging the essentialistic perspective of the diversity of the stranger. Such a pronouncement recalls the present and pressing warning against the labelling of individuals and groups according to their cultural background, and the never too often repeated solicitation to see diversities within groups. Then, Kristeva maintains that the process to approach and understand foreignness begins from within, rather than from without: in order to meet the other, we have to go through a movement of othering the self—an approach to otherness which is essential to the intercultural debate (*cf.* 6 this section). Kristeva recognizes the intrinsic paradox of her statement, and yet at the end of her volume she does not fail to answer to the initial question around which she has designed and developed her enquiry. In the first lines of her volume she had asked herself—and us readers—the fundamental question of how we can live with the others without renouncing our subjectivity, rejecting both ostracism and levelling. At the end of her discussion, she offers what nowadays sounds like her prediction of the ultimate way to live together in mutual respect: "Une commounauté paradoxale est en train de surgir, faite d'étrangères qui s' acceptent dans la mesure où ils se reconnaissent étrangères eux-mêmes" [A paradoxical community is rising, made by foreigners who can accept themselves only if they recognize themselves as foreigners] (290). Kristeva therefore sustains that to be with the others we need a renovated and critical conceptualization of foreignness, which cannot begin but in recognizing and accepting our own otherness. Though this conclusion has been

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

sometimes criticized as too quick a 'jump' (if we recognize the foreign in us, we will no longer have a problem with foreigners, *cf.* Visker 2005), I think Kristeva's reasoning gets at the core of the issue of foreignness, problematizing and de-essentializing its definition and representation, and while inviting us all to look inside our reciprocal black mirrors, it is not meant to offer solutions but rather to foster critical awareness of how we conceive the other's foreignness—and our own.

Linguistic Claire J. Kramsch echoes Kristeva's words when she states that "We only learn who we are through the mirror of others and, in turn, we only understand others by understanding ourselves as Others" (2009, 18). Again, it is by making ourselves others that we can become and understand ourselves. What Kramsch adds to my argumentation is her addressing foreignness from the linguistic perspective, and in particular her connecting foreignness to the experience of (learning) a foreign language. By sustaining that "foreign language education . . . is the prime promoter of the foreign perspective" (192), Kramsch brings to the fore a much neglected actor in the whole world of Foreign Language Education: the learner as a symbolic subject who, through a different language, can experience different emotional apprehensions, conceptualizations and representations of the self, the others and the world. Kramsch then advances a main critique to Foreign Language Education, since it has always been concerned with the instrumentality of foreign language as a tool to communicate with the allophones, with no attention to the intrinsic symbolic power that the experience of a new language can offer to the learner: "speaking or writing another language means using an alternative signifying practice, that orients the body-in-the-mind to alternative ways of perceiving, thinking, remembering the past, and imagining the future" (189). Kramsch's focus on future is by no means casual: indeed, the symbolic power of the new language is a declarative power which helps the learner represent the world in different way, but most of all is a performative power, which, by creating different symbolic realities, interrogates actual realities and opens up to a transformation of the taken for granted of social dynamics and representations. And by no means Kramsch relegates such experience to only one language: the experience of diversity that the foreign language necessarily implies is multiplied if we consider the subject as a multilingual subject. Advocating for a multilingual imagination, Kramsch then affirms:

> we need to revisit the notion of imagination and its link to language. For teachers, learners, and language users of all kinds, a multilingual imagination is the capacity to envision alternative ways or remembering an event, of telling a story, of participating in a discussion, of empathizing with others, of imagining their future and ours, and ultimately of defining and measuring success and

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

failure. A multilingual imagination opens up spaces of possibility not in abstract theories or random flights of fancy, but in the particularity of day-to-day language practices, in, through, and across various languages. (201).

In such a way, Kramsch connects classroom practice with wider perspectives, promoting not only the learners' motivation, but their transgression from ordinary rules, their desire to liberate themselves from monolingual constraints (and from what they may bear up in terms of psychological distress, unpleasant memories, etc.), their pleasure to engage in new identity representations or aesthetic discoveries, and their commitment to social matters. All Kramsch's argumentations then position Foreign Language Education at the intersection of major issues which question not only the individual, but contemporary societies, too. By breaking the 'natural' link between the word and the world, Foreign Language Education can unveil how far it is cultural and situated, thus fostering the deconstruction of taken-for-granted individual and collective cultural identities, and of monocultural and nationalist frameworks. This is a much needed priority at times of global migrations and of the rising of new populisms in order to challenge the prevailing narratives which label individuals and groups according to their linguacultural backgrounds. While Kramsch's greatest merit is to have envisioned and addressed foreignness from the perspective of the foreign language learner, investigating the symbolic and multilayered significance of her/his experience, for a very radical approach to the theme of foreignness we have to travel back in time to meet the third author of this section.

As seen, Kristeva and Kramsch have analyzed the issue of foreignness as an opportunity to travel and discover one's own foreignness from within. Yet, far back in time, another author utilized foreignness to problematize the similar. With his novel *Gulliver's Travels*, published in 1726, Jonathan Swift wrote a literary masterpiece which has tracked the way to a vast variety of literary productions, generated fictional genres, and equally amused children and adults throughout the centuries. Besides its literary accomplishments, Swift's novel foregrounds several important and everlasting issues: it exposes the trickeries of power, ridicules the greed of ambition, satirizes human vanity, unmasks corruption, reveals social inequalities, denounces the atrocities of war, and, by all these means, strongly advocates for more just and compassionate societies. In addition to all these merits, Swift's novel is a true gold mine to understand the mechanisms which favor the (re)production of foreignness. Swift uses Gulliver, his protagonist, to transform what is foreign into familiar, and *vice versa*. He does that by using two major literary stratagems. The first is a witty use of the literary device of the travel journal, where the description of far-off imaginary lands and customs is by no means

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

a way to describe the exotic, but rather a gimmick to speak about far too close real countries and customs—ours. The second is the subversion of the perspective. The perspective is what frames and defines our vision of reality and the meaning we give to it: by changing Gulliver's scale (too big or too small) or status (as with the Houuyhnhnms), Swift obliges us to readjust our perspective too. Therefore, while Gulliver is describing the foreign, Swift is really showing us the familiar, ironically and sometimes ferociously exposing its (our) contradictions and nonsense: for example, through a giant Gulliver, we see the pompousness of a military parade downscaled into a tiny and ridiculous exercise of power; or we learn that Gulliver's watch is mistaken by the natives for a god because it measures his time. Swift obliges us to reflect on how the smallest shift in the point of observation leads us to see and consider things differently, a fundamental exercise in reflexivity. But there is more: Swift's approach to foreignness and otherness precisely defines, *ante litteram*, the famous four principles of ethnography as they will be much later defined by Bronislaw Malinovski (1922): to live with the people you are studying, participate in their activities, and learn their language; to consider the group you are studying as a whole (language, uses, customs, religion, etc.), collect examples and data through observation and write them down; to be prepared for long fieldwork and the handling of practical problems. In all his adventures in the different countries he visits, Gulliver accurately follows this pattern: he writes detailed accounts of the different peoples and societies he meets in order to understand their own representation of their reality, he learns their languages, he lives with them and participates to their rituals, and when he seems a bit gullible (after all, his name is Gulliver, a witty combination of the verb 'to gull'—meaning to fool or deceive—and 'traveler') is only to play Swift's game to make the reader feel smarter than his protagonist. Besides all that, Swift makes a step in what can be considered, again much *ante litteram*, a post-colonial and critical anthropology, as the encounter with the other becomes a way to problematize the similar, interrogating and relativizing one's own culture and exposing all the contradictions which shape his contemporary societies—still much too similar to ours. Even Swift's interest in the link between language and culture is far ahead of his time: much before the Sapir-Whorf theory, which sustains a mutual influence of language and culture in shaping the link word-world, Gulliver tries to understand the societies he visits through their languages. He notices, for example, that the much rational society of the Houuyhnhnms has no words to say 'lie,' 'power,' 'war,' or 'pride': the Houuyhnhnms cannot conceptualize what these words designate because they don't lie, don't exercise power, don't make wars, and have no experience of the vice of pride. Gulliver then finally notes that the Houuyhnhnms have no terms to express anything that

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

is evil—except for those needed to describe the despicable qualities of the Yahoos. By showing us how words shape, and are shaped by, a certain worldview, Swift uses such a reflection on language to continue his reverse account, pointing out that while the Houuyhnhnms don't need such words, we have execrably built entire civilizations on them: again, Swift speaks of the foreigner to unveil the familiar.

Here is where the circle of these references close. In their own way, each of these three authors investigate the concept of foreignness by moving on different intersectional paths, and yet through lenses that share a common view. Rather than defining what is in and what is out, foreignness is a concept which first and foremost interrogates the similar, so that foreignness finally reveals its original liminal quality, and relates back to the concept of 'door' that is in its root.

3. LANGUAGE

> Definition: the method of human communication, either spoken or written, consisting of the use of words in a structured and conventional way.
>
> Origin: from the Latin: *lingua* (tongue).
>
> —from OED

The origin of the word refers to a specific body part (tongue) while its definition refers to an action which characterizes itself as *inter*action: either spoken or written, language is aimed to communicate. Therefore, the word 'language' defines both the physical part of an individual which makes possible the specific action of speaking, and the action itself which involves a relationship with others.

According to Henry G. Widdowson (2012), "Language is the place where the self and others travel": indeed, the image of language as a place of encounters, arrivals and departures, where differences and identities are constantly on the move, well represents the dynamic nature of the human language. Language is connected to the self, but it also represents the main social link with the others; its development is a fundamental step in the person's growth, but it is also a lifelong process; its symbolic nature marks the connections between the word and the world, but also between the words and the individual, as it can reveal (or hide) relationships of belonging, of power, of exclusion and inclusion; and last but not least, language tells one's own story, both personal and cultural, and all the changes and different affilia-

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

tions that everyone experiences during her/his life. At the junction between personal and social, mental and environmental, cognitive and affective, symbolic and cultural, it is therefore no surprise that language is investigated by several disciplines such as Linguistics, Psychology, Sociology, Anthropology, Philosophy, Glottology, Pedagogy, Neurosciences, Social, Cultural and Gender Studies, which sometimes work together in order to understand and explain the complex phenomenon of human language. I will briefly examine the connection between language and identity, first in relation to the mother tongue and then to other languages. I will then conclude this short survey focusing more in detail on how such a relationship is by no means neutral or accidental, as it is ideologically marked and determined by issues of power.

3.1. mOther tongue

The process of acquisition of one's mother tongue (also called L1, native tongue, or native language) marks both the relationship and the separation between the subject and the object, thus representing the first fundamental element which defines the boundaries and therefore the relations between the self and the world. According to George H. Mead, the self is apprehended through the other by the language. The child apprehends her/himself as other by assuming different roles through the *play*, an activity which allows her/him to shape and modify her/his personality through a series of *vocal gestures* which will later evolve into language itself. The *game* will be added as a process and an activity through which the child shapes her/his own self and evolves through the interaction with the others. It is therefore language which allows her/him to take on the role of the other, and it is through such a social interaction that the self can evolve. The knowledge of the world can occur only through the separation between the self and the other, and such a division is made possible by language, as it creates a relationship between the self and the other which is no longer fusional, but rather functional, symbolic and affective (2002 [1934], 38–39).

In many languages, this primary experience of relationship-separation that happens through language is defined with terms such as 'mother tongue,' '*langue maternelle*,' '*lingua madre*,' '*Muttersprache*,' which point out the strict connection between the mother and the language (*cf.* Amati-Mehler, Argentieri and Canestri 1990), a connection that is visually evidenced by Claire J. Kramsch (2009) through the spelling 'mOther tongue' which efficaciously represents how it is precisely the mother tongue to mark the first encounter with alterity.

The interaction self-other is thus characterized by language as an experience where the self can be reached *through* a movement towards the other,

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

a process which goes along one's life and constantly shapes and reshapes one's identity. Though there are other non-linguistic criteria which contribute significantly to define the several configurations of identity that each individual experiences during her/his existence, it is certainly language, and the communicative act which it entails, that offer the most important and crucial features through which individuals define themselves and their belonging to different groups, and through which they are defined and recognized by others. Representing the "social positioning of the self and other," individual and collective identities are "intersubjectively rather than individually produced" especially through language: "identity emerges in discourse through the temporary roles and orientations assumed by participants" (Bucholtz and Hall 2005, 586–91). Language is therefore not only a tool of communication, but rather a combination of the cultural and symbolic resources that contribute to weave the social web as well as the several constructions and representations of identity of each individual in interrelation with others.

Here above, roughly sketched, are the complex affective, cognitive, relational and socio-cultural links which exist between the individual, her/his identities and the native language. It is then interesting to examine what happens when such links are shuffled by the experience of a foreign/other (L2, L3, etc.) language: in other words, if L1 is the *mOther* tongue what does it imply to encounter, adopt or be adopted by *other* languages?

3.2. Other Languages

Several studies from different disciplines and perspectives (among others: Buxbaum 1949; Amati-Mehler, Argentieri, and Canestri 1990; Norton 2000, 2013; Pavlenko 2002, 2006; Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004; Ceracchi 2007; Dewaele 2010; Heller 2011) sustain that as language and the self are interconnected, the experience of another language (L2, L3, etc.) involves some modifications of the self. This new reformulation of the link language-self mainly operates in two ways: *defensive*—the opportunity to build up defenses against traumas or negative memories—and *transformative*—the possibility to reshape and reinvent the self. Yet, meeting another language can also be the most evident mark of a painful exile: in her deeply touching and insightful autobiography, Eva Hoffman, a Pole who emigrated in Canada at the age of thirteen, describes her migration experience first in Canada and then in the US mainly as a journey into a new language. From the traumatic impact with a linguistic dispossession where she feels that words have no living connection with the world, Hoffman travels by degrees in the new language as within the path of a new exploration of the self. From loss, her life in a new language (*A Life in a New Language* is significantly the subtitle of her

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

book) becomes the opportunity for a reapprehension of the self and of the world: "Words are no longer spiky bits of hard matter, which refer only to themselves. They become, more and more, a transparent medium in which I live and which lives in me—a medium through which I can once again get to myself and to the world" (1998, 243).

Indeed, the experience of a new language is not confined to the internal world only, as it modifies one's relation with the outer world too. Similar words indicating the same object elicit different perceptions according to the language used—Lévi-Strauss sustained, for example, that the French word 'fromage' possesses a rather different evocative quality than the English word 'cheese.' Yet, not only do we perceive the world differently in a different language, but we are also perceived differently by the others, as often reported in many studies (*cf.* Dewaele 2010), and as experienced by anyone who can speak different languages. When we speak a different language our tone of voice, our gestures, even our posture are different too: language is embodied, and therefore when we speak another language also our body speaks another language, in a way that not only we become others to ourselves, but are perceived as such by the others. As an example, I mention here a little episode which happened to me recently. One evening I was having dinner with a friend in a restaurant in my hometown when an acquaintance of mine, a French woman, entered the restaurant. As I knew she couldn't speak Italian, I switched from my mother tongue to French, introduced her to my friend, and exchanged a short conversation with her. When the French woman left, my Italian friend exclaimed: "When you speak French, you move French!" I don't know what it means 'to move French,' but I realized I had not done it deliberately, and yet gestures, body posture, tone of the voice, etc., all came out differently when I had switched to another language.

The experience of another language is not then the simple adding of a new vocabulary, but rather the reapprehension and the recreation of new relationships with the self and the others, as well as a new symbolic resignification of the world. Israel Scheffler maintains that it is precisely from that distance that we can develop a new critical awareness: "Our native tongue appears to us at the beginning as a purely transparent window on the real world. Only later on, in encountering other languages and other usages do we come to a more reflective self-consciousness about our own symbolic representations" (1985, 20). According to Scheffler, other languages make us realize that we live and communicate in a symbolic universe made of meanings and beliefs, and then it is precisely in the gap that they evidence between the word and the world that they can open up to a meta-reflection of our visions and representations of the world, and of ourselves too.

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

Having said all the above, it should be evident that the experience of a foreign language brings forth an enormous potential as far as it regards the development of an awareness on how words, meanings and representations are by no means stable and invariable elements, but they are always situated, interrelated and determined by many factors. Overtly exposing the intersection of personal and social, the experience of a foreign language evidences what is usually hidden in the folds of the native tongue and, more precisely, that language is a matter which directly addresses the individual in relation with the others and with society, as it shapes the configurations of identity that s/he can or cannot perform, the linguistic choices that s/he can or cannot make, which linguistic repertoires s/he can access or not, and which are the drives/conditions/opportunities/constraints under which a determined performance, choice and accessibility is possible or not possible. In other words, the experience of a foreign language foregrounds the fact that language is by no means a neutral tool of communication, but rather a significant indicator of power relations.

3.3. Language and Power

There are hundreds of studies and publications which have investigated the complex relation between language and power—to mention but a few: Scuola di Barbiana 2007 [1967]; Freire 2005 [1970]; Fairclough 1989; Butler 1990; Bourdieu 1991; Pennycook 2001; Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004; Duchêne and Heller 2012; Heller and McElhinny 2017. From several and often intermingling perspectives (political, sociological, economic, linguistic, feminist, etc.), these works have examined how language is one of the main indicators of inequalities based on class, gender or ethnicity, how it collaborates to (re)produce such inequalities and stigmatize differences, or how it can try to challenge them. The most recent among them, that of Monica Heller and Bonny McElhinny, tracks a comprehensive historical account of the connections between language and power travelling across colonialism, the dictatorships of the twentieth century, capitalism, and the neo-liberal policies of the contemporary globalized world, thus offering a fundamental compass for anyone who is interested in analyzing diachronically the issue of language and power, and in seeing how, beyond all differences, patterns of similarities recur through the centuries to perpetuate the (re)production of injustices and inequalities.

Yet, besides all critical literature which has addressed such issues, I believe that there are two works which will be always the most accurate compass to guide our travel within the mechanisms of power and unmask its fatal relation to language. Published in the same years, one is an accurate historical

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

account of how a dictatorship creates, perpetuates and imposes itself through language, while the other is a most famous dystopian novel. Though one is a philological essay and the other a fictional work, if you read them in parallel at some point you cannot say which is which: their backbone is much too similar, as they both show how power deliberately manipulates language to manipulate people.

I am speaking of Victor Klemperer's *LTI: Linguae Tertii Imperii—The Language of the Third Reich* (2000 [1947]), and George Orwell's *1984* (2003 [1949]). While Orwell's novel is a desperate warning on the risks of an all-encompassing totalitarianism of the future, for Klemperer keeping a diary to analyze the language of the Third Reich was, in his own words, "an act of self-defence" (2000, 8) at a time when he, a Jewish university professor in Nazi Germany, was being deprived of everything—his job, his house, his dignity. There are indeed strikingly similarities between the two works, as the mechanisms they unveil are very much the same. Here are a few examples of the features which can be found in both works describing how power poisons words and, through them, manipulates people's mind and feelings:

[the following examples will be reported as: Klemperer *LTI* (K); Orwell *1984* (O)]

<u>repeating words; words as slogans; language as ubiquitous *cliqués*:</u>

- (K) "endless repetition . . . appears to be one of the principal stylistic features of their language" (28)
- (K) figure of the *Lausher* [Eavesdropper] as a warning against the spies with the caption *Feind hört mit* [Enemy is listening too] on matchboxes, posters, shop windows (80)

- (O) War is Peace
- (O) Freedom is Slavery
- (O) Ignorance is Strength

<u>renaming places:</u>

- (K) geographical names were 'nordified' to sound more Teutonic (74–75)

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

- (O) "the names of the countries and their shapes on the maps had been different" (23)

<u>modifying or rewriting history:</u>

- (K) Friedrich Stieve's *Geschichte des deutschen Volkes* [History of the German People], a massive and very popular book published in 1934 and which, by 1942, had reached its twelfth edition. In it, German history is re-written from its origins as a crescendo of the manifest Teutonic destiny of ruling the world which reaches its crowning achievement with the appearance of the Führer who incarnates the truest German spirit (244–47)

- (O) "The past was erased, the erasure was forgotten, the lie became truth" (77)
- (O) mutability and readjustment of the past (218–19)
- (O) "Who controls the past controls the future; who controls the present controls the past" (255)

<u>using euphemisms, contractions and abbreviations:</u>

- (K) killed = '*liquidiert*' [liquidaten] (139)
- (K) use of contractions (82–86)
- (K) SA (*Sturmabteilung* = Storm Detachment); SS (*Schutzstaffel* = Elite Guard) (63)

- (O) abolished, annihilated, disappeared = 'vaporized' (19)
- (O) dead = 'unperson' (161)
- (O) Minitrue (Ministry of Truth);
- (O) Minipax (Ministry of Peace);
- (O) Miniluv (Ministry of Love);
- (O) Miniplenty (Economic Affairs) (4)

<u>reducing vocabulary and simplifying concepts; reshaping or overturning the meaning of words:</u>

- (K) "The golden rule is always: don't let your listeners engage in critical thought, deal with everything simplistically" (164).
- (K) use of the word '*fanatisch*' [fanatical] in a positive sense (e.g., the fanatical belief in the everlasting life of Hitler's Reich, 55)

- (O) Ministry of Peace, concerned with war; Ministry of Love to maintain law and order, etc. (4)

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

- (O) Newspeak: “Every year fewer and fewer words, and the range of consciousness always a little smaller” (54)

deification of the leader:

- (K) self-deification: Hitler referred to himself as the German savior (104)
- (K) “we do not need to know what the Führer intends—we believe in him” (106)
- (K) “the ritualistic worship of Hitler, the radiant fog surroundings his person” (107)
- (K) “An intensification of this holiness into the realm of mysticism” (109)

- (O) during an apparition of Big Brother on a screen, a woman flung herself on his image, calling him “‘My Saviour!’ and extended the arms towards the screen. Then she buried her face in her hands. It was apparent that she was uttering a prayer. At this moment the entire group of people broke into a deep, slow, rhythmical chant of ‘B-B! . . . B-B! . . . B-B!’ over and over again” (16–17)

manipulation of the media; propaganda machine:

- (K) newspapers, radio, cinema, news, huge gatherings, songs, entertainment

- (O) poster, telescreens, slogans, huge gatherings, hymns, entertainment

appeal to emotions and sentimentalism; fanaticism: faith replaces knowledge:

- (K) “LTI was a language of faith because its objective was fanaticism” (103)
- (K) “Nazism was accepted by millions as gospel because it appropriated the language of the gospel” (110)

- (O) Ignorance is strength
- (O) celebrating Big Brother “was an act of self-hypnosis, a deliberate drowning of consciousness” (17)

reinforcing power by identifying the Other as the Enemy:

- (K) the Jews; other nations

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

- (O) Goldstein; other nations
- (O) Two Minutes Hate

mania for organization:

- (K) omnipresent National Socialist obsession with the word '*organisation*' (organization) and the verb '*organisieren*' (to organize, 91–96)
- (K) mechanizing language and using technical expressions for non-technical areas and for human beings are both euphemisms (person as a machine) and evidence of efficiency (142–45)

- (O) the complex system of buildings, offices, and cubicles created to 'rectify' events of the past (38–49)
- (O) all the bureaucratic apparatuses of Ministries, Thought Police, etc.

If we go through these categories, we can find several disturbing resonances with our contemporary present, as new nationalisms and new populisms work within a similar framework, using language with the same accent and purpose. Yet, also democracies often use similar linguistic strategies, as for example, when they disguise unconstitutional actions or unpopular decisions—e.g., when they call 'Peace Mission' the deployment of military troops, 'security' the militarization of cities and the repression of any form of dissent, and the highly creative euphemisms used to make people digest new taxes; when they divert public opinion away from internal affairs or scandals by waving external menaces—e.g., portraying migrants as invaders—or when they sedate people with brainwashing entertainment programs or repetitive slogans.

Therefore, the question is which are the strategies that can unveil and, possibly, break such mechanisms in order to question and challenge prefabricated narratives and interpretations of the world achieved through a manipulated use of language meant to prevent critical inquiry and understanding, and maintain the status quo. That is a very pressing issue in particular at times of unprecedented spread of globalized and dematerialized communications, where every second a huge amount of information, news (and fake news) reaches individuals all over the world. And if reading critically words and messages, verifying info, collecting different versions of the same story is of paramount importance for all, it is so in particular for those coming from the periphery of the world or of society, as they are the most vulnerable targets of every form of manipulation and oppression—and, as well evidenced by Klemperer and Orwell, language does not play not a secondary role in both. In a video interview published online in 2014, Paulo Freire sustains: "It's

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

impossible to speak about language without speaking of ideology and power. . . . Yet, the oppressed need to appropriate the dominant pattern and syntax, as the more they can articulate it, the more they can orientate their speech in the struggle against injustice" (Freire 2014, 00:30; 01:50). According to Freire, then, empowerment and the struggle for social justice necessarily pass through the appropriation of language.

Language can be appropriated in many ways but, as also Freire advocated, one of them is certainly through education. Indeed, besides one of the specific focuses of this book, Language Education (see Part Four), education is inevitably mediated by and connected with language as "When people speak and write in educational contexts, they signal things not only about the subjects they are teaching or learning but also about their affiliations with social groups inside and outside the speech event" (Wortham and Reyes 2016[2011], 137). Therefore, also in education the connection between language and power is by no means a peripheral issue as "educational processes are important sites for the production and the transformation of social identities" (143), thus favoring the perpetuation or the modification of dominant/subordinate dynamics. In the educational context, language use can thus offer or deny attention to under- or unheard voices, favor or challenge language ideologies and stereotyping, promote conventional or critical thinking, as "language use is not a passive means for representing or conveying educational experience, but an active force in shaping it" (148). As language and language ideologies are so relevant to shape educational processes, is now time to turn directly to education to examine whether and how it can reproduce or challenge such mechanisms.

4. EDUCATION

> Definition: the process of receiving or giving systematic instruction; a body of knowledge acquired through being educated.
>
> Origin: from the Latin *educere* (to lead, bring out).
>
> —from OED

Included in the concept of 'education' is the idea of a movement which brings something or someone 'out.' Such an idea involves the category of action not as a generic movement, but rather as the process of taking something or someone 'out' from somewhere, and, at the same time, as it conveys the image of an action which is somehow guided ('to lead'). Therefore, from its own root, 'education' indicates a movement which is both transformational ('going, moving out') and relational.

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

On March 9, 2017, Annick Grégoire, a Parisian emergency psychologist, received the *Légion d'Honneur* for her committed work after the terrorist attacks in the French capital. As the main responsible figure of the *Cellule Psychologique de l'Académie—Premier Degrée*, the psychological unit of the City of Paris which responds to traumatic or violent events, Grégoire had tirelessly worked to help families and friends of the victims, visiting many schools and communities, and facing mixed feelings of despair, rage and impotence.[3] In her acceptance speech, she thanked her colleagues, paid tribute to the CUMP emergency medical and psychological unit attached to the emergency medical service (SAMU) where she volunteers, and spoke about the distress and the challenges of her work. Then, quoting the theorist of education and pedagogue Philippe Meirieu, she identified in education and schooling the possible way out from divisions, and the way in to create mutual understanding and a sense of community:

> l'école n'est pas seulement le lieu où chacun apprend mais où l'on apprend ensemble, à faire société, le lieu où l'on apprend à penser, à confronter nos certitudes à celles des autres, à questionner les préjugés et les stéréotypes, le lieu où l'on apprend à partager des savoirs qui unissent, au contraire des croyances qui séparent [school is not only the place where we learn, but where we learn together, where we learn to make society, the place where we learn to think, to compare our certainties with those of others, to challenge prejudices and stereotypes, the place where we learn to share knowledge that unite instead of beliefs which divide].

Such a sentence acquired a particular intensity and relevance because of the events to which it referred and for the reason why it was pronounced; yet, it has the intrinsic capability of distilling the characteristics and the task of education in general, and schooling in particular. There are some words I would like to briefly discuss. The first, and possibly the one which gives sense to all the others, is 'togetherness': at school, we do not only learn but we learn together; 'togetherness' then identifies learning as an activity which is grounded in relations. Family and friends are environments of relations too, yet they are often places where similar beliefs are transmitted and shared, while at school we are confronted with a different type of 'togetherness,' that which is based on diversities rather than on similarities. Therefore, school is the place where we learn to be together in and through diversity: in other words, where we learn to be, and make, society. Another important word is 'learning to think': at school, we do not only learn Math, Geography, Languages, etc. but rather we learn to think, which means learning to compare and discuss our ideas with those of others. The exercise of comparing and discussing different points of view helps challenge prejudices and stereotypes, so that 'knowledge' (another

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

key word) emerges as a plural experience that replaces 'beliefs,' pre-given assumptions or attributions.

Working in a school, I am aware that it is not always the place where all these things happen, as teachers and students are often caught in repetitive routines and bureaucratic duties. Notwithstanding that, I also know that these things *do* happen, in particular when educators, teachers and practitioners are aware that the classroom is a place where what manifests there, within and between individuals, reflects much broader dynamics and issues. In other words, when teachers are aware that education goes much further on and beyond the school classroom, being mainly a political endeavor which has the no minor task of developing critical citizens of the world. Yet, to develop critical citizens, critical pedagogies are needed.

4.1. Critical Pedagogies

Critical Pedagogy (Scuola di Barbiana 1967; Freire 1970, 1973, 1998, 2005; Giroux 1983; Simon 1992; Anyon *et al.* 2009; Steinberg and Kincheloe 2010) has come to be pluralized into Critical Pedagogies to indicate different ways of knowing and different ways to enact criticalities. Critical Pedagogies address issues of power connected with knowledge in the direction of critical awareness, empowerment and transformation. Critical Pedagogies conceive education as a critical intervention on reality with the major goals to develop critical, conscious, and engaged human beings able to take the responsibility of citizenship; to unveil and challenge power relations; to offer equal opportunities and democratize conditions. Critical Pedagogies thus consider education as a political practice which must address structural issues, and connect teaching/learning with larger societal issues: locating both the teacher and the students in wider social relations and contexts, Critical Pedagogies connect micro- and macro-issues, promoting educational models able to situate between grand theorizations and empirical flattening (*cf.* Anyon *et al.* 2009). The main questions which define Critical Pedagogies are who teaches what, to whom, from which positioning, within which context, and for which purposes, also identifying who holds the power in curriculum design, and how that power is included within classrooms and administrations. Critical Pedagogies consider practice and theory (praxis) as mutually informing and nurturing each other in a single process: considering knowledge and transformation as connected, Critical Pedagogies engage students to question pre-given assumptions and develop their potentials with the purpose of empowering them to act, so as to produce a transformation in the direction of social action and justice. Furthermore, whereas traditional education has always played on the teacher-active/student-passive pattern, Critical Pedagogies recognize the dialogical nature of education. In Paulo Freire's words:

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

> There is no *teaching* without *learning*, and by that I mean more than that the act of teaching demands the existence of those who teach and those who learn. What I mean is that teaching and learning take place in such a way that those who teach learn, on the one hand, because they recognize previously learned knowledge and, on the other, because by observing how the novice student's curiosity works to apprehend what is taught (without which one cannot learn), they help themselves to uncover uncertainties, rights, and wrongs (2005, 31).

The employment of Critical Pedagogies recognizes that teaching and learning are complementary experiences: therefore, the pedagogies value the students' experiential knowledge as an important element to enhance participation and discussion, and encourage students to critically appropriate their learning—in Freire's words, to become "re-creators of what they learn" (1998, 30)—and develop a critical understanding of their reality.

Not only students are invited to become active participants of what they learn. The same process engages teachers to become recreators of what they teach—and of what they learn through the experience of teaching. Critical Pedagogies encourage teachers to revise their practice in an emancipatory way, refusing to be domesticated as simple technicians of culture and enslaved in pre-fabricated (and by no means neutral) educational packages and curricula: in Freire's words, teachers have to become 'cultural workers.' Being 'cultural' implies to take a radical ethical and political stance: teaching is a political endeavor not only as part of wider social systems but also because it has to challenge the overt and hidden ideologies and mechanisms which can (re)produce injustice within its daily practice.

Central to the notion of Critical Pedagogies is also the connection between language and power. As discussed earlier (section 3), language is never innocent or neutral as "problems of language always involve ideological questions and, along with them, questions of power" (Freire 2005, 132). Analyzing the students' access to linguistic resources and repertoires is of paramount importance as it helps connect individual language uses with broader issues, discovering and challenging the language ideologies and the social factors which favor or hinder the students' participation, emancipation and empowerment.

A similar critical approach to pedagogy and language also can be found in the life and works of Lorenzo Milani, an Italian educator and priest who is often coupled with Paulo Freire for his radical approach to education. Together with his students of the School of Barbiana, in 1967 Milani published *Lettera a una professoressa* [Letter to a Teacher], a collective work which strongly denounces a system of education that favors and reproduces the elites and the privileged while excluding the lower classes, the poor children from the mountains or from the working class: "La scuola ha un problema solo. I ragazzi che perde" [School has only one problem. The children they lose] (Scuola

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

di Barbiana 2007 [1967], 35). The text, which soon became a radical manifesto on education, devotes many reflections on language as a pivotal element of discrimination, sustaining how it is important to possess a language to voice one's experiences, and to learn foreign languages to "comunicare con tutti, conoscere uomini e problemi nuovi, ridere dei sacri confine delle patrie" [communicate with all kinds of people, meet new folks and new problems, and laugh at the sacred borders of all fatherlands] (21). The passionate letter reveals how many inequalities are grounded in, and reproduced by, language, and how a certain type of education contributes to perpetrate injustice, thus linking education with wider systems which reproduce domination and inequities.

Such an integrated perspective of society and education is also vindicated by sociologist Saskia Sassen, who was cited by Jean Anyon (Anyon *et al.* 2009) to exemplify the intrinsic connection between education and broader societal issues. Particularly well-known for her theorization of the 'Global City,' Sassen also coined the definition 'analytics of exogeny' to foreground the evidence that phenomena are not, and should not be analyzed, as isolated units but rather as interconnected systems which influence each other. Using Sassen's expression, Anyon sustains that "we cannot understand or explain *x* by merely describing *x*. One must look exogenously at *non-x*" (2). Applying this to Education, it means to "situate schools and districts, policies and procedures, institutional forms and processes in the larger social contexts in which they occur, in which they operate and are operated upon" (3). In other words, schools are cultural sites for the critical apprehension of the link inside/outside, of the micro- and macro-levels, of the individual and the social, with the intent to interrogate and transform existing conditions.

5. CRITICAL

> Definition: expressing adverse opinion or judgment; expressing or involving analysis of certain issue in order to form a judgment.
>
> Origin: from the Ancient Greek *krinein*: to separate, to decide; Latin: *criticus* = able to discern; able to make a judgement.
>
> —from OED

The original notion of 'critical' refers to the capability to divide in order to discern, analyze, and judge. Throughout the centuries, the word has become synonymous of a judgment *tout court* ('*criticus*'), while its roots refer to a word primarily connected to a capability to discern, and only consequently to express judgment and an informed opinion.

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

In Western culture, the word 'critical,' indicating reflexive and inquisitive thinking, can be traced as far back as to Greek philosophy and has shaped the history of thought throughout the centuries since then. In the twentieth century, the adjective 'critical' has been applied to a wide range of disciplines to manifest their commitment to a scrutinizing, if not radical, approach able to challenge conventional and reified narratives of reality, addressing issues such as inequalities and relations of power, not only with the intent of unveiling them, but also of questioning and subverting them. According to Wendy Leeds-Hurwitz's clear-cut definition, "All critical approaches . . . are about questioning the status quo" (2010, 21). It is indeed through denaturalizing what is considered as natural and taken for granted that the 'critical' emerges: a critical approach does not content itself with denouncing a particular problem or form of injustice but is interested in the bigger picture, explicating the causes and the interests which create injustices and different forms of violence. For example, many radical groups, movements, and associations that adopt a critical perspective do not only campaign, but act bottom-up, co-working with the people affected by several forms of injustice and violence: by so doing they favor awareness and empowerment, as well as forms of mutual recognition and solidarity which are both grounded in action. *Denaturalization* and *cooperation in action* are therefore two fundamental features of the 'critical,' together with *interconnectedness* and *interdependence* as to evidence that no single event, no matter how far it happens, is an isolated unit but rather the result and the manifestation of a series of processes, choices and decisions which involve, interrogate, and affect us all.

Within such a framework, I wish to offer the example of an Italian NGO, Emergency, which was founded in 1994 by the Italian surgeon Gino Strada with the intent to offer free and quality health care to people affected by war and poverty, and to affirm human rights through direct action. Since then, Emergency has worked in eighteen countries, building hospitals, surgical centers, rehabilitation centers, pediatric centers, first-aid posts, health centers, clinics and mobile clinics, a maternity center, and a cardiac surgery center. Emergency has built hospitals in Sudan, Afghanistan, Iraq, Sierra Leone, Central African Republic, and has six outpatient clinics in Italy which offer medical care to anyone in need. Due to progressive cuts in the Italian Health Care System, recently more and more Italians are turning to Emergency medical clinics to be treated. In Italy, Emergency also provides health care to seasonal workers through a series of mobile clinics, offers assistance to migrants in Sicily, social-sanitary orientation in Brescia, information and prevention for commercial sex-workers and, following the 2016 earthquakes in the center of Italy, has provided medical and psychological assistance to the population affected by the calamity. Besides the latter extemporaneous

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

intervention, through all the other activities Emergency endlessly denounces what is behind the event, disclosing the causes and the processes which have produced it. When an injured civilian arrives at one of the hospitals following a blast or a bombing, when a seasonal worker is dehydrated because of his long working hours under the sun, when a migrant arrives exhausted on the coasts of Sicily, or a girl is exploited through prostitution, Emergency addresses their pressing needs, but at the same time exposes the bigger picture—what are the interests and causes which made that specific child step on a landmine, that worker sweat under the sun for little or no pay, that migrant move from her/his homeland, and that girl become a sex slave. In other words, Emergency considers all specific cases not merely as individual incidents, but rather as indicators of wider structural forms of violence and injustice. Such an idea of care and solidarity becomes critical as it goes beyond the single event to become a wider action-reflection on the interdependence and reciprocity linking micro- with macro-phenomena, and the individual deprivation of justice and rights as the manifestation of wider structural and systemic processes, causes and interests. Besides combining immediate action with public denunciation, Emergency also sets up long-term co-constructed projects for individuals affected by war and poverty with the intent to restore not only their lives but their dignity too, providing, for example, the employment of former patients, or loans to help them start up an independent business. Another project in which Emergency is involved is the Abolition of War (Strada 2015). The project is by no means a declaration of good intent, but rather a way of taking responsibility for a process which has to be dealt with at multiple levels—politically, diplomatic, economic—as it addresses structural and systemic issues of the contemporary globalized world. ‘War’ is not ‘only’ war, as behind it are injustices, different forms of violence, the creation of millions of poor and refugees, the (re)production of social and economic inequalities: one spells ‘war’ but reads ‘injustice’ on one side, and ‘interest’ on the other. Emergency is just one of the thousand NGOs, radical groups, and movements that combine analysis and action towards a transformation of the status quo in the direction of more equitable conditions and societies. Transformation is a key concept, as it implies the capability of getting out from old habits and customary viewpoints to imagine new possible paradigms. Something is not necessarily impossible simply because it has never happened before, or, conversely, as it is has always been like that and is considered ‘natural’ to human condition—such as, for example, war itself. To put it in Virginia Woolf’s famous words: “We can best help you to prevent war not by repeating your words and following your methods but by finding new words and creating new methods.”

Practicing criticality is a strenuous habit, as it implies a constant combination of scrutiny and action, the capability to observe both micro events and

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

macro causes, and the decoding of prevailing narratives and pre-existing interpretations; yet, at the same time, it is the only way to develop a wider, more active and informed understanding able to promote empowerment, participation and transformation.

6. INTERCULTURAL

> Definition: taking place between cultures, or derived from different cultures; 'culture' = the ideas, customs, and social behavior of a particular people, group or society.
>
> Origin: a combination of the prefix '*inter-*,' from the Latin = between, in-between, with the word 'culture,' from the Latin '*cultura*' = cultivation, what grows.
>
> —from OED

In recent decades, 'intercultural' has become a popular word which has gone through several definitions and interpretations.[4] Besides different readings, the etymological root of the word 'intercultural' combines the idea of 'culture(s)' with that of 'inter-' referring to a dynamic condition of liminality which presupposes a mutual encounter and interaction between cultures. Just as we apprehend the self through the other (*cf.* 2.3.2), also one's own culture is discovered anew through the encounter with the culture of the other: "In encountering another culture . . . we are also brought to confront a certain ineradicable otherness in ourselves" (Eagleton 2016, 139). Otherness questioning the similar is the paradigm of the intercultural relationship which, as Francesca Gobbo states, evidences "il modo in cui ciascuno—noi e gli altri—è cambiato dall'incontro con le diversità" [the way in which each individual—we and the others—is transformed by the encounter with the diversities] (2008, 13). The practice of being able to meet and interact with cultural others then becomes the exercise of problematizing one's own culture(s) as well. The 'intercultural' then presupposes a double movement, where meeting the other is both moving outside and inside: making visible what is usually hidden in the familiar, such encounters can develop a multi-perspectival vision of both the self and the others (Gobbo 1992, 2008, 2011; Abdallah-Pretceille 2005, 2006).

Besides the etymological definition and the several interpretations and theoretical reflections that the word 'intercultural' has generated, it is illuminating to trace back its history. The first use of the term 'intercultural' is credited to anthropologist Ruth Benedict who, in 1941, employed it to

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

refer to intercultural relations and programs to be implemented in schools to ameliorate inter-ethnic relations. In the same years, the notion that some kind of cultural-linguistic knowledge could be useful to interact with people from different cultures arose in the army context, so that during World War II several books began to be distributed to the troops as how-to guides to help them interact with the locals. Yet, a more structured program was soon to follow. In her accurate and insightful accounts on the history of Intercultural Communication, Wendy Leeds-Hurwitz (1990, 2010) illustrates how it was during World War II that the US Department of State realized it was necessary to be prepared to interact in a culturally effective and diverse way in foreign contexts—and that American diplomats were not adequately prepared for the task. Therefore, a group of anthropologists and linguists participated in the war effort with the intent to offer some applied understanding of different cultures and facilitate communication between different nations. In 1946, the US Congress established the FSI (Foreign Service Institute) with the specific purpose to train diplomats on how to communicate effectively, culturally and linguistically, in their missions abroad. Built upon the experience gained during the war, such a division was formed by anthropologists, who were meant to deal with all the aspects of culture and cultural diversities, together with linguists, who brought their applied experience of teaching foreign languages to diplomats. 'Intercultural,' then, first combined Applied (micro) Anthropology with Applied (functional) Linguistics, producing a series of practical examples on how to interact in an appropriate cultural and linguistic style in specific situations in a determined cultural context. One of the main figures and inspirer of such an endeavor was anthropologist Edward T. Hall, who realized that while traditional anthropology had always focused on one single culture at a time, it was essential to study how members of different cultures interact with each other. Besides providing a large number of practical examples of 'micro-cultural behaviors' (tone of the voice, gestures, body distance, etc.), he began to realize that "the beginning of his awareness of cultural impact on behavior occurred through observing his own interactions with others" (Leeds-Hurwitz 1990, 269). Such a recognition is still of paramount importance for the 'intercultural' as we have come to understand it now, since it suggests that the intercultural experience begins within, observing one's own attitude towards and response to otherness.

The notion of 'intercultural' soon became systematic and organic to foreign diplomacy and international business, and by the 1980s Intercultural Communication was ready to transform itself from a mere functional tool of interaction to an independent field which needed a theoretical framework of its own. Intercultural Communication scholars have progressively loosened their original foundations in Anthropology and Linguistics to gather under the wider umbrella of Communication Studies, though maintaining a multi-

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

disciplinary and multipurpose approach. Indeed, due to the increasing global contacts of the last decades, Intercultural Communication has been applied to several theoretical and empirical fields—among others: health care, marketing, education, management, etc.—which are characterized by very different scopes and perspectives, but whose common aim is to investigate and facilitate the communication and the mutual understanding between individuals from different linguacultural backgrounds. Within the purpose of this book, it is relevant to briefly discuss its application to the field of education.

6.1. Intercultural Education

Also in Education, the intercultural has to recognize its debts to anthropological studies. Anthropological fieldwork and theories have offered Education a comprehensive picture of the institutional context of school as a multilayered and complex environment made of different cultures where what is conveyed is culturally situated and by no means neutral (*cf.* Gobbo 2011). Research and studies carried out by Anthropology of Education allowed the development of an intercultural perspective able to observe the processes which, formally or informally, overtly or opaquely, shape the educational contexts, the relations between majority and minority, the (re)production and the transformation of knowledge, and how all these elements impact on the definition of individual and collective identities. Intercultural Education then presupposes a double perspective able to address both individual and collective issues by discerning and valuing diversity as a situated condition between and within groups, thus avoiding the risk of essentializing diversities, or celebrating commonalities on the grounds of supposed equalities across differences as the liberal view of multiculturalism does (*cf.* Kubota 2004, see Part Four). Therefore, though often disseminated as a question which mainly regards the integration of immigrant students within a pre-existent and pre-defined school context, Intercultural Education foregrounds structural educational issues such as the attention to relations and diversities as fundamental cognitive and affective elements for the growth and the development of each individual, consequently disclosing itself as education *tout court* (*cf.* Gobbo 1992).

Plural declinations and multiple memberships are recognized by Intercultural Education as phenomena of selection, combination and affiliation within the complex network of relationships and contacts between the different groups and the different cultures that make up contemporary societies. Educating to *inter*cultural differences becomes also a way to apprehend and construct the trajectories of one's identity, a process which highlights *intra*-cultural differences too, emancipating the individual, in Kwame Appiah's words, from the "imperialism of identity" (1996, 134). A much too 'culturalized' identity leads the individual in the blind alley of determinism, while it

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

is precisely the educational task to open up to the discovery and the valuing of the individual's potential and agency in a transformational perspective. Such an approach helps individuals emancipate themselves from the group(s) they belong or are ascribed to, by breaking the different 'scripts'[5]: collective identities "lead people to forget that their individual identities are complex and multifarious . . . obliterating the identities they share with people outside their race or ethnicity, away from the possibility of identification with others" (*ibidem*). Individual declinations of multiple belongings can therefore help individuals to get out of the double tyranny which dominates "not only people of other identities, but the other identities, whose shape is exactly what makes each of us what we individually and distinctively are" (*ibidem*). The emancipation from the scripts is therefore a central issue to Intercultural Education. Francesca Gobbo sustains that besides the objective of promoting mutual knowledge and understanding, Intercultural Education has to favor the recognition and the support of the projects of each individual, as to create an intercultural group it is crucial to care for the individual and her/his development (*cf.* Gobbo 2007).

At the intersection of individual and collective instances, of local and global manifestations, of micro- and macro-phenomena, Intercultural Education is then asked to address both the recognition of diversities and the conditions which can create equal opportunities for each individual. Delineating the relations between individuals and education in complex societies, Martine Abdallah-Pretceille (2005) sustains that within the all the pluralities which mark contemporary societies—plurality of socializations, enculturation, education, identity structure, languages and communication, etc.—the pressing task of Education is to create all the possible conditions to let each individual know what s/he wants to become in order to engage in tomorrow's society. Within such a mandate, Intercultural Education is much more than an option, as it rather epitomizes the wider changes, challenges and contradictions which traverse and interrogate contemporary societies.

7. EXPERIENCE

> Definition: a practical contact with and observation of facts or events; the knowledge or skill acquired by a period of practical experience of something; an event or occurrence which leaves an impression on someone.
>
> Origin: from the Latin *experiential*, the factual act of *experire* = to try; to test (*ex* = out of; *peritus* = experienced, tested).
>
> —from OED

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

The origin of the word refers to an action indicating a practical knowledge or skill acquired by direct participation or observation: the word 'experience' is therefore characterized by an action, and by two main qualities, 'practical' and 'direct.' The action in itself has a specific quality which defines knowledge not as something derived from top-down or by being imparted, but rather as something acquired by direct observation following an experimentation.

"The power of generalizing ideas, of drawing comprehensive conclusions from individual observation, is the only acquirement . . . that really deserves the name of knowledge" (2004 [1792], 59). In 1792, the writer and philosopher Mary Wollstonecraft thus outlined knowledge as the acquirement that we can derive from "generalizing ideas" and from drawing "comprehensive conclusions from individual observation": by defining knowledge as a process which involves a direct and dynamic relationship between the individual and the environment, she was significantly linking the notion of knowledge to that of experience. Her pronouncement was particularly radical as it passionately vindicated the right of women to take part in such a process: indeed, she advocated a non-gendered and de-stereotyped education as a way to emancipate women from their domestication into the pre-attributed roles of decorative elements, devoted wives and good mothers. Wollstonecraft considered women's emancipation through education as the first step towards a more general liberation from ascribed roles which frame both men and women, and she sustained that such emancipation should start from within the family context. Wollstonecraft was far ahead of her time for her lucid understanding and incisive portrait of the deplorable condition of women, as the denied access to education tamed them and graciously wrapped them up in sentimentalism and good manners, preventing their participation in intellectual endeavors and in the pursuit of individual achievements. And it is no coincidence that, in her passionate vindication of women's emancipation, she made a clear connection between knowledge and experience, as such link implies the direct participation of the learner to the process of learning—a rather critical issue in education still nowadays.

More than a century later, the kind of direct knowledge that we can derive from experience was extensively advocated by another author. In the chapter "Having an Experience," contained in his work *Art as Experience* (2005 [1934]), John Dewey sustains that experience occurs continuously as it refers to the interaction of living beings with the environment. Yet, not all experiences become what he calls *an* experience, that is a meaningful unit with a single quality which defines it. To achieve such a unity and a specific quality, an experience has to be conscious, that is, to be distinguished from an aimless

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

action and even from a proficient and efficient action when it is performed automatically. In other words, the action in itself is not enough, nor is its successful performance (36–40), as "Between the poles of aimlessness and mechanical efficiency, there lie those *courses* of action in which through *successive deeds* there runs a sense of *growing meaning* conserved and accumulating towards an end that is felt as accomplishment of a *process*" (40, italics mine). The key elements that define an experience are therefore a series of actions which, by degrees, accumulate meaning yet not as a simple addition, but rather as a process of 'taking in': experience is the aware interaction of a living being with some aspects of the world. Such a relation involves a reconsideration and a reconstruction, as experience implies the constant and intimate union between doing and undergoing. Simple doing can result in a superficial experience, a series of fragmented and meaningless events, and undergoing can be intense and acute but self-contained, whereas an integral experience is when the single parts are linked to one another in a whole and dynamic process of growth. Therefore, what makes experience *an* experience is its relational quality: between the individual and the world, and between what is done and what is undergone.

Art can thus be an experience when it involves an aesthetic recreation as opposed to a passive, an-esthetic apprehension; yet, there is another field which, for its intrinsic characteristics, is probably the best to exemplify Dewey's concept of experience: Education. Only four years after *Art as Experience*, Dewey wrote *Experience and Education* (2007 [1938]), a short, dense pamphlet in which the philosopher distills his view on education. Dewey affirms that "there is an intimate and necessary relation between the processes of actual experience and education" (Chapter 1, "Traditional vs Progressive Education") and, after discussing the limits of both traditional and progressive education, he advocates for experiential education. He specifies, however, that not all experiences are *per se* educative, as for example those which arrest or prevent the growth to further experiences, those which simply develop automatic skills, or those that are disconnected to one another: in Dewey's words, they all "artificially generate dispersive, disintegrated and centrifugal habits" (Chapter 2, "The Need of a Theory of Experience"). So, the matter is not so much experience in itself, but rather its quality: education is therefore called to select those experiences which possess several characteristics such as continuity (the development and the growth from one experience to another, connecting the past and the future), direction (the ends toward which the growth tends) and interaction between external conditions (social, economic, historical, etc.) and internal factors. Experience is a moving force which is relational and social, as it always happens in a specific context and environment, and it gains educational significance and value through the mu-

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

tual and active connection between continuity and interaction. To favor fruitful and meaningful educational experiences, Dewey proposes the scientific method which is not to be intended as a specialized technique, but rather as a means for "getting at the significance of our everyday experience of the world in which we live" (Chapter 7, "Progressive Organization of Subject Matter"). Such a method provides a pattern to observe and progressively organize information and ideas, interrelating them as the "intelligent exploration and exploitation of the potentialities inherent in experience" (*ibidem*). Ideas and hypothesis are tested by consequences, and they are reflected upon as a way "to look back over what has been done to extract the net meanings, which are the capital stock for intelligent dealing with further experiences" (*ibidem*). Educators are therefore asked to have a long look ahead, and consider "every present experience as a moving force in influencing what future experience will be" (*ibidem*).

Within the framework here presented, the word 'experience' appears in its full original meaning as the knowledge derived from direct observation and experimentation, and as the combination of action and thought. Yet, experience here reveals another aspect too. Being an intelligent activity which defines and redefines hypothesis according to past results and future purposes, thus developing itself as a meaningful process of growth which connects past and future, experience discloses the relation between the individual and the environment also as the relation between the individual and society. Involving contact and communication, experience is not solely an individual endeavor but rather the element of conjunction between the individual and society: what makes experience relevant is not only its capability of developing the individual's potentials but also, and through that, her/his contribution to the improvement of society at large. In such a way, experience epitomizes the human condition as it reveals the multilayered and interconnected web which patterns each individual's life and her/his connection with—and responsibility for—the world.

NOTES

1. All the definitions come from the Oxford English Dictionary. OED is considered the most authoritative dictionary of the English language as it comprises a wider linguistic varieties of English words and uses compared to Webster's, which mainly refers to North American words and uses.
2. Julia Kristeva is a Bulgarian-born feminist, linguist, psychoanalyst and philosopher who has lived in France since the 1960s; Claire J. Kramsch is a linguist who was born in France, studied in France and Germany, and since the 1960s has lived in the US teaching Foreign Languages and Applied Linguistic; Jonathan Swift was an Irish

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

writer, satirist and clergyman who extensively wrote against the English exploitation and subjugation of Ireland.

3. In Annick Grégoire's own words: "This is a brief summary of my interventions in the emergency unit of the Academy of Paris (National Education). With the CUMP, I intervened the day after the attacks with direct victims or direct witnesses of the attacks—those who ran in the street hearing the shots of kalashnikov, those who fled from the Bataclan, those who brought help to the victims, or welcomed them to their homes. In the emergency cell of the Academy of Paris, I intervened in the aftermath of the attacks of November 2015 in the schools closest to the shootings (Petit Cambodge, Carillon, and Bataclan) to prepare the teachers to welcome the children, and help them answer to their questions (and in particular the essential one, without an answer, 'why'). A school group had already been impacted by the attack to the magazine *Charlie Hebdo* which was also nearby, so there was the reactivation of a trauma already suffered. On Sunday, other teams of psychologists and doctors were organized at the crisis unit in the Rectorate (where I was attached too), because there were many schools near the murderous course of the terrorists. I also intervened with children, creating a space for both one-on-one and in-group talks, and with parents, some of whom were the bereaved fathers and mothers of the victims. Most were still terrified, unable to express feelings of sadness, anger, incomprehension and meaninglessness, which emerged a few days later. Some children and their families had heard the shots, leaned out the window and ran to hide in the bathroom, terrified. Others had waited for a mother, a father, an elder brother, while they were prevented from reaching home and sometimes without being able to give news to their dear ones. With the teaching team, it was a question of trying to help the children overcome the feeling of insecurity and to show them that at school one can recover and return to an 'ordinary school life.' We come here to learn, to have fun, to meet our schoolmates—and, exceptionally, to talk about death" (personal communication; translation mine).

4. A multi-voiced analysis which illustrates the discussion among different scholars can be found in Alexander *et al.* (2014), where each participant offers her/his own interpretation of the word; other important references can be found at: https://centerforinterculturaldialogue.org.

5. Appiah defines the scripts as "narratives that people can use in shaping their life plans and in telling their life stories" (1996, 127).

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

Part Three

Within Research

According to Paulo Freire, all research is subjective, and all research is political. Within such a perspective, this part will show how every step of research is inevitably in/formed by a series of choices which are by no means neutral. Besides that aspect, this part also wishes to offer a commented procedural framework to practitioners, students, and researchers illustrating some elements of qualitative research. Part of this section will also discuss my research study, presenting its methodology and analyzing its weak and strong points, and then it will also present some considerations regarding methodological approaches.

1. INTRODUCING THE RESEARCH STUDY

In the years 2010–2012, I conducted a qualitative research study among native and non-native Italian adolescent students aimed at investigating what happens when a foreign language separates the speaker from her/his cultural identities in L1s (mother-tongue/s), and how this divorce impacts on the perceptions and representations of the self and of the others. The language in question was English as a Foreign Language: for its prevalence as a foreign language studied in Italian schools (100% at ISCED level 2—Lower Secondary Education—, and 96% at ISCED level 3—Upper Secondary Education, including Vocational Education [EACEA, Eurostat, and Eurydice 2013, 72–82]) and, most of all, because it is a language *foreign* for both Italian and non-Italian students. The English language taught in Italian schools is (still) defined as a 'Foreign Language' in all official documents; yet, besides the bureaucratic terminology, it was relevant to my study that the adjective 'foreign'

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

refers to the condition of the school context where students from *different* mother tongue/s are exposed to the *same* non–mother tongue.

The hypothesis of the research was that the experience of a foreign language can reframe individual and collective identities from a personal and relational point of view, and that this can impact on and remodel the different roles and footings that one can assume, perform, or access, in the context of the classroom. I was particularly interested in finding out the *intercultural potential* of a language foreign for both Italian and non-Italian students, as is the case of English in the Italian context. What emerged as a side line was that both in the school and in the extra-school contexts cross-linguistic interactions are widely practiced, and languages are appropriated bottom-up to create new belongings.

The study was based on field observations (as a teacher) of linguistic interactions from English(es) to other languages, followed by a quanti-qualitative written interview, and two back-talk focus groups which presented to the participants the findings of the study and the researcher's interpretations. Some of the students who had previously participated in the interviews joined the focus groups. Both interviews and back-talk focus groups were conducted in Italian, it being the language used at school, but students reported some examples of code-switching (Italian-English-other languages) when relating some episodes from their daily life, or sentences they used. Participation in the research was voluntary and without compensation; at every step of the study, privacy was guaranteed according to Italian laws on privacy (D.L. 30/06/2003, n. 196). Interview data were collected anonymously, stored in a dedicated web application and analyzed according to recurring themes and keywords; the back-talk focus groups were recorded and analyzed according to several theoretical references (see further on). New perspectives and issues emerged both from the interviews and the back-talk focus groups, and data were then compared and reanalyzed, to find consonances and dissonances with the original hypothesis of the research.

2. THE CONTEXTS

The study was conducted in two different high schools with students of Italian and non-Italian origins, from different mother tongues and sociocultural backgrounds. The students with a non-Italian origin mostly belonged to generation 1.5: they were 'children of family rejoinders,' a term that indicates individuals who were born and began their schooling in their homelands, and who, at some point of their lives, joined one, or both, parents who had previously arrived in the land of immigration. According to several studies

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

Table 3.1. A Comparison of *Istituto d'Arte and Liceo Scientifico*

Istituto d'Arte *High School of Arts* *(vocational high school with an Art Curricula)*	Liceo Scientifico *Scientific High School* *(high school which prepares for university studies)*
• where: two premises in two different parts of the city center of Turin, Italy. As both premises are close to train and metro stations, the percentage of students who commute from nearby towns ranges from 70% to 50% (data from Official School Portfolios—years 2009, and 2013–2014). An average of 40% of the students live in the metropolitan area;	• where: two premises in the city center of Turin, Italy. The main premises (where I conducted the research) is in the historical city center; the other one is still in a central part of the city, but in a less affluent area;
• number of students: about 800;	• number of students: 740 (Official School Portfolio, 2011–2012);
• sociocultural background: not declared in official documents; yet, at the time of my study, the students came from a low-medium sociocultural background as the school was an *Institute*[1] and not a *Liceo*;	• sociocultural background: according to the Headmaster, at the time of the study, there was a prevalence of medium-high class provenance, yet the Official School Portfolio (2011–2012) stated a more varied sociocultural background;
• though the *Istituto d'Arte* is the school where I have been teaching for many years, at the time of the study I was not working there, being on a Doctoral leave at the University of Turin. None of the students who participated in the research was one of my students or former students. The condition above avoided the possibility that the participants felt somehow pressed or constrained to give their consent.	

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

(e.g., Colombo and Santagati 2010), at the moment this is the most common condition of adolescents with immigrant background in Italy—though things are rapidly changing and there is a growing number of adolescents with immigrant background who are born in Italy (*cf.* Part One).

3. THE PARTICIPANTS

Sixty-two students, all of age (= or > 18), from five different school-classes (two from the *Istituto d'Arte* and three from the *Liceo*), participated in the linguistic interview, and twenty-five in the back-talk focus groups: seven were non-native Italian speakers (two Romanian, two Arabic, one Russian and one French-German bilingual), four were Italian born and mother-tongue with an immigrant background; three were bilinguals (Italian/other languages: one Italian/French, one Italian/German and one Italian/Spanish). As for gender, the participants were: 21 female students and 8 male students (interviews), and 6 female students and 3 male students (back-talk focus group) from the *Istituto d'Arte*; 19 female students and 14 male students (interviews) and 9 female students and 7 male students (back-talk focus groups) from the *Liceo Scientifico*.

4. METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTING

4.1. General Considerations on Methodology

Methodology implies positionality: who researches what, from which position, with whom, and for which purposes are all issues that should be clear to the researcher, and made explicit to the group studied/participants in order to develop some form of knowledge and empowerment of their own practices. The researcher should engage in self-reflexivity, being aware that s/he is always positioned and that s/he brings her/his values, perspectives, assumptions, and experiences to the research. The main core of research is grounded in awareness, participation, involvement and co-construction: being a participated process, research grows up along its path and has to be ready to reformulate and remodulate its premises and hypothesis on the grounds of what relationally emerges from the field. The roles may vary too: the participants can gradually become researchers, and the researcher a participant observer of the dynamics of the group s/he is studying. Research then becomes a process of experiential and relational knowledge (*cf.* Part Two, 7) which is co-constructed by the researcher and the participants. A lot of research neglects to come back to the group/community while it is fundamental to share results

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

with the participants, and discuss with them interpretations which regard their practices. There are several procedures that can be followed to create participatory research, and some of them will be discussed hereafter.

4.2. Data Collecting: Sampling

The sampling was guided by the following criteria:

- representativeness: it concerns the choice of informants who are representative for the research question;
- accessibility: within the parameters of representativeness, people can be contacted, and places can be accessed, via informal or friendly contacts (Rampton 1995, 23). In my research study, I was well acquainted with the contexts and dynamics of high schools in general. Then, in particular, I conducted one of the studies in the *Istituto d'Arte*, where I had been teaching for many years, while the headmaster of the *Liceo* proposed that I do the same research in her school;
- extendibility: the participants' representativeness represents both the accountability of the results and their possible application to further contexts.

4.3. Some Issues Regarding Data Collecting

Some issues characterized the initial stage of data collecting.

4.3.1. In/Out Issue

- Pole and Morrison sustain that teachers and educators who wish to research within their institution are primarily asked to make the familiar unfamiliar. Therefore, their positioning has to be the same whether they investigate within or without their familiar context (2003, 5). My approach was consistent with this indication and I declared it in my study;
- my study investigated the same research question in two different schools not only to compare data, but also to verify whether there were any differences between my positioning in both a familiar and an unfamiliar context;
- also the structure of the study itself replicated the dynamic in/out, as it involved students not only from different schools, but also from different school classes in the same school, so that, within the participants and between the researcher and the participants, there was a mixture of mutual acquaintance and mutual strangeness;
- such a combination also allowed students to get out from pre-defined roles assumed or attributed within the school class, offering the possibility of less constrained interaction and discussion.

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

4.3.2. *Objectivity/Subjectivity*

- reflexivity: qualitative research demands a constant critical analysis not only of the processes, of the data and of the goals of the study, but also, and moreover, of the researcher, of her/his positioning, her/his modes of interaction and reflection. A reflexive account allows casting a light on the several possible levels of interference which may arise along the path—e.g., between researcher and participants, between different roles of power, between data and interpretation, etc.;
- observer/observed: critical reflexivity allows situating both researcher and participants within the perspective(s) from which they observe reality and make their own sense of it. The researcher her/himself is both observer *and* observed, and s/he has to be aware of her/his positioning;
- awareness of the interpretative reading of reality: data collected in the field are not reality but rather the narrative-construction of a version of reality, as data are "constructed accounts" (Pole and Morrison 2003, 29–32).

4.3.3. *Ethical Issues*

- I referred to works which suggest the best practices, attitudes and modes to approach even the most sensitive issues, such as Kvale (1996), Coffey (1999), Pole and Morrison (2003), and Flick (2009);
- in my study, data collecting was carried out as to protect the participants and, at the same time, preserve the focus of the research. Participants were all of age (=> 18 years); participation was voluntary and with no compensation or school benefits to avoid encouraging or influencing their adhesion;
- spaces and times of data collecting were also chosen as to cause the least possible discomfort to participants.

As for the interviews:

- questions did not regard personal, sensitive or judicial information, nor did they involve health issues;
- data were collected and treated anonymously;
- data were disseminated and discussed (e.g., at conferences, in publications, etc.) for exclusive research purposes, and with no reference that could identify the participant, or offend her/his dignity or sensibility.

As for the back-talk focus groups:

- concerning the research question, data did not show particular evidence or differences in gender, mother tongue or nationality, and are therefore further reported according to what illustrated in endnote 2;

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

- from a procedural point of view, participants were asked to sign a form to give informed consent. The document asked the participants to consent to the recording of the discussion and the dissemination of the results for exclusive research purposes, and with no reference that could identify the participant or offend her/his dignity or sensibility.

At every step of the study, privacy was guaranteed according to Italian laws on privacy (D.L. 30/06/2003, n. 196).

4.4. Interviews and Back-talk Focus Groups

4.4.1. Motivation and Procedures

As for the interviews:

I decided to opt for written interviews as the first step of data collecting for many different reasons:

- I was interested in approaching the students' insider perspective (emic view) on their uses of English(es), in order to get as close as possible to their own reading of their world according to an ethnographic approach (Pole and Morrison 2003, 30);
- I intended to create a protected area where all voices, in particular those of shy or introverted students, could speak out freely without any form of influence or impediment (such as adherence or reference to previous roles, impaired or problematic adult/student or student/student relationships, etc.).

As for the back-talk focus groups:

- the back-talk focus group is a follow-up tool which consists of bringing together the participants to discuss research findings (*cf.* Frisina 2006). It is meant to stimulate the reflexivity of the researcher, to empower participants, and to disseminate results in a responsible and cooperative way;
- the back-talk focus group is therefore a co-constructed process revolving around the acknowledgment, the pertinence and adequacy of the analysis of data;
- it is set within a series of reworking and of collaborative interpretations and narrations of the social reality operated by both the researcher and the participants;
- by engaging the participants in voicing and expressing opinions on categories that are meant to represent them, it actually stimulates the participants

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

to become aware (and, possibly, to become researchers) of their own practices and experiences.

4.4.2. Theoretical References

As for the interviews:

- the *ad hoc* written interview was mainly prepared on the grounds of Atkinson's text on ethnography as a cultural reconstruction of reality (1990), Kvale's critical approach to interviews (1996) as well as on the *BEQ (Bilingual and Emotion Questionnaire*, 2001–2003) by Dewaele and Pavlenko (in Pavlenko 2006, and Dewaele 2010) and on the Dörnyei and Ushioda's *Motivation Questionnaire* (2011);
- the interview consisted of fourteen questions: three were general questions (about age, gender, mother tongue), followed by seven multiple-choice questions (regarding language/s spoken at home, with friends, on the Internet, and including feedback on qualities or feelings attached to each language), and finally there were four open questions in the form of narrative stories that presented some exemplary and emblematic uses of English by students I had observed as a teacher, which the interviewees were asked to comment upon, also relating to their personal experiences.

As for the back-talk focus groups:

- some of the theoretical references used for the analysis of the back-talk focus groups were: Goffman's work on the ritual presentation of the self (1959); Gumperz's studies on code switching (1982); Rampton's study on linguistic behaviors among adolescents (1995); works addressing how inclusion/exclusion (Klein and Paoletti 2002) and identity/alterity (Pistolesi and Schwarze 2007) are created through language; Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), Conversational Analysis (CA), turn-taking, repairing strategies, participation, study of the context as in Duranti (1997, chapters 4, 7, 8) and Bazzanella (2011, 197–219).

5. ANALYSIS OF DATA

Qualitative research is asked to explicit the principles and the mechanisms which constitute not only the process of its field research, but also the research itself as writing process. Though also hard science studies and quantitative research studies are rhetorically constructed (*cf.* Atkinson 1990), qualitative research has its own rhetoric and poetics: facts do not speak by themselves, but are read and reported through the researcher's experience and

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

perspective which are mediated by her/his sociocultural positioning. Writing is therefore not only a matter of conventions and style, and how to write is not an ornament or a by-product, but contributes to create the substance of the argument in question: "how we write is, effectively, an analytic issue" (Coffey and Atkinson 1996, 117). Therefore, qualitative research has to make explicit the tools by which it presents data, and on which grounds it founds their interpretation.

5.1. Main Principles

Literature identifies four main principles.

5.1.1. Reflexivity

- the (re)construction of the reality observed goes through its (re)construction in the text; data and facts do not speak by themselves, but through their representation: "the notion of reflexivity recognizes that texts do not simply and transparently report an independent order of reality. Rather, the texts themselves are implicated in the work of reality-construction" (Atkinson 1990, 7);
- the awareness of the arbitrary nature of the conventions on representation allows seeing alternative perspectives, and reflect on how things can always be read from different viewpoints (Atkinson 1990, 9). According to Coffey and Atkinson (1996), how we choose to represent data is by no means obvious or unproblematic, and the decisions we take on how to shape our representation are by no means options of little relevance; the style and the narrative mode we choose convey explicit and implicit messages on the social worlds we examine, and on our way of understanding and drawing them up.

5.1.2. Text Construction and Rhetorical Figures

- point of view: the writer cannot call her/himself outside the reality s/he is writing about as s/he is inevitably a person who lives within the research together with the groups or individuals s/he is researching;
- rhetorical figures: whether they work by similarity, difference, contiguity or shifting, all the rhetorical figures are used by the qualitative research to unveil the social world they aim to describe in the perspective of offering new viewpoints on behaviors, intentions and actions;
- by working through selection and combination, metaphor in particular becomes the paradigm of the research itself as a process which proceeds by considering similarities and differences. Within such a process, viable

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

metaphors allow widening the meaning of the factual data, and move from the local to the general, and from the micro to the macro level.

5.1.3. Dialogue Between the Data and the Framework

- the text is built through a constant dialogue between the framework and the data. Without data, the frame is empty, and without a frame, the data are not organized, and therefore they roam in an undifferentiated space where there are both salient and irrelevant data;
- writing represents the link between the data and the framework (Coffey and Atkinson 1996, 123);
- writing is also the place where facts and narratives meet: the function of the text is to describe, but also to take the reader within the framework, inviting her/him to find out differences and similarities (Atkinson 1990, 15).

5.1.4. Triangulation and Accountability

- triangulation is a multimodal approach which allows the examination of the same question or problem according to different procedures in order to provide cross-checking. For example: repeated observations of the same phenomenon; several interviews to the same informant or several interviews to different informants on the same event; the collection of multiple evidences on the same phenomenon—these are all elements which can assure the reliability of the research;
- adequacy or accountability indicate the principle which states the importance of returning the data and the information gathered during the research back to the participants as they are, ultimately, the people who can say whether the researcher's interpretations are meaningful and adequate.

6. THE FINDINGS

From the analysis of quantitative data, it emerged that the majority of students (45/62, that is 72,58%) do not consider the English language as a foreign language (though it is institutionally defined as such) but rather as a contact language which signals affiliation to specific groups of peers connected to youth transnational cultures (music, in particular hip hop; online blogs or games; social networks; etc.), or which is used to establish a special and intimate relation with a specific friend or relative. Data showed no gender difference in theses linguistic practices, and both female and male students alike complained about the gap they perceive between the language they are taught top-down at school, and the one they appropriate bottom-up to perform

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

their daily interactions in multicultural contexts, as well as in inter-personal relations.

Though the research was mainly intended to examine the impact of English as a language unfamiliar to both Italian and non-Italian students, analysis of qualitative data[2] suggested different perspectives too. In the interviews and during the back-talk focus groups, students affirmed that the English language has opened (and not closed as sometimes observed) the way to the use of other languages: "l'inglese ha rivoluzionato il nostro modo di parlare" [English has revolutionized our way of speaking] (AP7M18[3]) and has changed "a tal punto il nostro modo di esprimersi che è naturale utilizzare espressioni di altre lingue" [our way of speaking to such a point that it is natural to use expressions from other languages] (B10M18), as "noi usiamo altre lingue molto spesso anche inconsciamente" [we use other languages very often unconsciously] (B1F18). Other students affirm that they use English to bring in or cut out from conversations adults or other peers, as in the example of the Romanian young man and his Italian girlfriend:

> Quando voglio tagliar fuori da un discorso mia madre che non capisce l'inglese parlo con lei (*indica la sua ragazza*) in inglese. Inizialmente parlavamo in italiano che già mia madre non lo capisce bene, visto che è di nazionalità rumena, ma a un certo punto . . . siamo passati all'inglese [When I want to cut out my mother from what we are saying, I speak with her (*he points at his girlfriend*) in English. At first, we spoke in Italian, a language that my mother initially did not understand well as she's Romanian, but then . . . we decided to shift to English] (A1M19).

Here are other examples of a similar strategy of communication: "Con i miei amici tendo a parlare in italiano, mentre con mia sorella, più grande di me . . ., parlo più facilmente in inglese, sia a casa sia quando usciamo insieme" [I speak Italian with my friends, but I speak English with my elder sister, both at home and when we go out together] (B5F18); "A me capita magari con mia mamma, parlo in inglese con lei quando non voglio appunto che nessuno mi capisca" [It happens with my mother, I speak English with her when I want nobody around us to understand what we are saying] (AP3F18); "Uso molto l'inglese con le persone con cui ho un rapporto più stretto, migliori amici, mia madre, eccetera" [I use English a lot with people with whom I have a closer contact, such as my best friends, my mother, etc.] (B25F19); "se succede una determinata situazione che riprende magari un fumetto che ho visto, uso quella espressione in inglese . . . per creare una specie di, di feeling con altre persone, cioè, ok, io ho detto questo e anche tu capisci perché hai visto quello stesso fumetto" [If something happens in real life and I recall a sentence from a comics, I use the same expression in English . . . to create a feeling with

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

other people, that is, ok, I said that and you can understand it because you have seen the same comics] (A3F18).

The use of English as a language in common among peers (or, in some cases, with adults of choice) is employed there to include or exclude from communication, it is a secret alphabet able to create a protected space reserved to those who know and share the same linguistic code or cultural references. English has the advantage of being already a linguistic code, but at the same time it offers a condition of intimacy and has a confidential nature. An*other* language can create conditions for mutual recognition and for a sense of belonging to the *same* in-group community. And yet, from these quotes, there also emerges the evidence that a foreign language in common can be used not only as a means to blur borders, but also to set *new* ones that let someone in or leave someone out according to specific choices made by the speakers.

Another aspect emerged too, that is the impact on identity. Here are a few comments made by students: "Mi capita spesso di essere più estroverso nelle lezioni di inglese. Mi sento più euforico e divertente anche se ho spesso difficoltà ad esprimermi correttamente" [I often feel more extrovert during the English lessons. I feel more euphoric and funny, though I can't speak English correctly] (B17M18); "Parlare un'altra lingua mi fa sentire benissimo, mi sembra di riuscire meglio. Molto spesso mi sembra più semplice esprimere i vari sentimenti" [Speaking another language makes me feel great, I feel I can manage better. It seems simpler to express the feelings] (A5F19); "con l'inglese riesco ad aprirmi di più" [I can open up more in English] (A28M20); "io ad esempio uso l'inglese ogni tanto per rompere la banalità, . . . come trasgressione tra amici" [I sometimes use English to break the banality of communication, . . . as a transgression when I am with my friends] (B3M18); "[parlare in inglese] fa sentire più figo . . ., strano, diverso, particolare" [using English makes you feel cool . . ., strange, different, unique] (B2M19); "Effettivamente una lingua straniera ti rende una persona differente e a questo può conseguire (*sic*) maggiore sicurezza che nella lingua madre" [Indeed, another language makes you feel a different person, and that can attain (*sic*) more self-confidence than in your own mother tongue] (B13M18).

From reflections and discussions on these, and similar, comments, the experience of a non–mother tongue and of cross-linguistic interactions[4] emerged as practices able to elicit different perceptions and representations of the self and the others, to reframe individual and collective identities, and to create the opportunity for new group affiliations. Such affiliations are fluid and changeable, as they are determined by a constant flux of construction and deconstruction of borders, which are set up and dismantled according to what, from data, I illustrated with the following metaphors.

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

Table 3.2. Representation of the Self and the Others

THE CIRCLE (the others) deciding inclusion/exclusion; creating new belongings	while inclusion and exclusion are often socio-culturally determined, adopting a new language can offer new agency to the individual, as well as the opportunity of transcending national or ethnic descent by creating groups on the grounds of common interests (hip hop, online games, blogs, etc.)
THE MIRROR (the self) perceiving/performing a new self	a new language offers the possibility to perform a new self: the new self can play either—or both, depending on the context, occasion, etc.—'the good guy' or 'the bad guy,' that is a personality that the usual self is not allowed to be; it can then represent a transgression, as for example through the use of taboo words and swearing[5]; it can be a parody (i.e., of the native speaker), or even a self-parody (parodying oneself acting as a native speaker)

Jumping on/off languages then follows different lines and patterns, where the representation of personal and collective identities, and the creation of in-groups and out-groups, are practices which depend on the context, the aim of the communication, and the people the adolescent wishes to include or exclude. The patterns and the lines of the interactions also perform different functions: young people code-switch to a different language to create a special affective link with someone, or to protect their intimacy (for example to share secrets with their boy/girlfriend or best friend), as well as to mimic/appropriate/subvert hierarchies (for example, as a counter-act of power on adults and teachers).

Hence, adopting Abdallah-Pretceille's (2009) distinction between "différence" [difference] and "diversité" [diversity] (11–21), what emerged is that while persisting narratives define difference as a deviation from the norm, and thus as a fixed category, bottom-up appropriation of English(es) and practices of cross-linguistic interactions between adolescents and young people offer the opportunity for performing varieties of diversities. The shift from 'difference' to 'diversities' comes bottom-up: from their liminal space of in-between, adolescents spell out their difference through the appropriation of different kinds of diversities performed through languages, showing that Otherness can be approached, revisited and performed—within and between groups and individuals—by switching the language of communication.

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

7. DISCUSSION

7.1. On the Study

A reflective reading of the study invites us to observe critically how mechanisms and processes of recognition, inclusion or exclusion, as well as changes in perception and representation of the self and others, are redefined through language practices. Data illustrate that cross-cultural communications are created bottom-up mainly through language switching, a practice able to dismantle old categories (culture, ethnicity, etc.) to build up new boundaries and groups which, in turn, are transgressed to form to new configurations. These findings are consistent with many previous studies on cross-linguistic interactions, in particular but not solely between adolescents, such as those of Rampton (1995) and Auer (1998, 2006, 2007). Since the 1990s, those studies have led to many, at times divergent, interpretations, particularly regarding the issue of whether these linguistic practices are signals of ethnic and national crossing (as Rampton sustains), or just a conventional use of mixing languages typical of young urban generations. Auer in fact considers such practice

> part of a widespread usage of foreign languages for playful reasons in adolescents' social style. It is only marginally related to social boundaries and their transgression . . . is part of the emerging multilingual youth styles which are typical of some multiethnic metropolitan spaces in Europe. As a rule, though, these social-communicative styles do not address issues of ethnic boundary-making but rather index a social milieu in which certain languages are integral part of everyday life (Auer 2006, 482).

These practices should indeed be seen with a critical eye, as they might be symbols of 'linguistic consumerism,' a sort of shopping for different products from the shelves of the supermarket of languages to adhere to a series of youth transnational sub-cultures: in this sense, code-switching and language crossing (*cf.* Rampton 1995) are far from being critical and emancipatory practices, as they are rather reproducing models of transgression which are promoted by the market itself.

However, as a Second/Foreign Language teacher I notice every day how these linguistic practices facilitate intercultural encounters and create transcultural affiliations, where borders are not pre-determined by ethnic or national descent, but are constantly defined and redefined according to common interests: as for the younger Archie comics readers (Norton and Vanderheyden 2004), bottom-up linguistic appropriations create informal communities. What is relevant there is not really the intention, and not even the awareness or the aim of these linguistic practices, but rather their *process*: that is, what

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

really happens there when two or more people communicate using different languages, how their mutual perception and representation changes though this experience, and how such a change can create new affiliations, as well as new perspectives on the self and the others.

7.2. On the Research Methods

As my approach to research considers *how* one makes research as foundational and consistent with the research itself, its content and goals, I wish to make some considerations and comments about the methodology of my own research study. I will therefore discuss what I consider the strongest and the weakest points and achievements of my research study as an exercise of self-reflexivity, and also as a way to help future researchers to foresee potentials and traps which they might encounter along the way. Then, I will discuss in general which are, in my opinion, the best and the worst research methods as far as qualitative research on linguistic practices is concerned.

I think that the strongest points of my research were mainly two: the long acquaintance and in-depth knowledge of the context, the practices and the dynamics of the environment I was studying, and the animated sessions of discussion with the students-participants. As a teacher, I had had the opportunity to observe many episodes of linguistic practices performed by students both during the lessons and in the liminal spaces and times of the school—in the corridors, during the breaks, at the vending machines, etc. Such observations had actually piqued my curiosity to understand why these episodes were happening, what they could mean, and what they were signals of (e.g., local practices as indexes of wider phenomena and social changes; the intercultural potential of the experience of a foreign language, etc.). The written interviews were just the first step to check whether my observations made any sense to the students. The results were encouraging, and stimulated several reflections and interpretations. Yet, the most interesting part of the study was still to come. During the back-talk focus groups I presented the students-participants with the results of the written interviews, and invited them to discuss the metaphors I had envisioned. While commenting on the results and my provisional interpretation of them, the students-participants became gradually aware of their own linguistic practices, valuing alternative explanations and interpretations. The discussions got animated and I was soon left in the background, as the students-participants were taking possession of their own spaces, sharing, comparing, and discussing critically the experiences they made through and by their uses of the foreign language. As it often happens during my practice as a teacher, I realized what little effort is sufficient to involve students in a critical observation of their thoughts and actions, and how such minor

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

shift of perspective is beneficial, as it allows decentering one's vision of the self and widen that of others. At the end of the discussion, the students-participants said that they had never thought about or had the opportunity to talk about their linguistic practices, and that they had learned something about themselves and about the others. A similar process involved myself too. The research offered me the rarest and most precious opportunity to see my own professional practice from a different perspective, that is to see the *same* from an-*other* perspective. The research gave me the possibility of practicing reflexivity through the apprehension of familiar dynamics (= me as a teacher) from an unfamiliar perspective (= me as a researcher): to put it differently, reflexivity could occur from the familiar that was made unfamiliar. And that was precisely the very topic of my research too: while I was doing it, I realized that my research was walking in the same steps of my own experience, as while investigating others' practices I was also reflecting on my own, since both practices were concerned with a change of perspective determined by a shift in the position from which the world is observed. The research had thus offered me a luxury which is too rarely granted to teachers and practitioners: the opportunity to see and reflect on one's practice from without. From within, the study grounded my critical vision of school as a multilayered and complex environment constituted by many different cultures, where knowledge, languages and pedagogies are never neutral or apolitical (*cf.* Pennycook 1994), and where practices and dynamics are elements which interrogate, inform—and are informed by—broader issues.

The greatest criticality of my research is that it was my first research, so I was learning how to make it while doing it: I was literally building the road while I was walking on it. Therefore, besides all the changes, adjustments and revisions I had to make along the way, and besides all the things I found on the path which I could have never imagined at the start, at the end of it, looking back at the path I had travelled, I saw all the missing bits. One of them was that I felt I had failed to get a more comprehensive view of the practices I had been investigating. Though the research was based on linguistic practices acted by students in the school context, I felt I lacked a more holistic perspective of the students' linguistic practices with their peers in extra-school contexts, within their families, etc. Though the written interviews had some questions concerning linguistic practices in these environments, I was aware that the answers were declarations *about* activities, and not the activities themselves. I could have observed linguistic interactions in different contexts too in order to get a wider understanding of the practices I was studying. Therefore, at the end of my research, I realized I would have probably changed part of it, perhaps leaving out or reducing the written interviews to focus more on the observation of linguistic interactions in different contexts.

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

Another thing which I realized after the participated discussions in the back-talk focus groups was that I could have involved students-participants from the very beginning of the study, possibly utilizing an approach cognizant of the Participatory Action Research (PAR) process—see here further for discussion. For example, I could have engaged students more from the early stages of the research, e.g., co-designing it with them, suggesting them to take notes or record dialogues between peers or with their families, inviting them to discuss and present their results in the classroom, etc. Such involvement would have pushed forward and deepened the awareness they were acquiring, encouraging them to become more actively co-researchers.

Besides the achievements and the shortcomings of my research study, I want now to discuss briefly what I consider the best and the worst methodological practices of research in general. I will start from what I envision as the worst to end up with the positive note of the best. In the last years, I have noticed several manifestations of shortcuts to research which utilize the commodity of putting a qualitative label when data are quickly collected and connected, an infelicitous tendency which is rather peculiar when applied to research connected to languages and linguistic interactions which, occurring within relational contexts, need much time and gradation to be approached and appreciated. At conference presentations or in publications I have seen the label 'qualitative' applied to studies which present few data (sometimes merely collected online) which are often gathered from few informants (often chosen randomly), and generally involve no prior knowledge of the context, no reflexivity during the process, nor offer feedback or restitution to the participants afterwards. The weakness in terms of reliability and accountability of such studies resides in the self-appointed label of 'qualitative study,' a denomination applied to research which does not include the observation of actual interactions, nor considers how data can be trusted or verified when obtained from participants and contexts the researcher does not know nor takes the time to experience and comprehend. In other words, such studies have no (or, in the best cases, a rather scarce) knowledge of the people they address and of the contexts they live in/answer from, and therefore they often take claims for truths without critical reflection. With no evolution within the research, no reflexivity, no critical evaluation and, most of all, no attention to relationality and to how it changes the whole process of the research itself, these are not qualitative research studies but self-fulfilling prophecies which add little, if anything, to the issue addressed. But this is just part of the story. Other deeper issues are at stake, such as those involving ethical issues regarding the participants, their sampling, their right of being guaranteed anonymity, privacy, etc., as well as their right to be offered feedback on what their contribution/participation/expertise helped to find out. Such a bad habit of

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

conducting qualitative research is mainly due to some shabby drifts of the academic system which have turned the research process into an assembly line. When caught inside, one has to publish at all costs, and to publish at all costs means to collect data as quickly as s/he can, at the expense of intellectual honesty, of the reliability of the research and of a critical reflection on what s/he does, from which positioning, with whom, for which purposes—which should be the researcher's primary concerns. Research demands time to grasp and understand phenomena, and therefore a good way to be critical is also to evidence this priority and ask for it, making a stance and stepping out of the chain of mass-production of data collecting and publishing.

To end with a positive note, at the opposite end of the spectrum I place Participatory Action Research (PAR), a research process which has been defined by Michelle Fine not as a methodology but rather as "a radical epistemological challenge to the traditions of social science, most critically on the topic of where knowledge resides. Participatory action researchers ground our work in the recognition that expertise and knowledge are widely distributed. . . . PAR embodies a democratic commitment to break the monopoly on who holds knowledge and for whom social research should be undertaken" (2008, 215). Indeed, PAR's radical epistemological challenge reveals its ethical and critical commitment, as reflecting on the nature of knowledge means reflecting on issues of power—who, from where, for whom, according to/under which conditions, etc. one has/hasn't the power to define what counts as (relevant) knowledge. PAR thus foregrounds ethics and issues of power as central concerns, and by combining several methodologies, it relates observation, participation and transformation. Between participants and researcher/s there is no difference of power, but of roles: research becomes a horizontal activity where the researcher and the participants collaborate in generating knowledge focused on action. Participants are co-researchers and become empowered through the conscious observation of their practices, so that research favors a 'coscientization' leading to a transformation of the status-quo—indeed, with its focus on knowledge as a combination of participation, transformation and critical reflection towards a personal and social change, PAR is very much rooted in Freire's works. Such an approach to research requires many ingredients that are not so easily quantified and predictable, as they involve several relational aspects such as the sensibility to approach and engage actively with people; the capability of grasping contexts and dynamics, as well as fears, motivations and drives; the capacity of self-observation and critical reflexivity; the skill of being able to participate and distance oneself at the same time. The list above may sound familiar to most teachers, educators and practitioners from several fields, and this is also the reason why PAR is particularly effective (and relevant) in social contexts

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

such as schools, hospitals, social and health care associations, NGOs, etc. Involving a relationship and a collaboration between individuals and groups in producing knowledge and action, PAR is a co-constructed work-in-progress which constantly negotiates premises, meanings, and interpretations. For all the above reasons, PAR is not first choice when one has to produce data in a short time; yet, as often combined with Ethnography and Critical Pedagogies, it is the most authoritative critical approach to a meaningful research able to unveil ideologies behind phenomena; to make people aware of their practices and of how they can improve them; to favor understanding on how interpretations are constructed; and, while offering a multilayered account and knowledge of complex processes, dynamics, and events, it can prompt to action and transformation in the direction of more equitable opportunities for individuals and communities.

NOTES

1. In the year 2010, Berlusconi's government brought along a highly trumpeted optimization of the school system. The 'Educational Reform' actually meant severe cuts to the school curricula and administrations, and, in perfect Newspeak, also consisted in renaming the schools. The name of the school where I used to teach, *Istituto d'Arte* (Art Institute), was suddenly upgraded into *Liceo Artistico* (High School of Arts). That impacted on school population too: the word 'liceo,' a high school which prepares for academic studies, generally intimidates students coming from low socio-cultural backgrounds or with a recent history of immigration, as they (and their families) tend to choose more practical studies—e.g., vocational schools or institutes—hoping that such a formation will be less frustrating in terms of school success, and that it will buy them a ticket to the labour market (*cf.* Sansoé 2012).
2. I discussed these results in detail in previous publications (Giorgis 2013a, 2013b).
3. A = *Istituto d'Arte*; B = *Liceo Scientifico*; M = male student; F = female student; P = participant in the interview; as for the focus groups, the first number refers to the turn-taking in discussion, and the last to the age of the participant.
4. Cross-linguistic interactions are considered an early step for intercultural dialogue. See: https://centerforinterculturaldialogue.org for further discussion and references. It has also been noted that whilst intercultural dialogue presupposes a conscious practice, cross-cultural communication often happens spontaneously.
5. There are many studies which demonstrate how people feel more disinhibited when using taboo words or swearing in a foreign language (*cf.* Dewaele 2004).

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

Part Four

Meeting Foreignness

Foreign Language Education as a Critical (and) Intercultural Experience

"The average citizen of Oceania . . . is forbidden the knowledge of foreign languages. If he were allowed contact with foreigners he would discover that they are creatures similar to himself" (2003 [1949], 201). Orwell's remarks on the contact with foreigners and foreign languages in his novel *1984* will act as a guide for this conclusion where I go back to the title and the subtitle of this volume to discuss the theme of foreignness and of Foreign Language Education in a critical and comprehensive perspective, also suggesting what can be done in the field in the near future.

1. MEETING FOREIGNNESS

From its very beginning and title, this book has critically analyzed the concept of foreignness as an encounter both from within—becoming foreigners to ourselves—and from without—who is the foreigner, who has the power to define her/him as such, on which grounds, from which position, etc. The discussion developed has shown that such a double encounter with foreignness is not only complementary but also situated, and that language plays an important role in shaping such relation and positioning. Therefore, it is now relevant to get a comprehensive perspective on how Foreign Language Education can be applied to use the foreignness it foregrounds to become a critical (and) intercultural experience. Indeed, the use of the parentheses between 'critical' and 'intercultural' wishes to foreground also visually that the two constructs can be applied to Foreign Language Education both as separate and yet integrated factors, and as one single process.

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

2. FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION AS A CRITICAL (AND) INTERCULTURAL EXPERIENCE

As discussed in Part Two, the critical is a problematizing practice connected with discovering "how processes work in specific sites and moments . . ., identifying which resources are circulating and the conditions that make them available . . . and figuring out the consequences of these processes" (Heller 2011, 39). In Education, it implies connecting micro- and macro-relations, observing "how the classroom, text or conversation is related to broader social, cultural and political relations" (Pennycook 2001, 5). In language education in particular, the critical aims to unveil inequalities and equalize opportunities by analyzing and disclosing the relations between language and power, and the dynamics intercurring between structure and individual agency.

Foreign Language Education (FLE)[1] is particularly effective in a critical perspective, and for many reasons. First of all, FLE goes by definition beyond the familiar of what is viewed as 'language' and 'culture.' From the perspective of the new language, students can observe critically how Sameness and Otherness are constructed through linguistic practices, thus dismissing *a priori* assumptions about languages and cultures. FLE has thus the potential to decenter one's own perspective of the self and the other: the representation and perception of the self and the other can be reframed, and Otherness can be apprehended in two directions, from between and within groups and individuals. Abdallah-Pretceille warns us about considering FLE only through a merely functionalist approach, sustaining that its intrinsic ontological value should be foregrounded, as "l'apprentissage des langues étrangères est le lieu par excellence (ou plus exactement, devrait être le lieu) de l'apprentissage de l'altérité" [Learning foreign languages is (or, more exactly, should be) the place *par excellence* for learning Otherness] (2009, 56). She then argues that the acquisition of a foreign language should move away from the mere stocking of instrumental-linguistic-cultural notions to become intercultural as a chance to reflect on one's own culture, to understand its own diversity and internal complexity, as well as to discover Otherness. Indeed, as the Other is at the heart of communication, intercultural competence, continues Abdallah-Pretceille, is an intersubjective relationship which refers to culture in action, and whose fundamental concept is not that of culture, but that of otherness (*ibidem*).

If learning Otherness lies at the core of learning a foreign language, then the foreign language discloses itself as an intercultural experience. Set at the border between L1 (Language 1) and L2 (Language 2), between C1 (native culture) and C2 (target culture), FLE exposes, according to Claire Kramsch, that "understanding a foreign culture requires putting that culture in relation

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

with one's own" (1993, 205). By making the familiar foreign, FLE induces an "experiencing [of] the boundary [and] discovering that each of these cultures is much less monolithic than was originally perceived . . . [as well as understanding] boundary not as an actual event but, rather, as a state of mind, as a positioning of the learner at the intersection of multiple social roles and individual choices" (234), and thus engaging her/him "in the dialectic of meaning production" (239). An FL learner is not a "customer of various teaching methods" (236), but a person who takes possession of a 'third place,' according to Kramsch's definition, a territory from which s/he can create new meanings: linguistic and symbolic, multiple and dynamic, with varying degrees of plurality and creativity, such a space in-between can offer "the opportunity for personal meanings, pleasures and power" (238). The notion of the 'third place' has been later revised and criticized by Kramsch herself (2009), as it presupposes that cultures, both C1 and C2, are homogenous and static constructs, whilst cultures present many diverse *intra*cultural differences derived by social status, gender, age, etc. Notwithstanding this critique, what is relevant to value is that new meanings and conceptualizations can arise from the contrast between the meanings and the conceptualizations related to one's own native language and culture(s) with those of FL, bringing out the symbolic and mediated nature of language, thus favoring the problematization of meanings and conceptualizations that are often taken for granted.

Foreign, Second (Third, Fourth, etc.) language learners, teachers and researchers are then in perfect place to observe how languages can (re)produce, or challenge, cultural meanings and discourses. Allan Luke (2004) and Ryuko Kubota (2004) advocate for the critical in Second Language Education from similar perspectives. Luke suggests that it is necessary to be careful when we refer to the term 'critical,' not only because it has also been used for "liberal and neoliberal educational agendas to improve individual achievement and thinking" (2004, 21), but also because "for the critical to happen, there must be some actual dissociation from one's available explanatory texts and discourses—a denaturalization and discomfort and 'making the familiar strange'" (26–27): in other words, the 'critical' requires "an analytic move to self-position oneself as Other" (*ibidem*). Luke strongly promotes a critical mission for Second Language Education, advancing that "the field must do something other than what it currently does. Otherwise, it will remain a technology for domesticating the Other into nation, whatever its scientific and humanistic premises" (28). On rather similar premises, Kubota criticizes the liberal view of multiculturalism, based on an acritical emphasis on commonalities and "natural equality across racial, cultural, class and gender differences" (2004, 32), and sustains that "second language learning offers learners some new possibilities beyond their abilities in their native language

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

and culture, [and then] it does provide novel expressions and interpretations" (48). In that perspective, Kubota addresses in particular the necessity of a critical approach to English language education: "Rather than avoiding the teaching of the standard forms of the language, critical linguistic actions encourage students to learn the standard language critically, to use it to critique its complicity with domination and subordination, and to subvert the normative linguistic code" (46). And it is within these premises that is now relevant to discuss in particular the special case of the English Language, and of what is considered its multinational industry: English Language Teaching.

2.1. English and English Language Teaching

English Language in general, and English Language Teaching in particular, have been often labelled as 'linguistic imperialism' (*cf.* Phillipson 1992) and criticized as "a pedagogical site . . . for educating the racial and linguistic Other" (Luke 2004, 25). Nor has it to be forgotten the global big business machine linked to English Language Teaching—certifications, courses, study holidays, etc.—and all the institutions and private organizations which greatly benefit from it. Yet, if approached from a critical perspective, the widespread of English can be also potentially emancipatory and empowering.[2] A critical linguist such as Pennycook affirmed that "English offers an expanded community of users. If insurgent knowledges can emerge through English, they may have an effect far broader than if they had been voiced in other languages" (1994, 325). If that sounded like a wishful prophecy in the early 1990s, it is now a fact that English speakers around the world are counted in billions, and since the vast majority of them are non-native speakers, that implies the widest variety in the use of the language and in the cultural influences which shape and reshape it. Therefore, an ideological opposition to English language as the *tout-court* manifestation of power and oppression is much too shortsighted, as the link between language and discrimination is always situated and has to be contextualized—as in the examples offered by Claire Kramsch of some post-colonial settings (1993, 253–55), or as the one reported by the BBC regarding the 2016 protests in Cameroon where English speakers denounced they are discriminated against because of the language they speak (*BBC News* 2016). Moreover, the same dogmatic approach risks producing precisely the effect that it aims to contrast: Luke quotes Canagarajah saying that "whereas the uncritical use of English leads to accommodation and domination, an avoidance of English leads to marginalization or ghettoization" (2004, 46). Notions referring to 'imperialism' or to 'the macdonaldization of the world' through the English language do not take into account how complex and multifaceted the impact of global interconnectedness is: Martin Dewey quotes Held et al., who sustain

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

that "simple notions of homogenization, ideological hegemony or imperialism fail to register properly the nature of these encounters and the interplay, interaction and cultural creativity they produce" (2007, 336). Dewey then states that the case of English is particularly interesting "for the extent of its diffusion geographically; for the enormous cultural diversity of the speakers who use it; and for the infinitely varied domains in which it is found and purposes it serves" (333). Following critical pedagogy approaches, English teachers can develop counter discourses formulated through English in order to challenge and change the cultures and discourses that dominate the world (Pennycook 1994, 326), making their classroom "a key site for the renewal of both local and global forms of culture and knowledge" (*ibidem*), and thus becoming agents of change. Being at the heart of crucial socio-political issues and concerns, English teachers can play a special role in current events, using "their unique positions and agencies to inform the goals around which their pedagogy rotates. Rather than teaching communicative competence or other abstract notions, teachers can envision a new goal for pedagogy: global citizenship" (Birch and Nasser 2017, 45). At the intersection of global and local, of norms and variations, of standard and varieties, of domination and subversion, the widespread of the English language then represents an ideal point of observation to see how individual and collective representations of identity move through language affiliations and appropriations, which factors determine such movements and how they can be used to foster mutual understanding and new forms of knowledge.

2.2. English as a Foreign Language and English as a Lingua Franca

The *de facto* global spread and use of the English language requires to move the focus from considerations regarding the language in itself to those regarding the language speakers. English language is spoken as mother-tongue (L1) by around 328 million people and as L2 by an estimate of 2 billion (Baker 2017, 6). Among the L2 speakers, some are from countries where English, due to its colonial legacy, is officially an L2 (such as India, Nigeria, etc.), but the vast majority are speakers from different L1s who use English for their communicative purposes. Therefore, "the most extensive use of English as an L2 (or rather as an additional language since it may be an L3, L4, etc. . . .) is not as an officially recognized and codified variety, but rather as a lingua franca" (*ibidem*). While earlier definitions excluded the English native speaker, more recent interpretations have included the native speaker in the vast communities which use English for their communicative purposes as a contact language spoken by people from different mother-tongues (Seidlhofler 2004; Jenkins 2007; Dewey 2007, 2012a, 2012b). The focus has then been moved from language as a reified set of norms to language as a social

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

practice which involves the purposes of the communication, the uses of the language and the adjustments that all speakers (the native ones included) make to interact effectively: "English is no one's native language in ELF communication since all participants will need to adapt and adjust their language and other communicative practices to ensure successful communication" (Baker 2017, 11).

From the point of view of the concern of this volume, Foreignness, English as a Lingua Franca presents a very interesting challenge, as it blurs boundaries between foreignness and nativeness: all speakers, both native and non-native, use English as a language for interaction, adapting and accommodating it to their communicative means and needs. In other words: who is the foreigner when everybody speaks a language foreign to all? ELF overtly exposes how fictitious is the link 'one nation = one language = one culture' as it is a language which, by definition, is used by speakers coming from different linguacultural backgrounds. However, ELF is by no means, nor pretends to be, a neutral tool of communication or the magic wand for equitable interactions across the globe. Indeed, precisely because English is a language used by so many different speakers coming from many different cultures, it overtly exposes disparities of socio-cultural conditions and different status of power. Speaking one language in common does not mean to speak the same language: if that evidence is applicable to all conversations, included those in one's mother tongue, it is even more manifest when speakers use a language which does not belong to any of the interlocutors. Italian linguist Maria Grazia Guido has extensively studied the use of ELF in asymmetrical relations between refugees and custom officers, evidencing that the use of a lingua franca does not erase linguacultural traditions and conventions linked to the respective native languages, and that strongly shapes the interpretations—and often the misinterpretations—of events, with devastating effects on people in state of disadvantage or need (*cf.* 2008).

Therefore, if ELF is not to be considered the magic solution for global and intercultural communication, it should not be either ideologically considered *a priori* as the emblem of the neo-imperialist or neo-colonialist spread of English: it should rather be observed critically as a phenomenon, and pragmatically studied in its applied forms and uses, as well as in its impact on a rather relevant field, that of English Language Teaching.

2.3. English as a Lingua Franca and English Language Teaching. An Impossible Match?

The pluralization of English is not only a macro-phenomenon, but it is also evident in the English language class. Many of us non-native English speak-

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

ers experienced and studied English as a Foreign Language, that is as a language which, according to the most credited definition, is not spoken as a first language in the country, nor is used for official intranational functions, and, most of all, is a language that is apprehended in a non-natural context—i.e., at school. Yet, in the last decades it has become more and more evident that English has also developed into something else from the normative set of grammar rules, syntax, pronunciation that we used to learn, and it has become equally clear that the foreign language class is not the only place where students encounter and practice English. As seen here in Part Three, the Internet, blogs, online games and contacts, tutorials, music, TV series, YouTube videos, as well as intercultural and intracultural communication between peers have become part of the students' daily experience and contact with the English language thus blurring the borders between English as a Foreign Language and English as a Second Language (see note 1). Yet, besides being defined as a Foreign or a Second language, which English is the one that circulates among our students? It is a language of communication between people who, often, do not share the same mother tongue and use English as a contact language for their communicative purposes, adapting and accommodating it to their communicative needs. In other words, it is a language which falls into the definition and the uses of a lingua franca, a language which emerges as mainly a social practice. Within the pedagogical context and purposes, Martin Dewey provides a clear distinction between English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and English as Lingua Franca (ELF) speaking of language as a 'subject' and language as a 'medium' (2012a). At school, English is taught as a subject, yet students use it in their conversations as a medium. Such a divide is not only evident in non-English-speaking countries such as Italy, but also in the UK, where several voices have spoken out to draw attention to the gap between the constant change and evolution of English as a Lingua Franca and the static backwardness of English as a Foreign Language which, through the normative practices of English Language Teaching (ELT), ignores the changes and the developments that the English language has undergone in the last decades (Dewey 2007, 333). There have been some signals of openness in the direction of a more comprehensive perspective on the pluralization of English, as for example that promoted by the multinational enterprise Cambridge ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) which in 2008 carried out an ELF-oriented revision of DELTA (Diploma of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages), (Dewey 2012b, 144). More recent examples are the online Seminars on English as a Lingua Franca conducted by Katy Simpson and Laura Patsko for the British Council which outline a theoretical framework of ELF and offer some practical examples of activities, focusing in particular on pronunciation—e.g., evi-

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

dencing the difference between pronunciation and intelligibility, or suggesting the use of authentic materials such as online videos and audios to expose students to a variety of pronunciations (British Council English and Exams 2015). Still, from my perspective as a practitioner, I have not yet seen great changes in the course books, in the teaching materials or in the in-training courses for teachers. Actually, they all converge in a similar direction: the vast majority of in-training courses for teachers[3] are organized and sponsored by publishing houses whose main concern is to promote new flashy volumes rather than discuss ELF or radical/critical issues concerning foreign language teaching. Though such conferences make the effort of proposing different teaching methods meant to refresh old methodologies and remotivate fatigued middle-aged teachers, they end up to be mainly commercial events—to paraphrase Leonard Cohen, they just bring in new dresses for the old ceremony. The impression that not much has changed on the ELT side does not seem to be only a personal one: after having examined several course books, Will Baker evidences that ELT still maintains an Anglo-centric perspective, and that the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference) continues to refer to the native-speaker model (2017, 175–82). The latter in particular is a rather bizarre commandment for the English language, since non-native English speakers vastly outnumber the native ones, and most conversations in English occur between non-native speakers. Yet, certifications based on such codified canons of language acquisition are required to access universities, European tenders, as well as competitions in the public and private sectors, thus favoring the gigantic and much profitable enterprise of linguistic courses and examinations.[4] Conversely, it could be precisely in the gap between 'subject' and 'medium' indicated by Dewey that teachers and students could explore and observe a profound linguistic and cultural transformation, where the micro-context of the classroom could offer useful insights to apprehend critically what is happening at a macro level.

However, there is no doubt that the same gap 'subject'/'medium' foregrounds some relevant questions which interrogate the ethical, professional and institutional duties of a teacher. On the one hand, remaining too much attached to EFL normativity "does not fit very well with the communicative realities of English speakers" (Dewey 2012a, 26) as "an interactional setting may require numerous combinations and admixtures of languages, with hybrid selections of language resources being constructed from within a very varied repertoire" (*ibidem*). Indeed, it is evident that teachers cannot strictly adhere to EFL prescriptiveness presenting it as a reified monolith when every day we are confronted with non-standard uses of English. On the other hand, teachers should provide students, in particularly the less advantaged (*cf.* Freire's interview reported in the section *Language and Power*, Part Two),

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

with a substantial linguistic toolkit in order to prepare them for their future professional endeavors: some of most recurrent ELF uses—such as the drop of the 's' in the third person singular of the Simple Present, or of the 'ing' form—are the typical blue mistakes, and should be evidenced to students. Tensed between norm and exception, teachers are therefore asked to mediate between their "professional responsibility to advise students on how to be successful in language tests" (Dewey 2012b, 161) and "their personal responsibility to the communicative needs of . . . students as language users" (*ibidem*): the divide between language as a subject and language as a medium, is indeed parallel to that of the student as a learner and the student as a user of the language.

Yet, if the gap between EFL and ELF opens several questions, it also offers some solutions. These come as a paradox: "it may be of pedagogic value for teachers to be aware of non-ENL [English Native Language] varieties, but only so as to identify the ways in which students need to develop linguistically in order to achieve ENL goals" (Dewey 2012b, 155). Within such a paradox there opens the opportunity to develop a critical linguistic pedagogy able to offer both a solid architecture of a language and a critical approach to languages and cultures. Considering the English language both as "a fixed set of codified forms" and as "a dynamic means of communication" can help teachers adopt "multiple perspectives in their approach to language, and this can be beneficial to language learners" (161). Indeed, due to the globalization and pluralization of English, students use it now (and will use it more and more in the future) to interact and communicate mainly with non-native speakers, so that flexibility, accommodation and adjustments are more important than strict adherence to e.g., native-like pronunciation. Openly speaking of a post-normative pedagogical approach to English Language Teaching, Dewey suggests it can favor new reflections on language not for "identifying alternative sets of norms, but more in terms of enabling us to move beyond normativity" (166).

Therefore, while challenging teachers ELF also offers them the opportunity to revise their practice in a wider perspective, guiding reflections and discussions on the different socio-cultural contexts in which English is learnt and used, "increasing the exposure to the diverse ways in which English is used globally" (163), and critically considering the norms and the purposes of languages in terms of interaction. In a 2016 interview, Farzad Sharifian sustains that "in recent decades we have witnessed significant geographical, demographic, and structural changes to the English language, and this requires us to revisit notions such as 'language proficiency.' I think no matter how we define language proficiency in today's world, intercultural communication skills should be at the heart of it" (Sharifian 2016, 8). In other words,

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

if ELF as global phenomenon invites us to a meta-reflection on what we have considered the language so far, from the pedagogical perspective it stimulates teachers to reconsider their methodologies, approaches and goals in the light of a critical and intercultural pedagogy.

3. FOREIGN LANGUAGES AND THE INTERCULTURAL

Languages and language ideologies possess multifarious intersections with culture and should therefore be a core concern for the intercultural. Indeed, "learning another language is fundamentally an intercultural process that takes the learner beyond their familiar settings and communicative practices" (Baker 2017, 174). Yet, according to Dervin and Liddicoat, language has long been the "unnamed dimension of the intercultural" (2013, 8): much has to be done then, in particular in Education, where a critical awareness of language can engage students, as speakers and social agents, to reflect on their *own* perception and representation of self and others through language practices, as well as on how discourses inform and (re)produce social order. In multicultural and plurilinguistic contexts, where there are multiple cross-linguistic and cross-cultural contacts, language education "can contribute to educating for diversity" (1), moving "away from an educational approach which consists of building up facts about a 'target culture' . . . to one in which the language learner as language user and intercultural mediator are foregrounded" (4). As

> intercultural education is fundamentally an investigation of the intersections of language and culture in that language and culture shape processes of meaning making and interpretation . . . learning therefore happens at the interstices of languages and cultures . . . [and] this is more than saying simply that language is the 'vehicle' for culture. It is to argue that language is constituent not only of cultures, but of perceptions of cultures (our own and others') and the processes by which we make sense of ourselves and others (9).

Intercultural Education should be then considered "as an activity which is fundamentally based in language" (*ibidem*). Therefore, Linguistics—or, as Pennycook[5] suggests to highlight the dimension of language performativity, 'Language Studies' (2004, 1)—should take its seat at the round table of Intercultural Education, to "become a resource for other purposes that lie beyond purely linguistic objectives and analyses" (Dervin and Liddicoat 2013, 14): it can help reflect on differences and similarities between linguistic norms and practices; it can highlight processes through which languages and cultures are co-constructed through interaction; it can elicit students to become aware of

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

how they represent and interpret self and others through language practices; and, last but not least, it can engage both teachers and students to reflect critically on the role of language in the production and reproduction of power, for example observing how language dynamics frame discourses within the classroom and in the wider context, how differences are created through language use, and how inequalities can be manifest through the different levels of access to linguistic resources, and on the socio-economic processes that (re)produce these levels.

As for language teaching,

> the 'intercultural dimension' in language teaching aims to develop learners as intercultural speakers or mediators who are able to engage with complexity and multiple identities and to avoid the stereotyping which accompanies perceiving someone through a single identity. It is based on perceiving the interlocutor as an individual whose qualities are to be discovered, rather than as a representative of an externally ascribed identity. Intercultural communication is communication on the basis of respect for individuals and equality of human rights as the democratic basis for social interaction (Byram, Gribkova and Starkey 2002, 9–10).

Teachers, in particular, are then called to "uncover the language ideologies that shape their own discourse" (Cole and Meadows 2013, 35), by

> looking specifically at how their metalinguistic talk either legitimizes or delegitimizes the diversity of voices/subjectivities/positions present in the target communities that they construct for students in their speech. . . . the expansion of voices in the language classroom benefits Intercultural Education for two reasons: (1) it brings to the forefront the discursive construction of social groupings (e.g., national ones) and the political processes that determine who and what counts as legitimate, and (2) it engages students with the diversity of voices that exist in social reality, rather than in an idealized nationalist imaginary (*ibidem*).

Thus, "Intercultural Education benefits when language classrooms create opportunity for students and teachers not just to recognize, but to engage legitimately with linguistic and cultural variation" (42). A critical approach to language teaching can then become a "valuable tool to help classroom participants acquire the ability to reflexively recognize and explicitly articulate the discursive processes by which language is used to create both Self and Other communities" (43). Consequently, the foreign language classroom can become an intercultural site able to both reflect on one's own culture, noticing internal pluralities and complexities, and encounter with the other's, where the focus is not so much on 'culture,' but rather on the communication with different forms of otherness. As Martine Abdallah-Pretceille points out: "la

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

compétence interculturelle s'appuie sur une mise en perspective d'une relation intersubjective, elle renvoie à une culture en acte et non à une définition culturelle. Si l'Autre est au coeur de la communication, la notion prioritaire n'est pas celle de culture mais celle d'altérité" [intercultural competence is based on putting into perspective the intersubjective relation, it refers to a culture-in-act, rather than to a definition of culture. If the Other is at the core of communication, the main notion is not that of culture but rather that of Otherness] (2009, 56).

Critical Language Education intersects Intercultural Education at many points, its focus being language as a construct at the junction of identity, culture and power: language learning can promote pedagogies able to empower and equalize the opportunities for learners, to engage teachers and students in reflection and praxis, to critically evaluate education as an institution, as well as larger issues of power and authority (Norton and Toohey 2004, 3–15). Last but not least: an attention to language dynamics can also help Intercultural Education to question critically its own paradigm. The critique of 'culture' as an essentialized construct has often led to overlook the risk that also the intercultural can be essentialized: Ingrid Piller sustains that "some misunderstandings that are considered 'cultural' are in fact linguistic misunderstandings" (2007, 215), and that cultural interpretations of linguistic miscommunication often serve "to obscure inequality and injustice" (*ibidem*). Thus, to avoid falling into the trap of "a range of a priori assumptions about 'culture' and 'language'" (217) it is necessary to consider linguistic processes and practices in relation to the context and the speakers' access to linguistic resources, addressing the fundamental issue of inequalities in language, and focusing on the situated conditions that can favor, limit or hinder intercultural communication.

4. WHAT'S NEXT?

As discussed in the previous sections, and emerged from the findings of my research (Part Three), it is indeed in the opportunity to change one's perspective on the self and the others where Foreign, Second (Third, Fourth, etc.) Language Education can best express its commitment for the future. Subverting *familiar* roles and footings, according to Norton and Toohey an-*other* language overtly exposes how "social relationships are lived out in language" (2004, 1), and can thus show how "language is not simply a means of expression or communication; rather, it is a practice that constructs, and is constructed by, the ways language learners understand themselves, their social surroundings, their histories, and their possibilities for the future" (ibi-

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

dem). In a pedagogical perspective, a much needed critical and intercultural approach to Foreign Language Education can then promote encounters with Foreignness and diversity, starting from a beneficial and critical questioning of what is taken for granted—the self, language, culture, knowledge—able to dismantle, from within and between, monolithic views of individuals and groups. Such an approach is of paramount importance at times of global migrations when people and languages meet at an unprecedented scale, but where such encounters are characterized by appalling inequalities. As Maria Dasli and Adriana Díaz efficaciously put it:

> We live in a world rife with conflict and inequality, a state that has been normalised and often legitimized as the inevitable nature of human condition. . . . From the systematic and continuous violation of human rights, through asylum seekers' concentration camps, to gender violence, female genital mutilation and forced marriages, the normalised and desensitised nature of our supposed natural condition, along with everyday prejudice and abuse, are embedded in pervasive hegemonic discourses. [Therefore, we need develop] 'critical' intercultural beings capable of actively engaging in a dialogue that transcends boundaries—real and imagined. . . . It is in this context that modern/foreign language (MFL) education and intercultural communication have emerged as key disciplines whose convergence has the potential to effectively address this vision in practice (2017, 11).

Here is indeed the most important task for Foreign, Critical and Intercultural Language Education in the 21st century: the critical experience of cultural difference advanced by the foreignness of the foreign language can become a critical exercise in intercultural awareness able to question pre-given assumptions on individuals, cultures and knowledge. Observing how constructs of identity and otherness are defined and reproduced, as well as how they can be questioned, reshaped or subverted, a critical and intercultural approach to Foreign Language Education can thus develop more conscious and informed individuals, and contribute to create more equitable societies able to apprehend critically how difference is constructed, inequality reproduced and how the creative potential of diversities can be fostered.

4.1. How to Do It

As I discussed at the end of Part Three, there are indeed several well-established approaches which can work in the perspective of a critical intercultural approach to Applied Linguistics in general and to Foreign Language Education in particular. Yet, a very promising field of research and practice in a transformational perspective is Critical Cultural Linguistics (CCL),[6] a

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

brand-new branch of Cultural Linguistics. Cultural Linguistics is a new field in Linguistics which analyzes the relation between language and cultural conceptualizations, studying how linguistic interactions influence the development of cultural conceptualizations, and, at the same time, how language structure and use draw on and reflect cultural conceptualizations (Sharifian 2011, 2017). Yet, if cultural conceptualizations are encoded and embodied in language, they are by no means neutral or accidental. Therefore, Critical Cultural Linguistics is meant to analyze how cultural conceptualizations are shaped by contexts, conditions, power relations, unequal access to cultural and natural resources, as well as by socio-cultural and historical factors (Giorgis 2017). Studies within the perspective of Critical Cultural Linguistics can cast light on what lies behind cultural conceptualizations and on how language can (re)produce or challenge them. Within such premises, Critical Cultural Linguistics should look at interdisciplinarity as one of its most prominent features, as it is only by interconnecting elements and perspectives, as well as research and practices, that phenomena can be read in their complexity. Critical Cultural Linguistics can therefore become an exercise in interdisciplinarity, possibly developing a new methodological paradigm where scholars, researchers, educators, and practitioners from different fields can work together. Such an approach could combine theoretical reflections and practice (praxis) with linguistics and socio-political issues. Here are just some of the disciplines that could fruitfully work together:

- Education: it is indeed at the forefront of the critical for its being the main environment where inequalities and different status are to be observed, questioned and possibly transcended in an emancipatory perspective. CCL can then inform Education practices and policies, for example offering teachers new conceptual and empirical tools to view their own work as a complex net of cultural conceptualizations (e.g., CCL could play a fundamental role in teachers' training);
- Intercultural Communication Studies: if we consider the intercultural as the questioning of one's identity in relation to others, the mutual practice of being able to meet and interact with other cultures becomes the exercise of problematizing one's own(s) too. By its critical approach to cultural conceptualizations, CCL can offer theoretical and empirical tools to Intercultural Communication Studies, which could, for example, help prevent confusion between linguistic and cultural miscommunication and misunderstandings;
- Engaged/Non-Hegemonic Anthropology: CCL shares with a committed anthropological approach the viewing of the interactions between individuals and contexts as complex nets where individual agency and access to

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

cultural and natural resources are factors determined by inequalities and power relations which are then not to be taken for granted, but critically observed and questioned. Focusing on the cultural conceptualizations which frame language interactions, CCL and critical anthropology can thus work together to reveal dynamics of power (re)produced by language;

- Political and Social Studies: with its focus on a critical approach to cultural conceptualizations, CCL can cooperate with Political and Social Studies to unveil what contributes to create—and, at the same time, is created by—the public discourse, overall narratives, hidden or overt propaganda, from a cultural and linguistic perspective;
- Peace-Keeping Studies: language indeed plays a fundamental role in defining individual as well as collective identities, and therefore in framing narratives about people, groups and their (supposed) linguacultural belongings. With its flexibility in exploring language dynamics and cultural conceptualizations, CCL can profitably collaborate with Peace-Keeping Studies and practices to investigate which cultural and linguistic elements contribute to create 'the other' as 'the enemy,' and how and to what extent they can be challenged;
- Historical Studies: cultural conceptualizations affect, and are affected by, language in its diachronic dimension. Therefore, CCL can critically observe the impact of historical events on cultural conceptualizations, addressing the questions of where they come from, and investigating the reasons why a certain language, in a determined historical framework, created specific cultural conceptualizations, also in a comparative approach with other languages and cultural conceptualizations;
- Foreign Language Education: as the experience of a foreign language implies a separation of the speaker from her/his original linguistic background, Foreign Language Education can fruitfully work in concert with CCL: opening up to different worldviews and conceptualizations, Foreign Language Education can destabilize what we take for granted of individuals (ourselves included) and groups, showing how far what we consider 'natural' in language and cultural conceptualizations does not come 'naturally,' but it is rather a complex and multifaceted process which is always situated.

Within the framework and the intent of this book, I envision that Critical Cultural Linguistics could be particularly effective in analyzing how the *cultural conceptualization of foreignness* is enacted by language and linguistic practices, a theme which is particularly relevant and timely in consideration of the resurgence of nationalisms and populisms. Indeed, traversing the fields and the paths briefly outlined above, Critical Cultural Linguistics can

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

examine several cases of how cultural conceptualizations of foreignness are historically, culturally and geographically situated by and through language expressions, how such processes of categorizations can easily fall into the stereotyping of cultural features as static and homogeneous traits of some groups, and the much too short a step between the cultural conceptualization of the Foreign as the Other and the cultural conceptualization of the Enemy.

For all the above reasons, Critical Cultural Linguistics is a particularly promising field for Foreign Language Education. It can stimulate 21st-century Foreign Language Education to definitively shake off all the remains of the 'one-nation' and the 'native-speaker' paradigms, helping it exploit and work within the gap it creates between the word and the world to make not only an intercultural discourse, but rather a *critical* intercultural discourse. Critical Cultural Linguistics combined with Foreign Language Education can therefore become an exercise in awareness able to cast a new light on the concept of Foreignness. Together, they can observe it both from the critical perspective as a marker of possible inequalities in access to socio-linguistic resources on the one hand, but also as a possible act of resistance or recreation enacted through language practices on the other. They can work together in decoding signs and meaning through which people, from below, appropriate and reinvent linguistic forms to mark affiliations or disaffiliations to groups through practices of heteroglossia, analyzing which are the constraints and/or drives that determine the use of different languages. Analyzing how inequalities in communicative resources are (re)produced and how language can brand individuals and groups favors a linguistic awareness which can reveal how cultural conceptualizations are situated and linguistically marked, thus evidencing the socio-political mark of such constructions. Critical Cultural Linguistics and Foreign Language Education can therefore dismantle pre-given assumptions on individuals and groups based on cultural conceptualizations, blurring mutual stereotyped readings 'us' versus 'them,' and foregrounding the emancipatory and transformational potential of the language. As in the sentence expressed by Lorenzo Milani and his students: "Perché è solo la lingua che fa eguali. Eguale è chi sa esprimersi e intende l'espressione altrui" [As it is only language which makes people equal. Equal is the person who can express her/himself and understands the other's expression] (Scuola di Barbiana 2007 [1967], 96).

NOTES

1. Some theoretical approaches consider Foreign Language Education (FLE) and Second Language Education (SLE) as overlapping constructs, as both refer to the experience of learning a non–mother tongue. Conversely, other scholars argue that

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

they are very different, as SLE is learning an L2 (Second Language) in a natural setting—be it the Second Official Language of the country, or the language one has to learn following the migration to a foreign country—while FLE regards a language taught at school, and therefore practiced in a non-natural context. Both approaches have developed critical reflections: the first focusing on the question of the inequality of power and access to language resources between native and non-native speakers (e.g., Norton 2000), and the second emphasizing the symbolic, creative and potentially transformative aspect of the experience of a non–mother tongue (e.g., Kramsch 1993, 2009). Far from being in contrast with each other, both approaches can mutually benefit from their respective contributions, and usefully converge in a critical discourse on the acquisition of a non–mother tongue, whether it is defined as L2 (Second Language) or FL (Foreign Language). A further consideration should be made for the English language in particular, where this distinction seems notably blurred as, in the last decades, the neat opposition 'natural' *versus* 'non-natural' context of learning has progressively faded. It is indeed evident to every English teacher that students are immersed in, and interact with, several English-language contexts (the Internet, TV/online series, blogs, online games, music, etc.) besides the English they learn at school. Thus, due to its global spread in both real and virtual environments, it is matter of debate whether the English language can still be considered a 'foreign language,' or whether it would be more appropriate to consider it a sort of 'global L2' (*cf.* Graddol 2006; Giorgis 2016a).

2. I wish to briefly mention here how the widespread of English can be used as an act of solidarity: PaperAirplanes (https://www.paper-airplanes.org/) is an association which provides free, one-on-one virtual language and skills instruction to people affected by conflict to help them pursue higher education and employment.

3. As I mentioned in the Introduction, the only in-training courses for teachers which are free of charge and not connected to any kind of commercial activity—such as, e.g., the purchase of course books—are, to my knowledge, those organized by the Italian association Lend - Lingua e nuova didattica [Language and New Language Education].

4. Though it is understandable that some parameters of a codified ascertainment of the language have to be defined, it is less understandable why such an ascertainment should be transformed into an enterprise. The fees to access examinations are rather high, and this often makes linguistic certifications a matter of census, as low-income families can rarely afford to pay them. Sometimes schools or universities provide to cover or contribute to the fees, yet the costs of such subsidies have become progressively unsustainable. As a result, there are discrepancies and inequalities within the same classroom, as two students with the same level of English can or cannot access examination depending on the family income.

5. "I take up the notion of performativity as a way of thinking about language use and identity that avoids foundationalist categories, suggesting that identities are formed in the linguistic performance rather than pregiven" (Pennycook 2004, 1).

6. The part regarding the general features of CCL is a revised and extended version of the online publication at Center for Intercultural Dialogue (Giorgis 2017).

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

A Final Note

The Bigger Picture

A Few Remarks on Some fin-de-siècle *Fascinations*

"'The question is,' said Alice, 'whether you *can* make words mean so many different things.' 'The question is,' said Humpty Dumpty, 'which is to be master—that's all.'" (Carroll 2016 [1871], Chapter 6). At the beginning of this volume I defined the context within which I was going to present my analysis. I think it is now important to conclude the discussion casting a glance on some words and constructs which have shaped the last decades to observe the more general context where the notion of Foreignness is situated and has to interrelate, also to consider the role of Education—as a part of wider social, cultural and political systems—in addressing such a notion.

Since the 1990s, several constructs such as fluidity, diversity, hybridity have tried to read and describe a fast-changing and mingling world. Indeed, the categories that had interpreted the world through dichotomies such as close/far, in/out, mono-/multiculturalism, majority/minority, etc., seemed to prove too polarized and static, and more polycentric and multi-perspective understandings and visions were needed:

> There is a growing awareness that over the past two decades, globalization has altered the face of social, cultural and linguistic diversity in societies all over the world. Due to the diffuse nature of migration since the early 1990s, the multiculturalism of an earlier era (captured mostly in an 'ethnic minorities' paradigm) has been gradually replaced by what Vertovec (2007) calls 'super-diversity' (Blommaert and Rampton 2012, 7).

'Super-diversity' aims to portray a complex and interconnected world that does not define itself or move according to categories such as nationality, ethnicity, language or religion, but rather according to needs, desires, itineraries

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

which do not necessarily comply with such categories, eliciting processes that are characterized by unpredictability. In addition to these phenomena, if we take into account the transformations in technological communications (e.g., the Internet and mobile communication) and in the new media which have historically coincided with global migrations, we have the picture of "lived experiences and sociocultural modes of life that may be changing in ways and degrees that we have yet to understand" (*ibidem*, 9).

In this wider reconceptualization of the world and reconfiguration of individuals and societies, one of the constructs which has been scrutinized and more radically questioned is that of identity. Performative (Butler 1990), violent (Sen 2006), a constant experimentation or almost a precise task of the individual in fluid modernity (Bauman 2009), or a construct that must be critically challenged if not radically abolished (Remotti 1996, 2010): these are only some of the theorizations on the deconstruction of identity which have marked the debate in the last decades. Such critical re-elaborations were meant as warnings against the dangers of the one-and-only-identity ideology both at an individual and a collective level: when we speak of identity we are walking on thin ice, as tracking the line me/you or us/them can easily become (be exploited, represented, disseminated, etc. as) me *versus* you and us *versus* them—all of which include the crucial question of who has the power to decide who is 'us' and who is 'them.' Besides the radical solution of the abolition of the construct of identity, to be substituted by less reified and more relational concepts such as recognition, other perspectives have deconstructed identity by viewing it as a necessarily protean and plural notion. In particular, Judith Butler affirms that "The construct of identity has been radically challenged as a normative ideal" (1990, 16) moving from a 'normative' construct to a 'performative,' a "descriptive feature of experience" (*ibidem*), where "identity is performatively constituted by the very expressions that are said to be its results" (25). The concept of performativity points to a plurality of identities which are constructed and recognized through action and relation. Identity is not therefore connected with having, not the least with being, but rather with doing—in context with, and in relation to. According to Amartya Sen, we are different in many diverse ways as "Our differences do not lie on one dimension only" (2006, 45). By that, Sen intends to contrast the danger and the violence connected to the one-identity-only ideology, which, on the one hand, frames and labels individuals and groups according to one specific cultural or religious belongings, and, on the other hand, can be "skillfully cultivated and fomented by the commanders of persecution and carnage" (175). Yet, Sen also acknowledges that different alternative identities, or combinations of identities, require the possibility to access and operate according to a free, reasoned and informed choice, an opportunity which is not equally

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

granted to all the inhabitants of our planet. Who can choose what, according to which knowledge/restraints/opportunities, in which contexts and for which purposes are by no means peripheral questions. And, while warning about the dangers of the one-identity only, Sen also reminds us that,

> A proper understanding of the world plural identities requires clarity of thinking about the recognition of our multiple commitments and affiliations, even though this may tend to be drowned by the flood of unifocal advocacy of just one perspective or another. Decolonization of the mind demands a firm departure from the temptation of solitary identities and priorities (99).

And, at a collective level, he adds, such misunderstanding of the world's plural identities can result in societies that are not shaped by multiculturalism, but rather by a series of plural monoculturalisms.

Indeed, the social, political and environmental disasters of the first decades of the new century—the outrageous increase of the gap between the social classes, the resurgences of populisms, the devastation of the environment, continuous warfare, just to name a few—oblige us to reconsider such reasoning and warnings from further perspectives. If the notion of one-identity-only is a dangerously divisive and potentially violent concept, also the emancipation from one-identity-only, be it through the deconstruction of identity or its multiplication into plural identities, risks to fall into the same reactionary agenda it was meant to contrast. Scratching under the patina of fluidity, hybridity, diversity, plural identities, and all the like, Terry Eagleton (2016) tersely affirms that they have become the best servants to neo-liberal capitalism and neo-colonial agendas. The multiplication and the fragmentation of what he calls 'the cult of diversity' has resulted in a series of mutually independent/indifferent (if not antagonist) monads that float each in their own space. Discussing such fragmentation of individuals, communities and societies Eagleton affirms:

> some sectors of the cultural left, which in their zeal for a discourse of difference, diversity, identity and marginality ceased to use the word 'capitalism,' let alone 'exploitation' or 'revolution' some decades ago. Neo-liberal capitalism has no difficulty with terms like 'diversity' or 'inclusiveness,' as it does with the language of class struggle (154).

Indeed, "no mode of production in human history has been as hybrid, diverse, inclusive and heterogeneous as capitalism, eroding boundaries, collapsing polarities, merging fixed categories and pitching a diversity of life-form promiscuously together" (32), so that "Culturally speaking, late capitalism is for the most part a matter not of hierarchy but hybridity—of mingling, merging and multiplicity—while materially speaking the gulf between social

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

classes assumes ultra-Victorian proportions" (156). Indeed, what kind of hybridity can the homeless enjoy? What type of flexible identity can a refugee perform while s/he struggles to survive hunger, thirst and drowning on a boat crossing the Mediterranean? Or a female caregiver while she is attending to an old person's bottom? Or a girl enslaved into prostitution?

These may seem collateral questions to the topic here discussed, and to the questions raised concerning foreignness. Yet, the connection and the answer lie in the words of Lorenzo Milani (*cf*. Part Two, 4.1) who, responding to the army chaplains who had publicly declared the conscientious objection 'an act of cowardice,' in 1965 wrote:

> Non discuterò qui l'idea di Patria[1] in sé. Non mi piacciono queste divisioni. Se voi però avete il diritto di dividere il mondo in italiani e stranieri, allora vi dirò che, nel vostro senso, io non ho patria e reclamo il diritto di dividere il mondo in diseredati e oppressi da un lato, privilegiati e oppressori dall'altro. Gli uni sono la mia patria, gli altri i miei stranieri. [I will not discuss here the idea of nation in itself. I don't like these divisions. Yet, if you have the right to divide the world in Italians and foreigners, then I will tell you that, following your pattern, I have no nation and I vindicate the right to divide the world in the poor and oppressed on one side, and privileged and oppressors on the other. The first are my nation, the latter my foreigners] (Milani 2012 [1965]).

Milani sustains that if foreignness has ever to be constituted, it has to be identified in social class divide: inequalities and injustices on one side, privileges and oppression on the other. Applying such a perspective to the disasters of the early 21st century, it suggests that welcoming multiple diversities as supposedly emancipatory from the tyranny of one-identity-only has confined us into other forms of oppressions and divisions, generating micro-categories of society, fragmenting and scattering once collective identities such as class. Our infatuation with multiple diversities has become a commodity, a hobby horse graciously (yet unequally) granted by neo-liberal capitalism to make us forget the fact that class is here to stay as a fundamental category which frames and defines the life of individuals before and more than the belonging to a specific nation or ethnicity. There are indeed more similarities between a rich person in India and a rich person in the US than between a rich person and a poor person within the same country, evidence which tells us that people are, first and foremost, defined by their social class well before by their 'culture.'

These considerations lead us to approach critically another word we have had a long fascination with: culture. In the last decades, culture, one of the most complex words with multiple and often contradictory meanings, has become the good-for-all term to explain almost everything of human behavior:

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

at some point, everything seemed to be 'cultural'—and when culture was not enough, there came its critical progeny: multicultural, cross-cultural, intercultural. Yet, is the notion of culture really so helpful to read the contemporary world? Terry Eagleton does not think so. In his witty, passionate, historical, and literary critical analysis of culture, Eagleton affirms that culture has definitively lost its innocence: from its original ties to nationalisms, its roots in racist anthropology, its connivance with commodity production and political conflict, it has proved not to be an antidote to power, but rather collusive with it (2016, 148). Discourses on culture have prevented us from addressing structural issues: in a word, they have become a way for not talking about capitalism, oppression, property, class struggle, exploitation, new poverties. But, according to Eagleton, there is more: culture also colonizes imagination. One of its most militant branches, the culture industry, "can now colonise fantasy and enjoyment as intensively as it once colonised Kenya and the Philippines" (151): the emergence of an aesthetic form of capitalism manifests how "'Creativity,' which for Marx and Morris signified the opposite of capitalistic utility, is pressed into the service of acquisition and exploitation" (152). Showing how culture has become a useful servant to neo-liberal capitalistic agenda, Eagleton piercingly deconstructs some contemporary self-content narratives. Yet, his voice is not isolated: having its most prominent focus in culture, Anthropology has been one of the first to recognize its dangerous legacy—and progeny. Michael Herzfeld's engaged anthropology, David Graeber's radical anthropology, and the non-hegemonic anthropology of the Lausanne Manifestos denounce the intrinsic violence of the vertical hierarchy observer-observed to promote anthropology as a symmetric and participatory commitment leading to processes of understanding, empowerment and transformation able to challenge the structural and systemic inequalities and injustices of neo-liberal capitalism and neo-colonialism.

However, not only culture but also the intercultural often runs the risk of essentializing differences and becoming an arrangement to avoid recognizing radical issues, and instead of promoting the mutual recognition of diversities can hide structural injustices. I believe it is no coincidence that it was a linguist, Ingrid Piller, to be one of the first critical voices in this direction. Linguistic misunderstandings caused by an inequality of access to linguistic resources can be labelled as cultural misunderstandings which are often readjusted through an intercultural approach, whereas a more radical perspective should be applied. The term 'culture' can often obscure relationships of inequality and difference, so that a critical approach to intercultural communication needs to cautiously take into account presupposed cultural differences, and rather investigate who makes culture relevant to whom, how, in which context, under which conditions, and for which purposes. Piller uses neither

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

culture nor intercultural as cover blankets: for example, speaking in particular about female work migrations, she considers that domestic work, which used to be a gender divide, is now mainly a class divide, though still gendered; or when discussing the phenomenon of mail-ordered wives, she addresses it as one of the manifestations of structural global inequalities (2007, 218–21). And to get even more specific on language and pick up another thread of this book, also Second Language studies seem to neglect the fundamental issue of social class. As James Collins put it: "social class is the category that dare not speak its name" (2006, 3). Within the contexts of multilingual diversities and transnational identities, he claims that class is too often left in the background of the school classroom, while there are evident contrasting attitudes regarding the knowledge of a second language, which is considered to be an advantage or a problem according to the position in the social structure, and depending on how such knowledge is displayed and by whom it is evaluated: bi-multilingualism of upper classes is quite differently evaluated from the bi- or multilingualism of lower classes. He then proposes on the one hand to consider class less as a fixed social position but rather as a process involved in several forms of expression and social consciousness, and, on the other, to be alert to how "class conditions shape one's home, workplace and school encounters with multiple languages" (7).

It is therefore a very complex and multilayered context that in which Education is collocated and asked to engage with in the 21st century. To avoid becoming another useful servant of neo-liberal capitalism and connive at perpetrating inequalities, Education has to vindicate its critical transformative mission. In particular, as this volume has advocated, Education can particularly work on a critical attention to language. Orwell and Klemperer showed us very effectively how it is by twisting words that inequalities are (re)produced and different kinds of violence are not only justified, but also celebrated. It is therefore no coincidence that two contemporary philosophers, Slavoj Žižek and Giuliano Pontara, focus on language to exhort us to recognize the not-so-overt, if not deliberately hidden, forms of violence which constitute and reproduce injustices and inequalities. Lifting up the convenient cover of self-content and self-exculpatory narratives which celebrate globalization as the manifestation of global sisterhood and brotherhood, Žižek sustains that it is language itself the primary origin of all divisions: by symbolically creating Otherness, it makes Otherness real; the 'violence of language' resides precisely in its substantiating quality (2007, 62–77). From a quite different, yet still radical, perspective, Pontara critically approaches some of the words which shape current narratives. In his essays on peace, economic and social justice, he particularly examines the word 'peace' as an apparently indisputable term—who does not want and claim for peace? Referring to

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

Peace Research Studies, Pontara sustains that 'peace' and 'non-violence' are empty words—if not commodities—if we do not consider structural injustices as forms of violence. Therefore, instead of defining peace as the general absence of violence he prefers to adopt a wider conceptualization of violence as enacted in three main forms: *direct*, *structural*, and *cultural*. *Direct* violence is any form of direct fight or bloody action; *structural* violence is connected to the unfair distribution of power and resources made by institutions and systems which cause avoidable sufferings and deaths; *cultural* violence is the combination of all those cultural, ideological, and linguistic factors which help disguise or justify the first two forms of violence (2016, 31). Unless we are activists too, as teachers and educators we cannot do much to oppose the first two forms of violence, but we can actively engage to contrast the third by eliciting attention to language and to words to help detect and contrast overall narratives which culpably ignore injustices, reproduce inequalities, devastate the planet, conduct continuous warfare, and, by all of these, create millions of poor and refugees. Education can play a fundamental role in developing a critical awareness of how words are used, helping individuals read words and in-between words, as in Orwell's prophetic sentence "in the long run, a hierarchical society [is] only possible on a basis of poverty and ignorance" (2003 [1949], 194).

As the militant and applied branch of knowledge, Education is there to help us all acknowledge how the (re)production of foreignness (re)produces injustices and inequalities, whereas foreignness could be critically investigated not as a monolithic and reified construct but rather as a situated and liminal condition which interrogates both the self and the others. Indeed, the situatedness of foreignness foregrounds the relativity of our positioning in the world: in Eva Hoffman's words, it shows that no one is any longer "the norm or the center, that there is no one geographic center pulling the world together . . . [as] in a decentered world we are always simultaneously in the center and in the periphery, [and] that every competing center makes us marginal" (1998, 275). At the same time, the condition of liminality foregrounded by foreignness reveals the relativity and impermanence of our life, and therefore makes foreignness more than a feature, but rather a metaphor of the human condition.

This book has examined the concept of Foreignness from the perspective of foreign languages and Foreign Language Education, campaigning for a critical Foreign Language Education as a way to reconceptualize borders, both within and without, viewing them as mutable frontiers of our identities as well as of our small and interconnected planet. Within such a perspective, this volume has also intended to be a reminder of what foreign languages are for, as in the already quoted Milani's words, "to communicate with all kinds

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

of people, meet new folks and new problems, and laugh at the sacred borders of all fatherlands." My hope is that all such elements have stimulated interest and curiosity in the readers, in particular the younger ones, inviting them to engage in critical thinking and action. I therefore wish to conclude this discussion with a particular encouragement to participate in social action using the words of Antonio Gramsci, an Italian philosopher and politician who, commenting on some new books and reviews he had received, in 1917 wrote: "Questi libri non sono altro per me che stimoli, che occasioni per pensare, per scavare in me stesso, per ritrovare in me stesso le ragioni profonde del mio essere, della mia partecipazione alla vita del mondo" [For me, these books are nothing else than stimuli, occasions to think, to delve into myself, to find the most profound reasons of my being, of my participation to the life of the world] (2011, 92).

NOTE

1. The word 'Patria' (= nation), usually spelled with the capital letter, derives from the Latin word 'pater' = father. It therefore explicitly connects the idea of the territory where one lives in to a patriarchal concept (nation = fatherland). The term 'Patria' used instead of 'nazione' is often used by nationalists and right-wing parties as the marker of the belonging to the 'Italianness.' Moreover, in the course of Italian history, the word 'Patria' has often been ideologically used to justify and promote wars and military interventions. For all the above reasons, and to contrast nationalism which is encoded in the word 'Patria,' the Italian writer Michela Murgia has recently proposed the new term 'Matria' (= motherland) as a more inclusive concept, suggesting that a new word can help us step outside a hierarchical and patriarchal vision of society which has caused so many disasters and injustices (2017).

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

References

Abdallah-Pretceille, Martine. 2005. *L'Éducation interculturelle*. 2nd ed. Paris: PUF.

———. 2006. "Interculturalism as a Paradigm for Thinking About Diversity." *Intercultural Education* 17, no. 5: 475–83. https://doi.org/10.1080/14675980601065764.

———. 2009. "Communication interculturelle, apprentissage du divers et de l'alterité" [Intercultural communication, the apprehension of diversity and alterity]. In *2008: European Year of Intercultural Dialogue: Discussing with Languages-Cultures*, edited by Aristea-Nikoleta Simeonidou-Christidou. Proceedings of the international conference, Thessaloniki, 12–14 December 2008, 51–57. Thessaloniki, GR: Aristotle University. http://www.frl.auth.gr/sites/congres/interventions.htm.

Abramović, Marina. 2011. "Conversation: Marina Abramović." Interview by Jeffrey Brown. *NewsHour*, PBS video, 8:35. April 8, 2011. https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/conversation-marina-abramovic.

———. 2016. *Walk through Walls. A Memoir*. London: Fig Tree.

Adichie, Chimamanda Ngozi. 2009. "The Danger of a Single Story." Recorded July 2009, at TEDGlobal 2009, in Oxford. Video, 18:43. https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story#t-9760.

Alexander, Bryant Keith, Lily A. Arasaratnam, Roberto Avant-Mier, Aisha Durham, Lisa Flores, Wendy Leeds-Hurwitz, S. Lily Mendoza, John Oetzel, Joyce Osland, Yukio Tsuda, Jing Yin, and Rona Halualani. 2014. "Defining and Communicating What 'Intercultural' and 'Intercultural Communication' Means to Us." *Journal of International and Intercultural Communication* 7, no. 1: 14–37. https://doi.org/10.1080/17513057.2014.869524.

Amati-Mehler, Jacqueline, Simona Argentieri, and Jorge Canestri. 1990. *La Babele dell'inconscio: lingua madre e lingue straniere nella dimensione psicoanalitica* [The Babel of the unconscious: Mother-tongue and foreign languages in the psychoanalytic dimension]. Milano: Raffaello Cortina Editore.

Anyon, Jean 2009. "Introduction: Critical Theory, Educational Research, and Intellectual agency." In Anyon *et al.* 2009, 1–22.

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

Anyon, Jean, Michael J. Dumas, Darla Linville, Kathleen Nolan, Madeleine Pérez, Eve Tuck, and Jen Weiss. 2009. *Theory and Educational Research toward Critical Social Explanation*. New York: Routledge.

Appiah, Kwame Anthony. 1996. "Race, Culture and Identity: Misunderstood Connections." Lecture delivered at University of California at San Diego, October 27 and 28, 1994. In *The Tanner Lectures on Human Values*, vol. 17, edited by Grethe B. Peterson, 51–136. Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press. https://tannerlectures.utah.edu/lecture-library.php#a.

Arendt, Hannah. 1998 (1958). *The Human Condition*. 2nd ed. Chicago; London: The University of Chicago Press.

Atkinson, Paul. 1990. *The Ethnographic Imagination: Textual Constructions of Reality*. London; New York: Routledge.

Auer, Peter, ed. 1998. *Code-Switching in Conversation: Language, Interaction and Identity*. London; New York: Routledge.

———. 2006. "Sociolinguistic Crossing." In *Sca-Spe*, 490–92. Vol. 11 of *Encyclopedia of Language & Linguistics*, edited by Keith Brown. 2nd ed. Oxford: Elsevier.

———, ed. 2007. *Style and Social Identities. Alternative Approaches to Linguistic Heterogeneity.* Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton.

Baker, Will. 2017. *Culture and Identity through English as a Lingua Franca. Rethinking Concepts and Goals in Intercultural Communication*. Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton.

Barni, Monica. 2008. "Mapping Immigrant Languages in Italy." In Barni and Extra 2008, 217–43.

Barni, Monica, and Guus Extra, eds. 2008. *Mapping Linguistic Diversity in Multicultural Contexts*. Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton.

Bauman, Zygmunt. 2009. *Intervista sull'identità* [Interview on identity]. Edited by Benedetto Vecchi. 9th ed. Roma: Laterza.

Bazzanella, Carla. 2011. *Linguistica e pragmatica del linguaggio: un'introduzione* [Linguistics and linguistic pragmatics: An introduction]. 3rd ed. Roma: Laterza.

BBC News. 2016. "Bamenda Protests: Mass Arrests in Cameroon." November 23, 2016. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-38078238.

Birch, Barbara, and Ilham Nasser. 2017. "Forgiveness as Pedagogy in the English Language Classroom." In *English Across the Fracture Lines: The Contribution and Relevance of English to Security, Stability and Peace*, edited by Elizabeth J. Erling, 39–47. London: British Council Publication. https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/english-across-fracture-lines.

Bitti, Federico. 2017. "Tommy, Laioung e Amir, tra rap e voglia di cittadinanza" [Tommy, Laioung and Amir. Between rap and citizenship]. *la Repubblica.it*. July 8, 2017. http://www.repubblica.it/politica/2017/07/08/news/tommy_laioung_e_amir_tra_rap_e_voglia_di_cittadinanza-170256311/.

Block, David. 2014 (2007). *Second Language Identities*. London; New Delhi; New York: Bloomsbury.

Blommaert, Jan, and Ben Rampton. 2012. *Language and Superdiversity*, MMG Working Paper 12-09. Göttingen: Max-Planck-Institut zur Erforschung multireligiöser und multiethnischer Gesellschaften / Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity. www.mmg.mpg.de/workingpapers.

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1991. *Language and Symbolic Power*. Edited and introduced by John B. Thompson. Cambridge: Polity Press.

British Council English and Exams. 2015. "English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) in the English language classroom." YouTube video, 2:34. Published February 6, 2015 by British Council English and Exams. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qfk5y5QMvOI.

Bucholtz, Mary, and Kira Hall. 2005. "Identity and Interaction: A Sociocultural Linguistic Approach." *Discourse Studies* 7, nos. 4–5: 585–614. https://doi.org/10.1177/1461445605054407.

Butler, Judith. 1990. *Gender Trouble. Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York; London: Routledge.

Buxbaum, Edith. 1949. "The Role of a Second Language in the Formation of Ego and Superego." *The Psychoanalytic Quarterly* 18, no. 3: 279–89.

Byram, Michael. 2006. "Developing a Concept of Intercultural Citizenship." In Alred, Byram, and Fleming 2006, 122–56.

Byram, Michael, Bella Gribkova, and Hugh Starkey. 2002. *Developing the Intercultural Dimension in Language Teaching. A Practical Introduction for Teachers*. Strasbourg: Language Policy Division of the Council of Europe. Accessed June 3, 2018. https://www.coe.int/en/web/platform-plurilingual-intercultural-language-education/intercultural-aspects#{%2228072155%22:[5]}.

Byram, Michael, and Manuel Tost Planet, eds. 2000. *Social Identity and the European Dimension: Intercultural Competence through Foreign Language Learning*. Publication of the Council of Europe. Graz: European Centre for Modern Languages; Strasbourg: Modern Languages Division. https://www.ecml.at/tabid/277/PublicationID/53/Default.aspx.

Byram, Mike, and Geneviève Zarate. 1997. The Social and Intercultural Dimension of Language Learning and Teaching. Strasburg: Council of Europe.

Byrd Clark, Julie S., and Fred Dervin, eds. 2014. *Reflexivity in Language and Intercultural Education. Rethinking Multilingualism and Interculturality*. New York: Routledge.

Carroll, Lewis. 2016 (1871). *Through the Looking Glass*. Adelaide, SA: The University of Adelaide Library. Web edition published by eBooks@Adelaide. Last updated March 27, 2016. https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/c/carroll/lewis/looking/index.html.

Ceracchi, Marika. 2007. "Lingua madre e lingua straniera: le implicazioni psicoaffettive dell'apprendimento" [Mother-tongue and foreign languages: Psychological and emotional implications of learning]. *Studi di Glottodidattica* 1, no. 1: 19–34.

Coffey, Amanda. 1999. *The Ethnographic Self: Fieldwork and the Representation of Identity*. London; Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Coffey, Amanda, and Paul Atkinson. 1996. *Making Sense of Qualitative Data: Complementary Research Strategies*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Cole, Deborah, and Bryan Meadows. 2013. "Avoiding the Essentialist Trap in Intercultural Education. Using Critical Discourse Analysis in the Language Classroom." In Dervin and Liddicoat 2013: 29–47.

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

Collins, James. 2006. "Where's Class in Second Language Learning?" *Working Papers in Urban Language and Literacy*. Paper 41. https://www.kcl.ac.uk/sspp/departments/education/research/Research-Centres/ldc/publications/workingpapers/abstracts/WP041-Wheres-class-in-second-language-learning.aspx.

Colombo, Maddalena, and Mariagrazia Santagati. 2010. "Interpreting Social Inclusion of Young Immigrants in Italy." *Italian Journal of Sociology of Education* 2, no. 4: 9–48. http://hdl.handle.net/10807/8517.

Dasli, Maria, and Adriana Raquel Díaz, eds. 2017. *The Critical Turn in Language and Intercultural Communication Pedagogy. Theory, Research and Practice*. New York: Routledge.

Dervin, Fred. 2017. "Critical Turns in Language and Intercultural Communication Pedagogy. The Simple-Complex Continuum (Simplexity) as a New Perspective." In Dasli and Díaz 2017: 58–70.

Dervin, Fred, and Anthony J. Liddicoat, eds. 2013. *Linguistics for Intercultural Education*. Amsterdam; Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins.

Dervin, Fred, and Karen Risager, eds. 2015. *Researching Identity and Interculturality*. New York: Routledge.

Dewaele, Jean-Marc. 2004. "The Emotional Force of Swearwords and Taboo Words in the Speech of Multilinguals." *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* 25, nos. 2-3: 204–22.

———. 2010. *Emotions in Multiple Languages*. Basingstoke, Hampshire, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.

Dewey, John. 2005 (1934). *Art as Experience*. New York: TarcherPerigee.

———. 2007 (1938). *Experience and Education*. The Kappa Delta Pi Lecture Series. E-book published November 2007 by Simon & Schuster. http://www.simonandschuster.com/books/Experience-And-Education/John-Dewey/9781416587279.

Dewey, Martin. 2007. "English as a Lingua Franca and Globalization: An Interconnected Perspective." *International Journal of Applied Linguistics* 17, no. 3: 332–54. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1473-4192.2007.00177.x.

———. 2012a. "Beyond labels and categories in English Language Teaching: Critical Reflections on Popular Conceptualisations." In *English—A Changing Medium for Schooling*, edited by Constant Leung and Brian Street, 129–149. Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters.

———. 2012b. "Towards a *Post-normative* Approach: Learning the Pedagogy of ELF." *Journal of English as Lingua Franca* 1, no. 1: 141–70. https://doi.org/10.1515/jelf-2012-0007.

Dörnyei, Zoltan, and Ema Ushioda. 2011. *Teaching and Researching Motivation*. 2nd ed. Harlow, England; New York: Longman.

Duchêne, Alexandre, and Monica Heller, eds. 2012. *Language in Late Capitalism. Pride and Profit*. New York; London: Routledge. Also available as e-book.

Duranti, Alessandro. 1997. *Linguistic Anthropology.* New York: Cambridge UP.

EACEA, Eurostat, and Eurydice. 2013. *Key Data on Teaching Languages at School in Europe. 2012 Edition*. Brussels: EACEA P9, Eurydice and Policy Support. https://doi.org/10.2797/83967.

Eagleton, Terry. 2016. *Culture*. New Haven, CT; London: Yale UP.

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

Eco, Umberto. 2003. *Dire quasi la stessa cosa. Esperienze di traduzione* [Saying almost the same thing. Experiences in translation]. Milano: Bompiani.

Fairclough, Norman. 1989. *Language and Power*. London; New York: Longman.

Family Guy. 2008. Season 6, episode 8, "McStroke." Directed by Brian Iles. Aired January 13, 2008, on Fox.

———. 2013. Season 12, episode 5, "Boopa-dee Bappa-dee." Directed by Mike Kim. Aired November 17, 2013, on Fox.

Fine, Michelle. 2008. "An Epilogue, of Sorts." In *Revolutionizing Education. Youth Participatory Action Research in Motion*, edited by Julio Cammarota and Michelle Fine, 213–34. New York; London: Routledge. Also available as e-book.

Flick, Uwe. 2009. *Designing Qualitative Research*. 4th ed. London: Sage.

Freire, Paulo. 2005 (1970). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York: Continuum.

———. 1973. *Education for Critical Consciousness*. New York: Seabury Press.

———. 1998. *Teachers as Cultural Workers*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

———. 2005. *Teachers as Cultural Workers. Letters to Those Who Dare Teach*. Expanded edition with a new commentary by Peter McLaren, Joe L. Kincheloe, and Shirley Steinberg. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

———. 2014. "On Language and Power." Interview. YouTube video, 2:05. Published July 19, 2014, by Ella's Child. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DTwY2nGONs8.

Frisina, Annalisa. 2006. "Back-talk Focus Groups as a Follow-Up Tool in Qualitative Migration Research: The Missing Link?" In "Qualitative Migration Research in Contemporary Europe," edited by Maren Borkert, Alberto Martín Pérez, Sam Scott & Carla De Tona. Thematic issue, *FQS – Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research* 7, no. 3, Art. 5. https://doi.org/10.17169/fqs-7.3.138.

From Linguistic Diversity to Plurilingual Education: Guide for the Development of Language Education Policies in Europe. 2007. Strasbourg: Language Policy Division of the Council of Europe. Accessed May 3, 2018. https://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Guide_niveau3_EN.asp.

Giorgis, Paola. 2013a. *Diversi da sé, simili agli altri. L2, immaginazione e letteratura come pratiche di pedagogia interculturale* [Different from oneself, similar to others. L2, imagination and literature as practices of intercultural education]. With an afterword by Martin Dewey. Roma: CISU.

———. 2013b. "Mind the Gap. EFL/ELF: What Lies in between What Teachers Teach and What Students Use, and Its Pedagogical Implications." *Boğaziçi* Üniversitesi *Eğitim Dergisi / Boğaziçi University Journal of Education* 30, no. 1 (*BUJE* issue on ELF and education): 87–98. Accessed June 7, 2018. http://dergipark.ulakbim.gov.tr/buje/article/view/5000140046.

———. 2015. "Teaching EFL with a Hidden Agenda: Introducing Intercultural Awareness through a Grammar Lesson." Published online November 24, 2015, by Center for Intercultural Dialogue. http://centerforinterculturaldialogue.org/2015/11/24/teaching-efl-with-a-hidden-agenda-introducing-intercultural-awareness-through-a-grammar-lesson/.

———. 2016a. "Incontrare l'altro. Per una pedagogia critica e interculturale delle lingue straniere" [Meeting otherness. For a critical and intercultural pedagogy of

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

foreign languages]. *InSegno—Rivista Semestrale per l'insegnamento dell'Italiano come lingua seconda/straniera*, no. 1: 16–25. Published online by Libreria Becarelli. http://www.labecarelli.it/wordpress/catalogo/insegno-italiano-l2-in-classe/insegno-numero-1-2016/.

———. 2016b. "On Translation as an Intercultural Practice." Guest post. Published online August 10, 2016, by Center for Intercultural Dialogue. https://centerforinterculturaldialogue.org/2016/08/10/on-translation-as-an-intercultural-practice/.

———. 2017. "Critical Cultural Linguistics (CCL)." *Key Concepts in Intercultural Dialogue*, no. 88. Published online by Center for Intercultural Dialogue. https://centerforinterculturaldialogue.files.wordpress.com/2017/12/kc88-critical-cultural-linguistics1.pdf.

———. Forthcoming. "The Spaces In-Between. Foreign Language Education as Critical and Intercultural Education." *Taboo: The Journal of Culture and Education*.

Giorgis, Paola, Isabella Pescarmona, Rebecca Sansoé, Elisa Sartore, Federica Setti [wom.an.ed collective]. 2017. "Identity and Diversity: The Educational Challenge in Urban Contexts." In *Second International Handbook of Urban Education*, edited by George W. Noblit and William T. Pink, 1233–62. Dordrecht: Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-40317-5_64.

Giroux, Henry A. 1983. *Theory and Resistance in Education. A Pedagogy for the Opposition*. With a foreword by Paulo Freire. South Hadley, MA: Bergin and Garvey.

Gobbo, Francesca. 1992. *Radici e frontiere. Contributo all'analisi del discorso pedagogico interculturale* [Roots and frontiers. Contributions to the analysis of the intercultural pedagogic discourse]. Padova: Alfasessanta.

———, ed. 2007. *Processi educativi nelle società multiculturali* [Educational processes in multicultural societies]. Roma: CISU.

———, ed. 2008. *L'educazione al tempo dell'intercultura* [Pedagogy at the time of the intercultural]. Roma: Carocci.

———. 2011. *A proposito di intercultura* [On interculture]. Padova: Imprimitur.

Goffman, Erving. 1959. *The Presentation of the Self in Everyday Life*. Chicago: Anchor Books.

Graddol, David. 2006. *English Next. Why Global English May Mean the End of 'English as a Foreign Language.'* London: British Council. Also published online. https://englishagenda.britishcouncil.org/continuing-professional-development/cpd-researchers/english-next.

Gramsci, Antonio. 2011. *Odio gli indifferenti. Scritti 1917–1925* [I hate the indifferent. Collected Writings 1917–1925]. Milano: Chiarelettere.

Guido, Maria Grazia. 2008. *English as Lingua Franca in Cross-cultural Immigration Domains.* Bern [etc.]: Peter Lang.

Gumperz, John J. 1982. *Language and Social Identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP.

Heller, Monica. 2011. *Paths to Post-Nationalism: A Critical Ethnography of Language and Identity*. Oxford; New York: Oxford UP.

Heller, Monica, and Bonnie McElhinny. 2017. *Language, Capitalism, Colonialism: Toward a Critical History*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Hoffman, Eva. 1998. *Lost in Translation. A Life in a New Language*. London: Vintage Books.

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

Holmes, Prue, and Fred Dervin, eds. 2016. *The Cultural and Intercultural Dimensions of English as a Lingua Franca*. Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters.

Huber, Josef, and Christopher Reynolds, eds. 2014. *Developing Intercultural Competence through Education*. Pestalozzi Series no. 3. Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing. https://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/pestalozzi/Source/Documentation/Pestalozzi3.pdf.

"Italian Stereotypes." 2014. Video, 13:04. Published October 19, 2014, by Germany vs USA. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AtLNF-ehOn8.

"Italian Stereotypes." 2015. Video, 5:05. Published April 20, 2015, by HanksProStudio. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uhkdEG-2AIk.

Jenkins, Jennifer. 2007. *English as a Lingua Franca: Attitude and Identity*. Oxford: Oxford UP. https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199746866.001.0001.

Klein, Gabriella Brigitte, and Isabella Paoletti, eds. 2002. *IN & OUT: procedure conversazionali e strategie comunicative di inclusione e di esclusione* [IN & OUT: conversational procedures and communicative strategies of inclusion and exclusion]. Napoli: Edizioni scientifiche italiane.

Klemperer, Victor. 2000 (1947). *LTI: Linguae Tertii Imperii—The Language of the Third Reich*. London; New York: Continuum.

Kramsch, Claire J. 1993. *Context and Culture in Language Teaching*. Oxford: Oxford UP.

———. 2009. *The Multilingual Subject: What Foreign Language Learners Say About Their Experience and Why It Matters*. Oxford; New York: Oxford UP.

Kristeva, Julia. 1998. *Étrangers à nous-mêmes* [Strangers to ourselves]. Paris: Gallimard.

Kubota Ryuko. 2004. "Critical Multiculturalism and Second Language Education." In Norton and Toohey 2004, 30–52. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139524834.003.

Kvale, Steinar. 1996. *InterViews. An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Lastrucci, Emilio. 2006. "Scolarizzazione [Schooling]." In *Enciclopedia dei ragazzi Treccani*. Accessed May 16, 2018. http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/scolarizzazione_%28Enciclopedia-dei-ragazzi%29/.

Leeds-Hurwitz, Wendy. 1990. "Notes in the History of Intercultural Communication: The Foreign Service Institute and the Mandate for Intercultural Training." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 76, no. 3: 262–81. https://doi.org/10.1080/00335639009383919.

———. 2010. "Writing the Intellectual History of Intercultural Communication." In *Handbook of Critical Intercultural Communication*, edited by Thomas K. Nakayama and Rona Tamiko Halualani, 21–33. Oxford: Blackwell.

Luke, Allan. 2004. "Two Takes On the Critical." In Norton and Toohey 2004, 21–29. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139524834.002.

MCE Movimento di Cooperazione Educativa. 2017. "Appello per ius soli e ius culturae [A plea for ius soli and ius culturae]." Edited by Segreteria Nazionale. September 17, 2017. http://www.mce-fimem.it/appello-per-ius-soli-e-ius-culturae/.

Mead, George Herbert. 2002 (1934). "The Self." In *Identities: Race, Class, Gender, and Nationality*, edited by Linda Martín Alcoff and Eduardo Mendieta, 33–40. Oxford: Blackwell.

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

Milani, Lorenzo. 2012 (1965). "Lettera ai cappellani militari [Letter to the army chaplains]." In *L'obbedienza non è più una virtù ma la più subdola delle tentazioni* [Obedience is not a virtue any longer but the most perfidious of compulsions], edited by Fondazione don Lorenzo Milani. Firenze: Fondazione don Lorenzo Milani. Full text published online December 19, 2012. https://www.donlorenzomilani.it/lobbedienza-non-e-piu-una-virtu-2/.

Murgia, Michela. 2017. "Il concetto di patria ha fatto solo danni. Cominciamo a parlare di Matria" [The concept of fatherland has caused only harm. Let's start talking about motherland]. *L'Espresso.* November 15, 2017. http://espresso.repubblica.it/visioni/cultura/2017/11/15/news/michela-murgia-per-sconfiggere-i-nazionalismi-distruggiamo-il-maschilismo-1.314252.

Newman, Broke. 2015. "10 Common Italian Stereotypes that Are Actually True". *TakeLessons* (blog), June 17, 2015. http://takelessons.com/blog/italian-stereotypes-z09.

Norton, Bonny. 2000. *Identity and Language Learning: Gender, Ethnicity and Educational Change*. Harlow, UK: Longman/Pearson Education. Downloadable text for private study use only, accessed June 3, 2018. http://faculty.educ.ubc.ca/norton/Norton_Identity_and_Language_Learning_1e_2000.pdf.

———. 2013. *Identity and Language Learning. Extending the Conversation*. Second edition. With an afterword by Claire Kramsch. Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters. Preface, introduction and references downloadable for private study use only, accessed June 3, 2018. http://faculty.educ.ubc.ca/norton/Norton 2013 Intro.pdf.

Norton, Bonny, and Kelleen Toohey, eds. 2004. *Critical Pedagogies and Language Learning*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139524834.

Norton, Bonny, and Karen Vanderheyden. 2004. "Comic Book Culture and Second Language Learners." In Norton and Toohey, 2004, 201–21. https://Dol.org/10.1017/CB09781139524834.011.

Orwell, George. 2003 (1949). *1984*. With a foreword by Thomas Pynchon. London; New York: Penguin. Also available as e-book.

Pavlenko, Aneta. 2002. "Bilingualism and Emotions." *Multilingua—Journal of Cross-Cultural and Interlanguage Communication* 21, no. 1: 45–78. https://doi.org/10.1515/mult.2002.004.

Pavlenko, Aneta, ed. 2006. *Bilingual Minds: Emotional Experience, Expression and Representation*. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.

Pavlenko, Aneta, and Adrian Blackledge, eds. 2004. *Negotiation of Identities in Multilingual Contexts*. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.

Pennycook, Alastair. 1994. *The Cultural Politics of English as an International Language*. London; New York: Longman.

———. 2001. *Critical Applied Linguistics. A Critical Introduction.* Mahwah, NJ; London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. Also available as e-book.

———. 2004. "Performativity and Language Studies." *Critical Inquiry in Language Studies* 1, no. 1: 1–19. Published online Dec. 14, 2009. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15427595cils0101_1.

Phillipson, Robert. 1992. *Linguistic Imperialism*. Oxford: Oxford UP.

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

Phipps, Alison, and Manuela Guilherme, eds. 2004. *Critical Pedagogies. Political Approaches to Language and Intercultural Communication*. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.

Piller, Ingrid. 2007. "Linguistics and Intercultural Communication." *Language and Linguistic Compass* 1, no. 3: 208–26. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1749-818X.2007.00012.x.

Pistolesi, Elena, and Sabine Schwarze, eds. 2007. *Vicini e lontani. Identità e alterità della/nella lingua* [Near and far. Identity and alterity of/in the language]. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang.

Pole, Christopher, and Marlene Morrison. 2003. *Ethnography for Education*. Buckingham: Open UP.

Pontara, Giuliano. 2016. *Quale pace? Sei saggi su pace e guerra, violenza e nonviolenza, giustizia economica e benessere sociale* [Which peace? Six essays on peace and war, violence and non-violence, economic justice and social welfare]. Milano: Mimesis.

Rampton, Ben. 1995. *Crossing: Language and Ethnicity Among Adolescents*. London; New York: Longman.

Remotti, Francesco. 1996. *Contro l'identità* [Against identity]. Roma; Bari: Laterza.

———. 2010. *L'ossessione identitaria* [Identity obsession]. Roma; Bari: Laterza. Also available as e-book.

Sansoé, Rebecca. 2012. *Non solo sui libri. Un'etnografia della formazione professionale* [Not on books only. An ethnography of vocational training]. Roma: CISU.

Santerini, Giulia. 2017. "Ius soli: 'Ehi, lo sai che (non) sei italiano?'" [Ius soli: 'Hey, do you know you are—not—Italian?']. Interview. Repubblica Tv video, 5:28. June 16, 2017. https://video.repubblica.it/dossier/riforme-da-non-tradire/ius-soli-ehi-lo-sai-che-nonsei-italiano/278807/279407?ref=RHPPLF-BH-I0-C8-P5-S1.8-T2.

Scheffler, Israel. 1985. *Of Human Potential: An Essay in the Philosophy of Education*. Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Scuola di Barbiana. 2007 (1967). *Lettera a una professoressa* [Letter to a teacher]. Firenze: Libreria Editrice Fiorentina.

Seidlhofer, Barbara. 2004. "Research Perspectives on Teaching English as a Lingua Franca." *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics* 24 (January 2004): 209–39. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0267190504000145.

Sen, Amartya. 2006. *Identity and Violence. The Illusion of Destiny*. London; New York: Penguin. Also available as e-book.

Setti, Federica. 2015. *Una questione di prospettive. Etnografia dell'educazione e delle relazioni tra sinti e non sinti* [A matter of perspective. An ethnography of education and of the relations between Sinti and non-Sinti]. Roma: CISU.

Sharifian, Farzad. 2011. *Cultural Conceptualizations and Language: Theoretical Framework and Applications*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. https://doi.org/10.1075/clscc.1.

———. 2016. "An Interview with Prof. Farzad Sharifian." By Musa Nushi, Zahra Abolhassani, and Naiemeh Mojerloo. *Asian-Pacific Journal of Second and Foreign Language Education* 1, no. 6. https://doi.org/10.1186/s40862-016-0011-x.

———. 2017. *Cultural Linguistics. Cultural Conceptualisations and Language*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. https://doi.org/10.1075/clscc.8.

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

Sharifian, Farzad, and Maryam Jamarani, eds. 2013. *Language and Intercultural Communication in the New Era*. New York; London: Routledge. Also available as e-book.

Sharifian, Farzad, and Gary B. Palmer, eds. 2007. *Applied Cultural Linguistics. Implications for Second Language Learning and Intercultural Communication*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. https://doi.org/10.1075/celcr.7.

Simon, Roger I. 1992. *Teaching Against the Grain: Texts for a Pedagogy of Possibility*. New York: Bergin & Garvey.

Sironi, Francesca. 2017. "Quanti, dove e perché [How many, where and why]." *L'Espresso* LXIII, no. 52 (December 24): 21, http://fondiazioneleonmoressa.org/2017/12/27/65–81/.

Steinberg, Shirley R., and Joe L. Kincheloe. 2010. "Power, Emancipation, and Complexity: Employing Critical Theory." *Power and Education* 2, no. 2: 140–51. https://doi.org/10.2304/power.2010.2.2.140.

Strada, Gino. 2015. "Abolishing War Is Urgently Needed, and This Is Achievable." Acceptance speech at the Right Livelihood Award 2015 ceremony. Accessed June 13, 2018. https://en.emergency.it/culture-of-peace/abolishing-war-is-urgently-needed/.

Swift, Jonathan. 2003 (1726). *Gulliver's Travels*. London: Penguin.

Visker, Rudy. 2005. "The Strange(r) Within Me." *Ethical Perspective. Journal of the European Ethics Network* 12, no. 4: 425–41. https://doi.org/10.2143/EP.12.4.2004791.

Widdowson, Henry. 2012. Plenary Speech at *ELF 5, The Fifth International Conference of English as a Lingua Franca*, Boğaziçi University, Istanbul, May 24–26, 2012.

Witte, Arnd. 2015. "The Subjective Blending of Spaces in Intercultural Foreign Language Learning: Theoretical Considerations and Issues of Assessment." In Witte and Harden 2015, 9–40.

Witte, Arnd, and Theo Harden, eds. 2015. *Foreign Language Learning as Intercultural Experience. The Subjective Dimension*. Oxford [etc.]: Peter Lang.

Wollstonecraft, Mary. 2004 (1792). *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.

Wortham, Stanton, and Angela Reyes. 2016 (2011). "Linguistic Anthropology of Education." Chapter 9. In *A Companion to the Anthropology of Education*, edited by Bradley A. Levinson and Mica Pollock, 137–53. Oxford: Wiley Blackwell. Blackwell Reference Online, accessed June 5, 2018. http://www.blackwellreference.com/public/tocnode?id=g9781405190053_chunk_g978140519005311#citation.

Žižek, Slavoj. 2007. *La violenza invisibile*. [The invisible violence]. Milano: Rizzoli.

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

Index

Abdallah-Pretceille, Martine, xv, 51, 54, 71, 80, 89–90
Abramović, Marina, 1, 25
Accademia della Crusca, 4, 28n2
Adichie, Chimamanda Ngozi, 19
alterity, xiii, 31, 36, 66. *See also* identity
Amati-Mehler, Jacqueline, 36, 37
Anthropology, 25, 34, 51–53, 92, 93, 101; engaged, radical, non-hegemonic, 101; of Education, 53
Anyon, Jean, xvii, 46, 48
Appiah, Kwame Anthony, 53, 58n5
Arendt, Hannah, xvi, 9
Argentieri, Simona, 36
Atkinson, Paul, 66–68
Auer, Peter, 72

Baker, Will, 83, 84, 86, 88
Barni, Monica, 5, 9
Bauman, Zygmunt, 98
Bazzanella, Carla, 66
Benedict, Ruth, 51
Birch, Barbara, 83
Blackledge, Adrian, xv, 10, 37, 39
Block, David, xv, 10
Blommaert, Jan, 10, 97–98
Bourdieu, Pierre, 39
Bucholtz, Mary, 37
Butler, Judith, 39, 98
Buxbaum, Edith, 37
Byram, Michael, xiv, xv, 89
Byrd Clark, Julie S., xv

C1 (native culture) / C2 (target culture), 80–81. *See also* Kramsch, Claire J.
Canestri, Jorge, 36
capitalism, neo-liberal, 39, 99–102. *See also* Eagleton, Terry
Carroll, Lewis, 97
CCL. *See* Critical Cultural Linguistics
CEFR. *See* Common European Framework of Reference
Center for Intercultural Dialogue (CID), 28n12, 95n6
Ceracchi, Marika, 37
CID. *See* Center for Intercultural Dialogue
citizenship, 7, 9, 30, 46; intercultural, 18–21; global, 83. *See also* ius
code switching, 28n10, 60, 71–72
Coffey, Amanda, 64, 67, 68
Cole, Deborah, 89
Collins, James, 102
Colombo, Maddalena, 61
colonialism, 3, 4, 39, 83; neo-, xiv, 84, 99, 101; post-, 34, 82
Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), 86

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

Communication Studies, 52, 92
communication, xiv, 35, 37, 39, 53, 54, 57, 69–72, 77, 80, 84, 85, 87, 89, 90, 98; global, xiv. *See also* Communication Studies; Intercultural Communication
Critical Cultural Linguistics (CCL), 91–94, 95n6
Critical Language Education, 90, 91
Critical Pedagogies, xiii, xv, xvi, 27, 46, 47, 77, 83
cross-linguistic: interactions, 11, 60, 70, 72, 77n4, 88, practices, 11, 60.
cultural conceptualizations, 91–94. *See also* Cultural Linguistics
Cultural Linguistics, 92
cultural misunderstandings, 90, 92, 101. *See also* Piller, Ingrid
culture, xv, xvi, 2–4, 9–13, 15, 17, 19, 23, 24, 34, 49, 51–53, 68, 72, 74, 80–84, 88–91, 100–102. *See also* C1/C2; Eagleton, Terry, 99–101; linguacultural background

Dasli, Maria, xv, 12, 91
DELTA. *See* Diploma of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
Dervin, Fred, xv, 23, 24, 88
Dewaele, Jean-Marc, 37, 38, 66
Dewey, John, 55–57
Dewey, Martin, 82–83, 85–87
dialects, 2–7, 10, 16–18, 20
Díaz, Adriana Raquel, xv
Diploma of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (DELTA), 85
Dörnyei, Zoltán, 66
Duchêne, Alexandre, 39
Duranti, Alessandro, 66

Eagleton, Terry, 24, 51, 99–101
Eco, Umberto, 17
Education, xv, xvii, xviii, 2, 10, 12, 29, 44–48, 53–57, 80, 81, 88, 92, 97, 102, 103. *See also* Critical Language Education; Foreign Language Education (FLE); Intercultural Education
EFL. *See* English as a Foreign Language
ELF. *See* English as a Lingua Franca
ELT. *See* English Language Teaching
Emergency (NGO), 49–50
English as a Foreign Language (EFL), 59, 83, 85
English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), 83–85
English as a Second Language (ESL), 85
English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), 85
English Language Teaching (ELT), 82–87
English Native Language (ENL), 87; speakers, 83; varieties, 87
ENL. *See* English Native Language
ESL. *See* English as a Second Language
ESOL. *See* English for Speakers of Other Languages
ethnic groups, 21. *See also* nationalities
Ethnography, 13, 25, 34, 65, 66, 77. *See also* Malinovski's four principles
Extra, Guus, 5, 9

Fairclough, Norman, 39
Fine, Michelle, 76
FL. *See* Foreign Language
FLE. *See* Foreign Language Education
Flick, Uwe, 64
Foreign Language (FL), xiii, xiv, xv, xvi, 4, 12, 13, 27, 32, 33, 39, 52, 59, 60, 70, 72, 73, 79, 80, 81, 83, 88, 94, 95n1, 103. *See also* Foreign Language Education (FLE)
Foreign Language Education (FLE), xiii–xvii, xviii n1, 11, 27, 32, 33, 79, 80, 90–94, 94n1, 103
Foreign Service Institute (FSI), 52
foreign *vs.* native, 7–9

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

Freire, Paulo, 1, 13, 39, 43–44, 46–47, 59, 76, 86
Frisina, Annalisa, 65
FSI. *See* Foreign Service Institute

Giorgis, Paola, 13, 17, 77n2, 92, 95n1, 95n6
Giroux, Henry A., 46
Gobbo, Francesca, 16, 51, 53, 54
Goffman, Erving, 66
Graddol, David, 95n1
Gramsci, Antonio, 104
Gribkova, Bella, xv, 89
Guido, Maria Grazia, 84
Guilherme, Manuela, xv
Gumperz, John J., 66

Hall, Edward T., 52
Hall, Kira, 37
Harden, Theo, xv, 13
Heller, Monica, xv, 37, 39, 80
Hoffman, Eva, xviii, 37–38, 103
Huber, Josef, 12

identity, xiii, xv–xviii, 4, 9–13, 15, 19–21, 23, 31, 33, 35, 39, 44, 53, 54, 59, 60, 66, 70, 71, 83, 89–93, 95n5, 98–100, 103. *See also* alterity
immigrants, 4, 7, 8, 10, 16, 53, 62; in Italy, 4–9; Italian dialects spoken by, 4; Italian spoken by, 3, 7; native languages of, 4–5
immigration, 4–7, 10, 14, 15, 60, 77n1; predominant minority *vs.* polycentric migrations, 4. *See also* migrations
imperialism, 83; linguistic, 82; of identity, 53
Intercultural Communication, xvi, 17, 19, 24–26, 52, 53, 85, 87, 89–91, 101. *See also* Foreign Service Institute (FSI)
Intercultural Education, xiii, xvi, 17, 19, 24–26, 52, 53, 84, 87, 89–92, 101
intercultural, xiii–xviii, 12–14, 29, 51–54, 60, 72, 73, 79–84, 87–92, 94, 101, 102; citizenship, 18–27; competence, 12, 80, 90; grammar, 14–16; poetry, 16–18. *See also* Intercultural Communication; Intercultural Education; intracultural
intracultural: communications, 85; differences, 53, 81. *See also* intercultural
Italian: citizenship. (s*ee* ius sanguinis); Constitution, 8–9; languages, history of, 2–7; linguistic landscape, 5–6; regional dialects, 2–4; school, 7, 59, 60
Italianness, 8, 28n3, 104n1
Italians, stereotypes on, 21, 23
Italy: neoplurilingualism, 5; new multilingualism, 4, 5. *See also* Accademia della Crusca; ius; migrations; Osservatorio Linguistico Permanente dell'Italiano Diffuso fra Stranieri e delle Lingue Immigrate in Italia [Permanent Linguistic Observatory of the Italian Language among Foreigners and of the Immigrant Languages in Italy]; Scuola di Barbiana [School of Barbiana]
ius: culturae, 7; sanguinis, 7–9; soli, 7. *See also* migrations

Jamarani, Maryam, xv
Jenkins, Jennifer, 83

Kinceloe, Joe L., 46
Klein, Gabriella Brigitte, 66
Klemperer, Victor, 3, 102
Kramsch, Claire J., xiii, xv, 13, 30, 32–33, 36, 57n2, 80–81, 82, 95n1
Kristeva, Julia, xiii, 30–33, 57n2
Kubota, Ryuko, 53, 81–82
Kvale, Steinar, 64, 66

language crossing, 28n10, 72. *See also* Rampton, Ben
language: and power, xv, 7, 10, 32, 34, 35, 39–48, 79–82, 89, 90, 93, 95n1;

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

first. (*see* mother tongue); foreign, xiii–xvii, 12–14, 27, 32, 39, 48, 52, 59, 60, 68, 70, 72, 73, 79, 80, 86, 91, 93, 103; proficiency, 10, 87; second, 10, 81, 85, 95n1, 102. *See also* Italian
Leeds-Hurwitz, Wendy, 49, 52
Liddicoat, Anthony J., xv, 88
Lingua e nuova didattica (Lend) [Language and New Language Education], xix n2, 95n3
linguacultural background, xiv, 11–12, 33, 53, 84
linguistic landscape, 4–5. *See also* Barni, Monica
Linguistics, xviii, 52, 88, 91–93. *See also* Critical Cultural Linguistics; Cultural Linguistics
Luke, Allan, 81, 82

Malinovski's four principles, 34. *See also* Ethnography
McElhinny, Bonnie, 39
Mead, George Herbert, 36
Meadows, Bryan, 89
migrations, 3–5, 9, 10, 14–16, 33, 37, 60, 77n1, 91, 95n1, 97, 98, 102; in Italy, 3–9. *See also* immigration; ius
Milani, Lorenzo, 39, 46–47, 94, 100, 103–104
monocultural, xiii, 33, 97, 99. *See also* intercultural; multicultural
monolingualism, 4, 33. *See also* multilingualism; plurilingualism
Morrison, Marlene, 63, 64, 65
mother tongue(s), xiv, 3, 13, 27, 36–39, 59, 60, 62, 64, 66, 70, 83–85, 94–95n1; dialect as, 2–3. *See also* language
multicultural, xiii, 10, 53, 69, 81, 88, 97, 99, 101
multilingualism, 4, 5, 10, 28n5, 32, 33, 72, 102; *vs.* plurilingualism, 28n5. *See also* linguistic landscape; monolingualism; plurilingualism
Murgia, Michela, 104n1

Nasser, Ilham, 83
nationalities, 4, 14, 21, 23, 64, 97. *See also* ethnic groups
native tongue/language. *See* mother tongue
native *vs.* foreign, 7–9
neomultilinguismo [new multilingualism], 4, 5. *See also* Italy
neoplurilingualism, 5
new populisms, 33, 43, 93, 99
Norton, Bonny, xv, 37, 72, 90, 94, 95n1

Orwell, George, 8, 10, 40–43, 79, 102–103
Osservatorio Linguistico Permanente dell'Italiano Diffuso fra Stranieri e delle Lingue Immigrate in Italia [Permanent Linguistic Observatory of the Italian Language among Foreigners and of the Immigrant Languages in Italy], 4
other(s), (the), xiii, xv, xvii, xviii, 8, 10, 17–20, 23–25, 31, 32, 35–39, 42, 45, 51–54, 59, 70–74, 80, 81, 82, 88–91, 92–94, 103. *See also* Otherness, self (the)
Otherness; 18, 31, 34, 51, 52, 71, 80, 89–91, 102

Palmer, Gary B., xiv
Paoletti, Isabella, 66
PAR. *See* Participatory Action Research
Participatory Action Research (PAR), 75–77
Patria, 8, 28n9, 100, 104n1. *See also* Italianness
Pavlenko, Aneta, xv, 3, 10, 37, 39, 66
Peace Research Studies, 102–103. *See also* Pontara, Giuliano
Pedagogy of the oppressed. *See* Freire, Paulo, 1. *See also* Critical Pedagogies
Pennycook, Alastair, xiv, 39, 74, 80, 82–83, 88, 95n5
Phillipson, Robert, 82
Phipps, Alison, xv

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

Piller, Ingrid, 90, 101–102
Pistolesi, Elena, 66
plurilingualism, xiii, 3, 5, 28n5, 62, 66, 88; *vs.* multilingualism, 28n5. *See also* monolingualism; multilingualism
Pole, Christopher, 63, 64, 65
Pontara, Giuliano, 102, 103
praxis, 1, 46, 90, 92

Rampton, Ben, 10, 28n10. 63, 66, 72, 97–98
Remotti, Francesco, 98
research methodologies, 59, 62–68; back-talk focus groups, 60, 62, 64–66, 69, 73, 75, 77n3; critique to, 73–76; interviews, 60–62, 64–66, 68, 69, 73, 74, 77n3; objectivity/ subjectivity, 64. *See also* Participatory Action Research (PAR)
Reyes, Angela, 44
Reynolds, Christopher, 12
Risager, Karen, xv

Sansoé, Rebecca, 77n1
Santagati, Mariagrazia, 61
Santerini, Giulia, 8
Scheffler, Israel, 38
Schwarze, Sabine, 66
Scuola di Barbiana [School of Barbiana], 47. *See also* Milani, Lorenzo
Second Language Education (SLE), xviii n1, 72, 81, 90, 94n1
Seidlhofer, Barbara, 83
self, (the), xiii, 13, 31, 32, 35–38, 51, 59, 66, 70–73, 80, 88–91, 103. *See also* other(s), (the)
Sen, Amartya, 98, 99
Setti, Federica, 25
Sharifian, Farzad, xiv, xv, 87, 92
Simon, Roger I., 46
SLE. *See* Second Language Education
Starkey, Hugh, xv, 89
Steinberg, Shirley R., 46
Strada, Gino, 49–50
super-diversity, 97. *See also* Vertovec, Steven
Swift, Jonathan, 29, 30, 33, 34, 35, 57–58n2

tongue, 6. *See also* mother tongue
Toohey, Kelleen, xv, 72, 90

Ushioda, Ema, 66

Vertovec, Steven, 97. *See also* super-diversity
Visker, Rudy, 32

Witte, Arnd, xv, 13
Wollstonecraft, Mary, 55
Wortham, Stanton, 44

Žižek, Slavoj, 102

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

About the Author

Paola Giorgis teaches English Language, Literature and Visual Arts in Italian high schools and holds a PhD in Anthropology of Education and Intercultural Education. Her main interest regards a critical, intercultural and interdisciplinary approach to foreign languages and Foreign Language Education able to develop an awareness on words and languages in the direction of transformation and change. She has published a monograph, several articles, chapters in collective works, and has participated in many international conferences. She is co-founder and member of the collective wom.an.ed—women's studies in anthropology and education (www.womaned.org), and is affiliated to several international associations of Linguistics and Intercultural Studies.

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 8:33 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use